

“...AT THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES THAT EVERY WORD MAY BE ESTABLISHED...”

Duet. 17:6, Matt. 18:16, II Cor. 13:1

“AND I WILL GIVE POWER UNTO MY TWO WITNESSES...”

REV. 11:3

1. **PREMISE:** In our study of chronology and /or time prophesies, the order of importance is:

First – having two or three direct Bible statements or calculations.

Second – possible Biblical confirmations, direct or indirect.

Third – sources other than scripture.

2. THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES.

A. Acts 13:17-21 King James Version “The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they desired a king and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe Benjamin by the space of forty years.”

Observations:

“Our fathers” would certainly include Abraham the “our father”(Romans 4:1), as well as Isaac and Jacob.

Paul states “about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness” We know from the scriptural account that it was exactly 40 years.

“He divided their land to them by lot”. This followed the 40 years of the Wilderness wandering (6 years).

“And AFTER THAT he gave unto them judges about the space of 450 years, until Samuel the prophet”

“Until Samuel” means inclusive of Samuel, scripture states that Samuel was a judge I Samuel 7:15.

“And AFTERWARD they desired a king, and God gave unto them Saul....by the space of 40 years”.

The King James rendering is supported by these translations: The Diaglott by Benjamin Wilson (both Dr. J.J. Griesbach and Wilson), Young’s Literal Translation, The Syriac, The N.T. According To The Eastern Texts by George Lamsa, The N.T. A New Translation From the Original Greek by Olaf M. Norlie PhD., STD, Litt.D., The Holy Scriptures A New Translation From Original Languages by J.N. Darby, The N.T. by Fernand Faivre, The Holy Name Bible by A.B. Traina, A Literal Translation of the Bible by Jay P. Green and The Holy Bible In Modern English by Ferrar Fenton.

Now it is proper to bring out that the three oldest manuscripts (Sinaiticus, Vatican 1209 and Alexandrian), offer a different rendering, which is sometimes read -

“The God of this people Israel, chose our fathers, and the people he exalted, by their sojourn in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm brought he them out of it, and for the time of about forty years he bare with their manners in the desert; and overthrowing seven nations in the land of Canaan, gave them their land as an inheritance, about 450 years. And after these things he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.” The Emphasized Bible by Rotherham.

This translation seems to put the 450 year period before the judges. However, it has serious flaws.

First, “our fathers” would rightly include Abraham, and hence would be longer than 450 years.

Secondly, the 40 years of wandering would be included in the 450 years mentioned after it. This is out of sync with Paul’s chronological presentation: 40 years Wilderness wandering, 450 years for the judges, including Samuel, and 40 years for the first King, Saul.

Thirdly, there are a number of very good translations that try to follow these three oldest manuscripts, but render it thus:

“And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land for an inheritance, for about 450 years. Also after these things he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet.” RVIC 2000 by Br. James Parkinson.

Also similarly the Revised Standard Version, The American Standard 1901.

This presents the obvious problem that the 450 years would follow AFTER they entered and divided the land, far, too long a period.

Ferrar Fenton’s translation tries to incorporate both the three oldest manuscripts rendering with what he thinks the scriptures are trying to relate:

“He had conquered seven nations in the land of Canaan, He entrusted them with the possession of their country for about 450 years, and, contemporary with these events, He gave judges until the end of Samuel the prophet.”

Our Greek text/language authority of choice is found in “Alford’s Greek Testament, An Exegetical And Critical Commentary”, by Henry Alford. This reference work was the first choice of the late Br. David Jambor, after the Greek texts themselves. Alford writes (in part), the following:

“Treating the reading of ABCX (this X represents the Hebrew letter ALEPH which represents the Sinaiticus mss.), (see var. read.) as an attempt at correcting the difficult chronology of our verse, and taking the words as they stand, *no other sense* can be given to them, than that the time of the judges lasted 450 years... It seems then that Paul followed a chronology current among the Jews, and agreeing with the book of Judges itself (the spaces of time in which, added together = exactly 450), and that adopted by Josephus...”

B. From the book of Judges we can determine a 450 year period:

Judges 11:26: “...300 years....” In context this is being related in Jephthah’s time. It is counting from when Israel entered the land of Canaan and includes the six year division of the land under Joshua and the elders that followed, and all the previous judges up to Jephthah. After this 300 year period we have the following judges:

6 years – Judges 12:7, Jephthah.

7 years – Judges 12:8,9, Ibzan.

10 years – Judges 12:10, 11, Elon.

8 years – Judges 12:12-15, Abdon.

40 years – Judges 13:1, Philistine Oppression (including last 20 years of Samson).

40 years – I Samuel 4:12-18, Eli.

*45 years – I Samuel 8:1-5.

Total = 156 years of judges after the 300 year period.

Grand total = 456 years, from which we subtract the first 6 years of dividing the land = 450 years for the period of the judges.

*Samuel's period of judgeship is partially deduced, we know from I Samuel 7:2 that the ark was in Kirjath-jearim twenty years, so Samuel's period has to be substantially longer as found in the Bible narrative.

Thus we have our two witnesses.

C. I Kings 6:1; "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD".

The time periods (leaving out the judges), would be:

46 For the Exodus and division of the land.

40 for King Saul.

40 For King David.

4 for King Solomon

Added together this = 130 years. Subtract this from the 480 years = 350 years for the judges, in direct conflict with the two forgoing scriptural witnesses, being 100 years too short.

Following are some possible explanations for the discrepancy:

It is simply the equivalent of a typo. It should be "five hundred and eightieth year". This is not unlike other typos in Kings and Chronicles i.e. II Kings 24:8 and II Chronicles 36:9, where Jehoiachin is stated to be 18 years old when he began to reign in Kings and only 8 years old in Chronicles.

It may be a corrupted text. It does not appear to be quoted by any writers until Eusebius in the Fourth Century. Earlier writers, including Origen and Josephus, when writing on this subject do not refer to it or to a 480 year period.

A copyist's marginal note written with numbers, might have been inadvertently incorporated by latter transcribers with the Hebrew number 4 DALETH, looking very much like the Hebrew number 5 HE (only one stroke different see Psalm 119 just before vs. 25 and 33).

Observations:

This text is not as direct as our two witness, Acts 13:20 and the book of Judges. Paul, who as a studied Pharisee, would have certainly been aware of this portion of the text if it was either actually in the verse or if it was not 580 years. Certainly he would have expressed Acts 13 differently.

3. THE PERIOD OF THE KINGS:

A. From the scriptural records of I and II Kings we can add up the years of the Judean Kings, (adding in the 40 years for Saul - Acts 13:21), = 513 years.

B. From the scriptural records of I and II Chronicles we can add up the years of the Judean Kings (adding in the 40 years for Saul – Acts 13:21), = 513 years.

Thus we have our two witnesses.

C. Ezekiel 4:4,5: "Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it, according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, 390 days; so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel."

God instructs Ezekiel to publicly demonstrate His judgement against the 10 Tribe Kingdom for their rebellion. That the punishment would culminate in Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple at the end of a 390 year period.

To this 390 years we would add the following:

40 years for Saul.

40 years for David.

40 years for Solomon.

3 years of the besiegement of Jerusalem (II Kings 25:1, 2, siege started in Zedekiah's 9th year and ended in his 11th year)

Total = 123 years.

Grand total = 513 years for the period of the Kings.

D. Attempts to harmonize the time periods of the Kings of the 10 Tribes with those of the Kings of Judah, as found in I and II Kings result in a much shorter period of time for the Kings of Judah.

Attempts to do so more or less follow those of Edwin R. Thiele, author of “The Mysterious Numbers Of The Hebrew Kings”. In the new revised edition on page 205 we quote his conclusion in part:

“However, we must accept the **PREMISE** of an original reckoning of reigns in Israel according to the nonaccession-year system with a later shift to the accession-year method; of the early use in Judah of accession-year reckoning, a shift to the nonaccession-year system, and then a return to the original accession-year method; of the need to begin the regnal year in Israel with Nisan and with Tishri in Judah; of the existence of a number of coregencies; and of the fact that at some late date – long after the original records of the kings had been set in order and when the true arrangement of the reigns had been forgotten – certain synchronisms in 2 Kings 17 and 18 were introduced by some late hand twelve years out of harmony with the original pattern of reigns. ”

Premise in bold is our note. It seems that one would have to accept about 9 assumptions in this paragraph, none of which are stated directly in the Biblical accounts. If one accepts all of these “premises” than the simple, direct counting of the scriptures in I and II Chronicles has to be reduced, or set aside, and the confirmation found in Ezekiel 4 is lost.

Suggestion:

The LORD gave us a second record of the Judean Kings, without seeming confusion with the Kings of Israel, in the books of Chronicles so as to reassure us concerning the correct length of the period of the Kings – 513 years.

4. THE PERIOD OF SEVENTY YEARS DESOLATION:

A. Jeremiah 29:10 “For thus saith the LORD, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.”

This word “at” can be also be rendered “in”, see Strong’s Dictionary # 5921.

The LORD prophesies through Jeremiah that Israel would be punished for a 70 year period, in Babylon, and that He would restore them to their home land.

B. Jeremiah 25:11, 12 “And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.”

The LORD is interested in Israel, His covenanted people, it is THEIR 70 years desolation while they were in Babylon that has His interest. Yet, He intends to punish Babylon for their abuse of his people.

C. II Chronicles 36:19-23 “And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia; to fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years. Now in the first year of Cyrus King of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus King of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying. Thus saith Cyrus King of

Persia, all the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and He hath charged me to build Him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.”

In these verses the Chronicler tells us that from the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem and that all the surviving people were carried away to Babylon, up until Cyrus King of Persia announced that he was releasing the Israelites to return to Jerusalem, was a 70 year period of desolation that Jeremiah had previously prophesied (Jer. 29:10; 25:11, 12). We do not have to interpret this, the Word of God has done this for us by giving us the both the beginning and ending EVENTS.

A simple observation: if these 70 years of Sabbath rest for the Land had started 20 years prior to the Israelites being slain or carried away by the Babylonians, then they would have been still living on the Land and planting and harvesting it, along with their herds and flocks grazing upon it, in essence, God’s keeping of the Sabbath rests would not have been any better than that of the Israelites He was punishing!

D. Daniel 9:1, 2 (compiled from KJV and Lesser’s translation) “In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; in the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, where of the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would let pass full seventy years over the ruins of Jerusalem.”

Daniel who lived both before and after the 70 years Desolation, confirms Jeremiah’s prophecy, that is that Jeremiah had meant the 70 years would be over the RUINS of Jerusalem, not merely a 50 year period of ruin.

We have three witnesses, Jeremiah, Daniel and the Chronicler that it was a full 70 years of Desolation over Jerusalem.

E. Josephus confirms his belief that it was a 70 years desolation starting with the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem.

F. A further Biblical confirmation: The Jubilee.

First witness: The Jubilee as a type in the Law.

Second witness: The Jubilee viewed prophetically (Jer. 25:9-12 and II Chron. 36:21).

This is in fact a double witness. It testifies to the proper understanding of the 70 years desolation as well as being two independent calculation based on a different set of scriptures, it “witnesses twice” to itself as a time feature and prophecy.

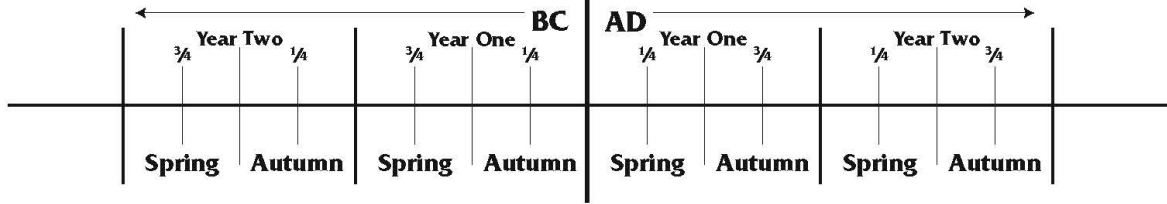
5. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS:

Our confidence, faith, should be first and foremost on the witnesses found in His Word, His Two Witnesses. When two or three of these harmonize, this is undoubtedly our strongest support.

It is unsafe to incorporate changes to these Biblical witnesses merely from secular sources or suppositions of scripture.

6. A FEW ADDITIONAL NOTES ON CALCULATING TIME: See next handout page.

**Great Pyramid Passages, Book II, Page 34,
written by the Edgar Brothers**



Jesus' Birth and 3 1/2 Year Ministry in Fractional Years

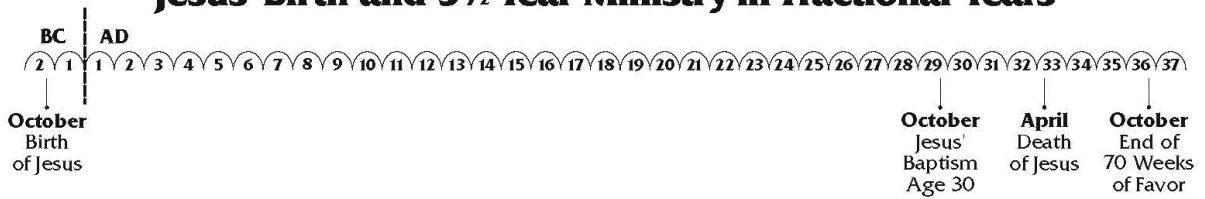


Chart Adapted from Reprint 3459 from Glasgow

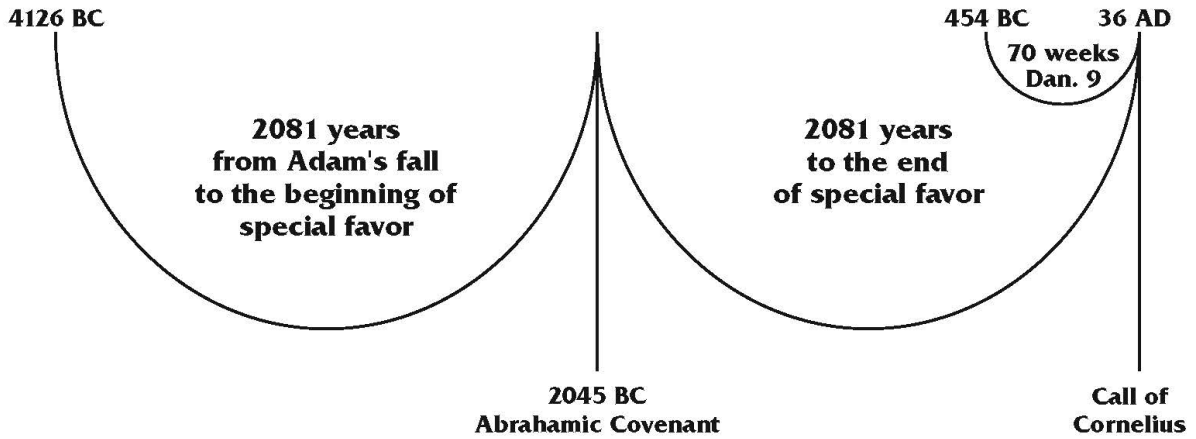


Chart Adapted from "Dating the Desolation" by Bro. Jerry Leslie

