

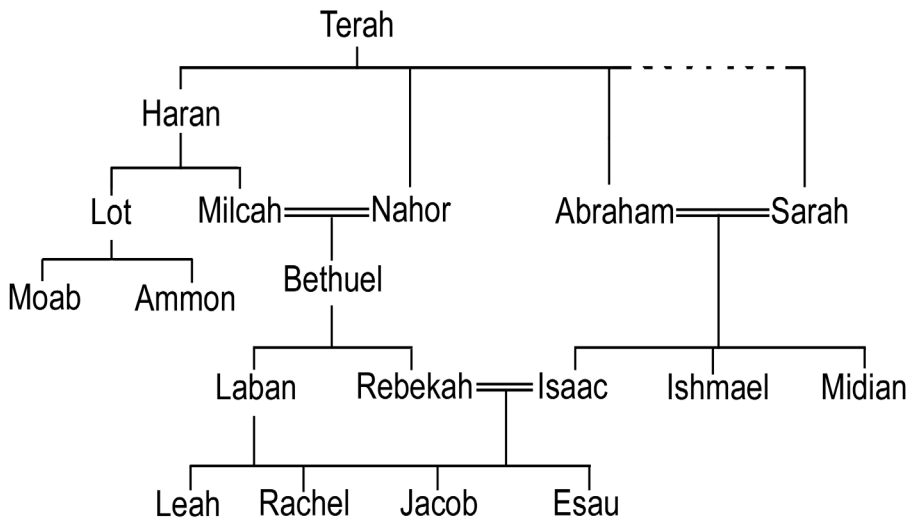
1 The Bible - Undesigned Coincidences?

The Bible is full of apparent coincidences, but the more of them you examine, the more you realise they are not accidental. Different writers, sometimes writing years apart, record incidents which tie up and could not have been contrived. These notes consider just a few of these spanning Bible history - some major events and some apparently trivial.

The generation gap between Isaac and Rebekah

The family tree below is based on Genesis 11:26-30; 24:15, 67. How was Isaac related to Terah? What about his wife, Rebekah?

We are not told here why there was a difference of one or two generations between them.



Now read Genesis 18:11. What have you found out?

Spices in Egypt



Look at Genesis 37:25. To whom was Joseph sold and what were they carrying?
Now read Genesis 50:2, 26. What happened to Jacob and Joseph when they died? What do you think was used for embalming?

John 19:39 records the burial of Jesus. How much myrrh was used when preparing Jesus' body?

What have you found out?

Transporting the tabernacle



Read Numbers 7:7, 8. Why did Merari have twice as many oxen as Gershon? There is no explanation here.

Now look at Numbers 4:25-26; 31-32 and see what each had to carry. What have you found out?

Giants



Look at Numbers 13:22, and note that there were giants in Hebron. This was part of the reason why ten of the spies thought that the land could not be conquered (see verses 32-33).

Now read Joshua 11:21-22, and note where giants remained. Look at 1 Samuel 17:4; where did Goliath come from? What have you found out?

If you feel like investigating this a bit more, you may like to see how the story unfolds later.



Of the places visited by the spies, Hebron is the only city named (see Numbers 13:22). Look at Numbers 14:24, and see how Moses promised Caleb that he would be given land they had visited.

Joshua 14:13-15 records the land Caleb was given, and Joshua 15:13-15 describes how he drove out the giants. From verse 16-17 we see that his territory was quite large, and included Kiriath Sepher (Debir) - see if you can find it on a map.

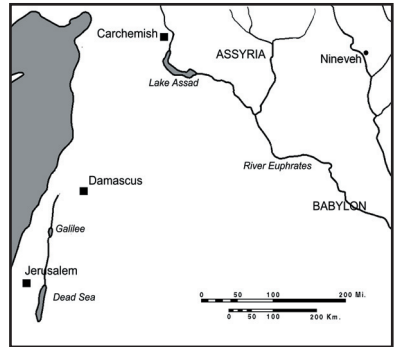
Now look at 1 Samuel 30:13-14, and summarise the consistent theme of these passages.

Jeremiah's '70 year' prophecies



Look at Jeremiah 25. You will notice from verse 1 that this happened in the fourth year of king Jehoiakim, which was 605 BC. In verses 8-12, what did Jeremiah say would happen? Note who is going to serve the Babylonians, and for how long.

What did Jeremiah say would then happen to the Babylonians? (Look at verses 12-14)



When did the 70 years start?

Now look at Jeremiah 46:1-2. This refers to the battle of Carchemish and says that it happened in the same year: the 4th year of Jehoiakim. The information box gives the date for this battle - make a note of it in the 'Summary' table below.

The battle of Carchemish
Nebuchadnezzar II reigned from 605 to 562 BC. He was the greatest king of the Babylonian empire. In 605 BC he defeated the Egyptian army at the Battle of Carchemish, which made Babylon the strongest power in the Middle East.

And when did the 70 years end?



Daniel 5:30-31 describes the capture of Babylon.

The fall of Babylon



In BC 539, the Babylonians were conquered by the Medes and Persians, and Darius the Mede (that's him on the left) took over as ruler of Babylon. It seems that he was put in charge of Babylon by Cyrus the Persian, so 539-538 was the first year of both Darius and Cyrus.

Read Daniel 9:1-3, and note when it happened. How many years had passed since Jeremiah's prophecy? See how, in verses 17-18, for example, Daniel is praying for Jerusalem to be restored.

Now look at Ezra 1:1-5. Note when this happened, and what Cyrus proclaimed. Allow a year or two for the people to return and settle in the land, and what do you get?

Summary

The Babylonian empire began with the battle of Carchemish, when they defeated the Egyptians and became ruling nation in the Middle East. This was in ...	
The Babylonians were defeated by the Persians, and the Jews were allowed to return to their land. They would have arrived in about ...	
So Israel had served the Babylonians for how long?	

Seventy years' exile.

We have just seen one period of 70 years, but there is another.

After the battle of Carchemish the Babylonians progressively strengthened their stranglehold in the Middle East. Several times the land of Israel was invaded and people taken captive into Babylon. King Jehoiachin was taken into exile and finally King Zedekiah.



During this time, Jeremiah wrote a letter to the Jews in Babylon, which is recorded in chapter 29 (see verse 1). Notice that in verses 10-11 God repeats the promise that they would return after 70 years.

Some time later the final destruction came and the temple was burned. Read Jeremiah 52:12-16. If the first year of Nebuchadnezzar was BC 605, when did this happen?

We have already seen that in around 537 BC the Jews returned to Jerusalem. They built the foundations of the temple, but were discouraged and it lay idle for many years. Then, encouraged by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, they restarted the work, with the support of King Darius II, who began to reign in around 522 BC. Look in Ezra 6:15 to see when the temple was completed.



This tablet is part of the Babylonian Chronicle, found in the ruins of Babylon. It describes how Nebuchadnezzar's army besieged Jerusalem and carried king Jehoiachin off to Babylon. It is now in the British Museum. photograph © 2002 Fathom, inc

Summary

The kingdom of Judah finally ended when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city of Jerusalem and burned the temple. This was in ...	
The rebuilding of the temple was completed in ...	
So the temple had been destroyed for how long?	

Peter's wife



Compare Matthew 8:14 and 1 Corinthians 9:5. What have you found out?

Healing on the sabbath

The Jewish sabbath begins at sunset on Friday and ends at sunset on Saturday. The Jewish interpretation of the law said that nobody was allowed to travel more than a sabbath day's journey (just over half a mile), and the Jewish leaders said that sick people should not be healed on the sabbath (Luke 13:14).



In Matthew 8:14-16, the people brought the sick to Jesus at evening. Matthew does not tell us why. Now look at Luke 4:31,38-40. You will notice that this was the same event as recorded in Matthew. What have you learned?

Striking Jesus



Compare Matthew 26:67-68 with Luke 22:64. Why did Jesus need to prophesy who hit him when they were standing in front of him? What you have found out?