

Chapter Five: *Brief history of Israel & the Temple of God*

“What was going on in the world when Daniel foretold of the future type of Antichrist that would come before the Antichrist?” “And when did that Antichrist wannabe show up anyway?” “The Bible talks about the Temple – past and future. Where do the different versions of it fit into prophecy and history?” Whoa Nelly! These are all good questions related to Biblical history and prophecy. My purpose in giving you this section – especially just before digging into the apocalyptic literature – is to help develop perspective through relationships. What relationships? Those in Bible prophecies, events surrounding those messages, and their fulfillment as shown throughout the centuries. But, this won’t be a comprehensive, detailed lesson in Jewish history.

Many books have been written about the history of Israel. For instance, *A History of Israel* by John Bright is a very comprehensive historical publication. And *The Stones Cry Out* by Randall Price is an excellent resource for learning about archeological discoveries that corroborate Biblical events and give us a better understanding of the history of Israel. Study Bibles like ‘*Every Man’s Bible*’ (New Living Translation) often contain timelines to help provide background for Scriptural studies. The Bible itself contains much historical literature (see the list of the historical books of the Bible in the previous chapter). Flavius Josephus wrote extensively about the history of the Jews to include details of the Jewish wars. These sources have been invaluable to preparing this brief historical summary. In fact, many dates and timelines have come directly from chapter introductions in ‘*Every Man’s Bible*’ and the ‘Study Aids, Notes, and Indices’ section of *The Stones Cry Out*.

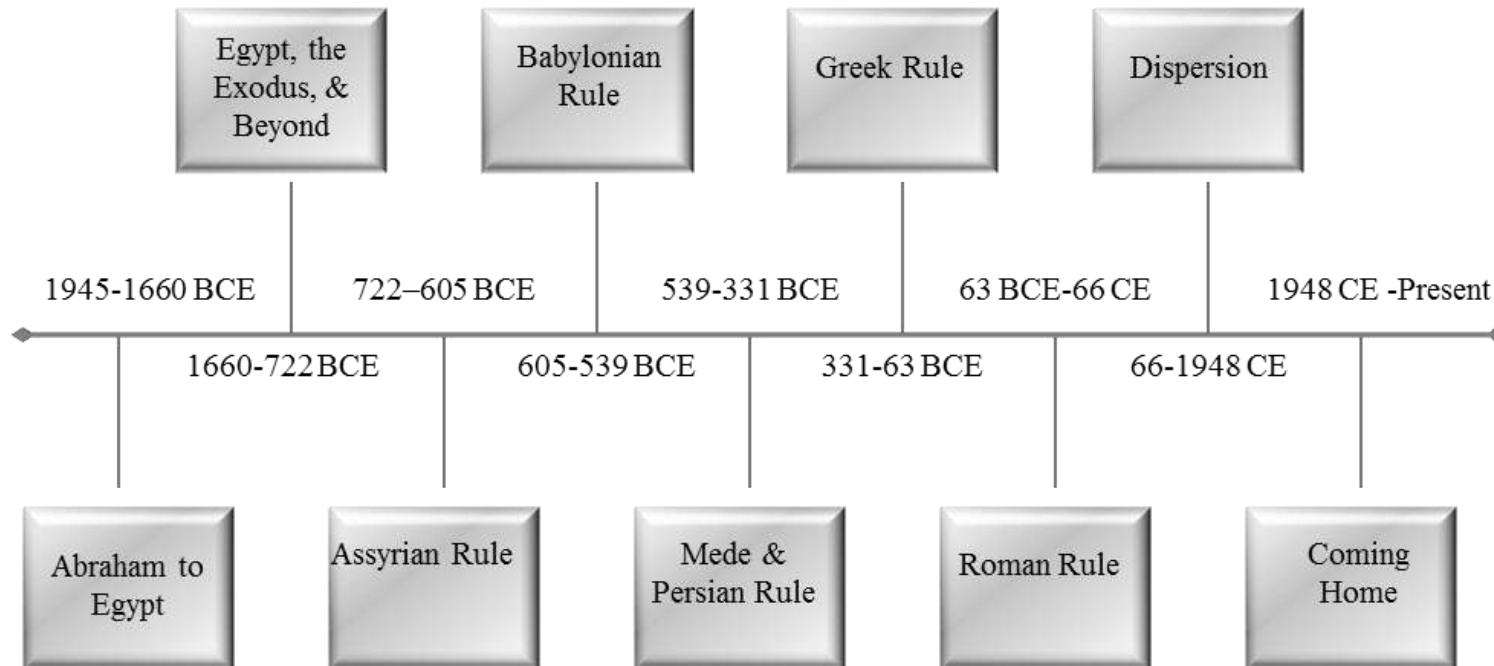
There’s no way I could provide similar detail to what these books do in a single chapter. Instead, I’d like to help you by summarizing and chronicling historical data pertinent to prophetic and apocalyptic literature addressed throughout our study. Israel and its people, the Jews, have undergone incredible persecution and oppression throughout the centuries at the hands of several kingdoms. These kingdoms and associated eras were foretold in advance by the likes of Ezekiel and Daniel, and sequentially take Israel from its beginnings to the very end of the world.

So, I’ve decided to present the historical summary in timelines associated with these major eras as follows:

- Birth of a Nation: Abraham to Egypt (1945 - 1660 BCE).
- Egypt, the Exodus, and Beyond (1660 – 722 BCE).
- Assyrian Rule: Assyrian domination up to the Babylonian invasion (722 – 605 BCE).
- Babylonian Rule: Through the Babylonian era (605 - 539 BCE).
- Mede-Persian Rule: From the end of the Babylonians until the Greeks (539 – 331 BCE).
- Greek Rule: Time of the Greek occupation and persecution until the Romans (331 - 63 BCE).
- Roman Rule: After the Greeks and through the dispersion (63 BCE – 1948 CE).
- Homecoming: Israel becoming a nation again until the present (1948 CE - Present).
- The Temple: A history of the temple from the time of David and its significance (966 BCE - ??).

NOTE: There may be slight variations in dates when comparing this summary to other resources. These should be infrequent and differences of no more than a year or two past the Exodus from Egypt. A possible cause for minor variations may be the use of different calendars or dating systems by those assigning timeframes to events. The biggest discrepancy (the time of Abraham through the stay in Egypt) is due to differences of opinion regarding how long the Israelites actually stayed in Egypt. Common thought is that the Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years. However, we understand from Galatians 3:17 that the 430 years was the total timeframe from the promise by God to Abram and receipt of the Law (10 commandments) on Mount Sinai by Moses in 1445 BCE. This is the approach I took in determining dates for events and births/deaths during this time period. Unfortunately, the difference is about 215 years. Regardless, any differences will be insignificant since this chapter is primarily meant to give perspective by relating events to Biblical prophecy. The next page introduces the history of Israel and begins with the era of the *Birth of a Nation*.

5.1 Timeline of the History of Israel



❖ *Birth of a Nation (1945 - 1660 BCE)*

The year is roughly 1875 BCE, and the great flood had come and gone about 360 years before. God found favor in Abram, the son of Terah, who until this time had lived at the home of his father in Ur. Provided you can get into the property, you can still see the ruins of Terah's home and of the Ziggurat (an ancient Chaldean temple), which are located next to Tallil Air Base in southern Iraq.

God's promise of blessing to Abram in part: "*And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing.*" —Genesis 12:2. Abram was 70 years old at this time, which was just before he left the home of his father. In a vision, Abram is told by God that his descendants will be great in number like the stars in the heavens (Genesis 15:5).

God went on to tell Abram in a different vision that his descendants would serve as sojourners and slaves for 400 years [beginning from the birth of Isaac] (cf. Genesis 15:13). There would be a total of 430 years from the promise made to Abram (cf. Genesis 12:1-3 & Galatians 3:17) until the Law would be given to Moses. God also told him that the fourth generation of his people would come back to where he'd lived in the land of Canaan. The Lord made a covenant at the same time to establish the lands of his descendants (cf. Genesis 15:18-21).

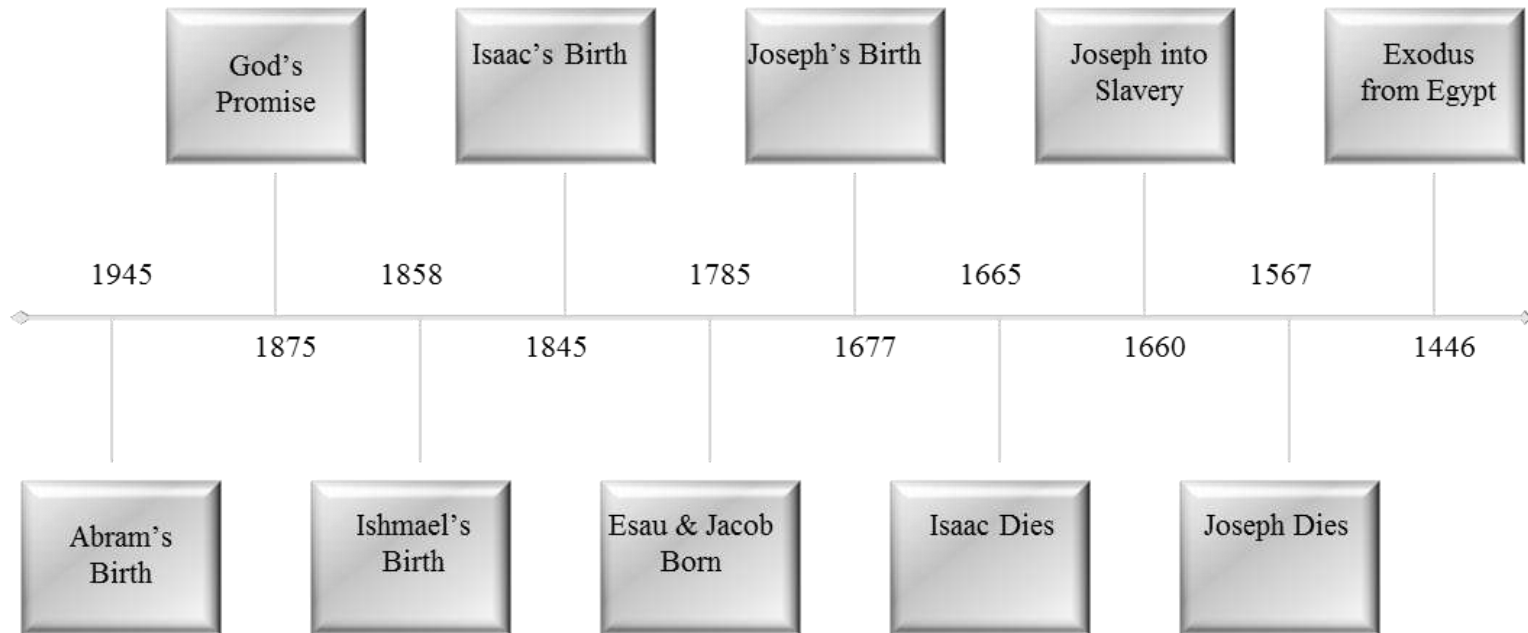
Wanting to force the issue and help God keep His promise (apparently, things weren't moving fast enough for him), Abram had intercourse with his wife's servant to produce an heir. So, at 86 years old, Abram had his first son. He named him Ishmael. This is the father of the Arab nation and Genesis 16:12 records, "*He will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, And everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers.*" He and his descendants have inhabited the lands from Egypt to Assyria ever since. Although God did bless Ishmael and made him the father of 12 princes just as Isaac became the father of 12 tribal leaders, His covenant remains with Abraham and his people (cf. Genesis 17:19-21).

Keeping His promise, God then established a covenant with Abram and his descendants when he was 99 years old (approximately 1846 BCE - Genesis 17). In this encounter, God changed Abram's name to Abraham, which meant '*father of a multitude*'. Ishmael was 13 years old by then. Abraham's second son Isaac, the heir of God's covenant, was born a year later when he was 100 years old.

Isaac took a wife from the land of his father Abraham at the age of 40. His bride's name was Rebekah. When Isaac was 60 years old, Rebekah gave birth to twins in roughly 1785 BCE: Esau and Jacob. Esau lost his birthright and his father's blessing through Jacob's trickery (cf. Genesis 25:29-34). Esau's curse was that his descendants would serve those of his younger brother, Jacob. Jacob fled to escape Esau's wrath, had his name changed to *Israel* by an angel, and married two wives in the process – Leah and Rachael. Both wives and their servants gave him a total of 12 sons; these became the leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel. One of the sons was named Joseph.

Joseph was Jacob's favorite, and he gave his son a colorful coat to prove it. In addition, Joseph had prophetic dreams revealing a scenario where his brothers would bow down to him. He wasted no time in telling them. Finally, they'd had enough and sold Joseph to slave traders, telling their father he'd been killed by a lion. Joseph was 17 and the year was roughly 1660 BCE – 5 years after his grandfather, Isaac, had died. The traders took Joseph to Egypt where he was sold into slavery.

1.2 *Timeline from Abraham to the Exodus from Egypt*
Years are Before the Common Era (BCE)



❖ *Egypt, the Exodus, and Beyond (1660 – 722 BCE)*

The Lord favored Joseph and so did Egypt's ruler after Joseph accurately interpreted the Pharaoh's dream of nearing times of feast and famine. The Pharaoh made Joseph second in command over the entire country. His family came to Egypt looking for food during the famine and became reunited with Joseph, who forgave his brothers for their treachery. The people of Israel moved to Egypt and enjoyed great wealth and protection until Joseph died at the age of 110 (1567 BCE) and the Egyptians forgot his legacy. Egypt would become the first of a total of 8 kingdoms highlighted by the prophet Daniel and the Apostle John. The Israelites remained in Egypt for another 128 years until the great exodus in 1446 BCE. It seemed they were doomed to a life of servitude. But God saved His people once again – through Moses, this time.

Moses was born in 1526 BCE, a single generation after the death of Joseph, at a time when the Egyptians began oppressing the Israelites out of fear because of their increasing numbers. Slaves were given heavier burdens and harder work, and the Pharaoh ordered the slaughter of all newborn Israelite boys to maintain control. Moses' mother saved him by placing the baby in a basket and hiding him in the reeds of the Nile. Ironically, one of the Pharaoh's daughters found the basket, rescued Moses, and asked the baby's mother to nurse him. Moses was then raised in Pharaoh's court. His time there was cut short when Moses killed an Egyptian taskmaster who was beating one of his fellow Hebrews. Out of fear, he then fled to an area called Midian near Mount Sinai.

God appeared to Moses (when he was 80 years old) in the form of a burning bush that “*didn't burn up*” and asked him to go back to Egypt to secure the freedom of his fellow Hebrews. Through Moses, God performed miracles and invoked several plagues in an attempt to convince the Pharaoh to free His people. The final plague that brought death to the firstborn of all Egyptians – human and animal alike – did the trick. A celebration of Passover has occurred annually ever since in remembrance of God's angel of death ‘passing over’ the Israelites.

The Israelites collected their belongings (and some donated Egyptian belongings as well) and headed quickly out of Egypt. God led them through the mountains to what is most likely the Gulf of Aqaba where they camped between the mountains and water. (NOTE: You should consider looking into this. Like me, you'll probably be impressed and reassured by the accuracy of geography compared to Scripture, and by the chariot wheels and other evidence discovered in the bay at Aqaba.) Pharaoh had a change in heart and chased the Israelites to their camp site by the sea. Through Moses, God parted the water so the people could cross and escape the clutch of their adversary. Thousands of pursuing Egyptians and their chariots were swallowed up by the water after God's people had crossed safely.

Two months after leaving Egypt, God gave Moses the first part of the Law in the form of 10 commandments. The total number of years from the time God gave Abram His promise at the age of 70 until the Hebrews received the Law in 1445 BCE after leaving Egypt was 430 (400 from the birth of his first descendant). This is confirmed in Galatians 3:15-17. The group wandered in the desert for 40 years waiting to cross into the land God had promised their ancestor Abraham. While Moses could see the land, he was not allowed to enter it as a consequence of a sinful act. During the wilderness sojourn, judges were established over groups of 1160 people to maintain the peace and help Moses keep his sanity (cf. Exodus 18:21). Moses died in 1406 – the same year Joshua led the conquest of Jericho upon entering Canaan (the Promised Land).

After Moses' death and the occupation of Canaan by the Israelites that followed, the tribes split into two groups: The northern portion (Israel/Samaria) and the southern portion (Judah) which contained Jerusalem. The tribes were governed by judges for several hundred years from roughly 1389 – 1050 BCE until the period of kingly rule began. Saul was the first; he was succeeded by David as the king of Judah in 1010. He went on to become king of Israel in 1003 and captured Jerusalem in 1000. David died in 970 BCE and was succeeded by his son Solomon, but not before he'd joined the northern and southern kingdoms into a unified Israel and brought back the Ark of the Covenant. His son, Solomon, transformed the home of the Ark into a splendid temple, which he completed in 959 after seven years of construction. This was definitely a golden age for Israel, but it wouldn't last long.

Israel split into two parts again in 930 BCE – 1 year after Solomon's death. Each had its kings: Hoshea was Israel's last (732-712) and Zedekiah was Judah's final king (597-586). Here's a list of each group's kings from the reign of Solomon:

1.3 *Israel and Judah's Kings*

JUDAH (Southern Kingdom)	ISRAEL (Northern Kingdom)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solomon: 970-931 • Rehoboam: 931-913 • Abijah: 913-911 • Asa: 911-870 • Jehoshaphat: 870-848 • Jehoram: 848-841 • Ahaziah: 841 • Athaliah: 841-835 • Joash: 835-796 • Amaziah: 796-767 • Uzziah: 767-740 • Jotham: 740-732 • Ahaz: 732-716 • Hezekiah: 716-687 • Manasseh: 687-642 • Amon: 642-640 • Josiah: 640-608 • Jehoahaz: 608 • Jehoiakim: 608-597 • Jehoiachin: 597 • Zedekiah: 597-586 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solomon: 970-931 • Jeroboam I: 931-910 • Nadab: 910-909 • Baasha: 909-886 • Elah: 886-885 • Zimri: 885 • Omri: 885-874 • Ahab: 874-853 • Ahaziah: 853-852 • Joram: 852-841 • Jehu: 841-814 • Jehoahaz: 814-798 • Jehoash: 798-782 • Jeroboam II: 782-753 • Zechariah: 753-752 • Shallum: 752 • Menahem: 752-742 • Pekahiah: 742-740 • Pekah: 740-732 • Hoshea: 732-712

As you'll learn in the next section, the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians in 722 BCE, who'd begun to harass Israel in about 743 BCE with the invasion led by Tiglath-Pileser II. The southern kingdom of Judah persevered until the Babylonian conquest in 605 BCE.

God spoke to the kingdoms through prophets like Joel and Elijah. Their messages usually contained admonishments and warnings that weren't generally well-received by the kings. Joel, Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah also revealed future apocalyptic events.

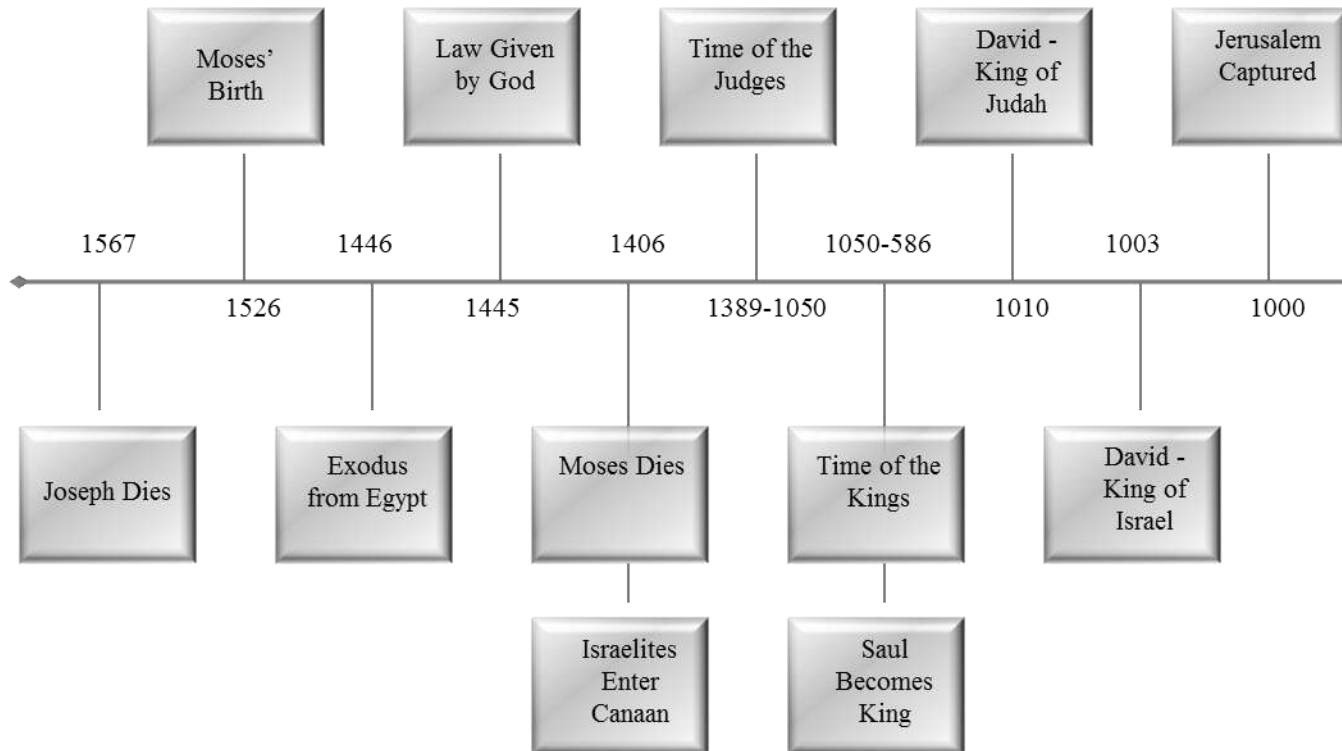
The following table shows at a glance which prophets served which kings. Dates in this and subsequent tables are approximate. I cross-referenced several resources in order to document what I believed to be the most accurate dates or date ranges. In addition to the resources already listed, I also used the Babylonian timelines listed at www.bible-history.com to help in the comparisons. You'll find this table ends by 722 BCE, which is when the Assyrians took control of the northern kingdom. I'll include similar tables to continue the trend in the next several sections, which address the Assyrian, Babylonian, Mede-Persian, Greek, and Roman eras.

1.4 Prophets and Their Kings (before the reign of Assyria)

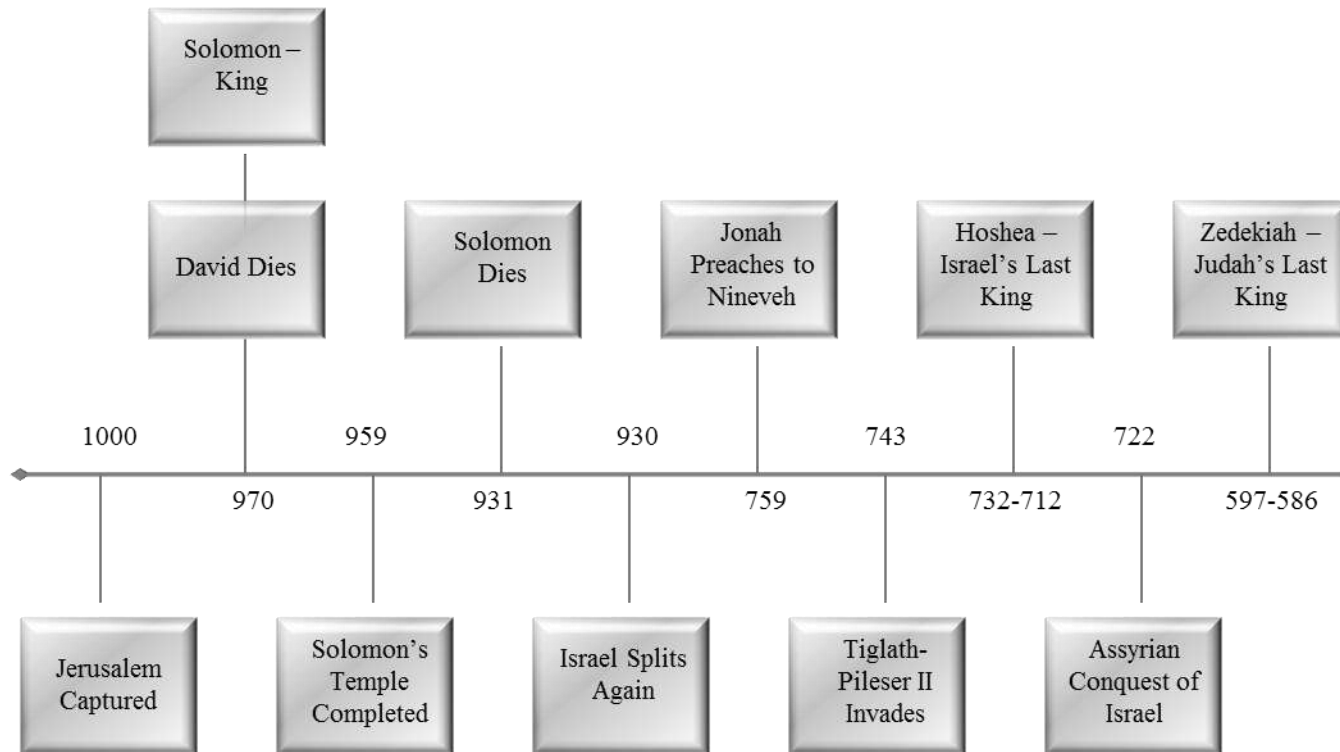
Prophet	Timeframe	King(s)	Biblical References
Elisha	Late 800's	Israel-Omri; Ahab	1 Kings 19:16-19 2 Kings 2-8 & 13
Elijah	892-832	Israel- Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Joram, & Jehu	1 Kings 17-19 & 21:17-28 2 Kings 1 & 2, 3:11, 9:36, 10:10, & 10:17 2 Chronicles 21:12 Ezra 10:21
Joel	850	Jehoshaphat	Joel
Jonah	770	Israel-Jeroboam II	2 Kings 14:25 & Jonah
Amos	760	Israel-Jeroboam II	Amos
Hosea	760-730	Israel-Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, & Hoshea	Hosea
Isaiah	740-700	Judah-Jotham, Ahaz, & Hezekiah	2 Kings 19 & 20 2 Chronicles 26:22, 32:20, & 32:32 Isaiah
Micah	736-690	Judah- Jotham, Ahaz, & Hezekiah	Micah

5.5 Timeline from Egypt to the Assyrian Period

Years are Before the Common Era (BCE)



5.6 Timeline from Egypt to the Assyrian Period (Cont.)
Years are Before the Common Era (BCE)



❖ *Assyrian Rule (722 – 605 BCE)*

Assyria was the second of five pre-Roman kingdoms to have authority over the Jews (Egypt was the first). It was quite large, encompassing Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Syria (Damascus), and Nineveh. Susa in modern-day Iran was to the east, and Ur (the home of Abraham's father) was to the extreme south. Nineveh lay to the extreme north of the empire. The language of the day was Aramaic. Although the empire had been around for a while, our summary will focus on the time of persecution, captivity, and oppression of the Jewish people starting with the invasion of Israel by Tiglath-Pileser III in 743 BCE.

Tiglath-Pileser III became king of Assyria in 745 – 2 years before invading the northern kingdom of Israel. Their cultural center was Nineveh, the great city Jonah prophesied in over 100 years earlier. During his reign, Tiglath invaded Israel and exiled many of the people to Assyria. He left Judah alone after being paid off by its king, King Ahaz. Unfortunately, the payment was made with gold and other articles taken from the Temple, indicating to future conquerors the wealth that awaited them. Tiglath-Pileser was succeeded by Shalmaneser V.

Shalmaneser V returned and captured Samaria, the capital of Israel, in 722 BCE after defeating King Hoshea in the ninth year of his reign. The siege of Samaria had lasted 3 years. Israel's remaining population was deported to Assyria afterward. Judah's king Hezekiah had been in power for 7 years by the end of the siege in Israel. Shalmaneser V was replaced as king of Assyria by Sargon II in the same year, and he, in turn, was succeeded by Sennacherib in 704 BCE.

In the 14th year of Judah's King Hezekiah (approximately 702 BCE), Sennacherib surrounded Jerusalem and attempted to take control. God admonished him, and His angel of death killed 13,000 Assyrian men that night. Sennacherib returned to Nineveh and was later killed by his sons in 681. Esarhaddon then became king of Assyria in 680 BCE.

Esarhaddon, in turn, was replaced by Ashurbanipal in 668 BCE. During his reign, the prophet Nahum predicted the fall of Nineveh. The city did indeed fall to Babylon in 612 BCE during the rule of Ashur-Uballit II. He was to be the last king of the Assyrian empire.

Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in the third year of the reign of Judah's King Jehoiakim. The year was 605 BCE. (Continued in the next section.)

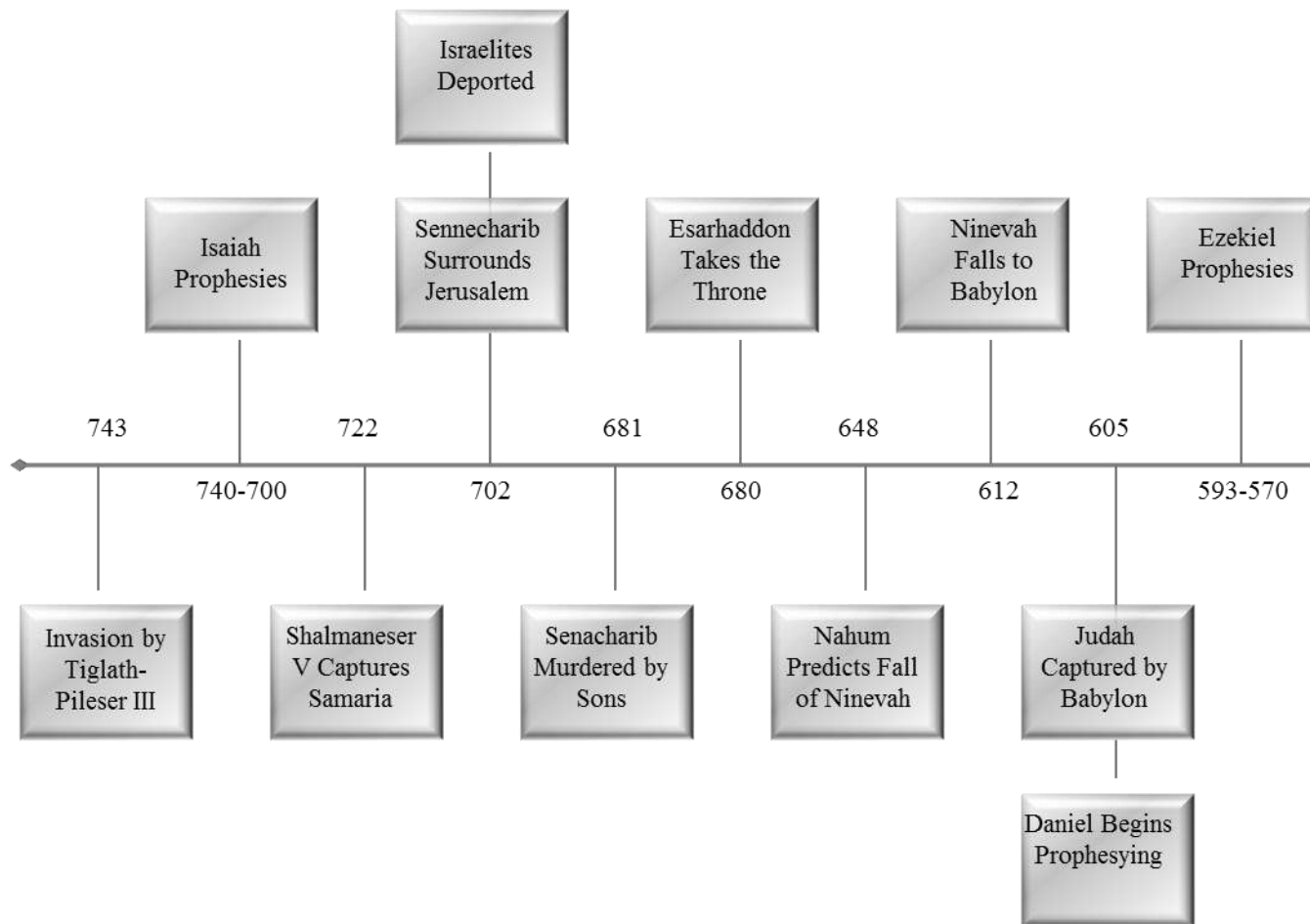
5.7 Assyrian Kings (during the reign over Israel)

Assyrian King	Timeframe	Significant Events	Biblical References
Tiglath-Pileser III	745-727	First invasion and captivity of Israel (King Pekah); Paid off by Ahaz for Judah	2 Kings 15:29 & 16:7-10 1 Chronicles 5:6 & :26 2 Chronicles 28:20
Shalmaneser V	726-722	Captured Samaria (capital of Israel); King Hoshea defeated; Deported Israelites to Assyria	2 Kings 17:3 & 18:9
Sargon II	721-705		
Sennacherib	704-681	Taunted Hezekiah by surrounding Jerusalem; Killed by his sons	2 Kings 19 2 Chronicles 32 Isaiah 36:1 & 37:17, :21, & :37
Esarhaddon	680-669	Replaced Sennacherib	2 Kings 19:37 Ezra 4:2 Isaiah 37:38
Ashurbanipal	668-627	Nahum predicted the fall of Nineveh	
Ashu-Etel-Ilani	627-624		
Sin-Shar-Ishkun	623-612		
Ashur-Uballit II	612	Nineveh fell to Babylon	

5.8 Prophets and Their Kings (during the reign of Assyria)

Prophet	Timeframe	King(s)	Biblical References
Isaiah	740-700	Judah-Jotham, Ahaz, & Hezekiah	2 Kings 19 & 20 2 Chronicles 26:22, 32:20, & 32:32 Isaiah
Micah	736-690	Judah- Jotham, Ahaz, & Hezekiah	Micah
Nahum	648	Judah-Manasseh	Nahum
Zephaniah	640-621	Judah-Josiah & Amon	2Kings 25:18 1Chronicles 6:36 Jeremiah 29:25 & :29, 37:3, & 52:24 Zechariah 6:10 & :14
Habakkuk	630-588	Judah-Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, & Zedekiah	Habakkuk
Jeremiah	627-580	Judah-Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, & Zedekiah	2Chronicles 35:25, 36:12, 36:21-22 Ezra 1:1 Nehemiah 10:2 & :12 Jeremiah Daniel 9:2
Daniel	605-530	Judah-Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, & Zedekiah	Daniel
Ezekiel	593-570	Judah-Zedekiah	Ezekiel

5.9 Timeline from the Assyrian to Babylonian Periods
Years are Before the Common Era (BCE)



❖ *Babylonian Rule (605 - 539 BCE)*

Nebuchadnezzar became king of the Babylonian Empire in 605 BCE (the third year of reign of Judah's King Jehoiakim). He captured Judah by besieging Jerusalem and deporting the king and some of the most intelligent citizens to Babylon at that time. One of those deported was Daniel, who was about 18 years old (cf. Daniel 1:1-6).

Much of what we know of Biblical Babylon during the Babylonian rule comes from the writings of the prophet Daniel. Knowing the interpretations of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and Daniel's own visions is important to our study. So, we'll defer regularly to what he wrote during this summary of the Babylonian era. I found Stephen R. Miller's book *An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture – Daniel* to be extremely valuable to creating this and the next portion of our historical summary. Many dates and explanations have come from this resource in addition to others noted earlier in this chapter. Let's begin with a brief look at the main Biblical players from this time period: Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar.

Daniel: Upon his deportation to Babylon from Jerusalem, this youngster's name was changed to Belteshazzar, which meant 'Bel will protect'. He earned great fame and wealth in the King's court through his God-given wisdom and ability to interpret the King's dreams. Two of the King's dreams and their interpretations can be found in the second and fourth chapters of Daniel's writings. In addition to interpreting prophetic dreams, Daniel also received several visions. Most of the dreams and visions occurred during the time of Babylonian authority:

- Chapter 2: Nebuchadnezzar's statue dream (603 BCE).
- Chapter 4: Nebuchadnezzar's tree dream.
- Chapter 5: Interpreted handwriting on the wall the night before the Persian/Mede invasion (539 BCE).
- Chapter 7: 1st year of Belshazzar – vision of the Antichrist & of the end (553 BCE).
- Chapter 8: 3rd year of Belshazzar - vision of the initial Antichrist type (Greek ruler Antiochus Epiphanes) (551 BCE).

Nebuchadnezzar: He was the first of several kings to rule the Babylonian empire during the exile of the Jews. As you'll see from the second, third, and fourth chapters of the book of Daniel, this king had trouble remembering that he was in authority only because God allowed him to be. He finally recognized God as the source of his kingdom after a 7-year bout of insanity as prophesied by Daniel. You can read about this in the King's letter contained in Daniel chapter 4. King Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, Belshazzar, became the Regent of Babylon in 553 BCE. Nabonidos was the last king of the Babylonian Empire.

Belshazzar: This was the spoiled grandson of King Nebuchadnezzar who became the Regent of Babylon in 553 BCE. In 539 BCE, on the night the combined force of Medes and Persians invaded Babylon, he was drinking wine out of the gold and silver vessels taken from God's Temple in 605 BCE. Handwriting from God appeared on the wall and Daniel interpreted the meaning as, "God has numbered your kingdom and put an end to it. You have been weighed on the scales and found deficient. Your kingdom has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians." —Daniel 5:26-28. The Mede-Persian army slipped under the city walls after diverting the Euphrates River and overtook the city within hours of this revelation.

Also worth mentioning are three other deportees: Hannaniah, Mishael, and Azariah. They were of the same caliber as Daniel and had great faith in God. As with Daniel, their names were changed as follows:

<u>Hebrew Name</u>	<u>Babylonian Name</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Hannaniah	Shadrach	“Inspired of Aku”
Mishael	Meshach	“Belonging to Aku”
Azariah	Abed-nego	“Servant of Nego”

As recorded in Daniel chapter 3, these men were thrown into a fiery furnace – a consequence of not worshipping the King (remember that he kept forgetting who the *real* boss was!). God saved these men from the fire and Nebuchadnezzar once again gave glory to Him for a short time. Now that we’ve met the main characters of our discussion, let’s resume a chronological approach to looking at the Babylonian era.

Events portrayed in the first 3 chapters of Daniel’s writings probably occurred within the first several years after his deportation and that of Hannaniah, Mishael, Azariah, and King Jehoiakim to Babylon from Jerusalem. We certainly know the events of chapters 1 and 2 did. The ordeal of the fiery furnace climaxed with a promotion for Hannaniah, Mishael, and Azariah.

During this time (603 BCE), the King asked Daniel to interpret a dream in which he saw a large statue composed of different metals. You’ll learn more about the statue in chapter 12 of this study. Basically, each metal represented a significant authority over the Jews from the Babylonian Empire to the final kingdom of the time of Christ’s return as follows:

- Head of **gold** - *Babylon* (cf. Daniel 2:32 & 2:38).
- Breast/arms of **silver** – *Mede-Persia* (cf. Daniel 2:32).
- Belly/thighs of **bronze** – *Greeks* (cf. Daniel 2:32 & 2:39).
- Legs of **iron** – *Romans* (cf. Daniel 2:33 & 2:40).
- Feet of **iron and clay mixed** – *kingdom/authority defeated by Christ* in the end (cf. Daniel 2:34 & 2:41-45).

Afterward, in 586 BCE, Babylon again invaded Jerusalem and destroyed the city and Temple. Most of the remaining population of Judah was deported except for a smattering of farmers. Most likely, Babylon was ensuring that no one who could create weapons or wage war remained behind. King Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, was also taken to Babylon at this time.

King Nebuchadnezzar had another dream interpreted by Daniel. It and the interpretation are relayed in the king’s own words as part of a letter he wrote during his reign. It’s difficult to say when the letter was written, but it was probably produced after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 but before the end of the king’s reign in 562 BCE. Daniel included the letter in his writings (chapter 4). After the interpretation came true (for not giving God the glory for his wealth and authority), the king came to his senses.

Belshazzar (Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson) became the Regent of Babylon in 553. This was 3 years before Cyrus I became King of Persia in 550 BCE. Babylon fell to the Mede-Persian army, headed

by Darius the Mede, in 539 BCE. This change of authority brought to an end a 70-year exile and introduced a new era for the Jews. They were about to be allowed to return home to Jerusalem and eventually rebuild the city, walls, and temple.

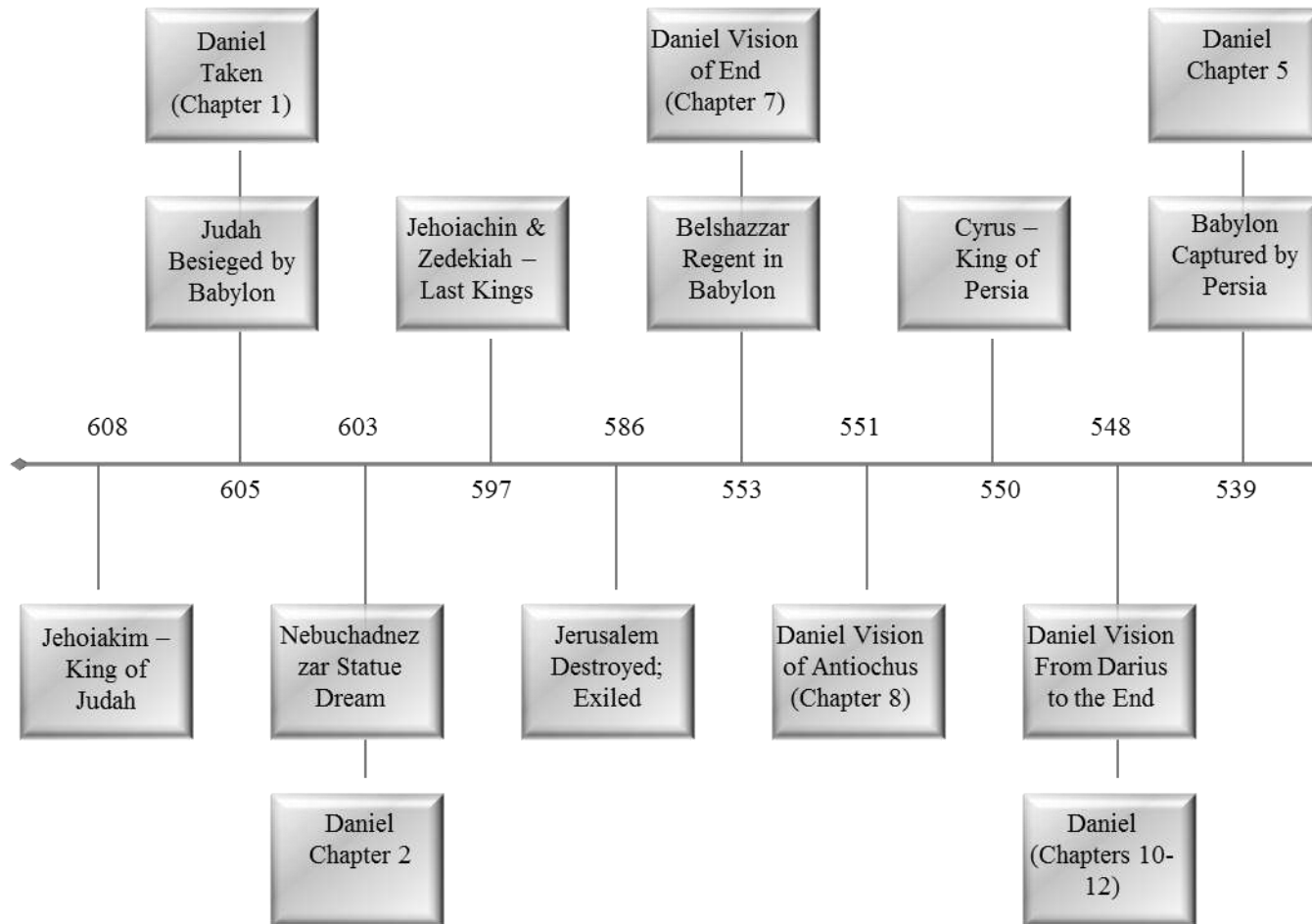
5.10 Babylonian Rulers (during the reign over Israel)

Babylonian Ruler	Timeframe	Significant Events	Biblical References
Nabopolassar (King)	626-605		
Nebuchadrezzar II (King)	605-562	Invaded Jerusalem in 605 BCE and deported Daniel & others; Destroyed Jerusalem & Temple in 586 BCE and deported most of the rest	2 Kings 25:22 1 Chronicles 6:15 2 Chronicles 36 Ezra 1:7; 2:1; 5:12 & 5:14; 6:5 Nehemiah 7:6 Jeremiah 21:2 & 21:7; 22:25; 24:1; 25:1; 25:9; 27; 28; 29; 32; 34; 35; 37:1; 39; 43:10; 44:30; 46; 49; 50:17; 51:34; 52 Ezekiel 26, 29, & 30 Daniel 1-5
Amel-Marduk (King)	562-560		
Neriglissar (King)	560-556		
Labashi-Marduk (King)	556		
Nabonidus (King)	556-539		
Belshazzar (Regent)	553-539	Regent of Babylon; Received a message from God the night of the Mede-Persian invasion	Daniel 5; 7:1; 8:1

5.11 Prophets and Their Kings (during the Babylonian Empire)

Prophet	Timeframe	King(s)	Biblical References
Habakkuk	630-588	Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, & Zedekiah	Habakkuk
Jeremiah	627-580	Judah- Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, & Zedekiah	2Chronicles 35:25, 36:12, 36:21-22 Ezra 1:1 Nehemiah 10:2 & :12 Jeremiah Daniel 9:2
Daniel	605-530	Judah-Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, & Zedekiah	Daniel
Ezekiel	593-570	Judah-Zedekiah	Ezekiel
Obadiah	580	N/A	Obadiah

5.12 Timeline from the Babylonian to Mede-Persian Periods
 Years are Before the Common Era (BCE)



❖ *Mede-Persian Rule (539 – 331 BCE)*

Identified in Daniel 2:32 as the “*breastplate and arms of silver*”, Darius the Mede and his Mede-Persian army cleverly overtook Babylon in 539 BCE. They did this by diverting the Euphrates River and entering the city from beneath its walls where the river had been. But Babylonian Regent Belshazzar had advance warning from God. As you learned in the previous section, God penned a wall-born message for the king. Daniel interpreted the handwriting, which told Belshazzar the kingdom would be divided between the Medes and Persians that very night. Other visions and interpretations by Daniel during the Mede-Persian rule included:

- Chapter 9: 1st year of Darius in 539 BCE – a vision of the 490-year redemption period (483 years to Christ, then 7 years at the very end before Christ’s return to earth).
- Chapters 10-12: 3rd year of Cyrus of Persia in 537 BCE – a vision of the world from the time of the Persian Empire until the end.

Darius the Mede was the new king of Babylon and leader of the smaller of two kingdoms that had collaborated in the defeat of the Babylonian Empire. Upon gaining ownership of Babylon, he divided his new kingdom into 120 provinces. Meanwhile, Cyrus II (the Persian king) issued a decree allowing the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the city and temple in 538 BCE. Priest Zerubbabel and Joshua went back to Palestine at that time to begin the work. Many of those exiled to Babylon in the late 6th century returned to Jerusalem in 537 BCE and began rebuilding the Temple in 536. The project was completed in 516 BCE and the Temple dedicated in 515. This was the second temple; Solomon’s was the first.

Persia was the stronger of the two collaborating kingdoms. The fact that the one was stronger than the other is made clear in Daniel 7:5, 8:3, and 8:20. Three of these Persian rulers (between Cyrus II and Xerxes) are represented by the 3 ribs in the ‘bear with 3 ribs’ of (cf. Daniel 7:5 & 11:1-2). For the most part, the Persians were good to the Jews – at least until the time of Queen Esther.

The year is 484 BCE and Persian King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) is having trouble with his wife, Vashti. She refused to present herself to the king during a feast. He had her removed from his palace and exiled as a result. The new problem: He needed a queen to replace Vashti. After a kingdom-wide review of the existing virgins, he chose Esther as Persia’s newest queen. But who was she?

Esther was a Jew. Her Hebrew name was Hadassah, but her uncle Mordecai changed it to Esther to hide her true identity. Beautiful, wise, and well-educated, she found favor with King Xerxes who chose her to be his bride sometime between 483-478 BCE. Things went well until a wicked Agagite named Haman tried to have her uncle Mordecai hanged and the Jews exterminated.

The Agagites (from King Agag of the Amalekites) were enemies of the Jews. Haman hated them and while he didn’t know yet that Esther was one, he knew that Mordecai was indeed Jewish (Mordecai had been exiled from Jerusalem in 586 BCE). King Xerxes promoted Haman to a position second only to his and Haman abused his power by demanding everyone at the gate bow to him as he passed by. Mordecai refused, invoking Haman’s wrath. He plotted to have Mordecai hanged and convinced Xerxes to sign a decree authorizing the extermination of the Jews living in the 127 Persian provinces. This happened in the 12th year of king Xerxes’s reign (475 BCE).

Esther and the other Jews in Persia were distraught as they anticipated their slaughter. Under the threat of death (because of the laws of the time) Esther approached her husband and exposed Haman's wicked plans. The king reversed the order, allowing the Jews to instead slaughter those who'd plotted the Hebrew exterminations. He also had Haman hanged on the same gallows erected by him to kill Mordecai. The Jewish people created the annual Feast of Purim in 473 BCE to commemorate their escape from death (the Pur was the lot cast during the planning of the Jewish extermination). The feast continues to this day.

Yearning to return home, Ezra took a small contingent of Jews back to Palestine in 458 BCE after a decree from the king. Nehemiah did the same in 445 after another decree. Ezra and Nehemiah both resumed the reading of Scripture to the Jews in 443 BCE. The Jewish people enjoyed a relative time of peace and safety until Greeks came onto the scene beginning in 331 BCE.

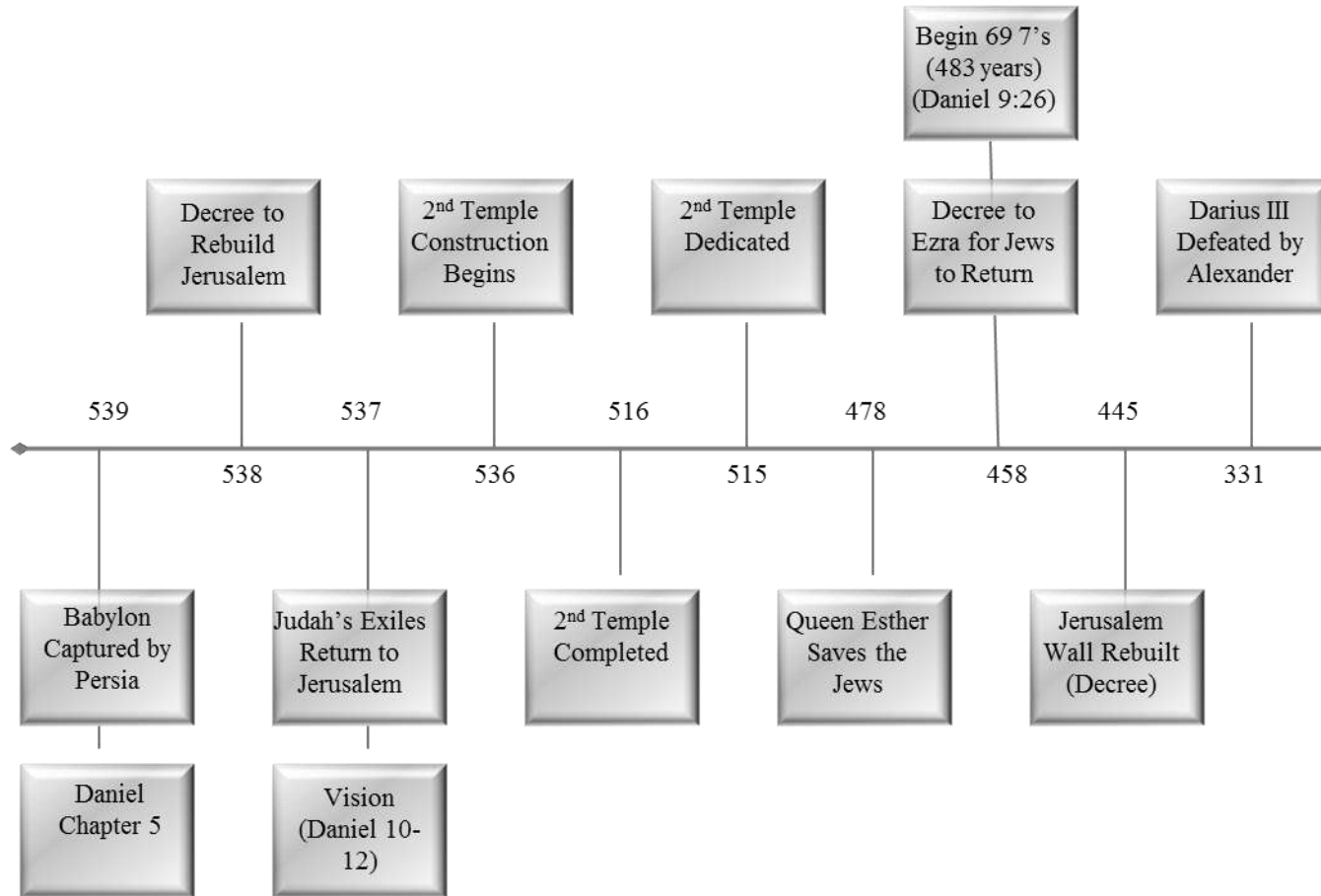
5.13 Mede and Persian Kings (from the defeat of Babylon)

Mede-Persian King	Timeframe	Significant Events	Biblical References
Cyrus I (Persia)	550		
Darius (Mede) (son of Ahasuerus) /Cyrus II (Persia)	539-529	Decree permitting the return to Palestine & rebuilding of the temple; Judah split into 120 provinces; 2 nd temple construction began (536 BCE); 70-year exile prophecy by Jeremiah ends; Daniel's vision of 490 years; Daniel's near/far vision of the end	2 Chronicles 36:22-23 Ezra 1:1, 2,7, & 8; 3:7; 4:3 & 5; 5:13, 14, & 17; 6:3 & 14 Isaiah: 44:28 & 45:1 Jeremiah: 25:11-12 & 29:10 Daniel 1:21; 6:28; & chapters 9-12
Cambyzes (Persia)	530		
Smerdis (Persia)	521		
Darius I Hystaspes (Persia)	521	2 nd temple halted in 520, but completed in 6 th year of Darius' reign (516 BCE); 2 nd temple dedicated in 515 BCE	Ezra 4:5 & 24; 5:5-7; 6:1 & 12-15 Nehemiah 12:22 Daniel 5:31; 6:1, 9, 25, & 28; 11:1 Haggai 1:1 & 15; 2:10 Zechariah 1:1 & 7; 7:1
Xerxes (Ahasuerus) (Persia)	486	Esther (Queen of Persia) saved the Jewish people; Feast of Purim started; Fourth Persian king in Daniel's vision	Esther Ezra 4:6 Daniel 11:2
Artaxerxes I (Persia)	464	Decree to Ezra allowing Jews to return & resume Temple activities (458 BCE); Decree to Nehemiah to rebuild wall of Jerusalem in 20 th year of his reign (445 BCE)	Ezra 4:6-7, 8, 11, & 23; 6:14; 7:1, 7, 11, 12, & 21; 8:1 Nehemiah 2; 5:14; 13:6 Daniel 9:25
Darius II (Persia)	423		
Artaxerxes II (Persia)	404		
Artaxerxes III (Persia)	359		
Darius III (Persia)	331	Defeated by Alexander's armies	Daniel 11:2

5.14 Prophets (during the reign of Persia)

Prophet	Timeframe	King(s)	Biblical References
Haggai	520	N/A	Ezra 5:1 & 6:14 Haggai
Zechariah	520-518	N/A	Ezra 5:1 & 6:14 Nehemiah 12:16
Malachi	430	N/A	Malachi

5.15 Timeline from the Mede-Persian to Greek Periods
 Years are Before the Common Era (BCE)



❖ *Greek Rule (331 - 63 BCE)*

From Alexander the Great who became King of Greece in 336 BCE to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, this era – the 5th of five pre-Roman empires – is very significant to Biblical history as well as prophetic and apocalyptic literature. Daniel referred to the Greek kingdom as:

- Thighs of bronze/bronze (cf. Daniel 2:32 & 2:39) (605 BCE)
- Leopard (cf. Daniel 7:6) (553 BCE)
- Goat (cf. Daniel 8:5-8) (551 BCE)

In 331 BCE, Alexander the Great defeated Darius III and took Babylon captive as prophesied by Daniel (cf. 11:3). He died only 8 years later in that city in 323 BCE at the age of 32. Upon his death, Alexander's empire was divided into 4 kingdoms just as Daniel had also prophesied (cf. Daniel 8:8 & 11:4): Macedonia (Greece), Ptolemaic (Egypt), Seleucid (Syria), and Pergamon (northwest Asia Minor in modern-day Turkey). Our summary of the Greek Empire will focus on the Seleucid kingdom, which had the greatest impact upon the Jews during this era.

In the second century BCE, the Seleucid kingdom was the largest division of Alexander's empire. The extensive area included Syria, Palestine, Persia, and Susa. As it lay north of Jerusalem, it's identified as the *king of the north* mentioned repeatedly by Daniel in chapter 11. Egypt is south of Jerusalem. So the Ptolemaic kingdom was the *king of the south* as denoted by Daniel in his chapter 11 prophecy. Unfortunately, Palestine was sandwiched between these two 'kings' who fought and reconciled several times during the second century. Egypt to the south wasn't the only challenge the Seleucid rulers faced, though.

Rome was expanding its empire to the east, giving Antiochus III, the Seleucid ruler at that time, something else to worry about besides the rival Ptolemaic kingdom. The Syrians were defeated by Rome at Thermopylae in 191 BCE. Antiochus III signed a treaty with the Romans several years later in 188 – roughly 13 years before the wicked Antiochus IV came to power. The conflict with the Romans and subsequent treaty were foreseen by Daniel and recorded cryptically in chapter 11 verse 18. The stage was now set for the one who would become a *type of the Antichrist* to come at the end of time.

Daniel prophesied about a precursor to the future Antichrist ruler he spoke of in chapter 7. He couldn't have known he was foretelling of a Syrian leader within the Greek kingdom: Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He came to power in 175 BCE and is identified in Daniel 8:5-25 & 11:21-35. Like the future Antichrist revealed to John in about 90 CE, this evil ruler was labeled as one who'd magnify himself above God, deceive through a peace agreement, and end daily sacrifice.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes entered into an agreement with Hellenized Jews who supported him in Jerusalem. Not everyone followed suit, though, and rebellion broke out. Antiochus was furious and after losing another bout with Egypt, stopped at Jerusalem on his way home and vented his anger. He broke the peace agreement, quelled the rebellion, and sated his violent appetite by killing roughly 80,000 men, women, and children in 167 BCE. Furthermore, he stopped the faithful Jews from following the Law. He ended daily sacrifices in the Temple and desecrated the holy place by sacrificing a pig on the altar and erecting a statue of Zeus. Judah Maccabeus and a number of

followers revolted because of this and corruption in the priesthood. They quickly regained control of Jerusalem and the Temple despite their small force and overwhelming odds.

The Maccabean revolt lasted about 4 years. In 164 BCE, Maccabeus and the priests of the Lord cleansed the Temple and rededicated it. This in itself was a miracle because there was only a one-day supply of pure, virgin olive oil – not nearly enough for the 8-day rededication of the Temple. However, the Lord provided a miracle and the oil burned for the entire rededication period. The Jews remember this amazing work of the Lord through the annual celebration of Hanukkah.

True to the Word of God given through Daniel (cf. 8:25), Antiochus IV Epiphanes died in 163 BCE of a nasty bowel disease (“*broken without hand*”). The Roman Empire worked its way eastward and took control of Palestine in 63 BCE.

5.16 Macedonian Rulers

Macedonian Ruler	Timeframe	Significant Events	Biblical References
Alexander III (the Great)	336–323	Defeated Persia; Kingdom split 4 ways upon death in July 323 BCE	Daniel 2:32 & 39; 7:6; 8:5-8
Philip III Arrhidaios	323–317	Macedonian ruler after Alexander	
Perseus	179–168	Last Macedonian ruler	

5.17 Ptolemaic Rulers

Ptolemaic Ruler	Timeframe	Significant Events	Biblical References
Ptolemy I Soter	323–285		
Ptolemy II Philadelphos	285–246		
Ptolemy III Euergetes	246–222		
Ptolemy IV Philopator	222–204		
Ptolemy V Epiphanes	210–180		
Cleopatra I	180–177		
Ptolemy VI Philometor	180–145		
Cleopatra II	170–115		
Ptolemy VIII	170–163		

5.18 Seleucid Rulers

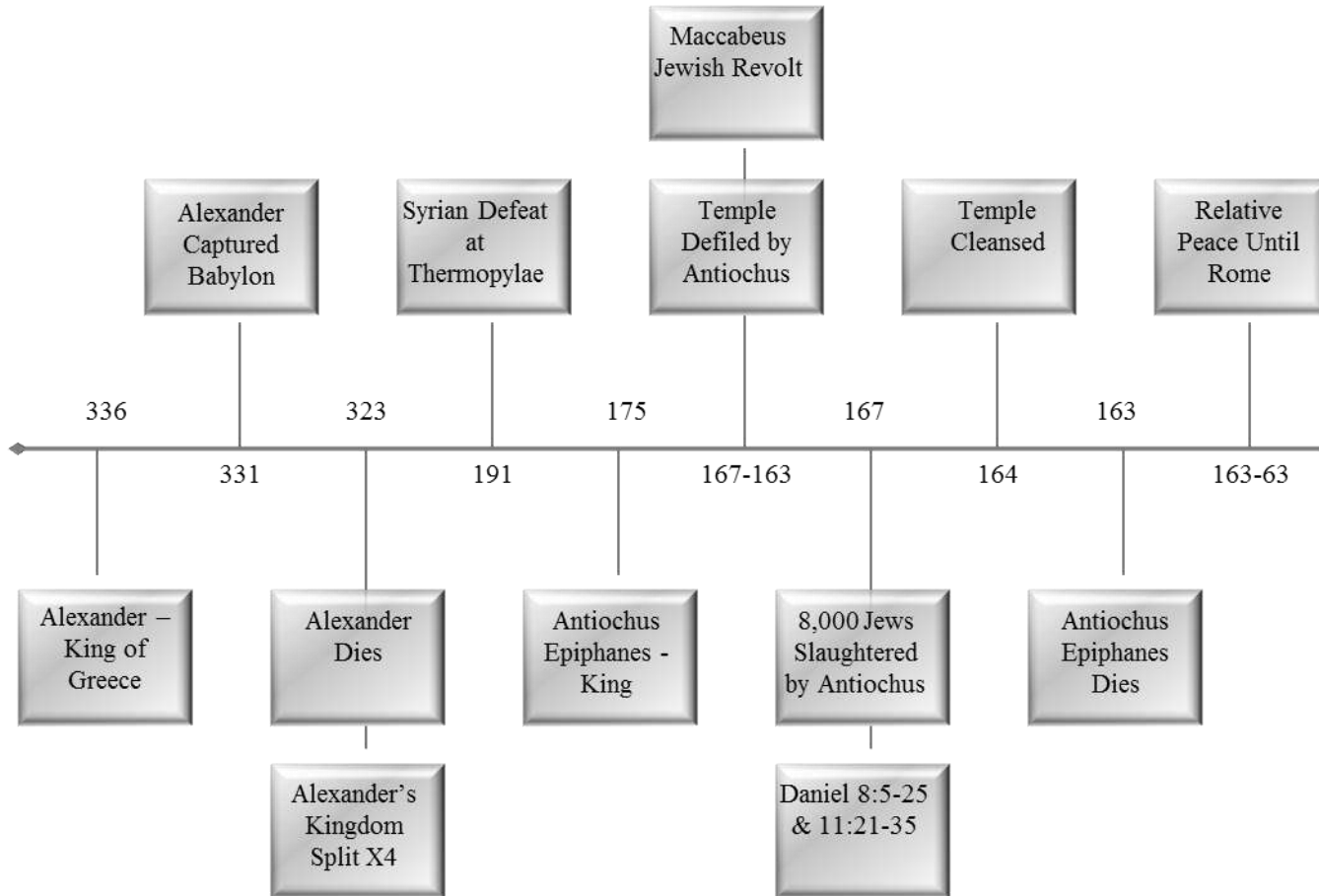
Seleucid Ruler	Timeframe	Significant Events	Biblical References
Seleukos I Nikator	323-281		
Antiochos I Soter	281–261		
Antiochos II Theos	261–246		
Seleukos II Kallinikos	246–225		
Seleukos III	225–223		
Antiochos III Megas	223–187		
Seleukos IV Philopator	187–175		

Seleucid Ruler	Timeframe	Significant Events	Biblical References
Antiochos IV Epiphanes	175–163	Broke an agreement with the Jews and slaughtered many; Defiled temple and altar in 167 BCE; Died of bowel disease	Daniel 8:5-25; 11:21-35 Maccabeus books

5.19 Pergamonian Rulers

Pergamonian Ruler	Timeframe	Significant Events	Biblical References
Philetairos	323–263	First ruler of the Pergamonian division of Alexander's kingdom	
Eumenes II Soter	197–158	Pergamonian ruler during the Maccabean revolts in 167-164	

5.20 Timeline from the Greek to Roman Periods
Years are Before the Common Era (BCE)



❖ *Roman Rule & Dispersion (63 BCE – 1948 CE)*

*And they are seven kings; five have fallen, **one is**, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. —Revelation 17:10-11.*

As we've already learned, the five fallen kingdoms mentioned in the Revelation to John (above) were Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Mede-Persia, and Greece. The Roman Empire is the kingdom that "is" at the time of Christ's revelation to John. Roman ruler Pompeus captured Jerusalem in 63 BCE and annexed Palestine to Rome at that time. The Empire, which consisted of a western half with Rome as its capitol and an eastern side with Constantinople as an eventual capitol, lasted for hundreds of years. However, we'll focus on the time from 63 BCE when Jerusalem was captured by Rome until the end of the third Jewish war in 138 CE.

Daniel saw the Roman Empire as "*Legs of iron*" on the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (cf. Daniel 2:40) and the "*dreadful and terrifying beast*" of Daniel 7:7. Rome allowed Palestine to retain its own kings for a time; we'll begin with Herod the Great who became King in about 37 BCE.

Herod the Great had four wives and his bloodline produced the likes of Herodias, who married two of her uncles (Herod Philip II & Herod Antipas) and Herod Agrippa who ruled during the time of the Apostle Paul. He spearheaded a massive overhaul of the 2nd Temple from 19 BCE – 22 CE and was king during the census taken at the time of Jesus' birth in 5 or 6 BCE. He was also the King Herod who attempted to kill Jesus by having all boys 2 years old or younger slaughtered. An angel warned Joseph of this in a dream, and he, Mary, and the baby went to Egypt until the death of Herod the Great. They returned to Palestine afterward when Jesus was roughly 2 years old.

When Herod the Great died in 4 BCE, his area of authority was divided into regions given to his sons. Herod Antipas became ruler of Galilee, which would become the stomping grounds of Jesus and His disciples about 30 years later. Herod Antipas ruled until 39 CE and took part in the judgment and crucifixion of Christ after also having John the Baptist beheaded at the request of his wife, Herodias. Herod Agrippa, Herodias' brother, became the King of Israel upon Herod Antipas' death.

The beheading of John the Baptist and crucifixion of Christ occurred in close proximity of the year 28 CE. Luke records this and lists some of the main players in the third chapter of his epistle:

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. —Luke 3:1-2.

Luke 23:7-8 shows a bit of Herod's involvement in Jesus' crucifixion (most likely in 28 or 29 BCE), which also concludes the first 483 years of Daniel's 490-year prophecy:

Then after the sixty-two weeks [of years] the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing. . . .
—Daniel 9:26.

Please note that I've added comments in brackets to help with your understanding of the passage. Don't worry - we'll cover this in much more detail later in chapter 12.

The next 40 or so years until the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE witnessed the infilling of God's Spirit into Christ's followers starting at Pentecost. His ascension and the creation of the New Testament Gospels and letters to the Church followed. Stephen and Paul were two of many martyred for their faith during this time (35 and 67 CE respectively). You've probably already discovered that Paul's letters are an integral part of solving the end-times mystery. Here's a partial listing of them:

- 50 CE: I Thessalonians while in Corinth.
- 51 CE: II Thessalonians.
- 65 CE: First letter to Timothy.
- 66 CE: Second letter to Timothy.

Fed up with Roman rule, the Jews began a 4-year revolt in 66 CE. Rome squashed the revolt in 70 CE after General Titus' soldiers destroyed the Temple as Jesus had predicted (e.g. Matthew 24:2). Daniel also saw this coming as part of a vision recorded in chapter 9 verse 26: “. . . *and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary . . .*”

General Titus was the son of Roman Emperor Vespasian. Sent by Rome to quell the uprising in 70 CE, he instructed his soldiers to avoid destruction of the Temple. Unfortunately, ambitious soldiers set the structure on fire while trying to smoke out a large group of Jews who'd barricaded themselves inside. The Temple had been covered in gold, which melted and ran into the crevices of the stones during the fire. To reclaim the precious metal, the soldiers overturned every stone, which they then discarded into the Kidron Valley. Jesus' predication that no stone would be left upon another was fulfilled at this time:

Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.
—Matthew 24:1-2.

Many Jews had been driven out of Jerusalem from the start of the first revolt that culminated in the destruction of the Temple. Those dispersed would be in one of three primary groups:

- Ashkenaz (Germany/central Europe).
- Sephardic (Spain/Portugal).
- Mizrahim (North Africa, Middle East, & Central Asia).

One deportee was the Apostle John who wrote 3 letters to the Church in 85 CE and recorded the Revelation given to him by Christ in about 90 CE while exiled to the isle of Patmos near Greece. John most likely mentored several churches in Asia Minor as you'll learn later. While he's the last

apostle we hear from in the New Testament, key players like his disciple Polycarp and Polycarp's disciple Irenaeus continued to propel the Church forward.

God's chosen people made two more attempts to overcome Roman rule: Kito's war from 115-117 CE and Kokhba's revolt from 132-135 CE. However, the Romans prevailed and the Jews were removed from Palestine. It wasn't long before none remained and Rome had put its own face on much of Jerusalem. This condition wouldn't be permanent and Palestine would change hands again before the people of Israel would be permitted back into their homeland after a 1,880 year separation.

Islamic occupation of the Temple Mount and Jerusalem began in 638 CE after the Caliph Omar entered Jerusalem riding a white camel. Caliph Abdel-Malik commissioned the building of the Dome of the Rock in 691 CE. The following excerpt from the Temple Mount group provides insight into the back-and-forth transfer of Mount Moriah between Muslims and Christians in the 11th and 12th centuries CE (www.templemount.org/allah.html):

“On July 15, 1099 Jerusalem was taken from the Muslims by the Crusaders from Europe. The Crusaders slaughtered the inhabitants of Jerusalem in an unjustified carnage. The Dome of the Rock was converted into a Christian Church called the Templum Domini – “Temple of our Lord.” The Crusaders then began to use the Al-Aksa Mosque as headquarters for the Knights of the Templar who officiated the Temple Compound. A remnant of the Crusader occupation still exists today, the tombs of the assassins of Thomas Beckett the Archbishop of Canterbury (1118-1170). After murdering Beckett the assassins traveled to Jerusalem and took up with the Templar Knights. Their tombs are situated near the main entrance. The Western world rejoiced that Jerusalem was in the hands of “Christians.” The victory, however, caused Muslims to immediately launch campaigns to regain the city and the Dome from the Christian infidels. The Crusader occupation was relatively short-lived. The Muslim leader Saladin (Salah al-Din) proclaimed a jihad, or holy war, to retake the land of Palestine. After ninety years of Crusader control, Jerusalem surrendered to Saladin's army on October 2, 1187. In contrast to the brutality of the Crusaders, Saladin treated the defeated Crusaders with kindness and mercy. The golden cross that was placed on the Dome of the Rock was torn down. Saladin rededicated the Templar's headquarters as a mosque. The Dome was covered with beautiful mosaics and a prayer niche facing Mecca was added. Jerusalem was back in the hands of the Muslims and Europe was ready to avenge the defeat. A Third Crusade was undertaken (1189-1192) to free Jerusalem from the armies of Saladin. Richard the Lion-hearted led England and other Crusaders in a fruitless attempt to retake the city. To this day, the Temple Mount remains in Muslim control.”

The eastern half of the Roman Empire persevered as the eventual Christian Byzantine kingdom but dwindled until late into the 15th century CE – well after the Muslim occupation of Mount Moriah had begun and the Crusades had ended. One major upset and sign of the end of the Empire was the conquest of its capital of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. The Ottoman Empire, founded by Osman Gazi in 1299, would go on to control Palestine from 1515 – 1918 CE. Earlier in our discussion of Roman Biblical history, we learned that Rome had been the 6th kingdom in a series as revealed to John by Christ. He also stated that a 7th kingdom would come for a short time before the 8th and final kingdom – that of the Antichrist. Some believe the 7th kingdom was the Ottoman Empire since it had control of Palestine in the same manner that Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome

had. The only thing left to do at this point was for God to bring His people home in the last days as promised long ago through prophets such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel:

Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will take the sons of Israel from among the nations where they have gone, and I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land" —Ezekiel 37:21.

And He will lift up a standard for the nations And assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. —Isaiah 11:12.

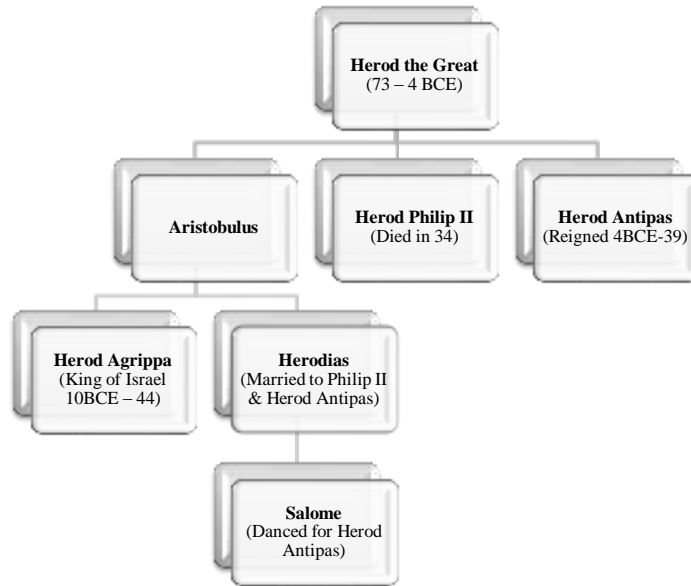
Then I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful and multiply. —Jeremiah 23:3.

Next: *The Homecoming*

5.21 Roman Emperors (during the reign over Israel)

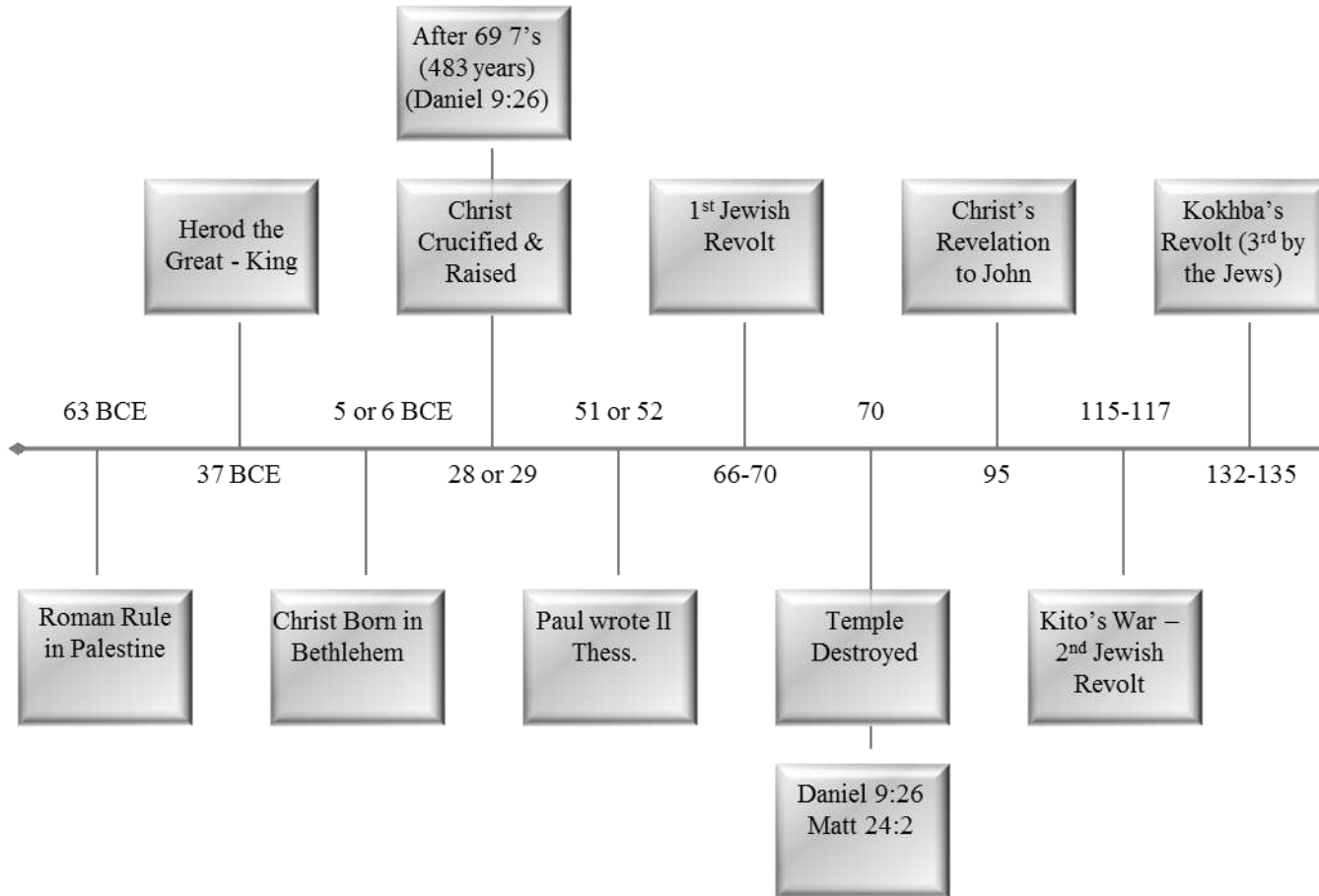
Roman Emperor	Timeframe	Significant Events	Biblical References
Augustus	27 BCE –14	Census at time of Christ's birth; Mary, Joseph, & Jesus flee to Egypt to escape death decree	Luke 2:1 Acts 21:21 Acts 25:21 & 25
Tiberius	14–37	Christ's life, death, & resurrection	Luke 3:1
Gaius Germanicus (Caligula)	37–41	Friend of Herod Agrippa	
Claudius	41–54		Acts 11:28
Nero	54–68	Paul martyred in Rome; Jewish revolt	2 Timothy 4:22
Galba	68–69	Jewish revolt	
Otho	69	Jewish revolt	
Vitellius	69	Jewish revolt	
Vespasian	69–79	Son Titus' soldiers burned & dismantled the Temple; Jewish revolt	
Titus	79–81		
Domitian	81–96	The Revelation given by Christ to John	
Nerva	96–98		
Trajan	98–117	2 nd Jewish revolt	
Hadrian	117–138	3 rd Jewish revolt	

5.22 Key Jewish Leaders during Rome's Rule
Years are in the Common Era (CE) Unless Otherwise Noted



5.23 Timeline from the Biblical Roman Period through the Jewish Wars

Years are Before the Common Era (BCE) or in the Common Era (CE)



❖ *Homecoming (1948 CE - Present)*

God gave the Jews hope by promising to bring them back to their homeland in the last days (e.g. Isaiah 11:11-12 & Jeremiah 23:3). This promise was finally realized on May 15, 1948 when Israel once again became a nation after 1882 years of diaspora (dispersion). Unfortunately, they had to immediately defend their homeland during a 19-month war with neighboring Arab countries. This became known as the Israeli War of Independence.

Nineteen years later in 1967, Israel once again had to defend the land given to them by God so many centuries ago in what has been called the Six-day War (June 5-10). Egypt, Jordan, and Syria came against Israel from nearly every side. At the time, these three Arab nations ruled the following areas in Palestine:

- Egypt – Gaza.
- Jordan – West Bank.
- Syria – Golan Heights.

Israel took control of the Sinai Peninsula (to the Suez Canal) and these regions as an outcome of their defeat of the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian forces. What was the significance of the Suez Canal? It connects the Mediterranean and Indian Oceans, eliminating the need to navigate around Africa to transport cargo between Europe and Asia. They also took control of the Temple Mount and Dome of the Rock which are sacred to Muslims around the world. Within hours, General Moshe Dayan transferred control to the Muslim Waqf (religious trust), temporarily squashing any hopes of moving the Dome to Mecca and constructing the 3rd Temple in its place. Israel's conquest and resulting relative peace would last for only 6 years until the next conflict.

Egypt and Syria again attacked Israel on October 6, 1973 during the Jewish Holiday of Yom Kippur (also during the Islamic Ramadan) in yet another Arab-Israeli war. This one lasted until 26 October. Egypt attacked the Suez Canal, now occupied by Israel, and Syria attacked Golan Heights. Early Arab victories may have suggested the Israelis were in for defeat. However, they prevailed and were nearly within striking distance of Cairo in Egypt and Damascus in Syria when a ceasefire was signed.

Although Arab-Israeli peace continued to be elusive, one significant milestone in the Middle East peace process was the Oslo Peace Accord signed in Washington D.C. on 13 September, 1993. The intent was to provide a framework for future negotiations and relations between the Israeli and Palestinian governments. Peace didn't happen as hoped, though. For instance, more than 6,500 people had been killed by the conclusion of the Al-Aqsa Intifada which began in late September 2000. The violence occurred on the Temple Mount near the Dome of the Rock. Hamas, rising to power in 2006 (well after the 1993 peace agreement had been signed), doesn't recognize the Oslo Peace Accord and aggressions continue to this day. Most recently, the Temple Mount and Land of Israel Faithful Movement groups reported these aggressive acts:

“On Thursday, June 10, 2010, Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, while thousands of Israelis were planning to surround the Temple Mount, as we do every Rosh Chodesh following the Biblical tradition at the beginning of each new month, we were shocked to see the Turkish flag being raised over the Temple Mount as a follow-up to the Gaza flotilla clash.”

“On the 7th of June, the Iranians declared that they are going to send to Gaza another flotilla of terror that will be followed by Iranian-armed soldiers. This is the Iran that has stated again and again during the last couple of years that her goal is to remove Israel from the map of the world. We can be sure that Israel will not allow this terror provocation and attack against Israel to come to Gaza in order to further arm the Hamas terror organization that continues to attack Israel with rockets and missiles.”

The latter report refers to statements made by Iran that they plan to remove Israel from the map of the world. This may have been what the Psalmist saw and reflected in Psalms 83:

For behold, Your enemies make an uproar, And those who hate You have exalted themselves. They make shrewd plans against Your people, And conspire together against Your treasured ones. They have said, “Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation, That the name of Israel be remembered no more.” —Psalms 83:2-4.

So, what about Israel’s future? We know from prophecies made by Ezekiel, Joel, and Daniel that a covenant will indeed be made with Israel in the last days and then broken before another great war breaks out against her:

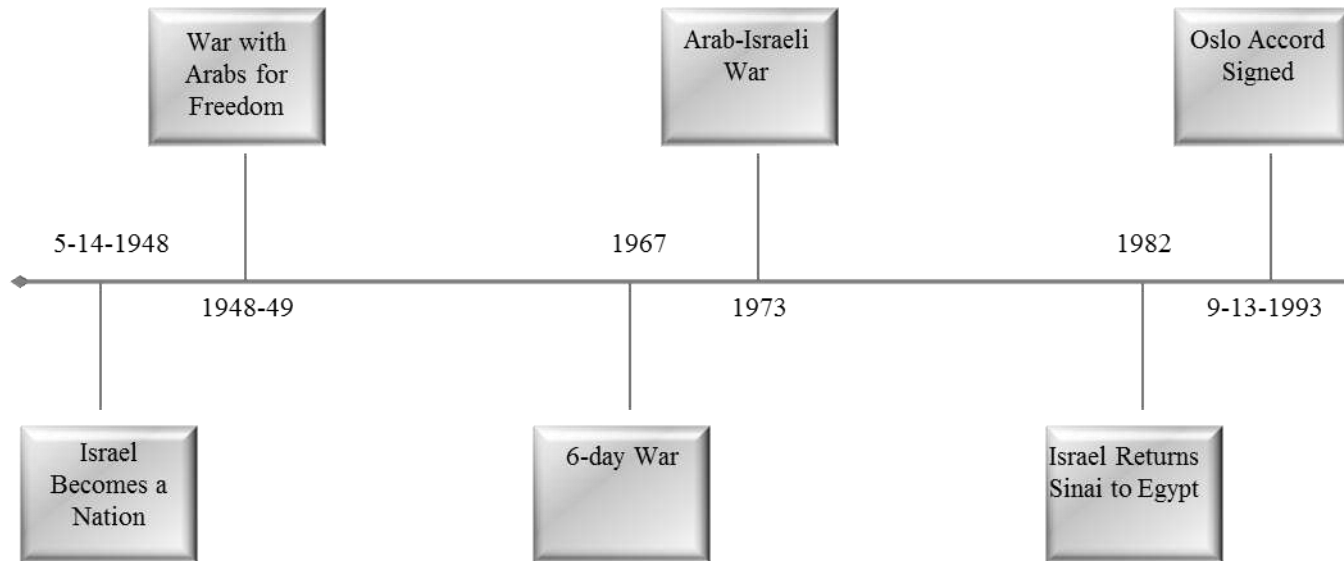
- The covenant will be made and then broken after 3.5: *“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering . . .”* —Daniel 9:27.
- The war of Gog and Magog against Israel and the coming judgment of the nations at the end of God’s wrath: Ezekiel 38 & 39 and Zechariah 12 & 14 (to name a few of many references that describe the Day of the Lord judgment).

In a nutshell, future events that still need to happen before the very end:

1. Building of the 3rd Temple for the sake of the relationship between God and His chosen people, the Jews.
2. Agreement/covenant (see references to Isaiah and Daniel’s prophecies above).
3. Agreement broken after 3.5 years (again, see above).
4. A great war between the Jews and others (you’ll learn later this is referred to as Armageddon).

You can view and download up-to-date information about current hostilities against Israel among other topics at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs web site (www.mfa.gov.il/MFA).

5.24 Timeline from the Homecoming to Present
Years are in the Common Era (CE)



❖ *The Temple (966 BCE - ???)*

Learning about the Temple and the requirement for a 3rd earthly version is important to understanding end-of-the-world Scripture. A Temple will exist in Jerusalem in the last days, and its construction and desecration by *the* Antichrist are integral parts of the end-times sequence of events. Daniel, Jesus, Paul, and John all attested to this.

From the time God led His people out of Egypt, He has desired to reside with those faithful to Him. The first dwelling place was a *tabernacle* in the form of a tent. God had given Moses strict guidelines with which to construct it and the articles to be used in worship to include the priest's garments. King David resumed worship of God upon the capture and reoccupation of Jerusalem, and his son built the Lord a proper place to dwell among the Jews later. The Temple has been rebuilt once and improved once as well. Both versions of the Temple have been destroyed, but a third Temple will again provide a place for God to reside with those who love and worship Him. It will be different from the Temple of the Holy Spirit (us) and the Heavenly Temple of which the earthly Temple is a type.

Some people believe the third temple mentioned in Scripture is symbolic and not a physical structure. A component of this false teaching is that the Biblical third Temple is actually representative of every Christian. While it's true that believers in Christ are called the Temple of the Holy Spirit (cf. Ephesians 2:21 and 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 & 6:19), there's no reason to believe the 3rd Temple itself will be anything other than what the Bible says it will be: A Temple of the Lord built for God by the Jews, and desecrated by the Antichrist. Believing anything else regarding the Temple will make it difficult to keep on track in our study of the end of the world. God's Holy Spirit does reside in and with Christian believers, negating the need for *us* to have a Temple, but apocalyptic literature in the Bible has revealed that the Jews will build one in fulfillment of end-times prophecy. Let's take a more in-depth look at the history of God's Temple.

After the Exodus of 1446 BCE, God renewed an everlasting covenant with the Hebrews (e.g. Exodus 34:10). He gave them guidelines to live by and instructions for building a tabernacle – a place where He could dwell with them:

Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it. —Exodus 25:8-9.

The Tabernacle of the Lord housed the Ark of the Covenant created by Moses according to God's specification during his trek in the desert. Unfortunately, the Philistines captured the Ark sometime before King David united the northern and southern Kingdoms. After David took control of Jerusalem, the Philistines sent the Ark back to Palestine to get rid of it. According to the Bible, Philistine people suffered plagues and destruction everywhere they sent the Ark within their own lands. David eventually transported the Ark to Jerusalem where he set it up inside the tent tabernacle. But this would be a temporary resting place.

God nudged David to build a permanent dwelling place:

Go and say to My servant David, Thus says the LORD, “Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in? For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; but I have been moving about in a tent, even in a tabernacle.” —2 Samuel 7:5-6.

David’s son Solomon honored God’s request for a more permanent structure and began building the first Temple in 966 BCE:

Now it came about in the four hundred and eightieth year after the sons of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD. As for the house which King Solomon built for the LORD, its length was sixty cubits and its width twenty cubits and its height thirty cubits. —1 Kings 6:1-2.

He finished the job in 959 BCE after employing many foreign laborers to cut stone and work metal – things the Israelites didn’t have much experience with yet. Additionally, he imported cedar beams from Lebanon and enjoyed a close relationship with the Queen of Sheba during this period. You can read more about the construction of the Temple in Scripture such as 1 Kings 6 & 7. Nearly 370 years would pass before it would be destroyed by the Babylonians.

In 586 BCE, the Babylonian army under the leadership of King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple and took the articles contained within it to Babylon along with thousands of Jewish deportees. This was in addition to the articles and people taken during the original raid in 605 BCE (you may remember this was when Daniel and some of his friends had been taken captive). The Temple and city of Jerusalem lay in ruins until 70 years had passed and rebuilding began.

The year 536 BCE witnessed a rebirth of sorts with the return of some Jews to Jerusalem and the blessing from Cyrus, King of Persia, to rebuild the Temple and city. After a temporary work stoppage, Temple construction resumed in 520 and was completed in 516 BCE. Jewish priest Zerubbabel dedicated it a year later in 515 BCE. The 2nd temple stayed erect until it was destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE, but it had undergone desecration and a facelift before then.

One character that will continually surface during our study is Antiochus IV Epiphanes – the Syrian Seleucid ruler of Daniel’s vision (see Daniel chapter 8 and others already covered). This wicked king established a covenant with Jews unfaithful to God, but broke the agreement and abolished Temple sacrifice and observance of God’s Laws. He killed roughly 80,000 men, women, and children and desecrated the Temple by slaughtering a pig on the altar and erecting on it a statue of Zeus. Antiochus and his forces were repelled by faithful Jews headed by Judah Maccabeus in 167 BCE. They reclaimed the Temple and purified it in 164 BCE after 1150 days (2300 evenings and mornings) as prophesied by Daniel:

It even magnified itself to be equal with the Commander of the host; and it removed the regular sacrifice from Him, and the place of His sanctuary was thrown down. And on account of transgression the host will be given over to the horn along with the regular sacrifice; and it will fling truth to the ground and perform its will and prosper. Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, “How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the transgression causes horror, so as to allow both the holy place and the host to be trampled?” He said to me, “For

2,300 evenings and mornings; then the holy place will be properly restored.” —Daniel 8:11-14.

In 19 BCE, Herod the Great started a 40-year project to give the second temple a facelift. He also added considerably to the Temple Mount, which is where the Temple sits atop of Mount Moriah. Jesus’ disciples commented on the magnificent structures one day when they were on their way to the Mount of Olives. He responded by telling them of the future destruction that would happen in 70 CE:

Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. And He said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down. —Matthew 24:1-2.

Two down – 1 earthly Temple to go. Jesus showed John in 90 CE (25 years after the destruction of the 2nd Temple) a vision of the 3rd Temple in Jerusalem:

Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, “Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread underfoot the holy city for forty-two months.” —Revelation 11:1-2.

We shouldn’t be surprised because Paul reminded the believers in Thessalonica that the Antichrist would enter the Temple and exalt himself above God when bringing to their remembrance events that must happen *before* Christ’s appearance and our gathering:

Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. —2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

But Daniel was the first to tell us this when recounting his vision of the end. He initially revealed that the Antichrist would enter the Temple and abolish sacrifice midway through a 7-year agreement in these two statements from 9:27 and 12:11:

And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week [of years], but in the middle of the week [of years] he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering . . . —Daniel 9:27.

From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. —Daniel 12:11.

A few have questioned the authenticity of Daniel’s visions (perhaps to rationalize a personal end-times position). That wouldn’t be a good thing to do since Jesus gave credibility to Daniel’s visions of the end by stating: *“Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)” —Matthew 24:15.* The Greek words the translation of ‘holy place’ came from in Matthew 24:15 are *hagios* and *topos*, which together define a ‘ceremonially consecrated location’ – not a figurative temple of the Holy Spirit.

So, is anyone serious about building the 3rd Temple? You bet! Many Jews have looked forward to this since June 1967 when the Israelis once again controlled the Temple Mount and Dome of the Rock (where they believe the Holy of Holies and Ark of the Covenant had been in Solomon's days). The control only lasted for a few hours, but many Israelis still hope to one day obtain permission to build the Temple. Several significant sources raise funds, create Temple articles, or educate the public on the topic of the Temple Mount and Temple: Temple Institute (www.templeinstitute.org), Temple Mount Faithful (templemountfaithful.org) and Temple Mount resource compilation (www.templemount.org). The first site reflects efforts to build the new Temple while the latter seems to be a good source of information related to Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and the Temple Mount. Some of the preparations already made for the 3rd Temple include:

1. *Reestablishment of the Jewish Sanhedrin.*
2. *Creation of Corner Stones* in 1989 (Attempts made annually to place these have been unsuccessful thus far).
3. *Attempting to determine the exact location of where the Temple should go* (the location may be several hundred feet from the Dome of the Rock, allowing it and the new Temple to exist simultaneously and peacefully).
4. *Seeking the Red Heifer* (the ashes of which are necessary for the process of Temple purification).
5. *Creation of various Temple vessels* to include the Menorah and Temple utensils.

5.25 Timeline of Temple Eras

Years are Before the Common Era (BCE) or in the Common Era (CE)

