

MAJOR EVENTS IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY

The Word of God takes on new life when a person understands the major events in Israel's history between the years of Abraham and the birth of Christ. Old and New Testament prophecies regarding Israel and her relationship to various world powers are seen in a new dimension.

Once you are acquainted with the religious, cultural, and political setting of Bible times, you will better understand God's plan for mankind and you will have a greater appreciation of the times in which our Lord lived and gave birth to His church.

FROM ADAM TO ABRAHAM

(The Beginning to About 2000 B.C.)

In the beginning there was no sin. Adam and Eve lived in unbroken fellowship with their Creator until they believed a lie and chose to disobey the explicit command of God. From that time on all mankind would be born in sin and bear its consequence: death.

Yet a merciful and loving God did not leave mankind in despair; He promised a Redeemer, born of a woman's seed. Over a thousand years passed, and with the passing of those years man's iniquity increased until every intent of his heart was only evil. God was grieved in His heart and "sorry that He had made man." And with that He determined to "blot out man...from the face of the land." But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord, for he was a righteous man, blameless in his time.

When the flood came, only those in the ark were preserved: Noah and his family, eight people in all. However, the basic sin nature of those who survived had not changed, and it wasn't long before they too were in rebellion against God. And God knew that because they were one society and had the same language, nothing

which they purposed to do would be impossible for them.

So once again God intervened, though not this time to destroy man from the face of the earth, for He had put a rainbow in the heavens and had made a covenant which He would not break. God intervened by confusing mankind's language and scattering them over the face of the whole earth.

Then around 2000 B.C. God called a man to leave Ur of the Chaldees and go to a land which He would show him. That man's name was Abram. From Abram God would not only make a great nation, but through him He would bless all the families of the earth. Thus God made a covenant with Abram and his descendants forever, and with that covenant He changed Abram's name to Abraham, "Father of a Multitude." With that covenant also came the promise of the land of Canaan as the eternal possession of Abraham's descendants.

The Seed that God promised Adam and Eve, the One who would redeem mankind, would come not only through the seed of the woman, but also through the loins of Abraham and his descendants, Isaac and Jacob. To Isaac would be born Jacob, and to Jacob 12 sons. As God confirmed His covenant with Jacob, He changed Jacob's name to Israel, the one who fathered the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel. A covenant nation had been brought into existence by God. In the fullness of time the Redeemer, the messenger of the covenant, would come from the tribe of Judah.

But all was not well among Jacob's sons, for they were jealous of Joseph, Jacob's favorite, his firstborn by Rachel. As they plotted to take Joseph's life, Reuben and Judah intervened, and Joseph was sold into slavery and taken to Egypt.

While Joseph's brothers meant this for evil, God meant it for good. Joseph went from being a slave in Potiphar's house to being a vice-regent in Pharaoh's palace via a prison. In His sovereignty God used Joseph's position in Egypt to deliver Israel's family from famine in Canaan. They lived in Egypt a total of 430 years, the majority of these as slaves. Then around 1525 B.C. a son by the name of Moses was born to two of these Hebrew slaves.

FROM THE EXODUS UNDER MOSES TO THE MONARCHY UNDER SAUL

(1445 B.C. to 1051 or 1043 B.C.)

It was about 40 years after the birth of Moses that the sons of Israel cried out to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because of their great affliction. God heard their cry and appeared to Moses in a burning bush. The great I AM would deliver them from the house of bondage, from the land of Egypt, and take them to the land He promised to Abraham. Moses would serve as God's spokesman, as their human deliverer, and as the one to whom God would give the pattern for the tabernacle. In the tabernacle God would give the Israelites not only the means of worshipping Him, but a picture of the Redeemer who was yet to come.

After the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years because of their unbelief, Joshua took them across the Jordan River into the promised land. The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and the elders, and then there arose a generation who did not know Joshua, and the children of Israel served the gods of the people of Canaan and did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord delivered them into the hands of their enemies. But when the people cried out to the Lord in their distress, God raised up judges from among the people. And God was with each judge all the days of his life. But when the judge died, the cycle of sin and slavery repeated itself. There was no visible king in Israel and everyone did what was right in his own eyes. It was to be a theocracy, with God as King, but the people did not obey their God.

Finally, in the days of Samuel, the prophet and judge, the people insisted on having a king over them like the other nations. Although this request grieved Samuel, God gave them what they wanted, for they had rejected Him.

FROM UNITED KINGDOM TO DIVIDED KINGDOM

(1051 or 1043 B.C. to 931 B.C.)

Saul, Israel's first king, gave God sacrifice rather than obedience, and so God raised up a man after His own heart. David, the son of Jesse from the tribe of Judah, was anointed by God to become king.

David reigned from 1011 to 971 B.C. During that time his passion was to build a permanent dwelling for God in Jerusalem, the city of David. God saw the intent of David's heart, but because David had been a man of war, the building of the temple would be the task of David's son and successor, Solomon, born to Bathsheba.

On the day when the ark of the covenant was brought into the temple and the temple was dedicated to the Lord, Solomon fell on his face before God and reminded Him of His covenant promises. Fire came from heaven and devoured the burnt offerings, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple.

But Solomon disobeyed God. He married foreign wives and set up their idols on high places in Jerusalem. When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods and his heart was not wholly devoted to serving God, as the heart of his father, David, had been.

After Solomon died, God tore the kingdom of Israel in two.

FROM 931 B.C. UNTIL THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

In 931 B.C. the tribes of Judah and Benjamin formed the southern kingdom of Judah, with Jerusalem as their capital. The remaining ten tribes formed the northern kingdom of Israel and eventually made Samaria their capital. The northern kingdom immediately began to worship idols, so in 722 B.C. God allowed the Assyrians to take them captive.

Although the southern kingdom was warned by the prophets of God that they too would go into captivity if they did not repent of their disobedience and idolatry, Judah did not listen. In 605 B.C., just before Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon, he attacked Jerusalem and took the king and some of his nobles captive to Babylon. Among them was Daniel (Daniel 1:1, 2). In 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar again attacked Judah, this time taking about 10,000 captives to Babylon, Ezekiel among them. Then in 586 B.C. Babylon, now the predominant world power, conquered Judah and destroyed not only the city of Jerusalem but the magnificent temple built by Solomon during his reign over Israel.

Separated from Jerusalem and their temple, the exiles established **synagogues** as a means of preserving their faith. The synagogues became centers of learning and worship where the Jews recited the **Shema** (Deuteronomy 6:4), read from the law and the prophets, prayed, and delivered messages.

Men trained in writing who recorded events and decisions were called **scribes**. They assumed the responsibility of copying, preserving, and even teaching the Word of God in the synagogues. By New Testament times the scribes were considered **experts in interpreting and teaching the law** and were referred to as lawyers.

Having experienced firsthand the cursings of disobedience as promised in the book of Deuteronomy, the exiled Jews seemed to gain a new respect and appreciation for the Word of God. They saw that God meant what He said and would not alter it even for His covenant people.

It was sometime after the kingdom divided and Judah went into captivity that the exiles became known as **men of Judah or Jews**.

The Persian Period (539 to 331 B.C.)

When the Medes and the Persians conquered Babylon in 539 B.C., they became the predominant world power in Babylon's stead. Daniel 5 records this invasion.

Approximately 175 years before **Cyrus** (the king of Persia) was born, Isaiah prophesied that God would raise up Cyrus to perform His desire

(Isaiah 44:28). Second Chronicles 36:22, 23 records the fulfillment of God's plan: Cyrus issued a decree allowing the exiles of Judah to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their temple. Just as Jeremiah had prophesied (Jeremiah 29:10; Daniel 9:2), **exactly 70 years from the time of Babylon's first attack on Jerusalem, the Israelites were allowed to return to their land.**

The group which returned is referred to in Scripture as the **remnant**. **Diaspora**, the Greek word for scattering, became the term used to describe the Jews who remained in exile among the nations.

The book of Ezra records the return of the remnant and the building of the **second temple** during the time of Haggai and Zechariah. The book of Nehemiah records the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah and Ezra were contemporaries. Ezra is referred to as a **scribe**.

The book of Malachi records the last Old Testament prophecy given by God. After this prophecy God did not inspire canonical Scripture again for 400 years.

This 400 years of silence which followed the book of Malachi is called the **intertestament period**. Although God was silent in that He did not speak through His prophets during this time, the events of these 400 years testify to the fulfillment of much that was written by Daniel the prophet.

These years could be divided into three periods: the **Greek**, the **Maccabean**, and the **beginning of the Roman period**.

The Greek Period (331 to 63 B.C.)

The Greek period encompasses four different rulerships over Jerusalem, which includes the Maccabean rule.

Under Alexander the Great (331 to 323 B.C.)

As the Persian Empire grew and threatened the security of the city-states of Greece, Philip of Macedonia sought to consolidate Greece in an effort to resist attack from Persia.

In 336 B.C. Philip was murdered, and his son, **Alexander**, who was about 20 years old, became

king over the Greek Empire. Within two years Alexander set out to conquer Persia, whose empire now extended westward as far as Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey).

Over the next two years Alexander conquered the territory from Asia Minor to Pakistan and to Egypt, which included the land of the Jews. Although the account is not universally accepted by other historians, Josephus, a Jewish historian who lived about A.D. 37-100, wrote that as Alexander marched into Jerusalem he was met by Jaddua and other Jewish priests dressed in their priestly garments and by the people of Jerusalem wearing white robes.

In a dream Jaddua had been told to put wreaths on the city walls in order to greet Alexander. Alexander also had a dream which coincided with this event. When Alexander was escorted into Jerusalem and shown the prophecy in Daniel 8, which described the destruction of the Medo-Persian Empire by a large horn on a goat (which represented Greece), Alexander felt the prophecy pertained to him and offered the Jews whatever they wanted. Alexander treated the Jews well and did not harm Jerusalem or their rebuilt temple.

When Alexander built the city of Alexandria in Egypt, he encouraged many Jews to settle there in order to help populate the city. Whenever Alexander conquered an area he established Greek cities and colonies, bringing in his Greek culture, ideas, and language. His goal was to consolidate his empire through a common way of life and thinking which became known as **Hellenization**. **Koine Greek** became the common language in the countries ruled by Greece

and continued to be the primary language of civilization through the time of Christ. The New Testament was written in Koine Greek.

By 331 B.C. Alexander had conquered Persia. He and his war-weary army returned to Babylon in 323 B.C. When Alexander, one of the greatest military leaders in history, returned to Babylon, history tells us he sat down and wept because there were no more territories to conquer. He died in Babylon in 323 B.C. at the age of 33.

Because Alexander the Great died without an appointed heir, his kingdom fell into chaos. After 22 years of struggle among his generals, it was divided among four of them: Lysimachus, Cassander, Ptolemy I Soter, and Seleucus I Nicator. (See chart below.)

Under the Ptolemies of Egypt (323 to 204 B.C.)

Ptolemy I Soter, who took Egypt, was given Jerusalem and Judea. The Jews fared well; they were allowed to govern themselves and practice their religion without interference. Under his leadership Jews were permitted to go to Egypt. Some Jews were invited to go to Alexandria and become scholars. The Ptolemies moved Egypt's capital from Memphis to Alexandria and made it the center of learning and commerce. There the Jews were encouraged to use the Greek library, at that time the most extensive and best in the world. As a result many were caught up in philosophy and logic and drank deeply from the cup of Hellenism.

It is believed that Ptolemy II Philadelphus commissioned the translation of the Pentateuch into the Koine Greek. The Greek translation of the

The Division of Alexander the Great's Empire

Lysimachus
took
Thrace and Bithynia

Cassander
took
Macedonia

Ptolemy I Soter
took
Egypt

Seleucus I Nicator
took
Syria

Ptolemy I Soter and Seleucus I Nicator began a succession of competing dynasties for which the land of Israel became a pawn.

(see page 1427 for the chart showing these dynasties)

entire Old Testament, eventually completed about 100 B.C., was referred to as the **Septuagint** (meaning 70), or abbreviated as the **LXX**. Many of the New Testament writers quoted from the Septuagint.

Other writings produced during this intertestament period are the **Apocrypha**, the **Pseudepigrapha**, and the **Qumran Scrolls** (also called the **Dead Sea Scrolls**). The **Apocrypha** are composed of a variety of writings, including apocalyptic, wisdom, and historical literature. It is from the apocryphal book of First Maccabees that historians gained insight into the period from the Maccabean revolt through the time of John Hyrcanus. The **Apocrypha** were included in the Septuagint, although they were not part of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The **Pseudepigrapha** are a collection of writings even more extensive than the Apocrypha, but scholars cannot entirely agree on which writings comprise this group. These writings are attributed to noted people such as Adam, Abraham, Enoch, Ezra, and Baruch—but scholars agree that these claims are not authentic.

The **Qumran** or **Dead Sea Scrolls** were manuscripts apparently written or copied between 200 B.C. and A.D. 70 by a Jewish religious sect called **Essenes**. The particular community of Essenes who lived close to the Dead Sea seem to have practiced celibacy and a strictly disciplined communal lifestyle, separating themselves from others. The Dead Sea Scrolls describe the lives and beliefs of this group which lived in the last two centuries before Christ; they also include the oldest known manuscripts of the Old Testament. The scrolls are so named because they were hidden and preserved in some caves near an archaeological excavation called Khirbet Qumran on the western side of the Dead Sea.

Under the Seleucid Kings of Syria (204 to 165 B.C.)

Those ruling Syria, referred to as the kings of the north in Daniel 11, wanted the beautiful land of Israel. When **Antiochus III the Great** conquered Ptolemy V Epiphanes of Egypt, Jerusalem and Judea were brought under Syrian dominance.

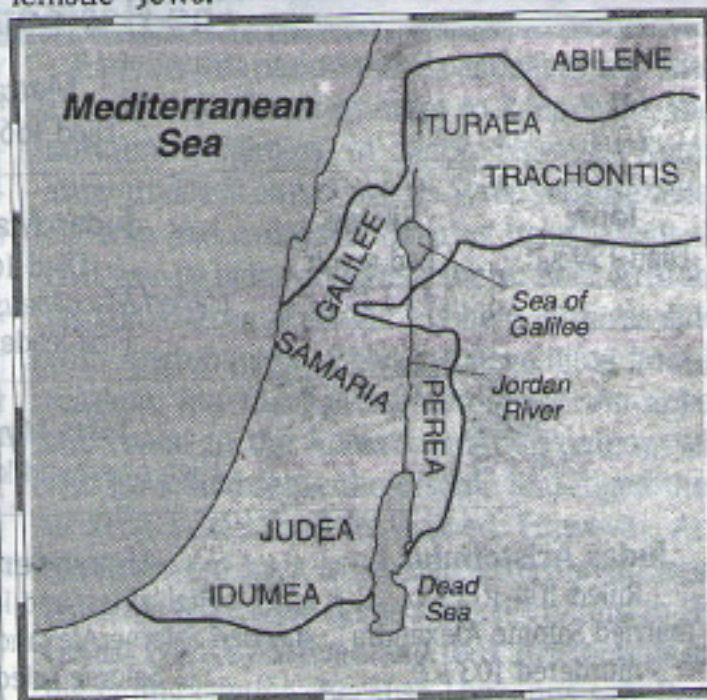
During this period the land of Israel was

sectored into **Judea**, **Samaria**, **Galilee**, **Perea**, and **Trachonitis**.

After gaining dominance over the Jews, Antiochus was defeated by the **Romans** and ended up having to pay Rome a large sum of money for a period of years. To make sure he complied, Rome held his son, Antiochus IV, hostage in Rome.

Antiochus III the Great was succeeded by his son **Seleucus IV Philopator**, who ruled from 187-175 B.C. In 175 B.C. **Antiochus IV Epiphanes** (the son who had been held hostage in Rome) usurped the throne by killing his brother. He ruled until 163 B.C. He was called **Epiphanes**, which means "manifest" or "splendid."

Until this period in Israel's history, the priesthood had been a matter of birthright and the office was held for life. However, during his reign Antiochus IV Epiphanes sold the priesthood to **Jason**, the brother of the high priest. Jason also paid Antiochus a high price in order to build a Greek gymnasium near the temple. During this time many Jews were lured into a Hellenistic way of life. All this brought a great conflict among the orthodox Jews and the "Hellenistic" Jews.



The conflict was heightened when **Antiochus IV Epiphanes** sought to take the throne of Egypt but was rebuffed by Rome. Because of that and because of what he surmised as a revolt in the priesthood, Antiochus **unleashed his anger on those Jews who wouldn't curry his favor or fully**

adopt Hellenism. He was determined to destroy Judaism. Circumcision was forbidden; those who disobeyed were put to death. Copies of the law were desecrated with heathen symbols or burned, while anyone found with a copy of the law was to be put to death. The Jews were also forbidden to celebrate the Sabbath. Then Antiochus sacrificed a pig on the altar in the temple and erected a statue of Zeus, an abomination of desolation, in the holy place (Daniel 11:31).

Finally, Antiochus sent his officers throughout the land to compel Jews to make sacrifices to Zeus.

The Maccabean Period (165 to 63 B.C.)

When Antiochus IV Epiphanes' officer arrived in the village of Modein (which lies halfway between Jerusalem and Joppa) and commanded the aged priest Mattathias to make a sacrifice to Zeus, the officer didn't know it was the last official duty he would perform in his life. As Mattathias refused, a younger Jew stepped forward to take his place. When he did, a furious Mattathias

plunged his knife not only into the Jewish volunteer but also into the Syrian officer. Mattathias fled with his five sons to the hills...and the Maccabean revolt, led by Mattathias's third son, nicknamed Maccabeus (the Hammerer), began.

Three years after Antiochus IV Epiphanes defiled the temple, the Jews recaptured Jerusalem. They removed the statue of Zeus and refurbished the temple and reinstituted Jewish sacrifices. On December 25 the Jews celebrated with a feast of dedication (John 10:22), which from then on became the annual feast of lights or Hanukkah. (See Herod's Temple on page IISB-38.)

Thus began what is referred to as the **Hasmonean Dynasty** as the descendants of Mattathias ruled Israel until Rome conquered Jerusalem in 63 B.C.

When Simon, the last surviving son of Mattathias, was murdered, Simon's son, John Hyrcanus, named himself priest and king. He ruled from 134-104 B.C. He destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim, and from that time on the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. After

The Hasmonean Dynasty

Mattathias

Died 166/165 B.C.

John

Died 159 B.C.

Simon

Led revolt
141-135 B.C.

Judas Maccabeus

Died 160 B.C.
(called Maccabeus—the Hammerer)
First leader of revolt

Eleazar

Died 163 B.C.

Jonathan

Led revolt
160-141 B.C.

Judas

Died 134 B.C.

John Hyrcanus I

High priest and king, 134-104 B.C.

Mattathias

Died 134 B.C.

Judas Aristobulus I

Ruled 104-103 B.C.
married Salome Alexandra
murdered 103 B.C.

Alexander Jannaeus

High priest and king, 103-76 B.C.
married Salome Alexandra (Aristobulus's widow)
Salome ruled 76-67 B.C.

Antigonus

Hyrcanus II

High priest and governor, 63-40 B.C.,
died 30 B.C.

Aristobulus II

King 67-63 B.C.;
died 49 B.C.
his granddaughter Miriam (Mariamne)
married Herod the Great

that Hyrcanus moved southeast and conquered the land of the Idumeans, who came from the ancient kingdom of Edom. The peoples of this land were given the choice of emigrating or converting to Judaism. This was the land of Herod the Great, who would someday become Rome's appointed king of the Jews.

During the reign of John Hyrcanus, the **Pharisees**, a religious sect of the Jews, arose from the **Hasidim**. The **Hasidim**, a militant religious community dedicated to the obedience of the law and the worship of God, began around 168 B.C. and was active during the Maccabean revolt. The word *Pharisee* means "separated one" and was probably used to describe these men because they separated themselves from the strong influence of Hellenism. During New Testament times the majority of the scribes were Pharisees.

Doctrinally the Pharisees viewed the entire Old Testament as authoritative; however, they also accepted the oral tradition as equally authoritative. To the Pharisee, to study the law was true worship. They believed in life after death, the resurrection, and the existence of angels and demons. Although the Pharisees taught that the way to God was through keeping the law, they were more liberal in their interpretation of the law than were the Sadducees. The Pharisees represented the largest religious sect, but their numbers declined when they fell into John Hyrcanus's disfavor.

The **Sadducees**, a smaller religious sect comprised mostly of the upper classes, were often of the priestly line and were usually more wealthy than the Pharisees. For the most part the Pharisees were of the middle-class merchants and tradesmen. The Sadducees accepted only the **Torah** (the first five books of the Old Testament) as authoritative. While they were rigid in the observance of the law and held to its literal interpretation, they denied divine providence, the resurrection, life after death, the existence of angels and demons, and any reward or punishment after death. They opposed the oral law as obligatory or binding and were materialistic.

The Sadducees controlled the temple and its services. However, because the Sadducees leaned

toward Hellenism, they were unpopular with the majority of the Jewish populace.

Aristobulus I, who succeeded his father, John Hyrcanus, married **Salome Alexandra**. However, when Aristobulus died, Salome married his brother **Alexander Jannaeus**, who became high priest and king in 103 B.C. This marriage created many enemies for Alexander Jannaeus because the high priest was to marry only a virgin.

When he died in 76 B.C., his wife, Salome Alexandra, took the throne, but as a woman she could not hold the office of high priest, so her oldest son, **Hyrcanus II**, assumed that position.

Civil war broke out when Salome died, because her younger son, Aristobulus II, who was supported by the Sadducees, sought to take the throne from Hyrcanus II. He was willing to give up that position, but Antipater (an Idumean and the father of Herod the Great) befriended Hyrcanus and persuaded him to seek outside help in order to regain his position as the rightful heir. Hyrcanus's forces came against Aristobulus and defeated him. He had to flee and made the temple in Jerusalem his fortress, but he was besieged by Hyrcanus's forces.

Early in this period the Hasmoneans had made a treaty with Rome in order to keep Syria, their northern neighbors, in check. Now the Roman army under Scaurus was in Syria because Seleucid rule had collapsed. Scaurus heard about the civil war in Judea and went there. Both Aristobulus and Hyrcanus sought his help. Scaurus sided with Aristobulus and had the siege lifted from Jerusalem, but the fighting continued. An appeal was made to the Roman general Pompey, who said he would settle the dispute and urged them to keep peace until he arrived. However, Aristobulus went back to Jerusalem to prepare resistance, which caused Rome's support to turn to Hyrcanus. Pompey arrived and took Aristobulus and his family captive. Because Hyrcanus saw Rome as an ally, he opened Jerusalem's gates to Pompey, who then besieged the city for three months.

The Period of Roman Rule (63 B.C. to A.D. 70)

In 63 B.C. Pompey conquered Jerusalem and

with some of his soldiers walked into the holy of holies. Although they didn't touch any of the furnishings, they alienated the Jews, who never forgave Pompey. About 12,000 Jews died during this Roman siege of Jerusalem, a supposed attempt to settle a civil war.

Rome broke up the Hasmonean dynasty and their territory. Judea was now reduced to smaller borders and its independence lost. It was now a territory of Rome. Hyrcanus II could be the rightful priest but not king. He was now under the governor of Syria, a Roman province. Scaurus was appointed governor. Aristobulus and many Jews were taken to Rome. Not much later Gabinius, a Roman governor of Syria, took control. He entrusted the temple to Hyrcanus and changed the government of Judea.

The Jewish state was divided into five districts governed by a council that remained under the jurisdiction of the governor of Syria; Hyrcanus, the high priest, was made ruler over Jerusalem. Antipater was his chief magistrate.

The high priest presided over the Sanhedrin, a 71-member council comprised of both Sadducees and Pharisees, which governed the Jews under the authority of Rome. Although the Sanhedrin seemed to have autonomy in the matters of the civil and criminal government of the Jews, apparently the Sanhedrin was not allowed to put people to death without the permission of the Roman procurator. The Sanhedrin is often referred to as "the council" in the Gospels and Acts.

In 55 B.C. three men—Pompey, Crassus (the governor of Syria), and Julius Caesar—controlled Rome. Crassus, considering himself another Alexander the Great, set out to conquer the world. However, just before this he stole the treasures from the temple in Jerusalem. Crassus and his army were later destroyed by the Parthians.

Parthia, southeast of the Caspian Sea and part of the Persian Empire, had been conquered by Alexander the Great. But Rome would not conquer them until A.D. 114.

After Crassus's death, Julius Caesar took Italy and then set out to destroy Pompey. Pompey fled to Egypt, where he was assassinated. During

this time Antipater supported Caesar, so out of gratitude Caesar gave him the official title of Procurator of Judea.

Antipater made his son Phasael governor of Judea and his son Herod governor of Galilee. Hyrcanus II remained high priest, although Antipater and his two sons robbed him of his authority.

In 44 B.C. Caesar was murdered by Brutus and Cassius. Civil war broke out in Rome. Cassius took control of the east. Because of the instability of Rome, Hyrcanus's rivals made a bid for power.

Antipater was murdered in 43 B.C. Antigonus, Aristobulus's son (who was supported by the Parthians), invaded the country.

At that time Herod came to the aid of Hyrcanus, who out of gratitude gave Herod a beautiful woman named Miriam. They were not married until five years later.

After that Brutus and Cassius were defeated by Mark Antony and Caesar's nephew Octavian (who would later become Caesar Augustus). Mark Antony became ruler of the east. In 40 B.C., when the Parthians invaded Palestine, Herod fled to Rome.

That year, at the urging of Antony and Octavian, Herod was made king of the Jews. It took him three years to rid the area of the Parthians and establish his rule in Judea. Just before laying siege to Jerusalem, Herod married Miriam (also called Mariamne), hoping that his marriage into the Hasmonean family would make him more acceptable to the Jews.

In 20 B.C. Herod began rebuilding the temple. The one built by Zerubbabel after the Babylonian exile was so pitifully small in comparison to the first temple that Herod was determined to make it larger and more magnificent than Solomon's. Although the temple itself was completed in a year-and-a-half, the construction and decoration of its outer courts continued for years, so in A.D. 26 the Jews would say, "It took forty-six years to build this temple" (John 2:20).

Herod, whose people (the Idumeans) had been forced to convert to Judaism under John Hyrcanus, was only a Jew in practice when he

lived in Judea. Although Rome gave Herod the title "King of the Jews," he was never accepted by those he ruled over.

Then "in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?'" (Matthew 2:1, 2).

The true King had come...the Ruler who would shepherd God's people Israel (Matthew 2:6).

Herod died in 4 B.C. But those living in Judea and Galilee saw a great light and heard with their own ears the voice of God, the King of kings.

The 400 years of silence had been broken.

FROM CHRIST TO MODERN TIMES

Many Jewish leaders were religious, but they did not know God. When Jesus came to explain the Father, they rejected Him. They rejected God's precious cornerstone. Consequently, once again they would be banished from their land.

Jesus warned, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand....for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people, and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:20, 23, 24). God had spoken. Had the people listened, they wouldn't have been caught unawares—but they refused to hear.

The Destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70)

The conflict between the Jews and their Roman ruler intensified. Tacitus, the Roman historian, said the Jews put up with things until the procuratorship of Gessius Florus. When the Jews rose up against Florus's army, war became inevitable. Nero commanded T. Flavius Vespasian to subdue the Jews. Vespasian reduced northern Palestine and secured the rest of the country, except for Jerusalem, Masada, and two other fortresses.

During this time, Nero committed suicide and civil war broke out in Rome. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius succeeded one another as emperor.

Then the eastern legions of Rome proclaimed Vespasian emperor, and Vitellius was murdered. Vespasian put his son Titus in charge of the war and sailed for Rome. In A.D. 70 Titus besieged Jerusalem. Over one million Jews died in five months. On August 6, Roman forces invaded the temple and, just as Jesus prophesied, not one stone was left upon the other. Jerusalem was burned. Titus went to Rome to celebrate his victory with his father.

Although some of the Jews fled to Masada, the Jewish state no longer existed. Sometime between A.D. 72-74 Masada fell to the Roman governor Flavius Silva.

Hadrian and Aelia Capitolina

In A.D. 132 the Emperor Hadrian banned circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath. He also made plans to build a temple to Zeus. These actions spurred Simon bar Kochba to lead another revolt. After Hadrian crushed the Bar Kochba revolt, Hadrian rebuilt Jerusalem in A.D. 136, named it Aelia Capitolina, and forbade the Jews entrance to the city on pain of death. That edict was enforced for about 500 years.

The Byzantine Period (A.D. 324 to 638)

In A.D. 324 Constantine became sole emperor of Rome. In A.D. 330 the capital was moved from Rome to Byzantium, which was renamed Constantinople (present-day Istanbul, Turkey) in his honor. According to tradition, Constantine became a Christian after seeing a vision of a cross and hearing the words, "By this sign thou shalt conquer." He proclaimed Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Constantine's mother, the empress Helena, began restoring the city of David (Jerusalem), locating Christian sites and building shrines over the places associated with Christianity. Helena and the city's bishop, Macarius, built the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on the site where they believed Jesus had been buried. Byzantine churches could be seen across the land. By the fifth century the Roman Empire divided and the eastern half became the Byzantine Empire, with its capital in

Constantinople. Rome became the capital of the western Roman Empire.

In the fifth century the Jews were permitted to pray on the temple mount on Tisha B'Av, the anniversary of the destruction of the temple. By the middle of this century Jerusalem was recognized as a patriarchal territory equal in status to Constantinople, Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch.

In A.D. 614 the Persians conquered the land, massacred the people, and destroyed the churches. In A.D. 629 the Byzantine emperor Heraclius reconquered Jerusalem.

The Early Moslem Period

(A.D. 638 to 1099)

Nine years later the Moslems were ruling. During this time Christians and Jews were permitted to worship freely. Jews returned to Jerusalem. The Umayyad dynasty reigned from 660-750. The prophet Mohammed's journey from Mecca to Jerusalem on his winged horse Al-buraq was linked to the temple mount, thus making it a holy site for the Moslems. In the seventh century, Caliph Abd ed-Malik commissioned the building of the mosque, the Dome of the Rock, on the temple mount. Thus Jerusalem became the third-holiest city for Islam. The Arabs built only one new city, Ramle, which Suleiman made his capital in the eighth century.

The Crusader Period

(A.D. 1099 to 1244)

In 1099, at Pope Urban II's appeal, the Crusaders crossed Europe to liberate the Christian holy places from the Moslems. The city was theirs after a five-week siege. Jerusalem became the capital of the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem. European Christian noblemen and bourgeoisie came to settle in Jerusalem. Mosques were turned into churches, and new churches and monasteries were built. For the next 88 years, Jews and Moslems were not permitted to live in Jerusalem, but only visit it.

The Ayyubid Interlude

(A.D. 1187 to 1192)

In 1187 Saladin, the founder of the Ayyubid

dynasty, took Jerusalem, destroyed the cross on top of the Dome of the Rock, and turned churches into mosques. The Jews were now allowed to return to Jerusalem. They came from North Africa, France, and England to settle alongside the Jews of Jerusalem.

Then in 1192 Richard the Lion Hearted and Phillipe Auguste of France restored the Crusader kingdom which had been conquered by Saladin. Jerusalem was divided. The temple mount and its mosques remained in Moslem hands while the other parts of the city came under Christian rule. In 1244 the Crusaders lost the city.

The Mamluk Period

(A.D. 1260 to 1517)

In 1260 Jerusalem was conquered by the Mamluks, military regiments from central Asia who were the new rulers of Egypt. The Mamluks established **madrasas** (institutes of religious instruction) and hostels for Moslem scholars and pilgrims.

The Ottoman Period

(A.D. 1517 to 1917)

The Ottoman Empire, comprised of Constantinople, Asia Minor, parts of Europe and the Balkans, Egypt, and Syria, added Palestine in 1517. Jerusalem was taken from the Mamluks by Ottoman Turks. Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent had the walls which still surround Jerusalem built at this time. After his death the Jewish community became more firmly entrenched as they built the Jewish quarter along the Zion Gate. Jewish scholastic centers were established in Jerusalem and Safed. The Christians split into various eastern communities.

In 1832 the Pasha of Egypt, Mohammed Ali, denuded the Holy Land of trees as he set out to build his ships. However, his approval of Christian missions and schools, foreign consulates, and archaeological expeditions opened up Jerusalem to Western influence. In the late 1800s a political movement called **Zionism** sprang up in Europe. Its goal was to create a homeland for Jewish people in Palestine. Jews fleeing eastern Europe and Russia and arriving in Abraham's land

were quick to adopt Theodor Herzl's vision for a free state for Jews. In 1897, the first Zionist Congress was held.

The British Mandate

(A.D. 1917 to 1948)

Four hundred years of Ottoman rule came to an end on December 9, 1917. Two days later British Field Marshal Allenby entered the Citadel and Jerusalem was pronounced the capital of the country. The Balfour Declaration promised the establishment of a national home for the Jews. In 1920 and 1929 Jews and Arabs had violent clashes. The Arabs rebelled in 1936-1939, and open war erupted as Arabs and Jews fought for control over Jerusalem.

From 1939 to 1945 six million Jews were systematically murdered under the direction of Adolf Hitler. After World War II, world opinion strongly favored the establishment of a Jewish homeland. By November 1947 the tension between Jews and Arabs was so great the United Nations decided to intervene, end the Mandate, and make Jerusalem an international city. The United Nations voted 33 to 13 to partition Palestine west of the Jordan River into two parts—one for Arabs, one for Jews. The Jews agreed, but the Arabs rejected the plan.

The State of Israel

(May 14, 1948)

On May 14, 1948, when the British withdrew, the Jews proclaimed the independent State of Israel. The next day Israel was attacked by Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. By December Israel won its independence. Jordanian soldiers, however, remained in the West Bank (biblical Judea and Samaria). Egypt held the Gaza Strip. When a cease-fire was declared in January 1949, the city was divided. Jordan held all the shrines encompassed by Suleiman's walls; the old city of Jerusalem was out-of-bounds for the Jews.

Israel prepared for the influx of more than 800,000 immigrants from 102 countries during the next seven years. Living conditions were austere, but the Jews were home! By 1957 the malarial swamps of the Hula Valley were drained

and the waters of the Sea of Galilee flowed south through pipelines, bringing life to the arid Negev.

The Sinai Campaign

(1956)

In 1956 Israel executed a swift victory over Egypt in the Sinai Campaign. On the guarantee of freedom of navigation in the Straits of Tiran and the Gulf of Elath, Israel withdrew her troops from the Sinai. Then later, once again, Egyptian troops moved to Israel's borders.

The Six-Day War

(1967)

The Six-Day War broke out on June 5, 1967. During that war Israel occupied Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, took the Golan Heights, and reunited Jerusalem under Jewish sovereignty for the first time since the Bar Kochba revolt, more than 1800 years earlier. The Jews could finally weep at the holy wall of Jerusalem, the wall of the sacred temple mount.

The Yom Kippur War

(1973)

In 1973, on Yom Kippur, the highest of holy days, Israel was attacked on Syrian and Egyptian fronts. After three weeks the Israeli defense forces finally drove the attackers back. Disengagement agreements were signed between Israel and Egypt and between Israel and Syria.

The Peace Treaty Between Israel and Egypt

(1979)

In March of 1979 Israel and Egypt signed a historic peace treaty returning the Sinai to Egypt.

On June 6, 1982, Israel launched Operation Peace for Galilee in order to remove from Lebanese territory the Palestine Liberation Organization's threat to its northern settlements.

The Middle East Gulf War

(1991)

In January 1991, when war broke out between Iraq and a coalition of nations headed by the

United States of America, Iraq responded with missile attacks on Israel—although Israel was not part of the conflict and remained out of the conflict at the United States's urging. The Middle East Gulf Crisis came to an end approximately six weeks later.

The words of Zechariah the prophet remain unfulfilled, but because of all that is transpiring, they are read with new insight and great anticipation:

Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go

forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle.

And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south....

Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!...

And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one (Zechariah 14:1-4, 5, 9).

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:20).

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