

creationists to be on the lookout for critiques of the established scientific paradigm, but we must be careful not to ‘grasp at straws’ by treating every critique as though it constituted definitive ‘proof’.

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Biblical chronology—our times are in his hands

In Mike Viccary’s article, ‘Biblical chronology—our times are in his hands’ (*Journal of Creation* 21(1):62–66, 2007), he defends the accuracy of the biblical data but uses the unbiblical date of 1446 BC for the Exodus. This date is the result of the work of Edwin Thiele who’s revised chronology, which is based on his understanding of Assyrian chronology, does violence to the biblical data. His work *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, is the basis for much misinformation about biblical chronology for the past 50 years. In Viccary’s footnote to substantiate this

date, he cites the charts of Whitcomb who uncritically accepted Thiele’s work. In the same footnote he cites the works of Ussher in Latin, which very few people have access to, and the works of Dr. Jones.

Why not cite the updated edition which is readily available? In that edition of the works of Ussher, I go to great pains to show the folly of trusting the works of Thiele. See appendices C, D and E. Likewise, Dr Jones devotes almost a third of his book on chronology to showing the errors of Thiele. I challenge anyone to use the biblical data and arrive at a date of 1446 BC for the Exodus. It is impossible to do without seriously compromising the Scriptures as Thiele did. Even Dr Les McFall, who has taken over from Thiele, could not find an error in the appendix C charts in Ussher, which in themselves thoroughly refute Thiele’s chronology.

Writers on chronology should be more careful with the details. Viccary’s mistake mars an otherwise good article.

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Mike Viccary replies:

I want to thank Larry Pierce for drawing my attention to the difficulties of matching the continuous chronology of Scripture with modern dates. At some point we do have to connect the biblical dates post Creation with our calendar AD. My single aim in the article (which was a small part of an original longer piece) was to show that the Bible is sufficient, consistent and accurate, particularly with reference to the chronology in the Pentateuch. Having only recently read Appendix C of the updated edition referred to by Pierce, I note that Ussher uses the ‘terminal date’ of 562 BC taken from Ptolemy’s king lists. There may well be good reasons for using this rather than an Assyrian connection, but the point remains we do have to locate the

perfect, accurate timeline revealed in God’s word with some modern date. As I understand it, my date for creation is 45 years earlier than Ussher’s. Taking Ussher’s view of the king lists this would date the Exodus at 1491 BC rather than 1446 BC.

To conclude, I am grateful for being directed to a work which takes seriously the Scriptures as our sole authority. I heartily endorse this starting point. Assuming that Ussher’s view of the king lists to be correct, we still have the problem of deciding how to connect the Bible’s timeline to our reference points. It would seem that at least part of the difference in the timelines may result from how we connect to modern dates, and not on how we view the Scriptures. Whilst the Bible always remains true and accurate, we are still at the mercy of secular (or extra-biblical) testimony to make that link. However, it occurs to me that if the Bible has an unbroken chronology up until Daniel’s prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27, we thence have an unbroken link right up to the death of Christ.

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The problems of traditional chronology

I read David Down’s book review, ‘The problems of traditional chronology’ in issue 21(2):44–47, 2007, concerning the recent book, *David and Solomon: In Search of the Bible’s Sacred Kings and the Roots of the Western Tradition*, by Finkelstein and Silberman. The quotations David provides from the book on page 45 illustrate what many secular archaeologists think about Old Testament history: the Old Testament is largely a collection of oral legends and myths before the 8th century BC, the stories recorded centuries after the

events took place if they occurred at all. Now let me check some things to see if this picture is accurate.

It is well established that the Ugarit texts (standard dating 1400–1200 BC; also called Ras Shamra) have much vocabulary in common with the Mosaic law¹ offerings, including identical sacrifices such as the burnt offering, trespass offering, wave offering, first fruit offerings, as well as New Moon offering. It is also demonstrated that the covenant form in the book of the Law, especially Deuteronomy, follows Hittite suzerainty treaty model from the 14th century BC.² Given the secular archaeology opinion, we must accept the Mosaic law vocabulary for various offerings circulated orally among the Hebrews for 400 years or more before recorded, but the Canaanites had a written religious vocabulary as far back as 1400 BC.

The name Ahilud, 2 Samuel 8:16 and 20:24 during the time of David's kingdom turned on up on a storage jar handle found Raddana, close to Ai.³ The inscription is dated 11th century BC, the same time period as 2 Samuel 8:16 and 20:24. However, the archaeologists do not claim this is the same Ahilud as the Bible, but that the name was in use during the period. Here is evidence of Hebrew writing from the period which many claim is oral history.

In 1908, the Gezer calendar was found dated to 10th century BC, and was considered the oldest example of ancient Hebrew writing. At Isbet Sartah a more ancient inscription was uncovered.⁴ It is written left to right with the Hebrew alphabet, a practice inscription dated 1200 BC during the time of the Judges, and the letter Pe precedes the letter Ayin in the alphabet order. Again this comes from a period considered to be oral stories in the Bible.

I don't want to leave out Abraham. Genesis chapter 23 shows Abraham purchased a field and cave from the Hittites for a burial site.⁵ The NIV and NKJV render 'deeded' in verse 17 and 20 of this business transaction. Abraham could count and weigh according to the Bible, but if the

Hittites deeded the purchase in written form, poor Abraham could not read or write!

In my opinion Old Testament history, especially Solomon back to Adam in the Garden of Eden, contains many events that evolutionists cannot reconcile with their reconstruction of Earth history and so they expend considerable efforts at debunking the biblical record.⁶

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4. Demsky, A. and Kochavi, M., An Alphabet from the Days of the Judges, *Biblical Archaeology Review* (BAR) IV(3):24, 1978. The Isbet Sartah inscription is about 200 years older than the famous Gezer calendar.
5. Wilson, C.A., *Rocks, Relics and Biblical Reliability*, Probe Ministries International, Richardson, TX, p. 41, 1977; Wilson, C.A., *That Incredible Book ... The Bible*, Word of Truth Productions Ltd., Victoria, Australia, pp. 51–52, 1973.
6. The sad commentary on modern archaeology and Old Testament history, it appears many throw out plain references to writing in the Bible like the following:

(A common Hebrew word for book is 'sepher' and its first use is Genesis 5:1.

The LXX at Genesis 2:4 reads '*biblos*', 'This is the book of the generation of heaven and earth.' There are other books mentioned in the Old Testament like Numbers 21:14, the Book of the Wars of the Lord also Joshua 10:13, the Book of Jasher. In 2 Samuel 1:18 the Book of Jasher existed in Joshua's time and also David. Perhaps the Book of Jasher was the Book of the Wars of the Lord referenced in Numbers 21:14. Exodus 17:14 may refer to this book.

Joshua 18:9 shows the men who surveyed the land in Canaan recorded the results in a book.

Samuel writes about the rules of kingship in 1 Samuel 10:25 after anointing Saul as king. There is a good note at 1 Chronicles 29:29 in the 2002 Scofield Study Bible edition concerning additional books mentioned in

the Old Testament but not in our canon or even found today. 1 Chronicles 29:29 uses the Hebrew 'dabar' for book and we see that the prophets Samuel, Nathan and Gad wrote books concerning the acts of king David. Another book was written about the acts of king Solomon see 1 Kings 11:41.

Moses writes in Exodus 17:14 and Deuteronomy 31:24, Joshua wrote see Joshua 24:26, as well as Samuel, Nathan and Gad. During the reign of David, Jehoshaphat was the professional 'recorder' of the king's deeds, see 2 Samuel 20:24. The NKJV translates the Hebrew '*hamazakir*' as 'recorder'.

See passages like 2 Chronicles 34:8 and Isaiah 36:22. Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon makes clear that this position was a historian who maintained official records of the Hebrew kings. Such official records from the time of David make sense of the archaeology record, e.g. the 1994 discovery of a reference to the 'House of David' at Tel Dan on a stele.)

'Short' sojourn comes up short?

Two of this journal's articles have recently argued for a 215-year sojourn of Israel in Egypt.¹ This is shorter by half than the 430 years stated in Exodus 12:40, where Moses writes: 'Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years' (NIV, emphasis added).

For several reasons I believe that the plain sense of this passage should stand, and that the 'short' sojourn view, though held in good faith by a number of scholars, is unsatisfactory.

1. The Hebrew text of Exodus 12:40–41, which our English versions reflect, is constant in attesting to both the Egyptian locus, and the 430-year duration, of the sojourn. Twice (including v. 41) it says that the period in Egypt lasted 430 years ('lived in Egypt ... 430 years. At the end of the 430 years, to the very day, all ... left Egypt'). There is no hint of the distinctive diamond-shaped sign used by the Masoretic scribes to indicate any doubtful Hebrew reading (only 15 in the entire Old Testament, none in Exodus).² The Exodus scroll found at Qumran preserved the same reading, leading *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* translators to observe that 'The Masoretic text and 4QExodc