

## Book Review

*The Wonders of Biblical Chronology* by Phillip Mauro, Ashburn, VA: Hess Publications, 2001, 120 pp. ISBN: 0-87377-060-9. \$8.00.

Phillip Mauro provides an important service to Bible students in this book on biblical chronology. Mauro follows closely the work of Martin Anstey's work, *The Romance of Bible Chronology* published in 1913 by Marshall Bros., London. That work comprises two large volumes and covers every chronological statement in the Bible. From that detailed analysis, Anstey formulated a complete chronological system from the creation of Adam to Jesus Christ. Mauro gives the number of years from the creation of Adam to the death of Jesus as 4075. The death of Jesus would have occurred in A.D. 30.

From Mauro's work it is possible to determine the following information. The time elapsed from the creation of Adam to the time of the flood is 1656 years. From the creation of Adam to the birth of Terah (Abram's father-Gen. 11:24) is 1878 years. From the creation of Adam to the birth of Abraham (Gen. 11:27) is 2008 years. By the time you get to the end of chapter eleven in the book of Genesis, you are already half way through Old Testament history. The book of Genesis covers 2369 years. Exodus covers 144 years, eleven and one-half months. The book of Leviticus covers one month. Numbers covers 40 years. Deuteronomy covers 30 days. From the creation of Adam to the death of Moses, 2552 years elapse. The Pentateuch covers 2,554 years, one and one-half months.

The value of this chronological information is that it is based upon the Word of God alone. The biblical chronology is intertwined with the genealogical accounts given in the Scriptures, the historical narratives of the lives of the men and women in the Bible, and the historical information of the nations of the earth. All of this information is given for one reason, i.e. to record the history of the lineage of Jesus Christ who is the savior of the world! The Bible has one theme: the redemption of mankind. God develops His own timetable to bring Jesus into the world and to complete the work of redemption. This timetable is revealed in the pages of God's Word and Mauro helps the Bible student to see and understand it. You cannot tamper with this chronology without destroying the lineage of Jesus Christ. Biblical chronology cannot be harmonized with evolutionary chronology. It is impossible.

The book is divided into fifteen chapters. The first part of the book contains a preface to the revised edition with an explanation of the beginning of the work. There are twelve charts interspersed among the remaining chapters. The charts give both the number of years from the creation of Adam and the corresponding years in B.C. or A.D.

Chapter one contains a comparison between the biblical chronologies and chronological systems from other sources outside of the Bible. One problem Mauro points out is that if human history has lasted for about six thousand years, for more than half (about two-thirds to be exact) of that history there are no chronological records from which a chronology could be constructed apart from the Old Testament itself (p. 2). The chronological records of the Bible are superior to anything else that we have available to us. These records are testable by any student of God's Word who will take the time to investigate them.

Chapter two surveys various chronologers and their systems. Mauro points out their weaknesses in contrast to the Bible. He points out the weaknesses involved in following the chronological information given by Ptolemy. Ptolemy lived in the second century after Christ. However, he reconstructed a "canon" or list of the Persian kings from Cyrus to Alexander the

Great of Macedon. Upon this “canon” all modern chronologists have built their systems. His chronology lacks corroboration by Josephus, Fidiusi and Sedar Olam (p. 8). It also contradicts the Old Testament. Consequently, Mauro rejects it and stays with the Old Testament information. James Ussher’s chronology has been verified and improved by Mauro. For the book of Genesis, Ussher and Mauro’s numbers are the same. Any Bible student can verify these numbers beginning with the creation of Adam (Mauro and Ussher give different numbers when reckoning time according to B. C. dates. The difference between them is 42 years).

Chapter three addresses the time of the patriarchs before the flood. Mauro begins his chronology with the history of man rather than the history of the universe. He skirts the questions involved in the Gap Theory and the Day-Age theory. However, Jesus does not do this. In Matt. 19:4, Jesus places Adam and Eve “at the beginning.” We know that Adam was created on the sixth day of creation thus placing him at the beginning (Gen. 1:1). This is enough information to affirm the history of the beginning of the universe and that of Adam was very close in proximity. This chapter contains the first table. It begins with Adam and ends with Noah’s age at the time of the flood (600) and 1656 years elapsed. There are no gaps in the chronology. Mauro mentions “breaks” and then, he is able to “fill in” the breaks by making computations based upon the information supplied by the Scriptures (p. 22-23). The first “break” is Noah’s age at the time Shem was born. Noah was 502 years old when Shem was born. Mauro derives this number from the fact that Noah was 600 years old when the flood came. Shem was 100 years old two years after the flood, the year that Arphaxad was born (Gen. 11:10). 98 from 600 gives us 502. Chapter three also contains a detailed chronology of the flood (p. 23-24).

Chapter four details the chronology from the flood to Abram. The Flood occurred 1656 years after Adam was created. Abram was born 2008 years after Adam was created. From the Flood to Abram 352 years elapse. Mauro is able to compute the age of Terah when Abram was born. Terah died at the age of 205. Abram left Haran at the age of 75. If Abram was 75 years old at the death of Terah, then Terah was 130 years old when Abram was born. This results in the birth of Abram 2008 years after Adam was created (p. 26). The first eleven chapters of Genesis cover a period of history almost equal in length to the rest of Old Testament history.

Here is an interesting result of the study of the chronology up to this point. Adam was for 243 years the contemporary of Methuselah. Methuselah’s life overlapped that of Shem for 98 years. Shem was for 150 years the contemporary of Abraham. Two men connect Adam with Abraham, i.e. Methuselah and Shem (p. 28).

Chapter five covers the chronology from the birth of Abram to the death of Joseph. This will take us up to the end of the book of Genesis. This chapter contains tables three and four (there are twelve chronological tables in the book). Mauro gives the explanations for all of the dates given in the tables. Abram was born 2008 years after Adam was created. Joseph dies 2369 years after Adam was created. The book of Genesis covers 2369 years.

Chapter six gives the chronology of the years of Israel under Moses. There is no direct statement in the Scriptures of the length of time between the death of Joseph and the birth of Moses. However, this time period can be determined. Mauro gives all of the necessary information to conclude that 64 years elapse between the death of Joseph and the birth of Moses (p. 40). Mauro also shows that the book of Exodus covers 144 years, 11 ½ months. The book of Leviticus covers one month. Numbers covers 40 years. Deuteronomy covers 30 days (one month). Table six of the chronology of the Bible is given in this chapter taking us from the

Exodus (2513 years after Adam was created) to the death of Moses (2552 years after Adam was created).

Chapter seven details the chronology of the books of Joshua and Judges. Mauro computes the time of the conquest as six years. The time for the distribution of the land among the tribes was fourteen years. The book of Joshua covers twenty years. Based on Paul's statement in Acts 13:18-20, the period of the judges lasted four hundred and fifty years. Mauro explains this time period thus, "By examining details of Table 7 it will be found that, if the several periods, beginning with the 8 years' servitude under Cushan, and ending with the 20 years' judgeship of Samuel, be added together, they make up a total of 450 years" (p. 50). Mauro also explains the 480 years of I Kings 6:1 (pp. 50-51).

Chapter eight covers the united kingdom of Israel under the reigns of Saul, David and Solomon. This period covers 120 years as each of these kings reigned 40 years. Table Eight is given in this chapter and the beginning of Saul's reign was 3023 years after the creation of Adam and the death of Solomon is 3143 years after the creation of Adam. Mauro begins a discussion of the period of the divided kingdom which continues into the next chapter. The books of Kings and Chronicles contain challenging chronological difficulties. Mauro appeals to Anstey and Lightfoot for the development of rules to govern the interpretation of this period.

Chapter nine contains the chronology from the death of Solomon (3143 years after the creation of Adam) to the reign of Jehu (3232 years after Adam was created). The period of the divided kingdom is itself broken into three distinct periods. The first is the sum of the reigns of the kings of the six kings of Judah, Rehoboam to Ahaziah, which is 90 years. The second period is the sum of the reigns of the 6 kings and 1 queen of Judah, from Athaliah to the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah, which is 174 years. The third is the sum of the 6 kings of Judah from the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of Jehoiakim, which is 114. The total number of years is 378.

Chapter ten relates the chronology of the second period of the divided kingdom. Table Ten begins with the ascension of Athaliah (3232 years after Adam was created) to the fall of Samaria (3406 years after Adam was created). Mauro deals with the reign of Ahab and the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Virgin Birth of the Messiah in this chapter as well.

Chapter eleven discusses the seven prominent kings of Judah and gives their strengths and weaknesses. The seven kings are: Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah and Hezekiah.

Chapter twelve presents information for the chronological period from the fall of Samaria to the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in the 11<sup>th</sup> year of Zedekiah. This period covers 131 years. Table eleven is found in this chapter giving the details of the chronology.

Chapter thirteen relates the chronology of the captivity and the return "unto the Messiah." The true beginning of the captivity was 3520 years after the creation of Adam. Daniel and his friends were taken captive at this time. Table Twelve begins with the captivity of Zedekiah (3539 years after Adam was created) to the time of Christ's crucifixion (4075 years after the creation of Adam). Mauro gives the year of the crucifixion of Jesus as A.D. 30. Mauro gives an explanation for and defends the time of the birth of Jesus at 5 B.C. He also starts his explanation for the 70 weeks of Daniel's prophecy.

Chapter fourteen is devoted to a discussion of Daniel's 70 weeks (Daniel 9). Mauro refutes the canon of Ptolemy and rejects his dates. He discusses Daniel 9:25, Isaiah's prophecy concerning Cyrus, and statements in Ezra and Nehemiah.

Chapter fifteen completes the discussion of Daniel's 70 weeks with a focus on the last week. Mauro rejects the Premillennial view which holds that the last week of Daniel's prophecy

is disconnected from the other 69. Mauro believes that the final week is connected to the other 69 and that the Messiah was cut off in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week a reference to Jesus' crucifixion. Mauro believes that Jesus' prayer for the forgiveness of the unbelieving Jews who crucified Him brought about a delay of the last half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week and delayed the fulfillment of the destruction of Jerusalem for 40 years until A.D. 70 (pp. 118-119).

Mauro's book is an excellent treatment of the chronology of the Old Testament bringing us up to the time of Jesus' crucifixion through the interpretation of Daniel's 70 weeks. This chronology is interwoven with the genealogies of Jesus Christ and the history of the people and events that figure prominently into the lineage of the Messiah. For that reason, it is impossible to harmonize Bible chronology with evolutionary chronology. This makes another strong biblical argument against the evolutionary time table.

Mauro has two primary weaknesses. The first is that he is not willing to deal with the Gap theory or the Day-Age theory which are given as possible explanations in order to compromise the biblical account of chronology with evolutionary theory. Theistic evolutionists attempt to do this and it is not possible to accomplish without violating the veracity of the Scriptures. The second weakness is found in the later part of his explanation for Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. He makes the 3 ½ years last 40 years which is not possible and not necessary. The last half of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week is explained by considering the duration of the covenant that was made with the Jews which seems to involve the preaching of the gospel to the Jews only during the earthly ministry of Jesus until the preaching of Philip to the Samaritans in Acts 8. A firm covenant lasting seven years (Daniel 9:27). During this time (the seven years) the gospel was preached first to the Jews and then, after that time, to the Gentiles (see Rex Turner's commentary on the book of *Daniel*, pp. 339-350).

Many Christians have never studied the chronology of the Bible. Mauro's book makes it possible to begin the study in earnest.