



## Endnotes for *Ussher Explained and Corrected*

Spring 2018 *Bible and Spade*

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> That the genealogical lists of Genesis 5 and 11 usually do not give the name of the firstborn son follows from one of the purposes of the lists, which was to provide the names of ancestors of Noah (Gn 5:3–32), and then of Abraham (Gn 11:10b–26). If any modern person endeavors to trace their own ancestry back several generations, they should not be surprised to learn that their direct ancestors were generally not the firstborn. This will especially be true when going back a century or more, when families, in the western world at least, tended to be larger than today. In the patriarchal ages before and after the Flood, the longevity of the individuals listed, along with the assumption that the ages of procreation were proportionately longer, means that many if not most of the individuals in the lists of Genesis 5 and 11 would have had scores of sons and daughters. From all these individuals, however, the genealogical tables of Genesis 5 and 11 are generally restricted to the direct ancestors of Abraham. (Elsewhere, as in Genesis 4:17–22 and 10:2–26, some of these other individuals are named.) The probability that any one of the direct ancestors of Abraham was the firstborn among what could have been scores of siblings is therefore quite low.

An interesting corollary is that, since apparently Abraham could name his ancestors back to Noah, and Noah could name his ancestors back to Adam, it must have been a rather general practice throughout those times, and not just restricted to Abraham's lineage, to preserve one's *toledoth* (family histories). Alternately, it could be presumed that the Lord only instituted the practice of the *toledoth* for the chosen line—or that the lists were revealed miraculously to Moses without there being any previous memory of these individuals, either written or oral. But a direct revelation to Moses or a restriction to just the chosen line does not explain why the literary structure of the early parts of Genesis follows a pattern that is found in very early Mesopotamian inscriptions on clay and stone. It is therefore my opinion that the first of these options is the most probable and most in agreement with the literary structure of Genesis 1:1 to 37:2a. In those chapters, the verses in which the word *toledoth* appears should be understood as summary lines for the preceding account, following a convention that was used in pre-alphabetic inscriptions from long before the time of Abraham. The practice was to write such colophons at the end of stone and clay tablets to summarize the preceding history and to give the name of the author or transcriber. After Genesis 37:2a, which concludes the *toledoth* of Jacob (the verse is definitely not a heading for the “generations of Jacob” as in the KJV), the story of Joseph would have been written on papyrus or parchment, and this convention would no longer be followed. Moses would then have translated the *toledoth* into Hebrew to give us the first 36 chapters of the Bible. See P.J. Wiseman, *New Discoveries in Babylonia about Genesis* (London: Hunt, Bernard & Co., 1936); online at [http://www.biblemaths.com/pdf\\_wiseman.pdf](http://www.biblemaths.com/pdf_wiseman.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Valerius Coucke, “Chronologie biblique,” in *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible*, ed. Louis Pirot, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Letouze et Ané. 1928), cols. 1245–79.

<sup>3</sup> Edwin R. Thiele, “The Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 3 (1944), pp. 137–86.

<sup>4</sup> One year is subtracted from the figure for six kings, but not for Zimri’s seven day reign.

<sup>5</sup> Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, rev. edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan/Kregel, 1983), pp. 16, 17.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 78.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth A. Strand, “Thiele’s Biblical Chronology as a Corrective for Extrabiblical Dates,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 34:2 (1996), pp. 304–05.

<sup>8</sup> Hayim Tadmor, “The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 12 (1958), pp. 22–42.

<sup>9</sup> Hayim Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III, King of Assyria* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994), pp. 266–67.

<sup>10</sup> James Ussher, *The Annals of the World*, revised and updated by Larry and Marion Pierce (Green Forest, AR, 2003). Originally published in 1658.

<sup>11</sup> Floyd Nolen Jones, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, rev. edition (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2005, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114b.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114b–15a.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134b.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147b.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173b.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112b–13a.

<sup>18</sup> Ussher, *Annals of the World*, but comment added by Larry Pierce, p. 913a.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 914a.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 915b–16a.

<sup>21</sup> Rodger C. Young, “When Did Solomon Die?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46:4 (2003), pp. 589–603.

<sup>22</sup> *Idem*, “When Did Jerusalem Fall?” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47:1 (2004) pp. 21–38.

<sup>23</sup> Regarding the identity of “Pul” with Tiglath-Pileser III, Thiele writes, “Many years ago Schrader presented convincing arguments that Pul and Tiglath-Pileser must be the same individual. [footnote to Eberhard Schrader, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, trans. Owen C. Whitehouse (London, 1885), 1:218ff.] Indisputable proof of their identity is provided by notations from a Babylonian king list and the Babylonian Chronicle where, in a list of the Babylonian kings, Tiglath-Pileser appears by his usual Assyrian name on the one list and by his name Pulu on the other, as shown in the lists on p. 140” (Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, p. 141).

Jones, unable to deny that Pul or Pulu was another name for Tiglath-Pileser III, insists, because of Ussher’s chronology, that Ashur-dan III (772–755 BC) was also called Pul (*Chronology of the OT*, p. 173). But there are no inscriptions in which Ashur-dan III or any other monarch besides Tiglath-Pileser III is given this name. As mentioned in the main text, the Iran Stela that lists Menahem as a tributary of Tiglath-Pileser shows the folly of such grasping at straws.

<sup>24</sup> Jones, *Chronology of the OT*, p. 172a.

<sup>25</sup> Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, pp. 68–72.

<sup>26</sup> Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Rosh HaShanah* 2a.

<sup>27</sup> The length of reign for Solomon is given as 40 years in 1 Kings 11:42 and 2 Chronicles 9:30. However, it is not clear if this was measured from when he was anointed king and coregent with David while his father was still alive (1 Kgs 1:11–48, 2 Chr 23:1), or from the beginning of his sole reign at the death of David. Another variable is whether the 40 years are measured in an accession sense or non-accession sense. Thiele followed a general convention that coregencies were measured in a non-accession sense, although his reasons for so assuming may not apply to the case of Solomon. These two variables therefore introduce uncertainty into how Solomon's 40 years are to be measured. It might be assumed that, facing a choice in the matter, the official recorders chose whichever combination would give 40 years to Solomon's reign in order to match the 40-year reign of his father.

<sup>28</sup> Ussher's AM dates for the end of Abijah's reign and the beginning of Asa's are modified from spring ("c") to winter ("b") because of his comment in the text that Asa began to reign "at the very end" of the Nisan-based year. The "c" (spring) would mean the first three months of the regnal year, not the end of the year as indicated in Ussher's text. The same applies to the end of the reign of Jotham and the beginning of the reign of Ahaz.

<sup>29</sup> Ussher's AM dates for the end of Ahaziah's reign and the beginning of Joram's are modified from spring ("c") to winter ("b"), because of his comment that Ahaziah died "in the latter end" of the Nisan-based regnal year. The "c" (spring) would mean the first three months of the regnal year, not the end of the year as indicated in Ussher's text. The same applies to the end of the reign of Jehoahaz at the beginning of the reign of Jehoash and the end of Ussher's supposed interregnum at the beginning of the reign of Hoshea.

<sup>30</sup> Jehu killed Joram; no coregency possible to get Ussher's extra year over the Bible figure.

<sup>31</sup> Menahem killed Shallum; no coregency possible to get Ussher's extra year.

<sup>32</sup> By specifying 3283b AM for the capture of Samaria, Ussher has the capture occurring in the winter season preceding the first of Nisan, 721 BC. For exact accounting purposes based on the year beginning in Nisan, this was 722n.

<sup>33</sup> Ussher's date for the start of Temple cleansing was AM 3380c, in the spring of 624 BC (Ussher's date; the correct date is fall of 623). To allow enough time for all the events described, he put the date for the Passover one year later, in 3381c, i.e., the spring of 623 BC. Although this was in Josiah's 18th according to Ussher's starting year for Josiah, his putting the start of Temple cleansing one year earlier places it in Josiah's 17th year, contradicting 2 Kings 22:3 (18th year). In an attempt to fix Ussher's contradiction of the Bible, the Pierces, in their edition of the Annals, moved Ussher's date for Josiah's Passover up one year to 624 BC, the same year for the start of cleansing the Temple. The Pierces explain that "No chronological entry by Ussher is invalidated by so doing" (p. 93a). This statement is incorrect. It not only fails to solve the problem that Ussher recognized (namely, that all these events cannot fit into 13 days), but it places both the start of Temple restoration and the following observance of the Passover in the 17th year of Josiah according to Ussher's starting year of 641 BC for that king. The Pierces' "solution" therefore is no solution, and it contradicts both 2 Kings 22:3 and 2 Kings

23:23. Thiele's explanation honors all the relevant Scriptures and is consistent with the other evidences showing that Judah started its regnal years on Tishri 1. The correct date for these events, based on Thiele's Bible-honoring scholarship, is fall of 623 for the initiation of Temple cleansing and the spring of 622 for the Passover, both in Josiah's 18th Tishri-based year, 623t.

<sup>34</sup> By acknowledging the use of non-accession years, Floyd Nolen Jones was able to correct some of the one-year inaccuracies in Ussher's dates for the kingdom period. But by not accepting a Tishri-based regnal calendar for Judah, Jones stumbled over Abijah. His chart for the period shows accession years for Rehoboam and Asa on both sides of Abijah, but no accession year for Abijah himself; to do so would put Abijah's starting year in the 17th year of Jeroboam, instead of the 18th year given in Scripture. Most readers will never catch small discrepancies like this in the elaborate charts that some writers use to illustrate their chronologies. It is easier to check whether a given chronology is coherent and in agreement with the biblical lengths of reign and synchronisms if a notation is adopted that displays accurately the kind of year that the ancient writers were using, which is why Tables 1 and 2 provide Nisan-based years for calculations.

<sup>35</sup> Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), p. 66. Finegan cites Theodor Mommsen, *Chronica minora* (Berlin: Weidmann 1892–1898), 2:130; Mommsen cites Cassiodorus Senator.

<sup>36</sup> Jones, *Chronology of the OT*, pp. 136b–37a.

<sup>37</sup> Exodus 40:31, "both Aaron and his sons." Numbers 9:14, "both the foreign resident and the native of the land." 2 Chronicles 23:17, "both its altar and its images." Nehemiah 1:6, "both I and my father's house." Psalms 76:6 (76:7 in Hebrew), "both chariot and horse." Isaiah 34:11, "both owl and crow." Jeremiah 32:24, "both the famine and the pestilence." Ezekiel 39:9, "both bucklers and shields." Ezekiel 48:22, "both the Levites' possession and the possession of the city." Daniel 1:3, "both the royal family and the nobility." Daniel 8:13, "both the sanctuary and the host."

<sup>38</sup> "The plural verb in v 5bA indicates that Israel and Ephraim are separate entities." Francis I. Anderson and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, (Doubleday, NY, London, 1980), p. 393. "The alternation of singulars and plurals in these verses [Hos 5:3–5] would suggest that three kingdoms are here mentioned: Israel, Ephraim, and Judah." H.J. Cook, "Pekah," *Vetus Testamentum* 14:2 (1964), p. 133.

<sup>39</sup> Rodger C. Young, "Tables of Reign Lengths from the Hebrew Court Recorders," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48:2 (June 2005), pp. 225-48. Available online at <http://www.rcyoung.org/articles/rtables.pdf>.

<sup>40</sup> Kenneth A. Kitchen, *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100–650 B.C.)* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1973), p. 72. Subsequent studies by Egyptologists on the chronology of Shoshenq I, first pharaoh of Egypt's 22nd Dynasty, have accepted Kitchen's use of Thiele's date for the invasion of Shishak/Shoshenq, differing only on which year of the pharaoh's reign his invasion took place.

<sup>41</sup> "It is incredible that all these numbers can have been handed down through so many editors and copyists without often becoming corrupt . . ." Wm. F. Albright, "The Chronology of the Divided Monarchy of Israel," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 100 (1945), p.17.