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| **Historical Theme** | **Timeline** | **Narrative account** | **Contemporary writing** |
| Creation |  | Genesis 1-11 |  |
| Covenant – Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph) | c. 2000 BC | Genesis 12-48 |  |
| Slavery in Egypt | c. 1500 BC |  |  |
| Exodus (Moses) – 40 years in wilderness - Jordan | c. 1400 BC | Exodus to Deuteronomy |  |
| Conquest & Settlement (Gideon, Samson) | c. 1300 BC | Joshua, Judges, Ruth |  |
| United Kingdom (Saul, David & Solomon) | c. 1000 BC | 1 & 2 Samuel | Some Psalms and Proverbs |
| Divided Kingdom (Elijah & Elisha) | 933 BC | 1 & 2 Kings / 1 & 2 Chronicles | Amos, Hosea |
| Fall of Northern Kingdom (Samaria) | 721 BC (Assyrian rule) |  | Isaiah 1-39, Micah |
| Fall of Southern Kingdom (Judah) | 598 BC (elite exiled to Babylon)  586 BC (destruction of Jerusalem and Temple) |  | Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Obadiah |
| Exile in Babylon | 598 – 539 (Babylonian rule) | Daniel | Ezekiel, Isaiah 40-55 |
| Return and rebuilding of Jerusalem – Second Temple | 539 (return)  520 (Temple rebuilt)  (Persian rule until Alexander the Great in 330 and Greek rule) | Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther | Isaiah 56-66, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, |
| Revolt against the Greeks | 166-134 BC  Brief period of freedom under Maccabees until Romans sacked Jerusalem 63 BC | 1 & 2 Maccabees | Daniel |

**When were the books of the OT written?**

They probably came into existence between the 9th and the 2nd centuries BC, though they may incorporate older written material – ancient poems, for example – and may in some cases rest on older, orally transmitted folk-memories. But the bulk of written records in ancient Israel seem to come from a core period of the 6th and 5th centuries BC, with heavy concentrations in some particular ages: most think, for example, that the period of the exile was particularly rich in generating written texts, as was perhaps the early Persian age.