



BIBLE ORIENTATION COLLECTION

Biblical Timeline

A beginner-friendly guide to the people, events, kingdoms, covenants, and promises of the Bible's unified story

PURPOSE

See how the Bible's major events fit together, follow God's promises through history, and recognize Jesus as the center and fulfillment of the story.

Welcome

The Bible contains many people, places, kingdoms, covenants, poems, prophecies, letters, and visions. A timeline helps us see how they belong to one unfolding story: God creates, humanity rebels, God promises rescue, Jesus comes, the gospel goes to the nations, and Christ will return to make all things new.

This guide gives a framework, not a date for every event. Keep your Bible open. Dates before the monarchy are often approximate, and faithful scholars differ about some chronologies.

Scripture translation

Short quotations are from the Berean Standard Bible unless otherwise noted. References are provided so readers can verify each statement in context.

A prayer before you begin

Father, thank You for working faithfully through history. Help me understand Your Word, see Jesus clearly, and respond with faith and obedience. Amen.

How to Use This Timeline

- Start with the One-Page Bible Story.
- Learn the eras in order before memorizing dates.
- Open the listed passages and read them in context.
- Notice covenants, kingdom, exile, temple, and mission.
- Ask how each movement prepares for or flows from Jesus.

MASTER RHYTHM

Creation → Fall → Promise → Covenant people → Kingdom → Exile → Return → Messiah → Church and mission → New creation.

One-Page Bible Story

MOVEMENT	WHAT HAPPENS	WHY IT MATTERS
Creation	God creates a good world and humanity in His image.	Everything belongs to God and is made for His glory.
Fall	Humanity rebels; sin and death enter human experience.	The world needs rescue that people cannot produce.
Promise	God promises a serpent-defeating offspring and blesses Abraham.	God's rescue will reach all nations.
Covenant people	God rescues Israel, gives His covenant instruction, and dwells among them.	Israel is called to holiness, worship, and witness.
Kingdom	David rules, and God promises an enduring royal Son.	The promised King will come through David's line.
Exile and return	Sin brings judgment; God preserves a remnant and restores them.	God remains faithful and promises deeper renewal.
Messiah	Jesus lives, dies for sins, rises, and ascends.	God's saving promises reach their center in Christ.
Church and mission	The Spirit forms and sends a people from every nation.	The gospel is proclaimed while the church awaits its King.
New creation	Jesus returns, judges evil, raises the dead, and renews creation.	God dwells with His people forever.

Part One · The Biblical Timeline

ERA 1 · Creation and Early Humanity

Approximate period: Beginning to an unknown early period

Big movement: God creates; humanity rebels; sin and death spread.

Key events: Creation, Eden, the image of God, the first marriage, the fall, Cain and Abel, and growing violence.

Key people: God, Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, Seth.

Read in: Genesis 1-5.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus is the eternal Word through whom all things were made and the last Adam who brings life.

Key passages: Genesis 1:1-3, 26-28; 3:1-24; John 1:1-5, 14; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49.

Memory anchor: God's good creation is broken by sin, but God promises victory over the serpent.

ERA 2 · Flood, Babel, and the Nations

Approximate period: Unknown early period

Big movement: God judges human evil, preserves Noah, and scatters proud humanity into nations.

Key events: The flood, God's covenant with Noah, the sign of the rainbow, Babel, and the table of nations.

Key people: Noah, his family, Nimrod, and the peoples descending from Noah.

Read in: Genesis 6-11.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus compares His return to Noah's days; Pentecost begins a gospel gathering from many languages and nations.

Key passages: Genesis 6:5-9:17; 11:1-9; Matthew 24:36-44; Acts 2:1-12; Revelation 7:9-10.

Memory anchor: God judges evil, preserves life, and continues His purpose for the nations.

ERA 3 · Abraham and the Patriarchs

Approximate period: About 2000-1700 BC

Big movement: God chooses one family through whom blessing will reach every nation.

Key events: Abraham's call, covenant promises, Isaac's birth, Jacob renamed Israel, twelve sons, Joseph in Egypt.

Key people: Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Leah, Rachel, Joseph, Judah, and Jacob's twelve sons—the family lines behind Israel's tribes.

Read in: Genesis 12-50; Job may reflect a patriarchal setting, though its date is uncertain.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus is Abraham's promised offspring and the Lion from Judah's tribe; through Him the nations receive blessing.

Key passages: Genesis 12:1-3; 15; 17; 22; 28; 49:8-12; Matthew 1:1-17; Galatians 3:6-29.

Memory anchor: God forms a covenant family and promises land, offspring, presence, and worldwide blessing.

ERA 4 · Egypt and the Exodus

Approximate period: Traditionally about 1446 BC; some favor about 1260 BC

Big movement: God rescues Israel from slavery and reveals His covenant name and saving power.

Key events: Oppression, Moses' call, plagues, Passover, departure, Red Sea, and journey to Sinai.

Key people: Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Pharaoh, and the Israelites.

Read in: Exodus 1-18.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus is the greater deliverer and Passover Lamb who rescues from slavery to sin and death.

Key passages: Exodus 3:1-15; 12-14; Luke 9:28-36; John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 3:1-6.

Important context: The exact date is debated. The Bible's central claim is God's real saving action, not dependence on one modern chronology.

Memory anchor: The LORD hears, remembers His covenant, and delivers His people.

ERA 5 · Sinai, Covenant, and Wilderness

Approximate period: From the Exodus to about 1400 or 1200 BC

Big movement: God makes Israel His covenant people, gives His instruction, and dwells among them.

Key events: Ten Commandments, covenant ratification, tabernacle, priesthood, sacrifices, rebellion, forty years, and covenant renewal.

Key people: Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, Joshua, Caleb, Korah, and the wilderness generation.

Read in: Exodus 19-40; Leviticus; Numbers; Deuteronomy.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus fulfills the Law, mediates the new covenant, is the true tabernacle and final sacrifice, and leads His people toward rest.

Key passages: Exodus 19-20; 24-25; Leviticus 16; Numbers 13-14; Deuteronomy 6; 18:15-19; Matthew 5:17-20; Hebrews 8-10.

Memory anchor: God redeems a people to worship Him, live holy lives, and display His character.

ERA 6 · The Land and the Judges

Approximate period: About 1400/1200-1050 BC

Big movement: Israel enters the land but repeatedly turns from God and needs faithful leadership.

Key events: Jordan crossing, Jericho, covenant renewal, incomplete obedience, cycles of rebellion and rescue, and civil collapse.

Key people: Joshua, Rahab, Caleb, Deborah, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, Ruth, Boaz, Naomi, and Samuel.

Read in: Joshua; Judges; Ruth; 1 Samuel 1-7.

Connection to Jesus: Joshua's name shares the form behind Jesus' name, and Joshua's partial rest points beyond itself. Boaz serves as a family redeemer (Hebrew go'el), anticipating the greater redemption Christ provides.

Key passages: Joshua 1; 6; 23-24; Judges 2:6-23; 4-5; 11; Ruth 1-4; Hebrews 4:1-11.

Important context: Joshua's conquest and Jephthah's vow are recorded within difficult ancient settings; narrative description does not mean every human action is endorsed.

Memory anchor: God remains faithful while Israel's repeated failure reveals the need for a righteous King.

ERA 7 · The United Kingdom

Approximate period: About 1050-930 BC

Big movement: Israel becomes a monarchy; God promises David an enduring dynasty.

Key events: Saul's rise and fall, David's reign, Jerusalem established, ark brought to Jerusalem, Davidic covenant, Solomon's wisdom, and temple.

Key people: Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, David, Abigail, Bathsheba, Nathan, Solomon, Hiram, and the queen of Sheba.

Read in: 1 Samuel 8-31; 2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-11; 1 Chronicles; 2 Chronicles 1-9; many Psalms and Proverbs.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus is David's promised Son, wiser than Solomon, the true King, and the One greater than the temple.

Key passages: 1 Samuel 8; 16-17; 2 Samuel 7; Psalm 2; 72; 110; 1 Kings 8; Matthew 1:1; 12:6, 42; Luke 1:32-33.

Memory anchor: Human kings fail, but God promises David a Son whose kingdom will endure.

ERA 8 · The Divided Kingdom

Approximate period: About 930-722 BC

Big movement: The kingdom divides; idolatry and injustice deepen while prophets call both kingdoms back to God.

Key events: Northern Israel separates from Judah, rival worship centers arise, dynasties change, Elijah confronts Baal, and Assyria conquers Samaria in 722 BC.

Key people: Rehoboam, Jeroboam I, Ahab, Jezebel, Elijah, Elisha, Jehu, Hezekiah, Amos, Hosea, Jonah, Micah, and Isaiah.

Read in: 1 Kings 12-22; 2 Kings 1-20; 2 Chronicles 10-32; Hosea; Amos; Jonah; Micah; much of Isaiah.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus is the faithful King, true Shepherd, and promised Immanuel who gathers a renewed people.

Key passages: 1 Kings 12; 18; 2 Kings 17; Hosea 1-3; Amos 5; Micah 5:2-5; Isaiah 7:14; 9:1-7; Matthew 2:5-6; 4:12-17.

Memory anchor: Division, idolatry, and injustice bring judgment, yet God continues to promise restoration.

Prophets during the Assyrian period

Jonah ministers concerning Nineveh. Amos and Hosea confront northern Israel. Micah and Isaiah speak mainly in Judah while addressing regional events. Prophetic books are not arranged in chronological order.

ERA 9 · Judah Alone and the Babylonian Crisis

Approximate period: 722-586 BC

Big movement: Judah survives Assyria but later rebels, reforms, and finally falls to Babylon.

Key events: Hezekiah's deliverance, Manasseh's evil, Josiah's reform, Babylon's rise, deportations, Jerusalem's fall, and temple destruction in 586 BC.

Key people: Hezekiah, Manasseh, Josiah, Huldah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah.

Read in: 2 Kings 18-25; 2 Chronicles 29-36; Jeremiah; Nahum; Zephaniah; Habakkuk; Lamentations.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus brings the new covenant Jeremiah promised, bears judgment, and is the righteous Branch from David.

Key passages: 2 Kings 22-25; Jeremiah 23:1-8; 29:1-14; 31:31-34; Lamentations 1-5; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 8:6-13.

Important context: Jeremiah 29:11 first addressed Judean exiles within God's seventy-year promise; it should not be detached into a guarantee of immediate ease.

Memory anchor: Judah's fall proves that outward religion cannot replace covenant faithfulness and a renewed heart.

Prophets around Babylon's conquest

Nahum anticipates Nineveh's fall in 612 BC. Zephaniah warns of the Day of the LORD. Habakkuk wrestles with Babylon's violence. Jeremiah ministers before and during Jerusalem's fall. Their messages overlap a rapidly changing political world.

ERA 10 · The Babylonian Exile

Approximate period: About 605/597-539 BC

Big movement: God's people live under foreign rule, yet He preserves them and promises restoration.

Key events: Deportations, life in Babylon, Jerusalem's fall remembered, Daniel's witness, Ezekiel's visions, and promises of a new heart, Spirit, Shepherd, and restored presence.

Key people: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Ezekiel, and the exiles.

Read in: Daniel; Ezekiel; portions of Jeremiah and Lamentations; Psalm 137.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus is the Son of Man who receives everlasting dominion, the Good Shepherd, the giver of living water and the Spirit, and God's dwelling with humanity.

Key passages: Ezekiel 34; 36:22-28; 37; 47; 48:35; Daniel 2; 3; 7; John 7:37-39; 10:1-18; Revelation 21:1-3.

Memory anchor: Exile is judgment, but God's presence and promises are not defeated.

ERA 11 · Return and Rebuilding

Approximate period: 539-about 430 BC

Big movement: Persia permits return; God's people rebuild while still awaiting full restoration.

Key events: Cyrus' decree, first return, temple completed in 516 BC, Esther's deliverance in Persia, Ezra's reforms, Jerusalem's walls rebuilt about 445 BC, and Malachi's final prophetic call.

Key people: Cyrus, Zerubbabel, Jeshua (also spelled Joshua) the high priest, Haggai, Zechariah, Esther, Mordecai, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi.

Read in: Ezra; Nehemiah; Esther; Haggai; Zechariah; Malachi.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus is the true temple, humble King, pierced Shepherd, covenant messenger, and Sun of Righteousness.

Key passages: Ezra 1; 3; 6; Nehemiah 8-9; Esther 4; Haggai 1-2; Zechariah 9:9; 11:12-13; 12:10; 13:7; Malachi 3-4; Matthew 21:5; 26:31; John 19:37.

Memory anchor: The people return and rebuild, but they still wait for the promised King and complete renewal.

ERA 12 · Between Malachi and Matthew

Approximate period: About 430-4 BC

Big movement: Empires change, Jewish communities develop, and expectation for God's deliverance grows.

Key events: Persian rule, Alexander's conquests, Greek influence, the Septuagint, Seleucid oppression, Maccabean revolt, Hasmonean rule, Roman control, Herod's reign, and growth of synagogues and groups such as Pharisees and Sadducees.

Key people: Alexander the Great, Antiochus IV, the Maccabees, Hasmonean rulers, Roman governors, and Herod the Great.

Read in: Historical background between the Testaments; Daniel anticipates successive kingdoms.

Connection to Jesus: The world into which Jesus comes has shared trade languages, Roman roads, Jewish Scriptures in Greek, synagogues, and intense hopes for God's kingdom.

Key passages: Daniel 2; 7-12; Malachi 3:1; 4:4-6; Luke 1-2; Galatians 4:4-5.

Important context: Catholic and Orthodox Old Testaments include certain writings from this broad period as Scripture, often called Deuterocanonical books. Protestants do not receive them as equal in authority to the 39 Old Testament books, though many value them for historical background.

Memory anchor: After centuries of waiting, God sends His Son in the fullness of time.

Jesus, the Church, and the Completion of the Story

ERA 13 • The Birth and Ministry of Jesus

Approximate period: About 6-4 BC to AD 30 or 33

Big movement: God's promised Messiah enters history, announces the kingdom, reveals the Father, and calls disciples.

Key events: Jesus' birth, baptism, temptation, teaching, signs, healings, exorcisms, transfiguration, journey to Jerusalem, and final week.

Key people: Jesus, Mary, Joseph, John the Baptist, the Twelve, women disciples, crowds, religious leaders, and Roman authorities.

Read in: Matthew; Mark; Luke; John.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus is the promised Son of Abraham and David, Immanuel, Servant, Son of Man, Lamb of God, and Son of God.

Key passages: Matthew 1-4; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:16-21; John 1:1-18; 3:16-18; 10:10-18.

Memory anchor: The King has come, and God's kingdom is present in Him.

ERA 14 • Cross, Resurrection, and Ascension

Approximate period: About AD 30 or 33

Big movement: Jesus gives His life for sins, rises bodily, commissions witnesses, and ascends as reigning Lord.

Key events: Last Supper, arrest, trials, crucifixion, burial, empty tomb, appearances, Great Commission, and ascension.

Key people: Jesus, the disciples, Mary Magdalene, Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea, and resurrection witnesses.

Read in: Matthew 26-28; Mark 14-16; Luke 22-24; John 13-21; Acts 1.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus fulfills Scripture, inaugurates the new covenant, defeats sin and death, and reigns at the Father's right hand.

Key passages: Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22; 110; Luke 22:14-20; 24:25-49; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:1-18.

Memory anchor: Jesus died for sins, rose bodily, reigns, and sends His people.

ERA 15 • Pentecost and the Earliest Church

Approximate period: About AD 30 or 33 onward

Big movement: The risen Jesus pours out the Holy Spirit and forms a witnessing community.

Key events: Pentecost, apostolic preaching, baptisms, shared life, healings, opposition, discipline, care for widows, and Stephen's martyrdom.

Key people: Peter, John, the apostles, Mary, Stephen, Barnabas, and the Jerusalem believers.

Read in: Acts 1-7.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus gives the promised Spirit, builds His church, and continues His mission through His people.

Key passages: Joel 2:28-32; Acts 1:1-8; 2:1-47; 4:23-35; 6-7.

Memory anchor: The Spirit empowers ordinary believers to bear witness to the risen Jesus.

ERA 16 • The Gospel to Judea, Samaria, and Gentiles

Approximate period: AD 30s-40s

Big movement: Persecution scatters believers, and God makes clear that the gospel embraces the nations.

Key events: Philip in Samaria, Ethiopian official, Saul's conversion, Peter and Cornelius, Antioch church, and growing Gentile mission.

Key people: Philip, the Ethiopian official, Saul/Paul, Ananias, Peter, Cornelius, Barnabas, Agabus, and believers at Antioch.

Read in: Acts 8-12.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus is Lord of all and the promised light for the nations; everyone who believes receives forgiveness.

Key passages: Isaiah 49:6; Acts 8:4-40; 9:1-31; 10:1-48; 11:19-30.

Memory anchor: The gospel crosses ethnic, geographic, and social boundaries.

ERA 17 • Paul's Journeys and the Jerusalem Council

Approximate period: Mainly AD 40s-50s

Big movement: Churches are planted across the eastern Roman world, and leaders affirm that Gentiles are saved by grace.

Key events: First, second, and third missionary journeys; Jerusalem Council about AD 49; churches planted; letters written; collection for Jerusalem.

Key people: Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Luke, Lydia, Priscilla, Aquila, Apollos, James, and local churches.

Read in: Acts 13-21; many of Paul's letters.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus calls people from every nation into one reconciled people and gives gifts for the church's mission.

Key passages: Acts 13-14; 15:1-35; 16-20; Romans 3:21-31; Galatians 2-3; Ephesians 2:11-22.

Memory anchor: Salvation is by God's grace, and the gospel creates churches among the nations.

ERA 18 • Paul's Arrest and Journey to Rome

Approximate period: Late AD 50s-early 60s

Big movement: Paul bears witness through trials, imprisonment, danger, and arrival in the empire's capital.

Key events: Arrest in Jerusalem, defenses before leaders, appeal to Caesar, storm, shipwreck, Malta, and house arrest in Rome.

Key people: Paul, Luke, James, Felix, Festus, Agrippa II, Julius, and believers along the route.

Read in: Acts 21-28; prison letters are often related to periods of imprisonment, though locations and dates are debated.

Connection to Jesus: The risen Jesus stands with His servants and advances the gospel even through suffering and confinement.

Key passages: Acts 23:11; 24-28; Philippians 1:12-30; 2 Timothy 4:16-18.

Memory anchor: God's mission advances through faithful witness, even when circumstances appear restrictive.

ERA 19 • The Later First-Century Church

Approximate period: AD 60s-90s

Big movement: Churches face false teaching, persecution, leadership needs, and the loss of apostolic witnesses.

Key events: Pastoral instruction, suffering under Roman power, preservation of apostolic testimony, letters to churches, and Revelation's messages and visions.

Key people: Peter, Paul, John, Timothy, Titus, Jude, elders, deacons, and the seven churches of Revelation.

Read in: Later New Testament letters and Revelation; exact dates for several books are debated.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus shepherds His churches, preserves His people, confronts compromise, and promises resurrection and victory.

Key passages: 2 Timothy 3:10-4:8; 1 Peter 1:3-9; 2 Peter 1:12-21; 1 John 1:1-4; Jude 20-25; Revelation 1-3.

Memory anchor: The apostolic message calls every generation to truth, holiness, love, endurance, and hope.

ERA 20 • The Post-AD 70 Church and Continuing Mission

Approximate period: AD 70 onward

Big movement: Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed, while the church continues proclaiming Jesus among the nations.

Key events: Rome destroys Jerusalem in AD 70; Christians preserve and transmit apostolic writings, form communities, face periodic persecution, defend the faith, and carry the gospel beyond the Roman Empire.

Key people: Local believers, pastors, teachers, missionaries, martyrs, and later Christian witnesses.

Read in: The New Testament remains the inspired apostolic foundation; later church history helps trace reception and mission but is not additional Scripture.

Connection to Jesus: The exalted Jesus remains with His people, builds His church, and sends witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Key passages: Matthew 16:18; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 2:19-22; 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

Important context: The gospel spread through Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt, North Africa, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Persia, Central Asia, India, Europe, and beyond. Claims from later history must be evaluated carefully under Scripture.

Memory anchor: The church's mission continues under Christ's authority and Scripture's rule.

ERA 21 • The Church's Present Mission

Approximate period: From Pentecost until Christ returns

Big movement: Jesus gathers, sanctifies, and sends His people while the kingdom is already present but not yet complete.

Key events: Worship, discipleship, baptism, Lord's Supper, prayer, mercy, justice, suffering, evangelism, church planting, and worldwide mission.

Key people: Every believer, local churches, elders, deacons, teachers, evangelists, missionaries, and neighbors from every people.

Read in: The whole New Testament, especially Acts and the letters.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus is present by His Spirit, intercedes for believers, rules His church, and empowers witness.

Key passages: Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:18-39; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Peter 2:9-12.

Memory anchor: The church worships, grows, serves, and witnesses while waiting for the King.

ERA 22 • Christ's Return, Resurrection, Judgment, and New Creation

Approximate period: Future

Big movement: Jesus returns visibly, evil is judged, the dead are raised, and God renews creation.

Key events: Christ's appearing, resurrection, final judgment, defeat of death, new heavens and new earth, New Jerusalem, and God's dwelling with His people.

Key people: Jesus Christ, resurrected humanity, redeemed people from every nation, and all creation.

Read in: Matthew 24-25; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4-5; 2 Peter 3; Revelation 19-22.

Connection to Jesus: Jesus is the returning King, righteous Judge, resurrection and life, victorious Lamb, and center of the new creation.

Key passages: John 5:24-29; 11:25-26; Acts 17:30-31; 1 Corinthians 15:20-28, 50-58; Revelation 21:1-5; 22:1-5, 20.

Memory anchor: The Bible's story ends not in escape from creation but in resurrection, renewal, and God's presence forever.

Quick-Reference Date Spine

Creation through Babel: Early biblical history; Scripture does not provide a universally agreed modern date.

Abraham: About 2000 BC.

Exodus: About 1446 BC according to an early-date view, or about 1260 BC according to a later-date view.

David's reign: About 1010-970 BC.

Kingdom divided: About 930 BC.

Samaria falls to Assyria: 722 BC.

Jerusalem and temple fall to Babylon: 586 BC.

Cyrus conquers Babylon and authorizes returns: 539-538 BC.

Second temple completed: 516 BC.

Nehemiah rebuilds Jerusalem's walls: About 445 BC.

Malachi's ministry: Often placed around 430 BC.

Jesus' birth: About 6-4 BC.

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection: About AD 30 or 33.

Jerusalem Council: About AD 49.

Jerusalem and temple destroyed by Rome: AD 70.

Christ's return: Future; no one knows the day or hour.

DATE GUARDRAIL

Dates help place events; they do not replace the text. Where Scripture and evidence allow more than one responsible reconstruction, hold the conclusion modestly.

Where the Bible's Books Fit

Law: Genesis through Deuteronomy: creation, patriarchs, exodus, covenant, and wilderness.

History: Joshua through Esther: land, judges, monarchy, exile, and return.

Poetry and Wisdom: Job through Song of Songs: worship, suffering, wisdom, love, and life with God across several periods.

Prophets: Isaiah through Malachi: covenant warning, judgment, hope, and restoration before, during, and after exile.

Gospels: Matthew through John: Jesus' life, teaching, cross, and resurrection.

Acts: The Spirit-empowered spread of the gospel from Jerusalem toward Rome.

Letters: Romans through Jude: gospel truth and faithful life for churches and leaders.

Revelation: A letter, prophecy, and apocalypse unveiling Christ's victory and the completion of God's plan.

Geographic anchors

Ur: Abraham's earlier homeland. Egypt: refuge, slavery, exodus, and later regional power. Sinai: covenant and tabernacle. Canaan: promised land. Jerusalem: David's city, temple, cross, resurrection, and Pentecost. Samaria: northern capital and later mission field. Nineveh: Assyrian capital. Babylon: Judah's conqueror and place of exile. Susa: Persian setting connected with Esther and Nehemiah. Bethlehem: David's town and Jesus' birthplace. Galilee: major setting of Jesus' ministry. Antioch: Gentile mission center. Rome: imperial capital and Acts' destination.

Women across the timeline

Women are essential participants throughout Scripture: Eve, Sarah, Hagar, Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, Miriam, Rahab, Deborah, Jael, Ruth, Hannah, Abigail, Bathsheba, Huldah, Esther, Elizabeth, Mary, Anna, Mary Magdalene, Martha, Mary of Bethany, Lydia, Priscilla, Phoebe, Lois, Eunice, and many unnamed women. They receive promises, lead, prophesy, preserve life, act courageously, support ministry, learn as disciples, witness the resurrection, host churches, teach, serve, and labor in the gospel.

Part Two · Want to Go Deeper?

INTERMEDIATE

Chronology is reconstruction

Biblical writers usually arrange material to communicate covenant, theological, literary, or pastoral meaning, not to satisfy every question of modern chronological precision. A responsible timeline combines explicit dates, reign lengths, genealogies, synchronisms, external evidence, and cautious inference.

BC, AD, BCE, and CE

BC means Before Christ; AD abbreviates the Latin Anno Domini, 'in the year of the Lord.' BCE and CE mean Before Common Era and Common Era. Both systems use substantially the same numbering, and neither has a year zero.

Genealogies and ancient calendars

Biblical genealogies may trace ancestry, covenant identity, legal descent, or selected representatives; some intentionally omit generations. Ancient cultures also used different calendars and ways of counting partial years. These features caution against forcing every list into a modern spreadsheet.

Why the Exodus date is debated

An early-date view often connects 1 Kings 6:1 with a fifteenth-century BC exodus. A later-date view emphasizes Egyptian and archaeological reconstructions associated with the thirteenth century. Each approach must interpret biblical numbers, place names, settlement evidence, and Egyptian chronology. The debate does not erase the Bible's testimony that the LORD delivered Israel.

Judges may overlap

The judges probably did not all rule the whole land in a simple uninterrupted sequence. Some may have served different regions during overlapping periods. Adding every stated year consecutively can therefore produce a misleading total.

Kings, alternate names, and prophetic settings

Kings may have co-regencies, different accession-year systems, and alternate names. A single person may appear under Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, throne-name, or spelling variants—Jeshua/Joshua and Jehoiachin/Jechoniah/Coniah are examples. Prophets should be placed beside the kings, empires, and covenant crises they addressed.

Prophetic horizons

A prophecy may address an immediate audience, a near historical event, a recurring covenant pattern, the Messiah, and final fulfillment. These horizons must not be collapsed carelessly. Begin with the original setting, then follow connections established by Scripture.

Literary genres and timeline reading

Narrative reports events but does not endorse every action it records. Law gives covenant instruction and must be read within its covenant setting. Poetry uses parallelism, imagery, hyperbole, acrostics, and sometimes chiasm—an arrangement in which ideas mirror around a center. Prophetic oracles combine warning, accusation, promise, symbolism, and future hope. Letters address real situations. Apocalypse communicates through vivid visions and symbols.

Worship, sacrifices, and feasts

Israel's worship joined tabernacle or temple, priesthood, sacrifice, prayer, praise, purity, Sabbath, and an annual calendar. Burnt, grain, peace, sin, and guilt offerings expressed consecration, thanksgiving, fellowship, cleansing, and restitution. Passover, Firstfruits, Weeks/Pentecost, Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and Booths remembered God's works and shaped Israel's hope. The New Testament presents Jesus as Passover Lamb, firstfruits of resurrection, final atoning sacrifice, and true dwelling of God; Pentecost marks the Spirit's outpouring.

Gospel chronology and the date of the crucifixion

The Gospels select and arrange material for truthful theological purposes. Matthew, Mark, and Luke share much material and are called Synoptic Gospels; John includes many distinctive signs and discourses. Scholars commonly propose AD 30 or 33 for the crucifixion. Differences in presentation should be studied carefully without assuming contradiction.

Acts and Paul's letters

Acts supplies a broad narrative framework for Paul's conversion, journeys, trials, and arrival in Rome. His letters address situations within that mission, but not every letter can be dated or located with certainty. Read Acts and the letters together while allowing each book to speak in its own literary setting.

Roman rulers and the Herods

The New Testament mentions emperors Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero indirectly or directly, along with governors and client rulers. 'Herod' can name several related rulers: Herod the Great, Herod Antipas, Herod Agrippa I, and Herod Agrippa II. Identifying which Herod appears prevents confusion.

AD 70 and the church after the apostles

Rome's destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70 profoundly affected Jewish and Christian history. The New Testament is the church's inspired apostolic foundation. Later Christians copied Scripture, summarized doctrine, defended the faith, served neighbors, endured persecution, and carried the gospel widely. Their writings can illuminate history but remain subordinate to Scripture.

Revelation and differing timelines

Christians agree that Jesus reigns, will return, judge evil, raise the dead, and renew creation. They differ about the sequence of tribulation, millennium, Israel's future, and Revelation's visions. Preterist, historicist, futurist, and idealist approaches emphasize different relationships between the visions and history; premillennial, amillennial, and postmillennial views understand Revelation 20 differently. These secondary debates should be handled with humility.

Covenant theology and dispensationalism

Covenant theology emphasizes the unity of God's saving plan through biblical covenants and often understands the church in strong continuity with Israel. Dispensational approaches emphasize distinguishable administrations in God's plan and often maintain a more distinct future for national Israel. Each family contains variations. All claims should be tested by Scripture, and shared gospel convictions should guide charitable discussion.

Archaeology and extra-biblical evidence

Inscriptions, cities, pottery, manuscripts, monuments, coins, burial practices, and ancient writings illuminate languages, rulers, geography, warfare, worship, and daily life. Archaeology has confirmed many background details and also raised questions that lead scholars to revise reconstructions. Evidence is partial and interpreted; silence is not automatic disproof, and artifacts cannot by themselves prove inspiration or the divine cause of a miracle.

When the Bible troubles you

Readers may struggle with conquest, judgment, slavery or servitude, imprecatory psalms, sexual violence, polygamy, warfare, suffering, hell, or Revelation's imagery. Do not hide the question or isolate a verse. Read the whole unit, identify genre and covenant setting, distinguish what Scripture records from what God approves, trace the Bible's moral and redemptive movement, study Jesus' teaching, consult responsible voices, protect people from harm, and admit what remains difficult.

Confidence levels

- Certain: the text states it directly.
- Strong: several lines of evidence converge.
- Probable: it best explains the available evidence.
- Possible: it fits but alternatives remain.
- Unknown: Scripture and evidence do not settle the question.

INTERMEDIATE MEMORY ANCHOR

A timeline serves Scripture. It should clarify the story, expose uncertainty honestly, and lead us toward Jesus—not create confidence beyond the evidence.

Timeline Glossary

Apocalypse: Symbol-rich revelation that unveils heavenly reality and God's purposes.

Atonement: God's provision for dealing with sin and restoring relationship, fulfilled in Jesus' sacrifice.

Covenant: A binding relationship established by God with promises and obligations.

Day of the LORD: God's decisive intervention in judgment and salvation, with historical expressions and final fulfillment.

Exile: Forced removal from the land under foreign rule because of covenant judgment.

Gentile: A person from the nations outside the Jewish people.

Kingdom of God: God's saving rule, inaugurated through Jesus and awaiting completion.

Levite: A member of Levi's tribe, set apart for responsibilities connected with Israel's worship.

Messiah or Christ: God's Anointed One—the promised King and Savior fulfilled in Jesus.

New covenant: God's promised covenant of forgiveness, renewed hearts, and the Spirit, established through Jesus.

Prophet: A person called to communicate God's message.

Remnant: Those whom God preserves through judgment and brings into His continuing purpose.

Temple: The Jerusalem sanctuary associated with God's covenant presence and worship; Jesus fulfills and transforms temple expectations.

Type or pattern: A real earlier person, event, or institution that Scripture connects with a later and greater fulfillment.

Reusable timeline worksheet

- Which era am I reading?
- What happened before and after it?
- Which covenant is active or being promised?
- Who rules the region?
- Where does the event occur?
- What kind of writing am I reading?
- What is certain, probable, possible, or unknown?
- How does this passage contribute to the Bible's story?
- How does Scripture connect it to Jesus?
- How should I respond?

ONE-SENTENCE SUMMARY

At this point in the biblical story, _____ happens because _____, preparing for or flowing from Jesus by _____.

Final Review and Encouragement

- Why is a biblical timeline helpful but limited?
- What is the Bible's story in one line?
- What did God promise Abraham?
- Why are the exodus and Sinai important?
- What did God promise David?
- What caused the divided kingdoms to fall?
- What did the prophets promise beyond exile?
- What changed between Malachi and Matthew?
- Why are the cross and resurrection the center of the timeline?
- What began at Pentecost?
- What is the church's present mission?
- How does the biblical story end?

You do not need to memorize every date before Scripture becomes meaningful. Learn the great movements. Place one person or book at a time. Let questions lead you back to the text. The same God who created, promised, delivered, judged, restored, sent His Son, raised Him from the dead, and gave the Spirit will complete His purpose.

FINAL MEMORY ANCHOR

God creates. Humanity rebels. God promises. God forms a people. Kings fail. Prophets hope. Jesus comes. Jesus saves. The Spirit sends. The church witnesses. Jesus returns. God makes all things new.

A prayer of response

Father, thank You for Your faithfulness through every generation. Thank You for sending Jesus in the fullness of time, raising Him from the dead, and giving the Holy Spirit. Help me read Your Word carefully, trust Your promises, live faithfully in my own time, and wait with hope for Christ's return. Amen.

A call to salvation

The biblical timeline leads to Jesus. All people have sinned and cannot rescue themselves. Jesus Christ lived without sin, died for our sins, was buried, and rose bodily. Salvation is God's gift, received by grace through faith. Read Mark 1:14-15; John 3:16-18; Romans 3:21-28; 10:9-13; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Ephesians 2:1-10.

A simple prayer of faith

Lord Jesus, I know that I have sinned and cannot save myself. I believe You died for my sins and rose again. Please forgive me, make me new, and teach me to follow You. I place my trust in You. Amen.

Use, share, and verify

These resources were created with care but may contain mistakes. Please open the Bible and verify every passage in context. Possible errors or needed clarifications may be reported to 3NailResources@gmail.com for careful review and correction.

3Nails exists to help people know God by understanding His Word, recognizing Jesus throughout Scripture, and becoming lifelong disciples who study the Bible with growing confidence.

- Point people to God.
- Reveal the heart of the Father.
- Magnify Jesus.
- Be grounded in Scripture.
- Encourage readers to open their Bibles.
- Build confidence, not dependence.

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus