



The Book of Jubilees

translated by R. H. Charles

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London

[1917]

The Book of Jubilees, probably written in the 2nd century B.C.E., is an account of the Biblical history of the world from creation to Moses. It is divided into periods ('Jubilees') of 49 years. For the most part the narrative follows the familiar account in Genesis, but with some additional details such as the names of Adam and Eve's daughters, and an active role for a demonic entity called 'Mastema'. The anonymous author had a preoccupation with calendar reform, and uses *Jubilees* as a platform for proposing a solar calendar of 364 days and 12 months; this would have been a radical departure from [the Jewish Calendar](#), which is lunar-based. There are also a couple of messianic, apocalyptic passages, although quite a bit less than the Book of Enoch.

The only complete version of *Jubilees* is in Ethiopian, although large fragments in Greek, Latin and Syriac are also known. It is believed that it was originally written in Hebrew. If at times one gets the impression that you are reading a first draft of Genesis, you are in good company. R.H. Charles, the translator, a distinguished academic Biblical scholar, concluded that *Jubilees* was a version of the Pentateuch, written in Hebrew, parts of which later became incorporated into the earliest Greek version of the Jewish Bible, the Septuagint.

--John Bruno Hare, July 22, 2004

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