

' BIBLICAL CHRONOLOGY

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The Chronology of the Pentateuch (Part 3)

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8. The Table of Nations

If we assume births every two years, and about 30 years between generations (**cp.** Gen. 11:12-24), we can come up with an approximate series of dates for the generations **recorded** in Genesis 10. We **shall** assume that **all** three of Noah's sons had their firstborn sons two years **after** the Flood (**cp.** Gen. 11:10). See the Table.

9. Abram in Canaan and Egypt

Abram entered Canaan in AM 2083. 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. Often in the Bible a preliminary judgment is rendered on the third day or in the third year, and thus it is reasonable to suggest that the same thing happened 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, **AM 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 AM 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.

10. The Chronological Structure of Abraham's Life

Abraham was born in 2008. He received his call from God to leave Haran at age 75, in 2083 (**Gen.** 11:32; 12:1; Acts **7:4**). After ten years he took **Hagar** as concubine at age 85 (**Gen. 16:3**), in 2093. **Ishmael** was born a year later, when Abraham was 86 (**Gen.** 16:16), in 2094. Since Abraham lived 175 years, the birth of **Ishmael** came at the center of his life. We shall discuss the importance of this below.

— **At the age of 99, Abraham was told to circumcise** his household, and was told that Sarah would have a son (**Gen.** **17:1, 24; 18:10**). This was the year 2107, the year Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. The next year, 2108, Isaac was born (**Gen. 17:17; 21:5**).

Five years later, Isaac was "weaned," meaning that he moved from his mother's tent to his father's (or in some other way was presented by Sarah to Abraham). The 400 years of Genesis 15:13 began when Isaac was five years old. This is approximately the time when Isaac was **weaned**, and when **Ishmael** was seen laughing by Sarah and was cast out. **Ishmael's** mother was an Egyptian, as the text is careful to point out in this context (**Gen.** 21 :9). While there was no direct oppression involved in **Ishmael's** simple laughter, yet when we remember that the name Isaac means "he laughs," we can understand Sarah's fear that **Ishmael** would be a counterfeit Isaac. Paul in **Galatians 4:29** says that this laughter constituted "persecution," in

An Hypothetical Chronology for the Table of Nations

Date	Line of Shem	Line of Ham	Line of Japheth
1656- Flood			
1658-	Arpachshad ben Shem	Cush ben Ham	Gomer ben Japheth
1660-	Elam ben Shem	Mitsrayim ben Ham	Magog ben Japheth
1662-	Asshur ben Shem	Put ben Ham	Madai ben Japheth
1664-	Lud ben Shem	Canaan ben Ham	Javan ben Japheth
1666-	Aram ben Shem		Tubal ben Japheth
1668 -			Meshech ben Japheth
1670-			Tiras ben Japheth
----- Generation gap			
1688-		Seba ben Cush	Ashkenaz ben Gomer
1690-		Havilah ben Cush [Ludim] ben Mitsrayim	Riphath ben Gomer
1692-		Sabtah ben Cush [Anamim] ben Mitsrayim	Togarmab ben Gomer
1693-	Shelah ben Arpachshad		
1694-		Raamah ben Cush [Lehabim] ben Mitsrayim Sidon ben Canaan	Elishah ben Javan
1696-	Uz ben Aram	Sabteca ben Cush [Naphtuhim] ben Mitsrayim Heth ben Canaan	Tarshish ben Javan
1698-	Hul ben Aram	Nimrod ben Cush (?) [Pathrusim] ben Mitsrayim [Jebusite] ben Canaan	[Kittim] ben Javan ¹
1700-	Gether ben Aram	[Casluhim] ben Mitsrayim [Amorite] ben Canaan	[Dodanim] ben Javan
1702-	Mash ben Aram	[Caphtorim] ben Mitsrayim [Girgashite] ben Canaan	
1704-		[Hivite] ben Canaan	
1706-		[Arkite] ben Canaan	
1708-		[Sinite] ben Canaan	
1710-		[Arvadite] ben Canaan	
1712-		[Zemarite] ben Canaan	
1714-		[Hamathite] ben Canaan	

Date	Line of Shem	Line of Ham	Line of Japheth
----- Generation gap			
1723-	Eber ben Shelah		
1724-		Sheba ben Raamah	
1726-		Dedan ben Raamah	
1730-		[Philistine] ben [Casluhim]	
----- Generation gap			
1757-	Peleg ben Eber		
1759-	Joktan ben Eber	Nimrod ben . . . Cush (?)	
----- Generation gap			
1787-	Reu ben Peleg		
1789-	Almodad ben Joktan		
1791-	Sheleph ben Joktan		
1793-	Hazarmaveth ben Joktan		
1795-	Jerah ben Joktan		
1797-	Hadoram ben Joktan		
1799-	Uzal ben Joktan		
1801-	Diklah ben Joktan		
1803-	Obal ben Joktan		
1805-	Abimael ben Joktan		
1807-	Sheba ben Joktan		
1809-	Ophir ben Joktan		
1811-	Havilah ben Joktan		
4 \$ 1 3	Jobab ben Joktan		
----- Generation gap			
1819-	Serug ben Reu		
----- Generation gap			
1849-	Nahor ben Serug		
----- Generation gap			
187 1? -	Tower of Babel		
1878-	Terah ben Nahor		

the sense that it **detracted** from Isaac's place as heir. Thus, Paul identifies the beginning of the 400 year oppression with the weaning of Isaac. This is the year 2113. Abraham was 105.

Sarah died 32 **years** later. Sarah was 90 at the birth of Isaac (**Gen.17:17; 21:5**). She died at the age of 127 (**Gen. 23: 1**). Therefore, Isaac was 37 when Sarah died, in the year 2145. Abraham was 137.

Abraham died at the age of 175 (**Gen.25:7**), in 2183.

In the providence of God, Abraham's life is structured **chiastically**:

- A. **Birth** in 2008
- B. Entrance into land at age 75
- C. Birth of **Ishmael** at age 86
- B' **.Birth** of Isaac at age 100
- A' **.Death** at age 175

If we reflect on this, we see that the land and seed are connected (B). We also see that at the center of Abraham's life (C) is the production of his own **seed**, which is not good enough. In a sense, **Ishmael** is Abraham's true seed, the seed produced by sinful man (though **Ishmael** became a believer, Gen. 21:20, cp. 21:22). Only **after** God's miracle is the true seed born, the **seed** of the woman, whose dead womb is miraculously opened.

Interestingly the second half of Abraham's life is also structured **chiastically**:

- A. Birth of Isaac, Abraham **100**
- B. Death of Sarah, Abraham 137
- A' **.Death** at age 175

The death of Sarah, followed shortly by Isaac's marriage, which involves taking Rebekah into Sarah's tent (**Gen. 24:67**), moves Abraham off the scene as regards the core of redemptive history. Abraham marries **Keturah** and has six more sons, but they are not the seed line.

Now, if we look at Acts **7:2-4**, we find the Holy Spirit saying that Abram received God's initial call in Ur, moved to Haran until his father Terah died, and then moved to Canaan. This is, of course, a **typological prophecy** of Israel's later exodus from Egypt: wandering in the wilderness (**Haran**) until the older generation (**Terah**) dies, and then entering the land. We are not told when Abram made his exodus from Ur and went to Haran, but it was sometime during his first 75 years. Also, at some point in these 75 years he married Sarai. Thus, Abram's marriage to Sarah and call parallel **chiastically** the death of Sarah and the removal of his call. We can now put it **all** together (see the chart).

The Structure of Abraham's Life

A. Birth of Abraham

B. Marriage to Sarah and call of Abraham (age ?)

C. Sojourn in Haran; God appears and tells him to leave (**Gen. 12**)

D. Entrance of Abraham into land (age 75)

E. Attack of Pharaoh on Sarah (**Gen. 12**) (age 76-77?)

F. Abraham re-enters land (**Gen. 13**) (age 77?)

G. War of the Kings; Lot rescued (**Gen. 14**) (age 78?)

H. God appears to Abraham (**Gen. 15**) (age 78?)

I. Birth of Abraham's son **Ishmael** (age 86)

H'. God appears to Abraham (**Gen. 17**) (age 99)

G'. Destruction of Sodom; **Lot** rescued (**Gen. 18**) (age 99)

F'. Abraham leaves land (**Gen. 20**) (age 99)

E'. Attack of **Abimelech** on Sarah (**Gen. 20**) (age 99)

D'. Birth of Sarah's son Isaac (age 100)

C'. Sojourn in Philistine territory; God appears, tells him to leave, return to land, offer Isaac (**Gen. 22**)

B'. Death of Sarah and removal of Abraham's call (age 137)

A'. Death of Abraham (age 175)