

History is the Foundation  
of the Inspiration  
and Authority of the  
**BIBLE**



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*"Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. "But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great." (Luk 6:47-49)*

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## Introduction

Jesus uses the analogy of the house that is built upon a solid foundation can not be shaken. In the same way, if our faith is not built on the solid foundation of the historicity of the Bible, it will fall. The inspiration, authority and ultimately, the Gospel of Jesus Christ rests on the whole Bible being true in all that it touches on. If Jesus was not physically born of a virgin, crucified and then risen physically from the dead, the Gospel falls. If the historical events and people were not true, then Jesus and the New Testament writers were wrong. If the events recorded in the Bible are not all true, then it can not be trusted. If the account of creation in six literal days, less than 8000 years ago is not true, then not only does that account fall, but also the basis for the need for Jesus to come and most of the doctrines in Scripture. Genesis provides the foundation for all that is to follow. Without the record of the fall of man and death being a direct result of that disobedience, the Gospel does not make sense. It pretty much comes down to: either everything is true or nothing is true. It is because of this concept that the three main historical events have been attacked by unbelievers and more recently by professing Christians. First, the historicity of Jesus and His resurrection. Secondly, creation in 6 days and thirdly, the worldwide flood at the time of Noah. Without the Bible being historically true, it would be put into the realm of something that is just made up in people's mind, and by default then, humanism, naturalism and atheism prevail. As this happens, the morality that God has instituted is eroded and reviled. While Jesus has in the past been at least considered a good, moral teacher, even that is going by the wayside as society and the church moves farther away from God's morality.

- A good podcast on the importance of chronology and some of the historical markers is [this interview](#) with Rodger Young, Doug Petrovich and Scott Stripling.
- [Associates for Biblical Research](#) has a wealth of information, articles and videos that support the historicity and accuracy of the Bible.

## Historicity of Jesus

The historicity of Jesus is foundational to the Gospel and Christianity. While people have tried to discredit the existence of Jesus, the Biblical and extra-Biblical evidence precludes this. There are several books written about the subject and other books address the issue as part of a bigger picture. A summary here of the evidence:

- There is overwhelming evidence that the New Testament is a reliable record composed by contemporaries and eyewitnesses of the events<sup>1</sup>.
- The earliest fragments of the New Testament date to the early second century AD<sup>2</sup>.
- There are more than 5800 hand written Greek manuscripts<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> (Geisler, Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics 1999)381

<sup>2</sup> (Barnett 2003)45

<sup>3</sup> (Geisler and Turek, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an ATHEIST 2004)225

- There are about 20,000 manuscripts in other languages.<sup>4</sup>
- One notable example is *Codex Sinaiticus*, a complete fourth-century edition of the New Testament that was discovered in 1844 at St. Catherine's monastery, Mt. Sinai<sup>5</sup>
- There are numerous works from the early church fathers. These writings would allow us to reconstruct the majority of the New Testament without the actual New Testament writings.
- Leaders of the early church like Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp, who wrote late in the first and early in the second centuries, quote extensively from almost every New Testament scroll, thus establishing their existence and use by c. 100 at the latest. Paul Barnett, *Is the New Testament Reliable?*<sup>6</sup>
- In the Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, Norman Geisler documents many non-Christian authors that reference Christianity in one way or another. (Chapter on Jesus-non-Christian sources)
- In "Evidence that Demands a Verdict" The McDowell's provide much evidence of the actual documents related to the New Testament and the historicity of Jesus.
- Very few scholars hold the view that Jesus never lived. This conclusion is generally regarded as a blatant misuse of the available historical data<sup>7</sup>.
- With the overwhelming evidence, the historicity of Jesus cannot be denied. The Gospels provide an accurate account of Jesus, His life, ministry, death and resurrection.

## Historicity of Luke and Acts

Luke, the doctor, provides much detail in both his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. He starts out by affirming that he has "investigated everything carefully from the beginning", so that his reader would "know the exact truth" about what he had been taught.

- In Luke 2:1-4, he provides the date and physical setting for the birth of Jesus.
- In Luke 3:1-2, he provides several references to place the start of John the Baptist's ministry.
- In Luke 3:23-38, he provides the historical genealogy right back to Adam, the first man who was the son of God.
- Throughout the Gospel of Luke, he continues to provide detailed geographical markers.
- The geographical places and the voyage to Rome are all correct.
- Paul Barnett documents a number of the historical accuracies of Luke<sup>8</sup>.
- Others have verified the voyage to Rome for example and the various geographical markers mentioned.

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<sup>4</sup> (Geisler and Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an ATHEIST* 2004)225

<sup>5</sup> (Barnett 2003) 44–45.

<sup>6</sup> (Barnett 2003)169

<sup>7</sup> (Habermas 1996)27

<sup>8</sup> (Barnett 2003)145 ff

As we look at the evidence provided not only in Luke and Acts, but also in the other New Testament writings, we can have great confidence that the accounts that we have in our Bible are true.

## Historicity of Kings

The Historicity of the book of Kings, Chronicles and the related Prophets are important for establishing the historicity of the nation of Israel, its claims and the lineage to Jesus the Messiah. The books on Archaeology listed in the bibliography contain many finds and affirmations of the accuracy of the Old Testament writings.

There are some historical markers that have been established in synchronisms with other cultures.

- The beginning of the divided kingdom has been established at 931 BC
- [Solomon and the Kings of Tyre](#) *Bible & Spade* 30:3 (Summer 2017)
- [Three Verifications of Thiele's Date for the Beginning of the Divided Kingdom](#) *AUSS* 45:2 (Fall 2007)
- [When Was Samaria Captured? The Need for Precision in Biblical Chronologies](#) *JETS* 47:4 (Dec. 2004)
- [When Did Jerusalem Fall?](#) *JETS* 47:1 (March 2004)

A few examples

- A stele at Dan dating to about 870 BC has a phrase “house of David” demonstrating the historicity of the Davidic kingdom<sup>9</sup>.
- The Mesha stele dates to about 835 BC and references king Omri and then Moab’s rebellion against Israel<sup>10</sup>.
- The Kurkh stele dating to about 852 BC recounts some battles by a king of Assyria and mentions “Ahab the Israelite” with his contributions of chariots and troops for the battle<sup>11</sup>.
- Inscription describing the construction of Hezekiah’s tunnel<sup>12</sup>.
- The Lachish relief commissioned by Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, depicts the battle at Lachish during Hezekiah’s rule<sup>13</sup>.
- Sennacherib’s Prism talks about various aspects related to Hezekiah<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> (Kennedy 2020)98-99

<sup>10</sup> (Kennedy 2020)112-113

<sup>11</sup> (Kennedy 2020)116-117

<sup>12</sup> (Kennedy 2020)134-135

<sup>13</sup> (Kennedy 2020)136-137

<sup>14</sup> (Kennedy 2020)138-139

## Historicity of Judges

The time of judges was one in which Israel did not do that well because of the cycles of disobedience, oppression and the God sending them a deliverer after they cried out to him. One notable stele is that from Pharaoh Merneptah where he says that “Israel is laid waste and its seed (grain) is not”<sup>15</sup>. There is some archaeological evidence for this period, but not a lot due to the nature of the time.

ABR has a number of [articles](#) that relate to this time period.

## Historicity of the Exodus

The historicity of the Exodus and the conquest has more evidence to support it.

Doug Petrovich in his article [Amenhotep II as the Exodus Pharaoh](#) goes through a lot of historical evidence that affirms the Bible’s account of the Exodus.

Bryant Wood has a number of [articles](#) on Jericho showing that archaeology supports the Biblical account and date.

[Associates for Biblical Research](#) has an abundance of articles and videos on their site regarding the [Exodus](#) and the [conquest](#).

Doug Petrovich has an [article](#) on the timing of Avaris (Rameses) being abandoned.

When all of these are considered, there is little doubt that the Biblical account of the Exodus is accurate.

## Historicity of Creation, the Flood and the Tower of Babel

Two of the most disputed events by secularists and even a large number of people who claim to be Christian are the world-wide flood from the time of Noah and Creation in 6 ordinary days in Genesis. Fortunately, there are a number of ministries, scientists and authors that have taken up the challenge to defend the truth and inspiration of the Bible.

- [Answers in Genesis](#)
- [Biblical Science Institute](#)
- [Is Genesis History](#)
- [Institute for Creation Research](#)
- [Creation Ministries International](#)
- [Creation Astronomy](#)

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<sup>15</sup> (Kennedy 2020)74-75

Andrew Snelling, in his two-volume work entitled “Earth’s Catastrophic Past” provides a mountain of evidence for the Biblical age of the earth and the world-wide flood. He addresses many aspects such as:

- Trees and creatures buried in an upright condition that would not be possible over millions of years.
- Geological evidence points to a catastrophic event rather than eons of time.
- Fossil graveyards
- Coal beds
- Soft-Sediment deformation
- Plate Tectonics
- Radioactive dating (problems and solutions)
- Many other subjects

Doug Petrovich has identified Eridu, which is close to Ur as the site of the tower of Babel. There is a large foundation of a temple (ziggurat) that was originally unfinished.

## Established Dates

God established creation as the date from which He measured time and how it is presented. For example, in Genesis 1:5, we read of the first day. Subsequent verses talk about the second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth day. From that point on, God provides the dates for the subsequent generations. See Appendix A for a detailed account of the dates from creation to the Exodus and the beginning of the temple construction by Solomon, which is an established date that links our current BC-AD calendar to God’s calendar, which starts with creation.

Scholars like Andrew Steinman, Rodger Young and Douglas Petrovich have all done intensive study on the dates from the entry into Egypt to the Exile and on to the New Testament times.

Some firm dates are:

- Jesus Birth - 2 - 3 BC<sup>16</sup>
- The exile of Judah – 587 BC<sup>17</sup>
- The exile of the Northern Kingdom – 723 BC<sup>18</sup>
- The death of Solomon – 931/932<sup>19</sup>
- The start of the building of the temple by Solomon 967 BC<sup>20</sup>
- The Exodus – 1446 BC<sup>21</sup>
- Entry into Egypt – 1876 BC<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> (Steinmann 2011)251-252

<sup>17</sup> (Steinmann 2011)165

<sup>18</sup> (Steinmann 2011)156

<sup>19</sup> (Steinmann 2011)123-125

<sup>20</sup> (Steinmann 2011)45-47

<sup>21</sup> (Steinmann 2011)45-47

<sup>22</sup> (Steinmann 2011)67

- Abraham's entry into Canaan - 2091<sup>23</sup>
- Abraham's birth – 2166 BC<sup>24</sup>

## Inerrancy, Authority and the Gospel

Why is all this dating and establishing the historicity of the events recorded in the Bible so important?

The first reason is that it is important to God. As God wrote the Scriptures (through human authors) He was clearly concerned with both the historicity and the chronology as is evidenced by the abundance of chronological and historical references. As we even just look at Genesis, it is evident that the reason for the detailed account of creation and the chronologies of the Patriarchs is to correct the false world views of the time and by extension the false world views of our present time. God had to correct the false accounts of the flood as well as there were other flood accounts which were distorted versions of what really happened.

The second reason is that if the recorded history and chronology is not true, then God and the human authors of Scripture are wrong. This clearly contradicts the Biblical teachings.

- *in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, (Tit 1:2)*
- *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (2Ti 3:16)*
- *But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2Pe 1:20-21)*
- *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (Joh 1:1)*
- *"But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail. (Luk 16:17)*

As we consider these and many other Scriptures, the Gospel depends on the whole Bible being true historically and chronologically. If you say that one aspect of Scripture, for example creation in six days less than 8000 years ago is not important enough to stand up for, then more and more of Scripture will be attacked. If we reject God's description of how He miraculously created the universe and the date He gives the creation, then why should anyone believe that a crucified man died and rose again? While many born again believers that love God do not hold to certain historical and chronological truths, they are none the less undermining the Scriptures and the Gospel. The people that are affected tend to be more the next generation since they are being told that they do not need to accept certain aspects of the Scriptures, even though they are very clear in what they say. If you do not need to accept some, then why any at

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<sup>23</sup> (Steinmann 2011)71-72

<sup>24</sup> (Steinmann 2011)71-72

all? As they are presented with the evolutionary hypothesis as fact, then many reject Christianity all together because they have not been provided with a reason for the hope that they have.

*but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; (1Pe 3:15)*

Terry Mortenson has written an excellent [article](#) on “How and Why Old-Earth Inerrantists Are Unintentionally Undermining Inerrancy”. This is a good in-depth discussion on the subject.

[Calvin Smith on "Christians, an Atheists best Friend"](#)

## Conclusion

As we can see, there is ample historical, scientific and Scriptural support for the Bible being actual true history and providing an accurate chronology of the events from creation to the end of the New Testament. The “Genesis Chronology” in Appendix A details the chronology from Creation to the building of Solomon’s temple.

History, chronology, inspiration, the authority of the Scriptures and the Gospel stand or fall together.

## Appendix A

### Genesis Chronology

#### Reference points

During Old Testament times, dates are generally given in reference to a king or a significant event. For example:

- *In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. (Gen. 7:11)*
- *Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. (Exod. 12:40-41)*
- *Thus the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, (Num. 9:1)*
- *Now it came about in the four hundred and eightieth year after the sons of Israel came 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 (1 Ki. 6:1)*

#### Genesis Chapters 1 & 2

- Genesis 1:1-5 describe the first day
  - Creation of heaven and earth
  - Light
  - Separation of light and dark
  - Definition of what a day means – evening and morning. In other words, a normal 24-hour day
- Genesis 1:6-8 describe the second day
  - An expanse is created between the earth and heaven
- Genesis 1:9-13 describe the third day
  - Dry land appears
  - The dry land is called earth and the water is called seas
  - Vegetation is created
- Genesis 1:14-19 describe the fourth day
  - Lights were made to be a sign for the seasons, days and years. (the reason for not specifying sun and moon is likely because they were worshipped by other people)
  - Stars are also made
- Genesis 1:20-23 describe the fifth day
  - Swimming creatures are made
  - Flying creatures are made
- Genesis 1:24-31 describe the sixth day

- Land animals are made
- Adam & Eve are made in the image of God
- Man is given dominion over all the living creatures
- Animals and mankind were given plants for food
- God states that everything that he made was “very good”
- Genesis 2:2-3 describe the seventh day
  - By the seventh day, God had completed his work, rested and blessed the seventh day.
- In the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment regarding the Sabbath, Exodus 20:11 affirms that God made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them in 6 ordinary, 24 hour days.

### Genesis chapter 5, 7 & 9

In this chapter we have the “book of the generations of Adam”. We will use the Masoretic text numbers as they are represented in our Bibles. Later we will show the comparison of the Masoretic text and Septuagint numbers as the latter is more likely the correct version.

Considering the formula given for this list, it is quite obvious that God wanted us to be able to calculate the overall timeline, with the reference point being creation. For example, we read that when Adam was 130, he became the father of Seth. He lived another 800 years and the total years that he lived was 930.

Name	Age at birth of Son	Lived after birth of son	Total Lifespan
Adam	130	800	930
Seth	105	807	912
Enosh	90	815	905
Kenan	70	840	910
Mahalalel	65	830	895
Jared	162	800	962
Enoch	65	300	365
Methuselah	187	782	969
Lamech	182	595	777
Noah	502	448	950

For Noah, we need to look at a few verses.

- Genesis 5:32 tells us that Noah was 500 years old when he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth
- Genesis 7:6 tells us that Noah was 600 years old when the flood came
- Genesis 9:28 tells us that Noah lived 350 years after the flood
- Genesis 9:29 tells us that Noah lived a total of 950 years.
- Genesis 11:10 tells us that Shem was 100 years old 2 years after the flood

- From this information, we can tell that Shem was not the first-born, but was born 2 years after either Japheth or Ham or both were born.

### Genesis chapter 11

In this chapter we have the record of the generations of Shem. We have a similar formula in this list. The age of the patriarch is provided at the birth of the son and then lived another number of years.

Name	Age at birth of Son	Lived after birth of son	Total Lifespan
Shem	100	500	600
Arpachshad	35	403	438
Shelah	30	403	433
Eber	34	430	464
Peleg	30	209	239
Reu	32	207	239
Serug	30	200	230
Nahor	29	119	148
Terah	130	75	205

For Terah we need to look at the following verses since his first son was not Abraham.

- Genesis 11:32 gives the total lifespan for Terah as 205
- Genesis 12:4 gives the age of Abraham as 75 when he left Haran right after Terah died there
- This makes Terah 130 when Abraham was born. (It also makes him 140 when Sarah was born to him by another woman)

### Abraham to Joseph

To get the numbers from Abraham to Joseph we go into a more detailed part of the text and find the references to compile this list.

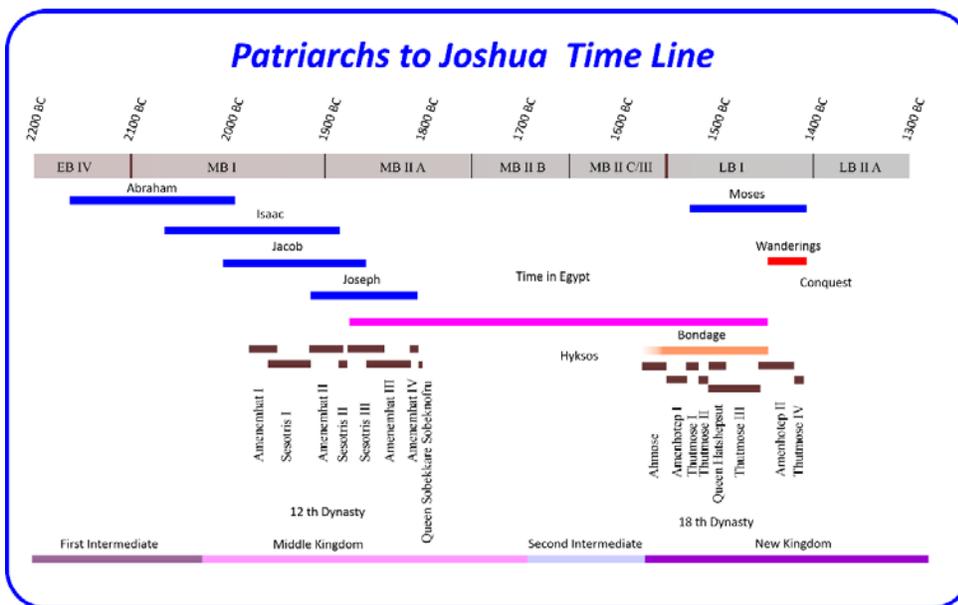
- Abraham was 100 years old at the birth of Isaac
  - Genesis 17 records Abraham being 99 years old when he was given the promise of a child through Sarah his wife the following year.
  - Genesis 21:5 records Abraham's age as 100 years old when Isaac was born.
- Abraham lived to be 175 years old (Genesis 25:7)
- Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born (Genesis 25:26)
- Isaac was 180 years old when he died (Genesis 35:28)
- Jacob was 147 years old when he died (Genesis 47:28)
- Joseph's numbers need to be calculated a bit differently.
  - Jacob was in Egypt 17 years
  - Jacob entered Egypt when there were 5 years left in the famine (Genesis 45:6, 11)

- Joseph was 30 years old when he came before Pharaoh (Genesis 41:46). At this point the 7 years of plenty were just beginning.
- Joseph died at 110 years of age (Genesis 50:26)
- So, to get Jacob's age at Joseph's birth we need to start from the time that Jacob entered Egypt. He was 130 Years old when he came to Egypt (Genesis 47:9). From that, we subtract the 2 years of famine that have already occurred, so that makes him 128 at the start of the famine. From there we subtract the 7 years of plenty, making him 121 at the time of the start of the 7 years of plenty which is when Joseph was 30 years old, making Jacob 91 years old when Joseph was born. Joseph's sons were born prior to the years of famine. (Genesis 41:50)

Name	Age at birth of Son	Lived after birth of son	Total Lifespan
Abraham	100	75	175
Isaac	60	120	180
Jacob	91	56	147
Joseph	31-36	74-79	110

### Time in Egypt

Exodus 12:40-41 provide the total time in Egypt – 430 years to the day.



### Time from the Exodus to the start of the Temple

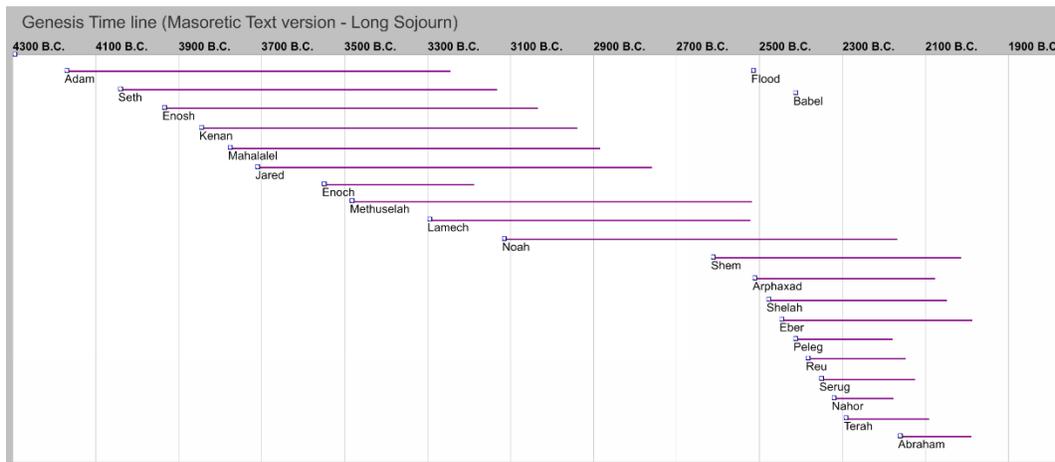
In 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 6:1 we are told that in the 480<sup>th</sup> year after Israel came out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon, he began to build the temple. So here we have another reference point.

The fourth year of Solomon's reign has been quite firmly established to be 967 BC (Steinmann 2011, Pg 37). This puts the Exodus at 1446 BC.

Putting all this together now we have

- The Exodus in 1446 BC
- Jacob (Israel) into Egypt in 1876 BC
- Jacobs birth is 2006 BC
- Isaac's birth is 2066 BC
- Abraham's birth is 2166 BC

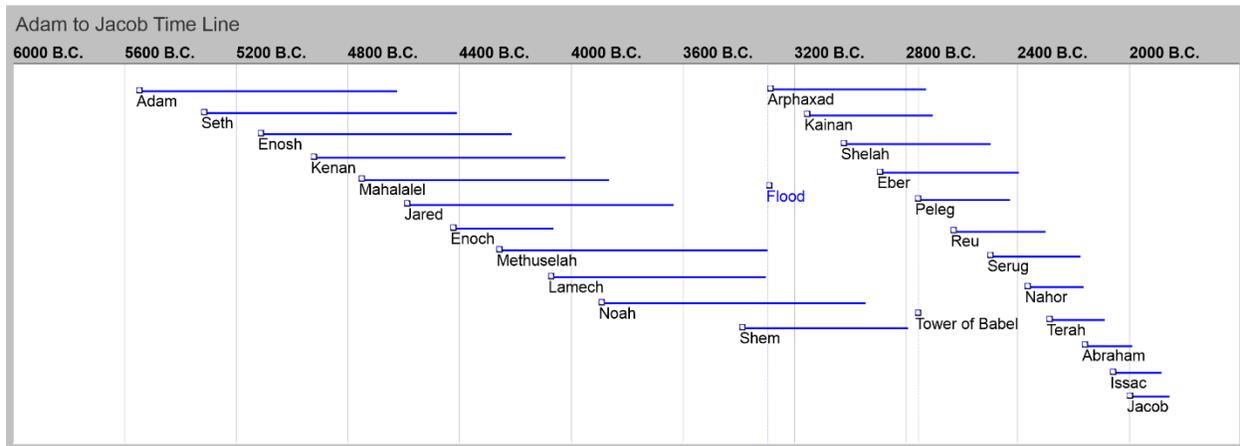
From there it is a fairly simple matter of charting all of this.



There is one more issue to deal with and that is the textual evidence of the Patriarchal numbers.

There has been an obvious changing of some of the numbers of the pre-flood and post flood patriarchs. A number of the ages when sons were born have been changed. There were also some copying mistakes. By looking at the textual and extra-Biblical evidence, the original numbers can be reconstructed fairly well. The following chart represents the most likely original numbers. With the Masoretic text, we come up with a creation date of about 4174 BC and with the most probable reconstruction, we come up with 5554 BC. This provides us with the outside bounds of the date of creation, i.e. no farther back than 5554 BC and no less than 4174 BC.

For a discussion on the textual evidence, please go to <https://biblearchaeology.org/abr-projects-main/genesis-5-11-project>



The other lifespan we are told about is that of Moses.

- Moses was about 40 years old when he killed the Egyptian (Acts 7:23)
- Moses was 80 years old at the time of the Exodus. (Exodus 7:7)
- Moses was 120 years old when he died. (Deuteronomy 34:7)

Since the Exodus was in 1446 BC, Moses would have been born in 1526 BC and died in 1406 BC.

#### Dating from Creation or our current calendar

When God started to provide a timeline for us, He started with creation not with the calendar that we currently use. This could be compared to using degrees Celsius or degrees Kelvin. The Kelvin scale starts at absolute 0 (-273.15 C), which could be compared to dating from creation, since that is the starting point of time. Degrees Celsius could be compared to our current dating system of BC and AD with Jesus Christ being the reference point. From this reference point, whether it be the freezing point of water at 0 degrees or the birth of Jesus, you can go forward or backward. Just as you can convert from Celsius to Kelvin, so you can convert from absolute dates from creation to our present calendar.

## Appendix B

### The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

#### Preface

The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian church in this and every age. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God's written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master. Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority.

The following Statement affirms this inerrancy of Scripture afresh, making clear our understanding of it and warning against its denial. We are persuaded that to deny it is to set aside the witness of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit and to refuse that submission to the claims of God's own Word which marks true Christian faith. We see it as our timely duty to make this affirmation in the face of current lapses from the truth of inerrancy among our fellow Christians and misunderstandings of this doctrine in the world at large.

This Statement consists of three parts: a Summary Statement, Articles of Affirmation and Denial, and an accompanying Exposition. It has been prepared in the course of a three-day consultation in Chicago. Those who have signed the Summary Statement and the Articles wish to affirm their own conviction as to the inerrancy of Scripture and to encourage and challenge one another and all Christians to growing appreciation and understanding of this doctrine. We acknowledge the limitations of a document prepared in a brief, intensive conference and do not propose that this Statement be given creedal weight. Yet we rejoice in the deepening of our own convictions through our discussions together, and we pray that the Statement we have signed may be used to the glory of our God toward a new reformation of the Church in its faith, life, and mission.

We offer this Statement in a spirit, not of contention, but of humility and love, which we purpose by God's grace to maintain in any future dialogue arising out of what we have said. We gladly acknowledge that many who deny the inerrancy of Scripture do not display the consequences of this denial in the rest of their belief and behavior, and we are conscious that we who confess this doctrine often deny it in life by failing to bring our thoughts and deeds, our traditions and habits, into true subjection to the divine Word.

We invite response to this statement from any who see reason to amend its affirmations about Scripture by the light of Scripture itself, under whose infallible authority we stand as we speak. We claim no personal infallibility for the witness we bear, and for any help which enables us to strengthen this testimony to God's Word we shall be grateful.

## A Short Statement

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms: obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

## Articles of Affirmation and Denial

### Article I.

WE AFFIRM that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God.

WE DENY that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source.

### Article II.

WE AFFIRM that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture.

WE DENY that Church creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

### Article III.

WE AFFIRM that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God.

WE DENY that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.

### Article IV.

WE AFFIRM that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation.

WE DENY that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's work of inspiration.

Article V.

WE AFFIRM that God's revelation within the Holy Scriptures was progressive.

WE DENY that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

Article VI.

WE AFFIRM that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration.

WE DENY that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

Article VII.

WE AFFIRM that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us.

WE DENY that inspiration can be reduced to human insight, or to heightened states of consciousness of any kind.

Article VIII.

WE AFFIRM that God in His work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.

WE DENY that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

Article IX.

WE AFFIRM that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write.

WE DENY that the finitude or fallenness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.

Article X.

WE AFFIRM that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.

WE DENY that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

Article XI.

WE AFFIRM that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.

WE DENY that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated.

Article XII.

WE AFFIRM that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit.

WE DENY that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

Article XIII.

WE AFFIRM the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.

WE DENY that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.

Article XIV.

WE AFFIRM the unity and internal consistency of Scripture.

WE DENY that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved vitiate the truth claims of the Bible.

Article XV.

WE AFFIRM that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration.

WE DENY that Jesus' teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.

#### Article XVI.

WE AFFIRM that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history.

WE DENY that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.

#### Article XVII.

WE AFFIRM that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word.

WE DENY that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.

#### Article XVIII.

WE AFFIRM that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

WE DENY the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

#### Article XIX.

WE AFFIRM that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ.

WE DENY that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church.

#### Exposition

Our understanding of the doctrine of inerrancy must be set in the context of the broader teachings of the Scripture concerning itself. This exposition gives an account of the outline of doctrine from which our summary statement and articles are drawn.

#### Creation, Revelation and Inspiration

The Triune God, who formed all things by his creative utterances and governs all things by His Word of decree, made mankind in His own image for a life of communion with Himself, on the model of the eternal fellowship of loving communication within the Godhead. As God's image-bearer, man was to hear God's Word addressed to him and to respond in the joy of adoring obedience. Over and above God's self-disclosure in the created order and the sequence of events within it, human beings from Adam on have received verbal messages from Him, either directly, as stated in Scripture, or indirectly in the form of part or all of Scripture itself.

When Adam fell, the Creator did not abandon mankind to final judgment but promised salvation and began to reveal Himself as Redeemer in a sequence of historical events centering on Abraham's family and culminating in the life, death, resurrection, present heavenly ministry, and promised return of Jesus Christ. Within this frame God has from time to time spoken specific words of judgment and mercy, promise and command, to sinful human beings so drawing them into a covenant relation of mutual commitment between Him and them in which He blesses them with gifts of grace and they bless Him in responsive adoration. Moses, whom God used as mediator to carry His words to His people at the time of the Exodus, stands at the head of a long line of prophets in whose mouths and writings God put His words for delivery to Israel. God's purpose in this succession of messages was to maintain His covenant by causing His people to know His Name—that is, His nature—and His will both of precept and purpose in the present and for the future. This line of prophetic spokesmen from God came to completion in Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Word, who was Himself a prophet—more than a prophet, but not less—and in the apostles and prophets of the first Christian generation. When God's final and climactic message, His word to the world concerning Jesus Christ, had been spoken and elucidated by those in the apostolic circle, the sequence of revealed messages ceased. Henceforth the Church was to live and know God by what He had already said, and said for all time.

At Sinai God wrote the terms of His covenant on tables of stone, as His enduring witness and for lasting accessibility, and throughout the period of prophetic and apostolic revelation He prompted men to write the messages given to and through them, along with celebratory records of His dealings with His people, plus moral reflections on covenant life and forms of praise and prayer for covenant mercy. The theological reality of inspiration in the producing of Biblical documents corresponds to that of spoken prophecies: although the human writers' personalities were expressed in what they wrote, the words were divinely constituted. Thus, what Scripture says, God says; its authority is His authority, for He is its ultimate Author, having given it through the minds and words of chosen and prepared men who in freedom and faithfulness "spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). Holy Scripture must be acknowledged as the Word of God by virtue of its divine origin.

#### Authority: Christ and the Bible

Jesus Christ, the Son of God who is the Word made flesh, our Prophet, Priest, and King, is the ultimate Mediator of God's communication to man, as He is of all God's gifts of grace. The revelation He gave was more than verbal; He revealed the Father by His presence and His deeds as well. Yet His words were crucially important; for He was God, He spoke from the Father, and His words will judge all men at the last day.

As the prophesied Messiah, Jesus Christ is the central theme of Scripture. The Old Testament looked ahead to Him; the New Testament looks back to His first coming and on to His second. Canonical Scripture is the divinely inspired and therefore normative witness to Christ. No hermeneutic, therefore, of which the historical Christ is not the focal point is acceptable. Holy

Scripture must be treated as what it essentially is—the witness of the Father to the Incarnate Son.

It appears that the Old Testament canon had been fixed by the time of Jesus. The New Testament canon is likewise now closed inasmuch as no new apostolic witness to the historical Christ can now be borne. No new revelation (as distinct from Spirit-given understanding of existing revelation) will be given until Christ comes again. The canon was created in principle by divine inspiration. The Church's part was to discern the canon which God had created, not to devise one of its own.

The word canon, signifying a rule or standard, is a pointer to authority, which means the right to rule and control. Authority in Christianity belongs to God in His revelation, which means, on the one hand, Jesus Christ, the living Word, and, on the other hand, Holy Scripture, the written Word. But the authority of Christ and that of Scripture are one. As our Prophet, Christ testified that Scripture cannot be broken. As our Priest and King, He devoted His earthly life to fulfilling the law and the prophets, even dying in obedience to the words of Messianic prophecy. Thus, as He saw Scripture attesting Him and His authority, so by His own submission to Scripture He attested its authority. As He bowed to His Father's instruction given in His Bible (our Old Testament), so He requires His disciples to do—not, however, in isolation but in conjunction with the apostolic witness to Himself which He undertook to inspire by His gift of the Holy Spirit. So Christians show themselves faithful servants of their Lord by bowing to the divine instruction given in the prophetic and apostolic writings which together make up our Bible.

By authenticating each other's authority, Christ and Scripture coalesce into a single fount of authority. The Biblically-interpreted Christ and the Christ-centered, Christ-proclaiming Bible are from this standpoint one. As from the fact of inspiration we infer that what Scripture says, God says, so from the revealed relation between Jesus Christ and Scripture we may equally declare that what Scripture says, Christ says.

#### Infallibility, Inerrancy, Interpretation

Holy Scripture, as the inspired Word of God witnessing authoritatively to Jesus Christ, may properly be called infallible and inerrant. These negative terms have a special value, for they explicitly safeguard crucial positive truths.

Infallible signifies the quality of neither misleading nor being misled and so safeguards in categorical terms the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe, and reliable rule and guide in all matters.

Similarly, inerrant signifies the quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake and so safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions.

We affirm that canonical Scripture should always be interpreted on the basis that it is infallible and inerrant. However, in determining what the God-taught writer is asserting in each passage,

we must pay the most careful attention to its claims and character as a human production. In inspiration, God utilized the culture and conventions of His penman's milieu, a milieu that God controls in His sovereign providence; it is misinterpretation to imagine otherwise.

So history must be treated as history, poetry as poetry, hyperbole and metaphor as hyperbole and metaphor, generalization and approximation as what they are, and so forth. Differences between literary conventions in Bible times and in ours must also be observed: since, for instance, non-chronological narration and imprecise citation were conventional and acceptable and violated no expectations in those days, we must not regard these things as faults when we find them in Bible writers. When total precision of a particular kind was not expected nor aimed at, it is no error not to have achieved it. Scripture is inerrant, not in the sense of being absolutely precise by modern standards, but in the sense of making good its claims and achieving that measure of focused truth at which its authors aimed.

The truthfulness of Scripture is not negated by the appearance in it of irregularities of grammar or spelling, phenomenal descriptions of nature, reports of false statements (e.g., the lies of Satan), or seeming discrepancies between one passage and another. It is not right to set the so-called "phenomena" of Scripture against the teaching of Scripture about itself. Apparent inconsistencies should not be ignored. Solution of them, where this can be convincingly achieved, will encourage our faith, and where for the present no convincing solution is at hand we shall significantly honor God by trusting His assurance that His Word is true, despite these appearances, and by maintaining our confidence that one day they will be seen to have been illusions.

Inasmuch as all Scripture is the product of a single divine mind, interpretation must stay within the bounds of the analogy of Scripture and eschew hypotheses that would correct one Biblical passage by another, whether in the name of progressive revelation or of the imperfect enlightenment of the inspired writer's mind.

Although Holy Scripture is nowhere culture-bound in the sense that its teaching lacks universal validity, it is sometimes culturally conditioned by the customs and conventional views of a particular period, so that the application of its principles today calls for a different sort of action.

#### Skepticism and Criticism

Since the Renaissance, and more particularly since the Enlightenment, world-views have been developed which involve skepticism about basic Christian tenets. Such are the agnosticism which denies that God is knowable, the rationalism which denies that He is incomprehensible, the idealism which denies that He is transcendent, and the existentialism which denies rationality in His relationships with us. When these un- and anti-biblical principles seep into men's theologies at [a] presuppositional level, as today they frequently do, faithful interpretation of Holy Scripture becomes impossible.

### Transmission and Translation

Since God has nowhere promised an inerrant transmission of Scripture, it is necessary to affirm that only the autographic text of the original documents was inspired and to maintain the need of textual criticism as a means of detecting any slips that may have crept into the text in the course of its transmission. The verdict of this science, however, is that the Hebrew and Greek text appear to be amazingly well preserved, so that we are amply justified in affirming, with the Westminster Confession, a singular providence of God in this matter and in declaring that the authority of Scripture is in no way jeopardized by the fact that the copies we possess are not entirely error-free.

Similarly, no translation is or can be perfect, and all translations are an additional step away from the autographa. Yet the verdict of linguistic science is that English-speaking Christians, at least, are exceedingly well served in these days with a host of excellent translations and have no cause for hesitating to conclude that the true Word of God is within their reach. Indeed, in view of the frequent repetition in Scripture of the main matters with which it deals and also of the Holy Spirit's constant witness to and through the Word, no serious translation of Holy Scripture will so destroy its meaning as to render it unable to make its reader "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15).

### Inerrancy and Authority

In our affirmation of the authority of Scripture as involving its total truth, we are consciously standing with Christ and His apostles, indeed with the whole Bible and with the main stream of Church history from the first days until very recently. We are concerned at the casual, inadvertent, and seemingly thoughtless way in which a belief of such far-reaching importance has been given up by so many in our day.

We are conscious too that great and grave confusion results from ceasing to maintain the total truth of the Bible whose authority one professes to acknowledge. The result of taking this step is that the Bible which God gave loses its authority, and what has authority instead is a Bible reduced in content according to the demands of one's critical reasonings and in principle reducible still further once one has started. This means that at bottom independent reason now has authority, as opposed to Scriptural teaching. If this is not seen and if for the time being basic evangelical doctrines are still held, persons denying the full truth of Scripture may claim an evangelical identity while methodologically they have moved away from the evangelical principle of knowledge to an unstable subjectivism, and will find it hard not to move further.

We affirm that what Scripture says, God says. May He be glorified. Amen and Amen.

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