

THE COMPLETE **BOOK** OF



WHEN & WHERE

IN THE BIBLE
AND THROUGHOUT HISTORY

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The Complete Book of When and Where

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THE OLD TESTAMENT ERA

2166 BC–7 BC

The Old Testament era includes the story of how God first created heaven and earth and then created his people. This book picks up the thread of history where reliable dating of biblical events begins—with God’s choosing of Abraham. God first chose Abraham’s family, and after the Exodus, at Sinai, the family became a nation. The nation of Israel later became a monarchy but soon descended into sin, resulting in a period of exile in Babylon. Only a remnant of the nation ever returned from captivity, but God encouraged his people through a series of prophets who foretold a full restoration of God’s people and of his coming kingdom.

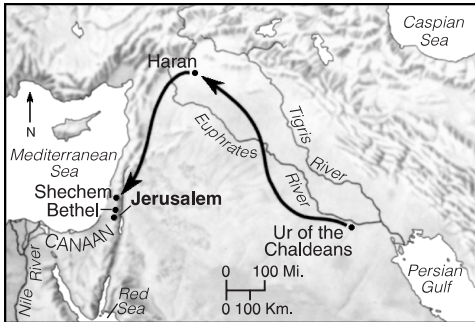


2166 BC ✧ ABRAM IS BORN

Abram, a descendant of Noah's son Shem (Genesis 11:10-26), was born in the Mesopotamian city of Ur in 2166 BC (Genesis 11:26-28) into a family of idolaters (Joshua 24:2). God chose Abram to be the founder of his people (Genesis 24:7). The name *Abram* probably means "exalted father," but God later changed his name to *Abraham*, meaning "father of many" (Genesis 17:5). While Abram was living in Ur, God called him to leave his country to journey to Canaan, the Promised Land (Acts 7:2-3). Abram/Abraham is described as a man of faith (Genesis 15:6; Hebrews 11:8-19) and "the father of all who believe" (Romans 4:16; Galatians 3:7, 29).

2091 BC ✧ ABRAM DEPARTS FOR CANAAN

On the way to Canaan, Abram and his father, Terah, settled in Haran on the Balih River in northern Mesopotamia (Genesis 11:31; 12:1, 5). When Terah died in 2091 BC, Abram (then seventy-five years old) left Haran with his wife, Sarai, his nephew Lot, and the servants he had acquired in Haran (Genesis 12:5). He settled near Bethel at Beersheba. In his covenant with Abram, God promised to make of



ABRAM'S JOURNEY TO CANAAN Abram, Sarai, and Lot traveled from Ur of the Chaldeans to Canaan by way of Haran. Though indirect, this route followed the rivers rather than attempting to cross the vast desert.

him a great nation, to bless him, to make his name great, and to bless all the families of the earth through him (Genesis 12:1-3). In addition, God gave the land of Canaan to Abram and his descendants (Genesis 12:7). Abram is described as a resident alien without a capital city of his own. He was a wealthy man (Genesis 13:2) with three hundred male servants in his household (Genesis 14:14).

2080 BC ✧ ISHMAEL IS BORN

God promised Abram that he would be the father of a multitude (Genesis 15:4-5). Abram believed God (Genesis 15:6), yet at the age of eighty-five he still was child-

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less. His wife, Sarai, frustrated that she was barren (Genesis 16:1), took things into her own hands. Following the Near Eastern custom, Sarai gave her maidservant Hagar to Abram as an additional wife to ensure that her husband would have a male heir (Genesis 16:2-3). In 2080 BC, Hagar gave birth to Ishmael (Genesis 16:15-16). The apostle Paul states that Ishmael was born according to the flesh, whereas Abram's second son, Isaac, was born through promise (Galatians 4:23). Abram later expelled Hagar and Ishmael (Genesis 21:14). Ishmael is regarded as the progenitor of the Arabs (cf. Genesis 21:18).

2067 BC ✧ ESTABLISHING THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

In making a covenant with Abram, God used the same oath rituals used by earthly kings when they made treaties, because his covenant with Abram was in essence a treaty. God commanded Abram to kill a heifer, a goat, and a ram, cut their carcasses in two, and lay each half opposite the other. Then God took an oath by passing between the divided carcasses, thereby stating symbolically, "May I be slain like these animals if I do not keep my oath" (Genesis 15:9-18). Abram performed his covenantal oath of allegiance to God through the act of circumcision (Genesis 17:10-13). Circumcision symbolized the curse of being cut off from God's people (Genesis 17:13-14). Abram, Ishmael, and all the males in his household were circumcised (Genesis 17:23-27). As part of the covenantal process, God changed Abram's name to Abraham, and Sarai's name to Sarah (Genesis 17:5, 15).

2066 BC ✧ ISAAC IS BORN

When Abraham was ninety-nine years old and Sarah was eighty-nine, the Lord appeared to Abraham and told him that his wife Sarai would bear him a son (Genesis 17:15-16). Sarah, listening at the nearby tent door, laughed. The Lord asked Abraham why Sarah had laughed, adding "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:1-15). The next year, in 2066 BC, Sarah gave birth to Isaac, the heir of God's covenant (Genesis 21:1-5; Romans 4:18-20). The name *Isaac* means "he laughs," because Sarah had laughed at the idea of her giving birth at the age of ninety (Genesis 17:17; 21:6). The great test of Abraham's faith came when God commanded him to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:2), the later site of the Jerusalem Temple (2 Chronicles 3:1). Abraham obeyed, but

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was spared sacrificing his son when God provided a ram as a substitute (Genesis 22:3-24).

2029 BC ✧ SARAH DIES

Sarah, Abraham's wife, died at the age of 127. The first property Abraham owned in the Promised Land was the burial place he purchased for Sarah (Genesis 23:1-20).

2006 BC ✧ ESAU AND JACOB ARE BORN

Esau and Jacob, fraternal twins, were born to Isaac and Rebekah in 2006 BC (Genesis 25:24-26). God sovereignly chose Jacob over Esau to be the heir of the covenant (Romans 9:10-13). As the two babies struggled with each other in Rebekah's womb, God told her, "The sons in your womb will become two rival nations," and "the descendants of your older son [Esau] will serve the descendants of your younger son [Jacob]" (Genesis 25:23; see also Romans 9:12). With cleverness and deceit, Jacob gained both Esau's birthright (Genesis 25:27-34) and blessing (Genesis 27:1-45), which were Esau's by right as the firstborn of the twins. Jacob was the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, and Esau became the progenitor of the nation of Edom (Genesis 25:30; 32:3; 36:1, 30).

1930 BC ✧ JACOB JOURNEYS TO HARAN

Isaac commanded his son Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman but to return to Haran in northern Mesopotamia (modern-day Turkey), where his grandfather Abraham had lived and where his uncle Laban was still living (Genesis 28:1-5). On the way, he had a vision of a stairway leading to heaven, known as Jacob's Ladder. Above it stood the Lord, who confirmed the Abrahamic Covenant to Jacob (Genesis 28:11-17). Jacob ratified the covenant by an oath of allegiance to the Lord (Genesis 28:20-22). This experience proved to be Jacob's spiritual conversion. He named the place Bethel, the "house of God" (Genesis 28:19). He continued on to Haran, where he met his uncle Laban and fell in love with his cousin Rachel. He agreed to work for Laban for seven years to earn the right to marry Rachel (Genesis 29:1-19).

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1923 BC ✧ JACOB MARRIES LEAH AND RACHEL

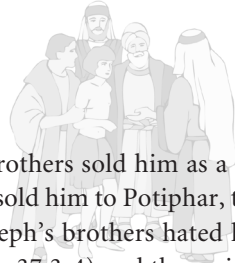
Jacob worked seven years for his uncle Laban to fulfill his contract to marry Laban's daughter Rachel. However, on the wedding night, Laban deceived Jacob by substituting Leah, his older daughter, for Rachel. A week later, Laban allowed Jacob to marry Rachel also, but only after Jacob agreed to work for another seven years (Genesis 29:15-30). Jacob the deceiver (Genesis 27:1-38) was himself deceived. Eleven sons and one daughter were born to Jacob during the next thirteen years he was in Haran. Jacob showed particular favor to Joseph, the elder son of Rachel, though he was not the firstborn among his brothers.

1910 BC ✧ JACOB RETURNS TO CANAAN

After Jacob had worked for Laban for twenty years, during which time he had built up his own flocks at the expense of Laban's. God commanded him to return to Canaan. In leaving Haran, Jacob had to deal with his father-in-law, whom he had deceived; in entering Canaan in 1910 BC, he had to deal with his twin brother, Esau, whom he had also deceived (cf. Genesis 27:1-45). But before Jacob arrived in the Promised Land, "a man came and wrestled with him until dawn" (Genesis 32:24). This divine adversary struck Jacob's hip and "knocked it out of joint at the socket" (Genesis 32:25). Because the hip was regarded as the seat of reproductive powers, the smiting of Jacob's hip foreshadowed the smiting of the Messiah, the descendant of Jacob who would be smitten by God (Isaiah 53:4), and who by his sufferings would justify Jacob and all of God's people (Isaiah 53:11). At this time, God gave Jacob a new name: Israel (Genesis 32:28), which means "one who struggles with God."

1899 BC ✧ JOSEPH IS SOLD AS A SLAVE

In 1899 BC, when Joseph was seventeen, his brothers sold him as a slave to merchants, who in turn took him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the captain of the palace guard (Genesis 37:2-36). Joseph's brothers hated him because he was their father's favorite son (Genesis 37:3-4) and the recipient of the family birthright with its double portion of the inheritance. The birthright had initially belonged to Reuben, Jacob's firstborn and the eldest son of Leah,



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but because Reuben committed adultery with Bilhah, his father's concubine (Genesis 35:22), the birthright was transferred to Joseph, the elder son of Rachel (1 Chronicles 5:1). Selling their brother with his birthright as a slave to Egypt was in direct disregard of their responsibility under the Abrahamic Covenant to possess the royal grant of the Promised Land "as a permanent possession" (Genesis 13:15). God's resulting judgment on the children of Israel was to enslave all of their descendants in Egypt for four hundred years (Genesis 15:13).

1888 BC ✧ JOSEPH IS SENTENCED TO PRISON

While serving in Potiphar's house, Joseph was accused of rape (Genesis 39:6-20) and was sentenced to prison in 1888 BC. During his time there, he correctly interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker, who were also in prison. The baker was later hanged, but the cupbearer was restored to his position in the palace (Genesis 40:1-23). In 1886 BC, when Pharaoh sought to have two of his own dreams interpreted, the cupbearer remembered how Joseph had correctly interpreted his dream two years before and recommended him to Pharaoh (Genesis 41:1-13). Joseph then correctly interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, predicting seven years of abundant crops that would be followed by a seven-year famine (Genesis 41:14-32). As a result, Pharaoh installed Joseph as second-in-command of Egypt (Genesis 41:41-43), making him responsible to store food for the nation during the seven years of abundance so that there would be enough for the seven years of famine (Genesis 41:33-49).

1886–1872 BC ✧ GOD SENDS BUMPER CROPS AND FAMINE

In fulfillment of Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream, God sent seven years of bumper crops to Egypt, beginning in 1886 BC. Joseph purchased one-fifth of each year's crop and stored it in anticipation of the coming seven years of famine (Genesis 41:46-49). When, as predicted, seven years of worldwide famine followed the years of plenty, only Egypt had stockpiles of grain because Joseph had stored it during the time of abundance. Joseph sold the grain not only to Egyptians but to other nations as well (Genesis 41:54–47:26). The nations of the world were being blessed through the seed of Abraham (Genesis 12:3).

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1878 BC ✧ JOSEPH'S BROTHERS SEARCH FOR FOOD IN EGYPT

When the famine extended to Canaan, Jacob sent ten of his sons to Egypt in 1878 BC to purchase food. Jacob held back Benjamin, his remaining son by Rachel. When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them but disguised himself so they would not recognize him. Though he sold them grain, he accused them of being spies and kept Simeon as a hostage until they would bring back Benjamin (Genesis 42:1-38). The sons returned to Canaan, and when they had eaten the grain they had purchased in Egypt, Jacob reluctantly let them take Benjamin to Egypt to buy more grain (Genesis 43:1-45:15). On this trip, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, telling them, “God has sent me here to keep you and your families alive so that you will become a great nation” (Genesis 45:7).

1876 BC ✧ JACOB AND HIS FAMILY MOVE TO EGYPT

After Joseph, the ruler of Egypt under the Pharaoh, revealed himself to his brothers, he commanded them to bring Jacob and the rest of their families to Egypt as quickly as possible (Genesis 45:1-28). As Jacob was leaving Canaan with his family, God appeared to him in a vision, telling him that God would make his descendants into a great nation in Egypt and would bring them back to the Promised Land. Jacob and his sons traveled to Egypt with their families, and Jacob had an emotional reunion with Joseph. The house of Israel, which now numbered seventy people, settled in Goshen, the most fertile part of Egypt (Genesis 46:1-47:12). Seventeen years later, in 1859 BC, after blessing his twelve sons, Jacob died in Egypt at the age of 147 (Genesis 49:1-33).

1526 BC ✧ MOSES IS BORN

Just prior to the birth of Moses in 1526 BC, the Egyptian Pharaoh had decreed that every Hebrew male child was to be thrown into the Nile River to drown. Moses' mother “threw him into the Nile” by placing him in a floating basket. Pharaoh's daughter saw the infant in the river, felt sorry for him, and decided to save him. Moses' sister, who was standing watch over the baby, approached the princess and offered to find someone to nurse the baby for her. When the princess agreed, Moses' sister brought her own mother, and Pharaoh's daughter

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offered to pay her to care for him. When Moses grew older, his mother returned him to Pharaoh's daughter and she adopted him (Exodus 1:22–2:10). God thus equipped Moses for leading his people by enabling him to be raised as a member of the royal Egyptian family, where he would receive the best education available at that time.

1486 BC ✧ MOSES FLEES TO MIDIAN

In 1486 BC, when Moses was forty, he witnessed an Egyptian overseer beating a Hebrew. Moses came to the man's defense and killed the Egyptian. Thinking no one had seen him, he buried the body in the sand. But there had been witnesses, and when word of the murder reached the Pharaoh, he ordered that Moses be arrested and killed. Moses escaped by fleeing to Midian, on the eastern side of the Red Sea. There he married Zipporah, the daughter of the priest of Midian, and had a son, Gershom (Exodus 2:11–3:1; Acts 7:23–29). Moses worked as a shepherd in Midian for forty years, thus preparing him to shepherd God's people for another forty years.

1446 BC ✧ PLAGUES STRIKE EGYPT

From the midst of a burning bush, God called Moses to deliver the Israelites from Egypt (Exodus 3:1–4:17). The bush was on Mount Horeb, another name for Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:20; Deuteronomy 5:2). Moses, accompanied by his brother Aaron, who served as his spokesman, asked the Pharaoh to let the Israelites go into the wilderness to worship. When Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he refused to let the people go, God sent ten plagues on Egypt: water turned to blood, frogs, gnats, insects, death of cattle, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, and the death of every firstborn male. The plagues demonstrated the power of the God of Israel and the impotence of the gods of Egypt (Exodus 7:8–12:30).

1446 BC ✧ THE FIRST PASSOVER IS CELEBRATED

Before the tenth and final plague, God warned Pharaoh through Moses that unless Pharaoh would let the children of Israel leave Egypt, God would pass through Egypt and slay every firstborn male: both human and animal. The Jews were instructed to roast a lamb or goat without any defect and to eat it with bitter

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THE PLAGUES ON EGYPT

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Plague</i>	<i>What Happened</i>	<i>Result</i>
Exodus 7:14-24	Blood	Fish die, the river smells, the people are without water	Pharaoh's magicians duplicate the miracle by "their magic," and Pharaoh is unmoved
8:1-15	Frogs	Frogs come up from the water and completely cover the land	Again Pharaoh's magicians duplicate the miracle by sorcery, and Pharaoh is unmoved
8:16-19	Gnats	All the dust of Egypt becomes a massive swarm of gnats	Magicians are unable to duplicate this; they say it is the "finger of God," but Pharaoh's heart remains hard
8:20-32	Flies	Swarms of flies cover the land	Pharaoh promises to let the Hebrews go but then hardens his heart and refuses
9:1-7	Livestock	All the Egyptian livestock die—but none of Israel's is even sick	Pharaoh still refuses to let the people go
9:8-12	Boils	Horrible boils break out on everyone in Egypt	Magicians cannot respond because they are struck down with boils as well—Pharaoh refuses to listen
9:13-35	Hail	Hailstorms kill all the slaves and animals left out or unprotected and strip or destroy almost every plant	Pharaoh admits his sin but then changes his mind and refuses to let Israel go
10:1-20	Locusts	Locusts cover Egypt and eat everything left after the hail	Everyone advises Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go, but God hardens Pharaoh's heart and he refuses
10:21-29	Darkness	Total darkness covers Egypt for three days so no one can even move—except the Hebrews, who have light as usual	Pharaoh again promises to let Israel go but again changes his mind
11:1-12:33	Death of Firstborn	The firstborn of all the people and cattle of Egypt die—but Israel is spared	Pharaoh and the Egyptians urge Israel to leave quickly; after they are gone, Pharaoh again changes his mind and chases after them

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