

and MESSIANIC FULFILLMENT



The Flight Into Egypt by Edwin Long

1. *What kind of crisis confronts the Jews at the beginning of the Maccabean period when Greece becomes the world power?*

A policy of radical hellenization threatens their Jewish identity. The Greeks—Antiochus Epiphanes in particular—impose the worship of their gods and ban not just worship but all practices that separate Jews from others (e.g., the Sabbath and circumcision) under penalty of death. Many Jews are killed until Mattathias and his sons stand up against this repression and launch an all-out campaign to fight for their faith. Ultimately, they are successful in pushing back the Greeks, and they even enjoy a brief period of self-rule before the Romans come.

2. *Based on the story of the Maccabees, what evidence do you see that Israel is learning to trust God?*

Rather than conforming to Greek ways and abandoning their religion, many of the Jews resist and fight back, risking their lives in the process. The two books of Maccabees are full of heroic stories of resistance and martyrdom. Clearly, the Jews have learned the lessons of the exile and now would rather follow God than abandon him.

3. *The period of the Maccabean Revolt concludes the Old Testament story. At this point, what positive progress has been made in God's plan to restore his children to himself? Refer to God's promises to Abraham and "God's Family Plan" on The Bible Timeline Chart.*

One way to look at this question is to see what has been fulfilled of God's covenant with Abraham. He has indeed had many descendants, who have inherited and inhabited the Promised Land of Canaan, lost it in exile, and ultimately returned. They have become a royal kingdom but are now under foreign rule. It has been hundreds of years since a king of David's line has sat on the throne. The promise of worldwide blessing was fulfilled in a limited sense in Egypt, when Joseph saved many nations from starvation, and again under David and Solomon, but this promise seems to have foundered.

Another way to look at it is to follow “God’s Family Plan” on *The Bible Timeline Chart*. What begins as a covenant with a couple, Adam and Eve, grows into a covenant with Noah’s family, then to a tribe under Abraham, a nation under Moses, and a kingdom under David. Progress has been made, yet something still separates God from his children.

4. *What remains to be done?*

The problem of sin remains; man’s fallen nature still separates him from God. Even with all the benefits, advice, and help God has given Israel, they still cannot persevere in serving him faithfully.

The problem of the broken covenant remains. How can God demand a strict following of the terms of the covenant, which demand death for sin and infidelity to his commands, and at the same time keep his promises to his people?

The way God solves these problems is the subject of the next period, Messianic Fulfillment.

5. *Open your Bible to the first book of the New Testament, the Gospel of Matthew, and read the first verse. Imagine you are a first-century Jew who knows the story. What does this verse mean to you?*

“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham”—a son of David has finally come to sit on the throne.

6. *How does Jesus fulfill the following promises of the Old Covenant in the New Covenant?*

(Optional: Can you name the period and books of the Bible that describe each of these promises? Can you explain the context in which each promise was given?)

Jesus fulfills the Old Covenant promises in the New Covenant:

- The seed of the woman will crush the head of the Serpent.

Jesus is the seed (child) of Mary, the second Eve, who comes to defeat Satan, the Serpent, on the Cross. The original promise was given in the Early World to Adam and Eve after the Fall in the context of God’s curse on the Serpent (see Genesis 3:15).

- God will provide a lamb for the sacrifice.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate Passover Lamb who takes the place of all the others and makes the one sacrifice needed to atone for sin. We have been looking for the Lamb since the Patriarchs and Genesis 22, when Abraham told Isaac that God would provide the lamb for the sacrifice.

- God’s people will have a land, nation, and kingdom.

The original promise came to Abraham in the Patriarchs period (see Genesis 12, 15, 17, and 22), and it referred to his descendants. In Jesus, it is a spiritual kingdom, the kingdom of God on earth, which will find its ultimate fulfillment in the kingdom of God in heaven. The promise is not just for the blood descendants of Abraham but for all who are his children by faith.

- The kingdom will be ruled by one who sits on the throne of David forever.

Jesus Christ rules from the heavenly throne over a kingdom established on the twelve tribes and twelve apostles, successor to the kingdom of David. The original promise of David’s everlasting throne was made in 2 Samuel 7 (Royal Kingdom).

- Israel will be a source of blessing for the entire world.

Through her son, Jesus Christ, Israel blessed the entire world and provided a way for all God’s scattered children to return to him. This was part of God’s original covenant promise to Abraham (Patriarchs; see Genesis 12, 15, 17, 22).

7. *Based on Jeff’s presentation, what are six things Jesus has come to do?*

He redeems us, he reveals how much God loves us, he shows us how to live, he gives us power to become children of God, he reconstitutes Israel around himself, and he establishes his authority in the Church.

Home Preparation: Looking Ahead

The answers to the Home Preparation questions about this time period are listed below:

Period name: THE CHURCH Approximate dates: AD 33 – present day

Period color: White Color meaning: The spotless bride of Christ

Name the three “waves of witness” that form the structure of this period:

Witness in Jerusalem Witness in Judea and Samaria

Witness to the ends of the earth

Home Preparation: Review

The answers to the Home Preparation questions are listed below:

	Period Name	Color	Color Meaning	Phrase
7.	Divided Kingdom	Black	Israel's darkest period	Israel split into rival kingdoms and fell into idolatry.
8.	Exile	Baby blue	Judah "singing the blues" in "Babylon"	God punished first Israel, then Judah, with exile. Prophets brought a message of hope.
9.	Return	Yellow	Judah returning home to brighter days	God brought the exiles back to Canaan; they rebuilt the Temple and Jerusalem and were taught from the Law.
10.	Maccabean Revolt	Orange	Fire in the oil lamps in the purified Temple	Mattathias and his sons stood up against the threats of hellenization.
11.	Messianic Fulfillment	Gold	The gifts of the Magi	God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, to fulfill all his promises.
12.	The Church	White	The spotless bride of Christ	The Church carries on God's work in the world.