

# Chronology Notes (Old Testament)

By Gerry Watts

After many years of study and research, I have come to the following conclusions concerning the earlier Biblical Chronology of the Old Testament. The later chronologies of the eras of Israel's kings, and the various captivities, are well established. It is the earlier dates that often cause problems.

The list below begins with the key date of the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Solomon's reign, and then works backwards in time to the Birth of Abram. The first portion of the chronology was originally based on the well-established dates of Edwin Thiele concerning the Hebrew kings, but I found that there was a discrepancy of 20 years for Saul's reign. The subsequent earlier dates below have been established from the time spans revealed in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, thus proving their accuracy.

Some of the key scriptures that have been misunderstood and misapplied by numerous Bible scholars and teachers for many centuries, resulting in inaccurate data, are also explained below. (I have to say that previously I was influenced by these inaccuracies for a time.)

I am greatly indebted to the writings of Dr Stephen E. Jones, particularly his work on chronology in his book *Secrets of Time*, which has helped me to arrive at some of my conclusions (though I disagree with some of his earlier dates concerning Abram and the covenant). The following books have also helped me in some of my research: *Time and the Bible's Number Code* by Bonnie Gaunt, and *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* by Prof. Jack Finegan.

RULER/PROPHET	DATE (BC)	BIBLICAL DETAILS
Solomon (40 years)	970 - 931	Solomon's 4 <sup>th</sup> Year <u>967</u> , his first year being 970. Solomon was anointed King while David was still alive, though this co-regency was probably only a matter of weeks or months (I Kings 1:28-40).
David (40 years)	1010 - 971	David's reign (1 Kings 2:10-11)

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Saul (40 years)	1050 - 1011	In Acts 13:21, Paul clearly states that Saul reigned for 40 years
Period of the Judges including Samuel (from the death of Joshua to King Saul)	1379 - 1051	The period of the Judges was 328 years
Joshua's Rule after Moses	1407 - <b>1379</b>	Joshua was 82 years of age when he took over from Moses and began to conquer the land of Canaan. Joshua died at the age of 110 (Joshua 1-3; 24:29. Also Book of Jasher 88:9; 90:32-47)
The Conquest Begun	<b>1407</b>	The Conquest (Battle of Jericho) to the Distribution of the Land under Joshua (10 years). The beginning of the Distribution occurred 5 years after the Conquest began (Joshua 14) but it evidently took another 5 years to complete. Joshua's rule lasted another 18 years after this, but the key date here is 1402.
The Division of the Land	<b>1402</b> - 1397	The reason for this is because Paul also mentions these two events in Acts 13:19-20 (See below). It is stated that 450 years elapsed from the Servitude/Sojourning to the Distribution of the Land (1847 - 450 = 1397)
The Wilderness (40 years)	1447 - 1407	The Wilderness Wanderings
Moses/Exodus	<b><u>1447</u></b>	1 Kings 6:1 says 480 Years from Solomon's <u>4<sup>th</sup> year</u> back to the <u>Exodus</u> (967 + 480 = <u>1447 BC</u> )

<p>The Servitude Wanderings in Canaan and Egypt begins  (400 years)</p>	<p><b>1847</b> - 1447</p>	<p>Genesis 15:13-16 records the prophecy of the 400 years of Servitude and Sojourning. The Servitude gradually became more severe over this period, and it included time in Canaan (185 years) as well as in Egypt (215 years in Egypt). This Servitude of Abram's seed began with the persecution of Isaac by Ishmael.</p> <p>Also, Acts 13:17-20 says that the period from the Servitude to the Distribution of the Land was 450 years (1847 - 450 = 1397)</p>
<p>Jacob's Birth  (Genesis 25:26)</p>	<p>1792</p>	<p>Genesis 47:28 says that Jacob lived 147 years (1792 to 1645). Jacob entered Egypt aged 130 (Genesis 47:9), hence the final 17 years of his life he lived in Egypt and then he died (1662 to 1645 BC). This means that the servitude in Egypt lasted for 215 years.</p> <p>Genesis 25:26 says that Isaac was 60 years of age when Jacob was born.</p>
<p>Isaac 5 years old</p>	<p>1847</p>	<p>Persecution by Ishmael (Genesis 21:9) beginning the Servitude of Abram's seed</p>
<p>Isaac's Birth  (Genesis 21:5)</p>	<p>1852</p>	<p>Genesis 21:5 says that Abraham was 100 years of age when Isaac was born. (<u>So Abram was born in 1952 BC</u>).</p>
<p>Abram enters Canaan/The Promise  (Genesis 12:1-8)</p>	<p>1877</p>	<p>Genesis 12:4-5 says that Abram was 75 years old when he set out from Haran and travelled to Canaan where he was given the original land Promise and Covenant. Later that year, after returning from Egypt, he was given the Covenant.</p>
<p>Abram/The Covenant/The Prophecy of the 400 years Servitude  (Genesis 15)</p>	<p><b>1877</b></p>	<p>Exodus 12:40-41 states that 430 years elapsed from the Patriarchs sojourning in Canaan through to the Exodus - <i>to the very day</i>. Paul makes it clear in Galatians 3:17 that the beginning of this period was the giving of the covenant to Abram (See below) (1877 - 430 = 1447). The Promise and the Covenant were given in the same year.</p>
<p>Abram's Birth</p>	<p>1952</p>	

## Key Texts

### Acts 13:17-23

This passage has caused a lot of confusion over the centuries due to inaccurate translation, particularly in the King James Version. Many versions *have* translated it more accurately. I will quote from the Concordant Version, though the NIV carries the same thought. In this passage, Paul was reviewing the major events of Israel's early history and confirming the line of the Messiah through King David.

*'The God of this people Israel chooses our fathers, and exalts the people in the sojourn in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm He led them out of it. (This is the 400 years Sojourning in Canaan and Egypt to the Exodus).*

*And for about **forty years'** time He carries them, as a nurse, in the wilderness. And, pulling down seven nations in the land of Canaan, (the Conquest) He distributes their land by lot (the Distribution) (**about four hundred and fifty years**). (The NIV shows the thought, 'All this took about four hundred and fifty years.' The CV puts this in parenthesis, implying that Luke, who wrote Acts, put it in, and not that Paul actually said it during his speech).*

*And after this He gives judges till Samuel the prophet. (This covers the period after Joshua's death till Samuel's rule). And thence they request a king, and God gives them Saul, son of Kish, a man out of the tribe of Benjamin, **forty years**. (Saul's reign of 40 years). And, deposing him, He rouses David for their king...'*

Due to the inaccurate translation of the KJV and others, this passage *seemed to state* that the period of the Judges was 450 years. This caused a contradiction with 1 Kings 6:1 which clearly states that **480 years** elapsed from the Exodus to Solomon's 4<sup>th</sup> year, the year in which he began the building of the Temple. So many interesting theories were brought forward to account for the over-calculation and seeming contradiction. Many were very convincing!

But it is clear from the above list and from an accurate translation of Acts 13:17-20, that the **450 years** are referring to the Servitude/Sojourning in Canaan and Egypt (400 years), the Exodus/Wilderness Wanderings (40 years) and the Conquest and Distribution of the land (10 years).

It is also possible that the **450 years** is being calculated from Isaac's birth in 1852 BC (1852 - 450 = 1402 BC). **1402 BC** is when the Division of the Land occurred, **5 years** after the Conquest began in **1407 BC**.

### Exodus 12:40-41

This is confirmed in our next passage, Exodus 12:40-41, which says,

'Now the dwelling of the sons of Israel and their fathers who dwelt in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt was **four hundred thirty years**. And it

came to be at the end of four hundred thirty years - and it came to be **on this very day** - that all the host of Yahweh went forth from the land of Egypt.'

Moses is saying here that from the day that Abraham was given the prophecy of the Servitude at the time of the giving of the Promise/Covenant (in **1877 BC**) through to the Exodus (in **1447 BC**), there was **430 years (1877 - 430 = 1447 BC)**. So this includes the 400 years Servitude/Sojourning of the Patriarchs and the sons of Israel in the land of Canaan and Egypt (Genesis 15:13-16).

### Galatians 3:17

Then in Galatians 3:17, Paul is confirming this passage as follows,

'Now this I am saying: a covenant, having been ratified before by God, the law, having come **four hundred and thirty years afterward**, does not invalidate, so as to nullify the promise.'

He is saying that the Abrahamic Promise/Covenant, which was ratified before by God, has not been invalidated and the promise nullified due to the giving of the Law through Moses. And he states that the giving of the Law came **430 years afterward**, that is, after the covenant was given to Abraham (i.e. **1877 - 430 = 1447 BC**). There is no way that Paul would contradict the Hebrew Scriptures that he knew so well, so it is evident that he got the figure of **430 years** from Exodus 12, and he also knew that it included the 400 years of Servitude prophesied to Abram.