ALL dates are approximate and refer to the period B.C.

Before 100,000. *Palaeanthropus palestinensis*, chiefly in the Mount Carmel region of Palestine; a mixed race which stood much closer to Cro-Magnon man (*Homo sapiens*) than to the Neanderthal race.

8000–5500. The Natufian or Mesolithic (Middle Stone) Age in Palestine. Grain was cultivated and prepared, but Natufian man was still far more of a food gatherer (hunting, fishing) than a food producer. Domestication of the dog.

5500–4000. The Neolithic (New, or Late, Stone) Age in Palestine. Villages were established, sometimes around shrines. Pottery was introduced. Semites from vast Syrian and Arabian deserts overran the “Fertile Crescent,” sometimes to remain. Increased domestication of animals, e.g., sheep. The Near Eastern Neolithic culture preceded the European by several millennia and influenced it considerably.

4000–3300. The Chalcolithic Age. Copper employed as well as flint. Pottery increasingly common.
Writing invented in Mesopotamia. The Jordan and Esdraelon valleys in Palestine settled, as well as other parts of the Near East.


vasion of Mediterranean coast of Palestine and Syria by the Philistines and other “sea peoples” from the Aegean regions. Habiru on both sides of the Jordan develop into separate nations: Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Israelites. Period of the Judges. Hebrew and Israelite tribes in struggle against the Canaanites and others in their midst and round about them. The Philistine threat spurs on most of the tribes to unite under Saul (1020–1005), Israel’s first king.

1005–925. The United Israelite Kingdom under David (1005–965) and Solomon (965–925). The Israelite empire was the dominant power in western Asia.

925–875. The Divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The incursions of Shishak the Egyptian into Israel and Judah resulted in the reduction of Judean prosperity and thus ended her economic and political dominance over Israel. Judah maintained an adequate defence against hostile neighbors and continued to enjoy limited prosperity. Israel was continually faced with a military threat from Aram.

875–750. The Assyrian Threat. The dynasty of Omri, followed by that of Jehu, in Israel continued friendly relations with Phoenicia in response to the continued threat from Aram. The latter part of the ninth century saw the rise of an even greater threat—the warlike Assyrians. Elijah, Elisha, and Amos were prophets in Israel. The judicial and religious reforms of Jehoshaphat in Judah
were followed by violent internal struggles over succession to the throne and frequent incursions of Aramean forces. Uzziah (about 780–740) restored internal stability and led Judah to the peak of her power and prosperity.

750–650. The Fall of Israel. The past glories of the Davidic empire were momentarily revived in Israel until Assyrian power overwhelmed her and Israel fell (722). Hosea the prophet in Israel. A narrow margin of prosperity was maintained in Judah under the constant threat of the Assyrian forces. Assyria attacked Judah in force (700) but failed to carry through a definitive conquest. Isaiah and Micah the prophets in Judah.

650–586. The Fall of Judah. The final generation of Judah’s independence was marred by frequent conflict with Assyria. Josiah, with the aid of the prophet Jeremiah, put through some religious reforms. Assyrian domination in the Near East was finally broken by Babylonian-Chaldean forces which, under Nebuchadnezzar, conquered Judah (586).

586–539. The Babylonian Captivity. The fall of Jerusalem (586) marked the beginning of the Babylonian Exile which was ended in 539 by the Edict of Liberation of Cyrus the Persian, conqueror of Babylon-Chaldea. Ezekiel and Second Isaiah the prophets of the Exile.

539–400. The First Return to Judah. Zerubbabel and
Chronological Summary

Joshua the secular and religious heads of Judea. Haggai and Zechariah the prophets in Judea. Temple in Jerusalem rebuilt.


300. Hellenistic civilization overwhelms Western Asia and Egypt, following the conquests by Alexander the Great.
Suggestions for Further Reading

IN understanding the development of western civilization the Bible is unquestionably the most important single text, and no heir to this tradition who has not read it can consider himself educated. Of the translations available in English the best are *The Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament* (New York, 1952) and *The Old Testament—an American Translation*, rev. ed. by T. J. Meek (Chicago; several printings). A new translation (editor-in-chief H. M. Orlinsky) is now in progress of *The Holy Scriptures according to the Masoretic Text*, editor-in-chief M. L. Margolis (Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1917); *The Torah: The Five Books of Moses* appeared in 1962.


Only in more recent times has the Hebrew Bible been treated as literature. Richard G. Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible*, rev. ed. (Boston, 1899), and the companion volume, *The Modern Reader’s Bible* (New York, 1930), are worth
Further Reading


son), Mesopotamia (by T. Jacobsen), and the Hebrews (by W. A. Irwin), is an integrated attempt to explain the thinking of the ancient Near East; this volume (without the chapters on the Hebrews) appeared as Before Philosophy (Pelican Books, 1949). The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East, ed. R. C. Dentan (New Haven, 1955); Authority and Law in the Ancient Orient (1954; monograph supplement to Journal of the American Oriental Society); S. N. Kramer, History Begins at Sumer (Anchor Book, 1959); J. A. Wilson, The Burden of Egypt (Chicago, 1951; now a Phoenix paperback); G. Stein- dorff and K. C. Seele, When Egypt Ruled the East, rev. ed. (Chicago, 1957); C. H. Gordon, The World of the Old Testament (Garden City, N.Y., 1958); the “General Articles” in Vol. I (pp. 3–46) of The Interpreter’s Bible (New York and Nashville, 1952)—all these have much to offer the student of ancient Israel.

The historical geography of Palestine has been very well treated by G. E. Wright and F. V. Filson in The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible, 2d ed. (Philadelphia, 1956); the text of this book constitutes also a fine sketch of Biblical Israel’s history. The same may be said of N. Glueck, The River Jordan, being an Illustrated Account of Earth’s Most Storied River (Philadelphia, 1946). Other recent works of note in this area are L. H. Grollengberg’s Atlas of the Bible (New York, 1956); E. G. Kraeling’s Bible Atlas (Chicago, 1956); Denis Baly, The Geography of the Bible (New York, 1957).


There are now available two fine works on Israel’s career:

Place names have been localized on at least one of the five maps; thus Jerusalem (II B 4-5) indicates that Jerusalem may be identified on Map II at B longitudinally and 4-5 latitudinally.

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