

## LESSON I

# THE BIBLE

### *Markers*

1. Rev. 20:11, 12
2. Rev. 1:1
3. John 21:15-17, 20-22
4. Matt. 22:29
5. John 10:8
6. Mark 12:1-12
7. Deut. 18:15
8. Matt. 10:5, 6
9. Luke 16:8
10. II Peter 3:8
11. Matt. 24:37

## Lesson I

# THE BIBLE

The word "Bible" has reached us through Latin from the Greek word meaning "books." It is the word now used to designate the Holy Scriptures, which is a collection of books considered sacred by Christians.

- (1) Let us look at Rev. 20:11, 12. We read "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened." This

expression "the books" is, in Greek, exactly the same expression from which the word "Bible" comes. Thus we may equally well read "and the Bible was opened." We learn from this that the Bible is in heaven. This means that when we reach heaven, the books, or the Bible will be there. In other words, the truths contained in the Bible are there, hence are eternal and will remain forever.

The Bible is the textbook for this course. Our textbook is more than 2,000 years old. Can you imagine a teacher of chemistry or physics using a textbook 2,000 years old? Indeed, if the textbook were ten years old, the pupils would look askance at it. Perhaps this is an indication of the relative truthfulness of the facts being taught. Euclid's geometry is perhaps the only other subject of antiquity similar to the Bible which may still be considered true today. No one, however, would suggest studying geometry to elevate his moral and spiritual state.

(2) We have found that the book of Revelation tells us that the Bible will be found in heaven, that its truths are eternal. By what authority is this statement made? Let us look at Rev. 1:1, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." We find that Jesus is the author of Revelation and that John wrote down what God revealed to Jesus. Hence we have it on the authority of Jesus himself that the truths of the Bible will be found in heaven.

(3) John was the beloved apostle who survived the ordeal of the boiling oil according to Tertullian and was finally exiled to the Isle of Patmos where Jesus appeared to him when he was about ninety years old and dictated the book of Revelation. You may recall (John 21:15-17, 20-22) that when Jesus was leaving the disciples after his resurrection that he asked Peter three times "lovest thou me" and then Peter turned to John and asked what the latter was to do. Jesus replied, "If I will that he tarry till I come what is

that to thee? Follow me." Thus Jesus indicated he intended to return.

- (4) Let us look at Matt. 22:29, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." In accord with his advice, let us turn to the list of the books in the front of the Bible.

The Bible is divided into two testaments. The Old Testament consists of books written by prophets living before the time of Jesus. Their prophetic utterances, however, are not confined to the period before Jesus but refer to events before, during and after the time of Jesus.

The New Testament consists of books written during or after the time of Jesus. In this case also the subjects and prophecies presented by these writers include events extending from creation to the arrival of the heavenly kingdom.

The final decision on the selection of the books to be included in the Bible essentially as we have them in the Authorized Version was made at the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. It was at this Council that the great argument which had been dividing the Church was discussed. The argument was essentially over whether Jesus was God or was the Son of God. It was greatly complicated by definitions and implied meanings but basically it reduced to the above. Those who taught that Jesus was God won out. The facts of spiritual existence, however, are not subject to majority vote.

The Old Testament canon had already been chosen since it had been translated from Hebrew to Greek by the Jews in preparing the Septuagint for the benefit of Jews who could not read Hebrew. It was principally New Testament canon that was under discussion. Unfortunately at this time, the Book of Barnabas, which contains a careful summary of the prophecies concerning Jesus in the Old Testament, was omitted. Barnabas was a companion of Paul. The book he wrote contains a summary of many of the prophecies concerning Jesus in the Old Testament

and wonderful explanations of their significance and fulfillment. It truly reveals the place of Jesus in prophecy.

The Book of Barnabas was placed in the New Testament Apocrypha. This was a collection of books whose authenticity was in doubt, and which were written at the time of the preparation of the New Testament. Barnabas is based entirely on the Old Testament, hence its value, but the others sound as if they were written to tell the reader what he would like to hear. Apocryphal today means "spurious" or "false," but originally it meant "hidden." The ancient priests thought there were some things too important to put into the hands of the common people. Apocryphal was the term used to designate these.

The first books of the Old Testament are to some extent in chronological order. One set of historical books is the group beginning with Genesis and extending through II Kings with the omission of Ruth. These chronicle events from creation through Abraham to Moses, then the Exodus, followed by the leadership of Joshua, the period of the Judges, the Prophet Samuel, the reign of David, and on down to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and the captivity of Judah by Babylonia.

The first five books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are known as the books of Moses or the Pentateuch or five books. The more inspired portions of these books were very probably written by Moses. Moses gave the basic law. Later vast amounts of dogma, ritual and ceremonies were added by the priests and attributed to Moses in order to put the stamp of authority on these additions.

The historical books of the Old Testament through II Kings are composed of a number of documents written by collectors of writings. These include the Elohist document in which God is called Elohim, the Jehovistic in which God is called Jehovah, the J E document consisting of a combination of the first two, writings of the priests, and the Deuteronomic document supposed to have been discourses delivered by Moses shortly before

his departure. In the next lesson in this course we shall consider in detail the name and nature of God and refer in more detail to the Elohist and Jehovistic documents.

Following the Pentateuch there are twelve historical books from Joshua to Esther. Joshua was Moses' successor and he recounts the conquest of Canaan and the division of land among the tribes of Israel. In the books of Samuel is the history of Samuel and the reign of Saul and David. In the books of Kings there is a history of Israel and then of the divided kingdom. In Chronicles is the record of David, Solomon and the kings of Judah. In Nehemiah is an inspired account of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

The next five books from Job through Song of Solomon are called the poetical books. The book of Job depicts the age-old problem of good and evil and Job's successful, practical solution of this problem. Psalms is an inspirational collection of songs, poems and prayers. Proverbs is an excellent collection of moral maxims and discourses, many of which might be profitably taught to children and committed to memory.

The next five books, Isaiah through Daniel, represent the thought of the four major prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. All prophesy far into the future. Some prophesy into and beyond the present era. Isaiah is filled with prophecies of the Messiah.

The twelve remaining books of the Old Testament beginning with Hosea are known as the books of the minor prophets.

#### *Summary of the Books of the Old Testament*

5 Pentateuch	Gen.—Deut.
12 Historical	Josh.—Esther
5 Poetical	Job.—Song of Sol.
5 Major Prophets	Isa.—Dan.
12 Minor Prophets	Hos.—Mal.

It is generally conceded that the Bible has both a literal and a spiritual meaning. From a literal standpoint the Bible appears as an historical record of the Hebrew people. This historical record in the Old Testament has been examined using a fine-toothed comb by historians, archeologists and philologists. In years past scholars have felt that there were vast divergences between the historical record of the Bible and the history of the Bible period obtained from other sources. Increasing investigations over long periods, however, have in general resolved many of these differences. The Bible has been shown to exhibit remarkable accuracy considering the many authors, the vast period it covers and the many sources from which it was compiled. There are volumes of information obtained by archeologists confirming the historical record in the Bible.

If history were the only subject of the Bible then this book would be just as dated as a chemistry book 2,000 years old. It would be read by just about as many people as read chemistry books of that vintage. It is not the historical but the spiritual value which makes the Bible timeless in its application and interest and which maintains it as the most widely read book in the world. It is not of crucial importance whether the events recorded actually occurred. The truths taught, the logic, the deductions, the consequences are just as true as they ever were and just as applicable to the solution of the problems of mankind. The fact that investigations are constantly discovering new facts which support the historical record of the Bible is encouraging to the student in his present application of spiritual truths, but he is no wise dependent on their verity, as his acceptance of Biblical teachings is dependent on present application and proof.

Literally considered, the Bible is the history of the Hebrew people. Spiritually viewed, it is the record of the effect of the varying concept of God on the fortunes of

(5) the Hebrews. The Old Testament presents God. The New Testament presents his Son. The Old Testament has innumerable references to the Son and to the manner and even time of his coming. The references, however, are all heavily veiled and it was not at all clear to the people what they might expect. This failure of the prophets to make clear to the people the coming of the Christ, despite the many hidden symbols and references, caused Jesus to declare (John 10:8), "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers." They had robbed Jesus of his rightful place. The people had been told about God, but not about Christ. In the Old Testament people turned to God. In the New Testament they turned to his Son. Jesus presented the true idea of God and the people were absorbed by the facts of this new view of God. Unfortunately, they personalized this idea of God and eventually came to worship Jesus and then called Jesus God. In so doing, God was lost.

What is it that made the spiritual history of the Hebrew people unique? What was it that enabled them to triumph in the face of such adversities? What did they have that was lacking in other religions? The answer is this. It was the revelation that there is one, infinite, spiritual God. This separated them from all others. It was the fact that they had one God and only one. It was the sense that He was unlimited in power and presence. It was the concept that He was spiritual and not material. This early revelation to the prophets which begins the Bible was the source of their power. Why? Because it is absolutely true. When they obeyed this idea in thought and deed they were on God's side and invincible. When they fell away from the power conferred by the sense of one infinite God to belief in many gods, they then had no god. A limited god is no god. A material god is no god and powerless. The very idea of God involves the concept of infinity. As soon as God is less than infinite, there is the implication of another power. We are then faced with



two powers. This is like saying that there are two opposing rules. If we believe that there are two contradicting rules, we cannot solve our problems.

In temples in the Orient one will find idols with multiple arms, legs and eyes. This is an effort to make the god all-seeing and all-acting, i.e., to confer on matter a power it does not possess. In some temples will be found hundreds of identical idols with multiple arms and eyes. This is an effort to make gods all-powerful and omnipresent. This is because the gods are material and limited, and to make up for their limitations, the number of gods is multiplied.

As soon as one allows a symbol to represent God, even though it is understood to be only a symbol, then God shares his power with the symbol and soon the symbol is the only god and the true God is lost. Right in the second verse of the first chapter of Genesis God is called Spirit. To symbolize Him in matter is to lose the proper sense of Him as Spirit. This is so important that the Second Commandment warns against graven images.

This is the basic difference between the original Hebraic sense of God and many other religions. Most others either materialized their sense of God or else started on a material basis and never rose above it. The Hebrews accepted that the power of their one God was omnipotent, infinite.

You may have heard the common statement so often voiced by divinity students that the god or gods of the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, the Hebrews, the Hindus, the Buddhists and the Christians is the same god under different names. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are as many different concepts of God as there are people. These concepts are not by any stretch of the imagination the same god. It is the very fact that the early concept of god held by the Hebrews was so close to the true concept of god that they were distinguished from all others. Others did not have the same god under



another name. They had another god and it differed as night from day from the Hebrew concept of god. The God called Spirit by Moses is not the god called Baal by the Canaanites under another name. The qualities of Spirit are not the qualities of Baal. People are not all worshipping the same god under different names. Differing concepts of god involve different gods and the worship of different gods must give way to the one true concept of God revealed in the Bible to which all must come. Jesus was the great demonstrator of what this true concept of God is.

The events recorded in the Old Testament close at about 350 B.C. although some of the actual writing of the books may have occurred later. The Septuagint translation of the Old Testament into Greek was prepared about 285 B.C. Later occurred the Maccabean revolt and eventually the conquest of Judea and Jerusalem by the Romans.

The New Testament begins with the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The word gospel means good story or good tale. The story of Jesus and his ministry is repeated to some extent in each of the Gospels. A large number of incidents are related in John which are not found in the other three Gospels. This seems to indicate that John may have seen the others before he wrote his and so omitted some of the events they related and added some that they omitted.

Matthew and Luke give the genealogy of Jesus, whereas John gives his spiritual origin. Matthew and Luke recount the virgin birth of Jesus. Except for the brief account of Jesus' birth and the flight of Mary and Joseph into Egypt and their return, and a mention of Jesus in the temple at the age of twelve, the four Gospels cover only the three-year period of Jesus' ministry beginning when he was about thirty. They do not concern themselves with the history of his life but with his statements of truth and their demonstration. It is the

truth that he taught and demonstrated that transformed the thought of ages and began a new era.

- (6) Jesus related a parable depicting the reception which the prophets had received and which He himself was receiving. Let us read Mark 12:1-12. The story tells the people that God has sent his prophets, but see how the people have treated them. Now the Son is here. How will they treat him? He essentially said "I am the Son." He was making it crystal clear. Why did He continue to preach to the Children of Israel although they were attempting to kill him? It was because He had been sent to teach and heal the Children of Israel by God. Moses said (Deut. 18:15), "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the Midst of thee, of thy brethen, like unto me—unto him ye shall hearken."
- (7) Jesus said (Matt. 10:5, 6), "Go not into the way of the Gentiles and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not—But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."
- (8)

- (9) Jesus foresaw that those to whom he had not been sent would be more receptive to his teachings, but in accordance with God's promise to the Hebrews, Jesus fulfilled his mission of teaching the truth to them. He said (Luke 16:8), "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of Light." The children of the Light were the Hebrews. He was saying that the Gentiles were wiser than the Children of Israel.

In the Old Testament non-Jews are called heathen. They weren't necessarily idol-worshippers. In the New Testament non-Jews are called Gentiles.

Although he did not leave a written record, Jesus' faith in the immortality of his words was such that he knew his work would not be in vain.

The Book of Acts of the Apostles related the events following Jesus' departure and is a historical book recounting the influence of Jesus' teachings and their practice by the apostles as they spread the gospel. In this

book are recounted events relating to Peter and concerning Paul's conversion and ministry. Paul traveled through the Greek and Roman world preaching to the Children of Israel, but gradually the Gentile world began to listen. It has been suggested that their lack of a long prophetic tradition overlaid with thick layers of priestly dogma enabled them to recognize more easily a new prophet and the vitality of his truth. It is interesting to consider how many times in religious history a prophet, trained in the traditional church, has arisen to proclaim a new and higher sense of eternal Truth, and been immediately denounced by all the hide-bound, dogma-laden members of his own group, with the result that a new religion has been born solely by force of circumstances and with no initial intent on the part of the new leader. Jesus tried to reform the Church of Judah. It refused to change. As a result Christianity was born. Later Luther tried to reform the Christian Church. It refused to change. As a result Protestantism was born.

In Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews he gives a marvelous explanation to the Jews of the symbolic significance of their rites and ceremonies and how they pointed to Jesus. Then he explains that Jesus has come so they should leave the symbols and ceremonies and listen to his teachings.

The next books of the Old Testament consist of a series of letters written by Paul to various churches and individuals in such a vein as would appeal best to the church or person being exhorted. Next are some letters by others and finally the Revelation or Apocalypse of John as revealed to him by Jesus.

The Authorized Version contains all that the student needs as a guide and is sufficient for this purpose. There exist a few other books not regularly included, known as the Apocrypha. The Old Testament Apocrypha contains some books which add a little information. Some of the events sound rather mythical and were properly kept apart.

As already explained the New Testament Apocrypha contains one excellent book called Barnabas which recounts many of the events in our Old Testament pointing to Jesus' place in Bible prophecy. Other books are of lesser interest and one of them is an attempt to invent a historical record of Jesus' life as a youth.

### *Bible Chronology*

In order to place events in the Bible in their proper relation, it is necessary to have a knowledge of Bible chronology. This need not be extensive nor of extreme accuracy, but the memorization of a few dates will be found helpful.

The historical record of the Bible begins with the allegory of Adam and Eve. This event is placed in the garden of Eden. Eden may have been the Edin of Babylonia on the bank of the Euphrates. The date of this event has been set at about 4000 B.C. Susa (the Shushan of the Bible) was a city located near the head of the Persian Gulf. Eridu was a seaport on the Persian Gulf.

The next important Biblical event is the Flood occurring about 2348 B.C.

The next event is the birth of Abraham in 2000 B.C. Abraham is the first person in the Bible called a "Hebrew" meaning "from the other side." This referred to his coming from the other side of the Euphrates River. The term "Hebrews" was used by others to designate those who had migrated from Ur in Babylonia (Chaldea), which is in northeastern Arabia. Abraham first migrated northward to Haran and then southwestward to Canaan.

The next important date is 1700 B.C. when Joseph was sold to the Ishmeelites. Then we have the Exodus occurring about 1500 B.C. Next we have David King over all Israel about 1000 B.C.

Following this is the division into two kingdoms about 975 B.C. The northern kingdom was called Israel and

the southern was called Judah. Important prophets of the northern kingdom were Elijah, 875 B.C., and Elisha, 850 B.C. Israel had its capital at Samaria and it was finally captured by Assyria about 722 B.C. A large deportation of the population occurred and the conquerors became a foreign element which mixed with the Israelites to become the Samaritans.

The northern kingdom's capital was finally Samaria. The people were largely involved in idol-worship. Finally the Jews ostracized the Samaritans as indicated by the story of Jesus and the woman at the well.

Recall Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan. See the significance of this parable when the priest and Levite passed by but a Samaritan gave the injured one help. He was showing that only goodness counted.

Judah, the southern kingdom had important prophets at the following dates:

Isaiah .....	700 B.C.
Micah .....	700 B.C.
Jeremiah .....	600 B.C.
Ezekiel .....	575 B.C.
Zechariah .....	520 B.C.

Jerusalem in Judah was captured by Babylonia in 586 B.C. and the Jews dispersed in the Babylonian Empire. In 536 B.C. Babylon was captured by Cyrus the Persian. The Persians were tolerant of the Jewish religion and various groups returned to Jerusalem. Nehemiah rebuilt the walls about 440 B.C. and the Jews developed their system of religion known as Judaism. In 330 B.C. Alexander the Great defeated the Persians and Greek influence became predominant. Following Alexander, about 285 B.C., the Septuagint, the translation into Greek of the Old Testament was prepared for Greek-reading Jews to provide them with their religious teachings and to combat Greek philosophy. In 166 B.C. the Jews gained independ-

ence by the Maccabean revolt. This ended in 63 B.C. with the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey the Roman general. It was about the period of 166 B.C. that the book of Daniel appears to have been compiled. The historical events in this book, however, deal with a much earlier period, about 500-600 B.C. when Daniel lived.

According to our present calendar it appears that the birth of Jesus occurred about 4 B.C. and his crucifixion and ascension about 29 or 30 A.D.

Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D. The ascension of John occurred about 90-100 A.D.

*Summary of Bible Chronology  
(approximate dates)*

4000 B.C.	Adam period
2384 B.C.	Flood
2000 B.C.	Abraham
1700 B.C.	Joseph in Egypt
1635 B.C.	Death of Joseph
1571 B.C.	Birth of Moses
1500 B.C.	Exodus
1000 B.C.	David
975 B.C.	Division into two kingdoms
875 B.C.	Elijah (Israel)
850 B.C.	Elisha (Israel)
722 B.C.	Israel captured by Assyria
700 B.C.	Isaiah (Judah)
604 B.C.	Daniel in Babylon
600 B.C.	Jeremiah (Judah)
575 B.C.	Ezekiel (Judah)
520 B.C.	Zechariah (Judah)
586 B.C.	Judah captured by Babylonia
536 B.C.	Babylonia captured by the Persians
440 B.C.	Nehemiah
330 B.C.	Persians defeated by Alexander
166 B.C.	Maccabean revolt
63 B.C.	Jerusalem captured by the Romans

4 B.C.	Jesus born
29 A.D.	Ascension of Jesus
70 A.D.	Jerusalem destroyed by Titus
90 A.D.	Ascension of John

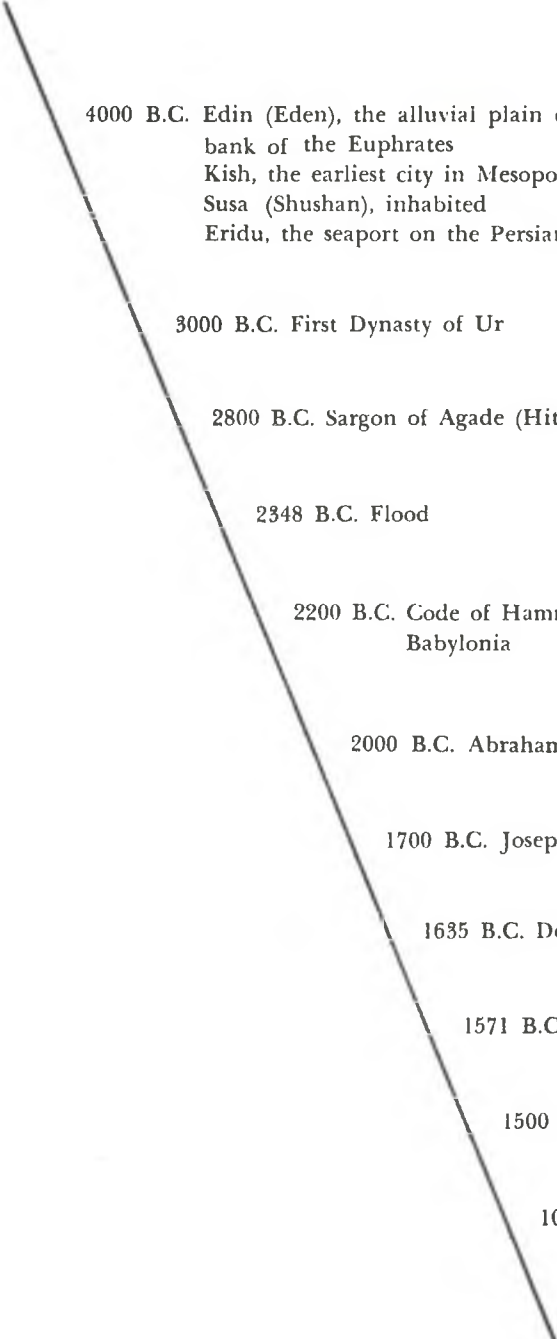
(10) The historical and prophetic Bible record covers the whole span of civilization stemming from the Adam period as the Hebrews saw it. Creation was complete in seven days. In II Peter 3:8 we read, "But, beloved he not ignorant of of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." On this basis one may conclude that this civilization is to be completed in 7,000 years. That is, the kingdom of heaven would be reached in that time. If we consider this a conditional prophecy, then this result will be achieved in such a time provided man measures up to the requirements. If not, it may take a million years.

The seven one-thousand-year periods are represented in Revelation by the opening of seven seals in chapter six and by the blowing of seven trumpets in chapter eight. A careful study of these will show their relation to important events occurring at the thousand year intervals.

(11) In Jesus' time some people thought that the kingdom of heaven would come at any moment. Jesus indicated otherwise, however. He knew that tremendous growth was required and that it would take a long time. He said (Matt. 24:37), "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Noah lived 950 years and thus we find that the second coming of Christ would take at least this long and this event must precede the arrival of the heavenly kingdom.

It is now six thousand years since Adam, leaving a scant thousand to fulfill the conditions required to be able to complete all prophecy. It appears that unless the solutions to the problems of mortal existence are going to drag on without limit we may expect a sudden surge in the near future.





4000 B.C. Edin (Eden), the alluvial plain of Babylonia on the  
bank of the Euphrates  
Kish, the earliest city in Mesopotamia  
Susa (Shushan), inhabited  
Eridu, the seaport on the Persian Gulf

3000 B.C. First Dynasty of Ur

2800 B.C. Sargon of Agade (Hittite)

2348 B.C. Flood

2200 B.C. Code of Hammurabi, King of  
Babylonia

2000 B.C. Abraham

1700 B.C. Joseph in Egypt

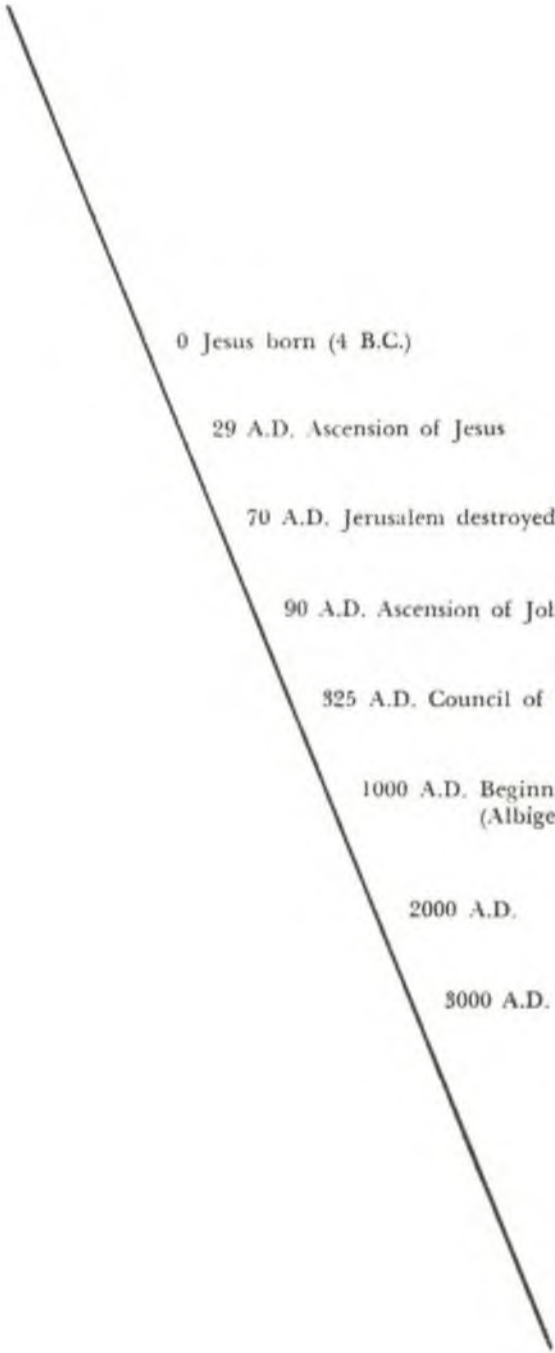
1635 B.C. Death of Joseph

1571 B.C. Birth of Moses

1500 B.C. Exodus

1000 B.C. David

	1000 B.C. David
	975 B.C. Division into Israel and Judah
	875 B.C. Elijah (Israel)
	850 B.C. Elisha (Israel)
Isaiah (Judah)	722 B.C. Israel captured by Assyria
	700 B.C.
Jeremiah (Judah)	604 B.C. Daniel in Babylon
	600 B.C.
Judah captured by Babylonia	586 B.C.
Ezekiel (Judah)	575 B.C.
Zechariah (Judah)	536 B.C. Babylonia captured by the Persians
	520 B.C. Zerubabel rebuilds the temple at Jerusalem
Malachi	440 B.C. Nehemiah rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem
	400 B.C.
Septuagint	285 B.C.
Maccabean revolt	166 B.C. Book of Dan.
Jerusalem captured by the Romans	63 B.C.
Jesus born	0 (4 B.C.)



0 Jesus born (4 B.C.)

29 A.D. Ascension of Jesus

70 A.D. Jerusalem destroyed by Titus

90 A.D. Ascension of John

325 A.D. Council of Nicaea

1000 A.D. Beginning of Protestantism  
(Albigenses)

2000 A.D.

3000 A.D.