

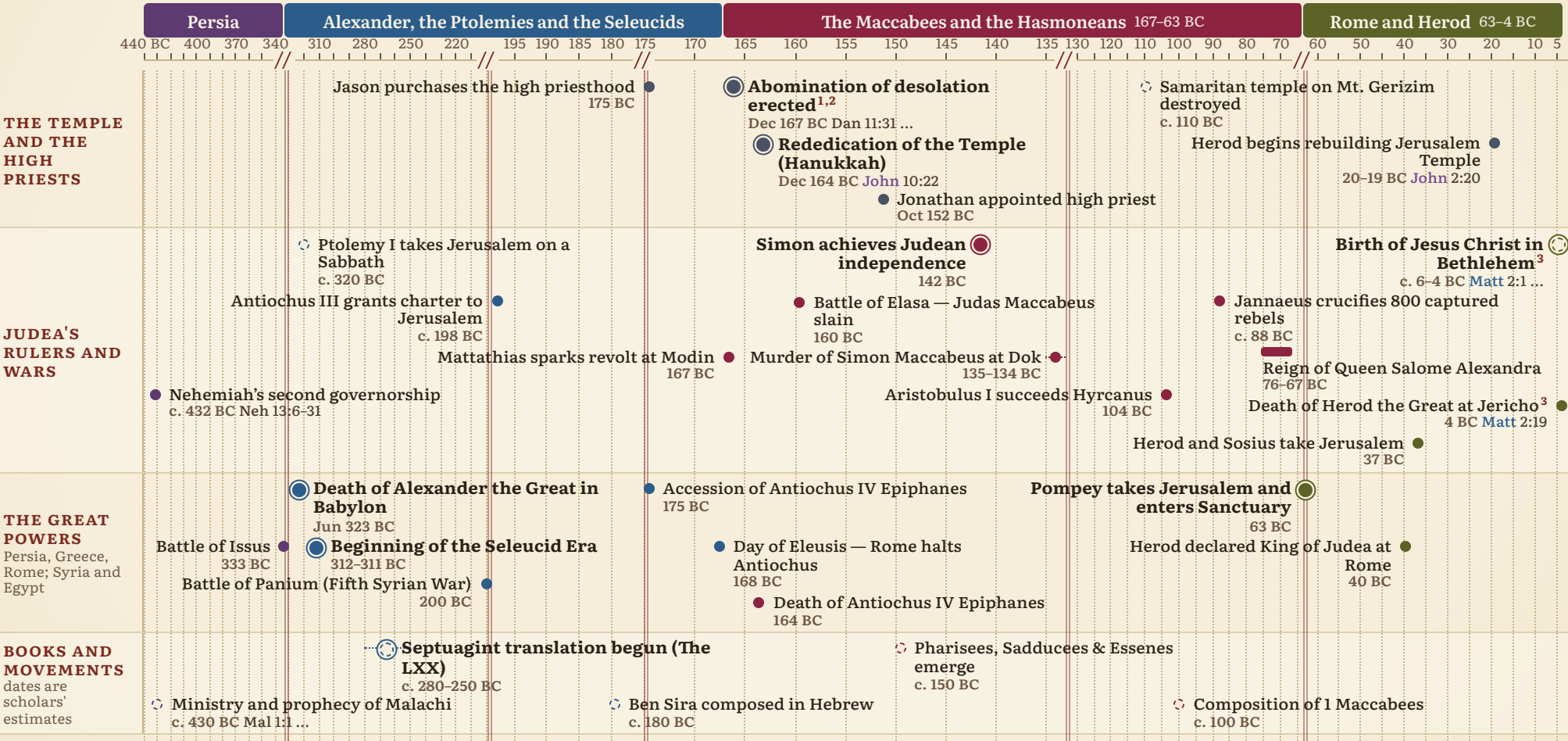
Between the Testaments

Persia, Alexander, the Maccabees, Rome and Herod — the centuries from Nehemiah and Malachi to the birth of Jesus, c. 432 – 4 BC

● event (date given or worked out) ■ lasted (reign, journey, ministry)
..... date uncertain — some time in this range ◌ dashed = reconstructed date (scholars differ)
// change of scale

“when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son”

 Gal 4:4 (KJV)



NOTES — every event with its references, the notes and the sources are on the pages after the chart in the PDF.

1 First Maccabees (1:54) dates the abomination to 15 Chislev, SE 145: Dec 167 BC counting the era from spring 311, Dec 168 BC from autumn 312. Most scholars take 167.

2 Traditional scholars date Daniel to the 6th century BC, critical scholars to c. 167–164 BC; on either view Dan 8 and 11 match Alexander, his successors and Antiochus IV.

3 Josephus: Herod died after a lunar eclipse, before a Passover, in his 34th year from 37 BC or 37th from 40 BC (part-years count) — 4 BC (eclipse 13 March). Some say 1 BC.

Between the Testaments — Study notes

Every event on the chart, with its Bible references, certainty and notes. One chronology for the whole series: the Bible's own numbers with the main ancient records. "c." = about; a range (e.g. 6–4 BC) = some time in that range.

DATE	EVENT	BIBLE REFERENCES	LANE	CERT.
The last century of Persian rule · 440–332 BC				
c. 432 BC	Nehemiah's second governorship Returns to Jerusalem to enforce covenant reforms Sources: The King James translators; Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein	Neh 13:6–31	Judea's rulers and wars	B
c. 430 BC	Ministry and prophecy of Malachi ¹⁷ Final Old Testament prophet confronts corrupt priests and unfaithfulness Sources: The King James translators	Mal 1:1, 8; 3:1	Books and movements	E
423–404 BC	Reign of Darius II Nothus King of Persia; reigns 19 years Sources: Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein		The great powers	C
419 BC	Elephantine Passover Papyrus Hananiah passes on word from Darius II to the satrap Arsames and gives the Jewish garrison at Yeb rules for Unleavened Bread (15–21 Nisan); the Passover itself is a restoration of damaged lines Sources: A. E. Cowley		Books and movements	C
Nov 407 BC	Elephantine temple petition to Bagoas Appeal to rebuild Yeb temple names Johanan and Sanballat's sons Sources: A. E. Cowley		The Temple and the high priests	C
404–359 BC	Reign of Artaxerxes II Mnemon Longest-reigning Persian king; rules 46 years Sources: Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein		The great powers	C
358–338 BC	Reign of Artaxerxes III Ochus Reconquers Egypt Sources: Diodorus Siculus (Loeb Classical Library translators); Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein		The great powers	C
336–330 BC	Reign of Darius III Codomannus Last Achaemenid king of Persia; overthrown by Alexander Sources: Arrian (tr. E. J. Chinnock); Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein		The great powers	C
333 BC	Battle of Issus Alexander defeats Darius III; opens Syrian coast Sources: Arrian (tr. E. J. Chinnock)		The great powers	C
Alexander, the Ptolemies and the Seleucids · 332–167 BC				
c. 332 BC	Samaritan temple built on Mount Gerizim ⁴ Sanballat builds rival temple for Manasseh Sources: Flavius Josephus		The Temple and the high priests	E
c. 332 BC	Alexander meets high priest Jaddua ¹⁰ Traditional visit to Jerusalem; shown prophecy of Daniel Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	E
332 BC	Alexander takes Tyre after 7-month siege Builds mole from mainland; subdues Phoenician coast Sources: Arrian (tr. E. J. Chinnock); Diodorus Siculus (Loeb Classical Library translators); Flavius Josephus		The great powers	C
331 BC	Alexander founds Alexandria in Egypt City destined to become major center of Hellenistic Judaism Sources: Arrian (tr. E. J. Chinnock)		The great powers	C
Oct 331 BC	Battle of Gaugamela Decisive defeat of Darius III; Persian Empire falls Sources: Arrian (tr. E. J. Chinnock)		The great powers	C

Between the Testaments — Study notes (continued)

DATE	EVENT	BIBLE REFERENCES	LANE	CERT.
Jun 323 BC	Death of Alexander the Great in Babylon Dies at age 32; his generals take over the empire (1 Macc 1:5–9) Sources: Arrian (tr. E. J. Chinnock); The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The great powers	C
323 BC	Partition of Babylon (The Diadochi) Alexander's generals divide the empire; Ptolemy takes Egypt (1 Macc 1:8–9) Sources: Diodorus Siculus (Loeb Classical Library translators); The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The great powers	C
c. 320 BC	Ptolemy I takes Jerusalem on a Sabbath¹¹ Takes the city without resistance; carries captives from Judea and Samaria off to Egypt, where many are settled in garrisons and at Alexandria Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	D
312–311 BC	Beginning of the Seleucid Era Seleucus I recovers Babylon (older books say 312; the Babylonian Diadochi Chronicle, which is damaged at this point, puts his arrival in spring 311, about May); the era is counted from autumn 312 BC (Macedonian reckoning) or from April 311 BC (Babylonian reckoning) and is used in 1 Maccabees (1 Macc 1:10) Sources: Bert van der Spek (translation), Livius.org; Elias J. Bickerman; Diodorus Siculus (Loeb Classical Library translators); The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769); Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein		The great powers	C
301 BC	Battle of Ipsus (Fourth Diadoch War) Antigonus defeated and slain; Coele-Syria is awarded to Seleucus but held by Ptolemy Sources: Diodorus Siculus (Loeb Classical Library translators); Plutarch (tr. Bernadotte Perrin)		The great powers	C
c. 280–250 BC	Septuagint translation begun (The LXX)¹⁸ Torah translated into Greek in Alexandria under Ptolemy II Sources: Flavius Josephus		Books and movements	D
c. 250 BC	Early Enochic traditions composed¹⁹ The oldest parts of 1 Enoch (the Book of the Watchers and the Astronomical Book); Jude 14–15 quotes a saying found in 1 Enoch Sources: Peter Kirby (Early Jewish Writings)	Jude 14–15	Books and movements	E
217 BC	Battle of Raphia (Fourth Syrian War) Ptolemy IV defeats Antiochus III and recovers Coele-Syria (Polybius 5.79–87) Sources: Polybius (tr. W. R. Paton)		The great powers	C
c. 200 BC	Simon son of Onias, high priest⁵ Repairs and fortifies the Temple; praised in Sirach (Sir 50:1–4) Sources: Flavius Josephus; The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The Temple and the high priests	D
200 BC	Battle of Panium (Fifth Syrian War)¹³ Antiochus III crushes Ptolemaic army under Scopas at Paneas Sources: Flavius Josephus; Polybius (tr. W. R. Paton)		The great powers	C
c. 198 BC	Antiochus III grants charter to Jerusalem Decreases temple subsidies, tax exemption & right to ancestral law Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
190 BC	Battle of Magnesia Scipio defeats Antiochus III in Lydia; breaks Syrian power Sources: Livy (tr. W. A. McDevitte)		The great powers	C
188 BC	Treaty of Apamea with Rome¹⁴ Antiochus III gives up Asia Minor west of the Taurus and pays a heavy indemnity Sources: Livy (tr. W. A. McDevitte); Polybius (tr. W. R. Paton)		The great powers	C

Between the Testaments — Study notes (continued)

DATE	EVENT	BIBLE REFERENCES	LANE	CERT.
187–175 BC	Reign of Seleucus IV Philopator Pays the costs of the Temple sacrifices from his own revenues (2 Macc 3:3), yet sends Heliodorus to seize the Temple treasure (2 Macc 3:4–7) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The great powers	C
c. 180 BC	Ben Sira composed in Hebrew⁵ Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach praises the high priest Simon son of Onias (Sir 50:1–4), most likely Simon II Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Books and movements	D
c. 176 BC	Heliodorus sent to plunder the Temple⁶ Syrian chancellor thwarted by angelic apparition (2 Macc 3:7–28) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The Temple and the high priests	E
175 BC	Jason purchases the high priesthood Buys the high priesthood from Antiochus IV, displacing his brother Onias III (2 Macc 4:7–8); gets leave to build a gymnasium and builds it under the citadel (2 Macc 4:9–12) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The Temple and the high priests	C
175 BC	Accession of Antiochus IV Epiphanes Takes the throne in SE 137 (1 Macc 1:10); Hellenizing Jews soon obtain his licence to adopt Greek customs (1 Macc 1:11–15) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The great powers	C
172 BC	Menelaus outbids Jason for priesthood Usurps office by promising 300 more talents of silver (2 Macc 4:23–25) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The Temple and the high priests	C
170 BC	Antiochus IV invades Egypt Defeats Ptolemy VI Philometor; returns from Egypt in SE 143 (1 Macc 1:16–20) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The great powers	C
169 BC	Antiochus IV plunders Jerusalem Temple Strips golden altar, candlestick, treasures on return from Egypt (1 Macc 1:21–24) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The Temple and the high priests	C
168 BC	Day of Eleusis — Rome halts Antiochus Near Alexandria the Roman envoy Popilius Laenas draws a circle round the king with his stick and tells him not to step out of it until he has answered; Antiochus gives way and leaves Egypt (Polybius 29.27; Livy 45.12) Sources: Polybius (tr. W. R. Paton); Livy (tr. W. A. McDevitte)		The great powers	C
The Maccabees and the Hasmoneans • 167–63 BC				
167 BC	Apollonius sacks Jerusalem & builds Akra Deceptive attack; city walls pulled down; citadel garrisoned (1 Macc 1:29–35; the name Apollonius is in 2 Macc 5:24–26) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
167 BC	Mattathias sparks revolt at Modin Slays apostate Jew and royal officer; flees to wilderness (1 Macc 2:1–28) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
c. 167 BC	The Assideans join Mattathias A company of the Assideans, mighty men of Israel devoted to the law, joins the revolt (1 Macc 2:42) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Books and movements	C
Dec 167 BC	Abomination of desolation erected^{1,2} Pagan altar placed over altar of burnt offering on 15 Chislev (1 Macc 1:54) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)	Dan 11:31; 12:11	The Temple and the high priests	C

Between the Testaments — Study notes (continued)

DATE	EVENT	BIBLE REFERENCES	LANE	CERT.
Dec 167 BC	Sacrifice begins on the idol altar¹ On 25 Chislev, SE 145, sacrifice is made on the idol altar set up on the altar of God (1 Macc 1:54, 59); the king's decree had required swine's flesh (1 Macc 1:47) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The Temple and the high priests	C
166 BC	Death of Mattathias; Judas takes command Dies in SE 146 and is buried at Modin, having told his sons to take Judas as their captain (1 Macc 2:65–66, 70; 3:1) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
166 BC	Battle of Beth-horon Judas ambushes and defeats Syrian commander Seron (1 Macc 3:13–24) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
165 BC	Battle of Emmaus Judas routs Syrian forces under Gorgias and Nicanor (1 Macc 3:38–4:25) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
164 BC	Battle of Beth-zur Judas defeats regent Lysias; opens road to Jerusalem (1 Macc 4:26–35) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
164 BC	Death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes¹⁵ After a failed attempt on a temple in Elymais, and on hearing that the Jews had beaten his armies and pulled down the abomination, he falls ill and dies in Persia in SE 149 (1 Macc 6:1–16; Polybius 31.9) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769); Polybius (tr. W. R. Paton)		The great powers	C
Dec 164 BC	Rededication of the Temple (Hanukkah)⁷ Altar restored; sanctuary consecrated on 25 Chislev SE 148 (1 Macc 4:52–59) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)	John 10:22	The Temple and the high priests	C
162 BC	Alcimus installed as high priest Demetrius I supports Hellenist Alcimus with general Bacchides (1 Macc 7:1–9) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The Temple and the high priests	C
162 BC	Battle of Beth-zechariah Lysias defeats Judas; Eleazar Avaran crushed by war elephant (1 Macc 6:30–46) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
c. 162–161 BC	Sixty Hasidim killed despite an oath of peace Alcimus, made high priest by Demetrius I, swears the Hasidim no harm, yet sixty of them are seized and killed in one day (1 Macc 7:9–16; Josephus blames Bacchides, Ant. 12.10.2) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	D
161 BC	Battle of Adasa — Judas defeats Nicanor General Nicanor is slain on 13 Adar, SE 151 (March 161 BC counting from autumn 312, March 160 from spring 311); commemorated annually (1 Macc 7:43–49) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
161 BC	Judas makes treaty with Rome Sends Eupolemus and Jason to Roman Senate; league formed (1 Macc 8:17–32) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The great powers	C
160 BC	Battle of Elasa — Judas Maccabeus slain Bacchides overwhelms the Jewish force in SE 152; Judas falls (1 Macc 9:1–18) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
160 BC	Jonathan takes leadership of the revolt Chosen by his brother Judas' friends to be their prince and captain after Judas died (1 Macc 9:28–31) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C

Between the Testaments — Study notes (continued)

DATE	EVENT	BIBLE REFERENCES	LANE	CERT.
c. 160 BC	Composition of the Book of Jubilees¹⁹ Rewritten Genesis-Exodus narrative promoting 364-day solar calendar Sources: James C. VanderKam		Books and movements	E
Oct 152 BC	Jonathan appointed high priest Alexander Balas names him high priest by letter; at the Feast of Tabernacles, in the seventh month of SE 160 (October 152 BC counting the era from spring 311, October 153 from autumn 312; 152 is the usual date), Jonathan puts on the holy robe (1 Macc 10:18–21) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		The Temple and the high priests	C
c. 150 BC	Pharisees, Sadducees & Essenes emerge First recorded mention of the three major religious movements Sources: Flavius Josephus		Books and movements	D
143 BC	Trypho captures Jonathan by treachery Lured into Ptolemais; later executed in Gilead (1 Macc 12:48; 13:23) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
142 BC	Simon achieves Judean independence Demetrius II grants freedom from tribute; the yoke of the heathen is taken away in SE 170 (1 Macc 13:34–42) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
141 BC	Simon captures and purifies the Akra Last Seleucid citadel in Jerusalem surrendered on 23 Iyyar (1 Macc 13:51) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
140 BC	Great Assembly confirms Simon's rule Jews decree Simon hereditary prince and high priest on 18 Elul (1 Macc 14:27–49) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
135–134 BC	Murder of Simon Maccabeus at Dok Assassinated with two sons by son-in-law Ptolemy in Shebat (1 Macc 16:14–16) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Judea's rulers and wars	C
135–134 BC	Accession of John Hyrcanus I Succeeds Simon as high priest and ethnarch; besieged by Antiochus VII Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
c. 134–133 BC	Antiochus VII Sidetes besieges Jerusalem Invades in his 4th year, Hyrcanus's 1st (Josephus, Ant. 13.8.2); after a truce for Tabernacles Hyrcanus gives hostages and 500 talents and the walls are pulled down (Ant. 13.8.3); the exact years are uncertain Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
134 BC	Hyrcanus opens King David's tomb Extracts 3,000 talents of silver to pay Antiochus VII and hire mercenaries Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
c. 132 BC	Greek translation of Sirach in Egypt²⁰ The translator, Ben Sira's grandson, comes to Egypt in the 38th year of King Euergetes II (133/132 BC) and translates the book there some time later Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Books and movements	C
129 BC	Death of Antiochus VII in Parthia Seleucid king slain in Media; Syrian control of Judea collapses Sources: Flavius Josephus		The great powers	C
c. 124 BC	2 Maccabees abridged from Jason Summarises Jason of Cyrene's five books (2 Macc 2:23); opens with a festal letter dated SE 188 (Oct 125–Sep 124 BC by the autumn-312 count, Apr 124–Mar 123 BC by the spring-311 count; 2 Macc 1:1–10) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Books and movements	D

Between the Testaments — Study notes (continued)

DATE	EVENT	BIBLE REFERENCES	LANE	CERT.
c. 128–110 BC	Hyrcanus invades Transjordan⁸ Takes Medaba after a six-month siege (Josephus, Ant. 13.9.1); Josephus puts it just after 129 BC, but excavations suggest the Hasmonean conquests came later (see the note) Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	D
c. 125–110 BC	Hyrcanus conquers and circumcises Idumea Captures Adora and Marisa; makes the Idumeans adopt Jewish laws Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	D
c. 110 BC	Samaritan temple on Mt. Gerizim destroyed⁸ Hyrcanus destroys it; coin finds at the site point to about 110 BC, but Josephus puts the conquest just after 129 BC and says the temple had stood 200 years (Ant. 13.9.1) Sources: Flavius Josephus; Yitzhak Magen		The Temple and the high priests	D
c. 108 BC	Hyrcanus besieges and destroys Samaria Takes city after one-year siege; channels rivulets to obliterate site Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
c. 107 BC	Hyrcanus breaks with the Pharisees Departs Pharisaic party to join Sadducees over high priestly insults Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	D
104 BC	Death of John Hyrcanus I Dies after 31-year reign holding three offices: ruler, priest, prophet Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
104 BC	Aristobulus I succeeds Hyrcanus¹² Josephus says he was the first Hasmonean to wear a diadem and be called king, and that he imprisoned his mother and, all but one, his brothers; Strabo gives that distinction to Alexander Jannaeus Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
104–103 BC	Aristobulus annexes and circumcises Iturea Conquers northern territory; forces Itureans into the Jewish covenant Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
103 BC	Accession of Alexander Jannaeus Aristobulus's widow Salome (called Alexandra by the Greeks) frees his brothers and makes Alexander king (Ant. 13.12.1); she is usually identified with Alexander's later wife, Queen Alexandra Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
c. 100 BC	Composition of 1 Maccabees Dynastic Hebrew history of the Hasmoneans, usually dated soon after John Hyrcanus died (104 BC): it ends by pointing to the chronicles of his priesthood (1 Macc 16:23–24) Sources: The King James translators (eBible.org / CrossWire standardized text of 1769)		Books and movements	D
c. 96 BC	Jannaeus captures and sacks Gaza Destroys the city after a year-long siege, killing its five hundred senators in Apollo's temple (Ant. 13.13.3) Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
c. 94 BC	Riot at the Feast of Tabernacles Worshipers pelt Jannaeus with citrons (etrogim); 6,000 slain by mercenaries Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
c. 88 BC	Jannaeus crucifies 800 captured rebels Scholars usually identify them with his Pharisee opponents; he has their wives and children killed before their eyes while he feasts with his concubines (Ant. 13.14.2) Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
76 BC	Death of Alexander Jannaeus at Ragaba Succumbs to quartan fever after 27-year reign; counsels peace with Pharisees Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C

Between the Testaments — Study notes (continued)

DATE	EVENT	BIBLE REFERENCES	LANE	CERT.
76–67 BC	Reign of Queen Salome Alexandra Governs Judea for nine years; restores Pharisees to religious authority Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
67–63 BC	Civil war of Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II Aristobulus ousts his elder brother; Antipater fans the conflict Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
Rome and Herod · 63–4 BC				
63 BC	Judea reduced to Roman tributary Stripped of coastal cities; placed under governor of Syria province Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
63 BC	Pompey takes Jerusalem and enters Sanctuary¹⁶ Captures temple on fast day Ol. 179; enters Holy of Holies but spares gold Sources: Cassius Dio (tr. E. Cary); Flavius Josephus; Strabo (tr. H. L. Jones); Tacitus (Loeb Classical Library edition)		The great powers	C
54 BC	Crassus plunders Jerusalem temple treasury Seizes 2,000 talents and gold beam before dying at Carrhae (53 BC) Sources: Flavius Josephus		The great powers	C
47 BC	Herod appointed governor of Galilee Antipater names his young son (about 25; the manuscripts of Ant. 14.9.2 read 15); Herod kills the brigand chief Hezekiah and many of his band Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
47 BC	Julius Caesar rewards Antipater the Idumean Grants Roman citizenship and tax immunity; confirms Hyrcanus ethnarch Sources: Flavius Josephus		The great powers	C
40 BC	Parthian invasion installs Antigonus as king Pacorus takes Syria; captures Hyrcanus II and Phasaël; Herod flees Sources: Flavius Josephus		The great powers	C
40 BC	Herod declared King of Judea at Rome Appointed by the Senate late in 40 BC under the patronage of Antony and Octavian (Josephus says Ol. 184, but that Olympiad ended in summer 40 BC) Sources: Flavius Josephus		The great powers	C
37 BC	Herod and Sosius take Jerusalem City stormed in Ol. 185 on "the solemnity of the fast", which Josephus says was the day on which Pompey had taken it, 27 years earlier by his inclusive count (26 years by modern reckoning) Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
37 BC	Antony beheads Antigonus at Antioch Last Hasmonean king executed (Josephus and Strabo say beheaded; Dio says flogged on a cross and then killed); end of the Hasmonean dynasty Sources: Flavius Josephus; Cassius Dio (tr. E. Cary)		The great powers	C
31 BC	Battle of Actium; Octavian defeats Antony Occurs in Ol. 187, Herod's 7th year; establishes Octavian as sole master Sources: Flavius Josephus		The great powers	C
30 BC	Octavian confirms Herod at Rhodes Herod pledges loyalty to Octavian; keeps his crown (Ant. 15.6.5–7) and soon gains more territory (Ant. 15.7.3) Sources: Flavius Josephus		The great powers	C
20–19 BC	Herod begins rebuilding Jerusalem Temple⁹ Commenced in 18th year (20/19 BC); main sanctuary completed in 18 months Sources: Flavius Josephus	John 2:20	The Temple and the high priests	C

Between the Testaments — Study notes (continued)

DATE	EVENT	BIBLE REFERENCES	LANE	CERT.
10 BC	Dedication of Caesarea Maritima Dedicated in Ol. 192 (Herod's 28th year, 10/9 BC) with lavish games after about 12 years' building (Ant. 15.9.6; Ant. 16.5.1 says ten) Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
c. 7 BC	Herod executes sons Alexander and Aristobulus Sons of the Hasmonean Mariamne, condemned at Berytus, strangled at Sebaste (Ant. 16.11) Sources: Flavius Josephus		Judea's rulers and wars	C
c. 6–4 BC	Birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem³ Born in Bethlehem in the days of Herod the king, in his final years Sources: The King James translators; Harold W. Hoehner	Matt 2:1; Luke 1:5; 2:1–7	Judea's rulers and wars	D
4 BC	Death of Herod the Great at Jericho³ Dies shortly after lunar eclipse and before Passover in his 34th/37th year Sources: Flavius Josephus; Fred Espenak and Jean Meeus (NASA Goddard Space Flight Center); Andrew E. Steinmann	Matt 2:19	Judea's rulers and wars	C

Certainty: **A** Stated in Scripture · **B** Worked out from Scripture · **C** Ancient record or astronomy · **D** Scholarly reconstruction · **E** Tradition / uncertain — scholars differ.

Between the Testaments — notes and sources

HOW THE DATES WERE WORKED OUT

The Old Testament history stops with Nehemiah and the New Testament narrative begins only in the days of Herod (Luke 1:5; Matt 2:1), so the Bible tells almost nothing of these centuries (Daniel 11 speaks of some of them, and John 10:22 mentions the Feast of Dedication). The dates therefore come from ancient historians (Josephus, Arrian, Polybius, Livy, Diodorus, Strabo, Cassius Dio), from 1 and 2 Maccabees and from the Elephantine papyri, with the Persian kings' reigns dated from Babylonian tablets and Ptolemy's Canon (Parker & Dubberstein). 1 Maccabees counts years of the Seleucid Era, which began in autumn 312 BC (Macedonian reckoning) or in spring 311 BC (Babylonian reckoning); the two counts differ by one year for part of every year, so both are given where it matters. A Jewish month converted to a Julian date can be a month out, so days are shown only where a source states them and otherwise the month or the year. Josephus counts Herod's years from 40 BC (named king by Rome) or from 37 BC (Jerusalem taken). Dates of books such as Malachi, Sirach and the Maccabees are scholars' estimates. Not drawn to one scale: the years are given different widths so that crowded periods stay readable — the quiet Persian and Greek centuries are squeezed and the years of the Maccabean revolt and of Herod are widened. Each change of scale is marked on the axis.

⚖ NOTES

1 First Maccabees (1:54) dates the abomination to 15 Chislev, SE 145: Dec 167 BC counting the era from spring 311, Dec 168 BC from autumn 312. Most scholars take 167. SE 145 ran from autumn 168 to autumn 167 BC if the era is counted from autumn 312 (Macedonian reckoning), and from spring 167 to spring 166 BC if it is counted from spring 311 (Babylonian reckoning). Chislev, the ninth Jewish month, falls in November–December, so the abomination was set up in December 168 or December 167 BC. Most scholars read 1 Maccabees as counting Jewish events from spring 311 and so give December 167 BC. Sacrifice on the idol altar, set up on the altar of God (1 Macc 1:54), began on 25 Chislev (1 Macc 1:59); the rededication three years later was on the same day of the month (1 Macc 4:52–54). (Dan 11:31)

2 Traditional scholars date Daniel to the 6th century BC, critical scholars to c. 167–164 BC; on either view Dan 8 and 11 match Alexander, his successors and Antiochus IV. (Dan 8:20–22; 11:2–4, 31)

3 Josephus: Herod died after a lunar eclipse, before a Passover, in his 34th year from 37 BC or 37th from 40 BC (part-years count) — 4 BC (eclipse 13 March). Some say 1 BC. (Matt 2:19)

4 Josephus puts the Gerizim temple in Alexander's reign (c. 332 BC); Magen's excavations indicate a Persian-period sanctuary there already in the 5th century BC.

5 Scholars debate whether the high priest praised in Sirach 50:1 is Simon I the Just (c. 300–270 BC) or Simon II (c. 219–196 BC), in office when Antiochus III took Judea. Josephus (Ant. 12.2.5) applies the title 'the Just' to Simon I, son of Onias I, under Ptolemy I and II. However, historical references in Ben Sira to repairing the temple after war fit Simon II following the Fourth Syrian War (c. 217 BC) or Fifth Syrian War (200 BC).

6 Heliodorus's attempt on the Temple treasury is known only from 2 Macc 3 (under Seleucus IV, 187–175 BC), which gives no year; the date is an estimate.

7 The rededication was on 25 Chislev SE 148 (1 Macc 4:52): Dec 165 BC counting the era from autumn 312, Dec 164 BC from spring 311 (the usual date). (John 10:22)

8 Josephus puts Hyrcanus's conquests (Medaba, Shechem, Gerizim) just after 129 BC; coins found on Mount Gerizim date the temple's destruction to about 110 BC. Josephus (Ant. 13.9.1) places the campaign against Medaba, Shechem and Mount Gerizim straight after the death of Antiochus VII (129 BC). Y. Magen, who directed the excavations on Mount Gerizim, concludes from the coins found there that the temple and the city were destroyed by John Hyrcanus about 110 BC, not in 128 BC as Josephus's order of events implies; the other Hasmonean conquests of the region are therefore dated here between the two views.

9 Josephus dates the start of the Temple rebuilding to Herod's 18th year (Ant. 15.11.1: 20/19 BC) or his 15th (War 1.21.1); John 2:20 says it had been 46 years in building. (John 2:20)

10 Josephus recounts Alexander meeting the high priest Jaddua at Jerusalem (Ant. 11.8.4–5); Arrian and Curtius, who describe his march from Tyre to Gaza, record no visit. The story of Alexander bowing to the high priest at Sapha and being shown the prophecy of Daniel (Ant. 11.8.5) is widely regarded by modern historians as an apologetic Jewish tradition (grade E). Alexander traversed the coastal road from Tyre to Gaza without a recorded detour into the Judean highlands.

11 Ptolemy I seized Jerusalem on a Sabbath (Ant. 12.1.1); scholars debate whether in his first Syrian campaign (c. 320 BC), after Gaza (312 BC) or after Ipsus (301 BC).

12 Josephus (Ant. 13.11.1) makes Aristobulus I the first Hasmonean king, Strabo (16.2.40) Alexander Jannaeus; Josephus's 481 years from the return are about 47 too many.

13 Most modern historians date the battle of Panium to 200 BC (Polybius 16.18 names the battle but gives no year); some place the capitulation of Scopas at Sidon in 198 BC. Polybius Book 16 mentions the battle between Antiochus III and Scopas at Panium (Paneas) in Coele-Syria only in a criticism of Zeno's account (16.18–19); that Antiochus conquered Scopas is stated in a fragment of Polybius quoted by Josephus (Ant. 12.3.3; Polybius 16.39). Jerome (Comm. on Dan. 11:15–16) says Scopas was routed near the sources of the Jordan and besieged in Sidon until famine forced him to surrender; modern historians put that surrender, and the final transfer of Judea from Ptolemaic to Seleucid rule, at about 198 BC.

14 The Treaty of Apamea (188 BC) made Antiochus III give up Asia Minor west of the Taurus, pay 12,000 talents in 12 years (15,000 in the first terms) and give 20 hostages. Rome's first terms (Polybius 21.17; Livy 37.45) asked 15,000 talents in all: 500 at once, 2,500 on ratification, then 1,000 a year for twelve years. The treaty itself (Polybius 21.42; Livy 38.38) names 12,000 talents over twelve years, 540,000 modii of wheat and 350 talents for Eumenes, after Antiochus's defeat at Magnesia (190 BC); the Loeb English of 21.42 prints "twelve thousand talents a year", an evident slip for "in twelve years" (Livy 38.38 agrees). Twenty hostages were also required, among them the future Antiochus IV (1 Macc 1:10). The heavy debt is the usual explanation for later Seleucid attempts on temple treasuries, including the Heliodorus affair under Seleucus IV (2 Macc 3) and the plundering of the Jerusalem Temple by Antiochus IV.

15 1 Macc 6:16 puts Antiochus IV's death in SE 149: Oct 164–Sep 163 BC by the autumn-312 count, 163/162 BC by the spring-311 count; the usual date is late 164 BC. Polybius 31.9 says that after a failed raid on the sanctuary of Artemis in Elymais he died at Tabae in Persia, struck by madness according to some.

16 Josephus (Ant. 14.4.3) and Strabo (16.2.40) say Pompey took Jerusalem on a day of fasting; Cassius Dio (37.16) says on the day of Saturn (a Sabbath).

17 Scholars date Malachi between about 500 and 430 BC: some in the time of Nehemiah's second term (Neh 13), others earlier, soon after the Temple was rebuilt. (Mal 1:8; Neh 13:6–12)

18 The Letter of Aristeas puts the Torah's translation under Ptolemy II (285–246 BC); the other books were translated gradually over the next two centuries.

19 Scholars date the oldest parts of 1 Enoch to the 3rd–2nd century BC (manuscripts c. 200–150 BC) and Jubilees to c. 170–140 BC; both are Jewish books outside the Bible.

20 The Greek prologue says its translator came to Egypt in the 38th year of Euergetes (Ptolemy VIII, counting from 170 BC): 133/132 BC; the translation followed. Counting from Ptolemy VIII's sole rule in 145 BC would give 107 BC, but he died in 116 BC, and Euergetes I (246–222 BC) reigned only about 25 years, so only the count from 170 BC fits.

Between the Testaments — notes and sources (continued)

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