

1350 B.C.- A.D. 1

**Literary, Political, and Social
Events in the Ancient Middle
East**



Snake-Dragon, Symbol of Marduk, the Patron God of Babylon. Panel from the Ishtar Gate, 604-562 BCE, unknown artist, glazed earthenware bricks. Courtesy of The Detroit Institute of Arts.

1350 B.C.

Egyptian book of the dead is assembled

- The original name of the book was “Book of Coming of Fourth by Day”
- The book is filled with magic spells meant to help the dead go through the underworld into the afterlife.
- Some spells date back to the third millennium B.C.
- There is no single “Book of the Dead.”
- Many times, the book was written hieroglyphic or hieratic script on papyrus scrolls.
- They often showed the journey into the afterlife and were placed in the coffin with the deceased.



c. 1550-1085 B.C.

New kingdom in Egypt

- Also known as “Egyptian Empire”
- The New Kingdom of Egypt was marked as Egypt’s most prosperous time and peak of its power.
- Radiocarbon dating suggests that the New Kingdom started a few years before 1550 B.C.
- The later years of this period is also known as the “Ramesside period” after the eleven pharaohs that took the name of Ramesses.
- Egypt expand south into Nubia and far into the east.

- Armies fought for what is now known as Syria.

c. 1375-1362 B.C.

Akhenaten rise to power in Mesopotamia

- Akhenaten means “living spirit of Aten”
- Akhenaten ruled for 17 years until he died.
- Akhenaten (Amenhotep IV) was known for abandoning the original Egyptian beliefs and enforcing worship of Aten, often described as monotheistic.
- After Akhenaten died the original religious beliefs were slowly restored in Egypt and Akhenaten was referred to as “the enemy”.



c. 1354 B.C.

Assyrians rise to power in Mesopotamia

- Assyria came to rule regional empires several times through history, especially in the iron age.

- Assyria was in northern Mesopotamia (modern day northern Iraq) competing with the fellow Akkadian speaking country, Babylonia, for dominance.
- Assyria had many different leaders throughout the ages, but managed to usually maintain control except for a short period of time when they were under rule of a Babylonian.

c. 1300 B.C.

The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is
written down by
Babylonians in
Mesopotamia

- The “Epic of Gilgamesh” is an epic poem and one of the earliest known pieces of literature.
- Scholars believe that this was originally a series Sumerian legends

and poems about the protagonist the story, Gilgamesh king of Uruk.

- They believe the series was later formed into a longer Akkadian epic.
- The story revolves around Gilgamesh and his close male companion, Endiku.
- Endiku was created by the gods to be Gilgamesh's equal and distract him from oppressing the city of Uruk.
- It tells of their journeys and struggles together.



c. 1000 B.C.

The Torah is assembled from earlier Hebrew text.

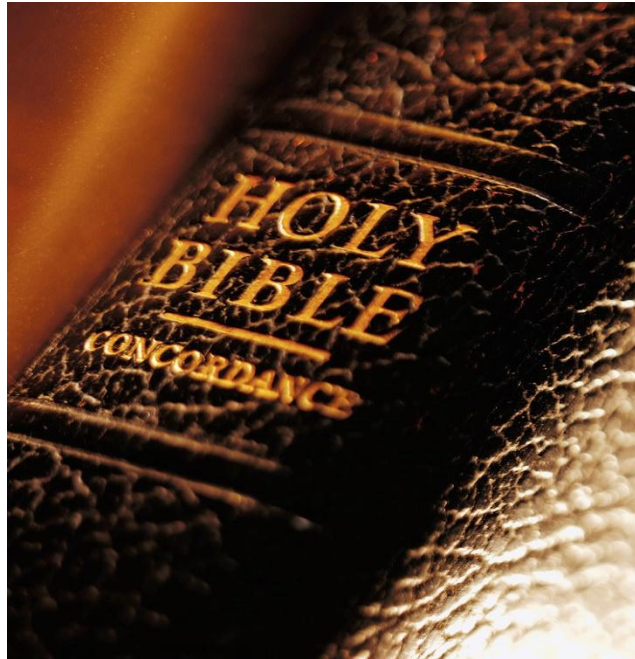
- The Torah is the first five books of the Jewish Biblical canon.
- The common names in the books in English are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
- The Zorah, the most important text in Jewish mysticism, says that the Torah was made before earth and is the “Blueprint for Creation”.
- The Torah is known in Christianity as the Pentateuch and the Five Books of Moses.

c. 1000 c-587 B.C.

The writings of the Hebrew Bible prophets are composed.

- The Prophets composed the four books of the Former Prophets, in the unvarying order of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings; and the four books of the Latter Prophets, Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, Minor Prophets
- All 12 of those prophets consisted of one book.
- The Writings composed the remains 11 books, the poetical works, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the five Megilloth, or Rolls, and last but not least Daniel, Esdras, Nehemias, Chronicles

- There are 24 books total.



c. 950- 750 B.C.

The biblical Book of Ruth is written.

- The Book of Ruth is found in both the Jewish and Christian bible.
- It is a short scripture only consisting of four chapters.

- It tells the story of several tragedies and the willingness of a daughter-in-law.

c. 750- 655 B.C.

Kushite kingdom in Africa gains control of Egypt

- Around 727 B.C. the Kushite king Piye invaded northward gaining control of Thebes and the Delta
- The 25th Dynasty reached climax with the Pharaohs Piye and Taharka.
- Taharka was an Egyptian who ruled until the Kushite took over, and Piye ruled the land after that.



c. 587 B.C.

Many Hebrew are taken into
exile by Babylonian king
Nebuchadnezzar II

- The Hebrew bible states that there were three exportations of Jews to Babylon.
- The forced exile of the Jews ended when Babylon was taken over by Persia.

- The Persian king gave the Jews permission to return to Yehud and rebuild the Temple, but many chose to stay.

c. 380- 343 B.C. Last Egyptian Dynasty

- Ptolemaic Dynasty was the last independent dynasty in Egypt.
- This dynasty lasted 275 years
- The most famous Ptolemy rule is Queen Cleopatra VII
- She is best known for her battles against Julius Caesar and Pompey, and also for her later battles against Octavia and Mark Anthony.

- She was the end of the Ptolemaic rule in Egypt after she committed suicide during the conquest by Rome.

c.6- 4 B.C.

Jesus of Nazareth is born

- Jesus was born around 4 B.C.
- The Virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus in a stable on December 25
- Jesus is said to have created the Christian ministry and church.

