

Some Solid Dates For Old Testament History

Two well-established historical anchors are the dates of 586 B.C. for the destruction of Jerusalem (Southern Kingdom of Judah) under Nebuchadnezzar (Babylonia) and 722 B.C. for the destruction of Samaria and the captivity of the Northern Kingdom of Israel at the hands of Assyria. Working back, and checking with dates in other countries' events, we can arrive at the date of 931 for the division of the monarchy into Judah and Israel at the death of Solomon. So Solomon rules from 970-931. In the fourth year of his reign Solomon began the temple—966 B.C. *1 Kings 6:1* says that this was 480 years after the Exodus from Egypt, putting the Exodus at 1446 B.C. *Exodus 12:40* says that the sojourn in Egypt was 430 years, so Jacob came down to Egypt in about 1876 B.C. He was 130 when he met Pharaoh (Gen. 47:9), suggesting that his birth was in the year 2006. Isaac was sixty when Jacob was born, so the birth of Isaac was around 2066. We then add another 100 years to place the birth of Abraham at 2166.

Another way to arrive at the same place is to start with biblical data. If we examine the chronological data in the Old Testament we find that Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born (Gen. 21:5); Isaac was sixty years old when Jacob and Esau were born (Gen. 25:26); and that Jacob was 130 years old when he went to Egypt (Gen. 47:9, 28). The period then from the birth of Abraham to Jacob's entry into Egypt is about 290 years: $100 + 60 + 130 = 290$. From Exodus 12:40 we learn that the Israelites lived in Egypt for a total of 430 years, and 480 years later Solomon's Temple was completed in the fourth year of his reign (966 B.C.) (1 Kings 6:1). Adding these years to the date of the completion of the temple we derive the following formula: $290 + 430 + 480 + 966 = 2166$. That means that Abraham was born in 2166 B.C.

Extended Chronology of the Old Testament

2296	Birth of Terah
2166	Birth of Abram
2091	Call of Abram
2066	Birth of Isaac
2006	Birth of Jacob
1991	Death of Abraham
1930	Jacob's Journey to Haran
1910	Jacob's Arrival at Shechem
1899	Sale of Joseph
1886	Death of Isaac
1876	Jacob's Descent to Egypt
1859	Death of Jacob
1806	Death of Joseph
1526	Birth of Moses
1446	Exodus from Egypt
1010	Reign of David
970	Reign of Solomon
966	Beginning of Temple
931	Divided Monarchy
722	Samaria Destroyed
587	Jerusalem Destroyed
536	Beginning of Returns

Old Testament History

1. Pre-monarchical Israel (1400-1050)
2. The United Monarchy (1050-931)
3. The Divided Monarchy (931-722)
4. The Kingdom of Judah (continued to 587/6)
5. The Exile (586-536)
6. The Return from Exile (536-414)
7. The Inter-Testamental Period (430-5/4)
8. Birth of Jesus (winter 5/4 B.C.)