

Dr. Robert Vannoy, Genesis, Session 20, Chronology of the Patriarchal Period Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Vannoy, Genesis, Session 20, Chronology of the Patriarchal Period, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture excerpt from Dr. Robert Vannoy's Old Testament History course discusses the chronology of the patriarchal period. It examines biblical data, particularly 1 Kings 6:1 and Exodus 12:40, to calculate the dates of key events, ultimately proposing a date for the beginning of the Patriarchal period around 2091 B.C. However, the lecture also highlights significant difficulties in establishing a precise chronology, including differing interpretations of biblical texts (like Exodus 12:40's differing versions in the Masoretic Text and Septuagint) and the challenges of reconciling biblical accounts with extra-biblical evidence. The lecturer addresses varying viewpoints on the date of the Exodus, and also acknowledges potential methodological issues in ancient record-keeping. The lecture concludes by considering arguments for both 430 and 215 years of Israelite sojourn in Egypt.

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Vannoy, Genesis, Session 20 – Double click icon to play in
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]
Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament →
Pentateuch → Genesis).**



**Vannoy_Genesis_Se
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3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Genesis, Session 20, Chronology of the Patriarchal Period

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided lecture excerpts:

Briefing Document: Chronology of the Patriarchs

Main Themes:

1. Authenticity of Patriarchal Accounts:

- Archaeological research has increased the acceptance of the patriarchal narratives as historically accurate compared to 50 years ago.
- Nomenclature and other cultural details within the narratives align with the patriarchal period and would have been difficult for later writers to invent.
- However, archaeology doesn't *prove* the stories happened exactly as written, but supports their general historicity.
- Quote: *"the nomenclature that you find in the patriarchal narratives fits precisely that period of Israel's history, not later periods...the kind of material that you find in the patriarchal narratives is of the type that could not have been invented by later writers..."*

1. Challenges in Dating the Patriarchs:

- Dating the patriarchal period is complex, with proposed dates ranging from the 21st to the 15th century BC, a 600 year span.
- Most scholars place the period around 1900-2100 BC, with Schultz favoring 2091 BC, but wide variation remains.
- The dating process requires working backward from the Kingdom period, using synchronized chronologies with Assyrian and Egyptian records.
- Quote: *"the chronology for the patriarchs still remains a moot point, within this general period, the date advocated for Abraham varies from the 21st to the 15th century."*

1. Biblical Data & Calculations:

- The starting point for calculations is 1 Kings 6:1, which places the start of the building of Solomon's Temple 480 years after the Exodus.

- The fourth year of Solomon's reign is generally accepted as 966 BC, thus placing the Exodus at 1446 BC.
- Exodus 12:40 states the Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years.
- Genesis 47:9 indicates Jacob was 130 years old when he entered Egypt.
- Genesis 25:26 shows Isaac was 60 when Jacob was born.
- Genesis 21:5 reveals Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born.
- Genesis 12:4 notes Abraham was 75 when he left Haran.
- Based on these numbers, the period between Abraham's birth and the fourth year of Solomon is approximately 1200 years, and the Patriarchs were in Canaan for 215 years before the move to Egypt.
- These figures lead to a date of 2166 B.C. for Abraham's birth, and 2091 for the beginning of the Patriarchal period in Canaan.

1. **Difficulties & Variables in Chronology:**

- The methodology used by the ancient writers for keeping chronological records is not fully understood. There's possibility that round numbers and schematics were used instead of strict chronological data.
- The date of the Exodus is debated, with two main views: an early date (1446 BC) and a late date (1260 BC). This directly affects the dating of the Patriarchs. The view of 1 Kings 6:1 as being schematic allows for the late date.
- The text of Exodus 12:40 is problematic because the Septuagint (LXX) says the 430 years refers to the combined time in Canaan and Egypt, as opposed to the Masoretic Text which attributes the 430 years only to the time in Egypt, and that creates a 215 versus 430 year variance for time in Egypt.

1. **Arguments for a 430-Year Sojourn in Egypt (Masoretic Text):**

- The Masoretic Text (Hebrew text) is generally preferred over the Septuagint.
- God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:13 indicates his descendants will be afflicted for 400 years (a close approximation of the 430 figure).
- Genesis 15:16 mentions the fourth generation returning to Canaan, and the word used for generation "d'or" can mean a span of time of 80 years or more in

cognate Semitic languages (this lines up with 400 years when using a span of 100 years per generation).

- Population growth of the Israelites to a reported 2-3 million at the time of the Exodus is easier to explain over 430 years than 215.

1. Evidence for 215-Year Sojourn in Egypt:

- Galatians 3:17 states that the law was introduced 430 years after the covenant with Abraham. This could imply a 215 year sojourn in Egypt and a 215 year patriarchal period in Canaan. This lines up with the Septuagint rendering of Exodus 12:40, which combines the time in Egypt and the time in Canaan as being 430 years.
- The covenant with Abraham was renewed with Isaac and Jacob. The reaffirmation of God's promise to Jacob just before he went to Egypt could indicate that the 430 years begins at that point.

Key Points & Ideas:

- **Historical Context:** While the stories themselves are considered to be authentic, there are significant difficulties in pinpointing the exact chronological dates of the patriarchs.
- **Biblical Textual Issues:** Variations between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint create discrepancies in calculating the length of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt.
- **Methodological Differences:** Ancient methods of record keeping and the use of "round numbers" may contribute to the challenges of dating the Patriarchal period precisely.
- **Significance of the Exodus Date:** How one interprets the date of the Exodus impacts the dating of the patriarchal period, as the timeline is calculated in reverse.
- **Multiple Interpretations:** There is no single definitive interpretation, and scholars employ diverse approaches and interpretations of biblical text.

Quotes of Particular Importance:

- *"the nomenclature that you find in the patriarchal narratives fits precisely that period of Israel's history, not later periods...the kind of material that you find in the patriarchal narratives is of the type that could not have been invented by later*

writers..." This highlights the argument for the historical authenticity of the patriarchal narratives.

- *"the chronology for the patriarchs still remains a moot point, within this general period, the date advocated for Abraham varies from the 21st to the 15th century."* This emphasizes the uncertainty surrounding the specific dating of the patriarchs.
- *"Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who grew up in Egypt was 430 years," but the question is there's a textual problem at that point. The Septuagint says, "that the sojourning of the children of Israel while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan was 430 years."* This is a key discrepancy in textual tradition that directly impacts dating calculations.
- *"In the fourth generation they shall come here again."* Now, the Hebrew term there is *d'or*, translates to *"generation."* and the explanation of *d'or* within other Semitic languages, which helps to contextualize the claim of a 400 year period.

Conclusion:

The dating of the Patriarchal period is a complex issue with no easy answers. While the biblical texts offer chronological data, they also present challenges due to textual variations, methodological uncertainties, and diverse interpretations. The lecture highlights the ongoing academic debate and the importance of understanding the various factors that contribute to the difficulty of creating a definitive timeline.

4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Genesis, Session 20, Chronology of the Patriarchal Period

The Chronology of the Patriarchs: A Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the significance of archaeological research in relation to the patriarchal accounts?
2. According to the lecture, what is the wide range of dates proposed for Abraham?
3. What is the starting point for determining the chronology of the Patriarchs?
4. What is the importance of 1 Kings 6:1 in determining the date of the Exodus?
5. What are the two different viewpoints on the date of the Exodus?
6. According to the Masoretic Text, how long were the Israelites in Egypt?
7. What does the Septuagint say about the length of the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt?
8. What is the significance of the number 400 in Genesis 15?
9. How does population increase factor into the debate about the length of the sojourn in Egypt?
10. How does Galatians 3:17 play into the debate over the length of the sojourn in Egypt?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Archaeological research has lent greater credence to the historical nature of the patriarchal narratives by confirming elements like nomenclature. This suggests that the narratives weren't invented later but reflect an earlier period, though not necessarily a literal fulfillment.
2. The date advocated for Abraham varies from the 21st to the 15th century BC, a 600-year span. Most scholars lean towards the earlier end of that range.
3. The chronology of the Patriarchs is determined by starting with fixed points in the Kingdom period and working backward using synchronized chronologies and other biblical data.

4. 1 Kings 6:1 states that the Temple was begun in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, 480 years after the Exodus. This provides a key anchor point for calculating the date of the Exodus.
5. The two viewpoints are the early date (1446 BC) which is based on the 480-year gap in 1 Kings 6:1 and the late date (1260 BC). The late date considers 1 Kings 6:1 a schematic figure.
6. The Masoretic Text of Exodus 12:40 states that the Israelites sojourned in Egypt for 430 years. This is a key point in one side of the chronological debate.
7. The Septuagint version of Exodus 12:40 says the sojourn was 430 years in Egypt and Canaan combined. This would mean 215 years in Egypt and is the basis of the debate about the length of the sojourn.
8. In Genesis 15:13, God tells Abraham that his seed would be afflicted for 400 years. This figure is closer to 430 and could be a round number figure in reference to it.
9. The rapid increase of the Israelite population supports a 430-year sojourn since it provides a more plausible timeframe for the exponential population growth. The 215-year sojourn would require an unrealistically high rate of increase.
10. Galatians 3:17 states that the law came 430 years after the covenant was established. Some use this to suggest a 430-year period encompassing both the patriarchal time in Canaan and the time in Egypt, supporting the Septuagint.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the challenges and complexities in establishing a precise chronology for the Patriarchal period. Analyze the various factors contributing to the uncertainty and the different approaches taken by scholars.
2. Compare and contrast the evidence supporting both the 430-year and the 215-year sojourn in Egypt. Analyze the textual arguments, consider their implications, and discuss what issues these different dates raise.
3. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of using biblical texts like 1 Kings 6:1 and Exodus 12:40 to establish a timeline for the Patriarchal period and the Exodus.

4. How does the debate surrounding the date of the Exodus impact the dating of the Patriarchal period? Explain the connection between these two events in the biblical timeline.
5. Analyze the significance of considering both biblical and extra-biblical (such as archaeological) evidence in establishing the historical context of the patriarchal narratives.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Patriarchal Period:** The period in the Old Testament associated with the founding fathers of Israel, including Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- **Nomenclature:** The system of names used in a particular field or community; in this context, the names of people and places during the Patriarchal period.
- **Historicity:** The historical accuracy or factual nature of an event or narrative.
- **Exodus:** The event of the Israelites' departure from slavery in Egypt, a central event in Old Testament history.
- **Masoretic Text (MT):** The standard Hebrew text of the Old Testament, compiled by Jewish scholars.
- **Septuagint (LXX):** The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, produced in the centuries before the time of Christ.
- **Sojourn:** A temporary stay in a particular place.
- **D'or:** A Hebrew term translated as "generation," used in Genesis 15:16, and can also mean a span of time.
- **Inerrancy:** The belief that the Bible is without error or fault in its original manuscripts.
- **Schematic Figure:** A figure or number that is used for symbolic or general representation rather than strict chronological purposes.
- **Covenant:** A formal agreement or treaty, often referring to the promises between God and his people in the Bible.

5. FAQs on Vannoy, Genesis, Session 20, Chronology of the Patriarchal Period, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on the Chronology and Historicity of the Patriarchs

1. **What is the general consensus on the historicity of the patriarchal narratives, and what role has archaeology played in shaping this view?** The consensus has shifted toward greater acceptance of the historical basis of the patriarchal narratives. Archaeological research has revealed that the customs, nomenclature, and social structures described in these texts align well with what is known about the period they depict, and do not reflect later eras, making it unlikely they were invented by later writers. While archaeology cannot definitively prove every detail as presented in the Bible, it does support the general historicity of the patriarchal accounts.
2. **How is the chronology of the Patriarchal period generally established within the biblical text?** The chronology of the Patriarchal period is established by starting with fixed points in the kingdom period, specifically linking to Assyrian and Egyptian chronology. The key verse used is 1 Kings 6:1, which states that Solomon began building the Temple 480 years after the Exodus. Working backward from a generally accepted date for Solomon's reign, the date of the Exodus can be deduced. Then, using the number of years the Israelites were in Egypt (Exodus 12:40) and the lifespans of the patriarchs (Genesis), it's possible to calculate the approximate time of Abraham.
3. **What is the significance of 1 Kings 6:1 in determining the chronology of the Patriarchs?** 1 Kings 6:1 is pivotal because it provides a link between the kingdom period (which can be synchronized with extra-biblical chronologies) and the Exodus. It states that the Temple was begun in Solomon's fourth year, 480 years after the Exodus. This forms a baseline for calculating when the Exodus occurred and, by extension, the earlier periods. It's a starting point for working backwards.
4. **What is the main controversy surrounding the date of the Exodus, and how does it impact the dating of the patriarchs?** The major controversy involves whether to date the Exodus around 1446 B.C. (the "early date" derived from a literal reading of 1 Kings 6:1) or around 1260 B.C. (the "late date" which is supported by some extra-biblical evidence). The date of the Exodus directly affects the dating of the patriarchs because the biblical chronology works

backward from that point. If the Exodus occurred earlier, the patriarchs would be dated earlier and vice versa.

5. **How do different interpretations of Exodus 12:40 contribute to the challenge of dating the Patriarchs?** Exodus 12:40 states that the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt lasted 430 years. However, the Septuagint version of this verse includes time in Canaan as part of the 430 years. If you accept the Masoretic Text, it would mean 430 years of Israelite slavery in Egypt, whereas if you accept the Septuagint it would mean 215 years in Egypt and the remaining time in Canaan. This disagreement leads to differing calculations for the total time of the Patriarchal period and the time in Egypt.
6. **What are the arguments for and against a 430-year sojourn in Egypt?** Arguments for the 430-year sojourn, which would be in accordance with the Masoretic Text, include: 1) the Masoretic Text is typically preferred to the Septuagint; 2) the promise in Genesis 15:13 where God says Abraham's descendants would be afflicted for 400 years corresponds better with 430 years; 3) and a larger population increase among the Israelites seems more plausible in 430 years than 215 years. On the other hand, proponents of the shorter 215-year sojourn cite Galatians 3:17, which refers to a 430 year period between the covenant with Abraham and the giving of the law, and interpret that it includes the Patriarchal period, thereby aligning with the Septuagint reading of Exodus 12:40.
7. **How do varying methodologies in ancient chronological record-keeping affect our understanding of these historical periods?** Ancient methodologies of keeping chronological records likely differed from modern methods, perhaps using schematic or rounded numbers and different methods of counting regencies and years. These differences in methodology make it challenging to interpret the biblical chronological data with complete certainty. It also brings up the question of whether certain figures were meant to be taken literally or as a schematic representation of historical time.
8. **How is the population growth of the Israelites during their time in Egypt used to argue for the 430-year sojourn over the 215-year sojourn?** Those who advocate for a 430-year sojourn in Egypt note the significant increase in population between Jacob's family's arrival and the Exodus. The biblical account indicates that the Israelites numbered approximately 2-3 million by the time of the Exodus. It is argued that this growth is more plausible over 430 years than the 215, based on an analysis of the potential growth per generation and the necessary multiplication rate, even considering the possibility of large families and longevity.