

Who Wrote the Word OT?

Old Testament Overview: Authors, Structure, and Themes

The Old Testament is a sacred compilation of history, law, poetry, and prophecy written over a span of approximately 1,000 years. Understanding who wrote each book helps us connect more deeply with its context, purpose, and message. The books are traditionally grouped into five categories: the Pentateuch (Law), Historical Books, Wisdom Literature, Major Prophets, and Minor Prophets.



The Pentateuch (The Torah or Law)

- Genesis – Traditionally attributed to Moses. Covers creation, the patriarchs, and God's covenant beginnings.
- Exodus – Moses. Documents Israel's deliverance from Egypt and the giving of the Law.
- Leviticus – Moses. Detailed laws for worship, sacrifice, and priestly conduct.
- Numbers – Moses. Chronicles the wilderness journey and censuses of Israel.
- Deuteronomy – Moses. A retelling of the Law before entering the Promised Land.



Historical Books

- Joshua – Traditionally attributed to Joshua. Covers conquest and division of Canaan.
- Judges – Possibly Samuel. Describes the cycle of rebellion and deliverance.
- Ruth – Unknown author; possibly Samuel. A love story that illustrates redemption.
- 1 & 2 Samuel – Possibly written by Samuel, Nathan, and Gad.
- 1 & 2 Kings – Traditionally attributed to Jeremiah.
- 1 & 2 Chronicles – Attributed to Ezra. Focuses on Judah and temple worship.
- Ezra – Ezra. Chronicles the return from exile and temple restoration.
- Nehemiah – Nehemiah. Memoir-style account of rebuilding Jerusalem's walls.
- Esther – Unknown author. Tells the story of Jewish deliverance in Persia.



Wisdom Literature (Poetry & Instruction)

- Job – Unknown author. Possibly Moses or Solomon. Explores suffering and divine justice.
- Psalms – Various authors (David, Asaph, Sons of Korah, Solomon, Moses, Ethan, anonymous).
- Proverbs – Primarily Solomon. Some later collections added by Hezekiah’s scribes.
- Ecclesiastes – Solomon, writing as “The Preacher.” A reflection on life’s meaning.
- Song of Solomon – Solomon. A poetic celebration of love and covenant.



Major Prophets

- Isaiah – Prophet Isaiah. Active during the reigns of Uzziah, Hezekiah, and others.
- Jeremiah – Prophet Jeremiah. Includes biographical and prophetic content.
- Lamentations – Traditionally attributed to Jeremiah. Poetic mourning over Jerusalem.
- Ezekiel – Prophet Ezekiel. Visionary messages during Babylonian exile.
- Daniel – Daniel. Apocalyptic and historical accounts from Babylon and Persia.



Minor Prophets (The Book of the Twelve)

- Hosea – Prophet to Israel, themes of faithful love.
- Joel – Prophet to Judah, themes of repentance and the Day of the Lord.
- Amos – Shepherd prophet, strong justice themes.
- Obadiah – Shortest OT book, message to Edom.
- Jonah – Reluctant prophet to Nineveh.
- Micah – Judgment and hope, messianic prophecy.
- Nahum – Judgment on Nineveh.
- Habakkuk – Dialogue with God on justice.
- Zephaniah – Warning of judgment and restoration.
- Haggai – Post-exile encouragement to rebuild the temple.
- Zechariah – Apocalyptic visions and messianic prophecy.
- Malachi – Final OT prophet before 400 years of silence.

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Old Testament Writers – Mini Biographies

Moses

The reluctant leader who became a mighty deliverer. Raised in Pharaoh's palace but called by God from a burning bush, Moses led Israel out of slavery and into covenant with the living God. He wrote the first five books of the Bible (Genesis through Deuteronomy), shaping Israel's identity as a chosen nation. He was a lawgiver, a prophet, an intercessor, and a man who met with God "face to face." Yet even Moses struggled with anger, doubt, and disappointment—reminding us that even the faithful are still human. He died before entering the Promised Land, but stood with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

David

The shepherd boy turned king, David was a man after God's own heart. He didn't just fight giants—he fought despair, betrayal, and his own sin. His psalms reflect the raw honesty of a heart that loved God deeply yet stumbled greatly. He wrote more than 70 psalms and helped establish worship in Israel. Despite his failures, he is remembered for his repentance and his passion. His life teaches us that worship isn't about perfection—it's about pursuit.

Asaph

A Levite musician appointed by David to lead worship in the temple. Asaph wasn't just a singer—he was a prophet-poet whose psalms wrestle with injustice and the prosperity of the wicked. His writing (Psalms 73–83) brings a priestly perspective to pain, yet ends in hope. He teaches us that worship includes questions, laments, and reverence—and that God welcomes it all.

Ezra

A priest and scribe who helped rebuild Israel's spiritual foundation after the Babylonian exile. Ezra was devoted to the Law of God and led a return to worship and repentance. He likely compiled historical books like 1 & 2 Chronicles and may have had a hand in finalizing the structure of the Old Testament. Ezra reminds us of the power of godly leadership rooted in truth, humility, and courage.

Solomon

Son of David, king of Israel, and the wisest man who ever lived—until he wasn't. Solomon

began with a heart that asked God for wisdom and built the glorious temple, but his later years were marked by compromise and idolatry. He wrote Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. His writings reflect brilliance, beauty, and warning. Solomon's life is a sobering reminder: wisdom must be followed, not just spoken.

Sons of Korah

Descendants of the Levite Korah, whose ancestor rebelled but whose line was preserved by grace. These temple musicians contributed worship psalms marked by longing, trust, and deep connection with God's presence. They wrote Psalms like 'As the deer pants for the water.' Their legacy reminds us that redemption runs deep, and God can bring beauty from a broken lineage.

Ethan the Ezrahite

A wise man from Solomon's era, known for his deep insight and poetic expression. Though he only penned Psalm 89, his words stand as a powerful reflection on God's promises and Israel's struggles. His writing bridges hope and heartbreak, and teaches us to wrestle with God's faithfulness in seasons of silence.

Jeremiah

Known as the weeping prophet, Jeremiah was called as a young man and remained faithful through ridicule, imprisonment, and national collapse. He authored both the Book of Jeremiah and Lamentations. His life models courageous obedience and emotional honesty with God in the face of suffering.

Daniel

A captive in Babylon who became a powerful witness for God in a foreign land. Daniel was wise, prayerful, and bold—even in the face of lions. His book includes both historical narrative and apocalyptic prophecy. Daniel's integrity reminds us that we can thrive spiritually even when we feel exiled.

Isaiah

One of the greatest prophets, Isaiah ministered during the reigns of several kings in Judah. His book is rich in messianic prophecy, poetic beauty, and divine judgment. He saw the Lord 'high and lifted up' and responded, 'Here am I, send me.' His voice calls us to repentance, trust, and awe.

Nehemiah

A cupbearer turned builder, Nehemiah's passion for God's glory moved him to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. His memoir-like book captures both spiritual leadership and practical

wisdom. Nehemiah was bold in prayer, decisive in conflict, and unwavering in vision. He shows us how faith and action can restore broken places.

Job

The central figure in one of the Bible's oldest stories, Job is a man who lost everything and still clung to God. The book bearing his name explores suffering, divine justice, and perseverance. Though he never receives all the answers, Job's journey ends with deeper revelation. His life is proof that faith refined in the fire still shines.

Who Wrote the Word – Old Testament Table Chart

Author	Era	Books	Role	Key Scripture
Moses	1445–1405 BC	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Psalm 90	Lawgiver, Prophet	Deuteronomy 34:10
Joshua	1405–1380 BC	Joshua	Leader after Moses	Joshua 1:9
Samuel	1100–1010 BC	1 Samuel, part of Judges, Ruth	Prophet, Judge	1 Samuel 3:19-20
David	1010–970 BC	Psalms (73–75 attributed)	King, Psalmist	Psalm 23:1
Solomon	970–931 BC	Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs	King, Teacher	Proverbs 1:7
Isaiah	740–681 BC	Isaiah	Prophet	Isaiah 9:6
Jeremiah	627–580 BC	Jeremiah, Lamentations	Prophet	Jeremiah 1:5
Ezekiel	593–571 BC	Ezekiel	Prophet	Ezekiel 36:26
Daniel	605–530 BC	Daniel	Prophet	Daniel 6:10
Ezra	480–440 BC	Ezra	Priest, Scribe	Ezra 7:10
Nehemiah	445–420 BC	Nehemiah	Governor, Leader	Nehemiah 8:10
Malachi	430 BC	Malachi	Prophet	Malachi 3:1

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Author	Era	Books	Role	Key Scripture
Matthew	50–60 AD	Matthew	Disciple, Evangelist	Matthew 28:19-20
Mark	50–60 AD	Mark	Disciple of Peter	Mark 10:45
Luke	60–62 AD	Luke, Acts	Physician, Historian	Luke 1:3-4
John	85–95 AD	John, 1–3 John, Revelation	Apostle, Beloved Disciple	John 1:1
Paul	48–67 AD	Romans– Philemon (13 letters)	Apostle to the Gentiles	2 Timothy 4:7
James	45–50 AD	James	Brother of Jesus, Church Leader	James 1:22
Peter	60–64 AD	1 & 2 Peter	Apostle	1 Peter 5:7
Jude	60–80 AD	Jude	Brother of Jesus	Jude 1:24-25
Unknown	Unknown	Hebrews	Possibly Paul, Barnabas, or Apollos	Hebrews 4:12