

## **I. Historical Time-line / History of Israel**

### **A. up through midterm exam: Age of Patriarchs to Babylonian Captivity**

**\* = years are approximate**

*Note: there is no independent historical evidence for 1-3 (and very little even for 4); so do not accept as simple historical fact*

1. 1800-1650 BCE\*: age of Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his 12 sons); Hebrews as semi-nomadic, semi-nobodies wandering the Fertile Crescent; maybe not originally from Canaan (at least, for whatever reason, their stories want to suggest that they came from elsewhere else—in fact, the word “Hebrew” is normally understood as derived from *apiru* or “wanderer” or “nomad”—called by God, and given land that didn’t really belong to them ... chosen for this “covenant,” though no explanation is given for why exactly)

2. 1650-1250 BCE\*: time in Egypt (including slavery)

3. Exodus

a) c. 1250 BCE\*: Exodus / covenant at Sinai

b) c. 1250-1200 BCE\*: leadership of Moses and Aaron; 40 years of wandering in the desert before they get back to the Promised Land (Moses never enters: see end of Deuteronomy)

4. 1200-1050 BCE\*: Israelite conquest of Canaan under Joshua and others (“judges”); the confederation of 12 tribes (named for the sons of Jacob); please note that the Books of Joshua and Judges give very different accounts of this “conquest”

*\* starting with phase 4, “Israelites” would be a better term for the people than Hebrews; at this stage, Hebrew is really just the name of their language*

5. 1050-921 BCE\*: the United Monarchy (Saul—first king—David, Solomon)

a) c. 1000 BCE\*: Jerusalem built as capital city

b) c. 950 BCE\*: Solomon builds the first Temple

6. 922-721 BCE: divided monarchy: (northern Kingdom of Israel = 10 tribes; southern Kingdom of Judah = 2 tribes)

*\* in 721, Israel (Northern Kingdom) destroyed by Assyrians; prior to that, prophets Amos and Hosea active in Israel*

7. 922-586 BCE: Kingdom of Judah

a) age of prophets Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah

b) King Josiah: 640-609 BCE; reforms date from 621 BCE: see B.6 below

8. 586-539 BCE: Babylonian Captivity

a) destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple (c. 586)

b) Cyrus of Persia defeats Babylon in 539 and begins the process of restoring Israel as a vassal state

## **B. post-midterm: from Babylonia Captivity to final diaspora**

### 1. 539-330 BCE: Persian supremacy

Persia essentially rules Israel (influence of Zoroastrianism) though it permits the people of Israel to maintain their own cultural and religious customs (so priests are de facto rulers rather than any king)

a) 520-515 BCE: new sanctuary built on site of Solomon's Temple (essentially the beginning of the Second Temple; Herod the Great will expand to magnificent structure during his reign; see below)

b) in 450-440 BCE, Ezra returns to Israel from Babylon with completed Torah; essentially begins the full-scale creation of Judaism (though reforming tradition goes back earlier); in other words, what we would today call Judaism first appears in this period, though some elements predate the Captivity; at this stage it makes sense to think in terms of "Jewish" culture (no longer the "Israelites"): "Judaism" / "Jewish" both come from "Judah"

### 2. 330-142: Greek supremacy

a) 336-323 BCE: Alexander the Great leads Greek conquest of Eastern Mediterranean and much of Middle East (including Egypt and Israel), Persia, and even parts of India

b) 167-142 BCE: Antiochus IV (Epiphanes)—king of the Seleucid Empire (the remnant of the Greek empire in Asia Minor and Syria and Iraq—modern Syria and Iraq, of course, did not exist yet)—attempts to eradicate Judaism; he desecrates the Temple by placing a statue of Zeus in the Holy of Holies; Maccabean revolt begins (Judas Maccabeus leads Jewish nation to a kind of independence)

3. 142-63 BCE: Maccabean or "Hasmonean" (after 20 years of a kind of stand-off with the Seleucids) rule in Judah (last time nation is independent until 1947 CE, with the creation of the modern state of Israel)

4. 63 BCE - 73 CE: Roman supremacy (first phase: from initial conquest to First Roman War)

a) 63 BCE: Roman consul Pompey the Great conquers Judah and makes it part of the Roman empire (Greater Judea, which effectively includes the Galilee, Samaria, and Perea)

b) 37-4 BCE: reign of Idumean prince Herod (Herod the Great) as King of Judea (essentially a client state of the Romans); Herod expands the Second Temple to one of wonders of ancient world

c) 30-14 BCE: reign of Augustus Caesar

d) after Herod the Great's death in 4 BCE, the Romans divide Greater Judea into regions to be ruled by Herod's sons; in 6 CE the regions of central Judea (Jerusalem and environs and Samaria) come under direct Roman control; the Galilee and Perea, under Herod Antipas (4 BCE-39CE), remain a client kingdom until Rome takes control of the entire region c. 40 CE

e) 4 BCE (?) – 30/33 CE: life of Jesus of Nazareth

f) 26-36 CE: Pontius Pilate is Roman governor (prefect) of Judea/Samaria

g) 27-29 CE: ministry of John the Baptist

h) 29-30/33: ministry of Jesus of Nazareth

i) 30-60 CE (very roughly): establishment of early Christian communities both in Roman Judea and throughout the Roman Empire (including in Egypt, Asia Minor) and perhaps going outside the Empire, even as far east as Persia and India: did Thomas, for example, get to India?

(i) 35-64 CE: missionary work of St. Paul who founds and / or nurtures a series of mostly non-Jewish Christian communities in Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece—all this is part of the Roman Empire; Paul is executed in Rome c. 64 CE under Emperor Nero

(ii) 62 CE: assassination of Jesus' brother, James, by High Priest in Jerusalem

j) 66-73 CE: First Roman War—Jews throughout Roman Greater Judea revolt; Vespasian and his son Titus (both to become Roman emperors) lead the Roman forces

(i) 68 CE: destruction of Essene Monastic community at Qumran, located near Dead Sea (great library: Dead Sea Scrolls); Essenes are an apocalyptic sect (sort of like John the Baptist though much more scholarly—highly literate (whereas John's work was among peasants)

(ii) 70 CE: sack of Jerusalem and destruction of Second Temple under Titus

(iii) 73 CE: Masada, stronghold of the Zealots (near Dead Sea) who fled Jerusalem, taken by Romans in 73 CE (effectively ending Jewish resistance during the First Roman War)

5. 73-135 CE: Roman Supremacy continues in post-Temple period

a) Christians scattered through Empire; escalation of persecution that had begun at least as earlier as the 60s under Nero; increased persecution of Christians under the Emperor Diocletian (81-96 CE); continues under Emperor Trajan (98-117 CE)

b) 117-138 CE: reign of Emperor Hadrian; 132-135 CE: Second Roman War (Bar Kochba revolt): begins because Hadrian wanted to build Temple to Jupiter on site of Temple; after defeat, Jews are banished from Judea (great diaspora)

## **II. Literary Time-line / the writing of the Bible**

### **A. up through midterm exam: Age of Patriarchs to Babylonian Captivity**

**\* = years are approximate**

1. 1200-900 BCE: oldest fragments of writing (e.g. the Song of Deborah of Judges 5; mostly poetry extolling YHWH as warrior-god who leads and protects the Israelites in the conquest of Canaan)

2. 950-850 BCE: compositions in Judah

a) first prose narratives of Israel's origins (Book of J, which includes the primeval history as well as stories of the Patriarchs and sections of Genesis, Exodus and Numbers)

b) some sections of Davidic "court history" probably date from this time: 2 Samuel 9-24 and 1 Kings 1-2)

c) the "royal Psalms," celebrating the Davidic line, are composed in this period (e.g. Psalm 2)

3. 850-750 BCE:

a) Elohistic account ("E") composed in Israel (northern kingdom)

b) the earliest versions of the former prophets (Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel and parts of 2 Samuel, and most of 1 and 2 Kings); perhaps existed in the form of royal archives; in 7<sup>th</sup> century—see #6 below—will be reworked by the Deuteronomist tradition)

4. 750-400 BCE: era of Prophets (starting with Amos, leading to the great prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel—and concluding with Malachi and Joel)

5. 721 BCE (ff.): JE epic (after fall of northern kingdom to Assyria, "E" is brought to Judah where it is assimilated with "J"—"J" remains the dominant narrative strand; Genesis 22 would be an example of an "E" section)

6. 621 BCE (though perhaps stretching backward in time to as early as 700 and certainly stretching forward in time to approximately 609): Deuteronomistic History composed (especially under Josiah and his court); central sections of Deuteronomy (Book of D) PLUS revisions of the former prophets; composed in Judah

## **B. post-midterm: from Babylonia Captivity to final diaspora**

1. 580-300 BCE: variety of post-exilic writings as well as additions to and revisions (editing) of earlier writings under the Priestly tradition (most especially the “P” additions to and revisions of Torah: include Genesis 1, some of Exodus and Numbers, and most of Leviticus as compendium of Priestly laws); the “writings” include Job, Ruth, Proverbs, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Chronicles; many additions to Psalms as well as to prophetic books (e.g. additions to Isaiah)

a) 580: writings of Ezekiel, in exile

b) c. 450 BCE: Ezra returns to Israel from Babylon with completed Torah

c) c. 450-400 BCE: Book of Job

2. 250 BCE: beginning of composition of the Septuagint (Greek translation of Hebrew Bible, written in a dialect of Greek called koine, with reordering of texts); the new books added to this Greek text are usually called the Apocrypha (not accepted by those who still adhere to Hebrew Bible); the final work on Septuagint probably is not completed until 1<sup>st</sup> century CE

\* the Hebrew Bible doesn’t simply disappear; its final form will emerge c. 90-100 CE in the age of the Pharisees

3. 165 BCE: Book of Daniel composed (note: it is written in Hebrew, not in Greek, though later translated into Greek and then included in the Septuagint); Daniel is the last book composed in the Hebrew Bible

4. 50-150 CE: composition of the New Testament

a) 50-62 CE: Paul’s letters

b) 50 CE ff.: compilation of material from oral traditions (sayings of Jesus [e.g. Q gospel], collections of miracle-stories); Crossan would date original Gospel of Thomas to this period, but that dating is much disputed

c) 70-100 CE: Gospel

(i) 70 CE: Mark

(ii) 85 CE: Matthew

(iii) 90 CE: Luke-Acts

(iv) 95-100 CE: John

g) 95-100 CE: Book of Revelation written (in response to Roman persecution of Christians)

h) 100-150 CE: various non-Pauline “letters” composed (Hebrews, James, Jude, Peter, John)