

to halt the inexorable accumulation of mutations.

If the average family has two, four or even 10 children, they all add the average number of mutations to the collective human genome. Only if the average number of new mutations per person per generation was less than 1 would there be a statistical probability of some people escaping the inexorable decline, but the average number is at least 100 so this is not possible. Extinction is inevitable, and on a short time scale in comparison to the evolutionary time scale.

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Is Darius the king from Ezra?

I am writing about the interesting article: Is Darius, the king of Ezra 6:14–15, the same king as the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1?

The report appears to have a conflict with the 70 years captivity, when those 70 years started and ended, the date for the fall of Jerusalem, and the 1st year of Cyrus. If we follow the author's historical model on page 52, we run into another time gap problem involving when the 70 years captivity ended and when Cyrus ruled.

From the destruction of the temple by Babylon until the 1st year of Cyrus, this is about 50 years if we follow James Ussher. We have 588–538 BC according to James Ussher (see II Kings 25:8–9 and II Chronicles 36:19–23). The 70 years captivity falls in this period, James Ussher dates 607–537 BC, (see Daniel 1:1–3).

It is common with modern historians to date the fall of Jerusalem in July–August 586 BC (see II Kings 25:8–9, Ezekiel 33:21), however Ussher dated the events of II Kings 25:8–9 in Saturday, August 27 588 BC (see page 104 of *The Annals of the World*, 2003).

Biblical Archaeology Review magazine reports that 17 Tamuz or July 3586 BC is the traditional date of the breeching of the walls of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.¹

The 70 years captivity frames the time of Ezra 1:1 and II Chronicles 36:19–23. The author has the 1st year of Cyrus taking place 483 years before Christ Baptism²⁷ in AD which places Cyrus about 450 BC or so.

The date for the fall of Jerusalem and the 70 years captivity is a problem with the author's historical model. If the 70 years captivity ended near 538 BC, we have another time gap in Old Testament history until the 1st year of Cyrus in II Chronicles 36:22–23 which will be near 450 BC. This looks like a problem for interpreting Daniel's 70 weeks in Daniel Chapter 9 if we follow the author's historical model proposed.

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References

1. Strata, In History, *BAR* 33(4):16, 2007 (July/August).
2. Austin, D., Is Darius the king of Ezra 6:14–15, the same king as the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1? *J. Creation* 22(2):46–52, 2008.

David Austin replies:

Thank you for your letter re above. The only time in my article a BC date is referred to is in the opening sentence. Here, I am not saying Ussher's date of 537 BC is correct. In fact the burden of the article is to show that because Darius of Ezra 6:14 is the same king as the Artaxerxes of 7:1, Ussher's BC dates are out by about 80–82 years. Ussher's dates were given to show his dates cover 563 years (not 483 years, equalling 69 weeks of years), evidence that his dates were wrong.

Re the problem stated that I have a gap from the time when the 70 years of

captivity ended to when Cyrus became 'sole' king:

- a) No BC dates were mentioned by me for this period.
- b) All traditional BC dates mentioned by your letter, if we are guided by biblical chronology, (see article), would be out by about 80–82 years. The article substantiates that traditional chronology makes the Persian Period c. 82 years too long. (205 years not 123). Because of this error on BC dates and maybe others I prefer using AM dates. In any circumstance a scoutmaster, mapping out a route for his scouts to follow, would expect them to start at the beginning of the course.
- c) These are the times for the 70 years captivity:

- i) c. 3520 AM (c. 526 BC):
Starting point of captivity was Jehoiakim's 3rd year when Daniel, his 3 friends, and others were taken to Babylon. In the 4th year of Jehoiakim, the next year, Jeremiah prophesied the captivity would last 70 years (Jer. 25:1). (N.B. Ezekiel's captivity commenced 11 years before the destruction of Jerusalem—refer to Ezekiel 40:1).

- ii) c. 3589 AM (c. 457 BC): The year that Cyrus becomes sole king marks the end of the 70 years, the issuing of Cyrus' decree and the returning of the children of Israel to Jerusalem in the 7th month. (3520–3589 [Incl.] = 70yrs).
Where is the gap in my chronology?

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