

Ric Cunningham - Chronology

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Our topic is chronology. At the mouth of two or three witnesses that every word may be established. I have some screens to share.

I think that should do it.

Our premise is very straightforward, brethren. We're using the scriptural paradigm that at the mouth of two or three witnesses a thing is established. So I'd like to start by reading a few of those verses. There is one in Deuteronomy 17, 6, 6. We won't read that.

We'll start with Matthew 18 and verse 16. But if he will not hear thee, take the two, one or two more. That in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established, and again that was Jesus, and again in 2nd Corinthians 13:1 from Paul, this is the third time I am coming to you.

In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established, and then lastly I'm going to read Revelation 11 and verse 3 and I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy 1203 score days clothed in sackcloths.

I think the brethren are pretty well united in their understanding that these two witnesses are the Old and New Testament and they prophesied in the dead language of Latin for a period of time. But going back to our paradigm is that the Bible gives us the true God inspired chronology, that the best we may understand it, and that we would use histories or comments from scholars to buttress what our two witnesses from the Scriptures have already given us. But if they're not in harmony with two or three witnesses from Scripture, then they would diminish in our opinion of their validity.

It considering the period of the judges first in Acts 13:16, 21 reading from the King James Then Paul stood up and beckoning with his hand, said, men of Israel, and you that fear God, give audience. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm brought he them out of it, and about the time of 40 years suffered he their manners in the wilderness, and when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by Lot, and after that he gave unto them judges about the space of 450 years, until Samuel the prophet and afterward they desired a king, and God gave unto them Saul the son of Sis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of 40 years.

Observations Paul here states that it was about the time of 40 years that God suffered their manners in the wilderness. But you and I know from the scriptural accounts that it was actually exactly 40 years. I'm just going to read some scripture references of that it was exactly 40 years in the wilderness. Numbers 14:33, Psalm 95, 10, Acts 7, 36, Hebrews 3 verses 8 and 9.

Then Paul states he divided their land to them by lot. This follows the 40 years of the wilderness wandering, and we've learned through our chronology studies that this was a six year period of time under Joshua, and after that he gave unto them Judges about the space of 450 years until Samuel the prophet.

Until Samuel means inclusive of Samuel. For the Scriptures state that Samuel was a judge. First Samuel 7, verse 15, and afterward they desired a king and God gave unto them Saul by the space of 40 years.

Ric Cunningham - Chronology

Now the King James rendering is supported by at least 11 translations. I'm not going to rattle them off, brethren. If you're interested I'd be happy to share them with you. But they're easy to find.

And now it's only proper to bring out that the three oldest manuscripts, the Sinaiticus, the Vatican 1209 and the Alexandrian offer a different rendering which is sometimes read and I'll read it to you. This is from Rotherham's, the God of this people Israel shows our fathers and the people he exalted by their sojourn in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm brought he them out of it, and for the time of about 40 years he bear with their manners in the desert and overthrowing seven nations in the land of Canaan, gave them their land as an inheritance about 450 years, and after these things he gave them Judges until Samuel the prophet. Again that was Rotherham's emphasized Bible.

This translation seems to put the 450 year period before the Judges. However, we need to consider some other sources to best understand how to harmonize what the King James based or those texts that are considered the received text harmonize with those of the older text or the critical text.

Here we're seeing a Greek authority, Henry Alford's Greek Testament an exegetical and critical commentary. These are Comments on Acts 13, verse 2. I would like to state that it was our late dear brother David Yambers, who excelled in his ancient language studies, particularly of Greek and Latin, who brought this commentary to our attention that he felt it was superior than many. But let's read this in the highlighted section on verse 20 treating the reading of A, B, C and Aleph. I'll talk on that in a moment.

As an attempt at correcting the difficult chronology of our verse and taking the words as they span. No other sense can be given to them than that the time of the judges lasted 450 years. The data implies the duration of the period between the division of the land and Samuel the Prophet inclusive, and we have exactly the same chronological arrangement in Josephus. I'm stopping there now before I read on.

I'd like to look at the bottom of this screen for the explanation of A, B, C and Aleph. A represents the Alexandrian Codex supposed to be written in the 5th century. B represents the Vatican Codex 1209 from the 4th century, C, the Ephraimi Codex from the 5th century and the Adluf, which is the first letter of the Hebrew Sinaitic Codex of the 4th century.

So Alford is considering these four sources of our oldest manuscripts, which we very much love and appreciate, and yet he's harmonizing it with what he feels is the correct language understanding of the Greek, and he explains it here, and what in essence what he is telling us is that he feels even with these four texts, as we seem to read it from the emphasized Bible by Rotherham, you still should understand that the Apostle Paul meant that there was a 450 year period for the judges.

Now in the second column here we're reading the highlight. It seems then that Paul followed a chronology current amongst the Jews and agreeing with the book of Judges itself. The spaces of time in which added together equal exactly 450 years and that adopted by Josephus, but not with that of our present Hebrew text of First Kings 6:1. Now we are going to consider First Kings 6. One in, in greater detail a little further along.

But we're acknowledging here and seeing that Alford in his examination of the Greek and the most ancient manuscripts that we have, he feels that they confirm a 450 year period of time for our Judges.

Ric Cunningham - Chronology

Our next screen. This is the same verses that we read first in the King James, then from Rotherham's, now from The RVIC, the 2020 version by our brother Jim Parkinson. Very tremendous labor of love went into this. Let's read. Men of Israel and you that fear God, hearken the God of this people, Israel chose our fathers and exalted the people when they sojourned in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm led he them forth out of it.

And for about the time of 40 years suffered he their manners in the wilderness, and when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land for an inheritance. For about 450 years also after these things, he gave them Judges. Until Samuel the Prophet, period, and afterward they asked for a king colon.

And God gave unto them Saul the son of Kish comma, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, comma, for the space of 40 years, period.

Brother Parkinson attempts to use the best text available, including of course the oldest manuscripts. As we've already discussed some observations, I would like to explain the colons.

A colon indicates that the following words elaborate on that which preceded the colon.

Note that the first colon after the 450 years that this is the time of the Judges. For that which follows after the colon is elaborating on that statement which precedes it. The second colon is after they asked for a king. Following it tells us that God did give him a king, and their first king Saul, they had for 40 years.

Summarizing these events as Paul has given them to US In Acts 13, 16, 21, Paul lines up the event. The Exodus and Wanderings, he states is 40 years, and we demonstrate it was exactly 40 years. God destroyed seven nations in the land. There was no time given.

God gives them the land as an inheritance with judges. 450 years. God grants their request for kings. Saul was their first king 40 years. So we note that there is no place for an unspecified 450 year period before the Judges.

Nor would Paul have stated that God gave them Judges and not state for how long did he give them.

I have to state that if you and I were to look at the table of contents of our Bibles, of course we'd see Genesis. Then we have Exodus and with the books of Exodus we have Israel leaving Egypt and beginning their 40 years wandering. Then the next book after Exodus is Leviticus and it gives us information about the Levitical priesthood, and that takes place after they exited Egypt, and we have numbers which records their events after they exited Egypt.

And then we have Deuteronomy, which is Moses, summation of their 40 years wandering Egypt, and then we have Joshua. They enter the land and it's divided. During the six year period, Joshua and the elders lived after him. They become the first Judges.

More on that shortly, and then the next book in the Bible after Joshua is the book of Judges followed by Ruth, which took place during the period of Judges. Then comes Samuel, the last of the Judges, and then follows the Book of Kings and Chronicles, the period of our kings recorded in both of those books. There is no place for a 450 year period prior to the Judges.

Ric Cunningham - Chronology

Now we believe that Farrar Fenton has given a a very clear reading that harmonizes the more oldest texts with what we've been discussing so once more. Acts 13:16 21 from the Holy Bible in Modern English by Farrar Fenton. Paul accordingly stood up and waving his hand said, men of Israel and those that reverence God, listen. The God of this people, Israel, chose our forefathers and raised up the nation during their residence in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm he led them out of it.

And for the space of about 40 years he endured their behavior in the desert. Afterwards, when he had conquered seven nations in the land of Canaan, he entrusted them with the possession of their country for about 450 years, and contemporary with these events, he gave Judges until the end of Samuel the prophet, and when they demanded a kingdom, then God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin for the period of 40 years. A few observations Clearly Fenton has captured the true sense of what Paul was writing from both the received text and the oldest manuscripts.

And it harmonizes well with what Henry Alford has presented from a critical examination of the Greek, and it just sums up nicely how the Apostle Paul was relating these events and their years to get us to this point of finally to the Kings period of the Judges. From the Book of Judges we can determine this 450 year period. Now in Judges 11:26. This is the start of Jephthah Judgeship and we are told There was a 300 year period from once they entered the land.

Then we have the remaining judges after that 300 years, Jephthah for six, Ibzan for seven, Elon for 10, Abdon for eight, and then we have the Philistine period of oppression of which Samson was part of the last 20 year period. But it was a 40 year oppression of the Philistines. Then we have Eli for 40 years and Samuel for 45 years. We minus the six years for the dividing of the land out of that 300 and it totals a grand total of 450 years.

Thus brethren, we have our two witnesses from the Bible, we have the Apostle Paul in the New Testament, and we have the record of the Judges from the Book of Judges.

Now we turn to harmonizing. First Kings 6, 1.

And it came to pass in the 480th 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 of Ziph, which is the second month that he began to build the house of the lord.

The problem 480 years from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon's reign, subtracting what we know, 40 years wilderness wandering, six years dividing the land. We're going to skip over the period of the judges for now. 40 years for King Saul, 40 years for King David, and 4 years for Solomon. That totals 130 years. This leaves a 350 year for the period of the judges.

It is exactly 100 years too short from both Paul's testimony and also from the Book of Judges.

Now, before we continue on reading the screen for myself with what I've read here in 1st Kings 6. One, it is not telling me what the period of the Judges are exact. It's included, but it's not addressing that point.

What we considered already for our two witnesses from Paul and from the Book of Judges was exactly on the period of the Judges, and that allows me for myself conscientiously to challenge this 1 Kings 6. 1 narrative.

Ric Cunningham - Chronology

And we do find that there are at least three solutions. Returning to reading on the screen.

No Christian or Jewish writers include the numerical part of this verse before the 4th century AD. Hence it might be a spurious addition.

It may be a simple typo. The four might have been a five when it had originally appeared about the 4th century.

580 would allow for exactly a 450 year period of the Judges.

So interrupting the reading here, all we're saying is that instead of 480 years from the Exodus to Solomon's fourth year, if it was 580, then it would allow for exactly a 450 year period for the Judges. Okay, going back to the screen, a type O. A type o example. In 2nd Kings 24:8 it states that Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he began to reign. However, in 2nd Chronicles 36, 9 it states that he was only 8 years old.

And we want to say 18 is the proper age.

So it is possible that a typo had crept. In the third possible solution, the Hebrew numeral 4 bayless is just one stroke different from the numeral 5 heth. You could clearly see that on your screen. You might see this in your Bible when looking at Psalm 119.

So in other words, brethren, if you turn to Psalm 119, my Oxford King James Bible, just before verse 25, in the center of the column there is the letter Daleth 4 with that Hebrew writing, and just before verse 33 is the letter T in the Hebrew. Only one little stroke difference.

Sister Elnita, I think your mic was on temporarily, so you might take a look at what this third suggestion is in reprint 1980 1980. Similar thought, the Diaglot Also has this thought contained in it under Acts 13.

So for myself, the way I'd like to harmonize it is that I do not think it was in the original Hebrew manuscripts the numerical part of 1st Kings 60:1, and that when it did come in to the later manuscript, that I would suggest it was originally 580 and then was later a corruption to the text, either a typo by a simple one little stroke difference, but again concluding that there is a way to harmonize 1 Kings 6:1, which is not directly talking about the period of the Judges with our two witnesses that are talking directly about the period of the Judges, the period of the kings of Judah.

On page 50 of the second volume, the time is at hand. There are listed the 21 kings of Judah with both their years in which they reigned and the Scripture citations from the Books of Chronicles. We want to add that you can easily find the same number for those Judean Kings in the Book of kings. The 21 kings of Judah reigned for a total of 513 years. The books of Chronicles and the Book of kings are two separate testimonies, two separate witnesses, and you come up with the same 513 year period.

Now, I haven't put it on the screen here, but I would encourage you that if this is something that interests you, you can go through the books of first and second Kings and write down the Scripture citations for where the period of these Judean Kings appear, and you'll see that it matches with what appears in the Chronicles.

Now brethren, think on this for a moment. Why did the Lord bother to give us the Books of Kings, 1st and 2nd Kings and the Book of Chronicles, 1st and 2nd Chronicles? Why did he do that? Why

Ric Cunningham - Chronology

wouldn't one of the records have been enough? Well, I like to think that he gave us Kings as the means of showing us how the shorter period of the kings over the 10 tribes intersected with the kings of Judah who reigned for the longer period both before them and after them, so that we would have their account of what took place in the lives of those kings regarding Israel.

For these were all for types and lessons for us to learn from. But he gave us one and two Chronicles with a clear clean list of of the Judean Kings for the purpose of having a clear chronological record for the period of the Kings. Hence our two witnesses.

Some have tried to synchronize the kings of Judah with the Kings kings over the 10 tribes. This invariably result in a too short period for the kings of Judah. Most try to follow the example of a Mr. Edwin R. Thiel as outlined in his book the Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrews Kings. In the 1983 edition, on page 205, he writes what he calls his conclusion in one paragraph which we'll read the final question concerning the chronological scheme set forth in these pages is whether or not it is the true arrangement of reigns of the Hebrew kings. Certainly this system has brought harmony.

I'll put a question mark there out of what was once regarded as hopeless confusion.

But is it necessarily the true restoration of the original pattern of rains?

At the least, this research shows that such a restoration is possible. However, we must accept the premise I want to read that again. However, we must accept the premise that of an original reckoning of reigns in Israel according to the non ascension year system. One premise with a latter shift to the ascension year method. Second Premise of the early use in Judah of ascension year reckoning.

Third premise a shift to the non ascension year system. Fourth premise then a return to the original ascension year method. Fifth Premise of the need to begin the regnal year in Israel with Nissan and with Tishri and Judah. Sixth Premise of the existence of a number of co regencies. 7th premise and of the fact that at some late date, long after the original records of the kings had been set in order and when the true arrangement of the reigns had been forgotten.

8th Premise Certain synchronisms in 2nd Kings 17 and 18 were introduced by some late hand, 12 years out of harmony with the original patterns of range. Ninth premise when all this is understood, we see that it is possible to set forth an arrangement of reigns for the Hebrew kings in which there are both internal harmony and agreement with contemporary history.

This foregoing paragraph contains at least eight suppositions that are not in the Scriptures. If they had been in the Scriptures, they all would have been cited. Certainly the Lord God Almighty would have provided his people with a direct and harmonious list of the rightful kings of Judah, and not just leave it to guesswork.

Another scriptural confirmation for the period of the Kings of Judah is found in Ezekiel 4. 5. It's true, it's not as direct as the Book of Kings and the Book of Chronicles are two witnesses. We add them right up. But this is a another scriptural, we believe valid confirmation.

Ezekiel 4, verse 5 For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity according to the number of the days, 390 days, so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the House of Israel. In context, the house of Israel is a ten tribe kingdom. Ezekiel was instructed to lie on his Side for the period of punishment for that 10 tribe kingdom that would culminate at the same time in which the two tribe kingdom of

Ric Cunningham - Chronology

Judah would end, that is in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

Now we can add 40 years for King Saul, the first king of Judah over the 12 tribes. Excuse me, he's from Benjamin, but he was. Over the 12 tribes. 40 years for King David of Judah over the 12 tribes. 40 years for king Solomon over the 12 tribes.

And then 3 years of Rehoboam's joint reign over all 12 tribes as recorded in 2 Chronicles 11:17. Then we add this 390 year period for the 10 tribe kingdom until the destruction of Jerusalem and the last king of Judah, which was Zedekiah, it totals exactly 513 years. This is a scriptural confirmation for the grand total of the period of the kings of Judah.

Next, we enter into the period of the 70 years desolation. You'll like to start by saying that in Acts 13 with Paul, we had our 40 years wilderness wandering, followed by our. Our six years of the division in the land, followed by the 450 years of the judges, followed by the 513 years of the kings that we've now have considered. Paul introduced the first two, but now we, we considered it from other sources of kings and Chronicles. Following the last king, Zedekiah, we have a period of seventy years desolation.

Jeremiah 29:10. For thus saith the Lord that after seventy years be accomplished. At Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word toward you in causing you to return to this place.

Sa I believe we might have lost brother Rick temporarily. We will wait and see if he can reconnect.

Sa Rick's computer went down. He's. He's getting back up. All right, fair enough.

He doesn't know what happened, but somehow it cut out. Over. Thank you.

Satan doesn't take days off, so he's active Saturdays too. So let him know that he can continue on a little longer if he needs to, to cover the situation. Okay. Okay. I'm going to go up and see what the process.

What the status is very good.

The rumors of your death have been greatly exaggerated, brother Rick. So sometimes you almost wish you were. Oh, wouldn't it be nice. Okay, take some extra time to finish the talk, please. Well, thank you.

Well, brethren, I hope we're back on track here. That was very more excitement than any of us needed. I had read Jeremiah 29, verse 10.

The second paragraph on the screen share says this word at. In other words, at Babylon can also be rendered in rather in Babylon. You can see this in Strong's Hebrew dictionary number 5921 the Lord prophesied through Jeremiah that Israel would be punished for a 70 year period in Babylon, and that he would restore them to their homeland. Next in Jeremiah 25:11 12 and this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon 70 years, and it shall come to pass when 70 years are accomplished that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, saith the lord, for their iniquity and the land of the Chaldeans, and and will make it perpetual desolations.

The LORD is interested in Israel, his covenanted people. It is their 70 years desolation while they were in Babylon that has his interest. Yet he does intend to punish Babylon for their abuses of his

Ric Cunningham - Chronology

people.

2nd Chronicles 36:19-23 which of course is at the end of the book of Chronicles, end of their last king Zedekiah and they burnt the house of God, and break down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof and them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon, and where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath to fulfill threescore and 10 years, 70 years. Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, all the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up. The chronicler tells us that from the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, when all the surviving people were carried away to Babylon until Cyrus the king of Persia announced he was releasing the Israelites to return to Jerusalem was a 70 year period of desolation previously prophesied by Jeremiah, Jeremiah 29 and 25, where we read we do not have to interpret this.

The word of God has done this for us by giving us both the beginning and the ending events.

Now a simple observation, brother.

If these 70 years of Sabbath rest for the land had started 20 years prior to the Israelites being slain or carried captive away by the Babylonians, then they would have been still living in the land and planting and harvesting it along with their herds and flocks grazing upon it for 20 years. So in essence God's keeping of the Sabbath's rest would have not been any better than that which the Israelites had kept for which he was punishing them. So the land would enjoy her sabbath. For Daniel 9:1-2, in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans in the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolations or as Lisa reads, the ruins of Jerusalem. Seventy years in the ruins of Jerusalem.

Now Daniel lived from before the 70 years began. Through it until after it ended, he confirms and interprets Jeremiah's several 70 years prophecies for us. So we have three witnesses, Jeremiah the chronicler and Daniel three testimonies from the word of God on what and how we should observe and understand this 70 years period.

Brother Russell adopted a chronology that was already in existence that he felt followed the biblical standard, and he used this period of time, the 70 years of desolation over Jerusalem at the conclusion of the reign of the kings of Judah. He used the 70 year time period as his touchstone as to whether or not he felt a chronological chronology, chronological chronological scheme was actually biblically based or not. If it had the all too often nominal church view that was only a 50 year desolation preceded by a 20 years of a partial captivity. He felt it didn't hold to the biblical standards of the three witnesses, the two or three witnesses, so he didn't entertain it for us.

Brethren, we can be conscientiously comfortable that if we've determined that this 70 years is a desolation, then you could be at peace that you don't have to chase down the rest of any chronological scheme that you come across. Typically we come across them in our different Bible

Ric Cunningham - Chronology

commentaries. You might appreciate, and we might appreciate some of their historical reasonings on different things. But when it comes to chronology, we're blessed because through the harvest messenger we're we have outlined in the second volume a biblically based chronology with this critical 70 years confirmation that allows you and I to date any of these events that we find in The Old Testament.

Now we also have a further confirmation on this 70 years desolation by using the two different Jubilee reckonings. We have the jubilee reckoning as a type of the law and we have a jubilee reckoning viewed as prophecy. From these prophecies we've just considered, they are a further testimony from Scripture, not as direct but certainly every bit as harmonious with is of note that Josephus, not that we quote him for his chronology, except there are times when we think he's correct. He has a 70 years desolation over Jerusalem.

Now our confidence, brethren, I'd like to submit our confidence should be in the two or three witnesses for any of our biblical periods for our chronology from the Scripture. This should be our paradigm that when we consider histories they have a second level of importance to us. When they confirm what we find in the Bible, we appreciate it. But where they don't and they're in conflict with our two or three witnesses from Scripture, well then we view them with some suspicion or we don't give them quite the same amount of testimony, if you will.

Now, I purposely didn't take the time to go further into what I'm going to introduce next, primarily because what we've presented, I believe is sufficient for the man of God. But I do want to say that through the good work of Brother Jerry Leslie, we were brought in contact with a another authority, Ralph Faruli.

Stop the share one moment.

We wanted to bring your attention an ancient language authority, Rolf Furulli. O R O L F Last name F U R U L I Ralph Faruli. This book is the second volume of two. This one is on Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian chronology. He's the lecturer in Oslo University as well as in Norway.

He is eminently qualified in being able to read and understand and have access to ancient writings from the cuneiform tablets and to other lists and on the back of the book, very simply, on the back of the book, he states that this book is presenting a new chronological scheme for the Neo Babylonian and Neo Assyrian empires and these would intersect at times with our Judean list of kings.

And he's bringing out from a number of different authorities and for reasons that there are legitimate concerns as to the veracity of the commonly accepted chronological periods for the Babylonians and the Assyrians, and he brings out different tablets, he brings out different eclipse observations, different planetary sightings, things that the ancients were using to help confirm their chronology and dating. So it's a simple matter, as it were, that if something is to be challenged and there are suspicions, legitimate suspicions, to something that is historical, from historical writings that I for myself would rather question that than to question the two or three witnesses that are clearly scriptural. Because I believe that the Lord God didn't expect all of us of his people to have to become scholars in order to understand the chronology and the time prophecies that are tied to it, to best understand where we are in his stream of time as found in the divine plan of the ages. So, brethren, with that, we'll close here.

Thank you for the extra moment or two. Turn it over to you, brother Mark. May the Lord add His blessing.