

ROSE DELUXE TIMELINES

Bible & Christian History



Reproducible

CONTENTS

Rose Deluxe Timelines: Bible and Christian History
© 2023 Rose Publishing

Published by Rose Publishing
An imprint of Tyndale House Ministries
Carol Stream, Illinois
www.hendricksonrose.com

ISBN: 978-1-4964-8197-9

Permission is granted to the purchaser to make up to 300 copies of individual pages for personal and classroom use. The pages may not be modified in any manner. Permission is not granted to reprint the charts, maps, timelines, illustrations, or other visuals apart from the page settings, to reprint groups of pages in bound form, either electronically or physically, or to offer copies for sale or donation either at cost or profit. All commercial use of these pages is reserved by the publisher. These pages may not be placed or used on websites. Any other use of these pages must be approved in writing by the publisher.

Contributing authors: Elizabeth Wingate (*Women of the Bible, Faith in America*), Todd Hafer (*Trailblazers*), Megan Sauter and Cecil R. Price (*Jerusalem*), and Jessica Curiel (*The Early Church*). Special thanks to AJ Hanna, Charlotte McNamee, and Tyler Comer.

Cover design by Sergio Urquiza. Timelines design by Cristalle Kishi. Photos and illustrations provided by Shutterstock.com, iStockPhoto.com, Geshher Media, Jerry Allison, Bill Latta, Joni & Friends, and Tyndale House Ministries.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.®

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2022055975

Printed by RR Donnelley, Hong Kong
February 2023, 1st printing

Bible Timelines

Bible & World History: Old Testament	5
Old Testament Overview	7
The Book of Genesis	8
Life of Abraham	16
Life of Joseph	18
The Exodus	20
Life of Moses	22
The Temple	26
Life of David	30
Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah	34
Elijah and Elisha	42
Women of the Bible	44
Bible & World History: New Testament	59
New Testament Overview	61
Life of Jesus	62
Life of Peter	70
Life of Paul	72
The Book of Acts	76
Life of John	80
Roman Emperors of the First Century	82
Jerusalem	84

Christian History Timelines

Christian & World History	93
Christian History Overview	97
The Early Church	98
The Reformation	108
Faith in America	118
Trailblazers	132
How We Got the Bible	146

Bible History

- Creation of the world and first humans.
- Adamic covenant
- The Fall: Adam and Eve expelled from Eden.
- The Flood: Noah and his family saved through a worldwide flood.
- Noahic covenant
- Tower of Babel: Languages confused.
- Job (date unknown)

Book of the Bible

- Key Event
- Key Person
- King of Israel
- King of Judah
- Time Span
- c. circa (approximate date)

World History


- Earliest forms of writing develop. c. 3200
- Bronze age begins in Asia. c. 3000
- Earliest stages of construction of Stonehenge in England. c. 3000
- Old Kingdom pyramids built in Egypt. c. 2700–2200
- Irrigation systems for growing rice develop in China. c. 2400
- Epic of Gilgamesh first appears in Mesopotamia. c. 2100
- Great ziggurat of Ur built by Sumerian King Ur-Nammu. c. 2100
- Minoan civilization begins on Crete. They trade olives, wines, and wool. c. 2050
- The city of Ur falls. c. 2004
- The Hittites, Indo-European tribes, migrate to Asia Minor. c. 2000
- Babylonians use geometry in astronomic measurements; identify signs of the zodiac. c. 2000
- Four basic elements identified in India: earth, air, fire, and water. c. 2000
- Indoor bathroom plumbing first used in Crete. c. 2000
- In England, Stonehenge becomes a center of religious worship. c. 2000
- Beginning of Semitic alphabet. c. 2000
- Corn, beans, and other produce is cultivated in North America. c. 2000
- Mortuary temple (the famous "lost labyrinth") is built by Amenemhet III in Egypt. c. 1870
- Hammurabi reigns in Babylon and creates the Law Code of Hammurabi. 1792–1750
- Sechin Alto complex built in Peru. c. 1750
- Hittite Old Kingdom c. 1700–1500
- First Chinese dictionary contains 40,000 characters. c. 1700
- Shang Dynasty in China c. 1600–1046
- Hittites sack Babylon. 1595
- Primitive Greek alphabet develops. c. 1500
- Shipbuilding flourishes in Mediterranean and Scandinavian countries. c. 1500
- Leprosy in India and Egypt. c. 1500
- Library in Hittite capital contains tablets in eight languages. c. 1500
- "Book of the Dead," Egyptian religious documents, written. c. 1500
- Tombs in the Valley of the Kings first built. c. 1526
- Ay c. 1350–1347
- Horemheb c. 1347–1318
- 19th dynasty begins. c. 1318
- Rameses c. 1318–1317
- Seti c. 1317–1304
- Rameses II c. 1304–1237
- Rameses III c. 1195–1164
- Merneptah c. 1237–1227
- Hittite Empire ends. c. 1200
- Olmec culture in Mexico marked by massive basalt sculptures. c. 1200
- Iron Age begins. c. 1200
- Battle of Kadesh between Egypt and Hittites fought to a draw. c. 1274
- Pharaoh Merneptah's victory stele mentions Israel for the first time in non-biblical history. c. 1230
- Trojan War begins. c. 1180
- Conquest of Troy 1184 (traditional date in Greek literature)
- Rameses III c. 1195–1164
- Egypt's power begins to decline. c. 1164
- Phoenicians trade cedar, glass, and ivory in Canaan. c. 1100
- Philistines bring the ability to smelt iron into Canaan. c. 1050
- Tiglath-Pileser rules Assyria. 1114–1076

The Patriarchs

Abraham (Abram) c. 2166–1991
Some scholars place Abraham's birth at 1952 BC. In this case, biblical events through Joseph would slide 214 years later.

Sarah (Sarai) c. 2156–2029

- Abram's father Terah and his family migrate from Ur to Harran in Mesopotamia.
- Abram and Sarai are married but are unable to have children.
- Abrahamic Covenant: The Lord calls Abram to go to Canaan and promises him land and offspring. 2091
- Abram and Sarai live for a time in Egypt to avoid a famine.
- Abram and his nephew Lot separate.
- Sarai's Egyptian slave Hagar gives birth to Abram's first son Ishmael. 2080
- Ishmael c. 2080–1943
- God confirms his covenant with Abram. Changes Abram's name to Abraham ("father of a multitude") and Sarai's name to Sarah ("princess").
- Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed, but Lot rescued.
- Isaac, the promised son, is born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age. 2066
- Isaac c. 2066–1886
- Sarah dies. 2029
- Isaac marries Rebekah. 2026
- Abraham marries Keturah who bears him six more sons.
- Esau and Jacob are born to Isaac and Rebekah. 2005
- Jacob (Israel) c. 2005–1859



Abraham



Stonehenge is made of stones weighing up to 50 tons each, brought in from an area 20 miles (32 km) away.

The Epic of Gilgamesh tells the story of a massive flood and a hero who is told to build a ship and take along every kind of animal.

EGYPTIAN KINGDOMS

- First Intermediate Period c. 2181–2050
- Middle Kingdom (11th–12th dynasties) in Egypt. Strong pharaohs encourage farming; international trade, literature, art, and architecture flourish. c. 2050–1800

1900 BC

- Jacob takes Esau's blessing and flees to Harran. 1929
- Jacob works for his uncle Laban for seven years to obtain Rachel as his wife. 1928–1921
- Laban tricks Jacob into marrying Rachel's older sister Leah. A week later, Jacob marries Rachel and agrees to work another seven years. 1921
- Jacob with Leah, Rachel, and their handmaids have eleven sons and at least one daughter.
- Joseph, son of Jacob and Rachel c. 1914–1805
- Jacob wrestles with an angel. God changes his name to Israel, which means "struggles with God."
- Benjamin is born to Jacob and Rachel, but Rachel dies in childbirth.
- Joseph (age seventeen) is his father's favorite. His jealous brothers sell him into slavery. 1897
- Taken to Egypt as a slave, Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dreams and foretells seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. Pharaoh makes Joseph a high official in Egypt. 1884
- Jacob and his family settle in Egypt to escape famine and be reunited with Joseph. 1876
- The people of Israel live in Egypt, part of that time in slavery. c. 1876–1446
- Jacob dies in Egypt at age 147. 1859
- Joseph dies in Egypt at age 110. 1805



The Beni Hasan Egyptian Tomb Painting depicts a group entering Egypt from Canaan. The painting shows how people in Canaan dressed during the patriarchal period. Here, four women and a boy are shown.



Hammurabi stele: The Law Code of Hammurabi, king of Babylon, was written about 300 years before Moses and the Ten Commandments.



This sculpture on the King's Gate at the Hittite capital of Hattusha depicts a warrior god. Until discoveries at the end of the 19th century, the Hittites were only known from the Bible.

1800 BC

- Second Intermediate Period (13th–17th dynasties) c. 1800–1570
- Hyksos rule Egypt. c. 1730

1700 BC

Sojourn in Egypt



Bull's head from Knossos, Crete



Nile River in Egypt



Amenhotep II

1600 BC

- Shang Dynasty in China c. 1600–1046
- Hittites sack Babylon. 1595

1500 BC

- Primitive Greek alphabet develops. c. 1500
- Shipbuilding flourishes in Mediterranean and Scandinavian countries. c. 1500
- Leprosy in India and Egypt. c. 1500
- Library in Hittite capital contains tablets in eight languages. c. 1500
- "Book of the Dead," Egyptian religious documents, written. c. 1500
- Tombs in the Valley of the Kings first built. c. 1526

EGYPTIAN PHAROHS

- Hyksos expelled from Egypt. 1570
- 18th dynasty begins. 1570
- Ahmos c. 1570–1545
- Amenhotep c. 1545–1529
- Thutmose c. 1529–1517
- Thutmose II c. 1517–1504
- Queen Hatshepsut c. 1504–1483
- Amenhotep II (possible pharaoh during the exodus) c. 1453–1426
- Thutmose IV c. 1426–1416
- Amenhotep III c. 1416–1377
- Thutmose III c. 1504–1453
- Amenhotep IV c. 1377–1360
- Tutankhamun ("King Tut") c. 1360–1350

1500 BC

Moses and the Exodus

Aaron c. 1529–1407

- Pharaoh orders all newborn Hebrew males to be cast into the Nile River.
- Moses is born and saved from death in the Nile. c. 1526
- Moses c. 1526–1406
- Joshua c. 1501–1391
- Moses flees to the land of Midian. 1486
- God speaks to Moses through a burning bush and tells Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. 1447
- God sends ten plagues upon Egypt. 1446
- The Israelites eat their first Passover meal and leave Egypt. 1446
- God parts the sea and the Israelites escape Pharaoh's army. 1446
- The exodus, followed by forty years of wilderness wanderings. 1446–1406
- Mosaic Covenant: God gives Moses the Ten Commandments and the law. 1446
- Tabernacle and ark of the covenant built. 1445
- Twelve spies return from Canaan. Out of fear, the Israelites refuse to enter the land. 1445
- Moses writes Genesis through Deuteronomy.
- Moses appoints Joshua as leader. Moses dies at age 120. 1406
- Israelites invade Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. Rahab helps the spies. The walls of Jericho fall. Israelites celebrate Passover and renew the covenant. 1406
- Book of Joshua



The Merneptah Stele (c. 1230 BC) describes the pharaoh's victories over various enemies. One line of the stele claims victory over Israel in Canaan. (The Bible does not mention this battle.)



King Tutankhamun began his rule at age nine and died before reaching age twenty.

1400 BC

- Hittite New Kingdom c. 1400–1200


1300 BC

- Battle of Kadesh between Egypt and Hittites fought to a draw. c. 1274
- Pharaoh Merneptah's victory stele mentions Israel for the first time in non-biblical history. c. 1230
- Trojan War begins. c. 1180
- Conquest of Troy 1184 (traditional date in Greek literature)
- Rameses III c. 1195–1164
- Egypt's power begins to decline. c. 1164


1300 BC

The Promised Land


- Era of the judges c. 1382–1051
- Book of Judges
- Judges Othniel, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, and others (dates unknown)
- Low date for the exodus 1290
- Some scholars date the exodus at 1290 BC. For this "low date" for the exodus, the dates of the Passover, wilderness wandering, and the beginning date for the era of the judges would slide 156 years later, compressing the era of the judges.
- Abimelek, a son of Gideon, murders his brothers and usurps power in Israel.
- Tribes of Israel go to war against the tribe of Benjamin.
- Book of Ruth
- Eli, priest in Shiloh c. 1100–1060
- Samuel, judge and prophet c. 1060–1020
- Samuel anoints Saul as the first king of Israel. 1051
- David is born. 1041




This retaining wall and its terraces are possibly the "Millo" built in Jerusalem by the Jebusites and later rebuilt by King Solomon.



Columns from the temple that Rameses III built at Thebes. He was the last of the great warrior pharaohs of Egypt.



Olmec basalt statue



Cedar tree in Lebanon (ancient Phoenicia)

1200 BC

- Hittite Empire ends. c. 1200
- Olmec culture in Mexico marked by massive basalt sculptures. c. 1200
- Iron Age begins. c. 1200
- Battle of Kadesh between Egypt and Hittites fought to a draw. c. 1274
- Pharaoh Merneptah's victory stele mentions Israel for the first time in non-biblical history. c. 1230
- Trojan War begins. c. 1180
- Conquest of Troy 1184 (traditional date in Greek literature)
- Rameses III c. 1195–1164
- Egypt's power begins to decline. c. 1164
- Phoenicians trade cedar, glass, and ivory in Canaan. c. 1100
- Philistines bring the ability to smelt iron into Canaan. c. 1050
- Tiglath-Pileser rules Assyria. 1114–1076

1100 BC

King Saul c. 1051–1011

Samuel, judge and prophet c. 1060–1020

David is born. 1041



CALL OF MOSES

From a burning bush on Mount Horeb, God tells Moses to return to Egypt to lead the Israelites out of slavery. Ex. 3:1–4:17

Moses tells Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave to worship God in the wilderness. Ex. 4:18–5:1

PHARAOH'S REFUSAL

Pharaoh retaliates by not providing the straw the Israelite slaves need for making bricks. Ex. 5:2–18

Moses again confronts Pharaoh, showing him a sign: Aaron's staff becomes a snake. But Pharaoh again refuses. Ex. 7:8–13

“Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today.... The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.”

EXODUS 14:13–14

God sends ten terrible plagues upon the Egyptians. Yet after each plague is lifted, Pharaoh's heart only becomes harder.



1. BLOOD

The Nile River turns into blood. Ex. 7:14–25



2. FROGS

Frogs invade everything throughout the land. Ex. 8:1–15



3. GNATS

Dust turns into insects covering people and animals alike. Ex. 8:16–19



4. FLIES

Swarms of flies are unleashed upon Egypt but avoid the Israelites. Ex. 8:20–32



5. DEATH OF LIVESTOCK

A plague kills the Egyptians' animals. Ex. 9:1–7



6. BOILS

Boils appear on both the Egyptians and their animals. Ex. 9:8–12



7. HAIL

A massive hailstorm strikes Egyptian lands. Some Egyptian officials then side with Moses. Ex. 9:13–35



8. LOCUSTS

Locusts eat every crop. Egyptian officials plead with Pharaoh to listen to Moses. Ex. 10:1–20



9. DARKNESS

Intense darkness descends upon the land for three days. Ex. 10:21–29



PASSOVER: Moses tells Israelite families to kill and eat an unblemished lamb and spread its blood on their doorframes so the next plague will “pass over” their homes. Ex. 11:1–12:28

THE EXODUS

The exodus is the story of God's deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. It is an epic narrative, with nightmarish plagues, amazing miracles, and a face-off between divine powers. But at its heart, it is a story about a sovereign God who protects and rescues those who obey his voice and follow where he leads.

The book of Exodus begins with the people of God brutally enslaved by the pharaohs. But God has a plan: Moses—rescued as an infant from death in the Nile River, raised in the Egyptian royal court, and then as an adult fleeing Egypt for his life—encounters the great “I AM,” the God of Israel, in the wilderness.

God gives Moses a simple, yet dangerous, command: “So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt” (Ex. 3:10).



10. DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN

God strikes dead all firstborn males, including Pharaoh's son. Homes with lamb's blood are spared. Pharaoh relents and lets the Israelites leave. Ex. 12:29–42



When Pharaoh realizes his slave-labor force is gone, his heart is hardened, so his army pursues the Israelites to the edge of the sea. Ex. 14:5–9



PARTING OF THE SEA

Moses lifts up his staff and God parts the waters, and the Israelites walk through on dry ground. Ex. 14:10–22

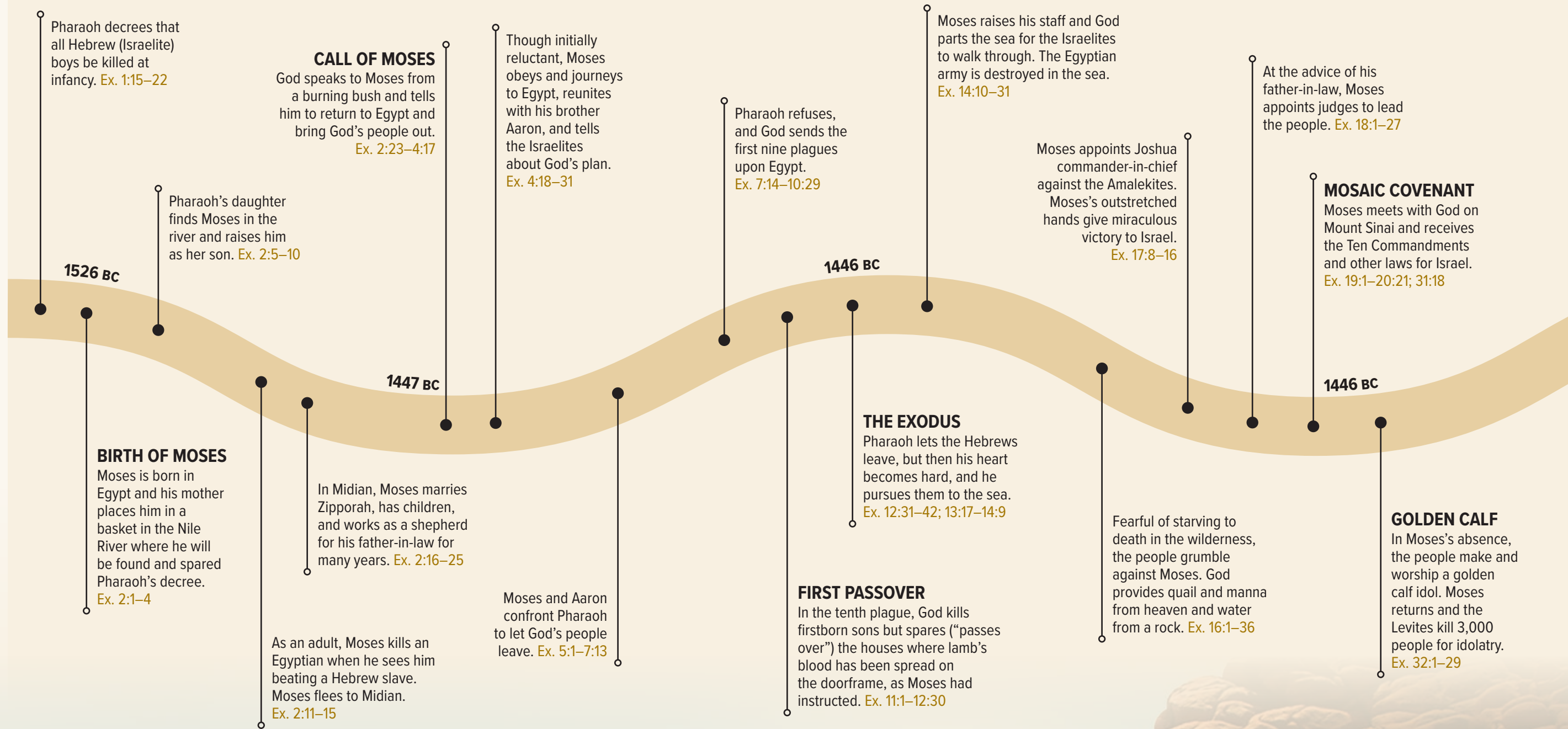


When the Egyptian army follows them into the sea, the army is engulfed and none survive, finally ending Pharaoh's pursuit. Ex. 14:23–31

LIFE OF MOSES

As the Hebrew population in Egypt grew in number and prosperity, the pharaohs grew in suspicion. So the Egyptians enslaved the Hebrews and “worked them ruthlessly” (Ex. 1:13). It was during this time that a Hebrew named Moses was born. Taken out of the Nile River by Pharaoh’s daughter, Moses was raised as a member of Pharaoh’s household. But God had chosen Moses for something far greater than the Egyptian royal court.

Moses is one of the most important figures in the Old Testament. The name Moses is similar to a Hebrew verb meaning “to draw out,” as he was drawn out of the Nile. Yet he was also “drawn out” by God for the extraordinary task of leading God’s people out of Egypt and on a perilous wilderness journey to the edge of the promised land.



God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.... The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’”
EXODUS 3:14–15



Dates are approximate. Bible scholars have proposed two possible dates for the exodus: a “high” date of 1446 BC and a “low” date of 1290 BC. This timeline follows the traditional high date.

THE TEMPLE

The temple in Jerusalem, which replaced the tabernacle in the wilderness, was the place where God met with his people. Both structures were visible, tangible expressions of God's presence, protection, and mercy toward his people.

THE TABERNACLE AND ARK BUILT

Before the tabernacle is built, Moses sets up a "tent of meeting" outside the camp at Sinai where he can meet with God to receive guidance. This provisional tent is later incorporated, in some manner, into the tabernacle. Ex. 33:7-11

1446 BC

At God's instruction, Moses and the Israelites construct the tabernacle and the ark of the covenant in the wilderness of Sinai. Ex. 25:8-9; 40:1-33

The Israelites transport the tabernacle and the ark with them for about forty years in the wilderness. Num 10:11-21, 33-36

1445 BC

Priests carry the ark across the parted Jordan River as the Israelites enter the promised land of Canaan. They carry it around Jericho for seven days and the city walls fall down. Josh. 3, 6

Joshua brings the tabernacle into the promised land and sets it up at Shiloh. Josh. 18:1

1406 BC

The ark is taken to Bethel. Judg. 20:26-28

By the time of the prophet Samuel, the ark is back in Shiloh. 1 Sam. 3:3, 21

The Philistines capture the ark but are forced to return it after seven months. 1 Sam. 4-6

The ark is taken to Kiriath Jearim and remains there for twenty years. 1 Sam. 7:2

1100 BC

Saul brings the ark into battle against the Philistines. 1 Sam. 14:18

THE ARK IN JERUSALEM

As King David is bringing the ark to Jerusalem, the ark is left at the house of Obed-Edom for three months and the household is blessed. 2 Sam. 6:1-11

With much celebration, King David brings the ark into Jerusalem, the new capital of Israel. 2 Sam. 6:12-15

1003 BC

King David purchases the threshing floor of Araunah, the site where the temple is later built. 2 Sam. 24:21

1000 BC

THE FIRST TEMPLE BUILT

King Solomon constructs the first temple in Jerusalem. The tabernacle is no longer used, but its tent and sacred items are incorporated into the temple in some way. The ark is set in the temple's Most Holy Place (the Holy of Holies). 1 Kings 6:1; 8:1-9; 2 Chron. 5:2-10

960 BC

After Israel's civil war, King Jeroboam of the northern kingdom builds rival worship centers in the north to keep people from returning to the temple in Jerusalem in the south. 1 Kings 12:26-30

931 BC

TABERNACLE

ARK

TEMPLE



The most sacred item in the temple was the ark of the covenant. The ark was kept in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies). Once a year on the Day of Atonement, the high priest atoned for the sins of the people by sprinkling blood from a sacrificed animal on the lid of the ark, called the mercy seat.



The First Temple

Dates are approximate. Some dates for events in the timeline are unknown. This timeline follows a 1446 BC date for the exodus and a 4 BC date for the birth of Christ, though Bible scholars differ on the exact dating of these events.

KINGS AND PROPHETS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

Jeroboam 931–910 BC

After King Solomon dies, Jeroboam leads the northern tribes in rebellion against Solomon's heir, Rehoboam—and also leads them into idolatry. He establishes the northern kingdom of Israel, but in the end, God strikes him dead. 1 Kings 11:26–14:20; 2 Chron. 9:29–13:20

● The Assyrian Empire begins to rapidly expand its territory but is not yet a major threat to Israel. 912 BC

Nadab 910–909 BC

This evil son of Jeroboam reigns for less than two years before being killed by Baasha. 1 Kings 15:25–31

Baasha 909–886 BC

Baasha's murderous reign begins when he kills Nadab and then goes on to kill all of Jeroboam's family; yet he commits the same sins as Jeroboam had. 1 Kings 15:16–16:7; 2 Chron. 16:1–6

Elah 886–885 BC

Baasha's son Elah reigns only two years and then, while drunk, he is assassinated by Zimri the commander of the king's chariots. 1 Kings 16:6–14

Zimri 885 BC

Zimri kills himself in a palace fire to avoid being captured by Omri, the army commander, who pursued him to avenge Elah's murder. His reign lasts only seven days. 1 Kings 16:9–20

Omri 885–874 BC

Omri contends with Tibni for the throne and defeats him. Omri moves the capital of Israel from Tirzah to Samaria. He continues in the idol worship that Jeroboam had begun decades earlier. 1 Kings 16:15–28

Ahab 874–853 BC

Omri's son Ahab does "more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him" (1 Kings 16:30). He and Queen Jezebel massacre God's prophets. Jezebel, a devotee of Baal, tries unsuccessfully to kill the prophet Elijah. Ahab dies when wounded by an arrow in battle against Aram (Syria). 1 Kings 16:28–22:40; 2 Chron. 18:1–34

Ahaziah 853–852 BC

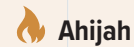
Ahab's son Ahaziah falls from his palace and never recovers—a death foretold by Elijah. 1 Kings 22:40–2 Kings 1:18; 2 Chron. 20:35–37

● In the Battle of Qarqar, the Assyrians fight against an alliance of kings, including Israel's King Ahab. 853 BC

Joram (Jehoram) 852–841 BC

Joram—Ahaziah's brother and also a son of Ahab and Jezebel—does not fully turn away from idol worship. He is killed by Jehu, a chariot soldier, who succeeds him as king. 2 Kings 3:1–27; 9:14–26; 2 Chron. 22:5–7

Kings of Israel



Ahijah

Ahijah, an aged and blind prophet, prophesies the division of Solomon's kingdom, and then the fall of the house of King Jeroboam of Israel. 1 Kings 11:29–40; 14:1–18



Shemaiah 926 BC

King Shishak of Egypt plunders Jerusalem but does not destroy it, just as Shemaiah had prophesied to King Rehoboam of Judah. 2 Chron. 12:1–12



Prophet from Judah

This unnamed prophet foretells the destruction of the altar in Bethel, where King Jeroboam of Israel had set up a golden calf idol. 1 Kings 13:1–32



Azariah

The prophet Azariah encourages King Asa of Judah to be strong and to seek the Lord, which Asa does, for the most part. 2 Chron. 15:1–8

Hanani 875 BC

Hanani the seer rebukes King Asa of Judah for making an alliance with the king of Aram instead of trusting in God. Asa becomes so angry he has Hanani thrown in prison. 2 Chron. 16:7–10



Elijah 870–845 BC

Elijah clashes with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, performs amazing miracles, and defies the powerful King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. Escaping death several times, God takes him to heaven in a whirlwind. 1 Kings 17–21; 2 Kings 1–2

Micaiah 853 BC

Micaiah tells King Ahab that Israel is like a sheep without a shepherd, and so the king will not survive his battle against Aram. 1 Kings 22:1–28

Jehu, son of Hanani 853 BC

The prophet Jehu rebukes King Jehoshaphat of Judah for allying with wicked King Ahab of Israel. (Years earlier, he had prophesied to King Baasha the end of Baasha's house in Israel.) 1 Kings 16:1–7; 2 Chron. 19:1–3

Elisha

Prophets

Rehoboam 931–913 BC

After the death of his father, King Solomon, he fights against Jeroboam and secures Judah, establishing the southern kingdom of Judah. Rehoboam listens to foolish advisors, and Judah falls into idolatry and immorality. 1 Kings 11:43–12:24; 14:21–31; 2 Chron. 9:31–12:16

Abijah 913–911 BC

Like his father Rehoboam, he battles Jeroboam and worships idols. 1 Kings 14:31–15:8; 2 Chron. 12:16–14:1

Asa 911–870 BC

Abijah's son Asa drives out idol worshipers from the land and deposes his wicked and powerful grandmother, Maakah. During his reign, he fights the Cushites and makes a treaty with Aram (Syria) to fend off King Baasha of Israel. He dies of a severe foot disease. 1 Kings 15:8–24; 2 Chron. 14:1–16:14

Jehoshaphat 873–848 BC

Jehoshaphat continues the spiritual reforms of his father Asa. During his reign, Judah and Israel are at peace. He even joins King Ahab of Israel in battle against Aram. 1 Kings 22:1–50; 2 Chron. 17:1–21:1

Jehoram (Joram) 853–841 BC

Jehoram is King Jehoshaphat's firstborn son who reigns for a few years with his father. But when his father dies, he murders his brothers and turns the kingdom back to idolatry. He dies of a painful disease in his bowels, just as Elijah had prophesied. 2 Kings 8:16–24; 2 Chron. 21:1–20

Most dates are approximate. Kings are listed by dates of reign and prophets according to when they prophesied, if known. Some Bible scholars list Tibni, who unsuccessfully contended for the throne against Omri (1 Kings 16:21–22), among the kings, which would bring the number Israel's kings to twenty, the same number as Judah's rulers. Some kings' reigns may have overlapped (coregency).

WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

EVE

God created the first woman Eve from Adam's rib. She was perfect and without sin. In the garden of Eden, she and Adam disobeyed God (thereby committing the first sin) and were banished from the garden. She bore three sons: Cain, Abel, and Seth. Eve became the mother of the entire human race. Her name in Hebrew means "life" or "living." Gen. 2:15–4:25; 3:20

NOAH'S WIFE and DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW

Noah and his wife were accompanied on the ark by their three sons and three daughters-in-law. The only people God chose to save from the great flood, they repopulated the earth after the water receded. Gen. 6:9–22; 7–9:1



God establishes a covenant with Abraham.
2091 BC



SARAH

Originally named Sarai, Sarah was the wife of Abraham, the first patriarch of the Israelites. Unable to bear children, Sarah gave her slave Hagar to Abraham in a foolish attempt to fulfill God's covenant with Abraham: to be the father of many nations. Afterward, however, Sarah resented Hagar. In her old age, God promised Sarah a child (to which she laughed). But just as God promised, she did have a son: Isaac, an ancestor of Jesus. Gen. 16:1–6; 18:10–15; 21:1–13

HAGAR

Hagar was Sarah's Egyptian slave who was given to Abraham to bear a son. She bore Ishmael, but he was not the promised son. Because Sarah remained childless, she mistreated Hagar, so Hagar fled. God, however, sent her back. After Sarah had her own child, tensions increased to such an extent that Sarah had Abraham send Hagar and Ishmael away. God provided for them in the wilderness, and Ishmael eventually became the father of a large nation. Gen. 16; 21:9–21

LOT'S WIFE

Lot's family fled before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Although they were told not to look back, Lot's wife disobeyed and consequently became a pillar of salt. Gen. 19:15–26

REBEKAH

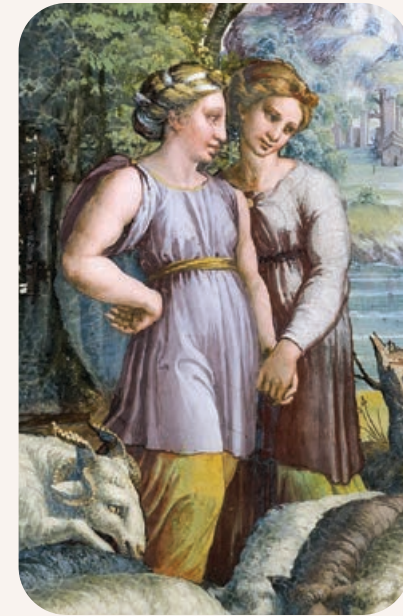
Rebekah traveled to Canaan to become Isaac's wife. Some years later, in answer to Isaac's prayer regarding Rebekah's barrenness, she had twin sons: Esau and Jacob. Because Rebekah favored Jacob, she helped him deceive her aged husband for the paternal blessing, which customarily would have gone to Esau. Gen. 24; 25:19–34; 27



Rebekah gives birth to twins Esau and Jacob.
2005 BC

LEAH

Leah was Jacob's first wife, despite his original marriage arrangement with her younger sister Rachel. Though not favored by Jacob, Leah was favored by God, who gave her six sons. Jesus is a descendant of her son Judah. Gen. 29:21–30; 30:9–21; Matt. 1:1–2



RACHEL

Rachel was the beloved second wife of Jacob, and Leah's beautiful younger sister. When Rachel became jealous of her sister's ability to conceive, she gave her maidservant Bilhah to Jacob, so that she would have a family. Rachel, however, did bear two sons: Joseph and Benjamin. She died giving birth to Benjamin. Gen. 29:9–30; 35:16–26

ZILPAH and BILHAH

As was the ancient practice, Leah and Rachel gave their maidservants Zilpah and Bilhah to their husband to conceive children. These maidservants each had two sons, whose descendants became tribes of Israel. Gen. 30:1–8; 35:23–26

DINAH

Dinah, Jacob and Leah's young daughter, was defiled by Shechem, a Hivite. Two of Dinah's brothers deceitfully bargained with Shechem to give Dinah to him in marriage, but instead the brothers brutally murdered every male in Shechem's city. The Bible does not say what happened to Dinah after this terrible experience. Gen. 34:1–31

The twelve sons of Jacob are born.

TAMAR

Tamar was twice widowed by Judah's sons and promised to a third. When she realized Judah was not going to marry her to his third son, she disguised herself as a prostitute and slept with Judah, after which she gave birth to twin sons: Perez and Zerah. Perez is listed in Jesus's genealogy. Gen. 38:6–30; Matt. 1:3



POTIPHAR'S WIFE

Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph. When he refused, she falsely accused him of assaulting her, and Potiphar imprisoned Joseph. Gen. 39:1–20



ASENATH

The daughter of an important Egyptian priest, Asenath was Joseph's wife. Their sons Manasseh and Ephraim became two of the tribes of Israel. Gen. 41:45, 50–52

Joseph is sold into slavery to Potiphar in Egypt.
1897 BC

The Israelites migrate to Egypt.
1876 BC

THE BOOK OF ACTS

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." -Acts 2:42

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." -Acts 2:21



ASCENSION

Christ ascends to heaven. Acts 1:6-9

AD 30



PENTECOST

The Holy Spirit fills believers. Acts 2:1-13

AD 30

The church in Jerusalem is established. Acts 2:42-47

Ananias and Sapphira are struck down for lying to the Holy Spirit. Acts 5:1-11

Persecution forces believers to disperse from Jerusalem. Acts 8:1-4

Simon the sorcerer tries to buy the Holy Spirit's power and is rebuked. Acts 8:9-25



THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM

PERSECUTION AND GROWTH

Matthias is chosen as an apostle to replace Judas Iscariot. Acts 1:15-26

Peter preaches the gospel and 3,000 are saved. Acts 2:14-41

Peter and John perform miracles and face persecution. Acts 3:1-5:21



AD 32
Stephen is martyred in Jerusalem. Acts 7:54-60

Philip shares the gospel in Samaria. Acts 8:5-8

Philip baptizes an Ethiopian official. Acts 8:26-39

"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." -Acts 1:8



PAUL'S CONVERSION

On his way to Damascus to persecute believers, Paul encounters Christ and becomes a believer. Acts 9:1-19

AD 37

Peter heals Aeneas and raises Tabitha from the dead. Acts 9:32-43

Barnabas brings Paul to the church in Antioch. Acts 11:25-26

Paul and Barnabas deliver funds to believers in Jerusalem during a famine. Acts 11:27-30

Peter is imprisoned by Herod Agrippa but miraculously escapes. Acts 12:3-19



PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Paul and Barnabas spread the gospel as far as Cyprus and Pisidia. Acts 13:1-14:28

AD 47-49

PAUL'S MISSION

Paul travels to Damascus, Jerusalem, Caesarea, and finally Tarsus. Acts 9:26-30

GENTILES RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

Peter brings the gospel to Cornelius. Acts 10:1-48



"God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him." -Acts 10:34-35

Believers in Jesus Christ are first called Christians in Antioch. Acts 11:26



AD 44
James the son of Zebedee is martyred by Herod Agrippa. Acts 12:1-2

Herod Agrippa dies. Acts 12:20-23

People in Lystra try to worship Paul and Barnabas; they later stone Paul to near death. Acts 14:8-20

ROMAN EMPERORS OF THE FIRST CENTURY

AUGUSTUS 27 BC–AD 14

Also known as Octavian, Augustus was the adopted son of Julius Caesar. After winning control of the empire in the wake of his father's assassination, he was deemed Rome's first official emperor. Augustus was the reigning emperor at the time of Jesus's birth. His census caused Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem where Jesus would be born (Luke 2:1–4).



CALIGULA AD 37–41

Shortly after becoming emperor, illness is suspected as driving Caligula to become insane, causing him to perform bizarre acts, harming and killing many people. Caligula appointed Herod Agrippa as king of Judea. (Agrippa was the ruler who executed James and had Peter thrown into prison; Acts 12:1–23.) After reigning only four years, Caligula was assassinated in Rome by his closest advisors and bodyguards.

TIBERIUS AD 14–37

Tiberius, a stepson of Augustus, reigned during the ministry of Jesus and appointed Pilate governor of Judea (Luke 3:1). When Pilate tried to free Jesus, the Jewish leaders claimed Pilate was “no friend of Caesar [Tiberius]” (John 19:12). During the later part of Tiberius's reign, he gained a reputation for reveling in lavish eccentricities and violence. As extreme as his behavior was, it would be outmatched by his successor, Caligula.

CLAUDIUS AD 41–54

Claudius was initially favorable to Jews, as a nod to Herod Agrippa's strong support of him. Yet amid reports of troublemaking in Rome, Claudius expelled the Jews from the city, including Paul's friends Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:2). Claudius's reign ended abruptly when his wife poisoned him, making her son Nero the next emperor.

NERO AD 54–68

Nero was the Caesar to whom Paul appealed his case, causing Paul to be sent to Rome (Acts 25:11). He was also the reigning emperor when Peter wrote his first epistle urging Christians to “honor the emperor” (1 Peter 2:17). When a massive fire devastated Rome, Nero blamed the Christians. This led to a period of intense persecution of Christians, during which Peter and Paul were martyred. Unrest in the empire continued, and when several Roman territories revolted and the Senate turned against him, Nero fled and took his own life.

VESPASIAN AD 69–79

Vespasian increased taxation, even laying claim to the temple tax paid by Jews throughout the empire. It was during his reign that Roman forces squashed the First Jewish Revolt, destroying the Jerusalem temple in AD 70. Many Jews were killed or exiled as slaves throughout the empire.



DOMITIAN AD 81–96

Domitian proclaimed himself to be a god and killed or persecuted close relatives, government officers, and Christians, while increasing the army's pay for his own protection. He was the emperor when John was exiled to Patmos where John received visions from God that became the book of Revelation. Court officials succeeded in their conspiracy to assassinate Domitian in AD 96.

GALBA, OTHO, AND VITELLIUS AD 68–69

During a period of chaotic civil war, these three emperors held short reigns that ended by either murder or suicide.

TITUS AD 79–81

Titus essentially co-ruled with his father Vespasian during much of his father's reign, and it was Vespasian who had charged him to lead the army that marched on Jerusalem in AD 70. Titus's reign ended in illness, leaving the empire to his younger brother Domitian.

NERVA AD 96–98

Nerva's short but successful reign gave Christians some reprieve from persecution. It is believed that John was released from exile under Nerva's rule. Nerva's successor, Emperor Trajan (AD 98–117), however, was not as tolerant; and being a Christian could once again be grounds for execution.

THE EARLY CHURCH

By the start of the second century, Christianity had spread throughout much of the Mediterranean world. While still concentrated in Judea, Samaria, Syria, and Asia Minor, vibrant churches were taking root in cities as far east as Edessa (Turkey), as far west as Carthage (Tunisia), as far north as Rome (Italy), and as far south as Alexandria (Egypt).

Over the second and third centuries, the Christian faith continued to rapidly expand throughout the Roman Empire, despite (or in some respects, because of) persecution by those who viewed this strange new religious movement as dangerous and subversive. Christian bishops, martyrs, and theologians gave shape to early church doctrine and provided inspiration for Christians facing oppression for aligning their lives, not to the pagan gods of their neighbors, but to Jesus Christ alone.

YEAR

Most dates are approximate.

97 CLEMENT of Rome writes his letter to Corinth.

While serving as bishop (or elder) of Rome (AD 88–99), Clement wrote the oldest surviving Christian document outside of the New Testament. His letter to Christians in the city of Corinth (in Greece) urges them to follow the “way of truth” in unity with one another and without strife. Clement drew heavily from Old Testament imagery and the writings of the apostle Paul.

99 EVARISTUS becomes bishop of Rome.

Originally from Bethlehem, Evaristus led the church in Rome after Clement’s death for nearly a decade (about AD 99–108).

97

98

98 TRAJAN becomes emperor.

After the short reign of Emperor Nerva (AD 96–98), Trajan conquered and annexed territories, greatly expanding the reach of the Roman Empire. Unlike his predecessor, Trajan was not as tolerant of Christians.



Trajan

99

100

100 THE APOSTLE JOHN dies in Ephesus.

John, the last of the twelve disciples, died of natural causes around the turn of the century in Ephesus in Asia Minor, where he spent the later part of his life ministering. John had been exiled for a time on the island of Patmos where he received divine visions that became the book of Revelation. Two of John’s notable disciples in the early church were Ignatius of Antioch and Polycarp of Smyrna.

Ephesus, Turkey

100 THE DIDACHE is written.

The Didache (meaning “Teaching”) is an anonymous collection of Christian writings developed sometime in the second century. Essentially, the Didache was a guide for those wanting to join the church, explaining the “way” of Christianity: “Now this is the way of life: first, you shall love God who made you. Second, you shall love your neighbor as yourself; but whatever you do not wish to happen to you, do not do to another.” It includes liturgies and prayers, especially the Lord’s Prayer from the gospel of Matthew. It also provides instructions for baptism, the Lord’s Supper (Communion), and *agape* meals (fellowship meals or “love feasts”).

111 PLINY THE YOUNGER becomes the Roman governor of Bithynia.

Finding so many Christians living in Bithynia (in modern-day Turkey), Pliny wrote to Emperor Trajan detailing his concerns about “obstinate” Christians. Pliny’s and Trajan’s correspondence reveals how Roman authorities viewed Christians as a problem that they often found tricky to solve. They surmised that Christians were guilty of no crimes, but their refusal to worship the emperor and Roman gods was an affront to Rome’s authority. Pliny’s practice was not to actively seek out Christians, but if Christians were brought before him, he would give them a chance to burn incense and pray to the gods. If the Christians refused, they were subject to torture and execution. The emperor agreed with this approach.

Ruins in Nicaea, Bithynia

100

107

107 IGNATIUS, bishop of Syrian Antioch, is martyred in Rome.

On his way to Rome, this elderly disciple of the apostle John wrote seven letters to Christians. From these letters, it appears Ignatius was being sent to Rome to be executed for his Christian faith, his death to serve as entertainment for those in the city. His letters exhort Christians to avoid false teachings, especially the belief that Jesus was not fully human but merely appeared as a human. (This heresy was later known as Docetism, from a Greek word meaning “appearance.”) Reflecting on what he would face in Rome, Ignatius wrote, “When I suffer, I shall be free in Jesus Christ, and with him shall rise again in freedom.... I am God’s wheat, to be ground by the teeth of beasts, so that I may be offered as pure bread of Christ.”



Ignatius of Antioch

111

116

116 ROMAN HISTORIAN TACITUS writes about Jesus’s execution under Pilate and calls Christianity a superstitious evil.

The Roman Empire permitted most religions within their borders, as long as the people also accepted the gods of Rome and participated in emperor worship. Because Christians rejected idols and the pantheon of gods, they were often described as “atheists.” They were accused of “superstitions,” ranging from being a subversive political group to being depraved cannibals who practiced incest. These rumors may have gotten their start as a profound misunderstanding of both the Lord’s Supper (in which Christians partake of the “blood” and “body” of Christ) and the Christian practice of greeting each other with a “holy kiss” while calling each other brothers and sisters. Whatever the charge, the one that most often sent Christians to their death was their refusal to worship any other god or emperor besides the one true God.

Tacitus

FAITH IN AMERICA

1500s

Spanish missionaries, conquistadors, and settlers in present-day Florida and the Southwest bring with them Catholicism. The French, in their fledgling colonies, do the same.

1607

The colony of **Jamestown** (in Virginia) is founded with Anglicanism as the established religion.

1610–1640

Franciscan friars from Spain work in present-day New Mexico to build missions and convert Native Americans (Pueblos) to Catholicism and instill in them Spanish culture.

1619

Slave traders bring about twenty kidnapped Africans to Jamestown and sell them to the colonists. Between 1619 and 1865, many slaves were forced to convert to Christianity. Nevertheless, many also kept their religious traditions from West Central Africa: communicating with their ancestors, giving reverence to different gods, and incorporating music and dance in their religious life.

1620

Seeking religious freedom, Protestant reformers (**Pilgrims**) break with the Church of England and establish a colony in Plymouth, Massachusetts. They organize First Parish Church, the first Congregational church in Plymouth, and Congregationalism becomes the official religion of Massachusetts.

1624

The royal colony of **Virginia** is established, as is its official religion: Anglicanism. All Virginia colonists

are required by law to be church members and pay taxes to support the Church of England. Preachers of “dissenting religions” can obtain licenses to preach.

1628

Settlers from Holland establish the **Dutch Reformed Church** as the official religion of their colony of New Netherland (along the east coast, roughly from present-day New York to Delaware).

1630

Seeking religious freedom, **Puritans** from England, led by John Winthrop, establish the Massachusetts Bay Colony. They remain part of the Church of England but attempt to reform it by creating a model Christian commonwealth. They believe that only “the elect” are chosen by God to be saved and that a conversion experience is a sign of salvation. They do not tolerate opposing religious viewpoints.

1632

Maryland is created to be a safe place for Catholics persecuted in England to settle. However, the colony also has Protestant settlers, and the conflict between the two groups in England is repeated in the New World.

1636

After **Roger Williams** quarrels with the Puritan authorities in Massachusetts about their theology, their connection with the Church of England, and their treatment of Native Americans, he is banished from the colony. So he establishes the colony of Providence, Rhode Island, which welcomes religious dissidents and guarantees freedom of conscience.

Harvard College (later called Harvard University), a private institution and the first institution of higher

learning in America, is founded by Puritans, mainly to train Puritan ministers.

1638

Anne Hutchinson is banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony after she claims that false doctrine is being taught and that God has spoken directly to her (heresy in Puritan theology).

Sweden establishes **New Sweden** (in present-day Delaware), with the Church of Sweden as the colony’s religion.

1648

Preacher **Richard Mather** writes the Cambridge Platform, which describes the Congregational system of church government. His son, Increase, and grandson, Cotton, follow his lead.

1649

The **Maryland Toleration Act**, which protects Catholics from discrimination and harassment by Protestants, is passed by the Maryland Assembly.

The **colony of Maine** (which had Congregationalism as its religion) grants religious freedom to all citizens, providing that those who practice different beliefs behave in an “acceptable” manner.

The first **Evangelical Lutheran Church of America** is founded in New Amsterdam (present-day New York).

1650–1750

An **influx of immigrants** creates great religious diversity: Amish, Anabaptists, Dunkers, Moravians, and Mennonites from Germany add to Quakers settling in Pennsylvania; New Netherland adds Jews and members of the Dutch Reformed Church; southern colonies see more Anglicans arrive; Baptists settle in the south and northeast.

1654

The oldest **Jewish congregation** is established by Sephardic Jews of Spanish and Portuguese descent in New Amsterdam when they flee Dutch Brazil.

1656

Several **Quakers** (or Religious Society of Friends) arrive in Boston, but because they are considered politically and religiously subversive, they are arrested, and several are either deported or hung. (After Mary Dyer told the Massachusetts governor that the law forbidding Quakers from settling in the colony was “unrighteous,” she was hung in 1660.)

1663

By royal charter, **Rhode Island** becomes the first state to guarantee freedom of religion to its settlers.

John Eliot translates the Bible into an Algonquin dialect in an effort to spread Christianity to Native Americans living around Massachusetts Bay. The *Eliot Bible* is the first complete Bible printed in America.

1675

The oldest church building in continuous use, **Old Trinity Church** in Maryland, is completed.

1680

Although hundreds of Pueblos had apparently converted to Catholicism, Franciscan friars discover that Native Americans still practice their own religion. The friars destroy native religious icons and sacred sites and publicly hang a few natives accused of sorcery. On August 10, 1680, the Pueblos stage an uprising against the Spanish, destroying churches, killing more than four hundred, and driving them out of New Mexico. The **Pueblo Revolt** allows Native Americans to return to their religious practices, although some do incorporate practices from Catholicism.



TRAILBLAZERS

Some were born into privilege, others into poverty. Several were born into slavery. Some earned honor and fame for their work. For others, the result was an assassin's bullet or a hangman's noose. A few faced distinction and death, enduring both with faith and fortitude.

They are the trailblazers, the reformers, the rebels of the past two centuries. You will know some of their names, but perhaps not their stories. Others have lurked in the shadows of history for too long. It's time for you to meet them, and to be inspired by them.

They represent different cultures, different crafts, and different centuries. But all share one truth in common: If you truly want to blaze a trail, it's best to carry a divine spark inside.

*"Is not this the kind of fasting
I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer
with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away
from your own flesh and blood?"*

ISAIAH 58:6-7

**"GOD ALMIGHTY HAS SET BEFORE ME TWO GREAT OBJECTS: THE SUPPRESSION OF THE SLAVE TRADE AND THE REFORMATION OF MANNERS [MORALITY]. NEVER, NEVER WILL WE DESIST TILL WE HAVE WIPED AWAY THIS SCANDAL FROM THE CHRISTIAN NAME ... AND EXTINGUISHED EVERY TRACE OF THIS BLOODY TRAFFIC."
—WILLIAM WILBERFORCE**

► 1807

British politician, theologian, and philanthropist **WILLIAM WILBERFORCE** achieves a major victory in his nearly twenty-year fight against Britain's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, with the passage of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Bill. Wilberforce will continue to fight for the cause of abolition until his death, twenty-six years later.



► 1816

RICHARD ALLEN, a pastor who was born into slavery, joins forces with African Methodist congregations from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland to form the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME). Allen, who is elected as the AME's first bishop, will go on to support the Underground Railroad movement and work with community leaders to open schools for African Americans.

► 1830

CHARLES FINNEY, a lawyer turned pastor and social reformer, begins a six-month series of revival meetings in Rochester, New York. People from all walks of life attend the meetings, as many shopkeepers close their businesses and encourage their customers to participate. Attendees describe his "revivalist" speaking style as that of a lawyer making his case before a jury. Finney, arguably the most famous revivalist of the Second Great Awakening, makes revival gatherings a common feature of America's religious landscape. He also expands the role of women in the church, despite condemnation from fellow ministers. He allows and encourages women to speak at prayer meetings and relies on them to help bring about social reform.



► 1840

DAVID LIVINGSTONE embarks on his first missionary journey to Africa. The Scottish missionary, doctor, abolitionist, and explorer seeks to bring Christianity, commerce, and "civilization" to the continent. Livingstone's reports of slavery, including an eye-witness account of the massacre of four hundred Congolese slaves by slave traders, prove to be instrumental in ending Great Britain's involvement in the east African slave trade.



► 1843



Danish theologian and philosopher **SØREN KIERKEGAARD** publishes *Fear and Trembling*, a book exploring the biblical story of Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac. He argues that God sometimes requires his followers to hold beliefs and perform acts that are ridiculous or even immoral by rational human standards, as Abraham obeyed an outrageous divine command without trying to understand or justify it. With this book and numerous other writings during his lifetime, Kierkegaard challenges the intellectualism of his day, arguing that religious faith is not obtained by objective or scientific study but is a subjective choice, a leap *into* faith. Later dubbed the "Father of Existentialism," Kierkegaard maintains that genuine Christian *existence* is not easy; it is a struggle, a risk, an adventure.

► 1844

Twenty-two-year-old **GEORGE WILLIAMS** joins a group of friends to organize the first Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). Williams, previously a farmer, is troubled by the struggles of young men in industrialized London and seeks to create a refuge from the violence and despair of life on the streets. A few years later, inspired by Williams's efforts in Great Britain, the first YMCA in the United States is established.

► 1845

FREDERICK DOUGLASS, statesman and social reformer, publishes his first autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. A former slave who taught himself to read and write (secretly employing Methodist hymnals as his tutorials), Douglass uses his book to describe the physical and psychological horrors of enslaved people, and he also notes how slavery damages and corrupts slave owners as well. In his writings and public speeches, he often quotes Old Testament prophets as he calls out the hypocrisy of Christian slave owners: "The man who wields the blood-clotted cowskin during the week, fills the pulpit on Sunday and claims to be a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus."

