

THE ECLIPSE OF THALES

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Excerpt from Apples of Gold

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” Proverbs 25:11

This famous event took place in the 6th year of the war between Cyaxares the Mede and Alyattes of Lydia on the river Halys (North central Asia Minor, today's Turkey). The event had been foretold by Thales the Milesian, who forewarned the Ionians of it, fixing for it the very year in which it actually took place. Thales (640? – 546?) was one of the "Seven Wise Men" of ancient Greece. He used geometry to predict the eclipse of the sun that now bears his name. This event is recorded for us in Herodotus, Book i, Chap.74.

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| 1. | BC. 625 | Volney |
| 2. | BC. 610 | Ideler |
| 3. | BC. 603 | Clinton |
| 4. | BC. 585 | Prof. Airy |

Astronomically Calculated

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| 5. | July 30, BC. 607 | Calvisius |
| 6. | May 17, BC. 603 | Costard, Montucla, & Kennedy |
| 7. | Sept. 19, BC. 601 | Ussher |
| 8. | July 9, BC. 597 | Petavius, Marsham, Bouhier, & Larcher |
| 9. | May 28, BC. 585 | Pliny, Scaliger, Newton, Ferguson, Vignoles & Jackson |

There may be errors of observation on the part of the historian, calculation errors on the part of the astronomer, & errors of identification on the part of the chronologer, who may wrongly conclude that the dated eclipse calculated by the astronomer is the one described by the historian.

As may be seen from the above, it is a mistake to attribute to astronomically determined chronological dates, the infallibility of a mathematical calculation. To do so assumes that the strength of the chain is that of its strongest link, rather than that of its weakest link. The astronomical calculation may be correct, but that only fixes one link in the chain. This accuracy can not be transferred to the other links, or to the result as a whole.

We cannot, therefore, obtain from astronomical observations & calculations the material we need to enable us to use them as the standard by which to test the truth & validity of the chronological statements of the Holy Writ.

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