

# BIBLICAL CHRONOLOGY

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## Egypt in Biblical History

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Both Bible history and the current consensus chronology of the ancient world are tied up intimately with Egyptian history and chronology. Thus, as we broaden *Biblical Chronology* beyond the matter of adding up numbers and try to integrate Biblical chronology with the ancient world, the place to start would seem to be Egypt.

Before we start, however, I have to make a decision. Heretofore I have suggested that Daniel's 70 weeks of years should be taken literally as 490 years, and should begin with the decree of Cyrus. Virtually nobody believes this is possible today because of the grip of the Ptolemaic chronology and supposed astronomical synchronism that establish the current consensus chronology (hereafter CCC). I have provided information in previous issues of this newsletter that seriously call those prejudices into question (*Biblical Chronology* 2:1, 2:12, 3:1, 3:5, & 4:11). Now I need to make a decision regarding how to proceed. Shall I use the B.C. dates that assume Ptolemy and the CCC are correct, or shall I go with my inclination to take Daniel's 70 weeks of years chronologically? The CCC puts the decree of Cyrus in 536 B.C. The strictest Biblical chronology (hereafter SBC) would put it at 456 B. C., a difference of 80 years,

My decision is to go with the SBC as regards B.C. dates. I have two reasons for doing this. First of all, it is my private inclination. Second is the fact that this newsletter and almost all of my writings (as well as those of Gary North and similar persons) are highly prophetic. I'm not writing to persuade people to make slight adjustments in their paradigm (model). As we shall see, the CCC is under major assault within the world of archaeology and ancient history today. Yet, I seriously doubt if writings like mine will be taken seriously by even the revisionists within the academy.

One thing that makes prophetic ministries different from priestly ones is context. Prophets arise when the inadequacies of the present context or paradigm become intolerable. Thus, prophets do not find the happiness of working within a context of other people, or of many other people. Prophets create new contexts by calling people to rethink themselves and the world. Priests, however, minister within a context, gradually moving people forward. A priest, thus, can have a movement of people behind him that grows out of a preexisting situation. Movements within the church, such as the Church Growth Movement or the Charismatic Movement, grow out of two or three centuries of foundation. They are

'Prophetic work is quite different. Like Moses or Elijah, the prophet stands outside the trend and advocates something different by calling people back to the Bible. The prophet initially has only a few followers.

Now, it sounds very self-congratulatory for me to call myself a prophet, and I'm certainly not on a par with Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, or Luther. But at the same time in God's providence I have never been allowed the luxury of a context, or very much of one, and I've come to accept that this is my place. If I were writing in an Episcopalian context, I'd get into trouble for saying that kneeling for communion is a bad idea. If I were writing in a Presbyterian context, I'd get into trouble for saying that pastors need pastors, too, and so bishops are a good and necessary blessing. Obviously, if I were writing in a Baptist context I'd get into trouble for advocating paedobaptism and paedocommunion. My problem has been that I keep seeing things in the Bible that most people in these various contexts don't see and don't want to hear about.

These newsletters are published by the Institute for Christian Economics, whose president, Gary North, has been engaged in prophetic-type work for over twenty years. All of the ICE publications are designed to challenge the existing evangelical paradigm, expose its compromises, and call Christians back to a more serious consideration of the teachings in the Bible. So, since I'm calling for a "root and branch" reworking of ancient world chronology, why should I fall short of saying everything I think? If God blesses these writings and they wind up having some influence, then sooner or later other men will come along behind me and correct my errors. A new paradigm will grow out of the prophetic challenge laid down by these newsletters and by the work of others in this area. For now I seem to be called to plant prophetic seeds and see if God chooses to cause them to bear any fruit eventually.

With this in mind, let me provide at the outset a brief skeleton of Bible dates, and in this chart I'll set out all three forms of dating. As I proceed, however, I'm usually going to use SBC dates. The CCC dates are not simply 80 years off from the SBC dates because the CCC also misinterprets the period of the kings and is off by many years. Also, many CCC scholars erroneously think that the Hebrews were in Goshen for 430 years, and thus backdate the birth of Abram by 215 years. The CCC dates given here come from the

(1) This is an

	<u>Anno Mundi</u>	<u>B.C. (SBC)</u>	<u>B.C. (CCC)</u>
Creation	0	3930	undated*
Flood	1656	2274	undated*
Birth of Abram	2008	1922	1952 or 2167
Exodus	2513	1417	1447
Temple begun	2993	937	966
Fall of Jerusalem	3425	505	586
Decree of Cyrus	3474	456	536

'Evangelical using the CCC do not accept the chronological interpretation of Genesis 5 & 11, believing that there are gaps in the record. Thus, they can date neither the Flood nor the Creation.

### The Beginnings of Egypt

Genesis 10:6 tells us that the sons of Ham were Cush, Mitsrayim (Mizraim), Put, and Canaan. We know from Genesis 9:25 that Canaan was the actual name of one of Ham's sons. Cush also seems to have been the name of a person, because his children are mentioned by name in Genesis 10:7-12. Mitsrayim, however, is apparently a dual form in Hebrew, and the seven children of Mitsrayim listed in Genesis 10:13-14 are all in the plural (*Ludim*, *Anamim*, etc.), indicating nations rather than individuals. The dual form "mitsrayim" has almost always been taken to indicate the "two Egypts," that is the lower Egypt of the Nile delta and the upper Egypt to the south. Certainly the Egyptians thought of their land that way, and supposedly this is reflected in the Hebrew dual form. At any rate, perhaps Ham had a son named Mitser or something, whose name was altered in Genesis 10 to Mitsrayim in order to denote the nation that came from him; or perhaps the personal name of Ham's son has not been recorded in favor of giving the name of the nation, Herodotus calls the first king of Egypt Menes, founder of Memphis, and in the past "Menes" has sometimes been seen as a Hellenized form of something like "Mitser." One no longer encounters this association in scholarly literature, but whether this is because the required consonant shifts have been proven impossible or because Genesis 10 is simply ignored, I do not know,

The ancestor of the Egyptians, whom we shall call Mitser for convenience, was born after the Flood. We know this because there were only eight people on the Ark, so all the children of Shem, Ham, and Japheth were born after the Flood. We are entitled to believe that the four sons of Ham are listed in chronological order in Genesis 10:6, though this may not be the case. Canaan, at least, seems to have been the youngest, for in Genesis 9:24-25, Noah places a curse on Canaan because of what his own youngest son, Ham, had done. Noah's youngest son had rebelled against God's order, so Noah placed a curse on Ham's youngest son. (Remember that curses can be turned into blessings if men repent; the Canaanite Gibeonites did just that in Joshua 9.) At any rate, such seems to be the logic of Genesis 9:24-25, which, if true, would jibe with the fact that Canaan is listed last in Genesis 10:6. At any rate, I shall take it that Mitser was Ham's second-born son.

According to Genesis 11:10-13, Shem's son Arphaxshad was born two years after the Flood and lived 438 years. We may guess that Mitser was born to Ham sometime during the same decade at least and lived a comparably long life. Thus,

	<u>Anno Mundi</u>	<u>B.C. (SBC)</u>
Flood	1656	2274
Birth of Mitser (?)	1660	2270
Birth of Peleg	1757	2173
Tower of Babel (?)	1871	2059
Death of Peleg	1996	1934
Birth of Abram	2008	1922
Abram at 75	2083	1847
Abram leaves Egypt (?)	2086	1844
Death of Mitser (?)	2098	1832

This brings us to the question of when Egypt was founded, and whether Mitser actually founded it. Perhaps Mitser was the Menes who founded the first dynasty of Egypt. Or perhaps he was the father of those who became Egyptians later on.

We can put together a possible scenario by taking the tower of Babel incident into account. In *Biblical* 5:6 I argued that the scattering at the tower of Babel probably happened in the middle or later in the life of Peleg, who died in A.M. 1996. The dividing of the world happened during his life, and the clans of his brother Joktan were instrumental in the sin at Babel, which would put the event later in Peleg's life rather than earlier.

For aesthetic reasons I shall arbitrarily put the division of the nations in A.M. 1871 (2059 B. C.; midway between the Flood and Abram's exodus from Egypt), and it is possible that the first dynasty of Egypt began shortly thereafter. Of course, it might have begun earlier. Diodorus states that Menes introduced the worship of the gods into Egypt, perhaps a link to the aftermath of the Babelic apostasy. But all of this is very tenuous. The Bible does not give us enough to go on, and it will have to be up to archaeologists and historians to settle the matter, if they ever do.

Genesis 10:13-14 gives us an important bit of information often overlooked, which is that the Philistine were descendants of Mitsrayim. That is, the Philistine are grandchildren of the Egyptians, and in the Bible the Philistine are virtually equivalent to the Egyptians. The history of Israel's deliverance from Philistia in the time of Samson and David is equivalent to Israel's deliverance from Egypt in the time of Moses, and there are many, many deliberate parallels in the two events. Similarly, Abram's descent into Egypt and his exodus out of it are parallel to his later sojourn in Philistia, and also to Isaac's later sojourn in Philistia.

### Egypt and the Patriarchs

If we don't know much about the origin of Egypt, we do know that Egypt was a mighty power by the time of Abram's arrival in the land of Canaan (Genesis 12). A famine in the land caused Abram to journey to Egypt for a time. Bear in mind that Abram was an important personage, what we might call a sheik today. He had 318 fighting men in his sheikdom (Gen. 14:14), which means he had many other shepherds and servants, with their wives and children. From the outset, Abram presided over a nation of perhaps 3000 or more people.

The fact that Abram journeyed to Egypt indicates that Egypt exercised hegemony over the land of Canaan at this time. Also, we know that Israel sojourned in Egypt for 430 years, beginning at this point in time. Thus, Egypt exercised  
over

patriarchs (see *Biblical* of this).

2:7 for a fuller discussion

Abram entered Canaan in A.M. 2083 (1 847 B.C.). We are not told how long he dwelt in Canaan before his descent into Egypt, but I suggest two years. My reason is almost purely aesthetic and theological: it means that Abram's exodus from Egypt happened in the third year, as did his separation from Lot. So often in the Bible a preliminary judgment is rendered on the third day or in the third year, that it makes sense to see the same thing happening here. We do read in Genesis 12:4 that Abram was 75 when he left Haran. He spent a little time at Shechem (v. 6). Then he pitched his tent at Bethel (v. 8), a statement that indicates a somewhat longer sojourn. After a time, he moved into the Negev (v. 9). Then there was a famine in the land. Abram moved into Egypt, was celebrated as a sheik, and received many gifts. Then God struck the Egyptians with plagues. All of this indicates to me a time of about 2-3 years.

Now, what is interesting is that if Abram's exodus from Egypt came in the third year, A.M. 2086, this is 430 years after the Flood. The 430 years of "bondage" in Egypt begin with Abram's arrival in Canaan, as we have seen, so that there would be a three-year overlap of these two 430-year periods. Since the Hebrews' migration into Goshen happened exactly in the middle of the 430 years of "bondage in Egypt," it strikes me as aesthetically appropriate to put the fall of the nations at the tower of Babel exactly in the middle of the 430 years from the Flood to Abram's third year in Canaan. That is why I put the tower of Babel in A.M. 1871. This date for Babel is late enough for Joktan and his clans to be involved, but early enough for the two civilizations of Ur and Egypt to have developed to the point they seem to have at the time of Abram.

But the reader should be aware that my suggestion that Abram's exodus from Egypt happened in the third year of his sojourn in Canaan is somewhat speculative (though I think pretty well grounded in the text and in Biblical theology), and my date for the tower of Babel is purely speculative, though approximately correct.

At any rate, as regards Egypt, any reconstruction of ancient history must see Egypt as a great power already by this time, and continuing to be a power for 430 years.

Another important piece of information is found in the conversion of Pharaoh and apparently of the entire Egyptian nation under Joseph. Pharaoh's dissatisfaction with the old bread and the old wine caused him to cast his baker and cupbearer into prison in the year A.M. 2286. Three years later Pharaoh found better bread and wine in Joseph, in whom he recognized the Spirit of God (Gen. 41:38, in Hebrew). Later on, Pharaoh knelt before Jacob to receive the blessing of Yahweh (Gen. 47:7-10). Throughout Genesis 41 to 50 the Egyptians are always pictured as rejoicing at the good things that happen to the Hebrews, and as mourning at the death of Jacob. This is clearly a picture of national conversion. Joseph ruled Egypt for Pharaoh from A.M. 2289 to 2369, and sometime after that the Pharaoh and the Egyptians apostatized from the true faith.

What this means is that any accurate history of Egypt must assume an era of faith between the years 1641 B.C. and 1561 B.C.

### Egypt and Moses

The Hebrews began to multiply in Egypt, and about a

it. His effort climaxed with the command to murder all boy babies, a command his daughter rejected when she adopted Moses (Ex. 1). What this shows us is that Egyptian civilization was very dependant upon slave labor from about 2413 to the time of the exodus in 2513 (or 1517-1417 B.C.). Then the Egyptian culture was demolished for several centuries.

The Bible says nothing about Egypt until we read in 1 Kings 3:1 that Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter. This was shortly before the Temple began to be built in 2993 (937 B.C.). Egypt had obviously begun to be a power by this time, but in David's day it was still not important enough to be noticed. Thus, for nearly 480 years after the exodus, Egypt was a minor power.

Let's consider what the Bible actually says happened to Egypt in 1417 B.C.:

1. A slave labor base of over 600,000 men was lost, and a working population of an unknown number of "mixed multitude" also departed.
2. All the crops of Egypt were destroyed.
3. All the cattle of Egypt were destroyed.
4. All the firstborn sons of Egypt were killed.
5. The Egyptian army was wiped out.
6. The Pharaoh was killed, because the Pharaohs always led their armies.
7. The gods of Egypt were humiliated completely.

Now this event was of a huge magnitude. Scholars using the CCC today often tell us that it happened during the reign of Thutmose III, but we not only have the sarcophagus of Thutmose III, we also know nothing like this happened during his reign. The same is true of the alternative sometimes suggested, Rameses II. This construction of ancient history is clearly completely wrong.

The destruction of Egypt must have ushered in a dark age. Any reconstruction of ancient history that does not have an Egyptian dark age beginning in 1417 B.C. (or the equivalent CCC date, 1447 B. C.) is wrong.

Moreover, on their way out of Egypt the Israelites encountered a savage tribe of men called Amalekites (Ex. 17). There is reason to believe that these Amalekites were on their way to Egypt to pillage it. As Rahab informs us (Joshua 2:9-11), the shock of the collapse of Egypt was felt immediately in Canaan, which after all was under Egyptian hegemony. It is reasonable to assume that vultures would immediately descend upon the corpse of Egypt. Genesis 36:12 tells us that Amalek was a grandson of Esau, and thus the Amalekites were Semites of the Hebrew line, though they were completely mingled with Canaanite Horites (Gen. 36:1-43).

Immanuel Velikovsky must be given credit for suggesting that the Hyksos or Shepherd-King dynasties of Egypt were the Amalekites. The Hyksos were culturally degenerate and foreign, and evidently ruled Egypt for over 400 years.

### Egypt and the Kings of Israel

As we have seen, Egypt had become a world power by the time of Solomon's accession to the throne in A.M. 2989, A Pharaoh whom the Bible calls Shishak was on the throne of Egypt at the end of Solomon's reign and at the beginning of Rehoboam's (1 Kings 11:40; 14:25).

Zerah the Ethiopian, evidently a Pharaoh, was defeated by Asa of Judah, apparently in the 10th year of the latter's reign (2 Chronicles 14). This is A.M. 3069.

In the days of Ahaz of Judah and Hoshea of Israel, Egypt was active as an alternative to Shalmaneser of Assyria (2

In Hezekiah's day the Judahites were involved with Egypt (2 Kings 18:21). Hezekiah followed Ahaz in Judah, so we have continuity of Egyptian presence in this era of Biblical history.

Manasseh followed Hezekiah, and during his 55-year (A.M. 331 4-3369; 616-561 B. C.) reign the Egyptians seem to have been inferior to the Assyrians in power. Sometime during Manasseh's reign the Assyrians captured him.

After Manasseh came Amen for two years, and then Josiah for 31 years. Pharaoh Neco fought Babylon in the days of Josiah, killed Josiah, and captured Jehoahaz, taking him to Egypt (2 Kings 23:29-35). This was in A.M. 3402 (528 B. C., SBC).

What emerges from this survey is that Egypt was something of a power in the days of Solomon and Rehoboam, but then ceased to be very relevant to the scene until the days of Ahaz. The Egyptians opposed the Assyrians, but evidently were not strong enough to dislodge Assyrian hegemony over Canaan. Thus, the following information needs to be taken into account in constructing a history and chronology of the ancient world:

c. A.M.2980	c.950BC(SBC)	c.979(CCC)	Egypt re-emerges as power
c.2980-3030	c.950-900	c.979-929	Egypt active with Solomon and Rehoboam
3060	870	c.899	Egypt defeated by Asa
c.3069-3285	c.861 -645	c.899-732	Egypt apparently inactive in Canaan, possible period of weakness
c.3285-3474	c.645-456	c.732-539	Egypt opposes Assyria and Babylon ineffectually, but manages not to be conquered
c.3285	c.445	c.528	Conquest of Egypt by Cambyses of Persia

## Current Consensus Chronology and Egypt

If the Bible is correct, then virtually everything written about the history of Egypt in Bible Dictionaries and Bible Encyclopedias is wrong. The consensus history that is used in these works says that the Hebrews departed Egypt during the reign of Thutmose III, one of the greatest of the Egyptian Pharaohs and one of the earliest in what is called the New strongerand stronger, and its power and influence continued until around 1070 B. C.(CCC). Thus, those who suggest that the exodus happened during the reign of Thutmose's successor are also wrong.

Now this is precisely the period when, according to the Bible, Egypt was undergoing several centuries of devastation and weakness. Both of these things cannot be true, and it is a testimony to the almost unbelievable schizophrenic capacity of the human mind for self-delusion that any evangelical scholar could try to believe both of these things. In any other field of endeavor such an attempt would be called insanity. Only in Biblical studies does such stupidity go unchecked and unchallenged year after year.

You see, what is surprising is that no evangelical scholar bothers to question this. It would be one thing if the articles in dictionaries and encyclopedias addressed the problem and the authors then came away scratching their heads in bafflement. That would show that at least the author had come to grips with the problem. But these men are so caught up in the current and clearly wrong scholarly consensus that they don't even seem to see the problem at all. It is utterly amazing.

Happily there are serious revisionist movements in the scholarly world outside evangelicalism that are pointing out the serious errors in this historical reconstruction, and pointing out the serious errors in the assumptions underlying it. We shall investigate these errors in the next several editions of