

# **IN SEARCH OF A CORRECT BIBLE CHRONOLOGY**



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# **IN SEARCH OF A CORRECT BIBLE CHRONOLOGY**

## **Introduction**

There are a lot of genealogies and reign lengths and synchronisms in the Bible's chronology, however, there is a element of reliance on secular chronology in order to fix absolute dates to the dates of most Old Testament events in the Bible.

There is precious little chronological data in the Bible after the return of the Jews back from Babylon after it fell to the Persians. We are very much dependent on secular chronology to date events to the post-Exile Old Testament events.

The conventional date of **586 BC** for the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar gives us a starting point to make use of the huge amount of biblical chronological data that stretches all the way to the time of Adam and Eve.

How can we be confident that the conventional date of 586 BC for the fall of Jerusalem under the Babylonians is correct? This conventional date is accepted by both of the major chronological schools – modern supporters of James Ussher's chronology as well as those who support Edwin Thiele's chronology.

There is also a smaller group of bible chronologists who support a "pure bible chronology". They see the secular chronology of Babylon, Persia and Greece as faulty and see the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel as the link between the New Testament chronology and the chronological data in the Old Testament. They see the decree of Cyrus as being 483 years before Christ and the fall of Jerusalem being another 70 years before that.

The major framework for the absolute dates of kings between 747 BC and the time of the Roman Empire comes from Ptolemy's Canon. Not only does it list the kings over this period but it also supplies numerous astronomical observations that can be used to gauge its accuracy.

As it is a long and technical study I have placed the examination of its accuracy at the back of this study and dealt with this in appendix 1 where I also explore the validity of the "pure bible chronology". It is my conclusion at the end of that appendix that we can trust the accuracy of Ptolemy's Canon in regards to the date assigned to Nebuchadnezzar's reign and that the conventionally accepted date of 586 BC is indeed the correct date for the fall of Jerusalem.

## **Dating the Reigns of the Last Kings of Judah**

If we can confidently rely on 586 BC as the date for the fall of Jerusalem, we can begin to work back from there to determine the reigns of the last kings of Judah after the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel.

The Bible gives us these reign lengths for the last kings of Judah going backwards starting with the last king Zedekiah:

Zedekiah	11 years	
Jehoiachin	0 years	3 months
Jehoiakim	11 years	
Jehoahaz	0 years	3 months
Josiah	31 years	
Amon	2 years	
Manasseh	55 years	
Hezekiah	29 years	
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139 years</b>	<b>6 months</b>

These reigns total 139 years and 6 months, however there is no direct mention if any of these reigns include a co-regency with their father which could theoretically shorten the overall span of years between Hezekiah and Zedekiah.

The regnal years of the kings of Judah, according to Thiele, were counted from the Day of Trumpets that occurred around September/October. The Fall of Jerusalem occurred in **586 BC** on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month of the religious year (starting in Nisan – March/April) which in the 10<sup>th</sup> month of the civil/regnal year when counted from the Day of Trumpets (known as Rosh Hoshanah to the Jews) so the regnal year, according to Thiele, that the Fall of Jerusalem occurred was 587/586 (Sept/Oct 587 to Sept/Oct 586).

**If we round up the 139 years 6 months to 140 years and go back that many years from 587/586 BC we come up with Hezekiah's reign starting in 727/726 BC which is that supported by Dr Floyd Jones who supports Ussher's chronology.**

**The fall of Samaria took place in Hezekiah's 6<sup>th</sup> year which would seemingly place it in 721/720 BC.**

This is 2 years after the conventional Assyrian date for the fall of Samaria (**723-722 BC**). The Bible tells us that the Assyrian king that began the seige on Samaria was Shalmaneser. His annals indicate he fought against an enemy in his last 3 years, presumed to be all against Samaria. Shalmaneser V reign from 727 to 722 and his last year was 723-722 BC according to Assyrian chronology which is when the Fall of Samaria is placed using Assyrian chronology.

Another Bible synchronism (2 Kings 18:13-16) between Hezekiah in his 14<sup>th</sup> year and Sennacherib (his 3<sup>rd</sup> campaign – 4<sup>th</sup> regnal year) led to the situation where Edwin Thiele retained the conventional Assyrian date for fall of Samaria (723-722 BC) but dated the reign of Hezekiah 11 years later in contradiction to the three Bible synchronisms between Hezekiah and the last king of Israel, Hoshea.

Below are the accession years during which the last kings of Judah started their reigns according to the two major schools of thought for the kings of Judah after the Fall of Samaria:

	<b>FLOYD JONES</b>	<b>EDWIN THIELE</b>	
Fall of Jerusalem	<b>586 BC</b> (Within regnal year of <b>Nisan 587-Nisan 586</b> )	<b>586 BC</b> (Within regnal year of <b>Tishri 587- Tishri 586</b> )	9 <sup>th</sup> day of 4 <sup>th</sup> month (July 18) – Jer. 39:2. The 4 <sup>th</sup> month of religious year is the 10 <sup>th</sup> month of civil year.
Zedekiah (11y)	Nisan <b>597</b> - Nisan <b>696</b>	Tishri <b>597</b> - Tishri <b>696</b>	
Jehoiachin (0y 3m)	Nisan <b>597</b> - Nisan <b>696</b>	Tishri <b>597</b> - Tishri <b>696</b>	
Jehoiakim (11y)	Nisan <b>609</b> - Nisan <b>608</b>	Tishri <b>609</b> - Tishri <b>608</b>	
Jehoahaz (0y 3m)	Nisan <b>610</b> - Nisan <b>609</b>	Tishri <b>610</b> - Tishri <b>609</b>	
Josiah (31y)	Nisan <b>641</b> - Nisan <b>640</b>	Tishri <b>641</b> - Tishri <b>640</b>	
Amon (2y)	Nisan <b>643</b> - Nisan <b>642</b>	Tishri <b>643</b> - Tishri <b>642</b>	
Manasseh (sole reign) FJ (55y) ET (44y)	Nisan <b>698</b> - Nisan <b>697</b>	Tishri <b>687</b> - Tishri <b>686</b>	Thiele has a 11 year co-regency with Hezekiah between <b>698-687 BC</b> .
Hezekiah (29y)	Nisan <b>727</b> - Nisan <b>726</b>	Tishri <b>716</b> - Tishri <b>715</b>	
Fall of Samaria	<b>721 BC</b> (Within regnal year of Nisan <b>721</b> - Nisan <b>720</b> )	<b>723 BC</b> (Within Israel's last regnal year of Nisan <b>723</b> -Nisan <b>722</b> )	According to Thiele, Shalmaneser V campaigned against Samaria in his regnal years Nisan 725-Nisan 724, 724/723 & 723/722 BC and Sargon II was not king when Samaria fell despite his claim not supported in the Bible.

Apart from the difference over which month Judah's regnal year begins, the dates from Amon to the Fall of Jerusalem are identical (in blue). The differences relating to the reigns of Hezekiah and Manasseh and the Fall of Samaria date are highlighted in red.

Manasseh ruled for 55 years. Thiele has 11 of these years as his time of ruling as a co-regent alongside his father, Hezekiah.

There are a number of factors that we need to consider to correctly plot the last three items in the above table that are in dispute – Manasseh's reign, Hezekiah's reign and the Fall of Samaria date.

What started Edwin Thiele on the path that he chose came from the synchronism of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year (**2 Kings 18:13-16**). The account in the Bible is a very close match to the account that is on the Taylor Prism which says that it occurred in Sennacherib's 3<sup>rd</sup> campaign, usually dated to his 4<sup>th</sup> regnal year in **701 BC**, as Sennacherib ruled from **705 - 681 BC** according to Assyrian chronology.

Accepting Assyrian dates of this period as infallible, Edwin Thiele dated Hezekiah's reign as starting from **716/715 BC** and the Fall of Samaria to **723/722 BC**, placing Hezekiah some 7 years after the Fall of Samaria despite three very clear synchronisms with Hoshea, the last king of the northern kingdom of Israel. Thiele sadly, and incorrectly in my view, rejected these synchronisms.

That said, does that automatically mean that the James Ussher/Floyd Jones school of thought is correct with the dates that they have plotted for the reigns of Manasseh, Hezekiah and for the Fall of Samaria?

Conventional Assyrian chronology places the fall of Samaria in Israel's regnal year of Nisan 723 - Nisan 722 BC and the first invasion of Sennacherib in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year (Tishri 702-Tishri 701 BC according to Thiele) – **a difference of 21 ½ years**.

The Bible places the fall of Samaria in Hezekiah's 6<sup>th</sup> year and the first invasion of Sennacherib in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year – **a difference of 8 years**.

There is a 13/14 year difference which is a composite of the 11 years Thiele believes was Manasseh's co-regency with Hezekiah and the 2 years between the Fall of Samaria dates used by Thiele (using Assyrian dating) and Dr Floyd Jones (plus a half year using the different Judah regnal year). This presents us with a conundrum that we must resolve. How do we account for this 13 year difference in dates?

Edwin Thiele felt that Assyrian chronology dates for this period were sacrosanct. He retained both the conventional Assyrian dates for the Fall of Samaria (723/722 BC) and the Sennacherib invasion of Judah (701 BC) in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year.

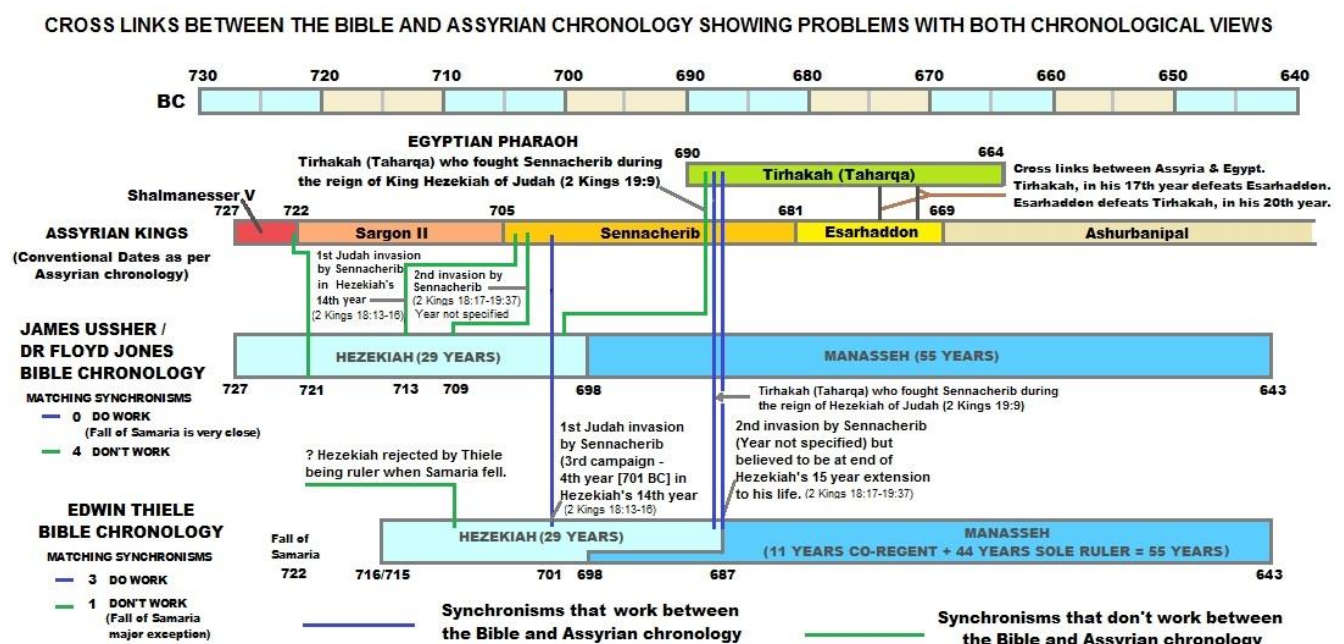
Dr Floyd Jones rejected both Assyrian dates. He dates the Fall of Samaria a close 2 years earlier in 721/720 BC. Assyrian chronology places the reign of Sennacherib from 705 to 681 BC, starting 8 years after Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year according to the dates assigned to Hezekiah's reign that Dr Floyd Jones gives him.

Dr Floyd Jones' solution for the Sennacherib attack in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year occurring 8 years before his reign as king is that Sennacherib was only co-regent at the time ruling alongside of Sargon II and that Sennacherib's standard 24 years do not include the first attack on Judah.

Dr Floyd Jones has Hezekiah's reign ending in 698 BC which is before the start of the reign of Tirhakah, king of Egypt, who began to reign in 690 BC based on synchronisms with Assyrian chronology and Tirhakah was king at the same time as Hezekiah according to 2 Kings 19:9. Dr Floyd Jones solution is the same as his for Sennacherib by saying he was just a prince or co-regent at the time.

The Bible calls both Sennacherib and Tirhakah king in both the passages where they are mentioned. Is Dr Floyd Jones' solutions correct? If it was just one of them then maybe but it is a real stretch applying that questionable solution to both of these individuals?

Below is a chart showing four synchronisms in the Bible and how each major view handles it showing the weaknesses in both views.





Is there another solution that gets around these problems that are highlighted above if we were to accept that Sennacherib and Tirharka were both primary kings during the events involving them in the Bible?

The only other alternative solution is to call into question the accuracy of conventional Assyrian chronology. This is the solution proposed by my friend from Newcastle, Eric Aitchison.

The Bible says that Samaria fell in Hezekiah's 6th year and that Sennacherib attacked Judah in Hezekiah's 14th year - an 8 year difference.

Assyrian chronology says that there were 21 years between Shalmaneser conquering Samaria and when Sennacherib attacked Judah in Hezekiah's 14th year.

Within the Fall of Samaria and Sennacherib's attack, according to Assyrian chronology, was the entire 17 year reign of Sargon II, even though the Bible assigns 8 years between these events.

How do we reconcile these differences? The possible solutions include:

- 1) The Bible has it wrong (scribal errors) and that Hezekiah did not begin to rule until after the kingdom of Israel had been carried away captive by Assyria. (Edwin Thiele's solution)
- 2) Hezekiah was co-regent with his father between 727 BC and 716 BC. (Leslie McFall's solution)
- 3) Sennacherib and Tirharka were co-regents and not sole kings when they were involved in the Bible events where they are mentioned. (Floyd Jones & James Ussher solution)
- 4) Assyrian chronology needs to be compressed moving the events involving Sennacherib back over a decade while keeping the Fall of Samaria about the same dates.
- 5) Assyrian chronology needs to be compressed with the Fall of Samaria occurring over a decade later while the events involving Sennacherib keep the same dates. (Eric Aitchison's solution)

Before we examine each of these possibilities and determine which is the best solution to our problem in plotting the reigns of Hezekiah, Manasseh and dating the Fall of Samaria we need to look at two other related subjects.

### **Was there One or Two Invasions of Judah by Sennacherib?**

Another controversial subject relating to the reign of Hezekiah is were there one or two invasions of Judah by Sennacherib?

The casual reader of the account of the Assyrian invasion in the story of Hezekiah could easily be forgiven for thinking that there was only one invasion given the way that it is compiled in the Bible, however, there is strong evidence supporting two invasions:

- 1) The first invasion in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year when he gave into Sennacherib's demands and accepted giving him tribute.
- 2) The second invasion 15 years later in Hezekiah's 29<sup>th</sup> and final year when God destroyed the Assyrian army numbering 185 000.

If there were two invasions then the one recorded by Sennacherib on the Taylor prism that records Sennacherib locking Hezekiah up like a caged bird and receiving a large tribute from him logically would appear to be the first invasion, not the second, because there was no tribute extracted due to the defeat of the Assyrian army.

Let's now look more carefully at the evidence for there being more than one invasion by Sennacherib against Hezekiah.

The Bible has three parallel accounts in the books of 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles and Isaiah describing these events:

2 Kings 18:13-16	Isaiah 36:1		Sennacherib comes up against Judah in Hezekiah's 14 <sup>th</sup> year. Hezekiah submits and pays a large tribute to Sennacherib.
2 Kings 18:17-19:37	Isaiah 36:2-37:38	2 Chronicles 32:1-23	Sennacherib pridefully boasts that Judah's God won't save Jerusalem from Sennacherib's army. Hezekiah's prayer to God is answered with destruction of Sennacherib's army numbering 185 000 soldiers.
2 Kings 20:1-11	Isaiah 38	2 Chronicles 32:24	Hezekiah is terminally ill and after being told by Isaiah he would not live petitions God who changes his mind and gives him 15 more years. The sun going backward 10 degrees is a sign from God to Hezekiah of these extra 15 years he would be given.
2 Kings 20:12-19	Isaiah 39	2 Chronicles 32:25-31	Shortly after his recovery Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon (a vassal king under Sennacherib) sends an envoy to Hezekiah who unwisely shows them the treasures of the House of God.

The latter two events in the table above are out of chronological order. They occur immediately before the first invasion. In fact, the showing of the treasures to Merodach-baladan's envoy was probably perceived by Sennacherib as the precursor to a revolt resulting in the first campaign against Judah.

The extra 15 years of Hezekiah starts with the first invasion and then ends shortly after the second invasion.



The Good News Bible Reading Program has this to say about the chronological place for the events of Hezekiah's sickness and visit by the envoy of the king of Babylon:

Many date Hezekiah's sickness and the visit of Babylonian envoys, which we [also] read about in [Isaiah] 39, as having occurred prior to Sennacherib's invasion. One reason for this is the fact that Hezekiah proudly shows the wealth of the national treasuries to the Babylonians, as we'll see (2 Kings 20:13)—and yet Hezekiah gave away much of the treasuries to Sennacherib (18:15-16).

Another important indicator is God's statement in 2 Kings 20:6 that He will defend Jerusalem and Hezekiah against the king of Assyria—seeming to indicate Sennacherib's assault, which would necessitate that it had not yet occurred. Finally, destruction is seen looming over Jerusalem *following* Hezekiah's sickness (see 2 Chronicles 32:24-25). Therefore, we will proceed on what appears to be the likelier supposition—that Hezekiah became ill prior to Sennacherib's invasion.

But his sickness must have come *right* before—earlier in the same year as the invasion. In 2 Kings 18:13, we are told that Sennacherib (who invaded in 701 B.C.) came in the 14th year of Hezekiah. Thus we understand Hezekiah's sole reign upon the death of his father to have begun around 715 B.C.

Hezekiah's 29-year reign is reckoned from 715 to 686 B.C. Since Hezekiah's life is extended 15 years beyond his sickness, this would place his sickness in 701. The Bible says his illness came "in those days" (2 Kings 20:1; 2 Chronicles 32:24; Isaiah 38:1)—that is, in the days of Sennacherib's invasion. And this must have indicated a narrow span of time, as we've seen.

Sadly, as faithful as Hezekiah had been, in preparing for war against Assyria, he and his people were not looking to God but to their military capabilities and strategies. Isaiah had stated this very thing in Isaiah 22:8-11, which we earlier read. God, then, allows Hezekiah to fall prey to a deathly illness involving some kind of lesion.

Hezekiah thus refocuses on his commitment to God —praying for healing. And God promises to heal him. It is interesting to note Isaiah's prescription of a poultice of figs even given God's promise to heal. "The practice of applying figs to an ulcerated sore is well attested in the records of the ancient Middle East, being mentioned as early as the Ras Shamra (Ugaritic) tablets of the second millennium B.C." (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 20:7).

This shows that we are to do what we physically can to relieve ourselves of illness in addition to fully relying on God's healing. In addition to purely supernatural miracles of healing, there are natural laws of health and healing that God created and sometimes chooses to work through for healing. All healing comes from God—and our working within His laws of health and healing does not betray trust in Him...

We then see the sign of the sundial. This was an incredible miracle. Like the miracle of Joshua's long day, it involved stopping the earth from turning—and this time rolling it backwards a ways. Consider that the surface of the earth at the equator is moving at a speed of more than 1,000 miles per hour. The laws of inertia demand that if the earth were suddenly stopped, everything on its surface would go flying forward—and massive upheaval would result on land and sea. So God had to have kept everything calm and in place. It is truly staggering to contemplate. Certainly Hezekiah understood it to be a great miracle. But given our scientific knowledge today, we are able to realize the immense complexity of this miracle far more than Hezekiah possibly could have.

Merodach-Baladan of Babylon was, as we've seen, involved in his own ongoing struggle to gain independence from Assyria. He ruled as king twice in Babylon—first from 721-710 B.C. and later for a short time in 703. "Amazingly, Marduk-apla-iddina [Merodach-Baladan] rebounded...and instigated yet another rebellion in 700. Again, and for the last time, he was

put down; and Assur-nadin-sumi, a son of Sennacherib, was installed as regent in Babylon” (Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*, 1987, p. 414).

What this tells us is that, though he wasn’t then on the throne, Merodach-Baladan was still a factor in 701—when Hezekiah was sick and Sennacherib invaded. We can therefore see why he would be sending a delegation to Jerusalem at this time. Ostensibly it was to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery from illness, but there was surely more political motivation behind it. Indeed, this was likely part of an attempt to forge an alliance with Hezekiah against their common foe, Assyria.

Hezekiah was more than willing to show off his wealth—possibly to prove that he had enough to help finance a joint rebellion—and did so with a certain amount of pride (2 Chronicles 32:25). Isaiah, however, warns that all of that wealth would eventually be taken by the Babylonians when they were no longer friends—perhaps even prompted by the reports taken back by these visitors. Sadly, Hezekiah’s response is not one of humility or repentance—only selfish satisfaction at the fact that this won’t transpire in his days.

God was greatly displeased at Hezekiah’s attitude in the whole affair. Though the king had been miraculously healed and been promised deliverance from the Assyrians by God, here he was again looking to his wealth and the help of foreign powers to overcome Assyria. And he was not sorry at Isaiah’s rebuke. “Therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem” (verse 25). Indeed, God withdrew from him as a test (verse 31). This all seems to refer to God allowing the catastrophic invasion of Sennacherib.

God allowed the Assyrians to prevail in the first invasion, it would seem, to teach Hezekiah a lesson about not relying on foreign powers and he submitted to the demand of tribute from Sennacherib. When the second invasion occurred Hezekiah had learned his lesson and turned to God for deliverance resulting in the destruction of the Assyrian army.

I’d like to quote now from an excellent article entitled “One Invasion or Two?” by William H. Shea that appeared in the Adventist journal “Ministry – International Journal for Pastors” (<https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1980/03/one-invasion-or-two>)

### **One Invasion or Two?**

When Sennacherib, king of Assyria, sent his troops to Jerusalem demanding its surrender Hezekiah knew that his kingdom of Judah faced possible extinction. The Assyrians had already conquered Samaria, thus ending the northern Hebrew kingdom, but so far God had preserved Jerusalem and Judah. Hezekiah couldn’t know, of course, that through divine deliverance God would grant Judah another century’s probation, until the nation was finally destroyed, not by the Assyrians, but by the Babylonians.

The story of this most dramatic confrontation between the kings of Assyria and Judah occupies nearly two chapters in 2 Kings (18:13-19:36) and is repeated in two chapters of Isaiah (36, 37). The narrative’s length and its repetition show how crucial the situation was. This pivotal struggle between Judah and Assyria has given rise to considerable scholarly controversy, mainly on the question of whether Sennacherib campaigned against Hezekiah once or twice.

Every one agrees that at least one invasion is described in Sennacherib’s annals of his third campaign in 701 B.C. Yet that record corresponds directly only to the first four verses of the Biblical account (2 Kings 18:13-16).

A comparison of these verses with the Assyrian annals shows differences and apparent conflicts with the rest of the record in 2 Kings. Thus the question is: Does 2 Kings 18:17-19:36 describe a continuation of the same campaign or a later campaign?

The record in 2 Kings begins with the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, which corresponds to 701 B.C.. Sennacherib came to the throne in 705 B.C., at the death of Sargon II on a foreign battlefield, and conducted his third campaign in his fourth regnal year, 701 B.C. Thus the two accounts coincide when the dates are translated into their Julian calendar equivalents. The Bible record follows with the statement "Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them" (2 Kings 18:13, R.S.V.).

In his annal entry, Sennacherib was more specific: "As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke. I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and to countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered (them) by means of well-stamped (earth) ramps, and battering-rams brought (thus) near (to the walls) (combined with) the attack by foot soldiers, (using) mines, breeches as well as sapper work."

Consequently Hezekiah decided to submit and pay the tribute demanded. He sent an embassy to negotiate the payment with Sennacherib at Lachish (verse 14). We have extra-Biblical evidence that Sennacherib campaigned against Lachish in the scenes of the so-called Lachish reliefs, which adorned the walls of his palace in Nineveh and depicted his conquest of that city.

According to both Biblical and Assyrian accounts Hezekiah paid the tribute required of him—in verse 14, he paid thirty talents of gold and three hundred talents of silver; but in Sennacherib's annals, thirty talents of gold and eight hundred of silver. The difference can be attributed either to scribal error or to Assyrian exaggeration. In addition, the annals list other payments in luxury goods.

The two sources thus far reveal four relatively direct correspondences indicating essentially the same course of events: (1) the date of 701 B.C.; (2) the Assyrian conquest of the cities of Judah; (3) the inclusion of Lachish among those cities; and (4) the amounts of tribute.

Here the entry ends in Sennacherib's annals for his 701 B.C. campaign. The Biblical account continues, although with a narrative that appears different in character and sometimes in conflict with what has been related previously. Instead of being satisfied with the amount of Hezekiah's tribute, as one would infer from the annals and from the Biblical verses considered thus far, Sennacherib, according to verses 31-35, sent his general to Jerusalem with a demand for unconditional surrender, elaborated at great length with threats based on earlier Assyrian conquests!

Furthermore, chapter 19:9 mentions Tirhakah as a king who came from Egypt to aid Hezekiah. But Egyptian chronological data indicate that Tirhakah did not begin to reign until 690 B.C. a decade later than Sennacherib's 701 B.C. invasion. Sennacherib's record does mention (without naming the pharaoh) an engagement with the Egyptians, but it places that engagement before the invasion of Judah instead of during or after it, as chapter 19 appears to do.

Those who hold to a single Assyrian invasion of Judah in 701 B.C. explain that Tirhakah, actually only a prince in 701 B.C., could have been called a king in the Bible because he had become king by the time the account was written.

Because of these considerations, and because it is difficult to synchronize the place names mentioned in the two accounts into a coherent and strategically reasonable record of one campaign, some scholars feel that the records of two campaigns have been joined together in the Biblical text.

Most Egyptologists and Assyriologists have held to one invasion because the annals record only one; Biblical scholars, who have felt the difficulty in seeing one campaign in the Biblical account, have held that there was a second campaign of which no extra-Biblical records exist (the last eight years of Sennacherib's annals have never been recovered).

I am sympathetic with those who favor a second campaign and would suggest that an Assyrian text brought to light in 1974, when two claytablet fragments were joined, relates to such an event.

This Assyrian text consists of two pieces from an originally complete text. Both were known separately in the British Museum for some time, but only recently did scholars discover they be longed together to form what Assyriologists call a "join." Sometimes fragments of one original text are found in different museums; making such a "join" requires difficult scholarly detective work.

These two fragments were originally attributed incorrectly to Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II, respectively. The brilliant deductive work of Israeli Assyriologist N. Na'aman demonstrated this join and showed convincingly that the Judahite king referred to in the text must have been Hezekiah, even though his name is damaged in both of its occurrences. Thus, this text was written for Hezekiah's Assyrian foe Sennacherib.

It was not a part of Sennacherib's annals; it was a particular type of text, known as a "Letter to God." Assyrian kings had their scribes write on occasion rather self-laudatory reports from the king to his god, couched in a more elaborate literary style than the dry and monotonous phrases of the annals. It was from such a letter that the pieces in question came.

When joined together, these two fragments provide 16 lines of text, which can be divided into two sections. The first section deals with the conquest of Azekah in Judah, and the second with the conquest of a royal city of the Philistines that Hezekiah had previously annexed to his kingdom. The second section furnishes more direct evidence of being a record of a second campaign of Sennacherib in Palestine.

10) the city of Azekah I besieged, I captured, I carried off its spoil, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire . . .

11) (name broken away) a royal (city) of the Philistines, which (Hezek)iah had captured and strengthened for himself. . . .

12) ..... like a tree (standing out on a ridge?) ....

13) surrounded with great towers and exceedingly difficult. . . .

14) palace like a mountain was barred Sennacherib sits on his throne receiving booty from Lachish. in front of them and high. ... it was dark and the sun never shown on it, its waters were situated in darkness and its overflow. ....

16) its mouth was cut with axes and a moat was dug around it ...

17) . . . (warriors) skillful in battle he caused to enter into it, their weapons he bound. ....

18) I caused the warriors of Amurru, all of them, to carry earth . .

19) against them. In the seventh time his . . . the great like a pot.

20) ... (cattle and she) ep I carried out from its midst. ....

We need examine only a few points in this dramatic description of Sennacherib's conquest of the city. The reference to a dark and sunless place appears to be a description of a tunnel that brought water within the city's fortifications (comparable to Hezekiah's famous water tunnel at Jerusalem). "Amurru" refers to the "Westlands" from the point of view of Assyria; that is, not only Assyrian soldiers were brought to fight against this city, but also those from other western kingdoms ruled by Sennacherib.

Though the name of this "royal city of the Philistines" is lost because of a break in the tablet, it must have been one of the five royal cities of the Philistines. Three of these, Gaza, Ashdod, and Ashkelon—all on or near the coast—can be eliminated as being too far from Azekah. None could have been the next city besieged by Sennacherib's troops according to any logical geographical order for this campaign. (Azekah has been identified with Tell Zakariyeh, 10 miles north of Lachish and 15 miles west of Bethlehem.) The choice, then,

must lie between the other two royal cities farther inland—Gath and Ekron. Their sites are disputed, but they are the only serious candidates for this identification.

If Sennacherib invaded Judah only once, this text describes the siege of either Ekron or Gath in 701 B.C. His annals for that campaign tell us that he conquered Philistia first and Philistia second, then turned his attention to Judah, after being momentarily distracted by the Egyptian attack. His major problem in Philistia was Ekron.

The Ekronites had taken their pro-Assyrian king and handed him over to Hezekiah for safekeeping, according to the annals: "The officials, the patricians and the (common) people of Ekron who had thrown Padi, their king, into fetters (because he was) loyal to (his) solemn oath (sworn) by the god Ashur, and had handed him over to Hezekiah, the Jew (and) he held him in prison, unlawfully, as if he were an enemy."

While Sennacherib was dealing with Ekron, the Egyptians arrived, hoping to bring relief to Philistia. The Assyrians turned them back, then completed the task of subduing Ekron. "I assaulted Ekron and killed the officials and patricians who had committed the crime and hung their bodies on poles surrounding the city. The (common) citizens who were guilty of minor crimes, I considered prisoners of war. The rest of them, those who were not accused of crimes and misbehavior, I released. I made Padi, their king, come from Jerusalem and set him as their lord on the throne, imposing upon him the tribute (due) to me (as) overlord."

From this it is evident that Hezekiah was not in possession of Ekron at the time of Sennacherib's 701 B.C. campaign. He had not captured the city; the Ekronites themselves had taken control of it and sent Padi to Hezekiah. Thus if Ekron is the city mentioned in Sennacherib's "Letter to God," which also refers to the conquest of Azekah, that text could not refer to 701 B.C.

Could Ekron have been the city besieged in a later Assyrian campaign? Yes. Sennacherib did not destroy it in 701 B.C.; he left it with Padi as king. Further, Ekron appears in Assyrian records not only before Sennacherib's period (in the time of Sargon II) but also later, in the reigns of Sennacherib's son Esarhaddon and his grandson Ashurbanipal, both of whom mention its king Ikasu (Achish).

On the other hand, Gath, the only other possibility for the city in question, was probably no longer in existence during Sennacherib's day; the last clear reference to it is the record of its destruction by Uzziah of Judah, who "broke down the wall of Gath" (2 Chron. 26:6, R.S.V), at least fifty years before Sennacherib's 701 B.C. campaign. Gath is mentioned in Amos 6:2 as having been destroyed by the prophet's time. Did Gath ever recover from this blow? It seems unlikely, since the Assyrian records mentioned above in connection with Ekron commonly mention three of the other royal cities of Philistia (Gaza, Ashdod, and Ashkelon) but never Gath. Thus it appears that Gath could not have been besieged by Sennacherib.

The conclusion is that Ekron was the royal Philistine city named (but now lost) in Sennacherib's "Letter to God." Since the city, according to that text, had been annexed and fortified by Hezekiah and besieged by Sennacherib, and since these circumstances do not fit the status of Ekron in the 701 B.C. annals, the events of the "Letter to God," including Sennacherib's siege of that city, should be attributed to a later campaign of that king against Hezekiah.

Another interesting feature of this "Letter to God" from Sennacherib also suggests it belongs to a second Palestinian campaign. The god to whom Sennacherib addressed his letter was Anshar. Anshar was not Ashur, the national god of Assyria, but an old Babylonian god. References to this Babylonian god do not appear in Sennacherib's inscriptions until 689 B.C., after he conquered Babylon and disposed of the threat that city had posed to his rule of the Assyrian empire. Sennacherib's inclusion of Anshar among the gods of his inscriptions after 689 B.C. was a theological way of expressing the political realities that had come to pass.

By invoking the name of this Babylonian god in connection with this Palestinian campaign, Sennacherib indicated his belief that the gods of Babylon were on his side and that they

would defeat his enemies, just as they had handed their city over to him. Thus the fact that Sennacherib invokes the name of the god Anshar instead of Ashur at the beginning of this text indicates a time after the fall of Babylon in 689 B.C. and requires a second campaign to Palestine conducted late in his reign. It cannot belong to his first Palestinian campaign in 701 B.C.

From the conclusion that Ekron was the royal city of Philistia mentioned in the "Letter to God," its history through this period can be reconstructed briefly. The Ekronites rebelled and disposed of their pro-Assyrian king Padi; Sennacherib in 701 B.C. punished them and put Padi back on the throne as a vassal king, then in this same campaign subjugated Judah and divided pieces of Judahite territory among the kings who reigned in the Philistine cities of Ekron, Ashdod, and Gaza (no mention of Gath), according to the entry in the annals for the campaign of 701 B.C.

Later, when Sennacherib was absent from the west—especially 694-689 B.C., when he was occupied with Babylon—the kings in the west had an opportunity to rebel. Hezekiah appears to have done so, and his interest would naturally have centered in reclaiming his territory lost to Philistine cities.

The one nearest to Judah that had received some Judahite territory was Ekron; thus, when Sennacherib returned on his second Palestinian campaign, he found Ekron in the hands of Hezekiah and had to reconquer it. That return invasion most likely occurred after his five-year campaign against Babylon, ending in 689 B.C. (where his annals that we possess end) and before 686 B.C., Hezekiah's death year, according to the chronological data in the Bible. The year 688 B.C., commonly suggested, seems reasonable.

These factors fit the reference to Tirhakah (2 Kings 19:9) as king of Egypt and ally of Hezekiah, since he became pharaoh in 690 B.C. Likewise, the title "king of Ethiopia" (he was of the Nubian Twenty-fifth Dynasty) is valid.

The line dividing 2 Kings 18 into two accounts of separate invasions by Sennacherib must be drawn, then, between verses 16 and 17. In that case the Assyrian king must have left off the first siege of Lachish during his first campaign, 701 B.C., when Hezekiah paid tribute (chap. 18:14), and besieged it again during his second campaign, in 688 B.C., at which time the city was conquered.

While his general was away at Jerusalem, Sennacherib moved on from Lachish to besiege Libnah (chap. 19:8). Thus the conquest of Lachish, as depicted in the reliefs on his palace walls, probably served as a consolation prize for his failure to conquer Jerusalem.

Dating the conquest of Lachish to Sennacherib's second Palestinian campaign explains its remarkable absence from the annal entry for his 701 B.C. campaign, a strange omission otherwise, since he thought so much of that victory he had it depicted on the walls of his palace.

Sennacherib's recently pieced-together "Letter to God" provides the best indication, thus far, that he was indeed on a second campaign in Palestine when he took Ekron away from Hezekiah and threatened Jerusalem.

### **When Was Manasseh Born?**

Before we start working through the options to determine when Hezekiah and Manasseh reigned, let's look at one more related subject – when was Manasseh born?

The account of Josephus of the life of Hezekiah and the invasion by Sennacherib gives us a major clue to determine the time in Hezekiah's life that his son Manasseh was born. Josephus writes:

...there was a very melancholy circumstance that disordered the king, which was the consideration **that he was childless**, and was going to die, and leave his house and his government without a successor of his own body; so he was troubled at the thoughts of this his condition, and lamented himself, and entreated of God that he would prolong his life for a little while till he had some children, and not suffer him to depart this life before he was become a father. Hereupon God had mercy upon him, and accepted of his supplication, because the trouble he was under at his supposed death was not because he was soon to leave the advantages he enjoyed in the kingdom, nor did he on that account pray that he might have a longer life afforded him, but in order to have sons, that might receive the government after him.

And God sent Isaiah the prophet, and commanded him to inform Hezekiah, that within three days' time he should get clear of his distemper, **and should survive it fifteen years, and that he should have children also.**

Now, upon the prophet's saying this, as God had commanded him, he could hardly believe it, both on account of the distemper he was under, which was very sore, and by reason of the surprising nature of what was told him; so he desired that Isaiah would give him some sign or wonder, that he might believe him in what he had said, and be sensible that he came from God; for things that are beyond expectation, and greater than our hopes, are made credible by actions of the like nature. And when Isaiah had asked him what sign he desired to be exhibited, he desired that he would make the shadow of the sun, which he had already made to go down ten steps [or degrees] in his house, to return again to the same place...(Antiquities of the Jews, Book X, Chapter 2, verse 5)

Manasseh is not born until after the first invasion of Sennacherib. In other words, after 701 BC according to conventional Assyrian chronology.

Manasseh's death is dated to 642 BC. If we add 55 years (how long he reigned according to 2 Kings 21:1) we find his rule began in 697 BC – only 4 years after the first invasion of Sennacherib.

We have only two choices:

- 1) Conventional Assyrian chronology is incorrect with respect to the regnal dates of Sennacherib and he ruled some 15 years earlier than claimed.
- 2) Manasseh was appointed co-regent by his father Hezekiah who knew he had only 11 or 12 years more to live and that Manasseh's 55 years includes his first 11 years of co-regency.

**Manasseh's 11<sup>th</sup> year of age equates to the last year of Hezekiah, after which in his 12<sup>th</sup> year he becomes sole king so a co-regency from birth makes a very good mathematical fit.**

It would appear from that exact mathematical fit for a co-regency of Manasseh from his birth that the conventional Assyrian dates for the reign of Sennacherib (705-681 BC) is likely to be correct and that it can be made to harmonise with the Biblical record.

As an aside, the story of Hezekiah's childlessness brings up an interesting point. Had Hezekiah's life not been extended he would not have had an heir from his own body and this may have been in violation of the promise to King David that he would always have an heir to the throne of David (2 Kings 7:12-16).



## **Dating the Reigns of Hezekiah and Manasseh and the Fall of Samaria**

Earlier we saw how there were a series of synchronisms between kings of Assyria, Judah and Israel and that there is a 13 year difference in the span of time recorded by the Bible and by Assyrian chronology between two key events – the Fall of Samaria and the invasion of Judah in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year.

How do we reconcile these differences? The possible solutions include:

- 1) The Bible has it wrong (scribal errors) and that Hezekiah did not begin to rule until after the kingdom of Israel had been carried away captive by Assyria. (Edwin Thiele's solution)
- 2) Hezekiah was co-regent with his father between 727 BC and 716 BC. (Leslie McFall's solution)
- 3) Sennacherib and Tirharka were co-regents and not sole kings when they were involved in the Bible events where they are mentioned. (Floyd Jones & James Ussher solution)
- 4) Assyrian chronology needs to be compressed moving the events involving Sennacherib back over a decade while keeping the Fall of Samaria about the same dates.
- 5) Assyrian chronology needs to be compressed with the Fall of Samaria occurring over a decade later while the events involving Sennacherib keep the same dates. (Eric Aitchison's solution)

Let's look at these options one by one and see which is the best solution to reconciling these differences between the Bible and Assyrian chronology.

### **Did Hezekiah Begin to Reign Before or After the Fall of Samaria?**

Edwin Thiele submitted to a belief in the unfallibility of Assyrian chronology for this period over an unfallibility in the Biblical data describing the Hezekiah / Hoshea synchronisms as scribal errors.

In defending his rejection of the Hezekiah / Hoshea synchronisms Edwin Thiele writes the following:

In those synchronisms the reign of Hoshea was thrust 12 years ahead of its correct position. When that reign is restored to its correct date, the fall of Samaria and the end of Hoshea's rule will be found to have taken place before Hezekiah began his reign...

First, let it be noted that the Old Testament is silent about any contacts between Hezekiah and Hoshea [apart from the briefly noted synchronisms]...When Hezekiah first came to the throne, one of the first acts in the first month of the first year was to open and repair the temple (2 Chron. 29:3, 17) and to proclaim a solemn Passover that was observed...

An interesting item concerning the invitations for this Passover was that they were sent not only to places in Judah but also in Israel – to Ephraim and Manasseh and even to Zebulun (2 Chron. 30:1, 6, 10), territory that once had been the domain of the northern kingdom but was now open to the envoys of Judah...While the northern kingdom was still in existence, it would not, of course, have been possible for the envoys of Judah to pass through the territory of Israel; so we have here a clear indication that it was not in existence...

Hezekiah's admonitions were expressly addressed to a nation that was in deep distress and desolation and whose people had already gone into captivity, for the ones who would now receive his letters were spoken of who had already gone into captivity (The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings, p.168-170).

It's unusual that Thiele would focus on the Passover invitations as one of his key proofs for rejecting the Hezekiah / Hoshea synchronisms as scribal errors, as it used to prove just the opposite by Eric Aitchison in his paper "Assyria – Is the Conventional Profile Believable?".

I quote now from Eric's paper and include the map that he uses to distinguish the invited tribes and those which had gone to captivity in the first wave of captivity prior to the fall of Samaria.

This event [The cleansing of the Temple] occurred in the very early years of Hezekiah, his first year as sole regent in my opinion. Hezekiah has to have co regency with Ahaz because Tiglath Pileser placed Hoshea in his kingship in year 12 of Ahaz, being year 20 of Jotham. Thus there had to be co regency between Jotham and Ahaz and between Ahaz and Jotham. The first sole year of Hezekiah has to be 711 BC, the Temple Cleansing which included the destruction of those religious artefacts constructed by Ahaz.

The Temple Cleansing was followed by an indefinite but seemingly short immediate time frame and with an invitation to Israel to come to Jerusalem for atonement and the celebration of the Passover in what appears to be Hezekiah's second month. Convention, through the scholarship of Thiele and others, has placed this event in an era when the political milieu will not tolerate its occurrence.

If "Hoshea is clearly gone when Hezekiah becomes king" then the invitation to those in the north has to occur after the forced migration of Israel following the capture and sack of Samaria and the whole of Bit Humri. By the time of this conventional date those in the north are not Israelites but foreigners brought in by the complementary forced migration by Sargon II in his seventh year (715 BC conventionally). Convention must therefore see the rejection of the invitation by those not in any way attuned to the worship of Yahweh in contradiction to II Chronicles 30: 10, 11 and 18.

At this point in my revised historical template many areas are no longer under the control of Israel. Tiglath Pileser III had taken Ijon and Abel-Beth-Maachah, and Janoah, and Kadesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the lands of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria . He had also placed Hoshea as king following the deposition of Pekah . He is also at the very border of Egypt in his 14th year.

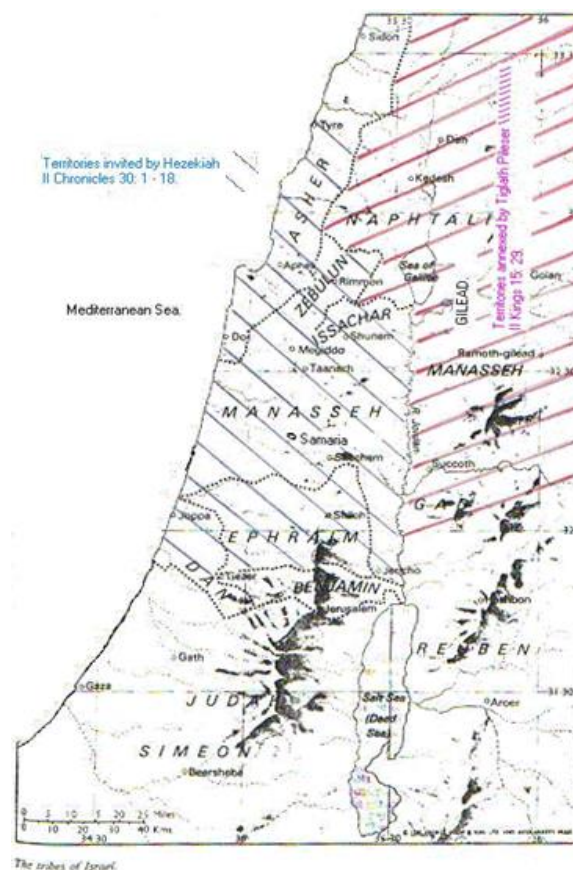
At some stage in his years five or six Hoshea summonses up the courage to resist the Assyrians. In his first sole year that enemy of Assyria , Hezekiah, is in sole control of Judah, it being his third year. Hezekiah, having seen what has happened to Israel, or the bulk of it, accepted the advice of Isaiah who convinced him that only by adherence to Yahweh would deliverance occur to Jerusalem. Isaiah is correct in the longer term.

Hezekiah cleanses the temple and issues invitations to his northern neighbours to attend the Passover of the Lord. One of the reasons offered for attendance was that "the children of Israel should turn again to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and He will return

to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria.” (It seems reasonable to draw attention to the plural word ‘kings’ in that quote.)

As noted before if Convention continues to hold the high ground then this invitation is being issued to those from other lands, other cultures, who have been forced into Israel and with no loyalty to Yahweh. Faulstich however has the invitation going prior to the capture of Samaria; in this he is on solid ground. The focus of the invitations is interesting. Other than the incongruous mention of Dan in II Kings 30:5, all other invited places mentioned throughout this episode are at this stage free from Assyrian control. Dan has to be within the area annexed by Assyria at the death of Pekah, unless it is the original southern homeland of the Danites.

The following areas, Assyrian free, are the most specifically identified invitees. Verse one has Ephraim and Manasseh in which is situated Samaria, whilst verse ten adds in Zebulun, verse eleven adds in Asher and verse eighteen rounds out the multitude by including Issachar. All these areas are southwest of the areas annexed by Tiglath Pileser and abut the new border. Thus the reaction of those invited can be assessed given that they had seen first hand the ravages of the Assyrians and probably knew even then that their turn was not far away. This map [below] is instructive (p.19-21).



It is an assumption for Thiele to say that the envoys of Judah would never had been allowed the access through Israel that they did if Hoshea was in charge, even though there were times when such level of access would have been restricted.

Eric makes an excellent case for the invitations to have been made while the kingdom of Israel was still in existence with the way that he highlights the tribes invited were those left after the first incursions by the Assyrians and also the fact the peoples left in Israel were not Israelites to invite after the fall of Samaria.

## **Was There a Long Co-Regency for Hezekiah Extending Back to the Fall of Samaria?**

Leslie McFall, who follows in Thiele's footsteps with his chronology, sees additional co-regencies that Thiele did not and believes that there was a co-regency between Hezekiah and his father Ahaz, that Hezekiah's sole reign did not start until after the Fall of Samaria and that the Hezekiah / Hoshea synchronisms are reckoned from his co-regency while the first invasion of Sennacherib in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year is correctly dated to 701 BC and reckoned from his sole reign.

Can this view be supported? This was my belief until my friend from Newcastle, Eric Aitchison, presented the information that I quoted above.

In answer to McFall's theory of the co-regency of Hezekiah extending over a decade back from his sole rulership, we have to remember that Hezekiah's father Ahaz was described as evil (2 Kings 16:2-3) and would not have allowed the Temple cleansing and Passover so this event **MUST** occur when Hezekiah becomes sole ruler.

The information I have quoted above from Eric Aitchison's paper shows that the first Passover **MUST** have occurred while the northern kingdom of Israel was still in existence.

Now there is a case for a co-regency for Hezekiah but only a brief one of 1-2 years. Hoshea began his reign in Ahaz's 12<sup>th</sup> year (2 Kings 17:1). Ahaz reigned for 16 years (2 Kings 16:1-2).

It would have been in Hoshea's 5<sup>th</sup> year that Hezekiah would have had his first sole reigning year once Ahaz died, yet we are told that he began ruling in Hoshea's 3<sup>rd</sup> year (2 Kings 18:1). This rulership in Hoshea's 3<sup>rd</sup> year is likely from when he began ruling as co-regent with his father Ahaz.

It appears from the above that the Hezekiah / Hoshea synchronisms relating to the fall of Samaria are dated from his co-regency, however, we have clearly shown that his sole rule most definitely began before the fall of Samaria.

## **Were Sennacherib and Tirharka were Co-Regents When They Are Mentioned in the Bible?**

Dr Floyd Jones, who follows James Ussher's chronology, in his book "The Chronology of the Old Testament" has Hezekiah's 6<sup>th</sup> year when the Fall of Samaria occurred in 721 BC and the first invasion of Judah by Sennacherib in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year in 713 BC.

He still maintains the conventional dates for Assyrian kings during this period even though he gives some excellent commentary in his book on the weaknesses on Assyrian chronology. He maintains Sennacherib's sole reign started in 705 BC and believes that he started to reign 8 years after his first invasion on Judah.

His solution for the Sennacherib attack in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year occurring 8 years before his reign as king is that Sennacherib was only co-regent at the time ruling alongside of Sargon II and that Sennacherib's standard 24 years do not include the first attack on Judah. In this way Dr Floyd Jones retains the conventional Assyrian king dates by suggesting that the 3<sup>rd</sup> campaign of Sennacherib is from his co-rule with Sargon II.

Dr Floyd Jones has Hezekiah ruling from 727-698 BC. The end date he has for Hezekiah's reign is before the start of the reign of Tirhakah, king of Egypt who began to reign in 690 BC and was ruling at the same time as Hezekiah in 2 Kings 19:9.

The solution applied is that which is described in the wikipedia article on Tirhakah:

Furthermore, [2 Kings] 19:9 mentions Tirhakah as a king who came from Egypt to aid Hezekiah. But Egyptian chronological data indicate that Tirhakah did not begin to reign until 690 B.C. a decade later than Sennacherib's 701 B.C. invasion. Sennacherib's record does mention (without naming the pharaoh) an engagement with the Egyptians, but it places that engagement before the invasion of Judah instead of during or after it, as chapter 19 appears to do.

Those who hold to a single Assyrian invasion of Judah in 701 B.C. explain that Tirhakah, actually only **a prince** in 701 B.C., could have been called a king in the Bible because he had become king by the time the account was written.

We now have two rulers of neighbouring nations who were clearly referred as kings in the Bible and both of these, we are told by Dr Floyd Jones, in support of Ussher's chronology, are both only princes or co-regents. If there was just one that might be possible but seems quite unlikely for when there are two kings.

Given the weaknesses of Assyrian chronology pointed out by Dr Floyd Jones himself in his book it would seem more likely that there is a problem in the interpretation of the Assyrian data and that the dates for the Assyrian kings of this period need to be altered?

Before we look at that, let's add some more support for a 687 BC date for the end of Hezekiah's reign. Dr Floyd Jones has the second invasion in 709 BC and Hezekiah's death 11 years later in 698 BC. Thiele places the second invasion in 687 BC, the last year of Hezekiah.

The following comes from Immanuel Velikovsky's book "Worlds in Collision" regarding the destruction of Sennacherib's army during his second invasion near the end of Hezekiah's reign. Velikovsky's believes that the destruction of the army from God was caused by a cosmic agent, including the incident of the sun going backwards 10 degrees.

An incident that parallels this in China at the same time is mentioned in Chinese annals and we are given an exact date – day, month and year and this exactly matches the belief that the second invasion occurred in 687 BC during Hezekiah's last year. Velikovsky writes:

The Talmud and Midrash sources, which are numerous, all agree on the manner in which the Assyrian host was destroyed; a blast [2 Kings 19:7, Isaiah 37:7] fell from the sky on the camp of Sennacherib. It was not a flame, but a consuming blast: **"Their souls were burnt, though their garments remained intact"**. The phenomenon was accompanied by a terrific noise (Worlds in Collision, p.224).

To me, this is like what happens when people are struck and killed by lightning. Velikovsky implies in his book that these are electric discharges that can occur between the earth and

a large enough passing body that has a different electric charge to the Earth's own negative charge.

Velikovsky combines Jewish and Chinese accounts to help us to date the destruction of the army and the sun going backwards 10 degrees. Continuing on, Velikovsky writes:

...Talmudic tradition explains that the day was shortened by ten degrees on the day when Ahaz was buried, and the day was prolonged by ten degrees when Hezekiah was ill and recovered, and this is the meaning of the "shadow of the degrees which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz".

**The rabbinical sources state in a definite manner that the disturbance in the movement of the sun happened on the evening of the destruction of Sennacherib's army by a devouring blast...**

It was apparently some cosmic cause that was responsible for the sudden destruction of the army of Sennacherib **AND** brought about the perturbation in the rotating movement of the earth...

A more exact date for the night of the annihilation of Sennacherib's army should be established. From modern research we know that it was in the year -687...

**The Talmud and Midrash give another valuable clue: the destruction occurred during the first night of Passover. The giant host was destroyed when the people began to sing the Hallel prayer of the Passover service.** Passover was observed about the time of the vernal equinox.

In the book Edouard Biot [written based on Chinese sources], "Catalogue general des etoiles filantes et des autres meteoros observes en Chine apres le VII siecle avant J.C." the register begins with this statement:

**"The year 687 BC...the day sin mao (23<sup>rd</sup> of March)** during the night, the fixed stars did not appear, though the night was clear [cloudless]. In the middle of the night stars fell like a rain"...

The date, 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, is Biot's calculation. The statement is based on old Chinese sources ascribed to Confucius. In another translation of the text by Remusat the last part of the passage is rendered as follows: "Though the night was clear, a star fell in the form of rain" **[Most likely a reference to a very large meteor shower].**

The annals of the Bamboo Books obviously refers to the same event when they inform us that in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the Emperor Kwei (the 17<sup>th</sup> emperor of the Dynasty Yu or the 18<sup>th</sup> monarch Yehou) **"the five planets went out of their courses. In the night, stars fell like rain. The earth shook."**

The words in the annals "in the night, stars fell like rain" are the same as in the record of Confucius dealing with the cosmic on the **23<sup>rd</sup> of March -687.**

**The annals supply the information that the cause of the this phenomena was a disturbance amongst the [motions of the] planets.**

The record of Confucius is a precious entry, because the time of the phenomenon – the day, the month and the year – is given...

The rare phenomenon occurred in that year and that part of the year – 23<sup>rd</sup> of March -687 when, as explained above, according to modern calculations and the Talmudic data, the destruction of Sennacherib's army took place. In the Chinese record we have a short but precise account of the night, which we have recognized as the night of the annihilation.

We also expect to find in Chinese sources a record of the disturbance in the movement of the sun. China is 45 to 90 degrees in longitude east of Palestine, the difference in time being 3 to 6 hours.

Huai-nan-tse...tells us that "when the Duke of Lu-yang was at war against Han, during the battle the sun went down. The Duke, swinging his spear, beckoned to the sun, **whereupon the sun, for his sake, came back and passed through three solar mansions**" (Worlds in Collision, p.226-229).

We find in these quotes that the event of 23<sup>rd</sup> March 687 BC involved a disturbance in the motion of the Earth that caused the planets to go out of their course. The Bible records such an event with the sun going backwards quickly 10 degrees and this event, according to Talmudic sources this event occurred at the same time as the second invasion of Judah by Sennacherib.

As an aside, there is a Greek parallel to the story of the sun going backwards 10 degrees in the time of Hezekiah. We are told in Greek legend:

Having been made king, Thyestes agreed that if the sun should move backward in its course Atreus could take over the throne. **Zeus sent the sun backward across the sky**, and Atreus acquired the kingdom of Mycenae. He had two sons by Aerope, Agamemnon and Menelaus. ([http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study\\_guide/literature/mythology/summary-analysis-greek/summary-analysis\\_alt2.html](http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study_guide/literature/mythology/summary-analysis-greek/summary-analysis_alt2.html))

The latter two sons feature in the story of Helen of Troy. Traditionally dated to around 1200 BC, this clue amongst many others calls for a re-dating of the end of the Mycenaean / Helladic age 500 years forward to 700 BC. Archaeologists are baffled by the 500 year "dark age" where little of Greek history is found between 1200 and 700 BC caused by dating the earlier age according to the faulty conventional Egyptian chronology and the latter Hellenic age according to the relatively more accurate Assyrian chronology but that's a whole different story.

The year 687 BC is the latest possible end date for the reign of Hezekiah so this must have been at the end of his 15 extended years. The end date of Hezekiah proposed by James Ussher and Dr Floyd Jones is 11 years too early for this event to have occurred in 687 BC as appears to be confirmed by the Jewish and Chinese sources. Recognising Manasseh's first 11 years as a co-regency from birth with his father Hezekiah before becoming sole king in his 12<sup>th</sup> year appears to be confirmed, as does Assyrian chronology at this point of Sennacherib's reign.

The idea of the invasion in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year occurring while Sennacherib was co-regent before his sole reign appears to be flawed as does the idea of Tirhakah only being co-regent when he is mentioned as a king in Hezekiah's reign.

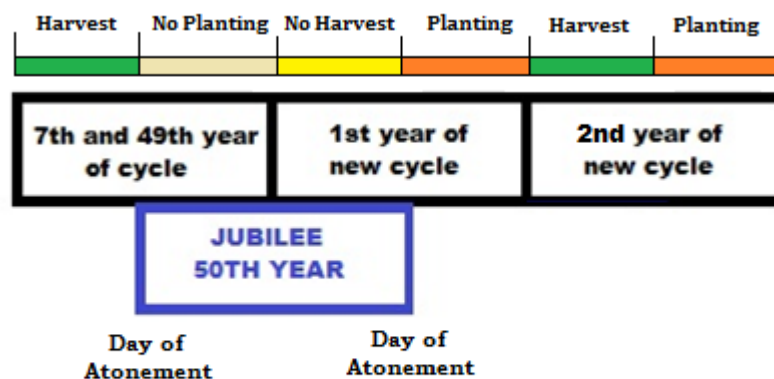
Dr Floyd Jones dates the first invasion to 713 BC and he dates the second invasion to 709 BC due to a reference in Isaiah 37:30 made about what he believes is the Jubilee year that occurred in the same year as the second invasion:



And this *shall be* a sign to you: You shall eat self-sown grain *this* year; and the second year that which springs of the same; and in the third year you shall sow, and reap, and plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.

Based on records of Josephus it appears that there were not 50 actual years between each Jubilee but they were 49 years apart and the 50th year is in the manner of counting.

The year began in Nisan (Abib) but the Jubilee was not announced at the beginning of the year but at the Day of Atonement in the 7th month. One school of thought is that the Jubilee / 50th year was reckoned between the middle of the 49th year and the middle of the 1st year which kept the repeating pattern of 7 years without an additional year each 7th cycle.



#### HOW THE JUBILEE YEAR WORKED TO SYNCHRONISE WITH THE AGRICULTURAL YEAR

An online article called "Josephus Statements along with his Chronology Confirms Repeating Seven Year Cycles!" ([http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/art/josephus\\_chrono.htm](http://www.itsaboutthattime.net/art/josephus_chrono.htm)) plots the sabbatical years that are noted by Josephus. The years that Josephus records as sabbatical years are as follows:

164/163 BC  
136/135 BC  
38/37 BC  
31/30 BC

If there were 50 actual years between Jubilees instead of 49 years the latter two sabbatical years would be two years later.

Going forward in time the closest sabbatical year to the start of Jesus' ministry is 26/27 AD. At the beginning of His ministry He spoke about the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:19) which almost all commentators acknowledge as the Jubilee year. It is very likely that year was the Jubilee year.

Going forwards from Christ's time, assuming His first year of ministry was a Jubilee year, the next Jubilee will be in 2035/36. Perhaps this will be the year of release for this world from man's destruction of this earth when Christ returns.

Going backwards in 49 year blocks the closest Jubilee date to the end of the Conquest of Canaan by Joshua that matches the Edwin Thiele's chronological scheme is 1396 BC which is about 4 years after his accepted conquest date. Ussher's chronology has a 1445 BC date for the Conquest of Canaan, which is right on the Jubilee before. Without pre-empting my own conclusions later on I believe that the Exodus date is 1445 BC (a 2 year adjustment from Thiele's data) and that date matches the 49 year Jubilee cycle if calculated back from 26/27 BC if that is recognised as a Jubilee year.

If we go backwards to the time of Hezekiah then 709 BC is the Jubilee year, not 687 BC, however 687 BC is a sabbatical year when the Israelites rested the land. Given the other data supporting 687 BC for the second invasion Isaiah 37:30 is more likely a reference to a sabbatical year.

### **Assyrian Chronology and the Fall of Samaria**

We have confirmed that 687 BC was the last year of Hezekiah vindicating Thiele's belief that Manasseh was co-regent with Hezekiah for 11 years and that he ruled as sole king for 44 years (687/686 - 643/642) for a combined reign of 55 years.

Going back 29 years gives us a start date for Hezekiah's reign of 716/715 BC. We have seen that there appears to have been a 2 year co-regency with Ahaz. If we go forward 6 years into Hezekiah's reign from 716/715 BC the Bible strongly implies that the Fall of Samaria took place in 710/709 BC – some 13 years after the reign of Samaria's conqueror, Shalmaneser V, according to Assyrian chronology.

**All our evidence from the Bible and Assyrian chronology relating to the dating of Sennacherib's two invasions appears to confirm that the Assyrian chronology dates for Sennacherib's reign (705-687 BC) are correct.**

**The Bible confirms that Hezekiah was sole king before Samaria fell yet the Bible tells us that the first invasion of Judah was 8 years after the Fall of Samaria NOT 21 years later according to Assyrian chronology.**

**This leaves us with one conclusion – The end of Shalmaneser V's reign when the Fall of Samaria occurred must be lowered by 13 years while retaining the dates for the reign of Sennacherib!!!**

Is there any evidence in the Assyrian records that indicates its chronology needs to be lowered at this point by over a decade?

Is there any evidence in the Assyrian records that indicates its chronology needs to be lowered at this point by over a decade? Just how accurate is Assyrian chronology with its eponym lists?

I have devoted Appendix 2 to a thorough examination of the accuracy of Assyrian chronology but I will provide a few bullet points that cover some of the key pieces of evidence about its accuracy

- It must always be remembered that a eponym or limmu does not mean a year. A limmu was the chief official of the king of Assyria. If there was a second king, a co-regent, it is entirely possible there was a chief official for each of the kings reigning

at the same time. The Bible in a few places implies that Assyria had **multiple** kings at the same time (2 Kings 19:11, 17, 2 Chron. 28:16, 30:6)

- Sometime there are more limmus that years assigned to the king and sometimes there are less limmus.
- Sometimes there are discrepancies of a few years between events assigned against an eponym as compared to the annals of those kings.
- There is potential of gaps where a king might seek to blot out a previous king from the historical record. If this was attempted both the king's record and the eponyms assigned to him would be erased and untraceable except for comparing records with another nation. Dr Floyd Jones quotes one king who feared just such a thing leading to the likelihood that this was done on occasion.
- There are inconsistencies in the eponym lists including one example of near identical limmu names for the same positions though a generation apart.
- There are many examples of tampering in the monumental records such as removing a father's name, etc and often some kings clearly claiming the accomplishments of their father or other prior king.
- A thorough examination is covered in Appendix 2 of the two key Shalmaneser III synchronisms that Thiele uses to support his dating. One is supposedly between Shalmaneser III and Ahab in Shalmaneser III's 6<sup>th</sup> year where Ahab is amongst a coalition that Shalmaneser III fought. The name in the inscription is "A-ha-ab-bu Sir-i-la-a-a." The connection between this name and Ahab are questionable and scholars question some of Shalmaneser III's claims and believe he may have claimed things done by one of his predecessors.
- The other key synchronism that Thiele uses is on the Black Obelisk. It is dated by other inscriptional evidence to the 18<sup>th</sup> year of Shalmaneser III and most scholars believe it records that Jehu gave tribute to Shalmaneser III. The inscription reads: "Tribute from 'la-u-a mar Hu-um-ri-i'." The majority of Assyrian scholars conjecture this to translate "Jehu, son of Omri."

Jehu was neither Omri's son, his kin, nor even of his dynasty. Moreover, it was Jehu who personally slew Omri's grandson, King Joram of Israel, thus bringing that dynasty to an end (2 Kings 9:26). As a charioteer, Jehu's skill and style acquired legendary proportions. It made him a byword in all Israel (2 Kings 9:20). His personal presence, adroitness, and valor as a warrior commanded instantaneous allegiance. It invoked immense fear in those who might oppose his will (2 Kings 9:24,25, 31-34; 10:4, 16-28). Yet most Assyriologists, chronologists, and other scholars would have us believe that the man seen fawning obsequiously before Shalmaneser is this same Jehu.

Assyrian chronology is strongest up to where it has support from Babylonian chronology going back to just before Sennacherib's rule. Before that there are greater question marks over its accuracy.

Now back to original problem of determining just where in Assyrian chronology there is evidence that it can be compressed to conform with the Biblical and other data that we have that points to the Fall of Samaria occurring a decade later than conventionally dated to in Assyrian chronology.

In his paper “Assyria – Is the Conventional Profile Believable?” Eric gives us this very important clue which shows that there needs to be a shift in where Sargon II’s rule should be placed:

Please also note that the Babylonian Chronicle tells us that after five years, the last three against Samaria, Shalmaneser V goes to his fate. It would seem as though we are required to follow Convention and see the last of the three years, “against Samaria” as the last year of Shalmaneser. This would be [according to conventional Assyrian chronology] Limmu Year 723 BC according to page 437 of ARAB and making 722 BC the first year of Sargon.

The four limmu entries, 722 through 719 BC do not reflect the detailed events from Sargon’s annals.

When we investigate the detailed annals of Sargon II, we are perplexed to find that Convention says that before year two, he controlled the city of Samaria, translated from Samerina, and later in year seven imported new citizens!

The Bible infers Shalmaneser commenced the siege of Samaria and the Babylonian and Limmu Data seems to confirm this. Convention gives the capture credit to Sargon by reliance on the aforementioned translation of Samerina as Samaria in his first year.

**However, we should note that in his second year (no accession year details are provided) Samaria revolts along with four other northern cities (p4-5).**

How can Samaria revolt 2 years after it fell to the Assyrians? This is our first major key to the correct placement of Sargon II’s reign! This event in year 2 of Sargon II had to have happened in one of the years preceeding the Fall of Samaria but where?

Eric in a table on page 5 of his paper supplies us with this synchronistic fit of the data we have already looked at in the scriptures altering the fit of Assyrian chronology as per the above clue we looked at and the next clues:

Yr	Tiglath	Yr	Shalmaneser V	Yr	Hoshea	Yr	Hezekiah	Dates	Yr	Sargon
15	Sapia			1	Hoshea		Ahaz	717/716		
16	In the Land			2	Hoshea		Ahaz	716/715		
17	Bel			3	Hoshea	1	Co r with Ahaz	715/714		
18	Bel			4	Hoshea	2	Co r with Ahaz	714/713	1	Samerina deportation
19	Damascus	1	Accession and inferred revolt by Samaria, Tribute with held.	5	Hoshea	3	Sole Reign of Hezekiah, Invitations issued.	713/712	2	Revolts by Damascus & Samaria in year Two.
		2	In the Land	6	Hoshea	4	Hezekiah	712/711	3	Tabal/ Mannai
		3	Samaria	7	Hoshea	5	Hezekiah	711/710	4	Limmu Year
		4	Samaria	8	Hoshea	6	Hezekiah	710/709	5	Damascus resettled
		5	Samaria and Limmu year	9	Hoshea	7	Hezekiah	709/708	6	Ellipi and Medes
						8	Hezekiah	708/707	7	Samaria resettled

I have made two changes to his table. One is that I have staggered the column for Judah's kings so their numbers are in between the numbers for their neighbouring kingdoms. I address this later but I believe Thiele is correct when he states that their regnal years were counted from Tishri to Tishri (Day of Trumpets) while Israel and Assyrian kings counted theirs from Nisan to Nisan.

The other change I have made (as his chart appears at the time of this writing) is that I have lowered the dates by one year. Eric and I concur that the 29 years of Hezekiah's reign includes 2 years of co-rule with his father Ahaz.

Hezekiah's 29<sup>th</sup> and last year was 687/686 BC. If his 29 years is his sole rule then his accession year was 716/715 BC as per what Edwin Thiele has calculated. If his 29 years is counted from the start of co-regency then his first year as co-regent was 715/714 BC. His co-regency starts from 715/714 in this case and this differs from his accession year if counted from his sole reign because an accession year is not included in the count from a co-regency. I have factored that in with this change in dates.

The first thing in the table to notice is where he places year 2 of Sargon. He has this revolt of Samaria in the same year as the accession of Shalmanesser V. It is in the same year that Hezekiah becomes sole king and issues invitations to the Passover to the northern tribes, which Eric believes also had political repercussions emboldening the northern king, Hoshea, into withholding tribute from Assyria. It was the death of Tiglath-Pileser that sparked the revolts of Samaria and Damascus in Sargon II's 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

Eric has a 2 year co-regency of Hezekiah with his father, Ahaz, as discussed earlier and that the synchronisms with Hezekiah and noted from his co-regency. Hoshea was placed on the throne of Israel by Tiglath-Pileser according to his records.

The consequence of placing the revolt of Samaria in Sargon II's 2<sup>nd</sup> year is that the resettling of Samaria referred to in Sargon II's 7<sup>th</sup> year annal and in the Bible is the year following the Fall of Samaria so this is a quite comfortable fit.

Now this lowers the reign of Shalmaneser V down by 6 years. What about the other 7 years that are needed to be reduced to harmonise the Biblical and Assyrian records?

The Babylonian Chronicle says that Merodach Baladan was defeated in 710/709 BC by Sargon and then later by Sennacherib in 703/2 BC – a difference of 7 years.

Based on a careful comparison of the annals and limmu data in Assyrian records Eric Aitchison argues that this was one and the same defeat mutually accomplished by Sargon and Sennacherib and that the correct date for this is the latter of the two dates – 703/702 BC.

This would lower the reign of Sargon II 7 years to go with the other lowering of 6 years noted earlier giving us the lowering of 13 years needed to harmonise the Bible and Assyrian records for the time span between the Fall of Samaria and the first invasion of Judah by Sennacherib in Hezekiah's 14<sup>th</sup> year (this is taken from his co-regency as per the other synchronisms). Eric writes the following in his paper "Assyria – Is the Conventional Profile Believable?":

Sargon fought Merodach Baladan in his first year and Merodach Baladan was able to rule in Babylon until Sargon's 13th year of 17 though 16 seems preferable. Thus immediately we have a problem with Ptolemy. He has Sargon king for 6 years whereas the man only lived another 3 or 4 years after his 13th year.

If we now revert to the Babylonian chronicle we note that, whilst some information is missing from lines 6 – 11, the sequence has Bel Ibni installed after Merodach Baladan's defeat by Sennacherib.

The Babylonian Chronicle has Merodach Baladan defeated in 710/709 BC by Sargon and then later by Sennacherib in 703/2 BC, a period lapse of seven years, the very years that Ptolemy uses, incorrectly in my opinion. Here I suggest that Ptolemy, a late commentator has adopted the Eusebius / Syncellus methodology of starting each successor at the death date of the predecessor whereas, as by the Bible, co regencies and multiple kings seem to be the order of the day.

The Bible speaks of "the kings of Assyria" and our pompous Assyrian annalists tell us that they were victorious over alliances of kings, single handedly. Yet Sargon had at his disposal seven armies to deal with the Ispabara interlude. Various kings of Assyria caused palaces to be built in different places, Sargon and Sennacherib certainly did. This indicates that they lived in cities separated in locality and prestige and might well have been mutually supportive in matters of attack and defence, without letting on, as discussed later...

The detailed records say that in his year 12 Sargon fought and defeated Merodach Baladan. In his year 13 Sargon continued his pursuit of Merodach Baladan, capturing, destroying and looting his Sealand City of Dur Iakin. The victory over Merodach Baladan was at Kish; see 710 BC, year 13 or year 12 by the annals.

The detailed annals of year 15, (there are presumed none for year 14) show contact with Ispabara, the country of Ellipi and by inference the country of Karalli. These are separate countries but by their grouping in various sections of ARAB it can be construed that they are closely linked geographically .

If we now return to the closing years of the above Limmu Lists we find reference to the destruction of Dur Iakin, a quiet year ("the gods were in their temples") and a comment about Karalli. But those years are allocated after the 16th year of Sargon. Blind faith in the dates in this latter section can seduce one into error. The most seductive date is year 705. This can be neither the last year of Sargon nor the first year of Sennacherib if we apply the detailed annals to the closing Limmu years of Sargon .

The Limmu Data for year 707 BC, regnal year 14 based on year 8 being 713 BC as per the Annals, provides the following information, "The King returned from Babylon" and on first glance will fit with year 709/8 being the year "Sargon took the hand of Bel". The detailed records indicate that he could not "take the hand of Bel" until he had defeated Merodach Baladan and captured Babylon.

The first defeat of Merodach Baladan is in year 12 and must, according to year 8 = 713, be 709/8. It is not until his year 13 that Merodach Baladan fled, leaving Sargon master of the field and Babylon and thus able to deal with the destruction of Dur Iakin.

In year 13, year 708 (annalistic) we begin to have further problems. The Limmu Data says, "Kumuhu was captured, a governor was appointed". Whilst the detailed records give this same information they are dominated by reference to the continued pursuit of Merodach Baladan and the capture and destruction of Dur Iakin. This is not mentioned in the Limmu Data until year 705, conventionally year 16 the year of Sargon's death. If year 16 is the death of Sargon then it must, conventionally be the accession date of Sennacherib and the beginning of his first year.

Sennacherib does not list his campaigns in his regnal years so this makes dating those campaigns a little tricky. It could be that his campaign one was in his accession year, 705,

but it fits in better if it is in his first year. In it he records the defeat of Merodach Baladan in Kish and the capture of the treasure house of Merodach Baladan in Babylon and the eventual capture of Dur lakin. Dur lakin is destroyed twice according to the records of Sargon and Sennacherib. Sargon records its destruction in his year 13 whilst Sennacherib's record is in campaign one. This campaign one involves two major events that are covered by separate but following years of Sargon. The defeat of Merodach Baladan is in his year 12 whilst the destruction of Dur lakin is in his year 13. For Sennacherib it was only one campaign.

**The defeat of Merodach Baladan in year 12 of Sargon and his defeat in campaign one of Sennacherib suggest a singularity of action.** The Limmu entry for Convention's year 710/9 has the king (Sargon) in Kish. This geographic place receives no mention until the annals of Sennacherib. It is in Kish that Sennacherib defeats Merodach Baladan. The mention of Kish and the destruction of Dur lakin in year 13 of Sargon and the destruction of Dur lakin in an extended campaign one of Sennacherib re-enforces this singularity of action.

**If we look at both instances and their dual happenings we have an overlap of actions. If this singularity of defeat and destruction is accepted, i.e., both Sargon and Sennacherib jointly defeat Merodach Baladan and destroy Dur lakin, then Sennacherib's campaign one is a continuous affair, encompassing parts of Sargon's years 12 and 13.**

**More importantly every reference I can find for the appointment of Bel Ibni after the first campaign of Sennacherib has his reign as 702 - 699 immediately preceding Assur Nadin Shumi, itself linked to the destruction of Babylon in 689 BC. This fixation demands that campaign one of Sennacherib is in 703/2... (pages 4 & 8).**

If we now put all the data together including the biblical data in the charts below we come to the conclusion that Hezekiah's 6<sup>th</sup> year (from co-regency) was Tishri 710 BC to Tishri 709 BC and that Hoshea's 9th year was Nisan 709 BC to Nisan 708 BC. **This places the Fall of Samaria between Nisan and Tishi in 709 BC.**

**Hezekiah rules for 29 years (including a co-regency that lasts 2 years) from 715/714 BC to 687/686 BC and Manasseh is born in 697/696 BC and is co-regent for his first 11 years and from when he turns 12 he rules for another 44 years to 643/642 BC for a combined total of 55 years.**



2Ki 16:1-2 In the 17th year of Pekah... Ahaz... king of Judah began to reign... and reigned 16 years in Jerusalem.  
\* This is when Ahaz became primary king as his 12th year (from co-regency) is 3 years later in Pekah's 20th year. His 16 years appears to be from his co-regency.

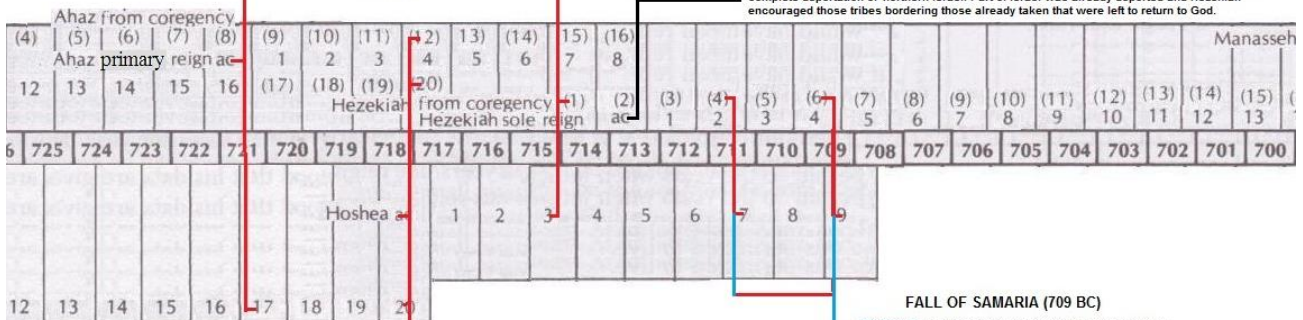
2Ki 18:1-2 Now it came to pass in the 3rd year of Hoshea ... king of Israel, that Hezekiah ... king of Judah began to reign... he reigned 29 years in Jerusalem.

\* Ahaz's 12th year occurs 3 years earlier yet Ahaz ruled 16 years and reigns another year so this is when Hezekiah begins his co-regency. His accession year then his 1st sole year follows. An assumption is made that the 29 years is from the start of his co-regency as all the synchronisms with Hoshea are linked to his co-regency.

2Ch 29:1 Hezekiah began to reign when he was 25 years old... In the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them.

2 Ch 30:1, 5-6, 10-11 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah... that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover... So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba even to Dan... saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD ... and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria... So the posts passed from city to city through ... Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they ... mocked them. Nevertheless ... Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.

\* This could only happen after Ahaz (who was evil) had died and before the fall of Samaria and complete deportation of northern Israel. Part of Israel was already deported and Hezekiah encouraged those tribes bordering those already taken that were left to return to God.



2Ki 15:27 Pekah ... began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned 20 years.

2Ki 15:30 And Hoshea ... made a conspiracy against Pekah ... and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the 20th year of Jotham.

2Ki 17:1 In the 12th year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea ... to reign in Samaria over Israel 9 years.

\* Hoshea began to reign after Pekah's 20 years. This was the 12th year of Ahaz from the start of his co-regency. Ahaz's primary reign began only 3 years earlier in Pekah's 17th year yet 3 years later we read of Jotham's 20th year.

In the earlier notes on Jotham there is confirmation Hoshea's reign started 20 years from the start of Jotham's sole reign yet 2 Kings 15:33 says he only reigned 16 years. It would appear as if Ahaz promoted his son to be primary king a few years earlier.

#### FALL OF SAMARIA (703 BC)

2Ki 18:9-11 And it came to pass in the 4th year of king Hezekiah, which was the 7th year of Hoshea ... king of Israel, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it: even in the 6th year of Hezekiah, that is the 9th year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria.

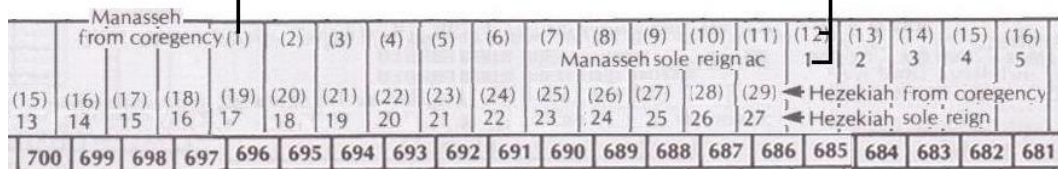
\* Note that Hezekiah's 4th and 6th years are counted from the beginning of his co-regency.

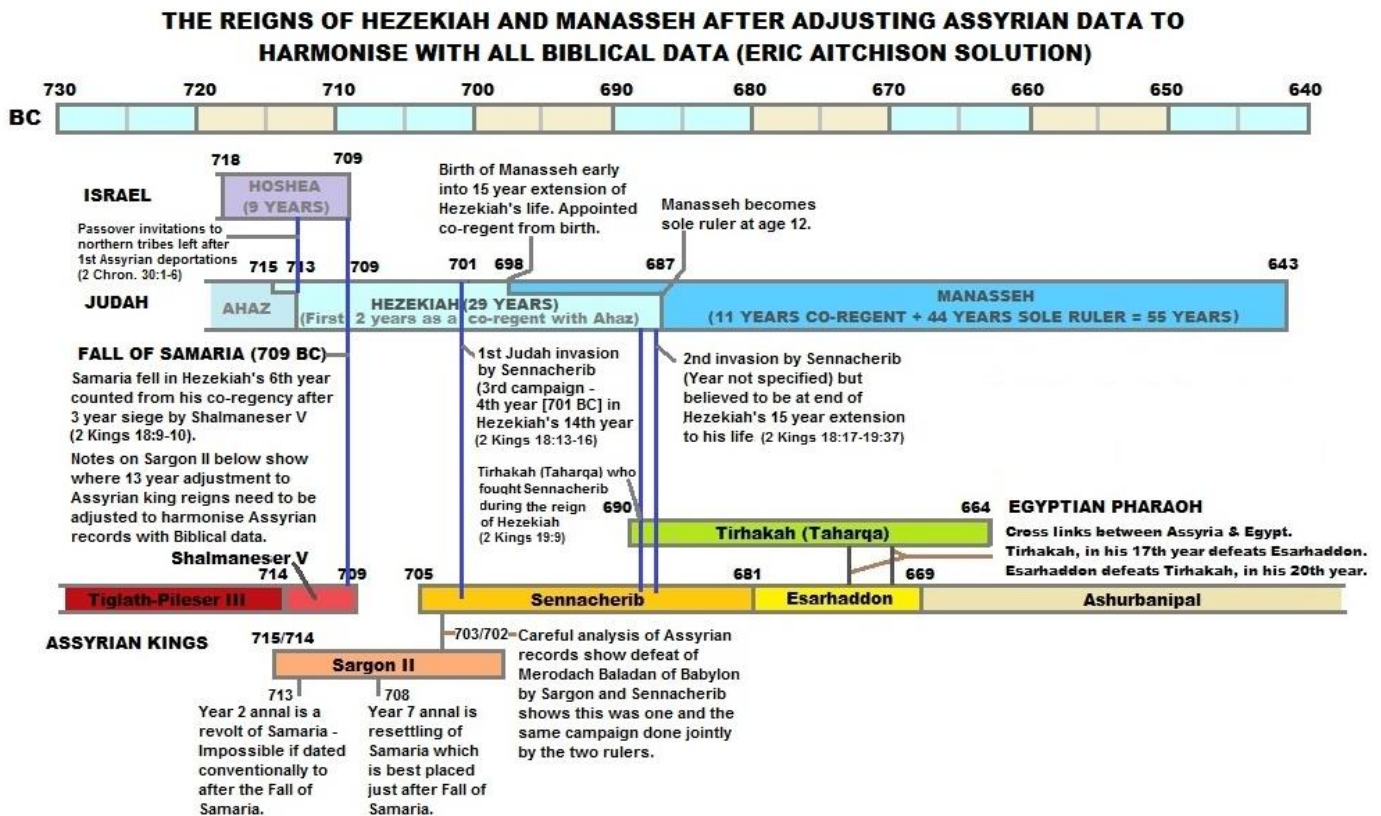
There is solid evidence using Assyrian chronology that the 14th year of Hezekiah when Sennacherib came against him (2 Kings 18:13) was 701 BC and that Manasseh succeeded Hezekiah in 686 BC. The end of Jehoiachin's reign when Nebuchadnezzar captured him and Jerusalem is dated by Babylonian sources to 586 BC.

Adding the reign lengths of Manasseh to Jehoiachin gives 11 extra years. The most likely reason for this is that Manasseh's 55 years includes 11 years of co-regency during Hezekiah's last years when God told him that he only had 15 more years to live (2 Kings 20:1-6).

2 Ki 20:1 Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king, and he reigned 55 years in Jerusalem.

\* See note to the left regarding his co-regency. Manasseh was installed from birth as co-regent when Hezekiah knew he was in his last 15 years of life. The reign of 55 years for Manasseh includes his years as a co-regent.





## The Two Dominant Bible Chronologies

While we are given an abundance of synchronisms between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel there is still a good deal of interpretation how to handle this data due to various factors. Dr Floyd Jones sums up the biggest of these problems:

The great problem in working out the chronology for the period following Solomon's death whereupon the Kingdom divided into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah until the destruction of the Temple, Jerusalem and the carrying away of Judah to Babylon (c.586 BC) is well known to all Bible chronologists. It faces each squarely, like an implacable stone wall.

This problem is made readily apparent when we sum the length of the reigns of the Kings of Israel beginning at the reign of Jeroboam (the son of Nebat), through its collapse in the ninth year of Hoshea, viz:

1. Jeroboam I 22 yrs.
2. Nadab 2 yrs.
3. Baasha 24 yrs.
4. Elah 2 yrs.
5. Zimri (7 days only)
6. Omri 12 yrs.
7. Ahab 22 yrs.
8. Ahaziah 2 yrs.
9. Joram 12 yrs.
10. Jehu 28 yrs.
11. Jehoahaz 17 yrs.
12. Jehoash 16 yrs.
13. Jeroboam II 41 yrs.
14. Zachariah 6 months

15. Shallum 1 month
16. Menahem 10 yrs.
17. Pekahiah 2 yrs.
18. Pekah 20 yrs.
19. Hoshea 9 yrs.

**These reigns total 241 years, 7 months and 7 days.**

**If we then total the length of the reigns of the Kings of Judah for the same period of reign, that is from Solomon's son Rehoboam through the 6th year of Hezekiah (which was the 9th year of Hoshea, II Ki.18:10), we obtain 261 years as the length of the span – a difference of nearly 20 years.**

1. Rehoboam 17 yrs.
2. Abijah 3 yrs.
3. Asa 41 yrs.
4. Jehoshaphat 25 yrs.
5. Jehoram 8 yrs.
6. Ahaziah 1 yr.
7. Athaliah 7 yrs.
8. Joash 40 yrs.
9. Amaziah 29 yrs.
10. Uzziah 52 yrs.
11. Jotham 16 yrs.
12. Ahaz 16 yrs.
13. Hezekiah 6 yrs. (6 of his 29 total)

Thus, a built-in dilemma confronts the student from the onset.

From the earliest works, there have been offered two, and only two, possible solutions to the paradox. Either:

**1. The chronologist accepts Israel's 241 plus years as the correct length of the period and adjusts off the nearly 20 years of Judah by assuming periods of co-regencies, whether the Scriptures actually say this to be the case or not.**

This effectively subtracts these 20 years as the lengths of the various kings' reigns are made to overlap one another rather than to run in a linear, consecutive manner.

However, as shall be seen, the only Scriptural co-regency is that of Jehoshaphat and his son, Jehoram (II Ki.8:16).

**2. Or the chronologist accepts the 261 years as the length of this span of time by using Judah as the standard. He then "hangs" Israel from this standard, the 241 years being "stretched" by the insertion or addition of a period of years for one or more interregna.**

An interregnum is a period of time in which there is no king occupying the throne. Whereas the concept of a co-regency is familiar to most, the concept of an interregnum is probably a new one to the typical reader although such has occurred fairly often throughout history. Scripturally, an example of having no reigning king is clearly stated in I King 22:47 with regard to the Kingdom of Edom.

Babylonian history records an interregnum of 2 years which has been dated as 703-704 BC by secular historians, and another of 8 years duration from 688-681 BC. A more recent and familiar instance is that period in England's past from 1653-1658 AD when Oliver Cromwell governed as "protectorate" bringing the Monarchy to a temporary halt. This circumstance was an interregnum.

**As is true in the instances concerning the six to eight co-regencies proposed by various proponents who have accepted Israel as the criterion from which to work, no**

**actual mention of the term "interregnum" appears in the Holy Writ (The Chronology of the Old Testament, p.109-110).**

While there are several different Bible chronologies for this period there are two dominant Biblical chronologies. The first is that put forth by 17<sup>th</sup> century Irish Archbishop James Ussher, best known for his calculated date of 4004 BC for Creation. His prime supporter in the modern age is Dr Floyd Jones, author of the book "The Chronology of the Old Testament". He retains Ussher's chronology with only very slight adjustments. One example is that he accepts the same date for the Fall of Jerusalem as Edwin Thiele.

Edwin Thiele's chronology is the other dominant chronology and the one that has the most support in the academic community due to his strict upholding of both Babylonian and Assyrian chronology. While Babylonian chronology has been shown earlier to be quite accurate, Assyrian chronology has been shown to be not as accurate as it appears to the academic community.

Christian churches are divided between the two dominant chronologies. Evangelical and fundamentalist churches who support a young earth in particular, tend to side with Ussher's chronology. Those who have a more liberal approach to Bible history tend to support Thiele's chronology.

Thiele's chronology is also the one currently accepted by my own church, the United Church of God. Faced by Thiele's rejections of the Hezekiah/Hoshea synchronisms the United Church of God accepts McFall's solution of a long co-regency and accepts Thiele's sole reign dates with no change to Assyrian chronology.

As we have shown before with regards to working out the correct date for the Fall of Samaria, both chronological schemes have their weaknesses. As we work backwards through the divided kingdom we will compare and contrast the two dominant chronologies and then do a quick overview of others which, for the most part, incorporate a different mix of the same differences between the two dominant chronologies.

Edwin Thiele took the first of the two approaches noted in the last quote by applying co-regencies where indicated mathematically, if not stated explicitly, in the scriptures. He came up with a division of Israel date of 931 BC, some 44 years, after the date derived (975 BC) by James Ussher and Dr Floyd Jones who inserted two interregnums that totalled the difference of 20 years noted earlier.

This difference in years between Thiele's division of Israel date and that of Ussher and Jones is over twice that noted above between the totals for the regnal data added together.

James Ussher and Dr Floyd Jones felt that the Bible stated that there was a total of 390 years between the division of Israel and the Fall of Jerusalem based on a subjective interpretation of the 390 year prophecy in Ezekiel 4.

Edwin Thiele did not recognise this 390 years as applying to the length of time between the division of Israel and the Fall of Jerusalem. Free of this "constraint" he found mathematically that there were co-regencies in both Judah and Israel which not just

reduced the 261 years for the length of the kingdom of Judah but also reduced the length of the kingdom of Israel from the 241 years quoted above.

Another factor we'll look at soon that reduces the 241 regnal years of Israel further to the actual number of years for the length of the Israelite kingdom is correcting for the non-accession reckoning of reigns of the Israelite kings.

The fundamental basis of Ussher/Floyd Jones' chronology is the overall span of time they believe the Bible states there was between the division and/or idolatry of Israel and the Fall of Jerusalem. They believe it is 390 years according to a prophecy in Ezekiel 4, which itself is somewhat subjective.

A simple counting up of the reigns of the kings of Judah after Solomon equals 393 years but this does not factor in any co-regencies which could be included in these figures. Ussher/Floyd only recognised one co-regency – that between Jehoshaphat and his son Jehoram which reduced the total of years for the kings of Judah between the division and the captivity to 390 years which they believe is confirmation that the 390 year prophecy to the house of Israel in Ezekiel 4 is the actual span of time from the division to the captivity. But is this so?

The 390 year prophecy in Ezekiel 4 about the House of Israel's sin "constrained" Ussher and others to set a date for the split of the kingdom of Israel 44 years earlier than the more commonly accepted dates of Edwin Thiele. They took it as a marker that from the fall of Jerusalem (586 BC) back to when the kingdom split into two kingdoms was 390 years.

Is this the correct application of this prophecy? The prophecy concerns the House of Israel which had gone into captivity 120 years before Ezekiel gave the prophecy. Ezekiel's prophecy is given below:

**Eze 4:4** Also lie on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel on it; *according* to the number of days that you shall lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity.

**Eze 4:5** **For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, 390 days. So you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.**

**Eze 4:6** And when you have fulfilled them, lie again on your right side, and you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days; a day for a year; a day for a year, I have set for you.

There is nothing explicit stating that the 390 days began with the split of Israel and the sins of Jeroboam. That is one possible interpretation among others how this can be interpreted.

Dr Floyd Jones says that the prophecy is dated to the fall of Jerusalem, however, this does not appear to be the case. Though the timeframe of the book of Ezekiel does move towards the fall of Jerusalem, it begins 7 years earlier in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiachin's captivity dated to 593 BC. This prophecy is grouped with the group of prophecies at the beginning of the book so this prophecy in Ezekiel 4 appears to be dated to 7 years before the fall of Jerusalem which would mean extending the date of the split of Israel back another 7 years if the date when the prophecy was given is the end point for the iniquity of Israel.

Another problem for the Ussher/Jones interpretation of this verse is that it is well over a century after Samaria fell and Israel was taken into captivity by Assyria. The prophecy is

about the house of Israel followed by the 40 day/year one for the house of Judah. When the terms “children of Israel” or “whole House of Israel” are used the Bible is referring to all 12 tribes of Israel. When the term “house of Israel” is used it is referring to the political kingdom – the northern kingdom of Israel that Assyria took into captivity.

Why would the 390 years of the northern kingdom’s iniquity include the century after their captivity when they were already bearing their punishment? This appears illogical.

The Hebrew word “avon” can be translated either as iniquity or punishment. If interpreted as iniquity it implies in this verse the 390 years refers to a period in the past. However, if it is translated as punishment it implies that the 390 years refers to a period of future punishment.

Even if we interpret it as a period of past iniquity it doesn’t necessarily apply to the period from the division to the captivity. It could, in theory, refer to that period plus the 40 years in the wilderness, which would bring the division to close to Theie’s date for the division.

An important thing to notice in the prophecy is that 390 years (Israel) + 40 years (Judah) = 430 years. This is an important number in the Bible representing the time from the promises given to Abraham up to the Exodus (Gal. 3:16-17).

If we go ahead 390 years from the date of the prophecy (593 BC) we come to 203 BC. This is the time when the Parthian Empire comes on the scene and gains independence from the Greek Seleucids. As well documented in Stephen Collins' book "Parthia" the ruling class and much of its people were descendants of the Israelites relocated to the area of Parthia by the Assyrians.

**The time of the rise of the Parthian empire (203 BC), exactly 390 years after this prophecy was given, would represent the first time in centuries that the bulk of the northern tribes in exile had gained full independence.**

If we go further 40 years from that date of 203 BC we come to the time of the Maccabees which is the first time in centuries that the house of Judah (the Jews) gain full independence.

These facts appear to me to be too co-incidental and the most likely application of this prophecy of Ezekiel.

While it is still possible that the 390 year prophecy could refer to a period of past iniquity, I believe it is unlikely this refers to the number of years between the division and the fall of Jerusalem.

**We should not, therefore, be constrained to fit the kings of the divided kingdom period to this exact span of time. We should let the Biblical data point us the way back to the correct date for the division and not “force” the data to a particular date because of a dubious application of the Ezekiel 4 prophecy.**

Wikipedia makes these comments about James Ussher and his chronology that comes from his great work “The Annals of the World”:



James Ussher (sometimes spelled Usher, 4 January 1581 – 21 March 1656) was Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland between 1625 and 1656. He was a prolific scholar, who most famously published a chronology that purported to establish the time and date of the creation as the night preceding Sunday, 23 October 4004 BC, according to the proleptic Julian calendar. (Article – James Ussher)

Ussher's proposed date of 4004 BC differed little from other Biblically based estimates, such as those of Jose ben Halafta (3761 BC), Bede (3952 BC), Ussher's near-contemporary Scaliger (3949 BC), Johannes Kepler (3992 BC) or Sir Isaac Newton (c. 4000 BC).

Ussher's specific choice of starting year may have been influenced by the then-widely-held belief that the Earth's potential duration was 6,000 years (4,000 before the birth of Christ and 2,000 after), corresponding to the six days of Creation, on the grounds that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8). This view remains to be held as recently as 2000 AD, six thousand years after 4004 BC...

Ussher was able to establish an unadjusted Creation date of about 4000 BC. He moved it back to 4004 BC to take account of an error perpetrated by Dionysius Exiguus, the founder of the Anno Domini numbering system. Ussher chose 4 BC as Christ's birth year because Josephus indicated that the death of Herod the Great occurred in 4 BC. Jesus could not have been born after that date (Article – Ussher's chronology).

The Bible amazingly gives us enough data to determine the date of the division is 3029 years after the time it gives for the creation of Adam. The 975 BC division date of Ussher when we go back 3029 years gives us a date of 4004 BC for Adam's creation, which according to Ussher is exactly 4000 years before Christ was born. Just as the sun began to shine on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of creation (or re-creation after it "became waste and void"), the Son of God came into the world. For many fundamentalist Christians, this is just too coincidental to write off. However, there are a couple of problems with this.

Firstly, Jesus was not born in 4 BC but 5 BC. Herod the Great died around the time of Passover in 4 BC and would not have been alive at the time of Christ's birth as the Bible says he was if Christ was born in late 4 BC.

The second is that 6000 years of the age of man has already past if Ussher's date is correct. If we use 4005 or 4004 BC then the 6000 years would have ended in either 1996 or 1997. Paul in Hebrews 4 compares the 1000 years (millennium) after the second coming of Christ spoken of in Revelation 20 to the sabbath rest day – a day is as a thousand years (2 Peter 3:8).

Edwin Gibbon in chapter 15 of his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" confirms this was the belief of the early church that they believed that there would be 6000 years for the age of man followed by the millennium represented by the sabbath day.

If we accept Ussher's date then the 6000 years has passed and the Kingdom is clearly not here. If we accept Thiele's date for the division and go back 3029 years then that 6000 years has not arrived yet. Go back 3029 years and then go forward 6000 years from Thiele's date gives us a date of 2041.

Additionally, while there is an exactness to many things in the Bible (eg. Christ dying on Passover day, the Holy Spirit coming on Pentecost), the creation of Adam does not necessarily have to be exactly 4000 years before the birth of Christ (4005 BC). It theoretically could be 4000 years before the start of His ministry or His death.



Edwin Thiele was a professor of the Andrews University, a seventh-day Adventist university. His chronology as given in his definitive work "The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings" is seen by most scholars as an improvement on Ussher's work as it synchronises better with Assyrian chronology, seen in the scholarly world as very accurate by virtue of its "yearly" eponym lists. Wikipedia provides this summary of the book and its chronology:

The chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah rests primarily on a series of reign lengths and cross references within the books of Kings and Chronicles, in which the accession of each king is dated in terms of the reign of his contemporary in either the southern Kingdom of Judah or the northern Kingdom of Israel, and fitting them into the chronology of other ancient civilizations.

However, some of the biblical cross references did not seem to match, so that a reign which is said to have lasted for 20 years results in a cross reference that would give a result of either 19 or 21 years. Thiele noticed that the cross references given during the long reign of King Asa of Judah had a cumulative error of 1 year for each succeeding reign of the kings of Israel: the first cross-reference resulted in an error of 1 year, the second gave an error of 2 years, the third of 3 years and so on.

**He explained this pattern as a result of two different methods of reckoning regnal years: the accession year method in one and the non-accession year method in the other. Under the accession year method, if a king died in the middle of a year, the period to the end of that year would be called the "accession year" and Year 1 of the new king's reign would begin at the new year.**

**Under the non-accession year method the period to the end of the year would be Year 1 of the new king and Year 2 would begin at the start of the new year. Israel appears to have used the non-accession method, while Judah used the accession method until Athaliah seized power in Judah, when Israel's non-accession method appears to have been adopted in Judah.**

**In addition, Thiele also concluded that Israel counted years using the ecclesiastical new year starting in the spring month of Nisan, while Judah counted years using the civil year starting in the autumn month of Tishri. The cumulative impact of differing new years and different methods of calculating reigns explained, to Thiele, most of the apparent inconsistencies in the cross references.**

Unknown to Thiele when he first published his findings, these same conclusions that the northern kingdom used non-accession years and a spring New Year while the southern kingdom used accession years and a fall New Year had been discovered by Valerius Coucke of Belgium some years previously, a fact which Thiele acknowledges in his Mysterious Numbers.

**Based on his conclusions, Thiele showed that the 14 years between Ahab and Jehu were really 12 years. This enabled him to date their reigns precisely, for Ahab is mentioned in the Kurk Stele which records the Assyrian advance into Syria/Palestine at the Battle of Qarqar in 853 BC, and Jehu is mentioned on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III paying tribute in 841 BC. As these two events are dated by Assyrian chronology as being 12 years apart, Ahab must have fought the Assyrians in his last year and Jehu paid tribute in his first year.**

**Thiele was able to reconcile the Biblical chronological data from the books of Kings and Chronicles with the exception of synchronisms between Hoshea of Israel and Hezekiah of Judah towards the end of the kingdom of Israel and reluctantly concluded that at that point the ancient authors had made a mistake. Oddly, it is at that precise**

**point that he himself makes a mistake, by failing to realize that Hezekiah had a coregency with his father Ahaz, which explains the Hoshea/Hezekiah synchronisms.**

This correction has been supplied by subsequent writers who built on Thiele's work, including Thiele's colleague Siegfried Horn, TC Mitchell and Kenneth Kitchen, and Leslie McFall. (Article – The Mysterious Numbers of the Kings).

The author of this Wikipedia article was wise enough to see the mistake of Thiele in rejecting the synchronisms between Hezekiah and Hoshea, though, as we have seen, the Leslie McFall solution of a long co-regency period for Hezekiah with his father Ahaz is not the correct solution to harmonise all the Biblical and Assyrian data.

One fundamental foundation of Thiele's chronology are two synchronisms between Shalmaneser III and Ahab conventionally dated to Shalmaneser III's 6<sup>th</sup> year (853 BC) and Shalmaneser III and Jehu on the Black Obelisk conventionally dated to Shalmaneser III's 18<sup>th</sup> year (841 BC).

We have previously shown the weaknesses of these two synchronisms when we investigated how reliable Assyrian chronology was. Neither appear to be rock solid so we are not constrained by this as we work through plotting the reigns of the kings.

### **The Methods of Handling the Bible Regnal Data**

In chapter two of his book "The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings", Edwin Thiele's gives a good outline of the factors that we need to bear in mind when it comes to handling and interpreting the Bible's chronological data. He writes:

In working out the chronology of a nation, a primary requisite is that the chronological procedure of a nation be understood. The following items must be definitely established:

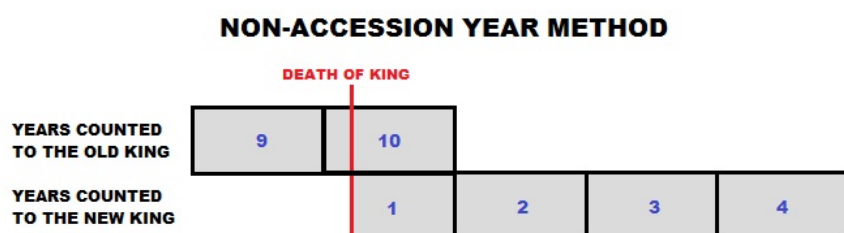
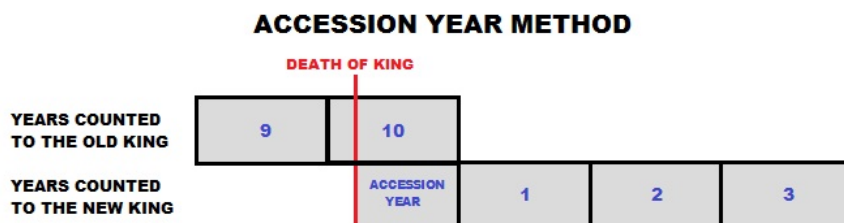
- 1) The year from which a king began to count the years of his reign – whether from the time of his actual accession, from the following year or from some other time.
- 2) The time of the calendar year when a king began to count his reign.
- 3) The method according to which a scribe of one nation reckoned the years of a king of a neighbouring state, whether according to the system used in his nation or according to that of the neighbour [if different].
- 4) Whether or not the nation made use of co-regencies, whether or not several rival rulers might have been reigning at the same time and whether interregna occurred [a period where there was no king].
- 5) Whether during the period under review a uniform system was followed or whether variations took place and finally,
- 6) Some absolute date during the period in question from which the years can be figured backward and forward so that the full chronological pattern might be secured...

Just when did a king begin counting the years of his reign? When he ascended the throne did his first year begin immediately? Or, did he wait till the beginning of the next new year and designate that his first year? Customs were not the same.

In Assyria, Babylon and Persia when a king came to the throne, the year was usually called his accession year but not till the first day of the next new year did the king begin reckoning events in his own first year. This system of reckoning is called the **accession-year system**...

In other places a king began to reckon his first year from the day he first came to the throne. This method of reckoning is known as the **non-accession year system**...

It will be noticed that any particular year of a king's reign according to the non-accession year system is always one year higher than than according to the accession year system (p.43-44).



In terms of accuracy for determining the span of time for a greater period over several reigns, the accession method is better because the year of transition between any two kings **IS NOT COUNTED TWICE** as it is with the non-accession year method.

An example in the kings of Israel and Judah showing the difference from using these two different systems is the period between the division of Israel to the 18<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoshaphat when the death of Ahaziah took place.

The total number of years from counting the reigns of Judah's kings is 79 years. The total number of years adding up the 7 kings of Israel is 86 years – a difference of 7 years for the 7 kings of Israel.

Judah's regnal years using the accession year method represent actual years. For Israel's kings 1 year needs to be subtracted from the official regnal years to correct for the actual years elapsed as per the table below:

Israel King	Official Years	Actual Years
Jeroboam	22	21
Nadab	2	1
Baasha	24	23
Elah	2	1
Omri	12	11
Ahab	22	21
Ahaziah	2	1
	-----	-----
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>79</b>

Both Dr Jones and Thiele acknowledge a brief change from accession-year reckoning to non-accession year reckoning in Judah for the reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah and Joash before reverting back to accession-year reckoning from the reign of Amaziah on. The change to Israel's non-accession year reckoning for several reigns was due to the intermarriage between the two royal houses in Jehoshaphat's reign.

Thiele has the kingdom of Israel reverting from non-accession year reckoning to accession-year reckoning at the same time that Judah reverted back to accession-year reckoning from the reign of Jehoash on. The change was probably due to the Assyrian influence in the region and the Assyrians used accession-year reckoning.

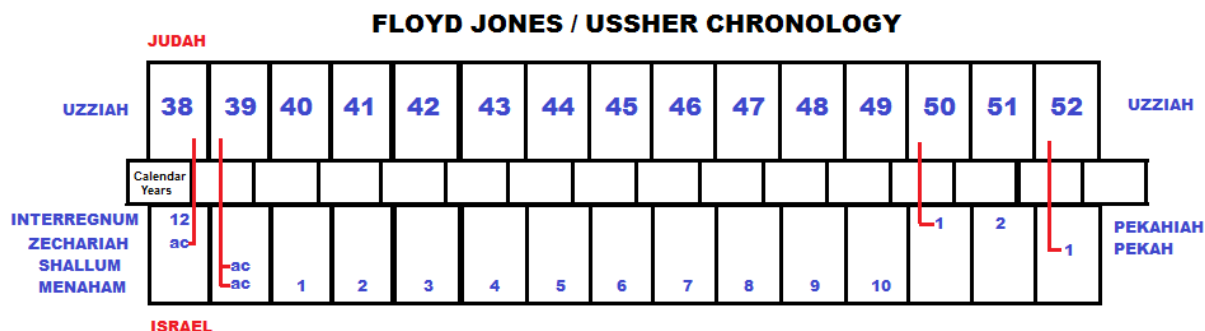
Below is a chart showing the period of accession and non-accession reckoning in Israel and Judah according to Thiele. This chart comes from Leslie McFall's work "The Chronology of the Hebrew Kings" (page 6).

Kings of Israel												
Jeroboam	Nadab	Baasha	Elah	Zimri	Omri	Ahab	Ahaziah	Jehoram	Jehu	Jehoshaz	Jehoash (coregent)	
Jehoshaphat	Nonaccession						Accession					
Accession						Non-accession			Accession			
Jeroboam	Abijah	Asa	Jehoshaphat				Jehoram	Ahaziah	Jehoash	Amaziah	Azariah	
Kings of Judah												
PERIOD A				PERIOD B				PERIOD C				
Jotham				Ahaz				Hezekiah				

Dr Floyd Jones in his charts from Jehoash on has an odd mixture of non-accession (NAM) and accession year dating (AM) used for the remaining kings of Israel – Jehoash (NAM), Jeroboam II (NAM), interregnum, Zechariah & Shallum (not applicable due to reigns only lasting months), Menahem (AM), Pekahiah (NAM), Pekah (NAM), interregnum, Hoshea (AM).

As seen in the chart below, Dr Floyd Jones has Menaham's accession year in Uziah's 39<sup>th</sup> year as per the synchronism then his year 1 as Uziah's 40<sup>th</sup> year which makes Menaham's 10<sup>th</sup> and last year as Uziah's 49<sup>th</sup> year yet we are told that Pekahiah ascended the throne in Uziah's 50<sup>th</sup> year.

Without an accession year this could be "fudged" if the king died on the last day of the year (Uzziah's 49<sup>th</sup> year) and the next day in the new year (Uzziah's 50<sup>th</sup> year) was reckoned as the beginning of Menaham's reign. However you would have to replicate this rare "fudge" again if Pekah doesn't have an accession year. Uziah's 51<sup>st</sup> year would be BOTH Pekahiah's 2<sup>nd</sup> year AND Pekah's 1<sup>st</sup> year (in violation of the synchronism to Uziah's 52<sup>nd</sup> year) without an accession year.



Both chronological schemes believe that the kingdom of Israel began their regnal years from Nisan 1 (which falls around March/April) which was the beginning of the religious year.

For the kingdom of Judah, Thiele believes that they began their regnal year on Tishri 1 (Rosh Hashanah), the start of the civil year which falls around September/October. Dr Floyd Jones believes that the regnal year of Judah was in sync with the kingdom of Israel also starting on Nisan 1 at the start of the religious year.

Both views have good evidence to support each other and this could go either way. In my charts for the whole of the divided kingdom period I have used Thiele's Tishri-to-Tishri regnal year for Judah and as we go through the differences between the two major chronologies I will show some evidence I found that makes me lean more towards Thiele's view.

### Comparing the Differences of the Two Major Chronologies for the Divided Kingdom Period

Now that we have calculated our date for the Fall of Samaria as 709 BC let us look at the last years of the northern kingdom of Israel and work out the reigns for the kings of Israel and Judah. We will compare and contrast the two dominant chronological views and examine each of their differences and then conclude which one is more accurate.

Below is a chart of the last years of the northern kingdom showing how each chronological scheme looks:

**EDWIN THIELE'S CHRONOLOGY**

**JUDAH**

**ISRAEL**

**CO-REGENCY**

**UZZIAH (AZARIAH) (52 YEARS)**

**JOTHAM (16 YEARS) BUT DIED IN 20TH YEAR**

**AHAZ (16 YEARS)**

**HEZEKIAH (29 YEARS)**

**JEROBOAM II (41 YEARS)**

**MENAHEN (10 YEARS)**

**PEKAHIAH (2 YEARS)**

**PEKAH (20 YEARS)**

**HOSHEA (9 YEARS)**

**SHALLUM (1 MONTH)**

**ZECHARIAH (6 MONTHS)**

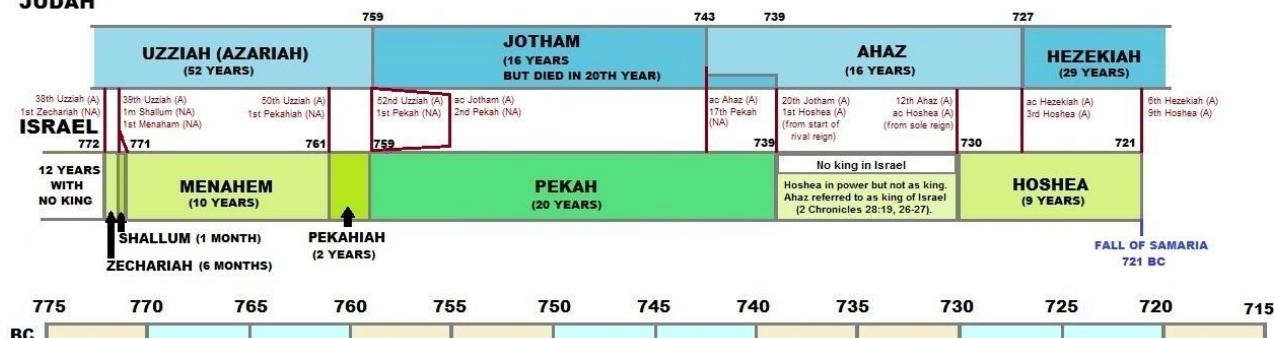
**FALL OF SAMARIA 723 BC**

**775 770 765 760 755 750 745 740 735 730 725 720 715**

**BC**

38th Uzziah (A) (from CR)  
39th Uzziah (A) (from CR)  
40th Uzziah (A) (from CR)  
41st Uzziah (A) (from CR)  
42nd Uzziah (A) (from CR)  
43rd Uzziah (A) (from CR)  
44th Uzziah (A) (from CR)  
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94th Uzziah (A) (from CR)  
95th Uzziah (A) (from CR)  
96th Uzziah (A) (from CR)  
97th Uzziah (A) (from CR)  
98th Uzziah (A) (from CR)  
99th Uzziah (A) (from CR)  
100th Uzziah (A) (from CR)

## JUDAH



As we have seen, Thiele felt compelled by Assyrian chronology to begin Hezekiah's reign in 716/715 BC and by also accepting the Assyrian Fall of Samaria date of 723/722 BC he has no part of Hezekiah's reign overlapping with Hoshea in complete violation of 3 synchronisms.

There are 3 synchronisms between Hezekiah and Hoshea:

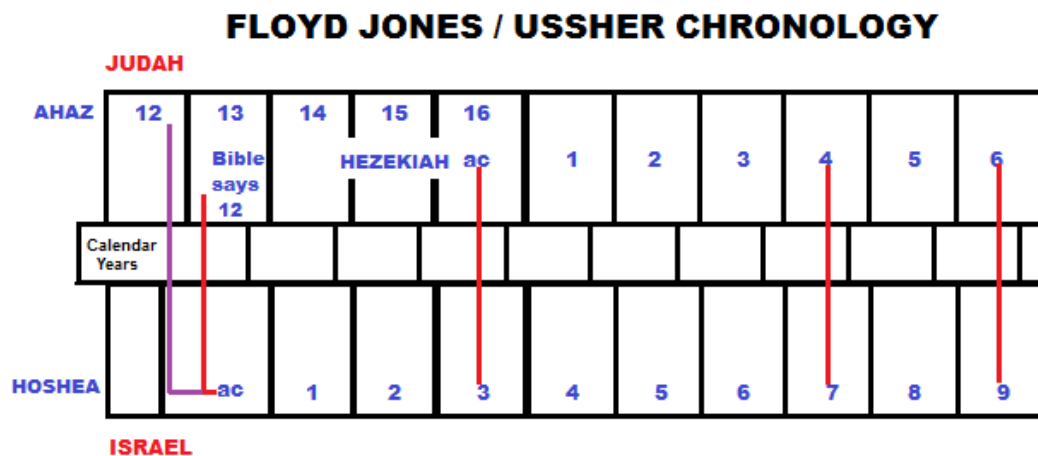
Fall of Samaria = 9<sup>th</sup> year of Hoshea = 7<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:10)

There is one other synchronism that Thiele rejected and it was the synchronism between the accession of Hoshea in Ahaz's 12<sup>th</sup> year (2 Kings 17:1). This synchronism helps us to see that there was a brief co-regency between Ahaz and Hezekiah, a co-regency that is rejected by Jones/Ussher.

Dr Floyd Jones has a rather blatant fudge to avoid this sticky synchronism as shown in the chart below. He has extended the accession year of Hoshea by another few months so it will overlap with Ahaz's 12<sup>th</sup> year.

Using Thiele's Tishri-to-Tishri regnal year and the Fall of Samaria date of 709 BC we calculated before we find that Ahaz' 16<sup>th</sup> year and the beginning of Hezekiah's sole

reign (714/713) is 27 years before the 687/686 BC date for the end of Hezekiah's reign, not 29 years so it is my conclusion that the 29 years of Hezekiah is counted from his co-regency, as are the synchronisms with Hoshea.



**DIFFERENCE:** Jones/Ussher have a 9 Year Interregnum between Pekah and Hoshea which Thiele does not have. He rejects the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ahaz synchronism with Hoshea's accession and extends the reign of Ahaz past the Fall of Samaria.

The 9 year interregnum advocated by Jones/Ussher is borne from two things. The first is their "necessity" for all total regnal years assigned to the kings of Judah to exclude any co-regency period where there is an overlap with the previous king's number of years assigned to them. For the regnal years assigned to two successive kings to include years of overlap would reduce the 390 years they mistakenly believe (in my opinion as shown earlier) there is between the division and the Fall of Jerusalem.

The second reason for the interregnum is to account for various synchronisms. The beginning of the pro-regency period when Ahaz started to reign alongside Jotham is dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Pekah (2 Kings 16:1). Pekah reigned for 20 years (2 Kings 15:27), only 3 more years after the start of Ahaz's pro-regency yet we are told that Hoshea, who succeeded Pekah, began his reign in Ahaz's 12<sup>th</sup> year (2 Kings 17:1).

We have two choices to deal with this data:

- 1) We can assign a 9 year interregnum between Pekah and Hoshea as Jones/Ussher have done.
- 2) Ahaz's 12<sup>th</sup> year is reckoned from the start of a co-regency period that started several years before he became pro-regent.

What complicates matters for Jones/Ussher is that Hoshea assassinated Pekah and reigned in his place (2 Kings 15:30).

The way that they get around this complication is to say that Hoshea was in power after the assassination of Pekah but not as king. They say that Ahaz of Judah temporarily controlled Israel for several years before Hoshea became sole king in Ahaz's 12<sup>th</sup> year

from the start of his pro-regency. They cite 2 Chronicles 28:19 and verses 26-27 which refers to Ahaz as a king of Israel. Let's look at these verses and see if there is a case for this point of view.

**2Ch 28:19** For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel. For he loosed *immorality* in Judah, and sinned grievously against the LORD...

**2Ch 28:26** And the rest of his acts and of all his ways, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

**2Ch 28:27** And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem. But they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. And his son Hezekiah reigned in his place.

While he is referred to as king of Israel in verse 19 we see in verse 28 that the royal burial site which other verses state was in Jerusalem is referred to as the tombs of the kings of Israel even though it was where the kings of Judah were buried. 2 Chronicles 21:20 in a very similar verse says that Jehoshaphat of Judah was buried "in the City of David but not in the tombs of the kings."

As Judah was one of the tribes of Israel and their kings descended from the kings of the united kingdom of Israel under David and Solomon the use of the term "king of Israel" does not necessarily mean that Judah had control of the northern kingdom's territory at this time.

**If one takes a better look at verse 19 again one can see that Judah was brought LOW when Ahaz was king. Ussher/Jones' idea that Ahaz was in control of both Judah and Israel in Hoshea's time is in contradiction to what it says in 2 Chronicles 28:19 where God brought Judah LOW in the days of Ahaz.**

We read a few verses back in the same chapter (2 Chronicles 28:5-6) that Ahaz was delivered into the hands of Hoshea's predecessor Pekah who killed 120 000 from Judah and nowhere in the verse does it speak of Judah gaining any ascendancy against Israel. In fact, it says much the opposite.

My conclusion is that there was no interregnum and that there was a co-regency period between Jotham and Ahaz before Ahaz became pro-regent. It is from the start of the co-regency that the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ahaz synchronism with the start of Hoshea's reign is reckoned from.

**DIFFERENCE: Thiele has Ahaz's 16 years excluding pro-regent period with Jotham while Jones/Ussher include Ahaz's pro-regent period with Jotham in Ahaz's 16 years.**

Thiele has Hezekiah beginning his reign in 716/715 BC. He accepts the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Jotham synchronism (2 Kings 15:30) with the accession of Hoshea which he dates to 732/731 BC. The difference is 16 years hence the pro-regent period between Jotham's 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> years is not included in the 16 years of Ahaz.

Ussher has the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ahaz at the same time as the accession of Hoshea and counts the 1st year of Ahaz (in Pekah's 17<sup>th</sup> year) from the start of his pro-regency period so there



is 12 years up to the start of Hoshea's reign for Ahaz and another 4 of Ahaz's reign after that up to when Hezekiah starts his reign.

We determined previously that the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ahaz when Hoshea took the throne is to be calculate from the start of a co-regency prior to the 4 year pro-regency. As there are only 4 years of Ahaz after Hoshea takes the throne then the 16 years is inclusive of the co-regency and pro-regency.

**DIFFERENCE: Thiele has Pekah's first 12 years as a rival reign over Ephraim before sole ruling Israel in his last 8 years while Jones/Ussher have no such split and have the reigns of Menahem, Pekahiah and Pekah all successive to one another.**

The 12 rival reign of Pekah with Menaham (10 years) and Pekahiah (2 years) is borne out of the "need" to maintain two synchronisms with Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III. Thiele cites a synchronism between Tiglath-Pileser III (conventionally dated 745-727 BC) and Menahem and there is a clear statement of Tiglath-Pileser III that he placed Hoshea over Israel (The Bible says that Hoshea overthrew Pekah. Tiglath-Pileser III notes this overthrowing of Pekah and allowed/appointed Hoshea to remain as king of Israel).

Thiele has Hoshea starting his reign in 732/731 BC. Go back 22 years to Menahem's last year and it falls in 752/751 BC, some 7 years before Tiglath-Pileser III. If both kings had contact with Tiglath-Pileser III who only ruled 19 years then there must have been some overlap of reigns between the Israel kings.

Let's look at the merit of these two synchronisms, the merits of a rival reign during Menaham and Pekahiah's reigns by Pekah and another related question – was Pul, the king of Assyria who extracted tribute from Menahem one and the same as Tiglath-Pileser III?

First of all, let's look at what Josephus has to say in his "Antiquities of the Jews":

And after this manner it was that this Menahem continued to reign with cruelty and barbarity for ten years. But when **Pul, king of Assyria**, had made an expedition against him, he did not think meet to fight or engage in battle with the Assyrians, but he persuaded him to accept of a thousand talents of silver, and to go away, and so put an end to the war. This sum the multitude collected for Menahem, by exacting fifty drachme as poll-money for every head; after which he died, and was buried in Samaria, and left his son Pekahiah his successor in the kingdom, who followed the barbarity of his father, and so ruled but two years only, after which he was slain with his friends at a feast, by the treachery of one **Pekah, the general of his horse**, and the son of Remaliah, who laid snares for him.

**Now this Pekah held the government twenty years**, and proved a wicked man and a transgressor. **But the king of Assyria, whose name was Tiglath-Pileser**, when he had made an expedition against the Israelites, and had overrun all the land of Gilead, and the region beyond Jordan, and the adjoining country, which is called Galilee, and Kadesh, and Hazer, he made the inhabitants prisoners, and transplanted them into his own kingdom. And so much shall suffice to have related here concerning the king of Assyria (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 9, chapter 11, verse 1).

If Tiglath-Pileser III was one and the same as Pul one has to wonder why Josephus didn't use Pul in both times he mentioned the king of Assyria or Tiglath-Pileser in both times he mentions the king of Assyria? This seems to imply that they were not one and the same king of Assyria.

This passage from Josephus strongly argues against a rival reign by Pekah during the reigns of Menahem and Pekahiah. **When Pekah assassinated Pekahiah he was under Pekahiah's authority as the general of his horses NOT some rival in another part of Israel.**

Further information on the synchronisms between Tiglath-Pileser III and Menahem and Hoshea and the equation of Pul with Tiglath-Pileser III is discussed by Dr Floyd Jones who provides the following information:

Most modern scholars insist that the Assyrian annals record Tiglath-pileser (III) as claiming to have received tribute from Menahem, King of Israel. This has led nearly all scholars to identify the Biblical "Pul" as being Tiglath-pileser (III) rather than his immediate predecessor as stated in the Authorized Bible (author's emphasis and brackets):

"And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, **and** the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he [Tiglath-pileser, cp. II Ki.15:29] carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day" (I Chr.5:26, KJB).

In order to "honor" the Assyrian data, the New King James translation alters this Scripture to read "So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, **that is**, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria. ..." rather than the more correct word "and" as the King James faithfully records.

Thus two problems arise. Do the Assyrian records say that Menahem paid tribute to Tiglath-pileser and were Pul and Tiglath-pileser one and the same Assyrian sovereign?

#### 1. MENAHEM AND THE ASSYRIAN ANNALS

There are only two extant Assyrian texts that mention Menahem. The Assyrian document quoted below is an undated fragmentary annalistic text ascribed to Tiglath-pileser (III), and is the one to which appeal is invariably made regarding this matter.

This identification may be seen as correct as it apparently references both Pekah and Hoshea of Israel, a synchronism which the Biblical text confirms (II Ki.15:29-30):

..."[As for **Menahem** I ov]erwhelmed him [like a snowstorm] and he...fled like a bird, alone, [and bowed to my feet(?)]. I returned him to his place [and imposed tribute upon him to wit:] gold, silver, linen garments with multicolored trimmings,...great...[I re]ceived from him. Israel (lit.: "Omri-Land" bit Humria)...all its inhabitants (and) their possessions I led to Assyria.

**"They overthrew their king Pekah (Pa-qaha) and I placed Hoshea (A-u-si-) as king over them.** I received from them 10 talents of gold, 1,000(?) talents of silver as their [tri]bute and brought them to Assyria."

**The continual assertion that the Annals of the Kings of Assyria record Tiglath-pileser (III) as claiming to have received tribute from Menahem is seen as false as the name "Menahem" appears in brackets meaning that the annals is unreadable and the word has been supplied by the translator.**

**Thus, this identification rests solely upon conjecture. The rationale behind this supposition is to be found in the second Assyrian annals text which refers to the tribute of a "Menihimmu of Samerina" (Menahem of Samaria?). This fragmentary text has been assigned to Tiglath-pileser (III). Based on this data, the name "Menahem" was added and inserted in the bracket in the preceding text.**

However Tiglath-pileser's annals were engraved upon the slabs of the rebuilt central palace at Calah (Nimrud) and were later removed by Esarhaddon to be used in his southwest

palace of the same city. Removal and trimming of the stone have resulted in reducing the annals to a fragmentary state, and thus it is possible that these texts are actually those of a previous monarch(s). With regard to this and the uncertainty surrounding the reliability of these particular fragments, Daniel David Luckenbill has written:

"Without the aid of the Eponym List with notes it would have been impossible to arrange the fragments in their chronological order, **and, even so, future discoveries are likely to show that the arrangement now generally accepted is wrong.**"

Thus it is seen that there is no compelling Assyrian data demanding the placing of the reigns of Menahem and Tiglath-pileser (III) as parallel. On the authority of the Hebrew Text, this author positively asserts that the second "slab" inscription has been wrongly assigned to Tiglath-pileser (III) whereas in truth it should be credited to an earlier Assyrian monarch whom the Biblical text calls "Pul" (Ashur-dan III). The testimony of the Hebrew Text unmistakably places Pul in the days of Menahem's reign (772-761 BC) and states that he extracted tribute from that King of Israel:

"And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand. And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land" (II Ki.15:19-20).

Hence the situation is that one Assyrian text has the name "Menahem" placed in brackets by conjecture based solely upon another fragmented text which reliable external evidence shows to have been mistakenly assigned to Tiglath-pileser (III).

Yet it is this identification that has been used by the Assyrian Academy to overrule the Hebrew chronology, cause anachronisms, and in so doing violate and cast Biblical passages aside as erroneous. As shall be shown, Pul and Tiglath-pileser (III) are not one and the same.

**Moreover, only a few lines down in this same fragmentary annals appears the name "Pa-qa-ha" (Pekah, see quotation on page 179), the King of Israel who began his reign only two years after Menahem's death.**

**The context indicates – the Biblical chronology demands – that the missing name in the first mentioned damaged Assyrian annalistic text should be Pekah, not Menahem.**

**Thus, there is no Assyrian historical text which says or even infers that Tiglath-pileser collected tribute from Menahem of Israel, although almost all scholarly sources proclaim that he so did.**

## 2. TIGLATH-PILESER (III) IS NOT "PUL"

Thiele has compared two Babylonian documents, King List A and the Babylonian Chronicle. The first document mentions that a "Pulu" (or Porus in Ptolemy's Canon) reigned two years in Babylon following a three year reign by Ukin-zer. The second states that Tiglath-pileser took the throne of Babylon after Ukin-zer had reigned three years and died the following year. The comparison brought him to the conclusion that "Pulu" (or "Porus") was Tiglath-pileser (III), and in this determination he apparently is correct. Thiele then assumes that the similarity of these names to the "Pul" in the Hebrew Text must insure that they are one and the same individual.

The academic world has accepted this assumption, especially in light of the general absence of the name "Pul" in the existing Assyrian data. Yet this absence cannot be taken as final...

If the Assyrian records are accurate in this time period, Pul is Ashur-dan III. As Assyrian names usually consisted of compounds of two, three or more elements, his complete name may well have originally been Ashurdanin-pal. Pul is the Hebrew form of the Akkadian name "Pal". It is known that this name was given to the eldest son of Shalmaneser II (III).

Shalmaneser II's (III) son, Shamasi-adad V, was also known as Shamas-Pul (Vul = Pul as "V" and "P" are interchangeable). Moreover, Shamas-Pul was Ashur-dan III's "grandfather" and Ashur-dan III's "father", Adad-nirari III, was known as "Pullush". Thus the word "Pul" is firmly attached to his immediate lineage and fits the Biblical narrative (The Chronology of the Old Testament, p.170-173).

After going through what the Bible, Josephus and the Assyrian records have to say my conclusion is that Tiglath-Pileser III is not the Pul mentioned in the Bible and that there is no need to have any overlap between Tiglath-Pileser III and Menahem. There is, though, clear Biblical and Assyrian support for Tiglath-Pileser III and Hoshea being ruling contemporaries.

Josephus' evidence of Pekah being the general of Pekahiah's horses at the time he assassinated Pekahiah leads me to the conclusion that there was no rival reign by Pekah during the reigns of Menahem and Pekahiah.

**DIFFERENCE: Thiele Has Jotham's 16 Years Including Co-Regency With Uzziah while Jones/Ussher do not.**

This difference comes about because of Thiele's mistaken belief in a rival reign between Pekah and Menahem in order to overlap Menahem's reign with Tiglath-Pileser III's which we have shown above is not required.

Thiele acknowledges the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Jotham synchronism with the start of Hoshea's reign when he killed Pekah (2 Kings 15:30) who reigned for 20 years (2 Kings 15:27). Pekah's 20 years are therefore in alignment with Jotham's 20 years, in theory, starting and ending at the same time.

Thiele has Menahem's years overlapping with Pekah's years 1 to 10 and Pekahiah's reign overlapping with Pekah's years 11 and 12 before Pekah becomes sole ruler for the last 8 years of his 20 year reign.

Pekahiah's reign begins in Uzziah's 50<sup>th</sup> year (2 Kings 15:23) and Pekah's reign in Uzziah's 52<sup>nd</sup> year (2 Kings 15:27). According to Thiele, Uzziah dies around Pekah's 12<sup>th</sup> year. Since Jotham's 20 years parallel the 20 years of Pekah, Thiele believes the first 12 of Jotham's 20 years are as co-regent. Jotham reigned 16 years but allowed Ahaz to be pro-regent after his first 16 years.

We have shown that there was no rival reign between Pekah and the other kings Menahem and Pekahiah.

Jotham's 20th year and Pekah's 20 years are at the same time when Hoshea takes over from Pekah after killing him. Ahaz's pro-regency period starts in Pekah's 17<sup>th</sup> year and Jotham's reign starts 16 years before.

Uzziah died after ruling 52 years (2 Kings 15:2) and we are told that in his 52<sup>nd</sup> and last regnal year that Pekah's 20 year reign began so Jotham's sole reign started close to the same time as Pekah's sole reign of 20 years.

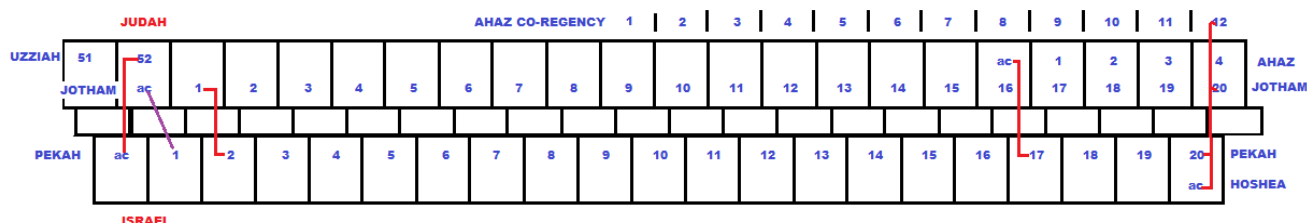
If Judah had a Nisan-Nisan regnal year as Jones/Ussher believes then Jotham's accession year had to be the same as Pekah's accession year or Pekah's year 1 if they

used the non-accession year method. As Jotham's 20<sup>th</sup> year was also Pekah's 20<sup>th</sup> then Pekah must have used the accession year method, otherwise Jotham's 20<sup>th</sup> year would have been Pekah's 21<sup>st</sup> year.

So, Jotham's accession year had to be the same as Pekah's accession year according to the above logic, however, we are told that Jotham's reign began, not in Pekah's accession year or his 1<sup>st</sup> official year but in Pekah's 2<sup>nd</sup> year (2 Kings 15:32)? How can this be? This is a 2 year discrepancy when you factor in the accession year.

I initially thought that perhaps there was a case for a 2 year rival reign between just Pekahiah's 2 years and Pekah but was forced to disbandon that idea after reading what Josephus said about these two rulers.

If we use a Tishri-Tishri regnal year for Judah which is 6 months out of sync with Israel's then the synchronisms line up as per the chart below:



Notice if we were to pull Jotham's reign back 6 months for a Nisan-Nisan regnal year in Judah so Jotham's 20<sup>th</sup> and Pekah's 20<sup>th</sup> align then Pekah's 2<sup>nd</sup> year would be the same Jotham's 2<sup>nd</sup> year, neither Jotham's accession year nor his 1<sup>st</sup> official year.

If we move back Jotham's reign in this chart 6 months and say that Pekah used non-accession reckoning then Pekah's 1<sup>st</sup> year matches Uzziah's 52<sup>nd</sup> year and Pekah's 2<sup>nd</sup> year is Jotham's 1<sup>st</sup> official year following his accession year (Uzziah's last year) BUT Pekah's reign count is one higher than Jotham's and Jotham's 20<sup>th</sup> would be Pekah's 21<sup>th</sup> but this cannot be since Pekah reigned 20 years.

With a Tishri-Tishri regnal year Pekah's 2<sup>nd</sup> year when Jotham started his reign straddles Jotham's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years. While almost all other synchronisms are given from a king's accession year this appears to be an exception when the 1<sup>st</sup> official year, not the accession year, is noted in the synchronism.

We have concluded that there does not need to be a co-regency between Uzziah and Jotham to deal with the Bible synchronisms involving Jotham.

While the Bible gives no information whether there was such a co-regency or not between Jotham and his father Uzziah, Josephus does confirm that there was a co-regency between Jotham and Uzziah. Josephus writes the following about the incident where Uzziah became leprous:

While Uzziah was in this state, and making preparation [for futurity], he was corrupted in his mind by pride...

Accordingly, when a remarkable day was come, and a general festival was to be celebrated, he put on the holy garment, and went into the temple to offer incense to God upon the golden altar, which he was prohibited to do by Azariah the high priest, who had fourscore priests with him, and who told him that it was not lawful for him to offer sacrifice, and that "none besides the posterity of Aaron were permitted so to do." And when they cried out that he must go out of the temple, and not transgress against God, he was wroth at them, and threatened to kill them, unless they would hold their peace.

**In the mean time a great earthquake shook the ground and a rent was made in the temple, and the bright rays of the sun shone through it, and fell upon the king's face, insomuch that the leprosy seized upon him immediately.**

And before the city, at a place called Eroge, half the mountain broke off from the rest on the west, and rolled itself **four furlongs [Half a mile]**, and stood still at the east mountain, till the roads, as well as the king's gardens, were spoiled by the obstruction. Now, as soon as the priests saw that the king's face was infected with the leprosy, they told him of the calamity he was under, and commanded that he should go out of the city as a polluted person.

Hereupon he was so confounded at the sad distemper, and sensible that he was not at liberty to contradict, that he did as he was commanded, and underwent this miserable and terrible punishment for an intention beyond what befitted a man to have, and for that impiety against God which was implied therein.

**So he abode out of the city for some time, and lived a private life, while his son Jotham took the government;** after which he died with grief and anxiety at what had happened to him, **when he had lived 68 years, and reigned of them 52;** and was buried by himself in his own gardens (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 9, chapter 10, verse 4).

After Uzziah became leprous he was in no fit state to govern and his son Jotham was acting king, though it was not until after Uzziah died after ruling 52 years that the 16 years of Jotham's reign are counted.

Technically, this could be regarded as a pro-regency but in my charts I have only used the term pro-regency for a period when the regent was ruling at a time when years are not being reckoned to the older king that is still alive (eg. the additional 4 years after Jotham's 16 regnal years he was alive while Ahaz ruled). In all other cases in my charts I have used the term co-regency.

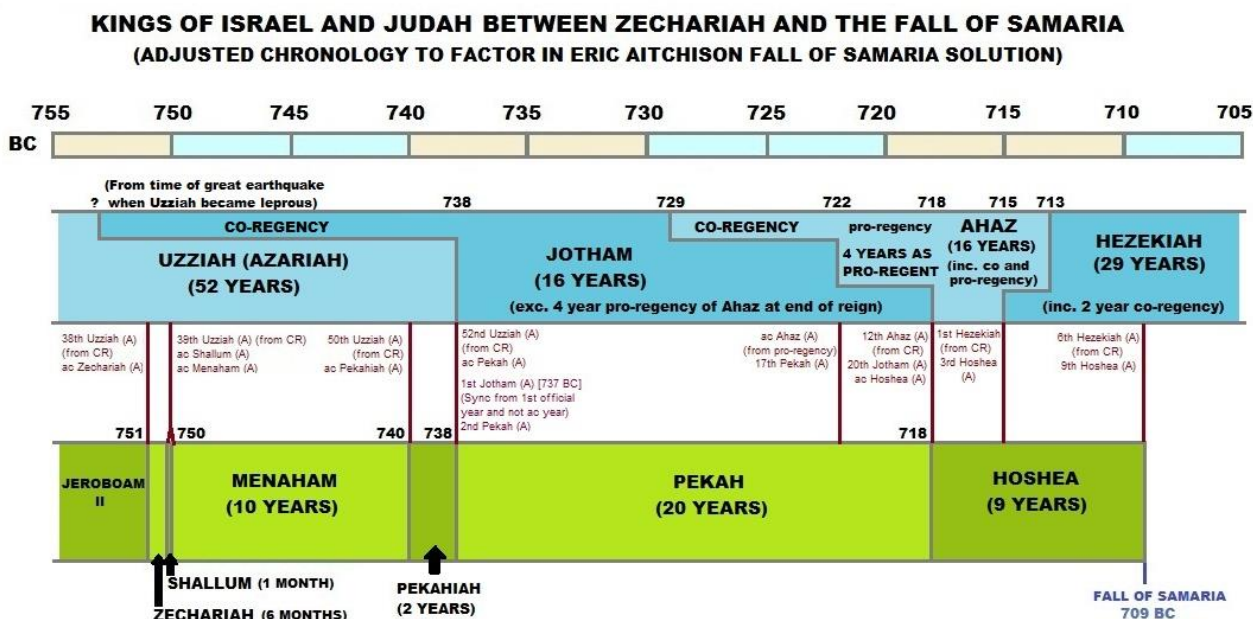
So how long was this co(or pro)-regency period of Jotham after his father Uzziah became leprous? Our only clue comes from comparing Josephus with the opening verse of the book of Amos which reads:

**Amo 1:1** The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa; the Word which he saw concerning Israel **in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, 2 years before the earthquake.**

The great earthquake of Uzziah's reign occurred on the day that Uzziah became leprous. Amos tells us that Jeroboam II was ruling in Israel 2 years before the great earthquake (also mentioned in Zechariah 14:5).

Zechariah took over Israel in Uzziah's 38<sup>th</sup> year which was 14 years before Uzziah's 52<sup>nd</sup> and last year so the earthquake was a minimum of 12 years before Uzziah's death. Jotham's co(or pro)-regency period after his father Uzziah became leprous was, therefore,

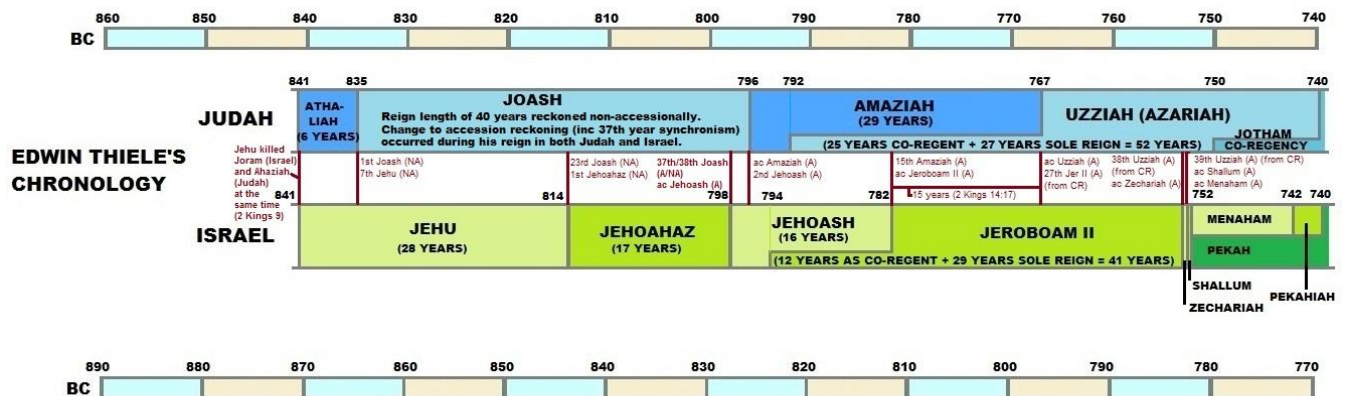
The chart below shows what we have determined so far for the reigns between Zechariah and the Fall of Samaria.



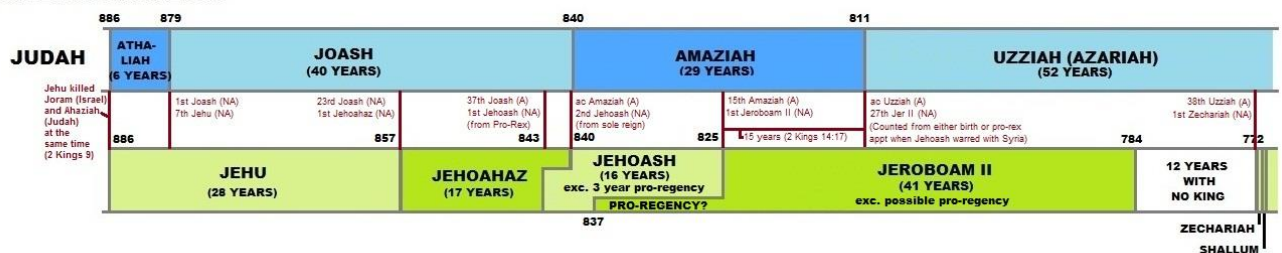
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## KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH BETWEEN JEHU AND JEROBOAM II



## DR FLOYD JONES / USSHER CHRONOLOGY



**DIFFERENCE:** Jones/Ussher has Jeroboam II's reign followed by a 12 year Interregnum before Zechariah's Reign while Thiele has Zechariah immediately following Jeroboam II's reign.

While there may be an inference in scripture that might possibly justify an interregnum between Pekah and Hoshea's sole reign, there is no such inferences for this proposed 12 year interregnum between Jeroboam II and his son Zechariah's reign.

Jones/Ussher believe there can be no overlap between the 29 years attributed to Amaziah (2 Kings 14:1-2) and the 52 years attributed to Uzziah (2 Kings 15:1-2).

The choice of using interregnums over unstated (but mathematically implied) co-regencies is made by Jones/Ussher to keep the total span of time between Jeroboam I's idolatry and the Fall of Jerusalem to the 390 years they believe is stated in the prophecy of Ezekiel 4, which I have shown support for this being a misapplication of this prophecy.

The "need" for an interregnum here comes from a comparison of the synchronisms. Jeroboam begins his reign in Amaziah's 15<sup>th</sup> year. Amaziah reigns 29 years and Uzziah becomes king when his father Amaziah dies 15 years later (2 Kings 14:17).

At this point we are told Uzziah begins his reign in Jeroboam II's 27<sup>th</sup> year (2 Kings 15:1-2). Since we are told Jeroboam became king only 15 years earlier Jones/Ussher state that his 27<sup>th</sup> year is either how old he was or that it was the 27<sup>th</sup> year since he became co-regent BUT Jeroboam II's 41 years (2 Kings 14:23) MUST be counted from his sole reign and not include any co-regency.



Using these assumptions, Uzziah becomes king in Jeroboam II's 15<sup>th</sup> sole reigning year (27<sup>th</sup> since co-regency) Jeroboam II lives, at most, another 26 years after reigning for 41 years, assuming the 41 years is how long Jeroboam II is sole ruler.

His successor Zechariah does not become king in Uzziah's 26<sup>th</sup> year. We are told he becomes king in Uzziah's 38<sup>th</sup> year (2 Kings 15:8) – a 12 year difference hence the “need” for an interregnum.

The 12 year difference Thiele believes can be explained by noting that the accession of Uzziah in Jeroboam II's 27<sup>th</sup> year since becoming co-regent is when Uzziah became sole ruler and that the synchronism of Zechariah becoming king in Uzziah's 38<sup>th</sup> year is counted from when Uzziah became co-regent.

The political climate in the northern kingdom makes the idea of a 12 year interregnum without a king in Israel ludicrous. Neither Zechariah nor his successor Shallum lasted more a year in power as power-hungry contenders fought for control. For the throne to be vacant for 12 years is just a crazy proposition in such a political climate as existed at this time.

Josephus writes the following about the transition between Jeroboam and his son Zechariah:

When Jeroboam the king had passed his life in great happiness, and had ruled forty years, he died, and was buried in Samaria, and his son Zachariah took the kingdom (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 9, chapter 10, verse 3)..

Not so much of a hint of an interregnum is recorded by Josephus. Is it logical that a king would die and his son not take the throne or be acknowledged as king for 12 years?

The 12 years of co-regency for Jeroboam II is a much more logical choice than a 12 year interregnum to account for the 12 years difference highlighted by the synchronisms we looked at above.

**DIFFERENCE: Thiele has Uzziah's 52 years inclusive of a 25 year co-regency with Amaziah while Jones/Ussher have no co-regency for Uzziah's 52 years.**

Let's recap what we covered above.

Jeroboam begins his reign in Amaziah's 15<sup>th</sup> year. Amaziah reigns 29 years and Uzziah becomes king when his father Amaziah dies 15 years later (2 Kings 14:17).

At this point we are told Uzziah begins his reign in Jeroboam II's 27<sup>th</sup> year (2 Kings 15:1-2). Since we are told Jeroboam II became king only 15 years earlier then his 27<sup>th</sup> year, according to Thiele, is counted from when he became co-regent.

Since Uzziah becomes king in Jeroboam II's 15<sup>th</sup> sole reigning year (27<sup>th</sup> year since co-regency according to Thiele) Jeroboam II lives, at most, another 26 years after reigning for a total of 41 years.

His successor Zechariah does not become king in Uzziah's 26<sup>th</sup> year. We are told he becomes king in Uzziah's 38<sup>th</sup> year – a 12 year difference.

The 12 year difference Thiele believes is explained by noting that the accession of Uzziah in Jeroboam II's 27<sup>th</sup> year since becoming co-regent is when Uzziah became sole ruler.

The synchronism of Zechariah becoming king in Uzziah's 38<sup>th</sup> year is counted from when Uzziah became co-regent, NOT from when he became sole ruler.

The subsequent synchronisms with Israel's kings in Uzziah's 39<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup> years DO NOT WORK from when he became sole ruler. They do work from when he became a co-regent.

My conclusion is that Uzziah did have a co-regency period that is included in his total 52 years.

Thiele says that Uzziah's co-regency period was 24 years in length before sole ruling for 28 years. Before we can confirm or alter that we need to look at whether the 41 years of Jeroboam II included or excluded his 12 year co-regency period.

**DIFFERENCE: Thiele has Jeroboam II's 41 years inclusive of a 12 year co-regency with Jehoash while Jones/Ussher believe if there was a co-regency it was not a part of his 41 years.**

Jones/Ussher state that the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam (2 Kings 15:1-2) when Uzziah became king was either his age or when he became co-regent.

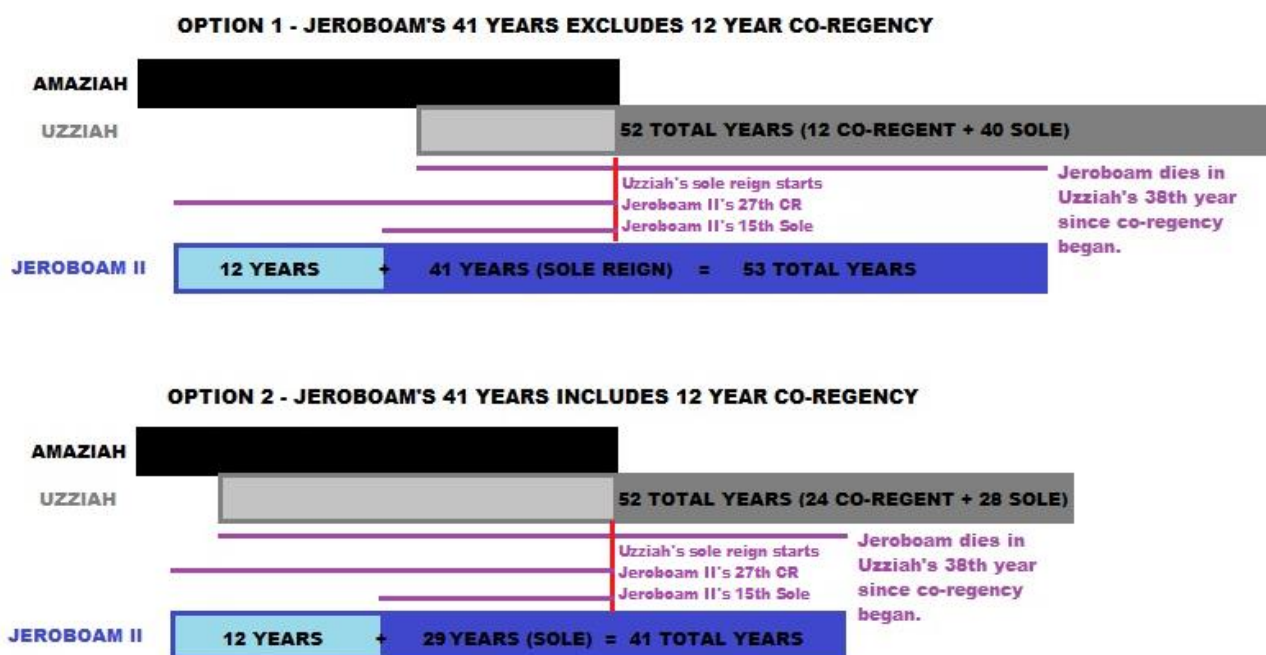
Josephus says the following about when Uzziah became king:

After the same manner did Uzziah, the son of Amaziah, begin to reign over the two tribes in Jerusalem, in the **14<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Jeroboam** (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 9, chapter 10, verse 3).

This 14<sup>th</sup> year synchronism (15<sup>th</sup> year when we account for the difference of Israel using non-accession reckoning) shows that the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam II is clearly not when Jeroboam II became sole ruler.

Does the 41 years of Jeroboam II include or exclude a 12 year co-regency of Jeroboam II? Is there any merit to the idea that the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam II is his age rather than his regnal year?

If there was a co-regency when we put the synchronisms together we have two possible options as shown in the chart below:



In both options we see Jeroboam II dies in Uzziah's 38<sup>th</sup> year from when his co-regency began. Uzziah begins his reign in Jeroboam II's 15<sup>th</sup> sole year (27<sup>th</sup> year from co-regency). Jeroboam II's sole reign begins in Amaziah's 15<sup>th</sup> year.

Both options fit all the synchronisms. The overall time span is 12 years in difference depending on whether Jeroboam's 41 years includes or excludes his 12 year co-regency. So which option is the correct one?

Edwin Thiele argued for option 2 with its shorter overall span. The main motivation for this is to fit the kings into the right span of time for both Ahab and Jehu to be ruling in Shalmaneser III's 6<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> years respectively. We have seen evidence previously showing the weakness of these apparent synchronisms so we are not bound to fit the reigns of the Israelite and Judah kings to fit with them.

In Thiele's favour is that most reigns, including all those we have looked at so far, have their total regnal years inclusive of co-regency years. The reason for this is simple in that it inflates the ego to have a greater number of years in a king's total of regnal years.

The other thing in favour of Thiele is that if Jeroboam II's regnal years were exclusive of his 12 year co-regency then he would have reigned for a grand total of 53 years including his co-regency – longer than even Uzziah who's 52 years is quite an exceptionally long reign. To have two neighbouring rulers in ancient times rule for so long is especially rare.

In order to support option 2 Thiele needed to offer an alternative understanding to one particular bible passage which I quote below:

**2Ki 14:17** And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years.

2Ki 14:18 And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not written in the Book of the Matters of the Days of the Kings of Judah?

2Ki 14:19 And they made a plot against him at Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. And they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there.

2Ki 14:20 And *they* brought him on horses, and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.

2Ki 14:21 **And all the people of Judah took Azariah [Uzziah] who *was* 16 years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah.**

2Ki 14:22 He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after the king slept with his fathers.

Thiele has a 24 year co-regency period for Uzziah which is impossible if Uzziah was 16 years old when he became sole ruler. He cites the phrase “the people of Judah took Azariah” as an exceptional situation which prompted the people to place him on the throne at that age. If he was co-regent beforehand he would simply assume the throne and would not be placed there by the people.

There was such an exceptional event that would cause the people, not his father, to make him co-regent very early in his life. Amaziah was captured and imprisoned by Jeroboam’s father Jehoash (2 Kings 14:9-13) and probably was released upon Jehoash’s death when Jeroboam came on the throne and Amaziah, we are then told, lived another 15 years (2 Kings 14:17).

He was 16 at the time the people made him king. If Uzziah had a 24 year co-regency his father would have been 29 years old if this event took place 5 years into Amaziah’s reign as Amaziah was 25 years old at the time he took the throne (2 Kings 14:2). This would mean that Amaziah was a mere 14 years old when he became a father to Uzziah if Thiele’s view is correct. While a bit of a stretch this would not be that uncommon.

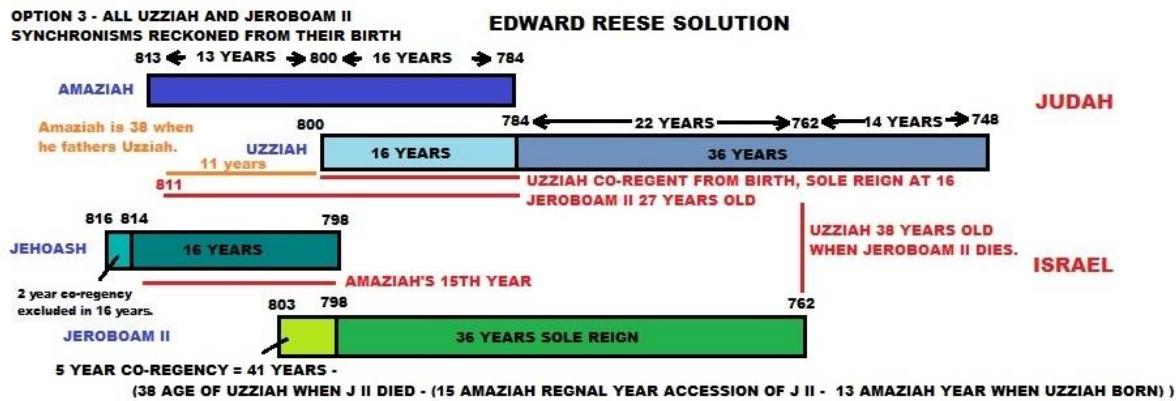
We have looked at two options so far for dealing with this rather sticky issue relating to the reigns of Jeroboam II and Uzziah. There is a third option that we should examine.

My friend, Eric Aitchison, who’s research on the Fall of Samaria shaped my own view, has another option and it is one that is shared by Edward Reese, who compiled the chronological arrangement for the Reese Chronological Bible, only with different fixed dates. Eric came up with this third option independently of Edward Reese.

Bth Eric and Edward Reese take the Jeroboam 27<sup>th</sup> year synchronism as being from his birth and they also take the synchronisms of Uzziah as his age at the time – possibly as a co-regent from birth.

They say that Uzziah’s 38<sup>th</sup> year synchronism is to be taken from his age. This could, combined with Jeroboam’s 27<sup>th</sup> being from his age, make Uzziah’s sole reign start in between options 1 and 2 easing the problem of how old Amaziah was when he fathered Uzziah for option 2. As there is not just one but four Uzziah synchronisms (38, 39, 50 & 52) they would all have to be factored from his birth in addition to the Jeroboam 27<sup>th</sup> year synchronism.

Below is a chart showing how their option 3 works:



There are a few weaknesses that I see in this view:

1) For all other synchronisms in the divided kingdom apart from this period synchronisms are ALWAYS by regnal year and not by age. This solution requires an UNSTATED exception not once (Jeroboam II's 27th year) but 5 times (Uzziah's 38, 39, 50 and 52nd year synchronisms).

2) Uzziah's conception occurs 2 years before the final 15 years of Amaziah. While not a definitive proof, Thiele believes the addition of the unusual comment that he lived another 15 years after Jehoash's death is because Jeroboam II released him from his father's captivity at that time. IF true then Uzziah could not have been conceived when this view says he is.

3) Josephus states in "Antiquities of the Jews" that Uzziah reigned 52 years and lived for 68 years placing the start of his 52 year reign at 16, not his birth. It must be stated that Josephus lived centuries after these events and was reconstructing the period as we are trying to today so his word is not necessarily the final word.

4) Assuming Uzziah was co-regent from birth in this view, it is very unusual to be made co-regent at birth unless there was some impeding crisis or risk to the co-regent's father.

If we take Jeroboam II's 27<sup>th</sup> year as his age and the Uzziah synchronisms from his co-regency when the reigns are plotted there is actually no difference to option 1.

Option 1 of an exclusive co-regency of Jeroboam II has Uzziah being made a co-regent at 4 and becoming sole ruler at 16 and dying at 56.

Option 2 of an inclusive co-regency of Jeroboam II has Uzziah being made co-regent at 16 and then at 40 becoming sole ruler and dying at 68.

Option 3 has Uzziah being made co-regent at birth at becoming sole ruler at 16 and dying at age 52.

All options have BOTH strengths and weaknesses and it is almost like having to pick the lesser of several anachronistic views.

Option 3 to me is the weakest of the three possibilities because of the combination of those four weaknesses that I outlined above.

Choosing option 1 would mean the fixed dates before this point would be 10 years earlier than Thiele's. Choosing option 2 means the fixed dates before this point are 2 years later than Thiele's.

Getting a little ahead of ourselves, if we use Thiele's date for the division of Israel and working back we would have a creation date of 3960 BC. Option 1 if there are no further changes from Thiele's scheme, would give us a creation date of 3970 BC and option 2 would give us a creation date of 3958 BC.

If we go back 6000 years from the crucifixion (30 AD) the date is 3971 BC (remember no zero year) which is very close by a single year to option 1.

If there are 49 years between Jubilee years and if the start of Christ's ministry was the Jubilee year then the closest Jubilee to the end of the 7 years of Israel conquering Canaan was 1396 BC. Thiele's dates has the year after the conquest as 1399 BC. Option 1 has it as 1409 BC. Option 2 has that year as 1397 which is the closest to when the first Jubilee was reckoned from.

If there are 50 years between Jubilee years and if the start of Christ's ministry was the Jubilee year then the closest Jubilee to the end of the 7 years of Israel conquering Canaan was 1425 BC.

To me this is very line ball choosing between options 1 and 2. I am going to use Thiele's option 2 with my charts at the end of this divided kingdom section but I will make reference to alternate dates for other major events if we were to choose option 1 for this particular difference between Thiele and Ussher/Jones.

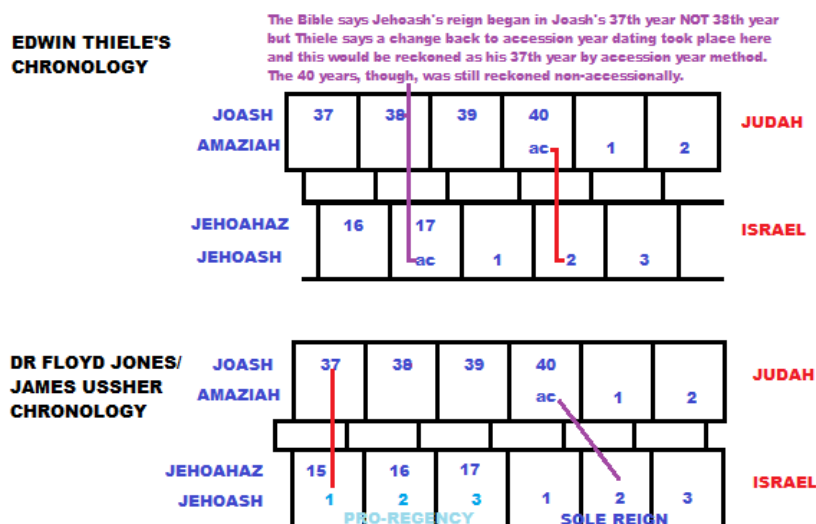
While the age of Amaziah when he fathered Uzziah (14) is unusually young with this option it is not out of the question. This, to me, is the biggest weakness of option 2.

I believe Thiele has a marginally better case for a co(or pro)-regency appointment by the people when Uzziah was 16 as opposed to starting his sole reign at 16 when his father died. The people would not have been involved in his appointment if his father died and we do know the Amaziah was taken captive early in his life.

Additionally, co-regencies were included in the total years for most kings with a co-regency and it would have been highly unusual for Jeroboam to have reigned a total of 53 years if the co-regency was excluded in his 41 years.

**DIFFERENCE:** Jones/Ussher has a 3 year pro-regency between Jehoahaz and Jehoash, that is not a part of Jehoash's reign length of 16 years while Thiele says there is no co or pro-regency and the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Joash is due to a change in reckoning between non-accession to accession dating in Judah.

The chart below highlights in clearer detail the differences between the two major chronologies at the time period where Jehoash (Israel) and Amaziah (Judah) become king.



The first problem to note in Jones/Ussher's chronology chart is that the first year of Jehoash would be the same as Jehoahaz's 17<sup>th</sup> and last year (2 Kings 13:1) if they used non-accession dating. This would line up Jehoash's 2<sup>nd</sup> year with the accession year of Amaziah (2 Kings 14:1).

To keep the the synchronism of Jehoash starting to rule in Joash's 37<sup>th</sup> year (2 Kings 13:10) the pro-regency can be reduced from 3 to 2 years to compensate. A 2 year co(or pro)-regency that is not included in Jehoash's 16 years would match up with the synchronisms.

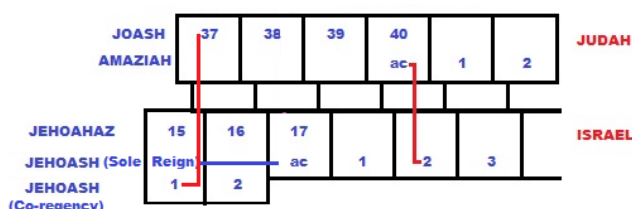
Thiele has a different solution than a co-regency that is exclusive to the 16 years reckoned to Jehoash (2 Kings 13:10). Thiele has Judah using a Nisan-Nisan regnal year which we have shown earlier is required to deal with one earlier synchronism. The accession year of Uzziah must straddle the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years of Jehoash. It cannot straddle Jehoash's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year as Jeroboam's accession year would straddle the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> years of Amaziah rather than be in his 15<sup>th</sup> as required by the next synchronism. Jehoash's accession year can't be pushed back a year in the chart above.

Jehoash's accession year, therefore, straddles the 38<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> year of Joash. Rather than state that there was a 1-2 year co-regency, Thiele says that there was a change back from non-accession to accession year reckoning during Joash's reign and that the 38<sup>th</sup> year reckoned non-accessionally is reckoned accessionally as the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Joash.

I should note that Dr Floyd Jones is in agreement with Thiele that Judah changes back to accession reckoning at this same point in time.



If we are to be consistent with the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Joash and his 40 years being reckoned the same way then it can only be done by reckoning both non-accessionally. To do that we have to recognise a 1-2 year co-regency of Jehoash that is not included in Jehoash's 16 years as seen in the chart below. This is the only major change that Leslie McFall makes in his chronology of the northern kingdom of Israel compared to Edwin Thiele. While exclusive co-regencies are the exception and not the rule, I favour this over Thiele's inconsistent solution. Either way, there is no change in the sole reigns of these kings nor the fixed dates.



**EDWIN THIELE'S CHRONOLOGY**

NOTE: For Israel's kings (and Jehoram of Judah) the actual length of their reign is one less than their official reign length due to non-accession method of counting their years.

**KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH BETWEEN AHAAB AND JORAM**

BC	875	870	865	860	855	850	845	840
<b>JUDAH</b>	<b>ASA (41 YEARS)</b>		<b>JEHOSHAPHAT (3 YEARS CO-REGENCY + 22 YEARS SOLE REIGN = 25 YEARS)</b>			<b>JEHORAM (8 YEARS) exc. co-regency</b>		<b>ATHALIAH</b>
	38th/37th Aaa (NA/A) 1st Ahab (NA)		ac Jehoshaphat (A) 4th/5th Ahab (A/NA)	* Change in Judah here between accession to non-accession reckoning to match Israel's non-accession reckoning.		17th Jehoshaphat (NA) 1st Athaliah (NA)	18th Jehos (NA) 2nd Jehor (NA) (from CR) 1st Joram (NA)	1st Jehoram (NA) 1st Athaliah (NA) 12th Joram (NA)
	874				853	852		841
<b>ISRAEL</b>	<b>OMRI</b>		<b>AHAB (22 YEARS)</b>			<b>JORAM (12 YEARS)</b>		<b>JEHU</b>
							<b>AHAZIAH (2 YEARS)</b>	

**DR FLOYD JONES / USSHER CHRONOLOGY**

BC	920	915	910	905	900	895	890	885
<b>JUDAH</b>	<b>ASA (41 YEARS)</b>		<b>JEHOSHAPHAT (25 YEARS)</b>			<b>JEHORAM (3 YR PRO-REX) (8 YEARS) including co-regency</b>		<b>ATHALIAH</b>
	38th/37th Aaa (NA/A) 1st Ahab (NA)		ac Jehoshaphat (A) 4th/5th Ahab (A/NA)	* Change in Judah here between accession to non-accession reckoning to match Israel's non-accession reckoning.		17th Jehoshaphat (NA) 1st Athaliah (NA)	18th Jehos (NA) 2nd Jehor (NA) (from Temp pro-rex) 1st Joram (NA)	1st Jehoram (NA) (from CR) 5th Joram (NA) 1st Athaliah (NA) 12th Joram (NA)
	918				898	897		886
<b>ISRAEL</b>	<b>OMRI</b>		<b>AHAB (22 YEARS)</b>			<b>JORAM (12 YEARS)</b>		<b>JEHU</b>
							<b>AHAZIAH (2 YEARS)</b>	



**DIFFERENCE:** Thiele has Jehoshaphat's 25 years inclusive of a co-regency with Asa followed by an 8 year reign of Jehoram that does not include a co-regency while Jones/Ussher see Jehoram as having a 3 year pro-regency (years 17-19 of Jehoshaphat) followed later by a 4 co-regency and another 4 years of sole rule with his 8 years consisting of only his co-regency and sole reign but not earlier pro-regency.

This sounds like quite the mouthful and rather complex. There are 6 synchronisms that we have fit correctly to align the reigns correctly for this period.

The first and last of these helps us to fix the overall span of time between them. We are told that Jehoshaphat starts to reign (1 Kings 22:41) in Ahab's 4<sup>th</sup> year (5<sup>th</sup> year when reckoned non-accessionally). The second king of Israel after Ahab, Joram is killed at the same time as Ahaziah, the king of Judah, by Jehu, so both Jehu's and Athaliah's reigns begin at the same time (2 Kings 9:21-27).

There are 17 years left of Ahab's reign when Jehoshaphat begins to reign. Ahab's 22 years (1 Kings 16:29) becomes 21 actual years when non-accessional counting is corrected. Ahaziah reigns 2 years (1 Kings 22:51) which becomes 1 actual year when non-accessional counting is corrected. Joram's 12 (2 Kings 3:1) becomes 11 actual years when non-accessional counting is corrected. Adding Ahab's 17 left, 1 for Ahaziah and 11 for Joram gives us an overall time span of 29 years between the two events. Dr Floyd Jones is in agreement with this time span. He has the start and ending points as 915 and 886 BC (29 years apart).

The kings of Judah for this period are Jehoshaphat (25 years - 1 Kings 22:41), Jehoram (8 years - 1 Kings 8:17) and Ahaziah (1 year - 1 Kings 8:25-26). Both Thiele and Dr Floyd Jones recognise that the last two reigns are reckoned non-accessionally and that Judah switched for a brief time to the non-accession method due to the intermarriage between the two royal houses in Jehoshaphat's reign. Jehoram's 8 becomes 7 actual years and Ahaziah becomes a part year. Totalling the reigns as actual years gives us 32 years and a part year which is 3 years too long. If we count Jehoshaphat's 25 years from Ahab's 4<sup>th</sup> year then he dies 4 years before Jehu kills the two kings of each kingdom. Jehoram has 7 actual years.

There are two synchronisms with Jehoram of Judah – the first is the year that Joram of Israel becomes king. It is in BOTH the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Jehoram of Judah (2 Kings 1:17) that is also the 18<sup>th</sup> year of his father Jehoshaphat (2 Kings 3:1).

The second synchronism is that Jehoram of Judah's started to reign (1<sup>st</sup> year non-accessionally) in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Joram of Israel (2 Kings 8:16). Jehoram's successor, Ahaziah, becomes king in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Joram of Israel (2 Kings 8:25-26).

The second synchronism is 7 years before Ahaziah starts his reign. According to Dr Floyd Jones, Jehoshaphat only dies 4 years before Jehu kills the 2 kings, not 7 years. By insisting that Jehoshaphat's 25 years starts from Ahab's 4<sup>th</sup> year, Dr Floyd Jones has to recognise the second synchronism (Jehoram's 1<sup>st</sup> year in Joram's 5<sup>th</sup> year) must be when he started his co-regency.

If the second synchronism and Jehoram's regnal years start from Jehoram's 1<sup>st</sup> year as co-regent then how do we account for the earlier synchronism that says that Joram began his reign in both Jehoram's 2<sup>nd</sup> year and Jehoshaphat's 18<sup>th</sup> year?

Dr Floyd Jones comes up with a temporary pro-regency. This does not fit the picture of events in 2 Kings 3. Jehoshaphat is not in need of stepping down his primary regnal duties and straight after the synchronism with Jehoshaphat's 18<sup>th</sup> year is mentioned, Joram of Israel goes to Jehoshaphat NOT his regent Jehoram for help against the Moabites (2 Kings 3:1-7).

Thiele has the earlier 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Jehoram synchronism as from the start of Jehoram's co-regency and the later 1<sup>st</sup> year of Jehoram synchronism as the start of Jehoram's sole reign. The regnal years are not inclusive of the co-regency. As his sole reign and 8 regnal (7 actual) years) are a part of the 29 years between Ahab's 4<sup>th</sup> year and Jehu killing the two kings then that only leaves 22 years left to for Jehoshaphat in this period from the start of his sole reign.

Thiele concludes that there is a 3 year co-regency between Jehoshaphat and his father Asa. This is a logical conclusion because Asa was badly diseased in his feet (1 Kings 15:23) near the end of his reign and this is likely the reason for such a co-regency.

I find it illogical for Dr Floyd Jones to say regarding the Jehoram synchronisms that there was a synchronism with a separate pro-regency period, then one for a co-regency period and yet not have one for when Jehoram becomes sole ruler. My conclusion is that Thiele has the handling of the synchronisms of this period correct.

This is the last period of major contention between the two major chronological schemes. Going back from here to the division the two schemes are almost identical with the exception of the difference is regnal year for the kingdom of Judah. Thiele has it going from Tishri to Tishri while Dr Floyd Jones uses a Nisan to Nisan regnal year.

Based on the remaining data for which there is common agreement between the competing schemes, the division of Israel date that I have come to is **929 BC** if we use Thiele's option for the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam II (option 2). If we were to use option 1 for that period then the division of Israel date would be **941 BC**.

### **Other Biblical Chronologies**

Before I present a series of charts covering all the reigns of the kingdoms after the division let's look at some alternate bible chronologies that cover this period. In the pages to follow are charts with the dates for the chronologies we have looked at so far as well as these next alternative bible chronologies.

#### **ALAN MONTGOMERY:**

Alan is a member of an email forum on ancient chronology that I participate in.

He starts with a slightly earlier Fall of Jerusalem start date of 588 BC and sees a co-regency between Hezekiah and Manasseh placing his last year 2 years earlier than Floyd/Ussher in 700 BC. Like I do, he sees a brief 2 year co-regency between Ahaz and

Hezekiah. Without the Manasseh co-regency that Thiele has, Alan's Fall of Samaria dates works out to be the same as Thiele's 723 BC.

He has the same placements and fixed dates as Floyd/Ussher from Hoshea back to Zechariah for the two kingdoms choosing the Floyd/Ussher solution of an interregnum between Hoshea and Pekah.

To deal with the difficult period of Jeroboam II and Uzziah's reign he has chosen to use not just one BUT TWO interregnums. He has Jeroboam II taking the throne in Amaziah's 15<sup>th</sup> year and then Amaziah living another 15 years followed by a 12 year interregnum before his son Uzziah becomes king in Jeroboam II's 27<sup>th</sup> regnal year.

Jeroboam II reigns another 14 years to complete his 41 years in Uzziah's 15<sup>th</sup> year. He then has an extraordinarily long 23 year interregnum after Jeroboam II's death before his son Zechariah takes the throne.

In BOTH cases the interregnums are followed by the son of the king who dies before the interregnum. In virtually all other clearly identified interregnums they follow the end of a dynasty. They are not followed by the son of the king who preceded the interregnum. We also have Josephus' evidence that the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam II was his 14<sup>th</sup> (or 15<sup>th</sup> counted non-accessionally) regnal year which would be his sole reign.

Prior to Jeroboam II Alan follows the same regnal placements as Floyd/Ussher putting his division of the kingdom date in **986 BC** which is 11 years prior to Floyd/Ussher.

#### **EDWARD REESE:**

Edward Reese is a Bible professor who's chronological arrangement of all the Bible's verses forms the basis for the Reese Chronological Bible.

He follows Floyd/Ussher's chronology from the Fall of Jerusalem back to the Fall of Samaria with the same dates. With regards to the reign of Hezekiah he follows a similar approach taken by Leslie McFall breaking Hezekiah's 29 years into an 11 year co-regency followed by a 18 year sole reign starting in 716, the same year that Thiele believes his reign began. Thiele has the co-regency exclusive of the co-regency. While this allows the 14<sup>th</sup> year of Hezekiah to match the 701 BC date for the first Sennacherib invasion, Reese places his death in 698 BC, some 8 years before his contemporary in Egypt, Tirhakah.

He has Hezekiah's co-rule beginning in Hoshea's 2<sup>nd</sup> rather than 3<sup>rd</sup> year and starts Hoshea's reign 2 years later than Jones/Ussher. That difference then becomes 11 years going back to Zechariah as he rejects the Floyd/Ussher interregnum between Pekah and Hoshea and his regnal placements are the same as the ones that I have advocated back to Zechariah.

For the Jeroboam II/Uzziah period he follows the same idea as advocated by my friend Eric Aitchison arguing that the synchronisms of Jeroboam's 27<sup>th</sup> year and Uzziah 38<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup> years refer to their age at the time rather than their regnal year. He deals with the Jehoshaphat & Jehoram reigns the same way that I have advocated which is the same as Thiele's approach. His division of Israel date works out to be **945 BC**.

## LESLIE MCFALL:

Leslie McFall is a supporter of Thiele's chronology but with a few additional adjustments which he outlines in his book "Chronology of the Hebrew Kings":

The four major modifications are four coregencies that Thiele overlooked:

- (1) a coregency for Hezekiah from 729/728 to 715 B.C.
- (2) a two-year coregency for Jehoash king of Israel from 799 to 798;
- (3) Ahaziah king of Judah probably became coregent in the 11th (nonaccession) year of Joram and in the 12th year became king and
- (4) a coregency for Jehoiachin from September 608 —December 597 B.C. (pages 8-9).

I have covered the first one and concluded that Thiele is incorrect in rejecting the Hezekiah/Hoshea synchronisms but disagree that a long co-regency is the answer because the first Passover after he became king is from his sole reign as his father Ahaz was evil and would not allow such a thing if he was still alive so his sole reign must start before the fall of Samaria.

The second change is one that I have advocated earlier for Jehoash and believe it to be valid though it does not affect the fixed dates for the sole reigns for him and nearby kings.

The third change regarding the missing co-regency for Ahaziah, son of Jehoram, is discussed by Jehoram in his book "Chronology of the Hebrew Kings" where he writes:

**25. 2 Kings 8:25-26 (= 2 Chron. 22:2)**, "In the 12th [nonaccession] year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, became king. Ahaziah was 22 years old when he became king, and he reigned one [nonaccession] year as coregent and king in Jerusalem" (841 B.C.; A-B pattern).

Ahaziah became coregent in September 842 and became king between April and September 841 B.C. and he died during this period. The 11th and 12th years of Jotham led Thiele to postulate that a scribe used two systems for dating Jehoram's accession to the throne.

**26. 2 Kings 9:29**, "In the 11th [nonaccession] year of Joram the son of Ahab, Ahaziah became coregent over Judah" (Tishri 842 B.C.). Thiele regarded the 11th year as an exception to his observation that all synchronisms from Jehoram and Joash of Judah are according to the nonaccession-year system. By regarding the 11th as an exception Thiele missed a one-year coregency for Ahaziah, which is supported by some Septuagint evidence.

Thiele confused the application of two of his variable factors in the case of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12th years of Joram. One such variable is the practice of writing each kingdom's record according to the system used in the other kingdom. Another is the need to observe the difference between nonaccession and accession years. What Thiele failed to notice is that the first variable applies only to Period A, whereas Joram and Ahaziah belong to Period B.

Jehoram had already introduced Judah to the nonaccession-year system and this system was in use in Israel also; therefore there is no need to "convert" nonaccession years into accession years or vice versa.

Two incidents suggest that Ahaziah did have a coregency period. In 2 Chronicles 21:19 Joram contracted a fatal bowel disease two years before he died, which undoubtedly prohibited him from officiating at religious functions. Obviously as it grew worse he was unable to carry out his royal functions.

The second incident is the inhabitants of Jerusalem putting Ahaziah on the throne (2 Chron. 22:1) and not his father, Joram. This might suggest that Joram was still alive when this was done, for it was done for Uzziah when his father was captured by Jehoash (text no. 38).

The people decided the accession in the case of Jehoahaz of Judah (2 Kings 23:30) when his older brother ought to have succeeded his father, and they also decided the accession of Josiah (2 Chron. 33:25). The interference of the people in the succession suggests impatience on their part with a "lame duck" king or their preference for a son who did not have the lawful entitlement to the throne; either way the natural order of events/succession was interfered with and some form of irregularity is indicated in such action.

The key evidence here is the fact that non-accession dating had already been introduced in Judah as it was in Israel at the time so there is no need to record dual dates according to the two different systems. As a result, I believe that McFall is correct to advocate a brief co-regency for Ahaziah which is not included in his regnal total of 1 year, which is a part year in actual time.

The fourth and last change that he advocates is one that comes from combining two verses in two different Bible books:

**2Ch 36:9** Jehoiachin *was* 8 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 3 months and 10 days in Jerusalem. And he did the evil in the sight of Jehovah.

**2Ki 24:8** Jehoiachin *was* 18 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem 3 months.

The 10 year difference in age when he began to reign has been put down to some as a scribal error in one or other text but as far as I can tell going back to the original Hebrew there is a difference between his age in the two verses which, more likely, indicates a co-regency of 10 years from when he was 8 to 18 before his 3 month sole reign.

His father reigned for the same period of the co-regency and there was the ever present danger of Babylon and Egypt vigorously vying for control of Israel at the time so his father making him co-regent while he reigned would have seemed a prudent move. I believe this is a valid change recognising this co-regency.

## **ERIC AITCHISON:**

Eric is another member of an email forum on ancient chronology that I participate in. His Fall of Samaria solution is, to me, the best way to harmonise ALL the Biblical and Assyrian data. I credit him also for the subsequent changes that need to be made prior to it to extend the length of the kingdom of Israel by removing the need for the rival reign of Pekah to harmonise with Josephus' data.

Eric and I share the same fixed dates working back until we hit the period of Uzziah and Jeroboam II. His choice of taking the synchronisms of Uzziah as from his age rather than his regnal year puts his dates going back 5 years earlier than Thiele's. Like myself, he accepts Thiele's relative placement of the reigns before Uzziah and Jeroboam II but in Eric's case his division date is **936 BC**, 5 years before Thiele's.

Following the charts comparing the various chronologies on the next two pages is a complete chart for all the years from the Division of the Kingdom to the Fall of Jerusalem with all the synchronisms and the reigns as we have concluded them to be in this section.

CHRONOLOGIES COMPARED FOR THE NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

	REGNAL YEARS	FLOYD JONES (Ussher refinement)	MONTGOMERY	REESE	THIELE	MCFALL	AITCHISON	WAITE
Division of the Kingdom:		975 BC	986 BC	945 BC	931 BC	931 BC	936 BC	929 BC *
Jeroboam I	22	975-954 [24] NA	986-965	945-924	931-910 [24] NA	931-910 [21] NA	936-915 [24] NA	929-908 [24] NA
Nadab	2	954-953 [1] NA	965-964	925	910-909 [1] NA	910-909 [1] NA	915-914 [1] NA	908-907 [1] NA
Baasha	24	953-930 [23] NA	964-941	924-901	909-886 [23] NA	909-886 [23] NA	914-891 [23] NA	907-884 [23] NA
Elah	2	930-929 [1] NA	941-940	901-900	886-885 [1] NA	886-885 [1] NA	891-890 [1] NA	884-883 [1] NA
Zimri	7 days	929 [PY] NA	940	900	885 [PY] NA	885 [PY] NA	890 [PY] NA	883 [PY] NA
Tibni	Not stated	929-925 [4] NA Rival reign with Omri	940-935 Rival reign with Omri	900-895 Rival reign with Omri	885-880 [5] NA Rival reign with Omri	885-880 [5] NA Rival reign with Omri	890-886 [4] NA Rival reign with Omri	883-878 [5] NA Rival reign with Omri
Omri	12	929-918 [11] NA	940-929	900-889	885-874 [11] NA	885-874 [11] NA	890-879 [11] NA	883-872 [11] NA
Ahab	22	918-897 [21] NA	929-908	889-870	874-853 [21] NA	874-853 [21] NA	879-858 [24] NA	872-851 [24] NA
Ahaziah	2	897-896 [1] NA	908 CR only with Ahab	870-869	853-852 [1] NA	853-852 [1] NA	858-857 [1] NA	851-850 [1] NA
Jehoram	12	897-886 [11] NA	908-897	869-858	852-841 [11] NA	852-841 [11] NA	857-847 [11] NA	856-845 [11] NA
Jehu	28	886-858 [28] A	897-869	858-831	841-814 [27] NA	841-814 [27] NA	847-819 [27] NA	839-812 [27] NA
Jehoahaz	17	857-841 [16] NA	869-852	830-814	814-798 [17] A	814-798 [17] A	819-802 [17] A	812-796 [17] A
Joash	16	PR 843-841 [3] (exc) SR 840-825 [15] NA	852-836	PR 816-814 [3] (exc) SR 814-798 [16]	798-782 [16] A	CR 799-798 [1] (exc) SR 798-782 [16] A	CR 804-803 [2] (exc) SR 796-780 [16] A	CR 797-796 [2] (exc) SR 796-780 [16] A
Jeroboam II	41	PR? 837-826 [12] (exc) SR 825-785 [40] NA INTERREGNUM 12Y 773-772 [PY] NA	836-795 INTERREGNUM 23Y 772	CR 802-798 [4] (inc) SR 798-762 [36]	CR 793-782 [12] (inc) SR 782-753 [29] A	CR 793-782 [12] (inc) SR 782-753 [29] A	CR 791-787 [5] (inc) SR 787-751 [36] A	CR 791-780 [12] (inc) SR 780-751 [29] A
Zachariah	6 months			762	753-752 [PY] A	753-752 [PY] A	751-750 [PY] A	751-750 [PY] A
Shallum	1 month	772 [PY] NA	771	761	752 [PY] A	752 [PY] A	750 [PY] A	750 [PY] A
Menahem	10	772-762 [10] A	771-761	761-751	752-742 [10] A	752-742 [10] A	750-740 [10] A	750-740 [10] A
Pekahiah	2	761-760 [1] NA	761-759	750-748	742-740 [2] A	742-740 [2] A	740-738 [2] A	740-738 [2] A
Pekah	20	759-740 [20] NA	759-739	748-729	RR 752-740 [12] A SR 740-732 [8] A	RR 752-740 [12] A SR 740-732 [8] A	738-718 [20] A	738-718 [20] A
Hoshea	9	INTERREGNUM 9Y 730-721 [9] A	INTERREGNUM 8Y 731-721	728-721	732-723 [9] A	732-723 [9] A	718-709 [9] A	718-709 [9] A
Fall of Samaria		721 BC	721 BC	721 BC	723 BC	723 BC	709 BC	709 BC

\* 941 BC  
Possible alternate  
date if Jeroboam II  
co-regency not  
included in his  
41 years or had no  
co-regency as per  
option 4 discussed.  
Dates prior to Jeroboam II  
are then pushed back  
12 years.

Alternate Jeroboam II dates  
for option 2  
CR 804-791 [12] (inc)  
SR 792-751 [41] A  
No co-regency for  
option 4 but same sole  
rule dates.

CHRONOLOGIES COMPARED FOR THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF JUDAH

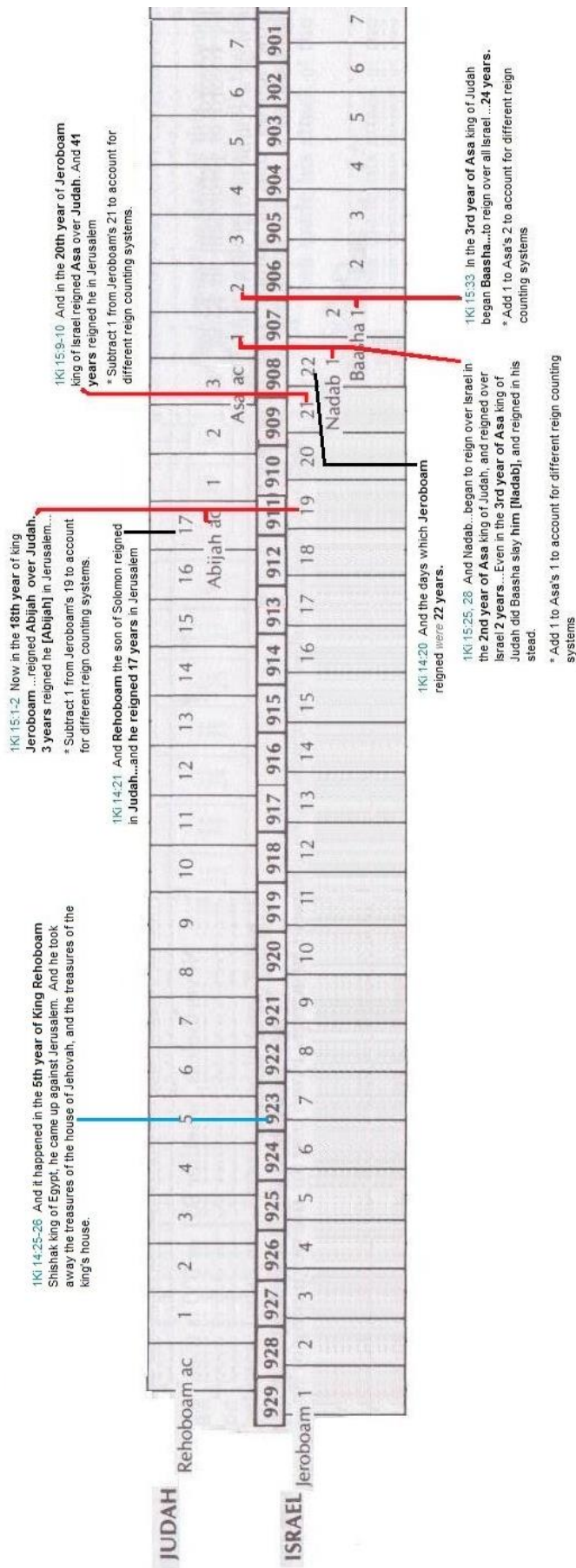
REGNAL YEARS	FLOYD JONES (Ussher refinement)	MONTGOMERY	REESE	THIELE	MC FALL	AITCHISON	WAITE
Division of the Kingdom:	975 BC	986 BC	945 BC	931 BC	931 BC	936 BC	929 BC *
Rehoboam	975-959 [17] A	986-969	945-929	931-914 [17] A	931-914 [17] A	936-919 [17] A	929-912 [17] A
Abijam	958-956 [3] A	969-966	929-926	914-911 [3] A	914-911 [3] A	919-917 [3] A	912-909 [3] A
Asa	956-915 [41] A	966-925	926-886	911-870 [41] A	911-870 [41] A	917-876 [41] A	909-868 [41] A
Jehoshaphat	915-890 [25] A	925-900	CR 889-886 (inc) SR 886-864	CR 872-870 [3] (inc) SR 870-848 [22] A	CR 872-870 [3] (inc) SR 870-848 [22] A	CR 879-877 [3] (inc) SR 876-854 [22] A	CR 870-868 [3] (inc) SR 868-846 [22] A
Jehoram	PR 898-896 [3] (exc) CR 893-890 [4] (inc) SR 889-886 [4]	PR 909-907? (exc) CR 904-901 (inc) SR 900-897	CR 870-865 (exc) SR 864-858	CR 853-848 [5] (exc) SR 848-841 [7] NA	CR 853-848 [5] (exc) SR 848-841 [7] NA	CR 860-854 [5] (exc) SR 854-847 [7] NA	CR 851-846 [5] (exc) SR 846-839 [7] NA
Ahaziah	886 [PY] NA	897	858	841 [PY] NA	CR 842 [1] (exc) SR 842 [PY] NA	847 [PY] NA	839 [PY] NA
Athaliah	886-880 [6] NA	897-891	858-852	841-835 [6] NA	841-835 [6] NA	847-841 [6] NA	839-833 [6] NA
Joash	879-840 [39] NA?	891-851	852-812	835-796 [39] NA	835-796 [39] NA	841-801 [39] NA	833-794 [39] NA
Amaziah	840-811 [29] A	851-822	812-784	796-767 [29] A	796-767 [29] A	801-772 [29] A	794-765 [29] A
Uzziah	811-759 [52] A	INTERREGNUM 12Y 810-758	CR 799-784 (inc) SR 783-748	CR 792-767 [25] (inc) SR 767-740 [27] A	CR 792-767 [25] (inc) SR 767-740 [27] A	CR 788-772 [16] (inc) SR 772-736 [36] A	CR 790-765 [25] (inc) SR 765-738 [27] A
Jotham	759-743 [16] A	758-742	747-732	CR 751-740 [12] (inc) SR 740-736 [4] A	CR 751-740 [12] (inc) SR 740-736 [4] A	SR 738-722 [16] A	SR 738-722 [16] A
Ahaz	743-727 [16] A	742-726	732-717	XR 735-731 [4] (exc) PR 735-731 [4] (exc)	XR 735-731 [4] (exc) PR 735-731 [4] (exc)	SR 722-718 [4] (exc)	XR 722-718 [4] (exc)
Hezekiah	727-698 [29] A	CR 728-727 (inc) SR 726-699	CR 727-717 (inc) SR 716-698	SR 731-716 [16] A	SR 731-716 [16] A	CR 729-722 [8] (inc) SR 722-714 [8] A	CR 729-722 [8] (inc) SR 722-714 [8] A
Fall of Samaria	721 BC	723 BC	721 BC	716-687 [29] A	CR 729-716 [13] (exc) SR 716-687 [29] A	SR 714-687 [27] A	CR 715-714 [2] (inc) SR 714-687 [27] A
Manasseh	698-643 [55] A	699-644	698-643	723 BC	723 BC	709 BC	709 BC
Amon	643-641 [2] A	644-642	643-641	CR 697-687 [11] (inc) SR 687-643 [44] A	CR 697-687 [11] (inc) SR 687-643 [44] A	CR 697-687 [11] (inc) SR 687-643 [44] A	CR 697-687 [11] (inc) SR 687-643 [44] A
Josiah	641-610 [30] A	642-611	641-610	643-641 [2] A	643-641 [2] A	643-641 [2] A	643-641 [2] A
Jehoahaz	609 [PY] A	611	609	641-610 [30] A	641-610 [30] A	641-610 [30] A	641-610 [30] A
Jehoiakim	609-598 [11] A	611-600	609-598	609 [PY] A	609 [PY] A	609 [PY] A	609 [PY] A
Jehoiahcin	597 [PY] A	600	597	609-598 [11] A	609-598 [11] A	609-598 [11] A	609-598 [11] A
Zedekiah	597-586 [11] A	600-588	597-586	CR 608-597 [11] (exc) SR 597 [PY] A	CR 608-597 [11] (exc) SR 597 [PY] A	597 [PY] A	597 [PY] A
Fall of Jerusalem	586 BC	588 BC	586 BC	597-586 [11] A	597-586 [11] A	597-586 [11] A	597-586 [11] A

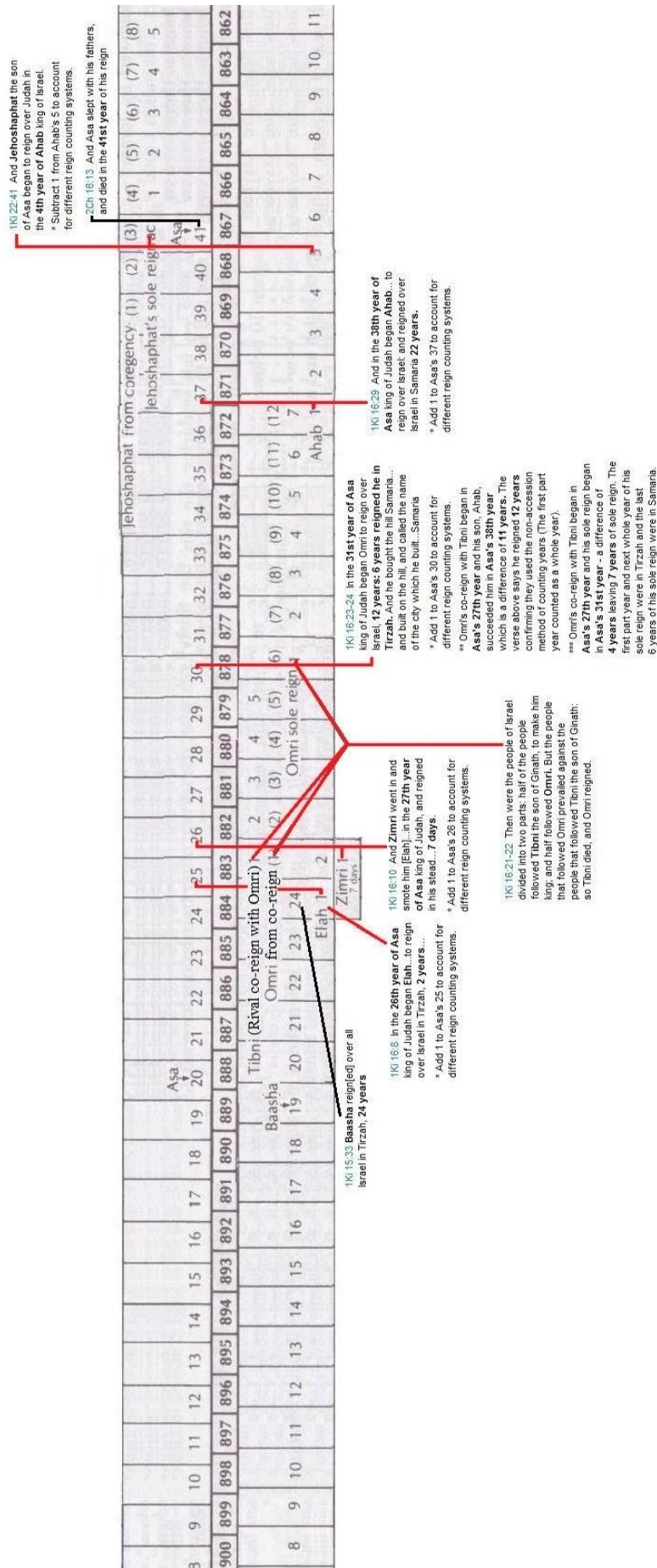
\* 941 BC  
Possible alternate date if Jeroboam's co-regency not included in his 41 years or had no co-regency as per option 4 discussed. Dates prior to Uzziah are then pushed back 12 years.

Alternate Uzziah dates (Options 1 & 4)  
CR 790-778 [12]  
SR 778-738 [40]



# KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH DURING THE DIVIDED KINGDOM TO THE FALL OF JERUSALEM









5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
829	828	827	826	825	824	823	822	821	820	819	818	817	816	815	814	813	812	811	810	809	808	807	806	805	804
0	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28							

Joash

Jehoahaz 1

Jehu

2Ki 10:36 And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was 28 years.

2Ki 13:1 In the 23rd year of Joash... Jehoahaz... began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned 17 years.

If we take 15 years from Jeroboam II's total of 41 years then Ahaziah (Uzziah) could have only reigned for 26 years at most. If Jeroboam's 41 years includes his co-regency then Jehoash's co-regency must have succeeded him in Ahaziah (Uzziah)'s 14th sole reigning year. His 38th year when Jeroboam became king was probably from when Ahaziah (Uzziah) became co-regent. His installation as a king/co-regent probably occurred when his father was imprisoned by Jehoash of Israel.

1

\* Brief co-regency for Jehoash of 1-2 years not included in his 16 year count.

\* Due to the growing Assyrian influence in the area both Israel and Judah switch from the no-

His installation as a co-regent probably occurred as a precautionary measure by Jehoash before Jehoash went to battle Amaziah in **2 Kings 14:8-13**.

**2Ki 15:1-2** In the 27th year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah (Uzziah) ....king of Judah to reign...and he reigned **52 years** in Jerusalem.

2Ki 14:17 And Amaziah... king of Judah  
lived after the death of Jehoash... king of  
Israel 15 years.

\* Note that Azariah (Uzziah)'s sole reign started **15 years** after Jeroboam II became sole king so the **27th year** noted here is from his start as a co-regent.

[illegible]

2 Ki 14:23 In the 15th year of Amaziah... Jeroboam  
... king of Israel, became king in Samaria, and reigned  
**41 years.**

\* Thiele believes the 41 years includes his years as a co-regent.

**2 KI 15:8** In the 38th year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel in Samaria 6 months.

The 38th year of Azariah (Uzziah) is from him becoming co-regent as Azariah (Uzziah)'s sole reign started in Jeroboam II's 27th year as co-regent and his 15th sole reign year. As Jeroboam II reigned 41 years Azariah (Uzziah) could not have sole reigned 38 years by this time.

2 Ki 15:13 Shallum ... became king in the 39th year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria.

\* The 39th year of Azariah (Uzziah) is from when he became co-regent.

2 Ki 15:17 In the 39th year of Azariah king of Judah, Menahem... became king over Israel, and reigned 10 years.





2Ch 29:1 Hezekiah began to reign when he was 25 years old...in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them.

2 Ch 30:1, 5-6, 10-11 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah... that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover....So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba even to Dan...saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD .... and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria...So the posts passed from city to city through ...Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they ...mocked them. Nevertheless ....Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.

\* This could only happen after Ahaz (who was evil) had died and before the fall of Samaria and complete deportation of northern Israel. Part of Israel was already deported and Hezekiah encouraged those tribes bordering those already taken that were left to return to God.

There is solid evidence using Assyrian chronology that the 14th year of Hezekiah when Sennacherib came against him (2 Kings 18:13) was 701 BC and that Manasseh succeeded Hezekiah in 686 BC. The end of Jehoiachin's reign when Nebuchadnezzar captured him and Jerusalem is dated by Babylonian sources to 586 BC.

Adding the reign lengths of Manasseh to Jehoiachin gives 11 extra years. The most likely reason for this is that Manasseh's 55 years includes 11 years of co-regency during Hezekiah's last years when God told him that he only had 15 more years to live (2 Kings 20:1-6).

2 Ki 20:1 Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king, and he reigned 55 years in Jerusalem.  
\* See note to the left regarding his co-regency.  
Manasseh was installed from birth as co-regent when Hezekiah knew he was in his last 15 years of life. The reign of 55 years for Manasseh includes his years as a co-regent.

Manasseh from coregency (1)														
(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
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737	738	739	740	741	742	743	744	745	746	747	748	749	750	751
752	753	754	755	756	757	758	759	760	761	762	763	764	765	766
767	768	769	770	771	772	773	774	775	776	777	778	779	780	781
782	783	784	785	786	787	788	789	790	791	792	793	794	795	796
797	798	799	800	801	802	803	804	805	806	807	808	809	810	811
812	813	814	815	816	817	818	819	820	821	822	823	824	825	826
827	828	829	830	831	832	833	834	835	836	837	838	839	840	841
842	843	844	845	846	847	848	849	850	851	852	853	854	855	856
857	858	859	860	861	862	863	864	865	866	867	868	869	870	871
872	873	874	875	876	877	878	879	880	881	882	883	884	885	886
887	888	889	890	891	892	893	894	895	896	897	898	899	900	901
902	903	904	905	906	907	908	909	910	911	912	913	914	915	916
917	918	919	920	921	922	923	924	925	926	927	928	929	930	931
932	933	934	935	936	937	938	939	940	941	942	943	944	945	946
947	948	949	950	951	952	953	954	955	956	957	958	959	960	961
962	963	964	965	966	967	968	969	970	971	972	973	974	975	976
977	978	979	980	981	982	983	984	985	986	987	988	989	990	991
992	993	994	995	996	997	998	999	1000	1001	1002	1003	1004	1005	1006

# FALL OF SAMARIA (709 BC)

2Ki 18:9-11 And it came to pass in the 4th year of king Hezekiah, which was the 7th year of Hoshea ... king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it: even in the 6th year of Hezekiah, that is the 9th year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria.

\* Note that Hezekiah's 4th and 6th years are counted from the beginning of his co-regency.



(18) 7	(19) 8	(20) 9	(21) 10	(22) 11	(23) 12	(24) 13	(25) 14	(26) 15	(27) 16	(28) 17	(29) 18	(30) 19	(31) 20	(32) 21	(33) 22	(34) 23	(35) 24	(36) 25	(37) 26	(38) 27	(39) 28	(40) 29	(41) 30	(42) 31	(43) 32	(44) 33	(45) 34	(46) 35	(47) 36	(48) 37											
											Manasseh's sole reign																														
0	679	678	677	676	675	674	673	672	671	670	669	668	667	666	665	664	663	662	661	660	659	658	657	656	655	654	653	652	651	650											

2 Ki 21:19 Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned 2 years in Jerusalem.

2 Ki 22:1 Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned 31 years in Jerusalem.

(48)	(49)	(50)	(51)	(52)	(53)	(54)	(55)	(56)	(57)	(58)	(59)	(60)	(61)	(62)	(63)	(64)	(65)	(66)	(67)	(68)	(69)	(70)	(71)	(72)	(73)	(74)	(75)	(76)	(77)	(78)	(79)	(80)
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69
0	649	648	647	646	645	644	643	642	641	640	639	638	637	636	635	634	633	632	631	630	629	628	627	626	625	624	623	622	621	620	619	618

**FALL OF JERUSALEM (586 BC)**

2 Ki 25:1-11 **Nebuchadnezzar**, king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem...the city was besieged until the **11th year** of King **Zedekiah**. They took the king and...killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes...put out the eyes of Zedekiah...and took him to Babylon. And in the fifth month... (which was the **19th year of King Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon)...He burned the houses of the Lord and...carried away captive the rest of the people...to Babylon.

\* Nebuchadnezzar's 19th year is dated independently to 586 BC.

## The United Kingdom of Israel and the Time of the Judges

Based on the data we have examined we have come up with a date of **929 BC** for the division of Israel or alternatively **941 BC** if option 1 is chosen solution for the Uzziah/Jeroboam II period.

This is same date as the death of Solomon when his son Rehoboam came to the throne. Solomon reigned 40 years so, if our conclusions so far are correct, he would come to the throne in **969 BC**. His father, David also ruled for 40 years so David would have come to the throne in **1009 BC**.

There is a little bit of controversy over the length of Saul's reign due to the variations in translating 1 Samuel 13:1 which I quote below.

1Sa 13:1 Saul reigned one year, and when he had reigned two more years over Israel,  
1Sa 13:2 then Saul chose for himself three thousand from Israel. (Modern KJV)

This translation appears to be clear enough to indicate it is not referring to his overall reign but events early in his life.

The Apostle Paul in one of his speeches said:

Act 13:21 And afterward they asked *for* a king. And God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of *the* tribe of Benjamin, *for* **40 years**.

Josephus tells us this about the length of Saul's reign:

To this his end did Saul come, according to the prophecy of Samuel, because he disobeyed the commands of God about the Amalekites, and on the account of his destroying the family of Ahimelech the high priest, with Ahimelech himself, and the city of the high priests. Now Saul, **when he had reigned 18 years while Samuel was alive, and after his death 2 [and 20]**, ended his life in this manner (Antiquities of the Jews, Book 6, chapter 14, verse 9).

The New Testament gives Saul's reign as 40 years. The [and 20] in the above quote appears to be a later insertion but appears to be a correct insertion based on the New Testament length given by Paul since 18 plus 22 gives us 40 years.

There are some secular historians who discredit the Bible because of the unusual "co-incidence" that Saul, David and Solomon all are recorded as having reigns of 40 years. While it is a little incredulous that is what is recorded in the scriptures. If Saul reigned for 40 years then his reign was about **1049 to 1009 BC**.

Below is a table of the fixed dates for the three kings of the united kingdom of Israel.

	DATES USING THIELE'S UZZIAH/JEROBOAM II SOLUTION (OPTION 2)	ALTERNATIVE DATES USING UZZIAH/JEROBOAM II OPTION 1 SOLUTION
<b>SAUL</b>	<b>1049-1009 BC</b>	<b>1061-1021 BC</b>
<b>DAVID</b>	<b>1009-969 BC</b>	<b>1021-981 BC</b>
<b>SOLOMON</b>	<b>969-929 BC</b>	<b>981-941 BC</b>

A major chronological marker is given to us in 1 Kings 6:1 where we read:

**1Ki 6:1** And it happened in the **480th year** after the sons of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which *is* the second month, he began to build the house of the LORD.

We read here that that the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Solomon's reign (**965 BC**) when he began to build the Temple of God was exactly 480 years after the Exodus. The date of the Exodus would therefore be **1445 BC** (alternate date **1457 BC** using Uzziah/Jeroboam II option 1).

Regarding the chronology of the time of the Judges that must be fitted within this period Donovan Courville in his work "The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications" (Volume 1) says the following:

Unlike the problem of setting the date for Mena, the first Egyptian king, on which opinions have differed by more than 3000 years,' the limits of interpretation of Old Testament chronology with reference to the Exodus date are relatively narrow. The limits of opinion which would appear to be acceptable within the concept of a dependability of these writings chronologically are included in the time era from the late seventeenth century to the mid-fifteenth century B.C., a variation of less than 200 years. While dates for the Exodus have been suggested between these extremes critical Bible scholars, for the most part, are divided into two groups, the difference of opinion resting on variant interpretations of the statements in 1 Kings 6:1 and Acts. The record in 1 Kings was presumably written by the religious chronographer at the time and reads:

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord.

The record of Acts was written by Luke and provides for us the words of Paul in a speech made to the people of Antioch. Paul, a Hebrew scholar, is reviewing the past history of the Jews. The KJV renders his comments on the era in question in the words:

And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet...

Examination of these figures [figures in the Book of Judges for reign lengths of Judges and oppression length] will make it apparent that it is quite impossible that the elapsed time from the Exodus to the fourth year of the reign of Solomon was 480 years, if at the same time the period of the rule of the Judges was 450 years.

The 480-year period must include in addition to the period of the Judges, the forty years in the wilderness, a period of six years for the initial phase of the conquest, a period between the Conquest and the first judge which is not defined in Scripture but which Josephus gives as 18 years, the 40-year reigns of Saul and David, and three years into the reign of Solomon.

About 330 years is thus the maximum that can logically be allowed of the 480 years for the period of the Judges. This is 120 years short of the period as given to this era in the KJV rendering of Acts 13:20. Yet it is quite anomalous that either Paul or the chronographer of 1 Kings should make an error of more than 100 years in this matter, for both could be expected to have an unerring knowledge of the past history of Israel. Since Paul is speaking extemporaneously, one might allow for some degree of approximation, but the qualification hardly allows for a deviation of more than a full century...

[Bible] scholars, representing a majority opinion, take the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1 as true elapsed time and explain the apparent discrepancy in the KJV rendering of Acts 13:20 as rising from an unfortunate selection from variant readings of the verse as found in other manuscripts. Textual evidence favors the reading as given in the RSV which reads:

"...he gave them their land as an inheritance for about four hundred fifty years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet."

If this be taken as the correct rendering of the statement as originally given by Paul, the 450-year period falls before the time of the Exodus and not during the period of the Judges. Since the period as given is obviously approximate, it may be taken as that from the promise to Abraham to the entrance of Israel into the land of Canaan. During this time, the land was theirs only as a promised inheritance and not in actuality. Paul also gives the length of the period from the promise to the giving of the law at Sinai, just following the Exodus, as 430 years [Galatians 3:17]. The two statements are now consistent providing confirmation for the correctness of the RSV rendering. The approximate period of 450 years is then more exactly 470 years by addition of the 40 years in the wilderness to the 430.

An alternate method used to attain harmony between 1 Kings 6:1 and Acts 13:20 would recognize Moses and Joshua as belonging to the period of the Judges. This interpretation has been deemed reasonable since these two leaders acted in the capacity of judges." This interpretation, however, would not appear to be permissible within the rendering of either the KJV or the RSV.

By any thesis that accepts the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1 as true elapsed time, the date for the Exodus may be calculated by moving backward in time 480 years from the date for the fourth year of Solomon. The most recent refinement of this date places the fourth year of Solomon in the year 967-966 BC leading us by the Jewish calendar to the year 1445 BC...

If the period of the judges is to be compressed into a period of about 330 years, which is the approximate maximum allowable fraction of the 480 years, the periods involved must have overlapped to some degree. The details provided in the Books of Judges and Samuel leave room for assuming considerable parallelism, some of which represented contemporary rule of judges, others which represented parallelism of judgeship and oppression.

The judges came from various places in the geography of Israel and there was no common capital from which they ruled. Othniel, the first judge, was from the tribe of Judah on the south; Tola was from the tribe of Issachar on the north; Samson was from the tribe of Dan, while Elon was from the tribe of Zebulun, both on the north; Deborah, Samuel, and Abdon were from the tribe of Ephraim in central Palestine. There is thus no necessity for presuming that each of these ruled over the entire territory of Israel except as so indicated, and hence no necessity for presuming that the line ruled altogether in succession.

Neither were the oppressions over Israel over the entire nation. The most notable of these is the last 40-year oppression under the Philistines; yet the territory actually occupied by the Philistines at that time would seem not to have been in excess of perhaps ten per cent of the total. It is not at all improbable that one section of the country was under foreign domination while another section was under the rule of a judge. The Ammonite oppression evidently involved primarily the territory east of Jordan, while both Eli and Samson judged Israel during the period of oppression by the Philistines. Unless we presume that the judges did not count the periods of their rule under oppression as part of the period attributed to them, some overlapping must be assumed.

It is certain that Samuel continued to rule as judge many years after the anointing of Saul for it was he who anointed the subsequent king, David, an incident that could not have occurred significantly earlier than the 25th year of Saul's reign. The Scriptures tell us that Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life, yet he lived more than half way through the reign of Saul (p.6-12).

Not all chronological scheme's support the 480 year marker in 1 Kings 6:1 as being the actual elapsed time between the Exodus and the building of the Temple which requires parallel rulerships in the period of the judges. Some see the 450 years of the Judges mentioned in Acts 13:20 as elapsed time and offer an alternate explanation for the 480 years. Alan Montgomery is one of these and in an email to me explained it this way:

It became obvious when looking at the various new testament data on Israel chronology that it was impossible to have the judges restricted to 480 years. Furthermore, the vast majority of chronologists have never used the 480th year as a data point. Josephus who had access to the temple documents was not compatible with 480 years and Whiston figured either 592 or 612 as his length for the judges period.

So why would the 480th year be recorded in scripture. Well, there were years where israel was ruled by foreigners and as such these were unclean years. If one adds to the 480 clean years the 71 unclean years of foreign rule and the 18 years by the elders after Joshua when there was no leader in Israel you get 569 years (inclusive) for the judges period (Moses to the 4th Solomon). This puts the Exodus at **1591 BC**.

Paul says "about 450 years" making it an approximation rather than an exact figure allowing for parallelism. I am personally not convinced of the 480 "clean years" theory Alan is expressing above even though I recognise that 480 is  $40 \times 12$ , both being highly symbolic biblical numbers. Without a disclaimer clarifying the "clean 480 years", I don't see why the biblical writer did not use a greater overall total if 480 years was only part of it. Would this not deliberately confuse any reader of the scriptures?

Below I quote how Steve Rudd has dealt with the data of the period of the Judges on one website (<http://www.bible.ca/archeology/bible-archeology-exodus-route-date-chronology-of-judges.htm>) showing that it is possible to have sufficient parallelism to fit all the data relating to the time of the Judges.

His dates for the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Solomon and the Exodus are 5 years later than the main dates that I have calculated above (and 17 years after the alternate dates). He also has a 42 year reign for Saul. Steve writes:

1. "Indivisible Units of Chronology" are connected strings of dates of several Judges that must be taken as a unit. For example, when the Bible says that "after Jephthah then Ibzan became Judge, and after Ibzan then Elon became Judge, and after Elon then Abdon became judge", there is no way to suggest that these Judges ruled at the same time. We have identified 5 different "Indivisible Units of Chronology". Each unit is a fixed block of time. We cannot shorten the time for each block, but we can overlap one block with another.

If we arrange each of the five blocks end to end like a train, the sum total of time is 489 years from Othneil to the death of Samuel in 1004 BC.

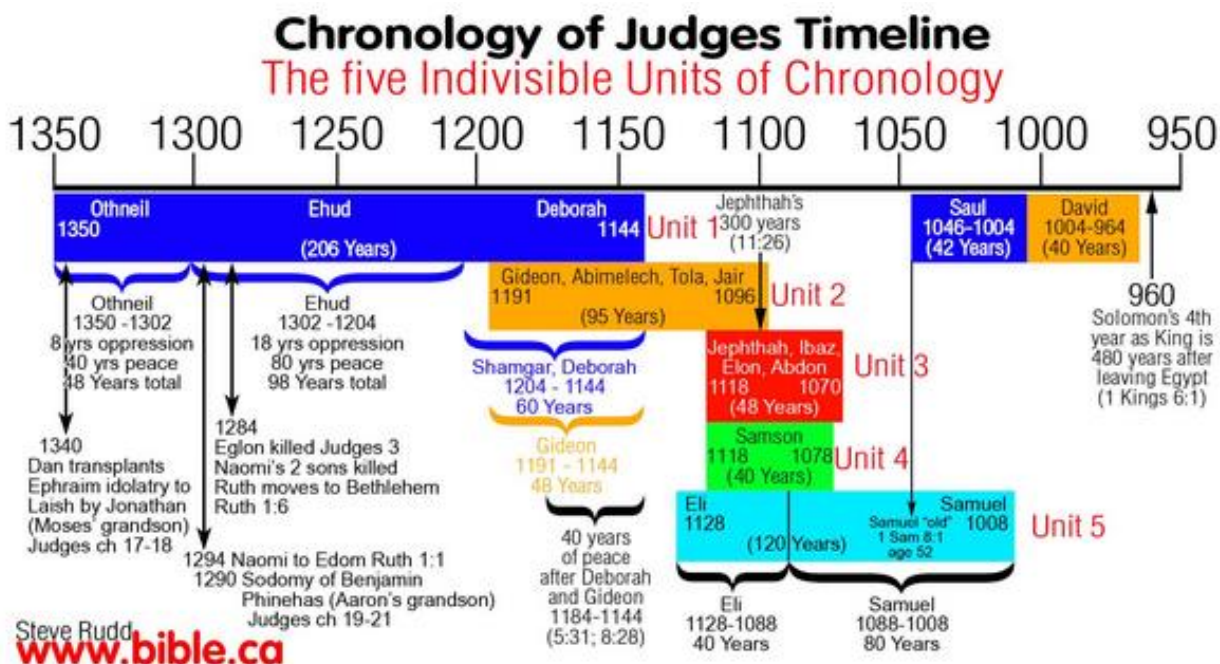


However, if we overlap the 5 "Indivisible Units of Chronology" on top of each other, the sum total of time is 346 years. This harmonizes perfectly with Jephthah's statement that he lived 300 years after Israel crossed the Jordan in 1400 BC: Judges 11:26.

2. The period of time from the death of Joshua to the time of Jephthah in Judges 11:26 was 250 years. Yet the numbers in the book of judges add up to 301 years for this same period of time. This means that the chronology of Othneil to Jephthah (301 years), taken at face value, has about 50 years too many to harmonize with Judges 11:26.

Our solution to this is simple. We have broken the chronology down into 5 "indivisible units of chronology" as follows: Unit 1: Othneil to Deborah: 206 years. Unit 2: Gideon to Jair: 95 years. Unit 3: Jephthah to Abdon: 48 years. Unit 4: Samson: 60 years. Unit 5: Eli to Samuel: 120 years. So the only way to reduce the total time from 409 years (excluding Eli - Samuel) to about 250 years is to overlap these "indivisible units of chronology". We can also reduce Samson from 60 to 40 years because his judgeship ended at the same time as the oppression ended.

Unit 1: Othneil to Deborah: 1350 - 1144 (206 years)  
 Unit 2: Gideon to Jair: 1191 - 1096 (95 years)  
 Unit 3: Jephthah to Abdon: 1118 - 1070 (48 years)  
 Unit 4: Samson: 1118 - 1078 (40 years)  
 Unit 5: Eli to Samuel: 1128 - 1008 (120 years).



#### A. The Chronology of Judges Master Table:

Oppressor: years	A	Area of Israel affected	Judge: years	Tribes involved in fighting	B	A+B	Date BC	Indivisible units
Aram-naharaim: (3:8) served 8	8	-	Othneil: (3:11) land had rest 40	-	40	48	1350 - 1302	Unit 1: 1350 - 1144 (206 years)
Moabites: (3:14) served 18	18	Central	Ehud: (3:30) land undisturbed 80 <a href="#">Ruth &amp; Boaz</a> lived at this time.	Benjamin	80	98	1302 - 1204	
Philistines: (3:31)	-	Southern	After Ehud came Shamgar: (3:31)	-	-	-	1200	
after Ehud died, served Canaanites: (4:3) 20	20	Northern, Mt. Tabor	Deborah: (5:31) land undisturbed 40	Zebulun, Naphtali	40	60	1204 - 1144	
Midianites, Amalekites: (6:1) in hand of 7	7	Central to transjordan Starts in Jezreel Valley and moves transjordan	Gideon: (8:28) land undisturbed 40	Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali	40	47	1191-1144	Unit 2: 1191 - 1096 (95 years)
-	-	-	Abimelech: (9:22) After <a href="#">Gideon</a> 3	-	3	3	1144 - 1141	
-	-	-	Tola: (10:2) after <a href="#">Abimelech</a> died 23	-	23	23	1141 - 1118	
-	-	-	Jair: (10:3) after <a href="#">Tola</a> 22	-	22	22	1118 - 1096	
Ammonites: (10:8) crushed Israel 18	18	Transjordan	Jephthah: (12:7) 6	Gileadites	6	24	1118 - 1094	Unit 3: 1118 - 1070 (48 years)
-	-	-	Ibzan: (12:8) after <a href="#">Jephthah</a> judged 7	-	7	7	1094 - 1087	
-	-	-	Elon: (12:9) after <a href="#">Ibzan</a> judged 10	-	10	10	1087 - 1077	
-	-	-	Abdon: (12:14) after <a href="#">Elon</a> judged 7	-	7	7	1077 - 1070	
Philistines: (13:1) into hands 40	40	South, Gaza	Samson: (16:31) judged 20	None	20	40 (not 60: see notes)	1118 - 1078	Unit 4: 1118 - 1078 (40 years)

## From the Exodus to the Flood

In **Exodus 12:40-41** we read the following about the Exodus:

**Exo 12:40** Now the **sojourning** of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, *was* **430 years**.

**Exo 12:41** And it happened at the end of the **430 years**, even it was **on this very day**, all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

Now there has been a rather persistent myth that has continued to be perpetuated that the slavery of the Israelites lasted some 400 years. This is based on a misunderstanding of Exodus 12:40 that says that the sojourning of Israel was 430 years. Notice carefully the word is sojourning not the word slavery.

Paul says in **Galatians 3:16-17** that from Abraham when the promises were made till Mt Sinai and the giving of the law was the same period of time noted in Exodus 12:40 – 430 years.



Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He says not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to your seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was **430 years after**, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

The period of 430 years was not the amount of time that they were in slavery in Egypt. This is confirmed by Josephus. Josephus tells us:

They left Egypt in the month Xanthicus, on the 15th day of the lunar month; **430 years after our forefather Abraham came into Canaan, but 215 years only after Jacob removed into Egypt.**

From that 215 years after Jacob's move into Egypt you have to subtract the 71 years of Joseph that he lived after his father moved so, in reality, the slavery was probably not much more than 100 years at most. The Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) translates **Exodus 12:40** this way:

The sojourning of the children and of their fathers, which they sojourned in the land of Canaan AND in the land of Egypt was 430 years.

When in Abraham's life were the promises by God made that were made exactly 430 years before the Exodus? Josephus and the Septuagint in the above quotes strongly imply it was at the same time that Abraham moved out of the land of the Chaldees and began sojourning in the land of Canaan. This is indeed the case.

God made promises to Abraham when he was 75 years old at the time he left the land of the Chaldees for Canaan (Genesis 12:1-5). By cross-referencing other Genesis data it can be demonstrated that time it was when Abraham left for Canaan at 75 when the 430 years that Paul speaks about begins.

The 430 years did not begin when God confirmed the promises by an animal sacrifice ceremony in Genesis 15 when Abraham was around 85. It also wasn't when he was 99 years old (Genesis 17) and the Lord visited Him on route to Sodom or some 10 to 20 years later when Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac (Genesis 22).

Jacob moved to Egypt when he was 130 years old (Genesis 47:9) and this was 215 years before the Exodus. Genesis doesn't specifically tell us how old Jacob was when he begot Joseph but Genesis does give us enough to confirm Joseph was 39 years old when Jacob moved to Egypt when he was 130 years old.

Genesis 41:46 tells us Joseph was 30 when he ascended to his high position under pharaoh. This was also when the 7 years of plenty began. Jacob moved to Egypt during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of famine (Genesis 45:6) or 9 years after Joseph ascended to his high position under pharaoh. Since Joseph was 39 years old when Jacob was 130 years old we know that Jacob was 91 years old when he begot Joseph.

Jacob was 91 years old when he begot Joseph. Isaac was 60 years old when he begot Jacob (Genesis 25:26) and Abraham was 100 years old when he begot Isaac (Genesis 21:5).

If we add the 25 years between when Abraham moved from the land of the Chaldees to the birth of Abraham to the 60 years Isaac was when he begot Jacob and then add the 130 years which was his age when he moved to Egypt we have the 215 years that Josephus tells us there was between Abraham leaving Ur and Jacob moving to Egypt.

This confirms that the occasion when the promises were made that Paul was referring to in Galatians 4:16-17 was the time Abraham left for Canaan in Genesis 12.

<b>Josephus:</b> "They left Egypt in the month Xanthicus, on the fifteenth day of the lunar month; <b>430 years</b> after our forefather Abraham came into Canaan, but <b>215 years</b> only after Jacob removed into Egypt."	
<b>130</b> – Jacob when he moved to Egypt	Joseph was 39 years old when Jacob moved and Joseph lived another 71 years after to 110.
<b>60</b> - Isaac when Jacob born	Therefore max time of slavery was 144 years but more likely to have been not much more than <b>100 years</b> long.
<b>25</b> - Time between Abraham moving to Canaan and Isaac being born (100 – 75)	
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<b>215 years</b>	

It's interesting that it says in Exodus 12:41 that the Israelites left Egypt on the selfsame day as their forefather Abraham left the land of the Chaldees. Just as Abraham came out of the society he was living in, the Israelites were coming out of Egypt with all of its corrupting influences. Just as Abraham left the land of the Chaldees for the promised land so too were the Israelites.

Using an Exodus date of **1445 BC** gives us a date of **1875 BC** for when Abraham left the land of the Chaldees at age 75. Working back from that date using the genealogies in Genesis 11 gives us a date of **2302 BC** for the Flood.

The question may be asked "How are fractions of a year are dealt with when dealing with the genealogical data that only quote whole numbers"? Would these compound over several generations pushing back the date of the Flood and Creation a few additional years?

Yes, that is certainly a possibility. What is more likely, though, is that the whole numbers represent the number of new years celebrated and fractions of a year are balanced out this way so they do not compound just as we saw before with accession year dating for the various kings of Judah and Israel.

Genesis 11:26 tells us that "Terah lived 70 years and begot Abraham, Nahor and Haran." Terah lived to the ripe old age of 205 (Genesis 11:32). Acts 7:4 tells us that Abraham moved from Haran to Canaan at the time that Terah died. Since Abraham was 75 at that time and Terah died at age 205, that means that Terah had to have been 130 years old when he begot Abraham.

If Terah begot Abraham at age 70 then Abraham would have been 135 years old when he left for Canaan and this was not so. It was one or both of Abraham's brothers, Nahor and Haran, that Terah begot at age 70. Abraham was 150 and Isaac was 50 years old when Noah's righteous son, Shem, died at the ripe old age of 600. Noah died only 2 years before Abraham was born. Below is a table showing the dates of the patriarchs from the Flood to the Exodus.

### DATES FROM THE FLOOD TO THE EXODUS

#### The Flood - 2302 BC

	Born	Lived to	Died	Age when and the Son he begat	Years after the Flood	Date
Shem	2400 BC	600	1800 BC	100 when he begot Arphaxad	2	2300 BC
Arphaxad	2300 BC	438	1862 BC	35 when he begot Salah	37	2265 BC
Salah	2265 BC	433	1832 BC	30 when he begot Eber	67	2235 BC
Eber	2235 BC	464	1771 BC	34 when he begot Peleg	101	2201 BC
Peleg	2201 BC	239	1962 BC	30 when he begot Reu	131	2171 BC
Reu	2171 BC	239	1932 BC	32 when he begot Serug	163	2139 BC
Serug	2139 BC	230	1909 BC	30 when he begot Nahor	193	2109 BC
Nahor	2109 BC	148	1961 BC	29 when he begot Terah	222	2080 BC
Terah	2080 BC	205	1875 BC	130 when he begot Abraham	352	1950 BC
Abraham	1950 BC	175	1775 BC	100 when he begot Isaac	452	1850 BC

#### Abraham leaves land of the Chaldees 1875 BC at age 75

Isaac	1850 BC	180	1750 BC	60 when he begot Jacob	512	1790 BC
Jacob	1790 BC	147	1643 BC	91 when he begot Joseph	603	1699 BC
Joseph	1699 BC	110	1589 BC	(He died 64 years before Moses was born and 144 years before the Exodus)		

Moses	1525 BC	120	1407 BC	(He died 17 years after the Israelites entered the land of Canaan)		
Joshua	1498 BC	110	1390 BC			

#### Exodus 1445 BC

Note: Add 12 years to these dates for alternate dates using option 1 for Uzziah/Jeroboam II period

### From Adam to the Flood

The genealogies of Genesis 5 give us data to work back from the Flood to the creation of Adam. If we use Thiele's solution for the period of Uzziah and Jeroboam II (option 2) and the other dates that I have calculated so far it would give us a Creation date for Adam of **3958 BC**. If we use option 1 for the period of Uzziah and Jeroboam II it gives us a Creation date of Adam of **3970 BC**.

If we go back 6000 years from the crucifixion (30 AD) the date is **3971 BC** (remember no zero year) which is very close by a single year to option 1.

Looking at that it is tempting to choose the option 1 solution for the period of Uzziah and Jeroboam II and adjust it 1 year to **3971 BC** to account for compounding error as it has the Son of God giving His life exactly 4000 years after Adam. Just as light from the Sun came into the world on the 4<sup>th</sup> day, adjusting slightly our option 1 date would have the Son of God come into this world as a perfect sacrifice exactly 4 millennial days (a day is as 1000 years to God – 2 Peter 3:8) after Adam.

One might want to take that further and say just as there were 3 ½ years of ministry before Christ's sacrifice there'll be 3 ½ years of Great Tribulation before His second coming exactly 2000 years later (**2030 AD**).

There is one snag with that thought and that is there is a strong implication that the 6000 years will be cut short (Matthew 24:21-22) and perhaps that short period is added after the millennium when Satan will be loosed for a short time (Revelation 20:7).

Option 1 for the Uzziah / Jeroboam II period gives us a Creation of Adam dates if marginally adjusted by a year exactly 4000 years before the death of Christ.

Option 2 when also marginally adjusted by a year connects perfectly the end of the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites with the first Jubilee period but it doesn't give us a date for Adam's creation exactly 4000 years before either the birth, death or start of Christ's ministry.

Just a little quandry for the reader to have fun mulling over as we conclude this study into Bible chronology and finding the best fixed dates we can for these events. Below are our final dates working back to the dawn of mankind between Adam and the Flood.

### **DATES FROM ADAM TO THE FLOOD**

**God Created Adam - 3958 BC**

(Alternate date using Uzziah/Jeroboam II option 1 – 3970 BC  
or 3971 BC [2000 years before Christ's death])

	Born	Lived to	Died	Age when and the Son he begat	Years after Adam created	Date
Adam	3958 BC	930	3028 BC	130 when he begot Seth	130	3830 BC
Seth	3828 BC	912	2916 BC	105 when he begot Enosh	235	3725 BC
Enosh	3723 BC	905	2818 BC	90 when he begot Cainan	325	3635 BC
Cainan	3633 BC	910	2723 BC	70 when he begot Mahaleel	395	3565 BC
Mahaleel	3563 BC	895	2668 BC	65 when he begot Jared	460	3500 BC
Jared	3498 BC	962	2536 BC	162 when he begot Enoch	622	3338 BC
Enoch	3336 BC	365	2971 BC	65 when he begot Methuselah	687	3273 BC
Methuselah	3271 BC	969	2303 BC	187 when he begot Lamech	874	3086 BC
Lamech	3084 BC	777	2307 BC	182 when he begot Noah	1056	2904 BC
Noah	2902 BC	950	1952 BC	502 when he begot Shem	1558	2400 BC

**The Flood 2302 BC** (Noah was 600 years old and was 1656 years after God created Adam)

Note: Add 12 years to these dates for alternate dates using option 1 for Uzziah/Jeroboam II period.

# APPENDIX 1

## ESTABLISHING THE DATE OF THE FALL OF JERUSALEM AND JUST HOW ACCURATE IS PTOLEMY'S CANON?

There are a lot of genealogies and reign lengths and synchronisms in the Bible's chronology, however, there is a element of reliance on secular chronology in order to fix absolute dates to many dates of Bible events.

There is precious little chronological data in the Bible after the return of the Jews back from Babylon after it fell to the Persians. We are very much dependent on secular chronology to date events to the post-Exile Old Testament events.

The established date of **586 BC** for the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar gives us a starting point to make use of the huge amount of biblical chronological data that stretches all the way to the time of Adam and Eve.

So how can we be confident that the conventional date of **586 BC** for the fall of Jerusalem under the Babylonians is correct? What is the evidence built upon?

The major framework for the absolute dates of kings between 747 BC and the time of the Roman Empire comes from Ptolemy's Canon.

The Canon of Kings by Claudius Ptolemy starts with the Babylonian king Nabonassar in 747 BC, a date significant in Immanuel Velikovsky's book "Worlds in Collision" which he believed was the date of the great earthquake of Uzziah.

The early Babylonian kings on the canon were vassals of the Assyrian empire before Assyria fell in 612 BC. The following is from the Wikipedia article on the Canon of Kings:

The Canon of Kings was a dated list of kings used by ancient astronomers as a convenient means to date astronomical phenomena, such as eclipses. The Canon was preserved by the astronomer Claudius Ptolemy, and is thus sometimes called Ptolemy's Canon. It is one of the most important bases for our knowledge of ancient chronology.

The Canon derives originally from Babylonian sources. Thus, it lists Kings of Babylon from 747 BC until the fall of Babylon to the Persians in 539 BC, and then Persian kings from 538 to 332 BC. At this point, the Canon was taken up by Greek astronomers in Alexandria, and lists the Macedonian kings from 331 to 305 BC, the Ptolemies from 304 BC to 30 BC, and the Roman Emperors from 29 BC to 160 AD.

The Canon only deals in whole years. Thus, monarchs who reigned for less than one year are not listed, and only one monarch is listed in any year with multiple monarchs. Usually, the overlapping year is given to the monarch who died in that year, but not always.

Note that both periods where no king is listed represent times when Sennacherib, King of Assyria, held effective control over Babylon. His name is not listed because of the hatred the Babylonians held for him due to his destruction of the city in 689 BC. The Canon is generally considered by historians to be extremely accurate. The dates have been confirmed to be essentially accurate whenever they are checked against independent sources.

Commenting on the accuracy of Ptolemy's canon Edwin Thiele has this to say in his book "The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings":

What makes the canon of such great importance to modern historians is the large amount of astronomical material recorded by Ptolemy in his Almagest, making possible checks as to its accuracy at almost every step from beginning to end. Over eighty solar, lunar and planetary positions, with their dates, are recorded in the Almagest and these have been verified by modern astronomers. The details concerning eclipses are given with such minuteness as to leave no question concerning the exact identification of the particular phenomenon referred to and make possible verification possible.

One author who has compiled evidence to challenge the accepted dates of Ptolemy is Ernest Martin. I quote first of all from his article entitled "Chronology: The Key to Prophetic Understanding - Part 2 (<http://www.askelm.com/prophecy/p900902.htm>):

The most important year in the whole Bible to establish a proper world chronology for all past time (from Adam to the present) is the year in which Jerusalem and Temple were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. This is the only key date that gives a "link-year" from biblical chronology to a precise Gentile time reckoning.

The Bible tells us that this crucial "link-year" is the 11th year of Zedekiah (the last Davidic king of Jerusalem) which dovetails with the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar (II Kings 25:2,8; Jeremiah 52:5,12).

What makes this year crucial (and vitally important for chronological purposes) is the fact that from this year onward the Bible gives only prophetic time indications until the advent of the Messiah (that is, the Seventy Years and Seventy Weeks prophecies of Daniel Nine). All other dates in the Bible (from this time forward) are the years of Gentile rulers -- and this practice continues into the New Testament with the mention of the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 3:1).

It is because of this feature that some chronologists insist on going to "Babylon" and Gentile chronology from Nebuchadnezzar [year] 19 onward. But this is wrong! What the Gentiles need to do is to go to the Bible for the correct date of Zedekiah [year] 11 (which equals Nebuchadnezzar [year] 19).

**It is the Bible that has the proper date (and the Bible has a perfect chronology of 4000 years from the first Adam to the spiritual Adam -- Christ Jesus).**

**It is NOT the Babylonian chronological scheme sanctioned by Ptolemy that should determine (wrongly) when Zedekiah [year] 11 occurred in world history and thereby adjusting all biblical dates to accord with the Gentile scheme. This is where the modern error begins.**

Now Ptolemy in his astronomical canon placed Nebuchadnezzar's 19th year in what we call 585 B.C. (while most modern scholars have adjusted Ptolemy slightly and consider the year to be 586, 587 or some even 588 B.C.).

But is Ptolemy and the "Babylonian chronology" correct at this time in history? There are many reasons to show that the Gentile scheme is wrong, and this was acknowledged by several historians of the past who relied principally on the Bible.

Josephus (first century A.D.), a historian of the first rank, a priest who had access to and referred to the archives in the temple in Jerusalem as well as all the records in the imperial library at Rome including Babylonian, Egyptian, Jewish, Greek and Persian histories, stated

quite confidently that **Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in what we call 639 B.C. In another place, when he acceded to the Babylonian chronology of Berosus, he said it was 619 B.C.**

Ctesias (fourth century B.C.), whom we referred to before (even though he did not follow the Bible), showed Jerusalem's destruction was probably 850 B.C. since he placed the fall of Nineveh in 877 B.C., and he said Nineveh fell 27 years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Demetrius (last of third century B.C.) was a Jewish historian from Alexandria. He worked out a chronology that was supposed to be with great precision and he stated there were 338 years and 3 months from the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar to King Ptolemy of Egypt (that is, in 222 B.C). **Thus, according to his chronology, Jerusalem fell in 560 B.C.** See Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, 1,21,141 for this scheme.

Tertullian (third century A.D.) had an odd way of recording years of the past, but his fall of Jerusalem came to 507 B.C. See Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol.3, pp. 158, 159,168.

Africanus (third century A.D.), the first Christian chronologer, stated that Jerusalem fell in 629 B.C. (Archer, Jerome's Commentary on Daniel, p.96).

Hippolytus (third century A.D.), one of the most educated men in Italy, stated that Jerusalem fell in 664 B.C. (Finegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, p. 147).

Jerome (fifth century A.D.), editor of the chronologies of Africanus and Eusebius, said Jerusalem fell in the year 591 B.C. See Finegan, p.185. All these dates are inconsistent!

What we find is the fact that the chronology of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian worlds was not clearly understood by historians (and even astronomers) within a few decades of some major historical events within the periods.

Indeed, we have Plutarch telling us just prior to the time that Ptolemy devised his astronomical canon of kings that thousands of chronologists (using historical and astronomical data) were working to correct the errors that people knew to be resident in that crucial time in history.

And even today, we find many of the early Gentile historical records not agreeing with known astronomical indications. Our modern dates for the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods are not as infallible as some people may think.

Of course, new discoveries which would give us more astronomical information concerning the times of the various Assyrian, Egyptian, Babylonian and Persian kings would be most welcome, but of the texts that we already have available, there is no real consensus that all the astronomical and chronological problems have been perfectly worked out.

It is essential for us today that we re-examine what the biblical writers have told us about the proper chronology from the first Adam to the last Adam (Jesus Christ).

In my Part One of this research paper I have shown the remarkable circumstance that exactly (to the very day) a 4000 year period has elapsed between the two "Adams." When one looks at the evidence carefully, it may well be that it is the biblical revelation that has the "key" to solve the real chronological problems of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods. I believe this to be the fact.

Below is the chart from Part 1 of the chronology article that I have quoted above by Ernest Martin (<http://www.askelm.com/prophecy/p900901.htm>):



From Adam's year "one" to the 99th year of Abraham	2107 years.
From Abraham's year 99 to the first year of the Exodus	430 years
From the year of the Exodus to year 4 of Solomon's reign	480 years
Add the remainder of Solomon's 40 years' reign	36 years.
Summation of the years for the 19 kings of Judah and their reigns from Jerusalem	<b>393 years</b>
Then add a "one" year period for harvest after the temple's destruction	1 year
Then add the prophetic period which comprised the Babylonian Captivity of the Jews when the Land of Judah observed its Sabbatical years of rest	70 years
Finally, add the 69 Weeks of Sabbatical Periods that reach to a Messiah (which should properly begin with the year called Cyrus "one")	483 years
Total number of completed years from Adam to the Messiah of Daniel	<b>precisely 4000 years</b>

With this chronology of Ernest Martin's he has 483 years between Cyrus' decree (usually dated to 539 BC) and the birth of Christ (5 BC) giving a date of 488 BC for Cyrus' decree, a difference of 51 years.

He has the 70 years of the captivity prophecy starting from the fall of Jerusalem instead of the earlier captivity (23 years earlier) of Jehoiachin (The 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy is conventionally dated from 609-539 BC).

If it could be proven that there were exactly 4000 years between Adam and Jesus Christ this might constitute some solid evidence in favour of using a "purely" biblical chronology unreliant upon secular dates.

There are two mistakes in the above chart. The first is that the 430 years from Abraham to the Exodus is from when Abraham was 75 years old and came out of Ur of the Chaldees (assuming Josephus' statement below is correct), not from the later promise given to him at age 99. See the chart below for the details confirming this:

HOW LONG WAS ISRAEL'S PERIOD OF SLAVERY?	
Exodus 12:40-41: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years. And it came to pass at the end of the 430 years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt."	
Galatians 3:16-17: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made...And this I say, that the law which was 430 years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before God in Christ".	
Josephus: "They left Egypt in the month Xanthicus, on the fifteenth day of the lunar month; 430 years after our forefather Abraham came into Canaan, but 215 years only after Jacob removed into Egypt."	
130 - Jacob when he moved to Egypt	Joseph was 39 years old when Jacob moved and Joseph lived another 71 years after to 110.
60 - Isaac when Jacob born	Therefore max time of slavery was 144 years but more likely to have been not much more than 100 years long.
25 - Time between Abraham moving to Canaan and Isaac being born (100 - 75)	
-----	
215 years	



The second mistake in Martin's chronology chart is the length of time between the split of Israel into two kingdoms and the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. Ernest Martin explains his reasoning for using 393 years for this period this way:

There were 19 kings who followed Solomon. Simply add up the years of reign of those 19 Judaic kings (in the Book of Kings and in the Book of Chronicles -- both books give the identical number of years), and one is shown a total of 393 years.

There is another way to demonstrate that 393 years is absolutely accurate for this period of time. The prophet Ezekiel gave a prophecy that the House of Israel (the northern ten tribes) had been in an iniquitous relationship with God for 390 years (Ezekiel 4:1-8). Ezekiel put him at the end of the 390 years at the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in Nebuchadnezzar's year 19 which happened to be the last year of King Zedekiah's reign.

But why 390 years and not 393 years (which is the exact period of time after the death of Solomon)? This is simple to explain. We are told in II Chronicles 11:17 that for three years the northern Israelites after the death of Solomon continued to walk in the righteous ways of God. But after three years, Jeroboam set up the calf worship in Bethel and Dan (I Kings 12:26-33).

This is the precise time that Ezekiel's prophecy of the 390 days (which answered to "years") began to be counted. Thus we see that the prophet Ezekiel clearly confirms the 393 years' period for the 19 Judaic (Davidic) kings to have ruled in Jerusalem.

It is true that a simple counting up of the reigns of the kings of Judah after Solomon equals 393 years but this does not factor in any co-regencies which could be included in these figures. Consider the following data to illustrate the point:

**2Ki 14:23** In the **15th year of Amaziah**... king of Judah, **Jeroboam** ... king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, *and reigned 41 years*.

**2Ki 14:17** And **Amaziah**... king of Judah lived after the death of **Jehoash**...king of Israel **15 years**.

Amaziah lives 15 years after Jeroboam's father died and Jeroboam became king. So this would mean that Amaziah's son Azariah (Uzziah) starts his reign in Jeroboam's 15<sup>th</sup> year but what do we read next?

**2Ki 15:1-2** In the **27th year of Jeroboam** king of Israel began **Azariah (Uzziah)** ...king of Judah to reign...and he reigned **52 years** in Jerusalem.

Hang on, how can Azariah (Uzziah) start his reign in Jeroboam's 27<sup>th</sup> year when we just calculated above it should be in Jeroboam's 15<sup>th</sup> year?

We have one of two choices:

- 1) The 27<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam starts from when he became co-regent ruling alongside his father.
- 2) There was a period of 12 years when a king didn't sit on the throne of Judah.

If we accept option 2 then there is more than 393 years between the split into the two kingdoms and the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians so it must be option 1 according to Ernest Martin. Continuing on:

**2Ki 14:23** In the 15th year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, *and reigned* 41 years.

So we have Azariah (Uzziah) starting his reign in the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam from his co-regency. We are then told above that Jeroboam reigned 41 years. If this is taken from his co-regency then his successor should take over in **Azariah (Uzziah)'s 14<sup>th</sup> year** (41-27). So what are we then told?

**2Ki 15:8** In the **38th year of Azariah [Uzziah] king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam** reign over Israel in Samaria 6 months.

Now we have a difference of 24 years. If his successor takes over in Azariah [Uzziah]'s 38<sup>th</sup> year we again have two choices:

- 1) The 38<sup>th</sup> year of Azariah (Uzziah), king of Judah, is taken from his co-regency. This is anathema to those who says that there was 393 years between the split into the two kingdoms and the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians.
- 2) There was an interregnum of 24 years when there was no king sitting on the throne of Israel.

This latter option appears to be ruled out by this verse:

**2Ki 14:29** And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, *even* with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned **in his stead**.

This verse strongly implies that Zachariah succeeded Jeroboam straightaway **NOT 24 years after Jeroboam dies** or 12 years later if somehow we can work something out so that the 27<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam when Azariah (Uzziah) became king was from Jeroboam's sole reign, not co-regency.

Given the succession of 3 rulers within 2 years that occurred in Israel after Zechariah ascended the throne of Israel such a space of so many years in Israel without a king is completely illogical given the number of power hungry contenders there would have been trying to seize the throne.

The 390 year prophecy in Ezekiel 4 about the House of Israel's sin "constrained" Ussher and others in an unnecessary way to set a date for the split of the kingdom of Israel 44 years earlier than the more commonly accepted dates of Edwin Thiele. They took it as a marker that from the fall of Jerusalem (586 BC) back to when Jeroboam set up idols and changed the feasts should be 390 years.

This is an incorrect application of that prophecy. The prophecy concerns the House of Israel which had gone into captivity 120 years before Ezekiel gave the prophecy. Also, the fall of Jerusalem, if we were to take it as the end point, was not for several years after Ezekiel gave the prophecy. Ezekiel's prophecy is given below:

**Eze 4:4** Also lie on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel on it; *according* to the number of days that you shall lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity.

**Eze 4:5** For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days. So you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.

**Eze 4:6** And when you have fulfilled them, lie again on your right side, and you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days; a day for a year; a day for a year, I have set for you.

There is nothing explicit stating that the 390 days began with the split of Israel and the sins of Jeroboam. Ezekiel gave this prophecy in 593 BC, well over a century after Samaria fell and Israel was taken into captivity by Assyria.

If we go ahead 390 years from the date of the prophecy we come to 203 BC. This is the time when the Parthian Empire comes on the scene and gains independence from the Greek Seleucids. As well documented in Stephen Collins' book "Parthia" the ruling class and much of its people were descendants of the Israelites relocated to the area of Parthia by the Assyrians.

This prophecy, in itself, going forward from the time of Ezekiel gives support for the general period of time allocated by Ptolemy for the Babylonian and Persian empires.

Simple addition of 483 years and the 70 years of captivity plus the biblical dates from Adam to the fall of Jerusalem when we use the correct figures gives us a number somewhat different from the magical 4000 years calculated by Ernest Martin.

We've gotten a little off topic here in examining the claims of Martin's "purely biblical chronology" without reliance on secular dates but I believe we have shown enough above to show that we need to find outside, independently corroborated secular dates to help us obtain the necessary fixed dates for the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian and Persian kings.

Now a little more from Ernest Martin relating specifically to Ptolemy's Canon before we look at the counterarguments:

Why is so much authority given to this second century A.D. document preserved by an Egyptian astrologer attached to the Chaldean priesthood? It is because of those *seven eclipses* of the moon! And those eclipses, at first glance, do seem to be a formidable adversary to any other chronological scheme put forward, even though it may come directly from the Bible. The reason? Astronomy never lies!

True enough, astronomy is a sure guide if used properly. But look at Ptolemy. He used only seven lunar eclipses. Why only seven? Ptolemy should have used many more. The fact is, lunar eclipses occur quite frequently. There were literally hundreds that occurred in the period Ptolemy covered, but he was only able to involve seven?

Look, out of that 400 year period (the time of the Babylonian and Persian Empires) there were over 600 lunar eclipses visible to the earth. It is true that not all of these could be observed from the region of Babylon (the only area Ptolemy is concerned with). Yet, it was possible for the Babylonians to witness and to record over 300 of them. But of all these 300 eclipses, Ptolemy was able to muster only seven.

This lapse is odd, indeed. In fact, lunar eclipses occur in cycles. If a lunar eclipse is seen at any time, in 54 years and one month, that same type of eclipse will occur again in virtually the same part of the sky and with the same amount of the shadow of the earth on the moon. Any encyclopedia will inform a person that in any ten year period there are on the average 15 lunar eclipses observable from earth. That is a lot of eclipses. (Ptolemy only deals with lunar eclipses because the Chaldeans at this early period were unable to predict or to work with the more complicated solar eclipses.)

Astronomers (other than historians) have long complained that Ptolemy gave us only a pittance of eclipses when hundreds occurred. They are very disappointed in him. In fact, in the Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society, March, 1968, Professor Heather speaking about the eclipses of ancient times:

"There is no mention of important eclipses which one would have expected to be recorded such as that of 462 B.C. and there are those which are recorded that have no counterpart theoretically" p.549

**In fact, there are all types of eclipses that occurred right in Babylon that Ptolemy and others should have recorded—very prominent ones—that are passed over as though they never occurred, and there are many, many more eclipses mentioned by the classical writers which don't fit in with Ptolemy's eclipse chronology at all! What is interesting is the fact that Ptolemy only selected seven eclipses when over 300 were available.**

And now, thanks to the modern astronomical research by Dr. Robert R. Newton, he has proved dogmatically that every one of Ptolemy's eclipses was manufactured by Ptolemy himself. Indeed, Ptolemy found eclipses to fit his astrological scheme of chronology. See Dr. Newton's book *"The Origin of Ptolemy's Astronomical Tables,"* The Center for Archaeoastronomy, at the University of Maryland, published by John Hopkins University, Applied Physics Laboratory.

The Seder Olam was compiled by Rabbi Yose ben Halafta in the second century AD and is the basis for the Jewish chronology. The year 2000 will be, according to the Jewish chronology, the year 5760 since the creation of mankind, around 200 years short of the Bible's chronology.

The Jewish chronology misses 60 years from misunderstanding how old Terah was when he begat Abraham. The Jewish chronology reckons Terah as being 70 years old when Abraham was born. Genesis 11:26 tells us that "Terah lived 70 years and begot Abraham, Nahor and Haran." This gives the impression that Terah was 70 years old when he begat Abraham though we are plainly told that Abraham was 75 years old when Terah died at 205 (Genesis 11:32, Acts 7:4). It obviously had to be one of the brothers of Abraham who born when Terah was 70 years old.

The remaining difference of around 140 years comes from shortening the Kingdom of Persia from over 200 years to a little over 50 years. The kings after Darius I are completely left out. Darius I is incorrectly noted as the king Darius who Alexander the Great defeated. The kings of the "decadent phase" of the Persian empire - Artaxerxes II, III and IV are all left out as well as Darius III. In addition, the existing kings' reign lengths are compressed.

The years attributed to the Persian kings by the Jewish chronology are as follows:

Darius the Mede - 1 year  
Cyrus - 3 years  
Artaxerxes (Cambyses) - ½ year  
Ahasuerus (Xerxes) – 14 years  
Darius the Persian – 35 years

According to orthodox Persian chronology Artaxerxes I reigned 40 years and then Darius II reigned 18 years.

Artaxerxes I is left out in the Jewish chronology and half his reign is added to Darius the Persian's reign. The two decrees in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> years of Artaxerxes reign involving beautifying the Temple and rebuilding the city and wall given to Nehemiah are correctly ascribed to Darius the Persian (Darius I) in the Jewish chronology.

Can this removal of the latter Persian kings be justified? Some christian scholars have also advocated the removal these latter Persian kings in order to make the decree of Cyrus the Great rather than one of the two in Artaxerxes I's reign be the starting point of the 70 weeks prophecy that is interpreted to say that there is 483 years between the decree and coming of the Messiah.

The last Persian king mentioned in the Bible is Darius II and the King of the North v King of the South prophecy jumps from Xerxes to Alexander the Great so can this removal of the latter Persian kings be justified historically?

In his article "Bible Chronology and Prophecy" William Dankenbring writes:

To support a 456 B.C. date for Cyrus, some 80-year gap theorists claim that the reigns of Darius II (19 years) and Artaxerxes II (46 years) and Artaxerxes III (21 years) should be cut out of the historical record as "FABRICATIONS." This would account for 86 years. But there is a slight problem with this suggestion. Archaeology disproves this idea, because the ROYAL TOMBS of these kings which supposedly "never existed" HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED!

"...in 1931 the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago began excavation of Persepolis ... Cut into the hill behind the platform on which Persepolis was built are **the TOMBS OF ARTAXERXES II, ARTAXERXES III AND DARIUS III**. At NaqshiRustam, only three miles from Persepolis, the end of a steep, narrow ridge of rock comes to an abrupt end in the plain. **High up in the face of the cliff are the rock cut tombs of Darius I, Xerxes 1, Artaxerxes I and DARIUS II**" (Collier's Encyclopedia, vol.15, p.567-568, article 'Persian Architecture: Achaemenid Period 553-330 B.C.').

Further archaeological evidence proves these kings existed. The remains of a palace of Artaxerxes III have been discovered at Persepolis. An inscription of Artaxerxes III himself on the walls of that palace reads:

"Says Artaxerxes the great king, king of kings, king of countries, king of this earth: I (am) the son of Artaxerxes (II) the king; Artaxerxes (was) the son of Darius (II) the king; Darius (was) the son of Artaxerxes (I) the king; Artaxerxes (was) the son of Xerxes the king; Xerxes (was) the son of Darius (I) the king; Darius was the son of Hystaspes by name. Hystaspes (was) the son of Arsames by name, the Achaemenid."

The effect of the Jewish shortened chronology according to Dr Floyd Jones in his book "The Chronology of the Old Testament" is that it conceals the fact that the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 points to Jesus Christ being the Messiah and also points the prophecy to Simon Bar Kokhba who led the second Jewish revolt in 132 AD.

Now for the counterarguments regarding the trustworthiness of the Canon of Ptolemy. For the balance of this appendix I would like to quote at length from a blog by Alan Feuerbacher called "Discussion Of Historical Evidence" (<http://corior.blogspot.com/2006/02/part-2-discussion-of-historical.html>). In this blog he provides significant independent confirmation from multiple sources of Ptolemy's fixed dates for the Babylonian kings.

This independent astronomical data helps lock in fixed dates for the Babylonian data of Ptolemy and subsequently the Persian data as well for which we have significantly less data for apart from Ptolemy. Feuerbacher has the following to say about Ptolemy's canon:

Claudius Ptolemy (70-161 A.D.) was a scholar, astronomer, geographer, historian and chronologist who lived in Egypt during the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius. In about 142 A.D. he wrote *The Almagest*, to which he added his famous *canon*, a list of kings and their lengths of reign beginning with the reign of Nabonassar in Babylon, 747 B.C., through the Babylonian, Persian, Greek (Ptolemaic) and Roman rulers to his contemporary, Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138-161).

Where did Ptolemy get his king list? The *Aid* book, under the subject "Chronology," says that "Ptolemy is thought to have used the writings of Berossus (p. 331), but it gives no evidence in support of this claim, which has been dropped from the equivalent discussion in *Insight on the Scriptures*. The claim is not very likely, because scholars have concluded that Ptolemy's canon represents a Babylonian tradition about the first millennium B.C. that is *independent of Berossus* as can be seen from the order and forms of the names of the kings. Professor Friedrich Schmidtke explains:

"With respect to the dependence of the sources, the Canon of Ptolemy has certainly to a great extent taken its stuff from the Babylonian Chronicle. This is clear from the characteristic *abasileuta ete* [years of interregnum] 688-681, which is also found in the Chronicle (IV,23), while the King List A at this place introduces Sennacherib instead, as well as for the two *abasileuta ete* 704-703. The Canon of Ptolemy like the Chronicle reproduces here the Babylonian tradition, which did not recognize Sennacherib as the legitimate king, as he had sacked and destroyed Babylon."

**There is also some evidence that Ptolemy used Babylonian king lists. Thus he had access to Babylonian chronicles and king lists, probably through intermediary sources, but *evidently independent of Berossus*. This is a very important conclusion, as Ptolemy's figures for the Neo-Babylonian kings are in agreement with Berossus's figures.**

Thus we have two independent witnesses to the length of the Neo-Babylonian era according to the chronicles, and even if these chronicles are only partly preserved on cuneiform tablets, their figures for the lengths of reign of the Neo-Babylonian kings have been correctly transmitted to us via Berossus and Ptolemy.

The reigns of the Neo-Babylonian kings, according to Berossus and Ptolemy, are as follows, not counting accession years:

	YEARS OF REIGN ACCORDING TO:		
	BEROSSUS	PTOLEMY	B.C. DATES
Nabopolassar	21 years	21 years	625 - 605
Nebuchadnezzar	43 years	43 years	604 - 562
Evil-merodach	2 years	2 years	561 - 560
Neriglissar	4 years	4 years	559 - 556
Labashi-Marduk	9 months	--	556
Nabonidus	17 years	17 years	555 - 539

Ptolemy omits Labashi-Marduk, as he always reckons *whole* years only. Labashi-Marduk's reign of only a few months (probably 2 or 3) was included in Neriglissar's last year (which was also the accession year of Nabonidus). Ptolemy, therefore could leave him out of the king list.

If these lists by two of the oldest and most reliable historians are correct, the first year of Nebuchadnezzar would be 604/3 B.C. and his 18th year, when he destroyed Jerusalem, would be 587/6 B.C. But even if Berossus and Ptolemy both give a true representation of the length of reigns given in the original Neo-Babylonian chronicles, how do historians know that the chronological information originally contained in these chronicles is reliable?

One reason Ptolemy's canon has their confidence is that in his *Almagest* he records a large number of ancient astronomical observations from the periods covered by the canon. As these observations were dated to different kings mentioned in the king list, Ptolemy could attach the list to a series of astronomically fixed dates, thus turning it into a kind of "absolute chronology" for the periods it covered...

Here is what Berossus said about Nebuchadnezzar's taking of Jewish captives in his accession year:

"Nabopolassaros, his father, heard that the satrap who had been posted to Egypt, Coele Syria, and Phoenicia, had become a rebel. No longer himself equal to the task, he entrusted a portion of his army to his son Nabouchodonosoros, who was still in the prime of life, and sent him against the rebel. Nabouchodonosoros drew up his force in battle order and engaged the rebel. He defeated him and subjected the country to the rule of the Babylonians again. At this very time Nabopolassaros, his father, fell ill and died in the city of the Babylonians after having been king for twenty-one years.

"Nabouchodonosoros learned of his father's death shortly thereafter. After he arranged affairs in Egypt and the remaining territory, he ordered some of his friends to *bring the Jewish, Phoenician, Syrian, and Egyptian prisoners* together with the bulk of the army and the rest of the booty to Babylonia. He himself set out with a few companions and reached Babylon by crossing the desert."

**Thus Berossus gives support to Daniel's statement in Dan. 1:1 that Jewish captives were brought to Babylon in Nebuchadnezzar's accession year.**

This confirmation of Dan. 1:1 is important because Berossus derived his information from the Babylonian chronicles, or sources close to those documents, originally written during the Neo-Babylonian era itself...

Here is what Thiele actually said concerning this [Ptolemy's canon]:

"What makes the canon of such great importance to modern historians is the large amount of astronomical material recorded by Ptolemy in his *Almagest*, making possible checks as to its accuracy at almost every step from beginning to end. Over eighty solar, lunar, and planetary positions, with their dates, are recorded in the *Almagest* which have been verified by modern astronomers. The details concerning eclipses are given with such minuteness as to leave no question concerning the exact identification of the particular phenomenon referred to, and making possible the most positive verification." [*The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, p. 46].

**As professor of ancient history Otto Neugebauer has pointed out, the king list was compiled from Babylonian sources by Alexandrian astronomers long before Ptolemy, to be used in their astronomical calculations.**

**Ptolemy was simply one in a long line of keepers of astronomical records, and he used the previously compiled king list in conjunction with his astronomical calculations. Attempts to prove that his astronomical data are erroneous, therefore, have no bearing on the king list, since it existed long before Ptolemy.**

It is an accident of history that the king list was preserved, but since it was preserved in Ptolemy's own writings, it came to bear his name. Many other king lists, none as complete as Ptolemy's, have been found from more ancient times which bear this out.

Royal inscriptions of various kinds -- building inscriptions, annals, etc. -- have been found in Assyria and Babylonia in great numbers. We will consider three original documents from the reign of Nabonidus.

**1. Nabon. No. 18 is a cylinder inscription from an unnamed year of Nabonidus.** Fulfilling the desire of Sin, the moon god, Nabonidus dedicated a daughter of his to this god as priestess at the Sin temple of Ur. An eclipse of the moon, dated in the text to Elul 13 and observed in the morning watch, led to this dedication. When, during Nabonidus's reign, did such an eclipse take place?

In 1949 scholar Hildegard Lewy examined the eclipse and concluded that it referred to the eclipse of September 26, 554 B.C (Julian calendar). If Nabonidus ruled for seventeen years and his first year was 555/4 B.C., as is shown by Berossus and Ptolemy, the eclipse and the dedication of Nabonidus's daughter took place in his *second* regnal year (554/3 B.C.), according to Lewy's calculation.

A remarkable confirmation of this dating was brought to light twenty years later, when another scholar, W. G. Lambert, published his translation of four fragments of an inscription from Nabonidus's reign. The inscription established that the dedication of Nabonidus's daughter took place shortly before his third year, and obviously in his second, precisely as Lewy had concluded.

The lunar eclipse of Elul 13, then, definitely fixed the second year of Nabonidus to 554/3 B.C. and his first year to 555/4, thus giving a very strong confirmation of Berossus' and Ptolemy's figures for Nabonidus's reign.

**2. Nabon. No. 8, or the Hillah stele,** was discovered in the neighborhood of Hillah, southeast of the ruins of Babylon, at the end of the 19th century. A transcription of the text was first published in 1896 and a second in 1912. The information given in this stele helps to establish the length of the *whole* Neo-Babylonian era from Nabopolassar to the reign of Nabonidus. This inscription, too, contains a record of astronomical observations which enables us to fix the reign of Nabonidus.

The stele tells of occurrences in Nabonidus' accession year and his first full year, and contains a description of a configuration of planets and stars observed by Nabonidus in an unnamed evening during this period.

It is stated that Venus, Saturn, and Jupiter were visible after dusk while Mars and Mercury were absent. Certain bright stars were also mentioned. If, as has been established, Nabonidus ascended the throne in 556 B.C. and his first full year was 555/4 B.C. (Nisan-Nisan), we should find this configuration of stars and planets during that period.

**The above mentioned Hildegard Lewy calculated the date for this configuration and concluded:**

**"The only time within the given interval when this constellation occurred was the period of 3 days comprised between Simanu 2 and Simanu 6 of Nabu-na'id's first full**



**year (May 31 to June 4, 555 B.C.), during which period, in fact, also the fixed stars enumerated by the king were visible in the evening sky."**

**So again, we find Nabonidus's reign astronomically fixed and his seventeen years of rule confirmed.**

In several of his royal inscriptions (Stelenfrgm. III,1 and XI, Nabon. H1,B and Zyl. III,2) Nabonidus says that in a dream in his accession year he was commanded by the gods Marduk and Sin to rebuild the temple e.hul.hul in Harran. In connection with this the text under discussion (Nabon. No. 8) provides a very interesting piece of information:

"As to the temple e.hul.hul in Harran which was in ruins for 54 years -- through a devastation by the Manda-hordes the(se) sanctuaries were laid waste -- the time (predestined) by the gods, the moment for the appeasement (to wit) 54 years, had come near, when Sin should have returned to his place."

The date when the temple e.hul.hul in Harran was ruined by the "Manda-hordes" is known to us from two different reliable sources: The Babylonian chronicle BM 21901 and the Harran inscription Nabon. H1,B (this is described below).

The chronicle states that in the 16th year of Nabopolassar, in the month of Marcheswan, "the Umman-manda (the Medes), [who] had come [to help] the king of Akkad, put their armies together and marched to Harran.... The king of Akkad reached Harran and [...] he captured the city. He carried off the vast booty of the city and the temple."

The Nabonidus stele H1,B gives the same information: "Whereas in the 16th year of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, Sin, king of the gods, with his city and his temple was angry and went up to heaven -- the city and the people that (were) in it went to ruin."

**Thus Nabonidus reckons the 54 years to be from the 16th year of Nabopolassar to the beginning of his own reign when the gods commanded him to rebuild the ruined temple. This is in excellent agreement with the figures for the Neo-Babylonian reigns given by Berossus and Ptolemy. As Nabopolassar reigned for 21 years, 5 years remained from his 16th year to the end of his reign.**

**After that Nebuchadnezzar ruled for 43, Evil-Merodach for 2, and Neriglissar for 4 years before Nabonidus came to power (Labashi-Marduk's few months may be neglected). Adding up these regnal years (5+43+2+4) we get 54 years -- exactly as Nabonidus states on his stele.**

If, as has already been established, Nabonidus's first year was 555/4 B.C., Nabopolassar's sixteenth year must have been 610/609, his first year 625/4 and his 21st year 605/4 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar's first year, then, was 604/3, and his 18th, when he destroyed Jerusalem, was 587/6 B.C. These dates agree completely with the dates arrived at from Ptolemy's king list and Berossus's figures.

**Consequently, this stele alone establishes the length of the whole Neo-Babylonian era. It fixes the reign of Nabonidus astronomically, and it gives the total length of the reigns of all the Neo-Babylonian kings prior to Nabonidus. The strength of this evidence from the Neo-Babylonian era itself can hardly be overestimated.**

**3. Nabon. H1,B, or the Adda-Guppi stele**, after the name of queen to which it was dedicated, was discovered in 1956. It is virtually complete and includes a biographical sketch of Nabonidus's mother Adda-Guppi. It recorded the number of years in the reigns of two Assyrian kings, Ashurbanipal and Ashur-etillu-ili, as well as those of the Neo-Babylonian kings Nabopolassar through Neriglissar. The record ends in the 9th year of Nabonidus's reign. Note these excerpts:

"From the 20th year of Assurbanipal, King of Assyria, that I was born (in) until the 42nd year of Assurbanipal, the 3rd year of Assur-etillu-ili, his son, the 21st year of Nabopolassar, the

43rd year of Nebuchadnezzar, the 2nd year of Awel-Marduk, the 4th year of Neriglissar, in 95 years of the god Sin, king of the gods of heaven and earth....”

Further on in the text a complete summary of her life is given:

“From the time of Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, until the 9th year of Nabu-na'id king of Babylon, the son, offspring of my womb, 104 years of happiness, with the reverence which Sin, king of the gods, placed in me, he made me flourish, my own self....”

**So the reign of every Neo-Babylonian king, except Labashi-Marduk, who ruled only three months, down into the reign of Nabonidus, during which the queen died, is given in this stele, and the figures exactly match Ptolemy's canon and all the other sources of evidence.**

Interestingly, the queen actually lived only about 101 or 102 years, because the scribe who recorded this stele apparently did not realize there was an overlap of two years between the last Assyrian king, Assur-etillu-ilani, and the first Neo-Babylonian king, Nabopolassar. The scribe simply summed up the years given for the kings and missed the overlap.

**So the stele assigned lengths of reign for the following Neo-Babylonian kings: 21 for Nabopolassar, 43 for Nebuchadnezzar, 2 for Awel-Marduk and 4 for Neriglissar. These correspond exactly to every piece of evidence we have discussed...**

Thousands of such dated cuneiform texts have been unearthed from the Neo-Babylonian period. During the 1920s alone, more than five hundred tablets dated in the reign of Nabonidus were published, according to the work *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, by Raymond P. Dougherty, 1929.

**Thus there exist many such dated tablets from every year during the whole Neo-Babylonian era. Because of this abundance of dated texts modern scholars are able to determine not only the length of the reign of each king, but also the time of the year when each change of reign occurred, sometimes almost to the day. This has been demonstrated by R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein in their work *Babylonian Chronology: 626 B.C. -- A.D. 75*, 1956...**

Another interesting business document mentions both the 43rd year of Nebuchadnezzar and the accession year of his son, Evil-merodach. A slave girl was placed at the disposal of one Nabu-ahhe-iddina "in the month of Ajaru, forty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon." Some months later, "in the month of Kislimu, accession year of (Amel)-Marduk," full payment was given for the girl. This text, then, fixes the length of Nebuchadnezzar's reign and shows that he was succeeded by Evil-merodach.

Nebuchadnezzar's length of reign and his succession by Evil-merodach are confirmed by the Bible. In 2 Kings 24:8, 12, 15 the 1st year of Jehoiachin is said to be the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar, when Jehoiachin was exiled to Babylon.

**2 Kings 25:27 says that in Jehoiachin's 37th year he was let "out of the house of detention" by the king of Babylon, Evil-merodach. Jer. 52:31 equates the 37th year of Jehoiachin's exile with the accession year of Evil-Merodach. Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar could have reigned for at most 44 years, and, counting from his accession year this means his 43rd year was his last. This is a remarkable example of how well the Bible and secular history agree on Neo-Babylonian chronology...**

Astronomical observations are fundamental to establishing an absolute chronology of ancient time periods. Certain documents called "astronomical diaries" are used to establish Neo-Babylonian chronology. For purposes of this discussion, the "astronomical diaries" are a group of documents recording astronomical observations by astronomers at Babylon, and have been so termed by an authority on astronomical diaries, Professor Abraham J. Sachs.

**A "diary" usually covers the six or seven months of the first or second half of a particular Babylonian year and gives the position of the moon at its first and last**

visibility on a specific day, along with the positions of the planets Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

**It should be noted that the Babylonian priests kept these records mainly for astrological purposes, since much of their religion was based on astrology. They kept precise records of the heavens in order to practice astrology.**

The diaries often add much additional information, such as meteorological events, earthquakes, market prices, etc. More than 1,200 fragments of astronomical diaries of various sizes have been discovered, but because of their fragmentary condition only about a third of the number are datable. Most of these texts had already been discovered in the 1870s and 1880s. Almost all are kept in the British Museum. This is where designations like "BM 32312" come from.

**Most cover the period from about 385 to 60 B.C. and contain astronomical observations from about 180 of these 325 years, thus firmly establishing the chronology of this period. Half a dozen of the diaries are dated in the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries B.C.**

#### **VAT 4956**

The most important text for our discussion is designated VAT 4956, which is kept in the "Vorderasiatischen Abteilung" in the Berlin Museum. This diary is dated from Nisan 1 of Nebuchadnezzar's 37th regnal year to Nisan 1 of his 38th regnal year, recording observations of the moon and the planets from his entire 37th year. A translation and careful examination of the text was published by P. V. Neugebauer and E. F. Weidner in 1915.

Among the many observations recorded on VAT 4956, there are about thirty which are so exactly described that modern astronomers can easily fix the exact dates when they were made. By doing so they have been able to show that all these observations (of the moon and the five planets) must have been made during the year 568/7 B.C. Remember in the following discussion that astronomical calculations include a zero year between 1 B.C. and 1 A.D., so that this date would be written as -567/6.

The diary itself clearly states that the observations were made during Nebuchadnezzar's 37th year, opening with the words: "37th year of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. On Nisan 1 the moon became visible behind the Hyades; visibility lasted for 64m...." It ends with Nisan 1 of the "38th year of Nebuchadnezzar," according to Neugebauer and Weidner.

If Nebuchadnezzar's 37th regnal year was 568/7 B.C., then his first year must have been 604/3 B.C., and his eighteenth, during which he destroyed Jerusalem, 587/6 B.C. This is the same date indicated by Berossus, Ptolemy, royal inscriptions and the business documents.

Could all these observations also have been made twenty years earlier, in the year 588/7 B.C., which according to the chronology presented in the *Aid* and *Insight* books corresponds to Nebuchadnezzar's 37th regnal year? The March 15, 1969 *Watchtower*, page 186; *Aid*, page 331; and *Insight*, pages 455-6, say: "Modern chronologers point out that such a combination of astronomical positions would not be duplicated again in thousands of years." Let's consider one example.

**According to this diary, on Nisan 1 and Airu 1 of Nebuchadnezzar's 37th year, the planet Saturn could be observed "opposite the Southern Fish [south of the constellation Aquarius] of the Zodiac."**

**Since Saturn revolves around the sun every 29.5 years, it moves through the whole Zodiac in 29.5 years. This means that it can be observed opposite each of the twelve constellations of the Zodiac for about 2.5 years on average. It means also that it could be observed in opposition to the Southern Fish 29.5 years prior to 568/7 B.C., or in 597/6, but certainly not 20 years earlier, in 588/7.**

**Add to this the different periods of revolution of the other four planets mentioned in the text, along with the positions given for the moon, and it is easily understood why such a *combination* of observations could not be made again in thousands of years.**

**The observations recorded in VAT 4956 must have been made in 568/7 B.C. because they fit no other situation which occurred thousands of years before or after. Thus VAT 4956 gives very strong support to the chronology of the Neo-Babylonian era as established by historians through all the other means we are discussing.**

The astronomical evidence is so strong that the [Watchtower] Society has to grasp at straws to discredit it.

First, *Insight*, Vol. 1, page 456, says:

"The observations made in Babylon may have contained errors. The Babylonian astronomers showed greatest concern for celestial events or phenomena occurring close to the horizon, at the rising or setting of the moon or of the sun. However, the horizon as viewed from Babylon is frequently obscured by sandstorms."

Then Professor O. Neugebauer is quoted as saying that Ptolemy complained about "the lack of reliable planetary observations [from ancient Babylon]."

Although the description of the weather conditions at Babylon is undoubtedly correct, this does not mean that unreliable planetary observations were commonly made. The horizon as viewed from Babylon was not obscured by sandstorms every day, and some planetary events could be observed many days in succession, such as the position of Saturn which, according to VAT 4956 could be observed "opposite the Southern Fish of the Zodiac."

As pointed out above, Saturn can be observed opposite each of the twelve constellations of the Zodiac for about 2.5 years on the average. Saturn's positions in the vicinity of the Southern Fish, then, could have been observed for several months in succession, which would have made it impossible for Babylonian astronomers to make any mistake as to where this planet was observed during the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar, *in spite of frequent sandstorms*.

Further, Babylonian astronomers made regular and systematic observations of the moon and planets, following their movements through the Zodiac day by day. By the Neo-Babylonian period they had devised computational methods for *predicting* certain celestial events; some "observations" recorded in the diaries are actually not observations, but celestial events calculated in advance. These calculations are usually found to be correct when checked by modern astronomers.

For example, VAT 4956 records an eclipse of the moon which occurred on the 15th day of the month Sivan. Astronomers had calculated this eclipse with the help of the known 18-year eclipse period and therefore it is designated in the text as *atalu Sin* which means "calculated lunar eclipse." Then were probably added the words (the text is somewhat damaged): *sa etelik (LU)*, "which did not take place," i.e., it was invisible in Babylon. This has been confirmed by modern computations. The eclipse took place on July 4, 568 B.C (Julian calendar), but as it began in the afternoon it was not visible at Babylon.

This including of "observations" that were really calculations, and noting them as such, and especially indicating when the predicted event did not occur, argues strongly against a modification by scribes several hundred years later in order to fit some sort of altered version of history. If the purpose of the scribe was to alter a historical account, and if the events were not observed, logically he would have left them out. A pure copyist, on the other hand, would simply copy everything, errors and all. This would include translating them to other languages or updating them to current usage as the original language changed through the centuries.

That the observations recorded in VAT 4956 are substantially correct may be seen also from the fact that all of them (except one or two containing scribal errors) fit the same year. This

would not have been the case if the observations were erroneous. Furthermore, Professor Neugebauer, who is quoted in *Insight*, does not himself seem to distrust the information given in the diaries, even though a reader of *Insight* could get that impression from the quotation of him.

Second, *Insight* says:

"The fact is that the great majority of the astronomical diaries found were written, not in the time of the Neo-Babylonian or Persian empires, but in the Seleucid period (312-65 B.C.E.), although they contain data relating to those earlier periods. Historians assume that they are copies of earlier documents."

But historians do far more than just "assume" they are copies of earlier documents. The earliest dated diaries frequently reflect the struggle of the copyists to understand the ancient documents they were copying, some of which were broken or otherwise damaged. Often the documents used an archaic terminology which the copyists tried to modernize. This is clearly true of VAT 4956, too. Twice in the text the copyist added the comment "broken off, erased," indicating he was unable to decipher a word in the text he was copying. Also, the text reflects his attempt to change the archaic terminology. But did he change the content of the text, too? On this Neugebauer and Weidner conclude: "As far as the contents are concerned the copy is of course a faithful reproduction of the original."

**Suppose some of the material in the thirty complete observations recorded in VAT 4956 had been distorted by later copyists. How great is the possibility that *all* these "distorted" observations would fit into one and the same year, that is, Nebuchadnezzar's 37th regnal year? Remember that this year is corroborated by the royal inscriptions, the business documents, the chronicles, Berossus, and Ptolemy.**

Accidental errors of this kind do not cooperate to such a great extent. So there is no reason to doubt that the original observations have been correctly preserved in our copy. Vaguely saying "errors may have occurred," without presenting specific supporting evidence, is mere special pleading...

### ***Shamashshumukin's Reign***

There exists relatively new material establishing firmly that Nabopolassar's 1st year was 625/4 B.C. This material matches up the reigns of Babylonian kings from before the Neo-Babylonian era with the first king of that era, Nabopolassar. Note that astronomical dates from B.C. are given as negative numbers, and that a zero year is put between 1 B.C. and 1 A.D., so that 652 B.C. is written -651.

In an article published in 1974, the aforementioned Professor Abraham J. Sachs, considered to be the foremost authority on the astronomical diaries, gives a brief presentation of them. Mentioning that the oldest datable diary contains observations from the year 652 B.C., he explains how he was able to fix its date:

"I found the astronomical contents to be just barely adequate to make this date virtually certain. It was a great relief when *I was able to confirm the date by matching up a historical remark in the diary with the corresponding statement for -651 in a well-dated historical chronicle.*"

In a letter, Professor Sachs was asked the following questions:

"What information in the diary makes the date -651 virtually certain? What kind of historical remark in the diary corresponds with what statement in which well-dated chronicle?"

In his answer Professor Sachs included information about the diary in question, BM 32312, and added information which fully answered the questions. The astronomical contents of the diary clearly establish the year as 652/1 B.C. when the observations were made. Sachs wrote:

**"The preserved astronomical events (Mercury's last visibility in the east behind Pisces, Saturn's last visibility behind Pisces, both around the 14th of month I; Mars' stationary point in Scorpio on the 17th of month I; Mercury's first visibility in Pisces on the 6th of month XII) *uniquely determine the date.*"**

Interestingly, it cannot be claimed that later copyists inserted the name and regnal dates of the king mentioned, because *they are broken away*. Yet these data may be supplied because of a historical remark in the diary. For month 12, day 27, the diary states that the king of Babylon was involved in a battle at a place called Hirit. Fortunately, this battle is also mentioned in a well-known Babylonian chronicle.

The chronicle is the so-called "Akitu Chronicle," BM 86379, which covers a part of Shamashshumukin's reign, especially his last five years (the 16th to 20th). Shamashshumukin was the 2nd to last king in Babylon before the Neo-Babylonian kings began to rule. The battle at Hirit is dated in his sixteenth year as follows:

**"The sixteenth year of Shamash-shuma-ukin ... On the twenty-seventh day of Adar [the 27th day of the 12th month!] the armies of Assyria and Akkad did battle in Hirit. The army of Akkad retreated from the battlefield and a major defeat was inflicted upon them."**

Incidentally, this chronicle shows that the Babylonian priests who recorded the information did not shrink from reporting major defeats in battle, in contrast with the Assyrians.

The astronomical events described in the diary fix the battle at Hirit on Adar 27 to 651 B.C., about the middle of March. The "Akitu Chronicle" shows that the battle at this place on this day (Adar 27) was fought in the 16th year of Shamashshumukin.

Thus Shamashshumukin's 16th year was 652/1 B.C. His entire reign of 20 years, then, may be dated to 667 - 648 B.C. This is how historians had dated Shamashshumukin's reign for a long time (see *Insight*, Vol. 1, p. 453), and that is why Professor Sachs concluded his letter by saying:

**I should perhaps add that the absolute chronology of the regnal years of Shamash-shuma-ukin was never in doubt, and that it is *only confirmed again* by the astronomical diary.**

Shamashshumukin's reign has been known, for example, through Ptolemy's canon which gives him 20 years and his successor Kandalanu 22 years. Thereafter Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father, succeeded to the throne. These figures agree completely with ancient cuneiform sources.

Business documents, as well as the "Akitu Chronicle" and the "Uruk King list," all show that Shamashshumukin ruled for 20 years, and that from the first year of Kandalanu to the first year of Nabopolassar was a period of 22 years.

The diary BM 32312, then, again corroborates the chronology of the Neo-Babylonian era:

BABYLONIAN KINGS	LENGTH OF REIGN	B.C. DATES
Shamashshumukin	20 years	667 - 648
Kandalanu	22 years	647 - 626
Nabopolassar	21 years	625 - 605
Nebuchadnezzar	43 years	604 - 562
Evil-merodach	2 years	561 - 560
Neriglissar	4 years	559 - 556
Labashi-Marduk	3 months	556
Nabonidus	17 years	555 - 539

The diary confirms Ptolemy's king list, as well as much other data. A change of Nebuchadnezzar's 18th year from 587 to 607 B.C. would also change Shamashshumukin's 16th year from 652 to 672 B.C. But the diary BM 32312 makes such a change impossible. And, as already pointed out, no one can claim that later copyists inserted "the 16th year of Shamashshumukin" in this diary, because the text is damaged at this point and that datum is broken away.

**The unique historical information in the text, repeated in the "Akitu Chronicle," fixes the diary to Shamashshumukin's 16th year. This diary, therefore, may be regarded as an independent witness, which upholds the authenticity of the dates given in VAT 4956 and other diaries...**

### Lunar Eclipses

The astronomical evidence we have considered so far is fully supported by other astronomical observations, which are covered below. One such is a lunar eclipse in 621 B.C., said by Ptolemy's canon to have been in Nabopolassar's 5th year.

Nabopolassar reigned 21 years, which makes 605 B.C. the year of his death and of Nebuchadnezzar's accession. It also makes 625/4 B.C. the 1st year of Nabopolassar, consistent with what was derived above in connection with Shamashshumukin.

If Nebuchadnezzar's accession year was 605/4, then his 1st year was 604/3 and his 37th year was 568/7 B.C., which is what has been independently established by VAT 4956 and other sources. So we have *three* independently established and astronomically confirmed sets of data that prove Nebuchadnezzar's 18th year was 587/6 B.C. Therefore that was the year of Jerusalem's destruction.

One of the most important types of astronomical observations concerns the *regular pattern* of lunar eclipses that was discovered by Babylonian astronomers. These observations were recorded in the lunar eclipse records known as the *saros* texts. They are among the strongest of evidences against the Society's chronology. They contain reports of observations of consecutive lunar eclipses arranged in 18-year groups. It was known in late Babylonian times that the pattern of observable lunar phenomena is repeated at intervals of approximately 18 years and 11 days.

This cycle later became known as the *saros* period. Some of the *saros* texts record lunar eclipses from as early as the 8th century B.C., while others are from the 7th, 6th, 5th and 4th centuries B.C. Fourteen texts of this type were briefly described by Dr. Abraham Sachs in his catalog of *Late Babylonian Astronomical and Related Texts*, LBART, Providence, Rhode Island, 1955, pp. xxxi-xxxii. Over 400 years, from Nabonassar's first regnal year (747 B.C.) to the 4th century B.C., are covered by such eclipse dates, giving numerous *absolute dates* for this period. Again, these often very detailed descriptions of lunar eclipses offer a perfectly satisfactory substitute for the eclipses described by Ptolemy in his *Almagest*. By themselves, they contain enough information to establish the absolute chronology of this period.

For the 8th century B.C., the *saros* texts record detailed descriptions of lunar eclipses from six different years (748/7, 747/6, 731/0, 713/2, 703/2, and 702/1 B.C.). For the 7th century, the texts contain descriptions of lunar eclipses, most of them detailed, from about 25 different years, and the number from the 6th century is about 15-20.

The texts recording lunar eclipses from the Neo-Babylonian era are LBART 1418, 1419, 1420 and 1421 in Sachs's catalog. Of these, the last three contain detailed descriptions of lunar eclipses. The observations are dated, with the names of the kings and the specific regnal years given, and provide the following absolute dates:



KING	YEAR	B.C. DATE
Nabopolassar	15th	611/0
	17th	609/8
Nebuchadnezzar	1 <sup>st</sup>	604/3
	12th	593/2
	13th	592/1
	14th	591/0
	15th	590/89
	30th	575/4
	31st	574/3
	32nd	573/2
	41st	564/3
	42nd	563/2
Nabonidus	1st	555/4

LBART 1419 spans the whole period from the 17th year of Nabopolassar (609/8 B.C.) to the 18th year of Artaxerxes (447/6 B.C.). This text contains detailed reports of consecutive lunar eclipses at the 18-year intervals, without interruptions, from the beginning to the end of this period. These observations are dated with the regnal years and the names of the kings. This tablet alone provides a completely reliable network of absolute dates for this period, settles the total length of the Neo-Babylonian era, and establishes the absolute chronology of the period. The following absolute dates at 18-year intervals are given in this text:

KING	YEAR	B.C. DATE
Nabopolassar	17th	609/8
Nebuchadnezzar	14th	591/0
Nebuchadnezzar	32nd	573/2
Nabonidus	1st	555/4
Cyrus	2nd	537/6
Darius	3rd	519/8
Darius	21st	501/0
Xerxes	3rd	483/2
Xerxes	21st	465/4
Artaxerxes	18th	447/6

These observations refer to lunar eclipses, the same type of observations as the ones recorded by Ptolemy in his *Almagest*. When we compare the handful of observations described by Ptolemy from these three centuries, with the great number of observations found on the cuneiform tablets from the same period, such as the diaries and the *saros* texts, it is obvious that the absolute chronology of this period is firmly established even without the help of the observations of Ptolemy.

The *saros* texts provide at least four independent lines of evidence for the length of the Neo-Babylonian period. All four of them give absolute dates from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and confirm that his 18th year, when Jerusalem was destroyed, was 587/6, not 607 B.C.

**It should now be evident why any claim that individual lunar eclipses could be confused with earlier ones is simply wrong, at least where the eclipse has enough supporting evidence to fit it in the *saros* cycles. Because the 18-year cycles are not exactly 18 years, but 18 years and 11 days, the eclipses are not repeated on the same day in the calendar. The pattern gradually moves forward at each 18-year interval, and cannot even be approximately repeated for about 600 years. Therefore it is impossible to confuse an earlier eclipse with a later one.**

So there is a *continuous* list of kings, tied to astronomical observations, that synchronizes perfectly with the dates given by all the methods mentioned above.

Feuerbacher's abundant evidence of multiple astronomically-corroborated and independent data that supports Ptolemy plus the evidence of the 390 year prophecy from Ezekiel to the time of Parthia, in my mind, allows us to confidently accept the dates handed down from Ptolemy.

# APPENDIX 2

## HOW ACCURATE IS ASSYRIAN CHRONOLOGY?

Just how accurate is Assyrian chronology? To begin with I'd like to quote some background material on Assyrian chronology relating to the topic of how just reliable Assyrian chronology is. The first quote below is by Dr Floyd Jones from his book "The Chronology of the Old Testament". He writes:

One of the great problems in biblical chronology is that of converting Bible dates (i.e.: Anno Mundi = year of the world) to years BC. This is accomplished by establishing with certainty a point (or points) of contact between the history of the Hebrews and that of some other nation whose chronology is known to the extent that it will render an absolute date at the contact(s). The record of Scripture contains such points of definite contact with the Assyrian and the NeoBabylonian empires during the period of the divided Hebrew monarchies.

Most scholars believe that the chronologies for these two nations are firmly determined, at least for this span. Other nations such as Egypt also came in touch with the kingdoms of Judah and Israel during this time frame, but the chronologies of these are not yet fully established.

Today, the Assyrian chronology for this span is especially accepted as being absolute. The reason for this is due to the practice utilized by the Assyrians in recording their years. Each year was individually named to honor a significant person within the government. The person is the eponym (or limmu) holding the office for a given year and historical events or documents in Assyria were usually dated in terms of these men's names. Normally, the king would be honored as limmu during the first full year of his reign. He would usually be succeeded by a high official in the court; first the Tartan or commander-in-chief of the army (2 Kings 18:17; Isa. 20:1), who would be followed in succession by the grand vizier (Rabshakeh, Isa. 36:2, 4, 11-13, etc.), chief musician, chief eunuch, and then the governor of a city or province.

Between the years 859 to 703 BC, an outstanding event or activity occurring during that particular eponymous year would follow in the second column after the man's name for whom the year was assigned. Thus, if we have a complete list of eponyms, we have a list of successive years in Assyrian history.

In AD 1846, Sir Henry Rawlinson, the famous British Assyriologist, discovered among the inscribed cuneiform terra cotta tablets four copies of the Assyrian Eponym Canon (list) which had been recovered by Austen Layard at Nineveh.

He designated the four as Canons I, II, III and IV covering the period from 911 BC according to Assyrian reckoning (actual date = 956 BC) to 659 BC,

Canon I is the foremost and standard copy. Canon II extended from 893 (Assyrian, actual = 938 BC) to 692, III from 792 BC (Assyrian, actual = 837 BC) to 649, and IV from 753 BC (Assyrian, actual = 798 BC) to 701. None of these lists is perfect for the entire period, each being broken in places.

Since then, other fragments of Canon I have been found as well as many additional fragmentary copies. Some contain but a few names; others catalogue several hundred. Often where one tablet may be broken, the missing name or names may be supplied from the other lists such that a single composite of the annual eponyms has been constructed for

the period from 1030 BC (Assyrian, actual = c. 1075 BC) to 648 BC (see my appendix G, page 281 ff.).

The composite list is then synchronized with the King List found in the 1932/33 excavations at Khorsabad, the ancient capital of Sargon II, and the SDAS King List. These two registers are practically identical, except that the SDAS ends with the names of Tiglath-pileser (III) (18 years, 745-727 BC) and Shalmaneser IV (V) (5 years, 727-722 BC). The Khorsabad List bears an inscription which states that it was copied from a king list in the city of Ashur in the eighth year of Tiglath-pileser (III) (738 BC) during the second eponymy of Adad-bel-ukin.

As the King List very closely approximates the number of names between the kings listed among the eponyms, a fairly close synchronization between most of the data is achieved which leads the majority of scholars to conclude that the problems are minor and almost inconsequential. However, as we shall presently see, such is an illusion and deception...

The Canon of Claudius Ptolemy (AD 70-161) is utilized to check the accuracy of the eponyms from 747-648 BC. Over 80 solar, lunar and planetary positions are recorded and dated by this astronomer in his *Almagest*. Thus, Ptolemy's Canon gives much precise data beginning at 747 BC and as the Assyrian Eponym Canon goes down to 648 BC, an overlap of a century exists between the two...This overlapping allows the two works to serve as a check one upon the other.

Hence, for most investigators the entire matter is settled. For them, the Assyrian records are absolute and all other national chronologies for the period in question must be made to conform to whatever mold is imposed upon them by the Assyrian data. Although it seems so facile and tidy, is it an accurate portrayal of the actual history and is such unqualified trust warranted? (p.145-146)

Edwin Thiele certainly thought so. Below are his comments relating to one of the key pieces of evidence used to support the accuracy of Assyrian chronology for this period:

One item of unusual importance is a notice of an eclipse of the sun that took place in the month Simanu in the eponymy of Bur-Sagale. Astronomical computation has fixed this as 15 June 763. With the year of the eponymy of Bur-Sagale fixed at 763 BC, the year of every other name of the complete canon can likewise be fixed. The Assyrian lists extant today provide a reliable record of the annual limmu officials from 891 to 648 BC and for this period they provide reliable dates in Assyrian history...

The canon of Ptolemy provides the date 709 BC (year 39 of the Nabonassar era) when Sargon, king of Assyria, became king of Babylon. From Assyria come two tablets, K5280 and K2688 that provide the information that the eponymy of Mannu-ki-Ashur-li, the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Sargon as king of Assyria, was his first year as king of Babylon. We thus secure 709 BC as the year of the eponymy of Mannu-ki-Ashur-li and the 13<sup>th</sup> year of Sargon as king of Assyria. Now on the basis of Ptolemy's canon we are able to provide dates to all the other eponymies on the Assyrian lists, and we thus secure 763 for the eponymy of Bur-Sagale – the same date as secured for that eponymy by the evidence of the solar eclipse that took place in the month Simanu.

So the date 763 for the eponymy of Bur-Sagale has been established not only by the astronomical evidence of Assyria but also that by that of Ptolemy's canon. We thus have complete assurance that 763 is the correct date for Bur-Sagale and that the other dates of the eponym lists, whether reckoned backward or forward from that date, are likewise correct...

An exact synchronism between the Hebrew and Assyrian history is made possible in the early period of the kings by an interesting correlation of events in Israel and Assyria that begins and ends the 12 year period of 853 to 841 BC. It has already been mentioned that Ahab is listed by Shalmaneser III as one of the kings of the Westland who fought against

him in the battle of Qarqar and we have seen that this battle was fought in the year 853. Therefore Ahab was still alive and reigning in Israel sometime in the year 853. Shalmaneser also mentions that he received tribute during his expedition to the west in his 18<sup>th</sup> year. This would be in the eponymy of Adad-rimani (841). Thus Jehu was already reigning over Israel sometime in 841...

One point that should not be overlooked concerning the year 853 for the accession of Ahaziah and 841 for the death of Joram is that we have here from an Assyrian source a complete confirmation of the use in Israel of the nonaccession-year system of reckoning.

[NOTE: The reigns of Ahaziah and Joram were in between Ahab and Jehu who Thiele says had contacts with Shalmaneser III 12 years apart.] If the official length of Ahaziah's reign was 2 years (1 Kings 22:51) and if the official length of Joram's reign was 12 years (2 Kings 3:1) and if these two reigns totaling 14 official years were only 12 actual years from 853 to 841, it is obvious that Israel was at this period using the nonaccession-year system (The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings, p. 69, 71-72, 75, 77-78).

The accession year method of reckoning that was used in Assyria at this time and for most of the kingdom of Judah. In the year that a king died the remainder of the year was assigned to the old king. That same year was reckoned as the accession year for the new king and the following year was assigned as the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the new king. This had the net effect of avoiding any overlap of reigns that would artificially stretch out the time of a kingdom when the reigns were added together over a period of time.

The non-accession year method of reckoning the reigns of kings was used for most of the kingdom of Israel. In the year that a king died the remainder of the year was assigned to the old king. That same year was also assigned as the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the new king. This had the net effect of creating an overlap of years assigned to reigns.

In the example Thiele notes above of the actual time between the end of Ahab's reign and the start of Jehu's reign there were 12 actual years but because 2 years were counted twice in the reigns of the in-between kings, the total of their official reigns amounts to 14 years.

Those familiar with the content of Immanuel Velikovsky's book "Worlds in Collision" would recognise the date calculated for the Bur-Sagale eclipse is prior to the dates of the most recent changes he believed had occurred to the earth and the moon's orbits in the period between Uzziah's great earthquake and the defeat of the Assyrian army in Hezekiah's day.

He put forth evidence to support his view that there was a change in the calendar from a 360 day solar year to a 365  $\frac{1}{4}$  day solar year and that there was a change in the moon's orbit as well. Those who support his point of view would see that correct retro-calculation of eclipses prior to these orbital changes are just not possible and are only possible after the last of these orbital changes.

As we have seen, Babylonian chronology is very reliable but evidence will be shown shortly that such is not the case with Assyrian chronology. The earliest synchronism between the eponym lists and Ptolemy's canon is Sargon in 709 BC. Before that we are solely reliant on the trustworthiness of the Assyrian lists assuming there are no gaps or duplication in the limmus.

It must always be remembered that a limmu does not mean a year. A limmu was the chief official of the king of Assyria. If there was a second king, a co-regent, it is entirely possible there was a chief official for each of the kings reigning at the same time. The Bible in a few places implies that Assyria had **multiple** kings at the same time (2 Kings 19:11, 17, 2 Chron. 28:16, 30:6)

Now I would like to quote again at length from Dr Floyd Jones' book "The Chronology of the Old Testament" who highlights the many weaknesses in Assyrian chronology:

It will be noted in the above paragraph that two Roman numeral designations have been assigned to some of the Assyrian monarchs. This is because a conflict exists among the works of various Assyriologists as to the number of Assyrian monarchs bearing the same name. In general, the older works give the numerical value outside the parentheses.

We have attempted to allay the confusion by always placing the modern Assyrian School's assignments in parentheses. Still, this attempt falls short of its intended goal due to the varied designations by the different workers. Thus when consulting the older studies the reader will find "Shalmaneser II," but the works after AD 1912 designate him as "Shalmaneser III." To circumvent the confusion, he is herein designated "Shalmaneser II (III):"

#### 1. THE ECLIPSE OF BUR-SAGALE

There now arises the problem of assigning precise dates to each of the eponyms. The prevailing position is that this has been solved by the footnote accompanying the eponym of Bur-Sagale which states that an eclipse of the sun took place in the month of June. Astronomical computations yielding a Julian calendar date of 15 June, 763 have become widely accepted for this event (Gregorian = 7 June 763 BC). Hence, with the year of the eponymy of Bur-Sagale "established," one merely assigns BC dates in both directions from that foundation. Based upon these Assyrian lists, nearly all Assyriologists consider the matter firmly settled from 1030-648 BC.

#### 2. THE CANON OF PTOLEMY

The Canon of Claudius Ptolemy (AD 70-161) is utilized to check the accuracy of the eponyms from 747-648 BC. Over 80 solar, lunar and planetary positions are recorded and dated by this astronomer in his Almagest. Thus, Ptolemy's Canon gives much precise data beginning at 747 BC and as the Assyrian Eponym Canon goes down to 648 BC, an overlap of a century exists between the two...This overlapping allows the two works to serve as a check one upon the other.

Hence, for most investigators the entire matter is settled. For them, the Assyrian records are absolute and all other national chronologies for the period in question must be made to conform to whatever mold is imposed upon them by the Assyrian data. Although it seems so facile and tidy, is it an accurate portrayal of the actual history and is such unqualified trust warranted?

#### 3. ASSYRIAN INCONSISTENCIES

With regard to these eponyms, a truly strange phenomena is encountered. When one gleans the reference material readily available to the typical reader, the glaring overstatements relative to their reliability as though no significant problems or uncertainties exist become a matter of major concern for such is not an accurate presentation of the facts.

For example, the Assyrian Eponym Canon has 33 eponyms assigned to Tiglath-pileser (II) but the Assyrian King List ascribes to him only 32 years. By the number of eponyms between King Tukulti-urta (II) and King Ashur-nasirapli, the eponym lists assign Tukulti-urta

a 6 year reign, yet the Assyrian King List gives him a 7-year reign. This suggests that a name has been removed from the eponym register.

Moreover, on one eponym list an extra eponym - Balatu - is supplied as compared to three other lists that cover the period. Either the first list is correct and the others have omitted Balatu or the three are correct necessitating a clarification as to why the name has been inserted on the first.

The first list reads:

788 Sil-Ishtar  
787 Balatu  
786 Adad-uballit  
785 Marduk-shar-usur  
784 Nabu-shar-usur  
783 Ninurta-nasir

The other three lists contain the following sequence:

787 Sil-Ishtar  
786 Nabu-shar-usur  
785 Adad-uballit  
784 Marduk-shar-usur  
783 Ninurta-nasir

It should be noted that the first list not only contains the additional name, Balatu, but the name Nabu-shar-usur is discordant. It appears in a different sequence than on the other registers.

There is a discrepancy involving an incursion into "Hatte" which is associated with the eponym Daian-assur (Assyrian dating = 853 BC). The Assyrian Eponym List places this event in the sixth year of the reign of Shalmaneser II (III) whereas the Black Obelisk Inscription places the eponymy of Daian-assur in the fourth year of Shalmaneser. Further, the eponym of Naidi-ili is listed twice in the annals of Tukulti-urta II but is not found on the Assyrian Eponym Canon. The Assyrian King List gives Adad-nirari (III) a reign of 28 years, yet the Eponym Canon records 29 names. Also, there are several gaps in which a number of names have been lost.

Moreover, the June 15, 763 BC date for the eclipse of Bur-Sagale has been challenged several times in the past. Some have fixed this solar phenomena as that of June 24, 791, others identified it with the eclipse of June 13, 809.

It is neither the purpose of this endeavor to attempt identifying the eclipse nor undertaking the solving of any aforementioned problems with regard to the Assyrian Eponym registers. We merely note them and are amazed at how lightly they are passed over by most modern Assyriologist as well as other scholars. For the most part, they contemplate these problems as amounting to no more than that of whether the so-called "long chronology" or the "short chronology" is the correct solution - a difference of but one year in the entire Assyrian scheme. Moreover, after assuring us that no evidence exists of any type break in the Eponym Canon, particularly during the eighth century BC.

Edwin R. Thiele goes on to state:

"It will be noted that this accord between the chronological evidence provided by the lengths of reign of the Assyrian kings for this period and of the names on the limmu lists makes utterly untenable the postulation of a gap in the eponym canon, for it is in this period that the existence of such a gap has been proposed."

We take great issue with Thiele's comment that there is no evidence indicating a break in the Assyrian Eponym List. Thiele's chronology tortures and contorts the Hebrew record in order



to make it fit the Assyrian framework. In so doing, many clear forthright Scriptures suffer violence.

Apparently, for Thiele, the Scriptures fall into the category of being "no evidence" for they do much protest against the current Assyrian interpretations.

**It is obvious from the cited quote Thiele never considered that an official decree issued by a new monarch (perhaps as the founder of a new dynasty) wishing to obliterate a predecessor(s) would necessitate not only removing the name of that king from all chronicles, inscriptions, etc. but the names of the limmu within his reign as well.**

Indeed, such limmu represents the names of men associated with the hated predecessor, hence loyal and usually supportive of his views and goals. Both the newly copied resulting king list and Eponym Canon would contain an absolutely indistinguishable gap, almost incapable of detection. Only by some reference among the records of neighboring countries might the deleted monarch escape historical obliteration.

Nor is it an altogether unfamiliar circumstance to find the removal of all reference to past rulers from the history of a nation. Such events are well documented in antiquity. For example as mentioned previously, Thutmose III had the name of his co-regent aunt, Queen Hatshepsut, obliterated from all the Egyptians records. We know of her only through the annals of other kingdoms which came into contact with Egypt during that period.

Such confidence and faith in the Assyrian data is all the more puzzling when one considers that the single addition of "Cainan" to the genealogical list recorded in Luke 3:36 causes liberals and even staunch conservatives to call into question the validity of the strict chronology interpretation of the 11th chapter of Genesis.

The Assyrian data has been noted as having the aforementioned uncertainties, yet it is viewed by most modern scholars as not being capable of a disparity of more than a single year over the entire 382-year span from 1030 to 648 BC. The Bible, on the other hand, has but one departure between the registers in Luke chapter 3 [Cainan being a later scribal insertion] and the 11th chapter of Genesis and yet it is seen as a totally disqualifying consequence. Does not this strike our reader as being that of a double standard to say the very least?

#### 4. THE FACTS EXPOSED

As hundreds of these ancient chronicles in their actual unedited form came under the focus of this analysis, this writer was shocked, not only by the overall marred condition of the vast majority of the relevant data but by the extensive amount of unsubstantiated filling in of words, names, phrases, clauses, etc. that had been added by the various translators. Some seemed justifiable but others, flights of a most fertile imagination. Yet when published, quotes and even extended quotes taken from these records are usually presented without any qualifying parenthesis, brackets or the like and thus the reader is not made aware of the often loose and expanded liberties made during translation.

Much of the supposed "translation" consists of an interpretation laced with conjecture, creative imagination, paraphrase and that often based upon preconceived ideas of the editor. This is especially true with regard to nearly all materials written for laymen, secular or Christian, and even pastors. Indeed, for the most part, only a relatively small esoteric group of scholars are cognizant of such information, thus becoming the "trade secret" of the elite. Several examples will be given presently so that the reader may judge for himself.

The undeniable reality is that the history of Assyria and Babylonia, although sometimes giving detailed dates, exists only in a mutilated condition with no continuous chronology. This fact cannot be overstated. This is especially true with regard to the time traverse in question.

Even the "history" of Assyria is highly interpretive, subjective and contradictory. This fact is not readily apparent when one peruses standard reference materials which usually describe a rather straightforward flowing albeit abbreviated account over the span from c. 900 to c. 605 BC. However, careful scrutiny reveals much conjecture and many gross discrepancies between the various accounts. For example, one reference source relates that near the end of Shalmaneser's II (III) reign, his eldest son revolted against him. The revolt is said to have been put down by his second son, Shamshi Adad (V), who succeeded his father on the throne.

Continuing, we read that Shamshi-Adad died young and his widow, Sammuramat (Semiramis), assumed control until their son, Adadnirari (III) came of age. The encyclopedia continues stating that "Assyria made little real advance" under Adad-nirari's rule. It concludes in stating that he died young without issue thus creating a problem over his successor. Other sources mention the revolt but make no mention of Sammuramat or Adad-nirari's being so young upon his accession.

Yet another general source has nothing to say of the revolt but states that under the leadership of three great warrior-kings the Assyrians again secured their northern and eastern frontiers, reached the Mediterranean Sea on the west and penetrated Babylonia. The three great warrior-kings are listed as having been Ashur-nasir-pal (II), Shalmaneser II (III) and Adad-nirari (III)! Some of these statements will seem all the more ambiguous before this pericope is concluded. Numerous other examples could be cited but as the point has been made, we refrain.

No history of any ancient peoples is even minutely comparable to the detailed and flowing continuous record of the Hebrew witness nor is there any nation of antiquity other than that of the Hebrews whose annals record their military defeats. The force of these facts cannot be overly emphasized. They transcend all miraculous and religious overtones which some could otherwise perceive as adequate reason for disqualifying or lessening their testimony, explicitly attesting to the preeminent integrity of the Bible.

It becomes painfully apparent that were it not for the religious and spiritual overtones of that witness, no clear thinking unbiased scholar would ever set aside its testimony in favor of the extant, yet fragmented and disfigured data of the various countries contiguous to the Hebrew nation. Indeed, few seem aware of these circumstances.

Moreover, it seems a requirement for acceptance as a peer among those involved in such investigations that they play down the accuracy of the Hebrew testimony while extolling that of not only the Assyrian, but any other record than that of the people of the Word. The desire to obtain such recognition is a most powerful, intimidating and driving force. This pressure, acting in concert with the aforementioned presuppositions, must be seen as that pall which overshadows not only the area under discussion but all other related fields as well. Christian and secular inquirers alike seem unable to stand free of this ever compelling vortex.

Here then is unmistakable proof of the lack of an objective dispassionate approach to biblical related research. We find not the slightest evidence of any "neutral" approach. Of a truth, the unprejudiced mind would without controversy never overthrow the lucid historical data embedded in the pages of Scripture for the other stale fragmented crumbs as is the vogue in today's so-called "scholarly cliques." This is not to say this data is valueless and devoid of merit. Its testimony deserves a hearing but is not worthy of its current place on the bench.

## 5. MORE EPONYMOUS INCONSISTENCIES

Nor is our list of aforementioned problems concerning the composite Assyrian Eponym List exhaustive. There are other particulars, regardless of whether due to tampering or error, which cast doubt and uncertainty with respect to their being unconditionally unblemished. To mention but a few, we note the following:

857 Shulman-asharid	king of Ashur (Shalmaneser)
856 Ashar-bel-ukin	field marshal
855 Ashur-bunaia-usur	chiefcupbearer

as compared to:

827 Shulman-asharidu	king of Ashur (Shalmaneser)
826 Daian-Assur	field marshal
825 Ashur-bunaia-usiu	chief cupbearer

There is a most conspicuous similarity between the two triads yet they are presumably separated by thirty years. First, each trio begins with the same king's name save the additional "u" at the end of the latter. We note that the titles are in the same usual descending order, i.e.: king, field marshal and chief cupbearer.

Although the second names are not identical (not uncommon with regard to Assyrian personal names relating to the same individual) "Ashur" is part of both names. In and of itself, this would seem inconsequential were it not for the fact that both the third name and title are identical. Hence, we find an "Ashur" twice sandwiched between two men bearing the same name and titles - the titles of both triumvirates being in the same descending progression.

This highly suspicious condition bristles with most disturbing possibilities for the promoters of an invincible certain Assyrian chronology. Are these really different kings, we wonder? Could not these be the same king and an abbreviated repetition with names missing from the earlier part of the Canon?

We also observe that the name "Nabu-sharusur," which appeared in our first listing on page 146, is found not only at the year 786, but also 104 years earlier at 682 BC. Of course they could be different men who merely happen to have precisely the same name, but we wonder.

This is especially true since we also note other such cases as a "Tab-bel" at both 859 BC and 762 and an "Urta-ilia" at 863, 837, 801, 736 and 722.

Obviously, these cannot all be one and the same person but as it is rare for men to have the exact same names, we ponder whether these represent in some cases different men or flaws - and precisely how one is to be certain in each instance? Indeed, is it not curious or at least noteworthy that after Sennacherib's reign, neither Esarhaddon nor Ashur-banipal, the succeeding monarchs, are found among the eponyms.

Thus, it has been demonstrated that the Assyrian Eponym Canon is fraught with uncertainties and is not the solid unquestioned foundation upon which to base all other chronologies as is published and proclaimed by today's scholars in nearly all quarters.

## 6. TAMPERING COMMONPLACE

Inexplicably, the defenders of the Assyrian evidence often lament its inconsistencies and the fact that there exists obvious indication of its having been altered. Faulstich cites many such corruptions.

For example, he concludes that the reason for the discrepancy between the activity during the Daian-assur eponym, listed as occurring in Shalmaneser's fourth year on the Black Obelisk Inscription but said to have transpired in his sixth on the Monolith Inscription, is because Shalmaneser "stole" the Monolith Inscription from his father, Ashurnasir-pal (II).'

That is, Faulstich accuses Shalmaneser II (III) of removing his father's name along with the eponym years coinciding with his father's reign from the Monolith Inscription, placing his own name in its stead along with eponymous persons into the text to parallel his first six years.

Whereas most of the information contained on the Black Obelisk is apparently correctly attributable to Shalmaneser II (III), there also are appalling indications of forgery. For example, an inscription over a relief catalogs animals received as tribute from Africa yet there is no evidence documenting that he extended his sphere of influence that far south.

Moreover, a near identical inventory has been found on the "Broken Obelisk" in which the animals were presented to King Ashur-bel-kala, c. 150 (Assyrian = 200) years previously, hence Shalmaneser has apparently claimed for himself tribute belonging to a former monarch.

It is well known and accepted by most Assyriologists that a significant number of the inscriptions claimed by Tiglath-pileser (III) deal with events that precede his reign. A mutilated brick inscription states that he is the son of Adad-nirari (III), however, the Assyrian King List makes Tiglath-pileser (III) the son of Ashur-nirari (V), son of Adad-nirari (III)'

This is quite a discrepancy for the King List places Adad-nirari III four monarchs before Tiglathpileser's reign and depicts Ashur-nirari. (V) as both his father and immediate predecessor upon the throne. The List goes on to relate that Shalmaneser III (IV) and Ashur-dan III (III) were brothers, being the sons of Adad-nirari (III). Ashur-nirari (V) is also said to be a son of Adad-nirari (III), implying brotherhood with Shalmaneser III (IV), and Ashur-dan III (III).

The Assyrian records contain very little information concerning Adad-nirari (III) and nothing about Shalmaneser III (IV) or Ashur-dan III (III). Significantly, an alabaster stele was discovered in 1894 at Tell Abta displaying the name Tiglath-pileser imprinted over that of Shalmaneser (IV), a successor of Adad-nirari (III) and the third sovereign prior to Tiglath-pileser (III). This find coupled with the aforementioned absence of information relative to Shalmaneser III (IV) and Ashur-dan III (III) strongly implies that Tiglath-pileser was a usurper to the throne and that he destroyed the records of his three immediate predecessors - Ashur-nirari (V), Shalmaneser III (IV) and Ashur-dan III (III).

No less Assyrian authority than Daniel David Luckenbill, commenting on the brick inscription, was led to pen "...whether we err in ascribing these texts to Tiglath-pileser III is still to be determined." Again we note that the Assyrian evidence is lacking the towering degree of reliability generally ascribed to it. We do not mean to suggest that all such records should be accounted unworthy of merit, but intend to underscore with what great prudence and skepticism their testimony should be regarded when unsupported by other certified historical data. Pertaining to this subject, Dr. Thiele candidly admits:

**"Every Assyriologist knows that Assyrian inscriptions are not always reliable in all details. The account given in one place may vary from that found in another place. An achievement of one king may be claimed by his successor. The specific details of a victory reported in one year may grow in magnitude and splendor in the reports of succeeding years. The fact that Sargon claimed to have captured Samaria does not prove that he did so."**

**Is it not most incongruous that in light of so explicit an admission, the eminent Doctor along with nearly all modern scholars not only follows the Assyrian data to the near exclusion of all others, but wholeheartedly endorses its chronological implications allowing possible no more error than that of a single year? Does not this contradict all logic and common sense?**

All fair minded men, secular or Christian, should wonder with great amazement how it is that such well educated, informed intellectuals can so continue. Were it not so obvious, we would answer herewith. Presently we shall as we may forbear only so long.

We have not exhausted the matter as though these were the only imaginable faults to which the data regarding these two monarchs may be called into question for other Assyrian sovereigns are likewise guilty of such unseemly behavior against the records of their predecessors. So widespread were these alterations that some, hoping to discourage any from changing the records by which they hoped their fame might continue throughout time, had curses inscribed against anyone so brash and profane. The following specimen is from a stele of Ashurnasir-pal (II), father of Shalmaneser II (III), who plainly feared that his name would otherwise be removed from the archives and his achievements claimed by some future prince of Assyria.

"As for the one who removes my name: May Ashur and the god Ninurta glare at him angrily, overthrow his sovereignty, take away from him his throne, make him sit in bondage before his enemies, (and) destroy his name with mine (and) his seed from the land.

"...O later prince among the kings my sons whom Ashur will name for the shepherdship of Assyria: [restore] the weakened (portions) of that temple; [write] your name with mine (and) return (my inscription) to their places so that Ashur the great lord (and) the goddess Ishtar, mistress of battle and conflict, [in wars] with kings on the battlefield will cause him to achieve success.

"...As for the one who sees my stele, reads (it), anoints (it) with oil, makes sacrifices, (and) returns (it) to its place, Ashur, the great lord, will listen to his prayers (and) in wars with kings on the battlefield will cause him to achieve success.

"...O later prince, do not erase my inscribed name! (Then) Ashur, the great lord, will listen to your prayers."

## 7. TRUTH REVERSED

As previously stated, it is affirmed by most modern scholars that as the Assyrian Eponym List confirms the Assyrian part of the Canon of Ptolemy, the validity of the rest of the Canon should be accepted with complete confidence and trust. This may be true, but as Beechers and Anstey pointed out as far back as AD 1907 and 1913 respectively, wherever the Assyrian list of eponyms confirms the Assyrian part of the Canon of Ptolemy, it confirms also the biblical Record!

Strangely, the world of scholarship seems unable to perceive this fact. Since the Canon of Ptolemy agrees with the Assyrian Eponym List in those places where the biblical record also agrees with it, why is this not seen by the scholars as confirming proof of the authenticity of the record of the Scriptures instead of assessing the situation as being that of having authenticated the Canon of Ptolemy?

Let it be said, the Canon of Ptolemy's agreement with the Eponym List at the occasion where the Assyrian data is contiguous to the biblical record serves as positive external attestation to that account as being a verifiable and actual historical chronicle of the Hebrew people. Therefore, all religious and supernatural overtones aside, due to its uninterrupted continuous record as compared to the mutilated records of all their neighbors, the Hebrew record deserves at least equal, if not preferred, esteem in establishing the chronology of the ancient world...

If agreement with the Assyrian Records authenticates Ptolemy's Canon, it must of necessity authenticate the biblical record as well. Furthermore, it should be noted that wherever these three witnesses meet, they are in accord. The real problem between the Assyrian and biblical records is at but one point and, as we shall see, that point of contact may not even exist!

## 8. INSCRIPTIONS OF SHALMANESER II (III)

Simply stated, the problem begins with the fact that the "Monolith Inscription" documents that in the sixth year of his reign, Shalmaneser II (III), son of Ashur-nasir-pal (II), fought against a 12-king alliance at the battle of Qarqar (Karkar) during the eponymous year of Daian-Assur. The inscription states that one of the kings against whom King Shalmaneser II (III) engaged was a certain "A-ha-ab-bu Sir-i-la-a-a."

Most Assyriologist understand this to be Ahab, the Israelite. This may be true, but there are problems associated with this identification. First, the identification may be incorrect.

"A-ha-ab-bu Sir-i-la-a-a" may be some other historically obscure ruler, perhaps of something no more than a city-state anywhere along the nearly 300-mile seacoast area of the Fertile Crescent. Some researchers go so far as to accuse Shalmaneser II (III) of taking credit for this and other events which actually belonged to his father, Ashur-nasir-pal (II). Among

them, Faulstich addresses several perceived inconsistencies or contradictions regarding military expeditions and warns:

"Some of the claims of Shalmaneser are preposterous, and it would be ill-advised to reconstruct the Hebrew chronology to satisfy his inaccurate boasting."

After advancing examples, he concludes:

"... that the inconsistencies in Shalmaneser's annals would make it impossible to accurately date the battle of Qarqar."

Whereas we do not concur with or endorse all of Faulstich's determinations, we cite him to expose the uncertain nature of much of the oft cited Assyrian assertions. Nor is Faulstich alone. Daniel David Luckenbill cautions in his comments prior to Shalmaneser's royal annals that "It is possible that the first of these, which contained a full account of the events of the year of accession, belongs to a much earlier period."

Ahab is supposed to have furnished 2,000 chariots at Qarqar [and 10,000 infantry, New Westzinstler Dictionary of the Bible, op. cit., p. 21 (Ahab)], yet at the height of his power Solomon had but 1,400 (1 Kings 10:26). Only 5 biblical citations record Israel as having them in large quantity. Indeed, a 3 ½ year drought/famine had earlier destroyed most of Israel's livestock. When Ben-hadad II invaded Israel 5 years afterward, Ahab could only assemble 7,232 footmen to oppose the Syrians (1 Kings 18:1-5, 20:1-21). While it is possible that Ahab took chariots and horses from among these and the following year's spoils, such is not recorded and it seems improbable that only 2 years later he could have placed so vast an armada in the field at Qarqar.

A fragment of an annalistic text from Shalmaneser's 18th year declares that upon an incursion against Damascus (Di-mas-qi), the Assyrian ruler received tribute from "la-u-a mar Hu-um-ri-i." Also the Assyrian Black Obelisk, which has 20 small reliefs engraved on its four sides, depicts a ruler with a short trimmed beard bowing down to the ground in submission before Shalmaneser.

The inscription reads: "Tribute from 'la-u-a mar Hu-um-ri-i'." The majority of Assyrian scholars conjecture this to translate "Jehu, son of Omri." Thus, it is insisted that the reign of Jehu, monarch of the northern kingdom of Israel, must overlap that of Shalmaneser II (III). The Black Obelisk does not give the year of Jehu's (?) tribute; the year is ascertained by comparing it to the aforementioned fragment from Shalmaneser's annals.

However, we hasten to caution that the identification by way of the translation is not certain nor is the incident mentioned in the Bible. Though not to be taken as conclusive by itself, we observe that the Jews were forbidden by Jehovah to trim or round off the corners of their beards. Of course, Jehu may have ignored this injunction as he certainly did others, due mainly to his syncretistic religious practices in simultaneously serving both Jehovah and the golden calves. That notwithstanding, we note that he did acknowledge Jehovah had placed him upon the throne.

Further, Jehu was neither Omri's son, his kin, nor even of his dynasty. Moreover, it was Jehu who personally slew Omri's grandson, King Joram of Israel, thus bringing that dynasty to an end (2 Kings 9:26). At the same time, Jehu had put to death Omri's great grandson, King Ahaziah of Judah (2 Kings 9:27-28). He rapidly followed these deeds by coercing the elders and rulers of Samaria to behead Ahab's other 70 sons leaving none remaining of the house of Ahab (2 Kings 10:1-11). He even had 42 of Ahaziah's kinsman executed, extirpating the last of Omri's lineage.

Finally, we add that prior to his enthronement, Jehu is portrayed in Scripture as having been a mighty warrior. He had become a general in the army of Israel and held in such repute and esteem among his fellow commanders that upon their learning of his having been anointed king at Ramoth-Gilead by the young prophet whom Elisha had appointed to the task, to the man they immediately submitted to his authority placing their garments beneath his feet and hailing him king (2 Kings 9:1-13).

As a charioteer, Jehu's skill and style acquired legendary proportions. It made him a byword in all Israel (2 Kings 9:20). His personal presence, adroitness, and valor as a warrior commanded instantaneous allegiance. It invoked immense fear in those who might oppose his will (2 Kings 9:24,25, 31-34; 10:4, 16-28). Yet most Assyriologists, chronologists, and other scholars would have us believe that the man seen fawning obsequiously before Shalmaneser is this same Jehu. We think not.

Such sycophantic behavior scarcely seems befitting so valiant a soldier. Such men die first. But in view of their presuppositions, we wonder if such considerations have even been taken into account by these accomplished intellectuals as they proceed with their etymological endeavors and identifications. The overwhelming biblical evidence throws serious doubt upon this identification.

The situation before us is this. If neither of the cited references from Shalmaneser's records is actually referring to Ahab or Jehu, there exists no conflict between the Assyrian and biblical accounts. Thus there would be no point of synchronization between the two nations extant during this period and, as such, the Assyrian and Hebrew dates would stand independent of one another, without cross verification or conflict. No less authority than the late George Smith championed this very assessment.

We do not "know" or assert that such is the status; indeed, allowance for the accurateness of both identifications has been given on chart 5. The point being made is that the manner in which these considerations is usually reported does not reflect the amount of conjecture, speculation and uncertainty that is involved in these and many other determinations. Regardless of anyone's personal convictions, it must be acknowledged that neither of the two postulated identifications may reflect the actual historical situation.

If, however, either or both of the cited references from Shalmaneser's time refers to Ahab or Jehu, then obviously a synchronistic relationship must be taken into account. It is at this possible happenstance that the entire issue between the two schools with regard to the period of the divided monarchy of the Hebrew kings focuses and the battle lines are sharply drawn. Each school has its own approach based upon its presuppositions.

#### a. Assyrian Academy's Solution to the Shalmaneser

##### Problem

Adherents of the Assyrian School, presupposing that the Eponym List is precise, will "fix" Shalmaneser II's (III) accession to the throne at the "Assyrian" date 859 BC (or 858). Then, having accepted "A-ha-ab-bu Sir-i-la-a-a" as being Ahab of Israel, they deduce that these two sovereigns engaged one another at the Battle of Qarqar 853 BC (or 852) in Shalmaneser's sixth year. Thus, for this school, the term of Ahab's reign is forced to correspond to that year, even though the Hebrew record clearly places him about 45 years back in time.

"la-u-a mar Hu-um-ri-i" is also embraced as "Jehu, son of Omri"; hence they compel Jehu to be on the throne in the 18<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Shalmaneser, about 841 (Assyrian date). But again, this does violence to the Hebrew account which would place Jehu 45 years earlier.

How then does the Assyrian Academy contend with and remove this 45-year excess? They reduce the span by contriving and interjecting a series of unsubstantiated co-regencies upon the lengths of reign of the Jewish monarchs. By overlapping the biblically stated regnal years of these kings, the epoch is shortened, bringing the Hebrew to conform to the Assyrian outline which has been superimposed upon it. Each Assyriologist and chronologist of that school has his own peculiar solutions, but the results are basically the same. Dr. Thiele, for example, proposes nine such overlapping co-regencies. However, of the nine, five are neither mentioned nor demonstrable in the Holy Text.

Thiele's first co-regency, that of Tibni and Omri of the Kingdom of Israel, and his seventh, between Jehoram and his father Jehoshaphat in Judah's realm, are demanded by the biblical text. His fifth, involving Jotham and his father Uzziah (Azariah), and his eighth, that of



Jehoshaphat with his father Asa, do superficially appear possible from the biblical perspective but upon more thorough analysis, the context becomes more certain and the support vanishes.

Again, Thiele completely ignored the Hebrew Masoretic Text, choosing instead to follow the witness of the thoroughly corrupt LXX manuscript, Vaticanus B, which credits Asa with but 39 years rather than 41. Thus Thiele's frame of reference with regard to the Scriptures and the Assyrian archives has betrayed him into fabricating and imposing these five contrivances.

Inconceivably, Thiele's slavish allegiance to his presuppositions drove him to ignore the biblical witness to the extent that he actually concocted from a single abused Scripture (Hosea 5:5) an unprecedented third Hebrew kingdom, the nation of Ephraim. As a consequence, he was forced to violate the testimony of at least six other clear Scriptures in order to maintain his third kingdom. This fanciful invention will be dealt with presently.

For now, it should be manifestly clear that the chronology of the Hebrew dynasties becomes no more than historical nonsense when adjusted to conform to such corruptions and/or forgeries as we have thus far enumerated. Other faulty insights coupled with numerous misapplications and misrepresentations of the Assyrian materials which follow will only widen the already strained credibility gap.

#### b. Biblicists' Solution to the Shalmaneser Problem

Adherents of the "biblicist" school, placing their faith and trust in the far more complete self-consistent biblical account and presupposing that the Creator has both given His Word as an infallible deposit to man and kept His many promises to preserve that Text, are not hostile to the Assyrian data in and of itself. It is the relative value placed upon it; hence it is the manner in which its witness to history is "honored" that is contrary to the Assyrian School's beliefs. Our frame of reference with its accompanying presuppositions forces us to observe its testimony as secondary; thus if usable at all, a way must be found to blend it into the outline that the Scriptures demand - a position which is the antithesis of that of the Assyrian School.

##### (1) No Point of Contact

The posture of the biblicists is divided with some holding that neither of the cited references from Shalmaneser's records is actually referring to Ahab nor Jehu. For them, no conflict exists over this period between the Assyrian and biblical accounts as there is no point of synchronization between the two kingdoms. The Assyrian and Hebrew dates are viewed as independent of one another here and are without cross verification or conflict. Again, we acknowledge the possibility of this resolution. Of course, the disciples of the modern Assyrian Academy do not concur.

##### (2) Contact Exists

The other solution is based upon the biblicists' acceptance as correct both or either of the aforementioned postulated interpretations. Namely, that "A-ha-ab-bu Sir-i-la-a-a" is Ahab of Israel and/or "la-u-a mar Hu-um-ri-i" is Jehu. However, as the biblical record unmistakably places the reigns of these two Israeli sovereigns farther back in time, a gap must exist in the Assyrian data. That is, the testimony of that data is flawed and this flaw must be taken into account to accurately reconstruct the history in question.

Other Assyrian data, if it is correctly understood, does seem to link Shalmaneser (III) to this general time frame. Shalmaneser apparently refers to the "Hazael" King of Syria mentioned in 2 Kings 8:15; 10:32; 12:17; 13:7, 32; 2 Chron. 22:5-7, etc. who ruled during the reigns of Joram, Jehu, and Jehoahaz of Israel and Ahaziah, Athaliah, and Joash of Judah. David Daniel Lackenbill translates that Shalmaneser (III) called Hazael "the son of a nobody," strongly implying that Hazael did not come from royal stock. This agrees with the biblical account where "Hazael" was but a courtier to Ben-hadad II who usurped the throne of Syria after murdering his lord (Grayson, ARI, op. cit., vol. I, p. 246).

If indeed Ahab and Shalmaneser II (III) made contact with one another, Shalmaneser's accession year becomes 903 BC, not 859, and the Battle of Qarqar in Shalmaneser's 6th year becomes 898 rather than 853. In this scenario, Jehu has contact with the Assyrian monarch's 18th year about 886 instead of 841 by Assyrian reckoning. It must be borne in mind that only one of these two identifications may be correct.

If both are, the gap must be at least 45 years in length. However, if but one is the actual circumstance, the gap could be smaller. That is, if the Shalmaneser/Jehu contact is the only state of affairs, an exact year for Shalmaneser's eighteenth could not be determined and it could be accommodated to match Jehu anywhere along a 29-year span (Jehu's 28 plus his year of accession). Thus the gap could be foreshortened by 29 years to but 16 ( $45 - 29 = 16$ ).

The point is that the Assyrian information is being forced to fit the "known" biblical data and regardless of which biblicists chronological arrangement one prefers, a gap in the Assyrian annals is necessary to align the sovereigns under discussion. The size of the gap will depend upon the commitment of the individual to the doctrine of inerrancy of Scripture, his discernment, insight, prudence and especially the revelation given to him as he examines and weighs the various Scriptures germane to the problem. If, for instance, his commitment to inerrancy is not firmly established or if it only extends to the "originals," he will be tempted and almost invariably eventually succumb to relegating difficulties to the category of so-called "scribal errors" in the text in order to ameliorate the problem.

It must not be supposed that the postulation of the existence of a gap in the Assyrian evidence at this period is novel. One school of past Assyriologists stood similarly convinced that a whole block of consecutive names had somehow been removed. Again, this view of the Canon is the one that agrees with the chronological data as found in the Sacred Writ if, indeed, a point of contact between Shalmaneser II (III) and either or both Ahab and Jehu did historically occur.

If such a connecting synchronization did transpire, is there an explanation for the discrepancy between the Assyrian and biblical accounts?...

Syncellus writes: "... Nabonassar, after compiling the acts of his royal predecessors, did away with these records so that the numbering of the Chaldean kings commences from himself."

As Nabonassar began to reign over Babylon in 747 BC, his tampering with the earlier records is the reason why Ptolemy took his Canon back no farther than that year.'

Anstey voices his support and enlarges upon Beecher's proposal that the Assyrians were overtaken by some national disaster resulting in a large block of eponymous names (c. 51) being lost either by accident or destroyed by design.' He concludes, with some justification, that this unknown calamity probably occurred shortly after the reign of the powerful Assyrian sovereign Ramman-nirari (III) [Adad-nirari (III)] stating:

For in his time we find the Assyrians taking tribute from the whole region of the Mediterranean, Judah alone excepted, whilst at the end of the blank period, in the reign of Aashur-daan III, we find that their power over this region had been lost, and that they were now engaged in a desperate struggle to regain it.

However, if the synchronization under inquiry did transpire, the real reason for the disparity between the two records and the missing block of names is implied within Scripture. To begin with, 2 Kings 14:23-27 records that the prophet Jonah ministered to Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II. The Book of Jonah (3:7-10) relates that the king of Assyria ("Nineveh" being the capital) and all his nobles repented, turning in faith to the true God. That this was a true act of contrition is verified by the Lord, Christ Jesus, in Luke 11:32.

Now this unnamed monarch and his nobles are the very men for whom the years would have been named - they would be the limmu in the Assyrian scheme. With the passing of

time and the subsequent enthronement of different kings, eventually one would come to power who revered the ancestral gods of Assyria. The general spiritual condition of the people, as has befallen all nations throughout recorded history, would tend to diminish and gravitate back to the old paths as well.

Regardless of the number of kings who had reigned remaining loyal to Jehovah, how would this new ruler behold his immediate predecessors? Would he not consider and mark them as sacrilegious apostates, blasphemers all? And from the testimony of history, what might we expect as to this recent king's reaction? The answer is manifestly obvious. The natural response would be to obliterate every mention of such "wicked" men from all the archives in order to "purify" the land, creating as they did holes or gaps in their records.

Whereas we freely admit that such a scenario is neither directly so stated nor capable of certification, it should be taken as more than a passing "coincidence" that the potential for so lucid and rational a resolution is found embedded within the Sacred Text at the very time span in dispute. The fact that the Assyrian archives catalogue Tiglath-pileser (III), Ashur-nirari (V), Shalmaneser III (IV), and Ashur-dan III (III) as all being sons of Adad-nirari (III) may well be the signal indicating an effort by each of them to distance himself from the apostate king or kings who repented under Jonah's message, embracing Jehovah.

Yet despite all the uncertainty and lack of consensus, particularly among past Assyriologists, involved in both of these identifications, inexplicably nearly all modern scholars hold to them even though it causes much abuse and contortion to the plain reading of the Hebrew Text. It would seem that were there not an obvious bias against the Hebrew authority, it would be utilized by these scholars as the deciding factor in "clarifying" the uncertainties regarding the persons in question. Instead, one incessantly finds the Shalmaneser/Ahab/Jehu connection referred to as "having provided tremendous help" in dating the regnal years of the Hebrew kings of both kingdoms as they are "cross-referenced in the Bible" but, to the contrary, when Scriptures are forced to so fit the Assyrian scheme an anachronism is created...

It is not that the biblicist is blindly opposed to the "hard facts" of Archaeology. The Assyrian data is of considerable value, but its limitations must be taken into account. It must be seen that it is not the "facts" that are at issue. The real difficulty lies in the presuppositions, goals and hidden agendas brought to the problem. The data is the same for both camps. The crux of the matter is in the relative value each researcher places upon the various inscriptions and writings of antiquity (The Chronology of the Old Testament, p.146-148).

# APPENDIX 3

## HISTORICAL FULFILLMENT OF THE 70 WEEKS PROPHECY AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE POST EXILE PERIOD

The following summary information is extracted from my large study paper "Daniel's 70 Weeks Prophecy" ([http://rogerswebsite.com/articles/Daniel%27s\\_70\\_Weeks\\_Prophecy.pdf](http://rogerswebsite.com/articles/Daniel%27s_70_Weeks_Prophecy.pdf)).

Below is a summary of the points in support of using Cyrus' decree as the starting point for the 70 weeks prophecy:

- 1) The name Artaxerxes used in Ezra and Nehemiah is the Greek equivalent of Ahasuerus in the book of Esther. This is a title rather than a proper name and means "mighty king". It could be used for any Persian king in the same way that Pharaoh can be used for any Egyptian king.
- 2) Dr Floyd Jones in his book "The Chronology of the Old Testament" makes a great case for Darius I being the Ahasereus who married Esther. He uses two details relating to the number of provinces in the empire and another detail relating to some islands showing this can only apply to Darius I, not Xerxes who most scholars believe was Esther's husband.
- 3) While Dr Jones supports Artaxerxes I as the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah, his evidence for Darius being the Ahasereus who married Esther can be used to support the possibility of Darius I also being the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah since the titles Artaxerxes and Ahasereus are one and the same. While not using Dr Jones evidence from Esther, Fred Coulter in his book "The Appointed Times of the Messiah" believes Darius I is the Artaxerxes of Nehemiah. This new identification makes the 20th year of Artaxerxes (Darius I) decree fall in the year 502 BC since Darius became king in 522 BC.
- 4) If we go back to calculate the date for the 7th year of Artaxerxes decree which involved the supply of gold and silver and other treasures to decorate the Temple identifying this Artaxerxes as Darius I we have a date of 515 BC - almost immediately after the Temple was completed in 6th year of Darius (Ezra 6). Logically decorating the Temple would happen right after the Temple is built, NOT 60 years after with the conventional identification of Artaxerxes as Artaxerxes I.
- 5) By identifying Artaxerxes in Ezra/Nehemiah as Artaxerxes I scholars have added an artificial gap of 60 years into this book/s. Ezra 6 has the Temple being completed in Darius I's 6th year and right after in Ezra 7 the decree to decorate the Temple happens the year after in his 7th year.
- 6) By identifying Artaxerxes in Ezra/Nehemiah as Darius I we nicely resolve the chronological problem in Nehemiah where Nehemiah and many of the same priests are there at the time of Cyrus and also at the time the wall is completed supposedly 90 years later. Dr Floyd Jones says that some chapters are inset chapters that are flashbacks to the time of Cyrus and that Ezra and Nehemiah lived very long lives. However, this would make Nehemiah a very old man when he was Artaxerxes I's

cupbearer. Identifying Artaxerxes in Ezra/Nehemiah as Darius I is a much more comfortable fit.

- 7) Identifying Esther's husband as Darius I and not Xerxes means that she became queen (in Ahasereus' 3rd year) the year after Darius I (in his 2nd year) allowed the Temple to be rebuilt that was completed 4 years later. The unchangeable law of the Medes and Persians worked in favour of the Jews as Darius could not rescind the Temple rebuild decree once given. Thwarted by that, the Jews' enemies then tried to use the unchangeable law of the Medes and Persians against the Jews. Since they couldn't stop the Temple they went all out to destroy the people.
- 8) Daniel 9 says that there is a combination 69 "sevens" between the command to restore Jerusalem and the coming of Messiah. This combination is formed of two blocks of 7 "sevens" and 62 "sevens". There must be some purpose to these two groupings of 49 years (7 "sevens") and 434 years (62 "sevens").
- 9) By using Darius I as the Artaxerxes in Ezra/Nehemiah we find that Nehemiah and company complete the job of restoring Jerusalem and Nehemiah finishes his governorship in 490 BC - exactly 49 years after Cyrus' decree. This physical restoration of Jerusalem completes the 7 "sevens" of the prophecy.
- 10) Fred Coulter has a break between the two blocks of 7 and 62 "sevens" and the second block of 62 "sevens" (spiritual judgment) starting with Malachi's proclamation of the coming Messiah shortly before 400 BC. There is no definitive date for the book of Malachi. Fred Coulter favours 409 BC with the 62 "sevens" ending in 26 AD with the start of the ministry of Christ.
- 11) As an aside, we are told that the amount of gold given was 100 talents (Ezra 8:26). A talent is 30 kg (65 pounds) so that means there was **3 tonnes of gold!!!** At today's gold price this is equivalent to an incredible **\$180 million!** The prophets spoke of the second Temple being a shadow of the glory of Solomon's Temple. Indeed, it was in comparison because it had 3000 talents (1 Chr. 29:4) which is equivalent to **90 tonnes of gold** valued at over **\$5 billion at today's gold price.**

Based on this identification of Nehemiah's Artaxerxes being Darius I, a more correct solution for the chronological structure of Ezra and Nehemiah and Esther is as follows:

- The Book of Ezra starts with the story of the Temple from Cyrus the Great's decree (**539 BC – Ezra 1**) then the opposition that stopped it for several years in Cambyses' reign (**529-522 BC - Ezra 4**) to the restart in Darius I's 2<sup>nd</sup> year (**520 BC - Ezra 5**) and completion in Darius' 6<sup>th</sup> year (**516 BC - Ezra 6**).
- Slotted in between the restart and completion of the Temple is the story of Esther in Darius' 3<sup>rd</sup> year (**519 BC**) where the Jews' enemies tried to destroy the Jews since they couldn't stop the Temple from being built.
- Following the completion of the Temple in Darius' 6<sup>th</sup> year (**516 BC - Ezra 6**) the Temple is decorated in Darius' 7<sup>th</sup> year (**515 BC – Ezra 7**) with gifts of gold and silver. Darius I, at this time has as his wife Esther, who is a Jew. Ezra names the

people who came back from Babylon with the king's gold and silver for the Temple in Ezra 8. [At the end of chapter 8 there is a chronological break before the final chapters (Ezra 9 & 10) which occur in the year that the Temple wall is dedicated (492 BC)].

- Nehemiah hears of the state of the city and petitions Darius I in his 20<sup>th</sup> year (**502 BC - Nehemiah 2**) to rebuild the city and the wall.
- After 10 years the wall is completed in the 6<sup>th</sup> month (**492 BC – Nehemiah 6**).
- In the same year (**492 BC**) the people gather for the reading of the Law of Moses by Ezra (Nehemiah 8:1-5, 13:1) that was done every 7 years at the Feast of Tabernacles. Just after the Feast on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month (Nehemiah 9:1, Ezra 10:2) the people confess their sins of intermarrying pagan wives and enter into a covenant putting the pagan wives away (Ezra 10:3-5, Nehemiah 9:38-10:1-30).
- The wall is then dedicated (**492 BC – Nehemiah 12**).
- The separations occur (Ezra 10:7-44, Nehemiah 13:1-3), Nehemiah deals with the issue of sabbath-breaking (Nehemiah 13) before he completes his time as governor overseeing the completion of city and the wall (**490 BC – Nehemiah 5:14**)

#### FLOW OF EVENTS IN EZRA, NEHEMIAH AND ESTHER

DATE	EZRA	ESTHER	NEHEMIAH	EVENT
539 BC	Ezra 1-3			Cyrus the Great's decree to rebuild the Temple and journey back to begin this work.
c. 525 BC	Ezra 4			Opposition from enemies that stopped work for several years in Cambyses' reign (529-522 BC)
520 BC	Ezra 5			Darius I's 2nd year to recommence work on the Temple
519 BC		Book of Esther		In Darius' 3rd year the Jews' enemies try to destroy the Jews. Esther becomes Darius' wife and helps prevent genocide.
516 BC	Ezra 6			Completion of Temple in Darius' 6th year
515 BC	Ezra 7-8			In Darius' 7th year the Temple is decorated with gifts of gold and silver given by Darius I, who married Esther.
502 BC			Nehemiah 1-2	Nehemiah hears of the state of the city and petitions Darius I in his 20th year to rebuild the city and the wall.
c. 500-495 BC			Nehemiah 3-5	The wall is built under continual opposition from the enemies of the Jews.
492 BC			Nehemiah 6-7	After 10 years the wall is completed in the 6th month of the year.
492 BC	Ezra 9-10		Nehemiah 8-11	Ezra reads the Law of Moses. The people confess to intermarrying pagan wives and make covenant to put them away.
492 BC			Nehemiah 12	The wall is then dedicated.
492-490 BC			Nehemiah 13	Nehemiah deals with sabbath-breaking and completes his 12 year governorship in Darius' 32nd year.

# APPENDIX 4

## IN WHAT YEAR WAS CHRIST CRUCIFIED?

Most mainstream churches defend either **30 AD** or **33 AD**. The Worldwide (and United) Church of God has said that Christ was crucified in **31 AD** (and therefore born in **4 BC**). Which is the correct date?

**The WCG/UCG view that Christ died in the year 31 AD is built upon two points:**

- 1) The belief that Passover (Nisan 14) fell on a Wednesday in 31 AD and on a Friday in both 30 AD and 33 AD.**

For Christ to been in the grave for 3 days and 3 nights as demanded by Scripture He must have died shortly before sunset on a Wednesday and rose just before sunset near the end of the weekly sabbath. The sabbath after the day of the crucifixion was a high sabbath (First Day of Unleavened Bread). It was one of the annual sabbaths, NOT the weekly sabbath.

Was the Passover of 30 AD on a Friday as claimed or on a Wednesday? I did a lot of searching on Google to determine which was true and came up with some interesting results. Almost every day of the week came up in the results. The majority of results (including the US Naval Observatory) did support a Friday date in 30 AD but coming in a close second was a Wednesday date for 30 AD for the Passover. It is clear that retrocalculating the day of the week is not the exact science that some claim that it is.

Carl Franklin in his very detailed paper "The Calendar of Christ and the Apostles" goes into much detail on the evidence that Dr Herman Hoeh of the Worldwide Church of God used to arrive at the 31 AD date (covered mostly in chapters 5 and 13). He misinterpreted certain source information that Carl Franklin goes back into and examines carefully regarding the pattern of leap years in the 19 year time cycle when retrocalculating the dates for Passover in the years 30 and 31 AD.

By using the wrong pattern (leap years in years 2, 5, 7, 10, 13, 16 and 18 of the 19-year cycle) instead of the pattern that Carl Franklin shows was in use at the time of Christ (leap years in years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19 of the 19-year cycle) different days of the week are arrived at for Passover in 30 and 31 AD. The internet address for those who wish to download the paper is [http://www.cbcbg.org/franklin/cal\\_of\\_christ\\_part1\\_revised.pdf](http://www.cbcbg.org/franklin/cal_of_christ_part1_revised.pdf).

Carl Franklin also notes:

These errors were compounded by the fact that many in the early days of the church simply believed that the Passover of the crucifixion of Jesus occurred in the year of 31 AD. Why? Because there was a strong belief that an event that occurred in 1931—the beginning of the Radio Church of God, occurred 100 19-year time cycles (1900 years) after the supposed beginning of the New Testament church in 31 AD.



This attempt to have the Passover of the crucifixion occur in 31 AD was probably born out of good intentions. Nevertheless, a 31 AD crucifixion also stemmed from the work of scholars who had not thoroughly researched the subject. We need not assign some great fault for this conclusion as it was likely based on good motives (The Calendar of Christ and the Apostles, p.124-125).

- 2) John 2:20 speaks of the Temple being built (Herod's major expansion) 46 years earlier than Christ's first Passover in His ministry and Josephus says this was in the year that we date to 19 BC. Adding 46 years (remembering there was no zero year) would bring us to Passover 28 AD. Adding 3 years to this brings us to 31 AD for Christ's crucifixion date.**

In A.T. Robertson's special notes at the back of his Harmony of the Gospels where Robertson discusses this particular point he notes that when you use Josephus' other writings to correct himself, it gives a date of either 20 or 19 BC for the start of the Temple expansion. Wikipedia says around 19 BC rather than a definitive 19 BC.

Even if 19 BC was correct, there is also the possibility of the Temple starting in January or February 19 BC and so someone counting from then to the first Passover of Christ's ministry would count 46 years to 27 AD since the new year began just before Passover. This would give a 30 AD crucifixion (33 AD appears to be ruled out as an option by this).

**There are three other key pieces of evidence that also need to be considered in determining the dates for the birth and death of Jesus.**

- 1) The death of Herod occurred around Passover in 4 BC.**

Most scholars who put forth a year and general time of year for the death of Herod based on Roman and Jewish records conclude that Herod died shortly before Passover in 4 BC. The Bible plainly tells us he was still alive when Jesus was born. If this is correct then Jesus could not have been born 6 months in late 4 BC after Herod died. This would mean the latest date for Christ's birth was **5 BC** and therefore Christ's crucifixion would have to have been in 30 AD (remembering that 1 BC is followed by 1 AD and there is no zero year).

- 2) Another key piece of evidence is the typology that kicks in if Christ was crucified in 30 AD. The year 30 AD is exactly 40 years before the Temple was destroyed. The siege of Jerusalem itself began on Passover in 70 AD.**

The number of 40 we all know is the number of trial and testing and it would make perfect sense if God gave the Jews 40 years to turn back to Him after their involvement in the death of Christ. Josephus writes:

And indeed, why do I relate these particular calamities? – while Manneus, the son of Lazarus, came running to Titus at this very time and told him that there had been carried out through the gate, which was entrusted to his care, no fewer than a 115 880 dead bodies, in the interval between the **14th day of the month Xanthicus [Nisan] when the Romans pitched their camp by the city** and the 1st day of the month Panemus [Tamuz]. (War of the Jews Volume V, Chapter 13, 7)

Josephus confirms that the siege of Jerusalem began on Nisan 14 in **70 AD** on the very same day of the year that Christ was crucified. This would be exactly 40 years to the day when Jesus was crucified if it was in the year **30 AD**.

### **3) Temple miracles that occurred for 40 years before the destruction of the Temple.**

We do have some other historical evidence that supports this likelihood that God gave the Jews 40 years of testing following the death of Christ. Jewish records record four miraculous events that started 40 years before the Temple was destroyed and continued every year until Jerusalem fell. It would be unusual if these started a year before Christ was crucified and it would make more sense if they began starting with the year of Christ's death.

The Jerusalem Talmud has to say on this matter [The following translation is that of Jacob Neusner from his book *The Yerushalmi*, pages 156,157.1]:

#### **Forty years before the destruction of the Temple [starting in A.D.30]**

- **The western light went out,**
- **The crimson thread remained crimson, and**
- **The lot for the Lord always came up in the left hand.**
- **They would close the gates of the Temple by night and get up in the morning and find them wide open [These huge gates took 20 men to open and close].**

Said Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai to the Temple, 'O Temple, why do you frighten us? We know that you will end up destroyed. For it has been said 'Open your doors, O Lebanon [a symbol for the Temple at Jerusalem which was made from Lebanese timbers], that the fire may devour Your cedars' (Zechariah 11:1) (Sotah 6:3).

I personally find that typology of there possibly being 40 years between Christ's death and the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem is extremely compelling evidence supporting a 30 AD crucifixion date, particularly given that the siege of Jerusalem began on the very same day of the year as Christ's crucifixion.