



UNDERSTANDING SCRIPTURE

How to Read and Interpret the Bible

A CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR EVENTS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Adapted from several resources including The Spirit Filled Life Bible, Walk Through the Bible and Halley's Bible Handbook

1. THE ERA OF BEGINNINGS | Genesis 1 - 11:26

- A. The Creation account - Genesis 1-2
 - 1) The Genesis account of creation (1:1-25)
 - 2) The creation of Man and his responsibilities (1:26-2:17)
 - 3) The formation of Eve (2:18-25)

- B. The fall of man and the consequences - Genesis 3:1-6:8
 - 1) Temptation in the Garden (3:1-7)
 - 2) The fall of mankind judgment and the curse (3:8-24)
 - 3) The first account of Christ, our "Kinsman Redeemer" (3:15)
 - 4) Covered by the blood, the hope of redemption (3:21)
 - 5) Expulsion from Eden (3:22-24)
 - 6) The first murder (4:1-16)
 - 7) Descendants of Cain and Seth (4:17-26)
 - 8) The genealogy from Adam to Noah (5:1-32)
 - 9) The human condition prior to the flood (6:1-8)

- C. The flood: God's judgment upon a corrupted mankind - Genesis 6:9-8:19
 - 1) Noah, his Divine commission and obedience (6:9-22)
 - 2) The Ark is finished and filled (7:1-10)
 - 3) The judgment of God and the universal flood (7:11-24)
 - 4) The end of the flood (8:1-19)

- D. New beginnings for the human race - Genesis 8:20-11:32
 - 1) Noah's altar and sacrifice to the LORD (8:20-22)
 - 2) God's Covenant with Noah and all mankind (9:1-17)
 - 3) The sons of Noah, their blessing and cursing (9:18-27)
 - 4) The nations who descended from Shem, Ham and Japheth (10:1-32)
 - 5) The Tower of Babel and the scattering of all the people (11:1-9)
 - 6) The Messianic line of Shem to Abraham (11:10-26)

2. THE PATRIARCHAL ERA | Genesis 11:27 – 50:26

- A. Abraham, the father of our faith - Genesis 11:27-25:11
 - 1) Abram's family in the land of Ur and Haran (11:27-32)
 - 2) The call of Abram and his journey from Haran to Shechem (12:1-6)
 - 3) God's appearance and promise to Abram (12:7)
 - 4) Abram's altars to the LORD (12:7-8)
 - 5) Abram's journey to Egypt and deceit (12:10-20)
 - 6) Abram separates with his nephew, Lot (13:1-11)
 - 7) Lot's move to Sodom (13:12-13)
 - 8) God's reaffirms His promise to Abram and builds another altar (13:14-18)
 - 9) Abram rescues Lot from the five kings with 318 of his own men (14:1-16)
 - 10) After the victory, Abram tithes to Melchizedek, king of Salem (14:17-20)
 - 11) God's Covenant with Abram and the promise of a son and inheritance (15:1-21)
 - 12) Sarai's plan to fulfill God's promise through Hagar, her servant (16:1-2)
 - 13) Hagar conceives Abram's child, flees and encounters the Angel of the LORD (16:3-14)
 - 14) Hagar bears Ishmael (16:15-16)
 - 15) Abram's name changed to Abraham and the Covenant of Circumcision (17:1-27)
 - 16) The Angelic visit and promise of a son to Abraham and Sarah (18:1-15)
 - 17) Abraham intercedes for Sodom (18:16-33)
 - 18) Lot and his family flee as Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed (19:1-29)
 - 19) Lot's daughters conceive sons, fathers of the Moabites and Ammonites (19:30-38)
 - 20) Abraham's deception and deliverance from Abimelech (20:1-18)
 - 21) Isaac is born, Hagar and Ishmael are sent away (21:1-21)
 - 22) The Covenant confirmed: Abraham's test of offering Isaac to God (22:1-19)
 - 23) The death of Sarah and the acquisition of a burial plot (23:1-20)
 - 24) Rebekah, a bride for Isaac, the son of God's promise (24:1-67)
 - 25) The death of Abraham (25:1-11)
- B. Isaac, the seed of Abraham - Genesis 25:19-28:9
 - 1) Rebekah, the mother of twins, Jacob and Esau (25:19-26)
 - 2) Esau rejects his birthright and gives it to Jacob for a meal (25:27-34)
 - 3) Isaac and Abimelech (26:1-16)
 - 4) Isaac reopens the wells of his father, Abraham (26:17-22)
 - 5) The Covenant confirmed to Isaac (26:23-25)
 - 6) God's blessing to Isaac and Abimelech (26:26-33)
 - 7) Jacob steals Esau's Patriarchal blessing (27:1-40)
 - 8) Esau's plan to kill Jacob (27:41-46)
 - 9) Isaac blesses Jacob and sends him to Laban (28:1-5)
 - 10) Esau marries a relative of Ishmael (28:6-9)
- C. Jacob's adventures - Genesis 28:10-36:43
 - 1) Jacob's dream and God's Promise at Bethel (28:10-22)
 - 2) Jacob works for his uncle Laban (29:1-14)
 - 3) Laban deceives Jacob who marries Leah and Rachel (29:15-30)
 - 4) Jacob's children (29:31-24)
 - 5) Jacob's flocks increase through deceit (30:25-43)
 - 6) Jacob and Laban part (31:1-55)
 - 7) Jacob prepares to meet his brother Esau (32:1-21)
 - 8) Jacob wrestles with an Angel (32:22-32)

- 9) Esau and Jacob reconciled (33:1-17)
- 10) Jacob builds an altar at Bethel and calls it, "The House of God" (35:1-15)
- 11) Rachael buried in Bethlehem (35:16-20)
- 12) Jacob's twelve sons (35:21-26)
- 13) The death of Isaac, Jacob and Esau bury their father (35:27-29)
- 14) The family of Esau in Edom (36:1-43)

D. The life of Joseph - Genesis 37-50:26

- 1) Joseph's dreams of greatness (37:1-11)
- 2) Hated by his brothers and sold into slavery (37:12-36)
- 3) Judah and Tamar (38:1-30)
- 4) Joseph, a slave in Egypt (39:1-20)
- 5) Joseph blessed in prison (39:20-23)
- 6) Interpreting the prisoners' dreams (40:1-23)
- 7) Interpreting Pharaoh's dreams (41:1-38)
- 8) Joseph exalted (41:39-57)
- 9) Joseph meets his brothers (42:1-45:28)
- 10) Jacob's journey to Egypt (46:1-11)
- 11) Jacob settles in Goshen (46:11-12)
- 12) Joseph's handling of the famine (47:13-31)
- 13) Jacob blesses Joseph's sons (48:1-22)
- 14) Jacob's last words to his twelve sons (49:1-28)
- 15) Jacob's death and burial (49:29-50:14)
- 16) Joseph reassures his brothers (50:15-21)
- 17) The death of Joseph and his instructions concerning his bones (50:22-26)

3. THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT | Exodus

A. Israel's 400-year enslavement - Exodus 1

- 1) The children of Israel multiplied (1:1-7)
- 2) A new king who did not know Joseph comes to power (1:8-10)
- 3) Israel's oppressed and the killing of Hebrew baby boys (1:11-16)
- 4) The Godly fear of the midwives in sparing many of the children (1:17-22)

B. Israel freed from slavery - Exodus 2-12:42

- 1) Moses' birth, education and flight into Midian (2:1-25)
- 2) Moses at the burning bush (3:1-4:17)
- 3) Moses returns to Egypt (4:18-31)
- 4) The encounter with Pharaoh (5:1-23)
- 5) The ten plagues (6:1-11:10) of blood, frogs, gnats, flies, livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness and the firstborn
- 6) The Passover and the Divine protection of blood (12:1-30)
- 7) The Exodus from Egypt (12:31-42)

C. From Egypt to Mount Sinai - Exodus 13:1-19:2

- 1) Consecrating the first born and the establishment of the Passover (13:1-16)
- 2) The Red Sea crossing and the destruction of the Egyptian army (13:17-14:31)
- 3) The song of Moses and Miriam (15:1-21)
- 4) The wilderness way and the water of Marah (15:22-27)
- 5) The provision of Manna and quail (16:1-31)

- 6) Some of the Manna preserved and in a jar (16:32-36)
- 7) Moses struck the rock and water flowed (17:1-7)
- 8) Joshua, Moses, Aaron and Hur gain victory over the Amalekites (17:8-16)
- 9) The advice of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law (18:1-27)

D. Israel at Mount Sinai - Exodus 19:3-40:38

- 1) Israel at Mount Sinai (19:1-25)
- 2) Ten Commandments, Decalogue (20:1-21)
- 3) Ordinances for Israel (20:22-)
- 4) The Covenant confirmed with Moses and the leaders (24:1-18)
- 5) Moses on Mount Sinai, receives instructions from The LORD (25:1-31:18)
- 6) Idolatry (the golden calf) and God's severe judgment (32:1-30)
- 7) Moses intercedes for Israel (32:31-35)
- 8) Moses and the Glory of God (33:1-23)
- 9) The new Stone Tablets (34:1-28)
- 10) The radiant face of Moses (34:29-35)
- 11) Building the Tabernacle and the Priestly garment (35:1-39:31)
- 12) The Tabernacle completed and the Shaking Glory of God (39:32-40:38)

4. THE WILDERNESS YEARS | Numbers 10:11 - 25:18

A. From Mt. Sinai to Kadesh - Numbers 10:11-12:16

- 1) The Israelites leave Mount Sinai and the divisions of the camps (10:11-35)
- 2) Murmurings and judgments (11:1-35)
- 3) Miriam and Aaron, Moses' sister and brother, oppose Moses (12:1-16)

B. The crisis at Kadesh - Numbers 13:1-14:45

- 1) The spies and the report on the exploration of Canaan (13:1-33)
- 2) Rebellion and God's judgment upon Israel that the current generation would not enter the Promised Land (14:1-38)
- 3) Israel's sorrow and presumption leads to defeat (14:39-45)

C. The years of wandering - Numbers 15:1-19:22

- 1) God's Laws present and future (15:1-41)
- 2) Korah's great rebellion and the fire of God's judgment (16:1-50)
- 3) The budding of Aaron's staff (17:1-13)
- 4) The vindication of appointed leaders (18:1-19:22)

D. From Kadesh to the plains of Moab - Numbers 20:1-22:1

- 1) The death of Miriam, Moses' sister (20:1)
- 2) The opposition against Moses and Aaron because of lack of water (20:2-8)
- 3) Moses' anger and sin in striking the rock (20:9-13)
- 4) The King of Edom refuses Israel passage (20:14-21)
- 5) The death of Aaron (20:22-29)
- 6) Israel's victory over the Canaanites (21:1-3)
- 7) The rebellion, judgment of serpents and the bronze snake on the pole (21:4-9)
- 8) March around Moab (21:10-20)
- 9) The defeat of Sihon, King Amorites and Og, King of Bashan (21:21-35)
- 10) Israel arrives on the plains of Moab near the Jordan and across from Jericho (22:1)

- E. Preservation of God's people - Numbers 22:2-36:13
 - 1) Balak's intent to use the prophet Balaam to curse Israel (22:2-40)
 - 2) Balaam's five oracles (22:41-24:25)
 - 3) With Balaam's instruction, Moab seduces Israel, resulting in God's judgment (25:1-25:18)

5. PREPARING TO ENTER CANAAN | Numbers 26:1 - 36:13

- A. Preparation for conquest - Numbers 26:1-33:49
 - 1) The second census, and a new generation (26:1-65)
 - 2) God clarifies inheritance difficulties (27:1-11)
 - 3) Joshua to succeed Moses (27:12-23)
 - 4) The annual feasts, offerings and vows (28:1-30:16)
 - 5) Vengeance on the Midianites, cleansing from Balaam's advice (31:1-54)
- B. Final instructions for occupation of Canaan - Numbers 32:1-36:13
 - 1) The Transjordan tribes (32:1-42)
 - 2) Israel's history reviewed (33:1-49)
 - 3) The boundaries of the inheritance of Canaan (34:1-29)
 - 4) Towns for the Levites and the cities of refuge (35:1-34)
 - 5) Inheritance regulations (36:1-13)

6. POSSESSING THE PROMISED LAND | Joshua 1 - 24

- A. Entrance into Canaan - Joshua 1-5:12
 - 1) Joshua succeeds Moses (1:1-18)
 - 2) Rahab and the two spies sent into Jericho (2:1-24)
 - 3) Crossing the Jordan River (3:1-17)
 - 4) The twelve stones of memorial from the Jordan (4:1-24)
 - 5) The men of Israel circumcised at Gilgal (5:1-12)
- B. Joshua's military campaigns (strategy for conquest) - Joshua 5:13-12:24
 - 1) Joshua's physical encounter with God (5:13-15)
 - 2) Defeat of Jericho, and the beginning of the Central Campaign (6:1-27)
 - 3) Israel defeated before a minor foe, Ai (7:1-26)
 - 4) The sin of Achan and judgement (7:1-26)
 - 5) Ai destroyed and the Covenant renewed (8:1-35)
 - 6) The Gibeonite deception and consequences (9:1-27)
 - 7) The five Amorite Kings and Joshua's extended day (10:1-28)
 - 8) The cities conquered in the Southern Campaign (10:29-43)
 - 9) The kings in Joshua's Northern Campaign killed (11:1-23)
 - 10) The list of defeated kings (12:1-24)
 - 11) The land still to be taken (13:1-32)
- C. The Promised Land divided among the tribes of Israel - Joshua 14:1-21:45
 - 1) The division of the land and allotments west of the Jordan (14:1-19:51)
 - 2) The Cities of Refuge (20:1-9)
 - 3) The Levitical towns (21:1-45)
 - 4) 2½ tribes return home to the East side (22:1-9)
 - 5) The altar built by the 2½ tribes (22:10-34)

- D. The end of Joshua's career and life - Joshua 23:1-24:33
 - 1) Joshua's farewell and the Covenant renewed at Shechem (23:1-24:27)
 - 2) Joshua buried in the Promised Land (24:28-33)

7. THE JUDGES AND TRANSITION | Judges, 1 Samuel

- A. Prologue: Conditions in Canaan after the death of Joshua 1:1–3:6
 - 1) Continuing conquests by Israelite tribes 1:1–26
 - 2) Incomplete conquests of the land 1:27–36
 - 3) Covenant of the Lord broken 2:1–5
 - 4) Introduction to the period of the judges 2:6–3:6
- B. History of oppressions and deliverances during the period of the judges 3:7–16:31
 - 1) Mesopotamian oppression and deliverance by Othniel 3:7–11
 - 2) Moabite oppression and deliverance by Ehud 3:12–30
 - 3) Philistine oppression and deliverance by Shamgar 3:31
 - 4) Canaanite oppression and deliverance by Deborah and Barak 4:1–5:31
 - 5) Midianite oppression and deliverance by Gideon 6:1–8:35
 - 6) Brief reign of Abimelech 9:1–57
 - 7) Tola's judgeship 10:1, 2
 - 8) Jair's judgeship 10:3–5
 - 9) Ammonite oppression and deliverance by Jephthah 10:6–12:7
 - 10) Ibzan's judgeship 12:8–10
 - 11) Elon's judgeship 12:11, 12
 - 12) Abdon's judgeship 12:13–15
 - 13) Philistine oppression and the exploits of Samson 13:1–16:31
- C. Conditions illustrating the period of the judges Judges 17:1–21:25
 - 1) The idolatry of Micah and the migration of the Danites 17:1–18:31
 - 2) Immorality: The atrocity at Gibeah and the Benjamite War 19:1–21:25
- D. Renewal under Samuel Samuel 1:1–7:17
 - 1) Birth and childhood of Samuel 1:1–2:36
 - 2) Birth and dedication of Samuel 1:1–2:11
 - 3) Growth of Samuel and the corruption of Eli's sons 2:12–36
 - 4) Beginning of Samuel's prophetic ministry 3:1–4:1
 - 5) His call from God 3:1–9
 - 6) His word for Eli 3:10–18
 - 7) His ministry to all Israel 3:9–4:1
 - 8) Samuel's ministry as judge 4:2–7:17
 - 9) The capture of the ark by the Philistines 4:2–11
 - 10) Death of Eli 4:12–22
 - 11) Recovery of the ark by Israel 5:1–7:1
 - 12) Samuel's call for repentance 7:2–6
 - 13) Defeat of the Philistines 7:7–17

8. THE MONARCHY | 1 Samuel 8:1 - 15:35; 2 Samuel & Chronicles; 1 Kings 1 - 11 and 2 Chronicles 1 - 9

- A. The reign of Saul 8:1–15:35

- 1) Saul's establishment as king 8:1–12:25
 - 2) Israel's demand for a king 8:1–22
 - 3) Saul chosen and anointed as king 9:1–12:25
 - 4) Saul's wars 13:1–14:52
 - 5) Saul's rejection by God 15:1–35
- B. Saul's decline and David's rise 16:1–31:13
- 1) David's increasing prominence 16:1–17:58
 - 2) His anointing by Samuel 16:1–13
 - 3) His singing before Saul 16:14–23
 - 4) His defeat of Goliath 17:1–58
 - 5) Saul's decreasing influence 18:1–31:13
 - 6) Saul's persecution of David 18:1–27:12
 - 7) Saul's visit to a medium 28:1–25
 - 8) David's conflicts with the Philistines and the Amalekites 29:1–30:31
 - 9) Saul's death 31:1–13
- C. The triumphs of David 1:1–10:19
- 1) The political triumphs of David 1:1–5:25
 - 2) Reign of David in Hebron 1:1–4:12
 - 3) Reign of David in Jerusalem 5:1–25
 - 4) The spiritual triumphs of David 6:1–7:29
 - 5) Moving the ark 6:1–23
 - 6) God's covenant with David 7:1–29
 - 7) The military triumphs of David 8:1–10:19
 - 8) Triumphs over his enemies 8:1–12
 - 9) David's righteous rule 8:3–9:13
 - 10) Triumphs over Ammon and Syria 10:1–19
- D. The transgressions of David 11:1–27
- 1) The sin of adultery 11:1–5
 - 2) The sin of murder 11:6–27
 - 3) Uriah's loyalty to David 11:6–13
 - 4) David's command to murder Uriah 11:14–25
 - 5) David and Bathsheba's marriage 11:26, 27
- E. The troubles of David 12:1–24:25
- 1) Troubles in David's house 12:1–13:36
 - 2) Prophecy by Nathan 12:1–14
 - 3) Death of David's son 12:15–25
 - 4) Joab's loyalty to David 12:26–31
 - 5) Incest in David's house 13:1–20
 - 6) Absalom's murder of Amnon 13:21–36
 - 7) Troubles in David's kingdom 13:7–24:25
 - 8) Rebellion of Absalom 13:7–17:29
 - 9) Joab's murder of Absalom 18:1–33
 - 10) David restored as king 19:1–20:26
 - 11) Commentary of the reign of David 21:1–24:25

9. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM | 1 Kings 12 - 22, 2 Kings 1 - 17, 2 Chronicles 10 - 27

- A. The kingdom divided 12:1–22:53
 - 1) The revolt and reign of Jeroboam in Israel 12:1–14:20
 - 2) The reign of Rehoboam in Judah 14:21–31
 - 3) The reign of Abijah in Judah 15:1–8
 - 4) The reign of Asa in Judah 15:9–24
 - 5) The reign of Nadab in Israel 15:25–32
 - 6) The reign of Baasha in Israel 15:3–16:7
 - 7) The reign of Elah in Israel 16:8–14
 - 8) The reign of Zimri in Israel 16:15–20
 - 9) The reign of Omri in Israel 16:21–28
 - 10) The reign of Ahab in Israel 16:9–22:40
 - 11) The reign of Jehoshaphat in Judah 22:41–50
 - 12) The reign of Ahaziah in Israel 22:51–53

- B. The divided kingdom 1:1–17:41
 - 1) The reign of Ahaziah in Israel 1:1–18
 - 2) The reign of Jehoram in Israel 2:1–8:15
 - 3) The reign of Jehoram in Judah 8:16–24
 - 4) The reign of Ahaziah in Judah 8:5–9:29
 - 5) The reign of Jehu in Israel 9:0–10:36
 - 6) The reign of Queen Athaliah in Judah 11:1–16
 - 7) The reign of Joash in Judah 11:7–12:21
 - 8) The reign of Jehoahaz in Israel 13:1–9
 - 9) The reign of Jehoash in Israel 13:10–25
 - 10) The reign of Amaziah in Judah 14:1–22
 - 11) The reign of Jeroboam II in Israel 14:23–29
 - 12) The reign of Azariah in Judah 15:1–7
 - 13) The reigns of Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah in Israel 15:8–31
 - 14) The reign of Jotham in Judah 15:32–38
 - 15) The reign of Ahaz in Judah 16:1–20
 - 16) The reign of Hoshea in Israel 17:1–5
 - 17) The captivity of Israel to Assyria 17:6–41

- C. The kingdom of Judah alone 18:1–25:30
 - 1) The reign of Hezekiah 18:1–20:21
 - 2) The reign of Manasseh 21:1–18
 - 3) The reign of Amon 21:19–26
 - 4) The reign of Josiah 22:1–23:30
 - 5) The reign of Jehoahaz 23:31–34
 - 6) The reign of Jehoiakim 23:5–24:7
 - 7) The reign of Jehoiachin 24:8–16
 - 8) The reign of Zedekiah 24:17–20
 - 9) The fall of Jerusalem 25:1–7
 - 10) The captivity of Judah to Babylon 25:8–26
 - 11) The release of Jehoiachin 25:27–30

- D. The reigns of the kings of Judah 10:1–36:16
 - 12) The reign of Rehoboam 10:1–12:16

- 13) The reign of Abijah 13:1–22
- 14) The reign of Asa 14:1–16:14
- 15) The reign of Jehoshaphat 17:1–20:37
- 16) The reign of Jehoram 21:1–20
- 17) The reign of Ahaziah 22:1–9
- 18) The reign of Queen Athaliah 22:0–23:15
- 19) The reign of Joash 23:6–24:27
- 20) The reign of Amaziah 25:1–28
- 21) The reign of Uzziah 26:1–23
- 22) The reign of Jotham 27:1–9
- 23) The reign of Ahaz 28:1–27
- 24) The reign of Hezekiah 29:1–32:33
- 25) The reign of Manasseh 33:1–20
- 26) The reign of Amon 33:21–25
- 27) The reign of Josiah 34:1–35:27
- 28) The reign of Jehoahaz 36:1–3
- 29) The reign of Jehoiakim 36:4–8
- 30) The reign of Jehoiachin 36:9, 10
- 31) The reign of Zedekiah 36:11–16

- E. Judah’s captivity and return 36:17–23
 - 1) Babylon’s captivity of Judah 36:17–21
 - 2) The decree by Cyrus for Judah’s return 36:22, 23

10. THE EXILE AND RESTORATION | Ezra and Nehemiah

- A. Ezra
 - 1) The return under Zerubbabel 1:1–2:70
 - 2) Cyrus proclaims Israel’s return 1:1–4
 - 3) The people prepare to return 1:5–11
 - 4) The first returnees are named and numbered 2:1–67
 - 5) The returnees give freely 2:68–70
 - 6) The temple reconstruction process 3:1–6:22
 - 7) The altar is built and sacrifices begun 3:1–7
 - 8) The foundation is laid, amid great praise and sorrow 3:8–13
 - 9) Enemies discourage the temple project 4:1–5
 - 10) Artaxerxes orders the work to cease 4:17–24
 - 11) Tattenai attempts to stop the temple project 5:1–17
 - 12) Darius assures Tattenai the project is legal 6:1–12
 - 13) The temple is completed and dedicated 6:13–18
 - 14) The Passover is celebrated 6:19–22
 - 15) The return under Ezra 7:1–8:36
 - 16) Ezra and more exiles depart from Babylon 7:1–10
 - 17) Artaxerxes writes a letter of support to Ezra 7:11–28
 - 18) The second group of returnees are named and numbered 8:1–20
 - 19) The exiles return to Jerusalem 8:21–36
 - 20) Ezra’s reform 9:1–10:44
 - 21) Ezra confesses Israel’s transgressions 9:1–15
 - 22) Israel’s leaders consent to reform 10:1–44

B. Nehemiah

- 1) Nehemiah goes from exile to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem 1:1–7:73
- 2) Authority from Artaxerxes I to rebuild the wall 1:1–2:8
- 3) Planning the work, motivating and organizing the workers 2:9–3:32
- 4) Opposition and defense 4:1–23
- 5) Extortion and usury resisted by Nehemiah's godly example 5:1–19
- 6) Walls completed in spite of evil plots 6:1–7:3
- 7) Reestablishment of Jerusalem's citizens 7:3–73

C. Ezra and Nehemiah work together to establish the people 8:1–10:39

- 1) Reading God's Word 8:1–12
- 2) Celebration of Feast of Tabernacles 8:13–18
- 3) Confession of personal and corporate sin 9:1–37
- 4) Commitment to keep the law and support the temple 9:8–10:39

D. True repentance results in righteousness 11:1–13:31

- 1) Census of Jerusalem and surrounding villages 11:1–12:26
- 2) Dedication of walls and provision for the finances of the temple 12:7–13:3
- 3) Nehemiah's second term as governor, including further reforms and a final prayer



Between the last writings of the Old Testament and the appearance of Christ, several major developments set the stage for the Gospel story. The political, religious, and social atmosphere of Palestine changed

significantly during what some refer to as the “400 silent years”. Much of what happened was predicted by the prophet Daniel (chapters 2, 7, 8, and 11) and compare to historical events.

This period begins when the book of Malachi was completed (397 B.C.) until the angel's announcement of the birth of John the Baptist. During this time, there were no prophets and no inspired writers of divine revelation. Six historical divisions are observable.

1. The Persian Era (397-336 BC)

The Persians were the dominating power in the Middle East as far back as 586 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar overcame the Southern Kingdom of Judah and destroyed Jerusalem. God had already used the Persians to deliver Israel from Babylonian captivity (Daniel 5:30, 31). Yet in the book of Malachi, we see a people who were lukewarm and argumentative with God. Idolatry and corruption were prominent. During this time, the rise of the synagogue as the local center of worship was an important detail as it led to the building of the temple. This event encouraged the ultimate social and religious separation between Jew and Samaritan.

2. The Greek Era (336 - 323 BC)

Alexander the Great was the central figure. He conquered Persia, Babylon, Palestine, Syria, Egypt and western India, dying at the age of thirty-three. His aim was to found a world-wide empire united by language, custom and civilization. His prestige was key to the spreading of the gospel many years later because he influenced the world to speak and study Greek. This process is called Hellenization

and caused many struggles with the Jews as it affected their culture and religion. Because of Alexander the Great, the Greek language was widespread by 270 B.C. to bring about the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint.

3. The death of Alexander the Great led to the Egyptian Era (323 - 198 BC)

The Greek empire was divided into four segments: Ptolemy - Egypt and Africa, Lysimachus - Asia Minor, Cassander - Europe, and Selenus - Syria. Conflicts between Egypt and Syria arose and Israel was caught in the middle. During this time the Septuagint was authorized and two religious parties emerged: the Hellenizing party, which was pro-Syrian, and the orthodox Jews, in particular the Hasidim or "Pious Ones" (predecessors of the Pharisees). The two struggled for power and this conflict brought about the attack of Antiochus the Great in 168 B.C.

4. The Syrian Era (198 - 165 BC)

Antiochus the Great set about destroying every distinctive characteristic of the Jewish faith. He mutilated the scriptures and forced Jews to eat Pork and make sacrifices to idols. A few years later, Antiochus Epiphanes (son of Antiochus the Great) became one of the most vicious and violent persecutors the Jews ever knew. He invaded Egypt and then returned to Jerusalem (surprising many Jews who thought he was dead) to overturn the city. His most vile act was in the contamination of the Holy of Holies by sprinkling the blood of an unclean animal all over the sanctuary making it defiled and violated. One cannot grasp how horrifying this must have been to the Jews.

5. The Maccabean Era (165 - 63 BC)

In accordance with a prophecy in Daniel 8:14, the temple was not cleansed (1 Maccabees 1:39-41) until six and a half years later under the leadership of Judas Maccabaeus hence the Maccabean Era. During this time, Jerusalem was retaken and worship in the temple was thus restored. Many futile attempts were made to defeat the Maccabees by Syria but finally the Jews received their independence in 142 B.C. This ended in 63 B.C. when Pompey of Rome took Syria and entered Israel.

6. The Roman Era (63 - 4 BC)

It seems as though Israel's hopes of freedom from oppression were lost during this time. Herod the Great became King of Israel around 40 B.C. and he planned and carried out the building of the new temple in Jerusalem. However, he was a devoted Hellenist and mercilessly killed anyone who opposed him, even his own family. This was the man on the throne when Jesus was born in Bethlehem - what a dark and desperate situation for God's people! It seems that God allows a desperate situation to arise before presenting His message or providing deliverance.

During the 400 years between the Testaments, God was silent in terms of speaking through a prophet, but He was clearly at work! He was preparing the way for His Son. This period of history is of vital importance to the establishment of God's complete written revelation to man. The God of Israel then shattered this silence with the announcement of John the Baptist and the birth of His Only Son - Jesus Christ, Redeemer of mankind!