

A Firm Catholic Foundation Series

A CONCISE CATHOLIC GUIDE TO THE BIBLE



*Understand Scripture
through Summaries,
Maps, and Timelines*

FATHER MATTHEW NATHAN

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TO THE BIBLE**

***UNDERSTAND SCRIPTURE THROUGH SUMMARIES,
MAPS AND TIMELINES***

**WRITTEN BY
FATHER MATTHEW NATHAN**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

How is the book unique?

Part 1: The Old Testament

Genesis (Chapters 1-11)

Genesis (Chapters 12-50)

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

1 Samuel

2 Samuel

Psalms

1 Kings

Proverbs

2 Kings

Transition: The Prophetic Books

Amos

Hosea

1st Isaiah (Chapters 1-39)

Micah

Transition: Destruction of the Northern Kingdom

Zephaniah

Nahum

Habakkuk

Jeremiah

Lamentations

Obadiah

Ezekiel

2nd Isaiah (Chapters 40-55)

Ezra

1 Chronicles

2 Chronicles

Baruch

Haggai

Zechariah

Nehemiah

3rd Isaiah (Chapters 56-66)

Malachi

Joel

Job
Jonah
Song of Songs
Ecclesiastes
Esther
Judith
Tobit
1 Maccabees
Daniel
2 Maccabees
Sirach
Wisdom

Part 2: The New Testament

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John
Acts
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
Galatians
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Romans
Philippians
Colossians
Philemon
1 Timothy
Titus
2 Timothy
Hebrews
James
1 Peter
Ephesians
Jude
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Revelation

Conclusion

Appendices

INTRODUCTION

Friends, I have good news and bad news when it comes to reading the Bible:

- The good news: The Bible tells a coherent story of God's love for us.
- The bad news: The Bible is not arranged as a coherent story of God's love for us.

That is where this book comes in. I have always had a desire to present the whole Bible as a continuous, accessible story. Since most people find the Bible overwhelming (it is around 1500 pages), I wanted to make an overview so everyone (from beginners to experts) could get a big picture view of the Bible.

I will be explaining the 73 biblical books in an orderly fashion, as Catholics understand them, highlighting the following:

- 1) Catholic Presentation: The translation, historical notes, and most of the dates are taken from the New American Bible, revised edition (2010, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine). This is the Bible produced by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- 2) Catholic Interpretation:
 - a. We Catholics recognize that the Bible contains God's truth expressed through a variety of literary forms like poetry, instructional letters, and stylistic narratives. As a result, we have to continually keep in mind the kind of genre we're reading. The Vatican II document Constitution on Divine Revelation states: "Since God speaks in sacred Scripture through men in human fashion, the interpreter of sacred Scripture, in order to see clearly what God wanted to communicate to us, should carefully investigate what meaning *the sacred writers really intended*, and what God wanted to manifest through their words." "Those who search out the intention of the sacred writers must among other things, have regard for "*literary forms*". For truth is proposed and expressed in a variety of ways, depending on whether a text is history of one kind or another, to whether its form is that of prophecy, poetry, or some other type of speech. The interpreter

must investigate what meaning the sacred writer actually expressed in particular circumstances as he used contemporary literary forms in accordance with the situation of his own time and culture.” “For the correct understanding of what the sacred author wanted to assert, due attention must be paid to the customary and characteristic styles of perceiving, speaking and narrating which prevailed at the time of the sacred writer, and to the customs men normally followed in that time period in their everyday dealings with one another”. Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, no.12.

- b. Almost everything written in the Bible is recorded from previous oral traditions. This means the biblical authors were not only recording events but also interpreting how God was present as the events played out. The commentaries offered by the authors are just as inspired by God as the events themselves.
- c. Our natural temptation is to read the Bible as a long (and confusing) record of “stuff God wants to tell us”. Throughout the book, I utilize the aforementioned Catholic interpretation principles so we don’t fall into that trap.

HOW IS THIS BOOK UNIQUE?

This book has the following learning tools to help our comprehension:

Summaries

The summaries of each book will flow with each other so we can have a “story like” feel to the Bible.

Important Verse

A verse from the biblical book that communicates an essential truth the author was trying to communicate.

Time References

A timeline accompanies each biblical book so we can see how it flows with salvation history.

Graphics

Maps and charts help visualize the settings for the biblical texts and how different biblical texts fit together.

My hope is that this overview will give you the confidence to read any section of the Bible, knowing how it fits into the larger story of God’s love for us!

PART 1: THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament consists of the first 46 of the Bible's 73 books. Specifically, it refers to the part of the Bible that comes before Jesus. The word "Testament" means "Covenant". The Old Testament recounts God's action in the history of the Jewish people. A good summary of this covenant is in Exodus 6:7, "I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God."

GENESIS (CHAPTERS 1-11)

Summary

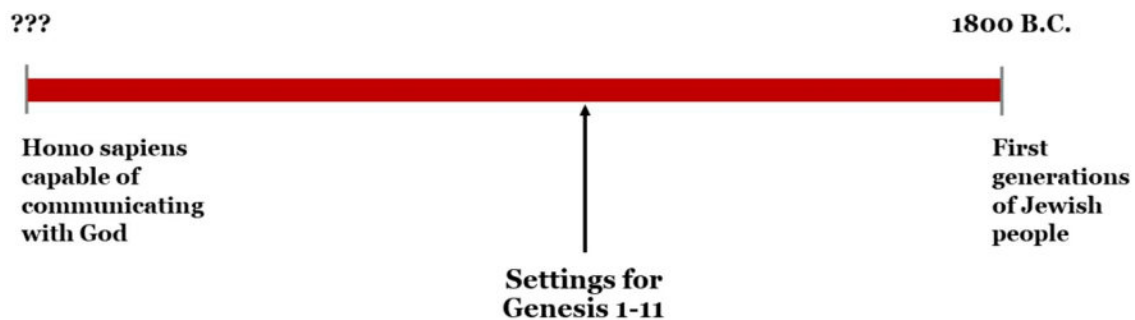
Genesis means “beginnings”. In chapters 1-11, the divine author adapts Mesopotamian creation-flood legends to explain the beginnings of the human relationship with God. Although God created us to share his love, we continually rejected him.

Important Verse

“God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good” (Gen. 1:31).

Time Reference

Chapters 1–11 covers the creation of the world and ends right before the beginnings of the Jewish people.



Graphic

The setting for the first scenes of Genesis is Mesopotamia, where the famous stories the garden of Eden, the flood, and the tower of Babel take place.



GENESIS (CHAPTERS 12–50)

Summary

Although humanity rejects God, he still desires communion with his creation. An ancient Jewish tradition suggests that God, having been rebuffed in the attempt to forge a relationship with the nations, decided to concentrate on one nation in the hope that it would eventually bring in all nations¹. That “nation” is the Jewish people. Genesis 12–50 focuses on the beginnings of the Jewish people—a people that God has chosen as his own and will eventually use to bring all humanity to him. Although they are one people, the Jews trace their ancestry to twelve different “tribes”, whose beginnings are explained near the end of the book of Genesis.

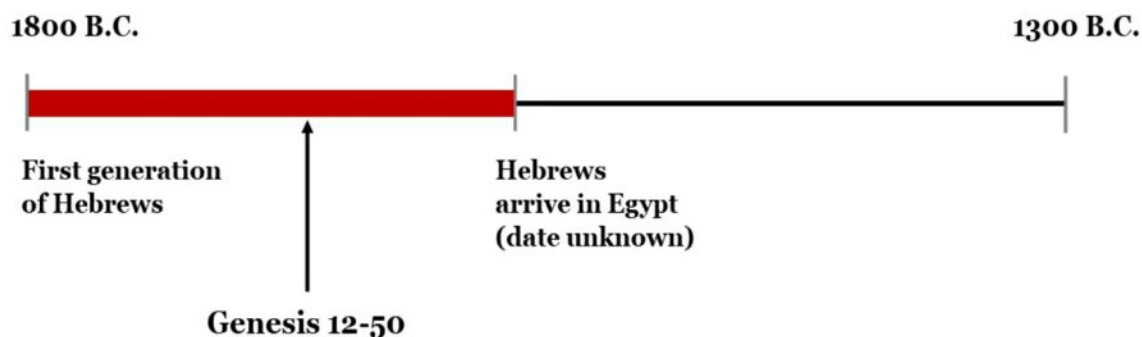
The Jewish people are called by different names in different books of the Bible. In this book, we will use “Hebrew,” “Jewish People,” “Chosen People” and “Israelites” as synonyms. The word used will usually depend on which word the book’s author utilized.

Important Verse

God told Abraham: “All the land you see I will give to you and your descendants forever. I will make your descendants like the dust of the earth; If anyone could count the dust of the earth, your descendants too might be counted” (Gen. 13:15–16).

Time Reference

Nobody can tell exactly when the first Jewish generations started, but scholars put it around 1800 B.C. Genesis ends with the Hebrews in Egypt sometime before 1300 B.C.



Graphic

The first generations of Hebrews started when Abraham left his home in

Mesopotamia (Ur, then Haran) and went to the land of Canaan. God promised Abraham that he would eventually have many descendants occupying that land. The book of Genesis goes through the first generations of the Hebrews occupying the promised land and ends with all of them in Egypt because of a famine.



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Genesis," <http://www.usccb.org/bible/genesis/o>

EXODUS

Summary

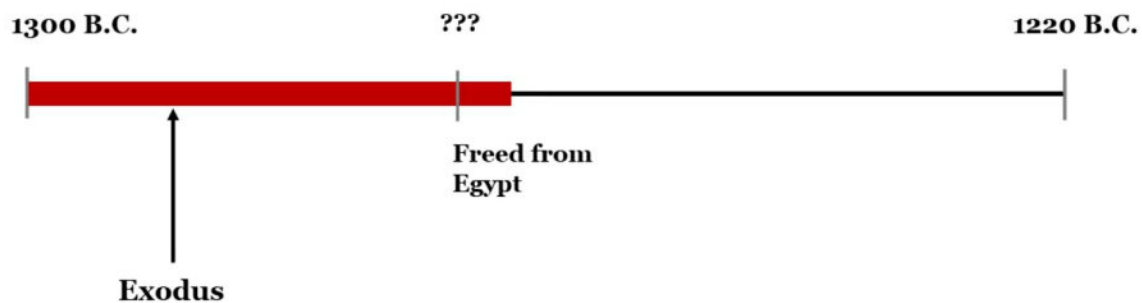
Abraham's descendants multiply for many generations in Egypt, but eventually become enslaved. God, faithful to his promise to Abraham, raises up a leader named Moses to bring the people out of slavery and return them to the promised land.

Important Verse

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Ex. 20:2).

Time Reference

There's non-biblical evidence (Egyptian war records) that the Jewish people had settled in the promised land by 1220 B.C., so scholars put the book of Exodus in around the 13 century B.C.



Graphic

According to other parts of the Bible, the Jews were enslaved for around 400 years (see Gen. 15:13 and Acts 4:6). No one knows the exact route from Egypt or location of Mt. Sinai, but this map shows the traditional route and Mt. Sinai location. There, Moses gives the Ten commandments and instructs the people on the worship of God.



LEVITICUS

Summary

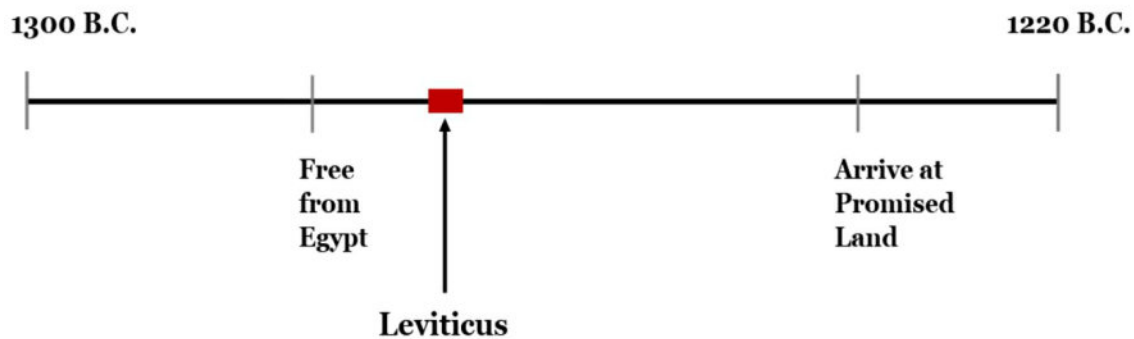
While encamped at Mount Sinai, Moses gives instructions on how to worship God and how the people should treat one another.

Important Verse

“The Lord said to Moses: Speak to the Israelites and tell them: The following are the festivals of the Lord, which you shall declare holy days. These are my festivals” (Lev. 23:1–2).

Time Reference

The setting for Leviticus is Mount Sinai, near the beginning of their journey, where they stay for more than a year.

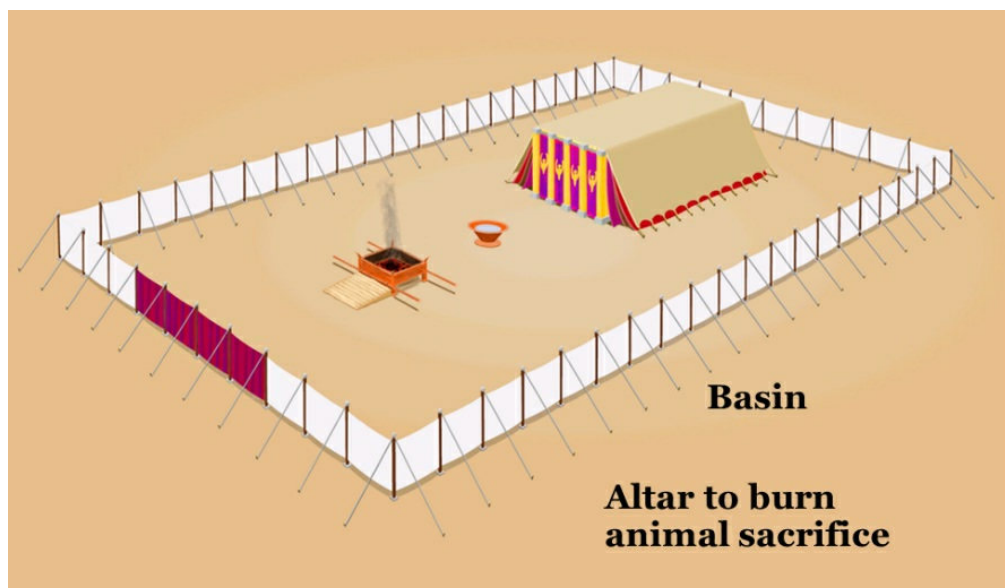
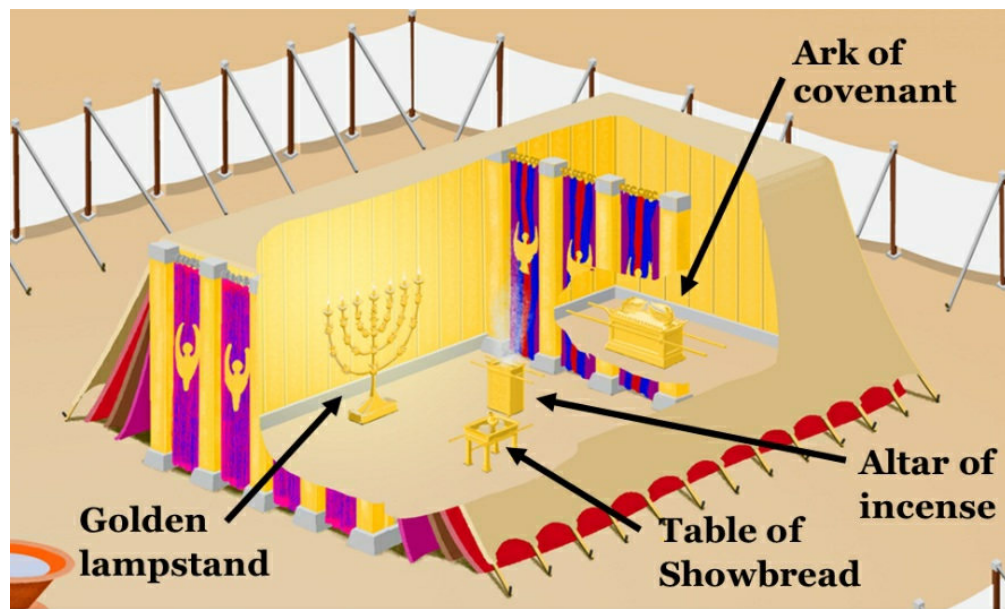


Graphic

The people set up tents as they traveled, and in the center of the encampment was the tent of meeting, a place where worship took place. Here, Moses would communicate with God in a cloud and the priests would offer animal sacrifices to God. Here are some of the important structures:

- Ark of the Covenant: where the Ten Commandments were held.
- Table of Showbread: twelve loaves of bread (symbolizing the twelve tribes of the Jewish people) were placed on a table to remind the people that God was their life and nourishment.
- Altar of Incense: meant to perfume the tent with “sweet spices” (see Ex. 30:34–38).
- Golden Lampstand: to keep the tent lit.
- Basin: where the priests would wash themselves before offering sacrifice.
- Altar of Sacrifice: where the priests would offer animal sacrifices to God.

See Appendix 2 for progression of central sites of worship throughout the Bible.



NUMBERS

Summary

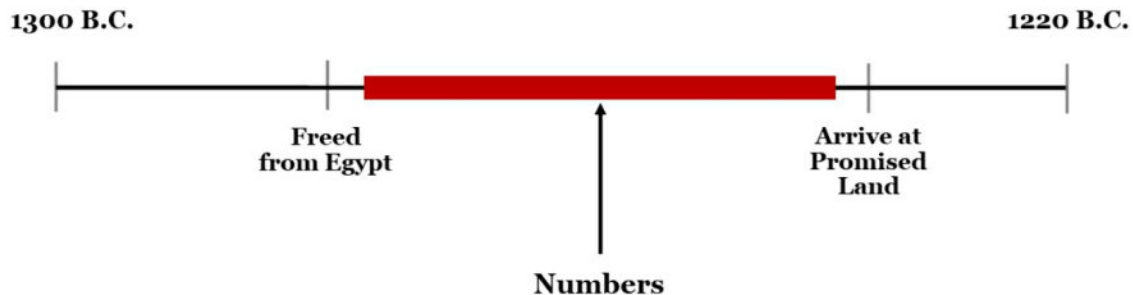
After spending roughly one year on Mount Sinai, God calls his people to continue their journey toward the promised land. They encounter many obstacles, like internal bickering and neighboring countries impeding them. As a result of their rebellion, God tells the people that the original generation that left Egypt will not enter the promised land, only their children will see it.

Important Verse

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: “Of all your men twenty years or more, enrolled in your registration, who grumbled against me, not one of you shall enter the land where I solemnly swore to settle you, except Caleb, son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, son of Nun” (Num. 14:29–30).

Time Reference

The inspired author records the whole trip to the promised land as taking forty years. Numbers covers roughly thirty-eight or so of those years.



Graphic

During the book of Numbers, God's people circle and wander around the desert as a punishment for their disobedience. Also, as punishment for their disobedience, almost none of the original generation that fled Egypt (not even Moses) would reach the promised land.



DEUTERONOMY

Summary

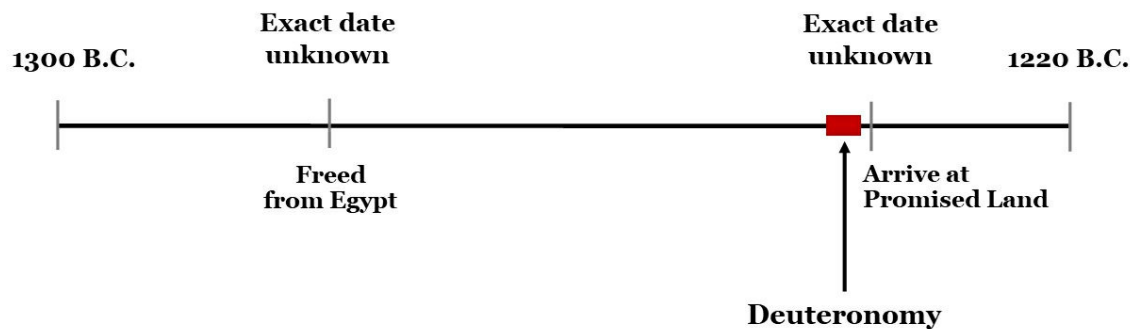
Right before entering the promised land, God's servant Moses gives his deathbed speech, reminding the Israelites all that God had done for them.

Important Verse

"Since then no prophet has arisen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deut. 34:10).

Time Reference

The time setting for Deuteronomy is right before the people enter the promised land.



Graphic

Moses's final speech to the people takes place on Mount Nebo, just before the people begin their campaign to take the land.



JOSHUA

Summary

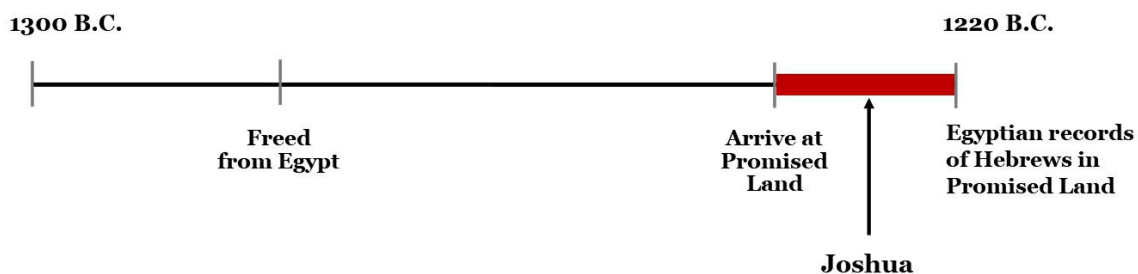
After Moses's farewell speech, the people get ready to enter their new homeland. However, the current inhabitants were not going to just let strangers come in and take their land. Joshua, Moses's successor, leads the people as they conquer some parts of the promised land while peacefully integrating into other parts.

Important Verse

"For it was the Lord, our God, who brought us and our ancestors up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. He performed those great signs before our very eyes and protected us along our entire journey and among all the peoples through whom we passed" (Josh. 24:17).

Time Reference

We're not sure how long it took for the Hebrews to occupy the land. Although the book of Joshua records the Hebrews as inhabiting the land via quick battles, there is archeological evidence that in certain areas Hebrews integrated gradually and peacefully with the inhabitants already there. Once again, we will use the Egyptian war records recognizing that the Israelites occupied the land by 1220 B.C.



Graphic

By the end of all the battles, the Hebrews divide the promised land into 12 sections since the Hebrew people were made up of twelve tribes. The area inside the dotted line is the regions firmly controlled by the Israelites. The shaded regions outside show where they were still fighting with previous inhabitants for control. See Appendix 1 for maps of the promised land throughout different periods in the Bible.



JUDGES

Summary

Now that the chosen people are settled into the promised land (also called Israel), they drift (once again) from God. This results in oppression by their neighbors. However, God raises up warriors (called judges) from among the different Jewish tribes who lead them into battle and bring peace.

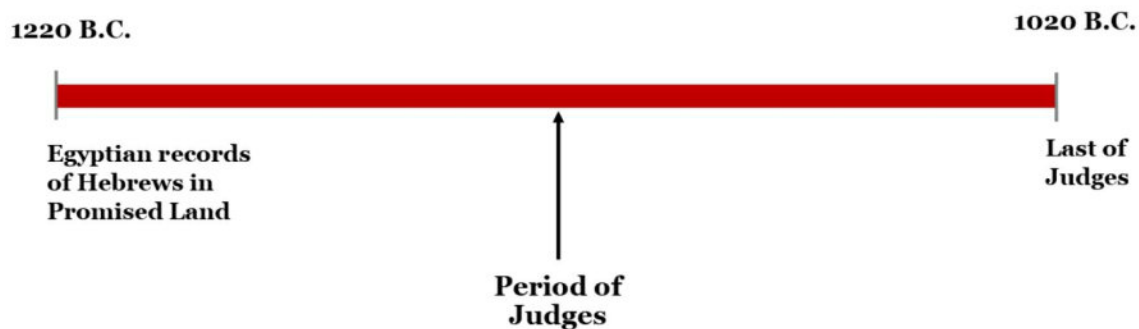
Unfortunately, this time of peace only lasts a short time, with the people falling back into infidelity and the cycle repeating. The book of Judges tells the story of thirteen judges who delivered Israel.

Important Verse

“And they were in great distress. But the Lord raised up judges to save them from the power of their plunderers; but they did not listen to their judges either” (Judg. 2:15–17).

Time Reference

The time of the judges is from around 1220 to around 1020 B.C.



Graphic

The Israelites fought with their neighbors (e.g., Amorites), and with other peoples that coinhabited their land (e.g., Canaanites).



RUTH

Summary

Although God is focused on bringing his salvation through the Jewish people, he continually utilizes people from other races. The book of Ruth is a narrative based on the recollection of a historical figure, Ruth, a widow who accompanies her mother-in-law to her native town of Bethlehem. This is one of the Bible's most moving stories of loyalty and goodness.

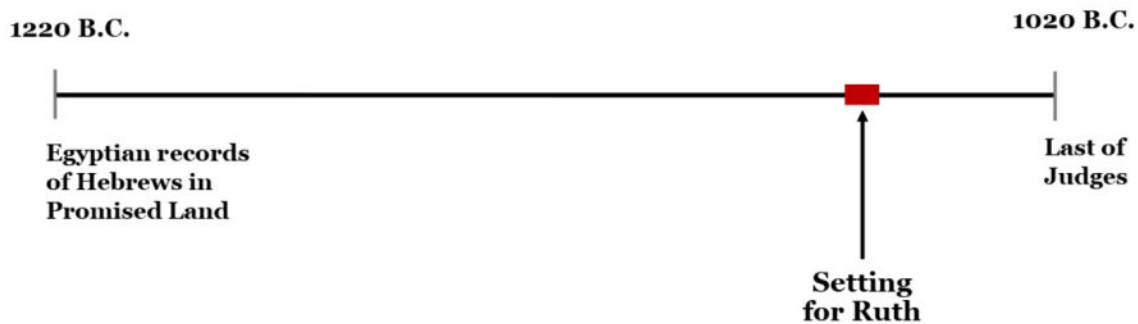
Important Verse

“But Ruth said, ‘Do not press me to go back and abandon you! Wherever you go I will go, wherever you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God, my God’”

(Ruth 1:16).

Time Reference

The setting for Ruth is during the time of the judges, sometime between 1220 and 1020 B.C.



Graphic

Ruth was originally from Moab. However, after the death of her husband, she accompanies her mother-in-law to Bethlehem.



1 SAMUEL

Summary

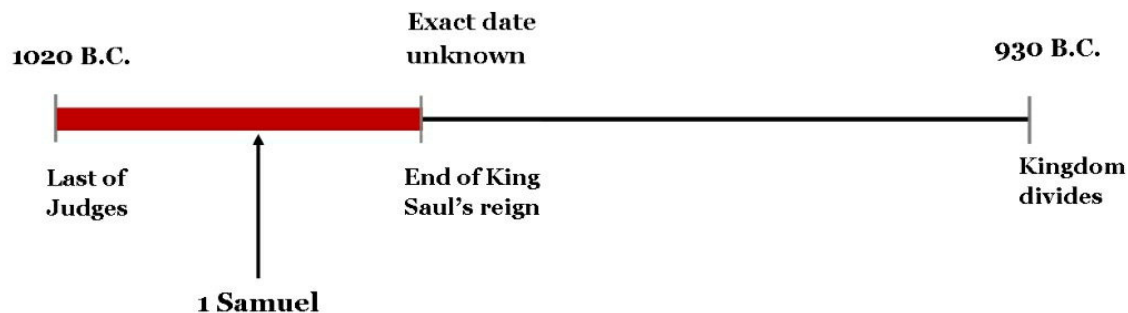
After 200 years of being led by Judges, the Israelites decide to be like the neighboring nations —choosing a human king to lead their battles and rejecting God in the process.

Important Verse

“The people, however, refused to listen to Samuel’s warning and said, “No! There must be a king over us. We too must be like all the nations, with a king to rule us, lead us in warfare, and fight our battles” (1 Sam. 8:19-20)

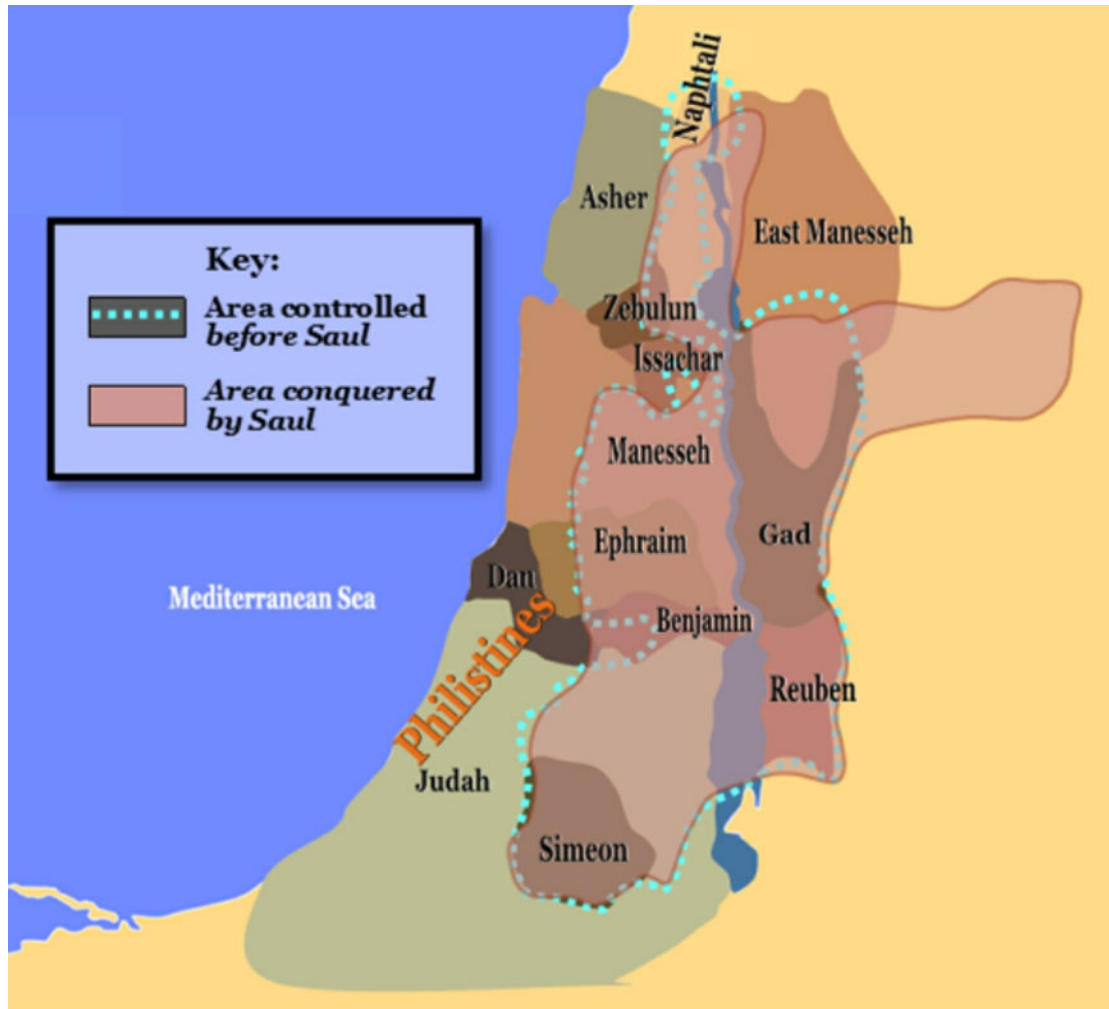
Time Reference

First Samuel begins with the last of the judges (Samuel) and ends with the death of the first king (Saul). We are not sure about the dates of the events recorded in 1 Samuel, but scholars estimate in the tenth century B.C.



Graphic

Below is a map of the expansion of Israel under King Saul. Israel's main enemy during this time is the Philistines. See Appendix 1 for maps of the promised land throughout different periods in the Bible.



2 SAMUEL

Summary

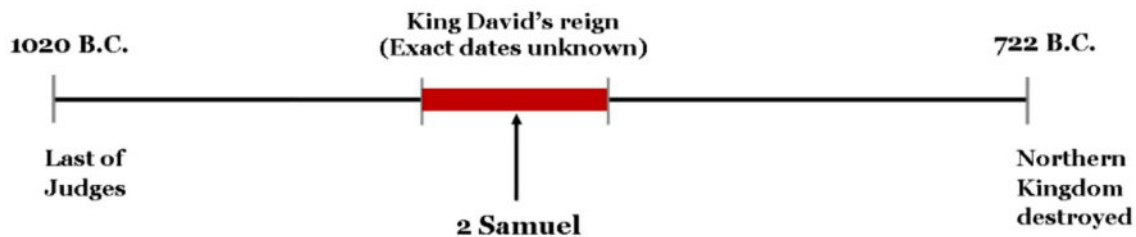
God continually calls great leaders for his people, like Abraham and Moses. Second Samuel recounts King David, Israel's most celebrated king. God promises David that one of his descendants will be the everlasting king of the Jewish people. We Catholics interpret that descendent to be Jesus.

Important Verse

"Your house and your kingdom are firm forever before me; your throne shall be firmly established forever" (2 Sam. 7:16).

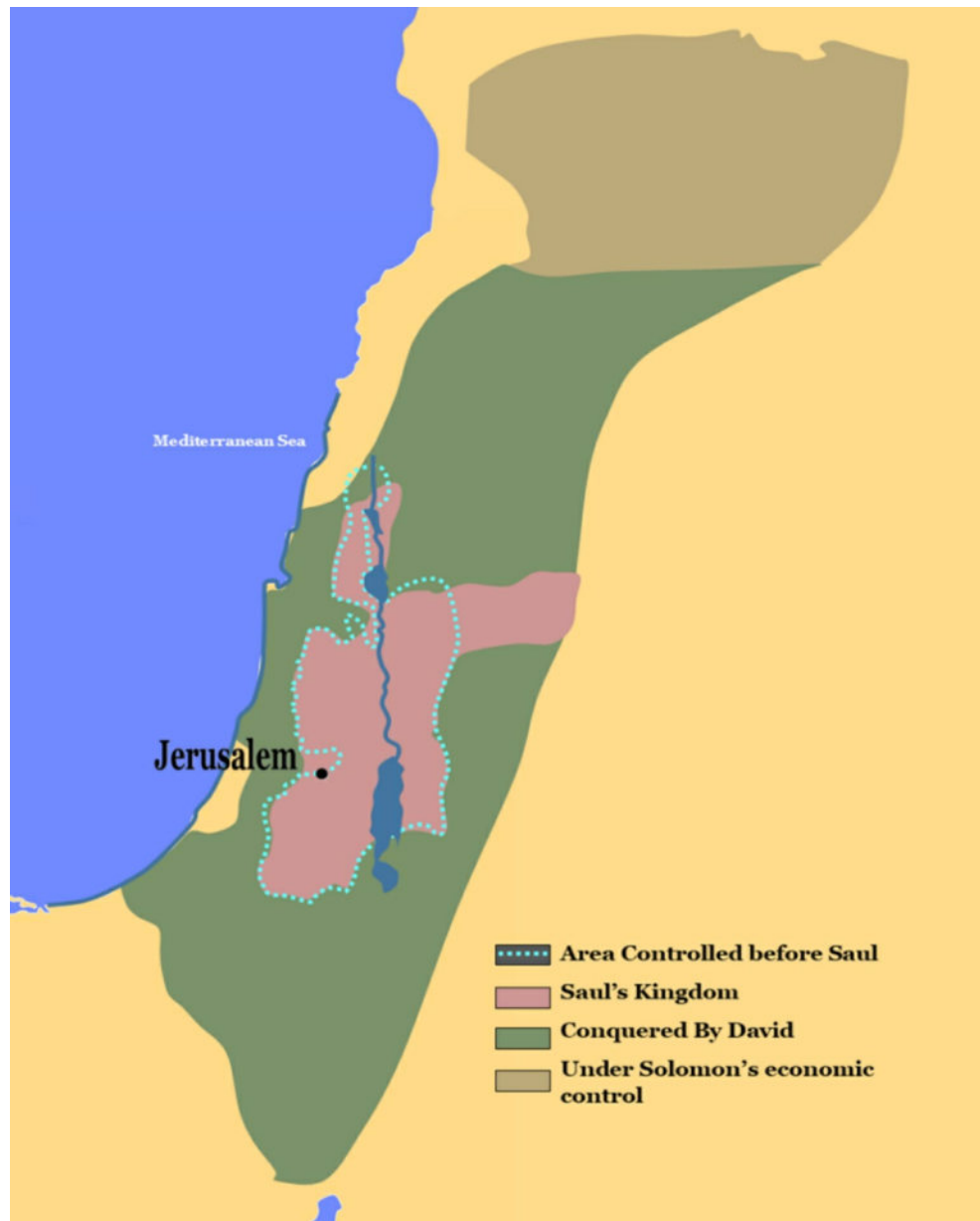
Time Reference

Once again, we do not have a firm date on King David's reign. The Bible records David as ruling forty years, seven from Hebron and thirty-three from Jerusalem (see 1 Kings 2:11).



Graphic

Below is a map of the expansion of Israel under David. David's son, Solomon, will expand the kingdom to its greatest earthly boundaries.



PSALMS

Summary

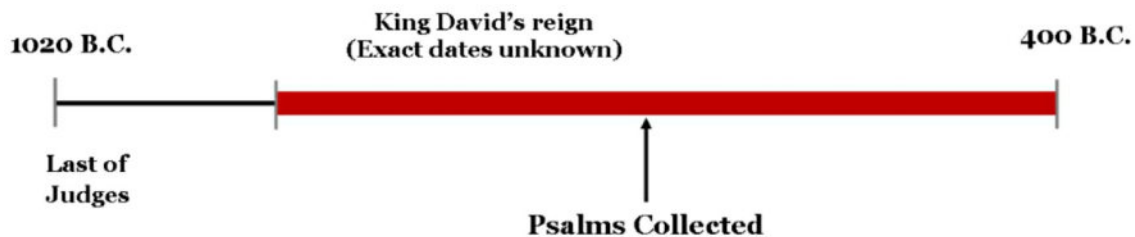
Our relationship with God is a two-way street: God communicates to his people, and we communicate to God. The Psalms (which is Hebrew for “songs”) are Israel’s “prayer book” to God. The Psalms cover the whole range of the human experience before God: anger, confusion, joy, and praise.

Important Verse

“In my distress I called out: Lord! I cried out to my God. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry to him reached his ears” (Ps. 18:7).

Time Reference

The Psalms were collected over a long period of time, from the time of King David (seventy-three of the 150 psalms are attributed to him) though the 400s B.C.



Graphic

The Psalms aren't arranged in any particular order, but many of them fall into certain themes. Here are some common themes present in the psalms, and which psalms correspond to it.

Psalm Types	Psalm Number
Songs praising Zion, the city of God	47; 96–99
Songs of praise to God	30; 116
Songs of lament	3–7; 22; 44; 74; 79
Songs that deal with the King	20; 21; 72
Songs that praise the Jewish law	1; 19; 119
Songs recounting Israel's history	78; 105; 106

1 KINGS

Summary

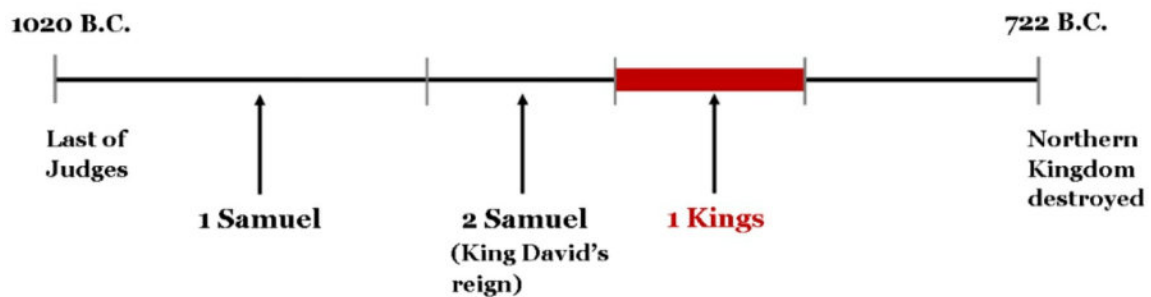
God gives us all different gifts, depending on the mission he calls us to. In 1 Kings, God gives the gift of wisdom to king Solomon so he can rule the people well. The first part of 1 Kings recounts Solomon's kingship, while the 2nd part recounts the division of the kingdom into the northern kingdom (called Israel) and the southern kingdom (called Judah) after Solomon's reign.

Important Verse

"Moreover, God gave Solomon wisdom, exceptional understanding, and knowledge, as vast as the sand on the seashore" (1 Kings 5:9).

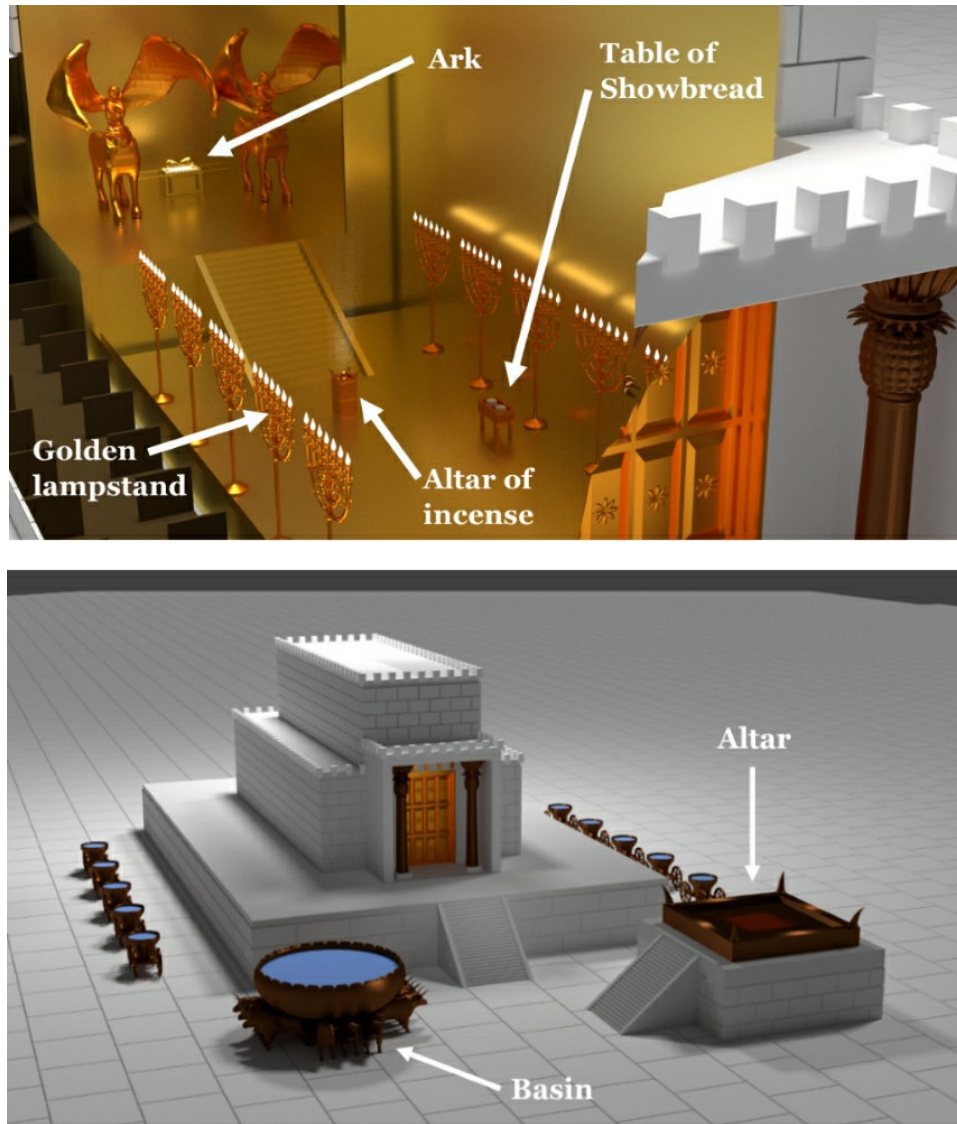
Time Reference

Scholars typically put Solomon's reign at around 970 B.C., and the division of the kingdom around 930 B.C.



Graphic

Solomon built the temple, the center of Jewish worship in Jerusalem. There, it held the ark of the covenant. Notice the similar design to the Jewish tent that they used as they were wandering the desert (see the graphic in Leviticus). See Appendix 2 for progression of central sites of worship throughout the Bible.



PROVERBS

Summary

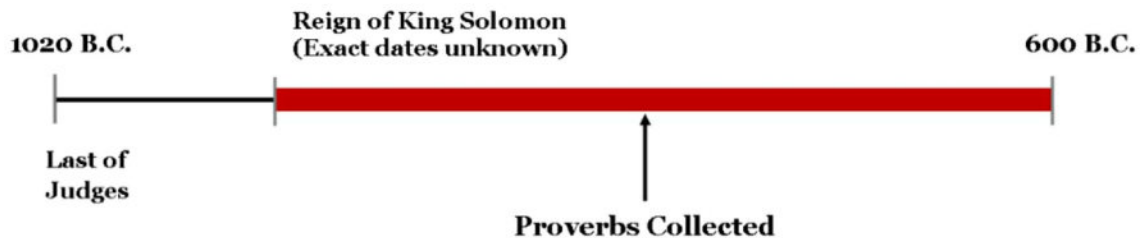
God communicates his wisdom by various means, and the book of Proverbs is a collection of short, wise phrases so the young can grow in godly wisdom.

Important Verse

“The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Prov. 9:10).

Time Reference

The different proverbs were collected over the course of centuries. Many of these proverbs are attributed to Solomon, while some were recorded by otherwise figures who came later.



Graphic

Below is a chart of how the book of proverbs is arranged. The book collects wise sayings from a variety of sources.

Chapters	Theme
1–9	The value of having wisdom
10–22	Wise sayings of King Solomon
23–24	Wise sayings of anonymous wise persons
25–29	More wise sayings from Solomon, collected by King Hezekiah
30–31	Wise sayings of Agur, Lemuel, and others

2 KINGS

Summary

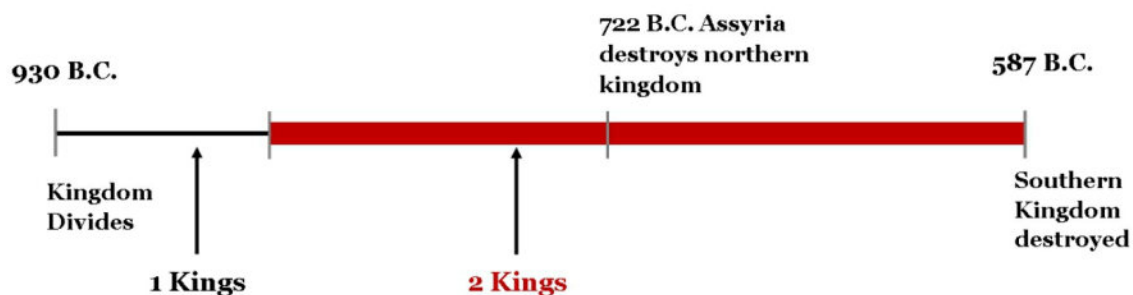
Second Kings continues where 1 Kings left off. God still tries to love the Israelite people, even though their selfish ways have divided the kingdom into two. Second Kings recounts the kings of both the northern and southern kingdoms. Some of the kings were good, but many of them took the people away from God.

Important Verse

“But they [both the kings and the people] did not listen. They grew as stiff-necked as their ancestors, who had not believed in the Lord, their God” (2 Kings 17:14).

Time Reference

Second Kings recounts the kings of the North and South. It includes the destruction of the northern kingdom in 722 B.C. and ends with the exile of the Jews in 587 B.C. to Babylon.



Graphic

Below is a map of the northern and southern kingdoms after they divided. The northern kingdom (Israel) was made of ten tribes while the remaining two made up the southern kingdom (Judah). It gets a little confusing because sometimes 1 and 2 Kings uses “Israel” referring to the whole Jewish people (since they are all “Israelites”), and other times it refers only to the northern kingdom, which was also called Samaria. See Appendix 1 for maps of the promised land throughout different periods in the Bible.



TRANSITION: THE PROPHETIC BOOKS

Up until now, the books we have seen so far have been narrative: they tell the story of God's relationship with human beings, focusing on Jewish people. This next section covers the prophetic books of the Bible. Contrary to popular belief, a prophet's job was not to predict the future (although some did warn the people of upcoming danger). The main job of a prophet was to speak truth to power: if the king or the people were doing something wrong, the prophet would tell them to get back on the good path.

Like other biblical books, most of these books were written based on oral traditions from each prophet's ministry. Some prophets' preaching have a whole book dedicated to it, while other prophets had their preaching recorded in other books of the Bible. The following chart is of the biblical prophets. The next few books we will be looking at are from the prophets of the Divided Kingdom.

Prophets during the Divided Kingdom, no separate books	Prophets during the Divided Kingdom	Prophets during the Solitary Kingdom	Prophets after the Exile
- Elijah - Elisha <i>(Their stories are in 1 and 2 Kings. They do not have separate prophetic books)</i>	- Amos - Hosea - Isaiah <i>(chapters 1–39)</i> - Micah	- Zephaniah - Nahum - Habakkuk - Jeremiah - Obadiah	- Ezekiel - “2nd” Isaiah <i>(chapters 40–55)</i> - Baruch - Haggai - Zechariah - “3rd” Isaiah <i>(chapters 56–65)</i> - Malachi - Joel

AMOS

Summary

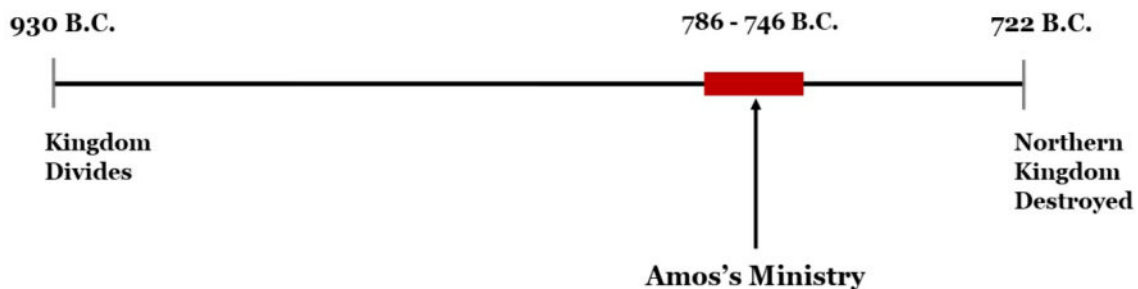
God calls Amos, a rural prophet (a dresser of trees) to go from the South in Judah up North to Israel. He is resisted because of his critiques of the upper class for exploiting the poor and for being a foreigner.

Important Verse

“Take away from me your noisy songs; The melodies of your harps, I will not listen to them. Rather let justice surge like waters, and righteousness like an unfailing stream”
(Amos 5:23–24).

Time Reference

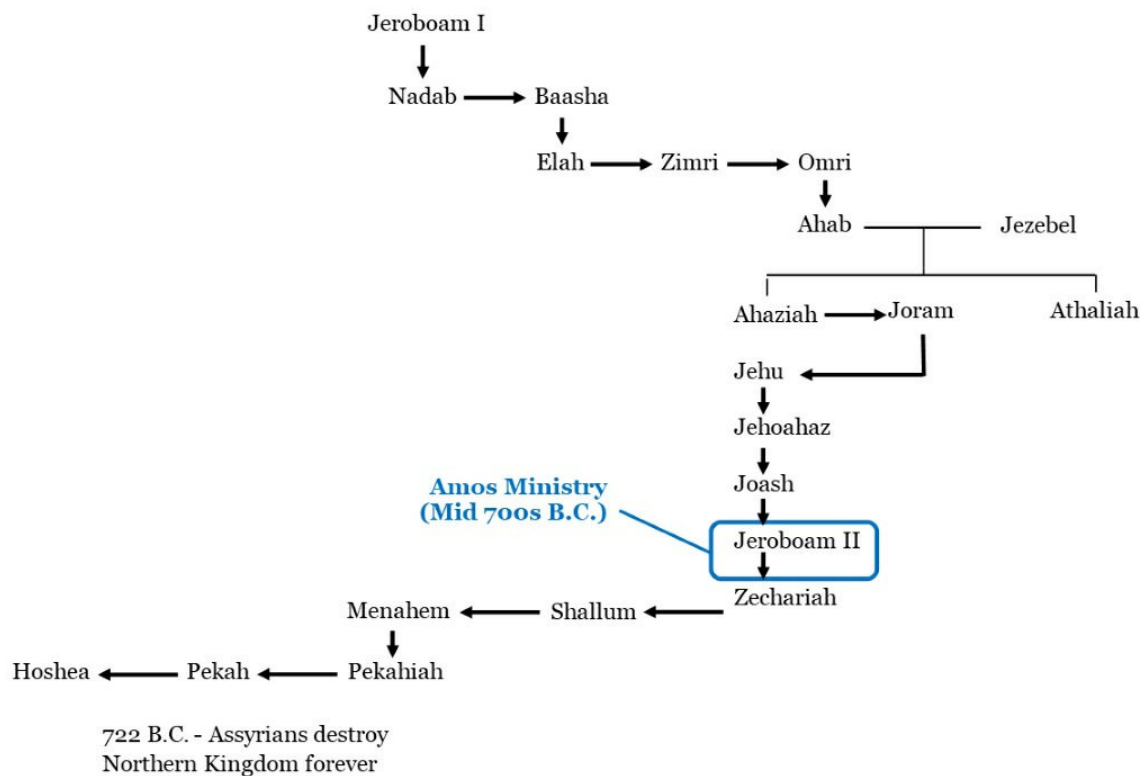
Amos preached during the northern kingdom’s most materially prosperous time, around 786–746 B.C.



Graphic

Below is a family tree of all the kings of the northern kingdom. The vertical lines connecting the kings reflects father-son relation. A horizontal line means that a new family took over the kingship. Amos preached during the reign of Jeroboam II. As you can see, there were a lot of kings in the northern kingdom before the prophet Amos begins to preach. The most famous prophets that preached before Amos were Elijah and Elisha (see 1 and 2 Kings for their preaching).

Northern Kingdom (Israel) 930? B.C. to 722 B.C.



HOSEA

Summary

Hosea lived in the northern kingdom and spoke to the northern kingdom—they were *his* people! He speaks a similar message to Amos but from another, gentler angle. First, Hosea lived the message of God in his own life: by marrying an unfaithful spouse just as Israel had been unfaithful to God. Hosea introduces a concept about the covenant relationship: God cared for them with steadfast love (the Hebrew phrase is “Hesed” love).

Important Verse

“When the Lord began to speak with Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea: Go, get for yourself a woman of prostitution and children of prostitution, for the land prostitutes itself, turning away from the Lord” (Hos. 1:2).

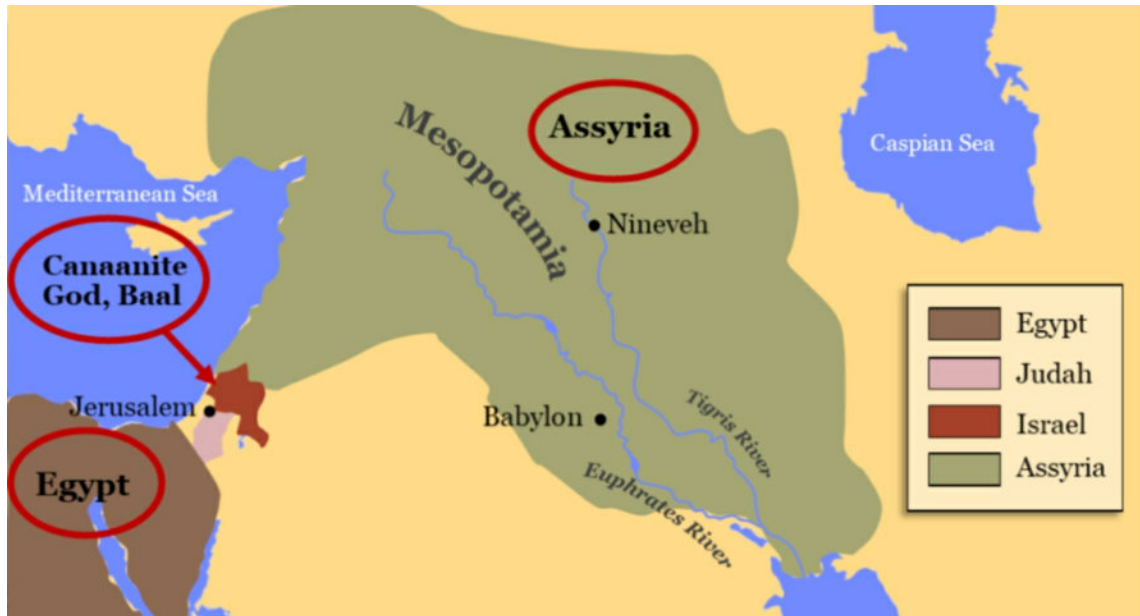
Time Reference

Hosea preaches from around 750–725 B.C.



Graphic

The same way Hosea's wife would prostitute herself with other men, Israel prostituted themselves with other Gods (like the Canaanite rain god, Baal) or other nations (like Assyria or Egypt).



1ST ISAIAH (CHAPTERS 1–39)

Summary

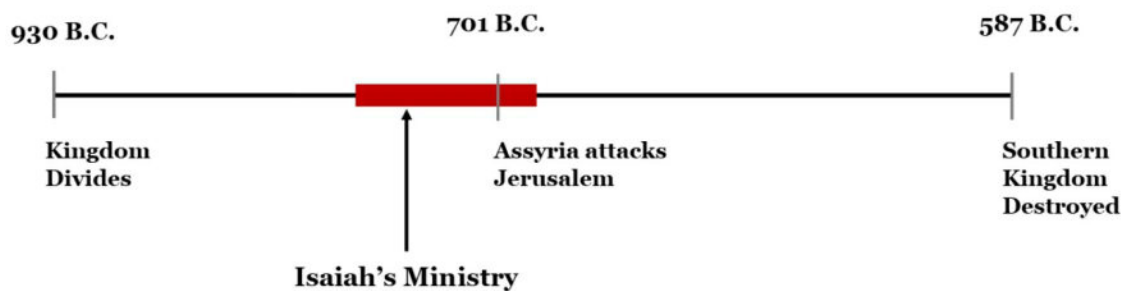
A constant temptation for both kingdoms was to trust other nations for riches and protection, following their foreign gods in the process. In the southern kingdom, God calls Isaiah, a city prophet from Jerusalem and possibly a priest who had wed a prophetess. He understood the ins and outs of the palace and the temple- so he had the king's ear. He exhorts the King to trust God rather than human alliances.

Important Verse

“An ox knows its owner, and an ass its master's manger; But Israel does not know, my people has not understood” (Isa. 1:3).

Time Reference

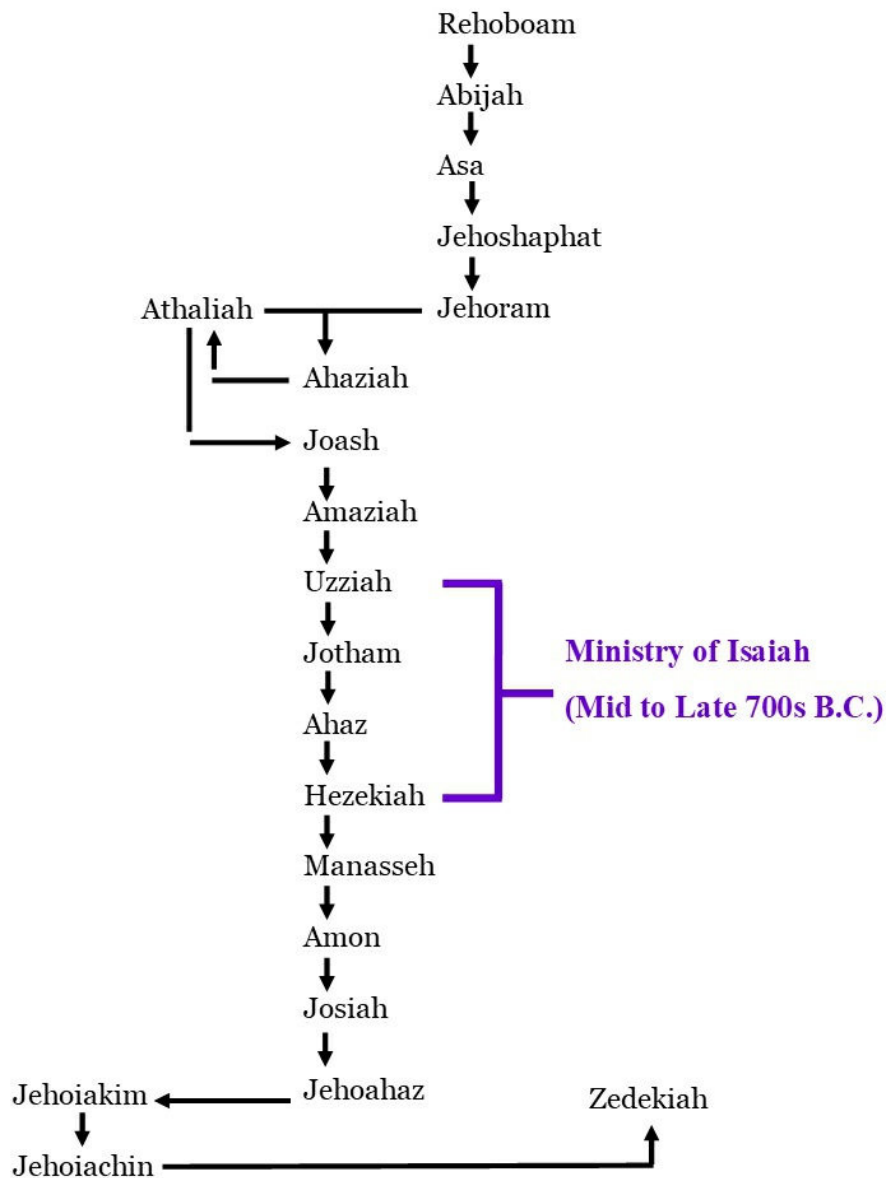
Isaiah had a long preaching career, lasting around forty years, starting in the mid 700s B.C. and finishing sometime after 701 B.C.



Graphic

Just like we saw the genealogy of the Northern kings, here is a family tree of the southern kingdom kings. Isaiah was alive from the time of Uzziah through Hezekiah. All these kings are from the same family, since God promised David his descendants would continually rule.

Southern Kingdom (Judah) 930? B.C. to 587 B.C.



587 B.C. - Babylonians
destroy temple South exile
(Return in 539 B.C.)

MICAH

Summary

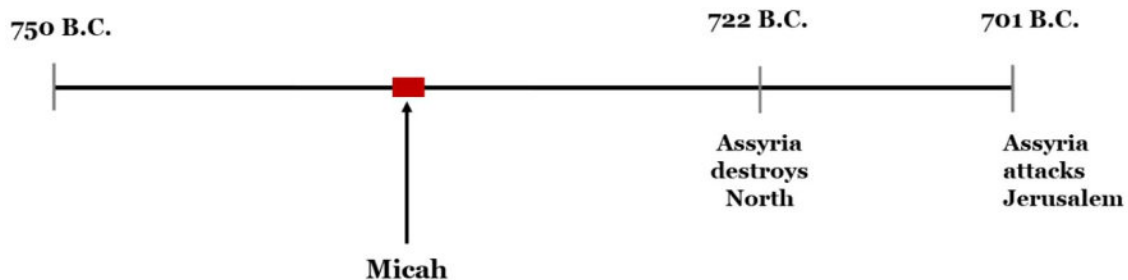
Micah was a rural prophet who lived where the poor had to fend for themselves due to the exploitation policies of the wealthy who had stolen their land from them. He was one of them.

Important Verse

“You have been told, O mortal, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Mic. 6:8).

Time Reference

Micah wrote in the eighth century B.C.



Graphic

In addition to preaching against exploitation, Micah also preached against idolatry in both the northern and the southern kingdoms. The main location of worship in the south was the temple in Jerusalem; but that did not stop the residents from worshiping other foreign gods. In the northern kingdom, the government made major idol sanctuaries in Dan and Bethel to prevent people from traveling to the temple to worship.



TRANSITION: DESTRUCTION OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

Micah is the last of the prophets to preach while both kingdoms are around. The Assyrian Empire destroys the northern kingdom in 722 B.C. Highlighted in our prophet chart are the ones that preached while only the southern kingdom was around.

Prophets during the Divided Kingdom, no separate books	Prophets during the Divided Kingdom	Prophets during the Solitary Kingdom	Prophets after the Exile
- Elijah - Elisha <i>(Their stories are in 1 and 2 Kings)</i>	- Amos - Hosea - Isaiah <i>(chapters 1–39)</i> - Micah	- Zephaniah - Nahum - Habakkuk - Jeremiah - Obadiah	- Ezekiel - “2nd” Isaiah <i>(chapters 40–55)</i> - Baruch - Haggai - Zechariah - “3rd” Isaiah <i>(chapters 56–65)</i> - Malachi - Joel

ZEPHANIAH

Summary

As we have seen, God is willing to use the Israelites' enemies to get them back on the right path. During the 700s and 600s B.C., God used the powerful Assyrian empire for this purpose. Assyria permanently destroyed the northern kingdom in 722 B.C. At the same time, God was calling everyone to stop doing evil. The prophet Zephaniah warns all nations (from the powerful Assyrians and to the still standing southern kingdom) that the wrath of the Lord is coming to destroy all other useless gods.

Important Verse

"This will be the recompense for their pride because they taunted and boasted against the people of the Lord of hosts. The Lord shall inspire them with terror when he makes all the gods of earth waste away" (Zeph. 2:10–11)

Time Reference

Zephaniah writes around the late 600s B.C., a few decades after the Assyrians destroy the northern kingdom.



Graphic

This graphic shows the exile of north in 722 B.C. The Assyrians deported northern kingdom residents to Assyria, while planting Assyrian residents into territory of the former northern kingdom.



NAHUM

Summary

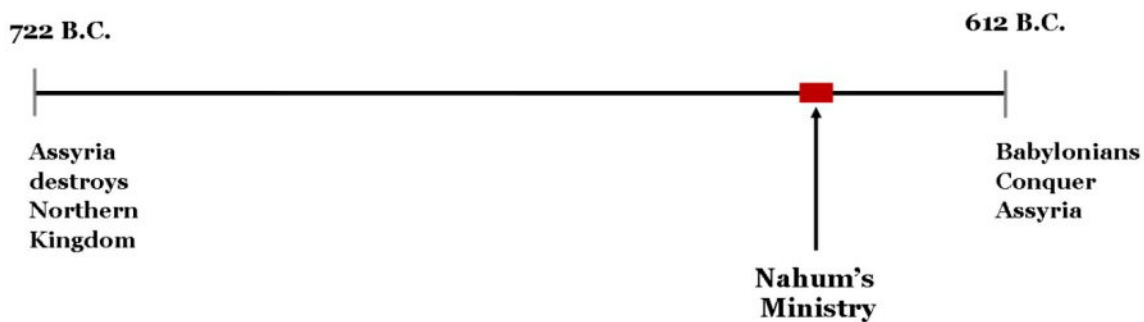
No empire lasts forever. Although Assyria was powerful, the prophet Nahum now rejoices at the destruction of its capital city of Nineveh. Why? Not only did the Assyrians deport conquered people, they used them to work farms which supported Assyrians who lived in large cities (like Nineveh). Further, the way they conducted war was particularly objectionable: destroy an area, kill and mutilate its inhabitants, and put their bodies on stakes around that city. When Nineveh fell, this would happen no more. Remember this when you read about the book of Jonah later!

Important Verse

“The Lord is slow to anger, yet great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished” (Nah. 1:3).

Time Reference

The prophet preached shortly before Nineveh fell in 612 B.C.



Graphic

Nineveh was the capital of the once powerful Assyrian Empire. It fell in 612 B.C. to the Babylonians in a rebellion. See Appendix 1 for maps of the promised land throughout different periods in the Bible.



HABAKKUK

Summary

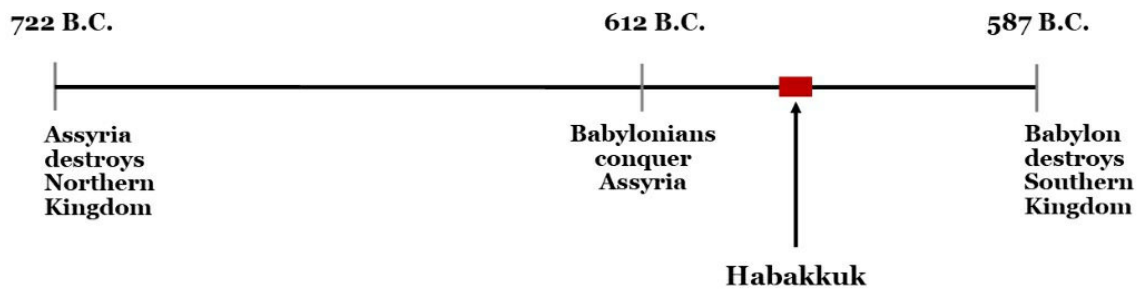
After the fall of the Assyrian Empire, God allows the Babylonian Empire to be the prominent world power for a time. This causes concern for all the world, including the southern kingdom. The prophet Habakkuk gives an unusual dialogue between God and the prophet, highlighting that God's idea of mercy and justice are not bound to human standards.

Important Verse

“How long, O Lord, must I cry for help and you do not listen? Or cry out to you, ‘Violence!’ and you do not intervene?” (Hab. 1:2).

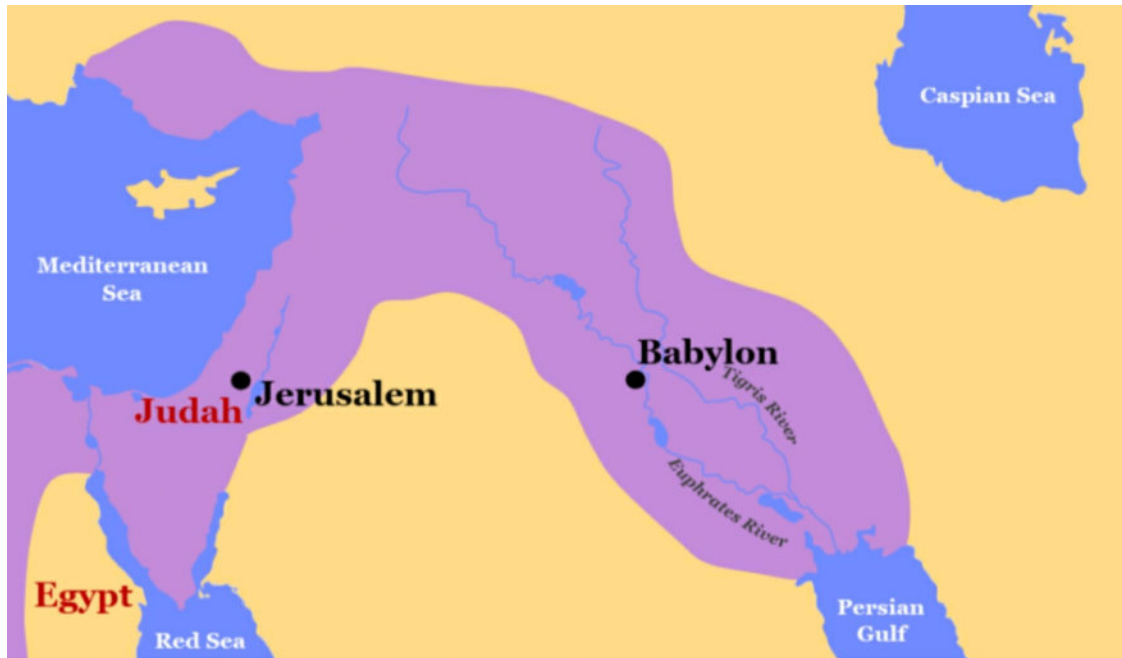
Time Reference

Habakkuk composes his questions to God sometime after the Babylonians take down the Assyrians in 612 B.C., but before they exile the southern kingdom the 587 B.C.



Graphic

This map shows the growing Babylonian empire after conquering Egypt in 605 B.C.



JEREMIAH

Summary

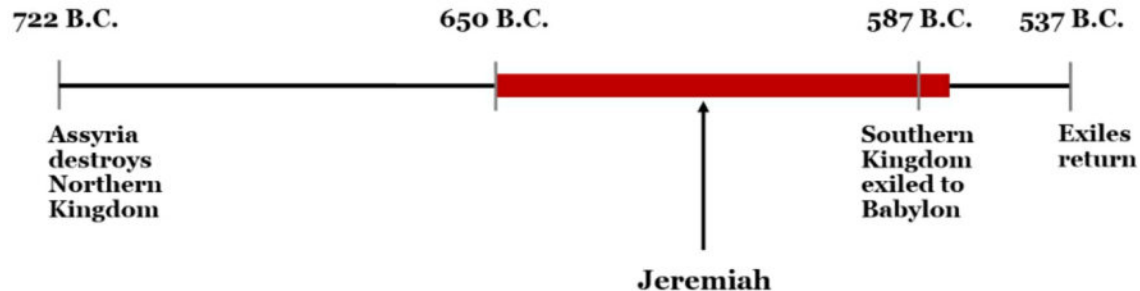
Just as God used the Assyrians to warn his people to return to him, God also used the Babylonians to warn the southern kingdom to do the same. The prophet Jeremiah exhorts the people to accept Babylonian rule as the consequence for their sinning towards God. This book emphasizes Jeremiah's call: The *difficulty* of being a prophet of the Lord. *Everyone* might be against you, but the Lord will *help* you.

Important Verse

“For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: A yoke of iron I have placed on the necks of all these nations serving Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and they shall serve him; even the wild animals I have given him” (Jer. 28:14).

Time Reference

Jeremiah lived from around 650 B.C. until after the Jews were exiled in 587 B.C. (his date of death unknown).

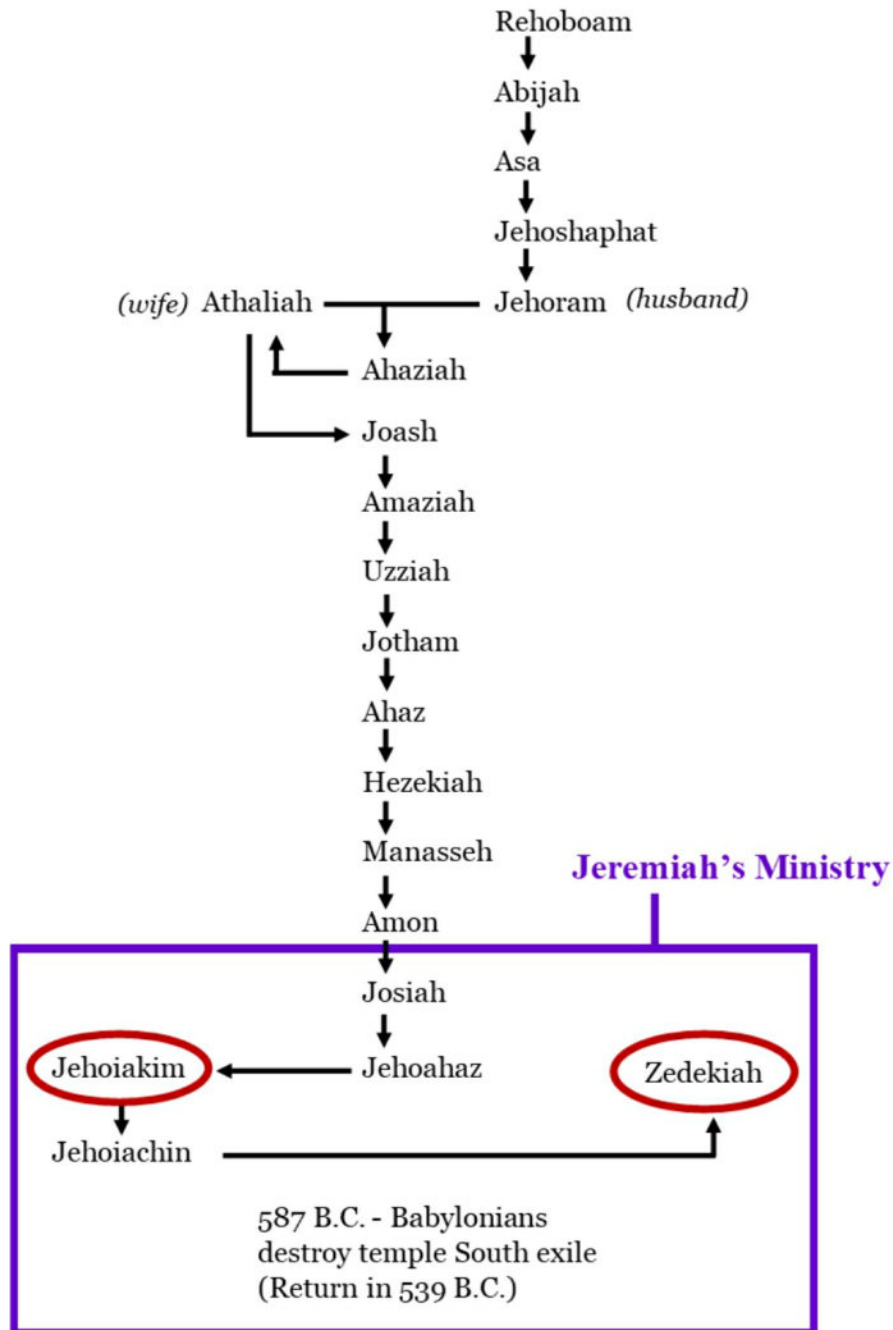


Graphic

It is a little hard to follow the book of Jeremiah. He preached the truth to many kings, but the redactor who compiled his preaching did not put it in chronological order. This graphic shows the different kings Jeremiah preached to before the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem in 587 B.C. He mainly preached to kings Jehoiakim and Zedekiah.

Southern Kingdom (Judah)

930? B.C. to 587 B.C.



LAMENTATIONS

Summary

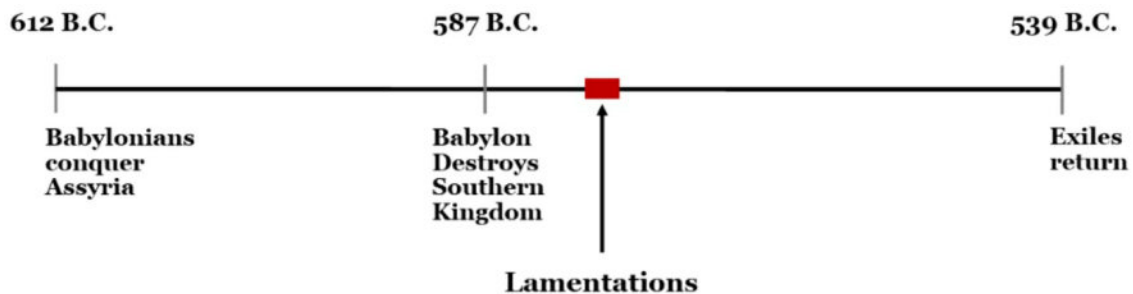
The author laments the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.

Important Verse

“Cry out to the Lord from your heart, wall of daughter Zion! Let your tears flow like a torrent day and night; give yourself no rest, no relief for your eyes” (Lam. 2:18).

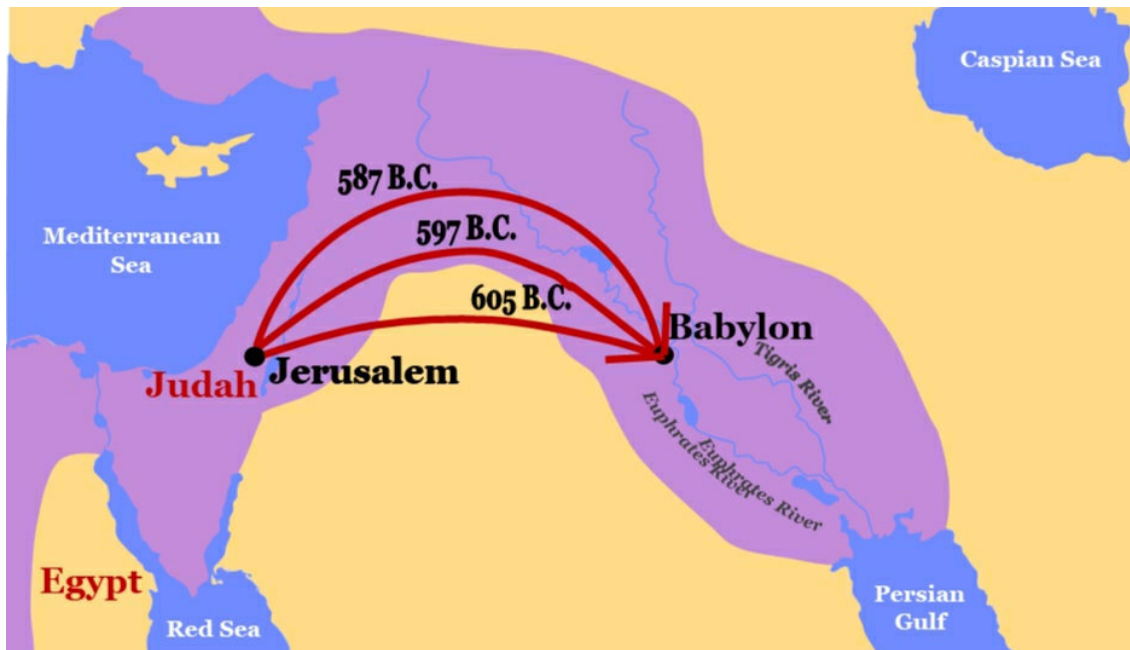
Time Reference

This book was written shortly after the deportation of 587 B.C.



Graphic

Babylonia spent around 10 years holding the southern kingdom captive before destroying Jerusalem in 587 B.C. During that time, there were 3 deportations. See Appendix 1 for maps of the promised land throughout different periods in the Bible.



OBADIAH

Summary

God's chosen people shared ancestry with neighboring nations, including the Edomites. The prophet Obadiah angrily condemns Edom for helping the Babylonians besiege Jerusalem and for taking Judean land. The prophet saw the Edomites not just as opportunists, but one brother fighting against the other.

Important Verse

"Because of the violence to our brother Jacob, disgrace will cover you, you will be done away with forever! On the day you stood by, the day strangers carried off his possessions, and foreigners entered his gates and cast lots for Jerusalem, you too were like one of them" (Obad. 10–11).

Time Reference

Obadiah decries Edom shortly after the deportation of 587 B.C.



Graphic

Edom was a neighbor of Judah from the ancient times. In fact, they have a same ancestor in Esau (see Gen. 27).



EZEKIEL

Summary

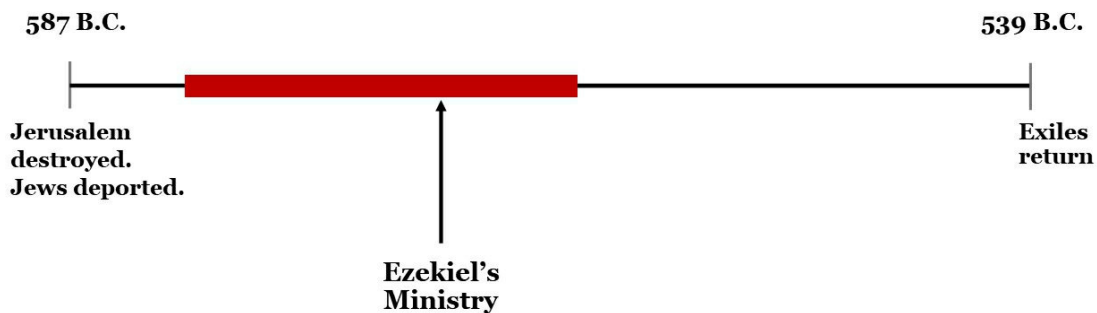
The people are now in exile. However, God does not leave his people; he sends prophets to reassure them of his continued presence. The prophet Ezekiel was an educated priest who had been taken with those brought into captivity due to his education. He taught that “God is everywhere”—a reassurance to the exiles that God was with them and they were not alone.

Important Verse

“Do I find pleasure in the death of the wicked—oracle of the Lord God? Do I not rejoice when they turn from their evil way and live?” (Ezek. 18:23).

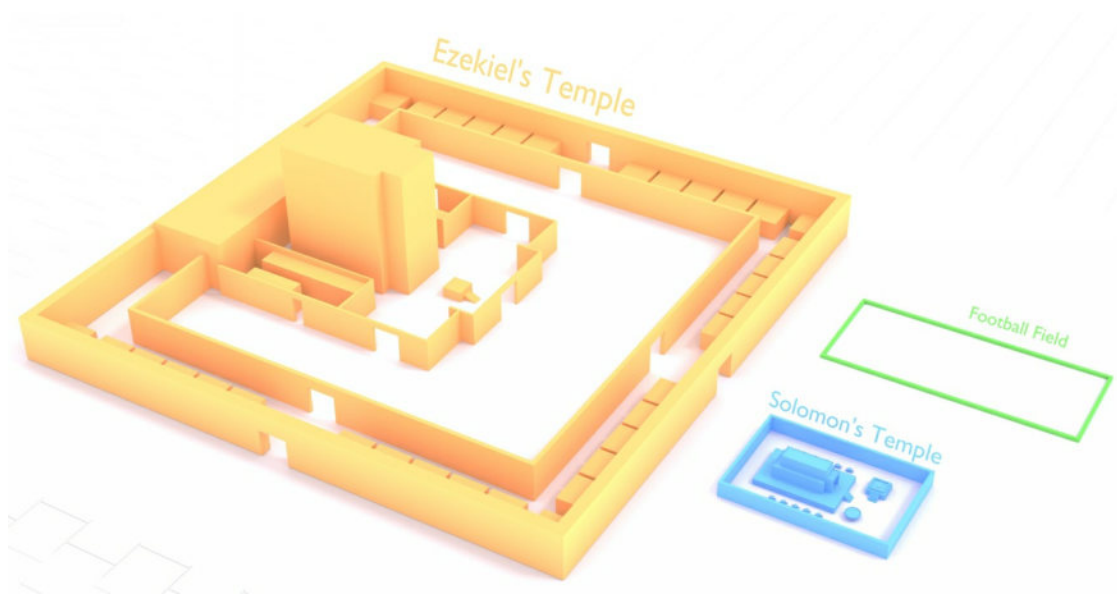
Time Reference

Ezekiel started preaching five years after the Babylonian exile (see Ezek. 1:2), but we are not sure when his ministry ended.



Graphic

Although the Jerusalem temple was destroyed in 587 B.C., Ezekiel has a vision of a more glorious temple where they will worship one day (see chapters 40–43 for its dimensions). As shown in the graphic, it was to be much bigger than Solomon's temple that the Babylonians destroyed. Spoiler alert: the Jews do eventually rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, but it is not as glorious as Ezekiel's vision.



2ND ISAIAH (CHAPTERS 40–55)

Summary

This prophet (called second Isaiah) utilizes the original Isaiah's preaching style to comfort the exiled Jews, reaffirming that God will restore them. He saw King Cyrus of Persia as God's instrument of liberation from their exile.

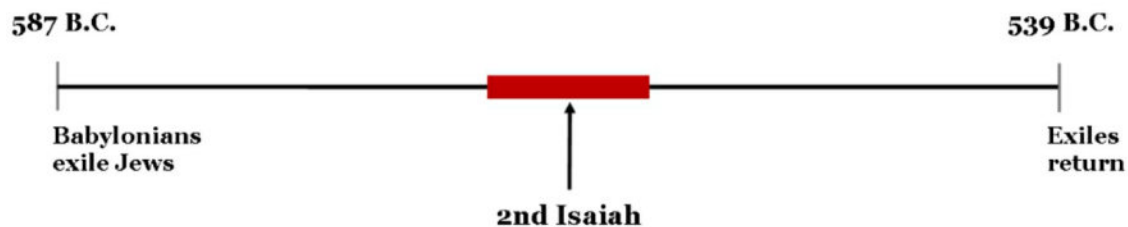
Second Isaiah realized that God is not one among many gods, but *the God of all*. He gave us the "Servant Songs"—passages about how a person's sufferings are not always a sign of guilt. Innocent people can suffer—a concept that Jesus's disciples later used to describe his death.

Important Verse

"It was I who stirred him [King Cyrus of Persia] up for justice; All his ways I make level. He shall rebuild my city and let my exiles go free. Without the price or payment, says the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 45:13).

Time Reference

Second Isaiah preached near the end of the Babylonian exile.



Graphic

The prophet senses the rise of the Persian empire, which will eventually take over the Babylonian empire and let the Jews go back to their land.



EZRA

Summary

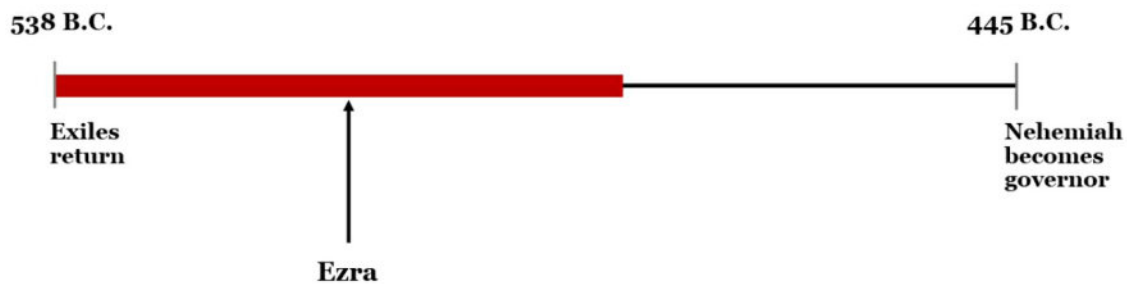
True to his promise, God takes the people out of exile. The book of Ezra recounts the return of the Jewish people to their native land

Important Verse

“Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of those among you who are of his people-may their God be with them!-are now permitted to go up to Jerusalem in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel-he is the God who is in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:2–3).

Time Reference

This book covers from when the Jews return to their homeland until around the early 400s.



Graphic

When the Persians conquered the Babylonians, they divided their empire into various regions (called Satraps). The Jewish promised land was one of the Satraps. See Appendix 1 for maps of the promised land throughout different periods in the Bible.



1 CHRONICLES

Summary

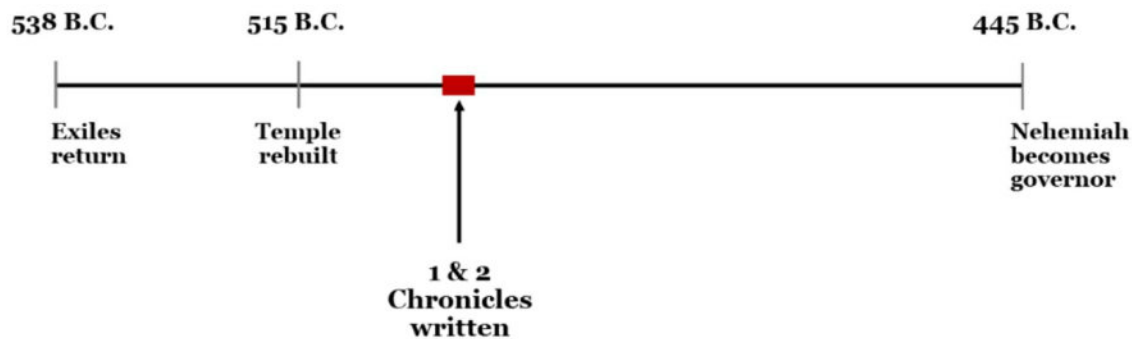
In the decades (and centuries) after the Jews return from exile, they wrote books to preserve their history and culture. In this book, the author (known as the chronicler, possibly Ezra) re-tells Israel's history from a priestly perspective, focusing on King David.

Important Verse

King David said to his son Solomon: "The divisions of the priests and Levites are ready for all the service of the house of God, they will be with you in all the work with all those who are eager to show their skill in every kind of craftsmanship. Also the commanders and all the people will do everything that you command" (1 Chron. 28:21).

Time Reference

First Chronicles was written after the Jews returned from exile. First Chronicles starts with a genealogy of the first generations of humans. The main content of 1 Chronicles is King David as a leader of worship. The book ends with his death.



Graphic

The focus of the chronicler is worship, especially the important roles the priests play in leading worship. This is the type of garment worn by the high priest for most of Jewish history, from the book of Exodus, after the exile, and up through the time of Jesus (see Ex. 28 for description of vestment).



2 CHRONICLES

Summary

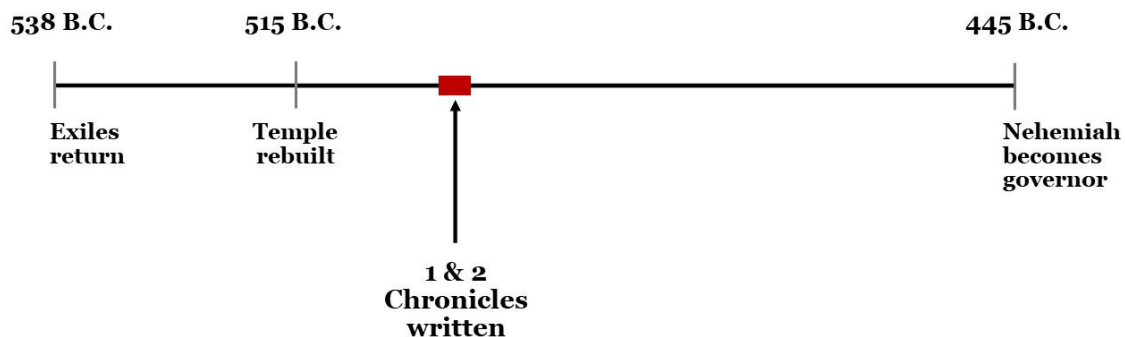
The chronicler continues to tell Israel's history from a priestly perspective, summarizing the numerous kings that served in the southern kingdom until its destruction. The chronicler goes out of his way to praise the kings who worshiped God in truth.

Important Verse

King Josiah “made a covenant in the presence of the Lord to follow the Lord and to observe his commandments, statutes, and decrees with his whole heart and soul” (2 Chron. 34:31).

Time Reference

Second Chronicles was written at the same time as 1 Chronicles but covers the time period from Solomon taking the throne until the Jews return from exile.



Graphic

Later in the Bible, the Gospel of Matthew will record Jesus's ancestors, starting from Abraham. The chart below shows Jesus's kingly descendants and the recorded ancestors that came after. Also included are the books in the Bible where you would be able to read about them.

Descendants of Jesus, based on Matthew 1:1-17		
	"From David to the exile to Babylon, 14 generations"	"From the Babylonian exile to the Messiah, 14 generations"
1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Chronicles 1 & 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles	David	Shealtiel
	Solomon	Zerubbabel
	Rehoboam	Abiud
	Abijah	Eliakin
	Asa	Azor
	Jehoshaphat	Zadok
	Joram	Achim
	Uzziah	Eliud
	Jotham	Eleazar
	Ahaz	Matthew
	Hezekiah	Jacob
	Manasseh	Joseph
	Amos	"Jesus who is called the Messiah" (Matthew 1:16)
	Josiah	
	"Jacksoniah and his brothers Jehoachaz and Zedekiah"	

Nothing written

Ezra Chapters 2 - 3

Nothing written

Gospels of Matthew & Luke

Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

BARUCH

Summary

Part of the Jews' effort to maintain their culture was to reflect on their past. The prophet Baruch reflects about what caused the Babylonian exile. It is told as if it is by Jeremiah's scribe Baruch and as though he was among the people in Babylonia during the exile.

Important Verse

"My pampered children have trodden tough roads, carried off by their enemies like sheep in a raid. Take courage, my children; call out to God! The one who brought this upon you will remember you" (Bar. 4:26–27).

Time Reference

We are not sure when this book was written, but it was after the exiles returned.



Graphic

The Jewish people maintained their faith through various writings after the exile. The following chart is the genres of books written after the exile but before the Greeks conquered the promised land.

Biblical Books Written After Exile, before the Greeks conquered Promised Land	
Genre	Biblical Books
Salvation History	- Ezra - Nehemiah - 1 Chronicles - 2 Chronicles
Wisdom/Poetry	- Job - Baruch? - Jonah - Song of Songs
Prophetic	- Haggai - Zechariah - 3rd Isaiah - Joel

HAGGAI

Summary

As the people move back, their material worries distract them from God. The prophet Haggai warns the people: It is time to stop sitting around doing nothing! You are building paneled houses for yourselves and none for the Lord! If you build the temple, you and the land will prosper! Now that the people had returned to their land, Haggai believed that their governor would become Judah's new king...but they were never allowed by Persia to have a king of their own.

Important Verse

“You expected much, but it became little;
and what you brought home, I blew away.
Why is this?—oracle of the Lord of hosts—
Because of my house is the one which lies in ruins,
while each of you runs to your own house” (Hag. 1:9).

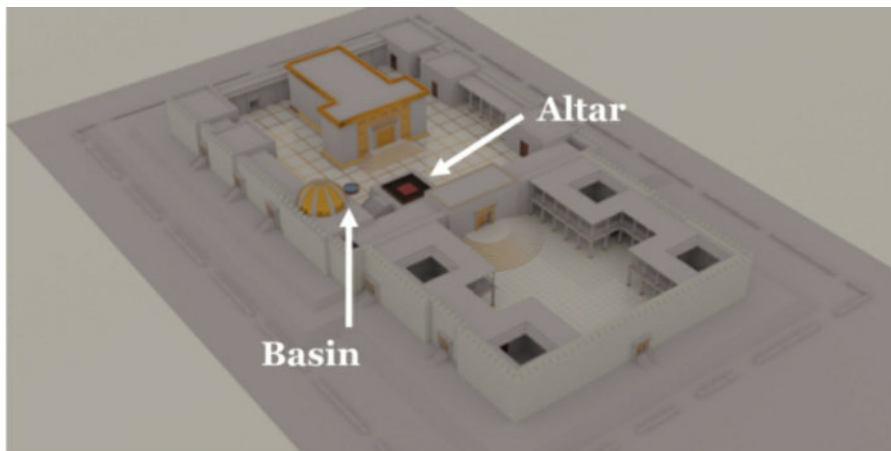
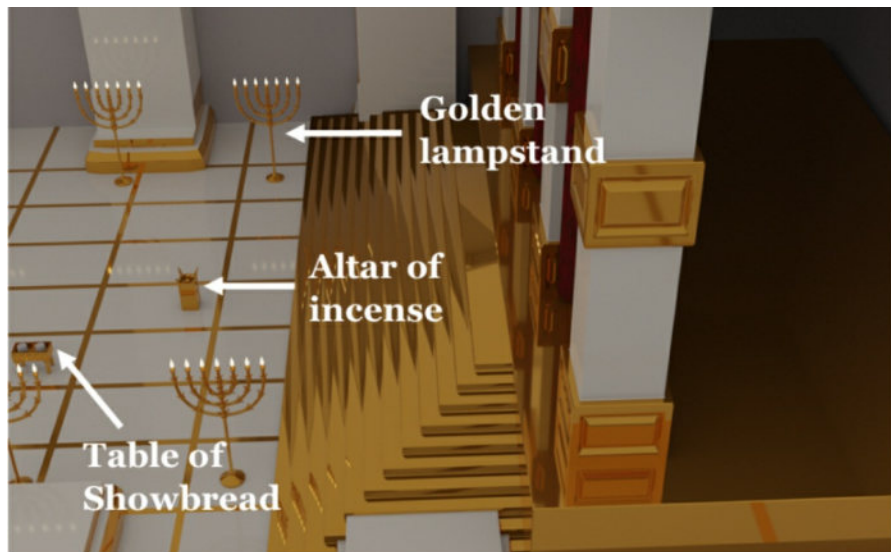
Time Reference

Haggai's preached a few years before the new temple was finished in 515 B.C.



Graphic

The rebuilt temple had a similar design as the original temple of Solomon and the original tent of meeting (see graphics for Lev. and 1 Kings). However, this temple did not hold the ark of the covenant (it was lost when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem). Also, it was not as big as the first temple. See Appendix 2 for progression of central sites of worship throughout the Bible.



ZECHARIAH

Summary

After all the Jewish people have been though, God still wants to use them to call the rest of the nations to worship him. The prophet Zechariah offers specifics on how to live as restored community of the Lord. Just like the prophet Haggai, Zechariah had new hopes for his people now that they had returned to their land: He spoke of *two* anointed ones—*two* messiahs—a purified high priest and a king (we Catholics interpret Jesus as the both high priest and king).

Important Verse

“Many peoples and strong nations will come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to implore the favor of the Lord” (Zech. 8:22).

Time Reference

Zechariah preached around the same time as Haggai, around 520 B.C.



Graphic

Zechariah's prediction is twofold: opposing nations (shown on the map) will be humbled, while accepting nations would come from all over to worship the true God in Jerusalem (see Zech. 8:18–23; 9:1–8).



NEHEMIAH

Summary

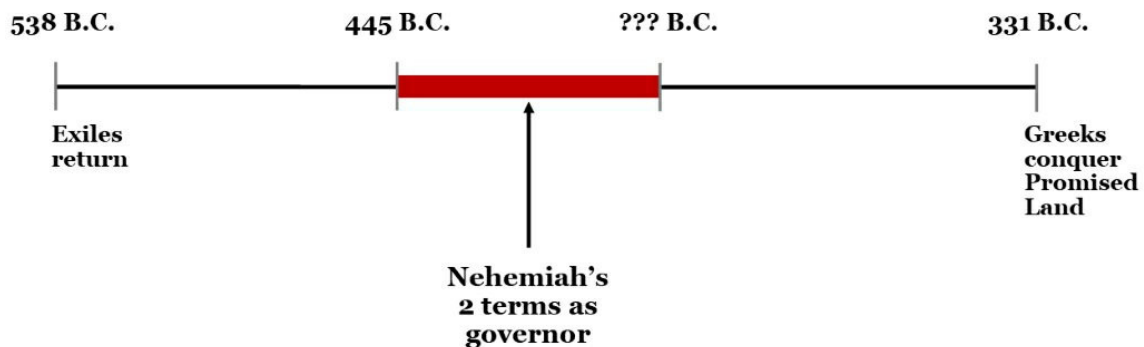
God calls Nehemiah, a Jew who was also an official of the Persian empire, to return to Jerusalem to repair the city walls.

Important Verse

“Jerusalem lies in ruins and its gates have been gutted by fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, so that we may no longer be a reproach!” (Neh. 2:17).

Time Reference

Nehemiah was governor of Judah for two periods. The first was from 445–432 B.C. He then went back to the city of Susa and later returned to Judah as governor. Unfortunately, we do not know how long he served the second time.



Graphic

Nehemiah wanted to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the damaged city gates. He did that in an astonishing fifty-two days. Here is a map of the restored gates in Jerusalem.



3RD ISAIAH (CHAPTERS 56–66)

Summary

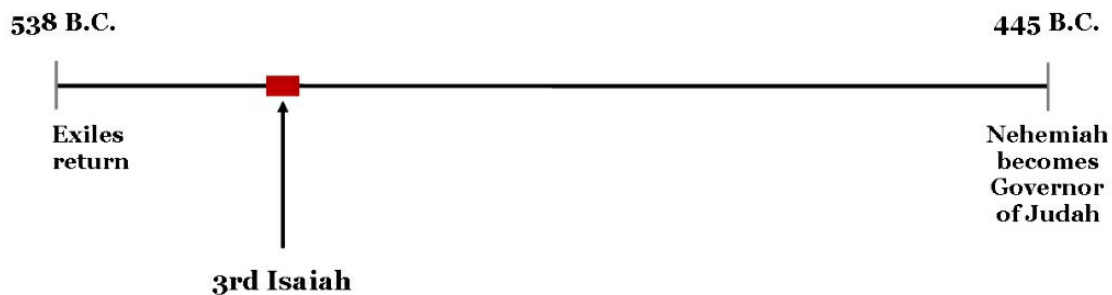
God's desire is still to bring all peoples to himself, and prophets still write about that desire. Third Isaiah, a prophet utilizing the style of the original Isaiah, preaches a universal message that God's house should be a house of worship for *all people*—all are welcome! He also gave a new image for God's reign: they will be a new heaven and a new earth where everyone will know God.

Important Verse

“Though darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds, the peoples, Upon you the Lord will dawn, and over you his glory will be seen. Nations shall walk by your light, kings by the radiance of your dawning” (Isa. 60:2–3)

Time Reference

Third Isaiah was written some time after the exile.



Graphic

Earlier, the prophet Zechariah mentioned neighboring peoples worshipping the true God. Third Isaiah mentions farther nations like Sheba, Midian, and Tarshish coming toward Jerusalem to adore the one true God (see Isa. 60:1–18).



MALACHI

Summary

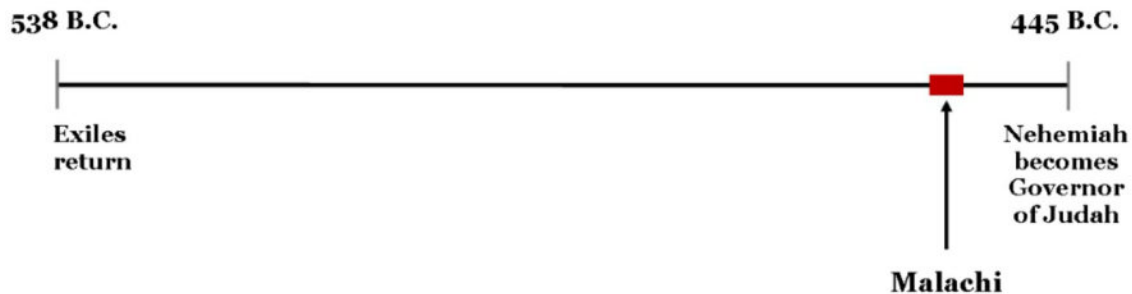
By this point in time, the second temple has been reconstructed for around 100 years. However, that does not mean that the people are worshiping God with all their hearts. The prophet Malachi was upset with a lack of care given to God's rebuilt house and the worship rituals of the priests.

Important Verse

"A son honors his father, and a servant fears his master; If then, I am a father, where is the honor due to me? And if I am a master, where is the fear due to me? So says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who disdain my name" (Mal. 1:6).

Time Reference

After the second temple was built, but before Nehemiah in 445 B.C.



Graphic

The people would sacrifice a malnourished calf in the temple, while saving the fattened cattle for themselves.



JOEL

Summary

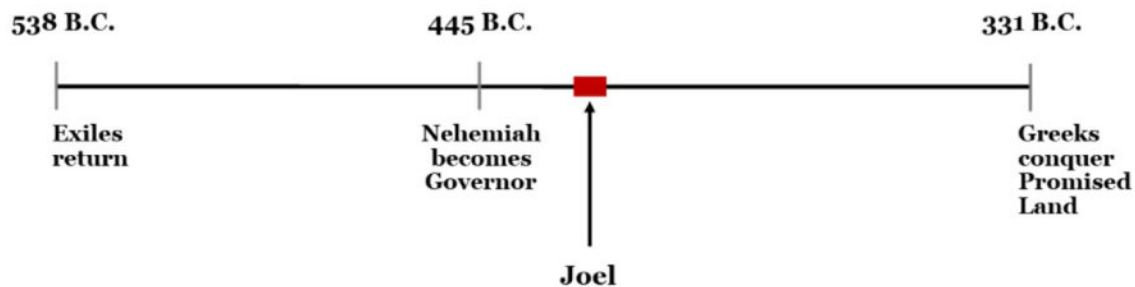
Joel lived during an invasion of locusts—an event that could easily cause vast starvation. The event was understood by the prophet to perhaps be the beginning of God’s reign—a great judgment day Amos called the “day of the Lord.” He called people to repentance and prayer in the face of this natural disaster and to see it as a warning of the ultimate day of judgment.

Important Verse

“It shall come to pass I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions” (Joel 3:1).

Time Reference

Joel was written sometime between 450 and 400 B.C.



Graphic

The day of the Lord is depicted graphically since it is mentioned later in the Bible (Acts 2:17–21). This “day of the Lord” is when God will put everything in the right order. As you can see, it is accompanied by harsh signs in nature such as the sun turning to darkness and columns of smoke everywhere (Joel 2:30–31). Later in the Bible, Jesus’s apostles will interpret this day of the Lord when referring to Jesus’s resurrection. Here is an adaptation of John Martin’s *The Great Day of His Wrath*.



JOB

Summary

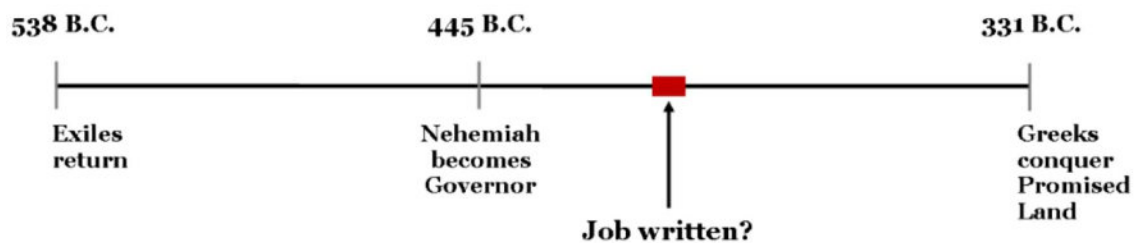
In addition to prophetic and historical writings, the post-exilic Jews utilized theological narratives to explain the human relationship with God. This is what we will look at in this book (Job) and the next book (Jonah). Here, the suffering protagonist Job questions why God allows the just to suffer. God reminds Job that human suffering is a mystery beyond human understanding.

Important Verse

“Then Job answered the Lord and said: ‘I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be hindered. Who is this who obscures counsel with ignorance?’ I have spoken but did not understand; things too marvelous for me, which I did not know” (Job 42:1-3).

Time Reference

Scholars say Job was composed sometime between the seventh and fifth centuries.



Graphic

Job discusses the meaning of human suffering with his three friends and a young onlooker. Finally, God comes in the form of a whirlwind to pronounce his sentence.



JONAH

Summary

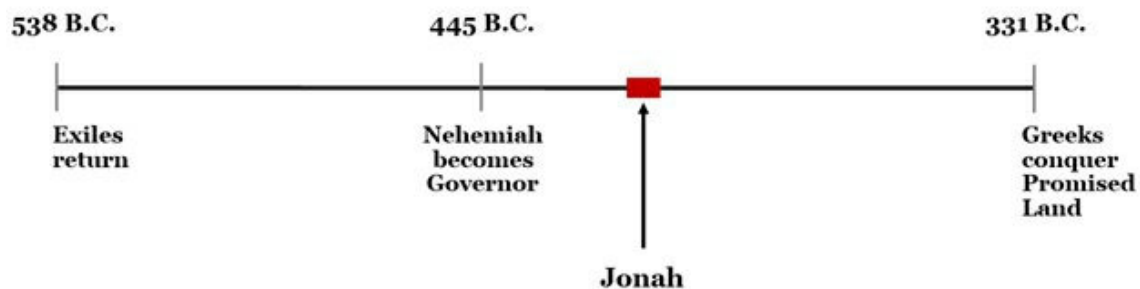
Jonah is another theological narrative to explain the human relationship with God. Jonah's call is unique: To go to *another* people and call *them* to conversion! Given what we know about the Assyrian Empire's cruelty (see the prophet Nahum), his reaction is understandable—he flees. God finds him anyway and he then goes to Nineveh to call for them to repent. To his surprise, they all immediately do—even the animals! Jonah becomes angry that God shows them mercy. The lesson of this theological narrative: God can show mercy to anyone he chooses!

Important Verse

God said to Jonah: “And should I not be concerned over the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot know their right hand from their left, not to mention all the animals?” (Jon. 4:11).

Time Reference

Although the setting for Jonah is the early 700s B.C., it was written after the return from exile to show God's mercy extends to non-Israelites as well.



Graphic

The book starts with Jonah fleeing from God's call. Jonah is originally called to preach in Nineveh, but he gets on a boat and sails to Tarshish, which is in the completely opposite direction. However, a large fish swallows Jonah to take him to where God wants him to be.



SONG OF SONGS

Summary

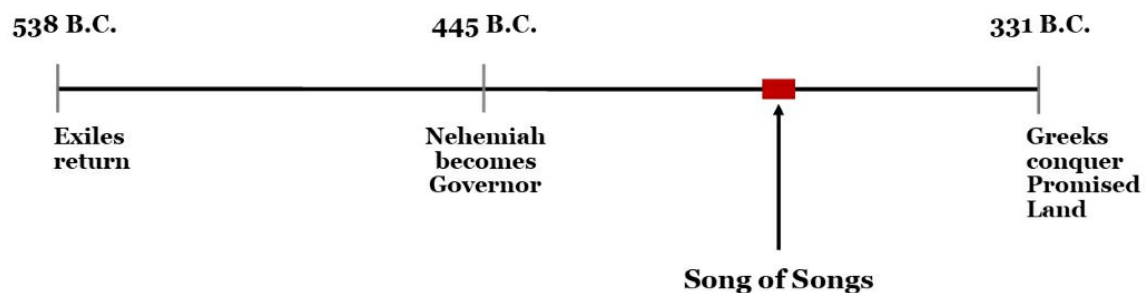
As we have seen, the biblical authors use various styles of literature (prophetic preaching, adaptation of Mesopotamian myths) to communicate God's love for us. This book, the Song of Songs, utilizes poetry to communicate that the love between spouses is a beautiful thing.

Important Verse

“Deep waters cannot quench love, nor rivers sweep it away. Were one to offer all the wealth of his house for love, he would be utterly despised” (Song 8:7).

Time Reference

King Solomon and his beloved are the main characters in this book. However, this book was written centuries after Solomon, in the years after the exile.



Graphic

The Song of Songs depicts Shulamite, a young woman eagerly waiting for her groom. The book recites poetry as she and her beloved search for each other and reflect on their love.



ECCLESIASTES

Summary

The author states that he can find no meaning in life because all human pursuits do not bring lasting satisfaction. His conclusion is to follow all of God's commandments.

Important Verse

'I have seen all things that are done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a chase after wind" (Eccles. 1:14).

Time Reference

Most scholars put this book in around the third century B.C.



Graphic

Quoheleth, the main character in this book, experiences worldly power but found it lacking. In fact, all the biblical authors knew that nothing lasts forever. To illustrate this fact, below is a table of the different world empires presented in the Bible. Although some ruled for many centuries, in the end this sort of power is “vanity and a chase after wind”. Although the different empires come and go, God remains the one relationship that lasts throughout.

Empire	Time Period	Corresponding Biblical History
Egypt	Around 3000–1000 B.C.	The beginning of the Jewish through the settling in the promised land
Assyria	Around 1000–600 B.C.	The divided kingdom
Babylon	Around 600–500 B.C.	The destruction of the southern kingdom and its exile
Persia	Around 500–300 B.C.	The return from exile, re-settling in the promised land
Greece	Around 300–50 B.C.	Greek persecution, integrating Greek and Jewish philosophy
Rome	Around 50 B.C.–A.D. 100. (The empire falls in A.D. 476, but the New Testament covers until around A.D. 100)	The time of Jesus and the apostles, the entire New Testament

ESTHER

Summary

Yet another style of literature utilized by the sacred authors of the Bible was the “novella”—stories designed to encourage the Jews to maintain steadfast in their Jewish faith and customs. In the Bible we have three such novellas (Esther, Judith, and Tobit). Esther, set in the time of the exile, tells the story of the beautiful Jew, Esther, who rescues her people from destruction.

Important Verse

“Queen Esther replied, ‘If I have found favor with you, O king, and if it pleases your majesty, I ask that my life be spared and I beg that you spare the lives of my people’” (Est. 7:3).

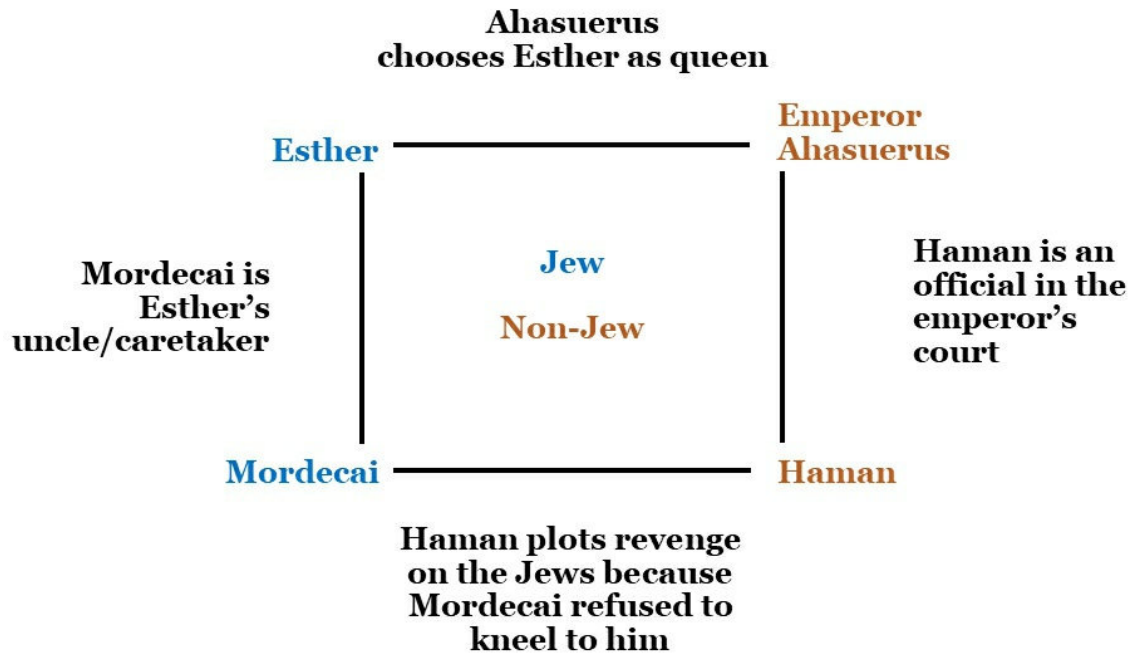
Time Reference

Although the setting of Esther is the Babylonian exile in the mid-500s B.C., the author wrote this narrative in the third century B.C.



Graphic

This diagram shows the relation between the four main characters to this story: Mordecai, Esther, Haman, and King Ahasuerus.



JUDITH

Summary

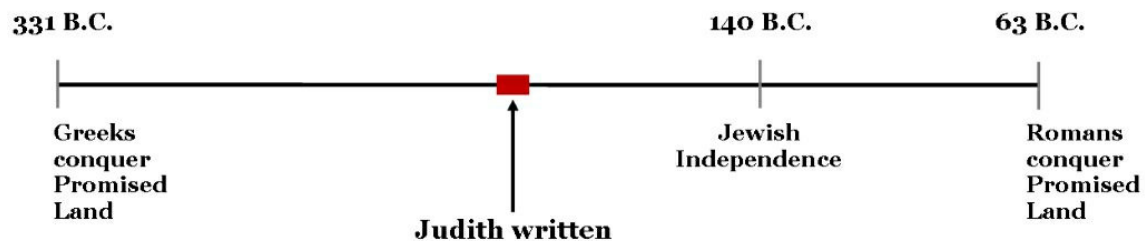
The second of three novellas. Judith, the beautiful widow, defeats the evil general Holofernes, who seeks to destroy the Jewish people. As we have seen so often, this story is meant to show that God can raise the lowly in society (like widows) to deliver his people from their enemies.

Important Verse

“When they came to her, all with one accord blessed her, saying: ‘you are the glory of Jerusalem! You are the great pride of Israel! You are the great boast of our nation!’” (Jdt. 15:9).

Time Reference

This book combines different time periods. It was written in the late second century B.C.



Graphic

Judith's decapitation of general Holofernes is prevalent in classical art. Here is an adaptation of Caravaggio's *Judith and Holofernes*.



TOBIT

Summary

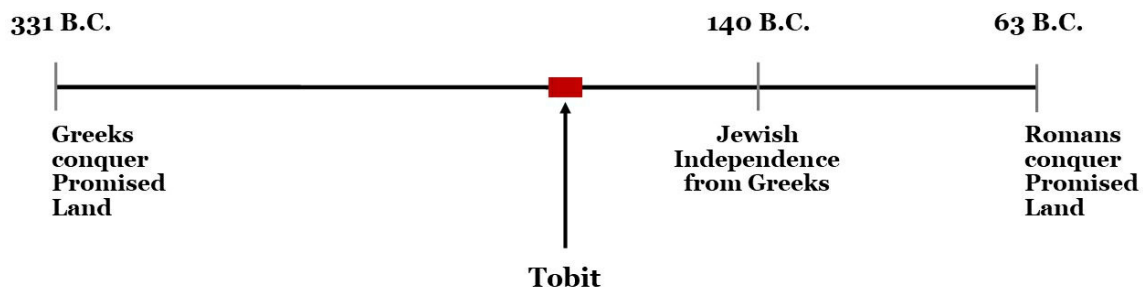
The third of three novellas. This story shows how God aides his pious followers even in times of trouble. The pious Tobit sends his son Tobiah to go on a journey to claim a large sum of money in a far-off land of Media. During his journey, he is accompanied by the archangel Rafael, who guides and protects him. In Media, he encounters his future wife Sarah. Upon returning safe and sound, the archangel reveals his identity, and heals Tobit's blindness.

Important Verse

[The archangel Raphael said:] “Now when you, Tobit, and Sarah prayed, it was I who presented the record of your prayer before the Glory of the Lord; and likewise whenever you used to bury the dead” (Tob. 12:12).

Time Reference

Although this novella takes place in the Assyrian empire days of the 700s B.C., it was written in the early second century to show that perseverance of good works will not go unnoticed.



Graphic

The archangel Raphael accompanies Tobiah from Nineveh to Media right after the northern kingdom is destroyed. There he finds his treasure and his future wife Sarah.



1 MACCABEES

Summary

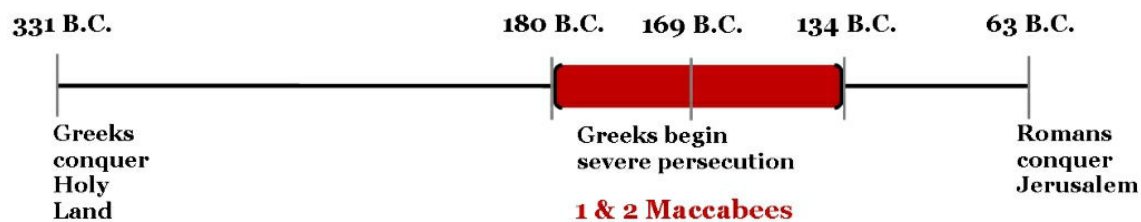
In 331 B.C., Alexander the Great took over the whole Mediterranean region. As we have seen in the Bible with each new empire, the Jewish people struggle to remain faithful to God. The Greek successors of Alexander peacefully controlled Israel until 175 B.C. In that year, king Antiochus IV took control of the region and wanted to repress Jewish devotion to the true God. First Maccabees recounts the scrappy, underdog Jewish rebellion against their Greek oppressors.

Important Verse

“Then Mattathias cried out in the city, ‘Let everyone who is zealous for the law and who stands by the covenant follow me! Then he and his sons fled to the mountains, leaving behind in the city all their possessions” (1 Macc. 2:27–28).

Time Reference

First Maccabees covers a period from 175 to 134 B.C. The time period covered in 1 Maccabees also overlaps a good deal with 2 Maccabees.



Graphic

This is a map of the Greek dynasties that controlled the Mediterranean around 175 B.C. At this point, Alexander's kingdom was divided into 4 regions. The dynasty that oppressed the Jews were the Seleucids (orange). See Appendix 1 for maps of the promised land throughout different periods in the Bible.



DANIEL

Summary

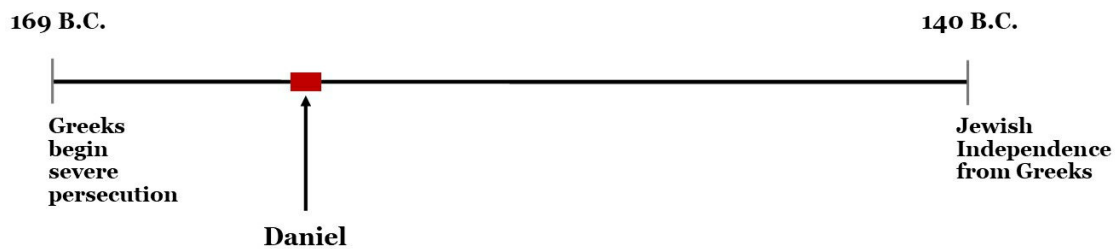
To encourage the Jews to persevere despite the Greek persecution, this divinely inspired author tells the story of Daniel, a wise youth who predicts God's triumph over those who have oppressed Israel in the past. The author wants to show that just as God has been faithful in the past, so will he help the Jews in their current persecution.

Important Verse

"In the lifetime of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed or delivered up to another people; rather, it shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and put to end to them, and it shall stand forever" (Dan. 2:44).

Time Reference

Although the setting of this book is during the Babylonian exile, the author wrote it in response to the Greek prosecution from 167–164 B.C.



Graphic

Daniel 2 describes a statue that represents the nations that have oppressed the Jews in the past.² However, none of them can stand God's strength.



Part of Statue	Kingdom Represented
Head of Fine Gold	Babylonian
Chest and Arms of Silver	Media
Belly and Thigh of Bronze	Persian
Legs of Iron	Greek
Feet of Iron and Clay	The Greek kingdom was divided among Alexander the Great's successors (See map of 1 Maccabees)
The Stone	The kingdom of God awaited by the Jews

²See note Dan. 2:36–45 in the New American Bible, <http://www.usccb.org/bible/daniel/2>.

2 MACCABEES

Summary

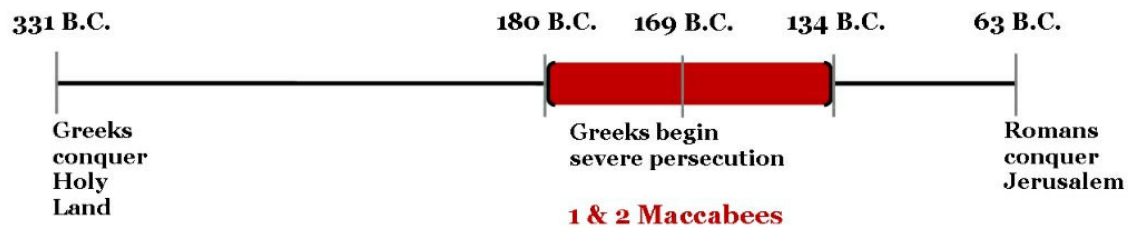
Inspiring stories of Jews maintaining their faith despite Greek persecution. One of the most inspiring stories of 2 Maccabees is that of Eleazar, an elderly man who preferred death to disobeying the Jewish law. This praise of faithful Jews is a common theme through the whole book of 2 Maccabees.

Important Verse

“This is how he died, leaving in his death a model of nobility and unforgettable example of virtue not only for the young but for the whole nation” (2 Macc. 6:31).

Time Reference

Second Maccabees covers an overlapping time as 1 Maccabees, from 180–161 B.C.



Graphic

As the Jews rebelled, they took control of more and more land from the Greeks. The orange region represents the amount of land retaken during 1 and 2 Maccabees. The yellow region shows how much land the Jewish people controlled by 114 B.C, when they had complete independence. This independence lasted until 63 B.C., when the Roman general Pompei conquered Jerusalem.



SIRACH

Summary

In the first century B.C., there were still many Jews living outside of the promised land. However, God always accompanies his people, wherever they may be. For the Jews living in Egypt, God inspired the grandson of a wise Jew named Jesus Ben Sirach to translate his wise advice from Hebrew into Greek. This way, Jews living in the region would be able to understand it and apply his wisdom.

Important Verse

“So my grandfather Jesus, who had long devoted himself to the study of the law, the prophets, and the rest of the books of our ancestors, and had acquired great familiarity with them, was moved to write something himself regarding instruction and wisdom. He did this so that those who love learning might, by accepting what he had written, make even greater progress in living according to the Law” (Foreword to Sir.).

Time Reference

Ben Sirach wrote down his wisdom in Hebrew in 175 B.C., while his grandson translated it into Greek around 117 B.C.



Graphic

Below is a map of the Jewish “diaspora”—the cities with large Jewish populations dispersed throughout the world around 200 B.C. The circled cities will be prominent later on in the Bible and also in early church history. The grandson is writing in Alexandria, which is around 600 miles away from Jerusalem.



WISDOM

Summary

Once again, God inspires an author to remind the Jews living in Egypt to remember their roots and stay true to God, despite living in a foreign land.

Important Verse

“For Wisdom is mobile beyond all motion, and she penetrates and pervades all things by reason of her purity. For she is the breath of the might of God and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; therefore nothing defiled can enter into her” (Wis. 7:24–25)

Time Reference

Chronologically, this is the last book written in the Old Testament, written around 50 B.C.



Graphic

Although Greek thought and philosophy is still the primary cultural influence in the Mediterranean world, the Roman empire is the primary political influence right before the time of Jesus. This map shows the Roman empire around 50 B.C., which is around the extent of the empire when Jesus was born. See Appendix 1 for maps of the promised land throughout different periods in the Bible.



PART 2: THE NEW TESTAMENT

As mentioned in the beginning of the book, the word “testament” means “covenant”. The previous books we looked at were part of the Old Testament. That “covenant” between God and humans can be summarized as “I will be your God, you will be my people” (Lev. 26:12).

The New Testament is the part of the Bible that comes after Jesus. In the New Testament, we have a “new covenant” where God will do something greater: he will become a human being to show his love for us.

It consists of twenty-seven books, and at least five different genres:

- Gospels (life of Jesus),
- Acts of Apostles (story of the early Christian church)
- Pauline letters (letters that the apostle Paul wrote to newly founded Christian communities)
- General Letters (letters written by disciples of the apostles)
- Book of Revelation (a series of visions)

MATTHEW

Summary

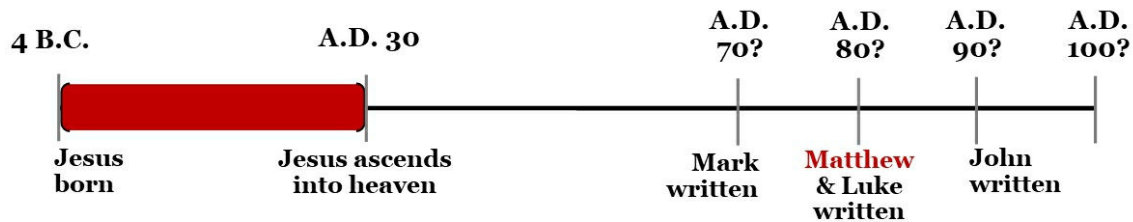
The divinely inspired author recounts Jesus's life, focusing on how he fulfills the Old Testament.

Important Verse

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17).

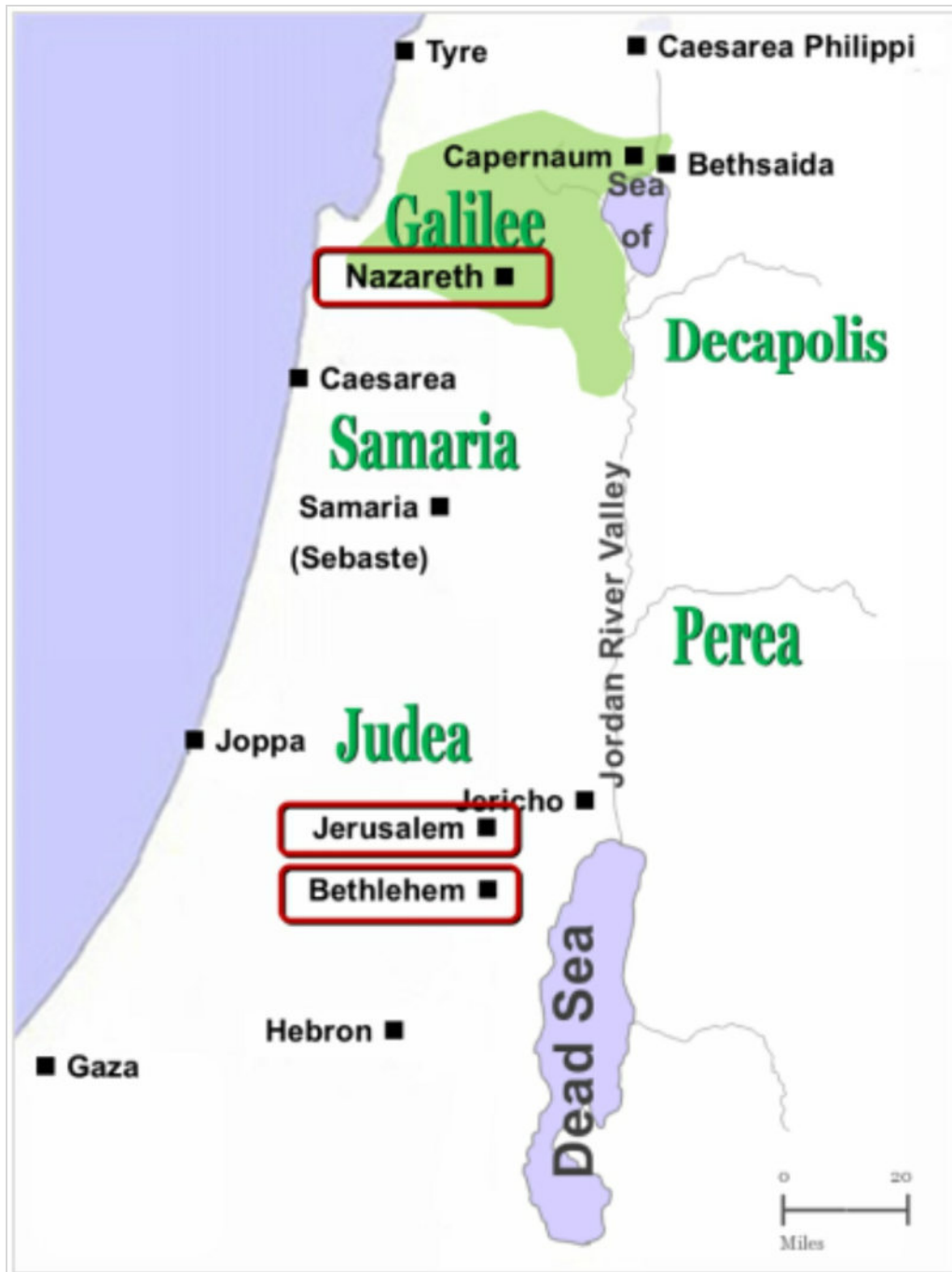
Time Reference

All four of the Gospels were written around a generation after Jesus. The writers compiled oral traditions of Jesus's life and wrote them down for future generations.



Graphic

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, grew up in Nazareth, preached mostly in Galilee, experienced his death and resurrection in Jerusalem.



MARK

Summary

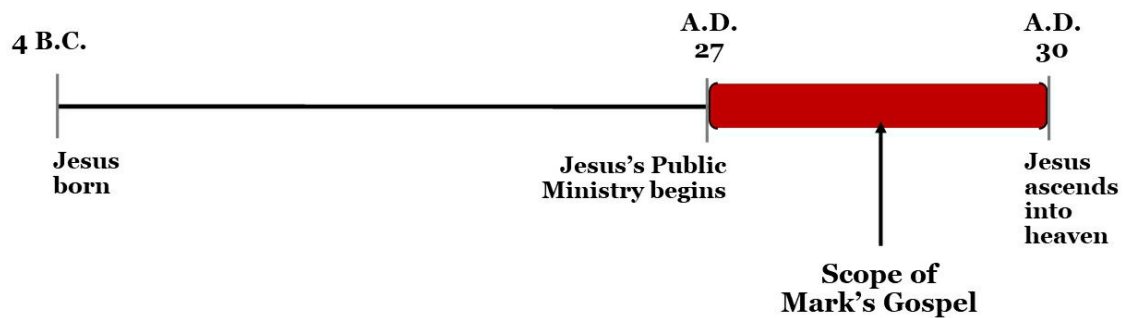
Mark recounts Jesus as the Son whom God sent to rescue humanity by serving and sacrificing his life.

Important Verse

“For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

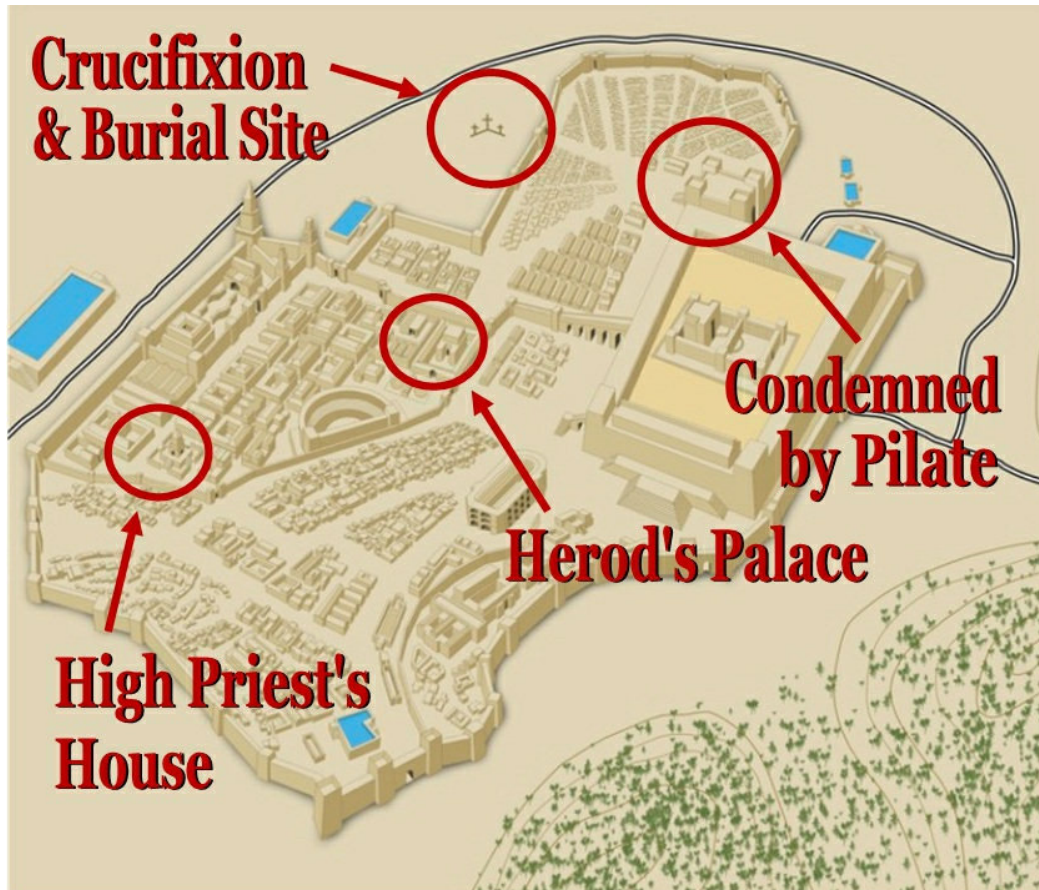
Time Reference

Mark’s Gospel only recounts Jesus’s public ministry, not the circumstances of his birth/childhood.



Graphic

This map of Jerusalem shows where Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead. Also noted is where Jesus stood trial before the Jewish leaders (at the high priest's house) and two different Roman authorities, Herod and Pilate.



LUKE

Summary

Luke recounts Jesus as the one who cares for the poor, the sinner, and anyone else who recognizes their dependence on God. This book is part one of a two-book series (book two is Acts of the Apostles).

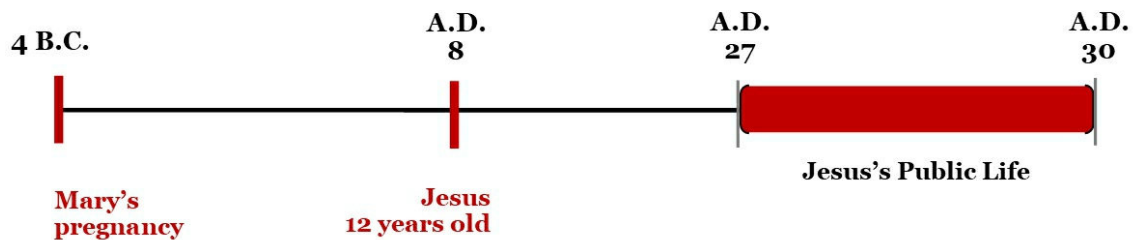
Important Verse

“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Time Reference

Luke has the most details about Jesus’s birth, as well as an episode from when Jesus was twelve years old. However, like the other three Gospels, Luke’s focus is on Jesus’s public ministry, his death, and resurrection.

Jesus’s life covered in Luke



Graphic

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus reaches out not only to Jews (green regions) but also people from the non-Jewish (purple colored) regions of Samaria, Syrophenicia (where Tyre is located), and the trans-Jordan region (where Decapolis and Perea are located).



JOHN

Summary

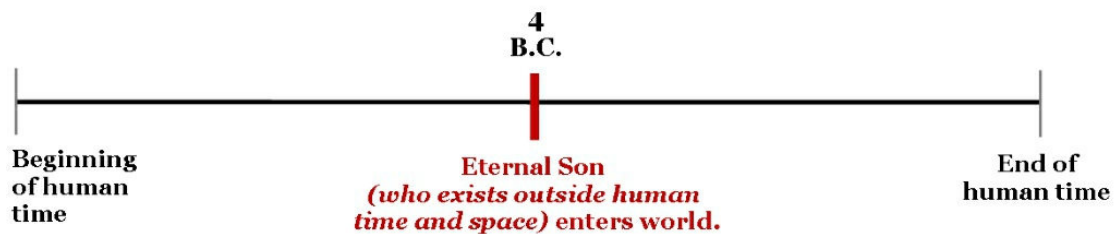
John presents Jesus as God's glorious Son, who reveals the Father's glory.

Important Verse

"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name" (John 20:30–31).

Timeline Reference

John begins his Gospel by telling us that Jesus always existed with God from even before time and the universe were created. Around 2000 years ago, the infinite Son of God took the form of a human being.



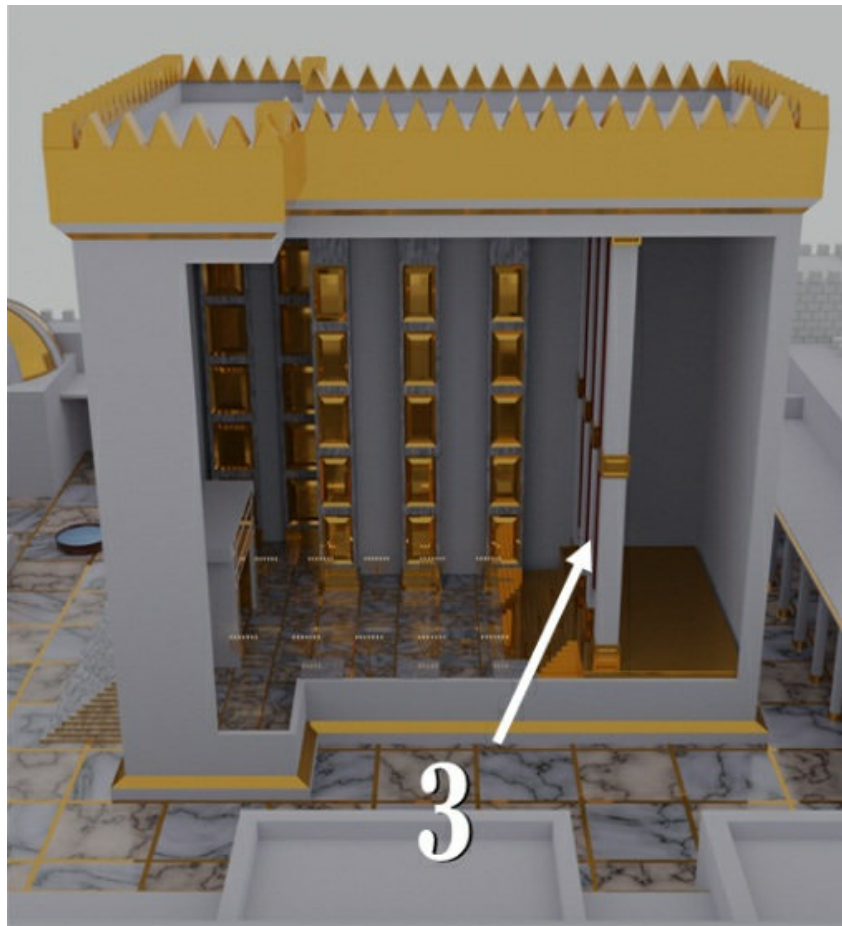
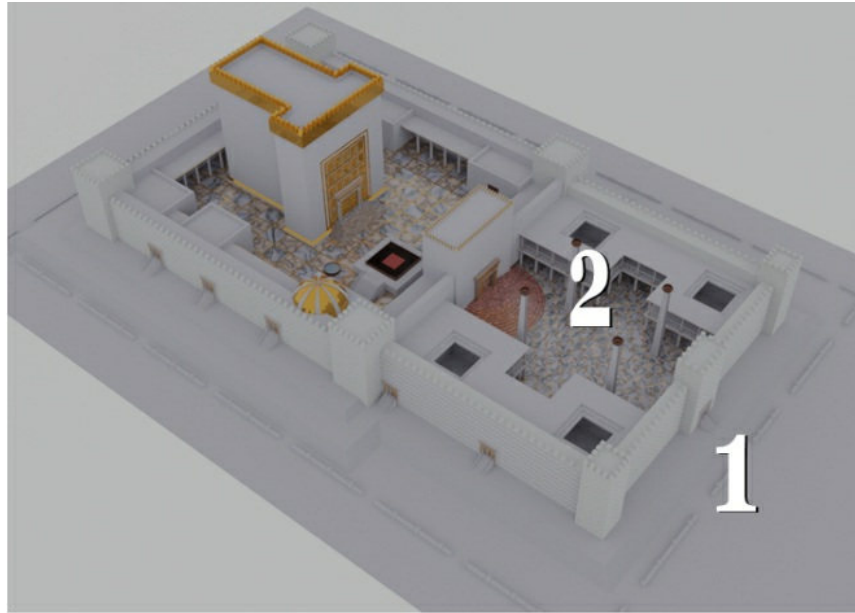
Graphic

Here is a rendition of the temple during Jesus's time. It is similar to the temple from 515 B.C. (see the book of Haggai), but the Roman king Herod enlarged it and further adorned it. The upper drawing depicts the whole temple structure, while the lower drawing depicts the interior of the main worship building.

Jesus, being Jewish, was familiar with the same utensils of worship used since the Jews left Egypt (see graphic for Leviticus). Here are other important spots in the temple during Jesus's life:

1. The outside border is the likely place where Jesus threw out the moneychangers for turning his heavenly father's house into a "den of thieves" (see John 2:13-16).
2. The Atrium is the likely spot where Jesus did his temple preaching in the week before his crucifixion (see Luke 20:1–21:38).
3. The veil of the temple tore in two when Jesus died on the cross

See Appendix 3 for progression of central sites of worship throughout the Bible.



ACTS

Summary

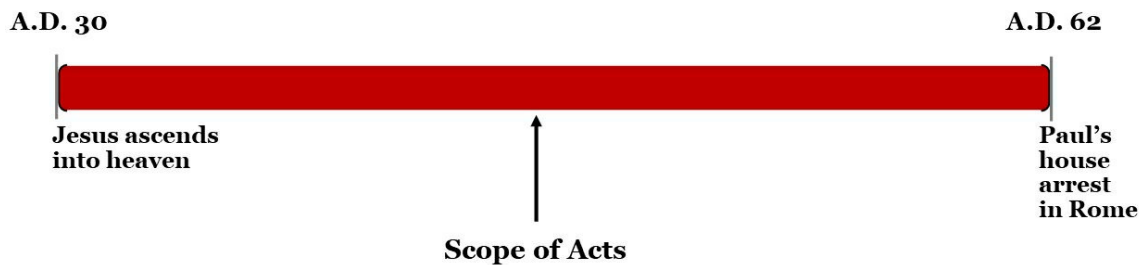
This is part two of Luke's Gospel. The Holy Spirit guides the first generation of apostles as they spread the good news of Jesus's salvation.

Important Verse

"But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Time Reference

Acts starts with Jesus's ascension in roughly A.D. 30 and ends with Paul's house arrest in Rome in A.D. 62.



Graphic

Below is a map of the places the apostles traveled. They start in Jerusalem, then preach in the areas of Judah and Samaria (purple). The green line represents Paul's missionary travels.



1 THESSALONIANS

Summary

As the apostles spread the gospel, some of the believers wondered what would happen to those who die before Jesus's glorious return to earth. Paul writes this letter to tell the Thessalonian community not to worry: Jesus will return to gather all the living and deceased to himself.

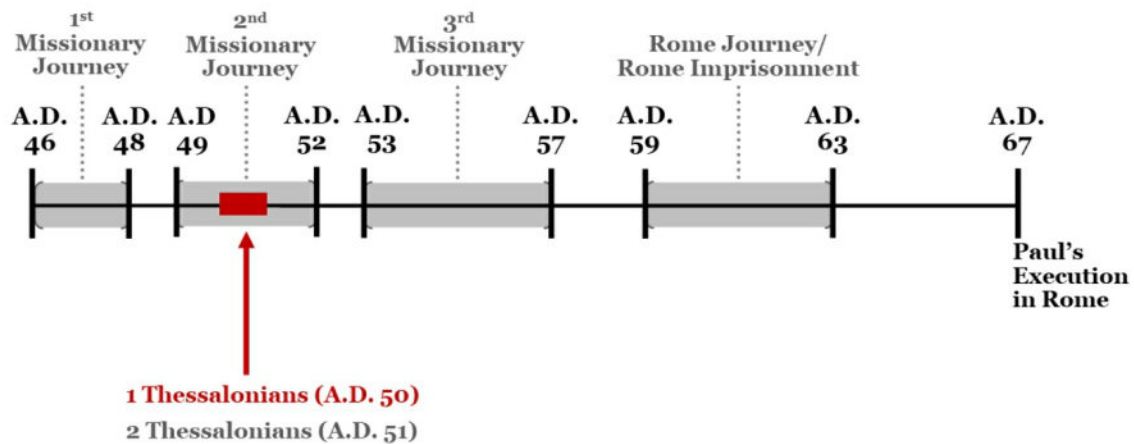
Important Verse

"We do not want you to be unaware, bother, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose, so too will God, through Jesus, bring with him those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thess. 4:13–14).

Time Reference

The writings of the New Testament occurred from around A.D. 50 to around 120.

First Thessalonians is the earliest of Christian writings, written around A.D. 50. For reference, Paul's three missionary journeys and his journey to Rome are marked in grey.



Graphic

When Paul wrote this letter, he was in Corinth during his second missionary journey (you can see all three of Paul's missionary journeys in Appendix 2.)



2 THESSALONIANS

Summary

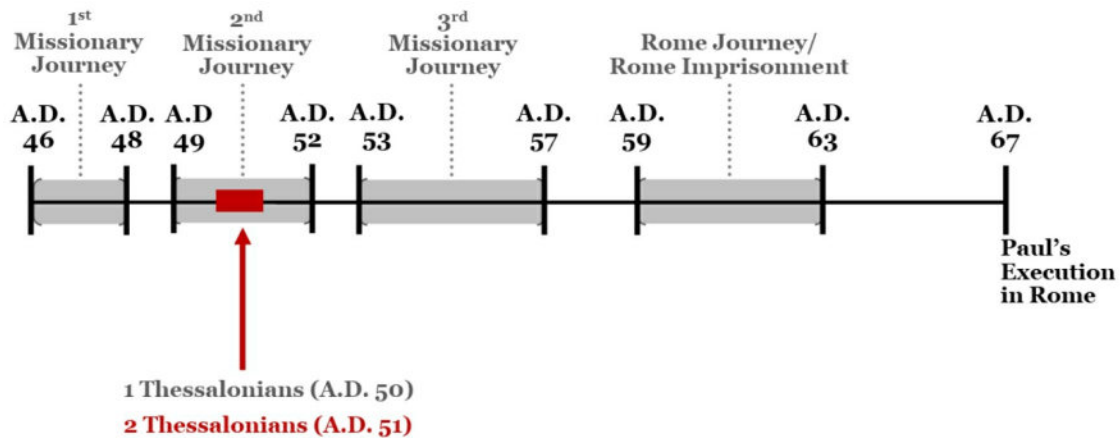
Paul hears that some believers are negligent of their responsibilities while waiting for Jesus to return. So, he reminds the community that Christians should continue working until Jesus returns.

Important Verse

“In fact, when we were with you, we instructed you that if anyone was unwilling to work, neither should that one eat” (2 Thess. 3:10).

Time Reference

The traditional view is that Paul wrote this letter shortly after 1 Thessalonians, in around A.D. 51.



Graphic

Most scholars are not sure if Paul or one of his disciples actually wrote 2 Thessalonians. In fact, there are thirteen letters in the New testament attributed to Paul. Scholars divide them into two categories: “undisputed” and “disputed” Pauline letters.

Undisputed Pauline Letters	Disputed Pauline Letters
Romans	Colossians
1 Corinthians	Ephesians
2 Corinthians	2 Thessalonians
Galatians	1 Timothy
Philippians	2 Timothy
1 Thessalonians	Titus
Philemon	

GALATIANS

Summary

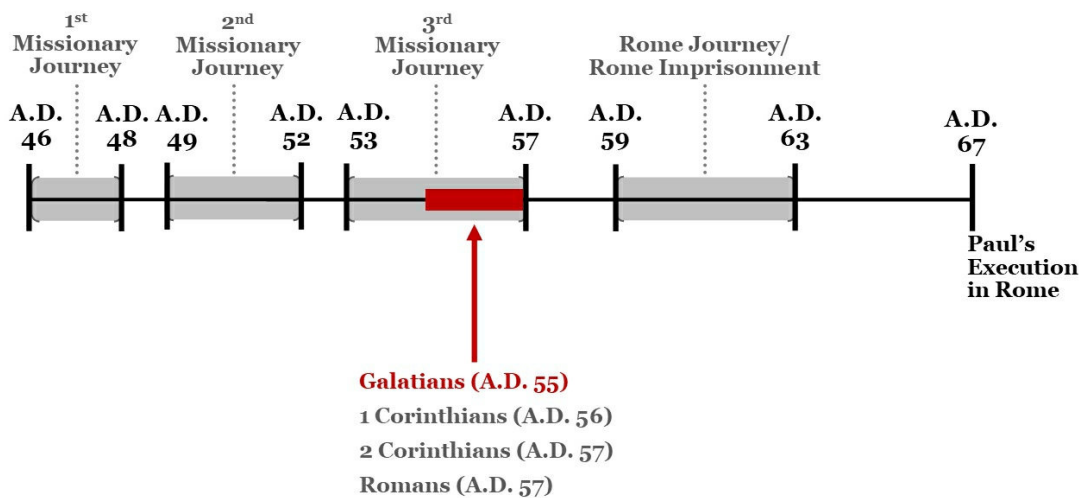
As Paul was preaching Jesus's salvation, he had to correct some of the believers who had an unhealthy attachment to parts of the Jewish law.

Important Verse

“Did you receive the Spirit from works of the law, or from faith in what you heard? Are you so stupid? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?” (Gal. 3:2–3)

Time Reference

Paul wrote Galatians around A.D. 54–55.



Graphic

Paul wrote this letter from Ephesus, during his third missionary journey, destined to the inhabitants of northern Galatia.



1 CORINTHIANS

Summary

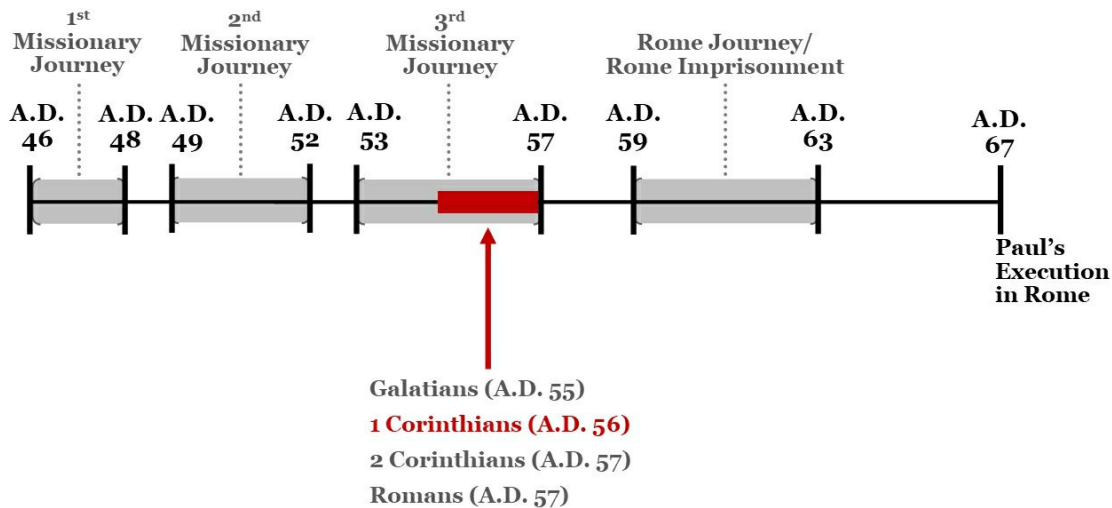
In his missionary journeys, Paul had to also correct moral problems and answer theological questions. One of the communities with numerous moral problems was the Corinth community. In 1 Corinthians, Paul addresses a wide range of problems and questions.

Important Verse

“So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13).

Time Reference

Paul wrote this Letter in A.D. 56, during his third missionary journey.



Graphic

Paul writes from Ephesus to Corinth during this third missionary journey.



2 CORINTHIANS

Summary

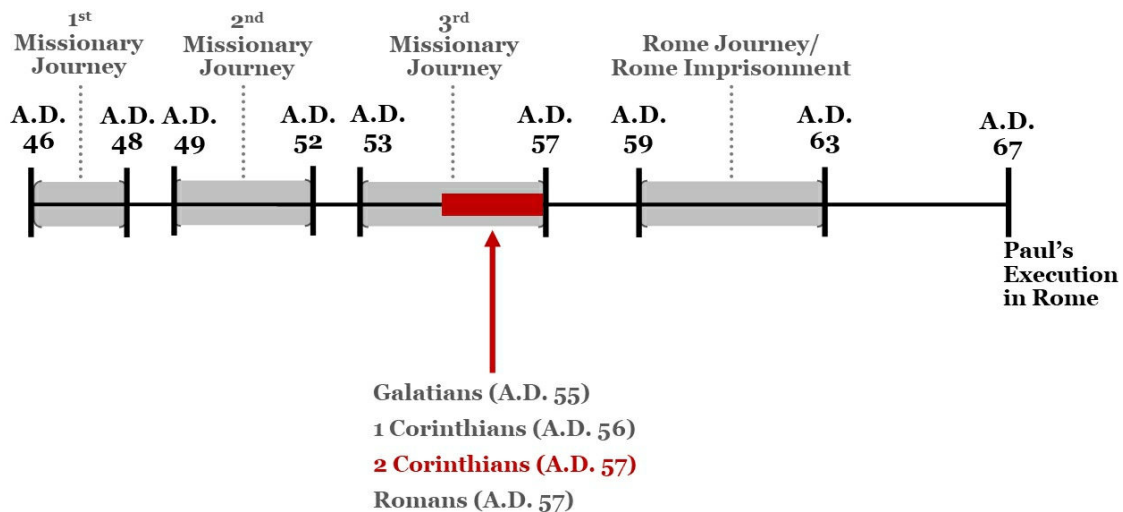
Not all believers accepted Paul's status being sent directly by Jesus. In 2 Corinthians, Paul explains his personal frustration with the Corinth community and defends the trueness of his call.

Important Verse

"Therefore I am content with weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for the sake of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

Time Reference

Most of this letter was written in 57 A.D. Paul wrote a total of 4 letters (see 1 Cor. 5:9, and 2 Cor. 2:3–4). Some parts of 2 Corinthians are excerpts from Paul's other letters.



Graphic

Based on certain sections of the letter, a good amount of it was written in Macedonia during Paul's third missionary journey.



ROMANS

Summary

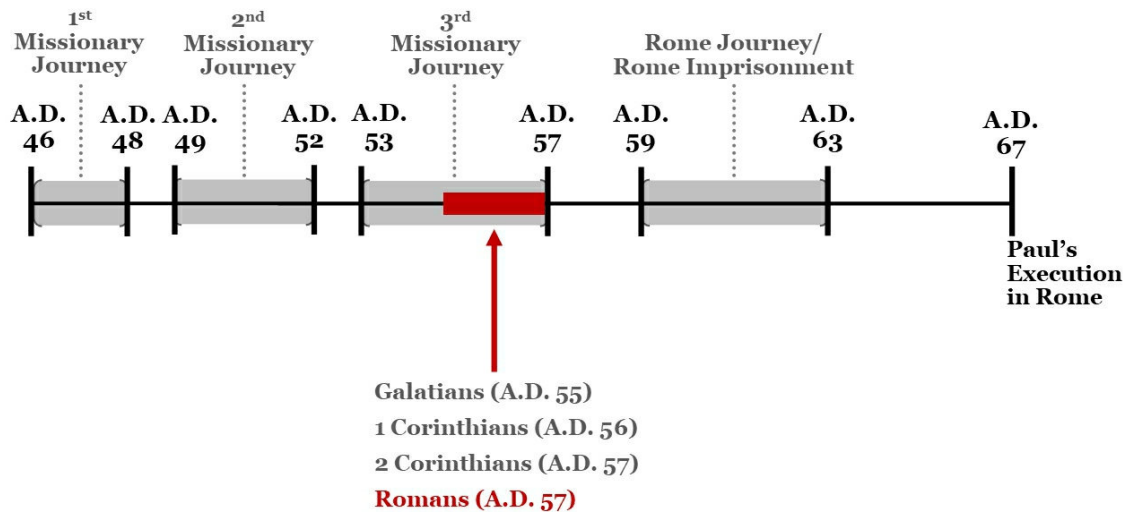
During his missions, Paul explains Jesus's salvation to both Jews and non-Jews. In this letter, Paul explains that all of us are separated from God because of our sin. However, we are reconciled back to God because of Jesus's death and resurrection.

Important Verse

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

Time Reference

Paul wrote this letter from Corinth, between A.D. 56–58 (see Acts 20:2–3).



Graphic

Paul wrote this letter to the Roman community while in Corinth.



PHILIPPIANS

Summary

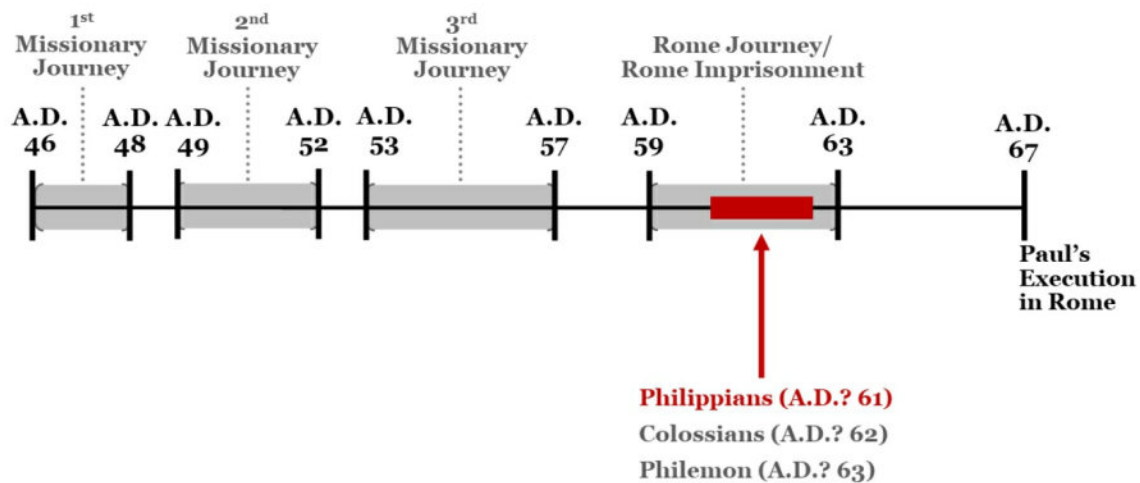
Not all of Paul's letters were to battle false beliefs and practices. In the letter to the Philippians, Paul shows his affection for the Philippian community.

Important Verse

"Rejoice in the lord always, I shall say it again, rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near" (Phil. 4:4–5).

Time Reference

Paul mentions that he is a prisoner as he writes this letter (Phil 1:7, 13, 14, 17). The traditional view is that this imprisonment refers to his house arrest in Rome from A. D. 59–63.



Graphic

Paul wrote this during his Roman imprisonment.



COLOSSIANS

Summary

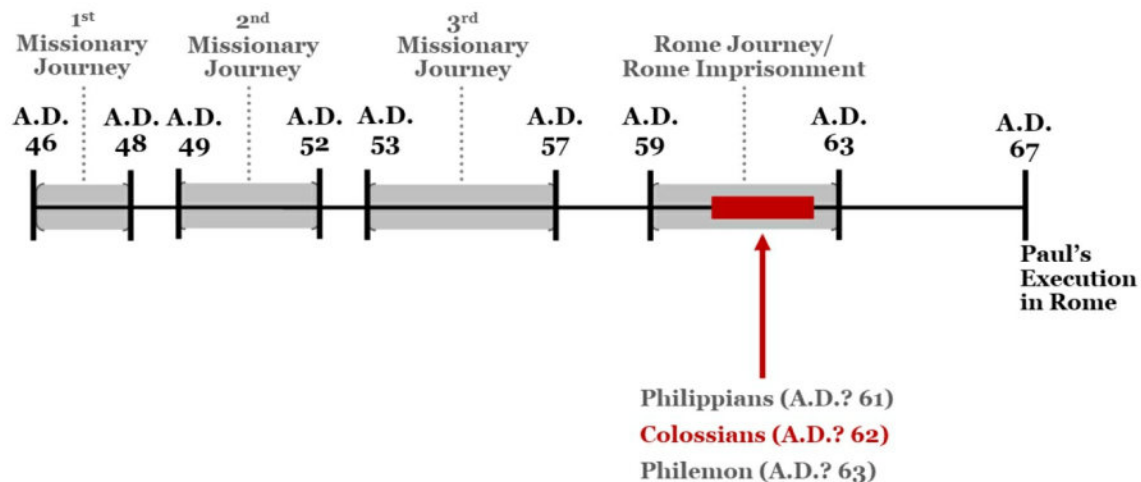
At this point in history, most of the world is neither Jewish nor Christian. Elements of other religions infuse themselves everywhere, including new Christian communities. Paul reminds the Colossian community that Jesus is king over everything and everyone.

Important Verse

“Think of what is above, not of what is on earth” (Col. 3:2).

Time Reference

This is another one of Paul’s “imprisonment” letters. Although he spent time imprisoned in Caesarea and Ephesus, the traditional view is that this letter was written during his Roman imprisonment, just like his letter to the Philippians.



Graphic

Paul is imprisoned in Rome while writing to the Christians in Colossae.



PHILEMON

Summary

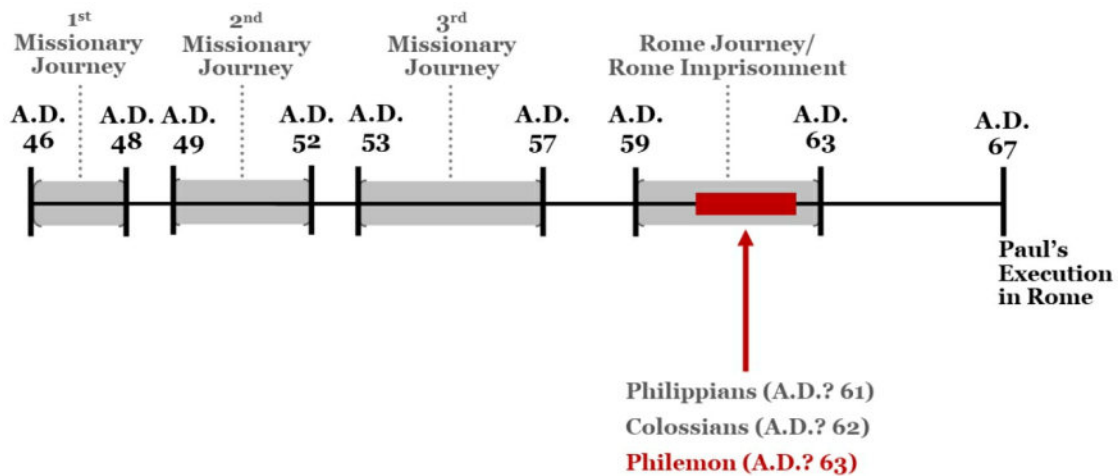
In this letter, Paul asks Philemon to accept the runaway slave Onesimus back to his house.

Important Verse

“I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you” (Philem. 12).

Time Reference

Paul describes himself as a prisoner, likely referring to his imprisonment in Rome between A.D. 61–63.



Graphic

See previous map. Paul is sending Onesimus back to Colossae with this letter.

1 TIMOTHY

Summary

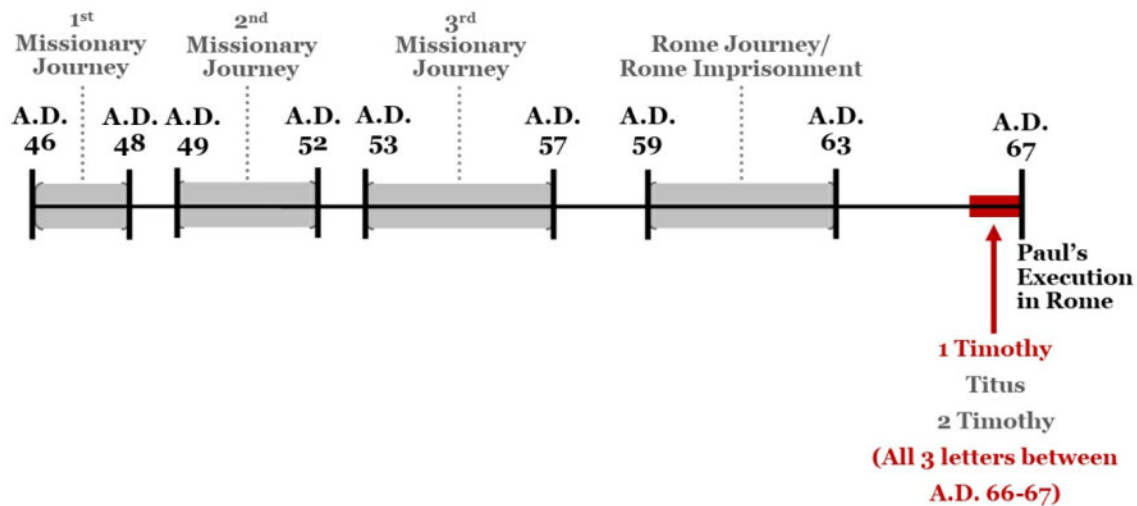
During Paul's second missionary journey, he picked up a disciple named Timothy. Paul guided Timothy in the faith and he eventually led churches by himself. In this letter, Paul instructs Timothy about his duty to lead the community in proper belief and proper conduct.

Important Verse

"Do not neglect the gifts you have, which was conferred on you through the prophetic word with the imposition of hands of the presbyterate" (1 Tim. 4:14).

Time Reference

The traditional view is that Paul wrote this letter shortly before his execution in A.D. 67.



Graphic

This letter is presented as being written from Macedonia to Timothy, the administrator of the Ephesian community.



TITUS

Summary

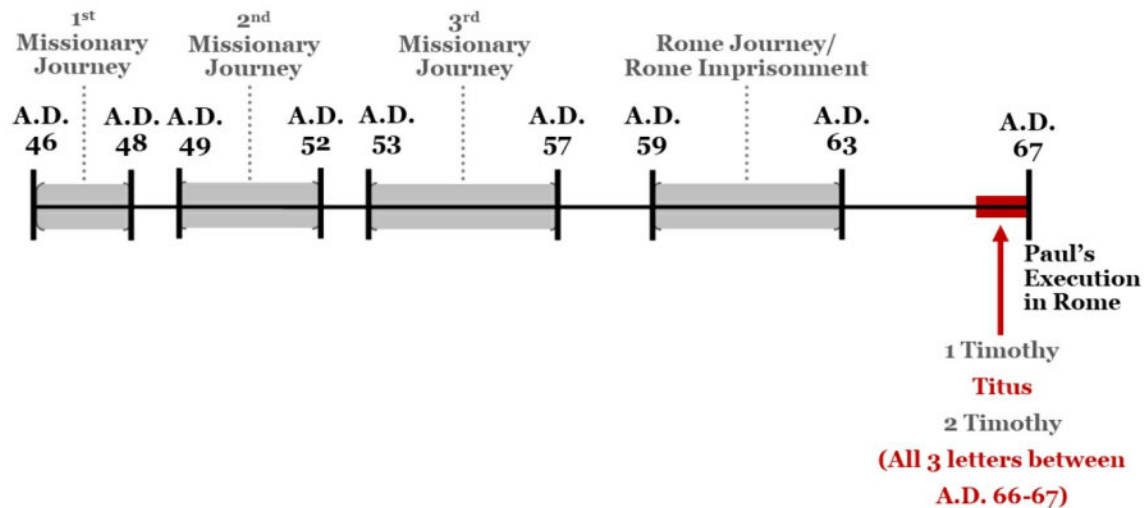
Another missionary companion of Paul was Titus, who Paul mentions in 2 Corinthians. Titus became the administrator of the church in the island of Crete.

Important Verse

“For this reason I left you in Crete so that you might set right what remains to be done and appoint presbyters in every town, as I directed you” (Titus 1:5).

Time Reference

Scholars think this letter was formed sometime after 1 Timothy and before 2 Timothy.



Graphic

Titus was the administrator of the Island of Crete. This letter doesn't mention where it's being sent from.



2 TIMOTHY

Summary

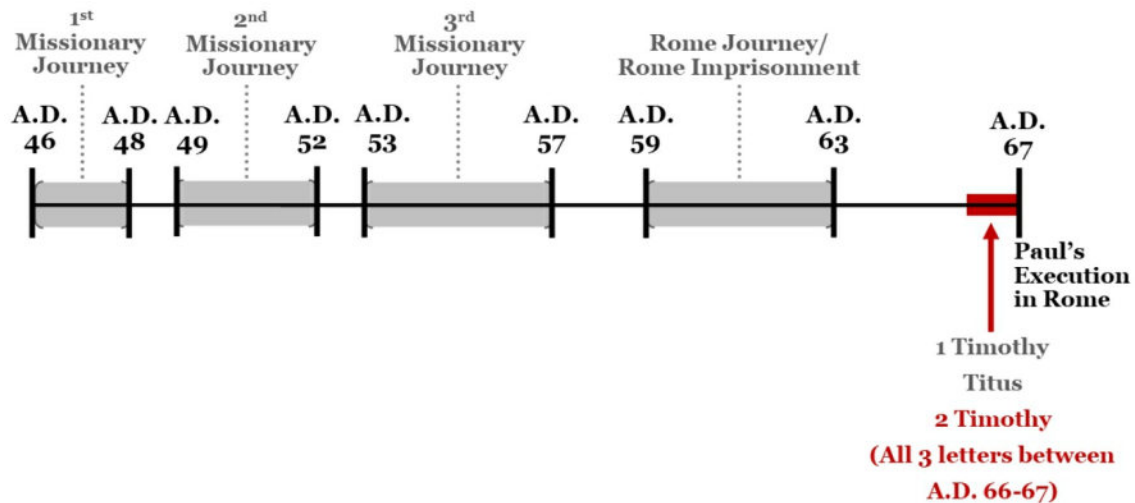
Paul has been a great proclaimer of Jesus's salvation. But no one lives forever, and shortly before his death, Paul writes another letter to Timothy saying his final goodbyes.

Important Verse

"I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7)

Time Reference

It is believed that this letter was written shortly before Paul's death in Rome in A.D. 67.



Graphic

The author (traditionally Paul) describes himself as a prisoner (traditionally in Rome), while evidence in the letter indicates Timothy is still administering the church of Ephesus.



HEBREWS

Summary

Most of the apostles died within forty years of Jesus ascending into heaven. However, they left behind successors that continued the mission. This new generation wrote letters to Christian communities, like Paul did before them. No one knows who wrote the letter to the Hebrews, but the content is clear: Jesus is greater than any sacrifice or person in the Old Testament

Important Verse

“In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe” (Heb. 1:1–2).

Time Reference

The author makes constant references to temple sacrifices in the present tense, so scholars think that was written before the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70.



Graphic

The Jewish temple was destroyed in A.D. 70. This map shows concentrations of both Christians and Jews throughout the empire at the time.



JAMES

Summary

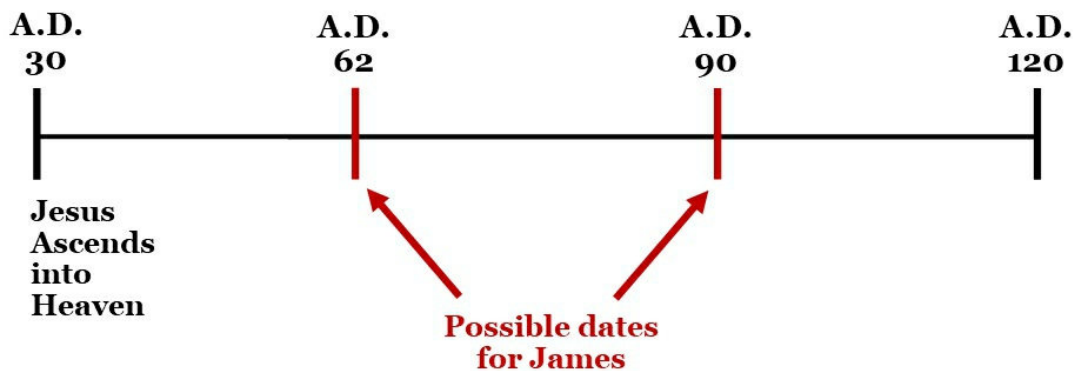
A common practice of a disciple was to write in the name of his teacher. We see that practice in letters carrying the names of apostles but was likely written by one of their disciples. In this letter, a disciple of the apostle James reminds the community that Christian faith is shown by our actions.

Important Verse

“So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 2:17).

Time Reference

If this letter was written by James the leader of the Jerusalem church, then it was written around A.D. 62. If by a later disciple of James, then around A.D. 90.



Graphic

As Catholics, we believe our seven sacraments have foundations in the practice of the apostles, even if their formats might have taken centuries to evolve into the format we know today. James 5:14 speaks of calling the elders to pray for the sick and anoint them with oil (what today we call the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick). This table gives examples of the sacraments being alluded to in early apostolic practices.

Sacrament	Early Church Practice
Anointing of the Sick	The letter of James says that praying for the sick and anointing them with oil will bring healing and the forgiveness of sins (James 5:14–15)
Baptism	Paul Baptizes prison guard and his household (Acts 16:25–34)
Communion	Paul says that when we follow Jesus’s command to eat his body and drink his blood, we are proclaiming his death until he comes again (1 Cor. 11:23–26)
Confirmation	The apostles Peter and James go to Samaria to give the Holy Spirit to the recently baptized (Acts 8:12–17)
Marriage	Paul reminds the community of Jesus’s command of the permanence of marriage (1 Cor. 7:10–11)
Holy Orders	The apostles ordain the first deacons (Acts 6:3–7)
Reconciliation	Jesus gives his apostles authority to lead the community, including restoring backsliders and reconciling brethren (Matt. 18:12–35)

1 PETER

Summary

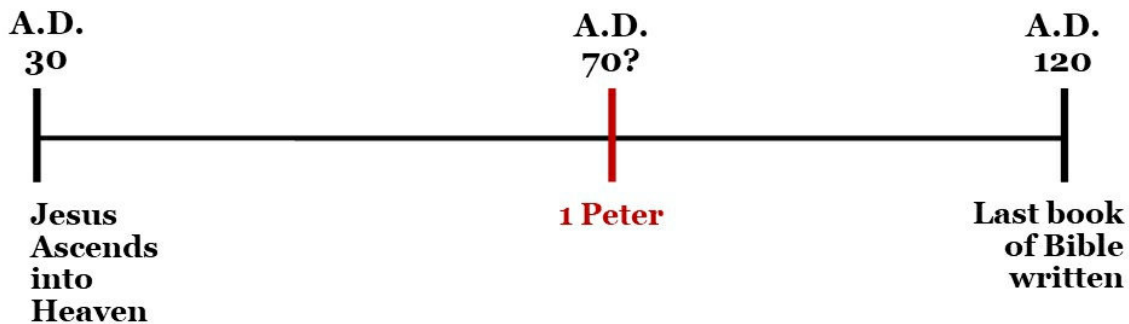
A disciple of Peter reminds Jesus's followers that suffering is a noble part of the Christian life.

Important Verse

"Although you have not seen him you love him; even though you do not see him now yet believe in him, you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, as you attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet. 1:8–9).

Time Reference

An admirer of Peter, writing in Rome, around A.D. 70.



Graphic

Peter the apostle was most likely martyred by the time 1 Peter was written. Below are the traditional fates of all the apostles.

Apostle	Location of Death (Traditional)	Method of Dying (Traditional)
Peter	Rome	Crucified upside down
James son of Zebedee	Jerusalem	Slain by the sword
John	Island of Patmos	Old age
Andrew	Greece	Crucified on an "X"
Philip	Hierapolis	Hung
Bartholomew	No info, even by tradition	Skinned alive
Matthew	Ethiopia	Pierced by spears
Thomas	India	Pierced by spears
Simon the Canaanite	Edessa (Turkey)	Crucified
Jude (Thaddeus)	Armenia	Shot with Arrow
John (not the son of Zebedee)	Egypt	Crucified
Judas Iscariot	Jerusalem	Hung Himself after Betraying Jesus

EPHESIANS

Summary

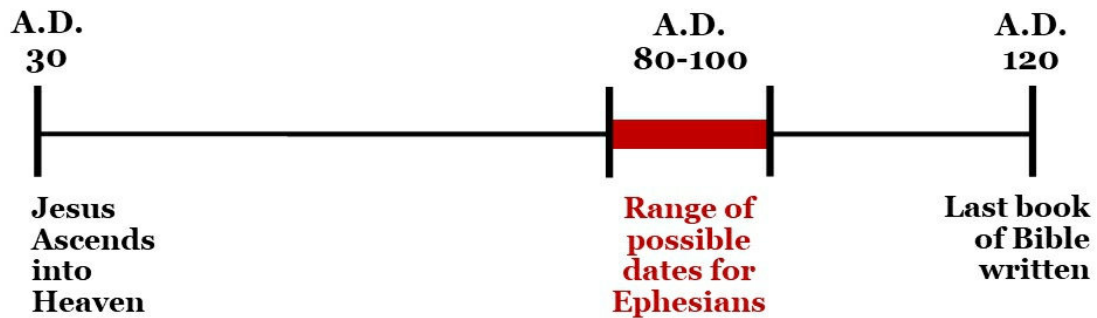
One of Paul's disciples reminds Jesus's followers that all of them are members of Christ's body, the church.

Important Verse

"Striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:5).

Time Reference

One of Paul's disciples writes this letter between A.D. 80–100.



Graphic

One of the most famous graphics in the Bible is the “armor of God,” where the author compares different aspects of the faith with the armor a soldier would use in battle (Eph. 6:11–18).



JUDE

Summary

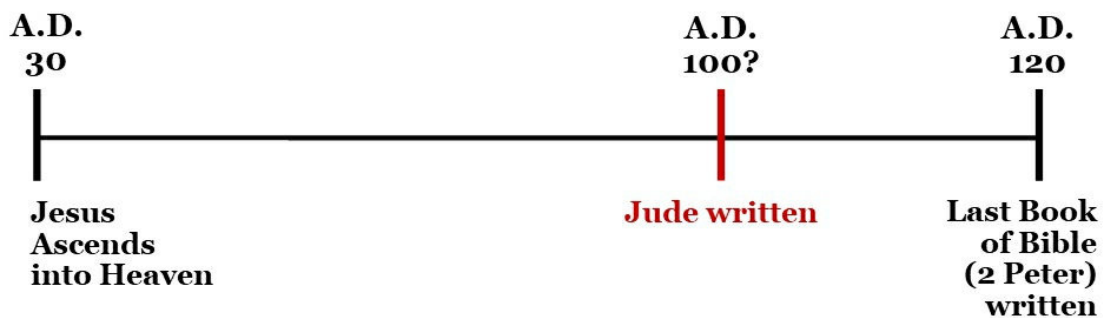
A disciple of Jude warns his congregation of false teachers.

Important Verse

“For there have been some intruders, who long ago were designated for this condemnation, godless person, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and who deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 4).

Time Reference

Jude was written near the end of the 1st century and was a basis for 2 Peter.



Graphic

A common practice in the New Testament is to refer to Old Testament stories. Below is a table of references Jude uses, either from the old testament or from Jewish tradition.

Old Testament References in Jude	Verse in Old Testament
“The Lord who once saved a people from the land of Egypt later destroyed those who did not believe” (v. 5).	Num. 14:28–29
“The angels too, who did not keep to their own domain but deserted their proper dwelling” (v. 6).	Gen. 6:1–4
“Likewise, Sodom, Gomorrah, and the surrounding towns, which in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual promiscuity and practiced unnatural vice” (v. 7).	Gen. 19:1–25
“They followed the way of Cain” (v. 11).	Gen. 4:8–16
“abandoned themselves to Balaam’s error for the sake of gain” (v. 11).	Num. 31:15–16
“and perished in the rebellion of Korah” (v. 11).	Num. 16:19–35

2 PETER

Summary

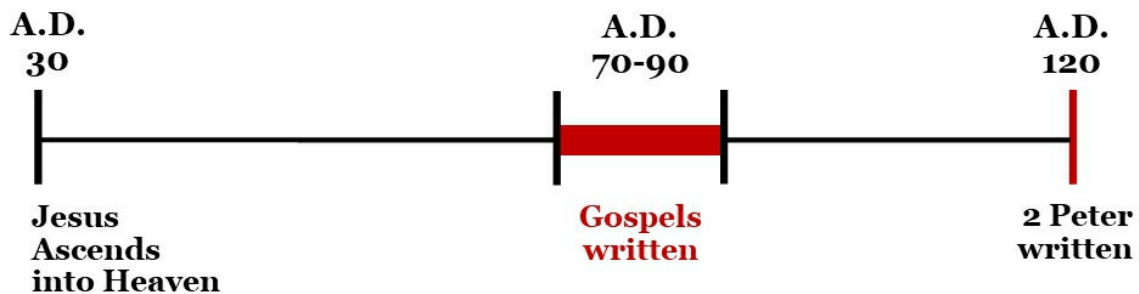
By the second generation of Christians, leaders utilized not only oral traditions, but also the letters that were previously written and circulating through the communities. 2 Peter warns against false teachers and reassures the community of Jesus's second coming.

Important Verse

"I am trying to stir up your sincere disposition, to recall the words previously spoken by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and savior through your apostles" (2 Pet. 3:1–2).

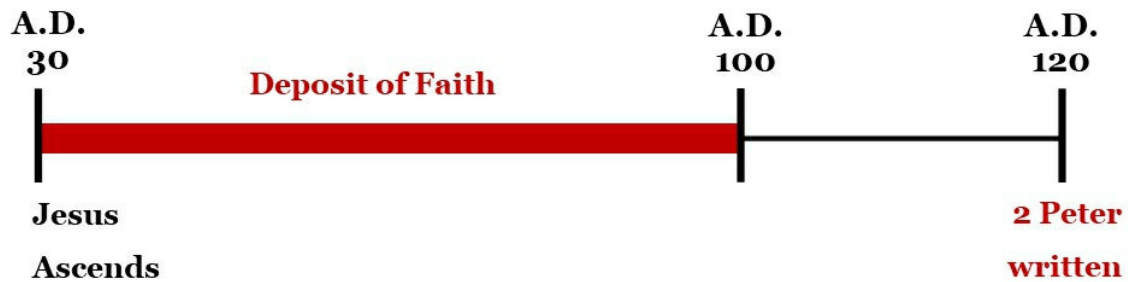
Time Reference

This is the last book included in the New Testament, written around A.D. 120.



Graphic

We Catholics define the “deposit of faith” as God’s special revelation from the Annunciation of Mary’s pregnancy until the death of the last apostle (around A.D. 100). This “deposit of faith” is the reference point for all further faith teachings (including the teachings of 2 Peter since it was written after the last apostle died).



1 JOHN

Summary

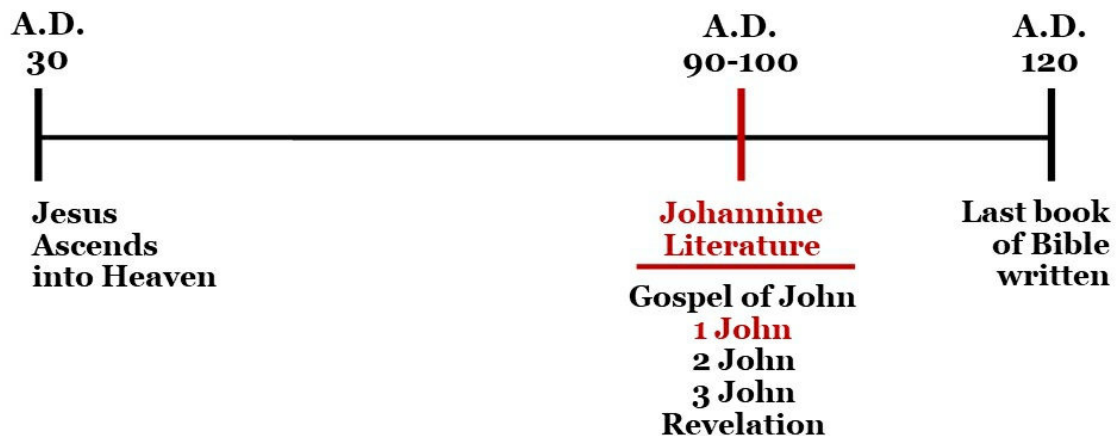
These last writings (1, 2, and 3 John, as well as Revelation) are called “Johannine” writings because their style resembles the Gospel of John. These writings were written either by John the apostle or a close disciple of John. First John reminds the Christian community that Jesus was a real human being, not simply a spirit.

Important Verse

“What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life” (1 John 1:1).

Time Reference

First, 2, and 3 John are all dated around the end of the first century.



Graphic

First, 2, and 3 John are attributed to a disciple of John the apostle, from Ephesus (the traditional place where John took the blessed Virgin Mary after the Holy Spirit descended upon them at Pentecost).



2 JOHN

Summary

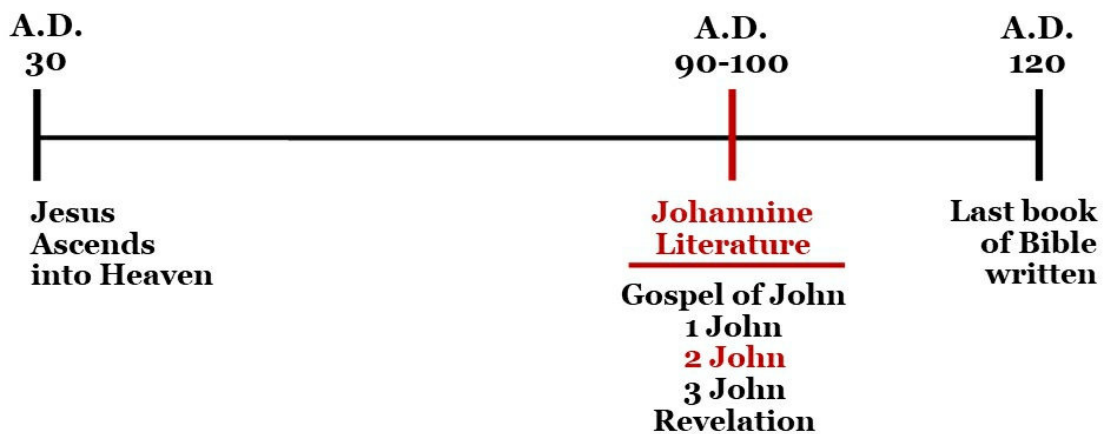
This letter contains exhortations to community members to show mutual love and recognize the historical truth about Jesus.

Important Verse

“Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh; such is the deceitful one and the antichrist” (2 John 7).

Time Reference

Second John is dated around the end of the first century.



Graphic

Both the earliest Christians (and Jesus himself) constantly affirm that he walked the earth as a real person. This image is an adaptation of Caravaggio's *Doubting Thomas* (1602). Jesus shows his physical scars after his crucifixion and resurrection (John 20:27).



3 JOHN

Summary

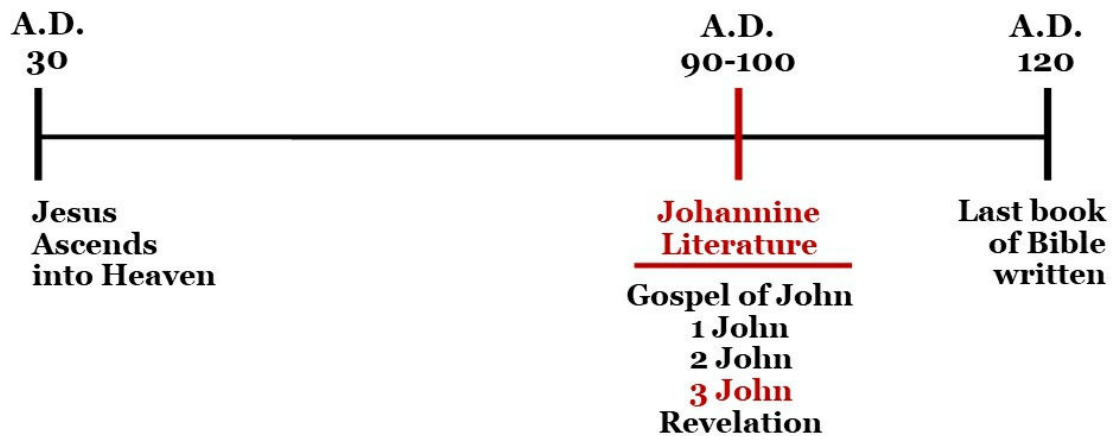
The author (calling himself the presbyter) exhorts Gaius, a leader in the community, to accept a missionary that would like to stay with them.

Important Verse

“Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does what is good is of God; Whoever does what is evil has never seen God” (3 John 11).

Time Reference

Third John is dated around the end of the first century.



Graphic

There are several names mentioned in the book. Here is a table: Gaius, Presbyter, Demetrius, Diotrephes.

Name	Role
Presbyter	Author of letter, writing to Gaius.
Gaius	Recipient of letter. Gaius has welcomed missionary visits in the past.
Demetrius	Missionary that the presbyter is sending to Gaius's community.
Diotrephes	Community member who in the past has opposed receiving missionaries sent by the presbyter.

REVELATION

Summary

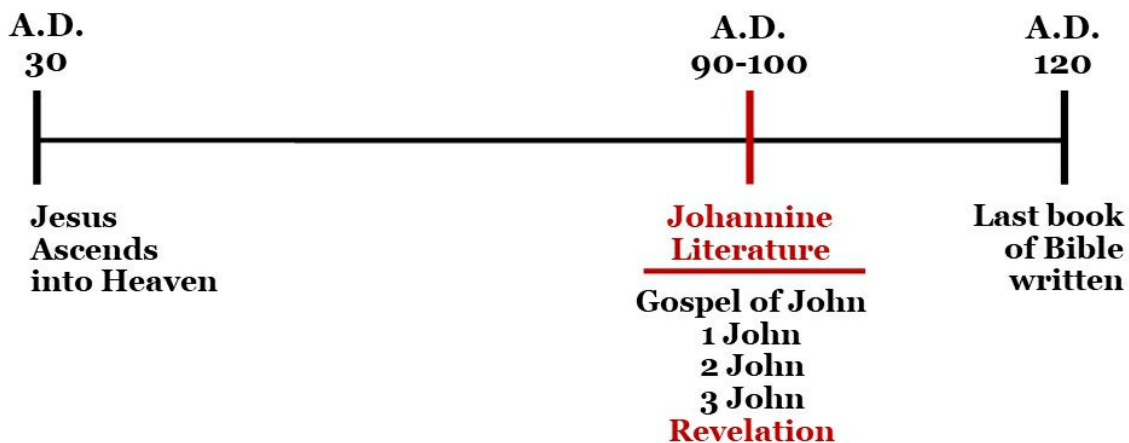
The Bible ends with us believers living in a tension of “already” and “not yet”. Jesus has already conquered sin and death to bring us back to God but has not yet returned to earth to claim the whole universe for himself. In this book, John receives symbolic visions about Jesus’s victory over death, the devil’s attempts to dissuade believers, and Jesus’s final and definitive victory.

Important Verse

“The one who gives this testimony says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’ Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all” (Rev. 22:20–21).

Time Reference

This book was written around A.D. 95.



Graphic

John is exiled on the island of Patmos and is addressing this letter to seven churches.



CONCLUSION

As we see, the Bible starts with God creating the universe out of nothing (Gen. 1:1), and ends with all creation worshiping God in the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1–22:5). In between, he communicated in a special way to the Jewish people and later became a Jewish man who died for our sins but rose from the dead to bring us back to himself. The last part of the Bible talks about how Jesus's disciples offer his gift of salvation to all the world, knowing that he will come again to unite all creation completely to himself.

I hope this book has accomplished its goal: give you, the reader, confidence to read any section of the Bible and know how it fits into the larger story of God's love for us. Now that you are finished, I hope this book can be a valuable reference for reading the biblical text.

APPENDICES

1. The promised land throughout the Bible
 - a. Arrival at promised land (around 1200 B.C.)



b. The united kingdom (around 1020 B.C- 930 B.C.)



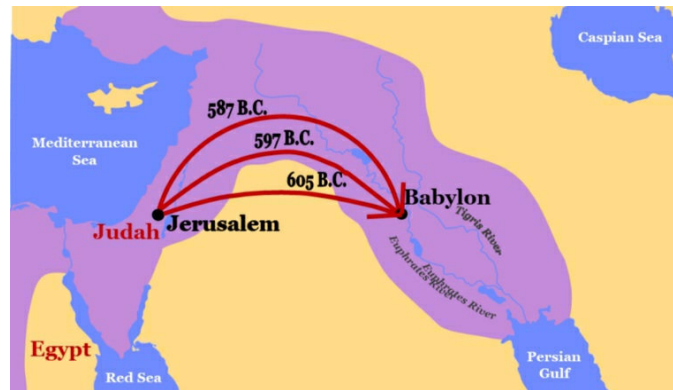
c. The divided kingdom (930 B.C. – 722 B.C.)



d. The solitary kingdom (722 B.C. – 587 B.C.)



e. The Babylonian exile (587 B.C. - 538 B.C.)



f. The return under Persia (538 B.C.)



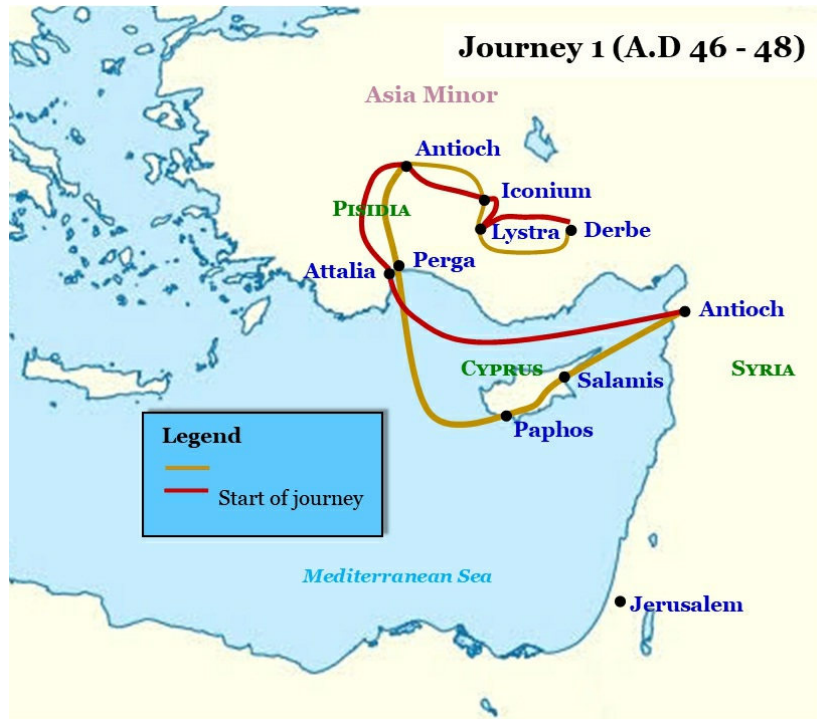
g. Greek Seleucid occupation (176 B.C- 114 B.C.)



h. Roman Empire (67 B.C–95 A.D. 95)



2. Paul's missionary journeys (Acts 13:4–21:6) (A.D. 46- 63)



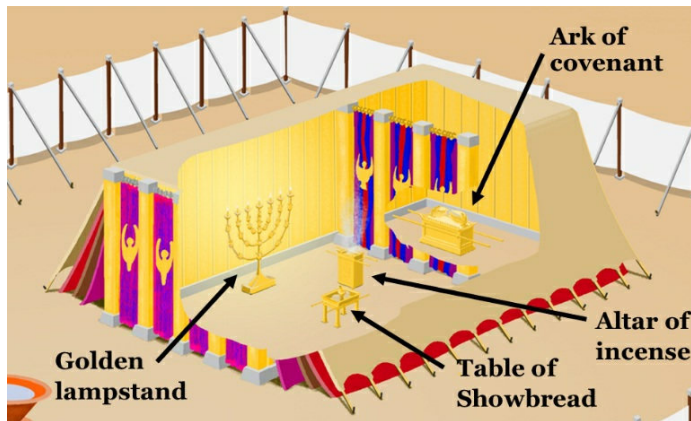
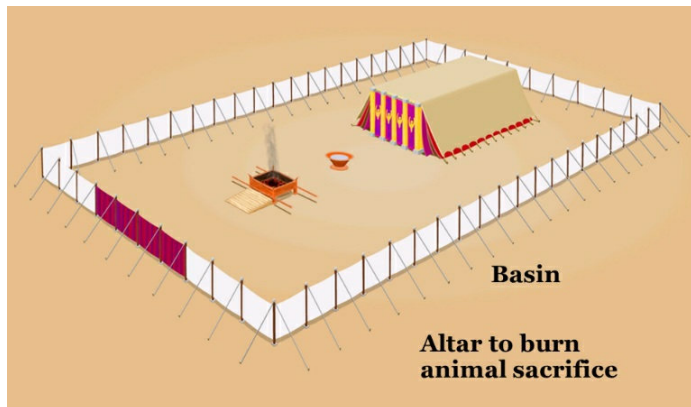


and journey to Rome (Acts 27:1–28:31)

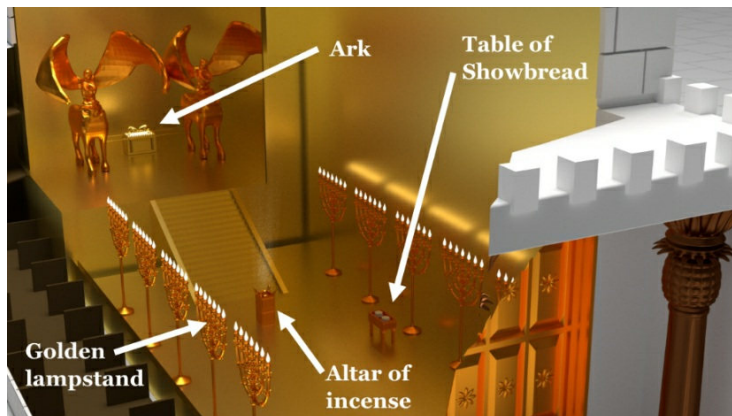
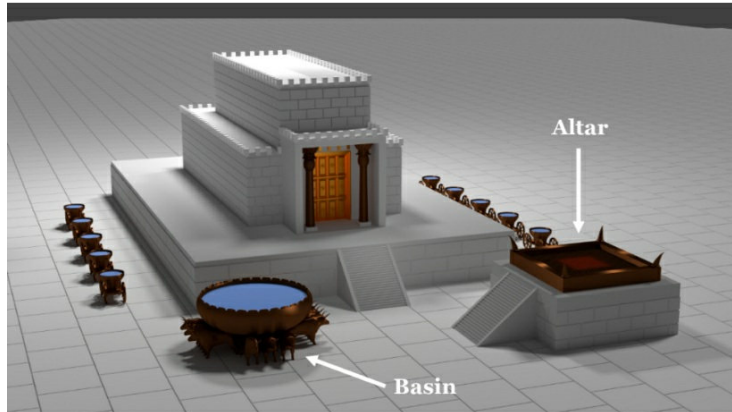


3. Central sites of worship throughout the Bible

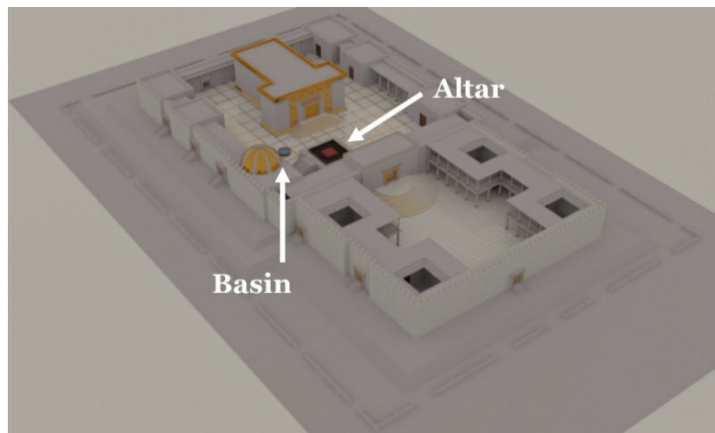
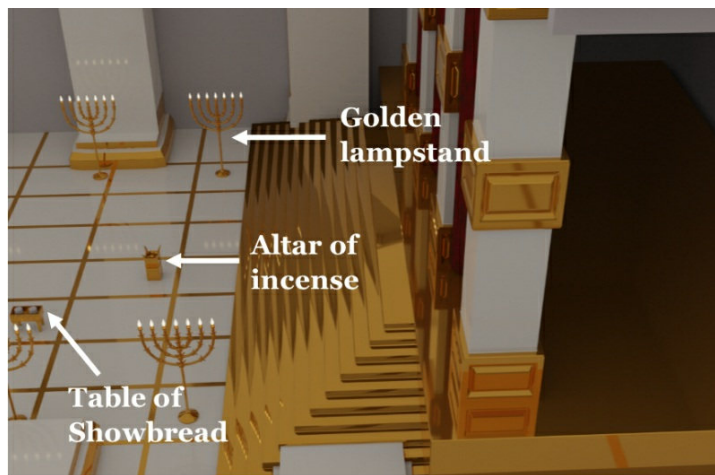
- a. **Tent of Meeting.** “On the first day of the first month- you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting” (Ex. 40:2). See Exodus 40:1–38 for a full description.



- b. **Temple of Solomon.** “In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites went forth from the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv (the second month), he began to build the house of the LORD” (1 Kings 6:14). See 1 Kings 6:1–37 for a full description.



- c. **Reconstructed temple.** “They finished the building according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus and Darius, and of Artaxerxes, king of Persia” (Ezra 6:14). See Ezra 2:1–6:22 for a full description.



- d. **Herod's temple.** “As he [Jesus] was making his way out of the temple area one of his disciples said to him, “Look, teacher, what stones and what buildings!” (Mark 13:1). See Jewish historian Josephus’s *Antiquities of the Jews*, chapter XV for a description.



- e. **Jesus.** For us Catholics, the center of worship is not the temple but Jesus himself “I say to you, something greater than the temple is here” (Matt. 12:6).



- f. **The human person.** In fact, this spirit of God dwells in all of us: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been purchased at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor. 6:19–20).



- g. **Heavenly Jerusalem.** At the end of time, God will gather us together to worship him. Everywhere will be the place of worship. “I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God almighty and the Lamb” (Rev. 21:22). See Revelation 21:9–22:5 for the vision of New Jerusalem.

