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What is the basic timeline of the Old Testament?

The following timeline of the Old Testament has been compiled with the assumption that the genealogies are literal and complete. If so, God created the world about 6000 years ago. All years are approximate.

Creation to the Flood

Creation: 4000 BC (we don't know how long Adam and Eve lived in the Garden before their exile.)

Adam: 4000 BC — 3070 BC ([Genesis 2:7](#); [5:5](#))

Methuselah: 3350 BC — 2350 BC ([Genesis 5:21](#); [5:27](#))

Noah: 2950 BC — 2000 BC ([Genesis 5:29](#); [9:29](#))

Flood: 2350 BC ([Genesis 6—9](#))

Note that Methuselah died a very short time before the

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death/spear/violence — bring, was the prophecy "His death shall bring." His death certainly did herald a significant event.

The Flood to Abraham

Flood: 2350 BC ([Genesis 6—9](#))

Tower of Babel: 2250 BC ([Genesis 11:1–9](#))

Egypt founded: 2170 BC

Abraham: 2165 BC — 1990 BC ([Genesis 11:26](#); [25:8](#))

The genealogies in the Old Testament show that Noah died while Abraham's father was living. Noah's father, Lamech, was born about eighty years before Adam died. It's very possible that the story of creation could have been passed on through very few steps.

Abraham to the Exile

Abraham: 2165 BC — 1990 BC ([Genesis 11:26](#); [25:8](#))

Abraham goes to Canaan: 2090 BC ([Genesis 11:31](#))

Ishmael: 2080 BC — ? ([Genesis 16:11](#))

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed: 2065 BC ([Genesis 19:1–29](#))

Isaac: 2065 BC — 1885 BC ([Genesis 21:1](#); [25:29](#))

Jacob: 2005 BC — 1855 BC ([Genesis 25:26](#); [49:33](#))

Joseph: 1910 BC — 1800 BC ([Genesis 30:23–24](#); [50:26](#))

Joseph sold into slavery: 1895 BC ([Genesis 37:18–36](#))

Jacob and family move to Egypt: 1870 BC ([Genesis 46—47](#))

Exile to Egypt: 1870 BC — 1450 BC ([Genesis 46—Exodus 12:33-41](#))

After the Flood, lifespans drastically decreased. Noah lived to be 950 years old. Abraham, who was born shortly after Noah died, lived to be only 175.

The Exile to the Monarchy

Exile to Egypt: 1870 BC — 1450 BC ([Genesis 46—Exodus](#)

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Moses flees to Midian: 1490 BC ([Exodus 2:15–25](#))

Exodus from Egypt: 1450 BC ([Exodus 12:33–14:31](#))

Forty years in the Wilderness: 1450 BC — 1410 BC ([Exodus 16—Joshua 1](#))

Joshua's rule: 1410 BC — 1390 BC ([Deuteronomy 34:9—Judges 2:8](#))

Conquest of Canaan Completed: 1400 BC ([Judges 1](#))

Deborah serves as Judge: 1245 BC — 1200 BC ([Judges 4—5](#))

Gideon serves as Judge: 1195 BC — 1155 BC ([Judges 6](#))

Samuel serves as Judge: 1090 BC — 1045 BC ([1 Samuel 1:1—25:1](#))

The Timeline of the Old Testament shows the Israelites were in Egypt for about 400 years and then were ruled by judges for about 400 years. They then demanded a king.

The Unified Monarchy

Saul Reigns: 1095 BC — 1015 BC ([1 Samuel 10:17—2:13](#))

David Reigns: 1015 BC — 970 BC ([2 Samuel 1:1—1 Chronicles 19:1](#))

Solomon Reigns: 970 BC — 930 BC ([1 Chronicles 19:1—2 Chronicles 9:31](#))

The Kingdom Splits: 930 BC ([2 Chronicles 10](#))

Israel

Israel, the Northern Kingdom: 930 BC — 725 BC

Elijah serves as Prophet: circa 870 BC

Obadiah serves as Prophet: circa 845 BC

Elisha serves as Prophet: circa 840 BC

Jonah serves as Prophet: circa 780 BC

Hosea serves as Prophet: circa 760 BC

Assyria destroys Israel: 725 BC ([2 Kings 17](#))

Judah

Judah, the Southern Kingdom: 930 BC — 586 BC

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Micah serves as Prophet: circa 725 BC
Isaiah serves as Prophet: circa 690 BC
Zephaniah serves as Prophet: circa 640 BC
Nahum serves as Prophet: circa 625 BC
Habakkuk serves as Prophet: circa 620 BC
Ninevah destroyed: 612 BC
Jeremiah serves as Prophet: circa 600 BC
Babylonian exile: 590 BC ([2 Kings 25](#))

After being ruled by judges for 400 years, the nation of Israel only lasted about 165 more years united under one king. The Northern Kingdom of Israel so rebelled against God that it was only another 200 years before the Assyrians destroyed them. The Southern Kingdom of Judah managed to last about 340 years before the Babylonian captivity.

Exile in Babylon

Babylonian Empire: 1984 BC — 539 BC
Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon: 605 BC — 562 BC
Daniel taken to Babylon: 605 BC ([Daniel 1](#))
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego survive the fiery furnace: 595 BC ([Daniel 3](#))
Ezekiel serves as Prophet: circa 593 BC
Daniel's confrontation with Belshazzar: 539 BC ([Daniel 5](#))
Persian Empire: 539 BC — 330 BC
Cyrus King of Great Persian Empire: 576 BC — 530 BC
Jews start returning to Jerusalem: 536 BC
Temple Rebuilt: 530 BC — 515 BC (Ezra)
Haggai serves as Prophet: circa 525 BC
Zechariah serves as Prophet: circa 525 BC
Xerxes (Ahasuerus) King of Persia: 485 BC — 465 BC (Esther)
Esther becomes Queen: 475 BC
Esther saves the Jews: 470 BC
Ezra serves as Priest: 460 BC — 430 BC

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Jeremiah was right—from the fall of Judah to the first refugees returning to Jerusalem was about seventy years ([Jeremiah 25:11](#)). But the Old Testament timeline doesn't tell the whole story. Not all the Jews left, and there are still small pockets of Jews in such places as Iran and India.

The Intertestamental Period

Alexander the Great reigns in Greece: 336 BC — 323 BC

Judea ruled by the Greek Empire: 330 BC — 308 BC

Judea ruled by Egypt: 308 BC — 195 BC

Judea ruled by Syria: 195 BC — 130 BC

Maccabean Revolt: 164 BC — 63 BC

Judea ruled by the Roman Empire: 65 BC — AD 70

Julius Caesar rules Roman Empire: 46 BC — 44 BC

Herod the Great reigns as King of the Jews: 37 BC — 4 BC

Jesus born: 6—4 BC

Neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament have much to say about the timeline between Malachi and the birth of John the Baptist. Most of what we can gather from this period comes from the Apocryphal books of 1 and 2 Maccabees as well as secular historical records.

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