

THE CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF YEARS FROM ADAM TO THE MESSIAH

The New Testament apostles took the statements in Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8 literally – that God views a thousand years as being a prophetic Day in His sight. They also believed that the Genesis account of creation, in that God created all things in six days and rested on the seventh, was prophetic in that the plan of redemption would encompass a great Week of seven prophetic thousand-year Days (or seven thousand years of our time). This prophetic Week would consist of four Days for the Old Testament era, two Days for the Church, and a seventh Day for Christ's millennial reign once His Church has been taken to Heaven in the rapture.

They were well aware that the sacred chronology of the Old Testament established the fact that there were exactly four thousand years from the creation of Adam to the start of Jesus' ministry. Therefore, they believed that Jesus would return after two great Days (two thousand years) to reign for the final thousand years in that seventh Day. Early writings show that this was a common teaching in the church of the first few centuries. This article duplicates the chronological record of the 4,000 years spanning the Old Testament era up until Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit at John's baptism and sent forth into ministry.

It is also clear that Jesus of Nazareth understood the chronological tally of years in the Old Testament as well. His statement in Luke 13:32 that two prophetic Days of Messianic ministry would conclude with a third Day of perfection, reveals that He understood the concept of God's prophetic Week for mankind. So in effect, the Lord Himself verified the chronological record that follows.

The implications of this revelation are enormous. Since Jesus' ministry began sometime between 26 and 30 AD, the addition of two prophetic Days (Days 5 and 6) can only mean that the seventh great Day will dawn in the next decade, sometime between 2026 and 2030 AD. Since this revelation is heavily substantiated in other passages throughout the Bible, we can expect Christ to return in the rapture in the next decade during this narrow window of years. And as strange as this might seem, the early church marked ours as the generation that would witness the Lord's return nearly two thousand years ago.

The chronological record divides the Old Testament into seven natural periods. Each of the seven periods begins and ends with the occurrence of a strategic event in the plan of God leading up to the manifestation of the Messiah at age 30. As you will see, these seven periods total 4,000 years – just four prophetic Days in God's

sight. A brief description of these periods, along with the Scriptural references that reveal the length of each period follows:

Period #1: From the creation of Adam to the birth of Abraham

The book of Genesis begins the genealogical record of Adam. This sacred chronology provides the number of years that lapsed between the births of each succeeding patriarch in the lineage leading up to Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation. The number of years for this period is obtained by simply adding up the years in the following references:

From the creation of Adam to Seth	
130 years	Genesis 5:3-5
From the birth of Seth to Enosh	
105 years	Genesis 5:6-8
From the birth of Enosh to Cainan	
90 years	Genesis 5:9-11
From the birth of Cainan to Mahalalel	
70 years	Genesis 5:12-14
From the birth of Mahalalel to Jared	
65 years	Genesis 5:15-17
From the birth of Jared to Enoch	
162 years	Genesis 5:18-20
From the birth of Enoch to Methuselah	
65 years	Genesis 5:21-24
From the birth of Methuselah to Lamech	
187 years	Genesis 5:25-27
From the birth of Lamech to Noah	
182 years	Genesis 5:28-31
From the birth of Noah to the flood	
600 years	Genesis 7:5
From the flood to the birth of Arphaxad	
2 years	Genesis 11:10
From the birth of Arphaxad to Salah	
35 years	Genesis 11:12-13
From the birth of Salah to Eber	
30 years	Genesis 11:14-15

From the birth of Eber to Peleg
34 years Genesis 11:16-17
From the birth of Peleg to Reu
30 years Genesis 11:18-19
From the birth of Reu to Serug
32 years Genesis 11:20-21
From the birth of Serug to Nahor
30 years Genesis 11:22-23
From the birth of Nahor to Terah
29 years Genesis 11:24-25
From the birth of Terah to Abraham
130 years See references

The number of years between Terah and Abraham is obtained by examining three passages of scripture. First, the passage in Genesis 11:32 states that Terah died in Haran at the age of 205.

So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

Second, the reference in Acts 7:4 reveals that Abraham left Haran when Terah died.

Then he [Abraham] came out of the land of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, he moved into this land in which you now dwell.

Third, Genesis 12:4 reveals that Abraham was 75 years old when he departed from Haran for the Promised Land.

So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Since Abraham left Haran when Terah died at 205, himself being 75 years old, Terah must have been 130 years old (205–75) when Abraham was born. Accordingly, the number of years for this time period equals 2,008, consisting of 1,878 years to the birth of Terah, and 130 years to the birth of Abraham.

Total years = 2,008

Period #2: From the birth of Abraham to the birth of Isaac, when God confirmed His covenant with Abraham and his seed

The day that God appeared to Abraham and entered into a covenant relationship is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis. Abraham was 99 years old at the time. It was on this day that God changed Abram's name to Abraham, "the father of many nations." It was on this day that Abraham and all in his household were circumcised. It was on this day that God promised an heir would be born through Sarah. Abraham confirmed his part of the covenant by the act of circumcision. God confirmed His part of the covenant through the miracle birth of Isaac the next year. The passage in Genesis 21:5 states that Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born and the covenant was confirmed.

And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

Isaac was the "son of promise" and foreshadowed the true Son of promise, Jesus Christ, who would be given as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. The confirmation of this covenant was a pivotal event in the Old Testament and rightly forms the end of period #2.

Total years = 100

Period #3: From the birth of Isaac and the confirmation of the covenant to the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt – when Moses gave them the Law

The duration of years for this time period is given in Exodus 12:40-41.

Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years--on that very same day--it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

The word "sojourn" means to abide somewhere temporarily as a traveler or a guest. The English translation of the passage above *appears* to say that the children of Israel spent 430 years in the land Egypt, but this was not the case. Other translations, such as the Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch, and Septuagint provide a more literal rendering of the Hebrew: "The time that the sons of Israel, which dwelt in Egypt *and in the land of Canaan*, sojourned was 430 years."

The Scripture makes it clear that Abraham and his immediate descendants (Isaac and Jacob) were also considered to be sojourners.

I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Genesis 17:8)

Since the time of their sojourn includes the time spent in Canaan, not just in Egypt, we need to know when the 430 years of sojourning began. Did it begin when Abraham left Haran at age 75 and was childless, or when he was 100 and Isaac was born in confirmation of the covenant?

The apostle Paul answered this question for us in his letter to the Galatians. In Galatians 3:15-18, Paul makes his case that righteousness is obtained through faith, and not by keeping the law. In doing so, he makes reference to the covenant cut between God and Abraham. He tells us that this covenant *predated the giving of the law (at the time the children of Israel left Egypt) by 430 years.*

Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

The apostle Paul, himself a student of the sacred chronology, wrote this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the 430 years of Exodus 12:40 began when Abraham was 100 years old, while living in Canaan, and when God confirmed the covenant through the miraculous birth of Isaac. They came to an end when the children of Israel left Egypt under Moses and the Law was given a few months later.

Total years = 430

Period #4: From the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt and the giving of the Law to the construction of Solomon's Temple

As in the prior period, the number of years spanning this period of time is supplied to us in one verse of scripture, in 1 Kings 6:1.

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

The last time period ended with the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt. This passage establishes the boundaries between period #3 and period #4. The period begins with the children of Israel coming up out of Egypt and ends in the fourth year of the reign of King Solomon. Therefore, time period #4 is 480 years.

We can see a pattern emerging. Each time period, as defined by the language of the chronological references, begins and ends with significantly important events. In other words, the time periods are not arbitrary choices on our part. The chronological references themselves determine the breaks between periods, which also coincide with key events leading up to the revelation of the Messiah.

God is marking the significant events along the trail to the Messiah, such as Abraham, the Covenant, the giving of the Law, and the building of the Temple. He is also giving us the amount of time that lapsed between these events. Since many other passages contain the number of years associated with a wide assortment of events, this lets us know that we are following the main trail.

Total years = 480

Period #5: From the construction of the Temple to its destruction; when the Jewish survivors were taken captive to Babylon

This next time period is framed by two significant events relative to the House of the Lord. The period begins in the fourth year of Solomon, when he began to build the Temple. The period ends with the last king who ruled from Jerusalem, when the city was conquered by the Babylonians and the Temple was destroyed. The total length of time for this period is provided by the "length of time" each succeeding king of Judah reigned while the Temple remained.

The record of these kings is found in 2 Chronicles, together with the number of years associated with each reign. So again, it is just a matter of adding up the years. The passage in 2 Chronicles 9:30 states that the reign of Solomon lasted 40 years. Since the first four years of his reign belong to the prior time period, we must subtract those years. Therefore, only the remaining 36 years of his reign should be counted in this period. The following is the sum of years for this period.

Solomon	36	years	2 Chron. 9:30 and I Kings 6:1
Rehoboam	17	years	2 Chron. 9:31 and 12:13
Abijah	3	years	2 Chron. 12:16 and 13:1-2
Asa	41	years	2 Chron. 14:1 and 16:13
Jehoshaphat	25	years	2 Chron. 17:1 and 20:31
Jehoram	8	years	2 Chron. 21:1-5
Ahaziah	1	year	2 Chron. 22:1-2
Athaliah	6.5	years	2 Chron. 22:9-12
Joash	40	years	2 Chron. 22:12 and 24:1
Amaziah	29	years	2 Chron. 24:27 and 25:1
Uzziah	52	years	2 Chron. 26:1-3
Jotham	16	years	2 Chron. 26:23 and 27:1
Ahaz	16	years	2 Chron. 27:9 and 28:1
Hezekiah	29	years	2 Chron. 28:27 and 29:1
Manasseh	55	years	2 Chron. 32:33 and 33:1
Amon	2	years	2 Chron. 33:20-21
Josiah	31	years	2 Chron. 33:25 and 34:1
Jehoahaz	0.25	years	2 Chron. 36:1-2
Jehoiakim	11	years	2 Chron. 36:2-5
Jehoiachim	0.25	years	2 Chron. 36:8-10
Zedekiah	11	years	2 Chron. 36:10-11

The chronological record for this period ends with the reign of Zedekiah; when King Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, and the 70 years of captivity in Babylon officially began.

Total years = 430

Period #6: From the destruction of the Temple to the decree of Cyrus, king of Persia, for the Jews to return to their Land and rebuild the Temple

The total number of years for this time period is found in the prophecies of Jeremiah. He prophesied that the king of Babylon would come against Jerusalem, destroy the Temple, and take the Jewish people as captives to Babylon. They would remain as captives in this foreign land for seventy years.

Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Because you have not heard My words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' says the

LORD, 'and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations...And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. (Jeremiah 25:8-11)

For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. (Jeremiah 29:10)

The chronology of the kings of Judah ended with the reign of Zedekiah. It was at this time that the prophecies of Jeremiah's 70 years began. As you read select parts from the closing chapter in 2 Chronicles, note the references to Jeremiah's prophecy.

Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand...Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions. And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years. (2 Chronicles 36:17-21)

The 70 years of captivity began with the destruction of Solomon's Temple, when Zedekiah's reign came to an end. The direct references to Jeremiah's prophecy were intentionally given to mark this period as the fulfillment of the prophecy. The statement that this fulfilled the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah marks this as the beginning of the 70 years in no uncertain terms. The next verse in the passage tells us when the seventy years were completed.

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom saying, "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me. And He commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all

His people? May the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up!” (2 Chronicles 36:22-23)

Notice that the proclamation of King Cyrus “fulfilled the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah.” These two events, the destruction of the temple and the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple, bracket the 70 years in real time, just as they do in this article. We do not have to guess when the seventy years began and when they were finished, for the passage above specifically refers to these two events as being the fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy.

Total years = 70

Period #7: From the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple to the anointing of Jesus as the Messiah and the start of His ministry

The 70 years of captivity ended when the Medes and the Persians conquered Babylon. The Medes and the Persians were a dual empire, with Cyrus ruling over Persia and Darius ruling the Medes. It was at this time that the prophecy in Jeremiah was fulfilled.

For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

Note that there were two components to the prophecy - a divine visitation, and the performance of a word that would cause the Jews to return to Jerusalem. God accomplished this by stirring the hearts of two men, a Babylonian captive by the name of Daniel, and Cyrus, the king of Persia.

The prophet Daniel was among the captives who were in Babylon. In the first year of king Darius, which was also the first year of Cyrus, God stirred the heart of Daniel to study the prophecy in Jeremiah concerning the 70 years of captivity.

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans - in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. Daniel 9:1-3

His study led him to the revelation that it was now time for his people to return to their land. As Daniel began to pray, God kept the second part of Jeremiah's prophecy: "After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you."

Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel...yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: "Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city...know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times." (Daniel 9:20-25)

God promised that at the end of the seventy years He would visit His people and perform a word, enabling them to return to their land. He was now making good on that promise. The angel assured Daniel that God had indeed heard his prayer, and the "command" had already gone forth from Heaven. This command was also issued that same year by Cyrus, the king of Persia.

This visitation by the angel Gabriel, together with the Lord's command to Cyrus to build Him a house in Jerusalem, fulfilled the prophecy in Jeremiah. This command was so important that God identified Cyrus by name more than one hundred years before he was born.

Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, and he shall perform all My pleasure, saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," and to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid" ... "Thus says the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held" ... "I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; He shall build My city and let My exiles go free." (Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1 and 13)

The timing and identification of this proclamation is critical. It not only concludes the 70 years of captivity, but initiates the final time period that brings us to the appearance of Jesus as the Messiah (when He started His ministry). Gabriel was sent to deliver one of the most important messages ever delivered – **when** to

expect the Messiah! Jesus' miracle ministry would begin after a combined period of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks, or sixty-nine weeks. In the Hebrew language, the word for "weeks" means "weeks of years," not days. The prophecy meant that Jesus would be manifested as the Messiah (Anointed One) after 483 years (69 x 7).

Gabriel revealed that the 483 years would conclude with the appearance of Messiah the Prince. The word Messiah means "Anointed One." This refers to the moment when the Father anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power at the baptism of John. It was at this time that John officially presented Jesus as the Messiah, or the Christ, to the nation of Israel and Jesus started His miracle ministry.

Many Bible teachers make a strategic mistake when they dismiss the decree of Cyrus and use later decrees by subsequent Persian kings to begin the 483-year countdown to the Messiah. They do this in spite of the overwhelming emphasis that Scripture places on the decree made by Cyrus. The identification of Cyrus' decree as the fulfillment of the prophecy is evidenced by many Scriptures. Both 2 Chronicles 36:22 and Ezra 1:1 state it implicitly. God mentioned Cyrus by name before he was even born, calling him "His Shepherd", and stated that he would perform "all His pleasure" by commanding both Jerusalem and the Temple to be rebuilt.

The main reason that the command of Cyrus is often disregarded is because secular history assigns too many years between his proclamation and the ministry of Jesus. Researchers have shown, however, that the few records that exist during the close of the Old Testament era are highly unreliable. So the question becomes, "Did God make a mistake, or could the historians be wrong?" Since no other portion of Scripture records how much time elapsed from the fall of Babylon to the appearance of Christ, should meager secular records trump the inspired Word of God?

There is evidence that the secular records of history are not completely reliable. The Medo-Persians, for example, were notoriously poor historians. Many of the dating systems related to this period were based on the canon of Ptolemy - a list of Persian kings and the supposed length of time that each king reigned. In a book entitled, *The Seventy Weeks and the Great Tribulation*, the author writes, "Ptolemy does not even pretend to have had any facts as to the length of the Persian period. His dates are based on calculations or guesses made by Eratosthenes, and on certain vague floating traditions."

In 1913, Martin Anstey published a detailed and scholarly book entitled, *Romance of Bible Chronology*, in which he showed that the period Ptolemy assigns to the Persian Empire is about 80 years too long. Compounding the problem is the fact that a great deal of historical information was lost when Alexander the Great

burned the buildings that constituted the palace of Xerxes. This palace contained the treasuries of historical records.

In light of such uncertainties, my view is to accept the testimony of Gabriel's vision instead. The countdown to the Messiah, therefore, began when God sent forth His command from heaven to end their captivity and Cyrus issued his proclamation. It coincided with Daniel's prayer that there would be no delay and when Gabriel delivered the time-specific prophecy as to the appearance of the Messiah.

Total years = 483

Adding it All Up:

Period #1: From the creation of Adam to the birth of Abraham - 2,008 years

Period #2: From the birth of Abraham to the birth of Isaac, when God confirmed His covenant with Abraham and his seed - 100 years

Period #3: From the confirmation of the covenant to the giving of the Law upon leaving Egypt - 430 years

Period #4: From the giving of the Law to the building of the Temple - 480 years

Period #5: From the building of the Temple to the destruction of the Temple and the start of the Babylonian captivity - 430 years

Period #6: From the destruction of the Temple to the decree of Cyrus to return to Israel and rebuild the Temple - 70 years

Period #7: From the decree of Cyrus and Gabriel's visitation concerning the coming Messiah to the ministry of Jesus at age thirty - 483 years

Total Years: 4,000 years (minus 1 year for going from 1 BC to 1 AD)