Bible Timeline Analysis:

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Part 1 – Introduction, assumptions and acknowledgments.

A. Acknowledgment

- This timeline is based largely on work done by Jonathan Hall in his booklet 'The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline.' His work, in turn, was largely influenced by James Jordan, Jack Finegan and James Usher, among others. Hall's work should be considered nothing less than revolutionary in the area of Bible chronology and historical timelines. His goal was to make a timeline which was completely true to every passage in the Bible; his assumptions about the Bible were that it is sufficient, without error, and more reliable than secular sources. The end result is a gift to every student of the Bible and to the Christian Church in general – the sheer number of Scripture passages used in his work, is nothing short of astounding.
- The question then is raised, Why this booklet? Why not simply use Hall's booklet, the 'Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline?' 5 reasons:

1. *Hall did not chart his work onto an adequately visual timeline.*

◊ Our goal was to make available to our church a nicely designed, and more importantly, an easy-to-see timeline of Bible history which they could put up on their wall and refer to often. Hall did not make a chart like this to go with his booklet.

2. *Hall's booklet does not make date-checking accessible.*

◊ For us, the most important tool is not this booklet but the chart itself – this booklet exists to serve the chart. When people are studying the chart we want them to be able to immediately look up any given date on the chart and find the Scripture passages and reasoning – the proof! – behind that date.

◊ Eg. For example a person may look on the chart and see that the Exodus is dated 1417 BC. We want them to be able to find the Exodus in this booklet within 30 seconds, and see for themselves all the Scripture passages which give us that date.

◊ Hall did not organize his booklet in such a way to make this type of fact-checking either quick or easy. His booklet is written as a treatise, comparing and contrasting this timeline of events with other timelines, and does not organize the individual events in such a way that they can be easily found or quickly checked.

3. *The format of Hall's booklet is hard to understand for the average person.*

◊ Hall's book is written and organized in such a way that the average person in our church would not read it, and those who tried would have difficulty understanding and following it. It is more on a level which theologians and scholars would appreciate.

◊ Our goal in putting this booklet together was to make it accessible at the most basic level, so that anyone who can read could access this information quickly and understand it. Therefore we tried our utmost to spell out every argument in painfully explicit, step-by-step logic so that anyone reading could follow and understand.

◊ In doing so, of course, we had to sacrifice a lot of detail and background information. This booklet does not replace Hall's timeline! For people who have serious doubts as to why this timeline disagrees with many of the most accepted timelines of our day, Hall's booklet has heaps of additional research and information which explains point by point why this timeline can be trusted. Read it!

4. *Hall's purposes for writing were different from ours.*

◊ His book was written, at least partially, as a rebuttal to the primary Bible timelines used by Christians today, most of which are based on the work of Dr. John C. Whitcomb, and which have serious flaws. As a result, vast portions of his booklet are taken up comparing and contrasting the different timelines and pointing out weaknesses in the other timelines. This was all immensely valuable and necessary work, to be sure, but serves only to confuse and discourage the casual student who desires only to learn the basic timeline of Bible events.

5. *This analysis answers our church's questions.*

◊ As just stated, Hall's booklet was written as a rebuttal to the primary timelines of our day. This booklet assumes that the people who read it trust the dates, and so the questions it answers are different. This analysis is written to answer the questions people at Southland have about the Timeline.

- Note: For all those wishing to purchase Hall's timeline it can be bought online at http://ultimatebibletimeline.com/).

B. Why studying the Bible's timeline is important:

1. *To help us better understand the Bible.*

◊ One major reason why many Christians do not read the Word of God is because they feel intimidated by it. When they read the Old Testament, in particular, it often feels like one big chaotic jumble – with people, places and events all mixed together and no seeming order to the story.

◊ A good timeline brings order from the chaos: it puts each of the people, places and events in Scripture in context, and locates the books of the Bible on the map of history so that the reader can understand the overall flow of the story and how each book fits together with the other books of the Bible. This, in turn, greatly enhances the reader's understanding and makes Bible reading vastly more enjoyable.

2. *To enhance our Christian worldview.*

◊ A proper Christian worldview must include an accurate timeline of human history. This has always been true, but never more so than today when the global clash of the major world-views (Atheism, Islam, Christianity) is intensifying. These worldviews are not founded on philosophy so much as they are founded on history – with each worldview fighting to have its version of history win out over the others.

◊ Furthermore, an accurate Bible timeline shows the sovereign hand of God in human affairs and gives us insights into His purposes for the future.

3. *To pursue truth.*

◊ Accurate facts always serve to enhance understanding, build faith and bring clarity. Inaccurate facts cause confusion, doubt and disunity.

◊ There are three benefits to pursuing truth (accurate facts) about the Bible's timeline:
a. It builds faith in individual believers;
b. It brings unity to the Church (the Body of Christ);
c. It brings more glory to God.

◊ For instance, many of the fulfilled prophecies in the Old Testament cannot be fully understood or appreciated today (and thus, no glory is given to God) because of the proliferation of inaccurate facts regarding dates. One example is the ongoing debate about Daniel's 70-week prophecy, found in Daniel 9:24-27. There are at least half-a-dozen different theories (lack of unity in the Body) as to when that prophetic period started, and many Christian scholars have thrown up their hands, saying, 'We can't know' (how does that build faith?).

◊ And yet, the prophecy was not meant to confuse – it was meant to be a clear sign for the Jews of the Divinity of Jesus, and to bring glory to God for the rest of human history. But God doesn't get much glory out of the prophecy right now because the debate over its starting point serves to obscure its stunning accuracy. Here is a prophecy so spectacularly precise as to offer a powerful boost of faith to every believer concerning the Supernatural authorship of Scripture and the Divinity of Christ – but many Christians hardly know about it because there are so many different opinions about when it started and ended.

◊ And why is there so much debate? Because of confusion caused by the inaccurate dating of the reigns of Cyrus and Artaxerxes by both secular and Christian timelines (more on this specific example later in the document). Accurate dates are important.

C. Four assumptions about Bible Chronology:[1]

1. The Bible is accurate.

◊ We assume the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God; there are no lies, mistakes or contradictions in it.

2. Bible-based timelines are more accurate than secular-based timelines.

◊ Secular timelines sometimes appear to be firm and unchangeable but in actuality they aren't. They are constantly changing, and, as time progresses, it is interesting to note that they are becoming more and more like the Bible's timeline – not less. In this timeline (unlike many Christian timelines), when there is a disagreement between the Bible's timeline and secular timelines, the Bible's timeline will be taken as true. Surely, if God exists, He is capable of getting His history right!

3. Bible dates are important.

◊ Many believers seem to think that the dates recorded in the Bible aren't important. But Jesus said this about the Word of God, *For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.* **– Matt 5:18 (ESV)**. In other words, every single thing in the Bible is important – right down to the punctuation marks! Nothing in the Bible is there by accident; if it's written in His Word, it's because He expressly purposed for it to be there.

◊ And this, of course, applies to dates as well. There are many dates recorded in the Bible, so we can trust that they were reported for a reason, and that they are important to the purposes God has for His Word.

4. The Bible gives a year-by-year accounting from Adam to Jesus with no gaps.

◊ This is the key assumption upon which this timeline is built. Though it is not in fashion these days, we assume that Bible history provides a year-by-year accounting that does not allow for centuries of time when people aimlessly roamed about making simple tools and eking out a half-man, half-animal lifestyle. This assumption is corroborated by facts: even secular historians agree that all the earliest civilizations (eg. Sumerian, Chinese, Egyptian, Persian and Greek) began within the last 6000 years,[2] which matches perfectly with the 6000-yr timeline here presented, from Adam's fall until now. [For more on our reasons for holding to this assumption see the arguments presented in Part 2, section B, Time-span #1. b. of this analysis, which discusses in detail the Genesis genealogies from Adam to Abraham.]

◊ Note: this timeline begins at Adam's fall, not before. This is important because even if we affirm the fact of no more than 6000 years of human history on the earth, we are in no way making a statement that the earth itself is only 6000 years old. What happened before Adam's fall, and the length of the period of time that God took in creating the earth is not covered by the scope of this timeline. The earth could be found to be many times older than 6000 years, and still not conflict with the Bible's timeline of events.

[1] See Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.17.

[2] See Encyclopaedia Britannica online: http://www.britannica.com/EBcheck/topic/573179/Summer (accessed Apr 30, 2010)

Part 2 – The Backbone of this Timeline: 10 consecutive time spans in the Bible's story which outline history.

Because of our 2 primary assumptions (1 – that the Bible is accurate, and 2 – that the Bible does not have any missing gaps of time), we should be able to figure out, using only the Bible, the number of years from Adam's fall to Jesus' death.

As it turns out, there are 10 key time spans documented in the Bible, which link up with each other consecutively (end-to-end) and which form the backbone of this timeline. (Note: the 10th one is not actually described in the Bible, but is an important part of Bible prophecy and can be accurately deduced from secular history.) Once these 10 foundational time spans are defined and understood, and then placed on a chart (one after another), the rest of the Bible's chronology is mostly a matter of 'plugging in the gaps;' almost every event falls neatly into place.

It is largely due to the fact that people have ignored these 10 time spans that there is so much disagreement among scholars about the dating of biblical events.

A. Chart of the 10 consecutive time spans of the Bible:

Table 2.A.

	EVENT	Yrs	BC	References
	Adam's Fall	0	3930	Genesis 1-3
1.	Adam to Abraham's birth	2008	1923	Gen 5, 11, Acts 7:2-4
2.	To Abraham's call by God	75	1848	Gen 12:1-4
3.	To Abraham's journey to Egypt	.5	1847	Gen 12:1-10, Exodus 12:40-41
4.	To Exodus	430	1417	Ex 12:40-41, Gal 3:15-17
5.	To Solomon's temple construction	479[3]	938	1 Kings 6:1
6.	To Solomon's temple completion	7	931	1 Ki 6:37-38
7.	To start of Babylonian captivity	407	524	1 Ki 12–2 Ki 25, 1&2 Chronicles
8.	To Cyrus' decree to rebuild the temple (end of Babylonian captivity)	70	454	Jeremiah 25, 2Chron 36:20-21
9.	To Christ's baptism	483	30 AD	Daniel 9:24-27
10.	To destruction of temple by Rome	40	70 AD	Secular history
	Total Years from the Fall to 2nd Temple destruction:	**4000**[4]		
	Total Years from the Fall until now:	**almost 6000**		

[3] Note: Solomon began the Temple in the 480th year from the Exodus, which was 938 BC. But counting 480 years, here, would include 1417 BC as 1 of the 480 years, which we already counted as part of the 430-year period from Abraham's journey to Egypt. Therefore, even though from the Exodus to the Temple is 480 years, we only count 479 years on this table – otherwise our count would end up with an extra year in it, due to counting 1417 BC twice. See Time-span #5 in section B, below, for more details.

[4] Note: If you actually add up all the numbers you get 3999.5, since Abraham's journey to Egypt took only 6 months (see explanation in Time-span #3 in section B, below, for more details).

- When you add up all of the years from 3930 BC to 70 AD, however, you get 4000 years, so it looks like there are 6 months missing from this chart of events.
- However, there are no missing 6 months – here's why:
  1. The first month of 3930 BC was September (that's why the Jewish civil – or creation – calendar counts September (Tishri) as the 1st month of the year; see explanation of the Jewish calendar in Time-span #3, section B, below, for more details).
  2. But God changed the Jewish calendar at the Exodus, so that from then on the Jews marked March as the first month of the year.
  3. Therefore 1418 BC was a short year according to the timeline of Biblical events – only 6 months long. Here's why: what should have been March of 1418 BC (only 6 months after the start of the year, which would have been September 1418 BC) became the first month of 1417 BC according to the reckoning of the Biblical writers for all further dating.
  4. Therefore, only 3999 years and 6 months passed from the Fall, in 3930 BC, until the Temple fell in 70 AD, even though adding up those two numbers equals 4000 years (3930 BC + 70 AD = 4000 years).

B. The Chart in Detail: an in-depth look at the 10 consecutive time spans.

- **How do we know that Adam's fall occurred in 3930 BC?** The key to starting this chart is the fact that the date of Christ's baptism is well-known and widely accepted by scholars as 29 or 30 AD.[5] With that date set (30 AD), the rest of the dates on this chart can be easily figured out simply by working backwards through each of the previous 9 defining Bible time spans.
- Each of the previous 9 time spans is clearly outlined in Scripture, as will be shown in this first section, and can be quite easily calculated from the Scriptural accounts. Adding them up together gives 3960 years. With the starting point of Jesus' baptism as 30 AD, we can quickly calculate the date of Adam's fall: 30 AD – 3960 years = 3930 BC.
- It should be noted (again) that dating Adam's fall (the eating of the apple in the Garden of Eden) at 3930 BC agrees with even secular timelines, since secular timelines all agree that the earliest civilizations appeared around 6000 years ago (around 4000 BC).[6]

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[5] **How do we know the date of Jesus' baptism to be 30 AD?** Jesus' baptism is the only dated event in the entire New Testament. Luke 3:1 states 'In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar' that John the Baptist began baptizing. Shortly thereafter (an unspecified amount of time, but no more than a few months) he baptized Jesus. It is a well-established fact that Tiberius reigned in Rome from 14 – 37 AD (see Encyclopedia Britannica or any other reference tool). Therefore the 15th year of his reign happened in 29 AD, and Jesus was baptized either in 29 AD or a few months later in 30 AD.

- We can be confident, though, that the baptism happened in 30 AD (not 29 AD). Here's how we put the puzzle together:
  1. We know that Jesus was 30 years old when He started His ministry (Luke 3:23 – the only place in the entire New Testament where Jesus' age, as an adult, is given).
     a. We also know that Jesus started His ministry in the same year that He was baptized (see below).
     b. Therefore Jesus was 30 years old when He got baptized.
  2. We also know that Jesus was born in 1 BC (see below).
     - Therefore Jesus turned 30 in 30 AD. (Not 29 AD because there was no year '0' AD.)
  3. **Therefore, by 1.b. and 2.a. Jesus was baptized in 30 AD**.
- How do we know that Jesus started His ministry in the same year that He was baptized? Immediately after His baptism Jesus was led into the desert to be tempted for 40 days (Matt 3:13-4:1, Lk 4:1). At the end of His 40 days in the desert Jesus began His ministry (Lk 4:14). Therefore Jesus began His ministry 40 days (or so) after His baptism – which would place it in the same year as His baptism.
- How do we know that Jesus was born in 1 BC? [Note: Various scholars dispute this date, putting it at 2, 3 or even 4 BC – but whatever you do with this dating it would only shift the entire timeline by at most 3 years anyway.]
  1. Firstly, 1 BC has always been the most widely accepted date – that's how our dating system came to be dated around Jesus, with the division AD and BC, in the first place (1 BC being the change-over year, since there is no year '0' AD).
  2. Secondly, if the 15th year of Tiberius was 29 AD, as scholars almost universally agree, then the only dating of Jesus' birth that could possibly be correct is 1 BC. If He was born in 2, 3 or 4 BC then He would have been older than 30 in the 15th year of Tiberius.
     - There are only 3 options at this point:
       a. That the Bible is wrong – Jesus wasn't 30 years old when He started His ministry (He was older, because He was born before 1 BC);
       b. That the scholars who say the 15th year of Tiberius happened in 29 AD are wrong (it had to have happened earlier than 29 AD);
       c. That the scholars who say Jesus was born earlier than 1 BC (in 2, 3 or 4 BC) are wrong.
     - We know the Bible can't be wrong, so that leaves options b & c. And here's the thing – there is WAY more evidence for the 15th year of Tiberius' reign being dated as 29 AD than there is evidence that Jesus was born earlier than 1 BC. Therefore we take Jesus' birth to be 1 BC, as has been generally accepted for more than 2000 years.

[6] See Encyclopedia Britannica online: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/573176/Sumer (accessed Apr 30, 2010)

1. **Time-span #1: from Adam's fall to Abraham's birth = 2008 years**.

◊ **(Therefore we can confidently date Abraham's birth at 1923 BC)**

a. Counting up all the years listed in the genealogies from Adam to Abraham, comes to 2008 years. Thus, we can confidently date Abraham's birth at 1923 BC. Below is a chart of all the generations from Adam to Abraham:

Table 2.B.1.

Adam to birth of Abraham = 2008 years[7]

Genesis 5:1-32 & 11:10-32

		Age at Son's Birth	Years After Birth	Total Years Lived	BC	
1.	Adam	130	800	930	3930-3001	**Genesis 5:3**
2.	Seth	105	807	912	3801-2889	v. 6
3.	Enosh	90	815	905	3696-2791	v.9
4.	Kenan (a.k.a. Cainan)	70	840	910	3606-2696	v.12
5.	Mahalalel	65	830	895	3536-2641	v.15
6.	Jared	162	800	962	3471-2509	v.18
7.	Enoch	65	300	365	3309-2944	v.21
8.	Methuselah	187	782	969	3244-2275	v.25
9.	Lamech	182	595	777	3057-2280	v.28
10.	Noah	502	448	950	2875-1925	v.32
11.	Shem	100	500	600	2373-1773	**Genesis 11:10**
12.	Arphaxad	35	403	438	2273-1835	v.12
13.	Shelah	30	403	433	2238-1795	v.14
14.	Eber	34	430	464	2208-1744	v.16
15.	Peleg	30	209	239	2174-1935	v.18
16.	Reu	32	207	239	2144-1905	v.20
17.	Serug	30	200	230	2112-1882	v.22
18.	Nahor	29	119	148	2082-1934	v.24
19.	Terah	130	75	205	2053-1848	see below, a.
20.	Abraham born	0	-	-	-	-
	Total Years:	**2008**				

b. ***How do we know that Abraham's father, Terah, was 130 when he had Abraham?*** Gen 11:26 only says that Terah was 70 when he 'fathered Abraham, Nahor, and Haran.' 70 was the age Terah was when the oldest of Abraham's older brothers was born. How do we figure out that he was 75 when he had Abraham? 3 steps of logic:

1) Acts 7:2-4 states that Abraham did not leave Haran to go to the Promised land until his father died.
2) Gen 11:32 tells us that Terah died when he was 205.
3) Gen 12:4 tells us that Abraham was 75 when he left Haran.

♦ Thus, Abraham was 75 when his dad died at 205. Therefore, Terah was 130 when he had Abraham.

For those desiring further study and discussion on this first time span continue on to the next page. For those wishing only to get a general overview of the 10 main time-spans skip ahead 4 pages to Time-span #2 . . .

[7] Finegan, Jack – *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* Revised Edition, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. (Peabody, Massachusetts); pg. 195.

c. Why do some Christian scholars teach that there are missing generations in Genesis lists, which means we cannot be confident of dating 2008 years from Adam to Abraham?

- There is mounting pressure in our culture, from secular scientists and archaeologists alike, telling us that humans have been around for a lot longer than 6,000 years. Archaeologists are making finds of 'Neanderthals' and 'cave men,' which they are convinced are 15,000 to 20,000 years old (or more).
  1) Since it is generally accepted, by both secular and Christian experts alike, that the time span from Abraham until now is about 4000 years, that would mean that in order for human history to stretch back 15,000+ years, there would have to be 10,000+ years between Adam and Abraham.
  2) Many theologians today are trying to keep the inerrancy of the Bible intact, while accepting the 15,000+-years-of-human-history claims as true. The only way to do this is to say that there are missing generations in the generational lists found in Genesis chapter 5 & 11. This way the Bible can still be true, without contradicting the popular science of our day.
  3) These theologians think they have proof, too. They point to the genealogies of Jesus found in Matthew chapter 1 and Luke chapter 3, both of which obviously omit generations from their lists. They then infer that since generations are omitted from those lists, it's quite likely that generations are omitted from the Genesis lists.
     - ◊ Following their logic a little further, if there are missing generations in the Genesis genealogies then there are gaps of time in them which are unaccounted for, and thus, there could be much more than 2008 years between Adam and Abraham.

- But this is faulty logic for one obvious reason: The Genesis genealogies deliberately include the age of each father when his offspring was produced, which explicitly rules out adding any years to the 2008 which we have counted up from Adam to Abraham – even if there are missing generations.
  1) Here is a sample excerpt from the Genesis genealogies: *When Seth had lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh. Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died.*

     When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan. Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died.

     When Kenan had lived 70 years, he fathered Mahalalel. Kenan lived after he fathered Mahalalel 840 years and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died. **– Gen 5:6-14**
     - ◊ Note: The entire genealogies of Genesis 5 & 11 are written in exactly this manner, in this amount of detail.
  2) Think about this for a moment – even if there are missing generations in the Genesis lists (which is very unlikely, given the wording of the text), it wouldn't actually change anything with regards to the timeline. Imagine, for a moment, that Enosh was actually the great-grandson of Seth, not Seth's son. What would that change in terms of the timeline? Nothing! Because the genealogy explicitly states that Seth was 105 when Enosh was born. So whether Enosh is the son or grandson or great-grandson makes no difference to the amount of time calculated from Seth to Enosh – 105 years.
     - ◊ And the time span from Enosh to Kenan is 90 years, whether Kenan is Enosh's son, or if he is instead a grandson or great-grandson.
     - ◊ And so on and so forth for everyone on the list.
  3) Because the age of each father is explicitly included at the time of his subsequent offspring's birth, the question of whether or not there are missing generations in the Genesis genealogies is actually IRRELEVANT with respect to the timeline. Even if we cannot be 100% sure of the number of generations from Adam to

Abraham, we can be 100% confident of the amount of time (assuming we are 100% confident in the inerrancy of Scripture).

- **Aside:** Incidentally, any comparisons that theologians make between the Matthew and Luke genealogies and the Genesis genealogies are shaky to begin with because they are completely different genres of genealogy, and were written to accomplish completely different purposes. The Matthew & Luke genealogies were written to preach a message about Jesus – who He was, and where He came from. Unlike Genesis, they were never intended as a timeline to help people understand the chronology of history; they don't contain any numbers – no ages or birthdays – and they are written in a vague way which allows for the obvious gaps that the authors intentionally included, and which the original Jewish readers immediately recognized.
- Here is a sample excerpt from Matthew's genealogy: *And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob . . .* **– Matt 1:12-15 (ESV)**
  - In several instances on this list the 'father' of so-and-so is actually the grandfather or great-great-grandfather. (Note: Luke's genealogy is written in exactly the same way.)

- **2 additional reasons to be confident that the time span of 2008 years from Adam to Abraham is correct:**
  (Though the primary argument given above is sufficient to prove it.)

1) **Reason #1: Historians and archaeologists (secular & Christian) tell us that human civilization appeared about 6000 years ago.**[8]
   a) Since there are 4000 years between Abraham's time and our time (this number is basically not disputed by anyone either Christian or non-Christian), this number of 6000 years confirms perfectly the Bible's timeline of 2008 years from Adam to Abraham as being accurate.
   b) Of course, historians and archaeologists also tell us that before human beings organized themselves into civilizations they wandered around for thousands of years like animals, eking out a cave-man-like existence.
   c) What are we to make of this?
   d) Here's what we know from the Bible: There were no cave-men between Adam and Abraham. Adam and Eve were highly intelligent, fully developed human beings and so were their offspring: they farmed (Gen 4:2), worked with metal (Gen 4:22), invented musical instruments (Gen 4:21) and built towns and cities (Gen 4:17). Adam & Eve's children formed the first civilizations, and both the archaeological record and the Bible's timeline are in agreement that this was 6000 years ago.
   e) Q: But what about the Neanderthals and cave-men? A: I don't know. Whatever they are, they do not affect or figure into the Bible's timeline. Some questions I do have about the whole subject:
   f) Are the Neanderthal remains archaeologists have found actually human, or are they something else entirely (some kind of monkey or gorilla or whatever)?
   g) How trustworthy is carbon dating? There are good scientific reasons to doubt the accuracy of a lot of carbon dating that's been done.
   h) Could these Neanderthal creatures be a part of pre-history, part of God's creating work before He made human beings? Like I said before, this timeline does not presume to prove that the earth is only 6000 years old, only that the length of human history – from Adam's fall until now – is about 6000 years.

[8] See Encyclopedia Britannica online: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/573176/Sumer (accessed Apr 30, 2010)

2) **Reason #2: There were very few people on the earth in the time of Abraham.**
   a) This is not a proof that there were only 2008 years between Adam and Abraham, but it is a confirmation of our position which makes much less likely the position that there were many thousands of years between the two.
   b) How do we know there were few people on the earth in the time of Abraham?[9] Note that when Abraham rescued Lot (Gen 14), he sent out all his trained men into battle, numbering only 318 in total (14:14). These 318 men defeat the combined armies of an alliance of four kings! These four kings themselves had just finished defeating an alliance of 5 kings (14:9). So Abraham commands a strong military force with only 318 men; this suggests a very limited number of people and development.
      ◊ Conversely, when Abraham's grandson Jacob moved to Egypt, his whole family totaled only 70 people (Gen 46:27). Just 215 years later, however, those 70 people mushroomed massively into a population with 603,550 fighting men (Num 1:1-46). In just 215 years, Jacob's family had grown into a nation with an army that was 2,000 times bigger than the one Abraham used to defeat an alliance four armies!
      ◊ If many thousands of years separated Shem and Abraham (Shem was Noah's son, so the world's population was reset to almost zero in his time, due to the Flood), as some Christian theologians are now saying, we would expect that the population in Abraham's time should have been much larger than it was.

[9] Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.49.

2. Time-span #2: from Abraham's birth to Abraham's call = 75 years.

◊ **(Therefore we can confidently date the call of Abraham in 1848 BC.)**

a. We now know the time period from Adam's fall to Abraham's birth to be 2008 years (as calculated from the Bible's detailed generational timelines in Genesis 5 & 11, see above).

b. Genesis 12:1-4 gives us the next time-span, clearly stating that Abraham was 75 years old when God called him. By adding 75 years to the 2008 years from the genealogies we now know the time from Adam's fall to Abraham's call to be 2083 years. Therefore, we can confidently date Abraham's call as happening in 1848 BC.

◊ **Recap of the Timeline so far:**

3930 BC Adam's Fall	**1923 BC** Abraham's Birth	**1848 BC** Abraham's Call
2008 years		**75 years**
Time-span #1		**Time-span #2**

3. Time-span #3: from Abraham's call until he entered Egypt = 6 months.

◊ **(Therefore we can confidently date Abraham's entry into Egypt in 1847 BC.)**

a. Almost immediately after Abraham obeyed God's call to move to Canaan, he was forced to move again (temporarily) – this time to Egypt because of a terrible famine in the land of Canaan. Many timelines neglect the time gap between Abraham's call and when he goes to Egypt.

b. This time gap could not have been more than 6 months, and most likely was almost exactly 6 months. Here's how we know how long this time gap was:

1) From Abraham's call to the Exodus = 430 years: Galatians 3:16-17 tells us that the time period from Abraham's call to the Exodus was 430 years.

◊ (Note: Galatians doesn't say 430 years to the 'Exodus,' it says 430 years to the giving of 'the law,' which refers to God giving Moses the 10 Commandments on Mount Sinai, which happened in the Exodus, just after the Israelites left Egypt.)

2) From Abraham entering Egypt to the Exodus = 430 years as well: Exodus 12:40-41 tells us that the time period from Abraham entering Egypt to the Exodus (Israel leaving Egypt) was exactly 430 years, to the very day.

c. This means that Abraham's call (Gen 12:1-5) had to have happened in the same year that Abraham entered into Egypt (Gen 12:10-20) since both events occurred 430 years before the Exodus.

◊ *But how do we know this time period is 6 months and not 8 or 9 or 10 or something else less than a year?*

a. The Exodus (Jews leaving Egypt) occurred in the month of March. We know this because God told the Jews to change their calendars in order to celebrate each Passover in the first month of the year (Ex 12:14-18). Ever since, the Jews have counted Nisan (our March) as the first month of the year.[10] Therefore, we know that the Exodus occurred in March. [SEE NEXT PAGE for chart comparing Jewish calendars]

b. Since the Exodus happened in March, and since it was 430 years to the day from Abraham entering Egypt to the Exodus, Abraham must also have entered Egypt in March.

c. We now know that Abraham entered Egypt in March, but when did God call Abraham? Well, as stated before, it had to have been in the same calendar year (counting by the Jewish calendar) as he entered Egypt, since both his call and his entry into Egypt were 430 years from the same event, the Exodus.

♦ Here's where dating these events gets tricky, however, because of the calendar change instituted by God at the Exodus. Before the Exodus, the Jews counted Tishri (our September) as the first month of the year.

♦ Therefore, according to Abraham, the year that he went down to Egypt (which was in our March, 1848 BC) started in September, six months earlier.

♦ Therefore, God had to have called Abraham sometime between September and March of 1848 BC. If God had called Abraham before September then the apostle Paul would have stated, in Galatians 3:16-17, that the time from Abraham's call to the giving of the law was 431 years not 430 years, since the call would not then have occurred in the calendar year of 1848 BC, but rather, in the previous calendar year (by Jewish reckoning) of 1849 BC.

[10] As a result, the Jews now have 2 calendars (SEE NEXT PAGE for chart comparing Jewish calendars):

1. **Religious Calendar:** The Religious one is the one which God inaugurated at the Exodus, which counts Nisan (our March) as the first month of the year. This is the calendar which the Bible uses almost exclusively (except for events which happened before the Exodus, obviously).
2. **Civil Calendar:** The civil calendar is almost never used by the Bible writers (except in all the events preceding the Exodus). It counts Tishri (our September) as the first month of the year.

Table 2.B.3.

Comparing the Months[11]

Roman Names	Bible Name	Jewish Calendars	
		Religious	Civil
March	**Abid or Nisan**	1	7
April	**Ziv**	2	8
May	**Sivan**	3	9
June	**Tammuz**	4	10
July	**Ab**	5	11
August	**Elul**	6	12
September	**Ethanim (Tishri)**	7	1
October	**Bul**	8	2
November	**Kislev**	9	3
December	**Tebeth**	10	4
January	**Shebat**	11	5
February	**Adar**	12	6

◊ As a result of this discussion, we can confidently date Abraham's entry into Egypt 1847 BC (March).

◊ **Recap of the Timeline so far:**

3930 BC	**1923 BC**	**1848 BC**	**1847 BC**
Adam's Fall	Abraham's Birth	Abraham's Call (September)	Abraham enters Egypt (March)

2008 years	75 years	6 mo.
Time-span #1	**Time-span #2**	**#3**

[11] Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.21.

4. Time-span #4: from Abraham's entry into Egypt to the Exodus = 430 years.

◊ **(Therefore we can confidently date the Exodus at 1417 BC.)**

a. The 4th time-span is 430 years long and takes us from Abraham's entry into Egypt all the way to the Exodus, when the Israelites left Egypt after the 10 plagues. Therefore we can confidently date the Exodus in 1417 BC. Paul reveals this time-span to us in Galatians.

♦ **Galatians 3:16-17:** *Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. . . . This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.* (ESV)

1) The 'promises made to Abraham' refers to God's promise to Abraham that he would father a nation (Gen 12:1-3). 'The law' refers to God giving Moses the 10 Commandments at Mount Sinai (Ex 34), which occurred when the Israelites left Egypt.

2) Paul makes it clear that there were 430 years between these two events, which allows us to confidently date the Exodus at 1417 BC (1847 BC – 430 years = 1417 BC).

♦ **Recap of the Timeline so far:**

3930 BC	**1923 BC**	**1848 BC**	**1847 BC**	**1417 BC**
Adam's Fall	Abraham's Birth	Abraham's Call	Abraham enters Egypt	The Exodus

2008 years	75 years	6 mo.	430 years
Time-span #1	**Time-span #2**	**#3**	**Time-span #4**

For those desiring further study on some of the implications and details concerning this 430-yr span of time, keep reading. For those wishing only to get a general overview of the 10 main time-spans skip ahead four pages to Time-span #5 . . .

b. The Israelites were NOT enslaved in Egypt for 400 years – at most it was 120 yrs.

♦ Many Christians (including a number of scholars) mistakenly think that Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, lived in slavery in Egypt for 400 years. This is not true. Paul makes very clear in Galatians 3 (see above) that there were only 430 years total between Abraham's call and Moses receiving the law on Mt. Sinai, which means there wasn't nearly enough time for the Israelites to endure 400 years of slavery in Egypt, since Abraham didn't even have children yet when God called him.

♦ Consider the following 4 points:

1) Abraham's grandson Jacob (later renamed Israel) wouldn't enter Egypt with his family (Gen 46:1-27, Ex 1:1-7) until 215 years after Abraham's call,[12] which means that at most the Israelites could have been in bondage only 215 years (430 years total – 215 years til' Jacob entered Egypt = 215 possible years of slavery).

2) But the number of possible years of slavery is much less, even, than 215 because the Egyptians didn't begin persecuting the Hebrews the moment that Jacob entered Egypt. The Bible says that it wasn't until after Jacob's sons had all died that the Egyptians began persecuting the Israelites:

◊ *Then Joseph died, and ALL his brothers and all that generation. [7] But the people of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong, so that the land was filled with*

[12] **How do we know there were 215 years from Abraham's call to Jacob's entry into Egypt?** 3 points:

1. **25 years from Abraham's call to Isaac's birth.** Abraham was 75 when he was called (Gen 12:1-4) and 100 when Isaac was born (Gen 21:5).
2. **60 years from Isaac's birth to Jacob's birth.** Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born (Gen 25:26).
3. **130 years from Jacob's birth to his entry into Egypt.** Jacob was 130 years old when he went into Egypt (Gen 47:9).

- Therefore: 25 + 60 + 130 = 215 years from Abraham's call to Jacob's entry into Egypt with all his family – the ½ way point of the 430-year span of time spoken of by the apostle Paul in Galatians.

them. [8] Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. [9] And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. [10] Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." [11] Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. **– Ex 1:6-11 (ESV)**

3) We don't know how long each of Joseph's brothers lived, but we know that Levi lived to be 137 (Ex 6:16). Since Levi was born when Jacob was 87,[13] and since Jacob was 130 when he entered Egypt (Gen 47:9) with all his family, then Levi was 43 when he entered Egypt. Which means that Levi lived for another 94 years after he entered Egypt, and according to Exodus 1:6 (above) the Egyptians could not have begun enslaving the Hebrews until this point at the earliest, since all of Joseph's brothers had to die first.

♦ Recap of the previous arguments concerning the length of time the Israelites were in slavery:

1) Abraham's call to Jacob entering Egypt = 215 years.
2) Jacob entering Egypt until Levi dies = 94 years (earliest possible time when slavery could have started – we don't know when the other brothers died, they could have been even later).
3) 430 years total from Abraham to Moses-on-Mt.-Sinai.

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[13] **Important Dating information concerning Jacob's Life.** The Bible does not explicitly state how old Jacob was when any of his sons were born, including Levi. Nor does it state how old he was when he got married or when Isaac blessed him. To figure out his age at these important events, 5 Scriptural markers are needed.

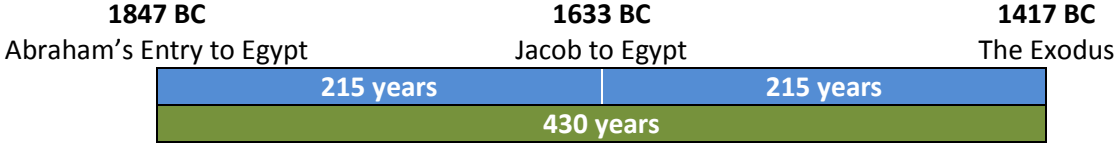
1. **Jacob was 130 years old when he entered Egypt (Gen 47:9)**.
2. **Jacob & his family entered Egypt in the 3rd year of the famine (Gen 45:6-7)**.
   - This means that Joseph had been ruling in Egypt for 9 years when his father Jacob, with his brothers, moved to Egypt. How do we know this? We know that Egypt and the surrounding lands went through a 14-yr period which consisted first of 7 years of plenty, followed by 7 years of famine (Gen 41:1-36). Pharaoh made Joseph the 2nd highest ruler of the land in the 1st year of the 7 years of plenty (Gen 41:37-45). Therefore, Joseph had been ruling for 9 years when his brothers and Jacob moved to Egypt since 7 years of plenty and 2 years of famine were already past (Gen 45:6-7).
3. **Joseph was 30 years old when he began ruling over Egypt (Gen 41:46)**.
4. **Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold into slavery (Gen 37:2; 3-36)**.
5. **Joseph was born to Jacob <u>in</u> the 14th year of his service to Laban (Gen 30:25-26 + Gen 31:41)**. How do we know this?
   - Jacob served Laban for 20 years total – 14 years to earn the rights to Leah & Rachel and 6 years to earn his flock (Gen 31:41).
   - Joseph was born to Jacob in the 14th year of his service. We know this because immediately after Joseph was born Jacob demanded that Laban release him to return to his homeland because he had fulfilled the amount of service required in order to earn his wives (Gen 25:25-26). Then they worked out a deal whereby Jacob would stay an additional set of years to earn his own flocks (Gen 30:31-36) – we know the amount of time to be 6 years because of Gen 31:41.

- <u>With this information it is now possible to calculate a number of things about Jacob's life</u>:
  1. ***How old Jacob was when he got married to Leah and Rachel – 85 yrs. old.*** By #2 and #3 above we can deduce that Joseph was 39 when Jacob entered Egypt. Jacob was 130 at that time, so that means that Jacob was 91 when he had Joseph. Since Jacob worked 7 years before he married Rachel and Leah (Gen 29:20-21, 30), and since Joseph was born in the 14th year of his service to Laban, that means that Jacob's marriages to Leah and Rachel happened when he was 85.
  2. ***How old (very closely) Jacob was when each of his sons was born:*** After his marriages to Leah and Rachel in the 7th year of his service to Laban (at age 85) Jacob had 11 sons in 7 years. We know this because Joseph is the youngest (until Benjamin comes along, but he doesn't come along until much later when Rachel dies – Gen 35:15-19) of the 11 and he is born in the 14th year of Joseph's service to Laban. Since none of the boys was twins, it's easy to calculate the years in which each was born (Gen 29:31 – 30:24):
     i. Reuben – Jacob is 85 years old (born to Leah);
     ii. Simeon – Jacob is 86 years old (born to Leah);
     iii. Levi – Jacob is 87 years old (born to Leah);
     iv. Judah & Dan – Jacob is 88 years old (Dan born to Rachel's servant Bilhah);
     v. Naphtali & Gad – Jacob is 89 years old (Naphtali born to Bilhah; Gad to Leah's servant Zilpah);
     vi. Asher & Issachar – Jacob is 90 years old (Asher to Zilpah; Issachar to Leah);
     vii. Zebulun & Joseph – Jacob is 91 years old (Zebulun to Leah; Joseph to Rachel).
  3. ***How old Jacob was when he stole Isaac's blessing from Esau – 78 yrs. old.*** This would have happened in the first year of his service to Laban (that's why he fled to Laban), 13 years before Joseph's birth.

♦ **Conclusion: 430 total years – 215 years before Jacob enters Egypt – 94 years until Levi dies = <u>121 years, maximum that the Israelites could have been in bondage to the Egyptians before traveling to Mt. Sinai with Moses in the Exodus.</u>**

♦ **Chart from Abraham's call to the Exodus:**

Table 2.B.4.i.



♦ **2 Questions which arise** – Many faithful students of the Bible will have 2 questions come to mind when they see the above chart:

1) If the Israelites were only enslaved in Egypt for a maximum of 120 years, what do we make of Genesis 15:13, where God promised Abraham that his descendants would suffer through 400 years of affliction?
2) If Jacob and his descendants only lived in Egypt for 215 years, how can Exodus 12:40-41 say that the Exodus occurred 430 years 'to the day' after 'Israel' entered Egypt?

Answers:

c. <u>Question #1</u>: *What are we to make of the 400 years of 'affliction' prophesied for the Israelites in Genesis 15:13?*

1) Genesis 15:13 says – *Then the Lord said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be <u>afflicted</u> for <u>four hundred years</u>.* (ESV)
   a) This is exactly the passage which has caused many Christians to assume that the Israelites were in slavery in Egypt for 400 years. But we now know, because of Galatians 3:16-17 and the arguments presented in the point above, that the Israelites could not have been in slavery for more than 120 years. The 400 years of affliction would have started only 30 years after Abraham's call (since 430 years from Abraham's call to the Exodus – Gal 3:16-17). So what are we to make of this passage where God promises that the Israelites would be 'afflicted for four hundred years?'
   b) A: The 400 years of 'affliction' for the Israelites begins when Abraham's son Ishmael, the son of Hagar (an Egyptian, see Gen 16:1) – ridicules ('persecutes') his other son Isaac (Gen 21:9-10), the father of the Israelites.
      ◊ Genesis 21:9-10 records the story of Ishmael mocking his younger brother Isaac at the celebration feast for young Isaac's being weaned. The apostle Paul interpreted this event as Ishmael 'persecuting' Isaac. *For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman* [Ishmael] *and one by a free woman* [Isaac].[23] *But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through promise. . . .* [28] *Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.* [29] *But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh* [Ishmael] *persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit* [Isaac]*, so also it is now.* **– Gal 4:22-23, 28-29 (ESV)**
      ◊ Since we have already eliminated the possibility that the 400 years of affliction could have started when Pharaoh enslaved the Israelites in Egypt, this persecution of Isaac must mark the starting point of the 400 years of affliction.

◊ And indeed, this makes total sense with regard to the biblical timeline of events. 30 years after Abraham's call (the start of the 400 years of affliction), Isaac would have been 5[14] and Ishmael 19, which makes perfect sense that that would have been the year of the feast for Isaac's weaning. Thus, it is beyond doubt that the 400 years of affliction, which God predicted in Genesis 15:13, started when Ishmael persecuted Isaac in Genesis.

d. **Question #2: What are we to make of the fact that Exodus 12:40-41 states unequivocally that the Israelites lived in Egypt for 430 years *to the very day*?** If Jacob entered Egypt 215 years after Abraham's call, and his descendants left Egypt 215 years later at the Exodus, how can Exodus 12:40-41 say that the Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years to the day?

♦ **A: The answer is simple – the 430 years did not start when Jacob entered Egypt (recorded in Gen 47), but when Abraham entered Egypt (Gen 12:10).**

1) Here is the passage in question: *The time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt was 430 years. [41] At the end of 430 years, on that very day, all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt.* **– Ex 12:40-41 (ESV)**
   ◊ Most Christians automatically assume that 'the time that the people of Israel lived in Egypt' started when Jacob and his family moved to Egypt.
2) But this cannot be true because Paul stated explicitly stated in Galatians 3:16-17 (as noted before) that there were only 430 years from Abraham's call to Moses on Mount Sinai.
3) So the 430 years of Exodus 12:40-41 (the amount of time the Israelites would be in Egypt) has to begin with something that happened in the same year that God called Abraham, since both events were 430 years from the Exodus. (Jacob wouldn't enter Egypt for 215 more years after Abraham's call (exactly the half-way point), so his move to Egypt is ruled out as a possibility.)
   ◊ The only event which matches is Abraham's journey down to Egypt, right after God's call, found in Genesis 12:10-20. Thus the Exodus 12:40-41 passage must start with Abraham's entry to Egypt, and because Abraham was the father of the Israelites, the time that they spent in Egypt started counting when he entered it for the first time.

◊ **Chart of the two 430-yr periods described in Exodus 12 & Galatians 3:**

Table 2.B.4.ii.

1923 BC Abraham's Birth	**1848 BC** (September) Abraham's Call	**1847 BC** (March) Abraham enters Egypt	**1417 BC** (March) The Exodus
75 years	**6 mo.**	**430 years "to the very day" (Ex 12:40-41)**	
	430 years from the "promise to the law" (Gal 3:16-17)		

[14] **How do we know how old Isaac & Ishmael were, 30 years after Abraham's call?** We know that Isaac was born to Abraham 25 years after the call (Abraham was 75 when he was called – Gen 12:1-4; Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born – Gen 21:5). So 30 years after Abraham's call Isaac would have been 5. We also know that Ishmael was 14 years older than Isaac because Abraham was 86 when Ishmael was born (Gen 16:16). Thus Ishmael would have been 19 at Isaac's weaning party.

5. **Time-span #5: The period of the Judges – from the Exodus to the building of Solomon's Temple = 479 yrs.**

◊ **(Therefore we can confidently date the start of the temple at 938 BC)**

a. *In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the Lord.* **– 1 Kings 6:1 (ESV)**

b. The Bible is very clear about this time-span – 480 years from the Exodus to the start of Solomon building the temple. On our timeline, however, we only count 479 of the years. The reason for this is quite simple – the year of the Exodus (1417 BC) has already been counted once, in the 430 year time-span from Abraham's entry into Egypt to the Exodus (1847–1417 BC). Thus, there is an overlap of 1 year in the two time-spans, since the writer of the book of Kings also counts the Exodus year in his 480 year calculation.

c. Point of interest: Judges ruled for most of these years as recorded in the book of Judges.

◊ **Recap of the Timeline so far:**

3930 BC Adam's Fall	**1923 BC** Abraham's Birth	**1848 BC** Abraham's Call	**1847 BC** Abram to Egypt	**1417 BC** The Exodus	**938 BC** Temple bld Starts

2008 years	75 years	6 mo.	430 years	479 years
Time-span #1	**Time-span #2**	**#3**	**Time-span #4**	**Time-span #5**
Book of Genesis			Books of Gen & Exodus	Books of Joshua & Judges

6. **Time-span #6: from the start of Solomon's Temple to the finish = 7 years.**

◊ **(Therefore we can confidently date the finishing of the Temple at 931 BC)**

♦ *In the fourth year* [of Solomon's reign] *the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid, in the month of Ziv. 38 And in the eleventh year* [of Solomon's reign]*, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its parts, and according to all its specifications. He* [Solomon] *was seven years in building it.* **– 1 Ki 6:37-38 (ESV)**

1) It took Solomon 7 years to build the Temple, which means we can confidently date the completion of the Temple at 931 BC (938 BC – 7 yrs = 931 BC).

2) Note: The month of Bul corresponds roughly to our month of October (see Table of Jewish months in the section devoted to Time-span #3).

◊ **Recap of the Timeline so far:**

3930 BC Adam's Fall	**1923 BC** Abraham's Birth	**1848 BC** Abraham's Call	**1847 BC** Abraham to Egypt	**1417 BC** The Exodus	**938 BC** Temple building starts	**931 BC** Temple finished

2008 years	75 years	6mo.	430 years	479 years	7 years
Time-span #1	**Time-span #2**	**#3**	**Time-span #4**	**Time-span #5**	**Time-span #6**
Book of Genesis			Genesis & Exodus	Books of Joshua & Judges	Kings & Chron

7. **Time-span #7: The period of the Kings – from temple completion to the Babylonian Captivity = 407 years.**

◊ **(Therefore we can confidently date the Babylonian captivity as starting at 524 BC)**

a. This span of time stretches from when the Temple was completed (Solomon's 11th year, see 1 Ki 6:38) to when Nebuchadnezzar took the Jews into Babylonian exile, and could be called 'The period of the kings,' because it spans the time when Israel and Judah were governed by kings, not including David and Solomon (as recorded in the books of 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles).

♦ There is no one verse which explicitly states that this time span was 407 years, but it can be accurately calculated by carefully going through the books of 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles, and adding up the number of years that each king ruled – SEE CHART NEXT PAGE.

♦ **Recap of the timeline so far:**

3930 BC Adam's Fall		**1923 BC** Abraham's Birth	**1848 BC** Abraham's Call	**1847 BC** Abraham to Egypt	**1417 BC** The Exodus		**938 BC** Temple building starts	**931 BC** Temple finished	**524 BC** Babylonian Exile
2008 years		**75 years**	**6mo.**	**430 years**	**479 years**		**7yrs**	**407 years**	
Time-span #1		**Time-span #2**	**#3**	**Time-span #4**	**Time-span #5**		**#6**	**Time-span #7**	
Book of Genesis				Genesis & Exodus	Books of Joshua & Judges		1 & 2 Kings; 1 & 2 Chronicles		

For those desiring to know the details of how the 407 years was calculated, see the chart on the next page and the explanations which follow. For those just wishing to get a general overview of the 10 main time-spans skip ahead a few pages to Time-span #8 . . .

Table 2.B.7.i. – The Kings of Judah and Israel after the Division: 407 yrs from Temple Completion to Babylonian Captivity

Total Period of all the Kings (Judah) : Saul – Zedekiah = 516 yrs (1021 BC – 506 BC)

Time-span #7: From temple completion (931)– Babylonian Exile (524) = 407 yrs

Judah					Israel				
	BC	Yrs	Kings	Reference	BC	Yrs	Kings	Reference	Notes
931		0	Temple completed in Solomon's 11th year (931), Solomon reigns 29 more years (til' 902) – then Rehoboam, his son,						
	930	29	takes over and the kingdom splits into two parts: Judah and Israel.						
	901	17	Rehoboam (E)	**1 KI** 14:21	901-880	22	Jeroboam	**1 KINGS** 14:19-20	Note: all the Israelite kings are evil. Some Judean kings are good and some are evil, so they are each denoted by a (G) or (E).
	884	3	Abijah (E)	15:1-2					
	881	41	Asa (G)	15:9-10	880-879	2	Nadab	15:25	
					879-856	24	Baasha	15:33	
					856-855	2	Elah	16:8	
					855	7dys	Zimri	16:15	
					855-844	12	Omri/Tibni	16:16-28	Israel split in 2, Tibni & Omri both reign first 5 yrs; Omri defeats Tibni & reunifies Israel. Omri – 12 total yrs.
					844-823	22	Ahab	16:29	
	840	25	Jehoshaphat (G)	22:41					Ahab & Ahaziah co-reign 2 yrs 824-823.
					824-823	*2	Ahaziah	22:51	
					823-812	12	Jehoram	**2 KINGS** 3:1	Confusing: both Israel & Judah had kings named Jehoram reigning at the same time.
	815	*3	Jehoram (E)	**2KI** 8:16-17					
	812	1	Ahaziah (E)	8:26					
	811	6	Athaliah (E)	11:1-3, 12:1	811-784	28	Jehu		
	805	*38	Joash (G) (also 'Jehoash')	12:1					
					783-767	*17	Jehoahaz	13:1	Jehoahaz & Jehoash co-reign 3 yrs (769-767)
					769-754	16	Jehoash	13:10	Confusing: both Israel & Judah had kings named Jehoash reigning at the same time.
	767	29	Amaziah (G)	14:1-2,17					
					753-713	41	Jeroboam (the 2nd)	14:23	
	738	11	**NO KING**	14:1,23 + 15:1					
	727	52	Uzziah (G) (aka Azariah)	15:1-2					
					712-690	23	**NO KING**		
					690	6m	Zechariah	15:8	
					689	1m	Shallum	15:13	
					688-679	10	Menahem	15:17	
					678-677	2	Pekahiah	15:23	
	675	16	Jotham (G)	15:32-33	676-657	20	Pekah	15:27	
	659	*14	Ahaz (E)	16:1-2	656-649	8	**NO KING**		
	645	29	Hezekiah (G)	18:1-2 + 16:2 + 17:1 + 18:9-10 = 645BC	648-640	9	Hoshea	17:1	
					640	**Assyrian Captivity**		**2 Kings 18:10**	**(no more political entity Israel)**
	616	55	Manasseh (E/G)	21:1					
	561	2	Amon (E)	21:19					
	559	31	Josiah (G)	22:1					
	528	1	Jehoahaz (E)	23:31					
	527	11	Jehoiakim (E)	23:36					
	524	Babylonian Captivity Begins 24:1-4							
Total Yrs:		407	*Only count 4 of Jehoiakim's 11 yrs*						
	517	0	Jehoiachin (E)	24:8					
	516	11	Zedekiah (E)	24:18, 25:3-21					
	506	**Jerusalem falls**		**25:9**	**No more kings**				

116 yrs

Asterisks from the Kings of Judah list

1.Jehoram: Jehoram reigned a total of 8 years, but only 3 by himself. He co-reigned with Jehoshaphat 5 yrs in 2 different stints (824-23 & 818-816), only reigning by himself from 815-813 (see further down for more).

2.Joash: Amaziah began co-reigning with Joash the last 2 yrs of Joash's reign (767-766). Joash actually reigned 40 yrs – 38 by himself.

3.Ahaz: Hezekiah began co-reigning with Ahaz the last 2 yrs of his reign (746-745). Ahaz actually reigned 16 yrs but only 14 by himself.

*This analysis is based on work done by Jonathan Hall in the **Ultimate Bible Timeline**: check it out www.ultimatebibletimeline.com*

◊ **Detailed Explanation for the chart of the kings (5 points).**[15]

Summary of the 5 points covered in this section:

a. The 407-yr period is calculated based on the kings of JUDAH, not the kings of Israel.
b. How to count the king years for Judah, and how to count the king years for Israel (they're different).
c. There was a period of time in Judah when there was NO KING (738-728 BC).
d. CO-REIGNS: Comprehensive explanations of the 5 Co-reigns in Judah and Israel (in chronological order).
e. Confirmation for this timeline's dating of the kings – Ezekiel's 430-yr period of sin.

◊ In detail:

a. **Point #1: The 407-yr period is calculated based on the kings of JUDAH, not the kings of Israel.** The ten tribes of Israel ceased to exist as a political entity when the Assyrians took them into captivity in 640, so obviously the 407-yr time period ending in 524 BC cannot be traced through them.

♦ It is through Judah that the Bible's timeline runs, anyway. Judah is the tribe of king David and of Jesus the two men around which much of the Scriptures revolve. The kings of Israel are only included on the above chart as a comparison to help people make sense of the books of 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles; and to help us make proper calculations about the reigns of some of the Judean kings.

b. **Point #2: How to count the king years for Judah, and how to count the king years for Israel (they're different).** There are several places in the Old Testament where critics of the Bible have pointed out supposed contradictions and errors in the dating of the kings. Most of these 'errors' actually can actually be attributed to one thing – the fact that the Bible writers calculated the years for the kings of Judah differently than they did for the kings of Israel.

1) Edwin Thiele discovered that for the kings of Judah the Bible writers assigned each calendar year to only one king; the king who happened to be reigning in the first month of the year – Abid (our March). In other words, the years of the kings of Judah are absolute and successive, no two kings are credited for the same year (this makes the Judean king lists ideal for calculating our timeline as well).[16]

◊ So, for example, 1 Kings 14:21 tells us that Rehoboam reigned for 17 years (starting in 901 BC). That means he got credited for 17 years beginning with 901 and ending in 885. The next king, Abijah, reigned for 3 years so he gets credited with 884, 883, 882. In actual fact, however, he probably started ruling sometime in 885 – but since Rehoboam was ruling in the 1st month of that year, only he gets credited for that year. In the Judean king list no year gets counted twice; no year gets credited to two different kings.

2) However, for the kings of Israel they used a month-by-month system, so that at times they credited 2 kings for the same year, since both kings were on the throne at some point during that year. One result of this is that kings sometimes got credited for more time than they actually reigned. For example, if a king ruled for a year, but that one year of time spanned portions of 2 different calendar years on the Jewish calendar, he would get credited for reigning 2 years.

◊ One look at the chart of the kings above is enough to explain one reason why they did this: the king-list for the ten tribes of Israel is chaos with 3 different co-reigns, 7 kings ruling for 2 years or less, 3 kings ruling for less than a year, and one king, Zimri, ruling for only 7 days (1 Kings 16:15)! In the dating system for the Judean kings, where only the king on the throne for the 1st month of that year gets credit for the year, a number of these kings would have been left out of the story line.

[15] This chart was based (with a number of modifications & corrections) on a chart found in: Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.42.

[16] Thiele, Edwin R; *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 2nd Edition, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1965), pp. 19-29.

◊ But the Bible writers wanted their chronicles of the period of the kings to be complete (not a single king from either Judah or Israel is missed in the Bible accounts). In order make this work for the kings of Israel the Bible writers had to use a more specific month-by-month method of counting so that none of the kings would be missed.

3) For a compare and contrast of the two different counting styles consider the following examples:

◊ King A begins reigning in April (Jewish 2nd month Ziv) of 901 BC and reigns until the end of the 1st March (the Jewish 1st month Nisan) of 895 BC.

◊ King B begins reigning the first day of April (Jewish 2nd month Ziv) of 895 BC and reigns 11 months until the end of February (Jewish 11th month Tebeth), 894 BC.

◊ King C begins reigning the first day of March (Jewish 1st month Nisan) of 894 BC and reigns until January (Jewish 11th month Shebat) of 880 BC.

◊ King D begins his reign February (Jewish 12th month Adar) of 880 BC and reigns until June (Jewish 4th month Tammuz) of 869 BC.

◊ King E begins his reign in July (Jewish 5th month Ab) of 869 BC and reigns until February (Jewish 12th month Adar) of 863 BC.

◊ No king for 4 months (March, April, May, June).

◊ King F begins his reign in July (Jewish 5th month Ab) of 863 BC and reigns until the next year July 862 BC.

King	Kings-of-Judah Counting System		Kings-of-Israel Counting System	
	Dates of rule	**# of yrs credited**	**Dates of rule**	**# of yrs credited**
1. King A	900 BC – 895 BC	6 years	901 BC – 895 BC	7 years
2. King B	–	0	895 – 894 BC	1 year
3. King C	894 BC – 881 BC	14 years	894 BC – 881 BC	14 years
4. King D	880 BC – 869 BC	12 years	880 BC – 869 BC	12 years
5. King E	868 BC – 864 BC	5 years	869 BC – 864 BC	6 years
6. No King	863 BC	1 year	863 BC	4 months
7. King F	862 BC	1 year	863 BC – 862 BC	2 years

◊ Note that if you count up the years, you get 39 years counting the kings of Judah (which is the correct number of years 900 – 862 BC), but you get 42 years counting the kings of Israel.

c. **Point #3: There was a period of time in Judah when there was NO KING (738-728 BC).** One of the keys to accurately calculating this time period is to realize that there was an 11-yr period of time between king Amaziah and king Uzziah (aka 'Azariah)' when Judah was without a king (Israel also went through 2 periods of time without a king, but those don't affect the timeline, so I won't discuss them here).

- Most people miss this time period because it isn't explicitly stated in the Bible, though it can be easily found by examining the text. Most people, when calculating this time period, simply add up the years of all the kings as listed in 1 & 2 Kings (and 1 & 2 Chronicles). But this will give you an inaccurate span of time.
- Here's how we know that there was an 11-yr gap between kings Amaziah and Uzziah:
  1) *In the second year of Joash* (another spelling/way of saying Jehoash) *the son of Joahaz* (another spelling/way of saying Jehoahaz)*, king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, began to reign.* **– 2 Kings 14:1 (ESV)**
     - Amaziah began to reign over Judah in the 2nd year of Jehoash's rule over Israel. Jehoash became king in 769 BC (see chart above and 1 Kings 13:10), which means that Amaziah became king in 767 BC. But how long did he reign for?
  2) *Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.* **– 2 Chron 25:1 (ESV)**
     - So Amaziah reigned 29 years, which means he was king from 767 BC – 739 BC (including 739 BC). But when did his son, Uzziah, succeed him? Not the next year! See the following verses:
  3) *In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah* (another name/spelling for Uzziah) *the son of Amaziah, king of Judah, began to reign.* **– 2 Kings 15:1 (ESV)**
     a) Amaziah's son, Uzziah, began reigning in the 27th year of Jeroboam's (the 2nd Jeroboam) rule over Israel.
     b) So when did Jeroboam start ruling?
  4) *In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, began to reign in Samaria, and he reigned forty-one years.* **– 2 Kings 14:23 (ESV)**
     a) Jeroboam began reigning over Israel in the 15th year of Amaziah's rule over Judah, which would have been 753 BC (not 752 BC, since it was in the 15th year, not after 15 years).
     b) Therefore, Amaziah's son Uzziah began reigning in 727 BC: 753 BC – 26 yrs = 727 BC.
- **Conclusion: Since Amaziah died in 739 BC and Uzziah began reigning in 727 BC, that leaves 11 years (738 BC – 727 BC) in which Judah had no king.**

- Some people may be bothered by this; they wonder how Judah could have functioned so long without a king. This shows a lack of understanding of how internally resilient the tribes were – there are many examples of them functioning on their own without a king:[17]
  1) First of all, for 396 years from Moses to King Saul, all twelve tribes governed themselves without any king (see the book of Judges).
  2) Just a few decades later, after Saul's son Ish-Bosheth's death, the ten tribes of Israel ruled themselves for 5 ½ years before they anointed David as king over all of Israel.[18]
  3) After the kingdom divided again in 901 BC the tribes of Israel went 'kingless' 2 more times for a total of 31 years (see chart of kings above).

[17] Paragraph based on a paragraph from: Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.95.

[18] **How do we figure that the tribes of Israel were kingless for 5 ½ years after Ish-Bosheth?** See 2 Sam 2:8-11. After Saul died, the kingdom split temporarily: Ish-Bosheth reigned over the ten tribes of Israel only 2 years, but David ruled over *just* Judah for 7 ½ years, before re-uniting both kingdoms in 2 Sam 5:1-5. Therefore there were 5 ½ years when the tribes of Israel were without a king.

d. Point #4 – CO-REIGNS: Comprehensive explanations of the 5 Co-reigns in Judah and Israel (in chronological order):

♦ **CO-REIGN #1: Ahab & Ahaziah co-reign 2 years 824 – 823 BC (ISRAEL).** Ahab and Ahaziah (father & son) reigned together for two years. Here's how we know:

1) *In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years.* **– 1 Kings 16:29 (ESV)**
   ◊ The 38th year of Asa was in 844 BC (see chart above). Therefore, Ahab reigned until 823 BC (844 BC is year 1, subtract 21 more years = 823 BC).
2) *Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned two years over Israel.* **– 1 Kings 22:51 (ESV)**
   a) The 17th year of Jehoshaphat was 824 BC (see chart above), so Ahaziah began reigning while his father Ahab was still reigning. This means that they must have co-reigned together for parts of 2 years 824 & 823 BC, before both dying, separately, only months apart – Ahab in battle of an arrow wound, and Ahaziah after falling through an upper-story lattice (Ahab's death: 1 Kings 22:29-40; Ahaziah's death: 2 Kings 1).
   b) Ahaziah was immediately succeeded in that same year (823 BC) by his brother (or half-brother) Jehoram, the son of Ahab (since Ahaziah had no sons – see 2 Kings 1:17 & 3:1).
   c) Reason for the co-reign: Ahab probably put his son Ahaziah on the throne to take care of things while he was off in battle with Ramoth Gilead (see 1 Kings 22:1-6).[19]

♦ **Note:** Be careful when reading the Scriptures, here, because it's easy to get confused – at the same time that Jehoram, son of Ahab was ruling in Israel (823 BC – 812 BC), another Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22:50) was ruling in Judah (824-823 BC & 818-816 BC & 815-813 BC). There were two Jehoram's ruling at the same time.

♦ **CO-REIGN #2: Jehoram's broken-up reign (JUDAH): *824-823 BC & 818-816 BC co-reigning with Jehoshaphat & 815-813 BC by himself*.** Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, had a very messy reign in terms of dates. We know that he reigned 8 total years (2 Kings 8:17), but those years were not consecutive as the following passages will show. His 8 years of rule can be divided up into 3 separate stints as king:

1) Stint #1: 824-823 BC, Jehoram co-reigns with his father Jehoshaphat.
   a) *So he* [Ahaziah son of Ahab] *died according to the word of the Lord that Elijah had spoken. Jehoram* [also a son of Ahab] *became king in his place in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, because Ahaziah had no son.* **– 2 Kings 1:17 (ESV)**
      ◊ So 2 Kings 1:17 makes clear the fact that Jehoram son of Ahab became king in the 2nd year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat.
   b) But according to 2 Kings 3:1, Jehoram son of Ahab became king in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat. So the Bible says 2 things: (1) that Jehoram son of Ahab became king in the 2nd year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat's reign (2 Ki 1:17), and (2) that Jehoram son of Ahab became king in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat's reign (2 Ki 3:1).
      ◊ **Therefore:** Jehoshaphat and his son Jehoram were reigning at the same time.
   c) We know from elsewhere in Scripture that Jehoram son of Ahab became king in 823 BC (see chart of kings above, Table 2.B.7.i.).

[19] See Norman Geisler's explanation for Jehoshaphat & Jehoram's co-reign in the same story – Geisler, Norman, *When Critics Ask: a popular handbook of Bible difficulties*, (203: Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI), p. 191.

◊ **Therefore** Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat began co-reigning with his father in 824 BC (since 823 BC was his 2nd year) and they co-reigned for the two years 824 & 823 BC (we deduce that it stopped after 2 years see following points).

d) **Question:** ***Why would Jehoshaphat put his son on the throne for 2 years, while he was still king?*** Probably for the same reason that Ahab put his son Ahaziah on the throne: to take care of things while he went to battle with Ramoth Gilead (see 1 Kings 22:1-6, 29).[20]

2) **Stint #2: 818-816 BC, co-reigning with his father Jehoshaphat.** 5 years after their first co-reign Jehoshaphat again promoted his son Jehoram and co-reigned with him; this time for 3 years. Here's how we know:

a) *In the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, when Jehoshaphat was* [still] *king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, began to reign.* **– 2 Kings 8:16 (ESV)**

◊ So in the 5th year of Jehoram son of Ahab, Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat became king.

◊ **Problem!** We just saw in 2 Kings 1:17 (see Stint #1 above) that Jehoram son of Ahab became king in the 2nd year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat – So who came first, the son of Jehoshaphat or the son of Ahab? It seems like the Bible has a contradiction. Wrong! The problem is easily solved by realizing that Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat became king twice: first, a year before Jehoshaphat son of Ahab and once again in the son of Ahab's 5th year.

b) Once again the Bible is very clear that this 2nd stint of Jehoram's rule is a co-reign, because Jehoram became king of Judah while his father Jehoshaphat is still reigning (see above verse).

◊ How do we know that this 2nd stint was three years long? See stint #3, next.

3) Stint #3: 815-813 BC, reigning by himself after his father Jehoshaphat's death.

a) Jehoram began reigning by himself after his dad, Jehoshaphat, died: *And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father, and Jehoram his son reigned in his place.* **– 1 Kings 22:50 (ESV)**

◊ This is an important piece of information because we know when Jehoshaphat died – 816 BC (see Table 2.B.7.i. above).

b) After his father Jehoshaphat died, Jehoram reigned until his own death (2 Ki 8:24-25).

◊ We can tell when Jehoram died by when his son began ruling after his death: *So Joram* [son of Jehoshaphat] *slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Ahaziah his son reigned in his place. In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign.* **– 2 Kings 8:24-25 (ESV)**

◊ The 12th year of Jehoram son of Ahab was 812 BC. Therefore, Ahaziah gets credit for 812 BC and his dad, Jehoram, died in 813 BC.

◊ **Therefore Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat reigned 815-813 BC by himself (his 3rd stint as king).**

4) Confirmation for the 3-yr length of Jehoram's second stint as king. How do we know that Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat's 2nd stint was 3 years of time? It's implied:

a) #1: we know his total reign was 8 years (2 Kings 8:17);
b) #2: we know his first stint was at least 2 years (2 Kings 1:17);
c) #3: we know that he had a 2nd stint of ruling (2 Kings 8:16);
d) #4: we know his 3rd stint was 3 years, 815-813 BC (1 Kings 22:50, 2 Kings 8:24-25);
e) #5: we assume his first stint ended after 2 years (because Jehoshaphat back from battle);
f) #6:Conclusion: that leaves 3 yrs unaccounted for, which must be chalked up to his 2nd stint of rule.

[20] ibid.

♦ **CO-REIGN #3: Jehoahaz & Jehoash co-reign 3 years 769-767 BC (ISRAEL).** This father and son duo (both evil) co-reigned the last 3 years of Jehoahaz's life (769-767 BC). Here's how we know:

1) Jehoahaz became king in 783 BC (the 23rd year of Joash in Judah, see chart of the Kings) and reigned for 17 years. That takes his reign to 767 BC.
2) Jehoash became king in 37th year of Joash of Judah, just 14 years after Jehoahaz (37th year – 23rd year), which starts him in 769 BC, and he reigned 16 years. Therefore their reigns overlap for 3 years, from 769-767 BC.
3) Here are the verses:
   a) *In the twenty-third year of Joash the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned seventeen years.* **– 2 Kings 13:1 (ESV)**
   b) *In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned sixteen years.* **– 2 Kings 13:10 (ESV)**

♦ **CO-REIGN #4: Joash and Amaziah co-reign 2 years 767 – 766 BC (JUDAH).**

1) Joash became king in the 7th year of Jehu king of Israel (805 BC, see chart of the Kings) and reigned 40 years. That makes his reign 805-766 BC.
2) Amaziah, his son, became king in the in the 2nd year of Jehoash (767 BC, see chart of the Kings), the son of Jehoahaz (grandson of Jehu) king of Israel, and he reigned 29 years.
3) That means the rule of these two kings overlapped 2 years, 767-766 BC.
4) Here are the verses:
   a) *In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba.* **– 2 Kings 12:1 (ESV)**
   b) *In the second year of Joash the son of Joahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, began to reign.* [2] *He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddin of Jerusalem.* **– 2 Kings 14:1-2 (ESV)**

♦ **CO-REIGN #5: Ahaz and Hezekiah co-reigned 2 years 645 – 644 BC (JUDAH).**

1) Ahaz and Hezekiah (father & son) co-reigned the last 2 years of Ahaz's life. Ahaz ruled 16 years from 659 BC (the 17th year of Pekah in Israel, see chart of the Kings) to 644 BC.
2) Hezekiah began ruling in the 4th year of Hoshea, king of Israel, which was 645 BC (see chart of the Kings), and reigned 29 years until 617 BC.
3) Therefore Ahaz and Hezekiah's rule overlapped 2 years, 645 BC – 644 BC. Here are the verses:
   a) *In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign.* [2] *Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And he did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord his God, as his father David had done.* **– 2 Kings 16:1-2 (ESV)**
   b) *In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it,* [10] *and at the end of three years he took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.* **– 2 Kings 18:9-10 (ESV)**
   c) *He* [Hezekiah] *was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah.* **– 2 Kings 18:2 (ESV)**

e. <u>Point #5: Confirmation for this timeline's dating of the kings – Ezekiel's 430-yr period of sin</u>. The time period of the kings is a complicated time period, as can be seen from the above discussion and chart. The presence of 2 different counting systems for the king years (Israel and Judah), as well as a multitude of co-reigns, split reigns and periods of time where no one reigned at all, make it a challenging task to correctly chart the time period. Many different scholars have attempted to chart the years, and have come up with many different numbers concerning its length.

♦ So how can we be sure that this timeline's dating of the kings are correct? Thankfully there is confirmation for this timeline's dating of the kings in an overlapping time-period prophesied in the book of Ezekiel.

1) Ezekiel's 430-yr prophecy: In Ezekiel chapters 1 and 4 God prophesied of 430 years of sin starting with Solomon's rule and ending in the 5th year of king Jehoiachin's exile: *(On the fifth of the month in the <u>fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile</u>, [3]the word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi . . .[4]"As for you, lie down on your left side and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel on it; you shall bear their iniquity for the number of days that you lie on it. [5]"For I have assigned you a number of days corresponding to the years of their iniquity, <u>three hundred and ninety days</u>; thus you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. [6]"When you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah; I have assigned it to you for <u>forty days</u>, a <u>day for each year</u>.* **– Ez 1:2-3, 4:4-6 (NASB)**

a) Thus, Ezekiel counts 430 years from the first year of Solomon's reign[21] to the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile. The question, now, is, How many years does this timeline count between those two dates? One important test of any timeline's dating of the kings must be this Ezekiel passage, where Ezekiel gives us a Holy Spirit-inspired fact concerning the amount of time from Solomon to Jehoiachin. Any timeline which does not match up with Ezekiel's 430 years on this point is wrong, and any timeline which does match up with Ezekiel passes an important test of accuracy.

b) Compare Ezekiel's 430 years with this timeline:

◊ This timeline charts the first year of Solomon's reign as 941 BC.

◊ This timeline charts the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile as (512 BC).[22]

◊ Do a little math: 941 BC – 511 BC (because 512 BC included) = 430 years. *Which is exactly what Ezekiel, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, also counted.*

c) **<u>Therefore</u>**, Ezekiel's 430-years-of-sin prophecy confirms that this timeline's dating of the period of the kings is correct.

2) A second confirmation from within Ezekiel's 430-yr prophecy.

a) There were two parts to Ezekiel's prophecy: (1) 430 total years of sin, for both Judah and Israel; and (2) 390 years of sin, just since the time of Israel (though these 390 years of sin apply to Judah as well, see next point).

b) Compare Ezekiel's 390 years with this timeline:

◊ This timeline charts the 1st year of the Division of Israel and Judah as 901 BC.

◊ This timeline charts the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile as (512 BC, see above).

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[21] **How do we know that Ezekiel's 430-yr time period begins with the first year of Solomon's rule?** The passage doesn't explicitly state Solomon as the starting point, so how can we be sure? See the objection, point c, on the next page for a full explanation.

[22] **How do we figure the date of the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile to be 512 BC?**

1. We know that Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin's father, reigned for 11 years from 527 BC – 517 BC (see Table 3.E.i. – table of the Kings, above).
2. We know that Jehoiachin reigned in the same year that his father died (517 BC), for only 3 months (2 Kings 24:6,8).
3. Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin into exile after 3 months of his rule (still in 517 BC) – see 2 Kings 24:10-17.
4. Therefore the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile was 512 BC.

◊ Do a little math: 901 BC – 511 BC (because 512 BC included) = 390 years. *Which is exactly what Ezekiel, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, also counted.*

c) **Therefore**, Ezekiel's 390 years gives a second confirmation that this timeline's dating of the period of the kings is correct.

3) Objection: *But how do we know that Ezekiel's 430 year prophecy begins with Solomon?*

a) Ezekiel doesn't say when his 430 year prophecy begins. It must, however, have been obvious to the people he was writing to (Jewish exiles in Babylon), otherwise there would be no point to the prophecy.

b) Every timeline, then, must be able to interpret Ezekiel's prophecy in a way which would have been meaningful and obvious to Ezekiel's original audience. The vast majority of the timelines used by Christians today, however, completely fail to do this.

◊ The reason for this is that most timelines today are based on the work of Dr. John C. Whitcomb. In the 1960s Dr. Whitcomb produced one of the most influential timeline in the evangelical community, the dates of which now find themselves quoted in many a Bible commentary and footnote.

◊ Dr. Whitcomb, along with Dr. Henry Morris, also co-authored a book, the Genesis Flood, which would have a significant impact on the evangelical community, in terms of the dating of biblical events.

◊ Though Dr. Whitcomb's work contributed very positively to the evangelical community, in terms of building people's faith that the Bible's narrative is true, accurate and not contradicted by science, his timeline has a number of errors in it.

c) These errors are exposed by Ezekiel's 430-yr prophecy. Whitcomb's timeline (which provides the dates which many evangelical commentaries now quote) cannot find 390 + 40 years in a meaningful way as should be expected. For Whitcomb, 390 years before Jehoiachin's 5th year is David's 29th year, and 40 years before that is Saul's 21st year.[23] This is random and un-meaningful. Since the people in Ezekiel's time must have readily known what the 390 + 40 year time span meant, it should also be clear to us if our timeline is correct. Whitcomb's dating of the kings must be rejected.

4) For any Bible timeline to be considered correct it MUST chart Ezekiel's 430 years in a meaningful way – this timeline does that.

a) An important thing to note about this timeline is how Ezekiel's 430 years and 390 years don't randomly fall in the midst of a king's reign, like with Whitcomb.

◊ According to this timeline 390 years before the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile falls exactly in 901 BC, the year of the Division of the kingdom, when Israel split from Judah. Thus, Ezekiel's 390 years of sin for the 'house of Israel' makes perfect sense when placed against this timeline.

◊ According to this timeline 430 years before the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile falls exactly in 941 BC, the year when Solomon became king. Solomon reigned for 40 years, at the end of which the Division of the kingdom into Judah and Israel happened. Thus, Ezekiel's extra 40 years of sin for the 'house of Judah' exactly fits the 40 years of Solomon's reign, and again is interpreted in a meaningful way by this timeline.

b) For some people, God counting Solomon's reign as 40 years of sin may seem unreasonable due to some of the good things he did at the beginning of his rule. However, remember these two things:

◊ God judges Solomon for his foreign wives and their idolatry by bringing two uprisings and permanently dividing the kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 11:1-13)[24] immediately after his death.

[23] Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.131.

[24] When Jesus comes back, however, he will reunite Israel and Judah – see Ezekiel 37:22-25.

◊ In addition to his wicked idolatry and foreign wives, Solomon was disobedient – during his reign, Israel never once observed the Sabbath Years or the Years of Jubilee as proscribed in Leviticus 25:1-22.[25] The Sabbath Year and the Year of Jubilee were very important to God, as can be seen by the fact that He tied the length of Israel's (Israel & Judah) exile in Babylon directly to the number of times that they failed to observe those years (2 Chron 36:20-21).

c) Not only does this timeline chart Ezekiel's 430 years in a way that is meaningful to us today, but, more importantly, it charts those years in a way that would have been very meaningful to the exiles of Judah living in Babylon.

◊ This prophecy would have been shocking to the people of Judah, who thought of themselves as better than Israel because they still had the Temple and had kept the outward forms of King David's worship and Moses' religion intact. And they certainly would not have counted Solomon's 40-yr reign as 40 years of sin.

◊ A close look at the entire Ezekiel passage, however, reveals that God is connecting together both Israel and Judah, and that he considers all of the years for both Judah and Israel to be sin-years. God's message to the exiles from Judah is that both the tribes together are disobedient and that the idolatry and disobedience of one of their hero's – Solomon – is what started it all.

Table 2.B.7.ii. – Ezekiel's Years of Sin

	Division of Judah & Israel	Jehoiachin's 5th yr of exile
941 BC	901 BC	512 BC
Solomon rules 40 years	**Sin years for both Judah and Israel 390 years**	
430 total years of sin		

See next page for a chart plotting Ezekiel's sin years beside the chart of the kings . . .

[25] **How do we know that Solomon did not observe the important Sabbath years?**

1. 2 Chronicles 36:20-21 says *He* [Nebuchadnezzar] *took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, [21] to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah* [referring to Jer 25:11]*, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. <u>All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath</u>, to fulfill <u>seventy years</u>.* The Babylonian captivity lasted 70 years because the land of Israel was due 70 Sabbath years which had not been observed.
2. What were the Sabbath Years? Every seventh year God commanded the Israelites not to cultivate their land or to plant and harvest (see Lev 25:1-22). They were to trust God for provision in those years and give the land a Sabbath rest.
3. But neither Israel or Judah observed the Sabbath years; they failed to trust God and they disobeyed His command. So God prescribed 70 years of Babylonian exile – He would remove the Jews from the land and allow the land to lie 'desolate' (see v. 21 above); ie. He would let the land 'catch up' and receive each of the 70 Sabbath years it had been denied.
4. Since the Sabbath year was to be observed every 7 years, that means there was a period of 490 years when the Sabbath Year was not observed.
5. The Babylonian exile ended in 454 BC. 454 BC + 490 years = 944 BC. Solomon began reigning in 941 BC, therefore it was during his reign that the Sabbath Year ceased to be observed.

Table 2.B.7.iii. Chart of the kings with Ezekiel's 430 years of sin plotted along-side:

Total Time that Jewish Kings ruled Israel (Saul – Zedekiah) = 516 years	40 yrs			1021	40		Saul					
	40 yrs			981	40		David					
	Ezekiel's 430 years of sin for Israel and Judah	40 yrs		941	40	11	Solomon	Ezekiel's 430 years of sin starts. Count all 40 of Solomon's years towards 430.				
				930		29		Solomon completes Temple in 11th yr. Count last 29 yrs towards 407-yr period.				
		Ezekiel's 390 years of sin for the 'house of Israel'		901	17		**KINGDOM SPLITS – Judah**		**Israel**			
							Rehoboam (E)		901-880	22	Jeroboam	
				884	3		Abijah (E)					
				881	41		Asa (G)		880-879	2	Nadab	
									879-856	24	Baasha	
									856-855	2	Elah	
									855	7dys	Zimri	
									855-844	12	Omri/Tibni	
									844-823	22	Ahab	
				840	25		Jehoshaphat (G)		824-823	*2	Ahaziah	
									823-812	12	Jehoram	
				815	*3		Jehoram (E)					
				812	1		Ahaziah (E)					
				811	6		Athaliah (E)		811-784	28	Jehu	
				805	*38		Joash (G)					
									783-767	*17	Jehoahaz	
				767	29		Amaziah (G)		769-754	16	Jehoash	
									753-713	41	Jeroboam (the 2nd)	
				738	11		**NO KING**					
				727	52		Uzziah (G)					
									688-679	10	Menahem	
									678-677	2	Pekahiah	
				675	16		Jotham (G)		676-657	20	Pekah	
				659	*14		Ahaz (E)		656-649	8	**NO KING**	
				645	29		Hezekiah (G)		648-640	9	Hoshea	
									640		**Assyrian Captivity**	
				616	55		Manasseh (E/G)					
				561	2		Amon (E)					
				559	31		Josiah (G)					
				528	1		Jehoahaz (E)					
				527	*4		Jehoiakim (E) [J ruled 11yrs until 517 BC–only count 4 up to Exile]					
				524			**Babylonian Exile Begins**					
			Time-span #7: From Temple completion to Exile = 407 yrs	**Total Yrs:**	**407**		**From Temple completion to Exile**					
					7		*Jehoiakim continues ruling after Exile for 7 yrs. (524-517)*					
			12 years	517	0		Jehoiachin (E) becomes king for 3 months – then EXILED (count 5 yrs to 512). Jehoiakim gets credit for 517 (his 11th yr).					
				516	*5		Zedekiah (E) [Z reigned 11 yrs until 506 BC – only count 5 until 512, the 5th year of Jehoiachin's Exile]					
				512			***5th year of Jehoiachin's exile (Ez 1:2) – 430th yr of sin***					
				Total Yrs:	**430**		**From Solomon's reign to 512 BC**					
			6 yrs		6		Zedekiah continues ruling for a total of 11yrs					
				506			**Jerusalem Falls – No more Kings**					
				Total Yrs:	**516**		**Israel has total of 516 king years**					

*This analysis is based on work done by Jonathan Hall in the **Ultimate Bible Timeline**: check it out www.ultimatebibletimeline.com*

8. Time-span #8: Babylonian Captivity lasts 70 years.

◊ **(Therefore we can confidently date Cyrus' decree to rebuild the Temple & Jerusalem to 454 BC.)**

a. Jeremiah prophesied that the Jewish exile in Babylon would last 70 years, and 2 Chronicles and Daniel confirm it. Here are the passages:

♦ *Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words, [9] behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the Lord, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants . . . [11] This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. [12] Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the Lord, making the land an everlasting waste.* **– Jer 25:8-9,11-12 (ESV)**

♦ *He* [Nebuchadnezzar] *took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, [21] to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.* **– 2 Chron 36:20-21 (ESV)**

♦ *In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— [2] in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.* **– Dan 9:1-2 (ESV)**

b. Since we know that the Babylonian captivity started in 524 BC (see Time-span #7), a simple calculation gives us 524 BC – 70 years = 454 BC. So the exile ended in 454 BC with the fall of the Babylonians and Cyrus' decree that the Jews could return to their lands and rebuild their Temple.

♦ *He* [Nebuchadnezzar] *took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, [21] to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years. [22] Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: [23] "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the Lord his God be with him. Let him go up.'"* **– 2 Chron 36:20-23 (ESV)**

◊ **Recap of the timeline so far:**

3930 BC Adam's Fall		**1923 BC** Abraham's Birth	**1848 BC** Abraham's Call	**1847 BC** Abram to Egypt	**1417 BC** The Exodus	**938 BC** Temple bld Starts
2008 years		**75 years**	**6 mo.**	**430 years**		**479 years**
Time-span #1		**Time-span #2**	**#3**	**Time-span #4**		**Time-span #5**
Book of Genesis				Books of Gen & Exodus		Books of Joshua & Judges

938 BC Temple Starts	**931 BC** Temple Finished	**524 BC** Babylonian Exile	**454 BC** Cyrus' Decree
7 years	**407 years**		**70 yrs Exile**
#6	**Time-span #7**		**Time-span #8**
1 & 2 Kings; 1 & 2 Chronicles			Daniel & Ezekiel

9. Time-span #9: Daniel's prophesied '69 sevens' – from Cyrus' Decree to Jesus' Baptism = 483 yrs.

◊ **(Therefore we can confidently date Jesus' baptism at 30 AD.)**

◊ Time-span #9 is based on one of the most important prophecies in the Bible – Daniel 9:24-27. Verse 25 reads: Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One [Jesus], the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. – Dan 9:25 (NIV)

a. Note: in Hebrew '7 sevens' = 49 years and '62 sevens' = 434 years for a total of 483 years.

b. When Daniel made this prophecy Jerusalem was nothing but a pile of rubble because the Babylonians had destroyed it in 506 BC. His prophecy stated that from the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the coming of Jesus would be 483 years.

◊ 2 important questions to answer: (1) How do we know it was *Cyrus*' decree to rebuild Jerusalem that started the prophecy and not some other king?;[26] (2) How do we know that the 'coming' of the Messiah prophesied by Daniel referred to Jesus' Baptism and not His birth, death, Triumphal entry or some other important event in Jesus' life?

a. Question #1: *Who decreed that Jerusalem would be restored and rebuilt and when did that happen?*

♦ **A:** Cyrus the Persian in the year that the Babylonian captivity ended in 454 BC (see Time-span # 8 for the timing of Cyrus' decree).

♦ Here are some Scriptures to prove this:

1) *He* [Nebuchadnezzar] *took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia,* [21] *to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.* [22] *Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:* [23] *"Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the Lord his God be with him. Let him go up.'"* **– 2 Chron 36:20-23 (ESV)**

◊ Note: many scholars, wishing to make their timelines 'work' reject Cyrus as the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. Their argument is that this passage doesn't say that Cyrus rebuilt Jerusalem only that he rebuilt the Temple.

2) But Scripture is clear that Cyrus (no one else!) rebuilt both the Temple AND Jerusalem: *"*[The LORD] *says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose;' saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' AND of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'"* **– Isa 44:28 (ESV)**

3) And just in case anyone missed Isaiah 44, God repeated Himself in Isaiah 45 in order to make sure that everyone would know that Cyrus was the one who would rebuild Jerusalem (it was important to God to make it obvious so that we could properly date Daniel's 483-yr prophetic period*): Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus . . . "I have stirred him up in righteousness, and I will make all his ways level; he shall build my city* [Jerusalem] *and set my exiles free, not for price or reward," says the Lord of Hosts.* **– Isa 45:1,13 (ESV)**

b. Question #2: How do we know that the 483 year period ended at Jesus baptism, not His birth or death or Triumphal entry?

♦ Daniel said that the 483 years would end when '*the Anointed One comes*'(Dan 9:25). Which event in Jesus' life was His 'coming?'

[26] Various kings made decrees about Jerusalem, the wall around Jerusalem and the Temple – some scholars say it was Artaxerxes who rebuilt the city, which changes things on the timeline.

1) The 483-yr period cannot end at Jesus' birth because 483 years – 454 BC = 30 AD,[27] which is way too late a date for Jesus' birth. But it also cannot refer to His death because 29 AD is too early a date for His crucifixion, which almost all scholars date 30-33 AD (most leaning closer to 33 AD).
2) 30 AD matches up perfectly, though, with the time period when most scholars agree that Jesus' baptism would have occurred.

♦ Recently, however, several popular authors have popularized the idea that the 'Anointed One comes' refers to Jesus' Triumphal entry into Jerusalem right before His crucifixion, not his baptism.[28] **Below are 4 reasons why Jesus' BAPTISM, not His Triumphal Entry, is the most likely event for the end of Daniel's 483 year period.**

1) **Reason #1: Jesus' Baptism is the ONLY dated event in the entire New Testament.** Luke3:1-2, 21-23 is the only New Testament passage that links a New Testament event to Caesar's reign year, thus giving us a clear date for that event. That event is John the Baptist's ministry and Jesus' baptism. Furthermore, Luke 3:23 even states Jesus' age, the only place in the Gospel's where Jesus' age is stated during His adult/ministry years. To show how singular this is, consider the fact that the Gospels do not even mention Jesus' age at His death.[29]
   a) Here is the passage in question: *In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar--when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene-- [2] during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah [John the Baptist] in the desert. . . . [21] When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. . . . [23] Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry.* **– Lk 3:1-2, 21,23 (NIV)**
   b) There are no accidents in Scripture – Jesus said every word, even down to the punctuation marks was there for a reason (Matt 5:18)! What is so special, then, about Jesus' Baptism that it would be the only dated event in the entire New Testament?
   c) The answer is that the Holy Spirit, through Luke, wanted to give His readers a marker by which they could test whether or not Jesus was the Messiah. By counting back 483 years from this date (the 15th year of Tiberius) they would be amazed to find Cyrus' decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. This would, in turn, confirm Jesus as being the 'Anointed One' prophesied by Daniel in Daniel 9:25.
2) **Reason #2: Jesus' Baptism makes a lot more sense for the Anointed One's 'coming,' than His triumphal entry, which was more like His going.**
   a) Daniel predicted 483 years until the Messiah's coming (Dan 9:25). Jesus' baptism was also the start of His public ministry. It seems obvious that this event, where Jesus first steps onto the national stage and begins His ministry, is the 'coming' which Daniel prophesied.
   b) If the 483 years instead ended at Jesus' triumphal entry (right before His crucifixion), that would mean 483 years to His going, not His coming – Jesus was just about to leave the earth at that point.
3) **Reason #3: Daniel's 483 year prophecy was meant to give the Jews the best possible chance of responding appropriately to Jesus.**
   a) If the 483 years ends at Jesus' baptism, then Daniel's prophecy puts God's seal of approval on Jesus right at the beginning of His ministry and gives all of Israel 3 years (the length of Jesus' ministry before His death) in which to respond to His miracles and teaching and accept Him as Messiah. The combination of His miracles, together with the timing of His appearance, exactly fulfilling Daniel's 483-yr prophecy, should have served as irrefutable evidence that Jesus was the Messiah sent from God. God wanted the

[27] Note: 483 years – 454 BC looks like it should = 29 AD, not 30 AD. Remember, though, that there was no year '0' AD. Therefore, from 1 BC to 1 AD was 1 year, not 2, and from 454 BC to 30 AD is 483 years, not 484.
[28] Josh McDowell, Robert Anderson, and Chuck Missler among others.
[29] Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.136.

Jews to have Scriptural confirmation of Jesus' identity, so that they would know His miracles were not counterfeit.

b) But this reasoning only works if the 483 years ended at Jesus' Baptism. If the 483 years ended at Jesus' Triumphal Entry (at the end of Jesus' ministry) then the Jews would have had only one week in which to respond to the Scriptural confirmation that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

4) **<u>Reason #4</u>: The weight of Scriptural evidence points to Jesus' Baptism as being a more significant event than His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.**

a) The most important events in all of Scripture are the comings of the Messiah (Jesus) – His first coming to pay for sins (past), and His second coming to Resurrect believers and rule the world forever (future). These two comings are the center around which the rest of Bible revolves. A vast amount of Scripture, Old and New Testament, is devoted to many different prophecies concerning these first and second comings of Jesus.

b) Daniel's prophecy in Daniel 9:25 is directed to Jesus' first coming, and is the only one of all the various prophecies concerning Jesus' first coming to put an actual date down. According to Daniel, exactly 483 years after Jerusalem was rebuilt the Messiah would 'come.'

c) So what was the event, 483 years after the rebuilding, which inaugurated Jesus' first coming? Because the comings of Jesus are the most important events in Scripture we would expect that whatever this event was it would figure prominently in Scripture, both in the Old and New Testaments.

d) Jesus' Baptism by John the Baptist fits this perfectly. Consider the following points:

◊ A number of Old Testament prophecies predicted a person who would prepare the way for Jesus' first coming. The Gospels testify that John the Baptist was the fulfillment of these prophecies (Matt 3:1-3; Matt 11:11-14).

◊ Jesus' only actual meeting with John was in the days around His baptism by John (not counting when they were both in the womb, see Lk 1:39-45). Jesus' baptism story figures prominently in all four Gospels (Matt 3; Mk 1:1-11; Lk 3:1-22; John 1:19-43).

◊ Immediately following Jesus' baptism, the trajectories of Jesus' life and John's life radically diverge – Jesus goes into the desert to be tempted for 40 days and then begins His ministry, a ministry that will draw massive crowds, unceasingly, and put Him in the center spotlight of all of Israel for the next 3 years.

◊ But after Jesus' baptism John's ministry essentially ends – immediately his ministry begins to shrink as his disciples leave him to follow Jesus (John 1:35-42), and the crowds leave him for the same reason (John 3:26-30; 4:1-3). Shortly thereafter John is put in prison (Matt 11:2) and then killed (Matt 14:1-12).

◊ It seems clear from Scripture that John's job of preparing the way for Messiah's coming ended at Jesus' baptism. Certainly Jesus' ministry <u>started</u> right after His baptism. Thus, it seems, Jesus' baptism served as a kind of baton-passing from John's ***<u>preparing</u>*** to the Messiah's ***<u>coming</u>***. Clearly, Jesus' baptism is the event which fulfilled Daniel's prophesied 'coming.'

e) In contrast, the only prophetic reference in the Old Testament related to Christ's triumphal entry is that He will come riding on a donkey (Zech 9:9). Furthermore, Jesus often talked to the disciples about His pending trial, suffering and death. However, He never once mentioned to them His triumphal entry. Considering how important the coming of the Messiah is, if the triumphal entry was supposed to be the fulfillment of Daniel's 483-yr prophecy, one would expect the Scriptures to link the two – but no such link occurs.

♦ **<u>Conclusion</u>: Therefore Daniel's 483 year prophetic period begins at Cyrus' decree to rebuild Jerusalem (454 BC) and ends at Jesus baptism, which we can now confidently date as 30 AD.**

◊ **Recap of the Timeline so far:**

3930 BC		1923 BC	1848 BC	1847 BC	1417 BC	938 BC
Adam's Fall		Abraham's Birth	Abraham's Call	Abram to Egypt	The Exodus	Temple bld Starts
2008 years		75 years	6 mo.	430 years	479 years	
Time-span #1		Time-span #2	#3	Time-span #4	Time-span #5	
Book of Genesis				Books of Gen & Exodus	Books of Joshua & Judges	

938 BC	931 BC	524 BC	454 BC	30 AD
Temple Starts	Temple Finished	Babylonian Exile	Cyrus' Decree	Jesus' Baptism
7 years	407 years	70 yrs Exile	483 years	
#6	Time-span #7	Time-span #8	Time-span #9	
1 & 2 Kings; 1 & 2 Chronicles		Daniel & Ezekiel	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther	

10. Time-span #10: from Jesus' Baptism to the destruction of the 2nd Temple by Rome = 40 years.

◊ It is a well-documented historical fact that the Romans destroyed the Jew's 2nd Temple in the summer of 70 AD.[30] Thus, from Jesus' baptism to the destruction of the Temple is 40 years (70 AD – 30 AD = 40 years).

◊ **The completed timeline:**

3930 BC Adam's Fall		**1923 BC** Abraham's Birth	**1848 BC** Abraham's Call	**1847 BC** Abram to Egypt	**1417 BC** The Exodus	**938 BC** Temple bld Starts
2008 years		**75 years**	**6 mo.**	**430 years**	**479 years**	
Time-span #1		Time-span #2	#3	Time-span #4	Time-span #5	
Book of Genesis				Books of Gen & Exodus	Books of Joshua & Judges	

938 BC Temple Starts	**931 BC** Temple Finished	**524 BC** Babylonian Exile	**454 BC** Cyrus' Decree	**30 AD** Jesus' Baptism	**70 AD** Temple Destroyed
7 years	**407 years**	**70 yrs Exile**	**483 years**	**40 years**	
#6	Time-span #7	Time-span #8	Time-span #9	Time-span #10	
1 & 2 Kings; 1 & 2 Chronicles		Daniel & Ezekiel	Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther	Gospels & Paul	

◊ **Adding up all of the years on the timeline gives 3999.5 years.** Which can be rounded up to the nice figure of 4000 years.

[30] "**Temple of Jerusalem**." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 13 May. 2010 <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/302895/Temple-of-Jerusalem>.

Part 3 – People and Events on the Timeline: *Detailed explanations for the dating of every item on the Timeline*

A. Dating Adam to Abraham + Isaac, Jacob, Joseph & Moses.

- This section is divided into two parts: (1) from Adam to Abraham; and (2) from Isaac to Moses.

1. **From Adam to Abraham** – Given that Adam's fall occurred in 3931 BC (see Part 2, section B for explanation) it is easy to calculate the date of birth and date of death for each man from Adam to Abraham, because of the information given in Genesis 5 and Genesis 11. Below is a chart, with the pertinent Scripture verses, containing all of the necessary information for our calculations:

Table 3.A.1.

Adam to birth of Abraham = 2008 years[31] **Genesis 5:1-32 & 11:10-32**						
		Age at Son's Birth	Years After Birth	Total Years Lived	BC	
1.	Adam	130	800	930	3930-3001	**Genesis 5:3**
2.	Seth	105	807	912	3801-2889	v. 6
3.	Enosh	90	815	905	3696-2791	v.9
4.	Kenan (a.k.a. Cainan)	70	840	910	3606-2696	v.12
5.	Mahalalel	65	830	895	3536-2641	v.15
6.	Jared	162	800	962	3471-2509	v.18
7.	Enoch	65	300	365	3309-2944	v.21
8.	Methuselah	187	782	969	3244-2275	v.25
9.	Lamech	182	595	777	3057-2280	v.28
10.	Noah	502	448	950	2875-1925	v.32
11.	Shem	100	500	600	2373-1773	**Genesis 11:10**
12.	Arphaxad	35	403	438	2273-1835	v.12
13.	Shelah	30	403	433	2238-1795	v.14
14.	Eber	34	430	464	2208-1744	v.16
15.	Peleg	30	209	239	2174-1935	v.18
16.	Reu	32	207	239	2144-1905	v.20
17.	Serug	30	200	230	2112-1882	v.22
18.	Nahor	29	119	148	2082-1934	v.24
19.	Terah	130	75	205	2053-1848	see below, a.
20.	Abraham born	0	-	-	1923-1748	see below

◊ **Abraham (1923–1748 BC, 175 yrs).** The length of Abraham's life is not recorded in Genesis 5 or 11, but in Genesis 25. Here's how we know Abraham's birth date and death date:

a. **Birth date (1923 BC):** Gen 11:26 only says that Terah was 70 when he 'fathered Abraham, Nahor, and Haran.' 70 was the age Terah was when the oldest of Abraham's older brothers was born. How do we figure out that he was 75 when he had Abraham? 3 steps of logic:

1) Acts 7:2-4 states that Abraham did not leave Haran to go to the Promised land until his father died.

[31] Finegan, Jack – *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* Revised Edition, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. (Peabody, Massachusetts); pg. 195.

2) Gen 11:32 tells us that Terah died when he was 205.
3) Gen 12:4 tells us that Abraham was 75 when he left Haran.
   a) Thus, Abraham was 75 when his dad died at 205.
   b) Therefore, Terah was 130 when he had Abraham. Since Terah was born in 2053 BC (see chart above), that means he had Abraham in 1923 BC.

b. **Death date (1748 BC):** Gen 25:7 states that Abraham lived 175 years. Therefore he lived until 1748 BC.

2. **Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses.**

a. **Isaac (1823–1643 BC, 180 yrs).** Here's how we get Isaac's birth and death dates:
   1) **Birth date (1823 BC):**
      a) Abraham was born in 1923 BC (see above).
      b) Abraham was 100 yrs old when he had Isaac (Gen 21:5).
      c) Therefore Isaac was born in 1823 BC.
   2) **Death date (1643 BC):** Gen 35:28 says Isaac lived 180 years, therefore he died in 1643 BC.

b. **Jacob (1763–1616, 147 yrs).** Here's how we get Jacob's birth and death dates:
   1) **Birth date (1763 BC):**
      a) Isaac was born in 1823 BC (see above).
      b) Isaac was 60 when he had Jacob (Gen 25:26).
      c) Therefore Jacob was born in 1763 BC.
   2) **Death date (1616 BC):** Gen 47:28 says that Jacob lived 147 years, therefore he died in 1616 BC.

c. **Joseph (1672–1562 BC, 110 yrs).** Here's how we get Joseph's birth and death dates:
   1) **Birth date (1672 BC):** The Bible doesn't explicitly tell us what year Joseph was born in, but it can be fairly easily calculated by taking into account the following 3 pieces of information:
      a) #1: Joseph was 30 years old when he began ruling in Egypt (Gen 41:46).
      b) #2: Jacob & his family entered Egypt in the 3rd year of the famine (Gen 45:6-7), which means Joseph was 39 years old when his father entered Egypt.
         ◊ How do we know that Joseph was 39 in the 3rd year of the famine? We know that Egypt and the surrounding lands went through a 14-yr period which consisted first of 7 years of plenty, followed by 7 years of famine (Gen 41:1-36). Pharaoh made Joseph the 2nd highest ruler of the land in the 1st year of the 7 years of plenty (Gen 41:37-45). Therefore, Joseph had been ruling for 9 years when his brothers and Jacob moved to Egypt since 7 years of plenty and 2 years of famine were already past (Gen 45:6-7).
         ◊ Since Joseph was 30 when he began ruling in Egypt, this means that he was 39 when his family moved to Egypt.
      c) #3: Jacob was 130 years old when he entered Egypt (Gen 47:9).
         ◊ <u>Conclusion</u>: Since Joseph was 39 when his father was 130, that means Jacob was 91 years old when he had Joseph. We know that Jacob was born in 1763 BC (see above point), therefore Joseph was born in 1672 BC.
   2) **Death date (1562 BC):** Genesis 50:22-26 says that Joseph was 110 years old when he died. Therefore he died in 1562 BC.

d. **Moses: (1498–1378 BC, 120 yrs).** Here's how we calculate Moses' birth and death dates:
   1) **Birth date (1498 BC):**
      a) Moses was 80 years old in the year he confronted Pharaoh to release the people – see Ex 7:7.
      b) The Exodus happened in 1417 BC (see explanation Part 2, Time-span #4 above).
      c) Therefore Moses spoke to Pharaoh in 1418 BC.

◊ Why one year earlier? The Exodus happened in Nisan (our March) the first month of the Jewish calendar year. Thus the calendar year had just turned over when the Exodus occurred. Therefore all the preceding drama between Moses and Pharaoh took place in the preceding calendar year.[32]

d) Therefore Moses was born in 1498 BC.

2) **Death date (1378 BC):** Deuteronomy 34:7 states that Moses was 120 years old when he died; therefore he died in 1378 BC.

[32] The calendar year switched over to a new year when the Israelites left Egypt in March of 1417 BC. Why? Because God commanded the Israelites to change over their calendars and make the month in which they left Egypt the first month of the year, and to celebrate Passover in that first month, every year afterwards. Ever since then the Jewish calendar year has started in the month of Nisan (our March) – see Ex 12:14-18 and explanation in Part 2, Time-span #3 above.

- Since the Exodus occurred at the beginning of the new year, 1417 BC (see explanation in Time-span #4 above of how we calculate the date to be 1417 BC), that means all the preceding drama between Moses and Pharaoh happened in 1418 BC.

B. Dating the Flood & the Tower of Babel.

1. **The Flood (2275 BC).** Here's how we figure the flood date:
   a. Noah lived from 2875–1925 BC (see Table 3.A.1. above).
   b. The flood happened when Noah was 600 years old (Gen 7:6).
   c. Therefore the flood happened in 2275 BC.

2. **The Tower of Babel (somewhere between 2154–2112 BC).** Here's how we figure the date range for the Tower of Babel:
   ◊ There are only 352 years from the Flood (2275 BC) to Abraham's birth (1923 BC), and the Tower of Babel happens at some point in between, closer to the Flood – but when?
   ◊ All the information we need about this time period (2275–1923 BC) is recorded in one story unit, Genesis chapters 10 & 11. Most of the information in these two chapters is genealogical (from Noah to Abraham), but in the midst of all the genealogies there is one story – the story of the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9).
   ◊ Here are the important points to know for dating the Tower of Babel:
      a. **Genesis 10 lists all the families who received God's curse (confusion of languages and dispersion of nations) at the Tower of Babel.** The purpose of Genesis chapter 10 is to tell us each of the families who were alive at the time of the Tower of Babel (the story which is then recounted at the beginning of chapter 11).
         ♦ We know this because Genesis 10 repeatedly tells us that the families listed in its genealogy are organized by language (Gen 10:5, 20, 31, 32). In other words, each name listed in Genesis 10 represents a family and clan which spoke a different language from the other families and clans in the genealogy.
            a) But we know that all the people of the earth spoke the *same* language until the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1).
            b) Therefore, Genesis 10 gives us the list of all the families alive at the time of the Tower of Babel and shows us how they were dispersed across the earth after God confused their languages (Gen 11:7-10).
               ◊ Because there are 69 names on the Genesis 10 list that means that at the Tower of Babel God divided the people up into 69 different nations, with 69 different languages, and dispersed them across the earth.
               ◊ In His mercy God did not divide the people up in an arbitrary fashion – He divided them up by families. Each family was separated from the other families, but individuals were not separated from their families or forced to go it alone. In this way the families were forced to move away from each other and populate the whole earth, which had been God's original command to mankind (given twice, both to Adam and Noah – see Gen 1:28 and 9:1).
               ◊ It was nothing but willful rebellion and astonishing pride which caused Noah's immediate descendents to ignore God's explicit command to Noah to fill the earth (Gen 9:1) and rather to all gather in one place and try to become like God (Gen 11:4).
         ♦ Here are the verses in Genesis 10 which show us that each of the families listed in its genealogy got a different language at the Tower of Babel:
            1) *From these the coastland peoples spread in their lands, each with his own language, by their clans, in their nations.* **– Gen 10:5 (ESV)**
            2) *These are the sons of Ham, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations***.– Gen 10:20 (ESV)**
            3) *These are the sons of Shem, by their clans, their languages, their lands, and their nations***.– Gen 10:31 (ESV)**
         ♦ Note of Interest: These 69 families are the original forefathers of every language group and ethnic race on the planet today.

b. **Because of point a., above, we can figure out the <u>earliest</u> possible date for the Tower of Babel by calculating the earliest possible date that the youngest person in the Genesis 10 genealogy could have gotten married and started a family.**

- ♦ Recap of point a.: In order to make it onto the Genesis 10 list a man would have had to have been alive at the time of the Tower of Babel, and the man would have had to have had a family (verses 5, 20 and 31 tell us that each of the names on the list represented a different clan, with a different language, who were dispersed to a different land).
- ♦ Therefore, most of the men on the list would have had large families but at the very least every man would have had to have been married. Single men could not have qualified as a 'clan' or 'nation' (v. 5, 20, 31) to be dispersed.
- ♦ Therefore, we can calculate the earliest possible date for the Tower of Babel by calculating the earliest possible date when the youngest person in the genealogy could have gotten married and started a family.
  1) *Q: Who was the youngest person listed in the Genesis 5 genealogy?* A: Peleg.
     - ◊ Peleg was born to Eber (10:25), who was the son of Shelah (v.24), who was the son of Arphaxad (v. 24), who was the son of Shem (v. 22), who was Noah's son and helped Noah build the ark. So Peleg was the 5th and last generation down from Noah to make it onto the Genesis 10 list.
  2) *Q: When was the earliest that Peleg could have gotten married and started a family?*
     a) Peleg was born in 2174 BC (see Table 3.A.1. above).
     b) Assuming that 20 years old is the youngest age by which Peleg could have gotten married and started a family means gives us 2154 BC.

c. **Therefore, the <u>earliest</u> possible date for the Tower of Babel is 2154 BC**.

d. ***What's the <u>latest</u> that the Tower of Babel could have occurred?***

1) Since Peleg represents the last (youngest) generation on the Genesis 10 list, his son Reu could not have had a family at the time when the Tower of Babel occurred.
2) Therefore, the latest possible date for the Tower of Babel is the latest possible date that Reu could have started a family.
3) Reu was born in 2144 BC (see Table 3.A.1. above) and had his first son, Serug, at the age of 32 (see Table 3.A.1. above), which was 2112 BC. Therefore, the Tower of Babel must have happened before 2112 BC because otherwise Reu would have made it onto the Genesis 10 list.

- ♦ **Therefore, the <u>latest</u> possible date for the Tower of Babel is 2112 BC.**

◊ **Conclusion: The Tower of Babel happened sometime between 2154 – 2112 BC.**

C. Dating Israel's time in Egypt.

- There are 5 points to cover in this section:
  1. The Call of Abraham (1848 BC);
  2. Abraham's entry into Egypt (1847 BC);
  3. Jacob's entry into Egypt (1633 BC);
  4. Israel's time of slavery (80 – 120 years);
  5. The Exodus (1417 BC).
- In detail:
  1. **The Call of Abraham (1848 BC).**
     - ◊ Here's how we calculate the 1848 date:
       a. We know that Abraham was born in 1923 BC (see Table 3.A.1. and the explanation for Abraham below it).
       b. Abraham was 75 years old when God called him (Gen 12:1-4).
       c. Therefore the Call of Abraham took place in 1848 BC.
  2. **Abraham's entry into Egypt (March, 1847 BC).**
     - ◊ Here's how we calculate the March 1847 date:
       a. There were 430 years from the Call of Abraham to Moses receiving the Law on Mount Sinai (Gal 3:16-17), just after the Exodus from Egypt.
       b. There were 430 years '*to the day*' from when Abraham entered Egypt (Gen 12:10-20) to when the Israelites left Egypt at the Exodus (Ex 12:40-41 – see explanation in Part 2, Time-span #3 of this document).
       c. Therefore 2 things:
          1) Abraham entered Egypt within a year of God calling him (since both events were 430 years from the same event – the Exodus).
          2) Abraham entered Egypt in March (Nisan, or Abid, on the Jewish calendar) since that's when the Exodus occurred (see explanation in Part 2, Time-span #3 of this document).
       d. Therefore, since our calendar switches over in January, Abraham entered into Egypt in March of 1847, not 1848 (for more in-depth analysis see Part 2 Time-spans #3 – 4).

Table 3.C. Chart of the two 430-yr periods described in Exodus 12 & Galatians 3:

1923 BC	1848 BC (September-ish)	1847 BC (March)	1417 BC (March)
Abraham's Birth	Abraham's Call	Abraham enters Egypt	The Exodus
75 years	**6 mo.**	**430 years "to the very day" (Ex 12:40-41)**	
	430.5 years from the "promise to the law" (Gal 3:16-17)		

  3. **Jacob's entry into Egypt (1633 BC).**
     - ◊ Here's how we calculate the 1633 date:
       a. Jacob was born in 1763 BC (see explanation of Jacob's birth date above, Part 3 section A.2.b.).
       b. Jacob was 130 years old when he entered Egypt (Gen 47:9).
       c. Therefore Jacob entered Egypt in 1633 BC.
  4. **Israel's time of slavery (80 – 120 years; earliest possible date for slavery to start is 1538 BC).**
     - ◊ See part 2 Time-span #4 for full explanation.
  5. **The Exodus (1417 BC).**
     - ◊ Here's how we calculate the 1417 date:
       a. Abraham entered Egypt in March of 1847 BC (see point 2 above).
       b. The Israelite's exodus from Egypt took place 430 years 'to the day' after that (Ex 12:40-41 – see explanation in Part 2, Time-span #3 of this document).
       c. Therefore the Exodus occurred in March of 1417 BC.

D. Dating Israel's Wilderness Wandering.

- The next three time periods (Wilderness Wandering, Joshua's conquest of the Promised Land and the period of the Judges), run back-to-back-to-back and add up to 436 years.
- **Wilderness Wandering: 40 years, 1417–1378 BC.** Here's how we calculate these dates:
  1. The Israelite exodus from Egypt occurred in March of 1417 BC (see above, Part 3 section C.5.).
  2. After leaving Egypt the Israelites sinned by refusing to go into the Promised Land after the negative report of the 10 spies (Numbers 13 – 14:12). God then punished them by making them wander in the wilderness for a total of 40 years (Num 14:33-34).
  3. In the fortieth year after that event Moses pronounced their wanderings over and the conquest to begin (Deut 1:3).
  4. Therefore the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness ended in 1378 BC.

E. Dating Joshua's Conquest of the Promised Land.

- The Conquest of the Promised Land under Joshua took 6 years (following immediately after the end of the Israelites Wilderness Wandering) from 1377–1372 BC.
  1. Nowhere in the Bible does it explicitly say how long Joshua's conquest of the Promised Land took, however it can be quite easily calculated from the following:
     a. The Bible tells us that Caleb receives his inheritance 45 years (Josh 14:10) after God promised it to him through Moses (see Num 14:24). The promise was given in response to Caleb's faithfulness in bringing back a good report after spying out the Promised Land as part of the 12 spies sent in by Moses (Num 13 – 14:12).
        1) This is an important piece of dating information because we know that Moses sent the 12 spies into the Promised Land in 1416 BC, the 2nd year of Israel's exodus from Egypt (1417 BC).[33]
        2) Therefore Caleb receives his inheritance in 1371 BC, since 1416 BC – 45 years = 1371 BC.
        3) Therefore Caleb receives his inheritance in the 7th year after the wilderness wandering ended, since the wandering ended in 1378 BC (see point 1 above).
     b. Furthermore, we also know that during the year in which Caleb received his inheritance there was no fighting (Josh 14:14 'the land had rest from war;' see also 11:23, 21:44 and 23:1), because (1) the conquest had largely been finished (Josh 11:23), and (2) the Israelites were celebrating their first Sabbath Year of rest since entering the Promised Land (Lev 25:4).
        - Note: Though the land was *basically* conquered by this time, the Israelites never did fully conquer the land and failed to drive out some of the previous inhabitants of the land (Josh 13:13; Judges 1:27-36).
        - **Conclusion:** ***Therefore (by 1.c. and 2.) the conquest of the land took 6 years and Caleb received his inheritance in the 7th year, while Israel was taking its first Sabbath Year rest.*** (see Scripture passage next page . . .)

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[33] **How do we know the spies went into the Promised Land in 1416 BC, the 2nd year of the Exodus?**

- This is how we know that the story of Moses sending the 12 spies into Canaan happened in 1416 BC (2 points of confirmation):
  1. Deuteronomy 2:13-14 states that from the time the Israelites left Kadesh Barnea (the place from which Moses sent the 12 spies into the Promised Land), to the time when their wandering in the wilderness ended, was 38 years.
     - That means that Moses sent the 12 spies into Canaan in 1416 BC, since their wandering in the wilderness ended in 1378 BC (see point 1 above) and 1378 BC – 38 years = 1416 BC.
  2. A second point of confirmation for the date of 1416 BC for the story of the 12 spies comes from the building of the Tabernacle.
     a. The Bible explicitly states that the Tabernacle was completed and erected in the first month of the 2nd year of the Exodus (Num 9:1, 15-23; Ex 40:1-2). This means that the Tabernacle was erected in 1416 BC, since the first year of the Exodus was 1417 BC.
     b. Moses sent the 12 spies into the Promised Land later in the same year that the Tabernacle was erected (see Numbers 9 – the inauguration of the Tabernacle, followed by Numbers 13 – the 12 spies).
     c. Therefore the dating of the Tabernacle in the 2nd year of the Exodus (1416 BC, see Num 9:1; Ex 40:1-2) confirms the dating of Moses sending the 12 spies into Canaan also in 1416 BC.

- ♦ *And now, behold, the Lord has kept me* [Caleb] *alive, just as he said, these forty-five years since the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness. And now, behold, I am this day eighty-five years old. . . .* [12] *So now give me* [Caleb] *this hill country of which the Lord spoke on that day, for you heard on that day how the Anakim were there, with great fortified cities. . . . Then Joshua blessed him, and he gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance.* [14] *Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord, the God of Israel. . . . And the land had rest from war* [Sabbath Year]. **– Joshua 14:10,12,13-14 (ESV)**

2. **Objection: *But didn't Caleb just start fighting for his inheritance in the 7th year of the conquest?***
   - ◊ This is a common misconception people have, due to a misreading of Joshua 14:12. In actual fact the conquest of the Promised Land was already finished by the time Caleb asked Joshua for Hebron and the hill country of the Anakim (though, as stated before, there were pockets of land which the Israelites never completely conquered, see Josh 13:13 and Judges 1:27-36).
   - ◊ We know this by comparing Joshua 11:21 – 23 with Joshua 14:10-15 (Caleb asking for his inheritance):
     a. **Joshua 11:21-23 (ESV) –** *And Joshua came at that time and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua devoted them to destruction with their cities.* [22] *There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the people of Israel. Only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod did some remain.* [23] *So Joshua took the WHOLE land, according to all that the Lord had spoken to Moses. And Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. And the land had rest from war.*
     b. **Joshua 14:10-15 (ESV)** – *And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, just as he said, these forty-five years since the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness. And now, behold, I am this day eighty-five years old.* [11] *I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me; my strength now is as my strength was then, for war and for going and coming.* [12] *So now give me this hill country of which the Lord spoke on that* [past tense] *day, for you heard on that* [past tense] *day how the Anakim were* [past tense] *there, with great fortified cities. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall drive them out just as the Lord said."* [13] *Then Joshua blessed him, and he gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance.* [14] *Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord, the God of Israel.* [15] *Now the name of Hebron formerly was Kiriath-arba. (Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim.) And the land had rest from war.*
   - ◊ Several things to note about these two passages (Josh 11:21-23; 14:10-15):
     a. In the story of Caleb asking Joshua for his inheritance in Joshua 14, the story ends by saying 'And the land had rest from war' (Josh 14:15). Obviously, Caleb could not have *started* fighting for Hebron after Joshua 14, since the conquest was already finished and 'the land had rest from war.'
     b. Furthermore, in Joshua 11 it is stated unequivocally that *Joshua* completely defeated all of the Anakim (v.22), explicitly including the Anakim of the hill country (v.21). These are the same Anakim whose land Caleb was asking for in Joshua 14:12). Joshua chapter 11 also ends with the phrase 'And the land had rest from war' (Josh 11:23), so both passages are speaking of the same time period – which we know from Joshua 14:10 to be the 7th year of the Conquest (1371 BC).
     c. Thus it is clear that Joshua defeated the Anakim during the first 6 years of conquest, and that Caleb merely asked to take possession of some already-conquered-territory in the 7th year (the Sabbath Year of Rest) – after the Promised Land had already been mostly subdued (Josh 11:23).

3. **Note – Though the conquest was mostly completed after 6 years, and the Israelites rested in the 7th (1371 BC), the Israelites did not actually take possession of their lands until the 8th year of the conquest (1370 BC).** Though Caleb received his inheritance in the 7th year of the conquest, he did not take *possession* of it until the 8th year (1370 BC), due to the 7th year being the Sabbath Year of Rest. This is true of most of the tribes of Israel as well.
   - ◊ Here's how we know this:
     a. We know that Caleb did not take possession of his inheritance in the same year that Joshua gave it to him (the 7th year) because Judges 1:1-2 makes it clear that Caleb's tribe (Judah) did not go up to take possession of their inheritance until after Joshua died.
     b. This is also true of most of the rest of the Israelite tribes as the rest of Judges chapter 1 makes clear.
     c. In Joshua 18:1-3, which occurs in the 7th year, the Sabbath Year of Rest, Joshua scolded 7 of the tribes for not yet having taken possession of their lands.
   - ◊ **Conclusion:** The Israelites conquered the Promised Land in 6 years (1377–1372 BC), rested the 7th year (1371 BC) and finally began taking possession of their lands in the 8th year (1370 BC, after Joshua died, see the book of Judges).
     - ♦ Note: This conclusion is confirmed by Jephthah's 300 years (see explanation in 'Jephthah's 300 years' in the next section).

4. **Point of Interest: We know that Joshua must have died late in the 7th year of the Conquest (1371 BC) because of two things:**
   a. The events of Judges chapter 1 happened after he died (Judges 1:1); but also,
   b. The events of Judges chapter 1 happened in the 8th year of the conquest (1370 BC).[34]
   - ◊ Therefore, since Joshua was alive in the 7th year of the Conquest (see the book of Joshua), but not alive in the 8th year (see the book of Judges), he must have died late in the 7th year.

[34] We know that the events of Judges 1 happened in the 8th year of the conquest because there cannot be any time gap between the book of Joshua and the book of Judges (see next point on the period of the Judges).

F. Dating the Period of the Judges.

- **The period of the Judges, as described in the book of Judges spans 390 years, from 1371 BC to 982 BC (inclusive).** The period of the Judges is easy to calculate because the book of Judges gives clear and explicit dating information for every period of oppression and every judge (see table below).

Table 3.F.3.i.

	The Period of the Judges = 390 years (1371 – 982 BC)				
	BC	**Event/People**	**Yrs**	**Book**	**Verses**
	1377-1372	**Joshua's conquest of the land**	**6**	**Joshua**	**ch. 1-12**
	1371	**7th year of conquest – rest from war**	**1**		**ch. 13-24**
		(Don't count the above years toward the period of the Judges)			
1.	**1371**	**Aramean oppression**	**8**	**Judges**	**3:7-8**
	1370	*8th year of conquest – Israelite tribes take possession of their lands in 2nd yr of Aramean oppression*			
2.	**1363**	**Judge Othniel**	**40**		**3:9-11**
3.	**1323**	**Moabite oppression**	**18**		**3:14**
4.	**1305**	**Judge Ehud**	**80**		**3:30**
5.	**1225**	**Canaanite oppression**	**20**		**4:2-3**
6.	**1205**	**Judge Barak**	**40**		**4:14 & 5:31c**
7.	**1165**	**Midianite oppression**	**7**		**6:1**
8.	**1158**	**Judge Gideon**	**40**		**8:28**
9.	**1118**	**Abimelech**	**3**		**9:22**
10.	**1115**	**Judge Tola**	**23**		**10:1-2**
11.	**1092**	**Judge Jair**	**22**		**10:3**
12.	**1070**	**Ammonite oppression**	**18**		**10:6-8**
13.	**1052**	**Judge Jephthah**	**6**		**12:7**
14.	**1046**	**Judge Ibzan**	**7**		**12:8-10**
15.	**1039**	**Judge Elon**	**10**		**12:11**
16.	**1029**	**Judge Abdon**	**8**		**12:13-14**
17.	**1021**	**Philistine oppression**	**40**		**13:1**
		Judge Samson (1001 – 982)			**15:20**
		King Saul (1021 – 982)		**1 Samuel**	**13:1**
	982	*The last year of the period of the Judges*			
		Total:	**390 yrs**	Just count the period of the judges (blue), not the period of conquest.	
	981	**King David's reign begins**			

- The rest of this section can be divided up into 4 parts – 2 questions and 2 confirmations (that this timeline of the period of the judges is correct):
  1. Question #1: How could the Israelites be taking possession of their lands and being oppressed at the same time (1371 – 1370)?
  2. Question #2: How can it be that Samson was acting as Judge in Israel at the same time that Saul was serving as king?
  3. Confirmation #1 (that this timelines dating of the Judges is correct) – Jepthah's 300 years.
  4. Confirmation #2 – 1Kings 6:1 and the 480-yr time span from the Exodus to the beginning of the Temple.

- In detail:

1. **Question #1:** ***How could the Israelites be taking possession of lands and being oppressed at the same time (1371 – 1370)?***
   - ◊ **A:** The oppression by the Arameans was not that severe, as far as oppressions go. It was the smallest of all the oppressions and limited in its scope, not affecting all the tribes, as evidenced by these 3 facts: (1) Othniel (tribe of Judah) defeats them without calling for help from other tribes; (2) Israel does not even count the number of enemy slain, and (3) 40 years of peace follow this oppression (see Judges 3:7-11). Compare this with the stories of the Judges that Othniel – like Ehud (Judges 3:12-30), Deborah and Barak (Judges 4) and Gideon (Judges 8) where massive enemy armies, consisting of thousands of soldiers are involved.
   - ◊ Thus, it is not surprising that the tribes of Reuben and Gad could be taking of possession of Ammonite land, while the tribe of Judah (and maybe a couple other tribes) was being oppressed by the Arameans. Especially when you consider that the tribes of Reuben and Gad were taking possession of land that was on the other side of the Jordan river, away from the rest of the tribes of Israel (Num 32:1-5).
   - ◊ Just because God describes certain years as years of oppression or of peace, does not mean that they were completely horrible or overwhelmingly peaceful. Life is never that simple.

2. **Question #2:** ***How can it be that Samson was acting as Judge in Israel at the same time that Saul was serving as king?***
   - ◊ The book of Judges demands this conclusion for two reasons:
     a. The story of Samson (Judges 13-16), follows right on the heels of the judgeship of Abdon (Judges 12:13-15). Jepthah's 300 years (see next point, 'c.' for an explanation) demands that the dates chronicled in the book of Judges be chronological and successive. Therefore Samson follows immediately after Abdon, which places him in the same time period as Saul.
     b. Secondly, the book of Judges explicitly says that Samson was born in the time when the Philistine's oppression began (Judges 13:1-7). The Philistine oppression is clearly dated as 1021 – 981 (see Table 3.D.3.i., above, and Judges 13:1), which is the exact time period of Saul's reign. Therefore, Samson and Saul have to be contemporaries.
        - ♦ Here's how we know Saul's reign to be 1021 – 981 BC:
          1) We know that the 4th year of Solomon's reign came 479 years after the Exodus, which occurred in 417 BC (see 1 Kings 6:1 and the explanation in Part 2, Time Span #5). Therefore the 4th year of Solomon's reign happened in 938 BC.
          2) Counting backwards 4 years gives us 942 BC. This would have been the last year of king David's reign (David preceded Solomon).
          3) King David reigned for 40 years (2 Sam 5:4-5). Counting backwards 40 years gives 982 BC. This would have been the last year of King Saul's reign (Saul preceded David).
          4) Saul reigned for 40 years (Acts 13:20-22). Counting backwards 40 years gives 1022 BC, the last year before he began ruling.
        - ♦ **Therefore Saul reigned 40 years from 1021 BC – 982 BC, the exact 40 year time period of the Philistine oppression.**
        - ♦ **Conclusion: Since Saul's reign exactly overlaps the Philistine oppression, and since Samson's judgeship also occurs during the Philistine oppression, then Samson and Saul have to be contemporaries.**

     c. The fact that neither Saul nor David nor the prophet Samuel ever mention Samson is not proof that Samson was not alive at the same time they were. Consider the following 3 points:

1) The high priest Eli was clearly a contemporary of David and Saul, but neither of them mention him either.
2) Consider also that Samson works with no one and lives at the far south west edge of the country – none of his exploits would have had much strategic impact on the nation as a whole.
3) Lastly, although Samson's supernatural strength fascinates us, compared with Saul and David's military victories, Samson's feats fall far short in terms of importance and impact. Indeed his greatest victory occurs at his death.

d. **Here's our *hypothesis* of how Samson's life played out:** Since Samson was born in the 1st year of the Philistine oppression (as stated earlier), and assuming that he started judging when he was 20 years old, then he dies at the age of 40 in the same year as Saul, which was the last year of the Philistine oppression. If Samson dies right after Saul, then even though the Philistines kill Saul and his sons, Samson destroys the temple of their god.[35]

[35] This paragraph and the preceding paragraph were taken almost verbatim from: Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.41.

3. **Confirmation #1 for our dating of the period of the Judges – *Jephthah's 300 years*.**

a. **Problem:** Some scholars make the dating of the period of the Judges more difficult than it needs to be. Instead of accepting the Bible accounts at face value, they dispute the dates on our chart for the following 2 reasons: (1) They say that there is an unknown gap of time between the book of Joshua and the book of Judges; and (2) that the detailed periods of time chronicled in Judges cannot be added up neatly and put on a chart. They say that the dates in Judges are not successive (back-to-back) and orderly, but rather, overlapping and jumbled.

- ***So how we can we be sure that our dates are correct?*** How can we know that the dates given in the book of Judges are successive (not overlapping) and that the dates 1371 – 981 BC (for a total of 390 years) are correct for the period of the Judges? Thankfully, the Bible gives us two important pieces of dating information which confirm this timeline of events. The two confirming pieces of evidence are: (1) Jephthah's 300 years; and (2) the 480-yr time-span from the Exodus to the Temple.

b. **<u>Confirmation #1: Jephthah's 300 years</u>.** In Judges 11:26 Judge Jephthah told the Ammonites, *"For three hundred years Israel occupied Heshbon, Aroer, the surrounding settlements and all the towns along the Arnon. Why didn't you retake them during that time?"*(NIV) In this important passage Jephthah says that from the time when the Israelites first took possession of their land (8th year of the conquest), until the time the Ammonites came to take their portion back (the start of the 18-yr Ammonite oppression[36]) was 300 years.

- If you go back to our chart of the period of the Judges (see Table 3.D.3.i. above) you will find that the chart also counts exactly 300 years from the 8th year of the conquest (the year the Israelites took possession of their lands – 1370 BC) to the start of the Ammonite oppression (1070 BC). Thus Jephthah's statement gives outside confirmation that our charting of the period of the Judges is accurate (at least up to the oppression of the Ammonites).

Table 3.F.3.ii.

Jephthah's 300 years (1370-1071)

	BC	Years	Event/People	Judges
300 years	1370	8th year of conquest: Reuben & Gad take possession of Ammonite land.		
		7	2nd yr of Aramean oppression (years 2-8 = 7yrs)	3:7-8
		40	Judge Othniel	3:9-11
		18	Moabite oppression	3:14
		80	Judge Ehud	3:30
		20	Canaanite oppression	4:2-3
		40	Judge Barak	4:14 & 5:31c
		7	Midianite oppression	6:1
		40	Judge Gideon	8:28
		3	Abimelech	9:22
		23	Judge Tola	10:1-2
	1092-1071	22	Judge Jair	10:3
		300	Total years	
	1070	18	Ammonite oppression	10:6-8
	1052	*Jephthah speaks to Ammonites of '300 years' after the last yr of their oppression – he is about to throw off their yoke.*		

For 3 reasons why Jephthah's 300 years are so important, see next page . . .

[36] Note: During the 18 years of Ammonite oppression neither side is able to occupy the land, as evidenced by the fact that even after 18 years of oppressing the Israelites, the Ammonites gather to take over the land (Judges 11:13).

c. **Jephthah's '300 years' is important for 3 reasons:**

1) **#1:** It confirms that the dating information given in the book of Judges is successive, not overlapping.
   a) As stated before, a number of modern-day scholars believe that you cannot simply add up the years given in the book of Judges to make an accurate timeline. They believe this because they think many of the periods of time overlap with each other.
   b) But adding up all the years of the oppressions and Judges, as given in the book of Judges, from the 2nd year of the Aramean oppression to the end of Judge Jair's reign gives exactly 300 years, just as Jephthah stated. Therefore the dating information in the book of Judges is conclusively proved to be successive and accurate, not overlapping as some modern-day scholars are suggesting.
   c) Of course, as someone may argue, Jephthah's 300-yr period does not reach all the way to the end of the period of the Judges – 89 years are still left until the time of king David when the period of the Kings begins. It seems very unlikely, however, that if all of the dating information in the book of Judges is successive and accurate up to the Ammonite oppression, that it would suddenly shift to chaotic and overlapping for the much shorter time period from the Ammonite oppression to the start of king David's rule.
2) **#2:** It proves that the Aramean oppression had to have started immediately after Joshua's conquest, with no gap of time in between. Thus, there is no gap of time between the events of the book of Joshua and the events of the book of Judges.
   a) As stated before, a number of modern-day scholars believe there is an unknown gap of time between the book of Joshua and the book of Judges, between Joshua's conquest of the land and the beginning of the Aramean oppression. According to them this unknown gap of time consisted of many years where the Israelites possessed the Promised Land peacefully before the cycle of oppressions and judges began. But Jephthah's 300 years conclusively proves that there was no such period of peace and that there can be no gap of time between Joshua's conquest of the land and the beginning of the Aramean oppression. Here's how:
      ◊ Jephthah clearly states that there are 300 years from the time the Israelites took possession of the land until the start of the Ammonite oppression.
      ◊ But adding up the years of the various Judges and periods of oppression as described in the book of Judges, there are 301 years from the first year of Aramean oppression to the start of the Ammonite oppression (see Table 3.D.3.i. above).
   b) **Conclusion:** Therefore, the first year of Aramean oppression starts the year before the Israelites take possession of their land (this would have been the 7th year of the conquest). But if the Aramean oppression started the year *before* the Israelites even took possession of their land, then there can be no unknown time period *afterwards*, as some scholars are trying to say, during which the Israelites were in possession of their land, and at peace, and the events of the book of Judges were not yet happening. Thus, Jephthah's 300 years proves conclusively that there is no unknown gap of time between the book of Joshua and the book of Judges, and that the cycle of oppression and judges began immediately after Joshua's conquest.
3) **#3:** It confirms that the Israelites took possession of their lands in the 8th year of the conquest. Comparing Jephthah's 300 years (from possession of land to Ammonite oppression) with the 301 years detailed in the book of Judges (from the 1st year of Aramean oppression to the Ammonite oppression – see Table 3.D.3.i. above) proves that the Aramean oppression started the year before the Israelites took possession of their lands (as stated previously). This fact also confirms the timeline of events for the book of Joshua, as presented earlier, namely, (1) 6 years of conquest (1377 BC – 1372 BC); followed by

(2) a 1-yr period of rest during the 7th year (1371 BC); followed by (3) the Israelites actually taking possession of their lands in the 8th year (see Part 3.D.2., above, the section concerning Joshua and the conquest of the Promised Land).

a) Here's how Jephthah's 300 years confirms that timeline of events:
   - ◊ #1: We know that the Aramean oppression could not have started during Joshua's conquest of the land, while Joshua was still alive (see the book of Joshua). Therefore, it had to start after the first 6 years of conquest.
   - ◊ #2: Because of Jephthah's 300 years, however, we also know that the Aramean oppression has to start the year before the Israelites take possession of their land.
   - ◊ #3: Therefore, there has to be a gap of at least a year between the Joshua's conquest of the land and the Israelites actually taking possession of the land. The Aramean oppression would have to start in this gap.
   - ◊ #4: We know that the gap cannot be more than a year, because we know that there are exactly 480 years from the Exodus to Solomon starting the Temple (see next point).

b) **Conclusion:** Therefore, there is a one-year gap between Joshua's conquest of the land and the Israelites actually taking possession of their land. This would exactly match up with the existence of a Sabbath Year of rest during which the Israelites did not go to war and did not take possession of their land. As such, it confirms our timeline of events for the conquest (see Part 3.D.2. above, concerning Joshua and the period of conquest): (1) 6 years of conquest; followed by (2) Year of Rest in the 7th year (Aramean oppression starts during this time); followed by (3) the Israelites take possession of their land in the 8th year of the conquest.

4. **Confirmation #2 for our dating of the period of the Judges – *the 480 year time-period from Exodus to the beginning of the Temple.*** [Note: This span of time is explained in detail in Part 2 Time-span #5.] This 480-yr span of time is the 2nd confirming piece of evidence which proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that (1) the years recorded in Judges are successive, and (2) our dating of the Judges is correct.
   - ◊ 1 Kings 6:1 states *In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the Lord.*(ESV)
     - ♦ Thus the Bible makes it explicitly clear that from the Exodus to the beginning of the Temple are 480 years.
   - ◊ With this important piece of dating information in mind, we can now prove that this timeline's dating of the period of the Judges is correct, using the following logic [see Table 3.D.3.iii. next page]:
     a. #1: We KNOW that after the Exodus the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years (Num 13:33-34, Deut 1:3).
     b. #2: We KNOW that after the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, it took Joshua 6 years to conquer the Promised Land.[37]
     c. #3: We KNOW that king David ruled 40 years (1 Kings 2:10-11) before Solomon.
     d. #4: We KNOW that Solomon began building the Temple in the 4th year of his reign (1 Kings 6:1).
     e. Therefore, a little math gives us:
        - ♦ 40 years of wilderness wandering + 6 years of conquest under Joshua + 40 years of David ruling + 4 years of Solomon ruling = 90 years between the Exodus and the beginning of the Temple when there were no Judges ruling.
        - ♦ This means that 90 years are accounted for, out of a total of 480 years from the Exodus to Solomon. Which means that 390 years are left over (480 – 90 = 390) for the period of the Judges.
     f. Compare this 390 years with the chart of the Judges above (Table 3.D.3.ii.): if you add up all of the dating information in the book of Judges, for the various Judges and oppressions, you get EXACTLY 390 years as well! Therefore, the 480 year time span from the Exodus to the start of the Temple confirms that this timeline's dates for the Judges are correct.
   - ◊ **Conclusion.** We can draw two conclusions from this: [See Table 3.D.3.iii. next page]
     a. **#1: There can be no gap between Joshua's conquest of the land and the beginning of the period of the Judges.** The period of the Judges must immediately follow Joshua's conquest, otherwise it wouldn't fit into the 480-yr time span.
     b. **#2: The dating information given in the book of Judges is accurate and successive, not chaotic and overlapping.** If many of the periods of time recorded in the book of Judges were overlapping then the period of the Judges would add up to much less than 390 years, and there would be unaccounted for gaps in the 480-yr span of time between the Exodus and the Temple.
        - ♦ Surely, it can be no accident that all of the dates given in the book of Judges just 'happen' to add up to 390 years, which, when added to 90, gives exactly 480 years – the time between the Exodus and the Temple. Surely the Bible means to give us a year-by-year accounting of the period of the judges so that a meaningful timeline can be constructed.

[37] **How we know the conquest of the land took six years.** This detail is fully explained in the section on Joshua's conquest of the land in Part 3. section D.2. above. For a quick explanation, consider the following:
1. Caleb received his inheritance at the end of the conquest, 45 years after Moses sent the 12 spies into Canaan (Josh 14:10).
2. The Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 38 years after the spies came back from Canaan (Deut 2:13-14).
3. Therefore, Caleb received his inheritance 7 years after the wilderness wandering ended.
4. Since Caleb received his inheritance during a year when the land had 'rest from war' (Josh 14:14), the conquest took 6 years.

Table 3.F.3.iii.

Exodus to the Temple of Solomon = 480 years					
BC	**Event/People**	**Yrs**	**Book**	**Verses**	
1417	Exodus Wilderness Journey	40	Numbers Deuteronomy	13:33-34 1:3	40 years
1377	Conquest of land	6	Joshua	14:10-11	6 years
1371	Aramean oppression	8	Judges	3:7-8	
1363	Judge Othniel	40		3:9-11	
1323	Moabite oppression	18		3:14	
1305	Judge Ehud	80		3:30	
1225	Canaanite oppression	20		4:2-3	
1205	Judge Barak	40		4:14 & 5:31c	
1165	Midianite oppression	7		6:1	
1158	Judge Gideon	40		8:28	
1118	Abimelech	3		9:22	The Period of
1115	Judge Tola	23		10:1-2	the Judges
1092	Judge Jair	22		10:3	390 years
1070	Ammonite oppression	18		10:6-8	
1052	Judge Jephthah	6		12:7	
1046	Judge Ibzan	7		12:8-10	
1039	Judge Elon	10		12:11	
1029	Judge Abdon	8		12:13-14	
1021	Philistine oppression	40		13:1	
	Judge Samson			15:20	
	King Saul		1 Samuel	13:1	
981	King David	40	1 Kings	2:10-11	
941	Solomon's first 4 years	4		6:1	
938	Temple building begins in Solomon's 4th yr	480 yrs			

*This analysis is based on work done by Jonathan Hall in the **Ultimate Bible Timeline**: check it out www.ultimatebibletimeline.com*

G. Dating the Kings.

Table 3.G.i. – The Kings of Israel

Total Period of all the Kings (Judah) : Saul – Zedekiah = 516 yrs (1021 BC – 506 BC)

BC	Yrs	Kings	Reference	BC	Yrs	Kings	Reference	Notes
1021	40	Saul	1 Sam 13:1					
981	40	David	1 Ki 2:10-11					
941	40	Solomon	1 Ki 11:42					
Kingdom Splits under Solomon's son Rehoboam (901 BC)								
Judah				**Israel**				
901	17	Rehoboam (E)	1 KI 14:21	901-880	22	Jeroboam	**1 KINGS** 14:19-20	Note: all the Israelite kings are evil. Some Judean kings are good and some are evil, so they are each denoted by a (G) or (E).
884	3	Abijah (E)	15:1-2					
881	41	Asa (G)	15:9-10	880-879	2	Nadab	15:25	
				879-856	24	Baasha	15:33	
				856-855	2	Elah	16:8	
				855	7dys	Zimri	16:15	
				855-844	12	Omri/Tibni	16:16-28	Israel split in 2, Tibni & Omri both reign first 5 yrs; Omri defeats Tibni & reunifies Israel. Omri – 12 total yrs.
				844-823	22	Ahab	16:29	
840	25	Jehoshaphat (G)	22:41	824-823	*2	Ahaziah	22:51	Ahab & Ahaziah co-reign 2 yrs 824-823.
				823-812	12	Jehoram	**2 KINGS** 3:1	Confusing: both Israel & Judah had kings named Jehoram reigning at the same time.
815	*3	Jehoram (E)	**2KI** 8:16-17					
812	1	Ahaziah (E)	8:26					
811	6	Athaliah (E)	11:1-3, 12:1	811-784	28	Jehu		
805	*38	Joash (G) (also 'Jehoash')	12:1					
				783-767	*17	Jehoahaz	13:1	Jehoahaz & Jehoash co-reign 3 yrs (769-767)
				769-754	16	Jehoash	13:10	Confusing: both Israel & Judah had kings named Jehoash reigning at the same time.
767	29	Amaziah (G)	14:1-2,17					
				753-713	41	Jeroboam (*the 2nd*)	14:23	
738	11	**NO KING**	14:1,23 + 15:1					
727	52	Uzziah (G) (aka Azariah)	15:1-2					
				712-690	23	**NO KING**		
				690	6m	Zechariah	15:8	
				689	1m	Shallum	15:13	
				688-679	10	Menahem	15:17	
				678-677	2	Pekahiah	15:23	
675	16	Jotham (G)	15:32-33	676-657	20	Pekah	15:27	
659	*14	Ahaz (E)	16:1-2	656-649	8	**NO KING**		
645	29	Hezekiah (G)	18:1-2 + 16:2 + 17:1 + 18:9-10 = 645BC	648-640	9	Hoshea	17:1	
				640		**Assyrian Captivity**	**2 Kings 18:10**	**(no more political entity Israel)**
616	55	Manasseh (E/G)	21:1					
561	2	Amon (E)	21:19					
559	31	Josiah (G)	22:1					
528	1	Jehoahaz (E)	23:31					
527	11	Jehoiakim (E)	23:36					
524		**Babylonian Captivity**	**2 Ki 24:1-4**					
517	0	Jehoiachin (E)	24:8					
516	11	Zedekiah (E)	24:18, 25:3-21					
506		**Jerusalem falls**	**2 Ki 25:9**					**No more kings**

116 yrs

Asterisks from the Kings of Judah list

1.Jehoram: Jehoram reigned a total of 8 years, but only 3 by himself. He co-reigned with Jehoshaphat 5 yrs in 2 different stints (824-23 & 818-816), only reigning by himself from 815-813 (see further down for more).

2.Joash: Amaziah began co-reigning with Joash the last 2 yrs of Joash's reign (767-766). Joash actually reigned 40 yrs – 38 by himself.

3.Ahaz: Hezekiah began co-reigning with Ahaz the last 2 yrs of his reign (746-745). Ahaz actually reigned 16 yrs but only 14 by himself.

*This analysis is based on work done by Jonathan Hall in the **Ultimate Bible Timeline**: check it out www.ultimatebibletimeline.com*

- **<u>Detailed Explanations for the chart of the kings</u>.**[38]
- Summary of the 4 points covered in this section:
  1. How to count the king years for Judah, and how to count the king years for Israel (they're different).
  2. There was a period of time in Judah when there was NO KING (738-728 BC).
  3. CO-REIGNS: Comprehensive explanations of the 5 Co-reigns in Judah and Israel (in chronological order).
  4. Confirmation for this timeline's dating of the kings – Ezekiel's 430-yr period of sin.

- In detail:
  1. **Point #1: How to count the king years for Judah, and how to count the king years for Israel (they're different).** There are several places in the Old Testament where critics of the Bible have pointed out supposed contradictions and errors in the dating of the kings. Most of these 'errors' actually can actually be attributed to one thing – the fact that the Bible writers calculated the years for the kings of Judah differently than they did for the kings of Israel.
     a. Edwin Thiele discovered that for the kings of Judah the Bible writers assigned each calendar year to only one king; the king who happened to be reigning in the first month of the year – Abid (our March). In other words, the years of the kings of Judah are absolute and successive, no two kings are credited for the same year (this makes the Judean king lists ideal for calculating our timeline as well).[39]
        1) So, for example, 1 Kings 14:21 tells us that Rehoboam reigned for 17 years (starting in 901 BC). That means he got credited for 17 years beginning with 901 and ending in 885. The next king, Abijah, reigned for 3 years so he gets credited with 884, 883, 882. In actual fact, however, he probably started ruling sometime in 885 – but since Rehoboam was ruling in the 1st month of that year, only he gets credited for that year. In the Judean king list no year gets counted twice; no year gets credited to two different kings.
     b. However, for the kings of Israel they used a month-by-month system, so that at times they credited 2 kings for the same year, since both kings were on the throne at some point during that year. One result of this is that kings sometimes got credited for more time than they actually reigned. For example, if a king ruled for a year, but that one year of time spanned portions of 2 different calendar years on the Jewish calendar, he would get credited for reigning 2 years.
        1) One look at the chart of the kings above is enough to explain one reason why they did this: the king-list for the ten tribes of Israel is chaos with 3 different co-reigns, 7 kings ruling for 2 years or less, 3 kings ruling for less than a year, and one king, Zimri, ruling for only 7 days (1 Kings 16:15)! In the dating system for the Judean kings, where only the king on the throne for the 1st month of that year gets credit for the year, a number of these kings would have been left out of the story line.
        2) But the Bible writers wanted their chronicles of the period of the kings to be complete (not a single king from either Judah or Israel is missed in the Bible accounts). In order make this work for the kings of Israel the Bible writers had to use a more specific month-by-month method of counting so that none of the kings would be missed.
     c. For a compare and contrast of the two different counting styles consider the following examples:
        1) King A begins reigning in April (Jewish 2nd month Ziv) of 901 BC and reigns until the end of the 1st March (the Jewish 1st month Nisan) of 895 BC.
        2) King B begins reigning the first day of April (Jewish 2nd month Ziv) of 895 BC and reigns 11 months until the end of February (Jewish 11th month Tebeth), 894 BC.

[38] Based (with a number of changes & corrections) on chart found in: Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.42.
[39] Thiele, Edwin R; *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 2nd Edition, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1965), pp. 19-29.

3) King C begins reigning the first day of March (Jewish 1st month Nisan) of 894 BC and reigns until January (Jewish 11th month Shebat) of 880 BC.
4) King D begins his reign February (Jewish 12th month Adar) of 880 BC and reigns until June (Jewish 4th month Tammuz) of 869 BC.
5) King E begins his reign in July (Jewish 5th month Ab) of 869 BC and reigns until February (Jewish 12th month Adar) of 863 BC.
6) No king for 4 months (March, April, May, June).
7) King F begins his reign in July (Jewish 5th month Ab) of 863 BC and reigns until the next year July 862 BC.

King	Kings-of-Judah Counting System		Kings-of-Israel Counting System	
	Dates of rule	**# of yrs credited**	**Dates of rule**	**# of yrs credited**
1. King A	900 BC – 895 BC	6 years	901 BC – 895 BC	7 years
2. King B	–	0	895 – 894 BC	1 year
3. King C	894 BC – 881 BC	14 years	894 BC – 881 BC	14 years
4. King D	880 BC – 869 BC	12 years	880 BC – 869 BC	12 years
5. King E	868 BC – 864 BC	5 years	869 BC – 864 BC	6 years
6. No King	863 BC	1 year	863 BC	4 months
7. King F	862 BC	1 year	863 BC – 862 BC	2 years

- Note that if you count up the years, you get 39 years counting the kings of Judah (which is the correct number of years 900 – 862 BC), but you get 42 years counting the kings of Israel.

2. **Point #2: There was a period of time in Judah when there was NO KING (738-728 BC).** One of the keys to accurately calculating this time period is to realize that there was an 11-yr period of time between king Amaziah and king Uzziah (aka 'Azariah)' when Judah was without a king (Israel also went through 2 periods of time without a king, but those don't affect the timeline, so I won't discuss them here).
   - ◊ Most people miss this time period because it isn't explicitly stated in the Bible, though it can be easily found by examining the text. Most people, when calculating this time period, simply add up the years of all the kings as listed in 1 & 2 Kings (and 1 & 2 Chronicles). But this will give you an inaccurate span of time.
   - ◊ Here's how we know that there was an 11-yr gap between kings Amaziah and Uzziah:
     a. *In the second year of Joash* (another spelling/way of saying Jehoash) *the son of Joahaz* (another spelling/way of saying Jehoahaz)*, king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, began to reign.* **– 2 Kings 14:1 (ESV)**
        - ♦ Amaziah began to reign over Judah in the 2nd year of Jehoash's rule over Israel. Jehoash became king in 769 BC (see chart above and 1 Kings 13:10), which means that Amaziah became king in 767 BC. But how long did he reign for?
     b. *Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.* **– 2 Chron 25:1 (ESV)**
        - ♦ So Amaziah reigned 29 years, which means he was king from 767 BC – 739 BC (including 739 BC). But when did his son, Uzziah, succeed him? Not the next year! See the following verses:
     c. *In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah* (another name/spelling for Uzziah) *the son of Amaziah, king of Judah, began to reign.* **– 2 Kings 15:1 (ESV)**
        - ♦ Amaziah's son, Uzziah, began reigning in the 27th year of Jeroboam's (the 2nd Jeroboam) rule over Israel.
        - ♦ So when did Jeroboam start ruling?
     d. *In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, began to reign in Samaria, and he reigned forty-one years.* **– 2 Kings 14:23 (ESV)**
        - ♦ Jeroboam began reigning over Israel in the 15th year of Amaziah's rule over Judah, which would have been 753 BC (not 752 BC, since it was in the 15th year, not after 15 years).
        - ♦ Therefore, Amaziah's son Uzziah began reigning in 727 BC: 753 BC – 26 yrs = 727 BC.
   - ◊ **Conclusion: Since Amaziah died in 739 BC and Uzziah began reigning in 727 BC, that leaves 11 years (738 BC – 727 BC) in which Judah had no king.**

   - ◊ Some people may be bothered by this; they wonder how Judah could have functioned so long without a king. This shows a lack of understanding of how internally resilient the tribes were – there are many examples of them functioning on their own without a king:[40]
     a. First of all, for 396 years from Moses to King Saul, all twelve tribes governed themselves without any king (see the book of Judges).
     b. Just a few decades later, after Saul's son Ish-Bosheth's death, the ten tribes of Israel ruled themselves for 5 ½ years before they anointed David as king over all of Israel.[41]
     c. After the kingdom divided again in 901 BC the tribes of Israel went 'kingless' 2 more times for a total of 31 years (see chart of kings above).

[40] Paragraph based on a paragraph from: Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.95.

[41] **How do we figure that the tribes of Israel were kingless for 5 ½ years after Ish-Bosheth?** See 2 Sam 2:8-11. After Saul died, the kingdom split temporarily: Ish-Bosheth reigned over the ten tribes of Israel only 2 years, but David ruled over *just* Judah for 7 ½ years, before re-uniting both kingdoms in 2 Sam 5:1-5. Therefore there were 5 ½ years when the tribes of Israel were without a king.

3. **Point #3 – CO-REIGNS: Comprehensive explanations of the 5 Co-reigns in Judah and Israel (in chronological order):**
   a. **CO-REIGN #1: Ahab & Ahaziah co-reign 2 years 824 – 823 BC (ISRAEL).** Ahab and Ahaziah (father & son) reigned together for two years. Here's how we know:
      - *In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years.* **– 1 Kings 16:29 (ESV)**
        a) The 38th year of Asa was in 844 BC (see chart above). Therefore, Ahab reigned until 823 BC (844 BC is year 1, subtract 21 more years = 823 BC).
      - *Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned two years over Israel.* **– 1 Kings 22:51 (ESV)**
        1) The 17th year of Jehoshaphat was 824 BC (see chart above), so Ahaziah began reigning while his father Ahab was still reigning. This means that they must have co-reigned together for parts of 2 years 824 & 823 BC, before both dying, separately, only months apart – Ahab in battle of an arrow wound, and Ahaziah after falling through an upper-story lattice (Ahab's death: 1 Kings 22:29-40; Ahaziah's death: 2 Kings 1).
        2) Ahaziah was immediately succeeded in that same year (823 BC) by his brother (or half-brother) Jehoram, the son of Ahab (since Ahaziah had no sons – see 2 Kings 1:17 & 3:1).
        3) Reason for the co-reign: Ahab probably put his son Ahaziah on the throne to take care of things while he was off in battle with Ramoth Gilead (see 1 Kings 22:1-6).[42]

      - **Note:** Be careful when reading the Scriptures, here, because it's easy to get confused – at the same time that Jehoram, son of Ahab was ruling in Israel (823 BC – 812 BC), another Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22:50) was ruling in Judah (824-823 BC & 818-816 BC & 815-813 BC). There were two Jehoram's ruling at the same time.

   b. **CO-REIGN #2: Jehoram's broken-up reign (JUDAH): *824-823 BC & 818-816 BC co-reigning with Jehoshaphat & 815-813 BC by himself*.** Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, had a very messy reign in terms of dates. We know that he reigned 8 total years (2 Kings 8:17), but those years were not consecutive as the following passages will show. His 8 years of rule can be divided up into 3 separate stints as king:
      1) **Stint #1: 824-823 BC, Jehoram co-reigns with his father Jehoshaphat.**
         a) *So he* [Ahaziah son of Ahab] *died according to the word of the Lord that Elijah had spoken. Jehoram* [also a son of Ahab] *became king in his place in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, because Ahaziah had no son.* **– 2 Kings 1:17 (ESV)**
            ◊ So 2 Kings 1:17 makes clear the fact that Jehoram son of Ahab became king in the 2nd year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat.
         b) But according to 2 Kings 3:1, Jehoram son of Ahab became king in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat. So the Bible says 2 things: (1) that Jehoram son of Ahab became king in the 2nd year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat's reign (2 Ki 1:17), and (2) that Jehoram son of Ahab became king in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat's reign (2 Ki 3:1).
            ◊ **Therefore:** Jehoshaphat and his son Jehoram were reigning at the same time.
         c) We know from elsewhere in Scripture that Jehoram son of Ahab became king in 823 BC (see chart of kings above, Table 2.B.7.i.).

[42] See Norman Geisler's explanation for Jehoshaphat & Jehoram's co-reign in the same story – Geisler, Norman, *When Critics Ask: a popular handbook of Bible difficulties*, (203: Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI), p. 191.

◊ **Therefore** Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat began co-reigning with his father in 824 BC (since 823 BC was his 2nd year) and they co-reigned for the two years 824 & 823 BC (we deduce that it stopped after 2 years see following points).

d) **Question:** ***Why would Jehoshaphat put his son on the throne for 2 years, while he was still king?*** Probably for the same reason that Ahab put his son Ahaziah on the throne: to take care of things while he went to battle with Ramoth Gilead (see 1 Kings 22:1-6, 29).[43]

2) **Stint #2: 818-816 BC, co-reigning with his father Jehoshaphat.** 5 years after their first co-reign Jehoshaphat again promoted his son Jehoram and co-reigned with him; this time for 3 years. Here's how we know:

a) *In the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, when Jehoshaphat was* [still] *king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, began to reign.* **– 2 Kings 8:16 (ESV)**

◊ So in the 5th year of Jehoram son of Ahab, Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat became king.

◊ **Problem!** We just saw in 2 Kings 1:17 (see Stint #1 above) that Jehoram son of Ahab became king in the 2nd year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat – So who came first, the son of Jehoshaphat or the son of Ahab? It seems like the Bible has a contradiction. Wrong! The problem is easily solved by realizing that Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat became king twice: first, a year before Jehoshaphat son of Ahab and once again in the son of Ahab's 5th year.

b) Once again the Bible is very clear that this 2nd stint of Jehoram's rule is a co-reign, because Jehoram became king of Judah while his father Jehoshaphat is still reigning (see above verse).

◊ How do we know that this 2nd stint was three years long? See stint #3, next.

3) **Stint #3: 815-813 BC, reigning by himself after his father Jehoshaphat's death.**

a) Jehoram began reigning by himself after his dad, Jehoshaphat, died: *And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father, and Jehoram his son reigned in his place.* **– 1 Kings 22:50 (ESV)**

◊ This is an important piece of information because we know when Jehoshaphat died – 816 BC (see Table 2.B.7.i. above).

b) After his father Jehoshaphat died, Jehoram reigned until his own death (2 Ki 8:24-25).

◊ We can tell when Jehoram died by when his son began ruling after his death: *So Joram* [son of Jehoshaphat] *slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Ahaziah his son reigned in his place. In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign.* **– 2 Kings 8:24-25 (ESV)**

◊ The 12th year of Jehoram son of Ahab was 812 BC. Therefore, Ahaziah gets credit for 812 BC and his dad, Jehoram, died in 813 BC.

◊ **Therefore Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat reigned 815-813 BC by himself (his 3rd stint as king).**

4) Confirmation for the 3-yr length of Jehoram's second stint as king. How do we know that Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat's 2nd stint was 3 years of time? It's implied:

a) #1: we know his total reign was 8 years (2 Kings 8:17);

b) #2: we know his first stint was at least 2 years (2 Kings 1:17);

c) #3: we know that he had a 2nd stint of ruling (2 Kings 8:16);

d) #4: we know his 3rd stint was 3 years, 815-813 BC (1 Kings 22:50, 2 Kings 8:24-25);

e) #5: we assume his first stint ended after 2 years (because Jehoshaphat back from battle);

f) #6:Conclusion: that leaves 3 yrs unaccounted for, which must be chalked up to his 2nd stint of rule.

[43] ibid.

c. **CO-REIGN #3: Jehoahaz & Jehoash co-reign 3 years 769-767 BC (ISRAEL).** This father and son duo (both evil) co-reigned the last 3 years of Jehoahaz's life (769-767 BC). Here's how we know:

1) Jehoahaz became king in 783 BC (the 23rd year of Joash in Judah, see chart of the Kings) and reigned for 17 years. That takes his reign to 767 BC.
2) Jehoash became king in 37th year of Joash of Judah, just 14 years after Jehoahaz (37th year – 23rd year), which starts him in 769 BC, and he reigned 16 years. Therefore their reigns overlap for 3 years, from 769-767 BC.
3) Here are the verses:
   a) *In the twenty-third year of Joash the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned seventeen years.* **– 2 Kings 13:1 (ESV)**
   b) *In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned sixteen years.* **– 2 Kings 13:10 (ESV)**

d. **CO-REIGN #4: Joash and Amaziah co-reign 2 years 767 – 766 BC (JUDAH).**

1) Joash became king in the 7th year of Jehu king of Israel (805 BC, see chart of the Kings) and reigned 40 years. That makes his reign 805-766 BC.
2) Amaziah, his son, became king in the in the 2nd year of Jehoash (767 BC, see chart of the Kings), the son of Jehoahaz (grandson of Jehu) king of Israel, and he reigned 29 years.
3) That means the rule of these two kings overlapped 2 years, 767-766 BC.
4) Here are the verses:
   a) *In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba.* **– 2 Kings 12:1 (ESV)**
   b) *In the second year of Joash the son of Joahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, began to reign.* [2] *He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddin of Jerusalem.* **– 2 Kings 14:1-2 (ESV)**

♦ **CO-REIGN #5: Ahaz and Hezekiah co-reigned 2 years 645 – 644 BC (JUDAH).**

1) Ahaz and Hezekiah (father & son) co-reigned the last 2 years of Ahaz's life. Ahaz ruled 16 years from 659 BC (the 17th year of Pekah in Israel, see chart of the Kings) to 644 BC.
2) Hezekiah began ruling in the 4th year of Hoshea, king of Israel, which was 645 BC (see chart of the Kings), and reigned 29 years until 617 BC.
3) Therefore Ahaz and Hezekiah's rule overlapped 2 years, 645 BC – 644 BC. Here are the verses:
   a) *In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign.* [2] *Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And he did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord his God, as his father David had done.* **– 2 Kings 16:1-2 (ESV)**
   b) *In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it,* [10] *and at the end of three years he took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.* **– 2 Kings 18:9-10 (ESV)**
   c) *He* [Hezekiah] *was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah.* **– 2 Kings 18:2 (ESV)**

4. **<u>Point #4: Confirmation for this timeline's dating of the kings – Ezekiel's 430-yr period of sin</u>.** The time period of the kings is a complicated time period, as can be seen from the above discussion and chart. The presence of 2 different counting systems for the king years (Israel and Judah), as well as a multitude of co-reigns, split reigns and periods of time where no one reigned at all, make it a challenging task to correctly chart the time period. Many different scholars have attempted to chart the years, and have come up with many different numbers concerning its length.
   - ◊ So how can we be sure that this timeline's dating of the kings are correct? Thankfully there is confirmation for this timeline's dating of the kings in an overlapping time-period prophesied in the book of Ezekiel.
     a. **Ezekiel's 430-yr prophecy:** In Ezekiel chapters 1 and 4 God prophesied of 430 years of sin starting with Solomon's rule and ending in the 5th year of king Jehoiachin's exile: *(On the fifth of the month in the <u>fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile</u>, [3]the word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, son of Buzi . . .[4]"As for you, lie down on your left side and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel on it; you shall bear their iniquity for the number of days that you lie on it. [5]"For I have assigned you a number of days corresponding to the years of their iniquity, <u>three hundred and ninety days</u>; thus you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. [6]"When you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah; I have assigned it to you for <u>forty days</u>, a <u>day for each year</u>.* **– Ez 1:2-3, 4:4-6 (NASB)**
        - ♦ Thus, Ezekiel counts 430 years from the first year of Solomon's reign[44] to the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile. The question, now, is, How many years does this timeline count between those two dates? One important test of any timeline's dating of the kings must be this Ezekiel passage, where Ezekiel gives us a Holy Spirit-inspired fact concerning the amount of time from Solomon to Jehoiachin. Any timeline which does not match up with Ezekiel's 430 years on this point is wrong, and any timeline which does match up with Ezekiel passes an important test of accuracy.
        - ♦ Compare Ezekiel's 430 years with this timeline:
          1) This timeline charts the first year of Solomon's reign as 941 BC.
          2) This timeline charts the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile as (512 BC).[45]
          3) Do a little math: 941 BC – 511 BC (because 512 BC included) = 430 years. *Which is exactly what Ezekiel, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, also counted.*
        - ♦ **<u>Therefore</u>**, Ezekiel's 430-years-of-sin prophecy confirms that this timeline's dating of the period of the kings is correct.
     b. **A second confirmation from within Ezekiel's 430-yr prophecy.**
        - ♦ There were two parts to Ezekiel's prophecy: (1) 430 total years of sin, for both Judah and Israel; and (2) 390 years of sin, just since the time of Israel (though these 390 years of sin apply to Judah as well, see next point).
        - ♦ Compare Ezekiel's 390 years with this timeline:
          1) This timeline charts the 1st year of the Division of Israel and Judah as 901 BC.
          2) This timeline charts the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile as (512 BC, see above).

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[44] **How do we know that Ezekiel's 430-yr time period begins with the first year of Solomon's rule?** The passage doesn't explicitly state Solomon as the starting point, so how can we be sure? See the objection, point c, on the next page for a full explanation.

[45] **How do we figure the date of the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile to be 512 BC?**
5. We know that Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin's father, reigned for 11 years from 527 BC – 517 BC (see Table 3.E.i. – table of the Kings, above).
6. We know that Jehoiachin reigned in the same year that his father died (517 BC), for only 3 months (2 Kings 24:6,8).
7. Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin into exile after 3 months of his rule (still in 517 BC) – see 2 Kings 24:10-17.
8. Therefore the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile was 512 BC.

3) Do a little math: 901 BC – 511 BC (because 512 BC included) = 390 years. *Which is exactly what Ezekiel, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, also counted.*

- **Therefore**, Ezekiel's 390 years gives a second confirmation that this timeline's dating of the period of the kings is correct.

c. **Objection: *But how do we know that Ezekiel's 430 year prophecy begins with Solomon?***

- Ezekiel doesn't say when his 430 year prophecy begins. It must, however, have been obvious to the people he was writing to (Jewish exiles in Babylon), otherwise there would be no point to the prophecy.
- Every timeline, then, must be able to interpret Ezekiel's prophecy in a way which would have been meaningful and obvious to Ezekiel's original audience. The vast majority of the timelines used by Christians today, however, completely fail to do this.
  1) The reason for this is that most timelines today are based on the work of Dr. John C. Whitcomb. In the 1960s Dr. Whitcomb produced one of the most influential timeline in the evangelical community, the dates of which now find themselves quoted in many a Bible commentary and footnote.
  2) Dr. Whitcomb, along with Dr. Henry Morris, also co-authored a book, the Genesis Flood, which would have a significant impact on the evangelical community, in terms of the dating of biblical events.
  3) Though Dr. Whitcomb's work contributed very positively to the evangelical community, in terms of building people's faith that the Bible's narrative is true, accurate and not contradicted by science, his timeline has a number of errors in it.
- These errors are exposed by Ezekiel's 430-yr prophecy. Whitcomb's timeline (which provides the dates which many evangelical commentaries now quote) cannot find 390 + 40 years in a meaningful way as should be expected. For Whitcomb, 390 years before Jehoiachin's 5th year is David's 29th year, and 40 years before that is Saul's 21st year.[46] This is random and un-meaningful. Since the people in Ezekiel's time must have readily known what the 390 + 40 year time span meant, it should also be clear to us if our timeline is correct. Whitcomb's dating of the kings must be rejected.

d. **For any Bible timeline to be considered correct it MUST chart Ezekiel's 430 years in a meaningful way – this timeline does that.**

- An important thing to note about this timeline is how Ezekiel's 430 years and 390 years don't randomly fall in the midst of a king's reign, like with Whitcomb.
  1) According to this timeline 390 years before the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile falls exactly in 901 BC, the year of the Division of the kingdom, when Israel split from Judah. Thus, Ezekiel's 390 years of sin for the 'house of Israel' makes perfect sense when placed against this timeline.
  2) According to this timeline 430 years before the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile falls exactly in 941 BC, the year when Solomon became king. Solomon reigned for 40 years, at the end of which the Division of the kingdom into Judah and Israel happened. Thus, Ezekiel's extra 40 years of sin for the 'house of Judah' exactly fits the 40 years of Solomon's reign, and again is interpreted in a meaningful way by this timeline.
- For some people, God counting Solomon's reign as 40 years of sin may seem unreasonable due to some of the good things he did at the beginning of his rule. However, remember these two things:
  1) God judges Solomon for his foreign wives and their idolatry by bringing two uprisings and permanently dividing the kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 11:1-13)[47] immediately after his death.

[46] Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.131.
[47] When Jesus comes back, however, he will reunite Israel and Judah – see Ezekiel 37:22-25.

2) In addition to his wicked idolatry and foreign wives, Solomon was disobedient – during his reign, Israel never once observed the Sabbath Years or the Years of Jubilee as proscribed in Leviticus 25:1-22.[48] The Sabbath Year and the Year of Jubilee were very important to God, as can be seen by the fact that He tied the length of Israel's (Israel & Judah) exile in Babylon directly to the number of times that they failed to observe those years (2 Chron 36:20-21).

♦ **Not only does this timeline chart Ezekiel's 430 years in a way that is meaningful to us today, but, more importantly, it charts those years in a way that would have been very meaningful to the exiles of Judah living in Babylon.**

1) This prophecy would have been shocking to the people of Judah, who thought of themselves as better than Israel because they still had the Temple and had kept the outward forms of King David's worship and Moses' religion intact. And they certainly would not have counted Solomon's 40-yr reign as 40 years of sin.

2) A close look at the entire Ezekiel passage, however, reveals that God is connecting together both Israel and Judah, and that he considers all of the years for both Judah and Israel to be sin-years. God's message to the exiles from Judah is that both the tribes together are disobedient and that the idolatry and disobedience of one of their hero's – Solomon – is what started it all.

Table 3.G.ii. – The 390 + 40 Years of Sin

	Division of Judah & Israel		Jehoiachin's 5th yr of exile
941 BC		901 BC	512 BC
Solomon rules 40 years	**Sin years for both Judah and Israel 390 years**		
430 total years of sin			

- See next page for a chart plotting Ezekiel's sin years against the chart of the kings . . .

[48] **How do we know that Solomon did not observe the important Sabbath years?**

1. 2 Chronicles 36:20-21 says *He* [Nebuchadnezzar] *took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia,* [21] *to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah* [referring to Jer 25:11]*, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. <u>All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath</u>, to fulfill <u>seventy years</u>.* The Babylonian captivity lasted 70 years because the land of Israel was due 70 Sabbath years which had not been observed.
2. What were the Sabbath Years? Every seventh year God commanded the Israelites not to cultivate their land or to plant and harvest (see Lev 25:1-22). They were to trust God for provision in those years and give the land a Sabbath rest.
3. But neither Israel or Judah observed the Sabbath years; they failed to trust God and they disobeyed His command. So God prescribed 70 years of Babylonian exile – He would remove the Jews from the land and allow the land to lie 'desolate' (see v. 21 above); ie. He would let the land 'catch up' and receive each of the 70 Sabbath years it had been denied.
4. Since the Sabbath year was to be observed every 7 years, that means there was a period of 490 years when the Sabbath Year was not observed.
5. The Babylonian exile ended in 454 BC. 454 BC + 490 years = 944 BC. Solomon began reigning in 941 BC, therefore it was during his reign that the Sabbath Year ceased to be observed.

Table 3.G.iii. Chart of the kings with Ezekiel's 430 years of sin plotted along-side:

Total Time that Jewish Kings ruled Israel (Saul – Zedekiah) = 516 years	40 yrs			1021	40		Saul				
	40 yrs			981	40		David				
	Ezekiel's 430 years of sin for Israel and Judah	40 yrs		941	40	11	Solomon	Ezekiel's 430 years of sin starts. Count all 40 of Solomon's years towards 430.			
				930		29		Solomon completes Temple in 11th yr. Count last 29 yrs towards 407-yr period.			
		Ezekiel's 390 years of sin for the 'house of Israel'		901	17		**KINGDOM SPLITS – Judah**		**Israel**		
							Rehoboam (E)		901-880	22	Jeroboam
				884	3		Abijah (E)				
				881	41		Asa (G)		880-879	2	Nadab
									879-856	24	Baasha
									856-855	2	Elah
									855	7dys	Zimri
									855-844	12	Omri/Tibni
									844-823	22	Ahab
				840	25		Jehoshaphat (G)		824-823	*2	Ahaziah
									823-812	12	Jehoram
				815	*3		Jehoram (E)				
				812	1		Ahaziah (E)				
				811	6		Athaliah (E)		811-784	28	Jehu
				805	*38		Joash (G)		783-767	*17	Jehoahaz
				767	29		Amaziah (G)		769-754	16	Jehoash
									753-713	41	Jeroboam (the 2nd)
				738	11		**NO KING**				
				727	52		Uzziah (G)		688-679	10	Menahem
									678-677	2	Pekahiah
				675	16		Jotham (G)		676-657	20	Pekah
				659	*14		Ahaz (E)		656-649	8	**NO KING**
				645	29		Hezekiah (G)		648-640	9	Hoshea
									640	**Assyrian Captivity**	
				616	55		Manasseh (E/G)				
				561	2		Amon (E)				
				559	31		Josiah (G)				
				528	1		Jehoahaz (E)				
				527	*4		Jehoiakim (E) [J ruled 11yrs until 517 BC–only count 4 up to Exile]				
				524			**Babylonian Exile Begins**				
			Total Yrs:		**407**		**From Temple completion to Exile**				
			12 years		7		*Jehoiakim continues ruling after Exile for 7 yrs. (524-517)*				
				517	0		Jehoiachin (E) becomes king for 3 months – then EXILED (count 5 yrs to 512). Jehoiakim gets credit for 517 (his 11th yr).				
				516	*5		Zedekiah (E) [Z reigned 11 yrs until 506 BC – only count 5 until 512, the 5th year of Jehoiachin's Exile]				
				512			***5th year of Jehoiachin's exile (Ez 1:2) – 430th yr of sin***				
			Total Yrs:		**430**		**From Solomon's reign to 512 BC**				
			6 yrs		6		Zedekiah continues ruling for a total of 11yrs				
				506			**Jerusalem Falls – No more Kings**				
			Total Yrs:		**516**		**Israel has total of 516 king years**				

*This analysis is based on work done by Jonathan Hall in the **Ultimate Bible Timeline**: check it out www.ultimatebibletimeline.com*

H. Dating the Babylonian Exile, the Fall of Jerusalem & Cyrus' Decree to rebuild Jerusalem.

1. **Babylonian Exile: The Babylonian Exile started in 524 BC and ended 70 years later in 454 BC.** Here's how we know these dates:
    a. **Start date – 524 BC:**
        1) Daniel 1:1-4 says: *In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel* [exile begins]*, both of the royal family and of the nobility, youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans*.
            ◊ So the Babylonian captivity, or exile, began in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah.
        2) We know from Scripture that Jehoiakim reigned 11 years, from 527 BC – 517 BC (see Table 3.G.i., above). Therefore, the third year of his reign was in 524 BC.
        3) **Therefore, the Babylonian exile began in 524 BC.**
    b. **End date – 454 BC:**
        1) Scripture is very clear that Judah's exile in Babylon lasted 70 years. The number 70 was no accident; God specifically sent the Jews into exile for exactly 70 years in order to give the land of Israel 'rest' for 70 missed Sabbath years that Israel had failed to observe (2 Chron 36:21). Here are some Scriptures which speak to 70 years of Babylonian exile:
            a) *He* [Nebuchadnezzar] *took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.* **– 2 Chron 36:20-21 (ESV)**
            b) "*Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: Because you* [Judah] *have not obeyed my words, [9] behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the Lord, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. . . . [11] This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. [12] Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the Lord, making the land an everlasting waste.* **– Jer 25:8-9, 11-12 (ESV)**
            c) *"For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place* [The exile will end]. *[11] For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.* **– Jer 29:10-11 (ESV)**
        2) So it is clear, from Scripture, that the Israelite's captivity in Babylon lasted 70 years. Since the 70 years started in 524 BC, subtract 70 from 525 BC to get 455 BC as the last year of the exile. Therefore, Cyrus' decree to send the Jews back to their land, thus ending the Exile (see 2 Chron 36:22-23), happened in 454 BC.
        3) **Therefore, the Babylonian exile went from 524 – 454 BC.**

2. **<u>The Fall of Jerusalem</u>: 18 years after the Babylonian captivity had begun, the Babylonians returned to Judah and burned the city of Jerusalem to the ground, destroying the Temple as well. This was 506 BC.** Here's how we know this date:
    a. After the initial Babylonian conquest of Judah in 524 BC, Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon leaving puppet Jewish kings to rule in his place. King Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar in the 9th year of his reign (2 Ki 24:20), which would have been 508 BC (see Table 3.G.i., above, for how we know the dates of King Zedekiah's rule) and Nebuchadnezzar returned to Jerusalem and laid siege to it (2 Ki 25). The siege lasted just over a 1 year into the 11th year of Zedekiah's reign (2 Ki 25:1-2), at which time the Babylonians broke through and utterly destroyed the city. It was at this time that Solomon's Temple was burned to the ground (2 Ki 25:9-10).
    b. The 11th year of Zedekiah's reign was 506 BC (see Table 3.G.i., above).
    c. **Therefore, the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple occurred in 506 BC.**

3. **<u>Cyrus' decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple</u>:**
    a. 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 records the Persian king Cyrus sending the Jews back to their land to rebuild the Temple in the first year of his reign.
        - This had to have happened 70 years after the Babylonian captivity first started, since God had promised that the exile would last exactly 70 years (see above point).
        - Subtract 70 from 524 BC to get 454 BC.
        - **Therefore, Cyrus' decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple occurred in 454 BC.**

    b. **Objection – "*Cyrus was long dead in 454 BC, everyone knows he ruled from 539 – 530 BC.*"** Secular timelines universally date Cyrus' reign at 539 – 530 BC,[49] 85 years earlier than 454 BC. This creates a significant problem for Bible scholars who believe the Bible but who also believe these secular timelines. Here's why:
        1) The Bible predicts that there would be 483 years between Cyrus and the coming of Jesus:
            a) In Daniel 9:25-26, Daniel predicted that there would be 69 sets of seven years (483 years) from the going out of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the coming of 'the Anointed One' (Jesus).
            b) In addition, the Bible records that Cyrus was the one who decreed the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Isa 44:28; 45:1,13).
                ◊ Therefore, by a) and b), according to the Bible there have to be 483 years between Cyrus and the coming of Jesus [Note: the 'coming' of 'the Anointed One' refers to Jesus' baptism, not His birth, since Daniel's prophecy refers to the start of Jesus' *ministry*, not life – see <u>part 2, Time-span #9 section b.</u> starting on p. 33 for 4 reasons how we know this to be true].
        2) But, as just stated, according to the most widely used secular timelines Cyrus reigned from 539 – 530 BC, which is 560+ years before Jesus' baptism in 30 AD – 76 years more than what Daniel predicted
        3) **Therefore**, if you are a Bible scholar who wants the Bible to be true but are frightened of disagreeing with secular timelines you have a problem, since 1. a), 1. b) & 2) cannot all be right. Instead of throwing out 2) (the secular timelines), however, most Biblical scholars have opted to throw out 1. b) – the fact that Cyrus was the one who decreed the rebuilding of Jerusalem.
    c. That's why most Christian scholars now argue that a later king, Artaxerxes, decreed the rebuilding of Jerusalem, not Cyrus. In response to 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 these scholars point out that the passage only says that Cyrus decreed the rebuilding of the Temple, not the city (never mind that rebuilding the Temple

[49] "**ancient Iran**." <u>Encyclopædia Britannica</u>. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 17 Jun. 2010 <<u>http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/851961/ancient-Iran</u>>.

without rebuilding the city doesn't make sense – how would the Jews be able to rebuild or use the Temple if it was standing in the midst of a huge pile of rubble!).

d. However, the Bible clearly says that Cyrus' rebuilt both the Temple AND Jerusalem. Furthermore, no Scripture can be found where Artaxerxes decreed the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Here are some Scriptures which say that Cyrus is the king who rebuilt the city of Jerusalem (not just the Temple):
   1) "[The LORD] *says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose;' saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' AND of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'*" **– Isa 44:28 (ESV)**
   2) And just in case anyone missed Isaiah 44, God repeated Himself in Isaiah 45 in order to make sure that everyone would know that Cyrus was the one who would rebuild Jerusalem (it was important to God to make it obvious so that we could properly date Daniel's 483-yr prophetic period): *Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus . . . "I have stirred him up in righteousness, and I will make all his ways level; he shall build my city* [Jerusalem] *and set my exiles free, not for price or reward," says the Lord of Hosts*. **– Isa 45:1,13 (ESV)**

e. **Artaxerxes did NOT rebuild Jerusalem.** In contrast to the clear testimony of Scripture that Cyrus rebuilt Jerusalem, below are two different theories, based on 2 different passages of Scripture, used by 2 different groups of scholars, each trying to find biblical support for Artaxerxes, rather than Cyrus, being the king to decree that Jerusalem be rebuilt.
   1) **Artaxerxes' theory 1:** the decree to rebuild Jerusalem happened in 445 BC when Artaxerxes allowed Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem to work on rebuilding the city – found in Nehemiah 2:1-8. Below are some excerpts from the passage:
      ◊ *In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I* [Nehemiah] *took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. [2] And the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart." Then I was very much afraid. . . .[5] And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it." [6] And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), "How long will you be gone, and when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time.* **– Neh 2:1-2, 5-6 (ESV)**
      ◊ ***What's wrong with this theory?*** Daniel's prophecy clearly states that the 483 year period would begin with a decree going out to rebuild Jerusalem. But Nehemiah 2:1-8 records no decree of any kind. All Artaxerxes does in Nehemiah 2:1-8 is give Nehemiah PERMISSION to go back to Jerusalem and continue rebuilding.
   2) **Artaxerxes' theory 2:** the decree to rebuild Jerusalem happened in 458 BC when Artaxerxes decreed that Ezra should restart the Temple sacrifices – found in Ezra 7:11-26. Below are some excerpts from the passage:
      a) *This is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest, the scribe, a man learned in matters of the commandments of the Lord and his statutes for Israel: [12] "Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven. Peace. And now [13] I make a decree that anyone of the people of Israel or their priests or Levites in my kingdom, who freely offers to go to Jerusalem, may go with you. . . .[21] "And I, Artaxerxes the king, make a decree to all the treasurers in the province Beyond the River: Whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, requires of you, let it be done with all diligence, [22] up to 100 talents of silver, 100 cors of wheat, 100 baths of wine, 100 baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much. [23] Whatever is decreed by the God of heaven, let it be done in full for the house of the God of heaven, lest his wrath be against the*

realm of the king and his sons. [24] We also notify you that it shall not be lawful to impose tribute, custom, or toll on anyone of the priests, the Levites, the singers, the doorkeepers, the temple servants, or other servants of this house of God. **– Ezra 7:11-13, 21-24 (ESV)**

b) ***What's wrong with this theory?*** Daniel's prophecy clearly states that the 483 year period would begin with a decree going out to rebuild Jerusalem. Unlike the Nehemiah 2:1-8 theory, at least Ezra records a decree going out (2 in fact) – however, this decree has nothing to do with the rebuilding of Jerusalem, it is merely a decree for Ezra to restart the Temple sacrifices.

♦ **Conclusion:** The biblical record is clear that Cyrus was the king to decree the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Thus the secular timelines have to be wrong when they date his reign as 539 – 530 BC. Is there merit to this conclusion? In fact there is – all secular timelines are based on a king list put together by a famous geographer named Claudius Ptolemy in the 2nd century AD, a list which has a number of proven errors, and which clearly contradicts the Scriptures at several points (not just with Cyrus). For a full description of Ptolemy's king list and problems with the secular timelines see the excellent discussion in Jonathan Hall's Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline, pages 120 – 122 [Hall's work can be purchased online at http://ultimatebibletimeline.com/].

f. **Three additional arguments for Cyrus being the one to decree the rebuilding of Jerusalem (not Artaxerxes), thus initiating Daniel's 490-year prophecy (and thus for a later dating of his reign – 454 BC as opposed to 539 BC):**

1)***The Bible refers to Cyrus' decree far more often than to Artaxerxes.'***

a) The Bible speaks of Cyrus' decree to rebuild Jerusalem and/or the Temple 6 different times, in 3 different books: Isaiah 44:28; Isaiah 45:1,13; 2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-6; Ezra 4:3-5; and Ezra 6:3-5, 14. God even prophesied Cyrus by name before he was born (Isa 44:28).

b) By contrast, the 2 different theories claiming Artaxerxes can only point to one passage each: Neh 2:1-8 or Ezra 7:11-26.

c) Clearly, Cyrus' decree is a more important event in the Bible than either of Artaxerxes' decrees.

2)***If Cyrus' decree is used, then the first 49 years of Daniel's prophecy AND all the events of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther can be meaningfully charted (see Table 3.I.i. below).***

a) Because most scholars reject Cyrus as the initiator of Daniel's 490-yr prophecy (Dan 9:24-27), and also, because they reject the fact that Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes were the same person (see next section for explanation), they cannot chart the events of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther in a meaningful way. Neither can they find the fulfillment of the first 49 years of Daniel's prophecy (Dan 9:25) in Scripture.

b) However, when one accepts that Cyrus was the one to initiate Daniel's 490-yr prophecy, not only can the events of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther be charted meaningfully, but they also fit exactly into the first seven sets of 7 years (49 years) which Daniel predicted (Dan 9:25) it would take for Jerusalem to be rebuilt and repopulated (see Table 3.I.i. below). This astounding symmetry cannot be coincidence, and should not be dismissed.

3)***Jewish timelines also reject the early dating of Cyrus' reign (539 BC) alleged by secular timelines.***

◊ It is interesting that the Jews, who have been studying Daniel's 490-yr prophecy ever since Daniel wrote it, also reject the generally accepted dating of Cyrus' reign (539 BC) as too early.[50] They date Cyrus' reign and decree at 371 BC, 83 years later, even, than this timeline.[51] Though this fact does not prove this timeline's date of 454 BC for Cyrus' decree, it is significant because it shows that there are other experienced scholars of the Old Testament who believe that Cyrus' reign should be dated much later than the 530's BC.

[50] Finegan, Jack – *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* Revised Edition, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. (Peabody, Massachusetts); pg. 195.
[51] Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.142.

I. Dating the events of Ezra, Nehemiah & Esther (+ dating for the Persian king Darius).

Table 3.I.i. **All the main events of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther (plus Haggai & Zechariah) charted together in chronological order[52]**

Years since Cyrus' decree & the end of Babylonian Exile	BC	▼	NAME	Reign yrs YR	MTH	EVENT	PASSAGE
						Note: Darius, Xerxes & Artaxerxes are all the same king	
49 total years: Daniel prophesied that Jerusalem would be rebuilt in the first 49 yrs (Dan 9:25) of the 483 yrs from Cyrus' decree to Jesus baptism(Dan 9:24-27). Amazingly, the events of Ezra, Neh & Esther fit exactly into this 49-yr period!	454	1	Cyrus	1	7	Cyrus' decree to rebuild the Temple	Ezra 1:1-4
			Cyrus	1		Return under Zerubbabel	Ezra 2:1-2
			Cyrus	1		Zerubbabel presents burnt offerings	Ezra 3:6
	453	2	Cyrus	2	2	Temple work begins – foundation laid	Ezra 3:8-10
		2	Cyrus			Opposition to building grows throughout the reign of Cyrus	Ezra 4:5
	439	16	Xerxes (Darius)	1		Neighbors complain, so work stops	Ezra 4:6
	438	17	Darius	2	-	Work stops until Darius' 2nd year	Ezra 4:24
			Darius	2	6	Haggai's first word	Haggai 1:1
			Darius	2	7	Haggai's second word	Haggai 2:1
			Darius	2	8	Zechariah: "Return to the Lord"	Zechariah 1:1
			Darius	2	9	Haggai's third & fourth words	Haggai 2:10 & 20
			Darius	2	11	Zechariah speaks of 70 years of the Lord's anger to this point	Zechariah 1:7, 12
	437	18	Xerxes (Darius)	3		Xerxes banishes Vashti	Esther 1:1-3
	436	19	Darius	4	9	70th year of twice-a-year fasting in months 5 & 7	Zechariah 7:1, 5
	434	21	Darius	6	12	Zerubbabel completes the temple	Ezra 6:15
	433	22	Darius	7	1	Israel celebrates Passover	Ezra 6:19
			Artaxerxes (Darius)	7		Some more Israelites to Jerusalem	Ezra 7:7
			Artaxerxes (Darius)	7	5	Ezra returns to Jerusalem	Ezra 7:8-9
			Artaxerxes (Darius)	7	9	People confess their sins	Ezra 10:9
			Artaxerxes (Darius)	7	10	Ezra deals with foreign wives	Ezra 10:16-17
			Xerxes (Darius)	7	10	Xerxes crowns Esther as queen	Esther 2:16
	428	27	Xerxes (Darius)	12	1	Haman plots to kill all the Jews	Esther 3:7-9
			Xerxes (Darius)	12	1	Edict tells of plan to kill the Jews	Esther 3:12
			Xerxes (Darius)	12	3	New edict that the Jews can defend themselves	Esther 8:9
			Xerxes (Darius)	12	12	Jews plunder their enemies and feast	Esther 9:1-19
	420	35	Artaxerxes (Darius)	20	9	Nehemiah hears of the state of Jerusalem's disrepair and weeps	Nehemiah 1:1
	419	36	Artaxerxes (Darius)	21	1	The king talks to Nehemiah	Nehemiah 2:1[53]
			Artaxerxes (Darius)	21		Nehemiah is appointed governor of Judah and holds this title 12 yrs	Nehemiah 5:14
			Artaxerxes (Darius)	21	6	Nehemiah rebuilds the walls of Jerusalem in 52 days	Nehemiah 6:15
			Artaxerxes (Darius)	21	7	Ezra reads law in square	Neh 7:73b, 8:1-3
			Artaxerxes (Darius)	21	7	People discover that they must celebrate the feast of booths	Neh 7:73b, 8:13-18
	408	47	Artaxerxes (Darius)	32		Nehemiah's 12-yr governship in Jerusalem ends/he goes to Babylon	Neh 13:6
	406	49	Artaxerxes (Darius)	34		Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem and fights against law-breakers?[54]	Neh 13:6b-31

[52] This chart based on a chart by Jonathan Hall – but with a number of revisions. Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.133.

[53] According to Nehemiah, the events of 2:1 and 1:1 happen in the same year, the 20th year of Artaxerxes (Darius). This is deceptive, however, because Nehemiah was using the civil calendar to chart events, instead of the religious calendar which the rest of the Bible is based on. The events of Nehemiah 2:1 occurred in the month of Nisan (our March) which is the first month of the new year on the religious calendar, instituted by God at the Exodus. Hence we chart a new year, 419 BC, and a new reign year (21). However, Nehemiah was reckoning Nisan as part of the same year as the events in Nehemiah chapter 1 since he was operating off of the civil calendar, on which Nisan is the 7th month. See Table 2.A.3. for a comparison of the Jewish religious and civil calendars.

[54] The Bible does not actually tell us the date when the events of Nehemiah 13:6b – 31 occurred. We know that Nehemiah left Jerusalem to see Artaxerxes in Babylon in the 32nd year of his reign (Neh 13:6a). We know, from that same verse, that he stayed there 'some time.' We also know that it was a long journey from Babylon to Jerusalem. So there has to be a year or two between 13:6a and

- **Summary of this section:**
  1. Dating the events of the books of Ezra, Nehemiah & Esther: why there is so much disagreement and confusion about these books.
  2. Proof that Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes are all the same person/king.
  3. How we know (with confidence) the start date of King Darius' reign over Persia (439 BC).

- **In detail:**
  1. **Dating the events of the books of Ezra, Nehemiah & Esther: *why there is so much disagreement and confusion about these books*.**
     - ◊ There is much confusion and disagreement among scholars as to the proper dating of the events in the books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. This confusion is due almost entirely to two issues:
     - ◊ The incorrect dating of Cyrus (because of Ptolemy's faulty King list) at 539 – 530 BC (see the discussion above in part 3, section F.3. concerning the dating of Cyrus' decree to rebuild Jerusalem);
     - ◊ The mistaken assumption (almost universally held among scholars) that Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes were 3 separate kings, instead of the same person.
     - ◊ Since the Cyrus issue was dealt with in the previous section, it will not be discussed again here. However, when Cyrus' decree is dated at 454 BC, and Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes are recognized as being the same person, all of the events of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther fall into place neatly (see Table 3.G.i. above). Not only do they fit together neatly with each other, but they also fit snugly into place with Daniel's famous 'seventy sets of seven' prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27.
     - ◊ Daniel divided up his seventy sets of seven into 3 sections: (1) The first seven sets of seven years (49 yrs), starting with Cyrus' decree, would see Jerusalem rebuilt (Dan 9:25); (2) the next set of 62 sets of seven years (434 yrs) would be a time of trial for the Jews in their land leading up to the coming of Jesus ('the Anointed One' – Dan 9:25-26); (3) the final set of 7 years has not happened yet, it refers to the final 7 years of world history commonly known as the Tribulation.
     - ◊ When Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes are recognized as being the same person the events of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther all fall exactly into the 49 year period Daniel predicted of rebuilding and re-populating Jerusalem (see Table 3.G.i. above). This symmetry is a very convincing argument for the accuracy of this timeline, and the dating of both Cyrus and Darius. Symmetry alone, however, is not enough of a proof. The next point discusses 4 reasons why Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes must all be the same person.

  2. **Proof that Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes are all the same person/king.**
     - ◊ 4 proofs that this must be so:
       a. **Proof #1 – Ezra 4.** Although Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther use all three names, Ezra 4:4-24 clearly ties all three together as being different titles referring to the same person:
          - ♦ *Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah and made them afraid to build [5] and bribed counselors against them to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of **Darius** king of Persia. [6] And in the reign of **Ahasuerus** [Xerxes], in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. [7] In the days of **Artaxerxes**, Bishlam and Mithredath and Tabeel and the rest of their associates wrote to **Artaxerxes** king of Persia. The letter was*

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the rest of the chapter. We assume the rest of the chapter to happen 2 years later (Darius' 34th year) since that would be exactly 49 years since Cyrus' decree to rebuild Jerusalem, and Daniel's prophecy said there would be 49 years from the going out of the decree to the rebuilding of the city being finished (Dan 9:25). Since Nehemiah records the story of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, we assume the book to record events up to the 49th year. Thus, these events being the last recorded events in the book, we assume them to have occurred in the 49th year from Cyrus' decree.

written in Aramaic and translated. . . .

*[23] Then, when the copy of **King Artaxerxes**' letter was read before Rehum and Shimshai the scribe and their associates, they went in haste to the Jews at Jerusalem and by force and power made them cease. [24] Then the work on the house of God that is in Jerusalem stopped, and it ceased until the second year of the reign of **Darius** king of Persia.* **– Ezra 4:4-7, 23-24 (ESV)**

- Verse 24 says that 'Then the work stopped . . . until the 2nd year of Darius.' The word 'then' refers back to the rest of the events recorded in the first part of the chapter – the letter writing campaign of Bishlam, Mithredath and Tabeel during the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes. So, assuming as scholars almost universally do, that Xerxes, Artaxerxes and Darius are 3 separate kings; verse 24 could be summed up by saying, "After Bishlam, Mithredath and Tabeel wrote letters to Xerxes and Artaxerxes, the Jews were forced to stop working on the Temple until the 2nd year of Darius."
  1) **Problem!** But wait a minute – according to all of the timelines put forth by secular historians (and accepted by most Christian scholars) Xerxes and Artaxerxes reigned *AFTER* Darius. So how could Bishlam, Mithredath and Tabeel have written a letter(s) to Xerxes and Artaxerxes, and stopped work on the Temple until the 2nd year of Darius, who preceded them as king? It's impossible! The only way this passage makes any sense is if Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes are the same person.
  2) This point is reinforced by the fact that the whole passage is book-ended by the use of the name 'Darius.' In verse 4, the story starts by saying that the people of the land frustrated the Jews from Cyrus up to Darius. Then the story switches titles and talks of Xerxes and Artaxerxes, before finishing with 'until the 2nd year of Darius.' Clearly this whole story is about the events of one king's reign – king Darius.
  3) *Why does the Bible use 3 different names for the same person?* Throughout history rulers have often held several different titles to honor various aspects of their responsibilities and their accomplishments. Even today, for example, Americans do the same with their President: he is called 'President,' 'Commander in Chief' and his opinions are often referred to in the popular media as the opinions of the 'White House.'

b. **Proof #2 – Ezra 6:15***: And the elders of the Jews built and prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. They finished their building by decree of the God of Israel and by decree of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes king of Persia; [15] and this house was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.* **– Ezra 6:14-15 (ESV)**

- **[Similar to proof #1.]** Secular historians and Christian commentators almost universally believe that Darius and Artaxerxes were two separate people. And all of those who believe this will say assuredly that Artaxerxes reigned after Xerxes who reigned after Darius.
- **Problem:** This passage states that the Jews completed the Temple during the reigns of Artaxerxes and Darius . . . in the 6th year of Darius. Except, wait: if Artaxerxes was a different king and he reigned after Darius, how could it have been completed during his reign (v. 14) if it was completed before his reign even started, during the reign of his *predecessor* Darius (v. 15)? The only way this passage works is if Artaxerxes and Darius are the same person!

c. **Proof #3 – Daniel 11:1-4 lists 4 rulers after Cyrus, not 9:** In Daniel 11 God tells Daniel that four Persian kings will reign after Cyrus down to the time when Alexander the Great conquers Persia.

- *"And as for me* [the angel speaking to Daniel]*, in the first year of Darius the Mede* [Do not confuse Darius the Mede with Darius king of Persia[55]] *. . . Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a fourth shall*

[55] Geisler, Norman, *When Critics Ask*: A popular handbook of Bible Difficulties; (Baker Books, Grand Rapids MI, 1992), p. 295. Darius the Mede (the Darius who appears repeatedly in the book of Daniel) is a totally different person from Darius the king of Persia (the Darius who appears in Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai and Zechariah – also known as Xerxes and Artaxerxes). Darius the king of Persia is the

be far richer than all of them. And when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece. [3] *Then a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion and do as he wills.* [4] *And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the authority with which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these.* **– Dan 11:1-4 (ESV)**

- The first year that Darius the Mede became governor over the province of Babylonia (see footnote below) was the third year of Cyrus the Great's rule over the Persian empire (see Dan 10:1). So in the third year of Cyrus, the angel told Daniel that 4 Persian kings would arise after Cyrus, before Alexander the Great would arise and conquer everything (all conservative Bible scholars agree that the 'mighty king' from Greece was a prophecy of Alexander the Great).
- **Problem:** Anyone who believes that Darius, Artaxerxes and Xerxes were 3 different kings ends up with more than 4 rulers between Cyrus and Alexander. Either Daniel got it wrong, or the current timelines are wrong. Here is the list currently accepted by most scholars (including, unwittingly, the Christian scholars who agree with the generally accepted secular timeline) of Persian kings from Cyrus to Alexander the Great:[56]

  Start: Cyrus

  1) Cambyses;
  2) Darius I (the Darius of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther)
  3) Xerxes I
  4) Artaxerxes I
  5) Xerxes II
  6) Darius II Ochus
  7) Artaxerxes II
  8) Artaxerxes III
  9) Darius III

  End: Alexander the Great

- Obviously, understanding that Darius I, Xerxes I and Artaxerxes I are all one person still leaves you with 7 kings, not four, between Cyrus and Alexander the Great, but it's a step in the right direction. Is it possible that Darius II, Xerxes II and Artaxerxes II are all the same person too? And what about Artaxerxes III and Darius III? The Bible doesn't explicitly speak about those kings so we can't comment authoritatively about them. However, there is clearly a certain symmetry at work here. If Darius II, Xerxes II and Artaxerxes II are all one person, and if Artaxerxes III and Darius III are one person, then Daniel's prophecy of 4 kings between Cyrus and Alexander works out perfectly:

  Start: Cyrus

  1) Cambyses;
  2) Darius I (also Xerxes I & Artaxerxes I);
  3) Darius II (also Xerxes II & Artaxerxes II);
  4) Darius III (also Artaxerxes III);

  End: Alexander the Great

famous Darius of history, who ruled shortly after Cyrus the Great. Darius the Mede never ruled Persia; he was a subordinate to Cyrus the Great who governed the province of Babylonia, within the Persian Empire (see Dan 9:1).

[56] "**ancient Iran**." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 17 Jun. 2010 <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/851961/ancient-Iran>.

d. **Proof #4: Mordecai's age as 89 is much more reasonable than 127, at the time when Haman tries to kill the Jews.**

- If Darius and Xerxes and Artaxerxes are different kings, then Mordecai would have had to have been 127+ at the time when Haman tries to kill the Jews (Esther 3:7 – 9:19) – at best this is a very unlikely number, at worst it is impossible.
- But if Darius, Xerxes and Artaxerxes are the same person, then Mordecai is 89 at the time when Haman tries to kill the Jews – a much more reasonable number.
- Here's how we figure those numbers:
  1) Esther 2:5-7 states that Mordecai is exiled to Babylon with Jeconiah (another form of Jehoiachin), which is 517 BC (see Table 3.G.i.), the 8th year of Babylonian captivity. So we know that Mordecai was alive already in 517 BC (he was probably just a baby).
  2) The story of Haman trying to kill all the Jews (Esther 3:7 – 9:19) happened in Xerxes' 12th year (Esther 3:7).
- ***Key Question: How long after 517 BC was Xerxes' 12th year?*** This will tell us how old – at the very least – Mordecai was when Haman tried to kill the Jews. TWO OPTIONS:

1) **Option #1: This Bible Timeline (Xerxes and Darius are the same person):**

Haman

Yr 8: Mordecai's Birth		**Mordecai is 89**
Babylonian Captivity	Cyrus - Cambyses[57]	Darius/Xerxes (the same person)
70 years	15 years	Year 12

◊ If Darius and Xerxes are the same person then Mordecai is 89 when Haman tries to kill the Jews.

2) **Option #2: Most secular& Christian timelines (assume that Xerxes and Darius are DIFFERENT people/kings):**

Haman

Yr. 8: Mordecai's Birth				**Mordecai is 127**
Babylonian Captivity	Cyrus	Cambyses	Darius	Xerxes
70 years	9 years	8 years	36 years	Year 12

◊ Most secular timelines chart the following reign years for the kings between Cyrus and Xerxes:[58] Cyrus – 9 yrs; Cambyses – 8 yrs; Darius – 36 yrs;

◊ **Conclusion:** It is not very likely that Mordecai was 127 when Haman tried to kill the Jews. Thus, it is clear that Darius and Xerxes must have been the same person/king, as Ezra 4 makes clear.

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[57] **How do we know the combined reigns of Cyrus & Cambyses was 15 years?** The Bible nowhere mentions Cambyses and the Bible nowhere states the length of Cyrus' reign. We simply assume that Cambyses was an actual king, as scholars mostly agree. The only thing that matters here though, is, *What was the gap between Cyrus first year (the year the Babylonian captivity ended) and the start of Darius' reign*? We calculate 15 years based on what we know about Darius' reign from Zechariah. Zechariah mentions 2 different 70-yr time periods, relating each of them to a specific year in Darius' reign.

1. The first 70-yr time-span refers to 70 years of God's anger against Jerusalem, and starts the year the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem (507 BC; we know the siege started in 507 BC because Jerusalem fell in 506 BC, and the siege lasted a year – see Jer 52:4-5), and ends in the 2nd year of king Darius' reign (Zech 1:7, 12). Since these 70 years of anger include 507 BC, subtract 70 from 508 BC to get 438 BC as the 2nd year of Darius' reign. Therefore, Darius began his reign in 439 BC.
   - The second 70-yr time-span in Zechariah confirms the above dating of Darius' reign. In Zech 7:1-5, Zechariah spoke of 70 years during which the Israelites observed 4 one-day fasts, each year; they began this custom the year after Jerusalem fell (505 BC, since Jerusalem fell in 506 BC), and the 70th year occurred in the 4th year of Darius' reign (Zech 7:1-5). Since 70 years includes 505 BC, subtract 70 from 506 BC to get 436 BC as the 4th year of Darius' reign, which matches up perfectly with what we found with the first 70-yr time span above, that Darius' 2nd year was 438 BC. Thus, we can be confident from Scripture that Darius began his reign in 439 BC.
2. Since Darius began his reign in 439 BC, and the Babylonian exile ended in 454 BC (see explanation in Part 2, Time-span #8), subtract 454 BC – 439 BC to get 15 years from the end of the Babylonian Exile to Darius. Thus, the total years of the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses (or whatever combination of kings ruled after Cyrus, before Darius) was 15 years.

[58] "**ancient Iran**." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 17 Jun. 2010 <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/851961/ancient-Iran>.

3. **How we know (with confidence) the start date of King Darius' reign over Persia (439 BC):**
   - ◊ The book of Zechariah gives us everything we need for dating the start of king Darius' reign. In the book, Zechariah mentions 2 different 70-yr time periods, relating each of them to a specific year in Darius' reign.
     a. The first 70-yr time-span refers to 70 years of God's anger against Jerusalem, and starts the year the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem (507 BC; we know the siege started in 507 BC because Jerusalem fell in 506 BC, and the siege lasted a year – see Jer 52:4-5), and ends in the 2nd year of king Darius' reign (Zech 1:7, 12). Since these 70 years of anger include 507 BC, subtract 70 from 508 BC to get 438 BC as the 2nd year of Darius' reign. Therefore, Darius began his reign in 439 BC.
     b. The second 70-yr time-span in Zechariah confirms the above dating of Darius' reign. In Zech 7:1-5, Zechariah spoke of 70 years during which the Israelites observed 4 one-day fasts, each year; they began this custom the year after Jerusalem fell (505 BC, since Jerusalem fell in 506 BC), and the 70th year occurred in the 4th year of Darius' reign (Zech 7:1-5). Since 70 years includes 505 BC, subtract 70 from 506 BC to get 436 BC as the 4th year of Darius' reign, which matches up perfectly with what we found with the first 70-yr time span above, that Darius' 2nd year was 438 BC. Thus, we can be confident from Scripture that Darius began his reign in 439 BC.
   - ◊ The Bible does not tell us how long Darius reigned in Persia, but it had to have been at least 32 years, since Nehemiah talks about returning to the king in the 32nd year of his reign (Neh 13:6). Most historians agree that Darius reigned for 36 years.[59]

[59] Ibid.

J. Dating the Prophets.

- When God tracks history he uses kings, not prophets or priests. For this reason the Bible has a wealth of information about the birth dates, death dates and ruling dates for each of the kings – but almost no such dating information for the prophets. Of the prophets, the Bible only gives birth and/or death years for Moses and Ezekiel.
- That said, there are enough references to kings and important events in the writings of the prophets to date most of them with a reasonable level of precision (see next page for chart).

Table 3.J.i.	Dating the Prophets (in roughly chronological order)					
	Prophet	**Place**	**During the reign(s) of:**	**Scripture References for dating**	**Dates**	
1.	Elijah	Israel	Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram	Elijah & Ahab: 1Ki. 17-19; Elijah & Ahaziah – Jehoram: 2Ki. 1:17-18.	Elijah's ministry stretched over 4 yrs: **826-823 BC.**	Contemporaries
2.	Elisha	Israel	Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash	1Ki. 19:16-21 – Elisha's start in ministry, during Ahab's reign; 2Ki. 13:10-19 – the end of Elisha's life, under Jehoash.	Elisha ministered much longer than Elijah, 53+ yrs. **823–765? BC**	
3.	Jonah	Israel	Before Jeroboam II's reign.	2Ki. 14:25 – Jeroboam II (753-713) recovered some land as prophesied by Jonah.	**Before 753 BC**	
4.	Amos	Israel	During Jeroboam II of Israel & Uzziah of Judah	Amos 1:1. Jeroboam II reigned 753–713 BC; Uzziah reigned 727 – 676 BC. Amos wrote sometime when their reigns overlapped.	Amos wrote sometime when U & J's reigns overlapped **727 – 713 BC.**	
5.	Hosea	Judah	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz & Hezekiah	Hos 1:1.	Hosea ministered across 4 kings whose reign years stretched: **727 – 617 BC.**	Contemporaries
6.	Isaiah	Judah	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz & Hezekiah (Isa 1:1)	Isa 1:1. Isaiah was called in the year that Uzziah died (676 BC, see Isa 6:1; and he ministered until at least Hezekiah's 14th year (2 Ki. 20:1-6).	Isaiah's ministered from 676 BC to somewhere between **632 – 617 BC.** **676 ~ 617 BC**	
7.	Micah	Judah	Jotham, Ahaz & Hezekiah	Mic 1:1.	Micah ministered across 3 kings whose reign years stretched: **675 – 617 BC.**	
8.	Zephaniah	Judah	Josiah (some overlap w Jeremiah)	Zeph 1:1	Josiah's reign was **559 – 529 BC**	
9.	Jeremiah	Judah – before and during the Babylonian Exile.	Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim & Zedekiah (Jer 1:1)	Jer 1:1; 25:1-3. Jeremiah's first 23 years of ministry stretched from Josiah's 13th yr (547 BC) to 524 BC. His ministry continued past the fall of Jerusalem (506 BC, see Jer 39) and possibly to the 37th yr of Jehoiachin's exile (480 BC, see Jer 52:31).	**547 ~ 480ish? BC (at least til' 506 BC)**	Contemporaries – Babylonian Exile
10.	Nahum	Wrote prophesy against Ninevah	**?**	Na 1:1. Nahum prophesied the downfall of Assyria, which had exiled the 10 tribes of Israel in 640 BC. Babylon conquered Assyria shortly before conquering Judah in 524 BC.	**528 BC?**	
11.	Habakkuk	Judah	Just before the Babylonian exile	Habakkuk prophesied of the impending Babylonian exile, probably just before it happened.	**Late 530s BC?**	
12.	Daniel	Babylon	During reigns of Babylonians and Persians	Daniel's ministry starts in the first year of the Babylonian Exile (Dan 1:1-7) which is 524 BC and extends past the fall of the Babylonian empire into the reign of the Persians.	Daniel's ministry lasted over 70 yrs. **524 – 450ish? BC**	
13.	Ezekiel	Babylon	During Babylonian exile	Ezekiel's ministry starts in 512 BC, the 5th yr of Jehoiachin's exile (Ez 1:1-3 – see Table 3.E.iii. above). His last prophecy was given in 492 BC, 14 yrs after Jerusalem was burned (Ez 40:1 – see Table 3.E.iii. above).	**512 – 492 BC**	

*This analysis is based on work done by Jonathan Hall in the **Ultimate Bible Timeline**: check it out www.ultimatebibletimeline.com*

14.	Haggai	Judah	After Babylonian exile	Hag. 1:1. All of Haggai's prophetic writings happened in the 2nd year of Darius (438 BC[60]) – see Hag 1:1; 2:1; 2:10 & 14. The main thrust of Haggai's ministry (along with Zechariah) was to encourage the Jews, who were discouraged, to finish re-building the Temple (which had been destroyed under the Babylonians) – see Ez 6:14.	**438 BC** (date of writing – his ministry lasted longer)	Contemporaries – Post-exilic prophets
15.	Zechariah	Judah	After Babylonian exile	Zech 1:1; 7:1. Zechariah's writings happened in the 2nd and 4th years of Darius' reign. Zechariah and Haggai worked together as prophets to encourage the Jewish returnees from Babylon to finish the job they had started and complete the Temple (Ez 6:14).	**438 – 436 BC** (date of writing – his ministry lasted longer)	
16.	Ezra	Judah	After Babylonian exile	Ezra 7:8-9. Ezra returned to Jerusalem from Babylon in the 7th yr of Artaxerxes (a.k.a. Darius) – see Ez 7:8-9 – which would have been 433 BC. In Nehemiah 8 – 9 we find Ezra ministering to the people in the 21st year of Artaxerxes (a.k.a. Darius) – see Neh 2:1 – which would have been 419 BC.	**433 – 419 BC**	
17.	Malachi	Judah	After Babylonian exile	The book of Malachi gives no dating information. However, Malachi has always been placed last in the Minor Prophets, and there is an approximate chronological order to the 15 prophetic books. The Talmud regularly classes Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi together as the first 3 post-exilic prophet.61	**420s BC?**	
18.	Obadiah	Wrote prophesy against Edom	**?**	The book of Obadiah gives no dating information. It consists of one lengthy prophecy against Esau and all of his descendents – that they will be permanently destroyed. Its order in the Bible seems to suggest that it was written around the time of Amos and Jonah.62	**?** (Possibly mid-700's – around Jonah, Amos)	
19.	Joel	Judah	**?**	The book of Joel gives no dating information. Certain factors seem to suggest the mid 700's – but it's not certain.63	**?** (Possibly mid-700's – around Jonah, Amos and Hosea)	

[60] **How we know the date that the Persian king Darius' began to reign:**

- The book of Zechariah gives us everything we need for dating the start of king Darius' reign. In the book, Zechariah mentions 2 different 70-yr time periods, relating each of them to a specific year in Darius' reign.
  1. The first 70-yr time-span refers to 70 years of God's anger against Jerusalem, and starts the year the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem (507 BC; we know the siege started in 507 BC because Jerusalem fell in 506 BC, and the siege lasted a year – see Jer 52:4-5), and ends in the 2nd year of king Darius' reign (Zech 1:7, 12). Since these 70 years of anger include 507 BC, subtract 70 from 508 BC to get 438 BC as the 2nd year of Darius' reign. Therefore, Darius began his reign in 439 BC.
  2. The second 70-yr time-span in Zechariah confirms the above dating of Darius' reign. In Zech 7:1-5, Zechariah spoke of 70 years during which the Israelites observed 4 one-day fasts, each year; they began this custom the year after Jerusalem fell (505 BC, since Jerusalem fell in 506 BC), and the 70th year occurred in the 4th year of Darius' reign (Zech 7:1-5). Since 70 years includes 505 BC, subtract 70 from 506 BC to get 436 BC as the 4th year of Darius' reign, which matches up perfectly with what we found with the first 70-yr time span above, that Darius' 2nd year was 438 BC. Thus, we can be confident from Scripture that Darius began his reign in 439 BC.

[61] Patterson, Richard D.: *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, JOEL (Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1985), p.701.

[62] The 15 prophetic books (12 minor, 3 major) are basically arranged in chronological order – see ibid., p. 701

[63] ibid, p.231.

K. Dating Job.[64]

- The Bible doesn't give us any specific dating information with regards to Job, so it is impossible to determine exactly when he lived with 100% confidence.
- One possible way, however, to determine the approximate date for Job is to determine the genealogy of his four friends. This approach suggests that Job lives around the time of Joseph. The names of Jobs' friends are Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite, and Elihu, son of Barakel the Buzite (Job 2:11 & 32:2). To properly search for their forefathers, realize that the ending of 'ite' is simply added to the root word. Therefore, the names to look for are Teman, Shuh (in this case Shuah), Naamath and Buz.
  1. **Zophar the Naamathite:** Zophar is a descendent of Naamath. The only reference to a Naamath is as Tubal-Cain's sister (Gen 4:22). This is a pre-Flood person and is not helpful in dating Job.
  2. **Elihu, son of Barakel the Buzite:** Elihu is a descendent of Buz. Buz is the second son of Nahor, Abraham's brother (Gen 22:21), and therefore, is a contemporary of Abraham.
     - ◊ This means that Job has to be dated sometime <u>after</u> the time of Abraham (Abraham lived 1923–1748 BC).
  3. **Bildad the Shuhite:** Bildad is a descendent of Shuah. After Sarah dies, Abraham marries Keturah and begets Shuah (Gen 25:2). Shuah is Keturah's 6th son. Shuah's birth, therefore, takes place around the time that Jacob and Esau are born (1763 BC).
     - ◊ This means that Job has to be dated some years <u>after</u> the birth of Jacob and Esau (1763 BC).
     - ◊ The fact that both Bildad and Elihu trace their geneology to men (Buz and Shuah) who both lived in the same time period (around the time of Abraham) confirms that we are on the right track with this analysis.
  4. **Eliphaz the Temanite:** The genealogy of Eliphaz gives us the most specific information for dating Job:
     a. Esau begets Teman's *father* Eliphaz (the original Eliphaz, not Job's friend) (Gen 36:4, 10) sometime after he is 40 (Gen 26:34) which he would have been in 1723 BC.
     b. Eliphaz's oldest son is Teman (Gen 36:11).
     c. Eliphaz, the friend of Job (descendent of the original Eliphaz), is a Temanite and so he is at least a descendent of Teman.
     d. Most conservative scholars consider Job to be ancient; to have lived before the time of the Exodus, long before the period of the Judges and, even later, the Israelite kings. Therefore, the most conservative estimate is that Eliphaz was a son (not a grandson, great-grandson or further) of Teman.
     e. If we <u>assume</u> 2 things:
        1) That each generation before Eliphaz produced a new generation every 40 years (an accepted average number); and,
        2) That Eliphaz is 40 years old when he talks to Job, then the year is 1603 BC (1723 BC – 120 years = 1603 BC).
        - ♦ The chart would look like this:

Abraham	**1923 birth**
Isaac	**1823 birth**
Esau	**1763 birth**
Eliphaz	**1723 birth?**
Teman	**1683 birth?**
Eliphaz at birth	**1643 birth?**
Eliphaz at 40 yrs old	**1603 at Job?**

     - ◊ Since Joseph is reigning as second in command in Egypt in 1603, then Job lives around the time of Joseph.

[64] This section taken, with some minor revisions, from: Hall, Jonathan; *The Ultimate Comprehensive Bible Timeline* (2008), p.35.

L. Dating Jesus' life.

- [Note: fascinating discussion of the dating of Jesus life and a detailed chart of his ministry (essentially detailing all the events of the Gospels) see Jonathan Hall's Ultimate Bible Timeline pages 117-118 – www.ultimate bibletimeline.com.]
- For the purposes of this timeline there are 3 key events from Jesus life to cover: His birth, His baptism and His death (This timeline does not discuss the 3 events in that order since important information about the dating of Jesus' birth is gleaned from the dating of His baptism).
  1. **Jesus' Baptism:** Jesus was baptized in 30 AD. Jesus' baptism is the only dated event in the entire New Testament. Luke 3:1 states 'In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar' that John the Baptist began baptizing. Shortly thereafter (an unspecified amount of time, but no more than a few months) he baptized Jesus. It is a well-established fact that Tiberius reigned in Rome from 14 – 37 AD (see Encyclopedia Britannica or any other reference tool). Therefore the 15th year of his reign happened in 29 AD, and Jesus was baptized either in 29 AD or a few months later in 30 AD.
     - ◊ We can be confident, though, that the baptism happened in 30 AD (not 29 AD). Here's how we put the puzzle together:
       a. We know that Jesus was 30 years old when He started His ministry (Luke 3:23 – the only place in the entire New Testament where Jesus' age, as an adult, is given).
       b. We also know that Jesus started His ministry in the same year that He was baptized.[65]
       c. **Therefore Jesus was 30 years old when He got baptized.**

  2. **Jesus' Birth:** Jesus was born in 1 BC. How do we know that Jesus was born in 1 BC? [Note: Various scholars dispute this date, putting it at 2, 3 or even 4 BC – but whatever you do with this dating it would only shift the timeline by at most 3 years anyway.]
     a. Firstly, 1 BC has always been the most widely accepted date – that's how our dating system came to be dated around Jesus, with the divisions AD and BC (1 BC being the change-over year, since there was no year '0' AD).
     b. Secondly, if the 15th year of Tiberius was 29 AD, as scholars almost universally agree, then the only dating of Jesus' birth that could possibly be correct is 1 BC. If He was born in 2, 3 or 4 BC then He would have been older than 30 in the 15th year of Tiberius, which contradicts Luke 3:23 (see above point).
        - ♦ There are only 3 options at this point:
          1) That the Bible is wrong – Jesus wasn't 30 years old when He started His ministry (He was older, because He was born before 1 BC);
          2) That the scholars who say the 15th year of Tiberius happened in 29 AD are wrong (it had to have happened earlier than 29 AD);
          3) That the scholars who say Jesus was born earlier than 1 BC (in 2, 3 or 4 BC) are wrong.
        - ♦ We know the Bible can't be wrong, so that leaves options b & c. And here's the thing – there is WAY more evidence for the 15th year of Tiberius' reign being dated as 29 AD than there is evidence that Jesus was born earlier than 1 BC. **Therefore we take Jesus' birth to be 1 BC, as has been generally accepted for more than 2000 years.**

  3. **Jesus' Death:** Jesus died in 33 AD. The Bible does not date Jesus' death, though Scholars commonly date it in and around 33 AD. For a comprehensive outline of Jesus life see Hall's Ultimate Bible Timeline.

[65] **How do we know that Jesus started His ministry in the same year that He was baptized?** Immediately after His baptism Jesus was led into the desert to be tempted for 40 days (Matt 3:13-4:1, Lk 4:1). At the end of His 40 days in the desert Jesus began His ministry (Lk 4:14). Therefore Jesus began His ministry 40 days (or so) after His baptism – which would place it in the same year as His baptism.