

# Chronology of Significant Dates in Ancient Jewish History

## Late Biblical Period (History and Prophetic Books)

- 721 BCE Samaria destroyed by Assyrians  
Refugees probably bring texts south to Judea
- 587 Destruction of first Temple by Babylonians. End of Davidic monarchy.  
Beginning of Babylonian Exile.
- 538 Edict of Cyrus permitting return to Jerusalem and rebuilding of Temple.
- 520-515 Second Temple built.  
Persian district of Yehud governed by High Priest and appointed governor.
- ~495-399 Jewish community at Elephantine

## Hellenistic Period

- 333-323 Alexander the Great. End of Persian Empire. Beginning of Hellenism.  
Breakup of empire on his death. Competition between Ptolemaic Egypt and Seleucid Syria for control of Eastern Mediterranean.
- ~250 Beginning of Septuagint-Torah translated into Greek in Alexandria, Egypt. Later books added over next two centuries.
- 167-166 Hasmonean Revolt against Seleucids
- 134-37 Hasmonean dynasty claims both kingship and High Priesthood.  
Origins of Pharisaic and Sadducee “parties”
- ~100 BCE – 200 CE *Age of the Tannaim*** (The Sages whose discussions are recorded in the **Mishnah**)

## Roman Period

- 63 Pompey the Great enters Jerusalem
- 37 Herod the Great establishes Herodian dynasty allied to Rome
- 4 CE Judea becomes Roman province
- 66-73 First Jewish revolt against Rome. Destruction of Second Temple.  
Dead Sea Scrolls from this period indicate Hebrew Scriptures have become largely standardized
- 115-117 Major revolts against Rome by Jews of Cyrene, Cyprus, Mesopo-

tamia and Egypt

132-135 Second Jewish revolt (Bar Kochba) Ends in military occupation under Hadrian. Judea renamed Palestina. Jews banned from site of Jerusalem.

~200 *Mishnah*, first major written version of Jewish oral traditions redacted by Rabbi Judah HaNasi.

**224-651 Sassanian Empire** (Babylonia and Persia. Zoroastrian)

**~200 – 500 Age of Amoraim** (Palestinian and Babylonian scholars who created the **Talmud**)

### **Rise of Christianity**

313 Edict of Milan legalizing Christianity in Roman world

325 Council of Nicea, called by Constantine I. Established calendar separating Easter from Passover and Jewish Sabbath from Christian

380 Edict of Thessalonica establishing Christianity as sole state religion of Roman Empire

395 Partition of Roman Empire, East from West

425 End of Patriarchate in Palestine and close of the Jerusalem Talmud

**~500 – 600 Age of Saboraim** (final redactors of Babylonian Talmud)

**~600 – 1050 Age of Geonim** (Babylonian scholars who standardized prayerbooks and spread Talmud. Writings include Responsa and treatises)