

A Concise History of Israel in the OT

Introduction

God's word is not written academically; it is not a handbook nor an encyclopaedia; thus the structure of the various books are not chronological. Even the historical books of the OT contain events mentioned in one but ignored in another.

The reason for this is spiritual; God has a spiritual purpose in the writing of the books. They are written for spiritual education and edification, not for analytical reasons. Consequently, it helps the Bible student to have a fair knowledge of chronological events in order to understand the historical narrative.

This paper is intended to help the student fill that gap. It is not fully comprehensive, as that would take a long book, but it seeks to cover the most important features of Israel's history to help to provide a template of historical narrative. Even though it is a concise approach, I believe that this will be of great assistance to Bible readers.

I decided to give more information on the inter-testamental period since most Christians are clueless about this time and have no access to books about it. All Christians can research the other details of Israel's history for themselves from Scripture, so I can be more succinct in this connection.

Dates

Many of the early dates, and some down to the Divided Monarchy period, are sorely debated and so those given here are sometimes approximations. Usually the differences are only a few years but sometimes are longer, even decades. For example, the judgeship of Othniel is given as 1377-1337 by J H Walton, 1367-1327 by L J Wood (whom I tend to follow), and 1374-1334 by JB Payne; these are only minor discrepancies. Some suggest dates that differ by 40 years or more.

In the realms of more ancient history, especially of Egypt and the patriarchs, the differences in chronology vary by hundreds of years. For example, Abraham's entry into Canaan is said by many to be in 2091 BC but by Jones as 1921; a difference of 170 years.

Dating depends upon the signposts of: 1) the date of the Exodus; 2) the duration of the Sojourn in Egypt and 3) the time between Abraham's birth and Jacob's migration to Egypt. All these are disputed, even by evangelicals. Key texts are 1 Kg 6:1 (Exodus was 480 years before the temple started in 966 BC); Exod 12:40 (the Sojourn was 430 years) and Judg 11:26 (at the time of Othniel, Israel had held the land for 300 years).

I have not tried to harmonise every date here (a hugely complex academic task); the dates given are approximate indications. Thus there are tables where dates differ slightly even within this paper.

Some disagreement between time periods within the Bible are explained by different writers using different calendar methods.

History is important and Jesus frequently mentioned historical events in the OT; it behoves us to understand the sequence of events.

Ancient Near Eastern Empires 2300-332 BC

This is given for comparison. It is quite important to understand what power was in charge in the area, especially in the later period.

Anatolia / Syria	Mesopotamia	Palestine	Egypt
2300			
Ancient Hatti	Akkadian Period	Early Bronze IV	Dynasty VI (2340-2175)
2200			
	Gutian Period: Dynasty of Lagash	Early Bronze IV	First Intermediate Period (2175-2040)
2100			
	Ur III Dynasty		
		Middle Bronze I Patriarchs	
2000			
	Isin-Larsa	Middle Bronze I Patriarchs	Middle Kingdom, Dynasties XI-XII (2040-1786)
1900			
	Elam-Amorite invasions	Middle Bronze IIA Sojourn	
1800			
Old Hittite Empire (1800-1600)	Old Babylonian Period; age of Hammurabi		Second Intermediate Period: Hyksos (1786-1580)
1700			
		Middle Bronze IIB & C Sojourn	
1600			
1500			
Mitanni-Hurrian Empire (1500-1350)		Late Bronze I Exodus and Conquest	New Kingdom (1580-1085) Dynasty XVIII (1580-1314)
	Kassite Period		
1400			
New Hittite Empire (1460-1200)		Late Bronze II Judges to Deborah	Dynasty XIX; Empire Age (1314-1194)
1300			
1200			
			Dynasty XX (1194-1085)
1100			
Neo-Hittites of North Syria through to 8 th century	Assyrian rise	Iron I Judges & United Monarchy	Dynasty XXI (1085-945)
1000			
900			
800			
Syrian rise until fall of Damascus in 732	Assyrian Empire	Iron II Divided Monarchy	Late Period Dynasties XXII-XXVI (945-525)
700			
	Neo-Babylonian Empire		
600			
Persian control 539-332			

Summary of great Empires affecting Israel

- Assyria 740-612 BC.
- Babylonia 612-539 BC. [Really the New Babylonian or Second Babylonian Empire.]
- Medo-Persia 539-331 BC. [Usually nominated as the Persian Empire.]

- Macedonia (Greek) 330-323 BC. [Usually nominated as the Greek Empire and initiation of Hellenistic culture.] After the death of Alexander, the empire was split between his generals. Thus the Ptolemies of Egypt, and the Seleucids of Syria.
- Rome 246 BC – 476 AD.

These will be discussed in more detail later.

Some other early empires in the region

Sumerian civilisation

Sumer (Biblical Shinar) was an ancient region comprising the southern part of Mesopotamia. From the 4th millennium BC it was the site of city-states that became part of ancient Babylonia.

Akkadian Kingdom

This existed in north, central Mesopotamia; Sargon the Great is a noteworthy emperor. The Akkadian language became the basis of many languages, including Hebrew and Aramaic. The extinct language of Akkad was written in cuneiform, with two dialects, Assyrian and Babylonian, widely used from about 3500 BC. It is the oldest Semitic language for which records exist.

The Gutti Empire

These barbarous raiding people originally lived in the Zagros mountains and no one knows their origins. They appeared in increasing numbers in Akkad and Sumer as settlers but about 2200 they invaded in force into southern and central Mesopotamia, destroying the Akkadian Empire and subjugating much of Sumer. However, they were poor rulers; possibly ruling for fifty years or so until the region entered a period of dark ages.

The Hittite Empire

Occupied Asia Minor and northern Syria between 1800 and 1200 BC. [See later.]

Adam to Abraham

Name	Total age	Ref.	Misc.
Adam	930	Gen 5:3-5	
Seth	912	Gen 5:5-8	
Enosh	905	Gen 5:9-11	
Kenan	910	Gen 5:12-14	
Mahalalel	895	Gen 5:15-17	
Jared	962	Gen 5:18-20	
Enoch	365	Gen 5:21-24	
Methuselah	969	Gen 5:25-27	
Lamech	777	Gen 5:28-31	
Noah	950	Gen 7:11, 9:29	600 years old at beginning of the flood.
Shem	600	Gen 11:10-11	Aged 98 at the end of the flood.
Arpachshad	438	Gen 11:12-13	
Shelah	433	Gen 11:14-15	
Eber	464	Gen 11:16-17	Origin of the word 'Hebrew'.
Peleg	239	Gen 11:18-19	
Reu	239	Gen 11:20-21	
Serug	230	Gen 11:22-23	
Nahor	148	Gen 11:24-25	
Terah	205	Gen 11:26-32	Father of Abram.

Note the gradual diminishing of life-span after the Fall, and particularly after the flood when the world's climatic conditions changed significantly. These changes account for the gradual extinction of large life-forms (such as dinosaurs) that could not cope with the change of air-pressure, oxygen content of atmosphere and weather conditions.

The Patriarchal period, 2166-1805 BC

This period is full of interest and largely requires a commentary upon Genesis. However, since Israel did not formally exist until after this time we shall only cover it in summary form here.

Abraham [2166-1881]

Event	Age	Date	Ref.
Abraham born		2166 (Wood, Payne) ¹	
The Calling of Abram			
Into Canaan	75	2091 (Wood) (Jones 1921)	Gen 12:4
Birth of Ishamel	86	2080	Gen 16:3
Birth of Isaac	100	2066	Gen 21:5
Abraham's test	115	2051	Gen 22

Isaac [2066-1886]

Event	Age	Date	Ref.
On Mt. Moriah	15	2051	Gen 22
Marries Rebekah	40	2026	Gen 25:20
Birth of Jacob	60	2006 (Jones 1836)	Gen 25:25:26
Death of Abraham	75	1991	Gen 25:7
Jacob marries	144	1922	Gen 29:21-30, 30:1, 22-26

Jacob [2006-1859]

Event	Age	Date	Ref.
Death of Abraham	15	1991	Gen 25:7
Jacob goes to Haran	77	1929	Gen 28:5
Marries Leah then Rachel	84	1922	Gen 29:21-30, 30:1, 22-26
Joseph born	91	1915	Gen 30:25, 31:38-41
Move to Canaan	97	1909	Gen 31:17-21
Joseph sold	108	1898	Gen 37:2-36
Death of Isaac	120	1886	Gen 35:28-29
Joseph elevated in Egypt	121	1885	Gen 41:39-40
Move to Egypt	130	1876 (Jones 1706)	Gen 45:6, 47:9
Jacob dies	147	1859 (Jones 1689)	Gen 47:9

Sons of Jacob

Son and name meaning	Mother	Ref.	Blessing order and symbol	Blessing ref.
Reuben [Behold, a son]	Leah	Gen 29:32	1. Unstable	Gen 49:3-4
Simeon [Hearing]	Leah	Gen 29:33	2. Anger & self will	Gen 49: 5-7
Levi [Attachment]	Leah	Gen 29:34	3. Anger & self will	Gen 49: 5-7
Judah [Praise]	Leah	Gen 29:35	4. Lion & sceptre	Gen 49:8-12
Zebulun [Abode]	Leah	Gen 30:20	5. Haven	Gen 49:13
Issachar [Reward]	Leah	Gen 30:18	6. Donkey	Gen 49:14-15

¹ Generally accepted as: 966 (temple began) plus 480 years to the Exodus; plus 430 years (from Jacob's migration to the Exodus); plus 290 years (between the migration and Abraham's birth).

Dan [Judgment]	Bilhah	Gen 30:6	7. Serpent	Gen 49:16-18
Gad [Good fortune]	Zilpah	Gen 30:11	8. Troop	Gen 49:19
Asher [Happy]	Zilpah	Gen 30:13	9. Rich food	Gen 49:20
Naphtali [Wrestle]	Bilhah	Gen 30:8	10. Deer	Gen 49:21
Joseph [May he add]	Rachel	Gen 30:24	11. Fruitful	Gen 49:22-26
Benjamin [Son of the right hand]	Rachel	Gen 35:18	12. Ravenous wolf	Gen 49:27

Joseph [1915-1805]

Event	Age	Date	Ref.
Move to Canaan	6	1909	Gen 31:17-21
Joseph sold	17	1898	Gen 37:2-36
Joseph elevated in Egypt	30	1885	Gen 41:39-40
Family relocates to Egypt	39	1876	Gen 45:6, 47:9
Jacob dies	56	1859	Gen 47:9
Death of Joseph	110	1805	Gen 50:26

Job

It is presumed that Job lived in the period of the patriarchs but details of chronology are lacking.

The reasons for supposing Job lived in the time of the Patriarchs (2166-1805 BC) are:

- No references to Israel or law.
- Job's long life (over 100 years).
- Job's role as a priest to the family (i.e. before the institution of the Levitical priesthood).
- Measuring Job's wealth in terms of livestock.

It is not known when the book was written, but similarities with Isaiah may suggest it was written during Isaiah's lifetime. We simply do not know.

Migration to Egypt [1876]

There are great debates about the date of the migration, the sojourn in Egypt and the Exodus, particularly about which Pharaoh was involved [see next]. Liberal scholars that continually propose late dates for OT events have been constantly proved wrong. There are also revisionist Egyptologists proposing a new dynastic chronology. The whole matter is complex and confusing.

My approach is simple and proposes the standard conservative view of an early date for the Exodus. By the time we get to the point of the United Monarchy, there is virtual agreement as to the dates by all.

The Birth of the Nation and the Wanderings [1446-1406 BC]

Sojourn in Egypt [1876-1446]

Variations

There are four schools of thought regarding the period of the sojourn and Exodus. Essentially there are conflicts between the understanding of archaeology (suggesting a late date) and the interpretation of the Bible (suggesting an early date).

A key issue is the understanding of Exod 12:40:

Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt *was* four hundred and thirty years.

This, at first, seems simple, following the Masoretic Hebrew. However, both the Septuagint² and the Samaritan Pentateuch include the patriarch's sojourn in Canaan as well as the sojourn in Egypt in the 430 years. The time in Canaan was 215 years, leaving 215 years in Egypt. Gal 3:17 is often cited in support of 215 years.³

EARLY EXODUS / LONG SOJOURN

This is the position of many evangelicals, including Leon Wood, John Davis, Merrill Unger, JB Payne and G Archer. This view is based upon the Masoretic reading of Exod 12:40. It proposes that:

- The patriarchal period was from 2166-1805.
- The Migration to Egypt was in 1876.
- The Egyptian sojourn was from 1876 lasting 430 years. [Note 1 Kg 6:1 says that the Exodus occurred 480 years before the construction of the temple.]
- The wanderings were from 1446-1406.
- The conquest and Judges were from 1406-1050.

EARLY EXODUS / SHORT SOJOURN

This proposes an early Exodus and a 215-year sojourn as per the LXX reading of Exod 12:40; held by J Free, David Rohl and S Schultz and many others.

- Patriarchs 1952-1589.
- Migration to Egypt 1660.
- Sojourn from 1660 (or 1661) - 1446 lasting 215 years; slavery from c.1580.
- Wandering from 1446-1406.
- Conquest and Judges 1406-1050.

LATE EXODUS

This proposes a late date for Exodus but a belief in the historicity of patriarchal events. It is held by RK Harrison, GE Wright, KA Kitchen and WF Albright.

- Patriarchs 1950-1650.
- Migration to Egypt 1650.
- Sojourn 1650-1230.
- Slavery from 1580.
- Conquest and Judges 1230-1025.

² 'And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and the land of Chanaan, was four hundred and thirty years.' LXX.

³ Since the promise of the covenant was given to Abraham at his entry into Canaan (Gen 12:1-3), which was 215 years before Jacob went to Egypt, this only leaves 215 years for the sojourn.

RECONSTRUCTIONIST

This proposes a late date for the Exodus and reconstructs Biblical history using Form Criticism. It is held by A, M Noth, C Gordon and HH Rowley.

- Patriarchs 1500-1300.
- Gradual migration.
- Sojourn 1350-1230.
- Conquest and Judges 1230-1025.

I take the conservative evangelical viewpoint.

The sojourn in Egypt was most likely either:

- From 1876-1446 lasting 430 years; the period of slavery from 1730 or 1580.
- From 1660 (or 1661) - 1446 (or 1447) lasting 215 years, slavery from 1580.

Hyksos

Though scholars, particularly liberal scholars, dispute the traditional dating, we must consider the Hyksos period. 'Hyksos' is the Greek form of the Egyptian phrase 'heqa khasut' meaning 'rulers of foreign lands'. The Hyksos 15th Dynasty ruled the eastern Delta and at least part of Upper Egypt with their capital being at Zoan (Tanis) in the north-eastern part of the Delta.

On the dating followed in this paper, between 1786-1580 BC Egypt had been conquered by a pastoral Semitic race from Asia called the Hyksos, who subjugated the native Egyptians, who were an African (Hamitic) race. Archaeology confirms that the Hyksos were similar to Canaanite groups from the Middle Bronze Age Levant. As a comparison, secular authorities date this period as c.1650-1550.⁴

Some evangelicals believe that this occurred hundreds of years before Joseph (e.g. Easton's Dict.) and thus the Hyksos welcomed Joseph; but in my dating this was 1786-1580, with the migration to Egypt occurring in 1876. The Egyptian sojourn was from 1876-1446. So the migration occurred 90 years before the Hyksos invasion. It is logical that the Semitic Hyksos shepherding race favoured the Hebrew shepherds. Thus the Hebrews began to multiply exceedingly (Gen 47:27) and extended in Goshen and to the west and south in good lands.

Eventually, the supremacy of the Hyksos came to an end. This explains why the Egyptians began to despise the Hebrews, and the period of their affliction began (Gen 15:13). However, the Hebrews, now slaves, grew in number.

Another view is put forward by a revision of Egyptian chronology by David Rohl.⁵ This would put the Hyksos invasion after the Exodus. In fact, it postulates that the invasion was enabled by the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea.

Summary of the dating problems

<p>Conventional Egyptian chronology Disagreement about dates, that can vary by 200 years.</p>	<p>New chronology Disagreement about dates that can vary by 300 years from conventional chronology.</p>	<p>Biblical chronology Difficult to absolutely correspond to either Egyptian chronology.</p>	<p>Liberal chronology Disagreement with conservative Bible dating.</p>
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⁴ Dict. of the Ancient Near East, art. 'Hyksos'.

⁵ 'The New Chronology', put forward in various books and papers. It is a major revision of the conventional chronology and particularly re-dates the 19th to 25th dynasties.

Exodus

Necessity

The new dynasty did not favour the Hebrews, perhaps associated with the Hyksos by race, and did not remember the service of Joseph; so the Hebrews were enslaved and finally their numbers reduced by killing male babies. Their cry in servitude came before the Lord.

The ten plagues and the judgment on Egyptian gods

- Nile turned to blood (Ex 7:14-25). Judgment on Khnum (guardian of the Nile), Hapi (spirit of the Nile) and Osiris (god of the underworld whose blood stream was the Nile).
- Frogs (Ex 8:1-15). Judgment on Heqt (frog god of resurrection, wife of Khnum).
- Mosquitoes / 'lice' (lit. gnats; Ex 8:16-19). Prevented priesthood from being ritually clean and hindered their work.
- Flies (Ex 8:20-32). Judgment on Uatchit, god manifested as Ichneumon fly.
- Plague on cattle and domestic animals (Ex 9:1-7). Judgment on Hathor (cow god), Apis (bull god), Ptah (fertility god), Mnevis (sacred bull).
- Boils (Ex 9:8-12). Imhotep (god of medicine). Sekhmet, goddess who ended epidemics. Serapis, god of healing.⁶
- Hail (Ex 9:13-35). Nut (sky goddess), Isis (goddess of life), Seth (protector of crops).
- Locusts (Ex 10:1-20). Isis, Seth.
- Darkness (Ex 10:21-29). Re, Amun-Re, Khepre, Harakhte, Aten, Atum, Horus (sun gods). Thoth, moon god.
- Death of firstborn (Ex 11:1-12:36). Osiris (giver of life).

Exodus & the miracle of the Red Sea [1446]

- Repeatedly affirmed to be the greatest miracle experienced by the Israelites.
- This literally put the fear of God in the inhabitants of Canaan for decades (Josh 2:10).
- It helps to explain why Egypt went into degeneration after this point.

Who was the Pharaoh?

This is an interminable problem, as even conventional chronology Egyptologists do not agree on exact dates for the various dynasties; in early Egyptian history the suggested dates can vary by hundreds of years. The 'New Chronology' of Rohl has created a new argument postulating wide variations from the accepted chronology. Many critics have questioned his views, such as that Solomon is a Late Bronze Age king instead of belonging to Iron Age 17; yet others claim his chronology best aligns with Scripture.

A table dating all the pharaohs would be too lengthy for this paper and not necessary; but some information is of value.

⁶ Imhotep and Serapis may have appeared later in history.

⁷ For example David fought the son of Saul at the pool of Gibeon. That pool has been excavated and determined to exist from Iron Age 1 not Late Bronze Age 2a.

Dynastic Period	Dynasty	Event	Breasted date ⁸ 1906	Shaw date ⁹ 2000	Rohl date ¹⁰ 2002
Early dynastic period	1 st / 2 nd		3400-2980	c.3000-2686	2830-2670
Old kingdom	3 rd – 6 th		2980-2475	2686-2181	2554-2061
First Intermediate Period	7 th – 10 th		2475-2160	2181-2025	2061-1833
Middle Kingdom	11 th -12 th	Israelites in Egypt (12 th –13 th dynasties)? 1876-1446	2160-1788	2125-1773	1833-1632
Second Intermediate Period	13 th -17 th	Hyksos 15 th -16 th dynasties; 1786-1580?	1780-1580	1773-1550	1632-1202
New Kingdom	18 th -20 th	Israelites in Egypt 18 th -19 th dynasties?	1580-1090	1550-1069	1202-842
Third Intermediate Period	21 st -25 th		1090-663	1069-656	842-657
Late Period	26 th		663-525	664-525	

Possible Pharaoh's involved with Israel include:

- Sesostris 1 (12th dynasty) – the pharaoh of the time of Joseph. Some have identified Joseph as the Vizier Mentuhotep. Rohl puts Joseph in the court of Amenemhat III (12th dynasty).
- Late 12th dynasty reveals evidence for Israelite slavery. Sesostris III (fifth king of the 12th dynasty) may have been the pharaoh at the time. He built cities in the delta, not of stones but of mud and straw. Wood suggests a Hyksos ruler.
- Moses may have lived in the late 12th dynasty (not in the traditional 18th or 19th dynasties). It is possible that Amenemhet III's daughter Sobekneferu was Moses' foster mother.
- Some claim it was in the 13th dynasty the Israelite slaves suddenly departed Egypt, possibly during the reign of Neferhotep I. Rohl affirms that it was Dudimose. The idea of Rameses II (1270) being the pharaoh is now discredited by Bible scholars.

The views put forward by Floyd-Nolen Jones in 'Chronology of the OT'.

Date BC	Event	Egypt	Dynasty
1706	Joseph vizier	Sesostris I	12th
After 1635	Israel's enslavement	Sesostris III	12th
1571	Moses born	Amenemhet III	12th
1491	Exodus	Neferhotep I	13th
After 1491	Judges	Hyksos	15 th -17 th

The views put forward by David Rohl in his 'New Chronology' (of Egypt).

Date BC	Event	Egypt	Dynasty
Before c. 1632	Joseph vizier	Amenemhat III	12th
	Israel's sojourn (215 years)		12 th -13 th
1447	Exodus	Dudimose	13th
1410	Conquest	Sheshi	14th
After 1410	Judges	Early Hyksos to 18 th dynast	14 th -18 th
	Israel's united monarchy	Akhenaten / Haremheb	18th

⁸ Breasted; 'Ancient Records', Volume One, sections 58-75 (1906).

⁹ Shaw; 'Oxford History of Ancient Egypt', p479-483 (2000). Shaw had access to more archaeological evidence as data than Breasted.

¹⁰ David Rohl; 'The Lost Testament', Century (2002).

Without doubt the whole debate about dating and comparing different empires in the Ancient Near East is confusing and depends upon which author you read. We will never be able to absolutely confirm the synchronicity of Israel and Egyptian pharaohs during this period.

Characteristics and history of Moses

- Moses ['drawn'] was born in 1526 BC. Named from his rescue, being drawn from the water (Exod 2:10).
- Born into the family of Amram, of the Kohathites (Exod 6:16-20) who with his wife Jochebed and two children, Miriam, a girl of perhaps fifteen years of age, and Aaron, a boy of three years, resided in or near Memphis, the capital city of that time.
- Saved from murder at birth by God's sovereignty and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter.
- Trained in the wisdom of the Egyptians and raised in the royal palace (Acts 7:22).
- After being raised for 20 years at the palace, he then probably spent 20 years in military service. A Jewish tradition says that he took a leading part in a war between Egypt and Ethiopia.¹¹
- After this Moses became more familiar with the struggles of his Hebrew people (Ex 2:11). In time he chose to side with them (Heb 11:25-27). After killing an Egyptian and it becoming known, he fled to Midian (the southern part of the peninsula of Sinai). He was providentially led to find a new home with the family of Reuel, where he remained for forty years (Acts 7:30).
- He was eventually commissioned to go down to Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from bondage by the angel of the Lord appearing to him in a burning bush (Exod 3:1). On the way he was met by Aaron and the elders of Israel.
- Kept by God's provision in strong health until 120 years old. Lived through three periods of probation:¹² 40 years in Egypt; 40 years as a herdsman in Midian; 40 years leading Israel through the wilderness.
- Towards the end of his life Israel was encamped in the plains of Moab, ready to cross over the Jordan into the Promised Land. There Moses addressed the assembled elders (Deut 1:1-4, 5:1-26:19, 27:11 - 30:20) and gives the people his last counsel, and then records the great song (Deut 32:1).
- Then, after blessing the tribes he ascended to the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah that is over against Jericho (Deut 34:1) and surveyed the land. God showed him all the land of Gilead to Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, to Zoar (Deut 34:2-3).
- Moses was buried by the Lord in secret in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor (Deut 34:6). In Jude 1:9 mention is made of a contention between Michael and the devil about the body of Moses.
- His chief virtue was that he was the meekest (most humble) man in all the earth (Num 12:3).
- Despite his humility, he could be a powerful and stern leader when necessary.
- No one in the OT probably had as close a relationship to God as Moses did. It was so intense that he was figuratively said to have seen God face-to-face. **'Since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, in all the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land,**

¹¹ Note Josephus and Acts 7:22.

¹² 40 is the number of testing, probation.

and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.' (Deut 34:10-12).

- Moses is the only character in the Old Testament to whom Christ compared himself (Jn 1:17, 5:46). [Note that Moses is the only person that comes close to typifying all the three offices of Christ: prophet, priest and king.]

Sins of Moses

- Smiting the rock twice instead of speaking to it, which ruined the messianic symbolism (Num 20:8-13). For this reason Moses was prevented from going into Canaan.
- Failing to circumcise his son (Exod 4:24-26).

Wanderings

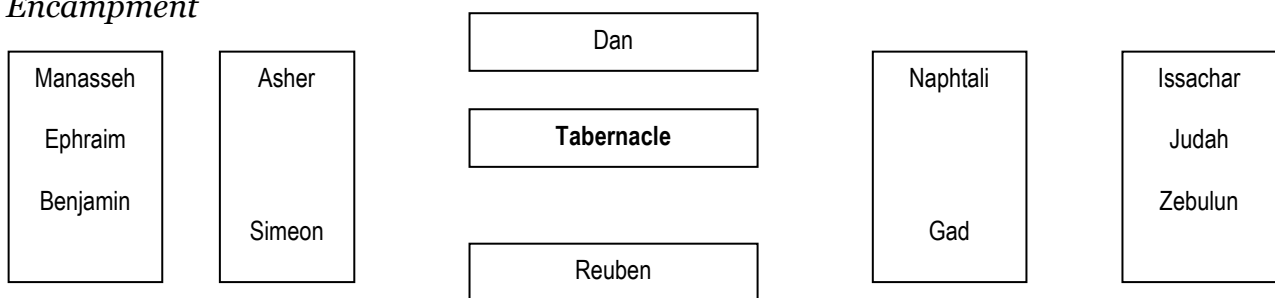
The wanderings were from 1446-1406.

The Tabernacle

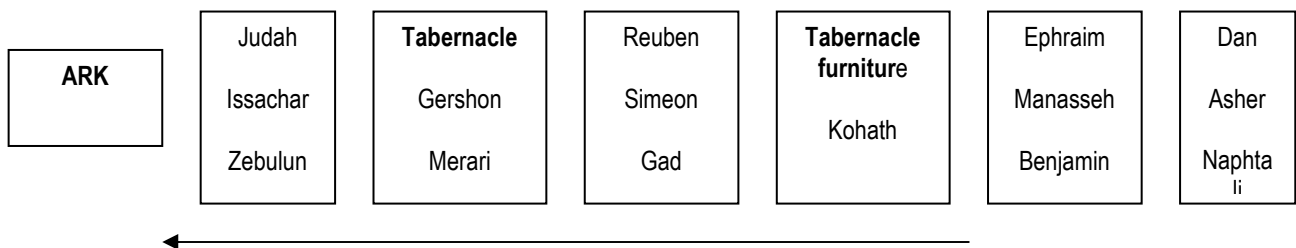
The Tabernacle was given according to pattern by God to establish a dwelling place for him in the midst of Israel. It is full of typology and symbolism, representing first the life and ministry of Christ to come and then the life of the church.

The centrepiece of the Tabernacle, in the Holy of Holies, was the Ark of the Covenant, where God dwelled.

Encampment



Marching



Israel's camps

TO MOUNT SINAI

- Marah.
- Elim.
- Wilderness of Sin.
- Rephidim.
- Mount Sinai.
- Exod 15:22-19:3.

GIVING OF THE LAW

- Exod 19:3-20:17.
- The book of the Covenant (Exod 20:22-24:4).
- Ratification (Exod 24:4-8).
- The law given and then broken (Exod 24:12-18, 32:1-34:35).
- The Tabernacle (Exod 25-31, 35-40).

SINAI TO KADESH-BARNEA

- Num 10:11-17:13, 33:16-19.
- Refusal to enter the land (Num 13-14).
- Rejection by God.
- 37 years and 6 months of fruitless wandering (Num 15-19, 33:19-36).

KADESH-BARNEA TO THE JORDAN

- Num 20-21, 33:37-48; Deut 2:1-3:14.
- Request to pass through Edom (Num 20:14-21).
- Edom detour (Num 21:4-20, 33:41-49).
- March northwards avoiding Moab (Num 21:10-35).
- Confrontation with Sihon and the Amorites (Num 21:21-32).
- Defeat of Og of Bashan (Num 21:33-35).

THE JORDAN

- Num 22-27, 31-32; Deut 31, 34.
- Balaam and the Moabites (Num 22-25, 31).

Miracles of providence (8)

- Bitter waters sweetened at Marah (Exod 15:23-25).
- Fire consumed the burnt offering at Sinai (Lev 9:24).
- Aaron's rod budding (Num 17:8).
- Water from the rock (twice; in Horeb, Exod 17:6; at Meribah, Num 20:8-13).
- Heavenly Manna (Exod 16:14-35).
- Provision of Quails (Exod 16:13).
- Healing by brazen serpent, on the road to Atharim; from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea (Num 21:8-9).

Miracles of destruction and condemnation (6)

- Parting of the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptians.
- Burning of some complaining people at Taberah (Num 11:1-3).
- Destruction of Nadab and Abihu by heavenly fire (Lev 10:1-2).
- Destruction of Dathan and Abiram and their families by divine earthquake (Num 16:31-33).
- Destruction of 250 men with Korah, by heavenly fire (Num 16:35).
- The instant plague on the 14,700 complainers (Num 16:42-50).

Chief battles and opponents

- Amalek; battle at Rephidim, Israel victorious (Ex 17:8-16).
- Amalek and Canaanites; battle at Hormah, Amalek victorious (Num 14:45).
- Arad; battle at Hormah, Israel victorious (Num 21:1-3).
- Amorites under Sihon; battle at Jahaz, Israel victorious (Num 21:21-25).
- Og of Bashan; battle at Edrei, Israel victorious (Num 21:33-35).
- Midianites under various kings, Israel victorious (Num 31:1-12).

The complaining of Israel

Israel constantly murmured against God, even in the face of miraculous provision, and continually harped back to the dainties of Egypt (Num 11:5, 'We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic').

There were (at least) ten occasions when the people complained against Moses and God's leading (Ex 14:2, 15:24, 16:2, 7, 17:3; Num 11:1, 14:2, 27, 29, 36, 16:11, 41; Deut 1:27; Ps 106:24-25). Ten is the number of completeness; it was a comprehensive murmuring against God that filled up the sin of the people so that they were cursed and died in the wilderness.

Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Heb 3:15-19

As such these became a warning example to the church today:

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*. Heb 4:1-2

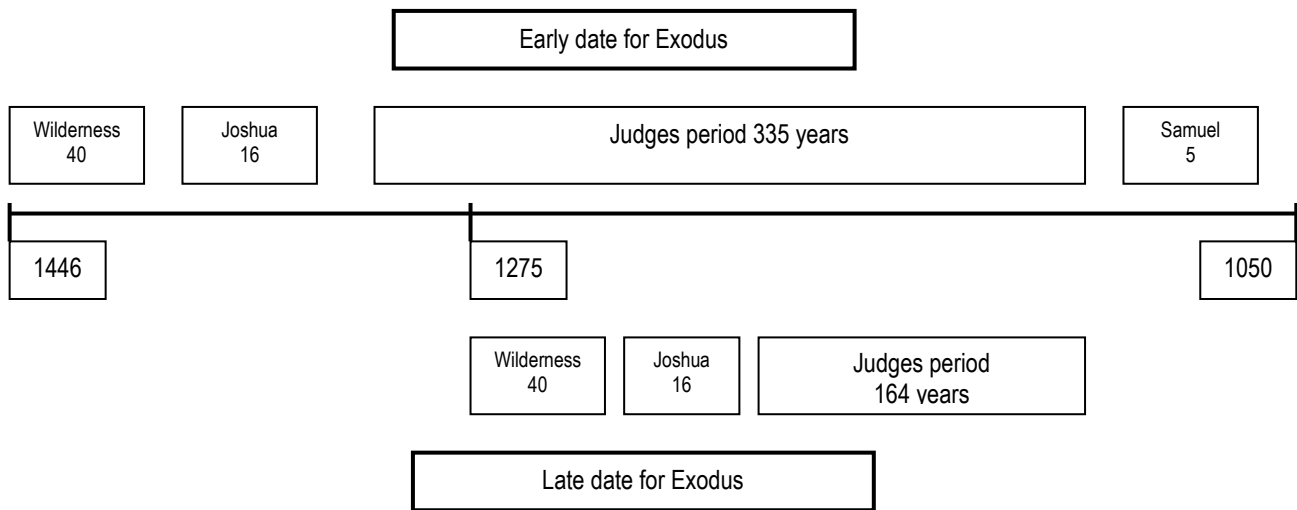
Idolatry

Typical of her later history, Israel also fell into idolatry from the beginning with the Golden Calf and kept falling into idolatry afterwards (often Baal worship copying Canaanite neighbours).

The Conquest of the Promised Land, 1406-1385 BC

The period of the Judges chronology

This depends upon the early date for the Exodus or the late date. It is best explained in this figure:



This shows the impossibility of a liberal late date for Exodus as 164 years is not enough time for all the events and reigns recorded.

Notable characters

Joshua

- ‘The Lord is his help’, or ‘The Lord the Saviour’. The son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, the successor of Moses as the leader of Israel. His name was changed from Oshea, 'help,' to Jehoshua, 'The Lord is help' (Num 13:16).
- About forty years old at the time of the Exodus.
- Commander of the army at the battle against the Amalekites in Rephidim (Ex 17:8-16).
- He became Moses' servant and accompanied him part of the way when he ascended Mount Sinai to receive the two tables (Exod 32:17).
- He was also one of the twelve spies who were sent by Moses to explore Canaan (Num 13:16-17); only he and Caleb gave a good report.
- Under the direction of God, Moses publicly commissioned Joshua with authority over the people as his successor (Deut 31:23).
- Visited by the Captain of the Lord's host, who encouraged him (Jos 1:1-9).
- Six nations and thirty-one kings were conquered by him (Jos 11:18-23, 12:24).
- Having thus subdued the Canaanites, Joshua divided the land among the tribes.
- He died, at the age of one hundred and ten years, twenty-five years after having crossed the Jordan. He was buried in his own city of Timnath-serah (Jos 24:1).

Joshua as a type of Christ (Heb 4:8)

- They had the same name in Hebrew; Joshua (Anglicised Hebrew) = Jesus (Anglicised Greek).
- Joshua brings the people into the possession of the Promised Land,
- As Joshua succeeded Moses, so the Gospel succeeds the Law.

Caleb

- ‘A dog’. The son of Jephunneh (Num 13:6, 32:12); one of the family chiefs of the tribe of Judah. He is called a Kenezite in (Josh 14:6, 14); this may mean ‘son of Kenez’ (Num 32:12). Some read ‘Jephunneh, the son of Kenez’, who was a descendant of Hezron, the son of Pharez, a grandson of Judah (1 Chron 2:5). Kenezite appears to have been a family name, for Othniel, his nephew and son-in-law, is called the son of Kenaz (Josh 15:17; Judg 1:13 and 1 Chron 4:13); and a grandson of Caleb is also called the son of Kenaz (1 Chron 4:15). Caleb being called the son of Hezron is to be understood of his having Hezron for one of his ancestors; and ‘son’ here must be considered as ‘descendant’; for Hezron, of the tribe of Judah, came into Egypt one hundred and seventy-six years before the birth of Caleb.
- He was one of those whom Moses sent to survey the land in the second year after the Exodus.
- He and Joshua were the only two of the whole number who encouraged the people to go up and possess the land, and they alone were spared when a plague broke out in which the other ten spies perished (Num 13:1, 14:1). All the people that had been numbered, from twenty years old and upward, perished in the wilderness except these two.
- The last observation of Caleb is when (85-years old) he came to Joshua at Gilgal, after possession of the land, reminding him of Moses’ promise by which he claimed part of the land of Kirjath-arba as his inheritance (Josh 14:6-15, 15:13-15, 21:10-12; 1 Sam 25:2-3, 30:14).

Notable miracles

- Crossing the Jordan.
- Destruction of the walls of Jericho.
- Holding back the sun (Josh 10:12-14).
- Hailstorm destroys several armies from Beth Horon as far as Azekah (Josh 10:11).

Battles

Joshua won all battles except the first battle against Ai.

- Jericho, Josh 6:12-27.
- Ai, Josh 7:2-6.
- Ai (and Bethel), Josh 8:1-29.
- Amorite confederation, Josh 10:1-27.
- Makkedah, Josh 10:28.
- Libnah, Josh 10:29-30.
- Lachish, Josh 10:31-32.
- Gezer, Josh 10:33.
- Eglon, Josh 10:34-35.
- Hebron, Josh 10:36-37.
- Debir, Josh 10:38-39.
- Northern confederation at the waters of Merom, Josh 11:1-9.
- Hazor, Josh 11:10-11.
- Cities of the north, Josh 11:12-17.

The Judges, 1377-1050 BC

Before this period there were various battles, such as against Bezek, Kiriath-Arba (won by Caleb), Kiriath-Sepher (won by Othniel), Luz, and other cities (Judg 1:4-25).

Enemy	Judge	Approx. Date	Ref.	Years of oppression	Years of Judge
Mesopotamia under Cushan-Rishathaim		1385-1377	Judg 3:8	8	
	Othniel	1377-1337	Judg 3:9-11		40
Moabites under Eglon		1337-1319	Judg 3:12-14	18	
	Ehud	1319-1239	Judg 3:15-30		80
Philistines			Judg 3:31		
	Shamgar	1260-1250	Judg 3:31		10
Canaanites under Jabin		1259-1239	Judg 4:2-3	20	
	Deborah / Barak	1239-1199	Judg 4:4-5:31		40
Midianites under various kings		1199-1192	Judg 6:1-6	7	
	Gideon	1192-1152	Judg 6:7-8:35		40
Civil war of Abimelech		1152-1149	Judg 9		
	Tola	1149-1126	Judg 10:1-2		23
	Jair	1126-1104	Judg 10:3-6		22
Ammonites		1104-1086	Judg 10:7-9	18	
	Jephthah	1086-1080	Judg 10:10-12:7		6
	Ibzan	1080-1072	Judg 12:8-10		8
	Elon	1072-1062	Judg 12:11-12		10
	Abdon	1062-1055	Judg 12:13-15		7
Philistines		1115-1075	Judg 13:1	40	
	Samson	1075-1055	Judg 13:2-16:31		20
	Samuel		1 Sam 7:6, 15		

Dates for the period of the Judges vary according to an early or late date for the Exodus. Some of the Judges are believed to have overlapping judgeships and so no precise chronology is possible.

The keynote about the period of the Judges was that everyone did what was right in their own eyes (Judg 17:6, 21:25), which led to continual desertion of the Lord.

Despite Israel's sin and idolatry, there were more periods of deliverance than subjugation.

There were twelve judges. Twelve is the number of divine government or covenant.

The judges

Othniel

- 'Lion of God'. The younger brother of Caleb (Judg 3:8,9-11).
- His wife, Achsah, was the daughter of Caleb (Josh 15:16-17; Judg 1:13), gained as a reward for leading a brave expedition against Debir.
- Thirty years after the death of Joshua the Israelites were subjected to Chushan-rishathaim, the king of Mesopotamia who oppressed them for eight years.
- Othniel was raised up to be the deliverer; the only judge connected with the tribe of Judah.

- Under him the land had rest forty years.

Ehud

- ‘Union’.
- The son of Gera, of the tribe of Benjamin (Judg 3:15).
- The people fell into idolatry and Eglon, the king of Moab, uniting with the Ammonites and the Amalekites, crossed the Jordan and took Jericho for eighteen years, exacting an annual tribute.
- Ehud killed Eglon in his own palace with an 18-inch, two-edged dagger; he then routed the Moabites at the fords of the Jordan, killing 10,000.
- The land (rather Benjamin) enjoyed rest for 80 years (Judg 3:12-30).

Shamgar

- ‘Sword’. The son of Anath.
- The Philistines from the maritime plain had plundered the Hebrew upland.
- God raised Shamgar up to free the land from this oppression.
- He repelled the invasion, killing 600 men with an ox goad.¹³
- He was probably contemporary for a time with Deborah and Barak.

Deborah and Barak

- Deborah = ‘a bee’. A prophetess of Lapidoth.
- Jabin, the king of Hazor, had subjugated Israel for twenty years. In this crisis Deborah roused the people from their lethargy and she became a mother in Israel (Judg 4:6, 14, 5:7).
- Israel came to her for judgment as she sat in her tent under a palm tree between Ramah and Bethel.
- She summoned Barak from Kadesh to take the command of 10,000 men of Zebulun and Naphtali and lead them to the Plain of Esdraelon.¹⁴
- She gave the signal for attack and the Israelites attacked the army of Jabin, which was commanded by Sisera, and Israel gained a decisive victory. The Canaanite army perished.
- In Judg 5 the song of Deborah is recorded in commemoration of the deliverance.
- Barak = ‘lightning’. The son of Abinoam (Judg 4:6).
- At the request of Deborah he warred against Jabin, who was completely routed.
- The battle was fought in the plain of Jezreel (Judg 4:16, 5:1).
- Barak's faith is commended in the NT but Deborah is absent (Heb 11:32).

¹³ The goad was a sharp pointed instrument, sometimes ten feet long.

¹⁴ Esdraelon is the Greek form of the Hebrew ‘Jezreel’, the name of the great plain which stretches across Central Palestine from the Jordan to the Mediterranean, separating the mountain ranges of Carmel and Samaria from those of Galilee, extending about 14 miles from north to south, and 9 miles from east to west. It is drained by the Kishon, which flows westward to the Mediterranean. Here Gideon gained his great victory over the Midianites, Barak defeated Sisera, Saul's army was defeated by the Philistines, and king Josiah, while fighting in disguise against Necho, king of Egypt, was slain. This plain has been called the ‘battle-field of Palestine’. Many subsequent great battles in history have been fought there.

Gideon

- ‘Hewer’; also called Jerubbaal, ‘let Baal contend’, the name given by his father when he destroyed the altar of Baal (Judg 6:29,32). The son of Joash. He was of the family of Abiezer (Josh 17:2; 1 Chron 7:18) and from the township of Ophrah (Judg 6:11).
- The first of the judges whose history is recorded in Jud 6-8.
- After the victory gained by Barak over Jabin, Israel sank into idolatry, and the Midianites and Amalekites, with other children of the east, crossed the Jordan each year for seven years, plundering and desolating the land.
- Gideon received a direct call from God to undertake the task of delivering the land from these warlike invaders.
- He first cast down the altars of Baal and cut down the asherah which was upon it, and then blew the trumpet. The people flocked to his standard on Mount Gilboa numbering 22,000 men.
- These were reduced to only three hundred armed with torches, pitchers and trumpets. They then attacked from three different points on the camp of Midian at midnight, in the valley to the north of Moreh, (Judg 7:18).
- The Midianites became confused and in the darkness killed one another, so that only 15,000 out of 120,000 escaped.
- The memory of this great deliverance impressed itself deeply on the mind of the nation (1 Sam 12:11; Ps 83:11; Isa 9:4, 10:26; Heb 11:32).
- The land had peace for 40 years.
- Gideon died in old age. Israel soon forgot God and worshipped Baalim. Gideon left behind him seventy feeble sons, except Abimelech, who was proclaimed king and gathered a band of warriors and slaughtered all Gideon's sons, except Jotham. He was killed by a woman.

Tola

- ‘A scarlet worm. A judge of the tribe of Issachar
- Judged Israel 23 years (Judg 10:1-2) when he died, and was buried in Shamir.

Jair

- ‘Enlightener’.
- He ruled for 22 years. His opulence is described in Judg 10:3-5.
- He had 30 sons, each riding on ass colts. They had possession of 30 of the 60 cities (1 Kg 4:13; 1 Chron 2:23) which formed the ancient Havoth-jair.

Jephthah

- ‘Whom God sets free’ or ‘the breaker through’. A wild, daring, Gilead warrior.
- Delivered Israel from the oppression of the Ammonites (Judg 11:1-33) and judged Israel six years (Jud 12:7).
- After 45 years of peace Israel apostatised and Ammon warred against Israel (Judg 11:5).
- The elders of Gilead went to Jephthah in the land of Tob, to which he had fled when driven out wrongfully by his brothers from his father's inheritance. Despite two entreaties to the king of Ammon, war was inevitable. Jephthah became general of the war against Ammon.
- The spirit of the Lord came upon him. However he foolishly vowed that if successful he would offer as a burnt-offering whatever would come out of the door of his house first to meet him on his return. This turned out to be his daughter and only child.

- He completely defeated of the Ammonites with great slaughter (Judg 11:33).
- The men of Ephraim regarded themselves as insulted in not having been called by Jephthah to go with him to war against Ammon. This led to a war between the men of Gilead and Ephraim (Judg 12:4) in which many of the Ephraimites perished.

Ibzan

- ‘Illustrious’.
- Judge of Israel who ruled seven years (Judg 12:8-10).

Elon

- ‘Oak’. A Zebulonite.
- He judged for ten years (Judg 12:11,12).

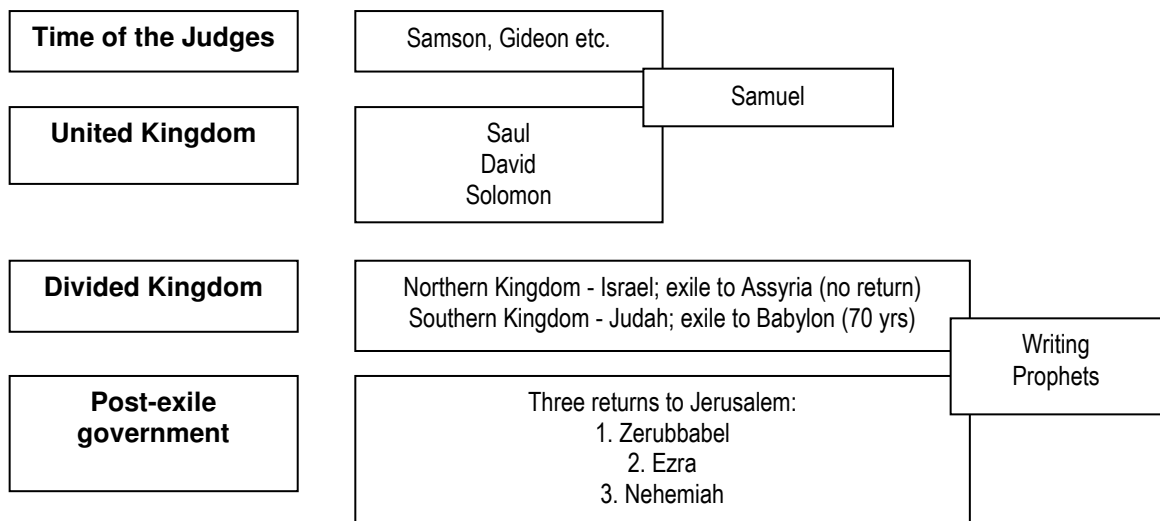
Abdon

- ‘Servile’. The son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, (Judg 12:13-15).
- He is possibly the Bedan of (1 Sam 12:11).

Samson

- ‘Of the sun’, the son of Manoah, born at Zorah. He was a Nazarite unto God from his birth, the first Nazarite mentioned in Scripture (Judg 13:3-5).
- The first recorded event of his life was his marriage to a Philistine woman of Timnath (Judg 14:1-5). This was not expressly forbidden by the law of Moses, as the Philistines did not form one of the Canaanite nations (Exod 34:11-16; Deut 7:1-4); however, it was a bad marriage.
- His wife was taken from him and given to his companion (Judg 14:20). Samson took revenge by burning the standing corn of the Philistines (Judg 15:1-8) who, in revenge, burnt her and her father with fire. He avenged her death (Judg 15:7-19).
- He judged Israel during the 20 years after this; but we have no record of his life.
- After this we see his exploits at Gaza (Judg 16:1-3) and his infatuation for Delilah, and her treachery (Judg 16:4-20) and then his death (Judg 16:21-31), perishing in the destruction of the nobility of his enemies.

Israel’s Political History (Overview)



Samuel

- ‘Heard of God’. Son of Hannah and Elkanah, a child of answered prayer; consecrated to the Lord as a Nazarite (1 Sam 1:23-28, 2:1-11). He was a judge and also one of the greatest prophets.
- Brought up in the tabernacle under counsel of Eli for probably twelve years.
- Samuel grew in favour with the Lord and with men (1 Sam 2:26) in a time of growing degeneracy in Israel (Judg 21:19-21; 1 Sam 2:12-17, 22) when the Philistines had greatly increased in power and subjugated Israel (1 Sam 10:5, 13:3).
- Samuel’s first message from the Lord was one of ruin to Eli and his profligate sons. Then the Lord revealed himself in continual ways to Samuel so that he was regarded as a true prophet. This initiated a new period in the history of the kingdom of God.
- The Philistine oppression was heavy; Israel suffered many defeats and even lost the Ark, thought it was miraculously returned at length. Even Shiloh was destroyed.
- The tabernacle (probably by the advice of Samuel, now about twenty years old) was moved from Shiloh to a place of safety, thence to Nob, where it stayed (1 Sam 21:1).
- Samuel dwelt at Ramah, though he went up and down from place to place, rebuking and exhorting the people. He was successful and Israel repented unto the Lord. Samuel summoned the people to Mizpeh, a hill in Central Palestine, where they fasted and prayed for war against the Philistines.
- God acted on behalf of Israel. Samuel himself was the general, the only occasion in which he acted as a warrior-leader. The Philistines were defeated with great slaughter. This battle, about 1095 BC, ended forty years of Philistine oppression. In memory of this great victory Samuel set up a great stone in the battlefield, Ebenezer, [‘Hitherto has the Lord helped us’] (1 Sam 7:1-12).
- During a long period of peace Samuel functioned as judge, going on a circuit from his home in Ramah to Bethel, thence to Gilgal (to the west of Ebal and Gerizim), and returning by Mizpeh to Ramah. He established regular services at Shiloh, where he built an altar. At Ramah he gathered young men around him and established a school of prophets. Others were established at Gibeah, Bethel, Gilgal, and Jericho.
- At the close of this period, when he was now an old man, the elders of Israel came to him at Ramah (1 Sam 8:4, 5, 19-22). The first reason was that his sons and assistants were not suitable to follow in his footsteps. The second was a threatened invasion of the Ammonites. This led to demands for a king.
- Samuel, angry, warned them of the consequences of such a step. Eventually, at God’s instruction, he anointed Saul to be their king (1 Sam 11:15).
- Before retiring from public life he convened an assembly of the people at Gilgal and exhorted the people. The remainder of his life was in retirement at Ramah, with occasional public appearances with revelation from God to Saul.
- God then sent him to Bethlehem to anoint David, the son of Jesse, as king over Israel.
- After this little is known of him till the time of his death, at Ramah, when he was probably about eighty.

The United Monarchy, 1050-931

King	Reign	Misc
Saul	1050-1010	
Ishbosheth	1010-1008	
David	1010 / 1003 -970	David reigned first over Judah and seven years later over all Israel.
		Absalom's rebellion 975?
Solomon	970-931	
		Temple started 966

The ministry and judgeship of Samuel

Samuel established the ministry of the prophets as the chief bearers of the word of the Lord due to the failure of the priesthood.

The call for a king like the nations

This represented apostasy from trusting God as the theocratic king of Israel.

Accession of Saul

Wars (1050-1010 BC)

- Against Ammonites at Jabesh-Gilead (1 Sam 11:1-11).
- Against Philistines at Geba (1 Sam 13:3).
- Against Philistines at Michmash (1 Sam 13:5-14:46).
- Against Moab, Ammon, Edom & Zobah at various places (1 Sam 14:47).
- Against Amalekites under Agag (1 Sam 15:1-9).
- Against Philistines including Goliath at the Valley of Elah (1 Sam 17:1-54).
- Against Philistines under Achish and others (1 Sam 31:1-6).

David and Goliath

- One of the greatest stories in the Bible and full of symbolism.
- Scholars postulate that David was about 18 years old. Previously some thought that he was 14, but a son that age would not have been left to care for the flocks alone on the hillsides.
- The story is all about God's provision by grace; note five smooth stones (1 Sam 17:4; five is the number of grace, divine strength out of weakness). Note the rejection of Saul's armour (rejection of the old nature, rejection of the strength of the flesh).
- Goliath (meaning 'great') was from Gath, but was probably descended from the Rephaim. His sin was openly defying God and his people. His height was 'six cubits and a span'; taking the cubit at 21 inches, this equals 10½ feet, but taking a cubit as 18 inches (more usual) equals 9½ feet. His sword was preserved at Nob as a religious trophy (1 Sam 21:9). David's victory over Goliath was the turning point in his life.
- Note: in 2 Sam 21:19 we read: 'And there was again a battle in Gath with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite, slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam'. The words, 'the brother of' do not appear in the text but are an interpolation from 1 Chron 20:5, where he is named Lahmi.

Sins of Saul

BEFORE REJECTION BY GOD

- Not waiting for Samuel and slaughtering a burnt offering. God rejects his kingship (1 Sam 13:8-14).
- Placing the army under a curse of fasting and then condemning his son Jonathan who ate honey unwittingly but was saved by the people of Israel, (1 Sam 14:24-45).
- Failing to kill Agag; rebellion, pride and fear of the people leading to disobey the Lord (1 Sam 15:7-33).

AFTER REJECTION BY GOD

- Trying to kill David.
- Persecuting Jonathan.
- Ordering the killing of Ahimelech and the town of priests (1 Sam 21, 22:9-19).
- Seeking out the medium of En Dor (1 Sam 28:7-25).

Death

By suicide after being wounded in battle against the Philistines (1 Sam 31:4-6). If the Amalekite is to be believed, falling on his sword did not kill him and he was despatched by the Amalekite (2 Sam 1:15). Three of his sons died with him in battle, including Jonathan (1 Sam 31:8-13).

Accession of David

Anointed by Samuel

- (1 Sam 16:13). It was many years before he became king in actuality.
- Reigned seven and a half years over Judah first, from the age of thirty in Hebron.
- He reigned 33 years over Israel and Judah from Jerusalem.
- He reigned for forty years in all (2 Sam 5:4-5).

Fleeing from Saul

- Hiding with his followers in Adullam's Cave, mountain strongholds, the wilderness and forests.
- Defecting to the Philistines. Settling at Ziklag in the Negeb (south country). Attack of Amalekites; defeat of Amalekite and restoring captives.

Civil war

- Abner (commander-in-chief of Saul's army) makes Ish-bosheth (son of Saul) king (2 Sam 2:8).
- Judah rallies to David as king; reigned in Hebron for seven years (2 Sam 2:4).
- War against Abner. Defeated by Joab, David's general. Abner escaped but killed Joab's brother Abishai with the blunt end of his spear (2 Sam 2).
- Abner defected to David and was accepted, but later killed by Joab (2 Sam 3:27, 31-39, 4:12). David lamented him.
- Two assassins murdered Ish-bosheth in his bed. David executed the perpetrators in Hebron. The elders of Israel accepted David's kingship and anointed him in Hebron, seven years after Judah had done (2 Sam 5:3).

David's prosperous rule

- David took Jerusalem from the Jebusites after Joab entered the city through the water tunnel linked to the Kidron valley (2 Sam 5:6-8; 1 Chron 2:4-6). This was the best location for the seat of monarchy over all Israel centred between the northern and southern tribes.
- David begins to be recognised as a significant king, not just a local tribal chief. Hiram of Phoenicia sent him materials and men to build a palace (2 Sam 5:11-12).
- The Philistines, seeking to put a quick end to David's rise, advanced on Jerusalem but David routed them (2 Sam 5:25).
- David sought to restore the Ark from its resting-place at Kirjath-jearim and bring it to a tabernacle pitched in Jerusalem (not Shiloh or Shechem). Initially this was done by violating the law (carrying it on a cart); Uzzah died trying to steady it (2 Sam 6:3-7). The Ark remained at the house of Obed-edom for three months. Eventually the Levites brought the Ark into the city with great celebrations. Michal's rebuke at David's dancing led to her being ostracised (2 Sam 6:23).
- David showed kindness to Mephibosheth, Jonathan's surviving son (2 Sam 9:1-13).
- David righted the wrongs suffered by the Gibeonites under Saul (2 Sam 21:1-11).

Absalom's revolt

- Absalom had killed David's eldest son, Amnon, to avenge the humiliation of his sister Tamar. He then fled.
- David eventually forgave him after five years (2 Sam 14:25-33).
- Absalom curried favour with the people (2 Sam 15:1-6), exploiting tribal resentments. The success of Absalom suggests some negligent governing by David.
- After four years he went to Hebron and had himself anointed king (2 Sam 15:7-12). He then marched against David, who had to flee Jerusalem (2 Sam 15:13-17). Ahithophel (one of David's advisors) defected to Absalom (2 Sam 15:12). Amasa, a relative of David and Joab, became his military commander.
- With David in flight were his personal bodyguard, his faithful 600 and servants, plus the two high priests Zadok and Abiathar with the Ark, but David sent the high priests back to act as informants (2 Sam 15:24-29).¹⁵ David's official counsellor, Hushai, was sent back to counteract Ahithophel's advice to Absalom (2 Sam 15:30-37). Hushai was very successful in this.
- David grouped his forces at Mahanaim preparing to attack (2 Sam 17:24-29). En route he was castigated by Shimei. At Mahanaim Shobi and Barzillai brought supplies. The battle near Mahanaim was between David's hard-core but fewer troops against Absalom's greater numbers but poor quality soldiers. Despite the battle being won, and contrary to David's order, Joab killed Absalom, who had become ensnared by his hair in a tree. David was grief-stricken. David returned to Jerusalem.
- It is conjectured that this revolt occurred in David's 35th year of his 40-year reign.

Sheba's revolt (2 Sam 19:9-20:22)

- Less serious than Absalom's.
- Sheba called for secession of the northern tribes.

¹⁵ There were two high priests initially since Abiathar had been with David and Zadok appointed by Saul. Eventually Abiathar was expelled.

- David ordered Amasa, his new general to gather an army from Judah and put down the outbreak. Taking longer than the allotted three days, David ordered Abishai to take the hard-core troops instead.
- Joab accompanied the force unofficially and killed Amasa who had replaced him. The townspeople in Abel of Bethmaacah delivered Sheba's severed head on the advice of a wise woman to protect the town. The revolt was over.

Wives and chief sons

- Michal: no sons.
- Abigail: Daniel.
- Ahinoam: Amnon.
- Maacah: Absalom.
- Haggith: Adonijah.
- Abital: Shephatiah.
- Eglah: Ithream.
- Bathsheba: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon.
- David had many other sons. See 2 Sam 3:2-5, 5:14-16; 1 Chron 3:1-9 and 14:4-7.

Wars of David

- Against Philistines at the Valley of Rephaim (2 Sam 5:17-25).
- Against Jebusites at Jerusalem (1 Chron 11:4-7).
- Against Moabites (2 Sam 8:2).
- Against Zobah & Syria near the Euphrates (2 Sam 8:3-6).
- Against Edomites at the Valley of Salt (1 Chron 18:12).
- Against Ammon, Zobah & Syria at Helam (2 Sam 10:1-19).
- Against Ammon at Rabbah (2 Sam 12:26-31).
- The rebellion of Absalom, battle of Mahanaim (2 Sam 18:1-16).
- Rebellion of Sheba, battle at Abel-Beth Maachah (2 Sam 20:1-22).
- Against Philistines at Gob (2 Sam 21:18-22).
- Against Amalekites after Ziklag destroyed (1 Sam 30).

Sins of David

- Lust for Bathsheba, leading to conspiracy to murder and adultery (2 Sam 11).
- Numbering the people out of pride (2 Sam 24; 1 Chron 21).

Failures of David

- David's chief sins (above) are noted in Scripture as being serious; however, he had other significant failures.
- He married multiple wives and had multiple concubines (including some foreigners).
- He failed to govern Israel effectively so that disgruntlement allowed Absalom to get a following.
- He failed to properly discipline his children.
- He once defected to the Philistines rather than trust God to defend him.

David's mercy

- Kindness to Mephibosheth (2 Sam 9, 21:1-14).

- Justice for the Gibeonites (2 Sam 21:1-11).

Characteristics of David

- Loved by God for being a man after his own heart (1 Sam 13:14; Acts 13:22).
- A man of war and valour, establishing Israel as a great nation.
- Laying the foundation and preparation for the building of the temple by Solomon.
- Loved by the people.
- Promised an everlasting dynasty (2 Sam 7:16).
- A musician and prolific writer of Psalms and thus of prophecy. E.g. Ps 22 is a significant messianic prophecy that was written by David.

David's mighty men (2 Sam 23:8-39; 1 Chron 11:10-47)

Joab is not mentioned, as he was the general above these men.

THE THREE

- Chief of the Three: Josheb-Basshebeth the Tachmonite.
- Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite.
- Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite.

ANOTHER THREE

- Chief: Abishai the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruah.
- Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel. David appointed him over his guard.
- The third is not mentioned. However, Asahel may be in this group and captain over the thirty, which would resolve the numerical discrepancy in both groups.

THE THIRTY

- Asahel the brother of Joab.
- Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem.
- Shammah (Shammoth) the Harodite.
- Elikah the Harodite.
- Helez the Paltite.
- Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite.
- Abiezer the Anathothite. (Sibbechai the Hushathite?)
- Mebunnai the Hushathite.
- Zalmon (Ilai) the Ahohite.
- Maharai the Netophathite.
- Heleb the son of Baanah (the Netophathite).
- Ittai (Ithai) the son of Ribai from Gibeah of the children of Benjamin.
- Benaiah a Pirathonite.
- Hiddai (Hurai) from the brooks of Gaash.
- Abi-Albon (Abiel) the Arbathite.
- Azmaveth the Barhumite.
- Eliahba the Shaalbonite (of the sons of Jashen).
- Jonathan the son of Shageh the Hararite.

- Shammah the Hararite. [In the first three?]
- Ahiam the son of Sharar (Sacar) the Hararite.
- Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite. (Eliphal the son of Ur?)
- Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite.
- Hezrai (Hezro) the Carmelite.
- Paarai the Arbite.
- Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah.
- Bani the Gadite.
- Zelek the Ammonite.
- Naharai (Naarai?) the Beerothite (armour bearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah).
- Ira the Ithrite.
- Gareb the Ithrite.
- Uriah the Hittite.

Since this is thirty-one there is a discrepancy to overcome (see above). There is a possibility that Shammah the Hararite is a repeat of Shammah (Shammoth) the Harodite.

Thirty one names are mentioned in this group, which, with first three and the second three amount in all to thirty-seven men, as stated in 2 Sam 23:39. One of the thirty must have attained to the second three (see above).

MEN FROM 1 CHRONICLES DIFFICULT TO CORRELATE

- Hephher the Mecherathite,
- Ahijah the Pelonite,
- Joel the brother of Nathan,
- Mibhar the son of Hagri,
- Zabad the son of Ahlai,
- Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite (a chief of the Reubenites)
- Hanan the son of Maachah,
- Joshaphat the Mithnite,
- Uzzia the Ashterathite,
- Shama [Shammah the Hararite?]
- Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite,
- Jediael the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite,
- Eliel the Mahavite,
- Jeribai and Joshaviah the sons of Elnaam,
- Ithmah the Moabite,
- Eliel, Obed, and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

Chronicles often supplies information not included in Samuel so these may be alternative names, or changed names of men above; or it could refer to additional men added after the list in 2 Samuel to replace men who had died.

Accession of Solomon

Solomon [Heb. *Shelomoh*, 'Peaceful'] was David's second son by Bathsheba, i.e., the first after their legal marriage (2 Sam 12:1). He succeeded his father on the throne when he was

probably 16-18 years of age. Nathan, his tutor, called him Jedidiah, i.e. 'beloved of the Lord' (2 Sam 12:24,25).

He reigned forty years in Israel's highest splendour. The first half of his reign was better and more prosperous; the latter half was damaged by idolatry.

He inherited an empire extending from the Euphrates to the borders of Egypt, a distance of 450 miles; and entered almost immediately on a period of peace lasting for half a century.

He traded extensively with Tyre, Egypt and Arabia, and even by sea with Spain, India and the coast of Africa, gaining vast stores of wealth (1 Kg 9:26-28, 10:11-12, 2 Chron 8:17, 18, 9:21). Israel had wealth, grandeur, architectural magnificence, artistic excellence, commercial enterprise, intellectual activity (notably from Solomon), and a position of dignity among the great nations of the earth, so that monarchs came to experience it (such as the Queen of Sheba).

Adonijah's attempted coup

- Adonijah was the fourth son of David. After the death of his elder brothers, Amnon and Absalom, he became heir-apparent to the throne, but Solomon, a younger brother, was preferred to him. Solomon was the second son by Bathsheba.
- When David was dying, Adonijah caused himself to be proclaimed king; he also persuaded Joab and Abiathar to join him. However, Nathan and Bathsheba induced David to command that Solomon should immediately be proclaimed king.
- Adonijah fled and took refuge at the altar, and received pardon for his conduct from Solomon on the condition that he showed himself 'a worthy man' (1 Kg 1:5-53).
- He made a second attempt to gain the throne, but was seized and put to death (1 Kg 2:13-25).
- Solomon thus had a brief co-regency whilst his father lived.
- This revolt is conjectured to have occurred within two or three years of Absalom's revolt.

Building of the temple

- David could not build the temple, though he desired to, because he was a man of war. Solomon inherited a great kingdom, the high point of Israel's history, and largely had a peaceful reign (though not completely), and thus was able to build the temple.
- He entered allied with Hiram, king of Tyre, who assisted him in various undertakings.
- For some years before his death David had collected materials for building a temple in Jerusalem as a permanent abode for the Ark of the Covenant (1 Chron 29:6-9; 2 Chron 2:3-7).
- As well as the temple, Solomon also built a number of other great projects, including judgment halls, palaces, fortifications, military outposts and warehouses and water supplies.

History of the temple

- Erected by Solomon.
- It was plundered by Shishak, King of Egypt, 33 years after its dedication (1 Kg 14:25-26).
- It was the place of the Coronation of Joash in the revolt against Athaliah (2 Kg 11:17-21).

- It was repaired by Joash under the guidance of Jehoiada, the High Priest (2 Kg 12:11-12).
- Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, was stoned to death in the temple court by the order of Joash (2 Chron 24:16-21).
- King Azariah (Uzziah) attempted to offer incense in the temple (2 Chron 26:16-21).
- Jotham built the higher gate (2 Kg 15:35).
- Ahaz placed an altar in the temple after the pattern he had seen at Damascus (2 Kg 16:10-16).
- Ahaz plundered the temple to bribe Tiglath-Pileser to attack the kings of Syria and Israel (2 Kg 16:7-18).
- Hezekiah repaired the temple (2 Kg 18:4).
- Hezekiah was forced to take the temple's treasures to pay tribute to Sennacherib (2 Kg 18:13-16).
- The temple was polluted by Manasseh, who set up idols and altars in its courts (2 Kg 21:3-5).
- Josiah repaired the temple and restored its worship (2 Kg 22:3-6).
- The temple was plundered by Nebuchadnezzar in the reign of Jehoiachin (2 Chron 36:10).
- Nebuchadnezzar plundered it again (2 Chron 36:10).
- 588 or 586 – Nebuzaradan commanded to destroy the temple (2 Kg 25:8-17).
- The ark disappeared after the destruction of the temple.

Characteristics of Solomon

- Desired to have wisdom to attend his rule and was gifted with it in great measure. He was thus able to write Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon.
- Built the temple with wisdom. Note that the sounds of preparation of the stones was left in the quarries and not on the temple site.
- Had numerous wives and concubines, including foreigners (700 wives and 300 concubines). This later led to him becoming idle and hedonistic.
- It also led to his downfall when he formally introduced his wives' pagan idols. This brought upon him divine condemnation; thus his enemies prevailed against him and one judgment after another hit Israel (1 Kg 11:14-40).

The Divided Monarchy

Problems in chronology

Amongst other problems is the fact that the early Hebrew calendar was lunar, counting from the new moon. This means that sometimes the Israelites need to add a special month in order to keep the dates in accordance with the farming seasons. The lunar calendar was 11 days shorter than the solar calendar. The calendar also sometimes required a 29-day month instead of a 30-day month.

Apart from the usual difficulties, it seems that the chroniclers in the two kingdoms used different formats. The Southern Kingdom counted the official reign of kings from the Hebrew month of Ethanim (Tishri, Sept-Oct), the beginning of the civil year. The Northern Kingdom used the month of Abib (Nisan, March-April), the beginning of the religious year. Note 2 Kg 22:3-13 and 23:21-23 for proof of this.

Furthermore, no Scripture identifies the exact date that the reign of kings began. Then kings did not record their accession year the same way. Sometimes a king would call the year he came to the throne as his first year ('non-accession year'); others would call the first year the year after he came to the throne, i.e. the first full year ('accession year'). It seems that Israel used non-accession year dating. Comparing Israelite monarch dates with Assyrian records demands this. This means that we must take one year off all the dates of Israel's kings. The scribes of Judah used the accession year system; though it changed systems when under the influence of Israel such as the reign of Jehoram.

On top of this we have several instances where a son reigned as co-regent with his father for some years and the reign is reckoned to both kings.

Comparison of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms	
Israel	Judah
The Northern Kingdom, or Samaria, or Ephraim.	The Southern Kingdom.
Ten tribes.	Two tribes: Judah and Benjamin.
Lasted 253 years.	Lasted 376 years.
Nine dynasties.	One dynasty (except for Athaliah).
20 kings.	19 kings and one queen.
Israel was more politically powerful and extensive. This culminated in the political power, wealth and dominion of Jeroboam II	The advantages of Judah were: centralised worship in the temple, plus some pious monarchs. The reigns of godly kings were long compared to idolatrous kings.
The two great idolatries were calf worship (introduced by Jeroboam) and Baal worship (introduced by Ahab). Baal worship was eventually terminated but calf worship was not.	Judah's idolatry became worse than that of Israel. It was more gross, licentious, varied and abominable. However, there were six kings notable for their godliness: Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah. Joash and Amaziah professed worship of God for a considerable time. The most notable idolaters were Abijah, Joram (who introduced Baal worship), Ahaziah, Athaliah, Ahaz and Manasseh.
Calf worship in the high places was to prevent the people going to religious feasts in Jerusalem and siding with Rehoboam. It was meant as a focus for Yahweh worship but using idolatry.	
Along with idolatry came many social sins and oppression of the poor.	

Chronology according to Thiele¹⁶

King	Country	Span	Dates
Rehoboam	Judah	17 years	930-913
Jeroboam 1	Israel	22 years	930-909
Abijah	Judah	3 years	913-910
Asa	Judah	41 years	910-869
Nadab	Israel	2 years	909-908
Baasha	Israel	24 years	908-886
Elah	Israel	2 years	886-885
Zimri	Israel	7 days	885
Tibni	Israel	Rival of Omri	885-880
Omri	Israel	Rival of Tibni	885-880
		Made king by the people	885
		Beginning of sole reign	880
		Total reign	885-874
		Official reign 12 years	
Ahab	Israel	22 years	874-853
Jehoshaphat	Judah	Coregency with Asa	872-869
		Official reign 25 years	872-848
		Beginning of sole reign	869
		Jehoram as Jeh's regent	853-848
Ahaziah	Israel	2 years	853-852
Joram	Israel	12 years	852-841
Jehoram	Judah	Coregency with Jehosh.	853-848
		Sole reign	848-841
		Official reign 8 years	
Ahaziah	Judah	1 year	841
Jehu	Israel	28 years	841-814
Athaliah	Judah	7 years	841-835
Joash	Judah	40 years	835-796
Jehoahaz	Israel	17 years	814-798
Jehoash	Israel	16 years	798-782
Amaziah	Judah	29 years	796-767
		Overlap with Azariah (Uzziah)	792-767
Jeroboam II	Israel	Coregency with Jehoash	793-782
		Total reign 41 years	793-753
		Beginning of sole reign	782
Azariah (Uzziah)	Judah	Overlap with Amaziah	792-767
		Total reign 52 years	792-740
		Beginning of sole reign	767
Zechariah	Israel	6 months	753
Shallum	Israel	1 month	752
Menahem	Israel	10 years (Samaria)	752-742
Pekahiah	Israel	2 years	742-740
Pekah	Israel	In Gilead (overlapping years)	752-740
		Total reign 20 years	752-732
		Beginning of sole reign	740
Jotham	Judah	Coregency with Azariah	750-740
		Official reign 16 years	750-735
		Reign to his 20 th year	730-732
		Beginning of coregency	750
Ahaz	Judah	Total reign	735-715
		From 20 th of Jotham 16 years	732-715
Hoshea	Israel	20 th of Jotham	732
		9 years	732-723
Hezekiah	Judah	29 years	715-686

¹⁶ Edwin R Thiele; *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*; Kregel (1983).

Manasseh	Judah	Coregent with Hez.	696-686
		Total reign 55 years	696-642
Amon	Judah	2 years	642-640
Josiah	Judah	31 years	640-609
Jehoahaz	Judah	3 months	609
Jehoiakim	Judah	11 years	609-598
Jehoiachin	Judah	3 months	598-597
Zedekiah	Judah	11 years	597-586

Kings of Israel

King	Overlapping reigns	Dates
Jeroboam I		930-909
Nadab		909-908
Baasha		908-886
Elah		886-885
Zimri		885
Tibni		885-880
Omri	885-880	880-874
Ahab		874-853
Ahaziah		853-852
Joram		852-841
Jehu		841-814
Jehoahaz		814-798
Jehoash		798-782
Jeroboam II	793-782	782-753
Zechariah		753-752
Shallum		752
Menahem		752-742
Pekahiah		742-740
Pekah	752-740	740-732
Hoshea		732-723

Kings of Judah

King	Coregency	Dates
Rehoboam		930-913
Abijah		913-910
Asa		910-869
Jehoshaphat	872-869	869-848
Jehoram	853-848	848-841
Ahaziah		841
Athaliah [Queen]		841-835
Joash		835-796
Amaziah		796-767
Azariah (Uzziah)	792-767	767-740
Jotham	750-740	740-732
Ahaz	735-732	732-715
Hezekiah		715-686
Manasseh	696-686	686-642
Amon		642-640
Josiah		640-609
Jehoahaz		609
Jehoiakim		609-598
Jehoiachin		598-597
Zedekiah		597-586

Kings and prophets of the Divided Kingdom¹⁷

Southern Kingdom (Judah)			Northern Kingdom (Israel)		
King	Date	Prophets ¹⁸	King	Date	Prophets
Rehoboam (Son of Solomon, reigned 17 years)	931-913 BC	Shemaiah Iddo the Seer	Jeroboam (Son of Nebat, reigned 22 years)	931-910 BC	Ahijah The Prophet from Judah The Prophet at Bethel Iddo the Seer
Abijam (Abijah, son of Rehoboam) 3 years	913-911 BC	Iddo the Seer			
Asa (son of Abijam) 41 years	911-870 BC	Azariah Hanani	Nadab (son of Jeroboam) 2 years	910-909 BC	
			Baasha (son of Ahijah) 24 years	909-886 BC	Jehu (son of Hanani)
			Elah (son of Baasha) 2 years	886-885 BC	
			Zimri (chariot commander under Elah) 7 days	885 BC	
Jehoshaphat (son of Asa) 25 years	870(873)-848 BC ¹⁹	Jehu (son of Hanani) Jahaziel Eliezer	Omri (Army commander under Elah) 12 years	885-874 BC	
			Ahab (son of Omri) 22 years	874-853 BC	Elijah Elisha Micaiah Unnamed prophets (1 Kg 18:4, 13, 20:28, 35-43)
Jehoram (Joram, son of Jehoshaphat) 8 years	848(853)-841 BC	Obadiah	Ahaziah (son of Ahab) 2 years	853-852 BC	Elisha
			Joram (Jehoram, son of Ahab) 12 years	852-841 BC	Elisha
Ahaziah (Jehoahaz, son of Jehoram) 1 year	841 BC		Jehu (son of Nimshi, army officer under Ahab) 28 years	841-814 BC	Elisha
Queen Athaliah (daughter of Ahab, mother of Ahaziah) 6 years	841-835 BC				
Joash (Jehoash) 40 years	835-796 BC	Joel	Jehoahaz (son of Jehu) 17 years	814-798 BC	Elisha Jonah?
Amaziah (son of Joash) 29 years	796-767 BC	Unnamed prophets (2 Chron 25:7-9, 15, 16)	Jehoash (Joash son of Jehoahaz) 16 years	798-782 BC	
Uzziah (Azariah, son of Amaziah) 52 years	767(792)-740 BC	Isaiah Zechariah	Jeroboam II (son of Jehoash) 41 years	782(793)-753 BC	Jonah? Amos Hosea
			Zechariah (son of Jeroboam II) 6 months	753-752 BC	Hosea
			Shallum (son of Jabesh) 1 month	752 BC	Hosea

¹⁷ Adapted from *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts* © 1993 Thomas Nelson, p138-139.

¹⁸ Prophets name in bold = Biblical writing prophet.

¹⁹ Bracketed dates = co-regencies (where the son occupied the throne with his father for a time).

			Menahem (son of Gadi) 10 years	752-742 BC	Hosea
Jotham (son of Uzziah) 16 years	740(750)-731	Isaiah Micah	Pekahiah (son of Menahem) 2 years	742-740 BC	Hosea
Ahaz (son of Jotham) 16 years	731(735)-715 BC	Isaiah Micah	Pekah (son of Remaliah) 20 years	740(752)-732	Hosea Obed
Hezekiah (son of Ahaz) 29 years	715(729)-686 BC	Isaiah Micah	Hoshea (son of Elah) 9 years	732-722 BC	Hosea
			Fall of Samaria 721 or 722 BC 10 Northern tribes go into captivity in Assyria		
Manasseh (son of Hezekiah) 55 years	686(696)-642 BC	Nahum Unnamed prophets (2 Kg 21:10; 2 Chron 33:18)			
Amon (son of Manasseh) 2 years	642-640 BC				
Josiah (son of Amon) 31 years	640-609 BC	Jeremiah Zephaniah Huldah the prophetess			
Jehoahaz (Shallum, son of Josiah) 3 months	609 BC	Jeremiah			
Jehoiakim (Eliakim, son of Josiah) 11 years	609-598 BC	Jeremiah Habakkuk Daniel Urijah			
Jehoiachin (Coniah, son of Jehoiakim) 3 months	598-597 BC	Jeremiah Daniel			
Zedekiah (Mattaniah, son of Josiah) 11 years	597-586 BC	Jeremiah Daniel Ezekiel			
Fall of Jerusalem 586 BC Southern Kingdom goes into captivity in Babylon					

The relationship of the writing prophets to kings

Before the conquest of Israel 721 BC			
Prophets	King of Israel	King of Judah	Key Gentile Kings
Obadiah 845	Joram	Jehoram	
Joel 835	Jehu	Joash	
Jonah 782?	Jerobaom II	Amaziah + Uzziah	Shalmaneser IV (Assyria)
Hosea 760-720	Jerobaom II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, Hoshea	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah	Tiglath-pileser II (Assyria)
Amos 760	Jeroboam II	Uzziah	
Isaiah 739-685	Pekah, Hoshea	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh	Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sennacherib (Assyria)
Micah 737-690	Pekah, Hoshea	Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah	Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sennacherib (Assyria)

Before and after the conquest of Judah 586 BC

Prophets	King of Judah	Key Gentile Kings
Nahum 650	Manasseh	Ashurbanipal (Assyria)
Zephaniah 640	Josiah	
Jeremiah 627-580	Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah, Gedaliah (Governor)	Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon)
Habakkuk 609	Jehoiakim	Nabopolassar (Babylon)
Daniel 605-530	Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah	Nebuchadnezzar, Neriglissar, Labashimarduk, Evil-Merodach, Nabonidas (Babylon); Cyrus and poss. Cambyses (Medo-Persia)
Ezekiel 593-570	Zedekiah	Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon)
Haggai 520	Zerubbael (Governor)	Darius I (Medo-Persia)
Zechariah 520	Zerubbael (Governor)	Darius I (Medo-Persia)
Malachi 433	Nehemiah (Governor)	Darius II (Medo-Persia)

Summary of reigns of the kings of Israel

The books of kings mainly feature Israel (the Northern Kingdom) while Chronicles features Judah (the Southern Kingdom). Kings also features the ministry of Elijah and Elisha.

There were nine dynasties in the North, only one (Davidic) dynasty in the South. The South had 19 kings and one queen (Athaliah), the North had 20 kings.²⁰ When the nation was under the influence of a queen (e.g. Jezebel or Athaliah) the result was disastrous.

The South had three religious revivals in the reigns of Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah; the North had none and all kings were bad. Their parallel history of over 200 years can be analysed by their relationship to each other:

Northern Kingdom Israel	Southern Kingdom Judah	Condition
From Jeroboam to Omri	From Rehoboam to Asa	Antagonistic to each other for 57 years (c. 931-874), 1 Kg 12-16.
Marriage of Jehoshaphat's son (South) to Ahab's daughter (North)		Allied (874-795), 1 Kg 16- 2 Kg 13.
From Jehoash to Hoshea	From Amaziah to Hezekiah	Antagonistic to each other (795-721), 2Kg 13-18.

Dynasty of Jeroboam [931-909, 22 years]

JEROBOAM [931-910]

- Jeroboam, 'increase of the people'. The son of Nebat (1Ki 11:26-39) an Ephrathite, the first king of the ten tribes (Israel). While still young was promoted by Solomon to be chief superintendent of the bands of forced labourers (1 Kg 11:28).
- Influenced by the prophet Ahijah, he conspired to become king of the ten tribes; but having been discovered, he fled to Egypt (1 Kg 11:29-40) where he remained under the protection of Shishak I.
- On the death of Solomon, the ten tribes revolted and invited him to become king.
- He rebuilt and fortified Shechem as the capital of his kingdom.
- He established calf worship in Israel. To perpetuate the division between the two parts of the kingdom, he erected at Dan and Bethel (the two extremities of his kingdom) golden calves as symbols of Yahweh. He commanded the people not to go to worship at

²⁰ Some writers ignore the reign of Tibni in Israel, others include him. For the period of four years he contended for the throne with Omri who at length became sole monarch of Israel. 1 Kg 16:21-22: 'Then the people of Israel were divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king, and half followed Omri. But the people who followed Omri prevailed over the people who followed Tibni the son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omri reigned'. Since half of Israel followed Tibni for four years, he should be included.

Jerusalem, but to bring their offerings to the shrines he had erected. Thus he became is termed the man 'who made Israel to sin'. This calf worship was followed by all the succeeding kings of Israel.

- While he was engaged in offering incense at Bethel, a prophet from Judah appeared with a warning message. Attempting to arrest the prophet for his bold words of defiance, his hand was dried up, and the altar before which he stood was split in two. Upon his pleading, his hand was restored but the miracle made no abiding impression on him.
- His reign was one of constant war with Judah.
- He died soon after his son Abijah.

NADAB [910-909]

- The son and successor of Jeroboam.
- While laying siege to Gibbethon, in southern Dan, a conspiracy broke out in his army, and he was slain by Baasha after a reign of two years. The assassination of Nadab was followed by that of his whole house, and thus this great Ephraimite family became extinct.

Dynasty of Baasha [909-885, 24 years]

BAASHA [909-886]

- The son of Ahijah of the tribe of Issachar.
- He made the capital of his kingdom the city of Tirzah, and there he was buried, after an eventful reign of twenty-four years.
- On account of his idolatries his family was exterminated, according to the word of the prophet Jehu (1Ki 16:3,4,10-13)

ELAH [886-885]

- The son and successor of Baasha.
- He was killed, while drunk, by Zimri, one of the captains of his chariots, and was the last king of the line of Baasha. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Jehu (1 Kg 6, 7, 11-14).

Dynasty of Zimri [885, 7 days]

ZIMRI [885]

- Murdered Elah at Tirzah, and succeeded him on the throne of Israel.
- He reigned only seven days, for Omri, whom the army elected as king, laid siege to Tirzah, whereupon Zimri set fire to the palace and perished amid its ruins.

Dynasty of Omri [885-841, 44 years]

OMRI [885-874]

- Declared king by the army. Omri succeeded to the throne only after four years of fierce war with Tibni, another claimant to the throne who ruled over half the kingdom.
- Omri was recognised in Assyrian inscriptions.
- Omri built Samaria, which he made the capital of Israel.

AHAB [874-853]

- Ahab was dominated by his foreign wife, Jezebel, and her idolatry.²¹

²¹ Jezebel: 'chaste', the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of the Zidonians. This was the first time that a king of Israel had allied himself by marriage with a heathen princess; and the alliance was disastrous. Jezebel has

- Most characteristic features of this period are the continual denunciation of Baal worship by Elijah and Elisha. This had been brought to prominence by Jezebel, wife of Ahab.
- Also significant was the tragedy surrounding Naboth's vineyard.
- The foremost event was the contest on Mt Carmel where Elijah called down fire from heaven and slew the prophets of Baal.
- Hazael (King of Syria), Jehu (King of Israel) and Elisha were the means used to destroy the worship of Baal.
- God's prophecy to Elijah to anoint Jehu (actually ordered by Elisha) and Hazael, and to anoint Elisha as his follower (1 Kg 19:15-17) is crucial. Eleven chapters out of 25 in 2 Kings are concerned with the fulfilment of this, though it is only 20 years. 2 Kings is chiefly concerned with the extinction of Baal worship in Israel.

AHAZIAH [853-852]

A weak king. He continued the calf worship of Jeroboam and the Baal worship of Jezebel and even consulted Baal-Zebub (the god of Ekron).²² He died from injuries following a fall.

JEHORAM (JORAM) [852-841]

- Son of Ahab; brother of Ahaziah.
- A weak king, strongly influenced by Jezebel; however, also influenced by Elisha.
- Calf worship and Baal worship continued, though he put away the personal Baal idol of his father.
- Had some military prowess and recovered Ramoth-Gilead from Syria.
- Notable in this time is the healing of Naaman by Elisha.
- He was killed by Jehu in battle (2 Kg 9:14-26) where Ahaziah, King of Judah, also died from his wounds.²³

Dynasty of Jehu [841-752, 89 years]

The dynasty of Jehu was the longest and most powerful.

JEHU [841-814]

- Jehu extinguished Baal worship and was rewarded with children to the fourth generation to sit on the throne of Israel.
- Jehu was originally a member of Ahab's bodyguard becoming commander in chief of the army.

stamped her name on history as the representative of all that is designing, crafty, malicious, revengeful, and cruel. She is the first great instigator of persecution against the saints of God. Four hundred and fifty prophets ministered under her care to Baal, besides four hundred prophets of the groves [R.V., 'prophets of the Asherah'], which ate at her table (1 Kg 18:19) The idolatry was of the most debased and sensual kind. At length she came to an untimely end. As Jehu rode into the gates of Jezreel, her chamberlains threw her from the window, so that she was dashed in pieces on the street, and his horses trod her under their feet. She was immediately consumed by the dogs of the street (2 Kg 9:7-37) according to the word of Elijah (1 Kg 21:19) Her name afterwards came to be used as the synonym for a wicked woman (Rev 2:20) It may be noted that she is said to have been the grand-aunt of Dido, the founder of Carthage.

²² Baal-zebub: fly-lord, the god of the Philistines at Ekron (2 Kg 1:2, 3, 16) This name was given to the god because he was supposed to be able to avert the plague of flies which in that region was to be feared. Ahaziah consulted him as to his recovery.

²³ Ahaziah: not the son and successor of Ahab. The son of Joram, or Jehoram, and sixth king of Judah. Called Jehoahaz (2 Chron 21:17 25:23) and Azariah (2 Chron 22:6) Guided by his idolatrous mother Athaliah, his reign was disastrous (2 Kg 8:24-29 9:29) He joined his uncle Jehoram, king of Israel, in an expedition against Hazael, king of Damascus; but was wounded at the pass of Gur when attempting to escape, and had strength only to reach Megiddo, where he died (2 Kg 9:22-28) He reigned only one year.

- Anointed by one of the sons of the prophets on the orders of Elisha. His purpose was to extinguish the house of Ahab.
- Jehu thus led the army in revolt. Jehu killed Joram; seized Jezreel; oversaw the death of Jezebel trampled by horses; massacred Ahab's descendants in Samaria and his allies in Jezreel. He also oversaw the assassination of 42 of the royal family of Judah connected with the house of Ahab by the marriage of Athaliah (Ahab's daughter) to Jehoram (king of Judah).
- He then massacred Baal worshippers and destroyed all images of Baal and Ashtoreth; however, he retained the calf worship of Jeroboam.
- Jehu was an able soldier but was cruel and ruthless. An unlovely hero; he was thus condemned by Hosea (Hos 1:4).

JEHOAHAZ [814-798]

- Son and successor of Jehu.
- Continued the calf worship at Bethel.
- Allowed the Asherah erected by Ahab in Samaria to be worshipped again.
- Hazael reduced Israel to a weak state, with a scanty force, fulfilling the prophecy of Elisha to Hazael (2 Kg 8:12).

JEHOASH OR JOASH [798-782]

- Son and successor of Jehoahaz [.
- Kept the calf worship at Bethel.
- Visited the dying Elisha, whom he respected (unlike his father and grandfather). Elisha prophesied that he would defeat the Syrians three times but not crush them.
- He defeated the Syrians three times at Aphek and drove them west of the Jordan, recovering the cities that Jehoahaz had lost.
- Defeated Amaziah, king of Judah taking him prisoner. Captured Jerusalem and levelled part of the wall, carrying of treasure for the temple and palace.

JEROBOAM II [793-753]

- Son and successor of Joash.
- Continued calf worship.
- The greatest of the kings of Samaria (in political terms), who waged war with confidence. He recovered all the territory included in the dominions of Solomon, from Hamath in the north to the Dead Sea.
- Reigned in prosperity and peace with no invasions. This led to building projects and personal luxuries. However, morals quickly degenerated, preparing the nation for its subsequent downfall (note the prophecies of Amos).

ZECHARIAH [753-752]

- Son and successor of Jeroboam II.
- Though Baal worship was destroyed by Jehu, calf worship continued. God permitted the fulfilment of prophecy against Jehu's dynasty.
- State of the nation denounced by Amos and Hosea.
- Zechariah murdered by Shallum.

Dynasty of Shallum [752, 1 month]

SHALLUM [752]

Assassinated by Menahem.

Dynasty of Menahem [752-740, 12 years]

MENAHEM [752-742]

- An army commander who revolted against Shallum after the murder of Zedekiah.
- Long expedition against Tiphseh, which he captured and treated barbarously.
- Israel invaded by Pul, king of Assyria. Menahem immediately capitulated and paid tribute.
- From this time in Judah and Israel there were two main factions: 1) those that submitted to Assyria; 2) those that rebelled against Assyrian suzerainty and trusted in Egypt.

PEKAHIAH [742-740]

- Son of Menahem.
- Assassinated by Pekah.

Dynasty of Pekah [752-732, 20 years]

PEKAH [752-732]

- Son of Remaliah.
- An inferior captain. Leader of the Egyptian party.
- A coalition of Rezin (Syria) and Pekah invaded Judah to make Judah join an alliance against Assyria. Ahaz (Judah) bought help from Tiglath-Pileser (Assyria) who reduced Syria to submission and then invaded northern Palestine.
- Pekah murdered by Hoshea.

Dynasty of Hoshea [732-722, 10 years]

HOSHEA [732-722]

- Son of Elah.
- Paid tribute to Assyria.
- The death of Tiglath-Pileser was followed by revolts in Assyria at a time when Egypt had a reliable king, So (Sabako). Hoshea negotiated with So and refused the Assyrian tribute. Shalmaneser (the new king of Assyria), despite a war with Tyre, marched on Israel, captured its cities and besieged Samaria, which fell after three years siege. Sargon, (son of Shalmaneser) captured the city in 721. The Northern Kingdom ceased to exist and the population was deported. The land was populated by people from the Assyrian Empire, who became the Samaritans.
- Assassinated.

Summary of the reigns of the kings of Judah

Unlike the Northern Kingdom, Judah only had one dynasty, that of David, with 19 monarchs (Athaliah was an exception).

Rehoboam [930-913]

- The successor of Solomon, and apparently his only son. He was the son of Naamah, an Ammonite princess.
- He was forty-one years old when he ascended the throne, and he reigned seventeen years.

- Although he was accepted as the rightful heir, the burden of taxation during Solomon's reign had been oppressive, and the people assembled at Shechem demanding relief.
- After consulting with a younger generation of courtiers, instead of following the advice of the elders, his response was harsh. The result was that the kingdom was split in two.
- Rehoboam was shocked and tried conciliation, but it was too late (1 Kg 12:18). The tribe of Judah, Rehoboam's own tribe, alone remained faithful to him. Benjamin was reckoned along with Judah by then, and these two tribes formed the southern kingdom, with Jerusalem as its capital; while the northern ten tribes formed themselves into a separate kingdom, choosing Jeroboam as their king.
- Rehoboam warred against Israel, but he was prevented by the prophet Shemaiah from fulfilling his purpose (1 Kg 12:21-24; 2 Chron 11:1-4).
- In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign the Egyptian Pharaoh Shishak [of the Assyrian dynasty], stirred up by Jeroboam, his son-in-law, invaded Judah. Jerusalem submitted to Shishak, who plundered the temple and made Judah a vassal state (1 Kg 14:25, 26; 2 Chron 12:5-9).
- Judah sank into moral and spiritual decay. In addition there was continual war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam.

Abijah [913-910]

- The son of Rehoboam, whom he succeeded on the throne of Judah; he is also called Abijam (1 Kg 14:31, 15:1-8). He walked in all the sins of his father (1 Kg 15:3; 2 Chron 11:20-22).
- In 1 Kg 15:2 his mother's name is said to be 'Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom', but in 2 Chron 13:2 it states, 'his mother's name was Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah'. However, Maachah is a variation of the name Michaiah, while Abishalom is the same as Absalom, the son of David. It is probable that Uriel of Gibeah married Tamar, the daughter of Absalom (2 Sam 14:27) and by her had Maachah. The word 'daughter' in (1 Kg 15:2) thus, as frequently elsewhere, means 'grand-daughter'.
- He initially tried to win back the ten tribes but failed.
- Warred with Israel; 500,000 of the army of Israel perished.

Asa [910-869]

- Son of Abijah and grandson of Rehoboam, the third king of Judah.
- He was zealous in maintaining the true worship of God and in rooting out idolatry and immorality out of the land (1 Kg 15:8-14).
- The Lord gave him rest and prosperity.
- However, in his old age, when afflicted, he deserted the Lord for physicians (Jer 17:5).
- He died in the forty-first year of his reign, greatly honoured by his people.

Jehoshaphat [869-848]

- Son of Asa.
- A true worshipper of God and a brave king.
- Co-regency with Asa 872-969. Jehoram as regent 853-848.
- Made a foolish alliance with Ahab, king of Israel. Married his son Jehoram to Ahab's daughter Athaliah. Joint expedition with Ahab to recover Ramoth-Gilead.
- Established a fleet with Ahaziah, Ahab's successor.
- Allied with Joram (king of Israel) and the king of Edom against Moab.

Jehoram [848-841]

- Son of Jehoshaphat.
- Co-regent with his father 853-848.
- Killed his six brothers.
- Influenced by Athaliah he introduced Baal worship to Judah.
- Edom gained independence from Judah.
- Philistines invaded Jerusalem and carried off treasure and the king's wives and sons leaving only Ahaziah.
- Died of a disease of his bowels, which affected him for two years. There was no mourning.

Ahaziah [841]

- Son of Jehoram and Athaliah.
- Baal worship continued.
- Assisted Joram (king of Israel) in war against Syria. Israel regained Ramoth-Gilead.
- Only reigned one year.
- Died in the revolt of Jehu against the house of Ahab.

Athaliah (Queen) [841-835]

- Daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, wife of Jehoram king of Judah; a disastrous marriage for Judah.
- The dynasty of David was at great risk. The sons of Jehoshaphat had been killed by Jehoram. The Philistines and Arabians had made inroads into Judah (2 Chron 21:16-17). 42 princes had been killed by Jehu (2 Kg 10:14). Athaliah then killed all male members of the royal family left in Jerusalem and usurped the throne.
- Joash, the son of Ahaziah, (then an infant) was saved by Jehosheba, wife of Jehoiada.
- Athaliah was evil but she held power for six years.
- Baal worship flourished and the temple of Baal was improved at the expense of the temple of God (2 Chron 24:7).
- She was killed in the insurrection which made Joash king.

Joash (Jehoash) [835-796]

- Son of Ahaziah and Athaliah.
- Joash had a long minority rule, assisted by Jehoiada.
- Jehoiada was the high priest at the time of Athaliah's usurpation of the throne of Judah. He married Jehosheba, or Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram (2 Chron 22:11). They both worked in the preservation and training of Jehoash when Athaliah slew all the royal family of Judah. The plans he adopted in replacing Jehoash on the throne of his ancestors are described in (2 Kg 11:2, 12:2; 2 Chron 22:11, 23:24). He was one of the foremost benefactors of the kingdom, and at his death was buried in the city of David among the kings of Judah (2 Chron 24:15, 16). He is said to have been one hundred and thirty years old.
- Joash oversaw the restoration of the temple. Stones had been removed, vessels stolen for Baal worship and non-Levites officiated. Joash immediately re-established the courses of priests, arranged the musical services and placed porters at the gates. Rebuilding occurred later. Joash also supervised the collection of money, badly managed by the Levites. Temple repairs were concluded in the 23rd year of his reign.

- On the death of Jehoiada Judah's princes influenced Joash to re-introduce grove worship and idolatry. This was denounced by the prophets, led by Zechariah, son of Jehoiada and now high priest. Joash ordered him to be stoned in the temple court. The Lord Jesus mentioned this sin (Matt 23:35; Lk 11:51).
- Disasters followed this sin. Hazael invaded the south and took Gath. Syrians defeated a large army of Joash who was forced to give away the treasures of the temple and the palace.
- Joash was wounded in the fight against the Syrians and was assassinated by some officials. He died as God's judgment for his murder of Zechariah (2 Chron 24:24-25).

Amaziah [796-767]

- Son of Joash.
- Executed the murderers of his father but spared their families.
- Reorganised the army and attacked Edom, which had continually incurred into Judah. Defeated Edom in the Valley of Salt. This broke the power of Edom.
- He took some of the gods of the Edomites and worshipped them (2 Chron 25:11-15).
- Hired Israelite mercenaries but sent them back after command of a prophet (2 Chron 25:6-10). These mercenaries then plundered the cities of Judah.
- Amaziah, in pride, challenged Joash; the king of Israel sent a parable as a reply (2 Chron 25:17-19). Angered, Amaziah marched on Israel and met Joash at Beth-Shemesh in Judah. Judah was routed and Amaziah taken prisoner. Joash entered Jerusalem in triumph, breaking down part of the wall. He took the treasures of the temple and the palace but did not massacre the people, but did take hostages.
- Amaziah reigned 15 years after this defeat but lost the good will of the people, who eventually rebelled. Amaziah fled and took refuge in Lachish, where he was killed.

Azariah (Uzziah) [767-740]

- Son of Amaziah.
- Made king by the people.
- Overlap with Amaziah 792-767.
- He extended the influence of Judah as far as Elath on the Red Sea.
- Warred with the Philistines and captured Gath, Jabneh and Ashdod.
- He controlled the Arabs in the south and the Ammonites paid him tribute.
- He strengthened Jerusalem, building towers at weak points.
- He built towns in the south as places of refuge against marauding Arabs.
- His reign was the most prosperous after that of Jehoshaphat and was equally wise in peace as well as war. But his pride led him, to burn incense in the Holy Place, for which he was struck with leprosy and spent his last years isolated with his son Jotham ruling as regent.

Jotham [740-735]

- Son of Uzziah.
- Coregency with Azariah 750-740.
- Generally a good king but did not destroy the high places.
- He built the high gate of the Temple and strengthened the fortifications of Ophel.
- He defeated the Ammonites who refused to pay tribute.

- Rezin (Syria) and Pekah (Israel) allied against Assyria and pressurised Jotham to join the confederacy, but no attack on Judah until the time of Ahaz.

Ahaz [735-715]

- Son of Jotham, ascended throne aged 20.
- A weak and terrible king who nearly abolished the worship of God in Judah. He walked in the way of the kings of Israel. He restored Moloch worship, in high places and groves, and ritually killed his son.
- The whole nation had become socially and morally corrupt while the kingdom was threatened by the coalition of Samaria and Syria. Religious and social reform plus trust in God for defence were required; Ahaz did neither.
- The coalition invaded and reduced the nation to a dire state. Jerusalem was besieged, but the siege failed. Syria then ravaged the east while Pekah ravaged the west. Rezin (Syria) then overran all of southern Judaea. Pekah killed 120,000 men and captured 200,000 women and children, but these were restored on the intervention of the prophet Oded and his own captains.
- Then the Edomites invaded the south-east and the Philistines invaded the south-west, the Philistines gained possession of the low country.
- Ahaz lacked faith in God, despite prophecies by Isaiah, and sought foreign help from Assyria under Tiglath-Pileser. This was paid for by giving the treasures from the temple and the palace. Assyria stopped both enemies; Rezin was deposed and Damascus taken and the inhabitants deported. In Samaria the Assyria faction under Hoshea murdered Pekah and seized the throne as a vassal of Assyria. Judah was practically the vassal state of Assyria except for a brief time under Hezekiah.
- Ahaz's visit to Damascus to submit to Tiglath-Pileser resulted in him copying the design for a pagan altar to replace the bronze altar in the temple. This was done to impress the king of Assyria. Ahaz also shut the great doors of the temple, put out the sacred lamps, discontinued the incense offering and left the building to fall into disrepair (2 Chron 29:5-11). On the temple roof he planted little altars for the worship of the Zodiac. The temple court had stalls for the sacred white horses of the chariot of the sun; the sun, moon and stars were worshipped.
- Ahaz died aged 36.

Hezekiah [715-686]

- Son of Ahaz and the most remarkable king of Judah, centred on peace and truth.
- He regained the independence of Judah and restored true worship of God. The nation had seemed ripe for destruction, but Hezekiah's reforms lengthened the kingdom by nearly 150 years.
- Agriculture flourished.
- He strengthened the fortifications of Jerusalem and gave proper arms to his army.
- Made provision for a water supply to Jerusalem via an aqueduct and a reservoir cut out of solid rock.
- Successfully warred against the Philistines and conquered as far as Gaza.
- The army of the Assyrians (under Sennacherib) was destroyed by the angel of the Lord.
- The country became wealthy and prosperous.
- Conducted a thorough religious reformation. Cleansed the temple, restored its services, removed the pagan altar and vessels of Ahaz. Followed by a large-scale sacrifice.

- Kept a solemn Passover, the Northern Kingdom was invited to it. Many rejected this offer but some from Asher, Manasseh, Zebulon, Ephraim and Issachar joined in.
- He destroyed pagan images, cut down the groves and removed the high places. He even destroyed the brazen serpent of Moses, which had become an object of superstition and worship.
- His life was prolonged by 15 years when he had no son.
- He entertained a visit by the ambassadors of Berodach-Baladan (Babylon). He was then told that Judah would be destroyed by Babylon not Assyria.
- His death was celebrated as godly and given great honour.

Manasseh [686-642]

- Son of Hezekiah, ascended the throne aged 12. Coregent with Hezekiah 696-686.
- Became greatly influenced by factions that supported pagan worship.
- Restored the high places. These were where supposed worship of Yahweh occurred but in pagan forms.
- Erected altars for Baal and a grove for Ashtoreth.
- An Asherah was erected in the temple; pagan priests were given places near the temple.
- Worship of heavenly bodies developed.
- The chariots and horse of the sun re-introduced.
- Moloch worship renewed, and Manasseh ritually killed his own son.
- Witchcraft and mediums prevailed.
- Worshipers of Yahweh were persecuted. Isaiah is thought to have been sawn in half at this time.
- Manasseh is said to have been worse than the Amorites (2 Kg 21:11).
- The punishment for these sins was national destruction, despite the later reforms of Josiah.
- Manasseh was carried captive to Babylon and there repented. He was allowed to return to Judah where he strengthened the fortifications of Jerusalem and made some religious reforms but there was no general reformation.

Amon [642-640]

- Son of Manasseh.
- Restored all the idolatries of Manasseh.
- Killed in his own house by his servants.

Josiah [640-609]

- Son of Amon.
- Only eight years old on ascension.
- Known for his piety; probably the most godly of all Judah's rulers (2 Kg 22:2, 23:25).
- When he was 20 years old he began a reformation of religion. He purged the temple of all idol worship. He removed all idols from Jerusalem. He took down the high places of syncretistic worship and defiled their land. He defiled the Valley of Topheth, ending the worship of Molech. The valley became the place for refuse. He removed the horses of the sun and broke up the altars made by Ahaz and Manasseh. He removed the high places erected on the Mt of Offence in the days of Solomon and defiled the sites. He thoroughly repaired the temple. He kept the Passover.

- During this time Hilkiah the priest found the 'Book of the Law' as they removed rubbish from the temple. Josiah feared the curses of Deuteronomy and consulted a prophetess called Huldah who declared that evil would come upon the nation in judgment but not in his day; he would die in peace. Josiah had the law read out to the people and renewed national the covenant with God. This was followed by a great Passover.
- He took his reforms into Samaria where he broke down the altar of Jeroboam at Bethel and defiled the site, fulfilling a prophecy (2 Kg 23:15-18).
- He proceeded to Naphtali breaking down altars with mattocks and executed idolatrous priests.
- Assyria had fallen by this time and Babylon had not yet risen to power. Pharaoh Necho, seeing his opportunity, advanced into Palestine to march to Syria and the Euphrates. Josiah determined to resist this invasion, despite advances by Necho for peace with Judah. The forces of Judah were overwhelmed at Meggido and Josiah was mortally wounded and taken to Jerusalem where he died. Jeremiah mourned his death.

Jehoahaz (or Shallum) [609]

- Fourth son of Josiah.
- Elected as king in preference to his brothers.
- Reigned only three months.
- Imprisoned by Pharaoh Necho on his return from Carchemish. He died in Egypt.

Jehoiakim (or Eliakim) [609-598]

- Son of Josiah.
- Set on the throne by Necho and changed his name to Jehoiakim. Judah became a tributary to Egypt.
- After the defeat of the Egyptians at Carchemish in 606, Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah, which became a tributary to Babylon. Jehoiakim was taken captive to Babylon but was then restored to the throne by Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel and his friends were also taken captive at this time.
- After three years Jehoiakim rebelled. Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites (subject nations to Babylon) were sent to harass the country.
- He met with a violent death with his body being thrown over the wall to prove to the besieging army that he was dead (note Jer 22:19).

Jehoiachin [598-597]

- Son of Jehoiakim and Nehushta.
- Placed as a vassal king by Nebuchadnezzar.
- Reigned for only three months and ten days.
- When Nebuchadnezzar advanced on Jerusalem, Jehoiachin surrendered. The royal family and high officials were carried off to Babylon. Jehoiachin was in prison for 36 years until restored by Evil-Merodach.
- With Jehoiachin the line of David through Solomon ended. The line was preserved through Nathan (Lk 3:31) and appears again in Zerubbabel who led the first party of Jews back to Jerusalem.

Zedekiah (or Mattaniah) [597-586]

- Son of Josiah, uncle of Jehoiachin.

- Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah in place of Jehoiachin and changed his name to Mattaniah.
- Jeremiah is a commentary on this reign.
- Different nations sought Judah as an ally against Babylon. Zedekiah revolted seeking the assistance of Egypt. The Babylonian army advanced into Judah and besieged Jerusalem. There is temporary relief when Pharaoh Hophrah advances. However, the Egyptian army retreats without a battle, the siege continues. The city falls after 18 months. Zedekiah flees but is captured; Nebuchadnezzar kills his two sons before him and then blinds him then carries him off prisoner. Nebuzaradan is commanded to destroy the city and temple, the plunder is carried off. The principal leaders are killed leaving only the poor of the land left. Thus were fulfilled the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Summary of the non-writing prophets

‘Non-writing prophets’ refers to the fact that there is no record of any writings in the Bible. In fact, several of these prophets did write biographies and oracles but they have been lost.

Prophet

The Hebrew word *nabi* means ‘one who announces’, i.e. the declarations of God. The Greek word *prophetes* means, ‘one who speaks for another’. The word ‘prophecy’ does not automatically presume foretelling, but rather forth-telling. Prophets brought God’s word to bear in a given situation and usually it had to do with correction.

In the time of the books of Kings there were schools of prophets that were trained to represent God because often the priesthood had failed in their job to teach God’s law and people were confused. It was Samuel that established systematic religious training for prophets because he had seen first hand the failure of the priesthood. The ‘sons of the prophets’ thus became religious teachers in God’s law. Specific schools of the later period were situated at Bethel, Jericho and Gilgal. Samuel taught his students at Ramah.

Elijah

- Name meaning: ‘Whose God is Yahweh’.
- The Tishbite (Gilead). The greatest prophet, as Moses was the greatest leader. Both joined Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration; note that both had mysterious deaths (Matt 17:2-3).
- The contest on Mt Carmel was one of the greatest events in Israel’s history.
- Miracles include: bringing fire on the captains and soldiers; multiplying the widow’s oil and meal; raising the widow’s son; bringing down fire on the prophets of Baal; dividing the river Jordan; calling for a drought and then rain.
- Characteristics: appears suddenly in the Bible record without warning or introduction. Disappears just as mysteriously instead of dying. Characterised by a chiefly solitary life (though he was served by Elisha and another servants for a time). Appears suddenly to Obadiah, Ahab and the messengers of Ahaziah.
- Noted for his simple faith and obedience.
- Single-minded in the religious restoration of Israel.
- Courageous in facing king Ahab.
- Stern in killing the prophets of Baal, calling down fire etc. yet his tenderness is seen towards the widow of Zarephath and to Elisha.

- Was prone to depression.
- Mentioned more than any other prophet. John the Baptist was said to come in the spirit of Elijah.
- A type of John the Baptist.

Elisha

- ‘God is salvation’. Son of Shaphat of Abel-Meholah.
- Called, as a young man, by Elijah on God’s instruction. Abandoned a wealthy life to follow and serve Elijah.
- Oversaw the destruction of Baalism in Israel.
- Miracles include: smiting and splitting the Jordan; healing the bad spring at Jericho; increasing the oil for a widow; raising the Shunammite woman’s son; curing deadly pottage; multiplying loaves at Gilgal; healing Naaman; making an axe-head float; prescience of Syria’s plans; smiting Syrians with blindness; predicting famine; reading the thoughts of Hazael; a dead man raised by touching his bones.
- Lived through reigns of Ahab, Ahaziah, Joram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Josiah (at least 65 years). Actively prophetic during the last four kings.
- Had residences at Samaria and Carmel.
- Died in the reign of Joash.
- A type of Christ. [His miracles are similar. His character is similar. Friend to women and simple people.]

Contrasts between Elijah and Elisha	
Elijah	Elisha
A man of the desert (cf. John the Baptist).	Civilised, city dweller.
No settled home.	Dwellings in Samaria and Carmel. Staying with the schools of the prophets. Had a chamber at the Sunammite’s house between Samaria and Carmel.
Wears a hairy mantle and has long, disordered hair.	Closely shorn hair and well trimmed.
Work is prophetic. The word is everything, miracles are subordinate.	Miracles are everything, the prophetic office subordinate.
Boldly denounces idolatry, kills the priests of Baal.	Teaches in the schools of the prophets. Wins people by personal influence.
Rebuked kings.	Friend of kings
Ahab called him ‘enemy’.	Joash called him ‘my father’.
Fierce, energetic, fiery.	Gentle, sympathetic.
Solitary figure.	Dwells among people.
Sudden appearances and disappearances.	Dwelling places are known and he is easily found.
His work is an apparent failure.	His work is a success. Baal worship is eradicated.
Ascends to heaven in a wind of fire.	Passes away peacefully after a long life of work.

Ahijah

- ‘Brother’ (i.e. friend) of Yahweh. A prophet of Shiloh (1 Kg 11:29, 14:2) called the ‘Shilonite’ in the days of Rehoboam. Prophet in the times of Solomon, Jeroboam I.
- We have two of his prophecies, (1 Kg 11:31-39) announcing the rending of the ten tribes from Solomon; and (1 Kg 14:6-16) delivered to Jeroboam’s wife, foretelling the death of Abijah the king’s son, the destruction of Jeroboam’s house, and the captivity of Israel.

Azariah

- ‘Yahweh has helped’.

- The son of Oded, a notable prophet in the days of Asa (2 Chron 15:1).
- He stirred up the king and the people to a great national reformation.

Eliezer

- ‘God his help’. Another common name.
- A prophet in the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron 20:37).

Gad

- ‘Fortune’. A prophet who joined David, and at whose advice he quitted the stronghold of the king of Moab for the forest of Hereth (1 Sam 22:4-5).
- Years later he is mentioned in connection with the punishment inflicted for numbering the people (2 Sam 24:11-19; 1 Chron 21:9-19).
- He wrote a book called the ‘Acts of David’ (1 Chron 29:29) and assisted in the arrangements for the musical services of the house of God (2 Chron 29:25).
- He had the title of ‘the king's seer’ (2 Sam 24:11,13; 1 Chron 21:9; 2 Chron 29:25).

Hanani

- ‘God has gratified me’, or is gracious.
- A prophet who was sent to rebuke king Asa for entering into a league with Benhadad I, king of Syria, against Judah (2 Chron 16:1-10) He was the father of the prophet Jehu (1 Kg 16:7)

Jahaziel

- ‘Beheld by God’.
- The son of Zechariah, a Levite of the family of Asaph (2 Chron 20:14-17), who (empowered by God) encouraged Jehoshaphat against the Moabites and Ammonites.

Jehu (son of Hanani)

- ‘Yahweh is He’. Many had this name.
- The son of Hanani, a prophet of Judah (1 Kg 16:1, 7; 2 Chron 19:2, 20:34) who pronounced the sentence of God against Baasha, the king of Israel.

Huldah the prophetess

- ‘Weasel’.
- A prophetess; the wife of Shallum.
- She was consulted regarding the book of the law discovered by the high priest Hilkiah.
- She lived in the second quarter of Jerusalem (*Mishneh*; 2 Kg 22:14-20; 2 Chron 34:22-28), supposed by some to be the area between the inner and the outer wall, the second or lower city, Akra.
- Miriam (Ex 15:20)²⁴ and Deborah (Jud 4:4) are the only others who bear the title of ‘prophetess’, for the word in (Isa 8:3) means only the prophet's wife.

Iddo the Seer

- ‘Lovely’.

²⁴ Miriam was not a prophetess in the real sense but was called such for her exuberant praise (Exod 15:20-21), just as Saul was (1 Sam 19:24).

- A prophet of Judah who wrote the history of Rehoboam and Abijah (2 Chron 12:15). He has been identified with Oded (2 Chron 15:1).

Micaiah

- ‘Who is like the Lord’. The son of Imlah.
- Prophet in the time of Ahab (1 Kg 22:8-28). Brought out from prison and who condemned the military expedition with Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to go up against Ramoth-Gilead to fight Ben-hadad.

Nathan

- ‘Given’.
- Important prophet in the time of David and Solomon.
- He is first spoken of in connection with the arrangements David made for the building of the temple (2 Sam 7:2, 3, 17).
- Rebuked David for his sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam 12:1-14).
- Oversaw the education of Solomon and present at his inauguration to the throne.
- He last appears in assisting David in reorganising public worship (2 Chron 29:25).
- He seems wrote a life of David, and also a life of Solomon (1 Chron 29:29; 2 Chron 9:29).

Oded

- ‘Restoring’.
- A prophet in the time of Ahaz and Pekah.

Shemaiah

- ‘Yahweh has heard’. Many had this name in the Bible.
- A prophet in the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kg 12:22-24).
- Forbade the king to attempt the conquest of the ten tribes.
- Declared that the invasion of Shishak was judgment for sin.
- Wrote a history of Rehoboam’s reign.

Urijah

- ‘The lord is my light’.
- A prophet of Kirjath-jearim in the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah (Jer 26:20-23).
- He fled into Egypt from the cruelty of the king, but having been brought back he was beheaded and his body cast into the graves of the common people.

Zechariah

- ‘Yahweh is remembered’.
- Prophet in the time of Uzziah (2 Chron 26:5).

Noteworthy facts

- There are more non-writing prophets (17) than writing prophets (16) [However, writing prophets could also include those who wrote Scripture, such as Moses, David and Solomon.].
- Elijah, considered the representative of the prophets, wrote nothing.

- We have very scant details regarding the life of many prophets, even though their ministry was important.

Summary of the writing prophets

Dating

Putting firm dates for the lifespan and prophetic ministry of the writing prophets is almost impossible. We only have information of the beginning of a few of them and that is all. The following table is merely a suggested dating.

Prophet	Main addressee	Date		King
		Walton ²⁵	Nelson ²⁶	
Obadiah	Judah / Edom	845	840	None named
Joel	Judah	835	835	None named
Jonah	Assyria	782	760	Jeroboam II
Hosea	Israel	760-720	755-710	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Jeroboam II
Amos	Israel	760	760-753	Uzziah, Jeroboam II
Isaiah	Judah	739-685	740-680	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah
Micah	Judah	737-690	735-710	Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah
Nahum	Assyria	650	660	None named
Zephaniah	Judah	640	635-625	Josiah
Jeremiah	Judah	627-580	627-580	Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah
Habakkuk	Judah	609	607	None named
Daniel	Babylon	605-530	605-530	Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Belshazzar, Darius the Mede, Cyrus of Persia
Ezekiel	Jews in Babylon	593-570	592-570	Jehoiachin
Haggai	Jerusalem after return.	520	520	Darius of Persia
Zechariah	Jerusalem after return.	520	520-485	Darius of Persia
Malachi	Jerusalem after return.	433	432-425	None named

Key themes

The sovereignty of God

Above all else God's total authority and control over all things is repeatedly affirmed in prophet after prophet. This sovereignty is not just in the matter of salvation but is over all things in heaven and earth. Nothing is outside God's direct control. No prophet supports modern supposed Christians who aver that Satan is in control of the bad things that happen. Just note a few examples:

Assyria, the rod of My anger and the staff in whose hand is My indignation. Isa 10:5

I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity [lit. 'evil']; I, the LORD, do all these *things*. Isa 45:7

Give glory to the LORD your God before He causes darkness, and before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, and while you are looking for light, He turns it into the shadow of death *and* makes *it* dense darkness. Jer 13:16

²⁵ Dates vary amongst scholars. These are from John H. Walton, *Chronological & background Charts of the OT*, Zondervan (1978)

²⁶ *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts* (1993).

The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy *it*. Jer 19:7

Who *is* he *who* speaks and it comes to pass, *when* the Lord has not commanded *it*? *Is it* not from the mouth of the Most High that woe [lit. 'evil'] and well-being proceed? Lam 3:37-38

If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they empty it, and make it so desolate that no man may pass through because of the beasts. Ezek 14:15

If there is calamity [lit. 'evil'] in a city, will not the LORD have done *it*? Amos 3:6

The need to uphold the law of God

The condemnation of Israel is repeatedly tied to its disobedience to, and transgression of, God's law. Thus the law of God is celebrated and glorified.

The Messianic Hope

Crucial in the prophets is the continual pointing to the future Messiah and the hope of eternal forgiveness, life, glory and liberty. This is stronger in some more than others and notably detailed in Isaiah.

Included in this theme are direct prophecies regarding the life and work of Christ, the Messiah to come.

The mercy of God

Over and over God, despite Israel's failings, shows grace and mercy. The prophets celebrate the mercy of God, even in the midst of denunciations.

The remnant

While the bulk of the population were rejected and fell into condemnation, God repeatedly promised that a remnant would return and be blessed. These were the true believers of the promise and the only ones who gained the eternal hope.

It is crucial that this doctrine is understood. The whole people were not identified with blessing and promise, only the remnant.

Denunciation for sin

Prophets bring correction and there is a continual condemnation of sin, both in Israel/Judah and in Gentile nations. Repeatedly we see messages of doom for unrepentant sin.

Condemnation of idolatry

Israel's greatest sin was spiritual adultery, rejecting the true and all-powerful God for a shabby idol imported from foreigners. It beggars belief that Israel / Judah was continually guilty of this crime, despite all the advantages God gave them.

Appropriate interpretation

Whole books have been written about how to interpret OT prophecy and these have prompted schools of theology. What is critical is to interpret prophecy according to Biblical contexts, particularly observing how the apostles interpreted prophecies. What is foolish is to issue inflexible rules, such as to only ever interpret prophecies literally (as in Dispensationalism). Apart from leading to some absurd conclusions that often contradicts apostolic interpretation, especially regarding fleshly Israel.

While there are generalised prophecies about the end and the Second Coming, many prophecies are wrongly interpreted to apply to eschatology when they refer to historical matters. What must be borne in mind is that the hope and goal of the OT prophets was the

Messiah and the Messianic Age – that is, the New Covenant and the Gospel Age. Regarding matters after this event they were cloudy (1 Pt 1:10-12). They prophesied about the grace to come with the Messiah but understood little above this.

The goal of the prophets was Christ and his new age of grace. Thus Christians are those upon whom the end of the ages²⁷ have come (1 Cor 10:11); those who are in the last times (1 Pt 1:20) and last days (Heb 1:2). It is wiser to centre upon the apostolic writings for details on eschatology, of which there are plenty.

Thus there are certain debated prophecies, such as some in Daniel and Zechariah, which are simply explaining what was going to happen in the inter-testamental period when there was no prophet or Scripture. It is logical that God would give some instruction regarding this period rather than leave his people in the dark completely. Thus Dispensationalists are very mistaken when, instead of letting the prophetic narrative run consecutively they posit a gap of thousands of years in the prophecy and then apply certain verses to an end time Antichrist instead of Antiochus Epiphanes, for example. This is a case of letting your theological agenda force your interpretation of Scripture.

Isaiah

- Heb. Yesh'yahu, 'the salvation of Yahweh'; the son of Amoz (Isa 1:1 2:1).

History

- He prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah (or Azariah), Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Isa 1:1). Uzziah reigned fifty-two years and Isaiah must have begun his career a few years before Uzziah's death. He lived till the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, possibly outliving him and being contemporary for some years with Manasseh. Thus Isaiah may have prophesied for at least sixty-four years. Liberals thus posit that there were two or even three prophets called Isaiah.
- Notable for uncompromising firmness and boldness in his declarations and also his spirituality and reverence.
- In early youth Isaiah must have been affected by the invasion of Israel by the Assyrian Pul (2 Kg 15:19)²⁸ and again, twenty years later, by the invasion of Tiglath-pileser (2 Kg 15:29). Soon after this Samaria was taken and destroyed (721 BC).
- The king of Assyria then threatened Judah, Sennacherib led a powerful army into Palestine. Hezekiah submitted to the Assyrians but after a brief interval war broke out again, and again Sennacherib led an army into Palestine, threatening Jerusalem (Isa 36:2-22, 37:8). Isaiah on that occasion encouraged Hezekiah to resist the Assyrians (Isa 37:1-7) whereupon Sennacherib sent a threatening letter to Hezekiah, which he spread before the Lord (Isa 37:14). The judgement of God then fell on the Assyrian host.
- Sennacherib never recovered from the shock of the disaster in Judah. He made no more expeditions against either Southern Palestine or Egypt. The remaining years of Hezekiah's reign were peaceful; Isaiah probably lived to its close, and possibly into the reign of Manasseh, but the time and manner of his death are unknown. There is a tradition that he suffered martyrdom in the heathen reaction in the time of Manasseh.

²⁷ 'Ages' is a better translation than 'world' (KJV).

²⁸ The first mention of an Assyrian king since the days of Nimrod. There is disagreement as to exactly who this Pul was.

Spirituality

Prophetic Judgment 1-39 Assyria central	Historic Interlude 36-39 Points back to Assyria, forward to Babylon	Messianic Consolation 40-66 Babylon central	Deliverance 40-48
			Deliverer 49-57
			Delivered 58-66

Many of the prophets developed the theme of the Messianic Hope, showing how God's provision of a coming deliverer would bring salvation to the faithful in Israel. Isaiah above all others explains more about this, even giving specific detailed prophecies that were fulfilled in Christ, but chiefly explaining how the Messiah would be a suffering deliverer, being smitten for God's people. The Jews never understood this, being focused on a victorious prince.

The Messianic Hope comes to its fulness in Isaiah with detailed prophecies regarding the coming Messiah (e.g. 7:14-15, 9:6, 11:1-12, 12:1-6, 25:8, 42:1-4, 53). There are four Servant Songs (42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12), the section of the Suffering Servant is crucial (53). Many key Messianic prophecies from Isaiah were fulfilled in the life of Jesus. The essential basis of the Gospel is enshrined in chapter 53.

He also denounces and condemns sin in Judah and the nations.

Jeremiah

- 'Appointed by Yahweh' or 'whom God appoints'; son of Hilkiah, a priest of Anathoth (Jer 1:1 32:6).
- Began his ministry in 627 BC while still young (Jer 1:1-10). His ministry lasted 42 years until his death in Egypt, traditionally said to be by stoning.
- His book can be divided into four parts: his call (c.1), his ministry and prophecies to Judah (c.2-45), prophecies to the nations (c.46-51), the fall of Jerusalem (c.52).
- Jeremiah was a contemporary of Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Obadiah, in Judah and Daniel and Ezekiel in Babylon.

History

- He was called to the prophetic office when still young (Jer 1:6) in the thirteenth year of Josiah and went to reside in Jerusalem, where he assisted Josiah in his reformation (2 Kg 23:1-25).
- During the three years of the reign of Jehoahaz we find no reference to Jeremiah, but in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim he was persecuted by the people and was placed under restraint (Jer 36:5).
- In the fourth year of Jehoiakim he was commanded to write his predictions and to read them to the people. This was done by Baruch, his servant, in his stead. The roll was read to the king who seized the roll, cut it to pieces, and cast it into the fire, and ordered both Baruch and Jeremiah to be apprehended. Jeremiah procured another roll and re-wrote the prophecies, and other words besides (Jer 36:32).
- He remained in Jerusalem, uttering his words of warning, without effect.
- He was there when Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city (Jer 37:4, 5). The rumour of the approach of the Egyptians to aid the Jews in this crisis induced the Chaldeans to withdraw and return to their own land for a time.
- He received a message from God explaining that the Babylonians would come again and take the city (Jer 37:7,8). The princes, therefore, cast him into prison. He was still imprisoned when the city was taken.

- The Babylonians released him, and showed him kindness, allowing him to choose the where to live. He went to Mizpah with Gedaliah, who had been made governor of Judaea.
- Johanan succeeded Gedaliah and, refusing to listen to Jeremiah's counsels, went down into Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with him (Jer 43:6). There the prophet spent the remainder of his life, in vain seeking still to turn the people to the Lord, from whom they had so long revolted.
- He lived till the reign of Evil-Merodach, son of Nebuchadnezzar, and must have been about ninety years of age at his death. We have no authentic record of his death. He may have died at Tahpanhes, or, according to another tradition, may have gone to Babylon with the army of Nebuchadnezzar; but of this there is nothing certain.

Spirituality

Often called 'the prophet of doom' or 'the weeping prophet'. Jeremiah's difficult calling was to continually denounce sin and warn the nation about her rejection of God and his law. His main subject was God's judgment on Judah. However, he also prophesied fully about the coming New Covenant (c.30-33).

Ezekiel

- Jehezkel, 'God will strengthen'; the son of Buzi the priest (Ezek 1:3).
- Began his ministry in c597 BC.
- He was one of the Jewish exiles who settled at Tel-Abib, on the banks of the Chebar.
- He was probably carried away captive with Jehoiachin (Ezek 1:2; 2 Kg 24:14-16).
- His call came to him in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity.
- He suddenly lost his wife in the ninth year of his exile for some unknown reason (Ezek 24:18).
- He held a prominent place among the exiles, and was frequently consulted by the elders (Ezek 8:1, 11:25, 14:1, 20:1).
- His ministry extended over twenty-three years (Ezek 29:17), during part of which he was contemporary with Daniel (Dan 14:14, 28:3) and Jeremiah, and probably also with Obadiah.
- The time and manner of his death are unknown.

Spirituality

Ezekiel is noteworthy for his powerful visions and symbolism, particularly regarding God's glory. Visions of glory run through the book from start to finish, beginning with heavenly glory in chapter 1. Though the nation (Judah) was in exile in a foreign land, God was still lord over all and full of glory.

Though occupied with many denunciations of sin, both to Judah and Gentile nations, Ezekiel wrote some amazing prophecies regarding the glory of the Gospel and the New Covenant.

The three main sections concern: a) the judgment of Judah, b) the judgment of the nations, c) the restoration of Israel.

Daniel

- 'God is my judge', or 'judge of God'. One of the four great prophets, although he is not once spoken of in the Old Testament as a prophet. He was descended from one of the

noble families of Judah (Dan 1:3) and was probably born in Jerusalem during the reign of Josiah.

- Began his ministry in 605 BC.
- His contemporary Ezekiel mentions him as an example of righteousness (Ezek 14:14, 20) and wisdom (Ezek 28:3).

History

- Daniel and his young noble friends were carried off to Babylon, along with some of the vessels of the temple, at the first deportation of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar, or immediately after his victory over the Egyptians at the second battle of Carchemish in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim.
- There he entered into the service of the king of Babylon where he was renamed Belteshazzar, i.e. 'prince of Bel', or 'Bel protect the king'. His residence in Babylon was probably in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar,
- He was trained in the schools of the wise men in Babylon (Dan 1:4) to fit him for imperial service and soon exceeded the wisdom and learning of the Chaldeans. After three years of training in the royal schools Daniel was brought into public service.
- He was distinguished for his piety and his strict observance of the Mosaic Law (Dan 1:8-16) and gained the trust of those over him.
- He became known for interpreting dreams (Dan 1:17, 2:14) and rose to the rank of governor of the province of Babylon, and became chief of the governors over the wise men of Babylon.
- He made known and interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Many years later, when he was an old man, after Belshazzar's feast, he was called by the queen-mother (perhaps Nitocris, the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar) to interpret the mysterious handwriting on the wall. He was rewarded with a purple robe and elevation to the rank of third ruler. [The place of second ruler was held by Belshazzar while his father, Nabonidus, was on the throne (Dan 5:16).]
- After the taking of Babylon, Cyrus (who now ruled all Asia from India to the Dardanelles) placed Darius, a Median prince on the throne. During the two years of his reign Daniel held the office of first of the 'three presidents' of the empire, and was thus practically at the head of affairs.
- He saw the Jews restored to their own land, although he did not return with them, but remained in Babylon.
- The time and circumstances of his death are not recorded but he probably died at Susa, about eighty-five years of age.

Spirituality

His faithfulness to God led to his persecution, and he was cast into a den of lions, but was miraculously delivered; after which Darius issued a decree demanding reverence for 'the God of Daniel' (Dan 6:26). He prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian, whom he may have influenced in ending the exile of the Jews.

His own series of prophetic visions opened up the prospect of a glorious future for the people of God. Half is history (1-6), half is apocalyptic prophecy (7-12), showing the sovereignty of God over kings.

Hosea

- 'Salvation', or 'God is my salvation'; the son of Beerli.

- He lived in Israel. His Israelite origin is shown in the peculiar, rough, Aramaic diction, pointing to the northern part of Palestine and by the intimate acquaintance he shows for the region of Ephraim (Hos 5:1, 6:8, 9, 12:12, 14:6). NB the Israelite king is designated as 'our' king.
- He ministered for about sixty years.
- He is the only prophet of Israel who has left any written prophecy.
- Hosea writes to Israel, during a time of material prosperity but moral corruption and spiritual adultery - idolatrous Baal worship, which included ritual prostitution
- Noteworthy is his marriage to a former harlot, which is used as an allegory for Israel. Hosea's marriage symbolised God's feelings - the desertion of his bride. Hosea's children's names symbolise God's judgment on Israel.

Joel

- 'The Lord is his God' ('Yahweh is El'). He was the son of Pethuel.
- His personal history is only known from his book.
- Joel writes to Judah and warns of the Day of the Lord.

Amos

- 'A burden', He was a native of Tekoa, the modern Tekua, a town about 12 miles south-east of Bethlehem. He was a man of humble birth, neither a 'prophet nor a prophet's son', but 'a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees'.
- He prophesied in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and was contemporary with Isaiah and Hosea (Amos 1:1, 7:14, 15; Zech 14:5) who survived him a few years.
- Under Jeroboam II Israel rose to the height of its prosperity but that was followed by hedonism, vice and idolatry. Amos was called from his obscurity to declare God's condemnation and retributive justice, and called the nation to repentance.
- Amos also denounces the nations for their sins (Amos 1:1-15, 2:1-3).
- The spiritual condition of Judah, and especially of Israel, is described (Am 2:4- 6:14).
- He gave five prophetic visions. The first two (Amos 7:1-6) are judgments against guilty people. The next two (Amos 7:7-9, 8:1-3) show that the people are ready for judgment. Amos 7:10-17 is an interlude recounting a conversation between the prophet and the priest of Bethel. The fifth vision describes the overthrow and ruin of Israel (Amos 9:1-10); however there is a promise of the restoration of the kingdom's glory in the Messiah's kingdom.

Obadiah

- 'Servant of the Lord'.
- He was probably contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel.
- Nothing is known of his life.
- Key subject is God's judgment on Edom.

Jonah

- 'A dove'. The son of Amittai of Gath-hepher.
- He was a prophet of Israel who exercised his ministry early in the reign of Jeroboam II.
- Contemporary with Hosea and Amos or possibly preceded them; therefore, may have been the very oldest of the writing prophets.
- His personal history is mainly inferred from his book.

- His ministry was chiefly as a missionary to Nineveh.
- He is noteworthy as a type of the Lord Jesus.

Micah

- Micah is a shortened form of Micaiah; 'who is like Yahweh?'; a native of Moresheth of Gath (Mic 1:14,15).
- Called 'The Morasthite' to distinguish him from Micaiah, the son of Imlah (1 Kg 22:8).
- He was a prophet of Judah; a contemporary of Isaiah (Mic 1:1).
- Very little is known about his life.
- Subject is God's judgment on his people for their sins in neglecting the poor, plus political and social corruption. This is followed by the promise of restoration and a demand for repentance.

Nahum

- 'Consolation', an Elkoshite; probably a native of Galilee, and after the deportation of the ten tribes took up his residence in Jerusalem. Others suggest that Elkosh was a place on the east bank of the Tigris.
- All we know of him is recorded in his book.
- Key theme is the destruction of Nineveh.

Habakkuk

- 'Embrace'. Contemporary with Jeremiah and Zephaniah.
- We know nothing of his personal history.
- He was possibly a member of the Levitical choir.
- He deals with the problem of faith when facing the problems of the world.
- The answer is to focus on God's law, his sovereignty and his glory. The victory of faith leads to praise.

Zephaniah

- 'Yahweh has concealed' or 'Yahweh of darkness'. The son of Cushi and great-grandson of Hezekiah.
- He prophesied in the days of Josiah, king of Judah, and was contemporary with Jeremiah.
- Emphasises the Day of the Lord for judgment, for Judah and the nations. There is, however, a promise of restoration.

Haggai

- 'Festive'.
- He was the first of the three prophets ministering to the returned exiles (with Zechariah, his contemporary, and Malachi, about one hundred years later). He began his ministry about sixteen years after the return.
- Little is known of his personal history. He may have been one of the captives taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar.
- The work of rebuilding the temple had been suspended for 15 years by the intrigues of the Samaritans and selfishness of the Jews. The work was resumed through the exhortations of Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 6:14).
- Emphasises building the temple, and obeying God for blessing.

Zechariah

- ‘Yahweh is renowned or remembered’. He describes himself as the son of Berechiah (Zech 1:1). In Ezra 5:1, 6:14 he is called ‘the son of Iddo’, who was probably his grandfather.
- Like Ezekiel, he was a priest.
- His prophetic ministry began in the second year of Darius about sixteen years after the return of the first company from exile. Thus he was contemporary with Haggai (Ezra 5:1).
- After a preface (Zech 1:1-6) there are eight visions (1:7-6:8), given in one night, which are a symbolic history of Israel to exhort the returned exiles. Chapters 7-8, given two years later, answer the question whether mourning for the destruction of the city should continue. He then assured the people of God's blessing.
- The second part (c9-14) concerns four messages and two burdens. The first (c9-11) gives an outline of God's providential dealings with his people to the time of Christ. The second (c12-14) declares the glories for God's people in ‘the latter day’ reign of Christ and the final triumph of God's kingdom.
- Zechariah has been subjected to considerable speculative interpretations, many of a flimsy and gross nature.

Malachi

- ‘Messenger’ or ‘angel’; shortened form of Malachijah. Prophesied about 420 BC.
- The last book of the Old Testament.
- Nothing is known of him except what is in his book.
- Some suggest that his name is a title as a ‘messenger’ of Yahweh, however, most affirm that Malachi was his real name.
- He was contemporary with Nehemiah.
- Since Ezra does not mention him, or the restoration of the temple, it is inferred that he prophesied after Haggai and Zechariah. It appears that the temple is already restored in his time.
- It is probable that he prophesied either just before or just after the second return of Nehemiah from Persia (Neh 13:6).
- He supported the governor Nehemiah in the restoration of civil and religious advances, just as Haggai and Zechariah had supported Joshua (high priest) and Zerubbabel (the governor) in building the temple.
- He censured the secular and hedonistic actions of the priests; the people's marriages with foreigners; the non-payment of the tithes and the rich men's oppression of the poor.
- He also promises rewards on the coming of the Messiah. There are key prophecies regarding John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus.

To this list we can add Moses and Samuel, who were prophets and who wrote Scripture

Spiritual characteristics of Israel and Judah leading to Judgment

Rejecting the word of the Lord

This was the most grievous sin; Israel and Judah continually failed to obey God apart from short interludes under a good king or heeding a prophet.

For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you. 1 Sam 15:23

The rejection of a prophet was a rejection of God and Jesus summed up Israel's treatment of prophets as:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her!

Matt 23:37

Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Lk 11:47

Rejection of the law

As well as rejecting the word of God, particularly through prophets, Israel rejected God's law, which was read to them every Sabbath. This was to despise the giver of that law, God.

They have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Isa 5:24

Idolatry

From the very beginning to the very end Israel and Judah adopted idolatry. The golden calf marked the beginning of calf worship, which was never removed in the Northern Kingdom after Jeroboam re-introduced it. The period of the Judges was ruined by idolatry of various sorts. For much of its history Israel and Judah worshipped Baal, but then added the worship of a multitude of other foreign gods, culminating in the ritual murder of children in offerings to Molech and Chemosh.

Failing to care for the poor and needy

The people of God have a duty of care to the poor and needy as if lending to God (Prov 19:17). Caring for the disadvantaged was incorporated into the law and legislation that worked against the poor was condemned by God's word (Ps 94:20; Isa 10:1).

Israel was continually berated for oppressing the poor of the land, especially by Amos. God condemned those responsible.

Hedonism

Hedonism and selfishness characterised Israel on many occasions when she had fallen into sin. The later part of Solomon's reign became sinful after he had been consumed by hedonism.

Pride

Pride is the root of many sins and characteristic of the devil. The root of rejection of the Lord and his word was pride in one's own choices.

I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you. And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. I will break the pride of your power.

Lev 26:17-19

Thus says the LORD: 'In this manner I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. This evil people, who refuse to hear My words, who follow the dictates of their hearts'. Jer 13:9-10

In the end the sins of the Northern Kingdom caused its complete ruin. Judah was also condemned into exile but a remnant was purified and returned.

The exiles of Israel to Assyria

First deportation

In the time of Pekah, Israel was defeated by Assyria, under Tiglath-pileser II, and part of the inhabitants of Galilee and of Gilead were deported to Assyria (2 Kg 15:29 cf. Isa 10:5-6; c.741 BC).

Second deportation

After the destruction of Samaria (721 BC) by Shalmaneser and Sargon, there was a general deportation of the Israelites into Mesopotamia and Media (2 Kg 17:6 18:9; 1 Chron 5:26). Samaria was colonised by captives from the eastern side of the Euphrates who became the Samaritans of Jesus' time.

Kings

*Tiglath-pileser III*²⁹

or Tilgath-Pil-neser, the Assyrian throne-name of Pul (or Pulu, the Babylonian throne name). He was the founder of what is called the Second Assyrian Empire.

Tiglath-pileser is the second Assyrian king mentioned in Scripture as having come into contact with Israel. He attacked Samaria in the reign of Pekah, 756-736 BC probably because Pekah withheld tribute, and he took Ijon, Abel-beth-maachah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazer, Gilead, Galilee, and all the land of Naphtali, and carried the population captive to Assyria (2 Kg 15:29). The date is uncertain.

Then Rezin, king of Syria, allied with Pekah to subject Judah. After some successes and with Jerusalem threatened, Ahaz sought help from Assyria; Tiglath-pileser appeared at the head of an army and conquered Damascus and killed Rezin (2 Kg 16:9).

After this he attacked Pekah from the northeast where it bordered upon Syria. He overran the whole district to the east of Jordan, carrying into captivity 'the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh' (1 Chron 5:26). Before returning into his own land, Tiglath-pileser met with Ahaz at Damascus (2 Kg 16:10).

He reigned, certainly, c.747 to 730 BC, possibly longer, dying in 728 or even 726, being succeeded by Shalmaneser. Tiglath-pileser's wars do not, appear to have been very important. No palace, or great building, can be ascribed to this king.

Shalmaneser IV

A general of Tiglath-pileser II, Ulula, who assumed the name Shalmaneser IV (or some say II). King from about 728. He warred against Hoshea of Israel and compelled him to pay

²⁹ There were three kings of Assyria with this name. Tiglath-pileser I reigned c.1115–c.1077 BC. He extended Assyrian territory further into Asia Minor, taking Cappadocia and reaching Syria, as well as expanding his kingdom to the upper Euphrates and defeating the king of Babylonia. Tiglath-pileser III (known as Pulu) reigned c.745–727 BC. He brought the Assyrian Empire to the height of its power, subduing large parts of Syria and Palestine, and, towards the end of his reign, conquering Babylonia and ascending the Babylonian throne under the name of Pulu.

tribute. When Hoshea rebelled, Shalmaneser marched to Samaria, besieging it for three years and finally taking it under his general Sargon (2 Kg 17:3-5, 18:9).

Meanwhile a revolt had occurred in Assyria, which deposed Shalmaneser, enabling Sargon to take the vacant throne.

Sargon:

- In Assyrian inscriptions, ‘Sar-ra-yukin’ means ‘god has appointed the king’; he is also called ‘Sar-ru-kinu’, ‘the legitimate king’.
- When Shalmaneser died (723 BC) an Assyrian general took the throne and assumed the name of Sargon, after the famous monarch, the Sargon of Akkad, founder of the first Semitic empire, as well as the most famous library of Chaldea.
- He began conquering and became one of the most powerful of the Assyrian monarchs.
- He is mentioned by name in the Bible only in connection with the siege of Ashdod (Isa 20:1).
- At the beginning of his reign he took Samaria (2 Kg 17:6, 18:9-12). An inscription found in the palace at Khorsabad, near Nineveh, says, ‘*The city of Samaria I besieged, I took; 27,280 of its inhabitants I carried away; fifty chariots that were among them I collected*’. The Northern Kingdom became an Assyrian satrapy.
- He drove Merodach-baladan out of Babylon, which he entered in triumph.
- He gradually enlarged and consolidated the empire, which extended from the frontiers of Egypt in the west to the mountains of Elam in the east, and thus carried almost to completion the ambitious designs of Tiglath-pileser.
- He was murdered by one of his own soldiers in 705 in his palace at Khorsabad, after a reign of sixteen years, and was succeeded by his son Sennacherib.

The Exiles of Judah

First deportation of Judah 606 BC

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, invaded Judah and captured Jerusalem. He placed Jehoiakim (puppet of Egypt) in fetters, plundered the temple and deported the Hebrew nobles, including Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah (Dan 1:6).

Second deportation 598 BC

Jerusalem was besieged in the time of Jehoiachin, who surrendered and was deported. The temple was pillaged of remaining golden vessels and remaining nobles and chief citizens deported. Only the poor were left in the land.

Third deportation 588-586 BC

Judah revolted against Babylon under Zedekiah so Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem. Zedekiah initially escaped but was captured. His sons were killed in front of him and his eyes were put out. He was chained and sent to Babylon.

Nebuzar-adan was commanded to destroy the city. The temple, royal palace and homes of the nobles were burned. The walls were destroyed and any remaining treasure carried off. Specifically, the great pillars Jachin and Boaz; the molten sea, the pots, shovels, snuffers, spoons and bronze vessels; the firepans and bowls of gold and silver. After the exile, some of these were returned by Cyrus.

Many chief priests and officials were killed. Most of the inhabitants were deported, leaving only vinedressers and farmers.

Fourth deportation 583

The few remaining inhabitants were removed to Babylon by Nebuzaradan.

Those not deported

- Gedaliah made governor of Judah (Jer 40).
- Jeremiah stays with Gedaliah (Jer 40:1-6).
- Many Jews gathered around Gedaliah (Jer 40:7-12).
- Ishmael conspired against Gedaliah and murdered him (Jer 40:13-16, 41:2-10).
- Ishmael was pursued by Johanan and his captains; the captives were rescued. Ishmael escaped. (Jer 41:11-18).
- At Bethlehem the captains consult Jeremiah regarding taking refuge in Egypt (Jer 42:1-6). The captains rejected Jeremiah's advice and went to Egypt, despite the prophecy that they would die by the sword there (Jer 43:7-22, 43:1-13).
- Jeremiah is presumed killed in Egypt. The remnant of Judah was lost from the land.

Nebuchadnezzar

- Nebuchadnezzar: in the Babylonian language Nabu-kudur-uzur means 'Nebo, protect the crown'. Scholars use the term 'Nebuchadnezzar'.
- He was the son and successor of Nabopolassar, who delivered Babylon from its dependence on Assyria and destroyed Nineveh.
- He was the greatest and most powerful of all the Babylonian kings; perhaps the greatest ever king in the east.
- He married the daughter of Cyaxares, uniting the Median and Babylonian dynasties.
- Necho II, king of Egypt, defeated the Assyrians at Carchemish. This gave Egypt the Syrian provinces of Assyria, including Palestine. The remaining provinces of the Assyrian Empire were divided between Babylonia and Media.
- Nabopolassar sought to recover the western provinces of Syria and he sent his son (Nebuchadnezzar) to command a large army (Dan 1:1). A huge battle was fought at Carchemish resulting in the defeat of the Egyptians (Jer 46:2-12). Syria and Phoenicia were brought under Babylon (606 BC). From that time 'the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land' (2 Kg 24:7).
- Nebuchadnezzar then subdued all Palestine, and took Jerusalem, carrying away captive many Jews, among whom were Daniel and his companions (Dan 1:1-2; Jer 27:19 40:1).
- Three years after this, Jehoiakim, a Babylonian vassal, rebelled, trusting to help from Egypt (2 Kg 24:1). This led Nebuchadnezzar to the conquest of Jerusalem, which immediately surrendered (598 BC).
- A third time he came, deposing Jehoiachin, whom he took to Babylon with much of the population of the city and confiscated the sacred vessels of the temple. He placed Zedekiah on the throne of Judah as vassal.
- Zedekiah, ignoring the warnings of Jeremiah, allied with Egypt and rebelled against Babylon. This led to the final siege of the city, which was utterly destroyed in 586 BC. Zedekiah was taken captive, his eyes put out, and made a prisoner for life. Thus were fulfilled the words of Jeremiah (Jer 46:13-26; Ezek 29:2-20).
- Having subjugated Phoenicia and defeated Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar concentrated on rebuilding Babylon (Dan 4:30) and securing the greatness and prosperity of his kingdom with canals, aqueducts and reservoirs greater in magnificence than anything

else in ancient history (Dan 2:37). He built the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. These were terraces built on arches in pyramid form rising to 300 feet with terraces that had sufficient earth to grow trees.

- He was called a king of kings, and ruled over a vast kingdom of many provinces, with many rulers under him (Dan 3:2,3,27).
- *‘Modern research has shown that Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest monarch that Babylon, or perhaps the East generally, ever produced. He must have possessed an enormous command of human labour, nine-tenths of Babylon itself, and nineteen-twentieths of all the other ruins that in almost countless profusion cover the land, are composed of bricks stamped with his name. He appears to have built or restored almost every city and temple in the whole country. His inscriptions give an elaborate account of the immense works which he constructed in and about Babylon itself, abundantly illustrating the boast, “Is not this great Babylon which I have built?”³⁰*
- After the miracle of the burning fiery furnace (Dan 3:1) Nebuchadnezzar was afflicted with severe mental derangement as a punishment for his pride and vanity, which some consider was lycanthropy (the change of a man into a wolf). A remarkable confirmation of the Scripture narrative is afforded by the discovery of a bronze doorstep, which has an inscription that it was presented by Nebuchadnezzar to the great temple at Borsippa as a votive offering on account of his recovery from a terrible illness.
- He survived this recovery for some years, and died in 562 BC, in the eighty-third or eighty-fourth year of his age, after a reign of forty-three years.
- He was succeeded by his son Evil-merodach, who, after a reign of two years, was succeeded by Neriglissar (559-555) who was succeeded by Nabonadius (555-538) at the close of whose reign (less than 25 years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar) Babylon fell to Cyrus commanding the combined armies of Media and Persia.

The Returns of Judah

First return

- Ezra 1-6.
- 538 BC under King Cyrus.
- 49,697 people returned.
- Leaders: Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, Jeshua.
- The temple vessels were returned and the building of the temple started but work ceased until 520 after the Samaritans caused trouble. Temple completed in 516.

Second return

- Ezra 7-10.
- 458 BC under King Artaxerxes I (Longimanus).
- 1,758 people returned.
- Leaders: Ezra.
- There was a significant problem with mixed-marriages.

Third return

- Nehemiah 1-13.
- 444 BC under King Artaxerxes I (Longimanus).

³⁰ Rawlinson, Hist. Illustrations.

- Leader: Nehemiah.
- Unknown number returned.
- Jerusalem's walls rebuilt in 52 days despite opposition.

Most Jews chose to stay in Babylonia where they had become prosperous and married foreign wives. In time Babylon would become a centre for Jews after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the authoritative Jewish text (the Babylonian Talmud) was written there by Pharisees.

Encouragement during the returns

Godly leadership

God provided 'kingly' leadership in Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, priestly in Joshua and Ezra, and prophetic in Haggai and Zechariah and Malachi.

Two periods

There were two basic periods of activity: the first period saw the rebuilding of the temple, the latter consisted of the rebuilding of the city and establishing its polity.

A small colony of 50,000 settled with Joshua (Jeshua) and Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:64) that became intermingled with pagans during the 60 years before Ezra. There were neither walls nor gates to the city in this time.

A second restoration was needed to mould national life by re-establishing the law and the city. This was the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, with the help of Malachi, during c. 50 years, ending with the death of Malachi and Nehemiah, at the close of the 5th century BC.

Relevant prophecy

This equates to the 'seven weeks' (49 or 50 years) of Daniel that stand at the beginning of the 'seventy weeks' (Dan 9:25), that mark the last period of OT revelation before the 62 weeks of years that follow without revelation, which precede the final week of the Messiah. The 70 weeks begin with Artaxerxes' seventh year, c.457 or 458 BC, when he allowed Ezra (Ezra 7:1, 6) to go to Jerusalem.

The work of Ezra

Ezra the priest purified the nation from within of pagan elements and restored the law. This was mainly done by extensive preaching.

The work of Nehemiah

Nehemiah was the 'governor' under Persian suzerainty who supervised the outer work of rebuilding the city and restoring the national polity. Officially Nehemiah was the prefect of a province ('*pechah*', Neh 5:14, 12:26; '*tirshatha*', Neh 8:9, 10:1, 7:65; Ezra 2:63) an office less extensive than a satrapy.

It is curious that Malachi is not mentioned in Nehemiah nor Nehemiah in Malachi.

The Persian period

Cyrus

Cyrus, king of Persia, first conquered the Medes, who then joined forces with him, and they conquered Babylon in 539 BC. Isaiah prophesied that Cyrus was God's servant in securing the release of the Jews. A decree of Cyrus in 537 brought about the return of the first party of exiles led by prince Zerubbabel.

Persian kings

- Cyrus [reign: 539-530] Medo-Persian Emperor. Allowed Jews to return.
- Cambyses [530-522].
- Darius I [522-486]. Haggai and Zechariah prophesy in this time, plus the temple was completed. The Greeks defeated the Persians at Marathon in 490.
- Xerxes [486-464]. King during Esther's time. Greeks defeated the Persians at Thermopolae [480] and Salamis [479].
- Artaxerxes I [464-423]. King during the return of Ezra [458] and Nehemiah [445], also the period of Malachi's prophecy [433]. Time of Greek Golden Age and Pericles [461-431].
- Darius II [423-404]. Beginning of Biblical silent period. Peloponnesian Wars [431-404].
- Artaxerxes II [404-359]. Time of Socrates [470-399], Plato [428-348] and Aristotle [384-322].
- Artaxerxes III [359-338]. Time of Philip II of Macedon.
- Arses [338-355].
- Darius III [335-331]. Alexander the Great overthrows Persian Empire. Establishment of Greek Empire under Alexander [336-323].

Observations

Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem was in 433-4; the Persian Empire broke up in 336 or 333. During this period there were Grecian wars in the west and Parthian wars in the east, but it was a period of relative stability for Palestine as the Persian emperor held sway over Egypt and Mesopotamia.

It was during this time that the word 'Jew', previously reserved for Judaeans alone, was applied to Israelites in general.

Idolatry appears to have been cured but new sins arose, such as legalism, traditionalism and xenophobia. Scribes (Pharisees) became prominent as a special class as well and synagogues multiplied. Away from the temple, Judaism became far more concerned with the reading of the law than sacrifices and rituals.

Also in this time the political power of the high priest was significantly advanced, especially as there had been a lack of prophets. The Sanhedrin was organised at this time as well, an advisory court of seventy elders.

The exiles brought back with them the speech of their conquerors, Aramaic (Chaldee). Hebrew was still the religious language but Aramaic became the social and formal language. Jesus spoke Aramaic.

Esther: God's providence to the Jews that did not return

This story regards the Jews living in the east after the exiles had returned to Judaea. It is noteworthy that the name of God does not appear in this book.

It begins with king Xerxes (Ahasuerus in the Bible) of Persia deposing his queen for dishonouring him and a contest being arranged for a new queen. Amongst the contenders was a Jewish orphan called Esther who had been brought up with her cousin Mordecai, who held an office in the palace at Susa. Esther was made queen in the seventh year of the reign of Xerxes in about 478-9 BC.

At this time Haman, a leading member of the court who was offended by Mordecai, conspired to kill all Jews and persuaded Xerxes to sign a decree to that effect. Mordecai informed Esther and she bravely explained the situation to the king without a summons to appear before him. She sought that Jews should be enabled to defend themselves. Xerxes asked who had plotted this and Esther identified Haman, who was immediately executed on the gallows intended for Mordecai. In the fighting that ensued, 75,000 enemies of the Jews were killed (Est 9:16).

This escape from genocide led to the Jewish feast of Purim. ‘Purim’ comes from the word ‘pur’ meaning ‘lot’.³¹ Haman had cast lots for determining the date of the slaughter (Est 3:7).

This account reveals several things:

- The number of Jews must have been significant if they killed 75,000 enemies.
- The Jews were spread out throughout the empire, but probably gathered in certain areas, particularly Babylon. The decree went out to all 127 provinces.
- Tablets found at Nippur from this time show that Jews were active in business.
- The story shows that Jews had freedom to live and work in freedom; note that Mordecai was prominent in the court. Before this (in the Babylonian period) Daniel had been a chief governor. If Esther could become queen, Jews were not discriminated against.
- Jews did have enemies.
- The most important feature is that of God’s providential care of his people to prevent genocide. This is seen in the court position of Mordecai, the availability of his cousin, the beauty and bearing of Esther, the bravery of Esther, the open ear of Xerxes and the precise timing of all the events. Of incredible timing was the fact that the king had official records read to him concerning the good deed that Mordecai had done to him on the very night before Haman arrived to ask for Mordecai to be executed.
- Note the reversals: The honour which was expected for Haman was given to Mordecai; the edict that was deigned to kill all Jews led to the Jews killing their enemies; the gallows erected for Mordecai were used for Haman.

My stand-out moments of Israel’s history

Of course this is perfectly arbitrary and subjective, but they are my choices.

The Red Sea miracle

An ex-prince of Egypt destroys the top layer of Egyptian hierarchy in protecting those who were previously slaves of that hierarchy. The miracle that God provided was so significant that it was still being talked about in the Near East centuries later and it made the Canaanites scared stiff of the Israelites because of their God.

Moses meeting God

The intimacy that Moses had with the Lord is astounding. Though speaking metaphorically, he was said to have met the Lord, ‘face to face’. No one else in the OT is shown to have such intimacy with God.

³¹ ‘Pur’ is derived from the Assyrian ‘puru’ meaning ‘a pebble’.

Holding back the sun

Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: 'Sun, stand still over Gibeon; And Moon, in the Valley of Aijalon'. So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had revenge Upon their enemies. *Is this not written in the Book of Jasher?* So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go *down* for about a whole day. And there has been no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel. Josh 10:12-14

This is after the Lord killed huge numbers of the enemy by hailstones, then the sun was held back for a complete slaughter. Who can not fear God?

Gideon's defeat of the Midianites

The most amazing strategy for a victorious military enterprise ever envisaged, and one rich with symbolism.

The slaying of Goliath

A story so engaging and inspiring that the very term 'David and Goliath' has become a description of a story-type (weak good defeating strong evil).

The dedication of the temple

The beauty and glory of this building was indescribable and a wonder of the ancient world. The dedication was enjoined with the sacrifice of tens of thousands of animals to represent the value of the substitutionary death of Christ. It had take all the years of the wars of David and the resultant peace to get to this point, which ushered in the golden age of Israel under a wise king (until he slipped).

The contest on Mount Carmel

Try to imagine being Elijah in this circumstance; what amazing faith this man had. Withholding rain was nothing in comparison.

God's inclusion of Gentiles

But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, *in the region* of Sidon, to a woman *who was* a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian. Lk 4:25-27

What is incredible is the encouragement to people not in the fold of Israel. Israel had many lepers of its own in Elisha's time but none were singled out for healing, while this foreigner Naaman was. Only the widow of Zarephath, a Sidonian, was cared for by the multiplying of food. We could also add the sparing of Jericho's Rahab or the inclusion of the Moabite Ruth (both in the Lord's ancestry).

The defeat of the Assyrian army by the angel of God

'For I will defend this city, to save it For My own sake and for My servant David's sake.' And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses -- all dead. 2 Kg 19:34-35

A brilliant example of how trusting the Lord implicitly in warfare results in completely unexpected changes of circumstances that could not be imagined.

The miracles recorded by Daniel and the conversion of Nebuchadnezzar

Even during Judah's exile for sin, God was present with his people delivering them from their enemies. Perhaps the greatest miracles in the sight of Gentiles were the protection of Daniel from the lions and the protection of his friends from the flames. More amazing was the judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar so that he lived like a beast for seven years (lycanthropy?), followed by his conversion to the true God. One of the greatest Biblical statements about God's attributes is Nebuchadnezzar's confession (Dan 4).³²

Enemies and neighbours of Israel from the Exodus to the divided monarchy

Note that the following enemies were related to Israel but were the result of sin: Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites.

It is common to interpret certain enemies in this way to highlight the chief enemies of the Christian:

- Egypt = the world
- Canaanites = the devil
- Amalekites = the flesh

However, this is somewhat simplistic as Israel had many enemies; but it makes a certain point.

Amalekites

- Dwelt in Arabia Petraea, between the Dead Sea and the Red Sea.
- Some associate them with Amalek the son of Eliphaz, who was a son of Esau. However, they were not the descendants of Amalek, the son of Eliphaz, for they existed in the days of Abraham (Gen 14:7). They were probably a tribe that migrated from the shores of the Persian Gulf and settled in Arabia (Num 13:29; 1 Sam 15:7).
- They were a pastoral, and a nomadic race. Their kings bore the hereditary name of Agag.
- They attempted to stop the Israelites when they marched through their territory (Deut 25:18) attacking them at Rephidim (Ex 17:8-13).
- They afterwards attacked the Israelites at Hormah (Num 14:45).
- We read of them subsequently as in league with the Moabites (Judg 3:13) and the Midianites (Judg 6:3).
- Saul finally desolated their territory and destroyed their power (1 Sam 14:48, 15:3) and David recovered booty from them (1 Sam 30:18-20).
- In the Babylonian inscriptions they are called Sute, in those of Egypt Sittiu, and the Amarna tablets include them under the general name of Khabbati, or 'plunderers'.

Ammonites

- Descendants of Ben-Amni.
- Ben-Ammi was a son of Lot by his second daughter.

³² Note: 'My understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honoured Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?' (Dan 4:34-35).

- Ammonites and Moabites are often connected.
- Were wanderers like the Bedouin.
- Chief god was Moloch or Milcom.
- Hated by Israelites because they refused assistance on their approach to Canaan. With the Moabites and Midianites they hired Balaam to curse Israel (Deut 23:4).
- They continued to be bitter enemies of the Hebrews down to the time of Nehemiah.

Amorites

- Name means 'the mountaineers'.
- Arose from the fourth son of Canaan.
- Occupied the barren heights west of the Dead Sea, but at the time of the conquest they had crossed the Jordan and possessed the country between the Arnon and the Jabbok.
- Dispossessed by Joshua.
- They are contrasted from Canaanites who were lowlanders. Thus the Amorites and Canaanites formed the two great sections of nations at the time of the conquest by Joshua.
- On occasion 'Amorite' is used as a précis for all Canaanite tribes.

Assyria

- The first of the great Ancient Near East / Mesopotamian empires.³³ It lay on a mountainous region north of Babylonia, extending along the Tigris to the high mountain range of Armenia. The Assyrians were Semites (Gen 10:22) but over time non-Semite tribes mingled with the inhabitants. It was an aggressive military country.
- The name derived from the city Asshur on the Tigris, the original capital of the country.
- It was originally a colony from Babylonia.
- It was founded in 1700 BC under Bel-kap-kapu as an independent power shaking off the yoke of Babylon before it subdued the whole of Northern Asia.
- The early history of Assyria little is obscure but in 1120 BC Tiglath-pileser I, the greatest Assyrian king, crossed the Euphrates, defeated the Hittites, captured the city of Carchemish, and advanced as far as the Mediterranean, founding the first Assyrian empire. After this they extended their power to Northern Syria.
- From an early period Assyria had been very militant and after absorbing Babylon, Hamath, Damascus, and Samaria, it conquered Phoenicia, and made Philistia, Idumaea and Judaea subjects. At length, however, its power declined.
- In 727 BC the Babylonians threw off the rule of Assyria under the Chaldean prince Merodach-baladan (2 Kg 20:12); but after twelve years were subdued by Sargon, who reunited Assyria and ruled over a vast empire. On his death rebellion re-ignited and an alliance of the Babylonians and Medes successfully gained independence (625). Assyria fell about 586 according to the prophecies of Isa 10:5-19, Nah 3:19 and Zeph 3:13 (2 Kg 18:19; Isa 36:4; Ezek 31:1) then ceased to be a nation.

Babylonia

- The second of the great Ancient Near East / Mesopotamian empires. It was a kingdom called 'the land of the Chaldeans' (Jer 24:5; Ezek 12:13).

³³ The concept of empires is confusing; there have been many empires all over the world. However, the great empires are usually considered to be those mentioned as important in Scripture and especially in Daniel. Thus Assyria is the first of Scripture's great empires even though there were Hittite, Mittani, Sumerian, Old Babylonian, Akkadian and Egyptian empires before this.

- It stretched along the valley of the Tigris from the Persian Gulf north for 300 miles. It was famed for its fertility and riches. Its capital was the city of Babylon, a great commercial centre (Ezek 17:4; Isa 43:14).
- Babylonia was divided into the two districts of Accad in the north, and Sumer (Shinar) in the south.
- Among its chief cities were Ur, Uruk, or Erech, Kulunu, or Calneh, Larsa, Nipur, Sepharvaim and Eridu.
- The original home of the Kalda, or Chaldeans was the salt-marshes at the mouths of the Euphrates and Tigris.

Old Babylonia

- The most famous of the early kings of Babylonia were Sargon of Accad (3800 BC) and his son Naram-Sin, who conquered a large part of Western Asia, establishing their power in Palestine.
- Babylonia was subsequently broken up into more than one state, and at one time fell under the domination of Elam. This was ended by Khammu-rabi (Hammurabi; Amraphel), who drove the Elamites out of the country, and overcame Arioch, the son of an Elamite prince. From this time forward Babylonia was a united monarchy.
- About 1750 it was conquered by the Kassi, or Kosseans, from the mountains of Elam, and a Kassite dynasty ruled over it for 577 years. In the time of Khammu-rabi, Syria and Palestine were subject to Babylonia and its Elamite suzerain; after the overthrow of the Elamite supremacy, the Babylonian kings continued to exercise their influence and power in what was called 'the land of the Amorites'.
- In the epoch of the Kassite dynasty Canaan passed into the control of Egypt. In 729, Babylonia was conquered by the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III; but on the death of Shalmaneser IV. It was seized by the Kalda or Chaldean prince Merodach-baladan (2 Kg 20:12-19) who held it till 709, when he was driven out by Sargon.
- Under Sennacherib, Babylonia revolted from Assyria several times, with the help of the Elamites, and after one of these revolts Babylon was destroyed by Sennacherib (689).
- It was rebuilt by Esarhaddon, who made it his residence during part of the year, and it was to Babylon that Manasseh was brought a prisoner (2 Chron 33:11).
- After the death of Esarhaddon, Saul-sumyukin, the viceroy of Babylonia, revolted against his brother the Assyrian king, and the revolt was suppressed with difficulty.

New Babylonia

- When Nineveh was destroyed in 606, Nabopolassar, the viceroy of Babylonia, who seems to have been of Chaldean descent, made himself independent. His son Nebuchadrezzar (Nabu-kudur-uzur; Nebuchadnezzar in the Bible, c.630–562), after defeating the Egyptians at Carchemish, succeeded him as king, 604 or 605 and founded the Neo Babylonian empire.
- Nebuchadrezzar strongly fortified Babylon, and adorned it with palaces and other buildings. He rebuilt the city with massive fortification walls, a huge temple, and a ziggurat (Hanging Gardens). He extended his rule over Palestine and neighbouring countries. In 586 he captured and destroyed Jerusalem and deported many Israelites from Palestine to Babylon.
- His son, Evil-merodach, who succeeded him in 561, was murdered after a reign of two years.
- The last monarch of the Babylonian empire was Nabonidus (Nabu-nahid), 555-538, whose eldest son, Belshazzar (Bilu-sar-uzur), is mentioned in several inscriptions. Babylon was captured by Cyrus in 538 BC, and though it revolted more than once in later years, it never succeeded in maintaining its independence.

Canaanites

- A full analysis and history of the Canaanites is confusing and complex. Furthermore, many sources make serious mistakes in their descriptions.
- They were descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham (i.e. Hamitic). They were called Phoenicians by the Greeks and Poeni by the Romans. However, the Canaanites preceded them in Palestine and Lower Syria. The Phoenicians were immigrants into Syria from the shores of the Persian Gulf or Arabia, who were peaceable traders and skilful navigators, while the Canaanites were warlike. Phoenicians were Hamitic (not Semitic as often claimed) and were known as Sidonians early on from their capital city. Carthage was a Phoenician colony that later rivalled Rome.
- Migrating from their original home, Canaanites reached the Persian Gulf, and sojourned for some time. They then spread to the west, across the mountain chain of Lebanon to the Mediterranean Sea, occupying all the land which later became Palestine, also to the north-west as far as the mountain chain of Taurus.
- This group was numerous, and broken up into many peoples (Gen 10:1) the 'sons of Canaan'.
- The Canaanites, as distinguished from the Amalekites, the Anakim, and the Rephaim, were 'dwellers in the lowlands' (Num 13:29) the great plains and valleys, the richest and most important parts of Palestine.
- Tyre and Sidon were their centres of great commercial activity; and hence the name 'Canaanite' came to signify a trader or merchant (Job 41:6; Prov 31:24).
- The name 'Canaanite' is also sometimes used to designate the non-Israelite inhabitants of the land in general, which leads to confusion (Gen 12:6; Num 21:3; Jud 1:10).
- The Israelites were commanded to destroy the Canaanites then occupying Canaan (Exod 23:23; Num 33:52, 53; Deut 20:16, 17). This was to be done gradually to prevent beasts overrunning the land (Exod 23:29; Deut 7:22,23). The book of Joshua describes these wars but the Canaanites were never fully exterminated. Jerusalem (the Jebusite stronghold) was eventually captured by David (2 Sam 5:6, 7). Solomon extracted bond-service from the remnants of Canaanites remaining (1 Kg 9:20, 21). After the return from exile, survivors of five of the Canaanite tribes were still found in Judah.
- The main deity was Baal ('Lord') a storm god and fertility god (though some say a sun god). Each locality had its special Baal, and the various Baals had the plural name of 'Baalim'. Baal became a continual problem in the syncretistic idolatry of Israel.
- Though the Israelites were commanded to kill the Canaanites for their sin they were not commanded to kill the Arvadites, Arkites, Sinites, Zemarites and Hamathites. However, Arkites, Sinites, Zemarites and Hamathites were sons of Canaan.

Lists of Canaanite tribes?			
Text Ref.	Verse	Observation	Comment
Gen 10:15-19	Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and Heth; the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were dispersed. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward	Thus Canaanites here include: the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Girgashite; the Hivite, the Arkite, the Sinite; the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Thus 9 nations. If you include Heth (Hittites) you have 10 nations. However, not named are the Kenezites, the Kadmonites,	As sons of Canaan, grandsons of Ham, they are a Hamitic race. Yet many sources claim they are Semitic! Heth was the father of the Hittites.

	Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, as far as Lasha.	the Perizzites, the Rephaim, and the Girgashites.	
Gen 15:18-21	To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates -- the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.	Canaanites are <u>distinguished</u> from: the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.	
Exod 3:8, 17, 23:23, 33:2, 34:11	Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.	Canaanites are <u>contrasted</u> from Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.	Hittites did not occupy Palestine but the area to the north of Galilee; originally the Taurus mountains. Amorites were not lowlanders but highlanders. These cannot be construed as Canaanites. Perizzites, Hivites and Girgashites can be construed as dwellers in Canaan.
Exod 13:5	When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.	Perizzites not mentioned.	
Deut 7:1	Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you.	Girgashites added. Specifically stated as seven nations.	
Jos 3:10	He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites.	Perizzites and the Girgashites included.	
1 Sam 27:8	David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites. For those nations were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as you go to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt.	The tribes of Geshurites & the Girzites, are added.	Certain tribes were named after city-states that had a local king. Their territory may have been small but they are identified as a tribe.

The list of contenders

- The Amorites: of the tribe of Canaan. Based west of the Dead Sea, but during the conquest were also east of the Jordan.
- The Arkites: descendants of the Phoenicians or Sidonians, the inhabitants of Arka, 12 miles north of Tripoli, opposite the northern extremity of Lebanon.
- The Arvadites: Arvad was a small island and city on the coast of Syria, mentioned as furnishing mariners and soldiers for Tyre. The inhabitants were called Arvadites.

- The Canaanites: in simple terms, the sons of Canaan that occupied the Promised Land at the time of the conquest.
- The Geshurites: 1. The inhabitants of Geshur. They maintained friendly relations with the Israelites on the east of Jordan. 2. A tribe who inhabited the south-west border of Canaan.
- The Girgashites: descendants of the fifth son of Canaan and one of the original Canaanite tribes. They were a branch of the family of the Hivites. They possibly lived in the central part of Western Palestine.
- The Girzites: (or Gizrites) Inhabitants of Gezer.
- The Hamathites: One of the families descended from Canaan.
- The Hittites (see description later).
- The Hivites: one of the original Canaanite tribes scattered over Palestine, from Hermon to Gibeon in the south. The name is interpreted as midlanders or villagers. They were probably a branch of the Hittites. At the time of Jacob's return to Canaan, Hamor the Hivite was the 'prince of the land' (Gen 24:2-28). They principally inhabited the northern confines of Western Palestine. A remnant of them still existed in the time of Solomon (1Ki 9:20)
- The Jebusites: the name of the original inhabitants of Jebus (Jerusalem), mentioned frequently among the nations doomed to destruction. They were defeated by Joshua, and their king was slain; but they were not entirely driven out of Jebus till the time of David, who made it the capital of his kingdom instead of Hebron. The site on which the temple was afterwards built belonged to Araunah, a Jebusite, from whom it was purchased by David, who refused to accept it as a free gift.
- The Kadmonites: a Canaanite tribe which inhabited the north-eastern part of Palestine in the time of Abraham (Gen 15:19).
- The Kenezites: (also Kenizzites) One of the tribes in Canaan at the time of Abraham who settled in Mount Seir. The clan whose name-father was Kenaz. They later became subject to Esau who occupied the area. Some descendants may have settled in the Arabah. To this clan belonged Jephunneh, the father of Caleb (Num 32:12; Josh 14:6, 14). Othniel, the first Judge of Israel, was a Kenizzite. It had evidently been absorbed by the tribe of Judah.
- The Kenites: (see description later.)
- The Perizzites: the Canaanite nation inhabiting the fertile regions south and south-west of Carmel. They were the farmers, and peasants.
- The Rephaim: giants, (Gen 14:5; 2 Sam 21:16, 18). The aborigines of Palestine conquered and dispossessed by the Canaanite tribes. They were known to the Moabites as Emim, i.e. 'fearful' and to the Ammonites as Zamzummim. Some of them found refuge among the Philistines, and were still existing in the days of David. We know nothing of their origin. They were not necessarily connected with the giants (Nephilim) of (Gen 6:4).
- The Sinites: an inhabitant of Sin, near Arka.
- The Zemarites: one of the Phoenician tribes (Gen 10:18) who inhabited the town of Sumra, at the western base of the Lebanon range.

Conclusions

The idea that the Canaanites consisted of six or seven nations seems questionable. Canaanites had developed into a multitude of tribes and even an empire (Hittites), but some had disappeared or relocated (Girgashites have been said to emigrate to Africa in fear of Israel). Plus, some occupiers of the land were not Canaanites (as in a descendant of

Canaan). The nations that were to be killed were those tribes that occupied the Promised Land at the time of Joshua.

Chaldeans

- Chaldea was the southern part of Babylonia, Lower Mesopotamia, lying chiefly on the right bank of the Euphrates, but the term was often used for the whole of the Mesopotamian plain. Compare this with the more ancient word 'Sumer' (Sumeria), the earlier term for the southern part of Mesopotamia. From the 4th millennium BC Sumeria was the site of city-states that became part of ancient Babylonia. So Sumeria became Chaldea, which in turn became Babylonia over time.
- The Hebrew name is *Kasdim*, which is usually rendered 'Chaldeans' or 'Chaldees' (Jer 50:10, 51:24, 35).
- The Chaldees were originally a tribe who lived on the shores of the Persian Gulf, and did not become a part of the Babylonian population till the time of Hezekiah. They were formerly a tribe of nomadic plunderers, related to the Arameans. Various tribes eventually settled in Babylonia but the Chaldeans lent their name to the area.
- Various Chaldeans became kings of Babylonia.
- Abram was born at Ur, the chief city of the Chaldees, by which is meant Mesopotamia.
- Chaldees or Chaldeans were the inhabitants of the country of which Babylon was the capital. They were so called till the time of the Captivity (2 Kg 25:1; Isa 13:19, 23:13).
- After the Captivity, particularly in the Book of Daniel (Dan 5:30, 9:1), the name began to be used for a class of wise men of magicians and astronomers. These men used the ancient Cushite (Ethiopian) language of the original inhabitants of the land for themselves (Dan 1:4). The Chaldeans were thus the professional class of scientists and priests who worshipped heavenly bodies.
- The common language of the country at that time had become assimilated into a Semitic dialect, especially through the influence of the Assyrians, and this was the language that was used for civil purposes. In later times the term Babylonia became prevalent.

Edomites

- The tribe of Esau.
- Edom is also known as 'Mount Seir' and by the Romans as Idumaea.
- They occupied the mountainous area east of the Jordan Valley, extending to the seaport of Elath.
- They refused to allow Israel to pass through their land in the conquest of Canaan (Num 20:14-21).
- They were conquered by Saul, David, Joab and Amaziah.

Egyptians (to the time of the Hyksos)³⁴

- Only a very brief summary is possible regarding this long and complex empire.
- Egypt is the oldest civilisation of which we have firm historical records. Their original home is still a matter of dispute, but possibly Southern Arabia.
- The ancient Egyptian language (the modern form is Coptic) is connected to the Semitic family.
- Egypt consists geographically of two halves, the northern being the Delta, and the southern Upper Egypt, between Cairo and the First Cataract. In the Old Testament,

³⁴ Mostly from Easton's Dict.

Northern or Lower Egypt is called Mazor, 'the fortified land' (Isa 19:6, 37:25); while Southern or Upper Egypt is Pathros, the Egyptian Pa-to-Res, or 'the land of the south' (Isa 11:11). The whole country is generally mentioned under the dual name of Mizraim, 'the two Mazors'.

- The civilisation of Egypt goes back to a very ancient time. The two kingdoms of the north and south were united by Menes, the founder of the first historical dynasty of kings. The first six dynasties constitute the Old Empire, which had its capital at Memphis, south of Cairo, called in the Old Testament Moph (Hos 9:6) and Noph. The Pyramids were tombs of the monarchs of the Old Empire, those of Gizeh being erected in the time of the Fourth Dynasty. After the fall of the Old Empire came a period of decline and obscurity. This was followed by the Middle Empire, the most powerful dynasty of which was the Twelfth.
- The Middle Empire was overthrown by the invasion of the Hyksos, or shepherd princes from Asia, who ruled over Egypt, more especially in the north, for several centuries, and of whom there were three dynasties of kings. They had their capital at Zoan or Tanis (now San), in the north-eastern part of the Delta. It is debatable whether it was in the time of the Hyksos that Abraham, Jacob, and later Joseph entered Egypt or whether this period began nearer the time of the Israelites' sojourn. The Hyksos were finally expelled about 1580 BC by the hereditary princes of Thebes, who founded the Eighteenth Dynasty, and carried the war into Asia.

Hittites

- They originally inhabited the Taurus mountains area, but the Hittite Empire once stretched from the Euphrates to Damascus, their chief cities being Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Kadesh in the Orontes valley. They were then rivals to the Egyptian and Assyrian empires. In the book of Joshua they are the dominant race north of Galilee.
- Somewhere about the 23rd century BC a Syrian confederation (led by the Hittites?) invaded Lower Egypt making Zoan their capital. Their rulers were the Hyksos, or shepherd kings (see earlier). They were eventually driven out of Egypt and the Hittites were defeated Rameses II at the battle of Kadesh.
- They are first mentioned when Abraham bought the field and the cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite (Gen 15:20, 23:3-18). They were then settled at Kirjath-arba.
- Esau's first two wives were Hittites (Gen 26:34, 36:2).
- They were closely allied to the Amorites, and are frequently mentioned along with them as inhabiting the mountains of Palestine.
- After this there are few references to them in Scripture. Mention is made of Ahimelech the Hittite (1 Sam 26:6) and of Uriah the Hittite, one of David's chief officers (2 Sam 23:39; 1 Chron 11:41).
- In Solomon's time they were a powerful confederation in the north of Syria and Israelite merchants brought horses from Egypt for the Hittites (1 Kg 10:28, 29). In the time of Ben-Hadad and Hazael they were a powerful people, noted for their chariots, who generally sided with Syria against Assyria. They are still a distinct people after the Exile (Ezra 9:1).
- From the Egyptian monuments we learn that *'the Hittites were a people with yellow skins and "Mongoloid" features, whose receding foreheads, oblique eyes, and protruding upper jaws are represented as faithfully on their own monuments as they are on those of Egypt, so that we cannot accuse the Egyptian artists of caricaturing their enemies. The Amorites, on the contrary, were a tall and handsome people. They are depicted with white skins, blue eyes, and reddish hair, all the characteristics, in fact, of the white race'*, (Sayce's 'The Hittites').

Kenites

- A branch of Midianites.
- Jethro (Moses' father-in-law) was a Kenite. This established friendship between Kenites and Israel.
- They seem to have accompanied the Israelites in their wanderings.
- Jael, the wife of Heber, slew Sisera.
- Rechab (founder of the Rechabites) is said to have been a Kenite.

Midianites

- An Arabian nomadic tribe descended from Midian, being the dominant tribe of Arabia.
- They inhabited the desert north of the peninsula of Arabia. The area around Sinai was the pasture-ground for their flocks.
- Joseph was sold to them (Gen 37:28, 36).
- In Midian, Moses became the servant and afterwards the son-in-law of Reuel or Jethro, the priest.
- After the Exodus, the Midianites were friendly to the Israelites as long as they traversed only their outlying pasture-ground on the west of the Arabah.
- When the Israelites entered into the land of Midian proper, they joined with Balak, the king of Moab, in a conspiracy against them (Num 22:4-7) hiring Balaam, to curse Israel. When this failed Balaam induced the Israelites to fraternise with Midianites in the licentious orgies connected with the worship of Baal-Peor. The Midianites were subsequently routed, their cities burned, five of their kings killed, and the nation was destroyed while Balaam executed.
- The country the east of Jordan, now conquered by the Israelites was divided between the two tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh.
- Two hundred and fifty years later the Midianites regained power, and in confederation with the Amalekites and others attacked Israel, oppressing her for seven years. Gideon was used to bring deliverance in the Plain of Esdraelon, and utterly destroyed them (Judg 6:1-ch. 7). They then disappeared from history.

Moabites

- Moab was a son of Lot by his eldest daughter.
- Occupied the area east of the Dead Sea., bounded by the River Arnon in the north.
- Closely connected to Ammonites (via Lot).
- Were a settled, pastoral people, unlike the Ammonites that were nomadic. In the time of Ahab they paid a tribute of fleeces.
- Refused Israel passage through their lands at the time of the conquest.
- Balak, king of Moab, hired Balaam to curse Israel.
- Eglon, king of Moab, oppressed Israel for 18 years.
- Conquered by Saul.
- Conquered by David with cruelty. It is conjectured that this was due to the Moabites killing his parents after being entrusted with them (1 Sam 22:3-4; 2 Sam 8:2).
- Conquered and ravaged by a coalition of Ahaziah (Israel), Jehoshaphat (Judah) and Edom. The villages were levelled, pastoral land was filled with stones, the good trees cut down and the wells filled up.
- Miraculously destroyed in the Valley of Berachah when fighting against Jehoshaphat (2 Chron 20:25).

- Harassed Judah in the time of Nebuchadnezzar.

Philistines

- A sea people (not Semitic) from the Aegean (Caphtor, probably Crete) who invaded the south-west corner of Palestine, south of Judah (the southern Shephelah) and destroyed the Avims (Amos 9:7; Deut 2:23). 'Philistine' means 'stranger'.
- The name 'Palestine' is derived from the Philistines.
- Their chief towns were Gath, Gaza, Ekron, Askelon and Ashdod.
- There was a continual struggle between Israel and the Philistines from the time of the Judges to David.
- They disappeared in the time of the Romans.

Samaritans

- These were settlers from the east of the Euphrates brought to colonise the Northern Kingdom by Assyria.
- There were three colonisations: 1) by Shalmaneser (or his successor Sargon) after the capture of Samaria (2 Kg 17:24; 2) by Esarhaddon (Ezra 4:2); 3) by Asnapper (Ezra 4:10).
- This brought much idolatry into the land. However, after the Lord sent lions to kill them (2 Kg 17:25); they appealed for help and the king of Assyria sent a priest to teach them how to serve Yahweh (2 Kg 17:26-35). The result was a syncretism of pagan and Yahweh worship.
- After the return of the exiles there was conflict between the Samaritans and the Jews, particularly against Nehemiah. In time the Samaritans built their own temple on Mt Gerizim where Joshua had built an altar.

Kings of the nations

Kings of Assyria ³⁵	
Ashurnasirpal II	883-859 BC
Shalmaneser III	859-823
Shamshiadad IV	823-810
Adadnirari III	810-781
Shalmaneser IV	781-771
Ashurdan III	771-753
Ashurnirari V	753-745
Tiglathpileser III	745-726
Shalmaneser V	726-721
Sargon II	721-705
Sennacherib	705-681
Esarhaddon	681-669
Ashurbanipal	669-c.627
Ashuretilani	c.627-620
Sinshariskun	c.620-612
Ashurballit II	612-610

³⁵ Dating from FF Bruce.

Kings of Babylon Chaldean Dynasty	
Nabopolassar	626-605 BC
Nebuchadrezzar II ³⁶	605-562
Evil-merodach	562-560
Neriglissar	560-556
Labashi-marduk	556
Nabonidus	556-539

Kings of Persia	
Cyrus II	559-530 BC
Cambyses	530-522
Pseudo-Smerdis	522-521
Darius I (Hystaspis)	521-486
Xerxes I (Ahasuerus in the Bible)	486-465
Artaxerxes I (Longimanus)	465-423
Xerxes II	423
Sekydianos (Sogdianos)	423
Darius II (Nothos)	423-404
Artaxerxes II (Mnemon)	404-359
Artaxerxes II (Ochos)	359-338
Arses	338-336
Darius III (Codomannus)	336-331

God's of the neighbouring peoples

Gods and goddess vary according to locality and to chronology; they often changed over time or a foreign deity was suddenly adopted. Therefore, the following list is extremely basic. A full description of all the Near Eastern pantheons would occupy a large book.

God's affecting Israel, mentioned in the Bible

Adrammelech (male form) / Anammelech (female form)

Gods of the Sepharvites (2 Kg 17:31). Sun or fire gods.

Ashima

The god of the men of Hamath (2 Kg 17:30). Connected by some to the Greek god Pan, the god of shepherds but also the god of medicine.

Ashtoreth (Astarte)

Phoenician [Zidonian] and Canaanite mother goddess of love and fertility (1 Kg 11:5; 2 Kg 23:13). The supreme female deity of the Phoenicians, representing the productive power in nature. Said by some to be represented by the moon (the moon is often portrayed as a goddess, with the sun as a god) and by others, Venus (= Greek Astarte and Ishtar for Assyrians). Her worship was connected with the Asherah (pillars or carved trees in groves) and was licentious.

³⁶ This is considered to be the correct spelling and pronunciation of his name by academics. I have followed the Biblical spelling.

Baal

'Lord'. Canaanite storm god (1 Kg 16:31-32; 2 Kg 10:18-28); the name was used to refer to the many gods of the Canaanites.

Some distinguish between the Baal storm god of the Canaanites and the Phoenician [particularly Zidonian]³⁷ Baal sun god, or the planet Jupiter. The Greeks identified this god with Heracles. This was the supreme deity of the Phoenicians representing the active power in nature.

Worship of Baal was introduced to Israel by Jezebel (daughter of the Zidonian king), with Ahab rearing an altar for Baal in the house of Baal (1 Kg 16:32). Jehu later destroyed this image and slaughtered the priests of Baal. Baal worship was introduced into Judah by Athaliah and was put down by Jehoiada, but was later revived, being attacked by Hezekiah and Josiah.

Baal-peor

'Lord of the opening', a god of the Moabites (Num 25:3, 31:16; Jos 22:17); worshipped by obscene rites. So called from Mount Peor, where this worship was celebrated.

Baal-zebul

Fly god or 'Lord of the flies' of Ekron (2 Kg 1:2).

Not the Beelzebub of the NT, which is used to refer to Satan. Beel-zebul or rather, Bee-zebul, means lord of the air (from zebul = a habitation'), or lord of the dung-hill (from zebel = 'dung').

Bel

'Lord'. Another name for Marduk. Also the Aramaic form of Baal; Bel was the national god of the Babylonians (Isa 46:1; Jer 50:2, 51:44).

Chemosh

Moabite god of war (1 Kg 11:7; 2 Kg 23:13). Also a sun and fire god. Human sacrifices were offered to this god. Carchemish on the Euphrates = 'the fort of Chemosh'.

Dagon

'Little fish'. Philistine fish-god and god of grain (Jud 16:23). This idol had the body of a fish with the head and hands of a man. It was an Assyrio-Babylonian deity, the worship of which was introduced among the Philistines through Chaldea.

Marduk

Babylonian storm god, their chief god.

Molech (Milcom, Malcam, Moloch)

Ammonite national god and fire god (1 Kg 11:5, 7, 33; 2 Kg 16:3, 23:10). Human sacrifices were offered to this god. Israelites burned their children as sacrifices, which were offered in the Valley of Hinnom or Tophet. Victims were placed on a brass statue with arms

³⁷ Zidon (Sidon) 'a fishery'; named from the first-born of Canaan. A town on the Mediterranean coast, 25 miles north of Tyre. It was the first home of the Phoenicians on the coast of Palestine and a great city. It was the mother-city of Tyre. It lay within the lot of the tribe of Asher, but was never subdued (Judg 1:31). The Zidonians long oppressed Israel (Judg 10:12). After David, Tyre rose to the place of pre-eminence. Solomon entered into a matrimonial alliance with the Zidonians, and thus their form of idolatrous worship found a place in the land of Israel (1 Kg 11:1,33). It is frequently referred to by the prophets (Isa 23:2, 4, 12; Jer 25:22, 27:3, 47:4; Ezek 27:8, 28:21, 22, 32:30; Joel 3:4).

outstretched so that they fell into the fire. Molech worship was at its peak in the reign of Ahaz and Manasseh but was destroyed by Josiah.

Nibhaz

A god of the Avites (2 Kg 17:31), symbolised by a dog or a dog-headed man.

Nisroch

A god of the Avites (2 Kg 19:37).

Nebo

Babylonian god, the son of Marduk. A Chaldean god whose worship was introduced into Assyria by Pul (Isa 46:1; Jer 48:1).

Nergal

God of the men of Cuth (2 Kg 17:30). Babylonian god of war and hunting whose symbol is the 'man-lion'.

Queen of heaven

Canaanite goddess, equivalent of Ashtoreth (similar to Anat and Ishtar). Queen of heaven was also the moon goddess worshipped by the Assyrians as the power in nature (Jer 7:18, 44:17, 25).

Rimon

The god of Syria (2 Kg 5:18). Some say that he was a sun god.

Succoth-benoth

A Babylonian god (2 Kg 17:30). Probably equals Zirbanit, a goddess regarded as the wife of the god Merodach. After Bel and Beltis, Merodach and Zerbanit were the favourite gods of Babylon.

Tammuz

Sumerian storm god. A corruption of Dumuzi, the Akkadian sun god (= the Adonis of the Greeks), the husband of the goddess Ishtar. In the Chaldean calendar there was a month set apart in honour of this god, the month of June to July, the beginning of the summer solstice. At this festival, which lasted six days, the worshippers, with loud lamentations, bewailed the funeral of the god, they sat 'weeping for Tammuz' (Ezek 8:14). The name, also borrowed from Chaldea, of one of the months of the Hebrew calendar.

Tartak

A god of the Avites (2 Kg 17:31) worshipped in the form of a donkey.

Egypt

The Egyptians had a host of gods, some of which have already been mentioned; the chief gods are these:

- Osiris: god of death.
- Isis: god of life.
- Horus: sun god.
- Hathor: mother goddess.
- Re: the sun.
- Seth: storm god.
- Ptah: creator god.

Mesopotamia

- Anu: the head of the gods.
- Enlil: storm god.
- Ea-Enki: freshwater god.
- Sin (Nanna): moon god.
- Ishtar: fertility god.
- Ninurta: god of war.
- Tiamat: god of salt water.

Canaan / Syria

- El: head of the Canaanite gods.
- Anat: god of war.
- Mot: god of death.
- Adad: Syrian god of storms.
- Teshub: Hittite storm god.
- Hannahanna: Hittite mother goddess.
- Arinna: Hittite sun goddess.

The Inter-testamental Period

This is a period of 400 years of silence from God. The books of the Apocrypha give a narrative of this time, as well as Jewish and secular histories.

This period is extremely complicated with numerous events: rebellions, invasions, coups, assassinations, wars, etc. It is the period of Alexander the Great, the Maccabees, Antony & Cleopatra, Julius Caesar, Hannibal, Pompey, Augustus and many others. Only a very simplified chronology is offered here.

From a spiritual point of view the period is noteworthy for the cultural syncretism³⁸ of the Jews as opposed to the religious syncretism that had been prevalent before the exile.

Concise timeline

- 331 Persia falls to the Greeks.
- 327 Alexander invades India.
- 323 Death of Alexander.
- 312 Seleucus establishes himself in Babylon.
- 301 Palestine annexed by Ptolemies.
- 292 Antiochus I joint king of Asia.
- 282 Ptolemy II becomes king of Egypt.
- 280 Antiochus I rules in Syria.
- 198 Judah comes under Seleucid control.
- 182 Death of Hannibal.
- 175 Accession of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
- 167 Attempts to hellenise the Jews.

³⁸ The absorption of Hellenistic culture.

- 166 Maccabean revolt in Palestine.
- 165 Hasmonean revolt.
- 164 Rededication of the temple.
- 163 Death of Antiochus Epiphanes.
- 64 Pompey in Syria; end of the Seleucid monarchy.
- 62 Pompey makes Hyrcanus high priest in Judaea. Birth of Octavian.
- 27 Imperial authority given to Octavian, now called Augustus.

The most significant event is the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the rebellion of the Maccabees.

The Maccabees / Hasmoneans³⁹

The Maccabees

- Judas ben Mattathias, d. 166 BC.
- Eleazar, d. 161.
- Judas Maccabeus, d. 161.
- John, d. 160.
- Jonathan, 153-42.
- Simon, 142-34.

Hasmonaeans

- John Hyrcanus, 134-06.
- Aristobulus I, 104-03.
- Alexander Jannaeus, 103-76.
- Salome Alexandra, 76-67.
- Aristobulus II, 67-63.
- Hyrcanus II 63-40.

The Greek conquest

- The Persian assaults westwards had all failed. The battles of Marathon (490), Salamis (480) and Plataea (479) stopped the Persian advance into Greece. By 336 Greece was ready to attempt world conquest,
- Philip of Macedon, who unified Greece, planned an invasion of the Persian Empire (the hereditary enemy of Greece) but was assassinated.
- His place was taken by his son Alexander (the Great), who was barely twenty. With a small but highly efficient army he began the invasion.
- In 334 BC he crossed the Hellespont⁴⁰ and won the battle of Granicus, thus becoming master of Asia Minor (Turkey).
- His next victory was at the pass of Issus in 333. He did not pursue Darius III but went south to overrun Phoenicia. After besieging and securing Tyre he deprived the Persians of their Phoenician seaports. He then captured Gaza and went to Egypt where he was welcomed. He founded the city of Alexandria; before long two of the five sections were Jewish.

³⁹ 'Hasmonaeans' is used in rabbinic literature for the Maccabees. Custom uses 'Maccabees' as belonging to Judas and his brothers only and Hasmonaeans for descendants of the Maccabees.

⁴⁰ The ancient name for the Dardanelles, named after the legendary Helle, who fell into the strait and was drowned while escaping with her brother Phrixus from their stepmother, Ino, on a golden-fleeced ram.

- He then won the battle of Gaugamela, east of Nineveh, ending the Persian Empire.
- He then went further into India but died in 323 aged 33.
- The occupation of Palestine was given to his general Parmenio. It is likely that the Jews passed peacefully from one overlord to another. However, Samaria offered some resistance. It appears that the Jews were allowed religious freedom and reasonable toleration.⁴¹
- The death of Alexander in 323 led to strife amongst his generals⁴² out of which three kingdoms evolved by 315:⁴³ Macedonia, Egypt / Southern Syria (under Ptolemy) and the vaguely defined Syrian / Mesopotamian kingdom of the Seleucids.⁴⁴

The Jews in the Greek Ptolemaic Period

A simplified list of the Ptolemaic dynasty ⁴⁵	
Ptolemy I (Soter) satrap of Egypt	323-305 BC
Ptolemy I (Soter) king of Egypt [abdicated 285, died 283]	305-285
Ptolemy II (Philadelphus)	285-245
Ptolemy III (Euergetes)	247-221
Ptolemy IV (Philopater)	221-203
Ptolemy V (Epiphanes)	203-181
Ptolemy VI (Philometor)	181-145
Ptolemy VII (Neos Philopater)	145
Ptolemy VIII (Euergetes II)	145-116
Cleopatra III and Ptolemy IX (Soter II, Lathyrus)	116-107
Cleopatra III and Ptolemy X (Alexander I)	107-101
Ptolemy X (Alexander I) and Cleopatra Berenice	101-88
Ptolemy IX (Soter II, Lathyrus) restored	88-80
Ptolemy XI Alexander II	80
Ptolemy XII (Auletes)	80-51
Cleopatra VII (associated with her brothers Ptolemy XIII and Ptolemy XIV, and her son by Julius Caesar, Ptolemy XV Caesar.	51-30 BC

- In this period Palestine was under the rulership of the Ptolemies from the south (Egypt), which gave rise to Hellenistic culture. This rule lasted 100 years up to 198 BC. It is also noteworthy for its tax farming.⁴⁶
- Ptolemy secured Palestine by a victory at Gaza in 312. Palestine remained under the Ptolemies until 198 when it passed to the Seleucids.
- Ptolemy entered Jerusalem on a Sabbath and deported many people to Egypt, partly captives and partly volunteers who were given equal citizenship with his own Macedonians.

⁴¹ Josephus; Antiquities of the Jews, XI, viii.

⁴² Called Diadochi, or 'Successors'.

⁴³ Some say four: Macedonia, Thrace, Syria/Mesopotamia, Egypt.

⁴⁴ So-called after Seleucus I, [312-280].

⁴⁵ FF Bruce.

⁴⁶ This is when the Ptolemies sold a franchise for the collection of taxes in an area. The tax farmer could collect as much as he was able. The result was an economic system that enriched a few and impoverished many.

- Privileges were also given to the Jews in Antioch by Seleucus I, after conquering Babylon in 312. After this time the fortunes of the Jews depended upon these two kingdoms in rivalry to the east and west.
- Hellenism was both inward and outward. Its outward forms were social and architectural: the gymnasium, the stadium and the hippodrome gave people theatre, sports and drama. The senate-hall was for the city council (the emphasis was on city-states as in Greece); while Greek dress, eating-halls and many festivals entered social life. The inner forms were in manners and customs: a more naturalistic religion, multiple idols and cults followed by vice and a loosening of morality. Greek cities sprang up all over Palestine⁴⁷ and Jews could not avoid contact with Hellenistic culture. By the time of Jesus prominent Jews favoured Greek culture if it led to advancement. The Sanhedrin itself was organised according to Grecian fashion, while the priesthood became a mere formalised and ritualistic office. The Ptolemies considered the high priest to be their representative. This led to two factions: 1) the Hellenisers, who favoured Greek manners and ways; 2) Hebrew legalists and separatists (which developed into the Chasidim / Hasidim ('pious') – the party of the 'godly').
- Jewish tradition says that the Septuagint translation⁴⁸ was made under the second Ptolemy (Philadelphus, 285-245 or 247).
- In Palestine the vernacular became the Syrian Aramaic, which Jews adopted.
- From this point the Jewish Diaspora in Babylonia and Egypt, plus other areas, became far greater in numbers than Jews in Palestine. Jews also settled in large numbers in Africa and Asia Minor. The Septuagint became a source for Gentiles to understand Judaism. The first dated evidence for the existence of synagogues comes from Egypt, not Babylon where they possibly began. The law was studied in the synagogue but sacrifices occurred in the temple.
- In this period Jerusalem was treated as if it were a temple state with the high priest as the chief political figure. Ultimately he was given tax-collecting power, becoming the prime intermediary between Judaea and the ruling Greek dynasty.
- In the second half of the 3rd century Onias II was high priest, who was a lover of money. He withheld payment of the tribute to Egypt (20 talents of silver). His nephew Joseph (son of Tobiah) negotiated with Ptolemy Euergetes [247-221] and secured control of the taxes, having authority for 20 years. His son Hyrcanus had a royal estate beyond the Jordan for seven years until he committed suicide after being threatened by Antiochus Epiphanes. The legacy of this family (called the Tobiadae, from Joseph's father) was a feud between Hyrcanus and other members, which divided the people. This led to disorders that eventually precipitated the Seleucid intervention.

The Jews in the Greek Seleucid Period

A simplified list of the Seleucid dynasty ⁴⁹	
Seleucus I (Nicator)	312-281 BC
Antiochus I (Soter)	281-261
Antiochus II (Theos)	261-246
Seleucus II (Kallinikos)	246-226
Seleucus III (Keraunos)	226-223

⁴⁷ Such as the Decapolis, a district of ten cities east of the Jordan.

⁴⁸ The Torah (and later all the OT) in Greek for Greek-speaking Jews who had ceased to understand Hebrew in Egypt.

⁴⁹ FF Bruce.

Antiochus III (the Great)	223-187
Seleucus IV (Philopater)	187-175
Antiochus IV (Epiphanes)	175-163
Antiochus V (Eupator)	163-162
Demetrius I	162-151
Alexander Balas married Cleopatra Thea.	152-145
Antiochus VI (Epiphanes Dionysus)	145-142
Demetrius II (Nicator) married Cleopatra Thea, daughter of Ptolemy VI.	147-139
Antiochus VII (Sidetes)	139-128
Demetrius II (Nicator)	128-125
Seleucus V	125
Antiochus VIII (Grypus)	125-96
Antiochus IX (Cyzicenus)	116-95
Eight others up to 56 BC	

- The transfer of Palestine to the Seleucids occurred in the time of Antiochus III ‘the Great’ [223-187 BC]; often identified as the ‘king of the north’ in Daniel 11:12. His ‘casting down thousands but not prevailing’ refers to his defeat of the Egyptians in 218 followed by his defeat by them in 217 at Raphia. The ‘fortified city’ (Dan 11:15) is Sidon,⁵⁰ captured by Antiochus in 198. This year marked the downfall of Egyptian power in Palestine (v16) where Antiochus was aided by Jewish forces to expel the Ptolemaic garrison from Jerusalem and Antiochus now stood ‘in the glorious land’ (Dan 11:16) threatening Egypt.
- Antiochus III was defeated by the Romans at Magnesia in 190 (v18). He withdrew and was killed in a Persian town he had plundered to pay off the Romans.⁵¹
- He is said, by Josephus, to have been welcomed by the Jews into Jerusalem, giving them certain concessions (Jews were dissatisfied with the Ptolemies). He also deported Jews from Babylon to Asia Minor.
- Jews suffered in this time both when Antiochus beat others and was beaten by others. Furthermore, the process of Hellenisation continued. Hellenised Jewish aristocrats and the upper classes were more pronounced under the Seleucids. In this Greek dominance the writer of Maccabees I resumes recording Jewish history.
- Also in this time strife developed in the priesthood. Onias III, who succeeded Simon II as the last of the legitimate high priests, was rivalled by his brother Jason (‘Jesus’); with the latter becoming high priest for a time in 175-4 BC. Jason was aggressively Hellenistic. This appointment by Antiochus IV marked the beginning of a period when the traditional hereditary nature of the priesthood was set aside and the Seleucid (and later Roman) rulers appointed high priests.
- This was disputed by Menelaus, which led to disorder involving the Tobiadae. The Tobiadae (Tobiads)⁵² supported Menelaus but most of the people supported Jason. The Tobiadae and Menelaus went to Antiochus Epiphanes seeking help and asked for Jewish laws to be abrogated and to follow the Greek way of living.⁵³ This was the beginning of the crisis that led to the Maccabean revolt. Menelaus became high priest though he was not Aaronic but had offered Antiochus a larger bribe.

⁵⁰ As the commentaries by Albert Barnes; Adam Clarke; John Gill; Matt Henry; Jamieson, Fausset and Brown etc.

⁵¹ Wheeler Robinson, p172-173.

⁵² The Tobiads were a notable Jewish family. These related by family to the Oniads (family of Onias).

⁵³ Josephus; Antiq. XII, v, 1.

- Antiochus III died in 187, followed by Seleucus Philopater [187-175 or 176 BC].
- Antiochus IV 'Epiphanes' ('the Illustrious') began his reign in 175 BC. This was the 'king of fierce countenance' of Daniel 8:23. He took charge of a financially stricken empire threatened on all sides.
- He was an aggressive Helleniser, determined to force Greek ways on the people to unify the Seleucid kingdom. The Hasidim opposed this.
- In 169 Ptolemy VI declared war but was routed by Antiochus.
- While Antiochus was in Egypt there was a false report that Antiochus had died. This prompted Jason, the disposed high priest, to attack Menelaus, who took refuge in the newly established Greek citadel of Acra. Jason was eventually forced into exile because of his brutality to the people of Jerusalem.
- In a rage Antiochus stopped at Jerusalem on his return to sort out the problems caused by the priesthood, which he interpreted as rebellion. He reinstated Menelaus with military force and plundered the temple.
- In 168 Antiochus attempted to control Egypt, but was ordered out by a Roman senatorial ambassador. His further military ambition against Egypt was prevented by the order of the Romans, whose power was extending eastwards. Having previously been a prisoner of Rome, he knew what power confronted him. However, he now decided that the existing principle of tolerating Jews was a mistake and he began a militant Hellenisation of Judaea, aided by Menelaus. This initiated a virtual civil war between the Hellenistic innovators of the Tobiad family and the orthodox majority. This developed into persecution; thus Antiochus was the first pagan monarch to persecute Jews for their faith.
- In 167 Antiochus sent Apollonius to punish Jewish rebels, who entered Jerusalem on a Sabbath and slaughtered unresisting citizens, burned the city, tore down its defensive walls and fortified the Acra (the Hellenistic city established by Jason). He later enforced a syncretistic worship and prevented circumcision. Pagan altars were established throughout Judaea. Jews who refused to sacrifice on them or to eat pork were killed.
- On 15 Chislew (Kislev) 167 BC Antiochus sacked the temple and erected a statue and altar of Zeus in the temple court and ten days later a pig was offered on the altar of brunt offering (the abomination of desolation of Dan 11:31).⁵⁴ Persecution was instituted against Jews following the law; many Jews fled.

The Maccabees: phase one

- The first Jewish resistance was by an old priest called Mattathias of the Hasmonaean family. His killing of a Syrian officer and dismantling a pagan altar at Modin signalled a general revolt. He and his five sons⁵⁵ fled to the hills of Judaea.
- Many Hasidim followed him; though they were more concerned with defence of the law than politics. They conducted guerrilla warfare, attacked pagan altars and forcibly circumcised children.
- When Mattathias died in 166 his third son Judas Maccabeus (Judas the Hammer) became leader. After a series of amazing victories the Syrians were driven back, aided by Antiochus IV's need to defend the eastern frontier; even the regent Lysias was defeated.

⁵⁴ It should be noted that Dispensational interpretations of these Daniel passages (and some in Zechariah) are folly, not least in the gap of thousands of years between certain verses. Daniel and Zechariah are mainly giving prophecies about the inter-testamental period, not the Second Coming.

⁵⁵ John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar and Jonathan.

- Judas occupied Jerusalem and the temple area (but not the fortified Acra, which was surrounded). On the 25th Chislev in 164 he cleansed the temple and restored the sacrifices. This event became the Feast of the Dedication ('Hanukkah', Jn 10:22). In 163 Antiochus died. Judas' army spread out throughout Judaea rescuing Jews that had been persecuted by Gentile neighbours. At this point the Romans offered to intervene on behalf of Judaea. Unfortunately, the accepted ruler was not Judas but the despised Menelaus. Judas then besieged the Acra in 163.
- Antiochus V sent the regent and commander Lysias with an army that included war elephants. The Syrian army defeated Judas at the battle of Beth-zacharias and Jerusalem was besieged. Eleazar became the first of Mattathias' sons to be killed and some Jews held out in the recently fortified temple area.
- Lysias had to withdraw to respond to a threat from a commander called Philip to take the Seleucid throne. This forced Lysias to make terms with Judas and religious liberty was obtained in 162. Lysias also deposed and executed Menelaus.
- Demetrius (son of Seleucus IV and successor to Antiochus V and Lysias, whom he killed) appointed Alcimus (an Oniad) as high priest, who was accepted by the Hasidim; they then ceased to support Judas. Alcimus, however killed 60 Hasidim. He then had to appeal for help against rebels.
- General Bacchides was unsuccessful and withdrew but left forces to aid Alcimus. Judas pursued guerrilla activity. General Nicanor attacked his forces, but was defeated and killed. Judas sent an embassy to Rome to request aid against Demetrius; the alliance was formalised in 161.
- A huge Syrian army under Bacchides arrived. Many deserted Judas and, severely outnumbered, he was defeated and killed at Elasa. Under a strong ruler, the Seleucids could concentrate on subjugating Judaea. This ended the first phase of the Jewish war.

The Maccabees: phase two

- When Judas died in 161 (or 160) Jonathan, the youngest son, became leader who continued a guerrilla action but was harassed by Bacchides. At this time John (the third brother) was killed by Nabataeans. After the death of Alcimus the Syrian forces withdrew.
- Jonathan's forces grew in strength and later defeated Bacchides but, wisely, Jonathan sought peace terms. Bacchides left Jonathan in control of Michmash, living as a sheikh ruling over a limited part of Judaea's hill country.
- About 153 there was confusion about the Syrian throne. One contender, Alexander Balas, claimed to be the son of Antiochus IV and tried to dethrone Demetrius. Rome, Egypt and others backed Balas so Demetrius turned to Jonathan for mercenary troops and granted him power to raise forces plus he released certain hostages from the Acra. Jonathan moved to Jerusalem and fortified it. However, Balas offered Jonathan a greater prize and appointed Jonathan high priest in 152. This appointment broke Levitical law and disturbed the Hasidim. In 150 Demetrius was killed in battle by Balas. Jonathan was appointed governor of Judaea. The Maccabees had consolidated religious and political power in a great reversal of events in ten years.
- After Balas was murdered in 146 Jonathan supported Demetrius II, who confirmed honours on Jonathan, increased his territory and reduced taxes.
- Demetrius II was then driven out by Trypho (Tryphon, the general of Balas and acting on behalf of Balas' son, Antiochus VI). Jonathan had already changed sides and supported Trypho, and again honours were placed on him and Simon, his brother, was appointed governor from Tyre to Egypt. Jonathan again made an alliance with Rome and fortified Judaea.

- Meanwhile Trypho was scheming against Antiochus VI and sought to eliminate Jonathan as a threat. Trypho trapped Jonathan and killed him in 142/3, massacring his bodyguard. In nine years (152-143), by diplomatic (and some military) skills Jonathan had risen from local sheikh to high priest and governor of an expanded Judaea.
- Simon, the last remaining son of Mattathias became high priest-leader, who proved to be capable. The high priesthood became the hereditary possession of his family and he was the first of a line of kings in the Hasmonaean dynasty, noted for its treachery and godlessness, though Simon appears to have been pious and respected. He began by transferring allegiance from Trypho to Demetrius II, and Judaea was released from tribute in 142, known to the Jews as *'the first year of Simon the great high priest and leader of the Jews'* rather than the 170th year of Seleucid reign.
- Simon convened a council of priests and elders in 141 to legitimise his high priesthood, which was not of the lineage of Zadok, but was of a priestly family. Also the office of king and priest were historically separate. The great Synagogue agreed to accept him and his descendants for his deeds until the appearance of a true prophet. This decision overturned the torah. In 140 the high priesthood was regularised and vested in the Hasmonaean family.
- He then consolidated independence, which Demetrius II recognised, and there was a growing prosperity. He raised two fortresses holding out – Gazara (Gezer) on the coast road (safeguarding the route to Jaffa) and the Acra at Jerusalem, expelling the Hellenisers and turning it into his own palace. Although under Syrian control, Judaea was practically independent. Simon also sent an embassy to Rome.
- There were continuing struggles in the Seleucid power structures. Demetrius II was captured in Babylon while trying to drive out the Parthians and Trypho returned to claim the throne. He was challenged by Antiochus VII (brother of Demetrius II), who confirmed Simon's position but demanded the return of Syrian cities taken by him, including the Acra.
- Simon sent his sons Judas and John to meet a Syrian army under Cendebaeus. John (Hyrcanus) defeated Cendebaeus.
- Simon and Judas were treacherously murdered by Simon's son-in-law Ptolemy in 135. A plot against John failed, so he succeeded his father.

The descendants of the Maccabees – the Hasmonaean period

- John Hyrcanus [135-105 BC]: Jewish influence increased under the high priesthood of Simon's son John.
- Antiochus VII invaded Judaea in his first year and besieged Jerusalem, taking hostages and cities and requiring a heavy tribute to withdraw. However, Antiochus was killed in 128 in a war with the Parthians; Demetrius II reclaimed his throne. Taking advantage of Syria's weakness, John reaffirmed his treaty with Rome and began a series of campaigns to expand Judaea's borders to recapture lost cities.
- Judaeian power extended north, south and east. Shechem and the Samaritan temple on Mt Gerizim were destroyed. Syria was too busy with problems to intervene. This action increased the already serious bitterness between Jews and Samaritans.
- In Idumaea the historical Edomites were conquered and forced to convert and be circumcised. Having been included in Jewry, the Edomites became the most ardent of the Jews. Out of this people arose the modern Sephardim. Herod was an Edomite (Idumaeian).
- John's use of paid mercenaries and increasingly Hellenistic style of rule initiated a rift with the Pharisees.

- Out of the antagonism between the Hellenistic high priestly party and the Chasidim conservatives there arose two parties: the Sadducees ('sons of Zadok'), a class comprising of priests and nobles and the Pharisees ('separate ones'), a sect. John began as a supporter of the Pharisees but changed sides when one (Eleazar) challenged his right to hold the high priesthood. The disenchanting Essenes withdrew completely to establish the Qumran community in the desert, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found.
- Hyrcanus died in 105 and was succeeded by his eldest son Aristobulus (104-103), who was the first Hasmonaean to take the title of 'king'. He was also the first to imprison his brothers to prevent a coup. John's intention had been for his widow to succeed him and for Aristobulus to be high priest. But Aristobulus imprisoned his own mother and three of his brothers, taking both offices. His mother starved to death. His remaining brother, Antigonus, was executed. However, Aristobulus conquered the Itureans in the north of Galilee, forcing them to convert (thus the Jews' dislike of anything from Galilee, where Jesus lived).
- After a brief reign Aristobulus was succeeded by his brother Alexander Jannaeus [104-78, Robinson; or 103-76, Wood] who was immoral, alcoholic, brutal and unpopular. This period marks the decline in the family of Mattathias.
- Alexander was a cruel ruler focused on self-aggrandisement and engaged in many military campaigns. At one point his territories exceeded the possessions of the 12 tribes and matched Solomon's kingdom. At another point he needed the aid of Cleopatra.
- Bitterness between rival factions (especially the worldly and Hellenistic Sadducees versus the religious Pharisees) increased with Alexander favouring the Sadducees.
- There was a civil war and massacres; after being insulted on one occasion he loosed his mercenaries to kill 6,000 people near the temple. Alexander used Greek mercenaries while the Jews received aid from the Seleucid king (Demetrius III). The threatened Syrian overlordship led to many Jews supporting Alexander.⁵⁶
- Victorious, Alexander crucified 800 leading Pharisees, the first time this punishment was inflicted in Judaea. The wives and children of these men were killed before their eyes. This was followed by more civil war and confusion [78-65 BC] during which 50,000 Jews were killed by Greek mercenaries.
- Alexander died of fever and hard living in 78 and his widow Salome Alexandra reigned for nine years in relative peace. She favoured the Pharisees and her brother was the Pharisee leader.
- Her elder son Hyrcanus II was appointed high priest (under the control of the Pharisees) but when she died (67) her younger son Aristobulus II (67-63, supported by the Sadducees), aided by Antipater (who had fought his way to power in Edom)⁵⁷ seized the throne. He forced Hyrcanus to yield up both the kingship and the high priesthood.
- Antipater convinced the weak Hyrcanus that his brother Aristobulus, sought to kill him and persuaded him to take refuge in Petra under the Nabataean Arabs. Aretas, their king invaded Judaea on behalf of Hyrcanus. Aristobulus was defeated and fled to Jerusalem where he was besieged by Aretas and Hyrcanus. There was now a complete rift between the priestly faction (Sadducees, supporting Aristobulus) and the common people supporting the Pharisees (and Hyrcanus).
- It was then that Rome intervened.

⁵⁶ Note the ironies: the successors of the Hasidim are in league with the descendants of Antiochus Epiphanes fighting against the descendants of the Maccabees.

⁵⁷ Antipater's father (Antipas) had been made governor of Idumaea by Alexander Jannaeus. Antipater succeeded him.

The Jews in the Roman Period

The intervention of Pompey.

- Background: Rome was changing from the diplomatic, non-interventionist policy of the old republic to a military, imperialistic policy which developed into the Roman Empire. Rome began a strategy of acquisition and control thus Pompey sought to extend Roman rule to the Euphrates; this meant that civil war in Judaea had to be stopped.
- Pompey had been engaged in eastern conquests when, in 65 BC, his general, Scaurus, arrived in Damascus. Both parties appealed to Pompey for help. Initially Scaurus helped Aristobulus but in 63 Pompey arrived in Jerusalem, killed the priests at their sacrifices and restored Hyrcanus as the rightful ruler.
- After a three-month siege against Sadducean insurgents, and a massacre of 12,000, Jerusalem was crushed and Pompey entered the Holy of Holies (63). He was astonished when he found no idol inside.
- Hyrcanus was allowed to stay as high priest but could no longer use the title 'king' but was called 'ethnarch' (the Pharisees had objected to the concept of kingship). Judaea's territories were taken away so that Hyrcanus ruled only over Judaea, Galilee and Samaria. Jewish independence was finished. When Pompey returned in great triumph to Rome, Aristobulus, once king of the Jews, was one of his captives in the procession.

Antipater and Julius Caesar

- The history of the period between 63 (Pompey's intervention) and 37 (when Herod gained the throne) is complex and difficult to summarise. The Roman province of Syria, in which Judaea fell, was crucial as a Roman defence against eastern powers, such as the Parthian Empire. The long buffer zone of 400 miles of Mediterranean coast was strategically critical but also contained an internal lack of unity. In Judaea the cities were Greek (except Jerusalem) but the rural area were very Jewish. There was also contention between Jews and Arabs. Pompey reduced Jewish control to Judaea, Idumaea and Galilee and some territory east of the Jordan.
- Hyrcanus II was the ethnarch and high priest (not king, which satisfied the Pharisees) of Judaea but the real power lay with Antipater, the Idumaeen (Edomite). Rome had secured his power and so Antipater was determined to stay good friends with Rome. However Aristobulus, with his sons Antigonus and Alexander, escaped from Rome and renewed the struggles in Palestine. Alexander led a revolt in 57; the next year Aristobulus led another; again the next year Alexander tried again. In 52 there was a revolt led by a certain Pitholaus. None were successful. Aristobulus was soon killed but Antigonus continued the rebellion. These led to changes. Hyrcanus was deprived of secular authority and Judaea was divided into five districts under separate control.
- In 49 BC civil war erupted in Rome between Pompey and Caesar. Antipater and Hyrcanus supported Pompey but when Caesar conquered Pompey at Pharsalia (48 BC) Antipater deserted Pompey and went to Rome to offer friendship to Caesar. He also gave Caesar forces to support him in Alexandria.
- Cassius (who had plundered the temple in 54) was proconsul of Syria, taxing it heavily. When Cassius and Brutus were defeated at Philippi, the east (including Syria) passed into Antony's hands. Antony made Herod and Phasael (sons of Antipater) tetrarchs under the ethnarch Hyrcanus II. In all this Antipater was the real power over the Jews.
- In 47 Antipater was made a Roman citizen and appointed procurator ['an agent representing others'] of Judaea. Julius Caesar showed favour to the Jews and granted

them tax remission, religious freedom and permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem that Pompey had destroyed. Caesar died in 44.

- In 43 Antipater was poisoned but he had made one of his sons, Phasael, governor of Jerusalem and another, Herod, governor of Galilee.

The last of the Hasmonaeans

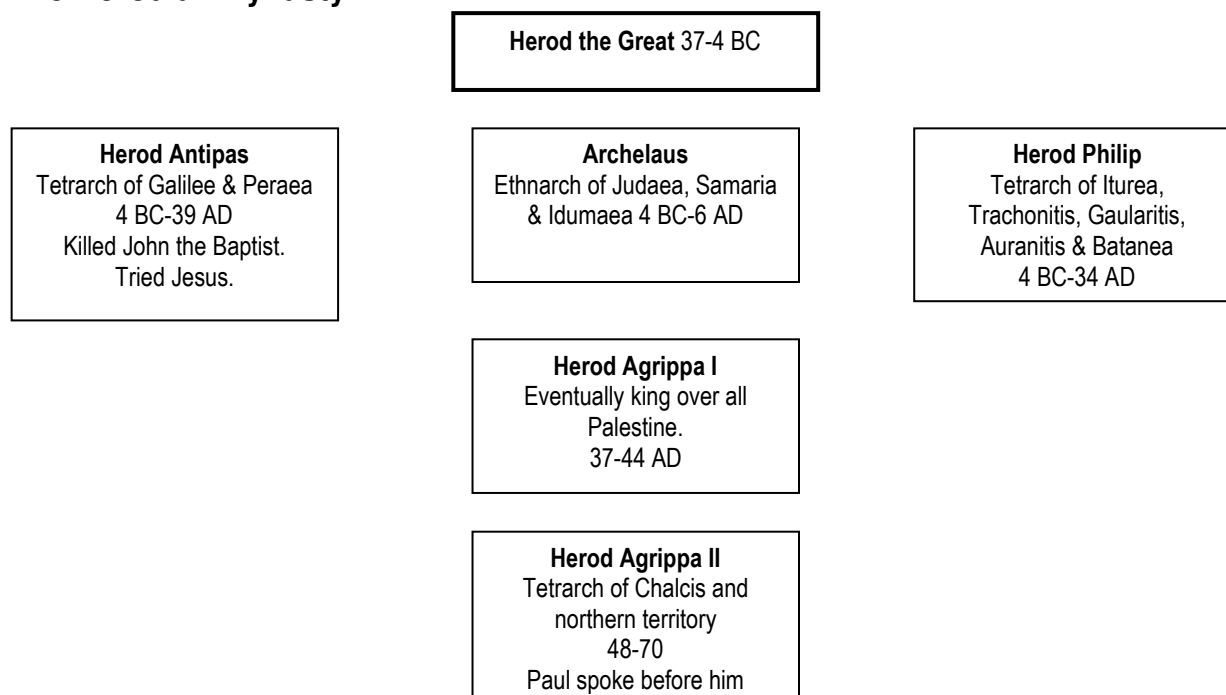
- Alexander Jannaeus had three sons: Hyrcanus was still high priest in Jerusalem; Aristobulus was dead but his son Antigonus was still active; and Alexander, who had died but left a daughter Mariamne, who had a son named Aristobulus.
- After Caesar's death Herod and Hyrcanus drew closer.
- In 40 Antigonus entered Jerusalem with an army of Parthians (who had invaded Syria). The people saw this as an opportunity to get rid of the Romans. Hyrcanus II was mutilated by Antigonus and carried off by the Parthians while Phasael committed suicide in prison. Herod escaped with Mariamne (his wife) and her brother Aristobulus. Antigonus seized the kingship and the high priesthood for a short time.
- Herod went to Rome to secure the support of Antony and Octavian for the claims of Aristobulus. However Octavian decreed that Herod should become king.
- The Romans drove out the Parthians. Finally the Roman army aided Herod in overcoming Jerusalem, after a siege of three months, which had been held by Antigonus. Herod returned to Jerusalem and in 37 the city fell to a combined Herodian and Roman army. Antigonus was executed, thus formally ending the Hasmonaean line. There were three survivors (the old Hyrcanus, Aristobulus and Mariamne) but these died soon afterwards by Herod's hands. Thus began the reign of Herod the Great.
- Josephus wrote that the Hasmonaean line was of noble extraction who had failed through internal dissensions, but that Herod was of vulgar family.

Herod the Great and the rebuilding of the temple

- Herod was then called 'the Great', and was effectively a king, but he was hated by the Jews as an Idumaeen and a friend of Rome. He was also full of vice. There was continual scheming in his court and later he had trouble with his own sons. To reign as long as he did in such conditions shows the force of his personality. Herod was focused upon power at any cost. Over his subjects he was brutal but to his superiors he was flattering and adroit; able to change sides when required.
- In the civil war between Antony and Octavian (later Augustus) for the Roman title, Herod had supported Antony but changed sides after Antony's defeat at Actium in 31, becoming indispensable to Octavian. Herod was useful as native king of a buffer state, while Octavian knew that Herod's power depended upon Rome.
- There are three periods to Herod's rule: a) consolidation of power from 37-25; b) the exercise of power (especially building projects) from 25-13; c) domestic tragedies, often of his causing from 13-4 BC.
- To consolidate his power he killed 45 supporters of Antigonus and used the wealth of his enemies to support Antony. During this period the Sadducees lose importance, as did the Sanhedrin. However, Herod placated the Pharisees to keep the people from rebelling. Herod rescued Hyrcanus but his mutilations prevented him from assuming the priestly role. Herod thus secured a priest from Babylon named Ananel.
- Alexandra, daughter of Hyrcanus, widow of Alexander (the son of Aristobulus II) urged Antony through Cleopatra to secure the priesthood for her son Aristobulus III. His sister Mariamne (wife of Herod) aided her. Initially Herod yielded but had him killed within a year. He soon had Hyrcanus executed despite being over 80.

- Cleopatra also caused Herod significant problems, including getting Antony to cede some of Herod's territory to her. (Both were worthy of each other in ruthless intrigue.) However her death after the battle of Actium (31) set him free. Octavian increased his territory.
- Herod later executed his wife Mariamne after she was accused by Salome (his sister) of trying to poison him (29). After an attempt to take Jerusalem when Herod was sick, he had Mariamne's mother, Alexandra, executed. In 25 Herod killed the last of the Hasmonaeans, the sons of Babas. From this point his power was consolidated. He later killed Mariamne's sons Alexander and Aristobulus in 7 BC. Augustus said that it was better to be Herod's pig than his son.
- Antipater, Herod's son by his first wife Doris, was executed for treachery.
- Herod's organising ability was put to work in rebuilding the temple on a massive scale, which took 46 years (Jn 2:20). Even this could not reconcile Jews to him as an Idumaeen. He also built fortresses against brigands at home and marauding Bedouin on the frontier, as well as a costly harbour at Caesarea, making it the most important city in Palestine. He also rebuilt Samaria (Sabaste). This was a time of prosperity.
- Herod could also do surprisingly beneficial things to keep his power. During a severe famine in 25 he melted down the gold and silver from his palace to buy corn from Egypt. In 20, during another time of shortage, he remitted a third of the taxation.
- A party of Jews arose that supported Herod, the Herodians (Mk 3:6, 12:13). However, a party also arose that fought against Herod called the Zealots (Lk 6:15). In general Herod was more friendly to the Greeks than the Jews. He had Greek scholars at court and promoted Greek culture, establishing theatres and stadia for games.
- Herod was the king that entertained the wise men seeking Christ and who massacred the infants at Bethlehem.
- Herod died of a foul disease, his mind deranged, in 4 BC.

The Herodian Dynasty



The imperial rule of Augustus

- Remember that Augustus is the Roman Emperor Octavian.

- It was Augustus that decreed that the world should be taxed and a census taken (Lk 2:1).
- His government has been described as ‘mildly fascist’. It prohibited secret societies and was very conservative. The objective of local governors was to keep provinces quiet. The governor was limited in power over Roman citizens but, within bounds set by the emperor, was totalitarian regarding everyone else.
- Cities had a measure of autonomy under their own elected magistrates. As long as they paid their taxes they preserved their own laws and customs. Individuals had freedom of movement and thought while Roman law, enforced by soldiers, reduced piracy and brigands. There was even a very efficient imperial postal service throughout the empire; an official letter could get from Rome to Egypt in 24 hours (better than today). The apostle Paul was able to take advantage of these conditions.
- Greek had long been the common language since the time of Alexander, and this continued to enable commerce and law. It was the tongue of eastern provinces, the language of Sicily and South Italy, the Greeks and Massilia in Gaul. It was also the speech of large parts of the population of Rome and the second language of Roman educated classes. Plutarch,⁵⁸ on visiting Rome in 90 AD, did not need to learn Latin.

The 12 Caesars			
Julius Caesar	Julio-Claudian dynasty	46-44 BC	Lord of the Roman world.
Augustus (Octavian)		31 BC – 14 AD	Christ born in this time.
Tiberius		14-37	Christ died in his reign.
Gaius Caligula		37-41	
Claudius		41-54	
Nero		54-68	Persecuted Christians. Paul died in his reign.
Galba		68-69	
Otho		69	
Vitellius		69	
Vespasian	Flavian dynasty	69-79	Destroyed Jerusalem
Titus		79-81	
Domitian		81-96	Persecuted Christians, banished John.

The five good emperors			
Nerva		96-98	
Trajan		98-117	Persecuted Christians.
Hadrian		117-138	Persecuted Christians.
Antoninus Pius		138-161	Rome's golden age but persecuted Christians.
Marcus Aurelius		161-180	Persecuted Christians.

⁵⁸ Plutarch (c.46–c.120), Greek biographer and philosopher; Latin name Lucius Mestrius Plutarchus. He is chiefly known for ‘Parallel Lives’, a collection of biographies of prominent Greeks and Romans.

Summary of Jewish history to the Bar-Kokhba revolt

Death of Herod the Great

- Insurrections and tumults had occurred before Herod's death, and increasingly as he was dying. In fact, the Zealots sprang up at this time. Herod's actual death prompted a full insurrection, which was put down by Varus, governor of Syria.
- Herod's three son, Antipas, Archelaus and Philip ruled a divided territory. Archelaus became ethnarch⁵⁹ of Judaea, Samaria and Idumaea; Antipas was tetrarch⁶⁰ of Galilee and Peraea; Philip was tetrarch of the north-east territory. Antipas ruled the longest and was most like his father.

Herod Antipas

- Antipas forged a marriage of convenience with the daughter of Aretas, king of the Nabataean Arabs. When he took up with Herodias and sought divorce, he roused the anger of Aretas and the Jews, as well as the condemnation of John the Baptist. His wife returned to Aretas, who subsequently warred with Herod and destroyed his army. Herod sought help from Tiberias, but he died preventing this occurring. Jesus ministered under this monarch.
- When Agrippa was installed as king over Philip's former territory, Herodias urged Antipas to appeal to Caligula for the same title as her brother. Agrippa accused Antipas of disloyalty and Herod was banished to Gaul with Herodias.

Philip

- Philip ruled for 27 years over a mixed people, more Syrian and Arab than Jewish.
- He was one of the better Herods.

Herod Archelaus

- Herod Archelaus ruled the tetrarchy of Judaea⁶¹ as ethnarch (4-6 BC), but the Romans denied him the title of 'king'. Judaea was then a satellite of Roman Syria under the rule of a prefect.
- He was the worst of the Herods. There was a joint appeal by Jews and Samaritans against his rule.
- Due to his misrule, Augustus deposed and banished Archelaus (6 AD) replacing him with a Roman procurator who ruled from Caesarea. Judaea continued as part of the province of Syria with the procurator being a subaltern of the Syrian governor.

The first procurators

- There were seven procurators in this first period before Agrippa I.
- After the removal of Archelaus from Judaea and Samaria in 6 AD the rulership was given to Roman procurators (a military office), who were middle class citizens not the senatorial rank as the Syrian legates (governors). However, these had a fair amount of independence until problems arose when the legate had to step in.
- Their administrative centre was Caesarea where non-Jewish but locally recruited troops were stationed in order to maintain peace.
- The procurator supervised the land and control tax but social matters were dealt with by the Jews through the Sanhedrin, in the hands of the Sadducean priestly aristocracy, and district councils.

⁵⁹ Ethnarch was slightly lower than a tetrarch.

⁶⁰ The governor of one of four divisions of a country or province.

⁶¹ That is Judaea, Samaria and Idumaea (Edom).

- The best known of this first period of procurators is Pontius Pilate (Pilate). He was not a weak man but constantly provoked the Jews; even when he provided a better water supply to Jerusalem. Eventually he was removed after his high-handed actions towards the Samaritans who appealed against him.
- It was under procurator Pontius Pilate (appointed by Tiberius, 26-36) that Jesus was killed.
- Up to the reign of Caligula (beginning 37) the Jews enjoyed toleration. When Caligula demanded worship, Jews refused. Petronius, governor of Syria, was ordered to set up a statue of Caligula in the temple but delayed (if he obeyed there would be rebellion; if he disobeyed he would be killed). At Alexandria there was a terrible massacre of Jews. Agrippa, a friend of Caligula persuaded him to cancel the order. Jews were spared by the murder of Caligula in 41 AD.

The first period of procurators ⁶²	
Coponius	6-9 AD
Marcus Ambivius	9-12
Annius Rufus	12-15
Valerius Gratus	15-26
Pontius Pilatus	26-36
Marcellus	37
Marullus	37-41

Herod Agrippa I

- Herod Agrippa I was the son of Aristobulus (executed in 7 BC by Herod) and the grandson of Herod the Great. When in Rome he was the friend of Caligula. In 37 AD Caligula appointed Agrippa to succeed Philip.
- Under Claudius in 41, and the efforts of his friend Herod Agrippa, toleration returned. Claudius conferred upon Agrippa the dominions of Herod the Great. For a brief period (41-44 AD) Herod Agrippa held sway over this.
- Agrippa's peaceful government enabled church missionary activity. The Sanhedrin, under Gamaliel I (Paul's teacher) had more authority than ever before. However, the Zealots continued to be a problem and Agrippa persecuted Christians to please the Jews.
- Agrippa died in 44. He was replaced by Roman procurators.

The later procurators

- The seven procurators who ruled between 44-66 drove the Jews to rebellion. In this period we see the rise of the Zealots. The assassins of the Zealots were called the Sicarii (see later).
- Felix and his successor Festus (see Acts) were of these procurators.
- These were mostly corrupt men and poor rulers with no sympathy for Jewish religious customs. There were constant problems including some massacres.

⁶² From FF Bruce.

The second period of procurators ⁶³	
Cuspius Fadus	44-46 AD
Tiberius Julius Alexander	46-48
Ventidius Cumanus	48-52
Antonius Felix	52-59
Porcius Festus	59-62
Albinus	62-65
Gessius Florus	65-66

The Jewish Revolt and war

- In 66 AD the Jews began to revolt against Roman rule in Judaea under the Zealots. The four years of this revolt led to some of the worst brutality in world history.⁶⁴
- There are four periods in this revolt: 1) The aggressions of procurator Florus (64-66) to the defeat of the Syrian governor Gallus in 66. 2) The subjugation of Galilee by Vespasian in 67. 3) The civil war in Jerusalem and Vespasian's campaign (68-69). 4) The capture of Jerusalem by Titus in 70.
- The actual outbreak was at Caesarea (where the Jews were dominated by Greeks) over a dispute about the right of way to a synagogue. Florus reacted with killing, scourging and crucifying a number of Jews. The remedial actions of the governor and of Agrippa II were useless. A declaration of war was initiated with the refusal to continue the usual sacrifices for the emperor in the temple; this quickly spread throughout the country.
- The Syrian governor marched on Jerusalem but suddenly withdrew, was attacked and then defeated by the Jews.
- The Jewish historian Josephus was involved in this period as leading a command in Galilee for the Romans.
- Civil War erupted within Jerusalem. There were three violent parties: Zealots led by John of Gischala; Zealots led by Simon bar Giora and Zealots led by Eleazar. Each held different parts of the temple and city. Vespasian reduced the rest of the country leaving these Zealots to war against each other.
- Vespasian left operations to his son Titus when he became emperor. Titus captured Jerusalem after a siege lasting from April to November of 70. In this terrible siege people were reduced to eating shoes and their own children. Even when the Romans had broken down the walls of the outer city, the castle of Antonia and the temple, John and Simon were still fighting each other in the Upper City (Eleazar was dead).
- Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple flattened in 70 AD. Many were scattered in the Diaspora. Josephus says that the hills of Judaea were denuded to supply crosses for thousands of crucifixions. According to church historian Eusebius, the Christians in Jerusalem heeded Jesus' warnings and escaped to Pella east of the Jordan.
- Rome struck coins celebrating this victory and a memorial arch was built. A garrison of 800 men occupied the ruins of Jerusalem. A search was made for all possible descendants of David.

⁶³ From FF Bruce.

⁶⁴ It is interesting that the two comparable periods of horrific atrocities cited by historians are the French Revolution and the Bolshevik Revolution. All three involved atrocities committed by Jews. Jews were behind the French Revolution in the form of the Jacobin party. Jews were also the driving force, leadership and finance of the Bolsheviks.

- Jews continued to live in the land and three fortresses held out (Herodium, Machaerus, Masada).
- Herodium and Machaerus fell in 71, Masada in 72. Thus Judaea was completely overrun.
- After this Judaism was centred in rabbinic schools, principally at Jamnia and Babylon.
- Domitian rigorously taxed the Jews who aided him in the persecution of Christians.
- During the reign of Trajan (98-117) the Jews in Egypt and Cyrene fought against the Greeks. In Cyprus the Jews massacred 240,000 people. Hadrian sent forces to quell the uprising in Egypt and Cyprus and banished Jews from Cyprus.
- Jews in Mesopotamia refused to pay tax and their insurrection was crushed by Lucius Quintus, who was then appointed governor of Judaea.
- Hadrian banned circumcision, reading of the Law and Sabbath observance and intended to set up a Roman colony in Jerusalem, including erecting a statue to Jupiter on the temple site. This prompted a messianic rebellion under Bar-Kokhba (or Bar-Cochba, 'Son of the Star'). Rabbi Aqiba acknowledged his claims to messiahship. Jews flocked to his standard and he fought against Hadrian for two years.
- General Julius Severus ravaged Judaea in defeating the Bar Kokhba revolt (132-136 AD). 985 villages were destroyed and most of the Jews were killed or sold into slavery, some managed to flee. Aqiba and Bar-Kokhba were executed; there were many massacres. Jerusalem was made into a new city, peopled with foreigners (no Jews were allowed), and renamed Aelia Capitolina (135 AD); Christians (now understood to be separate from Jews) were allowed in and a bishopric developed there. Judaea was renamed Syria Palestina (to spite the Jews by naming it after the Philistines).
- The Jewish population then centred on Galilee.

Timeline

- 37-4 BC: Herod (king).
- 4-6 BC: Archelaus (tetrarch).
- 6 BC: Province of Roman Judaea created out of Judaea, Samaria and Idumaea.
- 26-36 AD: Pontius Pilatus (procurator).
- Around 30 AD Jesus was crucified.
- 41-44: rule of Herod Agrippa (king).
- 44-66: seven procurators ruled.
- 66-70 AD: the Jewish Revolt.
- 70 AD: Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans. Over a million Jews are killed, 100,000 enslaved.
- 72: fall of Masada.
- 132-136: the Bar Kokhba revolt.
- 70-200: the Tannaim period whereby rabbis organised and commented on Jewish oral law. This led to the works: the Mishnah, Beraita, Tosefta and Midrash.
- 450-550 the Babylonian Talmud is produced to supersede all Judaism's religious documents.

Jewish parties in the NT period

While some discern up to 14 different sects within Second Temple Judaism,⁶⁵ there are really only a few that concern us. The most important are the first three. These were Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes, who may be described as the Formalists, the Freethinkers and the Puritans.

The Pharisees

From Greek *Pharisaios*, from Aramaic *prīšayyā* 'separated ones' (related to Hebrew *pārūš* 'separated'); or from *perishin*, the Aramaic form of the Hebrew word, *perushim*, 'separated'.

They were probably the successors of the Hasidim (Assideans i.e., the 'pious') that originated in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes in revolt against his Hellenising policies. The first mention of them is by Josephus as one of the three chief sects into which the Jews were divided (145 BC).

In the time of Jesus they were the popular party of the people acquiring popular favour and political influence. This influence was greatly increased by the extension of the Pharisees over the whole land and the majority which they obtained in the Sanhedrin. Their number reached more than six thousand under the Herods. In the time of Christ, they were divided into several schools, among which those of Hillel and Shammai were most famous.

One of the fundamental doctrines of the Pharisees was a belief in a future state. They believed in the resurrection of the dead, similar to early Christians. They also believed in divine Providence acting alongside the free will of man.

They were noted for their self-righteousness and their pride (Matt 9:11; Lk 7:39, 18:11, 12); in fact the Pharisees sought mainly to attract the admiration of men.

This sect was distinguished by strict observance of the traditions and written law and they commonly had pretensions of superior sanctity. They were minutely obedient in all matters appertaining to the Law of Moses but observing the tradition overlaid on this by rabbis. They taught that there was an oral law to complete and explain the written law, given to Moses on Mount Sinai, which was transmitted by him by word of mouth. The first portion of the Talmud, called the Mishna or 'second law', contains this oral law. It is a digest of Jewish traditions and a compendium of the ritual law, eventually it came to be esteemed far above the sacred text.

The Pharisees, pretending to maintain the Mosaic Law, multiplied minute precepts and traditional distinctions to such an extent that the life of the Jew was burdened by numerous, trifling, meticulous instructions, and the law was lost sight of. These traditions had long been accumulating. Examples of these regulations can be found in the Mishna: ritual washings before they could eat bread, special minuteness with which the forms of this washing were prescribed; their bathing when they returned from the market, washing hands after waking to rid them of demons etc.

Their system of religion was formal and not ethical, thus they had a very lax morality (Matt 5:20, 15:4, 8, 23:3, 14, 23, 25; Jn 8:7). They were, in reality, avaricious, sensual and dissolute (Matt 23:25; Jn 13:7). However, not all were morally lax; Josephus compared the

⁶⁵ That is the period between the building of the second temple after the Babylonian exile (about 420 BC) and the destruction of Herod's rebuilt temple in 70 AD.

Pharisees to the Stoics saying that they lived frugally; after all, there were such men as Nicodemus, Gamaliel, Joseph of Arimathea and Paul.

The first mention of them in the New Testament is in Matthew 3:7 where they are equated with the Sadducees as a 'generation of vipers'.

From the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the Pharisees showed themselves bitter and persistent enemies of the Lord. They hated his doctrines and his emphasis on inner purity rather than formalities and traditions, and so they sought every means to destroy his influence among the people. He denounced them, in the severest terms (see Matt 15:7-8, 23:5, 23:13-15, 23:23; Mk 7:6; Lk 11:42-44).

This animosity was continued after the destruction of Jerusalem when the Pharisees developed the rabbinical schools which re-invented Judaism, culminating in the anti-Christian Babylonian Talmud, the final product of Pharisaic enmity to Christ and godliness. Modern religious Jewry is Pharisaic.

The Sadducees

From Greek *Saddoukaios*, in turn from Hebrew *šēdōqī* i.e. 'descendant of Zadok' (2 Sam 8:17); thus 'followers of Zadok'.

They denied the resurrection of the dead (Matt 22:23), the existence of spirits, and the obligation of oral tradition, emphasising acceptance of the written Law alone, denying that the oral law was a revelation of God to the Israelites; thus they were enemies of the Pharisees. The Sadducees believed in the freedom of the will, which the Pharisees denied; they pushed this doctrine so far as almost to exclude God from the government of the world.

The origin of this sect is mysterious. It probably arose from the influence of Hellenistic customs and philosophy during the period of Greek rule. They were Hellenisers and political rulers. During the inter-testamental period there were many Sadducean high priests that also ruled the country.

It seems that the Sadducees, or Zadokites, were originally identified with the sons of Zadok⁶⁶ and constituted a kind of priestly aristocracy. The sons of Zadok then considered themselves as aristocrats; for example, the families of the high priest who had authority under the dynasties of Herod or the Hasmonaeans. These were for the most part judges of the governing class.

The first time they are recorded in Scripture is in connection with John the Baptist's ministry. They came to see him at the Jordan where he called them a generation of vipers (Matt 3:7).

The next time they are found is when they came to Jesus to tempt him. He called them 'hypocrites' and 'a wicked and adulterous generation' (Matt 16:1-4). The only reference to them in the Gospels of Mark (Mk 12:18-27) and Luke (Lk 20:27-38) is their ridicule of the resurrection and their denial of the existence of angels. They are never mentioned in John's Gospel.

There were many Sadducees among the elders of the Sanhedrin and seem to have been as numerous as the Pharisees (Acts 23:6). They showed their hatred of Jesus in taking part in his condemnation (Matt 16:21, 26:1-3, 59; Mk 8:31, 15:1; Lk 9:22, 22:66).

⁶⁶ Zadok being the priest who supported Solomon, when Abiathar took the part of Adonijah. 1 Kg 1:32-45.

They tried to prohibit the apostles from preaching the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:24, 31-32, 4:1-2, 5:17, 24-28).

They disappeared after the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Essenes

The name is similar to Hebrew words meaning ‘the silent’ or ‘the mysterious’.

They were a Jewish ascetic, perfectionist and mystical sect of the 2nd century BC - 2nd century AD in Palestine, who lived in highly organised communes. They practised a strict ceremonial asceticism, discouraged marriage, had community of property; they were temperate, industrious, charitable, opposed to all oaths, slavery, and war – in fact much like the Quakers. They were the forerunners of monkish celibacy and anchorite⁶⁷ asceticism. In zeal for the law they resembled the Pharisees.

They avoided dealings with other worshippers whose contact they regarded as polluting; thus they avoided the temple and sacrificed in their own homes. They are never mentioned in New Testament, no doubt due to their isolation from general society. They settled in communal groups in Engedi, on the western shores of the Dead Sea, and similar solitary places. The Essenes are considered to be the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

They originated about 110 BC and disappeared from history after the destruction of Jerusalem. Though not directly mentioned in Scripture, they may be referred to in Matt 19:11-12; Col 2:8, 18, 23). They are similar to the Egyptian ascetic mystics, the Therapeutae,

The Zealots

From Greek *zēlōtēs*, from *zēloun* ‘be jealous’, from *zēlos*. Simon, one of the apostles, was called the Zealot, so called from his pre-disciple exploits.

A sect aiming at an independent Jewish theocracy which resisted the Romans until 70 AD. From the time of the Maccabees there existed among the Jews a party who professed great zeal for the observance of the law. According to Josephus (BJ, IV, iii, 9; v, 1; VII, viii, 1) they resorted to violence and assassination in their hatred of foreigners.

They refused to pay tribute to the Romans on the grounds that this was a violation of the principle that God was the only king of Israel. They rebelled against the Romans, but were soon scattered and became a lawless band of bandits. They were afterwards called Sicarii, from their use of the *sica*, i.e. the Roman dagger.

The Herodians

A Jewish political party who supported the Herodian rulers in their policy, and in the social customs which they introduced from Rome. (Mk 3:6, 12:13; Matt 22:16; Lk 20:20). They were not a religious sect, but a court or political party.

They were united with the Sadducees in teaching the duty of submission to Rome, and of supporting the Herods on the throne. However, they also acted with the Pharisees in opposition to Jesus. Nothing is known of them beyond what the Gospels state.

⁶⁷ A religious recluse.

Simplified timeline of Israel's history

Based on an early date for the Exodus (1446) as opposed to 1290.

BC

- 2166 Abraham born.
- 2091 Abraham entered Canaan.
- 2066 Isaac born.
- 2006 Jacob born.
- 1915 Joseph born.
- 1886 Isaac dies.
- 1876 Migration to Egypt. Israel in Egypt 430 years.
- 1859 Jacob dies.
- 1805 Joseph dies.
- 1792 Hammurabi and Old Babylonian Kingdom.
- 1739 Israelites become slaves.
- 1595 Kassite period.
- 1584 Hyksos driven out of Egypt.
- 1526-7 Moses born.
- 1446 **Exodus. Birth of the nation.**
- 1446-1406 Desert wanderings.
- 1406 **Joshua enters Canaan.** Conquest completed in seven years.
- 1390 Death of Joshua.
- 1390-1375 Elders rule Israel.
- 1375-1050 Judges rule Israel.
- 1367 Othniel.
- 1162 Gideon.
- 1100? Samuel born.
- 1050 Saul becomes king. **United monarchy starts.**
- 1010 David becomes king, but Ishbosheth claim.
- 1003 David absolute ruler.
- 970 Solomon king.
- 931 **Divided monarchy.** Rehoboam king of Judah (Southern Kingdom). Jeroboam king of Israel (Northern Kingdom).
- 732 Capitulation to Assyria.
- 721 or 722 **Fall of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria;** population deported.
- 612 Fall of Nineveh (Assyria). Rise of Babylonia.
- 586 **Fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar.** Captivity of Judah.
- 539 Babylon falls to Persians.
- **538 First return of exiles to Jerusalem.**
- 516 Second temple finished.
- 420 Around this time the OT history is completed.
- 332 Alexander takes Palestine.
- 331 Persia falls to the Greeks.

- 301 Palestine annexed by Ptolemies.
- 198 Judah comes under Seleucid control.
- 166 Maccabean revolt in Judah.
- 146 Carthage destroyed by Romans.
- 63 End of Hellenistic (Greek) age.
- 27 'Augustus' title given to Julius Caesar Octavian.
- 4 **Birth of Jesus Christ.**

AD

- 14 Death of Augustus. Tiberius becomes emperor.
- 30 Death of Jesus Christ.
- 70 Destruction of Jerusalem.

Appendix One

Miracles in the Old Testament

Miracle	Place	Reference
Creation in 6 days		
Patriarchal period		
The flood	Global	Gen 7-8
Confusion of tongues	Babel	Gen 11:1-9
Fire passes between Abraham's sacrifice		Gen 15:17
Destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah	Sodom & Gomorrah	Gen 19:24
Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt	Zoar	Gen 19:26
Wombs of Abimelech's household closed the reopened.	Gerar	Gen 20:17-18
Birth of Isaac		Gen 21:1-3
Hagar allowed to find water	Wilderness of Beersheba	Gen 21:19
Healing of Rebekah's womb		Gen 25:21
Healing of Rachel's womb		Gen 30:22
Exodus		
Burning bush	Horeb	Exod 3:1-3
Moses' rod changed into a snake and back again	Horeb	Exod 4:3-4
Moses' hand turned leprous, then healed	Horeb	Exod 4:6-7
Aaron's signs	Egypt	Exod 4:30
Aaron's rod changed into a snake	Egypt	Exod 7:10-12
Aaron's rod/snake swallows up magicians serpents.	Egypt	Exod 7:12
The ten plagues	Egypt	
Waters turned to blood		Exod 7:214-25
Frogs		Exod 8:1-15
Gnats		Exod 8:16-19
Flies		Exod 8:20-32
Murrain (cattle plague)		Exod 9:1-7
Boils		Exod 9:8-12
Hail		Exod 9:13-35
Locusts		Exod 10:1-20
Darkness		Exod 10:21-29
Death of firstborn		Exod 11:12-36
Parting of Red Sea	Egypt	Exod 14:21-31
Wilderness		
The pillar and the cloud	Wilderness	Exod 13:21 etc.
Water sweetened	Marah (wilderness)	Exod 15:23-25
Provision of Manna	Wilderness	Exod 16:14-35
Water from the rock at Horeb	Massah / Meribah (i.e. Rephidim)	Exod 17:5-7
Miriam struck with leprosy then cured.	Wilderness	Num 12:10-15
Aaron's rod budded	Kadesh	Num 17:1ff
Defeat of Amalek	Rephidim	Exod 17:9-13
Moses' face shines with glory	Sinai	Exod 34:29-35
Fire consumed the burnt offering	Sinai	Lev 9:24
Nadab and Abihu destroyed by fire	Sinai	Lev 10:1-2
Burning of some complaining people	Taberah	Num 11:1-3
Destruction of Dathan and Abiram and their families by divine earthquake		Num 16:27-33
Fire from the LORD consumed two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense with Korah.		Num 16:36
14,700 killed by plague		Num 16:46-50
Water from the rock	Desert of Zin / Kadesh / Meribah	Num 20:7-13
Victory over King Arad	Hormah	Num 21:1-3

Fiery snakes	The road to Atharim; from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea.	Num 21:5-9
Healing by brazen serpent	The road to Atharim; from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea.	Num 21:8-9
Moses buried by God in secret	Moab, opposite Beth Peor.	Deut 34:5-7
Balaam's ass speaks	Pethor	Num 22:21-35
Conquest		
Dividing the River Jordan	Jordan	Josh 3:14-17
Destruction of the walls of Jericho	Jericho	Josh 6:6-20
Sun stands still	Gibeon	Josh 10:12-14
Hailstorm destroys several armies	Beth Horon as far as Azekah.	Josh 10:11
Judges		
Gideon's sacrifice consumed by fire	Ophrah	Jdg 6:21
Gideon's fleece	Ophrah	Jdg 6:37-40
Victory over the Midianites	The valley by the hill of Moreh	Jdg 7
Manoah's sacrifice consumed by fire	Zorah	Jdg 13:19-20
Samson's strength	Various places	Jdg 14:6 etc.
Water from the rock for Samson	En-hakkore	Jdg 15:19
1-2 Samuel		
Idol of Dagon falls down before the Ark, falls again and is broken.	Ashdod	1 Sam 4:1-5
Philistines struck with tumours	Ashdod	1 Sam 4:6
Ark taken by two milk cows away from calves	Philistia	1 Sam 6:2-12
50,070 men of Beth Shemesh, struck because they had looked into the ark.	Beth Shemesh	1 Sam 6:19
Thunder from God confuses Philistines during battle so that they were overcome.	Mizpah (Ebenezer)	1 Sam 7:10
Thunder and rain upon Samuel's prayer.	Gilgal	1 Sam 12:18
The sound in the mulberry trees.	Rephaim	2 Sam 5:23-25
Uzzah struck dead.	Perez-uzzah	2 Sam 6:7
1-2 Kings / 2 Chron		
Jeroboam's hand withered	Bethel	1 Kg 13:4
Altar split apart	Bethel	1 Kg 13:5
Syrians made to panic	Samaria	2 Kg 7:6-7
Lions sent into Samaria in judgment	Samaria	2 Kg 17:25
Sennacherib's army (185,000) destroyed	Jerusalem	2 Kg 19:35
Holding back the sun by Isaiah's prayer	Jerusalem	2 Kg 20:9-11
Fire consumes Solomon's sacrifice	Jerusalem	2 Chron 7:1
Uzziah struck with leprosy	Jerusalem	2 Chron 26:16-21
Hezekiah cured and life prolonged	Jerusalem	Isa 38:1-5
Elijah		
Widow of Zarephath's flour	Zarephath	1 Kg 17:14-16
Widow's son resurrected	Zarephath	1 Kg 17:17-24
Fire from heaven on Mt Carmel.	Carmel	1 Kg 18:30-38
Drought upon Elijah's prayer	Israel	1 Kg 17:1; Jm 5:17
Elijah fed by ravens	The Brook Cherith	1 Kg 17:6
Rain upon Elijah's prayer	Israel	1 Kg 18:41-45
Elijah given speed to outrun a chariot	From Carmel to Jezreel (16 miles).	1 Kg 18:46
Elijah fed by an angel then fasted 40 days	The wilderness near Beersheba	1 Kg 19:1-8
Ahaziah's captain and 50 men killed by fire from heaven.	Samaria	2 Kg 1:10
Ahaziah's second captain and 50 men killed by fire from heaven.	Samaria	2 Kg 1:12
River Jordan divided	Jordan	2 Kg 2:7-8
Ascent to heaven	Jordan	2 Kg 2:11

Elisha		
River Jordan divided	Jordan	2 Kg 2:14
Waters of Jericho healed	Jericho	2 Kg 2:21-22
Elisha's curse causes she-bears to kill 42 men	Bethel	2 Kg 2:24
Water for Jehoshaphat's army	Moab	2 Kg 3:16-20
Widow's oil multiplied	Shunem	2 Kg 4:2-7
Shunammite's son resurrected	Shunem	2 Kg 4:32-37
Toxic stew purified	Gilgal	2 Kg 4:38-41
100 men fed with 20 loaves	Gilgal	2 Kg 4:42-44
Naaman cured of leprosy	Samaria	2 Kg 5:10-14
Leprosy inflicted on Gehazi	Samaria	2 Kg 5:20-27
Iron axe-head floats	Jordan	2 Kg 6:5-7
Elijah's prescience	Dothan	2 Kg 6:12
Opening eyes of servants to heavenly visions	Dothan	2 Kg 6:17
Syrian army struck blind	Dothan	2 Kg 6:18-20
Syrian army cured of blindness	Samaria	2 Kg 6:20
Elisha's bones revive the dead	Elisha's tomb	2 Kg 13:21
Daniel / Jonah		
Deliverance from fiery furnace	Babylon	Dan 3:19-27
Daniel in the lion's den	Babylon	Dan 6:16-23
Sea calmed	Mediterranean Sea	Jonah 1:15
Jonah in the belly of the great fish	Mediterranean Sea	Jonah 2:1-10
Gourd grows for shade then dies	Nineveh	Jonah 4:5-7

Observations

Modern Christians seem to strive after miracles as if they give authenticity and authority to someone's ministry. Jesus warned about this desire saying that it was a 'wicked and adulterous generation' that sought such things.⁶⁸

The appearances of miracles in the OT reveal some interesting characteristics; chiefly that miracles occurred mostly in times of apostasy and rebellion. Let us gather them into groups from the time of Moses.

In the time of the Exodus the prevalence of miracles were associated with judgment on the Egyptians.

The many miracles that appeared in the time of the wilderness wanderings were associated with apostasy and a rebellious people. Despite multiple miracles on a large scale, the vast majority of the people that saw them died in sin and rebellion, being rejected by God. Only Caleb and Joshua avoided this.

The miracles that appeared during the conquest were mostly associated with judgment on the Canaanites.

The miracles during the time of the Judges were in a period of great apostasy and rebellion, but also judgment on God's enemies.

The miracles in the period of Samuel were mostly acts of judgment on God's enemies.

⁶⁸ Matt 12:39, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign,' Matt 16:4, 'A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign.' Mk 8:12, 'He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign?"'

The miracles in the time of Kings and Chronicles were almost all acts of judgment on God's enemies or during times of apostasy and rebellion.

The miracles performed by Elijah were actions of judgment on God's enemies; provision for God's servant; signs of authority and provision for a widow.

The miracles performed by Elisha were provision and healing for God's people; judgment on God's enemies; signs of authority; discipline for sin and healing of a Gentile.

The miracles in Babylon were during a time of judgment on God's people and were warnings to Gentiles.

The miracles involving Jonah were responses to his disobedience.

Apart from one or two cases (such as the heavenly fire consuming the sacrifice at the dedication of the temple), most miracles were in periods of apostasy, or were judgments on God's enemies, or were reactions to sin.

There were few miracles during times of religious revival and fewer still in times of peace and security.

Most miracles were warnings during times of rebellion and apostasy. These were to a theocratic people and such a situation does not apply to any nation today.

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I have avoided mentioning the longer (such as William Smith) and multi-volume histories (such as Alfred Edersheim) or those that are more liberal (such as John Bright). For further study I would recommend FF Bruce for an excellent shorter study and Merrill or Wood for a solid survey.

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