**Timeline Notes**

Cain (4000 BC)

**Genesis 4:8** Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Pharaoh (1400 BC)

**Exodus 1:22** So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, “Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.”

Jezebel (870 BC)

**1 Kings 18:4** For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.

*Ahab and Jezebel killed many of the prophets and threatened to kill Elijah as well. God preserves Elijah and tells him He has reserved 7000 people who have not bowed the knee to Baal.*

King Herod (3 BC)  
**Matthew 2:13** Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.” 14When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,  15and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, *“Out of Egypt I called My Son.”*

Jews/Pilate (33)

**Matthew 27:1** When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death.  2And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Rome / Polycarp (156)

Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, was a Christian who, according to tradition, was a pupil of the Apostle John. He is remembered as one of the early church fathers and was active in disputing gnostic heresies. In AD 155 (or 156) he was searched out, arrested, and dragged into a stadium in Rome. There he was given a choice: he could swear by Caesar, deny Christ, and live, or he could refuse and die. Polycarp replied, “Eighty-six years I have served him, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?” Polycarp was tied to a stake and burned to death for his refusal to deny Christ.

Diocletian – The "Great" Persecution (303-311)

Though it's popular to believe that Christians were always being persecuted in the Roman empire, it's not true. Empire-wide persecutions were rare, and the Great Persecution under Diocletian was the only one of any great length, lasting eight years.

Diocletian's goal was to wipe out the Church. He hunted down Christians and their Scriptures. He especially loved to get hold of church leaders. He was trying to turn them back to paganism, to the old Roman religion with the emperor as a God. Therefore, anyone he caught and tried could be released by offering a sacrifice to the gods or to the emperor.

They could also gain great favor by turning over copies of the Scriptures to be burned.

In addition, Diocletian destroyed their church buildings. This was something that couldn't be done earlier, as Christians rarely had devoted meeting places in the 2nd century. It was too easy to see them destroyed or taken over. While empire-wide persecutions were rare, local persecutions at the whim of a governer or prelate were not.

It was a horrible, difficult time for Christians (at least for the leaders). Many Christians fell away, and many others were tortured, thrown in a dungeon, or put to death.

The Middle Ages (476-1500)  
The Dark Ages was a period of religious struggle. Orthodox Christians and Catholics viewed the era from opposing perspectives. Orthodox Christians regarded this time as a period of Catholic corruption; they repudiated the ways of the Catholic Church with its papal doctrines and hierarchy. Orthodox Christians strove to recreate a pure Christianity, void of these “dark” Catholic ways. Catholics did not view this era as “dark.” Catholics viewed this period as a harmonious, productive religious era. The Dark Ages were also the years of vast Muslim conquests. Along with other nomads and horse and camel warriors, the Muslims rode through the fallen empire, wreaking havoc and seeding intellectual and social heresy in their wake. Muslim conquests prevailed until the time of the Crusades. This age old conflict between Christianity and Islam remains until this day.

Islam (610)

Numerous justified rampages against Christians