

When the Books of the Bible Were Written: Two Tables

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The information in these tables is based on *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (ed. Frank E. Gaebelin; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981; 12 Vols.). The Old Testament dates assume the early Exodus date of 1446 for the pre-monarchic period. The dates for the period of the monarchy and following are based on the chronology worked out by Edwin Thiele. The New Testament dates assume the completion of the canon at the end of the first century A.D. and Matthean primacy for the authorship of the Gospels.

Old Testament

Date (B.C.)	Book	Writer(s)	Notes
1445-1406	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers	Moses	Heb. <i>Torah</i> : instruction or Gk: Pentateuch: five books. Traditionally attributed to Moses. Other OT books (Josh. 1:7; 8:31; 1Ki. 2:3; 2Ki. 14:6; Ezr. 6:18; Neh. 13:1; Mal. 4:4), Jesus Christ (Mk. 7:10; 12:6; Jn. 5:46) and NT authors (Lk. 2:22; Ac. 3:22; Rom. 10:5) support this view.
1406	Deuteronomy	Moses, Joshua (?)	See Deu. 1:1. Chapter 34 was likely written by someone other than Moses; style and vocabulary makes Joshua most likely.
1370	Joshua	Joshua, Phineas (?)	See Jos. 8:32; 24:26. Commentators think that the final verses of the book were written by another person, likely the high priest Phineas.
1085-971	Judges	Unknown	Jewish tradition attributes the book to Samuel. Style and vocabulary suggest it was written in the Davidic period.
1085-971	Ruth	Unknown	Jewish tradition attributes the book to Samuel. Style and vocabulary is similar to Judges, thus suggesting it was written in the Davidic period.
1030-931	Samuel	Samuel, Nathan, Gad	The writers of the book are traditionally identified using 1Ch. 29:29.
1030-931	Job	Unknown	The poetic parts of the book are very ancient (2 millennium B.C.), but the introduction (Job 1-2) and conclusion (Job 42:7-17) are written in the language and vocabulary of the Davidic or Solomonian era, suggesting the poetry was edited and completed during that time.
971-686	Proverbs	Solomon, Agur, Lemuel	See Pr. 1:1; 30:1; 31:1. While most of the proverbs come from Solomon's pen, the final form of the book was produced by editors during Hezekiah's reign (see. Pr. 25:1).
around 940	Ecclesiastes	Solomon	Compare. Ecc. 1:1 and autobiographical information in Ecc. 1:1 – 2:9.
around 940	Song of Songs	Solomon	See Son. 1:1.
800-700	Joel	Joel	See Joe. 1:1. There is not enough clear information in the book to determine an exact date.
792-752	Amos	Amos	See Amo. 1:1
782-722	Hosea	Hosea	See Hos. 1:1
745-630	Jonah	Jonah (?)	While Jonah lived the events in the book and likely passed them on, the third-person form of the book and the past tense in Jnh. 3:3 suggest that it was written after the fall of Nineveh in 631 B.C.
739-686	Isaiah	Isaiah	See Isa. 1:1.
733-701	Micah	Micah	See Mic. 1:1
663-626	Nahum	Nahum	See Nah. 1:1. The year that best aligns with the description of Assyria in the book is 645 B.C. (P.A. Verhoef).
636-627	Zephaniah	Zephaniah	See Zep. 1:1
627-574	Kings	Jeremiah, Ezra	Jeremiah is suggested as the author, because the style of Kings is similar to the style in Jeremiah. The style of the passage in 2Ki. 25:27-30 is very similar to Ezra and Chronicles, so Ezra is accepted as the author.
626-590	Habakkuk	Habakkuk	See Hab. 1:1. The exact date of the book cannot be clearly determined from its content.
605-580	Jeremiah	Jeremiah, Baruch	See Jer 1:1. Baruch was Jeremiah's scribe (see. Jer. 36:4; 45:1). According to Jer. 36:1, Jeremiah began writing his book in 605 B.C.
597-573	Ezekiel	Ezekiel	See Eze. 1:3 and first-person accounts in the book. Ezekiel was very careful in dating his visions (e.g. Eze. 1:1; 8:1; 20:1; 24:1; 29:17).
586	Lamentations	Jeremiah	The Septuagint (first century B.C.) cites Jeremiah as the author.

Date (B.C.)	Book	Writer(s)	Notes
586	Obadiah	Obadiah	See Oba. 1:1. The date of Obadiah is very unclear. Some commentators place it in the 8 th century B.C. However, the content of the book fits better with the date cited.
550-530	Daniel	Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar	The second half of the book (Dan. 8:1; 9:2) was clearly written by Daniel, therefore the first half is attributed to him. The fourth chapter is a missive written by Nebuchadnezzar (see Dan 4:1).
520	Haggai	Haggai	See Hag. 1:1; compare Ezr. 5:1. For dating see Hag. 1:1,15; 2:1
520-480	Zechariah	Zechariah	See Zec. 1:1; compare Ezr. 5:1. Zechariah dates many of his visions (e.g. Zec. 1:1,7; 6:9;7:1)
515-415 (?)	Malachi	Malachi	See Mal. 1:1. The author's identity is disputed, because the name "Malachi" means "my messenger". Some think Ezra, Zechariah, or Mordechai might have written it. It is clear that the book is post-Exilic.
474-450	Esther	Unknown	Mordechai is suggested to be the author.
450-400	Chronicles	Ezra	Chronicles is clearly the work of one author. Ezra is accepted both due to Jewish tradition and the style of Chronicles being very similar to that of the book of Ezra.
440	Ezra	Ezra	See first-person expressions in Ezr. 8ff.
440-400 (?)	Psalms	David, Sons of Korah, Asaph, Solomon, Heman the Ezrahite, Ethan the Ezrahite, Moses, and many other anonymous authors	The Psalms are a compilation. It is unclear when the compilation was completed. The oldest Psalm (Ps. 90) is attributed to Moses, which would have to be written before 1406 B.C. David began writing in the 1030s. The other Psalms would have been written in the following centuries. The final form of the book was completed sometime after the return from the Exile to Babylon and before the ministry of John the Baptist, though most likely before the 400 years of silence. Jesus cites it as one of the major parts of the Bible (see Lk. 24:44).
430	Nehemiah	Nehemiah	See Neh. 1:1

New Testament

Date (A.D.)	Book	Writer(s)	Notes
45-50	James	James, son of Joseph	See Jas. 1:1. James is assumed to be the son of Mary and Joseph, thus the half-brother of Jesus Christ
48-52	Galatians	Paul	See Gal. 1:1-2. The early date assumes the addressees were the south Galatian churches Iconium, Lystra, Derby and Antioch. The late date assumes the addressees are unnamed north Galatian churches Paul founded during his second journey.
50	1 Thessalonians	Paul, Timothy	See 1Th. 1:1. Written in Corinth.
50	2 Thessalonians	Paul, Timothy	See 2Th. 1:1. Written in Corinth.
55	1 Corinthians	Paul	See 1Co. 1:1. Written in Ephesus.
56	2 Corinthians	Paul	See 2Co. 1:1. Written while in Macedonia.
57	Romans	Paul	See Rom. 1:1. Most likely written while Paul was in Corinth.
58-60	Ephesians	Paul	See Eph. 1:1. Either written in Caesarea or Rome. Most likely written at the same time as Colossians and Philemon.
58-60	Philemon	Paul, Timothy	See Phm 1:1-2. Either written in Caesarea or Rome. Most likely written at the same time as Ephesians and Colossians.
58-60	Colossians	Paul, Timoteos	See Col. 1:1-2. Either written in Caesarea or Rome. Most likely written at the same time as Ephesians and Philemon.
60-65	Jude	Jude, son of Joseph	See Jude 1:1. The author calls himself "the brother of James". The general view is that this James is the same who wrote the letter of James. The church fathers write that Jude is a half-brother of Jesus (a son of Mary and Joseph).
60-66	Matthew	Matthew Levi	Synoptic Gospel. The early church gave this Gospel primacy. Matthew is attributed as author by the church fathers.
61-64	Luke	Luke	Synoptic Gospel. Luke is attributed as author by the church fathers. Luke was Paul's companion (see Ac. 16:10; 20:5; 21:1; 27:1; Col. 4:14; Phm. 1:24; 2Ti. 4:11). This is supported by Gospel of Luke and Acts having the same writing style and the first-person accounts in Acts. Luke states that Acts is his second book (Ac. 1:1-2), thus the Gospel must have been written first.
61	Philippians	Paul, Timothy	See Php. 1:1. Written in Rome

Date (A.D.)	Book	Writer(s)	Notes
62-64	1 Peter	Simon Peter, Silas	See 1Pe. 1:1. Written in Rome. According to 1Pe. 5:12 Peter uses Silas ("Silvanus", see Ac. 15:40) as his scribe.
63-64	Acts	Luke	This book is the continuation of the Gospel of Luke according to Ac. 1:1-2. Some commentators think that this was written in Paul's defense for his trial before Caesar.
62-66	1 Timothy	Paul	See 1Ti. 1:1. Written while in Macedonia (see 1Ti. 1:3)
63	Titus	Paul	See Tit. 1:1. Place of writing is unknown, though Corinth is suggested.
64-67	Mark	John Mark, Simon Peter	Synoptic Gospel. John Mark is mentioned as Paul's companion in Ac 12:12; 13:15,13; 15:37-39. The church fathers state that Mark wrote down what he heard from Simon Peter, thus requiring the Gospel to have been completed before Peter's martyrdom at the hands of Nero.
64-68	2 Peter	Simon Petrus	See 2Pe. 1:1. Authorship is disputed because it was added to the canon at a very late date. The given dates assume Peter's authorship.
66-70	Hebrews	Unknown	The author is unknown, though Paul, Barnabas (Ac. 4:36-37; 13:2ff), Apollos (Ac. 18:24-28), and Priscilla (Ac. 18:18) are suggested.
67	2 Timothy	Paul	See 2Ti. 1:1-2. Written in Rome
70-96	Revelation	John son of Zebedee	See Rev. 1:1,2,4-6. The earliest writings of the church fathers paired with the internal evidence of the book support the authorship of John.
85-90	1 John	John son of Zebedee	The letters attributed to John do not name an author. The testimony of the church fathers and the similarity of the language to John's Gospel support the authorship claim.
85-90	John	John son of Zebedee	The church fathers state that Jesus' disciple John son of Zebedee wrote the fourth Gospel. This is supported by the content of the Gospel itself. Some commentators think it was written in the A.D. 60s or 70s.
90	2 John	John son of Zebedee	
90	3 John	John son of Zebedee	

References

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