

Timeline of Old Testament Books & their Parts

| Timeline | Historical Circumstances | Torah/Pentateuch | Historical Books | Writings/Wisdom Lit. | Prophets |
|----------|---|---|--|--|---|
| 1000 BC | United Monarchy under David & Solomon | Yahwists begin national epic | | Psalms (1000–400s?) Proverbs (950–450?) | |
| 922 | Divided Monarchy Northern Kingdom = Israel capital, Samaria Southern Kingdom = Judah capital Jerusalem | Elohists write national epic for the north | | | <i>Elijah and Elisha</i> |
| 760 | | | | | Hosea and Amos preach in Israel; Micah preaches in Judah |
| 721 | Assyria destroys Israel and reduces Judah to a vassal state; then must pull troops out to fight Babylon back in the East | | | | Isaiah of Jerusalem advises Judean king against alliances (most of Isa 1–39) |
| 622 | King Josiah reunifies nation under the old covenant, then is killed at the Battle of Megiddo in 609 BCE | Deuteronomists (Josiah's scribes) merge J and E and take up the story from Moses' final words to a history of the people in the promised land; Dtrs write and revise through the Babylonian Exile | Deuteronomists write Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings Ruth? | Job (600s–400s?) | Deuteronomists edit Amos (2:4-5; 3:7) Nahum prophesies against Assyria just before Babylonians destroy it; Zephaniah prophesies vs. idol worship; Habakkuk prophesies of the coming Babylonian threat |
| 587 | Babylon destroys Judah kills Davidic line and exiles top leadership to Babylon, but then must fight off Persia to east | | | | Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophesy before and through the Exile; II Isaiah prophesies from Exile (Isa 40–55) |
| 539 | Persia defeats Babylon and allows the Jewish exiles to return, even subsidizes the rebuilding of some infrastructure like the Temple | Priestly writers regroup nation, merging J + E + D and adding their own stories of God's control and blessing = P <i>Final redactor adds connecting bits to piece the final Torah together</i> | The Chronicler writes 1 & 2 Chronicles (which recast the biblical history from Adam to 2 Kings with an emphasis on David) and Ezra-Nehemiah Ruth? (set in the period of the Judges, but possibly written after exile to counter Ezra's mandate against foreign wives?) Tobit (set in Assyrian period, but written after Babylonian exile) Judith (set in Assyrian or Babylonian period?, but written after Babylonian exile) Esther (set in Persian period, but written after Babylonian exile) | Song of Songs (after 539) Qoheleth / Ecclesiastes (300s) Sirach / Ecclesiasticus (200–175) | III Isaiah prophesies after the return from Exile; post-exilic edition of Amos; Lamentations and Baruch added to the Jeremiah tradition; Haggai , Zechariah , Malachi , Joel (post-exilic prophets) Jonah (set during Assyrian period, written after Babylonian Exile) |
| 332 | Greece defeats Persia Hellenistic Empires split | | | | |
| 198 | Ptolemies lose "Israel" to Seleucids, who antagonize Jews by imposing Greek culture | | | | |
| 168 | Maccabean Revolt Jewish family, Hasmoneans (a.k.a. Maccabees) wins, takes over kingship and eventually high priesthood, with Seleucids' blessing, splits Jewish society | | | | |
| 164 | | | | | |
| 63 | Pompey takes Jerusalem for Rome | | | | |
| 37 | Rome supports the Herodian family of Iturea in successful war against Hasmoneans; Herod the Great converts to Judaism | | | | |
| 4 BCE | Herod the Great dies Jesus is born | | | | |