

torical periods. The table below gives a brief overview of these historical periods. Note that all dates are approximate!

1750-1300 BCE	Ancestral Period	Israel's ancestors migrate from Mesopotamia to Palestine.
1300-1250 BCE	Mosaic Period	Some of the people who would become the nation of Israel are enslaved in Egypt. They eventually escape and migrate back to Palestine.
1250-1020 BCE	Period of the Judges	The tribes of Israel struggle to gain control of Palestine.
1020-922 BCE	United Kingdom	Israel becomes a unified monarchy under the rule of kings Saul, David, and Solomon. Jerusalem becomes the kingdom's capital city, and a great Temple is constructed there.
922-722 BCE	Divided Kingdom	Israel splits into two rival kingdoms; ten tribes in the northern part of Palestine form a kingdom called Israel, and the remaining two tribes in the south form a kingdom called Judah.
722-586 BCE	Southern Kingdom	The northern kingdom of Israel is conquered by Assyria in 722 BCE; the southern kingdom of Judah (which includes Jerusalem) survives.
586-539 BCE	Babylonian Exile	In 586 BCE, the southern kingdom of Judah is conquered by the Babylonians, who destroy Jerusalem and its Temple and take many of the Jews into forced exile in Babylon.

539-333 BCE	Persian Period	In 539 BCE, Babylon is conquered by Cyrus the Great of Persia, who allows the Jews to return to Palestine and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple.
333-166 BCE	Hellenistic Period	In 333 BCE, Alexander the Great and his Greek armies conquer Persia, Palestine, and Egypt.
166-63 BCE	Hasmonaean Dynasty	The Jewish Hasmonaean family leads a successful revolt against the Seleucid Empire (Alexander's successors in Syria, who were in control of Palestine at the time). Israel achieves autonomy, which lasts for a century.
63 BCE	Roman Period Begins	Troops of the Roman Empire, under the command of General Pompey, occupy Palestine and establish Roman control of the Near East.
6-4 BCE	Roman Period	Jesus of Nazareth is born.
29-33 CE	Roman Period	Jesus of Nazareth is executed.
66-73 CE	Roman Period	Jews revolt against Roman occupation forces; in 70 CE, the Romans level Jerusalem and destroy the second Jerusalem Temple.

Scholars' Methods

Scholars have a number of methods by which to answer historical questions about the Bible. First, scholars seeking to understand who wrote the Bible, and how and when that writing took place, can study the Bible itself for internal clues regarding the process by which the Bible developed. For example, traditions