

Israel's Timeline: From Ancient to Contemporary Times

Middle Ages to Rise of Ottoman Empire

ca. 501 CE – 14th century

The Middle Ages

501	Earthquake hits Israel. Damage extends from Acre to Jerusalem.
511	Independent Jewish state in Mesopotamia arises and lasts for seven years.
516	King Ohu Nuwas in southern Arabia adopts Judaism. Abyssinian King Eleboas, with help from Justin I, defeats Nuwas.
519	After residents Ravenna (Italy) burn down synagogues, Ostrogoth ruler Theodoric orders the rebuilding of the synagogues at the expense of Ravenna.
587	Visigothic King Recared of Spain adopts Catholicism. He then forbids Jews from holding positions of authority. He also bans intermarriage with Jews and decrees that children of mixed marriages be raised Christian.
570	Birth of Muslim Prophet Muhammad
590	Pope Gregory the Great adopts policy towards Jews. He objects to forced conversions of Jews.
610	Visigothic ruler Sisebut outlaws Judaism and in 613 issues an ultimatum to the Jews of his lands to convert to Christianity or to leave. Some left; others converted and remained. Under Sesbut's successor, Swintilla, exiled Jews return to Byzantine Spain
614 - 630	Persians gain temporary control of Israel. Persian General Scharbaraz (aka Romizanes) allows Jews to administer Jerusalem. About 150,000 Jews reside in 43 communities in Israel.
617	The Persians, under pressure from Christian Byzantium, renege on their promises and forbid Jews to settle within a three mile radius of Jerusalem.
622-28	Mohammed, Islam's prophet and founder, drives Jews from Arabia. Initially Muhammad hopes that the Jews would recognize him as their prophet and would accept his new religious ideas. However, despite some support for him, as he saw that overwhelmingly most Jews do not convert, he starts to become more aggressive towards them. After he moves the center of his new religion from Makka to Medina, he takes a more active line against the Jews and pushes some of the Jewish tribes out of the Arabian peninsula.
628	Emperor Heraclius of Byzantium orders that that all Jews in his empire convert to Christianity.
638	Chintilla decrees that only Catholics are permitted to live in Visigothic Spain, yet Jews manage to continue living there.
638	Islamic conquest of Jerusalem. Muslim armies wrest control of the Holy Land from Byzantine Christian Empire. Jews permitted to return to Jerusalem.
660-691	Al Aqsa mosque and Dome of the Rock built in Jerusalem. New Muslim rulers refer to Jerusalem by the Arabic word "Al Quds" (the Holy) shortened for <i>Beit al-Maqdis</i> an Arabic translation of the original Hebrew <i>Beit HaMiqdash</i> , or the Holy Temple.

682	Visigothic King Erwig continues oppression of Jews, making it illegal to practice any Jewish rites and pressing for the conversion or emigration of the remaining Jews.
712	Jews help Muslim invaders capture Spain, ending Visigothic rule and beginning a 150 year period of relative peace, in which Jews were free to study and practice religion as they wished.
717	Jews are oppressed in Muslim Mesopotamia (today's Iraq). While Jews are doing relatively well under Muslim rule both in Israel and in Spain, they are among the minorities in Mesopotamia who suffer considerable discrimination from the Muslim rulers there.
722	After a military defeat over Muslim forces, Leo III of Constantinople begins the forcible conversion of the Jews. Most of the converts clandestinely continued their Jewish practices.
1078	Pope Gregory VII prohibits Jews from holding offices in Christendom.
1086-1145	The greatest Hebrew poet of his time, Yehudah Halevi.
1099	Crusaders (European Christians) capture Jerusalem and massacre tens of thousands of the city's Jews and Muslims. Crusader army en route to the Holy Land massacres hundreds of thousands of Jews in France and Germany.
1109	Tiberius falls to the Crusaders.
1135 - 1204	Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, (aka, Maimonides, or the Rambam), born in Spain, died in Egypt and is buried in Tiberias, Israel. A rabbi, physician, and philosopher, Maimonides was a religious rationalist and author of <i>Guide for the Perplexed</i> . He was the most influential figure in medieval Jewish philosophy. His influence in Judaism is still felt to this day.
1210	A group of 300 rabbis from France and England settle in Israel, foreshadowing 19 th and 20 th centuries' Zionist immigration.
1215	The Church's Fourth Lateran Council decrees that Jews be segregated from Christians and differentiated by their clothing to avoid relations between with Christians. Jews are sometimes required to wear a yellow badge. (In 20 th century, Nazis institute similar policy, forcing Jews to wear yellow stars.)
1227-1274	Saint Thomas Aquinas, Christian theologian, calls for the enslaving all Jews.
1244	Tartars capture Jerusalem.
1260	Muslim Mamluks rule Israel, first from Turkey and then from Egypt, until 1516. A series of wars and destruction follow. Jews suffer persecution but surviving records cite at least 30 Jewish urban and rural communities in Israel at the opening of the 16th century.
1267	Ramban (Nachmanides) arrives in Israel.
14th century	Rise of the Ottoman Muslim Empire