

CRITICAL NOTE: A SUGGESTION CONCERNING
THE CHRONOLOGY OF SOLOMON'S REIGN
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We first must find a date for the Exodus. I am personally convinced of the early date theory. Some current advocates of the early date theory suggest 1447 as the date of the Exodus.¹ Since it is probable that Isaiah's mention of Tirhakah calls for another western campaign of Sennacherib after 701 B.C.,² Egyptologists have revised downward their datings of the Pharaohs quite frequently. Professor Albright seems to think however that they have reached a more stable level now.³ Assuming this is so, the most probable dates for the deaths of Thutmosis II and III are 1495 B.C. and 1440 B.C. The Pharaoh mentioned in Exodus 2:23 can hardly be Thutmosis II, but Thutmosis III would fit the account very well. Leaving a couple of years for Moses' journey to Egypt and for the plagues, this puts the Exodus in 1438 B.C. at the earliest.

This now poses a problem in regard to Solomon's reign. According to 1 Kings 6:1, the fourth year of Solomon's reign was the 480th after Israel left Egypt. Counting 1438 B.C. as the first year, this gives 959-58 B.C. as Solomon's first year. At first glance this would seem to call for 923 B.C. as the date marking the end of Solomon's forty year reign (1 Kings 11:42). However, 930 B.C. as proposed by Thiele and others seems more reasonable.⁴

What shall we do with the extra seven years? Most recent chronologies do not take into account the clearly pictured period of Solomon's co-regency with David. Adonijah's intrigues forced David to proclaim Solomon king some time before David died. It seems reasonable that Solomon's forty years include this period. Furthermore, according to 1 Chronicles 29:22, shortly before David died, after David's many preparations for the Temple, David and the people made Solomon king "the second time." Perhaps this is the answer. It is not impossible that Solomon's fourth year is counted from this second public anointing. Certainly, the chronicler's account could be interpreted in this way. Nor should we disregard what Chronicles has to say. Albright in another place argues that archaeology does not uphold the low value critics assign to the historical material in Chronicles.⁵

This seven year overlapping of David's and Solomon's reigns would give time for David's new inspiration for encouraging his young son and for collecting more materials for the temple. It would put King Saul's death in 1002 B.C. and the beginning of his reign in 1034 B.C. This would give Samuel a little more time to grow old after his victory over the Philistines at Mizpeh in 1049 B.C. (1 Samuel 7:3-12).

Going back to the date of the Exodus in 1438 B.C., this would bring the conquest of the Transjordan to 1398 B.C. With the three hundred years of Judges 11:26 and the 18 years of Judges 10:3, this makes Jephthah's date 1080 B.C. (instead of 1089 B.C., as has been recently proposed).⁶ Then the sequence in Judges chapter 12 would bring Ibzan's judgeship to an end in 1069, Elon's in 1059, and Abdon's in 1049 B.C. Both 1069 (the probable date of the capture of the ark) and 1049 are significant dates. Since this series ends in 1049 and no one succeeded Abdon, this fits well with the fact Samuel took over the leadership in 1049 B.C.

All these things seem to fit together, confirming the long co-regency of David and Solomon, and perhaps indicating that the facts are not yet all on the side of the late date theory of the Exodus.

NOTES

1. John C. Whitecomb, Jr., "Chart of O. T. Kings and Prophets," *ISBE*, 2nd ed., I, 641 gives c1448; *Unger's Bible Dictionary* 3rd ed., p. 332 gives 1441; Francisco, *Introducing the Old Testament*, p. 31, gives 1445 B.C.
2. M. F. Laming Macadam, *The Temples of Kawa*, Oxford U. Press, 1949, I, 18. Albright upholds the two campaign view in "New Light from Egypt," *BASOR*, 130, pp. 8f., April 1953, and in *Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands*, 1955, pp. 97f. See S. M. Horton, "A Defense on Historical Grounds of the Isaian Authorship of the Passages in Isaiah Referring to Babylon," (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Central Baptist Seminary, 1959).
3. W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine*, Penguin Books, 1954, p. 220.
4. E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, U. of Chicago Press, c1951.
5. W. F. Albright, "The Biblical Period," *The Jews*, L. Finkelstein, ed., New York, Harper and Bros., 1949, I, 42.
6. J. W. Schmidt, "The Joshua-Judges Chronology," (Unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Central Baptist Seminary, 1954).

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