



Annals of the World

James Ussher

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Master Books commissioned this important literary work to be updated from the 17th-century original Latin manuscript to modern English and made available to the general public for the first time. In its pages can be found the fascinating history of the ancient world from the Genesis creation through the destruction of the Jerusalem temple.

Find Out:

- * Why was Julius Caesar kidnapped in 75 B.C.?
- * Why did Alexander the Great burn his ships in 326 B.C.?
- * What really happened when the sun "went backward" as a sign to Hezekiah?
- * What does secular history say about the darkness at the Crucifixion?

Annals of the World Details

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From Reader Review Annals of the World for online ebook

Fred Kohn says

I was very excited to find this book in the public library; not so excited to see that the editor is associated with that horribly dishonest organization Answers in Genesis. The book itself is fascinating though dry reading— three stars for that. The editing was better than I expected it would be, but I still have to subtract a star for numerous problems. The editor puts this book on a very high pedestal that it is not up to. One would think that it is almost as reliable as holy writ itself! So, for example, the editor finds himself defending Ussher's assertion that the Jubilee occurred in the 49th year rather than the 50th year. Admittedly, keeping the calendar straight can be confusing, as I found out quickly as I tried to retrace Ussher's steps. In this case, the author argues that since when a man is 49 years old, he is in his 50th year. True enough. The distinction here is between cardinal and ordinal numbers, which can sometimes have to be converted. But not here, since the sabbatical and Jubilee count uses only ordinal numbers. The 49th year can never be the 50th year. At any rate the point is moot, since Ussher puts the first year of the sabbatical count in AM 2554 (paragraph 322) and the first Jubilee in 2609 (paragraph 344), which would be the 56th year.

So one must tread carefully using this edition for any serious study. It would help to have the original to compare. Fortunately, I have easy access to both the Ohio State University rare book collection, which has both the Latin original and the first English translation, as well as access to Early English Books Online, which has a searchable PDF of the original English version. This came in handy when I was trying to figure out what possible 17th century English phraseology could lie behind the very modern sounding "Hence, Bagoas had revenge against Orsines because he disapproved of Bagoas' homosexual lifestyle. [paragraph 2267]" As it turns out, none at all; this statement was added by the editor. This is another major problem with this edition: editorial comments are not always marked, and while such unmarked comments are usually obvious by context, this lack of marking makes everything suspect.

At this point it has taken me about two years to get a bit more than half way through this massive tome. I expect to finish it in a year or so, at which time I may or may not return to this review. I have noted a few other minor errors in the editing that I don't know whether are worth pointing out.

Joshua Foote says

Very good reference

this book is a classic. the dates are used in most classic bibles mainly scofield reference bible I purchased to date a bible without the dates and works great for that

Joel Hoyt says

7000 short paragraphs about major events in biblical and world history over about 6000 years, from a young-earth creationist perspective. It was kind of fun to get some high level perspective on how some civilizations rose and fall.

Ebookwormy1 says

The faithful scholarship of Bishop Ussher (4 January 1581 – 21 March 1656) has been overshadowed by debates regarding the age of the earth. Ussher's self-imposed, life long project was to create a timeline from every primary source document available. This was a challenging endeavor in the seventeenth century that required months of travel to various libraries and collections, as well as hours, days and weeks spent evaluating and documenting texts.

In addition to the physical challenges, there were numerous intellectual conundrums for the good Bishop to resolve. For example, tracking of time. Groups of people tracked time by the lunar cycle, the solar cycle, the Roman Indiction, the Julian calendar, or a local dynasty! Additionally, different languages use different nomenclature for months and days. Ussher's ambition was to synthesize these systems, so that knowable historical events could be numbered up from 1 "Creation of the World" to what came to be #7000, dated 73 AD, the resolution of the Roman conquest of Jerusalem. In the end, Ussher decided to list the estimated date from creation, the Julian calendar date, the BC (before Christ)/ AD (after Christ) designation created by Exiguus in 532 AD, and a local designation (for example, Old Testament references to Israel have a Southern Kingdom date and a Northern Kingdom date). Ussher didn't just put everything in order, he cited the over 13,000 documents he surveyed and pointed out conflicts among them. Some of these sources have been lost in time through disasters, such as the 1922 fire in Dublin that destroyed part of Ussher's own library.

Tremendous honor also needs to go to a gentleman named Larry Pierce. Ussher, of course, published his findings in 1654 in Latin. Pierce translated and edited the complete text, systematizing the documentation with the modern Loeb Classical Library, and creating a paragraph organizational structure that makes reference and retention easier for the contemporary reader. Pierce's work extends to Editor's introductory essays (Preface, Epistle, Explanatory notes, Key to references), through the text itself, to the 8 Appendices

(Appendix A: Roman Calendars

Appendix B: The Forgotten Archbishop

Appendix C: Ussher's Time-line for the Divided Kingdom of Israel

Appendix D: Evidentialism - the Bible and Assyrian Chronology

Appendix E: Some Objections Considered

Appendix F: Maps

Appendix G: The Seder Olam Rabbah - Why Jewish Dating is Different

Appendix H: Archaeology and the Bible)

and the closing Index. Each of these beginning and ending essays provides context to the academic complexities of Ussher's work and how it has aged. Mad props to him!

I cannot recommend this reference enough. I am reading it cover to cover, making my own notes and relishing it's use of the Bible as one of many primary sources that draws together the timeline. Ussher himself wasn't convinced his work was perfect, but he intended to be faithful to TRY. In doing so, he raised the bar for scholarship in his time, making it absolutely pitiful that moderns have diminished his work by dicker over merely one of the plethora of decisions he made to produce this timeline. Please don't contribute to that oversight! For those who long to learn about the historic environment of the ancient world, including the empires of Sumer, Egypt, Assyrian, Babylon, Greece and Rome, Ussher's work is outstanding scholarship. Some day, Lord willing, I would love to return to Westminster Abbey and take a moment at Ussher's grave to thank him, may he rest in peace. Though perhaps the LORD will communicate my gratitude now.

If you'd like to see a visual representation of Ussher's findings, see
The TimeChart of the History of the World, 2009

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

If scholarship is your thing, and you'd like a contemporary work that specifically looks at the historic record of the Bible and Jesus as it's centerpiece, see

The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict, McDowell, 1999

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Too heavy? Try McDowell's summary of just 120ish pages,

More than a Carpenter, McDowell, 1980

<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Ebookwormy1 says

if only it weren't so expensive!

Chantal says

I love flipping through this book when I am at my peak of boredom. I'm always catching something new that I can't remember reading before. I have had this book for ages! Also, as a side note, it is a nice thing to have on hand during a photoshoot. It is nice and thick and is useful as a booster seat. Ha!!!

Josh Crews says

This is THE great work on Antiquity. James Ussher, a 1600's church officer and intellectual prodigy, assembled the great histories of his time into one master timeline. His one inerrant source was the Bible, and he sought to incorporate all the other historians of old times' work into one big book. It begins October 23, 4004 BC with the first day of Creation and tracks through the various Ages of Man.

I reference it in fascination of the harmony between nation's histories of themselves and the Old Testament.

Andrew McGill says

Ussher's Annals of the World is a blow-by-blow chronological summary of the documents recording the history of the world from creation to 50AD. The interesting thing about this is that there are not that many documents. The further back one goes, the sparser the account is, and the only document that remains standing is ...

I read Ussher's Annals of the World from 4004BC to 48AD (in chronological order), and, well, it's a good read. It's pretty heavy going though - even heavier than John Knox's History of the Reformation in Scotland. There are lots of names and places, every single one of which is unfamiliar, since the names have changed multiple times since then. For good measure, some names keep on appearing, and I kept wondering where I had read them before (Lysander and Timothy, and, oh dear, I forgot the other man).

Reading the history of the ancient world gave me a good feel for the amount and quality of ancient records, and a much better appreciation for the quality of the history in in the Bible - I can understand how Sola Scriptura is an entirely defensible position. In terms of capturing the flow of history and providing an understanding of the times, the writings of Herodotus, Diodorus, Tacitus and Josephus don't match it.

The book was quite useful for research for "Partial Recall" where I referenced the battle of Marathon (it's science fiction, and I recall reading someone else's tribute to the battle of Marathon stored in a murderous snow globe or cube.) It is also a source of endless trivia - understanding the actual morality of Alexander the Great and his generals - and for good measure that it was not unusual for the time. Julius Caesar burning the library at Alexandria came up in conversation. The attitude of the ancient world towards the Jews is also quite remarkable (they thought them barbaric, uncivilised, and extremely dangerous).

I'll have to read this book again, but since I haven't finished, I'm off the hook for now. When I do, I will keep a map of ancient names handy so I can solve the puzzle of who went where when.

Jason Schaitel says

This book is massive. I am about 1/10th of the way through. It is wonderful for a person who is interested in the bible, church history and world history.

Ebookwormy1 says

Years ago, a man named James Ussher who lived from 1581 to 1656 was driven to document all the significant events of world history, in chronological order. Only events that could be verified through primary source documents were admitted into his study. He numbered each event, gave it's date according to the Julian calendar, the Gregorian calendar and in reference to his own sequencing which he dated from an estimated date of creation. The author determined he would collect from creation to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD (Gregorian). The work ends at 73 AD.

James Ussher searched libraries all throughout the known world, his world being that of Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Africa, adding to his masterpiece item by item over the course of his life as a distinguished scholar. Some of the documents he examined in the 1600s have been lost, destroyed or damaged and are unavailable today. Yet his precise footnotes (over 12,000 of them!) clearly connect each item with at least one, and often multiple, primary source document. He also includes the Bible and Apocrypha as primary source documents and references them over 2,000 times. Although he published his work in Latin in 1650, his research only ceased with his death in 1656. In 1658, his work was published in English.

Dating in the ancient world is no easy task. Each kingdom/ city state/ provincial area/ etc had their own language and systems for timing events with various dynastic calendars, lunar calendars, and solar calendars. Ussher was working in the 17th Century to produce a compilation that would remain the standard for over 200 years. It wasn't until the archaeological age uncovered a cascade of new information, that new inquiries challenged Ussher's work. Even today, the tension between Egyptian records and the Biblical accounts Ussher used as primary (but not exclusive) sources endures.

This modern edition has been edited by Larry and Marion Pierce for all who want to understand ancient world history better. It took the Pierce's four years of diligent work to complete the editing, and I am grateful for their efforts. The Pierce's intriguing Appendices, featuring topics crucial to understanding ancient history

(Bibliography, Roman Calendars, a biography of Ussher himself, timelining the Israelite Kingdoms, Timelining the Assyrian empire, Objections to Ussher, Maps, Jewish Dating Systems) and the Index are insightful.

I am still reading the text. While I reference it often, I am determined to read every single word. The entire work is brilliant and compelling.

Why take the time? Reading everything in order illuminates both the sequence of history and how certain individuals emerge as radiant comets flying across the world stage. In addition, all of this research demonstrates the viability of both the Old and New Testaments as primary source documents. There is so much here to learn for anyone interested in ancient history, world history, Biblical scholarship or time-lining.

James Ussher was buried in Westminster Abbey, London, England. A part of his epitaph is translated from the Latin for the Preface of this Edition. It reads:

James Ussher
Historian, Literary Critic, Theologian
Among saints - most scholarly,
Among scholars - most saintly.

Westminster Abbey On-Line Catalog: James Ussher
<http://westminster-abbey.org/our-hist...>

To read the introductory material, see GoogleBooks:
https://books.google.com/books?id=_bM...

To see a Timeline that provides a visual of his work and beyond, see
TimeChart History of the World, Third Millennium Press, 1997
<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

David says

This was a long book, very detailed history of the western world from the beginning up to about 70 AD.
