

James Ussher and the Creation of the world:

When it comes to suggesting a date for the creation of the Earth, perhaps few people have been the butt of more ridicule on the subject from sceptics than Archbishop James Ussher. It was Ussher who in the 1650s put forward the idea that this occurred on October 23, 4004 BC, and this year appeared as a marginal note in many Bibles up until about the mid-20th century. So was Ussher a wise man, a charlatan, or just naive? And what should we think about his date?

The Scholar of Honour and Repute: James Ussher was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1581. As a young man he resolved to devote himself wholly to the work of the Church, and the Lord honoured him in his resolve. At 18 he entered Dublin University, which was then one of the major universities. At 20 he was ordained a deacon and priest in the Anglican Church at Dublin. At 26 he was appointed chairman of the Department of Divinity at Dublin, an honour accorded to very few who were that young. He was a professor from 1607 to 1621, and was twice appointed vice-chancellor of Trinity College, Dublin.

From his early school days he excelled in history, and from the time he was 20 for the next two decades he read every history book he could get his hands on. He excelled in church history and prepared several large authoritative works dealing with the Irish and English churches from the times of the Apostles.

In 1625, he was appointed Archbishop of Armagh, which was the highest position in the Irish Anglican Church. An expert in Semitic languages, he argued for the reliability of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and wrote widely on Christianity in Asia, and other Bible- related topics.

In 1628, King James appointed him to his Privy Council in Ireland. He was critical of the rebellion against Charles the first. However, Cromwell, who headed the rebellion, held him in great esteem. When Ussher died, Cromwell held a magnificent funeral for him and had him buried in Westminster Abbey.

The Only Reliable Source Document: One of Ussher's many projects was the writing, in Latin, of a complete history of the world covering every major event from the time of creation to 70 AD. He published this 1600-page tome in Latin in 1650. An English translation was published in 1658, two years after his death. This work is fascinating to read; however, few of us have access to it. The work is being republished and, as it is completed, will be posted for downloading on the Answers in Genesis web site. The contents of the first volume of his work are already posted for download. It covers the period from creation to 76 BC.

In preparing this work, Ussher first made the assumption that the Bible was the only reliable source document of chronological information for the time periods covered in the Bible. In fact, before the Persian Empire, very little is known about Greek, Roman, and Egyptian history, or the history of other nations. Much rests on speculation and myths. Dates in secular history become more certain with the founding of the Media-Persian Empire.

For events before this time, Ussher relied solely on the data from the Bible to erect his historical framework. He chose the death of Nebuchadnezzar as a reliable date to anchor all the earlier biblical dates to. Hence, working backward from that date, he ended up with his date for creation of October 23, 4004 BC.

**Quote from Larry Pierce - Online Bible, Latin to English
translator Of Annals.**

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