

## STUDY II

### BIBLE CHRONOLOGY

Chronology Necessary to an Understanding of Prophecy--Indispensable Data Furnished in the Bible--From the Creation of Adam to A.D. 1873 was Six Thousand Years--A Statement of Bible Chronology in Great Periods--Its Examination in Detail--From Creation to the Day the Flood was Dried Up--To the Abrahamic Covenant--To the Giving of the Law--To the Division of Canaan among the Tribes--The Period of the Judges--The Period of the Kings--The Period of the Desolation --To A.D. 1873--Wherein this Chronology Differs from that of Bishop Usher, Noted in our English Bibles--The True Date of our Lord's Birth.

IN this chapter we present the Bible evidence which indicates that six thousand years from the creation of Adam were complete with A.D. 1872; and hence that, since 1872 A.D., we are chronologically entered upon the seventh thousand or the Millennium--the forepart of which, the "Day of the Lord," the "day of trouble," is to witness the breaking into pieces of the kingdoms of this world and the establishment of the Kingdom of God under the whole heavens.

Chronology is necessary, too, as a basis for the examination of the prophetic periods. We must ascertain first of all where we are on the stream of time; and to do this, we must have reliable dates for the calculation; hence we take up the subject of chronology first in order. And a complete chronology of human history must of necessity begin with the creation of man.

The length of time since the creation of man is variously estimated. Among those who accept the Bible record, there can be but little difference of opinion; but among those who reject it, the differences are enormous, varying all the

way from ten thousand to hundreds of thousands of years. These suppositions are based upon facts which afford but slight ground for such extravagant and reckless conclusions. For instance, the finding of flint arrowheads in the

peat bogs of Switzerland and Ireland, at a considerable depth below the surface, is taken as a **proof** that their level was once the surface, and that the peat mosses gradually grew up around and above them; and the time necessary for such a growth is calculated from the present rate of growth per century, which is very slight. If their premises were true, of course it would prove that man had lived hundreds of thousands of years ago. But other geologists will show, and with good reason, that these peat bogs were once so soft that a flint arrowhead might easily sink to a great depth gradually, during a few centuries.

Another instance we quote: "In making soundings in the slimy soil of the Nile valley two baked bricks were discovered, one at a depth of twenty, the other of twenty-four yards. If we estimate the thickness of the annual deposit formed by the river at eight inches a century, we must assign to the first of these bricks an age of 12,000 years and to the second that of 14,000. **By means of analogous calculations,** Burmeister [a celebrated geologist] supposes seventy-two thousand years to have elapsed since the first appearance of man upon the soil of Egypt; and Draper [another noted geologist] attributes to the European man who witnessed the last glacial epoch an antiquity of more than 250,000 years."\*

Of course "**if we estimate**" just as these **great** men do, we should reach the same **great** conclusions. But some of us are unscientific enough to inquire, whether it is not more than probable that the slime deposits of the Nile river have been

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\*Prof. N. Joly, in "Man Before Metals," B183.

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very irregular, as of other rivers, which sometimes shift their beds and wash away their banks wonderfully in a single freshet. Again, we remember the Flood of Noah's day, not only particularly mentioned in the Bible, but preserved in the oldest traditions of the heathen nations, and we wonder how much slime and debris that caused, over and above the eight inches a century. We wonder, too, why it has not occurred to these **great** minds, as it naturally does to some not **too great**, that two bricks thrown into that "**slimy** soil," at a time when it was covered with water and very soft, would sink quite a distance by their own weight, being so much more dense than the slimy soil. As for the difference in depth of the two bricks, it would seem to an **unscientific** mind much more reasonable to suppose that the one fell into the

slime edge-wise, or end-wise, while the other, falling flat, would sink more slowly, than to suppose that men living two thousand years apart made two bricks exactly alike.

It is not many years since the skeleton of a man was found in a former bed of the Mississippi river, and some geologists began to calculate how many thousands of years **might** be indicated by the many feet of silt, slime, etc., covering the skeleton, and fancied they had a very valuable sample of prehistoric man. But finding later, several feet below the skeleton, parts of a "flat boat," such as was in use on the Mississippi less than fifty years ago, it completely upset the calculations, and relieved mankind of "another **proof**" that the world is hundreds of thousands of years older than the Bible teaches.

Leaving the discordant and wholly unreliable guessing of some geologists on this subject of chronology, we appeal to human history for information. And what do we find? The history of the oldest of the Gentile nations can be traced back clearly and distinctly less than three thousand years. Back of that all is dark, uncertain, mythical, fabulous,

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and untrustworthy tradition. Roman history does not extend so far back, as it is only twenty-seven hundred years since Rome was founded, and then its first centuries are wrapped in uncertain tradition. Three thousand years back in the Babylonian, Syrian, and Egyptian histories bring us to a period where their records are fragmentary and involved in great obscurity. In the history of China, it brings us to the Tchou dynasty, where the events of Chinese history "**begin** to be more trustworthy." In Greece, noted for its scholarship in the past three thousand years, with whom above all nations we might expect to find accurate history, what do we find? We find its dates accurate for the last twenty-six hundred years, but no farther back. Back of that, we come to what is known as the "fabulous, mythical or prehistoric age" of Greece. The only reasonable and connected account of the first three thousand years of man on the earth is found in the Bible; and this fact is surely in harmony with its claim to divine origin, direction and preservation.

As with history, so with dates: the world has, aside from the Bible, no means of tracing its chronology farther back than B.C. 776. On this subject we quote Prof. Fisher, of Yale College. He says: "An exact method of establishing dates was slowly reached. The invention of eras was indispensable

to this end. **The earliest definite time** for the dating of events was established in Babylon--the era of Nabonassar, 747 B.C. The Greeks (from about 300 B.C.) dated events from the first recorded victory at the Olympic games, 776 B.C. These games occurred every fourth year. Each Olympiad was thus a period of four years. The Romans, though not for some centuries after the founding of Rome, dated from **that** event; i.e., from 753 B.C."

In further evidence that the many so-called histories of the remote past so abound with vagaries and mythical traditions

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as to make them valueless as to chronological data, and wholly unworthy of consideration, we quote as follows from the American Cyclopaedia, under the caption,

#### **Chronology:**

"The history of ancient nations, unless we make an exception in the case of the Hebrews, goes back into mythical periods of thousands or millions of years; and even after the records begin to assume a historical aspect, the discrepancies are very great....The Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian inscriptions are in extinct languages, and in characters long obsolete....Greek and Roman dates are generally well authenticated to the first Olympiad, B.C. 776, and the establishment of the Consulate, B.C. 510, previous to which they are mainly traditional or legendary. Herodotus is valuable only as to events of his own time, about 450 B.C., and those of a century or two earlier."

Clinton in his work on Grecian Chronology (B283) says, "The history contained in the Hebrew Scriptures presents a remarkable and pleasing contrast to the early accounts of the Greeks. In the latter we trace with difficulty a few obscure facts preserved to us by the poets, who transmitted, with all the embellishments of poetry and fable, what they had received from oral tradition. In the annals of the Hebrew nation, we have authentic narratives written by contemporaries under the guidance of inspiration. What they have delivered to us comes accordingly under a double sanction. They were aided by divine inspiration, in recording facts upon which, as mere human witnesses, their evidence would be valid."

The Bible, our God-provided history of the first three thousand years, is the only work in the world which--beginning with Adam, the first man mentioned in history, monument or inscription, whose name, the time of his creation and death are recorded, and from whom his descendants

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can be traced by name and age in successive links for nearly four thousand years--furnishes us a clear and connected history down to a period where secular history is well authenticated. As we shall see, the Bible record extends to the first year of Cyrus, B.C. 536, a well established and generally accepted date. There the thread of Bible chronology is dropped--at a point where secular history is reliable. God has thus provided for his children a clear and connected record down to the present time. The Bible by its prophecies even supplements history, down to the consummation of "the restitution of all things," in the end of the seventh millennium, whence the new era of eternal blessedness will begin to date. The Bible is therefore the only record in the world which furnishes a view of human history as a whole. It carries us from the lost paradise of Genesis to the restored paradise of Revelation, tracing the pathway of humanity into eternity. Taken together, the history and prophecy of the Bible afford a panoramic view of the whole course of events from the creation and fall of man to his reconciliation and restitution. The Bible, therefore, is the chart of all history. Without it, as has been truly said, history would be "like rivers flowing from unknown sources to unknown seas"; but under its guidance we may trace these rivers to their springs, yea, and see their glorious ending in the ocean of eternity.

In the Bible alone, therefore, we may expect to find a record which will order aright the inharmonious periods and chronological irregularities which the annals of human history at first sight present--into harmony with each other and with the periods of nature.

In starting with the question, How long is it since man's creation? we should and do feel confident that he who gave the prophecies, and said that in the time of the end they should be understood, has provided in his Word the data necessary to enable us accurately to locate those prophecies.

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However, any who expect to find these matters so plainly stated as to be convincing to the mere surface reader, or the insincere skeptic, will be disappointed. God's times and seasons are given in such a way as to be convincing, at this time, only to those who, by acquaintance with God, are able to recognize his characteristic methods. The evidence

is given "that **the man of God** may be thoroughly furnished." (*2 Tim. 3:17*) These well know that in all the paths by which their Father leads they must walk by faith and not by sight. To all who are prepared to walk thus, we expect to be able to point out, at every step, solid statements of God's Word--a sure foundation for reasonable faith.

We will not here discuss the merits of the Septuagint and Hebrew versions of the Old Testament Scriptures, their difference in chronological data, etc., but will satisfy ourselves, and we trust the reader, with the statement that the former was a translation by Egyptians, while the latter is the original Hebrew record; which facts, taken in connection with the almost superstitious veneration with which the Hebrews guarded every jot and tittle of those sacred writings, is strong evidence of the reliability of the Hebrew version. Its acceptance by scholars is quite general, and in this volume we follow its dates, etc.

Here we furnish the evidence that from the creation of Adam to A.D. 1873 was six thousand years. And though the Bible contains no direct statement that the seventh thousand will be the epoch of Christ's reign, the great Sabbath Day of restitution to the world, yet the venerable tradition is not without a reasonable foundation. The law given to Israel, the typical people, appointing that six days of labor and weariness should be followed by one of refreshment and rest from their own works, seems fitly to illustrate the

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six thousand years in which the whole creation labors and groans under the bondage of sin and death (*Rom. 8:22*) in a vain endeavor to extricate itself, and the grand Millennial Day in which the weary and heavy laden may come to Christ Jesus, the shepherd and bishop of their souls, and through him find rest, refreshment and restitution--in which, through the merits of his precious blood, they may find repentance and remission of sins. On the typical seventh day he inquired of the impotent man, "Wilt thou be made whole?" and in answer to his faith and obedience gave him strength to take up his bed and walk. (See *John 5:6-9*; also *Matt. 12:10,13*; *John 7:23*; *Luke 13:11-16*; *14:1-5*.) So, during the antitypical Sabbath, the Millennium, it will be declared to all the world that "**whosoever will**" may have life and health eternal if he will take the steps of faith and obedience.

We must not overlook the fact already noted (Vol. I, Chap. VIII), that the term **day** is indefinite, and signifies

merely a period of time, whether of long or of short duration. The Apostle Peter intimated that the seventh thousand-year period of the world's history would be the seventh day in God's reckoning, saying, "Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day....The day of the Lord will come," etc. **2 Pet. 3:8,10**

If, then, the seventh thousand-year period of earth's history be an epoch specially noted as the period of Christ's reign, we shall, by showing that it began in A.D. 1873, be proving that we are **already in it**. This calls to mind what we have already noted in the preceding volume, that the Scriptures indicate that the dawn of the Millennium, or Day of the Lord, will be dark and stormy, and full of trouble upon the world and upon the nominal church, though its earliest dawning light will be full of comfort and cheer to the saints,

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who draw their comfort and peace from the hope set before them in the gospel, which, as an anchor, enters beyond the time of trouble, and fastens in the precious promises of the Millennial sunrise and glory: they see, beyond the time of trouble, the glorious reign and blessings promised.

The general condition of the world today, and the rapid development since 1873 of Socialism, Nihilism and Communism, whose avowed object is the overturning of the powers that be, and the redistribution of the wealth of the world, are certainly not out of harmony with what we should expect, however much, in some respects, these things may be deprecated by those who love law and order and peace. Only those who see that the coming anarchy and trouble are God's agencies for the establishment of a yet more complete law and order, and a more lasting peace, will be relieved from overwhelming fear as they pass through it.

Nor is this pointing out of the seventh epoch, or Millennium, the only value of chronology; for while we shall present several lines of prophecy entirely independent of chronology, it is the measure by which several lines of prophecy are established. The perfect agreement between these two classes of prophetic teaching, some dependent on, and some independent of, chronology, is very strong proof, not only of the correctness of those applications, but also of the correctness of the chronology which shows this harmony; on the same principle that a key which will unlock a treasure-casket difficult to open is evidently the true key.

The chronology given below harmonizes the various prophetic statements relating to Christ's Kingdom and its establishment, by showing their relative order and time.

Chronology is the stem or handle by which all the prophetic time-proofs, as notches or wards of the key, are held together and operated.

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## **A CONDENSED STATEMENT OF CHRONOLOGY TO THE YEAR A.M. 6000**

The following condensed statement of chronological periods may properly be termed Bible chronology, because the Bible record alone is followed down to the first year of Cyrus, B.C. 536, a date well authenticated and generally accepted by scholars. Here the thread of Bible chronology ends--a little beyond the period where secular history begins to be reliable. This, in itself, is a marked evidence of divine direction and oversight, in helping us only where we are unable to help ourselves.

### **From the Creation of Adam**

To the end of the flood.....	1656 years
Thence to the covenant with Abraham.....	427 "
Thence to the Exodus and the giving of the Law....	430 "
Thence to the division of Canaan.....	46 "
The period of the Judges.....	450 "
The period of the Kings.....	513 "
The period of the desolation.....	70 "
Thence to A.D. 1.....	536 "
Thence to A.D. 1873.....	1872 "
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Total.....	6000 years

As we consider particularly each of these periods, let the reader figure it out for himself, and see how firm a foundation for our faith is laid in God's Word. Two breaks in the historic narrative of the Old Testament we shall find, yet when we discover that in the New Testament God has provided bridges to span these two chasms, it should increase our confidence that God so arranged the record as to hide his times and seasons, until his due time for revealing them

had come--just as he has done with other truths already noticed.

We will now examine the foregoing periods separately, and in their order as named above, down to the reign of Cyrus. Have your Bible at hand and verify every quotation, that you may receive this as God's Word and not as man's.

### Chronology of the Period from the Creation of Adam to the Day the Flood was Dried Up

"Adam lived 130 years and begat a son and called his name Seth." <i>Gen. 5:3</i> .....	130 years
"Seth lived 105 years and begat Enos." <i>Gen. 5:6</i> .....	105 "
"Enos lived 90 years and begat Cainan." <i>Gen. 5:9</i> .....	90 "
"Cainan lived 70 years and begat Mahalaleel." <i>Gen. 5:12</i> .....	70 "
"Mahalaleel lived 65 years and begat Jared." <i>Gen. 5:15</i> .....	65 "
"Jared lived 162 years and begat Enoch." <i>Gen. 5:18</i> .....	162 "
"Enoch lived 65 years and begat Methuselah." <i>Gen. 5:21</i> .....	65 "
"Methuselah lived 187 years and begat Lamech." <i>Gen. 5:25</i> .....	187 "
"Lamech lived 182 years and begat a son and called his name Noah." <i>Gen. 5:28</i> .....	182 "
"Noah was 600 years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth." <i>Gen. 7:6</i> .....	600 "
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Total from the creation of Adam <b>to the day</b> the flood was dried up. <i>Gen. 8:13</i> .....	1656 years

Nothing more simple and exact to a day than this could be asked. Let us now examine the next period.

**The Period from the Flood to the Covenant with Abraham, at the Death of Terah, his Father**

"Shem--begat Arphaxad 2 years after the flood." <i>Gen. 11:10</i> .....	2 years
"Arphaxad lived 35 years and begat Salah." <i>Gen. 11:12</i> .....	35 "
"Salah lived 30 years and begat Eber." <i>Gen. 11:14</i> .....	30 "
"Eber lived 34 years and begat Peleg." <i>Gen. 11:16</i> .....	34 "
"Peleg lived 30 years and begat Reu." <i>Gen. 11:18</i> .....	30 "
"Reu lived 32 years and begat Serug." <i>Gen. 11:20</i> .....	32 "
"Serug lived 30 years and begat Nahor." <i>Gen. 11:22</i> .....	30 "
"Nahor lived 29 years and begat Terah." <i>Gen. 11:24</i> .....	29 "
"The days of Terah were 205 years and he died." <i>Gen. 11:32</i> .....	205 "
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Total.....	427 years

This, too, is very simple and exact. But the next period is not so easily traced; for the direct line of chronology is broken, until after the exodus of Israel from Egypt. Hence we would be quite unable to proceed, were it not that Paul and Stephen, as the mouthpieces of the Spirit, furnish the connecting link.

**The Period from the Covenant with Abraham to the Giving of the Law**

Paul declares that the length of this period was four hundred and thirty years. (*Gal. 3:17*) The Covenant included

the promise of the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and though several times reaffirmed, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, it was always the same covenant. (See

*Gen. 12:7,8; 13:14-18; 26:3,4; 35:9-12; 46:2-4; 50:24.*) As shown by a comparison of *Gen. 12:1-5,7* and *Acts 7:2-5*, the covenant was made (according to previous promise) as soon as Abraham had fully complied with the conditions on which he was to receive it: that was, as soon as he had entered Canaan, which he did immediately after the decease of his father, who died in Haran, on the way to Canaan. Having the date of the covenant--just after Terah's death--thus established by Stephen's statement, and having Paul's statement, that the Law was four hundred and thirty years after the covenant, the break in the Old Testament chronology is thus bridged by the New. But let us read the account carefully, and mark the particularity with which the bridge is constructed:

"Now the Lord **had** [previously, before he left Mesopotamia, or Ur of the Chaldees] said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house [brethren, etc.] unto a land that I will show thee; and [if you do so] I will make of thee a great nation," etc. (*Gen. 12:1,2*. Compare *Acts 7:2*.) This indicates that God had **proposed** the covenant to Abraham before Terah, his father, died, and before he came to dwell in Haran or Charran. But there was a stipulation which demanded Abraham's faith and obedience before the covenant should be actually made. This stipulation was that he must manifest faith in the promise that such a covenant would be made with him, by leaving his native country and kindred and going to the land to which he was directed. This Abraham did, and as his wife, his nephew Lot and his aged father shared his faith and desired to share his fortunes with him, they were permitted to do so, and the four started for

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the land of promise. His father Terah died on the way, in Haran, after which Abraham passed over into Canaan, that there he might secure and bind the covenant. As Stephen declared to Israel: "When his father was dead, he removed him into this land wherein ye now dwell." "So Abraham departed [out of Haran] **as the Lord had spoken unto him.**" (*Acts 7:4; Gen. 12:4*) And the covenant was made just after he entered the land. (See *Gen. 12:5-7*.) Thus we have the date of the covenant, and the beginning of the four hundred and thirty years, fixed as immediately following Terah's death, and the chain of chronology complete to the giving of the Law. The first feature of the Law was the Passover, which was instituted the same day that Israel left

Egypt. *Exod. 12:41-43,47,50,51*

In harmony with this we read: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years; and it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, **even the self-same day** it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." *Exod. 12:40-42,51*

Some may suppose that the statements of Moses and Paul (*Exod. 12:40-42* and *Gal. 3:17*) are not in harmony, the one affirming that the sojourning of Israel was four hundred and thirty years, and the other, that from the covenant with Abraham to the giving of the Law was four hundred and thirty years, reasoning that if only four hundred and thirty years elapsed between Abraham's coming into Canaan and the giving of the Law, the sojourn of the children of Israel in Egypt must have been much less. But it should be observed that the statement is not that Israel sojourned in Egypt four hundred and thirty years, but that the whole length of the sojourning of that people who for some time lived in Egypt lasted four hundred and thirty

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years: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who **dwelt** in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years." The sojourning referred to began when Abraham first came into Canaan. (*Heb. 11:8,9*) Israel sojourned in Abraham and in Isaac and in Jacob, even as Levi paid tithes to Melchizedec, while yet **in the loins of his father**. *Heb. 7:9,10*

The covenant with Abraham took effect from the time that, leaving Haran or Charran, he set foot in Canaan, the land of promise. From that time, he and all Israel in him, yet unborn, became heirs of the things promised, and **sojourners**, or pilgrims, waiting on God for the fulfilment of the promise. This sojourning had lasted four hundred and thirty years, to a day, when Israel left Egypt, and received that first feature of the Law, the institution of the Passover. The statements of Moses and Paul, therefore, refer to precisely the same period, thus giving most positive evidence that from the covenant with Abraham to the giving of the Law was four hundred and thirty years. Paul gave special emphasis to the fact that the Passover must be regarded as the beginning of the Law (which Moses also shows, *Exod. 12:42,43,47,50*), and Moses gave special emphasis to the exactness of the period, to a day.

Thus we have our third period clearly established. And when we mark the Lord's particularity to a day, in furnishing this link in the chain of chronology, it gives us strong

confidence, especially when we consider that such particularity was probably of no special interest to the Church of the past, and was given for no other than the present use.

## Period from the Exodus to the Division of Canaan among the Tribes

Israel's forty years, or "day of temptation in the wilderness" (*Deut. 8:2; Psa. 95:8-10; Heb. 3:8,9*), was followed by

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six years of war in Canaan, and the dividing of the land among the tribes. One year, one month and five days elapsed from their going out of Egypt to their leaving Sinai for Paran. (*Num. 33:3; 10:11-13*) And it was then, from Kadesh-barnea in the wilderness of Paran, that the spies were sent. (*Num. 13:3-26; 32:8-13*) One of these, Caleb, when applying for his portion at the division of the land (*Joshua 11:23; 10:42*), said, "Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land, and I brought him word again....And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, **these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word...**while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, lo, I am **this day** fourscore and five years old." (*Joshua 14:7,10*) Thus it will be seen that it was forty-five years from the spying of the land to its division among the tribes, as affirmed by Joshua, and a little over a year from the exodus to the sending of the spies, making forty-six full years and a fraction\* from the exodus to the division of the land. As the first forty years of this period were passed in the wilderness, as shown by many scriptures, notably *Acts 7:36* and *Heb. 3:9*, the remaining six to the division of the land were spent in Canaan, conquering and taking possession of the land of promise.

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\*We take account of only the complete years, more accurate account being impossible. Sometimes, as above, the years are fractionally long. And again some are short, as in the case of Zedekiah's reign. Zedekiah is said to have reigned eleven years (*2 Chron. 36:11; Jer. 52:1*); yet, from *verses 3 to 7* of the latter chapter, it is clear that his actual reign was ten years four months and nine days. We believe that these fractional parts of years counterbalance themselves; and that the Lord has thus overruled and arranged the matter is our confidence, supported by the outcome and the results deducible from it, and the accuracy to a day, even in large periods, already noticed. As illustrating God's care and particularity in this matter, see *Gen. 7:11,13; Exod. 12:40,41*.

## The Period of the Judges

We come now to the most difficult portion of chronology, the period from the division of the land to the anointing of Saul as king. It is usually termed the period of the Judges, though the Judges did not fill the office continuously. The record given in the books of Judges and 1 Samuel mentions nineteen periods, approximating a total of four hundred and fifty years; but they are disconnected, broken, lapped and tangled so much that we could arrive at no definite conclusion from them, and should be obliged to conclude as others have done, that nothing positive could be known on the subject, were it not that the New Testament supplies the deficiency. Paul states that after God divided their land to them by lot, "He gave unto them Judges about [during] the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the Prophet. Afterward they desired a king, and God gave unto them Saul." *Acts 13:19-21*

The Greek word rendered **about** in the common version is **hos**, and has the significance of **during**, or **while**. The same writer uses the word in three other places where the common version translates it **while**, viz.: *Acts 1:10; 10:17; Luke 24:32*. This passage would be better translated, "He gave unto them Judges **during** the space of four hundred and fifty years." The Syriac reads thus--"And for four hundred and fifty years he gave them Judges, until Samuel the prophet"--the last of the "Judges."

The statement of the length of this period of the Judges, by the Apostle, we accept as a specially designed solution of the problem. In only two instances--the four hundred and thirty years from the Covenant to the Law, and this period of the Judges--is there any reasonable uncertainty about the Old Testament chronology, and both are clearly stated in the New. Can we suppose that this merely happened so?

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It is more reasonable to suppose that God first hid the matter, by leaving the Old Testament record incomplete, and later supplied the deficiency in the New Testament, so that in due time, when attention should be called to it, those having sufficient interest to compare the accounts might find the missing links supplied in a manner calculated to teach dependence upon the Great Time-Keeper.

## The Period of the Kings

Saul's reign was in or during the space of forty years following the last Judge, until David was anointed king, as shown above; and following him, the periods of the kings in the line of David are easily traced in Chronicles, thus:

Saul's	"space"	<i>Acts 13:21</i>	40 years
David	reigned	<i>1 Chron. 29:27</i>	40 "
Solomon	"	<i>2 Chron. 9:30</i>	40 "
Rehoboam	"	<i>2 Chron. 12:13</i>	17 "
Abijah	"	<i>2 Chron. 13:2</i>	3 "
Asa	"	<i>2 Chron. 16:13</i>	41 "
Jehoshaphat	"	<i>2 Chron. 20:31</i>	25 "
Jehoram	"	<i>2 Chron. 21:20</i>	8 "
Ahaziah	"	<i>2 Chron. 22:2</i>	1 "
Athaliah	"	<i>2 Chron. 22:12</i>	6 "
Jehoash	"	<i>2 Chron. 24:1</i>	40 "
Amaziah	"	<i>2 Chron. 25:1</i>	29 "
Uzziah	"	<i>2 Chron. 26:3</i>	52 "
Jotham	"	<i>2 Chron. 27:1</i>	16 "
Ahaz	"	<i>2 Chron. 28:1</i>	16 "
Hezekiah	"	<i>2 Chron. 29:1</i>	29 "
Manasseh	"	<i>2 Chron. 33:1</i>	55 "
Amon	"	<i>2 Chron. 33:21</i>	2 "
Josiah	"	<i>2 Chron. 34:1</i>	31 "
Jehoiakim	"	<i>2 Chron. 36:5</i>	11 "
Zedekiah	"	<i>2 Chron. 36:11</i>	11 "
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Total			513 years

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## The Seventy Years of Desolation

This brings us to the period of the desolation of the land, which lasted seventy years, and was ended by the restoration of its people from Babylon, in the first year of Cyrus, B.C. 536 (See *2 Chron. 36:20,23*), a date well established in secular history, and beyond which the line of Bible chronology does not extend.

## Period from the Restoration to A.D. 1873

The period from the time of the restoration of the Jews from Babylon, at the close of the seventy years desolation of their land, in the first year of Cyrus, down to the date known as A.D. 1, is not covered by Bible history. But, as before stated, it is well established by secular history as a period of 536 years. Ptolemy, a learned Greek-Egyptian, a geometer and astronomer, has well established these figures. They are generally accepted by scholars, and known as Ptolemy's Canon.

Thus we have found a clear and connected line of chronology from creation to the beginning of the Christian era (A.D.)--in all, a period of four thousand one hundred and twenty-eight (4128) years, which, together with eighteen hundred and seventy-two years of the Christian era, make six thousand years from creation to the year 1873 A.D.

## This and Usher's Chronology Compared

It will be interesting to some to know wherein the above chronology differs from that inserted in the margin of the common version of the Bible, known as Usher's Chronology. The difference between the two, down to the time of the seventy years of desolation, is one hundred and twenty-four (124) years. This difference is made up of four periods of 18,4,2 and 100 years--as follows:

### B52

Usher dates the seventy years desolation **eighteen years** earlier than shown above--i.e., before the dethronement of Zedekiah, Judah's last king--because he figured the king of Babylon took many of the people captive at that time.\* (*2 Chron. 36:9,10,17; 2 Kings 24:8-16*) He evidently makes the not uncommon mistake of regarding those seventy years as the period of **captivity**, whereas the Lord expressly declares them to be seventy years of **desolation** of the land, that the land should lie "desolate, without an inhabitant." Such was not the case prior to Zedekiah's dethronement. (*2 Kings 24:14*) But the desolation which followed Zedekiah's overthrow was complete; for, though

some of the poor of the land were left to be vine-dressers and husbandmen (*2 Kings 25:12*), shortly even these--"all people, both small and great"--fled to Egypt for fear of the Chaldees. (*Verse 26*) There can be no doubt here: and therefore in reckoning the time to the **desolation of the land**, all periods up to the close of Zedekiah's reign should be counted in, as we have done.

The **four years** difference is in the reign of Jehoram. Usher gives it as a reign of four years, while the Bible says it was eight years. *2 Chron. 21:5; 2 Kings 8:17*

Of the **two years** difference, one year is found in the term of the reign of Ahaz, which Usher gives as fifteen, while the Bible says it was sixteen years. (*2 Chron. 28:1; 2 Kings 16:2*) And the other is in the term of Jehoash, which Usher reckons as thirty-nine, while the Bible gives it as forty years.

*2 Kings 12:1; 2 Chron. 24:1*

These differences can be accounted for only by supposing that Usher followed, or attempted to follow, Josephus, a Jewish historian whose chronological dates are now generally recognized as reckless and faulty. We rely on the Bible alone, believing that God is his own interpreter.

Aside from these twenty-four years difference in the period

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\*Note, however, this partial captivity occurred **eleven**, not eighteen, years before the dethronement of King Zedekiah.

## B53

of the Kings, there is another variance between the above Bible chronology and that of Usher, namely, **one hundred years** in the period of the Judges. Here Usher is misled by the evident error of *1 Kings 6:1*, which says that the fourth year of Solomon's reign was the four-hundred-and-eightieth year from the coming out of Egypt. It evidently should read the five-hundred-and-eightieth year, and was possibly an error in transcribing; for if to Solomon's four years we add David's forty, and Saul's space of forty, and the forty-six years from leaving Egypt to the division of the land, we have one hundred and thirty years, which deducted from four hundred and eighty would leave only three hundred and fifty years for the period of the Judges, instead of the **four** hundred and fifty years mentioned in the Book of Judges, and by Paul, as heretofore shown. The Hebrew character "**daleth**" (4) very much resembles the character "**hay**" (5), and it is supposed that in this way the error has occurred, possibly the mistake of a transcriber.

*1 Kings 6:1*, then, should read **five** hundred and eighty, and thus be in perfect harmony with the other statements.

Thus the Word of God corrects the few slight errors which have crept into it by any means.\* And remember that those breaks occur in the period bridged effectually by the inspired testimony of the New Testament.

So, then, whereas Usher dates A.D. 1 as the year 4005 from the creation of Adam, it really was, as we have shown,

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\*A similar discrepancy will be noticed in comparing *2 Chron. 36:9* with *2 Kings 24:8*, the one giving eighteen years and the other, evidently incorrect, giving eight years as the age of Jehoiachin, who reigned three months, and did evil in the sight of the Lord, and was punished by captivity, etc. Such a mistake could easily occur, but God has so guarded his Word that the few trivial errors of copyists are made very manifest, and the full harmony of his Word gives ample foundation for faith.

## **B54**

the year 4129, according to the Bible record, thus showing the year 1872 A.D. to be the year of the world 6000, and 1873 A.D. the commencement of the seventh thousand-year period, the seventh millennium, or thousand-year day of earth's history.

Thus chronology as gathered from the Bible alone, from creation down to well authenticated secular history, is clear and strong, bearing evidence, too, of the peculiar methods of divine providence in its record, in its concealing and in its gradual unfolding in due time. And this, together with the reliable dates of the Christian era and the several centuries before it at hand, enables us to locate ourselves accurately on the stream of time. And we begin hopefully to lift up our heads and rejoice, as we realize that we are actually sweeping into the glorious age of the seventh millennium--even though we recognize that its beginning is to be dark and full of trouble, as foretold by the prophets, and that the storm-clouds are already gathering and growing darker.

## **THE DATE OF OUR LORD'S BIRTH**

In the sixth century the Church began to reckon time from the birth of our Lord, and fixed the date A.D. as it now stands; namely, 536 years after the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia.\* Whether they placed it correctly or not does

not affect the chronology as just given, which shows that the six thousand years from the creation of Adam ended with A.D. 1872; because it is eighteen hundred and seventy-two years since the year designated A.D., and the first

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\*The year A.D. was fixed upon as early as the sixth century by Dionysius Exiguus, and other scholars of that period, though it did not come into general use until two centuries later.

### B55

year of Cyrus was five hundred and thirty-six years before that year (A.D.), whether it was the year of our Lord's birth or not.

We cannot, perhaps, explain this better than by the time-worn illustration of a line with a star upon it--thus:  
B.C. \_\_\_\_\_\*\_\_\_\_\_ A.D. Let the line represent the six thousand years of earth's history from the creation of Adam to 1873 A.D.; and let the star represent the turning point between B.C. and A.D. To move that point either way would not alter the length of the entire period, though it would alter the names of the years. To move the A.D. point backward one year would make the B.C. period one year less, and the A.D. period one year more, but the **sum** of the B.C. and A.D. years would still be the same; for the amount taken from the one is always an addition to the other. Nevertheless, let us briefly examine the date of our Lord's birth, as it will be found useful in our subsequent studies.

It has become customary among scholars to concede that our commonly accepted A.D. is incorrect to the amount of four years--that our Lord was born four years previous to the year designated A.D., that is, in the year B.C. 4. And this theory has been followed by the publishers of the common version of the Bible. We cannot agree that B.C. 4 was the true date of our Lord's birth. On the contrary, we find that he was born only one year and three months before our common era, A.D., namely, in October of B.C. 2.

The general reason with most of those who claim that A.D. should have been placed four years earlier to correctly mark the Savior's birth, is a desire to harmonize it with certain statements of the Jewish historian Josephus, relative to the length of the reign of Herod the Great. According to one of his statements, it would appear that Herod died three years before the year reckoned A.D. If this were true,

## B56

it would certainly prove that our Lord was born in the year B.C. 4; for it was this Herod, that issued the decree for the slaying of the babes of Bethlehem, from whom the infant Jesus was delivered. (*Matt. 2:14-16*) But is this statement of Josephus reliable? Is it true that Herod died four years before the year A.D.? No, we answer: Josephus alone is not sufficient authority for such a decision, as he is known and admitted to be inaccurate in his record of dates.

But this notion has prevailed: the date B.C. 4 has been generally accepted, and historical events and dates have been somewhat bent to fit and support this theory. Among other supposed proofs that B.C. 4 was the proper date, was an eclipse of the moon, said by Josephus to have occurred a short time before the death of Herod. All that is known of that eclipse is as follows: Herod had placed a large golden eagle over the gate of the Temple. Two notable Jews, named Matthias and Judas, persuaded some young men to pull it down. They did so, were arrested and executed. To make the matter clear, Josephus relates that there was at that time another Matthias, a high priest, who was not concerned in the sedition. He then adds: "But Herod deprived this Matthias of his high priesthood, and burnt the other Matthias who had raised the sedition, with his companions, alive, and that very night there was an eclipse of the moon." This is recorded as one of the last prominent acts of Herod, and is given a date which might correspond with B.C. 4 by Josephus, who marks the date by the eclipse mentioned.

But since at times as many as four eclipses of the moon occur in one year, it is evident that except under very peculiar circumstances the record of such an occurrence proves nothing. Where the time of the night, the time of the year and the amount of obscuration are all given, as has been done in several instances, the record is of great value in fixing dates; but in the case under consideration, there is nothing

## B57

of the kind; hence absolutely nothing is proved by the record, so far as chronology is concerned. Josephus does mention a fast, as having been kept before the event, but what fast, or how long before, is not stated.

As it happens, there was only one eclipse of the moon in B.C. 4, while in B.C. 1 there were three. The eclipse of B.C. 4 was only partial (six digits, or only one-half of the moon

being obscured), while all three in B.C. 1 were total eclipses--the entire moon was obscured, and of course for a longer time causing the event to be much more noticeable. Hence if the eclipse theory has any weight it certainly is not in favor of the earlier date, B.C. 4.

Unfortunately, the time of Herod's death is not given by a reliable historian. Josephus gives some important periods in his history and the dates of some events, but these dates are not trustworthy. Some of them would teach that Herod died B.C. 4, but others cannot be reconciled with that date. For instance, his death is said to have been at the age of seventy. He was made governor of Galilee B.C. 47, at which time Josephus says he was twenty-five years of age. (Ant. 14:9:2) This would date his birth B.C. 72 (47 plus 25). His death at seventy would then be B.C. 2 instead of B.C. 4.

In this connection it may be well to note the conflict of opinion among learned men, relative to the exact date of Herod's death, that thus it may be apparent to all that there is no well founded reason for accepting B.C. 4 as the only date in harmony with *Matt. 2:14-16*. Faussett's Bible Encyclopedia gives Herod's age when made governor at about twenty years. This would make his death, at seventy years, A.D. 2. Chambers' Cyclopedia and Smith's Bible Dictionary give his age at that time as fifteen years, which would place his death A.D. 7. Appleton's Cyclopedia, article Chronology, says: "Josephus also gives dates, but he is altogether too careless to be taken into account."

## B58

We now proceed to offer the Scriptural evidence relating to this subject, which more nearly agrees with the common era, and shows that our Lord's birth occurred only one year and three months prior to January, A.D. 1. It is as follows:

Our Lord's ministry lasted three and a half years. The sixty-nine symbolic weeks of years (*Dan. 9:24-27*) reached to his baptism and anointing as Messiah, and there the last or seventieth week (seven years) of Israel's favor began. He was cut off [in death] in the **middle** of that seventieth week--three and a half years from the beginning of his ministry. He was crucified, we know, at the time of the Passover, about April 1st, whatever the year. The three and **a half** years of his ministry, which ended in April, must consequently have begun about October, whatever the year. And October of some year must have been the true month

of his birth, because he **delayed not** to begin his ministry as soon as he was thirty, and could not, according to the Law (under which he was born and which he obeyed), begin before he was thirty. As we read, "Now when Jesus **began to be** about thirty years of age **he cometh**" etc.

John the Baptist was six months older than our Lord (**Luke 1:26,36**), hence he was of age (thirty years, according to the Law--**Num. 4:3; Luke 3:23**, etc.) and began to preach six months before our Lord became of age and began his ministry. The date of the beginning of John's ministry is clearly stated to have been the "fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar," the third emperor of Rome. (**Luke 3:1**) This is a clearly fixed date of which there can be no reasonable doubt. Tiberius became emperor at the death of Augustus Caesar, in the year of Rome 767, which was the year A.D. 14.

But those misled by the inaccurate statements of Josephus relative to Herod, and who place the birth of Jesus

## B59

at B.C. 4, in order to harmonize with him, run across a difficulty in this clearly stated date given by Luke, and endeavor to make it also harmonize with their B.C. 4 theory. To accomplish this end they make the claim that Tiberius began to exercise authority some three or four years before Augustus died, and before he was fully constituted emperor. They claim that possibly his rule might have been reckoned from that date.

But such suppositions will be found baseless, by any who will investigate the matter on the pages of history. It is true that Tiberius was exalted to a very important position by Augustus, but it was not **four** years before Augustus' death, as their theory would demand, but **ten** years before, in A.D. 4. But the power then conferred upon him was only such as had been enjoyed by others before his day. It was in no sense of the word imperial power, and in no sense of the word can his "**reign**" be said to have begun there: he was only the heir-apparent. Even in the most exaggerated use of language, his "**reign**" could not be said to have commenced before Augustus' death and his own investiture in office at the hands of the Roman Senate, A.D. 14.

History says, "The Emperor, whose declining age needed an associate, adopted Tiberius A.D. 4, **renewing** his tribunian power." Article TIBERIUS, **Rees' Cyclopaedia**.

"He [Augustus] determined accordingly to devolve upon

him [Tiberius] a share in the government....This formal investiture placed him on the same footing as that enjoyed by the veteran Agrippa during his later years, and there can be no doubt that it was universally regarded as an introduction to the first place in the empire....The programme **for the succession** was significantly shadowed out: Tiberius had been ordered to assume his place at the head of the Senate, the people, and the army....The **adoption**, which took place at the same time, is dated June 27

## B60

(A.U.C. 757)--A.D. 4." **Merivale's History of the Romans** (Appleton's), Vol. IV, pp. 220,221

Thus there is conclusive proof that the first year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar was not three or four years before Augustus died; and that the honors referred to as conferred during Augustus' reign were conferred ten, and not four, years before Augustus' death, and then were in no sense imperial honors.

We may, therefore, consider the date of **Luke 3:1** not merely the only one furnished in the New Testament, but an unequivocal one. There can be no doubt about it in the minds of any who have investigated it. Tiberius began to reign in A.D. 14. The fifteenth year of his reign, would therefore be the year A.D. 29, in which year, Luke states (**3:1-3**), John began his ministry. Since our Lord's thirtieth birthday and the beginning of his ministry were in October, and since John's birthday and the beginning of his ministry were just six months earlier, it follows that John began his ministry in the spring, about April first--just as soon as he was of age; for God's plans are always carried out on exact time. So, then, John was thirty years old in A.D. 29, about April first, consequently he was born B.C. 2\*, about April first. And Jesus' birth, six months later, must have been B.C. 2, about October first.

Again, there is clear, strong evidence that Jesus was crucified on Friday, April 3rd, A.D. 33. The fact that his crucifixion occurred at the close of the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, and that this date rarely falls on Friday, but did so in the year A.D. 33, substantiates that date so thoroughly

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\*For the benefit of readers not much accustomed to calculating dates, we call attention to the fact that in the beginning of the year A.D. 29, only 28 full years had elapsed: the twenty-ninth was only beginning.

that even Usher, who adopted B.C. 4 as the date of Jesus' birth was forced to admit that his crucifixion was A.D. 33. Compare Usher's dates in the margin of the common version Bible at *Luke 2:21* and *Matt. 2:1* with those at *Matthew 27* and *Luke 23*. The date of the crucifixion being A.D. 33, it follows that if Jesus had been born B.C. 4, he would have been 36 years old when he died; and his ministry from his thirtieth to his thirty-sixth year would have been six years. But it is clear that our Lord's ministry was three and a half years only. And this generally conceded fact is proved by Daniel's prophecy concerning Messiah's cutting off in the **middle** of the seventieth week of Israel's favor.

Thus, it is again proven that Jesus' birth was about one year and three months before our common era, A.D. 1; for, his ministry ending when he was thirty-three and a half years old, April 3rd, A.D. 33, the date of his birth may be readily found by measuring backward to a date thirty-three and a half years prior to April 3rd, A.D. 33. Thirty-two years and three months before April A.D. 33 would be January 3rd, A.D. 1, and one year and three months further back would bring us to October 3rd, B.C. 2, as the date of our Lord's birth at Bethlehem. The difference between lunar time, used by the Jews, and solar time, now in common use, would be a few days, so that we could not be certain that the exact day might not be in September about the 27th, but October 1st, B.C. 2, is **about** correct. Nine months back of that date would bring us to about Christmas time, B.C. 3, as the date at which our Lord laid aside the glory which he had with the Father before the world was [made] and the taking of or changing to human nature began. It seems probable that this was the origin of the celebration of December 25th as Christmas Day. Some writers on Church history claim, even, that Christmas Day was originally celebrated as the date of the annunciation by Gabriel

to the virgin Mary. (*Luke 1:26*) Certain it is that a midwinter date does not well agree with the declaration of Scripture, that at the time of our Lord's birth the shepherds were in the fields with their flocks.

"Lift up your heads, desponding pilgrims;  
Give to the winds your needless fears;  
He who has died on Calvary's mountain  
Soon is to reign a thousand years.

"A thousand years! earth's coming glory--  
'Tis the glad day so long foretold:  
'Tis the bright morn of Zion's glory,  
Prophets foresaw in times of old.

"Tell the whole world these blessed tidings;  
Speak of the time of rest that nears;  
Tell the oppressed of every nation,  
Jubilee lasts a thousand years.

"What if the clouds do for a moment  
Hide the blue sky where morn appears?  
Soon the glad sun of promise given  
Rises to shine a thousand years."

--Bonar