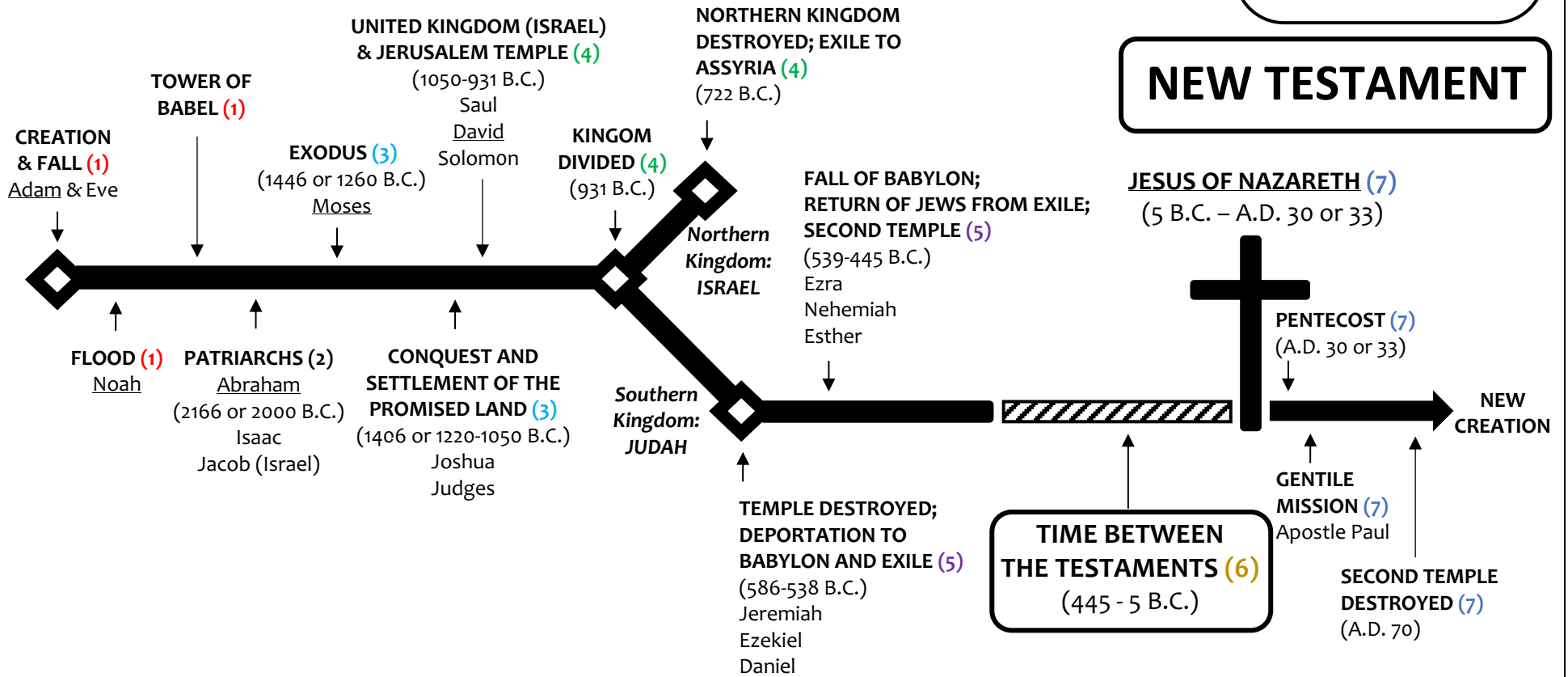


# BIBLICAL TIMELINE

## BIBLICAL HISTORY ERAS

- (1) The Primeval Era
- (2) The Patriarchal Era
- (3) The Exodus and Settlement Era
- (4) The Kingdom Era
- (5) The Exile and Return Era
- (6) The Silent Era
- (7) The New Testament Era

## OLD TESTAMENT



The timeline is **not** to scale.

The numbers in parentheses correspond to eras (see top right).

Underlined names (“Noah”) represent covenant partners.

All dates are approximate and based on the *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008).

## BIBLICAL HISTORY ERAS

**1. The Primeval Era** covers the creation of the world and the fall of humankind into sin (Adam and Eve), the proliferation of sin and the worldwide judgment through the flood (Noah), and the origin of people groups (Tower of Babel).

**2. The Patriarchal Era** covers the lives of Hebrew ancestors. God establishes a covenant with Abraham and gives him a promise which in part states that the whole world will be blessed through his offspring. Also prominent are his son Isaac, grandson Jacob (Israel), and Jacob's twelve sons among whom Joseph stands out. The era closes with Jacob's family living in Egypt, where they remain for over four centuries.

**3. The Exodus and Settlement Era** starts with God's miraculous rescue of the twelve tribes of Israel (led by Moses) from slavery in Egypt, followed by the establishment of the covenant at Sinai where they officially become God's people. After 40 years of wandering in the desert due to disobedience, they finally settle in the Promised Land (Canaan) under Joshua. After his death, the community again descends into disobedience to God, and chaos.

**4. The Kingdom Era** starts when the Israelites ask for a king to mirror the neighboring nations. The prophet Samuel anoints Saul as the first king. Saul becomes disobedient and the kingship is, by God's choice, given to David with whom God establishes a covenant, promising his dynasty an everlasting kingdom. David extends the country's borders and makes Jerusalem the capital, where his son Solomon builds a temple to God. After Solomon, the kingdom splits in two (Israel — north and Judah — south). Due to disobedience, both kingdoms are eventually conquered by foreign powers.

**5. The Exile and Return Era** marks a key developmental point. The First Temple in Jerusalem is destroyed by Babylon and the people of Judah are taken into a 70-year long captivity. This ends when Medo-Persia conquers Babylon and God prompts their king to allow the Jews to return, construct the Second Temple, and rebuild Jerusalem. Some important names of this era are Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

### COVENANTS IN THE BIBLE

The biblical story is structured around **covenants** — agreements in which God promises to do something for his people, and they are expected to be faithful to him. The following covenants are generally recognized:

- (1) with Adam, after creation.
- (2) with Noah, after the flood.
- (3) with Abraham (land and offspring).
- (4) with the Israelites through Moses at Sinai (where they receive the Law).
- (5) with David (kingdom).
- (6) New covenant, through Jesus for all who will believe in him.

**6. The Silent Era** (roughly 400 years long) falls between the Old and New Testaments. The Greeks, a new superpower, conquer Persia and with it the Jewish homeland. A Greek ruler tries to subdue the Jews by outlawing their religion, but this has an opposite effect; they revolt under the Maccabees (Hasmoneans) and gain independence. The ruling dynasty, however, becomes corrupt and after a period of infighting some Jewish leaders invite the emergent Roman empire to establish peace. Rome begins to rule Israel and eventually establishes Herod as a puppet king. This era is also when various Jewish sects (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes) emerge.

**7. The New Testament Era** begins with the preparation for the birth and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, whose life is the fulfillment of multiple scriptural prophecies. He is the promised *Messiah* (or *Christ*, "the Anointed One"), who comes to usher in the kingdom of God and save his people — not from foreign powers, but from bondage to sin. He is the eternal God (Yahweh) in human flesh, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin. He lives a life of perfect holiness, teaches powerfully, and performs miracles as evidence of his identity. Through his voluntary death on the cross in place of sinners and his subsequent resurrection, he provides the way of salvation for those who will believe in him. After his ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit descends on his disciples who then boldly start proclaiming the gospel (good news), and the Church (the community of Christ's followers) begins its worldwide spread. Some other important names from this era are the apostles Peter and Paul.

### PROPHECY, TYPES, AND SHADOWS

At various times and places, the Spirit of God prompted Old Testament believers to **prophecy** about the future *Messiah* (or *Christ*). They foretold some specific details, such as his place of birth, family lineage, manner of death, etc., and these predictions were fulfilled in the life of Jesus! Additionally, we see **types** and **shadows**. These are Old Testament persons, institutions, events, and objects which served to *foreshadow* future realities centered around Christ's redemptive work. For example, as king chosen by God, David prefigures Jesus who is the eternal king; the office of the high priest under the Law of Moses foreshadows Jesus' ultimate priestly service of offering himself on the cross; Noah's Flood points to the Christian baptism in water; etc. The Scriptures, thus, ultimately point to Jesus.

This gives us great assurance that God has been sovereignly directing history to provide salvation through Jesus, and that the yet unfulfilled prophecy of his second coming in power and glory is sure to come to pass.