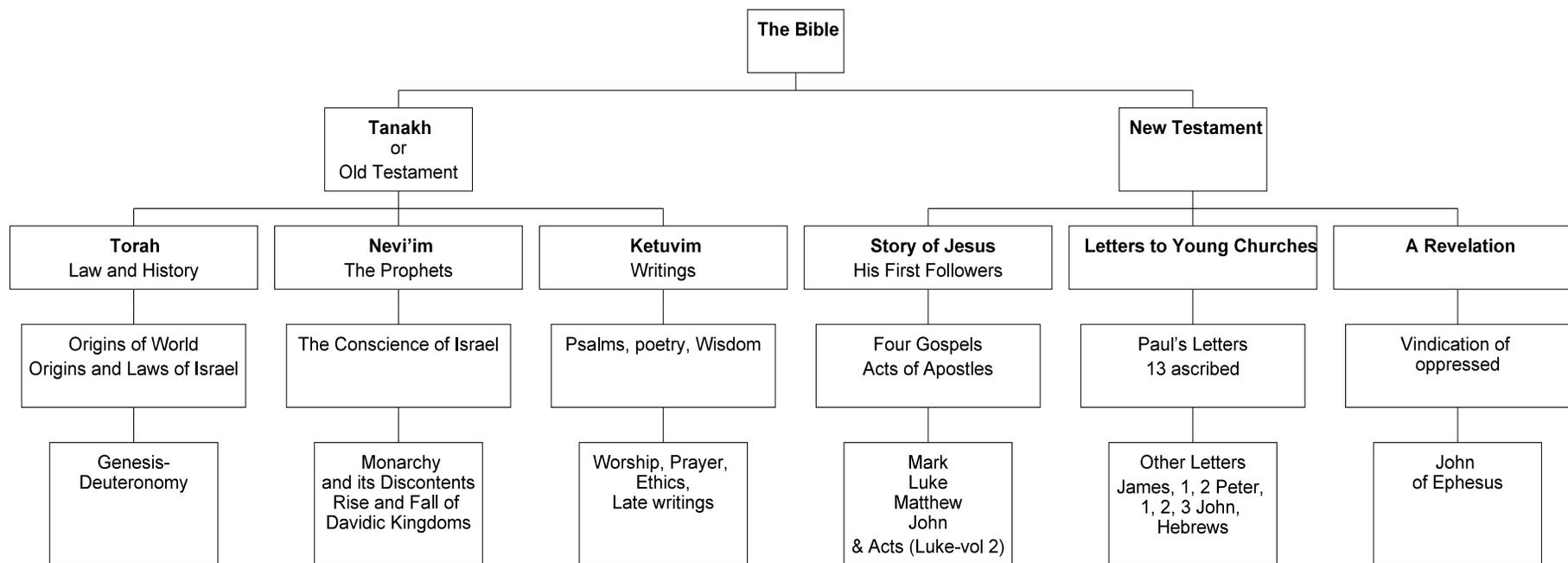


**The Bible** (*ta biblia* – “books”)

The Bible is a collection of 66 separate documents written over more than 1000 years.



The Old Testament contains documents written from about 1100 BCE to about 130 BCE (Before the Common Era). The New Testament contains documents written from about 46 CE to about 110 CE (Common Era).

### **The New Testament**

27 Separate Books in Three Major Sections  
Written between 46? and 110? CE

1. The story of Jesus, his earliest followers, their identification with the Jewish prophets and the Covenant given to Israel, and their challenge to both Jewish and Roman religious and political systems.
2. A collection of letters to newly formed congregations about faith, spiritual experience, organizational rules, ethnic tensions, and communal ethics, in the midst of their opposition to Rome and a growing Roman hostility to Christians.
3. An “Apocalypse” revealing God’s hidden plan for history. The faithful will be vindicated.

#### **Story of Jesus and his Earliest Followers**

The four Gospels  
(Mark, Matthew, Luke, John)  
  
and Acts of the Apostles (also  
by Luke)

#### **Letters to Young Churches**

##### **Paul’s Letters:**

1 Thessalonians, Galatians,  
1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians,  
Philemon, Philippians, Romans

##### **Disputed Pauline:**

Ephesians, Colossians

##### **Claiming Paul’s authorship**

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, Titus,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians

##### **Others, not claiming Pauline authorship**

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter,  
1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John  
James  
Jude  
Hebrews

#### **An Apocalypse**

Written in prison exile  
by John of Ephesus

Revealed!  
The secret of why we  
suffer injustice and  
oppression!

How we will be  
vindicated by God if  
we stay courageous  
against the Empire.

Extensive use of  
Hebrew stories,  
symbols, fantastical  
imagery that function  
as a Hebrew “code”  
that attacks Rome  
without Rome being  
able to de-code it.

## APPENDIX

### A. The Letters of Paul

There are 27 “books” in the New Testament, 13 are ascribed to Paul. The earliest of the four gospels– Mark – was not written until about 70 BCE. Matthew, Luke and John at least a decade or two later. Paul’s letters begin in the 50s. Thus Paul’s writings are the earliest documentary evidence we have for Jesus and his movement and are the earliest and best witness we have for the rise of the Jesus movement and its transformation from a Jewish sect into the Christian religion. The other major work in the New Testament, apart from the Revelation of John, is the book of “Acts of the Apostles” and half of that book is about Paul. Of the thirteen letters ascribed to Paul, six are without doubt from the hand of Paul, and two more are in dispute, that is, scholars don’t agree as to whether or not Paul wrote them.

<u>Undisputed Authentic</u>	<u>Disputed, but Pauline</u>	<u>Not Paul, not Pauline</u>
<u>Romans</u>	<u>Ephesians</u>	<u>2 Thessalonians</u>
<u>1 and 2 Corinthians</u>	<u>Colossians</u>	<u>1 and 2 Timothy</u>
<u>Galatians</u>		<u>Titus</u>
<u>Philippians</u>		<u>Hebrews</u>
<u>I Thessalonians</u>		
<u>Philemon</u>		

### B. Key Words of Roman Imperial Religion: Caesar Worship

<b>Euangelion = Gospel = Good News.</b>	The gospel of Caesar’s military triumphs.
<b>Kyrios = Lord = Sir or Ruler.</b>	There are many “lords,” but only Caesar is the Lord.
<b>Dikaios = Justice</b>	The goddess of Justice whom Augustus identifies with himself. Justice is the result of Caesar’s military victory over his enemies. He has brought Roman “salvation” to the world.
<b>Soter = Savior</b>	Caesar has saved not only Rome, but the whole world.
<b>Eireine = Peace.</b>	Vespasian built a huge temple to goddess Pax in Rome; Caesar embodies Peace through victory
<b>Parousia = The Arrival or Advent</b>	of Caesar, when coming to a city or region
<b>Theos = God</b>	The divine ruler of all things; Jupiter and Caesar
<b>Son of God</b>	Augustus and future Caesars– as “sons” of Augustus– are hailed both as Gods and Sons of God
<b>Ta Panta = All Things</b>	Caesar’s military victories make him Lord of “ta panta,” all things.
<b>Stauros = Cross</b>	Used to humiliate and execute those who threaten Roman power and rule. The most potent symbol of Roman might and ruthlessness.

A typical proclamation made throughout the Empire would go something like this:

Hear the gospel of the Lord Emperor Caesar Augustus! He has brought peace and salvation to the world.  
Through his divine grace, all nations are blessed with justice given by our Savior Emperor Caesar Augustus.  
Praise Caesar!

### C. Key Words of Paul's Gospel of Jesus Christ

**Euangelion** = Gospel = Good News about Jesus Christ: God vindicated the one whom the Roman Empire executed for his opposition to the Empire

**Kyrios** = Lord: applied to Jesus Christ as Lord of all things, i.e., a Ruler of all; *the* Lord.

**Soter** = Savior: applied to Jesus Christ as the one who, when enthroned, will establish his rule of love over all nations; all nations and peoples will be united in the service of this Lord. They will be saved from war, injustice, disorder, chaos and threat.

**Dikaios** = Justice = Righteousness: The condition established by God and enacted by God's people being faithful and obedient to God's plan to bring all nations and peoples into one Kingdom. God's faithfulness to the covenant he made with Israel and Jesus Christ's faithfulness to God brings justice (righteousness) to the world. The word occurs 200 times in the New Testament and (tzedek) 500 times in Old Testament. See Isa 56: 1 where justice and salvation are paired.

**Eirene** = Peace: the result of salvation, the end of war and misery, permanent prosperity because God's justice will rule the earth.

**Parousia** = The Arrival or Advent of Jesus Christ: Paul expects it to happen soon

**Ta Panta** = All things: Paul's Old Testament understanding of the whole creation, both of the nations (people) and nature (the cosmos).

**Son of God** = applied to Jesus Christ as THE Son of God

**God** = The God of the Hebrew people revealed in the stories of Abraham and Sarah, through Moses, David, and the Hebrew Prophets. The only God of the whole earth.

**Stauros** = Cross of Jesus who was humiliated and executed by Rome, but God vindicated Jesus by raising him from the dead. For Paul it is the primary example of how God works in the world. It is God's power to change the world not through arms and empire but non-violent love. What was vindicated was not just a person, Jesus of Nazareth, but his message and way of life.

Here are two selections from Paul's letter to the followers of Jesus in Rome: the introduction to the letter followed by the closing, the last page of the letter. Given how Roman religion and politics used words like "gospel," "lord," and "peace" notice how Paul parodies that language in the very beginning of his letter and, as if to drive home the point, does it again at the end. Also, note how often Paul flagrantly uses political language that rejects Roman imperial claims to universal rulership by his references to *David* (a once and future Jewish King), *Christ* (in Hebrew, Messiah, the Anointed Ruler), *power*, and *Jesus*, the "rebel" put to death by crucifixion by Roman authority. Paul sends this extraordinary letter right to the heart of the Empire itself! Suddenly this language doesn't seem so religiously innocent.

## THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS

### **Introduction**

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ (*Anointed One*) our Lord, 5through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, 6including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ (*Anointed One*).

7 To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (*Anointed One*).

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ (*Anointed One*) for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. 9For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers, 10asking that by God's will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you. 11For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you— 12or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. 13I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the Gentiles. 14I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish 15— hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome. 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17For in it the justice (*Dikaios*) of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, 'The one who is righteous (*Dikaios-justice/righteous*) will live by faith.'

### **Romans 16 Conclusion**

#### **Personal Greetings**

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.

Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ (*Anointed One*) Jesus, and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ (*Anointed One*) Mary, who has worked very hard among you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ (*Anointed One*) before I was. Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, (*Anointed One*) and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ (*Anointed One*). Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. Greet my relative Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; and greet his mother—a mother to me also. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ (*Anointed One*) greet you.

#### **Final Instructions**

I urge you, brothers and sisters, to keep an eye on those who cause dissensions and offences, in opposition to the teaching that you have learned; avoid them. For such people do not serve our Lord Christ (*Anointed One*),

but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded. For while your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, I want you to be wise in what is good, and guileless in what is evil. The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Anointed One*) be with you.

Timothy, my co-worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my relatives.

I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord.

Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.

### **Final Doxology**

Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ (*Anointed One*), according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ (*Anointed One*), to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

## **D. Emperors of Rome**

49 BCE Julius Caesar

31 BCE Octavian (*Jesus born, 4 BCE*)

14 CE Tiberias (*Jesus executed, 30*)

37 CE Caligula

41 CE Claudius

54 BCE Nero (*Paul executed, 63?, Jewish Wars begin, Jerusalem sacked, 65?*)

68 CE Galba

69 CE Otho

69 CE Vitellius

69 CE Vespasian (*Jerusalem burned, Temple destroyed*)

79 CE Titus (*Written Gospels begin: Mark ca.70 BCE*)

81 CE Domitian

96 CE Nerva (*Gospels completed, Matthew, Luke, John*)