

Bible Timeline: Key Events from Creation to Revelation

Follow the Bible's unfolding story through its people, books and turning points, from the first chapters of Genesis to the vision of Revelation.

This overview follows the broad narrative sequence of the Bible. Each milestone gives people, biblical books and a short summary to help you find your place in the story. The references are starting points for reading the passages in context.

CREATION → PROMISE → DELIVERANCE → KINGDOM → EXILE → JESUS → CHURCH → NEW CREATION

Beginnings and promise

CREATION | People: God and the first humans. Books: Genesis 1–2. The Bible opens with God creating the world and giving humanity a place within it.

THE FALL | People: Adam and Eve. Book: Genesis. Human disobedience brings brokenness into the story, while the narrative continues to hold out hope for restoration.

NOAH AND THE FLOOD | People: Noah and his family. Book: Genesis. Noah's family survives the flood, and God establishes a covenant sign for all living creatures.

ABRAHAM AND SARAH | People: Abraham and Sarah. Book: Genesis. God calls them to go, promising descendants and blessing that will reach the families of the earth.

ISAAC AND JACOB | People: Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau. Book: Genesis. The covenant promise passes through Isaac and Jacob, whose family becomes the tribes of Israel.

DATES | Scholars differ on the dating of many biblical events. This guide avoids specific dates where estimates are uncertain, apart from David's reign, often placed at approximately 1000 BC.

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Deliverance and the kingdom

Israel's family grows into a people in Egypt, then journeys through deliverance, covenant, settlement and monarchy. These books tell of trust, leadership and the responsibilities of life together.

JOSEPH IN EGYPT | People: Joseph and his family. Book: Genesis. Joseph's journey from enslavement to leadership brings his family to Egypt during famine.

THE EXODUS | People: Moses, Pharaoh and the Israelites. Books: Exodus and Deuteronomy. God brings the Israelites out of slavery and leads them towards freedom.

THE LAW AND COVENANT | People: Moses and Israel. Books: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. At Sinai, Israel receives covenant teaching for worship and community life.

THE PROMISED LAND | People: Joshua and the tribes of Israel. Book: Joshua. The people enter and settle in the land, and Joshua calls them to serve God faithfully.

THE JUDGES | People: Deborah, Gideon, Samson and other judges. Book: Judges. The people repeatedly turn away, face oppression and are delivered through judges raised up among them.

SAUL, ISRAEL'S FIRST KING | People: Samuel and Saul. Book: 1 Samuel. Israel asks for a king, and Saul becomes its first monarch under Samuel's prophetic guidance.

DAVID | People: David, Saul and Samuel. Books: 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Chronicles and Psalms. David becomes king and Jerusalem a centre of his rule; his reign is often dated to approximately 1000 BC, though scholars differ.

TIMELINE THREAD | From the exodus to the monarchy, the story follows a people learning how to live in covenant with God.

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Division, exile and return

After David, the kingdom reaches a high point and then divides. The historical books and prophets describe loss, displacement, return and renewed hope.

SOLOMON | People: Solomon and the people of Israel. Books: 1 Kings, 2 Chronicles and Proverbs. Solomon builds the temple in Jerusalem, while his reign is remembered for wisdom and great wealth.

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM | People: The kings of Israel and Judah, and prophets including Elijah and Isaiah. Books: 1 and 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles and the Prophets. After Solomon, Israel and Judah become separate kingdoms, often challenged by prophetic calls to justice and faithfulness.

EXILE | People: The people of Israel and Judah, including prophets such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Books: 2 Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. Conquest and displacement force the people to reckon with loss while holding to hope in God.

RETURN AND REBUILDING | People: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther and the returned community. Books: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai and Zechariah. Some exiles return, Jerusalem and the temple are rebuilt, and the community renews its worship and shared life.

A NOTE ON DATES | Scholars differ on the dates and historical framing of many events. This guide gives no specific year for these milestones because estimates differ.

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Jesus, the church and new creation

The New Testament centres on Jesus, the beginning of the church's witness and the hope of renewal. The sequence below follows its broad narrative movement.

THE FOUR-HUNDRED QUIET YEARS | People: Jewish communities in the generations before Jesus. Books: Malachi closes the Protestant Old Testament; Matthew and Luke open the New Testament. "Four-hundred quiet years" is a traditional term for the intertestamental period, not a claim of literal silence; scholars differ on its dates and framing.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS | People: Jesus, Mary, Joseph and the witnesses named in the birth narratives. Books: Matthew and Luke. The Gospels announce Jesus' birth and connect it with God's promises to Israel.

JESUS' MINISTRY | People: Jesus, his disciples and the people he meets. Books: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Jesus teaches about God's kingdom, heals, welcomes outsiders and calls people to follow him.

THE CROSS AND RESURRECTION | People: Jesus, his disciples and the witnesses to the empty tomb. Books: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Jesus is crucified and raised, the central event at the heart of Christian faith.

PENTECOST | People: The apostles, other disciples and visitors in Jerusalem. Book: Acts. The Holy Spirit comes upon Jesus' followers, and the community begins to proclaim the good news publicly.

PAUL'S JOURNEYS | People: Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy and the churches they serve. Books: Acts and Paul's letters. Paul travels across the eastern Mediterranean, sharing the message of Jesus and encouraging new Christian communities.

REVELATION | People: John and the churches addressed in the book. Book: Revelation. Its visions encourage faithfulness and look towards God's justice, renewed creation and life with God.

A note on the Scripture: the verse summaries in this guide are plain-English paraphrases, not quotations from a particular Bible translation. Read each passage in your preferred Bible for its full wording and context.

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