

Is There Life After Death?

**Is Life Eternal, Endless,
Everlasting, Perpetual?**

**Start at the Beginning,
Then Decide**



The Bible

AROUND
AND
BEYOND

REVISED EDITION

BY
**ALFRED
WAGNER**

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Everlasting, Perpetual?

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By Alfred Wagner

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Introduction

This book encompasses ancient and early religious history in an effort to document in one location the sequence of events from Adam and Eve to the present age. Humanity's existence is a fascinating study, but we must involve our minds if we are to understand the things that surround us. This book examines the writings of the Old and New Testaments, including the consequences and outcome of the events that have shaped world history.

This book has been arranged in the order of time to show the true relation of one event to another. The reason and motive for this work is to present the facts of history.

This book also illustrates the unfolding and the sequence of events, including the consequences and outcome of each, beginning with the prophets and their prophecies as written in the Old Testament. God blessed the Israelites, for they worshiped the one, true God, Creator of heaven and earth. He blessed them through the birth of His Son, Jesus. God also favored the Romans in the building of their empire for a purpose in history.

This book contains excerpts from the Bible and other reference materials such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, and concordances to present an outline of the events that have shaped the history of humanity. It is important that we study ancient and religious history to understand the times we live in.

The information presented in this book was derived from:

- *The American College Encyclopedic Dictionary*. Chicago, IL: The Spencer Press, Inc., 1955.
- Scott, Walter Dill, Franklin J. Meine, and W. Stewart Wallace. *The American Peoples Encyclopedia*. Chicago, IL: The Spencer Press, Inc.,

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1956.

- King James Version Bible
- *The New International Standard Medical and Health Encyclopedia*. Edited by Richard J. Wagman. New York, NY: Trident Reference Publishing, 2005.
- *Webster's New World Dictionary*. Edited by David B. Guralnik. Simon and Schuster, 1980.

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Chapter 1

Ancient History Before and After Christ

Since humans learned to write, they have inscribed words on a variety of surfaces as a form of communication. From rocks to animal hides to paper, humans throughout history have permanently documented events through the written word.

Writing in the Beginning

The Old Testament gives us a view of life and events from the beginning of the world. Most of the Old Testament was written in the ancient Aramaic Semitic language that was common in that day and age. It is noted that Jesus spoke Aramaic, as did His parents.

Semitic is a subfamily of the Afro-Asiatic family of languages—Hebrew, Arabic, Egyptian—with its influences being felt in a region extending from the Horn of Africa to North Africa to the Middle East. The Semitic alphabet was the basis for the language of the Old Testament of the Bible. Alphabetic writing came to Greece from the Phoenicians, the region of Syria and Egypt, with the earliest known specimens dating to approximately 2000 BC.

Judaism

The Old Testament, or Tanakh, was written in ancient Israel over a period of 1,000 years by many authors. The Jewish religion, a monotheistic religion based on the laws and teachings of the Holy Scriptures and the Talmud, a collection of writings of Jewish, civil, and religious law, is documented within the pages of the Bible.

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The Old Testament documents the first humans—Adam and Eve—who lived on this earth and goes through the time of Noah and the flood. It then documents the life of Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation who lived 175 years, and his descendants who carried the promise of one day becoming a great nation.

Palestine

The original inhabitants of Palestine, especially Western Palestine little is known. This land located between the Jordan River, the Dead Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea.

God called: this region the Promised Land, which he devoted to Abram, GEN. 12:1–3; Abram, the son of Shem, who was one of Noah's son's.

Abram, was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran as the Lord hath spoken unto him. Along with his wife Sarai, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered and the persons they hath gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the Land of Canaan, and into the Promised Land they came

Canaan

Canaan the son of Ham, and grandson of Noah, GEN. 10:6, and also the land which his descendants, known as Canaanites presently inhabited. The Land: of Canaan originally comprised the low coastland of Palestine on the Mediterranean. At a later period the name Canaan became enlarged to include the whole of Palestine, and was known by the name of these people; the Canaanites.

Canaanite; a member of the Semitic people inhabiting Palestine at the time of the Hebrew encroachment (Semitic is a person regarded as a descended from Shem, one of Noah's sons).

Hundreds of years later the subjugation of the Canaanites, and their land was effected, only by degrees, of the Hebrew encroachment.

Moses

Moses led his people out of bondage in Egypt, across the Red Sea into the wilderness, where they wandered forty years. Jehovah (God), spoke to the people, giving them his commands and providing for their needs.

Because of an incident in which Moses displayed a lack of confidence in God, he was forbidden entrance into the Promised Land of Canaan, (A place where they would have a better life).

Moses died at the age of 120, on top of Mount Nebo, in view of the Promised Land. At that time Joshua became his successor and led the Israelites into the land of Canaan.

Syria and Palestine were annexed to the Roman Empire by Pompey in 63 BC.

After the conquest of Canaan, the Israelites settled into life in their new home. Before long the Jewish nation desired a king to rule like the nations surrounding them. Saul, the first king of Israel, came to the throne sometime near 1030 BC. During his reign he quarreled with David, his son-in-law, the son of Jesse, and sought his life, at which point David fled for his life. However, Saul never caught David, and Saul was eventually defeated by the Philistine at Gilboa, and he took his own life for fear that the Philistines would capture him and torture him.

David succeeded Saul and established a permanent capital in Jerusalem. After David's death, his son Solomon assumed the throne. Unfortunately, after Solomon's reign the nation as a whole collapsed and the next 200 years of history were fraught with revolutions, assassinations, and captivity (732–586 BC).

Isaiah was one of the three, and perhaps greatest, of the major prophets. Living during the eighth century, his prophetic career covered forty years from 740–701 BC. Most of his work was done in Jerusalem. He foretold of the coming Messiah. He complained about the sins of the nation and exhorted the people to repent of their ways. He predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed and the people carried into captivity.

When Isaiah spoke of Israel as a chosen people, he did not mean that they were, therefore, a favorite people. Israel was chosen only in the sense that they were obligated to live above the average and be examples to all clans, tribes, and nations.

After living a holy life, Isaiah died through martyrdom by being sawed in half in a hollow log at the command of King Manasseh after reproving the king for his evil ways.

Jesus and the apostles refer to Isaiah more than fifty times in the New Testament.

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Jeremiah was a Hebrew prophet (c. 650–c. 585 BC) who lived in imminent danger of death because of his fearless preaching. According to tradition, he was stoned to death in the city of Tahpanhes, Egypt. Stoning was a form of Hebrew capital punishment, not Egyptian.

During Jeremiah's lifetime Nebuchadnezzar reigned over the Babylonian Empire (605–561 BC). Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon after his father's death in 604 BC. Babylon is located in what is now south Iraq near the Euphrates River, bounded on the northeast by Turkey. Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptian Army in 605 BC. Seven years after assuming the throne, he destroyed Jerusalem and took 4,000 Jews into captivity. He then invaded and plundered Egypt, restoring Babylon to its former glory with the riches he brought back from his conquests.

In 597 BC when his army captured Palestine, he placed Zedekiah on the throne of Judah after burning Jerusalem and carrying 4,600 of the leading and influential Jews into captivity. Upon arriving back in Babylon with his captives, the king ordered that certain young men be trained in the ways of Babylon. He gave them a daily provision of food and drink from the king's own table. Daniel, one of the Hebrew captives, was among the young men selected for this honor; however, he and his three friends requested a simple diet.

In Daniel 2 and 3 we read the account of the king and a dream he had that Daniel, through God's providence, told Nebuchadnezzar his dream when his magicians and astrologers could not do so. In the dream Nebuchadnezzar saw a giant statue whose head was made out of fine gold. Its breast and arms were of silver; its belly and thighs of brass; its legs of iron; and its feet part iron and part clay. Then a stone struck the feet of the statue and broke it into thousands of pieces. And the stone that hit the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

God also showed Daniel the meaning of the dream. Each material represented a different kingdom that would overthrow the kingdom before it. The gold represented Rome; the silver, Medo-Persia; the brass, Greece; the iron, Rome; and the feet of iron and clay, Europe. Today the European nations feature a wide variety of religious and ethnic groups, consisting of Christians, Jews, Muslims, etc.

The stone represents the kingdom of God that will destroy all the kingdoms of the earth and stand forever.

In 587 BC Nebuchadnezzar returned to Judah because Zedekiah rebelled against him. Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to the city until Zedekiah surrendered. The king of Babylon then killed all of Zedekiah's sons in front of him before putting out Zedekiah's eyes and throwing him in prison where he stayed until his death (2 Kings 24, 25).

In 525 BC the Persians conquered Egypt. During Persian rule the Egyptians had some degree of independence. It was also at this time that the Jews were scattered to all parts of the known world. The last historical record of events in the order of time of the Old Testament was the book of Nehemiah, the Jewish cupbearer to Artaxerxes, king of Persia from 464–424 BC. This was about a century after the Persian King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to their homeland from Babylonia captivity.

Alexander the Great (356–323 BC) conquered Egypt in 332 BC, and by the year 329 BC, the Greeks ruled most of Asia, which extended to the border of India. Alexander introduced Hellenism from Greek culture to all the conquered lands. Alexander, upon returning to Greece, made his general, Ptolemy, governor of Egypt. After Alexander's death, Ptolemy made himself king of Egypt, reigning from 323–285 BC. The Ptolemy dynasty continued from 323 BC to 30 BC, with Ptolemy XIII serving as the last member of the royal legacy.

During the Hellenistic rule, the Jews in Palestine were influenced by the Greek culture that surrounded them, and they adopted many Greek practices. As they lived and worked under the rule of four godless kings, religion became tainted by the seductive power of the paganism of Hellenism, the degenerated form of the Greek religion.

Baal was a fertility god among the ancient Semitic peoples, later a chief god. Also used to refer to a false god or idol. The Hebrews called Baal, Beelzebub. Baal is mentioned in the New Testament (Rom. 11:4). The New Testament refers to Baal as prince of the devils. For a description of Baal rites dating back to the ninth century BC, refer to the story of the prophet Elijah's showdown with the priests of Baal (I Kings 18:18–40). King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, turned the worship of Baal into a degenerated practice of sensual pleasures.

There was a dramatic clash of the religious outlook of the Hebrew's God, Yahweh, and the Hellenistic god, Baal, which was known as the god of fertility. After the Jews settled down to a stable life, antagonisms diminished and a process of assimilation began. By degrees, loyalty to Yahweh wavered as Baal

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Map of Europe and the Middle East circa 1860

became more alluring. Idols, shrines, festivals, and habits all found their way into Hebrew life. Polytheism, belief in or worship of many gods, threatened to debilitate the Jews and engulf the world.

Sodom and Gomorrah

Sodom, a city destroyed by fire together with a neighboring city, Gomorrah, because of the sinfulness of the people.

Sodom, one of the cities at the southern end of the Dead Sea. The wickedness of its inhabitants was a proverbial enigmatical or perplexing adage in which a profound truth is cloaked or hidden in its meaning.

Sodom is a biblically used word signifying one possessed of the sin of Sodom. A Sodomite, a person or inhabitant of Sodom.

Lot, the son of Haran and Abraham's nephew took residence in Sodom, his sojourn, or short stay in Sodom is referred to in Genesis 19:12–17. God destroys the city, 19:24,25.

Matthew 10:15, Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of Judgment than for that city.

Noah's Ark

After human beings had lived on earth for a time, God saw the wickedness, corruption, and evil of humanity, and God vowed to destroy evil (Gen. 6, 7).

Noah, who was tenth in descent from Adam, in the line of Seth, was a just man and perfect in his generation, for Noah walked with God. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

God told Noah to build an ark to escape the flood waters that He would send. He gave him directions on how to build it. The flood was to destroy the evil and wicked ways of earth's inhabitants.

The ark was to be made of gopher wood with rooms throughout the ark. Noah was to pitch it within and without. The length was to be 300 cubits, the breadth, fifty cubits, and the height, thirty cubits. The door of the ark was to be set in the side with lower, second, and third stories.

God instructed Noah to bring his wife and his three sons and their wives into the ark. Two of every living beast and fowl, male and female, was to find safety in the ark. Noah was also to store food from his garden for his family and

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food for the animals, in addition to seed to plant after the flood.

It came to pass that after all of God's instructions for the building of the ark were accomplished and Noah, his family, and the animals were safe in the ark that God shut the door of the ark. Seven days later rain began to fall, and it continued to fall for forty days and forty nights until water covered the earth. The ark floated on top of the floodwaters for 150 days until coming to rest upon Mt. Ararat, which is in eastern Turkey near the borders of Iran, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.

After the waters dried up from the earth, God told Noah, "Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth" (Gen. 8:16, 17).

Upon leaving the ark, Noah built an altar to God and offered burnt offerings on the altar, which God accepted and promised to never curse the earth again with a flood. "And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh" (Gen. 9:12–15).

God's covenant is signified by the rainbow.

Conclusion

In the writing of this book and by study and research, the author has gained knowledge and wisdom. It is hoped that you, as a reader, have benefited as well.

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What periods of history are covered in the Bible?

**What impact did the Roman Empire
have on the world?**

**What people group named the days of
the week and the months?**

How did people communicate in ancient times?

**How did the worship of ancient gods affect
world culture and religion?**

The history and culture of humanity has been integrated with religion since the beginning of time. ***The Bible Around and Beyond*** provides a condensed look at world history, especially the impact of the Roman Empire and the Roman Catholic Church on Christianity and the world we live in today. Read about important biblical and historical characters, locations, and terms; learn about important Bible topics; and examine the history of early civilizations.

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