

# CRITIQUE OF TIM WARNER

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Tim Warner, *The Time of the End* (Printed in Great Britain by Amazon.co.uk.Ltd., Marston Gate, 2012). Pp. 357.

The object of this book is to alert Christ's Church universally, if not also the world, that the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will take place on the Day of Atonement, October 1, 2036. Seven years before the Second Coming, that is, on the Day of Atonement in 2029, the 70th Week of Daniel will commence (see the chart on p. 330, and pp. 237-38).<sup>1</sup>

The author is well aware that he is following in the footsteps of many failed attempts to predict the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus, but he claims to have a unique method for discovering the date of Jesus' return, namely, chronology.

While most TEOTWAWKI prophets (the acronym stands for '*the end of the world as we know it*') claim to hear voices, or have dreams, or are privileged with some supernatural revelation or insight, directly from God, or through the Holy Spirit, Pastor Tim Warner (pastor of Oasis Christian Church in Tampa, Florida, USA) makes no such claim for his prediction of the Second Coming. He states that he got his 'insight' through years of study working on the chronology of the Bible (p. 22). The blurb on the back cover reveals where he got his inspiration to write this book. It reads:

The earliest Christians claimed a tradition from the Apostles that the Kingdom of Messiah would come in exactly 6000 years from creation. The New Testament books of Hebrews and 2 Peter confirm this claim, showing that it was taught by the Apostles just prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. If we can determine what year we are in on a continuous calendar counting from creation, we can know the year of Jesus' return to earth. . . . The Bible contains everything necessary for a complete calendar from creation to the second coming.

All previous attempts to predict the end of the world failed when their date passed and nothing happened. In T. Warner's case (hereafter TW), the prediction is so far in the future that the author can bask in the knowledge that he cannot be proved false until we have reached 1 October 2036 and the Lord has not come!<sup>2</sup>

## SUMMARY OF CRITICISMS

- 120 Jubilees are allocated for the entire existence of man on the Earth (Gen 6:3)
- 1 day is equal to a 1000 years in Hosea 6:2
- A Jubilee consisted of 50 years (in place of 49 years)
- Genesis 5 & 11 are taken as 'closed' chrono-genealogies
- The Hebrew text is not always correct<sup>3</sup>
- The stay in Egypt was 210 years long (not 430 years)
- Cyrus issued his decree in 462 BC (rejects 536 BC)
- Jesus was born *after* the death of Herod the Great<sup>4</sup>
- The following table has converted some of Tim Warner's Jubilees into BC dates for comparative purposes.

	HISTORICAL EVENT	WARNER	McFALL
1.	BIRTH OF ABRAHAM	1962 BC	2166 BC
2.	BIRTH OF JOSEPH	1712 BC	1915 BC
3.	EXODUS FROM EGYPT	1462 BC	1446 BC

<sup>1</sup> From 11 Sept. 2029 to April 2033 the Third Temple will be built and the two witnesses will preach for 3.5 years (pp. 321-22). From April 2033 to 1 Oct 2036 (Yom Kippur) the Antichrist will rule from the Third Temple in Jerusalem for 3.5 years (p. 328). According to TW these last seven years constitute Daniel's 70th week.

<sup>2</sup> TW has already got his get-out clause into print on pp. 321, 328-29, in the likely event that his prediction proves to be a false prophecy.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 100 n 194, where the LXX is preferred over the Hebrew, and at Exod 12:40 where the shorter time of the LXX is preferred over the 430 years of the Hebrew, for the stay in Egypt. Cf. also p. 46 n. 76.

<sup>4</sup> Page 329 note 508, "Jesus was almost certainly born in September of 3 BC." This statement is false, because it is a fact that King Herod the Great died shortly before the Passover (April) in 4 BC, which means that Jesus must have been born before 4 BC, and since Herod chose to kill all the infants in Bethlehem from two years and under, this implies that Jesus must have been born in 5 BC *at the latest* if this massacre was not a deathbed decision.

4.	START OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE	982 BC	967 BC
5.	REIGN OF JUDAH'S KINGS (TOTAL)	413 years	345 years
6.	HEZEKIAH'S 15th YEAR	662 BC	701 BC
7.	DESTRUCTION OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE	532 BC	586 BC
8.	DECREE OF CYRUS (PERSIAN KING)	462 BC	536 BC
9.	BIRTH OF JESUS	3 BC	6 BC
10.	DEATH OF JESUS	AD 30	AD 29

- Claim: I alone (and on my own) have recovered the chronology of the Bible
- Attitude: No other source is to be used except the Bible and logic.
- Prophecy: The Second Coming will occur on 1 October, 2036.

#### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION

In critiquing any work there are many underlying assumptions that an author makes about the document (in this case the Bible) he is examining, and Tim Warner has his fair share of them.

Perhaps the most influential assumption that he makes is his attitude toward the work of other scholars and toward extra-biblical sources of information that impinge directly on the Bible. He is an isolationist, in that he regards all other sources of information as inferior to the Bible, with the exception of the works of the Early Church Fathers. He permits these to be used in his reconstruction because of his belief that they were closest to the Apostles, but anything after their time is not taken into account by him.

He has no bibliography of modern authors,<sup>5</sup> because he avoids the idea of getting help from any source other than those already mentioned.

#### COMMONLY HELD ASSUMPTIONS

TW shares some of the assumptions that characterise other attempts to draw up a biblical chronology solely on the basis of reading a translation of the Hebrew and Greek texts. For instance:

- It is assumed that the figures in Genesis 5 & 11 give the exact age at which a father begat his son, hence there are no gaps, and consequently an exact chronology of the world, from Adam to the end of the Book of Acts, can be extrapolated from the Bible.
- It is assumed that the 'second Cainan' in Luke 3:36 was due to an early scribal error, which was then inserted into the LXX, whose numbers were deliberately changed by the Jews (p. 186).
- Galatians 3:17 is assumed to mean that there were just 430 years between the Covenant made with Abraham and the Exodus from Egypt.
- Jacob's 12 offspring are assumed to have been born in one, seven-year period.
- Daniel 9:24 is assumed to refer the 70 'weeks' to the *future*.
- It is assumed that there are 50 years in a Jubilee cycle.

Before reviewing TW's own unique set of assumptions, I shall reply to the common assumptions first, because these are foundational to his new chronology.

#### CRITIQUE OF SOME COMMONLY HELD ASSUMPTIONS

Having constructed my own Bible chronology, I published an article entitled, "Do the Sixty-Nine Weeks of Daniel Date the Messianic Mission of Nehemiah or Jesus?" in volume 54 of the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (2009) pp. 673-718, in which I investigated Daniel's Seventy Weeks in some depth. I have also published a number of articles on the chronology of the Bible in peer-reviewed journals.

I share the conviction of most conservative-evangelical scholars that God is a God of order, and that He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, at a time that followed His own timetable using His own appointed time-pieces that He set in the heavens, namely, His Jubilee cycles of times.

<sup>5</sup> On the rare occasion when he refers to an author the conventional method for recording bibliographical information is not followed; see p. 76 note 139; p. 88 n. 163; 172 n. 301; 186 n. 322; 210 n. 347; 214 n. 351; 217 n. 357, 359; 227 n. 369, 370; 231 n. 373; 239 n. 393; 241 n. 394; 255 n. 417, 418; 261 n. 426; 305 n. 469; 333 n. 510. The exceptions are p. 157 n. 279; 200 n. 330; 203 n. 335; 208 n. 346; 212 n. 348; 218 n. 360; but even in these cases the standard format is not followed completely. If the author had been familiar with the consensus style of scholarly works he would have been more careful in his presentation of the few sources he did consult. His dependence on the internet for information is evident in the footnotes.

## A. THE ASSUMPTION THAT THERE ARE NO GAPS IN GENESIS 5 & 11

God set the clock of the Jubilee cycles going at the moment He brought His people out of Egypt. Whether these cycles can be back-dated to the creation of Adam is not revealed, though in the interests of curiosity I have back-dated them as far as Terah (where we have our first, secure 'touchdown' as far as dateable history goes, whose dates are 2298–2091 B.C.) but TW, following in the footsteps of all his predecessors who have adopted a 'Bible Only' approach to chronology, has presumed that Genesis 5 and 11 are there so that we can reconstruct an unbroken (no gaps) chronological history of mankind from the creation of Adam to the end of the Book of Acts. I take the view that Genesis 5 & 11 are schematic lists, 2 x 10, leading up to Abraham, just as Matthew has 3 x 14 generations leading up to the Lord Jesus. Matthew has left out kings, but the *impression* he gives (to the first-time reader) is that there is an unbroken (no gaps) chronological history of direct links from King David to King Jesus. The impression is wrong in Matthew, and it is wrong in Genesis.

### PROBLEM: TRIPLETS BORN IN ONE YEAR TO NOAH AND TERAH

"And Noah is a son of five hundred years, and Noah begets Shem, Ham, and Japheth" (Gen 5:32).

"And Terah lives seventy years, and he begets Abram, Nahor, and Haran" (Gen 11:26).

We can come to the conundrum of triplets born to two men in one year indirectly through a study of Hebrews 7:9-10. We know from Scripture that Levi was not the direct son of Abraham. The order is: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi; so Levi was the great-grandson of Abraham.

### ABRAHAM BEGAT LEVI

The solution to the enigma of the triplets is very simple, and Hebrew 7:9-10 is the key, which reads: ". . . and apart from all controversy, the less is blessed by the better, and here, indeed, men who die receive tithes, and there *he*, who is testified to that he was living, and so to speak, through Abraham even Levi who is receiving tithes, paid tithes, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him." We just need to ask the question, 'When did Levi emerge from the loins of Abraham?' The answer is, 'When Isaac was born.' At that time Abraham was 100 years old. So Scripture is accurate at the generational level if it had said, "When Abraham was 100 years old he begat Levi." But Scripture would be inaccurate if we interpreted this at the chronological level, because when Levi was 'begotten' by Abraham, he was not *born* because he was still in the loins of Isaac, his grandfather. In any case, Abraham is called the 'father' of Levi. A first-time Western reader would describe this as a mistake, because Abraham was his great-grandfather, not his father.

### ISAAC BEGAT LEVI

We can ask the same question again, 'When did Levi emerge from the loins of Isaac?' The answer is, 'When Isaac was 60 years old.' So Scripture is accurate at the generational level if it had said, "When Isaac was 60 years old he begat Levi." But Scripture would be inaccurate if we interpreted this at the chronological level, because when Levi was 'begotten' by Isaac, he was not *born* because he was still in the loins of Jacob, his father.

### JACOB BEGAT LEVI

We can ask the same question again, 'When did Levi emerge from the loins of Jacob?' The answer is, 'When Jacob was about 83 years old.' So Scripture is accurate at the generational level if it said, "When Jacob was about 83 years old he begat Levi." In this case Scripture would be accurate if we interpreted this at the chronological level, because when Levi was 'begotten' by Jacob, he was *born* because he was no longer in the loins of Jacob, his father.

This illustrates the Hebrew truth that Levi had three fathers, who each 'begat' him at three different chronological times.<sup>6</sup> It can be truthfully said that Levi was the son of Abraham, the son of Isaac, and the son of Jacob, *all at the same time*, because the word 'son' can be used of any descendant of any distant ancestor, so Matthew could commence his Gospel with the words, "A book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham." If taken literally, Jesus was the grandson of Abraham.

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<sup>6</sup> The Russian matrushka dolls are a good analogy of Hebrew thinking, with regard who the carrier of the 'seed' is, for they all are carriers of the smallest doll in the very centre.

Now frequently in Hebrew literature (and in other Semitic cultures) a man is said to be the son of someone, but it turns out he is the grandson, or a distant, direct descendant of a distinguished ancestor. When this truth is taken on-board by Bible chronologists, then they will not read the Bible like a first-time reader, but with a deeper appreciation of the culture that lies behind the written words of Scripture.

What we can say genetically is that the 'seed of Levi' passed out of the physical body of Abraham when Abraham was 100 years old. So Abraham was the 'carrier' of the 'seed of Levi' for 100 years, and the 'seed of Levi' was then carried by Isaac for a further 60 years before it passed into the loins of Jacob, and the 'seed of Levi' was carried for a further 83 years (approximately) before it passed into the womb of Leah who bore Levi. Only at this point does Levi enter the physical world.

Now if you add up the years that Levi was being carried by his father Jacob (82 years [to conception]), his grandfather Isaac (60 years), and his great-grandfather Abraham (100 years), this comes to 242 years.

If, for a moment, Scripture recorded the birth of Levi as follows: "When Abraham was 100 years old, he begat Levi," the literalist (the 'Bible Only' reader) would take that at its face value and believe that Levi was the actual son of Abraham, and Abraham begat him when he was 100 years old. However, we know from Scripture that Levi was born 142 years later ( $242 - 100 = 142$ ). The lesson to be learned from this illustration is that there is only one point at which the generational level and the chronological level are both true, and that is when there is no gap between the actual father and the actual son. Once the link between 'father' and 'son' is widened, so that 'father' means 'grandfather' (or a distant ancestor) the chronological link is destroyed, and the only truth that remains, and that is *always* being conveyed by Scripture, is the generational one.

It is for this reason that the lists in Genesis 5 and 11 are *always* true at the generational level, but ambivalent at the chronological level. Both levels of truth are found in the link between Adam and Seth, because they are contemporaries, and because Adam gives him his name, and in the case of Lamech and Noah, because Lamech gives Noah his name, unless, of course, Lamech 'claimed' the son of one of his grandsons as his own son (on the Jacob-Joseph model, for which, see below). As for the other 'father-son' relationships in Genesis 5, these could be of the 'Abraham-Levi' kind.

When Abraham begat Isaac he automatically begat Jacob and Levi. So that Hebraically-speaking Scripture could have said, "When Abraham was 100 years old he begat Isaac, Jacob, and Levi." And this would be a truthful statement at the generational level, but false at the chronological level. The same applies to the statements that Noah begat three sons when he was 500 years old, and that Terah begat three sons when he was 70 years of age.

#### CONCLUSION TO THE ASSUMPTION THAT THERE ARE NO GAPS IN GENESIS 5 & 11

It does not invalidate Matthew's point if it can be shown that he left out four kings to achieve his deliberate  $3 \times 14$  pattern, the number '14' being the numerical value of David's name in Hebrew letters. Matthew's purpose was to link Abraham to Jesus at the generational level not at the chronological level.

It does not invalidate the Genesis lists if it can be shown that they omit intermediate generation links, such as the omission of Cainan in Genesis 11:12, which is recorded in Luke 3:36. The long-term purpose of the biblical genealogies was to link Adam to Jesus in the case of Luke's genealogy, and to link Abraham to Jesus in the case of Matthew's genealogy. The truth lies at the generational level not at the chronological level.

Matthew states that Joram (Jehoram), king of Judah, 'begat' Uzziah, but Uzziah was his great-great-grandson, but note that the exact same verb is used to beget a son and to beget a great-great-grandson. Matthew has omitted three kings, namely, Joash, Ahaziah, and Amaziah, between two names in his genealogy of Jesus. This is important for an understanding of what is going on in Genesis 5 and 11. In some instances in the Genesis genealogies a 'son' is begotten, but in others it could be a 'great-great-grandson.' The priority for the Hebrew writer was to convey generational truth; if there is any chronological truth it comes as a by-product of the generational truth.

Both in Genesis and in Matthew the verb 'begot' is the common term, and key, to a correct understanding of their purposes. The verb is not used in Luke's genealogy of Jesus. There the focus is on the 'seed' not on chronology. Just as Levi was in the loins of Abraham, his great-grandfather, when Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedek, and so the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews can state that therefore Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek, so David was in the loins of Abraham at that time also. This is a very Hebraic notion and one that is foreign to non-Semites, but it is one that explains how Noah can have three sons when he was 500 years old, and how Terah could have three sons when he was 70 years old. In both cases we know that they were not triplets.

## JACOB ADOPTED HIS OWN GRANDSONS AS HIS DIRECT SONS

Let's take another feature of Hebrew family life that throws light on Noah's situation. Jacob said to Joseph, "And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they [Ephraim & Manasseh] will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance" (Gen 48:5-6).<sup>7</sup>

When Joseph, the direct son of Jacob, went down into Egypt, he married, and had two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. On a 'Bible Only' approach, and steeped in a Western view of relationship terms, Manasseh and Ephraim were Jacob's grandsons. However, Jacob promoted his grandsons to the level of direct sons, so that they became equal in status to their uncles, the other ten sons of Jacob.

Now we know the age of Jacob when he 'begat' Manasseh and Ephraim. He was close to 147 years of age. In Jacob's family record (*toledoth*) it would be stated that, "When Jacob was about 147 years of age he begat Ephraim and Manasseh." Now we know that 'begat' in this context does not mean direct sonship, but a form of adoption whereby these grandsons become his direct sons in his old age, and they were not 'born' to him of his wives. Jacob also exercised his patriarchal right to demote his firstborn son, Reuben, from that highly privileged position, because Reuben slept with his concubine (Gen 35:22; 49:3-4; 1 Chr 5:1). Jacob had the authority of a king over his family and could pass the death sentence on Tamar, his daughter-in-law (Gen 38:24). This gives us an insight into the position of chief that each of the named individuals in Genesis 5 & 11 held while they were alive. They could promote or demote any of their sons or grandsons.

The case of Noah could fit the 'Jacob-Joseph' scenario quite easily, whereby when he was 500 years old, he adopted one of his sons (even though he was a grandson, or a great-grandson) to be his successor, namely, as his own direct son on a par with the adoption of Ephraim and Manasseh by Jacob at an advanced age *as his own direct sons*.

If Noah did adopt a particular (grand)son, then he automatically adopted this man's future sons. So that in terms of Hebrew family culture it was a true statement, *but only at the generational level*, that Noah begat the 'father' of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The father's name has not come down to us.

Now, just as Ephraim and Manasseh were a few years old by the time they were moved back one generation level to be considered full brothers alongside Jacob's direct sons, so in Noah's case, Shem, Ham and Japheth, could have been 'adopted' as teenagers, or still to be born in the case of Shem, who was 100 years old two years after the Flood, so Shem was physically born when Noah was 503 years old.

The same solution can be applied to the 'Terah-Abraham' case. Nahor begat Terah (hereafter called Terah-1). This Terah-1 is said to be 70 years old when he begat three sons: Abram, Nahor, and Haran. What this means is that Terah-1 carried the common ancestor of these three sons up until he was 70 years old, because this common ancestor left his loins at that precise moment in his own biological time, when he was 70 years of age, *and in the loins of Terah-2 was Abraham*.

In other words, what the compiler of Genesis is telling us is that he has traced the seed of Abraham to Terah-1, and when this man was 70 years of age he ceased to carry Abraham in his loins, because the seed of Abraham was now carried in the loins of Terah-2 for the next 60 years, before Abraham was physically born to Terah-2.

It is only by deduction from all the biblical data in Genesis and Acts 7:4 (and a comparison of the LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch, and other rabbinic sources) that we can work out that Terah-2 carried the seed of Abraham in his loins for 60 years (making 130 years in total between Terah-1 and Terah-2).

This throws new light on how Genesis 11:26 should be interpreted by commentators. *Terah was not Abraham's father but his grandfather.*

The name of Terah-2, Abraham's actual birth father, has not come down to us (as in the case of Noah's promoted 'son,' from whom came Shem, Ham, and Japheth). When Terah-2 was 60 years of age he physically begat Abraham, and this explains how Abraham was 75 years old when Terah-1 died at 205 years of age (205 - 130 = 75). The alleged contradiction between Genesis 11:26, 32; 12:4 and Acts 7:4 is removed on this interpretation.

This understanding of the terms 'father' (for a previous carrier) and 'son' (for a distant offspring) helps us to solve the enigmas of the triplets. The deductions we have been able to

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<sup>7</sup> A similar change of status occurred in the case of Josiah's grandson, Jeconiah (Jehoiachin). He was moved back one generation and so promoted to the same generational level as his uncles. "Josiah begat Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon" (Mt 1:11). His uncles were also kings of Judah.

work out in the case of Abraham's case history are certain. It is for this reason that I commence my chronology of the Bible with Terah-1, because we do not know the precise relationship between Nahor and his 'son' Terah (= Terah-1) in Genesis 11:24, and also of those that precede it. The relationship could be direct, that is, father-son, or indirect, that is, ancestor-offspring, but we have no way of knowing this, the terms are too fluid. It is because the precise relationship between all the named carriers of Abraham is not given in Genesis 5 & 11, that we must, in all honesty, stand back from imposing a direct 'father-son' relationship on all of them. This leads to the conclusion that the figures in Genesis 5 & 11 cannot be safely used to reconstruct a continuous chronology from Adam to Abraham.

Abraham is the focus and terminus of the genealogies in Genesis 5 & 11. The compiler of Genesis has carefully traced who is the carrier of the seed of Abraham from Adam through to Terah-2. It is for this reason that the compiler gives us the time each named ancestor carried Abraham in his loins. He does not have to list every single carrier. Just so long as he had access to the full biographical details, he could make a selection from these illustrious carriers, and state how long Abraham was carried by each previous ancestor: *that* is the purpose of giving the age of the named ancestor. Its purpose was not to give a continuous chronology of mankind.

#### IT IS NORMAL TO ABBREVIATE LONG GENEALOGIES

Apart from the wealth of material that could be cited for the abbreviation of genealogies in other Near Eastern cultures, we need look no further than the Jewish Book of Jubilees, which was written a century or more before the birth of Jesus, apart from being our earliest witness to the 49-year cycle of the Jubilee, it gives us examples of how the twenty generations in Genesis 5 & 11 can be shorted, or telescoped, depending on what the writer wishes to convey to his readers. The following is an abstract from my own researches into the chronology of that book.

#### GAPS IN GENESIS 5 & 11

It is likely that the reduction of the number of patriarchs to ten names before and after the Flood was deliberately schematic. There are three clues to this possibility within the Book of Jubilees itself.

First, we have an extra Cainan among the post-Flood patriarchs (Jub 8:1).<sup>8</sup> The solution to this variant is that when Shelah's grandfather Arphaxad was 35 years of age, he begat Cainan, and Cainan begat Shelah (in whose loins was Abraham). The fact that Shelah's birth father is omitted in the Hebrew text, but admitted into the Greek text, does not affect the generational truth, but it does affect the chronological truth.

Consequently, for those who view Genesis 5 & 11 as consisting of strict 'father-son' links, and who are using these links to construct a continuous chronology of the Bible (as Ussher did), they have a serious problem. The fact that Luke included the second Cainan in his genealogy of Jesus makes it difficult to get rid of it, because most 'Bible Only' chronologists hold firmly to the inerrancy of the Word of God. Few would go so far as to regard it as a spurious generation, but to retain it would introduce a chronological gap that is unacceptable.

However, for those who view Genesis 5 & 11 as providing generational truth, there is no problem. Indeed, if there were four generations missing between every named patriarch in Genesis 5 & 11, it would make absolutely no difference to the generational truth.<sup>9</sup>

Given these insights into Hebrew family culture, it comes as no surprise to find that Arphaxad begat the father of Selah, who was called 'Cainan,' and not Selah himself (Gen 11:12 LXX). The notice that Arphaxad was 35 years old when he 'begat' Shelah is true on the generational level, but not on the chronological level.<sup>10</sup>

The effect of placing Cainan between Arphaxad and Shelah, in the Septuagint, was to move Abraham out of the second set of ten, and make him the first, or head, of a third set. This would seem appropriate, because a new Covenant was made with him, and so a new era began with him. The election of the nation of Israel began with the election of Abraham. Genesis 1-11 is really the introduction to the life of Abraham and his seed.

The second clue is that Abraham, as reported by the author of the Book of Jubilees, reduced the twenty generations in Genesis 5 & 11 to just seven in an ascending order (Jub 19:23-25):

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<sup>8</sup> This generation is accepted as genuine in Luke 3:36, and the LXX.

<sup>9</sup> It may be that those who translated the Hebrew into Greek in the third century BC, knew that there was a longer period of time between Adam and Noah than the Hebrew would allow, and this would account for their attempt to lengthen the period between the generations. If so, they were simply attempting to match the renowned chronology of Egypt.

<sup>10</sup> Some scholars add another 60 years to the time from Shem to Abraham, figuring that Terah was not 70 years old when Abraham was born (cf. Genesis 11:26); but he was 130 years old, for Abraham was 75 when he left for Palestine after Terah's death at the age of 205 (Genesis 11:32; 12:4; Acts 7:4).

“And all the blessings wherewith the Lord hath blessed me and my seed shall belong to Jacob and his seed always. And in his seed shall my name be blessed, and the name of my fathers, **Shem**, and **Noah**, and **Enoch**, and **Mahalalel**, and **Enos**, and **Seth**, and **Adam**. And these shall serve to lay the foundations of the heaven, and to strengthen the earth, and to renew all the luminaries which are in the firmament.”

Later on, Abraham further reduced the seven to just four generations in a descending order (19:26-27),

“Jacob, my beloved son, whom my soul loveth, may God bless thee from above the firmament, and may He give thee all the blessings wherewith He blessed **Adam**, and **Enoch**, and **Noah**, and **Shem**; and all the things of which He told me, and all the things which He promised to give me, may He cause to cleave to thee and to thy seed for ever, according to the days of heaven above the earth.”

Later on, Abraham further reduced the four to just two generations in an ascending order (22:13):

“May the Most High God give thee [Jacob] all the blessings wherewith he hath blessed me, and wherewith He blessed **Noah** and **Adam**; May they rest on the sacred head of thy [Jacob] seed from generation to generation for ever.”

In the following table Abraham’s reduced list of names are given in bold print, showing the names, or generations, that he considered redundant for his immediate purpose.

<i>JUBILEES 19:24 (8 NAMES)</i>	<i>JUBILEES 19:26-27 (5 NAMES)</i>	<i>JUBILEES 22:13 (3 NAMES)</i>
<b>Abraham</b> Terah Nahor Serug Reu Peleg Eber Shelah Cainan Arphaxad	<b>Abraham</b> Terah Nahor Serug Reu Peleg Eber Shelah Cainan Arphaxad	<b>Abraham</b> Terah Nahor Serug Reu Peleg Eber Shelah Cainan Arphaxad
<b>Shem</b>	<b>Shem</b>	<b>Shem</b>
<b>Noah</b> Lamech Methuselah	<b>Noah</b> Lamech Methuselah	<b>Noah</b> Lamech Methuselah
<b>Enoch</b> Jared	<b>Enoch</b> Jared	<b>Enoch</b> Jared
<b>Mahahalel</b> Cainan	<b>Mahahalel</b> Cainan	<b>Mahahalel</b> Cainan
<b>Enosh</b>	<b>Enosh</b>	<b>Enosh</b>
<b>Seth</b>	<b>Seth</b>	<b>Seth</b>
<b>Adam</b>	<b>Adam</b>	<b>Adam</b>

If anyone takes a literal, ‘Bible Only’ approach to these numbers, and assumes that they are as true at the chronological level as they are at the generational level, then they will be imposing their Western standards on Hebrew literature, and end up throwing their hands in the air blaming the Scriptures for being ‘too complicated’ to be infallible records of the history of those times.

Those who read Scripture ‘as a child does’ will find Hebrew culture baffling and confusing on occasions; and those who never progress beyond reading Scripture ‘as a child reads’ are destined to remain stunted in their outlook and appreciation of the depth and complexity that lies beneath the surface of Scripture, which only those maturing in knowledge can reach and appreciate.

Reading Scripture ‘as a child does’ is the preferred approach of most modern, Bible-believing Christians, who take great pride that they have constructed their Bible chronology

without consulting any of the works of other scholars, and have not got any help except from reading the plain Word of God for themselves. This self-congratulation somehow, in their minds, elevates their results to the level of near-infallibility.

Unfortunately TW falls into the category of being a 'Bible Only' chronologist. Great pride is taken and the statement reiterated throughout his work (see pp. 21, 225, 239, 242, 244, etc.) that he has not relied on any confirmatory, extra-biblical sources, or the works of other Bible-believing scholars, in compiling his 'unique' chronology. As noted above, he does not interact with any other 'biblical' schemes, or conservative-evangelical scholars who have written on his topic. He has isolated himself from them. He dismisses them with all the liberals, because, in his opinion, they all (conservatives and liberals) have contaminated their schemes by relying on secular works: they have compromised the chronology of the Bible by consulting the vast store of available extra-biblical sources that providentially have been unearthed through archaeological excavations down through the centuries. He has turned his back on this unprecedented opportunity to use this information to establish synchronisms with non-Hebrew nations and their writings.

The Bible itself synchronises the years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign and the rule of Persian kings with the rulers of Judah. Nehemiah's memoirs synchronise his ministry with the 20th year of King Artaxerxes. Yet you will not find a single cross-reference to how these synchronisms can help to establish B.C. dates in TW's book. His premise is that the Bible is self-sufficient to establish its own infallible chronology, and this has turned him off from looking outside the Bible for confirmatory knowledge, which can act as a safeguard to avoid making silly blunders, of which there are a number in TW's chronology.

The mentality of TW is that he is afraid of knowledge—*extra-biblical knowledge*. He sees this as a threat to his uncontaminated scheme. And anyone engaged in interacting with secular sources is regarded by him as already in a compromised position, and unless they come out of it and adopt a Bible Only approach, they can never arrive at the true chronology of the Bible, as now fully established by his research.

TW has no idea how useful these extra-biblical sources can be. He is unaware of the standard works that now exist for the exact chronology of all the Persian kings that has been carefully compiled by Parker & Dubberstein,<sup>11</sup> and the same that has been done for the Egyptian Ptolemies by P. W. Pestman.<sup>12</sup> Both of these works, plus Alan Millard's work on the Assyrian Eponyms, have been painstakingly compiled from tens of thousands of original documents or tablets. They are not the work of Satan.

This self-inflicted, blinkered approach to the wealth of information that has been collected and faithfully recorded in journals and books has led TW to be suspicious that Satan is behind this misinformation (as he would see it), and it is a distraction and a diversion from uncovering the biblical chronology, which he believes he has recovered for the first time in the history of the world.

The strong lesson that emerges from this excursus into ancient Hebrew family culture is that every numeral stated in Genesis 5 and 11 is true at the generational level, but cannot be assumed to be true at the chronological level, because the purpose of these genealogies was/is not to give us a continuous history of the world (a characteristic expectation of our Western culture) but a continuous genealogical link from Adam to Jesus as given in Luke's genealogy of Jesus.

The knee-jerk reaction of a Westerner when he encounters what purports to be chronological data, such as we meet with in Genesis 5 & 11, is to assume that this is history in the sense that he is familiar with, and so he instinctively imposes his genre on the biblical material. One of the fallacies he will adopt when he reads the genealogies of Genesis 5 & 11 is that the Bible is presenting him with a continuous, unbroken, chronology of mankind from the creation of Adam to the end of the Book of Acts. The truth is that it only presents us with a continuous, unbroken, *generational* link between Adam and Jesus.

That there might be another purpose to the compilation of these genealogies, which would not agree with what he has assumed it to be, is quickly dismissed, because it robs the budding chronologist of the chance to create a world history based solely on the Bible, the fountain of all truth.

It is unlikely that the modern, impressionistic approach to Hebrew literature, and to Genesis 5 & 11 in particular, will ever go away; and so generation after generation of budding, enthusiastic, biblical chronologists will fall into the same pitfall that TW has fallen into, and repeat the same assumptions with the same results.

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<sup>11</sup> R.A. Parker & W. H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.—A.D. 75* (Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Press, 1956).

<sup>12</sup> P. W. Pestman, *Chronologie égyptienne d'après les textes démotiques*. Papyrologica Lugduno-Batava (Leiden: Lugduni Batavorum, 1967).



## B. THE ASSUMPTION THAT GALATIANS 3:17 SUPPORTS 430 YEARS BETWEEN ABRAHAM AND THE EXODUS

TM is not alone in failing to pay close attention to the wording of Galatians 3:17 which reads: "And this I say, [that] the covenant, that was confirmed (προκεκυρωμένην) before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."

A fundamental error common to virtually all modern chronologies is to assume that there were just 430 years between Abraham and Moses. What they have overlooked is that the text talks about the Abrahamic Covenant being 'confirmed' (not made or cut) 430 years before the Law was given to Moses in 1446 BC.

Note the verbs in Psalm 105:9-10.

God *made* a covenant with ABRAHAM

God *affirmed* the covenant with an *oath* to Isaac

God *caused to stand* (Heb. hiphil theme) with Jacob.

COMMENCEMENT

CONSOLIDATION

CONFIRMATION

What the vast majority of chronologists and commentators failed to notice is that Paul was well aware of his nation's history, and of Psalm 105:9-10, no doubt, and he took great care to note the *exact* time when God *confirmed* the Covenant with Jacob (not 'made' or 'cut' [with Abram] or 'ratified with an oath' [to Isaac]).

It was the same Covenant on each of the three occasions. In Leviticus 26:42, God lays down the conditions under which they could expect to receive His blessings. If they sinned but repented, "then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham I will remember."

This is not a reference to three separate covenants, but rather to the same covenant that He first made with Abraham.

When did God make this Covenant with Jacob? Genesis 46:2-4 is the last time that God spoke to Jacob, which was on the eve of his journey into Egypt (see also Gen 28:13-15; 35:10-11). This is when God 'confirmed' His covenant. God assured Jacob at the start of the 430 years in Egypt that He would fulfil the terms of the Covenant made with him, with Isaac, and with Abraham, that He would (1) multiply them, and (2) bring them back to Canaan.

By paying close attention to the precise verb ('confirmed') that Paul uses in Galatians 3:17, we can avoid the error that everyone else has fallen into. Reading the text like a first-time reader, they assumed that Paul was referring to the time when God 'cut' His covenant with Abraham. Paul's careful and precise use of the verb 'confirmed' makes it clear that he is not thinking of the 'commencement of the covenant (with Abram<sup>13</sup>), nor of its 'consolidation' (with Isaac<sup>14</sup>), but of its 'confirmation' with Jacob.<sup>15</sup>

On this reading of Galatians 3:17 we should take the 430 years to commence on the eve of Jacob's journey down into Egypt with his entire family, when Jacob was 130 years of age. It is not difficult to work out the birth of Abraham from this fixed point. The figures are as follows:

- 967 BC marked the 480th year after the Exodus from Egypt, which was the 4th year of Solomon's reign. Add 967 and 479<sup>16</sup> = 1446 BC, which is the date for the Exodus.
- 430 years in Egypt ended in 1446 BC with the Exodus. Add 430 and 1446 = 1876 BC for the Descent into Egypt by Jacob.
- Jacob was 130 years of age when he descended into Egypt. Add 130 and 1876 = 2006 BC for the birth of Jacob.
- Isaac was 60 years of age when he begat Jacob. Add 60 and 2006 = 2066 BC for the birth of Isaac.
- Abraham was 100 years of age when he begat Isaac. Add 100 and 2066 = 2166 BC for the birth of Abraham

If God made His covenant with Abraham when he was 70 years then this was in 2097 BC (so Acts 7:2-6 in conjunction with *Seder 'Olam* 2005:8); if he was 75 years then it was in 2092 BC (safer option). Neither date affects the date in Galatians 3:17. There is no precise date when God established His covenant with Isaac, but it was between 2006 BC (after the birth of Jacob) and 1886 BC (death of Isaac). There is, however, a precise date when God confirmed His covenant with Jacob; it was when he was 130 years of age in 1876 BC. The difference between the 430 years of Galatians 3:17 and the reality is 2092-1446 = 645 years. The choice is between 430 years or 645 years, so that anyone using Galatians 3:17 for chronological purposes will lose 645-430 = 215 years.

<sup>13</sup> Gen 12:1-4 and 17:4-8.

<sup>14</sup> Gen 17:19, 21 and 26:3-5, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Gen 28:13-15; 35:10-11 and 46:2-4.

<sup>16</sup> There were 479 *complete* years, not 480 as many have assumed.

Very few budding chronologists who adopt the 'Bible Only' approach to Scripture avoid the trap waiting for them in Galatians 3:17, and TW is no exception.

The LXX was despised by the Jews, but it was held in great respect by the post-Apostolic Church, so that the LXX was transmitted through the Church. Some scholars suggest that this gave the church the opportunity to change the LXX to agree with the New Testament. It is alleged that they altered the LXX text at Exodus 12:40 to agree with Galatians 3:17, because the LXX reads: "And the dwelling of the sons of Israel which they have dwelt in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, was four hundred and thirty years." The addition of the underlined words in the LXX was made (some think) to make it agree with Galatians 3:17 (on a misinterpretation of that verse).

### C. THE ASSUMPTION THAT JACOB HAD HIS 11 SONS IN SEVEN YEARS

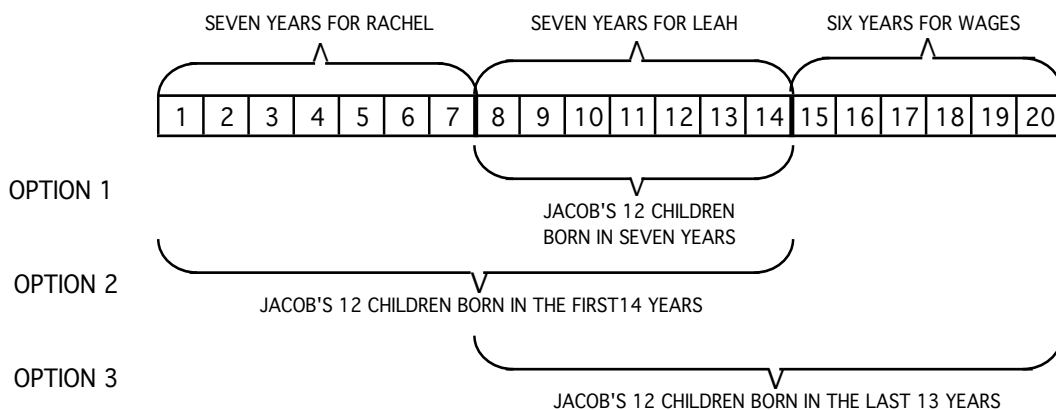
The author of the late rabbinic work, *Seder 'Olam*, was someone who kept very close to the wording of the Hebrew text and then drew on any traditions that he was aware of to expand and explain the meaning of the text. It is written in imitation of the *Book of Jubilees*, a 2nd century BC work, but with a strong interest in fleshing-out the background with extra-biblical stories and observations, coupled with a strong interest in chronological issues.

There are many bizarre elements in this late rabbinic work. When the author comes to explaining the problem of Jacob's 12 children, his first instinct is to read it for its literal meaning, just as a first-time reader would. Consequently, when he came to Genesis 29:20, "So Jacob served seven years, and they seemed only a few days . . . Then Jacob said to Laban, 'Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, . . .'" The author assumed that the literary sequence was also the chronological sequence, but v. 20 should be in parentheses. It is assumed by modern readers that Jacob married Leah and Rachel after he completed the first seven years of service.

In the case of the author of *Seder 'Olam*, with his strict adherence to the literal meaning, he knew he could not use the last six years of the 20-year service to place any births in, so he shut himself up to having to place the births of all 12 offspring in the middle seven years. He logically concluded, "It turns out that all [the] tribes were born within 7 years (except Benjamin), each one after [a] seven month pregnancy" (p. 23). The follow-up to this idea, in other rabbinic writings, is that when each son was born he had a twin sister, and he married her! The exception was Joseph, but to preserve the legitimacy of his line he married the daughter of Dinah (p. 26).

The *Book of Jubilees* opted for Option 3.<sup>17</sup> The author omitted to mention the six years that Jacob served Laban for wages, because he believed that as soon as Joseph was born, the six years were up, and Jacob returned to Canaan after 20 years of absence from Isaac (cf. Gen 31:38, 41). If so, there is a discrepancy with Genesis 31:7 where Jacob recounts that Laban changed his wages ten times to prevent him accumulating flocks of sheep and goats.

#### JACOB SERVED LABAN FOR TWENTY YEARS



The biblical account (Gen. 30:25–31:16) shows that the six years of additional service followed the birth of Joseph (Gen 31:41), not preceded it, as in *Jubilees*. The biblical data is

<sup>17</sup> On the sons of Jacob see John C. Endres, *Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees* (CBQMS, 18; Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 1987). This book is devoted to the Jacob sections of *Jubilees* and contains studies of all the passages involved. The solution in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* was to leave the last six years blank and for Jacob to have his 12 children in the first 14 years. This is option 2, and is the only one that clears up all the chronological problems relating to the rape of Dinah and its sequel.

confirmed in the meeting between Esau and Jacob by the brook Jabbok (in Transjordan). At this meeting, in the *Book of Jubilees*, Joseph was a newborn baby, but in Genesis 33:7, Joseph bows to Esau, with his mother Rachel. Joseph would have been about 7.5 years old at this time (2135 A.M.), so he would have been quite capable, mentally and physically, of doing what is attributed to him.

*Seder 'Olam* chose the first option, which is how a first-time reader would read the text.

#### D. THE ASSUMPTION BEHIND THE TRANSLATION OF DANIEL 9:24

The consensus translation of Daniel 9:24 is, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

This is a false translation. The 70 'sabbatical years' are not in the future. They are in the *past*. The punishment of 70 (sabbatical) years had just come to an end in 536 BC when Daniel spoke these words. The 70 years refers to the period of exile prophesied by Jeremiah. Daniel 9:24 refers to these 70 years as *completed*, and so in the past, not still to come in the future, as every English translation has translated this verse. The verse should read: "Seventy weeks WERE DETERMINED upon your people. . . ."

Daniel 9:25, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment [by Cyrus] to restore and to build Jerusalem [in 536 BC] unto the messiah the prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks [i.e., 466 BC]: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times [in Nehemiah's time].

26 And after threescore and two weeks shall messiah [= Nehemiah] be cut off [in 454 BC, at the end of the 69th year], but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy [or defile] the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

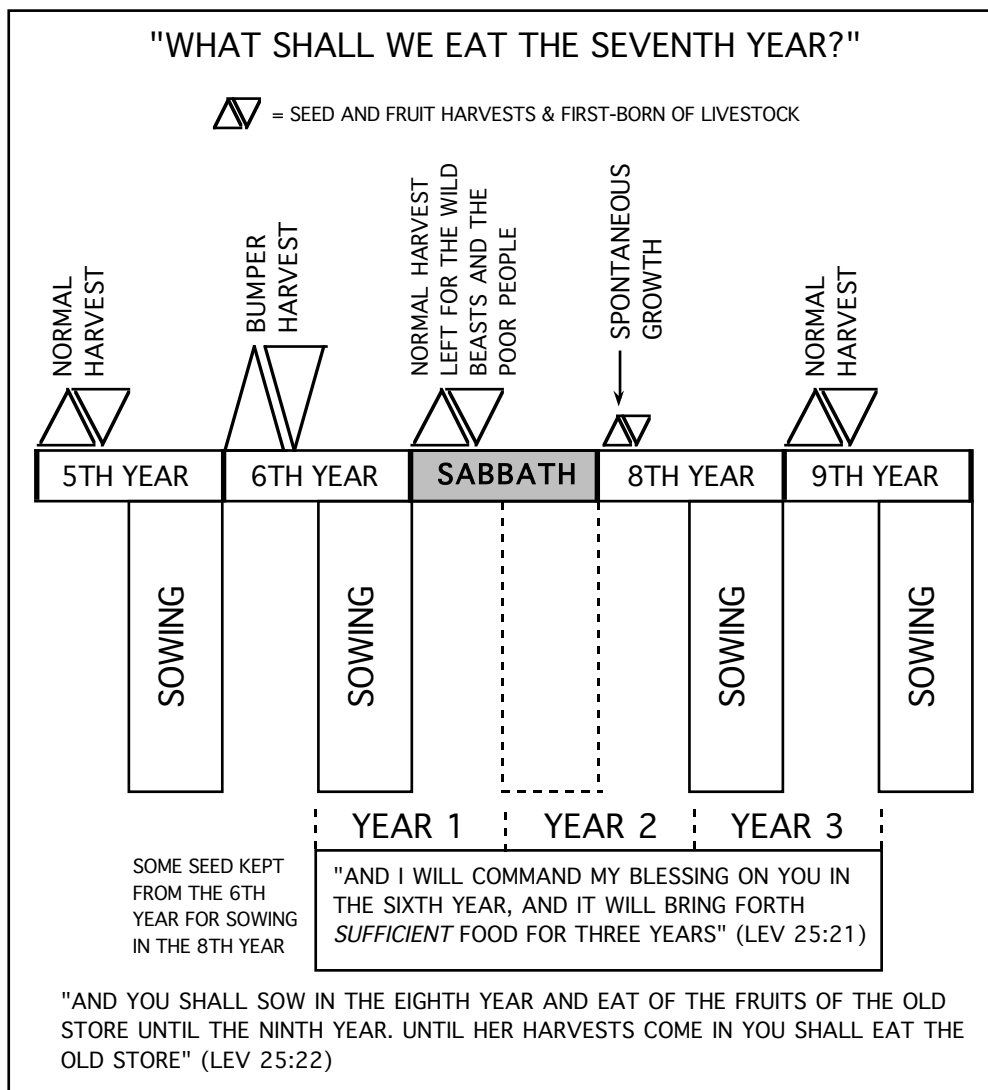
See my Daniel article in *JETS* for the application of this prophecy to Nehemiah in the first place, and for a double fulfilment of it in the life of Jesus.

It is a very common mistake among all Bible chronologists to assume that the 70 years of Exile ended in 539/8. However, if it commenced in 605 BC (which is an established fact of Hebrew and Babylonian chronology), then it ended in 536. In this context seventy means seventy, and not 67 or 68 years. Jeremiah makes it clear that when the *full* 70 years of punishment came to an end, *then* they would be brought back to Judah.

#### E. THE ASSUMPTION THAT A JUBILEE CONSISTED OF 50 YEARS

It is assumed that because Leviticus 25:8-10 refers to keeping the fiftieth year holy that this included the whole of that year. However, the Hebrew year began in April (on 1 Nisan) for all purposes and ran from April to April. This is the standard calendar year set by God when Israel came out of Egypt. However, the agricultural year ran from September to September, so that it overlapped two calendar years, the 49th and the 50th years. The months of the Sabbatical year are always numbered according to the calendar year, that is, from Nisan. Sabbatical years are embedded within the calendar year in much the same way that the tax year in some Western countries is embedded within the normal, calendar year. There was not a separate civil calendar running side by side with the religious calendar in Israel, with a six-month difference between their commencements. There was only *one* calendar.

Ignorance of this fact has misled many budding chronologists to assume that there were two consecutive Sabbatical years at the end of the Jubilee cycle; one was the 49th and the other was the 50th year. TW did not realize, or understand, that years are always calendar years, and so the Jubilee year itself would have straddled the second half of the 49th year (September to April) and the first half of the 50th year (April to September). One can excuse a first-time reader assuming that 'the fiftieth year' meant a full year, but it is inexcusable to find this error in a biblical scholar.



So much for errors that are common to TW and the majority of budding chronologists who take the 'Bible Only' approach to reconstruct its chronology. In the next section I shall examine the errors that are peculiar to T. Warner's own reconstruction of Bible chronology.

### UNSCHOLARLY FEATURES ABOUT THIS NEW BIBLE CHRONOLOGY

#### 1. THE 120 YEARS LIMIT ON MANKIND AND THE 'TWO DAYS' OF HOSEA

From an exegetical point of view the most alarming feature of this new chronology of the Bible is the arbitrary nature of its exegesis. Having latched on to the concept that God instituted His own system of marking the passage of time by means of seven-year cycles, and seven of these form a Jubilee of 49 Sabbatical years, topped with a 50th Sabbatical year, according to TW, it was a simple step for TW to see in the 120 years mentioned in Genesis 6:3 a reference to the total time that man would spend on this planet before God would burn it up, and begin again with a new creation. By converting 'years' into 'Jubilee periods' the sum total of man's years on Earth came to  $120 \times 50 = 6000$  years. Nowhere in Scripture is a year equal to a full Jubilee cycle of 49 years. This was an arbitrary decision by TW, and it is unique to him.

The task he set himself was to shoehorn all the history of mankind from Adam to the Second Coming into exactly 120 Jubilee periods (of 50 years), which divides neatly into three sections.

- (1) From Adam to the birth of Abraham is 40 periods (= 2000 years)
- (2) From the birth of Abraham to the destruction of the Second Temple is 40 periods (= 2000 years).
- (3) From the destruction of the Second Temple to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus is 40 periods (= 2000 years).

TW arbitrarily decided that the 'two days' mentioned in Hosea 6:3, indicated 2000 years, because a 1000 years is as one day (Ps 90:4; 2 Pet 3:8-10; see pp. 73-77, 89; cf. p. 234).

The choice of ending the second section with the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70, rather than at the birth of Jesus in 6 BC (which would have mirrored the coming of Abraham into the world at the end of the first section) was forced upon him because if he had done so, then the Second Coming would have occurred in Yom Kippur, AD 1996. So he had to arbitrarily adjust the terminus of the second section to allow the Second Coming to lie in the future, and the only convenient historical event following the death of Jesus was the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70. This was 40 years later than the death of Jesus (according to his new chronology), which meant he could add 40 years to AD 1996 and produce 2036 as the date for the Second Coming.

Unfortunately for this new chronology, Abraham was not born 2000 years before AD 70, which would place his birth in 1930 BC (2000 - 70 = 1930). Abraham was born in 2166 BC. This is just a number of miscalculations that TW has made in order to shoehorn history into his three blocks of 40 Jubilees.

Now, if there are 120 Jubilees allotted to the history of human life on this planet, and these Jubilees consist of 49 years each, then the total comes to  $120 \times 49 = 5880$  years. If 4000 of these years were in the past in AD 70, then this means that the Second Coming happened in 1810 (= 1880 - 70).

## 2. JUBILEE PERIODS ARE ALTERED FROM 49 TO 50 YEARS

The controlling or dominant factor in this new chronology is that it is based on a 50-year Jubilee cycle. Unfortunately, the author did not do his research into this yardstick before he set out on his goal. He put his faith in the *Seder 'Olam*: "[an] ancient 2nd century Jewish chronology and the oldest word on the subject, states plainly that the cycles were 50 years" (p. 227 n. 371). The statement that it is the oldest word on the subject is incorrect. The writings of Josephus and the Book of Jubilees are both older by hundreds of years, and both support 49 years for the Jubilee cycles. These works were written while Sabbatical years were part of their personal experiences, whereas the *Seder 'Olam* was composed by someone who lived at a time when the Jubilees were no longer observed.

According to the translator of *Seder 'Olam*, Heinrich W. Guggenheimer, "The Jerusalem Talmud clearly does not know of any composition called *Seder 'Olam*."<sup>18</sup> The Jerusalem Talmud was compiled in the 4th-5th century AD in Palestine, and the Babylonian Talmud was compiled about 500 AD in Babylon. It is considered that the *Seder 'Olam* was compiled later than the Babylonian Talmud, with which it has some affinities of material and traditions.

In any case, if TW had consulted the *Seder 'Olam* he would have noted that the 50-year cycle was arrived at through gematria, and not through experience.<sup>19</sup> The author knew that Ezekiel 40:1 referred to a Jubilee year (i.e., 574-573, Tishri to Tishri), which indeed it was (on the Thiele/McFall chronology). He also knew that it was the 17th *complete* Jubilee from the time Joshua entered the land (in 1406 BC), but he was puzzled why this was 17 years too many (i.e., too early).

The author of the *Seder 'Olam* had assumed that there were 50 years to a Jubilee cycle. Multiplying  $17 \times 50 = 850$  years for the total time, but he knew this was 17 years too many, which is correct. The solution is simple. If he had multiplied  $17 \times 49 = 833$  years, he would have discovered that this was exactly seventeen Jubilees from Ezekiel's 17th Jubilee back to 1406 BC (= 573+833), and there are no excess years. So, indirectly, *Seder 'Olam* becomes a witness to 49-year Jubilee cycles. It was the mistake of the author, writing well away from the land of Israel, and hundreds of years after the destruction of the Second Temple, who had assumed that there were 50 years in each Jubilee cycle.

If TW had consulted the literature he would have seen that the biblical time-line is based on a 49-year Jubilee. By reading the text as a child would he erred right at the start of his quest, which meant that his entire chronology had been undermined before it got started. He used the wrong measuring rod to mark off God's timetable of events.

Isa 37:30 (= 2 Kgs 19:29) appears to describe a Sabbatical year scenario. Sennacherib invaded Judah in the year before the Sabbatical Year (Tishri 700 to Tishri 699 BC), and so captured the nation's entire food supply that was needed to get through the next two years. The 'sign' (or miracle) that Yahweh presented to Hezekiah was that he would supply the loss of the nation's harvest. TW used this text to support his claim that it was proof of two consecutive Sabbatical years coming together. He does not understand how the Sabbatical year works.

<sup>18</sup> Op. cit., p. xi.

<sup>19</sup> Heinrich W. Guggenheimer, *Seder Olam: The Rabbinic View of Biblical Chronology* (New York/Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), p. 116.

Extra-biblical evidence exists for a few Sabbatical years, including 164/3, 38/7 BC and AD 68/9.<sup>20</sup> It so happens that if we extrapolate backwards from these known, extra-biblical, Sabbatical years then 458/7 BC is also a Sabbatical year.

If we extrapolate still further backwards, then the first Sabbatical year after the return from exile was 535/4 BC. It was exactly a year earlier (in Tishri 536) that the altar had been set up (cf. Ezra 3:6) and the Feast of Tabernacles observed, and it was their first chance to sow their own seed. However, Yahweh cursed their first harvest because they neglected his House ('You have sown much and brought in little,' Hag 1:6; cf. 1:11). As a result of Yahweh's curse they had barely enough food to see them through the Sabbatical year of 535/4 BC. But Yahweh encouraged them to stay their second year on His land and He would give them sufficient food (Hag 2:18-19). It says something for the faith of these first returnees under Zerubbabel that at the end of their first disastrous harvest in Tishri 535 they set aside their second year on the land as a Sabbatical Year, and devoted their time to rebuilding the Temple, which was completed in the sixth year of Darius the Mede, not Darius I.<sup>21</sup>

Given the evidence of the observance of Sabbatical years during the inter-testamental period, as recorded by Josephus, the year that Ezra came to Jerusalem, 458 BC, was a Sabbatical year.

Given that TW has used a 50-year Jubilee throughout his work, this means that he has to concede that Josephus and the rabbinic work, *Megillat Taanit*, got their facts wrong when they placed all their Sabbatical dates seven years apart. If there was an intercalated Sabbatical year after every 49th year, then this would decouple Josephus's Sabbatical years from those of T. Warner. That should give him cause for concern, but given that he considers his interpretation of the biblical data to be far superior to any secular source he is unlikely to be bothered with this disparity.

The fact that TW's Sabbatical and Jubilee years are out of synchronization with reliable Jewish sources is a devastating blow to his whole scheme.

### 3. OBSERVATIONS ON GENESIS 15:13 — THE 400 YEARS OF OPPRESSION

TW claims, with great pride, and as a point of principle, that his whole chronology is based solely on the Bible, and that he will have nothing to do with non-biblical sources of chronological data, lest it contaminate his final result (p. 296).

Unfortunately, the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak, and in the case of the 430 years that the Hebrews spent in Egypt, he cannot believe that they dwelt that long in that place. "Therefore, Israel was not in Egypt for anywhere near 400 years" (p. 252). So he preferred the LXX and rejected the Hebrew text. In this he is not alone. The vast majority of Bible scholars go with the LXX. He proposed that Israel remained in Egypt for just 210 years (p. 253), which he deemed to be close to the four generations, and the 400 years of oppression (Gen 15:13).

#### WAS ISRAEL IN EGYPT FOR 430 YEARS? AND WERE THEY AFFLICTED FOR 400 OF THOSE YEARS?

(1) God says they would be a sojourner "in a land not theirs." Egypt was never promised to Abraham. Canaan was given to Abraham as Genesis 15:18-21 points out.

(2) "in a land not theirs" they would be slaves for 400 years. This is not true if Israel was only 215 years in Egypt (or 210 years if Abraham was 70 years when the covenant was made with him, which is TW's preferred duration).

(3) If the 430 years includes the lifetime of Abraham (after he was 75 years), the lifetime of Isaac, and the first 130 years of Jacob, then these three patriarchs were 'humiliated, oppressed,

<sup>20</sup> Solomon Zeitlin, *Megillat Taanit* (Philadelphia: At the Oxford University Press, 1922), p. 17. See also the 7-year spacing of Josephus's references to Sabbatical years in *Ant.* Bk 12 §378. The editor, Marcus, gives the following as Sabbatical years in Josephus's *Ant.*: 163/3, 156/5, 149/8, 142/1, and 135/4.

<sup>21</sup> Note that the date in Ezra 3:8 is an anniversary era, and the years ran from Tishri to Tishri (see 3:1; confirmed by Josephus, *Ant.* xi. §4.2), 'in the second year of their coming in to the House of God to Jerusalem, in the second month began Zerubbabel . . . ' (The second month is Marcheshvan, not Iyyar.) The date in Ezra 3:8 (= start of Temple; presumed to be 1st day of Marcheshvan) and 6:15 (= completion of Temple; 3rd Adar) means that the traditional date for the dedication of the Second Temple must be moved back from 516 to 3rd Adar 530 BC (c. 17 March, 530 BC) (Ezra 6:15; 1 Esd 7:5 & Josephus *Ant.* 6.11, §4.7, read 23rd Adar). The total time taken to rebuild the Second Temple was 4 years, 6 months, and 3 days (because the 2nd and 5th years contained an intercalated month). The king is Darius the Mede (536-530), not Darius I (522-486), and Darius the Mede is Cyrus the Mede. Jeremiah predicted that the fall of the city of Babylon would be accomplished by 'the kings of the Medes' (Jer 51:11, 28). Donald J. Wiseman appealed to the Harran inscription that refers to the 'king of the Medes,' who in that year, 546 BC, could be 'no other than Cyrus the Persian,' Media having been incorporated into what became the greater realm of Persia in 555 BC. For Wiseman's sources and evaluation see James M. Bulman, "The Identification of Darius the Mede," *WTJ* 35 (1973) 247-67, who also claims that Cyrus is called 'king of the Medes' in secular literature (op. cit. p. 258). Herodotus relates that when Cyrus attempted to rule over the Massagetae tribe, their queen referred to Cyrus, then in the last year of his life, as 'king of the Medes' (op. cit. vol. I, bk. 1, §206). The Darius mentioned throughout Haggai and Zechariah is Darius the Mede, not Darius I (as most commentators have it).

*afflicted'* for the first 215 years of the 430 years of slavery. However, these three had freedom of movement, which was taken away from their descendants when Israel moved to Egypt.

(4) The idea that the 400 years of slavery began in Abraham's own lifetime contradicts the words of God that they would be slaves "in a land not theirs." How could Abraham be a slave in Canaan, when it was his own territory (see Gen 15:8)? The slavery *had* to take place in a land that was not promised to them, and that could only be Egypt.

(5) The nation who would enslave Israel is a *single* nation, not a collection of city-states as in Canaan. So no part of the 400 years of slavery could have taken place in Canaan. God would punish the *single* nation who enslaved them and they would leave that nation—Egypt—"with great substance" (Gen 15:14), which of course they did. So the LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch got it wrong.

(6) God said they would "go out" and they would "come in" after the 400 years of slavery was completed. The verbs can only make sense if the movement is into Egypt and then out of Egypt. If there was a period of 215 years of slavery in Canaan, then how could they "go out of" Canaan, and yet end up going back into the land of Canaan where they were slaves? The implication throughout the Hebrew story is that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were *never* slaves in Canaan. They were free men, and wandered about in the land with their flocks and herds, and became very rich in their own territory.

(7) God was speaking to Abraham in Canaan, when He said that Abraham's descendants "would come back here," 'here' being where Abraham was living at the time, in Hebron (Gen 13:18). The implication is that the period of slavery would not be 'here' (i.e., in Canaan) but outside Canaan, and they would come back *into* Canaan when the 400 years of slavery were over, because Canaan was 'their land.' So the LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch got it wrong.

TW is careful never to give any B.C. dates in his book until he reaches the death of Jesus, which he has dated to A.D. 30, and His birth, which he puts in 3 BC (p. 329). Using the pivotal date of Jesus' death, TW's Jubilee scheme of chronology can be converted into the normal B.C. format. It was not easy to do this.

Because of TW's extreme isolationist policy, if he had converted all his Jubilees to BC dates, readers might have been tempted to compare his new dates with other works in their possession (or personal libraries). The disparity that they would have found there would have been deeply unsettling. Rather than risk his readers being given the opportunity of making this comparison, he suppressed this information, which he must have been well aware of as he researched the topic. Why suppress this important information? Why put up a barrier in front of the reader to make it as difficult as possible to put his theory to the test? The author clearly does not want to invite any challenge to his new chronology.

Another elementary mistake that TW made was to assume from a cursory reading of 1 Kings 6:1 that there were 480 years from the Exodus to the 4th year of Solomon. There were, in fact, only 479 complete years. This simple, but very common, error often leads the careless to move the date of the Exodus to 1447 BC, and away from 1446 BC. TW assumed there were 480 *complete* years between the Exodus and the 4th year of Solomon (chart, p. 276).

1 Kings 6:1, "And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD."

#### 4. THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE HEBREW KINGS

The fact that TW has chosen to present his chronology in terms of numbered Jubilees means that it is not possible for the average reader of his book to know what is going on behind the scenes. If he had given his reader the BC/AD dates alongside his Jubilee numbers then he would have drawn attention to the gulf that exists between his dates and those of experts in the chronologies of Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome and Israel.

Item no. 5. in the above table shows the time from the end of Solomon's reign to the end of Zedekiah's reign (and the destruction of the First Temple) as 413 years in TW, but 345 in my column, which is the same as that of E. Thiele in his influential book, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, which has been the consensus chronology among conservative-evangelical scholars in the field, including the acclaimed standard work by Jack Finnegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (revd ed., 1998). The naivety of TW's approach to the complexity of synchronizing the reigns of Judah (2 tribes) and Israel (10 tribes) is revealed in his reading the relevant material as a first-time reader would read the text, simply adding up the stated number of years that each Judean king reigned with no regard to the fact that some of these totals include overlapping or coregency years.

For example he gives 25 years for the sole reign of Jehoshaphat (see his chart on p. 281), but this includes a 3-year coregency period with his father Asa. He gives Uzziah 52 years, but this includes a coregency (or overlap) of 24 years with his father Amaziah, so that, in effect, he ruled only 28 years on his own. He gives 55 years to Manasseh, but this includes an overlap of

11 years with his father Hezekiah. TW makes no reference to these coregencies, probably because he avoided reading any literature on the subject.

The existence of coregencies in the reigns of of the kings of Judah and Israel only came to light because the Bible itself synchronized the reigns of foreign kings with exact precision, such that 2 Kings 25:1-2, 8 records that the 19th year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar was the 11th year of Hoshea (cf. Jer 52:12 for the same precise synchronism). Jeremiah tells us that the word of God came to him “in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.” Jeremiah 32:1, “The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar.”

Given TW’s belief that the Bible is an infallible book, then these synchronisms must also be infallible pieces of data embedded within God’s Word, so why did he not taken these synchronisms seriously and work with them, instead of against them? We have sufficient archaeological documents and artefacts dating to Nebuchadnezzar’s own era to reconstruct the whole of Babylonian history during the monarchy period as it affected Judah’s relations with the outside world. The same goes for the history of Assyria, and Egypt, Persia, Greece and Rome. It was these precise synchronisms with the chronologies of the nations surrounding Israel that led Edwin Thiele to his epic breakthrough and to his recovery of the exact chronology of the Hebrew kings. There is no mention of Thiele or his achievements in TW’s book.

The reason why TW could not accept these ‘secular dates’ (although they are in Scripture) is that they would expose the manipulation that lies behind his chronology.

Thiele showed that the time from the end of Solomon’s reign to the end of Zedekiah’s reign (which coincided with the destruction of the First Temple) was 345 complete years. TW has 413 years. This is a difference of 68 years. This fact alone destroys his scheme of 500 years from the apostasy that began in Solomon’s 23rd year (his calculation) and ended with the return from the Babylonian exile. TW should have calculated this period as covering the last 17 years of Solomon’s reign, plus 345 years to the destruction of the Solomon’s Temple, plus 70 years for the Babylonian exile. This would have come to 432 years, and not the 500 years that he needed to keep up his theory of blocks of 500 years (or 10 Jubilees).

TW’s figure of 413 is inflated because he has added two years to Rehoboam’s 17 years (see his footnote on p. 281, for his justification for this small addition). This justification is restated on page 280, where he says, “Therefore, the year Solomon died and Rehoboam ascended the throne would not be counted for either Solomon or Rehoboam because neither reigned that entire year.” In other words he is claiming that the biblical figures for each king’s reign only includes *completed* years. This is an arbitrary decision on his part, and by imposing it on the data he is manipulating the figures toward a predetermined total.

TW goes on to note that this reasoning must apply to every king and his successor, and in consequence, “when adding up the kings of Judah given in 2 Chronicles, one intervening year must be added per king for this transitional year in order to arrive at an accurate total.” There are twenty such ‘intervening years’ that he has added in to create his inflated total of 413 years. His own count of years comes to 394 years and 6 months, before his addition of the 20 intervening years.

Clearly there is manipulation going on here to arrive at the figure of 413 because he was aware that he needed to add the last 17 years of Solomon’s life to arrive at 430 years, and to this he could add the 70 years of exile, and so arrive at the required 500 years, or exactly ten complete Jubilee periods.

#### 5. HEZEKIAH’S 15TH YEAR

Item no. 6. In the above table reads:

6.	HEZEKIAH’S 15th YEAR	662 BC	701 BC
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Whether he realized it or not, by placing Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah in 662 BC he created a fateful blow to his scheme. The true date of this invasion has been well documented and is beyond dispute. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, ruled from 704 to 681 BC. So he was dead 19 years before TW’s date for him.

By altering Hezekiah’s dates, TW must also move all the major writing prophets closer to the New Testament period by a full generation of forty years. This redating of the writing prophets will have an impact on how these books are to be interpreted against a different political background.



## 6. THE DECREE OF CYRUS

A worrying aspect of this new chronology is the loss of 74 years of Persian history in order to fit the history of the period into a much smaller time frame. TW determined that the decree of Cyrus should fall on the 70th Jubilee year.

8.	DECREE OF CYRUS	462 BC	536 BC
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The Babylonian chronology from 627 BC to AD 75 has been set out in detail by Parker & Dubberstein with the help of thousands of cuneiform economic documents that had been hidden in the ground for nearly two thousand years. We now know the exact months when the Persian kings began to reign and when they died. From these documents it has also been possible to record all the intercalated months that make up the 19-year Metonic cycle, whereby seven months were added over a period of nineteen years (or 235 lunar months).

According to Parker & Dubberstein's meticulous chronology, Cyrus entered Babylon on 12 October 539 BC. His reign ended in August, 530 BC. It was in Cyrus's third year, in 536 BC, according to the well-established consensus chronology, that he issued his famous decree permitting all captive nations to return to their ancestral homes (see my *JETS* article).

It is therefore surprising to find that TW has placed the decree of Cyrus in 462 BC. This is 74 years *after* the decree was issued, according to the well-established consensus chronology. By placing Cyrus's decree so late it meant that Ezra arrived back from Babylon only four years later than the first arrivals.

We have a difficulty with this date for Cyrus's decree, because on 1 December, 486 BC Xerxes (not Cyrus!) began his 21-year reign, and he was followed by his son, Artaxerxes I, who began his 41-year reign on 11 June, 464 BC. He died in December, 424 BC. So Cyrus was not around in 462 BC to issue his decree.

When a writer has to rewrite the histories of all the nations surrounding Israel, and change all their chronologies, to fit in with Israel's new chronology, alarm bells should be ringing furiously, yet this is precisely what TW must do to have his new chronology accepted.

There are many oddities about this work. For instance, when Jesus stood up to read Isaiah 61:1-7, He declared that it had been fulfilled 'today' (Lk 4:17). TW ignored what Jesus said and stated that it referred to Jesus' second coming, and not to His first (p. 235).

Without any proof, other than it is a conclusion of his work, he makes the following statements (underlined) as though they were incontrovertible facts (pp. 236-37):

1. God told Noah, on a jubilee year, that He was limiting the Spirit's struggle with the human race to 120 years.

2. Noah died and Abraham was born in the year 2,000 from creation, which was the 40th Jubilee year.

3. Isaac was born in the 41st Jubilee year.

4. The year of the exodus from Egypt fell "exactly on the 50th Jubilee from the creation, the year 2,500."

Another statement claimed that God gave David the Davidic Covenant on the 59th Jubilee year, which would be in 912 BC.

When a writer strings together a number of miraculous coincidences that he has personally created, then we have circularity and self-congratulations coming full circle.

## AN ALTERNATIVE TO T. WARNER'S NEW CHRONOLOGY

### DOES GOD HAVE A SET TIMETABLE?

Given the world and the universe in which we live, we can get to 'know' God through His creation, and order and wisdom are evident in everything we see. In the fullness of time God sent His Son into the world to invite all nations to enter into His Kingdom. The phrase "in the fullness of time" suggest that God is working to a preordained timetable in which this world will come to its predetermined end, followed by a new heaven and a new earth.

TW has taken up the 'good order' trait in God and has applied it to the concept of history and chronology in a distinctive approach. The fact that his approach has been showed to be deeply flawed should not turn us off looking for a better approach.

That God is a God of order can be seen in the following neat links between significant persons and events.

60 x 4 x 1 = From the birth of Abraham to the birth of Judah (ancestor of the Messiah; 2166-1926 BC)<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> This assumes that Jacob had his family during the first fourteen years of his 20-year stay with Laban.

60 x 4 x 2 = From the Exodus to the Foundation of Solomon's Temple (1446-967 BC)

60 x 4 x 3 = From the birth of Abraham to the Exodus (2166-1446 BC)

60 x 4 x 4 = From the Foundation of Solomon's Temple to the birth of Jesus (967 BC- 6 BC)

60 x 4 x 5 = From the birth of Abraham to the Foundation of Solomon's Temple (2166-967 BC)

60 x 4 x 6 = From the Exodus to the birth of Jesus (1446 BC- 6 BC)

Lastly, and most significantly:

From the birth of Abraham to the birth of Jesus is  $60 \times 4 \times 9 = 2160$  years.

You can find these stats on my website *JETS* article on the "Chronology of Saul and David," p. 497, footnote 58.

The arrogance of Western 'scholars' is proverbial when it comes to passing judgment on the accuracy of the transmission of the Hebrew text, and its numbers in particular. It was the pioneering work of Edwin R. Thiele that restored the faith of the Elect in the trustworthiness of the chronology of the Bible, by carefully noting the synchronisms that the Bible itself recorded between the Hebrews and surrounding nations. This gave him the opportunity to establish absolute dates within which he could set all the events of Israel's history. It is my conclusion, after revising Thiele's dates, that we can only construct a continuous history of the elect people of God from the time of Terah until the end of the book of the Acts of the Apostles. To pry into the millennia before that time is a waste of time.

#### FINAL ASSESSMENT

I would not normally give this type of unscholarly writing a second glance except that it is typical of an increasing obsession to use the Bible to support chronologies that claim to be biblical but which, in fact, bring dishonour and ridicule upon those Scriptures.

I refer particularly to a host of new chronologies that assure us we can put a date on the creation of Adam and Eve. From this comes the assumption that the geology of the Earth is of a similar age. This interpretation is then held to be an infallible 'truth' of Scripture, and any geologist who claims that the geology of the Earth is many ages older than Adam, and that the fossil evidence pre-dates Adam, is deemed to be opposed to God, when, in fact, they are only opposed to a human interpretation. This study has shown that the traditional date of 4004 BC for the creation of Adam cannot be used to draw a line in the sand over orthodoxy.

The new chronology of T. Warner, however, adds another, darker dimension to the study of Bible chronology, in that the purpose of its chronology is to predict the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. The justification for this pursuit of the holy grail of chronology is that the Apostles of the Lord Jesus are said to have unambiguously taught that there was a 6000-year limit on the human occupation of this planet. This is a potentially dangerous use of a legitimate investigation, because of its plausibility, and a simplistic presentation of the 'facts' that does not welcome any alternative evidence to be put in front of the reader. TW has made it as difficult as he could to meet his claim that "everything presented in this book can be objectively tested" (p. 22). Then why did he not convert his Jubilee periods into BC dates? This would have *instantly* made it possible for his results to be *objectively* tested against the solid facts of Near Eastern chronological studies.

If a reader of this book has to gain all his or her knowledge of Bible chronology from the pages of this book, then they are in a precarious position. If they go further and believe that as a result of this new chronology the Lord Jesus will definitely return in 2036, then they will be deluded Christians, and this false knowledge may even distort their choices and decisions.

Jesus was fully aware that knowledge of His Second Coming would be carried with the contents of the Gospel to the ends of the earth, and that as a consequence Satan would set out to deceive the elect by sending credible antichrists who would gain their loyalty and so be led away from the truths of the Gospel.

Another ploy of Satan, as a preparation for such a deception, would be to have credible pastors within Christ's Church, predict the coming of the Second Coming, and riding on the back of such predictions he could introduce his false messiahs. A new chronology of the Enemy's handbook would be just the instrument that he could use to carry out such a deception.

The existence of this critique will, hopefully, alert those who discover it, to recognise that a false prophet is in their midst, who will undoubtedly profit from the notoriety that this new chronology will bring him. No one knows the day or the hour when the Son of Man will come again, and we should live our lives as though we were living in the last days already.

END OF DOCUMENT

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