

Will Groben / Biblical Chronology / BE103-FL / 10.25.06

Event/Individual	Dates	Human Characters	Basis of Historical Dating / Prime Reasoning for Controversial Dates
Abraham (from - to)	2166BC-1991BC	Abraham; Sarah; Lot Melchizedek; Isaac	General archaeological evidence of contemporary culture and Bible dating from Solomon's reign backwards and Genesis 25:7 ¹
Exodus (early)	1446BC	Moses; Aaron	1 Kings 6:1 ² [see also discussion of evidence in notes 3 and 4]
Exodus (late)	1290BC	Moses; Aaron	Amarna letters; lack of archaeological evidence of agricultural civilization in Edom, Moab, and Ammon or of building activity in the Nile Delta in 1400s; Hyksos rule for Joseph ³
Conquest (beginning)	1405BC	Joshua	Amarna letters; dating of the Exodus ⁴
Saul's Rein	1048BC-1010BC	Saul; Samuel; David; Jonathan	1 Samuel 13:1 and dating by Solomon's death; general archaeological evidence of intensified construction ⁵
David's Rein	1010BC-970BC	David; Nathan; Joab; Bathsheba; Absalom	Dating by Solomon's death and 1 Kings 2:11; 11:42; Tel Dan Inscription ⁶
Solomon's Rein	970BC-930BC	Solomon; David	Anal of Shalmaneser III; Egyptian records; Temple of Amun at Karnak; relationship of reigns of kings in Bible book of 1 Kings ⁷
Solomon's Temple Built	959BC	Solomon	1 Kings 6:1-38; The Byt Yhwh Ostracon; The Jehoash Inscription ⁸
Division of Monarchy	930BC	Rehoboam; Jeroboam I	Radiocarbon dating at Tel Rehov; Temple of Amun at Karnak in Upper Egypt; 1 Kings 11:42-43; 12:16-20 ⁹
Jehu's Accession	841BC	Jehu; Elisha	Black Obelisk; 2 Kings 8:24-29; 9:1-37 ¹⁰
Assyrian Conquest of Northern Kingdom	722BC	Hoshea; Shalmaneser	Annals of Sargon II; 2 Kings 17:6; 18:9-11 ¹¹
Book of Law Recovered During Temple Repairs	621BC	Josiah; Jeremiah	2 Kings 22:1-10; 2 Chronicles 34:1-18; Bible dating from Solomon's death ¹²
Fall of Nineveh	612BC	[Nahum, Zephaniah predicted it]	Babylonian Chronicle; 2 Kings 23:29 and 2 Chronicles 35:20 ¹³
Death of Josiah	609BC	Josiah; Neco	Babylonian Chronicle; 2 Kings 23:29-30 and 2 Chronicles 35:20-27 ¹⁴
Battle of Carchemish	605BC	Nebuchadnezzar; Neco	Babylonian Chronicle; Jeremiah 46:2 ¹⁵
1 st Exile to Babylon	605BC	Daniel; Jehoiakim	Babylonian Chronicle; Daniel 1:1-4; 2 Kings 24:1 ¹⁶
2 nd Exile to Babylon	597BC	Ezekiel; Jehoiakim; Jehoiachin	Babylonian Chronicle; 2 Chronicles 36:5-10; 2 Kings 24:6, 12 ¹⁷
3 rd Exile to Babylon	587BC	Zedekiah; Jeremiah	Babylonian Chronicle [indirectly]; 2 Kings 24:18; 25:11; 2 Chronicles 36:11-20 ¹⁸
Babylonian Destruction of Jerusalem	587BC	Jeremiah; Zedekiah	Babylonian Chronicle; Lachish Ostraca; 2 Kings 24:18; 25:4-10; 2 Chronicles 36:11, 18-19 ¹⁹
Fall of Neo-Babylonia	539BC	Daniel	The Nabunaid Chronicle; Ezra 1:1-4; Daniel 1:21 ²⁰
1 st Return	538BC	Zerubbabel	The Kurash Prism; Ezra 1:1-4 ²¹
2 nd Return	457BC	Ezra	Elephantine Papyri; Ezra 7:8 ²²
3 rd Return	445BC	Nehemiah	Elephantine Papyri; Nehemiah 1:1 ²³

EXPLANATIONS OF EVIDENCE

¹ Nahum M. Sarna said, “There is no known synchronism between a single patriarchal Biblical event and a datable occurrence recorded in extra-Biblical sources.” [See Sarna in bibliography; because several of my references are from web sites, I am going to forgo the usual technique of giving full bibliographic information in the notes.] But he went on to quote W. F. Albright [*Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 36 (1973): 10]: “The narratives of Genesis dealing with Abram (Abraham) may now be integrated into the life and history of the time in such surprisingly consistent ways that there can be little doubt about their substantial historicity.” Sarna explains that new archaeological evidence suggests the biblical account portrays the contemporary cultures accurately: “The Scriptural data about the Fathers of Israel, their lives, experiences and activities, are, according to the Albright school, reflected in the varied testimony now available from a host of archaeological sites.” P. Kyle McCarter, Jr. and Ronald S. Hendel provide the 2166BC date, based on the following logic: scholarly acceptance of Solomon’s death in 930BC [see note 7]; Solomon’s reign of forty years [1 Kings 11:42] means he began his reign in 970BC; Solomon began the temple in his fourth year [1 Kings 6:1], or 966BC. The exodus occurred 480 years earlier [1 Kings 6:1], or 1446BC; the slavery in Egypt was for 430 years [Exodus 12:40], so began in 1876BC; Jacob was 130 when he descended into Egypt [Genesis 47:9], so was born 2006BC; Isaac was sixty when Jacob was born [Genesis 25:26], so he was born 2066BC; Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born [Genesis 21:5], so he was born 2166BC. [See McCarter and Hendel in the bibliography.] McCarter and Hendel had issues with this logic, mostly having to do with issues regarding the long life spans and what they saw as inconsistencies in the exodus accounts. Abraham’s death would have been in 1991BC, because he lived 175 years [Genesis 25:7]. In general, archaeological finds support the details of the culture

and practices of the area as given in Genesis, as exemplified by The Mari Tablets [which show Hittite customs like the feudal responsibility associated with Abraham's purchase of the cave in which to bury Sarah], the Nuzi Tablets [which describe customs consistent with the Genesis account for the second millennium before Christ but distinct from Israelite customs in the following millennium], the Yorgan Tepe tablets [which explain Lot's father-in-law's concern over the stolen family images, by recording one instance of possession leading to legal claim to other property], finds in the Jordan Valley [which support the descriptions of the district containing Sodom and Gomorrah as fertile and populated around 2065BC but abandoned soon after], and Cappadocian texts from the nineteenth century and Mari letters from the eighteenth century [which apparently refer to the Hebrews]; this evidence from McDowell, 99-104.

² 1 Kings 6:1 says the exodus was 480 years prior to the fourth year of Solomon's reign, or roughly 1446BC [see note 7 for full explanation of dating of Solomon's reign]. Archer, 249-251, refutes some arguments against the early date stemming from faulty assumptions resulting from archaeological dating of the destruction of cities. The Merneptah Stele, dating to about 1230BC, mentions Israel as an established nation [see All About the Journey in bibliography]. Please see the continued discussion in the next paragraph.

³ Jack Finegan [*Light from the Ancient Past*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959), 106-108, 179], discloses several arguments [as revealed in Archer, 241]. First, letters in the Amarna Correspondence from King Abdi-Hepa of Canaanite Jerusalem present his city as in imminent danger, which would mean they could not have been Israelite forces, since Jerusalem wasn't conquered until the time of David. However, as Archer, 241, points out, the armies of Joshua did menace Jerusalem,

and neither account suggests Jerusalem fell; so this actually supports the earlier date.

Second, Glueck's archaeological surveys failed to uncover evidence of urban civilization in Edom, Moab, and Ammon, in the 1400s. Archer, 241-242, responded that the surveys were surface exploration, not thorough, and assumed some falsehoods about pottery evidence; furthermore, several recent finds now suggest organized civilizations dating back to about 1600BC in at least some areas. Third, the later date is necessary to fit Joseph's rise to influence in Egypt with the Hyksos period in Egypt [beginning in about 1730BC]. Archer, 242, responded that it makes more sense to think the Hyksos king was the one who knew not Joseph in Exodus 1, and the Twelfth Dynasty as the probable time of Joseph's rise to influence; thus this actually supports the earlier date. Fourth, there is no evidence of building activity in the Delta during the reign of Thutmose III (1501BC-1447BC). Archer, 242-243, responded that archaeological evidence shows Thutmose III erected two obelisks at the base of the Delta in Heliopolis and a scarab refers to his son being born in Memphis, not far away; other evidence suggests frequent royal occupation in the Delta during the reigns of Thutmose III [during the time of oppression] and Amenhtep II [during the exodus]; thus this supports the earlier date. Fifth, the mention of the city of Raamses in Exodus 1:11 suggests a later date. Archer, 243-246, responded that the later date cannot reconcile the chronological sequence of the scriptures with the chronology suggested by evidence of from the Israel stela of Merneptah and Egyptian sources, whereas the earlier date can. Also, the Dream Stela of Thutmose IV suggests that he was not the first-born son of his father, and the promise in the dream recorded on the Stela combined with the evidence that he did become Pharaoh coincides with the biblical exodus account of the first born son dying.

⁴ The events portrayed in the Amarna letters, dating from 1400BC to 1370BC, seem to correspond well with the biblical account in Joshua. Data from Archer, 184, 288-295. Narrowing of date to 1405BC specifically is based on the dating of the Exodus [see previous notes].

⁵ Andre Lemaire said, “The principal difficulty in reconstructing the history of the period, however, is that we are dependent almost exclusively on the Bible.” [See Lemaire in the bibliography.] His exposition of scripture is decidedly liberal, but he pointed out that, “Archaeology seems to confirm that until about 1000 B.C.E., the end of Iron Age I, Israelite society was essentially a society of farmers and stockbreeders without any truly centralized organization and administration...By contrast, Philistine urban civilization was flourishing in the 11th century B.C.E., as revealed by recent excavations at Ashdod, Tel Gerisa, Tel Migne (biblical Ekron) and Ashkelon.” In general, this would support the idea that Saul began the urbanization and construction as described in 1 Samuel. Dating for Saul is based on the accepted date for the death of Solomon [see note 7] and subtracting forty years to get the date for David’s death [see note 7], subtracting another forty years to get Saul’s death [see note 6], and then subtracting forty-two years to get the date when Saul’s reign began, since 1 Samuel 13:1 [we think] indicates Saul ruled for forty-two years.

⁶ 1 Kings 2:11 says David ruled for forty years and was succeeded by Solomon. Solomon’s death has been well established as 930BC [see note 7], and from that and the mention in 1 Kings 11:42 that Solomon also ruled forty years, we work back to David’s death at 970BC and thus his ascension in 1010BC. The Tel Dan Inscription is the oldest archaeological find referring to David, specifically the House of David [though this is disputed]. It dates from the 9th to 8th centuries BC and says, “I killed Jehoram son

of Ahab king of Israel and I killed Ahaziah son of Jehoram king of the House of David,” possibly referring to events depicted in 2 Kings 8-9. Data from All about the Journey [see All About the Journey in the bibliography] and the website of K. C. Hanson [see Hanson, “The Tel Dan Inscription,” in the bibliography].

⁷ The Anals of Shalmaneser III mention Ahab’s alliance against the Assyrians in 853BC and Jehu’s payment of tribute in 841BC. The full years of the kings of Israel listed in the Bible from Solomon’s death to Ahab total seventy-eight, which would put Solomon’s death in 931BC [error in rounding, so 930BC]. Adding the forty years mentioned in the Bible [1 Kings 11:42] for Solomon’s rule gives a start date of 970BC. Egyptian records corroborate: Shoshenq’s rule began around 945BC and he invaded Israel and Judah in his twentieth or twenty-first year, which would put that invasion at 925/924BC, which the Bible says was Rehoboam’s fifth year [1 Kings 14:25-26], thus a date of about 930BC for Solomon’s death. Data from Kenneth A. Kitchen [see Kitchen in the bibliography].

⁸ 1 Kings 6:1-38 describes the construction process as being complete in the eleventh year of Solomon’s reign, or 959BC. There is no archaeological evidence of this date, but we have some of the temple’s existence. The Byt Yhwh Ostracon refers to the Temple and dates to the period of 9th to 7th centuries BC, per K. C. Hanson [see Hanson, “The Byt Yhwh Ostracon,” in the bibliography]. The Jehoash Inscription, supposedly found on the Temple Mount, describes temple repairs ordered by Jehoash in the 9th century BC. Data from Stephen Farrell [see Farrell in the bibliography].

⁹ Radiocarbon dating placed the destruction of Tel Rehov, in the Beth-Shean/Jordan Valley, 4 miles west of the River Jordan at 940-900 B.C. The Temple of Amun at Karnak in Upper Egypt records the list of cities conquered by Pharaoh Shoshenq

I [the biblical Shishak]. 1 Kings 14:25-26 says that Shishak invaded Israel in the fifth year of the reign of Rehoboam, or 925BC if Solomon's death was in 930BC [see note 7]. Data from Hendrik J. Bruins, Johannes van der Plicht, and Amihai Mazar [see Bruins, van der Plicht, and Mazar in the bibliography], and Rich Deem [see Deem in the bibliography]. 1 Kings 11:42-43 notes the death of Solomon and that he had ruled for forty years. 1 Kings 12:16-20 records the division of the monarchy almost immediately following, which would place it in 930BC [see note 7].

¹⁰ The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III indicates 841BC as the date Jehu paid tribute to the Assyrian leader, which would be the first year of his reign. This lines up with biblical indications for time differences between Judah's kings dating from Solomon's death [see note 7]. Data from Beitzel, 133. The event of Jehu's ascension is recorded in 2 Kings 9. 2 Kings 8:24-29 indicates a date of 841BC, because of the timing of the ascension of Ahaziah in Judah, just prior to the battle at Ramoth-gilead, which occurred in his only year on the throne.

¹¹ The annals of Sargon II indicate a date of 722BC for his ascension to power and conquest of the Northern Kingdom. Data from Beitzel, 137, and "The Bible Chronology from Solomon to Hezekiah" [see "The Bible Chronology from Solomon to Hezekiah" in the bibliography]. 2 Kings 17:6 and 18:9-11 say that the Assyrians captured Samaria and carried many into exile in the ninth year of Hoshea's reign and the seventh year of Hezekiah's reign, which Bible chronology experts give as 722BC based on the year of Solomon's death [see note 7], per Barker, 527, 531.

¹² 2 Kings 22:1-10; 2 Chronicles 34:1-18 indicate Josiah became king in 640BC [according to Bible chronology experts; see Barker, 627, and note 7] and that the

scroll was found in the eighteenth year of his reign, making it roughly 621BC. We know it had to be before 609BC, when Josiah died [see below].

¹³ The Babylonian Chronicle provides a date of 612BC for the fall of Nineveh. Data from Archer, 322-323. 2 Kings 23:29 and 2 Chronicles 35:20 record Neco of Egypt going up to help Assyria [following the fall of Nineveh], which has been dated to 609BC by the Babylonian Chronicle [see next note]. Implicit in 2 Kings 24:1 and 2 Chronicles 36:6 is the regional domination of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar following the fall of Nineveh and the final defeat of Assyrian forces. The fall of Nineveh was predicted by Nahum, which prediction we know was made after the fall of Thebes in 663BC, because Nahum mentioned that as past.

¹⁴ The Babylonian Chronicle provides a date of 609BC for the battle of Megiddo, at which Josiah perished. Data from Archer, 322-323. 2 Kings 23:29-30 and 2 Chronicles 35:20-27 record the results of this battle.

¹⁵ The Babylonian Chronicle provides a date of May or June of 605BC for the battle of Carchemish. Data from Archer, 322-323. Jeremiah 46:2 specifies a date as the fourth year of Jehoikim, following the death of Josiah in 609BC.

¹⁶ The Babylonian Chronicle provides a date of 605BC for the Battle of Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar's proceeding into Syria-Palestine, and his demand that the inhabitants appear before him. Data from Beitzel, 142. 2 Kings 24:1 records Jehoiakim's submission. Daniel 1:1-4 records the first exile as in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign, following the year of the death of Josiah.

¹⁷ The Babylonian Chronicle provides a date of March 15-16 of 597BC for the surrender of Jerusalem. Data from Beitzel, 142; Archer, 322-323. 2 Chronicles 36:5-6 and 2 Kings 23:34-36 say Jehoiakim reigned for eleven years after the year of the death

of Josiah. Further details are given in 2 Kings 24:6-12 and 2 Chronicles 36:10, that an exile occurred that year, after Jehoiachin had reigned for three months.

¹⁸ The external dating for the third exile is based on the dating for the fall of Jerusalem [see next point]. 2 Kings 24:18 and 2 Chronicles 36:11 indicate Zedekiah ruled for eleven years following the second exile. At his death, 2 Kings 25:11 and 2 Chronicles 36:20 indicate the third exile.

¹⁹ The Babylonian Chronicle provides a date of July, 587BC for the fall of Jerusalem. Data from Archer, 322-323, referring to the following text: “D.J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of the Chaldean Kings in the British Museum* (1956), pp. 29-31, 70-71.” Archer, 404-405, also mentions the Lachish Ostraca dating to 588BC, which discusses the Babylonian invasion occurring at that time. 2 Kings 24:18 and 2 Chronicles 36:11 indicate Zedekiah ruled for eleven years following the second exile. At his death, 2 Kings 25:4-10 and 2 Chronicles 36:18-19 record the destruction of Jerusalem.

²⁰ The Nabunaid Chronicle provides evidence of the date of 539BC for the fall of the Babylonian Empire. Data from Quartz Hill School of Theology [see Quartz Hill in the bibliography]. It is obvious from Ezra 1:1-4 that the empire did fall to the Persians prior to the returns from exile, and from Daniel 1:21 that this happened in Daniel’s lifetime [note that it also was predicted by him].

²¹ The Kurash Prism indicates the truth that Cyrus allowed the Jews to return. This information is from Charles F. Horne [see Horne in the bibliography]. Ezra 1:1-4 indicates this return was during the first year of the reign of Cyrus, after he conquered the Babylonian Empire.

²² Ezra 7:1-8 indicates the second return occurred during the seventh year of Artaxerxes, which began in 464BC. Archer, 457, notes that some have placed a later date

for this return, but argues this would render some biblical passages nonsensical and conflict with evidence such as the Elephantine Papyri, which mention people connected to others in the Bible narrative. These Papyri give a date for Artaxerxes' ascension as 464BC, according to Prophetic Technology Website [see both Prophetic Technology, "The Chronological Calendar for King Artaxerxes' reign in the 5th Century BC Based on Scientific Dating the 5th Century BC Elephantine Papyri," and Prophetic Technology, "Scientific dating the Elephantine Papyri with Certainty," in the bibliography].

²³ Nehemiah 1:1 places this event in the twentieth year of the reign of Araxerxes, which began in 464BC. Archer, 457, notes that some have placed a later date for this return, but argues this would render some biblical passages nonsensical and conflict with evidence such as the Elephantine Papyri, which mention people connected to others in the Bible narrative. These Papyri give a date for Artaxerxes' ascension as 464BC [see references in previous note].

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