

Note on the Chronological Dates

by John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby's sermon explores the significance of chronological dates in Scripture, emphasizing their prophetic implications and historical context.

Scripture: Exodus 12:40

Topics: "Prophecy and Fulfillment", "Biblical Chronology"

Description

John Nelson Darby discusses the chronological dates in Scripture, emphasizing the importance of understanding the timeline from creation to the birth of the Messiah. He explains how various passages, such as those in Exodus and Daniel, provide a framework for calculating significant periods in biblical history, including the sojourn of the Israelites and the reigns of kings. Darby highlights the significance of the 70 weeks of Daniel in relation to the coming of Christ and the prophetic implications of these timelines. He concludes that while the New Testament lacks specific chronological dates, the fulfillment of prophecy remains crucial for understanding God's plan. The sermon encourages believers to remain alert to the unfolding of God's timeline.

Transcript

{Taken from the notes in the New Translation of the Scriptures by J. N. D. See chart Chronlgy.*}

The dates follow generally accepted chronology, and are based sometimes upon detailed information given by various passages of Scripture, and sometimes upon verses such as Ex. 12:40, 41; Judges 11:26; 1 Kings 6:1; which cover a lengthy period of time. Only two or three of these passages require comment. For the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel the duration of which is clearly stated, the reader is referred to the table on opposite page.

In order to determine the scope of the expression 'the residence of the children of Israel' (Ex. 12:40), it must be borne in mind that the promise of God to Abram (Gen. 15. 13:16) mentions 'four hundred years', and then the assurance that the patriarch's descendants would return in the fourth generation to the land of Canaan. It follows therefore that the time of the sojourn or pilgrimage of the elect family must be reckoned from the days of Abraham, and presumably from his entrance into the land of Canaan. Compare also Acts 7:17.

The period of '450 years', mentioned in Acts 13. 20, appears to be an approximate figure covering the time which elapsed between the entry into the wilderness and the end of the reign of Saul, verse 21 being a

parenthesis intended to fix the attention on the period the apostle had in mind, namely, the reign of David to whom the promise of Saviour-King had been made. We must remember that the Judges often exercised their authority over a part of the people only. Thus Ehud and Shamgar wrought amongst the tribes in the south, whereas Deborah and Barak brought about deliverance in the north. The reference to Ehud rather than Shamgar (Judges 4:1), would prove that the 'rest' mentioned in Judges 5:31 must form part of the 'rest' spoken of in ch. 3:30, especially referring to the tribes in the south. Jephthah's reply to the Ammonites shows that the children of Israel, at this period, had been only three centuries in possession of Heshbon and Aroer-all the country lying between the Arnon and the Jabbok having been won not from the Ammonites but from the Amorites (Num. 21:24-26). Finally, it was during a part of the 'forty years' of Philistine oppression that Samson judged Israel (Judges 13:1; 15:20); this period came to an end with the victory of Samuel (1 Sam. 7:13).

For the chronology of the lapse of time between the Old Testament and the New, we have to consider the '70 weeks' of Dan. 9:24. As one of these 'weeks' of years refers to the future, there remain 69 'weeks', that is to say 483 years, reckoning 'from the going forth of the word to restore and to build' not the temple but the city of 'Jerusalem'. Permission to do this was given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes I in the twentieth year of his reign; the state of desolation in which Nehemiah found the city on his arrival is given in considerable detail. Verse 26 of Dan. 9 shows that the sixty-nine weeks do not end before the manifestation of the Messiah to Israel (John 1:31), perhaps not even before His death. It would therefore be necessary to deduct 33 years to arrive at the date of His birth, which would have been 450 years after permission was given to rebuild the city, or 530 years after the return of the first captives from Babylon.

These considerations enable us to arrive at the following summary:

Years

From the creation to the flood, when Noah was 600 years old (Gen. 5:3-29; 7:11) 1,656

From the flood to the birth of Terah (Gen. 11:10-25) 222

When his father died at the age of 205 years, Abraham was 75 130

Which fixes his birth, from the creation of the world 2,008

His entrance into the land of Canaan took place 75 years later (Gen. 12. 4) 75

Up to the exodus from Egypt (Gen. 15:13, 16; Ex. 12:40) 430

Up to the building of the temple 480 years later 480

Length of Solomon's reign, less three years already past (1 Kings 6:1) 37

Kings of Israel and Judah, up to the Babylonish captivity 370

Length of the captivity 70 years, and up to Nehemiah 80 years 150

Sixty-nine 'weeks' less 33 years (Dan. 9:26) 450

From the creation to the birth of the Messiah 4,000

For the facts related in the New Testament, we have no chronological dates of the same kind as those in the Old Testament. It was of the greatest importance to be able to indicate accurately the time of the coming into the world of the promised Messiah, not however according to human calculation, but according to the principles of prophecy. The same divine wisdom which fixes our attention on what has already been fulfilled requires that our hearts should be alert during the whole period which elapses before the last 'week' of Daniel. The Lord said 'a little while and ye do not behold me; and again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go away to the Father'. It is sufficient to recall as a well-established historical fact, that the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans took place forty years after the Saviour's death (Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24; 23:28, 29).

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-nelson-darby/note-on-the-chronological-dates/>

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