

## Appendix C-Ussher's Time Line for the Divided Kingdom

The time line for the divided kingdom has caused many problems recently for those who do not take the Bible as their final authority. This article documents this time line and points out the difficulties with it. Archaeology seems to have caused the most grief as well meaning individuals try to harmonize man's conjectures with the infallible word of God.

This work is based on the Old Testament Scriptures of the Bible. Any translation that accurately translates the current Hebrew texts into English can be used. The LXX is inaccurate in many places and is unsuitable for this. Likewise, any translation that is not based on the Hebrew text but uses the Greek LXX or the Latin Vulgate suffers from the same problems. Many foreign language versions are derived from the LXX, i.e. the Russian Synodal Bible. We used the 1769 English Authorized Version in preparing this work.

We have reconstructed the king lists for the divided kingdom based on the work of James Ussher's, "The Annals of the World." We have shown all chronological data for the period of the kings as we have gleaned it from Kings, Chronicles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. We have not knowingly omitted any passages in those books that contain chronological information. We have also documented all the supposed contradictions people have found in the chronological data and have explained them in location. Most of these disappear with an accurate reconstruction of the king lists. Only twice does there appear to be a scribal error in transmission and even these do not affect the king list chronology. The list of contradictions was taken from John Halley. (p. 396-404)

Ussher did not always state how he arrived at his findings. It was not until we broke the years down into the seasons that we were able to reproduce his findings. His untranslated Latin work called the *Sacred Chronology* holds the detailed documentation of how Ussher arrived at his results. We plan to translate the relevant portions at some future date.

### 1.0 Abbreviations

SK-Southern Kingdom  
NK-Northern Kingdom  
BB-Babylonian Kingdom  
YDK-Year From Division of Kingdom  
1Ki-1 Kings  
2Ki-2 Kings  
1Ch-1 Chronicles  
2Ch-2 Chronicles  
Isa-Isaiah  
Jer-Jeremiah  
Eze-Ezekiel  
Da-Daniel

The year is divided into four parts as follows in the same way Ussher divided up the year.

b-winter  
c-spring and approximate start of Jewish New Year  
d-summer  
a-fall

Jubilee years are marked and will be explained in detail in the article for the time period after the exodus. This article is already rather long.

\*- Indicates king who was murdered by his successor or forced to commit suicide to avoid being murdered by his successor. (eg Zimri)

X-Indicates king who was killed but not murdered by his successor

## 2.0 Terms

The first three terms are used in explaining objections to Ussher's system and we did not otherwise use them. The three terms came from Dr. McFall.

Accession year-This was the year a king came to the throne and was not normally considered the first year of his reign.

Accession year system-This computes the length of a king's reign based on the number of Jewish New Years that happened during his reign. If a king reigned only a week before and a week after the New Year, he would be said to reign one year because exactly one Jewish New Year occurred in his reign. Both the Talmud and the Mishnah specify this is the normal way to calculate the length of a king's reign. This system was the normal way kings counted their years of reign. If a king had no Jewish New years in his reign, the length of his reign was normally given in months. The *Accession Year System* is also called *Postdating* by some writers.

Non-Accession year system-The remainder of the previous king's year is counted as the first year of his successor and also counted as the last year of the previous king. If a king reigned only a week before and a week after the New Year, he would be said to reign two years when using this system. This system was not normally used, so think of it as non-standard. Only when you plot out the actual reigns, can you determine if this system was used. The *Non-Accession Year System* is also called *Antedating* by some writers.

Viceregent-This is like an assistant or co-king. The regular king was still on the throne. The only example of this was Jehoram who was made viceregent sometime in the 16th year of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat was preparing to help Ahab fight with the Syrians and appointed his son as caretaker while he would be away. Jehoram numbered his years of reign from this point until he was made viceroy 6 years later.

Viceroy-This position is considered to be defacto king. The viceroy's father was still alive, but the viceroy was running the kingdom. There were two reasons why a king made his son viceroy. First, the father was going to war and wanted to make sure of a smooth transition in case he was killed. Secondly, the father was in ill health and not able to manage the kingdom any more. Most viceroyships were rather short and occurred a year or so before the death of the king. According to the Talmud and the Mishnah [see *Virtual Jerusalem website*], the viceroy always counted his first year as king when he became viceroy, not the sole king. Ussher found no exceptions to this rule. Since appointing a viceroy was usually a planned choice, the logical time to do this would be at the start of the Jewish New Year in Nisan.

## 3.0 Assumptions

- 1) The biblical data not archaeological data is the final authority. You cannot use secular dates from archaeologists to overthrow the biblical data. The terminal date for biblical chronology is 562 BC with the release of Jehoiachin and is taken from Ptolemy's king lists. [Thiele, p. 227] [Jer 52:28] This date was the anchor Ussher used for his chronology before this time. The time from creation to the release of Jehoiachin forms a continuous chronology in the Bible. If you do not agree with this assumption of *scriptura sola*, you can justify almost any reconstruction of this period.
- 2) The king calculated his first year at the month of Nisan (first month of the Jewish New Year in the spring) even though he may have reigned for a few months in the previous year. That is, they all used the Accession Year system. This was the rule laid down in the Talmud and the Mishnah ([J. Halley, p. 397], [Virtual Jerusalem Website], Anstey and other chronologers cite the same rule).

Every rule has its exceptions. It seems the NK started using the Non- Accession Year system with Jeroboam and switched to the Accession Year system after Ahaziah. That is, the eight kings from Jeroboam down to Ahaziah all used the Non-Accession Year system. The subsequent kings followed in his steps until Jehoram. He started using the Accession Year system of the SK. (There is a possibility that Amaziah also used the Accession Year system. The scriptures would allow either method. Since he was made viceroy by his father Ahab, we assume this happened on the Jewish New Year and hence the Accession method would apply to his reign.) The Accession Year system was used throughout the entire time of the SK.

- 3) The king counted the first year of his reign from his viceroyship. Viceroy years were assumed to start at the beginning of the Jewish New Year. Ussher found no exceptions to this rule as laid down by the Talmud and the Mishnah. *[See Virtual Jerusalem website.]*

Ahaziah (SK) *[2Ki 8:25 2Ch 22:2]* presents an interesting case which conforms to this rule although at first glance it may not seem to. Jehoram (SK) in his 7th year as king was struck with a disease that lasted two years (part of the 7th year and part of his 8th year) which eventually killed him. Likely in the 7th year Ahaziah was made viceroy because Jehoram could no longer handle the kingdom because he was quite sick. This would be after the Jewish New Year so Ahaziah would not normally consider this his first year of the kingdom until the next Jewish New Year. *[2Ki 8:25]* We are told he became king in the 11th year of Jehoram or Joram (NK) *[2Ki 9:29]* Joram was not killed by Jehu until his 12th year so this refers to the time when Jehoram (SK) made Ahaziah viceroy. The Bible said he reigned for one year *[2Ki 8:25]* and although he reigned in part of the 11th year of Joram (NK) his first new year did not occur until the 12th year of Joram (NK).

- 4) The Babylonian kings counted the start of their reign like the kings of Israel and Judah, only they used the starting period of Nabonassar. This epoch started on the Wednesday evening of February 26th, 747 BC. (Thiele—in an appendix to his book, "Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings"—states without giving his source, that this was based on a 365 day year and would regress one day every four years. If this was so, the Babylonian New Year would be in mid-January on the Julian calendar by the time of Nebuchadnezzar. We know the Babylonians used a lunar calendar so this may introduce further uncertainty into the exact date for any given year.) The fact that the Babylonian New Year started a few weeks or months before the Jewish New Year, helps considerably in sorting out some supposed contradictions in the biblical chronology for the period of Nebuchadnezzar.

- 5) Part years may be counted as full years. (See Virtual Jerusalem website.) You cannot impose 20th century western ideas of time-keeping on the orientals either of today or those of 3000 years ago. This concept manifests itself in the Non-Accession Year dating method that was initially used by the NK and never used in the SK.

- 6) The phrase "in the nth year of A, B began to reign" can be understood in one of two ways.

- a) The nth year of A was the first year of the reign of B starting from Nisan. B actually reigned a few months before Nisan but this is not counted.

This is the most frequent situation and should be followed unless there is a good reason not to.

- b) In the nth year of A was the actual time B started to reign before the month of Nisan. The first year of the reign of B would start on the following Nisan or the year  $n + 1$  of A.

This situation was relatively rare. Ussher found this case only occurred eight times.

Asa *[1Ki 15:8-10]*

Jehoshaphat *[1Ki 22:41,42]*

Jehoram *[2Ki 1:17 3:1 9:29]*

Jehoash *[2Ki 13:10]*

Amaziah {2Ki 14:1,2 17:17}  
Ahaz {2Ki 16:1,2}  
Hosea {2Ki 17:1}  
Hezekiah {2Ki 18:1}

This situation is normally created by the Nisan to Nisan method of computing the 1st year of a king's reign. It becomes clear when you plot the kings' reigns how this is to be interpreted in each case. If you treat this case like the first case, you will not proceed very far before you encounter a logical contradiction in calculating the king lists. For the reasons why Ussher treated these kings like this, see his Latin copy of his *Sacred Chronology*. The author is now translating this into English.

The usually meaning for the phrase, *began to reign* refers to the time the king first started to rule either as sole king (if he was not appointed viceroy previously) or to the time when he was appointed as viceroy. Occasionally, it refers to the time when a king began to reign as a sole king after reigning for some months or years as viceroy. Two examples of this are Omri in 925 BC and Jeroboam in 825 BC. In both these cases the *nth year of king X* refers from the time the king first reigned as viceroy not as sole king.

### **Asa**

From the charts for the period of 960-946 BC, we can see that if the first Jewish New Year of Asa was the 20th year of Jeroboam, then the reign of Asa would overlap by part of a year with his father Abijam. From the passage 1Ki 15:8-10, it most likely seems that Abijam died before Asa reigned. Also if Asa started his reign a year early then Nadab would overlap the last year of his father Jeroboam. It seems unlikely that both Abijam and Jeroboam would appoint their sons as viceroys. To avoid these unlikely scenarios, it seems best to have the first partial year of Asa correspond with the 20th year of Jeroboam.

### **Jehoshaphat**

From the charts for the period of 915-886 BC, we can see that if the first Jewish New Year of Jehoshaphat was the 4th year of Ahab then Ahab's son, Jehoram would start his reign a year earlier and would overlap both Ahab and Ahab's son, Amaziah by a year. It is highly unlikely Ahab would appoint two sons as viceroys. The passage 2Ki 1:17 states that Jehoram reigned after the death of Amaziah, not before. Therefore, the first partial year of Jehoshaphat's reign must be noted as the 4th year of Ahab to avoid this contradiction.

### **Jehoram**

From the chart for the period of 900-886 BC, we can see that if the case of Jehoram was treated normally than he would have been reigning in the 22nd year of Ahab and in the second year of Azariah. It is unlikely that Ahab would appoint two sons as viceroys at the same time. The passage 2Ki 1:17 states that Jehoram reigned after the death of Amaziah, not before. Therefore, the first partial year of his reign must be noted as the second year of Jehoram of Judah to avoid this contradiction.

### **Jehoash**

Explanation awaits the completion of the translation of Ussher's *Sacred Chronology* from the Latin.

### **Amaziah**

Explanation awaits the completion of the translation of Ussher's *Sacred Chronology* from the Latin.

### **Ahaz**

Explanation awaits the completion of the translation of Ussher's *Sacred Chronology* from the Latin.

## Hosea

If you started the reign a year earlier, Hezekiah's reign would be a year earlier too and you would destroy the meaning of the sign the Lord gave to Hezekiah.

## Hezekiah

If you start the actual reign of Hezekiah a year earlier you destroy the meaning of the sign God gave him in the last year of the attack by Sennacherib. {2Ch 32:22 Isa 37:31,32} The Jubilee year would have been a year later in the reign of Hezekiah and the sign would be contradicted. Hence, you must start the first partial year of Hezekiah with the 3rd year of Hoshea. See Ussher's *Annals of the World*, paragraph 673ff for more details.

## 4.0 Constraints

- 1) The king lists synchronise themselves at 884 BC when Jehu killed the kings of both kingdoms and the late fall of 722 BC or the winter of 721 BC when Samaria fell.
- 2) The two intersection points with secular history are the fall of Samaria in early 721 BC, and the death of Nebuchadnezzar in early 562 BC. The text says *at the end of three years they took it*, {2Ki 18:10} which would most likely be by late winter in 721 BC or very late in the fall of 722 BC. The biblical data would favour the late winter of 721 BC but could be harmonized with the 722 BC date if there was data to establish that date.

Southern Kingdom 975-588 BC			
Monarch		Viceroy	Sole Monarch
Rehoboam			975-959
Abijam			959-956
Asa			956-915
Jehoshaphat			915-890
Jehoram	898-890		890-884
Ahaziah	885-884		884
Athaliah			884-878
Joash			878-839
Amaziah	840-839		839-811
Uzziah			811-759
Jotham	759		759-743
Ahaz			743-727
Hezekiah	728		727-699
Manasseh			699-644
Amnon			644-642
Josiah			642-611
Jehoahaz			610
Jehoiakim			610-599
Jehoiachin			599
Zedekiah			599-588

  

Northern Kingdom 975-721 BC			
Monarch		Viceroy	Sole Monarch
Jeroboam I			975-954
Nadab			954-953
Baasha			953-930
Elah			930-929
Zimri			929
Tibni			929-925
Omri			929-918
Ahab			918-897

• Ahaziah	• 898-897	• 897	•
• Jehoram	•	897-884	•
• Jehu	•	884-857	•
• Jehoahaz	•	857-840	•
• Jehoash	• 842-840	840-826	•
• Jeroboam II	• 836-826	826-785	•
• Interregnum	• 785-773		•
• Zachariah	•	773-772	•
• Shallum	•	772	•
• Menahem	•	772-762	•
• Pekahiah	•	762-760	•
• Pekah	•	760-740	•
• Interregnum	• 740-731		•
• Hoshea	•	731-721	•
.....			

Since the old Jewish New Year does not follow our calendar year but started normally in April, there is some leeway of about one year in the preceding tables for the dates. For example, the Bible does not tell us the exact month Rehoboam died. If he died between January and the Jewish New Year of 958 BC then the number of his years and that of his successor's reign would still be the same as if he had died after the Jewish New Year of 959 BC and before the end of 959 BC in December. Hence all things being equal there is a 75% chance he died in 959 BC and about a 25% chance it was early 958 BC. Therefore you cannot produce an absolute date for the reigns of many of the preceding kings unless the month of the king's death is known. However, the tables are an excellent guide to the approximate time each king reigned and the opening and closing date for each table is accurate while the ending date for most kings and the starting date for the next king could be the following year with a probability of 25%.

## 5.0 Alias Names for Kings

The following kings went by more than one name. The date reflects the year they started to reign.

- 958 BC-Abijam or Abijah (SK)
- 896 BC-Jehoram or Joram (NK)
- 878 BC-Joash or Jehoash (SK)
- 841 BC-Joash or Jehoash (NK)
- 811 BC-Uzziah or Azariah (SK)
- 599 BC-Jehoiachin or Jeconiah or Coniah (SK)

## 6.0 The Chronology of the Divided Kingdom

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	YDK
	975	974	973	972	971	970	969	968	967	966 BC
	bcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcd									
SK	.1	..2	...3	...4	...5	...6	...7	...8	...9	..10.. Rehoboam
NK	1	..2	...3	...4	...5	...6	...7	...8	...9	..10.. Jeroboam
	a	b	c	d						

- a) Rehoboam, at age 41, reigned for 17 years {1Ki 14:21 2Ch 12:13}
- b) Jeroboam reigned for 22 years. {1Ki 14:20} He used Non-Accession Year dating. He was crowned on the 23rd of the third Jewish month of called Sivan and the Jews hold a fast in memorial of this sad event. {\*Josephus, Antiq., l. 14. c. 4. s. 3. note (a) in Whiston's translation}
- c) Rehoboam forsook God in his 3rd year. {2Ch 11:17}
- d) Shishak invaded Judah in the 5th year of Rehoboam. {1Ki 14:25 2Ch 12:2}

	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	YDK
	965	964	963	962	961	960	959	958	957	956 BC	
	bcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcd										
SK	11	..12	..13	..14	..15	..16	..17	..			Rehoboam
								..1	..2	..3	Abijam
											Asa
NK	11	..12	..13	..14	..15	..16	..17	..18	..19	..20	Jeroboam
						a					b

- a) In the 18th year of Jeroboam, Abijam reigned for 3 years {1Ki 15:1,2 2Ch 13:1,2}
- b) In the 20th (24th in the LXX) year of Jeroboam, Asa reigned for 41 years. {1Ki 15:9,10}



- a) In the 26th (omitted by the LXX) year of Asa, Elah reigned 2 years, part of one year and part of the next year. He used Non-Accession Year dating. *{1Ki 16:8}*
- b1) In the 27th (omitted by the LXX) year of Asa, Zimri murdered Elah and reigned 7 days and committed suicide to avoid being killed by Omri. *{1Ki 16:10,15}*
- b2) Some of the people made Tibni king who reigned for 5 years. He used Non-Accession Year dating. *{1Ki 16:21}*
- b3) Some of the people made Omri king who reigned for 12 years. He used Non-Accession Year dating. *{1Ki 16:22}*

Problem 3:

- 1) Baasha died in the 27th year of Asa
  - a) In the 3rd year of Asa, Baasha murdered Nadab and reigns for 24 years. *{1Ki 15:28,33}*
- 2) Baasha died in the 26th year of Asa. *{1Ki 16:8}*

Resolution:

- 1) Baasha used the Non-Accession Year dating system for calculating the years of his reign and counted the year he murdered the previous king as the first year of his reign. Normally, he should have waited until the Jewish New Year to calculate his first year.

Problem 4:

- 1) In the 26th year of Asa, Elah reigned for 2 years. *{1Ki 16:8}*
- 2) a. In the 26th year of Asa, Elah reigned for 2 years. *{1Ki 16:8}*  
 b. In the 27th year of Asa, Zimri reigned for 7 days. *{1Ki 16:10}*  
 c. Therefore Elah only reigned for one year. (Hint:  $27-26 = 1$ )

Resolution:

- 1) The NK used the Non-Accession dating method at this time.

Problem 5:

- 1) Omri started to reign in the 27th year of Asa. *{1Ki 16:15-21}*
- 2) Omri started to reign in the 31st year of Asa. *{1Ki 16:23}*

Resolution:

- 1) The first case refers to the divided reign of Omri and Tibni and the second case refers to the start of Omri's sole reign after Tibni was killed. The text hints at this *{1Ki 16:23}* where it says he only reigned for 6 years in Tirzah. Likely, he took a year to build Samaria after defeating Tibni and then moved into his new capital city. A king started counting his years from the year he ascended to the throne. In this case Omri was king for about 5 years before the 31st year of Asa.

	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	YDK										
	925	924	923	922	921	920	919	918	917	916	BC										
	bcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcd																				
SK	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	Asa										
											..1.. Asa's Disease										
NK	.	5	*									Tibni									
	.	5	..	6	..	7	..	8	..	9	..	10	..	11	..	12	..	Omri			
																		1.2...	3..	Ahab	
																			a	b	c

- a) In the 31st year of Asa, Tibni was killed and Omri reigned for 12 years starting from the time of death of Zimri and he reigned 6 years in Tirzah. *{1Ki 16:22,23}*
- b) In the 38th year of Asa, Ahab reigned for 22 years. *{1Ki 16:29}* He used Non-Accession Year dating. (The LXX has 2nd year of Jehoshaphat instead of 38th year of Asa.)
- c) In the 39th year of Asa, he was diseased in his feet until he died in his 41st (40th the LXX) year. *{1Ki 15:23,24 2Ch 16:12,13}*

	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	YDK	
	915	914	913	912	911	910	909	908	907	906	BC	
	bcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcd											
SK	41	..										Asa



	.2..		Asa's Disease
	..1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9..		Jehoshaphat
NK	.4...5...6...7...8...9..10..11..12..13..		Ahab
	a	b	c

- In the 4th year of Ahab, Jehoshaphat at age 35, reigned for 25 years. *{1Ki 22:41,42 2Ch 20:31}*
- In his 3rd year, Jehoshaphat sent Levites to instruct the people. *{2Ch 17:7-9}*
- The 11th Jubilee.

	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	YDK
	905	904	903	902	901	900	899	898	897	896	BC
	bcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcd										
SK	10..	11..	12..	13..	14..	15..	16..	17..	18..	19..	Jehoshaphat
								1...	2...	3..	Jehoram Viceregent
NK	14..	15..	16..	17..	18..	19..	20..	21..	22..	X	Ahab
						1...	2...	3..			Peace with Syria
							1...	2..			Ahaziah Viceroy/king
									..1..		Jehoram
		a		b		c				d	

- First Syrian invasion of NK by Benhadad. *{1Ki 20:1-25 22:1,2}*
- Second invasion by Benhadad about a year later. *{1Ki 20:26}*
- There was 3 years of peace with Syria ending with Ahab's death. *{1Ki 22:1,2}*
- In the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram (NK) reigned for 12 years. *{2Ki 3:1}*
  - In the 2nd year of Jehoram (SK), Jehoram (NK) started to reign. *{2Ki 1:17}* This was the 18th year of Jehoshaphat in the LXX where the verse is 18 not 17.
  - Therefore, Jehoram (SK), became viceregent in the 17th year of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat was preparing for war with Ahab against Syria and appointed his son as viceregent for that time. (Hint:  $18-2 + 1 = 17$ )
- In the 17th year of Jehoshaphat, Amaziah reigned as viceroy for 2 years. Amaziah reigned for part of one and part of the next year. If Ahab appointed him viceroy on the Jewish New Year then Amaziah used Accession Year dating. If he was made viceroy after the New Year then Amaziah used Non-Accession Year dating. Both possibilities exist and are agreeable to the scriptures. Both Jehoshaphat and Ahab planned to fight with Syria and left their sons in charge lest any misfortune overtook them. This was a prudent precaution. *{1Ki 22:51 2Ki 3:1}*
- In the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram (NK) reigned for 12 years. *{2Ki 3:1}*
  - In the 2nd year of Jehoram's viceregency (SK), Jehoram (NK) started to reign. *{2Ki 1:17}* NK used Accession dating starting with this king until the fall of the NK.

#### Problem 6:

- In the 17th year of Jehoshaphat, Amaziah (NK) reigned for 2 years. *{1Ki 22:51}*
  - Therefore Ahab must have died in the 17th year of Jehoshaphat.
- Ahab became king in the 38th year of Asa and reigned for 22 years. *{1Ki 16:29}*
  - Jehoshaphat became king in the 4th year of Ahab. *{1Ki 22:41}*
  - Therefore Ahab died in 18th year of Jehoshaphat. (Hint:  $22-4 = 18$ )

#### Resolution:

- The first case refers to the time when Ahab made Amaziah viceroy before going to fight with the Syrians. Both the father and son died in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, the father by the Syrians and the son by a disease.

#### Problem 7:

- Jehoram (NK) began to reign in the 2nd year of Jehoram (SK). *{2Ki 1:17}*
- Jehoram (SK) began to reign in the 5th year of Jehoram of Israel. *{2Ki 8:16,17}*

#### Resolution:

- The first case refers from the time when Jehoram (SK) was made viceregent and the second case refers to the time when he was made viceroy by Jehoshaphat. It appears the years of the king's





c) In the 15th year of Amaziah, Jeroboam II began to reign as sole king for 41 years. *{2Ki 14:23}*  
 However, in *{2Ki 15:1}* we find that Uzziah became the king in the 27th year of Jeroboam. To reconcile this we must assume that Jeroboam was made viceroy for 12 years in the 4th year of Amaziah or in the 6th year of Jeroboam's father, Jehoash. (Josephus gave a similar explanation. *{Josephus, Antiq., l. 9. c. 10. s. 3. (215,216) 6:113,115}*) In *{2Ki 13:25}* we read that Jehoash fought and won three battles with the Syrians. We are not told when these battles were fought but it may be after the time Jeroboam was made viceroy. Jehoash likely appointed Jeroboam as viceroy before fighting these major battles with an enemy that had beaten Israel before, and had killed a king of Israel in a previous battle. This would explain the long overlap in the reigns between the father and the son. In spite of Elisha's promises of victory *{2Ki 13:19}*, Jehoash wanted to be careful just in case Elisha was wrong. The history of the Northern Kingdom was not noted for a smooth transition of power when a king died. Ahab appointed his son as viceroy before he went to fight with the Syrians, as did Jehoshaphat who accompanied Ahab in the battle with the Syrians.

Another explanation of this has been given by Lightfoot and others. They think Uzziah reigned in the 27th year of Jeroboam and Jeroboam was not a viceroy with his father. This would create an interregnum in the SK of 13 or so years thus extending the entire period of the divided kingdom by that much time to about 403 years. However, as pointed out earlier, we know the total length of the divided kingdom was 390 years, hence this explanation cannot be correct.

Problem 11:

- 1) Jehoash began to reign in the 37th year of Joash. *{2Ki 13:10}*
- 2) a. In the 23rd year of Joash (SK), Jehoahaz reigned for 17 years. *{2Ki 13:1}*
  - b. Therefore Jehoash began to reign in the 39th or 40th year of Joash. (Hint:  $23 + 17 = 40$  or  $23 + 17 - 1 = 39$ )

Resolution:

- 1) Jehoash was made viceroy in the 37th year of Joash. You cannot assume he started to reign after the death of Jehoahaz without creating a logical contradiction.

Problem 12:

- 1) In the 23rd year of Joash (SK), Jehoahaz's reign lasted 17 years. *{2Ki 13:1}*
- 2) a. In the 23rd year of Joash (SK), Jehoahaz reigned in the NK. *{2Ki 13:1}*
  - b. In the 37th year of Joash (SK), Jehoash reigned in the NK. *{2Ki 13:10}*
  - c. Therefore, Jehoahaz's reign lasted 15 years. (Hint:  $37 - 23 + 1 = 15$ )

Resolution:

- 1) Jehoash was made viceroy for 2 years by Jehoahaz.

```

140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 YDK
835 834 833 832 831 830 829 828 827 826 BC
bcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcd
SK .5...6...7...8...9..10..11..12..13..14.. Amaziah
NK .7...8...9..10..11..12..13..14..15..16.. Jehoash
.2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9..10..11.. Jeroboam II
                                   (Viceroy)
.                                   Jeroboam II
                                   (Sole King)
a
  
```

a) In the 15th year of Amaziah, Jeroboam II began to reign as sole king for 41 years. *{2Ki 14:23}*  
 Uzziah's ascension date started from time Jeroboam became viceroy not when he became sole king.

Problem 13:

- 1) a. Jehu reigned for 28 years. *{2Ki 10:36}*
  - b. In the 7th year of Jehu, Joash became king and reigned for 40 years. *{2Ki 12:1}*

- c. Therefore, Amaziah reigned in the 47th year from the start of Jehu's reign. (Hint:  $40 + 7 = 47$ )
- 2) a. Jehu reigned for 28 years. *{2Ki 10:36}*
  - b. In the 23rd year of Joash, Jehoahaz became king and reigned 17 years. *{2Ki 13:10}*
  - c. Amaziah started to reign in the 2nd year of Jehoahaz. *{2Ki 14:1}*
  - d. Therefore the start of Amaziah's reign in 49th year from the start of Jehu's reign which would be the 4th year of Jehoahaz. (Hint:  $7 + 23 + 17 + 2 = 49$ )

**Resolution:**

- 1) a. Joash counted the year he became king as his first year since he was crowned on the first day of the Jewish New Year. This is in accord with the Accession System. This accounts for one year of the difference. This reduces both totals by one to 46 from 47 and 48 from 49.
- b. Jehoahaz made Jehoash viceroy for 2 years. This subtracts 2 years from the second total of 49 making it 47.
- c. Therefore the correct total of years for this period when one considers the year a king became king and viceroy relationships is 47 years.

This supposed contradiction was most involved and we are surprised anyone found it!

```

150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 YDK
825 824 823 822 821 820 819 818 817 816 BC
bcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdab
SK 15..16..17..18..19..20..21..22..23..24.. Amaziah
   .1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9..10.. To Death of
                                           Amaziah
NK 12..13..14..15..16..17..18..19..20..21.. Jeroboam II
   .1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9..10.. (Viceroy)
                                           Jeroboam II
                                           (Sole King)
a

```

- a1) In the 15th year of Amaziah, Jeroboam II reigned as sole king for 41 years after the death of his father, Jehoash who died the same year. *{2Ki 14:23}*
- a2) Amaziah lived for 15 years after the death of Jehoash. *{2Ki 14:17,23 2Ch 25:25}*

```

160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 YDK
815 814 813 812 811 810 809 808 807 806 BC
bcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdab
SK 25..26..27..28..29.. Amaziah
   11..12..13..14..15.. To Death of
                                           Amaziah
                                           Uzziah
NK 22..23..24..25..26..27..28..29..30..31.. Jeroboam II
   ..1...2...3...4...5.. (Viceroy)
   11..12..13..14..15..16..17..18..19..20.. Jeroboam II
                                           (Sole King)
a                b

```

- a) In the 27th year from the viceroyship of Jeroboam II, Uzziah, at age 16 began to reign for 52 years. This corresponds to the 15th year of Jeroboam II reigning as sole king. *{2Ki 15:1,2 2Ch 26:3}*
- b) The 13th Jubilee.

```

170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 YDK
805 804 803 802 801 790 799 798 797 796 BC
bcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdab
SK .6...7...8...9..10..11..12..13..14..15.. Uzziah
NK 32..33..34..35..36..37..38..39..40..41.. Jeroboam II
   21..22..23..24..25..26..27..28..29..30.. (Viceroy)
                                           Jeroboam II
                                           (Sole king)

```

**Problem 14:**

- 1) The first year of Uzziah's reign was the 27th year of Jeroboam II *{2Ki 15:1}*
- 2) a. Amaziah reigned for 29 years. *{2Ki 14:2}*
  - b. Amaziah lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash (NK). *{2Ki 14:17}*

- c. In the 15th year of Amaziah, Jeroboam II became king. *{2Ki 14:23}*  
 d. Therefore, Uzziah's first year of his reign was the 16th year of Jeroboam II. (Hint:  $29 + 1 - 15 = 15$ )

Resolution:

- 1) Jeroboam became viceroy likely when his father went to fight the Syrians in 836 BC. The first case refers to the time from his viceroyship, whereas the second case is dated from the time he became sole king. The Talmudic rule is that a king's first year always began with his first year as viceroy not as sole king.

Problem 15:

- 1) a. In the 15th year of Amaziah, Jeroboam II became king and reigned for 41 years. *{2Ki 14:23}*  
 b. In the 27th year of Jeroboam II, Uzziah became king. *{2Ki 15:1}*  
 c. Therefore, Jeroboam was contemporary with Uzziah for 14 years. (Hint:  $41 - 27 + 1 = 15$ )  
 2) a. Jeroboam II died in the 38th year of Uzziah when Zachariah became king. *{2Ki 15:8}*  
 b. Therefore Jeroboam was contemporary with Uzziah for 38 years.

Resolution:

- 1) Same resolution as the previous problem. In case 2 it is incorrect to assume that Zachariah became king the same year as Jeroboam II's death for Jeroboam II died in the 26th year of Uzziah, about 12 years earlier. There was an interregnum of about 12 years before Zachariah came to the throne.

```

180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 YDK
795 794 793 792 791 790 789 788 787 786 BC
bcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdab
SK 16..17..18..19..20..21..22..23..24..25.. Uzziah
NK 42..43..44..45..46..47..48..49..50..51.. Jeroboam II
(Viceroy)
31..32..33..34..35..36..37..38..39..40.. Jeroboam II
(Sole King)

```

```

190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 YDK
785 784 783 782 781 780 779 778 777 776 BC
bcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdab
SK 26..27..28..29..30..31..32..33..34..35.. Uzziah
NK 52.X Jeroboam II
(Viceroy)
41.X Jeroboam II
(Sole King)
..1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9.. Interregnum
a

```

- a) Jeroboam II was murdered. *{Am 7:11}* There is no king mentioned who reigned in the Northern Kingdom during this period of about 12 years. *{2Ki 14:23 15:8}*

```

200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 YDK
775 774 773 772 771 770 769 768 767 766 BC
bcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdab
SK 36..37..38..39..40..41..42..43..44..45.. Uzziah
NK 10..11..12. Interregnum
.* Zachariah
* Shallum
...1...2...3...4...5...6.. Menahem
a bc

```

- a) In the last 6 months of Uzziah's 38th year, Zachariah reigned for 6 months. *{2Ki 15:8}* We assumed it was the last 6 months for sake of argument. Any 6 month period that started in Uzziah's 38th year and ended in Nisan or later in Uzziah's 39th year would also work.  
 b) In the 39th year of Uzziah, Shallum murdered Zachariah and reigned one month. *{2Ki 15:13}*  
 c) Menahem murdered Shallum and reigned 10 years. This illustrates the Nisan to Nisan rule. Although he started to rule in the 2nd month of the 39th year of Uzziah, his first year was not counted until the 40th year. He really reigned more than 10 whole years but using the Nisan to



- 2) Jotham may have turned the kingdom entirely over to his son in the 16th year of his reign and retired from public affairs and lived 4 more years. He would have died in the 20th year from the time he became king.

Problem 17:

- 1) In the 20th year of Jotham (4th year of Ahaz), Hoshea killed Pekah and became king. *{2Ki 15:30}*
- 2) Hoshea started to reign in the 12th year of Ahaz. *{2Ki 17:1}*

Resolution:

- 1) Unless we had the text for the second point we would normally assume Hoshea reigned directly after the death of Pekah. This text said that Hoshea began to reign in the 12th year of Ahaz. Hence, we deduce that there was an interregnum of 9 years when there was no king. This interpretation does no violence to the Hebrew text. The text for the first point stated he "reigned in his stead". The text for the second case clarifies the first and stated that he "began...to reign" in the 12th year of Ahaz.

```

240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 YDK
735 734 733 732 731 730 729 728 727 726 BC
bcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcd
SK .8...9...10...11...12...13...14...15...16.. Ahaz
.7...8...9...10...11...12...13...14...15...16.. Isaiah's Prophecy
..1...2.. Hezekiah
NK .5...6...7...8...9.. Interregnum
..1...2...3...4...5.. Hoshea
a b c

```

- a) In the 12th year of Ahaz, Hosea reigned for 9 years. *{2Ki 17:1}*
- b) In the 3rd year of Hoshea, while Ahaz was still alive, Hezekiah at age 25, was made viceroy then king after the death of Ahaz. He reigned for 29 years. *{2Ki 18:1,2 2Ch 29:1}*
- c) Hezekiah repaired the temple in the first month of the first year of his reign. *{2Ch 29:3}*

Problem 18:

- 1) Hezekiah started to reign at age 25. *{2Ki 18:2}*
- 2) Ahaz, his father died at age 36. *{2Ki 16:2}*

Resolution:

- 1) It is not medically impossible for an eleven year old to sire a child. There are documented cases where ten year old children have done this.
- 2) There was an error in the age of his father.

```

250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 YDK
725 724 723 722 721 720 719 718 717 716 BC
bcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcd
SK 17..18..19..20..21..22..23..24..25..26.. Isaiah's Prophecy
.3...4...5...6...7...8...9...10...11...12.. Hezekiah
NK .6...7...8...9... Hoshea
a b

```

- a) In the 4th year of Hezekiah and in the 7th year of Hoshea, Assyria attacked the Northern Kingdom and besieged Samaria for 3 years. *{2Ki 17:5 18:9}*
- b) In the 9th year of Hoshea and the 6th year of Hezekiah, the Assyrians captured the Northern Kingdom. This is toward the end of the 3rd year of the siege in early 721 BC. *{2Ki 17:6 18:10}*

```

260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 YDK
715 714 713 712 711 710 709 708 707 706 BC
bcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcd
SK 27..28..29..30..31..32..33..34..35..36.. Isaiah's Prophecy
13..14..15..16..17..18..19..20..21..22.. Hezekiah
.1...2...3... Sennacherib's War
a b cde

```



- a) In the 14th year of Hezekiah, Sennacherib attacked Hezekiah. *{2Ki 18:13, Isa 36:1}* This war on Egypt and Palestine lasted three whole years. *{Isa 20:3}* It appears Sennacherib launched his initial attack on Hezekiah and then went and fought in Egypt for 3 years and then returned to finish off Hezekiah.
- b) a. Hezekiah reigned for 29 years. *{2Ki 18:1, 2Ch 29:1}*
  - b. 15 years were added to Hezekiah's life. *{2Ki 20:6, Isa 38:5}*
  - c. Therefore his life was extended in the 15th year of Hezekiah. (Hint:  $29 + 1 - 15 = 15$ )
- c) Sennacherib abandons attack on Hezekiah, returns to Assyria and is killed by his sons. *{2Ki 19:37}* This was likely 55 days after his return to Assyria. *{APC Tob 1:21}*
- d) Manasseh born, 3 years after Hezekiah's life was lengthened and 12 years before his death. *{2Ki 21:1}*
- e) The 15th Jubilee.

```

270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 YDK
705 704 703 702 701 700 699 698 697 696 BC
bcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdab
SK 23..24..25..26..27..28..29..                Hezekiah
37..38..39..40..41..42..43..44..45..46..        Isaiah's Prophecy
..1...2...3..                                Manasseh
a

```

- a) Manasseh, at age 12, reigned for 55 years. *{2Ki 21:1 2Ch 33:1}*

```

280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 YDK
695 694 693 692 691 690 689 688 687 686 BC
bcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdab
SK 47..48..49..50..51..52..53..54..55..56..        Isaiah's Prophecy
.4...5...6...7...8...9...10...11...12...13..    Manasseh

290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 YDK
685 684 683 682 681 680 679 678 677 676 BC
bcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdab
SK 57..58..59..60..61..62..63..64..65..           Isaiah's Prophecy
14..15..16..17..18..19..20..21..22..23..        Manasseh
a

```

- a) In the 1st year of Ahaz's reign, Isaiah predicted that in 65 years, the Northern Kingdom would be completely destroyed. This final destruction of the Northern Kingdom happened 65 years later by Esarhaddon. *{Isa 7:8,9 2Ki 17:24}* Tradition states that this was the time Manasseh was deported to Babylon. His captivity must have been brief since the scriptures take no notice of it. *{2Ch 33:11}* *{See Gill's Expositor on "Isa 7:8"}*

```

300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 YDK
675 674 673 672 671 670 669 668 667 666 BC
bcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdab
SK 24..25..26..27..28..29..30..31..32..33..        Manasseh

310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 YDK
665 664 663 662 661 660 659 658 657 656 BC
bcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdab
SK 34..35..36..37..38..39..40..41..42..43..        Manasseh
a

```

- a) The 16th Jubilee.

```

320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 YDK
655 654 653 652 651 650 649 648 647 646 BC
bcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdab
SK 44..45..46..47..48..49..50..51..52..53..        Manasseh

330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 YDK
645 644 643 642 641 640 639 638 637 636 BC
bcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdababcdab
SK 54..55..                                         Manasseh
..1...2.X                                           Amnon
..1...2...3...4...5...6..                          Josiah
a                b

```

- a) Amnon, at age 22, reigned 2 years and was murdered by his subjects. *{2Ki 21:19 2Ch 33:21}*
- b) Josiah, at age 8, reigned 31 years, then died in a battle with Egyptians. *{2Ki 22:1,23:29 2Ch 34:1}*

```

340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 YDK
635 634 633 632 631 630 629 628 627 626 BC
bcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcd
SK .7...8...9..10..11..12..13..14..15..16.. Josiah
      1...2...3...4.. Jeremiah's Prophecy
      a                b c

```

- a) In his 8th year, Josiah sought the Lord. *{2Ch 34:3}*
- b) In his 12th year, Josiah started to clean up Judah of idols. *{2Ch 34:3}*
- c) From the 13th year of Josiah until the 4th year of Jehoiakim was 23 years. This time period may have started with Josiah's great cleanup of the land. *{Jer 1:2 25:1,3}*

```

350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 YDK
625 624 623 622 621 620 619 618 617 616 BC
bcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcd
SK 17..18..19..20..21..22..23..24..25..26.. Josiah
      .5...6...7...8...9..10..11..12..13..14.. Jeremiah's
      Prophecy
      1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8...9.. Ezekiel's Prophecy
      .1...2...3...4...5...6...7...8.. Judah's Apostasy
      a b

```

- a1) In the 18th year of Josiah, the great passover was held. *{2Ki 22:3 23:23 2Ch 34:8 35:19}*
- a2) From the great passover until the 5th year of Jehoiachin's captivity, was 30 years. *{Eze 1:1}*
- b) This marks the beginning of the 40 years of Judah's apostasy. After the mountain top experience of the Great Passover, Judah's religious life went downhill for 40 years until the last of them were deported from the land. *{Eze 4:6 Jer 52:30}*

The 23 year time period given by Jeremiah and the 30 year time period given for Ezekiel spanned the reign of several kings. These served as an independent check on the procedure used to calculate this chronology. If Ussher had not followed the Talmudic rules, these two confirmations would not have occurred.

```

360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 YDK
615 614 613 612 611 610 609 608 607 606 BC
bcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcdabcbcd
SK 27..28..29..30..31.. Josiah
      15..16..17..18..19..20..21..22..23 Jeremiah's
      Prophecy
      10..11..12..13..14..15..16..17..18..19.. Ezekiel's Prophecy
      Jehoahaz
      1...2...3...4...5.. Jehoiakim
      .9..10..11..12..13..14..15..16..17..18.. Judah's Apostasy
BB      .... 1... Nebuchadnezzar
      a bc de

```

- a) The 17th Jubilee.
- b) Jehoahaz, at age 23, reigned three months. *{2Ki 23:31 2Ch 36:2}*
- c) Jehoiakim at age 25, reigned for 11 years. *{2Ki 23:36 2Ch 36:5}*
- d) Nebuchadnezzar was made viceroy in 607 BC just after the Babylonian New Year. He became sole king after the death of his father in 605 BC. If Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem in mid February he would be in the third year of Jehoiakim's reign. If he captured it in the month Nisan a few weeks later, he would be in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign. *{Jer 25:1 Da 1:1}* This was the biblical evidence for the viceroyship of Nebuchadnezzar lasting for more than one year. Secular historians only allow a one year viceroy period for Nebuchadnezzar. Christians who follow the secular historians, invariably reconstruct this period covering the entire reign of Nebuchadnezzar incorrectly. Eusebius stated that he was viceroy for 20 months and this agrees with the biblical reconstruction of that period.
- e1) The time from the start of Jeremiah's prophecies in the 13th year of Josiah to the 4th year of Jehoiakim, was 23 years. *{Jer 25:1,3}*

- e2) Jeremiah's prophecy in the 4th year of Jehoiakim. *{Jer 36:1 45:1}* Chapter 36 is chapter 43 in the LXX. Chapter 45 starts at 51:31 in the LXX.
- e3) Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaohnecho in the 4th year of Jehoiakim. *{Jer 46:2}* Chapter 46 is chapter 26 in the LXX.

Problem 19:

- 1) The 4th year of Jehoiakim's reign was 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar's *{Jer 25:1 46:2}*
- 2) In the 3rd year of Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar was king. *{Da 1:1}*

Resolution:

- 1) The regal years for the Babylonian kings follow the period of Nabonassar which occurs a few weeks before the Jewish New Year. Nebuchadnezzar's 1st year as viceroy would overlap the last few weeks of Jehoiakim's 3rd year and most of his 4th year.

	370	371	372	373	374	375	376	377	378	379	YDK
	605	604	603	602	601	600	599	598	597	596	BC
	bcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcd										
SK	20..	21..	22..	23..	24..	25..	26..	27..	28..	29..	Ezekiel's Prophecy
	.6..	.7..	.8..	.9..	.10..	.11..					Jehoiakim
											Jehoiachin
					1...	2...	3...	4...			Jehoiachin's
											Captivity
							...	1...	2...	3...	Zedekiah
	19..	20..	21..	22..	23..	24..	25..	26..	27..	28..	Judah's Apostasy
BB	2...	3...	4...	5...	6...	7...	8...	9...	10...	11...	Nebuchadnezzar
	a	bc					d	e			

- a) Jeremiah's prophecy was made in the 5th year and the 9th month of Jehoiakim. *{Jer 36:9}* Chapter 36 is chapter 43 in the LXX. In the LXX it is the 8th year in the 9th month.
- b) Nebuchadnezzar's dream occurred in the 2nd year of his kingdom after the death of his father. *{Da 2:1}*
- c) Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar after serving him for 3 years. *{2Ki 24:1}*
- d1) Nebuchadnezzar at the beginning of his 8th year just before the Jewish New Year in Nisan, captured Jehoiakim. At the end of his 7th year, 3023 Jews were deported. Jehoiakim's captivity would start just before the Jewish New Year. *{2Ki 24:12 Jer 52:28}* Jer 52:28 is omitted in the LXX.
- d2) Jehoiachin, at age 18, reigned for last part of Jewish Year and a short time into the next year for a total of 3 months and 10 days. Nebuchadnezzar removed him after the Jewish New Year after his short 3 months and 10 day reign. *{2Ch 36:9,10}* If he only reigned after the Jewish New Year then Jehoiakim would have reigned 12 years not 11 as the Bible stated. *{2Ki 24:8 2Ch 36:9}*
- d3) This marked the beginning of Jehoiachin's 37 years of captivity. *{2Ki 25:27 Jer 52:31}*
- e) Zedekiah, at age 21, reigned for 11 years. *{2Ki 24:18 2Ch 36:11 Jer 52:1}*

Problem 20:

- 1) Nebuchadnezzar's dream occurred in his 2nd year. *{Da 2:1}*
- 2) a. Daniel and his friends were on probation for 3 years. *{Da 1:1,5,18}*
  - b. 3rd and 4th year of Jehoiakim's reign overlapped the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar's when Daniel and his company were carried away captive. *{Jer 25:1 46:2 Da 1:1}*
  - c. Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar's dream was in his 3rd year.

Resolution:

- 1) The first case refers to the time from when he became sole ruler and the second case refers to the time from when he became viceroy. Foreign kings were not bound by Talmudic rules.

Problem 21:

- 1) Jehoiachin was 18 years old. *{2Ki 24:8}*
- 2) Jehoiachin was 8 years old. *{2Ch 36:9}*

Resolution:

- 1) There is likely a scribal error in *{2Ch 36:9}* where the Hebrew letter YODH (number 10) was dropped from the text.

Problem 22:

- 1) Jehoiachin was captured by Nebuchadnezzar in the 8th year of his reign *{2Ki 24:12}*  
 2) Jehoiachin was captured by Nebuchadnezzar in the 7th year of his reign *{Jer 52:28}*

Resolution:

- 1) This was likely toward the end of the 7th year of Nebuchadnezzar and the beginning of the 8th year. The process of deportation may have carried on for a few weeks and spanned two years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. This is the traditional Jewish understanding of this verse.

	380	381	382	383	384	385	386	387	388	389	YDK
	595	594	593	592	591	590	589	588	587	586	BC
	bcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcd										
SK	.5	.6	.7	.8	.9	.10	.11	.12	.13	.14	Jehoiachin's Captivity
	.4	.5	.6	.7	.8	.9	.10	.11			Zedekiah
	30										Ezekiel's Prophecy
								.1	.2		Ezekiel's Vision
	29	.30	.31	.32	.33	.34	.35	.36	.37	.38	Judah's Apostasy
BB	2	.13	.14	.15	.16	.17	.18	.19	.20	.21	Nebuchadnezzar
	a	b	c	d	e	fg	h	i			

- a1) Hananiah's false prophecy was in the 4th year and 5th month of Zedekiah and his death was in the 7th month of the same year. *{Jer 28:1,17}* Chapter 28 is chapter 35 in the LXX.
- a2) Ezekiel's first vision was in the 5th year of Jehoiachin's captivity. This was the 30th year, 4th month and the 5th day from the time Ezekiel started to prophesy. *{Eze 1:1,2}*
- b) Ezekiel's vision of Jerusalem, was in the 6th year, 6th month and the 5th day of Jehoiachin's captivity. The LXX has 5th month. *{Eze 8:1}*
- c) Ezekiel's vision of Israel was in the 7th year, 5th month and the 10th day of Jehoiachin's captivity. The LXX omits the month and has the 15th day. *{Eze 20:1}*
- d) Ezekiel's vision of various countries was in the 9th year, 10th month and the 10th day of Jehoiachin's captivity. *{Eze 24:1}*
- e) In the 9th year, 10th month and the 10th day of Zedekiah's reign, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem for 3 years. The first part of Jeremiah chapter 39 is chapter 46 in the LXX. The LXX omitted the month in this reference. In *Jer 52:4*, the LXX has the 9th month instead of the 10th month. *{2Ki 25:1,2 Jer 39:1,2 52:4}*
- f) Ezekiel's vision of Pharaoh was in the 10th year, 10th month and the 12th day of Jehoiachin's captivity. The LXX has 12th year, 10th month, and the 1st day. *{Eze 29:1}*
- g1) The 10th year of Zedekiah was the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar. *{Jer 32:1}* Chapter 32 is chapter 39 in the LXX.
- g2) In the 18th year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar deported 832 Jews. This is omitted in the LXX. *{Jer 52:29}*
- g3) Ezekiel's vision of Egypt was in the 11th year, 1st month and the 7th day of Jehoiachin's captivity. *{Eze 30:20}*
- g4) Ezekiel's vision of Egypt was in the 11th year, 3rd month and the 1st day of Jehoiachin's captivity. *{Eze 31:1}*
- h1) In the 11th year, 4th month and the 9th day of Zedekiah and the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem fell. The LXX omitted the reference to the 4th month in *Jer. 52:6* and the 19th year in *Jer. 52:12*. *{2Ki 25:3,8 Jer 39:2 52:5,6,12}*
- h2) In the 11th year, 5th month and the 7th day of Zedekiah and the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem was burned. *{2Ki 25:8 Jer 52:5,12}*
- i1) Ezekiel's vision of Israel was in the 12th year, 12th month and the 1st day of Jehoiachin's captivity. The LXX has the 10th month. *{Eze 32:1}*
- i2) Ezekiel's vision of Israel was in the 12th year, 12th month and the 15th day of Jehoiachin's captivity. The 12th month was supplied from context. The LXX incorrectly had the 1st month. *{Eze 32:1,17}*

i3) Ezekiel was told of destruction of Jerusalem in the 12th year, 10th month and the 5th day of Jehoiachin's captivity about 6 months after the city was burned. The LXX had the 10 year and 12th month, which was an obvious transposition error. *{Eze 33:21}* Modern scholars who have incorrectly reconstructed the chronology, assume this would have been 18 months after the fall of Jerusalem and hence cite this as proof that the Nisan to Nisan calendar was not used.

	390	391	392	393	394	395	396	397	398	399	YDK	
	585	584	583	582	581	580	579	578	577	576	BC	
	bcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcd											
SK	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Jehoiachin's Captivity
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Ezekiel's Vision
	39	40										Judah's Apostasy
BB	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	Nebuchadnezzar
	a											

a1) In the 23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan deported 730 of the remaining Jews. The LXX omitted this verse. *{Jer 52:30}*

a2) This completed the 40 years of the iniquity of Judah and the 390 years of iniquity of Israel. *{1Ki 12:26-33 Eze 4:5,6}*

	400	401	402	403	404	405	406	407	408	409	YDK	
	575	574	573	572	571	570	569	568	567	566	BC	
	bcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcd											
SK	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	Jehoiachin's Captivity
	13											Ezekiel's Vision
BB	2	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	Nebuchadnezzar
						1	2	3	4			Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity
	a		b				c					

a) Ezekiel's vision of the temple was in the 25th year, 1st month and the 10th day of Jehoiachin's captivity, in the 14th year after Jerusalem fell. The chart shows 13 full years and about 7 months from the fall of Jerusalem so this would be in the 14th year. The LXX correctly supplies the "1st month" which is not in the Hebrew text but is clearly implied. *{Eze 40:1}*

b) Ezekiel's vision about Egypt was in the 27th year, 1st month and the 1st day of Jehoiachin's captivity *{Eze 29:17}*

c) This time marked the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity. This is a deduction based on history. Apparently he finished the conquest of Egypt in 571 BC. He had his dream as given in Daniel 4 in 570 BC. During that year he built up Babylon including the famous hanging gardens. After this he was put out of his kingdom after he bragged to himself about what he had done.

	410	411	412	413	414	415	416	417	418	419	YDK	
	565	564	563	562	561	560	559	558	557	556	BC	
	bcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcdabcd											
SK	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	Jehoiachin's Captivity
BB	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	Nebuchadnezzar
		5	6	7								Nebuchadnezzar's Insanity
		ab										

a1) The 18th Jubilee.

a2) Nebuchadnezzar was restored to his kingdom.

b1) Nebuchadnezzar died a few months after he was restored to his kingdom in the winter of this year. According to Eusebius Nebuchadnezzar reigned for 20 months as viceroy and 43 years as sole king. Just before his death, he predicted that Cyrus would capture Babylon. The date of 562 BC for his death is derived from Ptolemy's king lists. *{Thiele, p. 227.}*

b2) Jehoiachin was freed in a Jubilee year in the 37th year, 12th month and 27th day of his captivity. *{2Ki 25:27 Jer 52:31}*

Problem 23:

1) Jehoiachin was freed on the 27th day. *{2Ki 25:27}*

2) Jehoiachin was freed on the 25th day. *{Jer 52:31}*

Resolution:

- 1) The decree to free Jehoiachin was determined and ratified on the 25th and executed on the 27th day.
- 2) There was a scribal error.

This does not alter the chronology.

## 7.0 Differences Between Hebrew and the LXX Texts

- 1) In 20th (24th in the LXX) year of Jeroboam, Asa reigned for 41 years. *{1Ki 15:9,10}*
- 2) Baasha reacted to the defection of his subjects to Asa and started to build Ramah in the 36th (38th in the LXX) year from the start of the divided kingdom *{2Ch 15:9,16:1}*
- 3) In the 26th (omitted in the LXX) year of Asa, Elah reigned two years, part of one year and part of another. *{1Ki 16:8}*
- 4) In the 27th (omitted by the LXX) year of Asa, Zimri murdered Elah, reigned 7 days and committed suicide to avoid being killed by Omri. *{1Ki 16:10,15}*
- 5) In the 38th year of Asa, Ahab reigned for 22 years. *{1Ki 16:29}* (The LXX has 2nd year of Jehoshaphat instead of the 38th year of Asa.)
- 6) In his 39th year, Asa became diseased in his feet until he died in his 41st (40th in the LXX) year. *{1Ki 15:23,24 2Ch 16:12,13}*
- 7) In the 2nd year of Jehoram (SK), Jehoram (NK) started to reign. *{2Ki 1:17}* This was the 18th year of Jehoshaphat in the LXX and verse is 18 not 17.
- 8) In the 12th year of Jehoram (NK), Ahaziah at 22 years of age, reigned for part of a year. *{2Ki 8:25,26 2Ch 22:2}* In *{2Ch 22:2}* his age was given as 42 and it was 20 in the LXX.
- 9) Athaliah reigned over Judah for 6 years and was killed in her 7th year. (8th year *{2Ch 23:1}* and 7th year in *{2Ki 11:4 2Ch 24:1}* in the LXX). *{2Ki 11:3,4,16 2Ch 22:12 23:1,15}*
- 10) Jeremiah's prophecy was in the 5th year of Jehoiakim. *{Jer 36:9}* In the LXX it was the 8th year in the 9th month.
- 11) Nebuchadnezzar at the beginning of his 8th year just before the Jewish New Year in Nisan, captured Jehoiakim. At the end of his 7th year, 3023 Jews were deported. *{2Ki 24:12 Jer 52:28}* Jer 52:28 was omitted in the LXX.
- 12) Ezekiel's vision of Jerusalem, was in the 6th year, 6th month and the 5th day of Jehoiachin's captivity. The LXX had 5th month. *{Eze 8:1}*
- 13) Ezekiel's vision of Israel was in the 7th year, 5th month and the 10th day of Jehoiachin's captivity. The LXX omitted the month and had the 15th day. *{Eze 20:1}*
- 14) In the 9th year, 10th month and the 10th day of Zedekiah's reign, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem for 3 years. The LXX omitted the month in Jer 39:1,2. In Jer 52:4, the LXX had 9th month instead of 10th month. *{2Ki 25:1,2 Jer 39:1,2 52:4}*
- 15) In the 18th year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar deported 832 Jews. This was omitted in the LXX. *{Jer 52:29}*
- 16) Ezekiel's vision of Pharaoh was in the 10th year, 10th month and the 12th day of Jehoiachin's captivity, the LXX had the 12th year, 10th month, 1st day. *{Eze 29:1}*
- 17) In the 11th year, 4th month and the 9th day of Zedekiah and the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem fell. The LXX omitted the reference to the 4th month in Jer. 52:6 and the 19th year in Jer. 52:12. *{2Ki 25:3,8 Jer 39:2 52:5,6,12}*
- 18) Ezekiel's vision of Israel was in the 12th year, 12th month and the 1st day of Jehoiachin's captivity. The LXX had the 10th month. *{Eze 32:1}*
- 19) Ezekiel's vision of Israel was in the 12th year, 12th month and the 15th day of Jehoiachin's captivity. The 12th month was supplied from the context. The LXX incorrectly had the 1st month. *{Eze 32:1,17}*
- 20) Ezekiel told of the destruction of Jerusalem in the 12th year, 10th month and the 5th day of Jehoiachin's captivity. The LXX had the 10th year and 12th month which is an obvious transposition error. *{Eze 33:21}*

- 21) In the 23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan deported 730 of the remaining Jews. The LXX omitted this verse. *{Jer 52:30}*
- 22) Ezekiel's vision of the temple was in the 25th year, 1st month and the 10th day of Jehoiachin's captivity, in the 14th year after Jerusalem fell. The LXX correctly supplies "1st month" which was not in the Hebrew text but was clearly implied. *{Eze 40:1}*

Of the 22 differences, seven are critical. 1,3,4,5,7,8 and 9 would throw the chronology off if the LXX was used instead of the Hebrew text. Hence our admonition is justified that the chronology must be based on the Hebrew text.

## 8.0 Summary of the Viceroy Relationships

- 1) In his 18th year, Jehoshaphat made Jehoram viceregent while he went off to war with Syria.
- 2) In his 23rd year, Jehoshaphat made Jehoram viceroy and died two years later.
- 3) In his 21st year, Ahab (NK) made Ahaziah (NK) viceroy and Ahab died the same year in a battle with Syria.
- 4) In his 7th year, Jehoram made Ahaziah viceroy and died the next year of a disease of his bowels.
- 5) In his 15th year, Jehoahaz (NK) made Jehoash viceroy and died two years later.
- 6) In his 39th year, Joash made Amaziah viceroy and died two years later.
- 7) In his 6th year, Jehoash (NK) made Jeroboam II (NK) viceroy before he went to fight with the Syrians. He won, much to his surprise, and lived for another 11 years.
- 8) In his 52nd year, Uzziah made Jotham viceroy and died of leprosy a few months later.
- 9) In his 15th year, Ahaz made Hezekiah viceroy and died the next year.
- 10) According to Eusebius, Nebuchadnezzar was made viceroy while his father went off to war and was killed twenty months later.

In every case there is a good reason for these viceroy relationships. A king was virtually abdicating the throne when he appointed his son as a viceroy. Kings did not make such serious decisions on a mere whim. In cases 1, 3, 7 and 10 the king was going to war and wanted to ensure a smooth transition of power in case he did not return. In the other cases the viceroy relationship was toward the end of the king's life and did not last for very long. The king was likely in failing health and needed help with the administration of the kingdom.

Almost all viceroy periods were quite short, usually one or two years. The exception was Jeroboam II whose period lasted over 11 years. His father Jehoash did not expect to defeat the Syrians even though Elisha said he would. He thought he would come back on his shield, not holding it!

## 9.0 Some Objections

Modern chronology for the divided kingdom appears to be quite different than the one developed by Ussher. In order to force fit the biblical data with the preconceived ideas of Assyrian history, those of the Assyrian Academy must eliminate two interregnums from the biblical data. The concept of interregnums is not new and was common in this period of history among foreign nations. Therefore, we should not be surprised, given the political turmoil in the Northern Kingdom, to find one or more interregnums during the death-throes of that kingdom. The Southern Kingdom was much more stable during this time and we should not expect to find interregnums there.

From history, we know of at least four interregnums in foreign countries.

- 1) In 704 BC, after Arkeanos, there was no king in Babylon for two years. *{15}*
- 2) In 688 BC, there was no king in Babylon for eight years. *{15}*
- 3) In 687 BC, civil disorder increased in Egypt, because there was no king for two years. *{16}*

4) In 637 BC, there was a one year interregnum in Babylon. *(17)*

All serious students of history know about these interregnums. We are not surprised that those advocating the use of the conjectured Assyrian Chronology to amend the Bible, conveniently forget about them, and recoil in horror at such a concept for they know that if the concept is allowed, it is fatal to their schemes of interpretation. Neither Dr. Thiele or Dr. McFall breathe a word about this and indeed it is one of the best kept secrets of the Assyrian Academy. Indeed Galil goes so far as to state in his basic assumptions (without proof) there were no interregnums in the biblical chronology! This begs the question—"How does he know?"

We shall discuss this and other the errors in the most popular modern chronology that was developed by Dr. Thiele and refined by Dr. McFall in another article.

## 10.0 Interesting Observations

There was no king in the Northern Kingdom on two separate occasions, one starting in 784 BC and the other starting in 740 or 739 BC.

Viceroy relationships are essential to the understanding of the king lists. These become apparent as you actually plot out the data in detail. In reading the Bible, you would not normally be aware of most of these relationships unless you did your homework.

Jehoshaphat and Ahab both had two sons. Both had sons by the same name, Ahaziah and Jehoram. All of them were made viceroys at one time or another. This period in the king list was the most confusing until Jehu simplified it in 884 BC by terminating the kings!

Some have claimed that a different dating method was used by the writer of Chronicles than the writer of Kings. We found no evidence of this. Except for the difference in the age when two kings started to reign, all the data is identical.

Some have claimed a different accession year scheme was used at different times for either of the kingdoms. That is the Nisan to Nisan rule was abandoned for considerable periods of time and they deliberately used a different accession month (i.e. month Tishri to Tishri). We found no evidence to justify this claim.

## 11.0 Conclusion

Ussher's results, based on the Bible alone, violate just about every "absolute date" in archaeology. Amen. All this shows is that we may not know as much about history as God does. This provides an excellent incentive for Christians to reevaluate the findings of archaeology to find their mistakes. This has been done before by Christians. Let us do the same for the rest of archaeology's so called "absolute dates." We will never forget what Gordon Franz, who was guiding a tour to Israel in 1998, said on the mound of Jericho.

"Absolute *truth* in archaeology lasts about twenty years."

Maybe we should substitute "conjecture" for "truth!"

Archaeology is to history what evolution is to science. Evolutionists find a fossil and make up a story to go with it. Likewise, many archaeologists find a broken pot or a fragment of a scroll and spin a tale to explain it. If you are well respected in the field, your story becomes the gospel until something better comes along. This is not at all an exaggeration. The classic case was the time when Dr. Woods examined the dates for Jericho as determined by Kathleen Kenyon and found them too recent. She excavated an eight meter square and dated the fall of Jericho based on the type of pottery she DID NOT find! (We are sure this had nothing at all to do with her anti-biblical bias!) This farce rode on the



coat-tails of her reputation for decades until Dr. Woods exploded it. At the very best, archaeology can only confirm what the Bible says, never refute it. It may give us background information to help us understand the Bible better.

We have been able to recreate the background documentation to justify Ussher's reconstruction of the king lists for the divided kingdom. We have been careful to state all the assumptions we used and state all the known problems that people have found that relate to this chronological period. We have solely relied on the Bible for our information. We do not claim that this reconstruction is unique. There may be other ways to do it. However, we have shown that there exists at least one way it can be done without doing violence to the scriptures. That is sufficient to overthrow a host of inaccurate reconstructions for this same time period which result in a much shorter time for this biblical period.

We are open to suggestions and amendments. However, we will only entertain corrections that are rooted in the Bible. Archaeological arguments that violate the scriptures carry no weight with us.

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## Appendix D-Evidentialism—The Bible and Assyrian Chronology

In the last 100 years, various reconstructions of Assyrian chronology have been used to undermine the accepted chronology of the period of the divided kingdom. Edwin Thiele's work on Hebrew chronology—as reinterpreted in the light of Assyrian chronology—has become widely accepted by evangelicals and secular historians. We will show Assyrian chronology is not as simple as Thiele would have us believe and there is no reason to bend the Bible to fit the current reconstructions of Assyrian chronology.

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It is refreshing to see the creation movement maturing from the strictly evidential approach of the 60's and 70's to the biblically based, axiomatic approach of recent years. This represents a shift in emphasis from science to philosophy, from looking at theories to looking at how to build theories and interpret facts. The emphasis is on the authority of the Bible. Our understanding of the sciences pertaining to origins has been greatly enhanced as a result of using this *Bible first* approach.

One area, which has been almost totally untouched, is the area of biblical chronologies, especially for the period of the divided kingdom. Chronological problems are identical to the problems faced by the creation movement in dealing with the early chapters of Genesis. However, the arguments and logic are not nearly so simplistic and most people surrender when confronted by a wordy argument. Reduced to the simplest terms, we have the same problem we faced in Genesis stated in a more complex way, *What is your authority?* In this article, we will concentrate mainly on the latest accepted Assyrian chronology as popularized by Edwin Thiele. (There is little to be gained by examining previous reconstructions that have now been abandoned. These older abandoned reconstructions should make us very wary of accepting newer models that likewise conflict with the Bible.) We will show how Thiele has massaged the biblical data to make it fit with the current understanding of Assyrian chronology. You can guess very accurately which came out second best, the Bible or Assyrian chronology. Thiele stated: {1}

“Between the absolute chronology of the Hebrews and that of their neighbours there can be no conflict. If the biblical chronology seems to be at variance with Assyrian chronology, it may be because of errors in the Hebrew records, but it may also be because the data preserved in these records are not correctly understood.”

This statement sets the tone for Thiele's work. We were not aware that Assyrian chronology was inspired!

Thiele's book, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, has been published three times, 1951 {1}, 1965 {2} and 1983 {3}. There are major revisions between each printing. We will be referring to material from all three printings but wherever possible use the latest printing. Also, we will refer to the work by Leslie McFall in 1991 {4}, which has some minor refinements to Thiele's chronology.

### General Problems with Ancient History

Before we start, let's look at two well documented examples from ancient history that illustrate some of the problems we face in trying to reconstruct an accurate history. Both of these deal with the life of Alexander the Great and have abundant documentation from the ancient writers.

1. On the west side of the Hyphasis River in India, Alexander had his troops construct an oversized camp containing extra large furnishings. He did this to give an exaggerated impression of his armies' stature and deeds to those who saw them in later times. If an Indian archaeologist discovered these a few hundred years later and did not have access to the historical accounts of Plutarch, Diodorus, Arrian and Curtius, he may be misled and come to the wrong conclusions about the invading army of Alexander.
2. In attacking the citadel of the Mallians in India, Alexander was severely wounded. Depending on the accounts you read, even those who were present when this happened, disagree among themselves in

important details. The Latin historian Curtius wryly observed that so great was the carelessness of those old historians, it was hard to know what to believe!

These two items illustrate the problems faced when dealing with secular history. First, the accounts may have been deliberately misrepresented to glorify the doer of the deeds. Secondly, even eye-witness accounts may conflict. (Anyone who has sat on a jury will vouch for that.) Assyrian chronology suffers from all this and more as we shall see. Those who accept the authority of the scriptures, know that only the records of the Bible are accurate when compared to secular accounts for the same historical period.

## The Problem

The problem with biblical chronology is that it does not fit with our current understanding of Assyrian chronology. The biblical chronology is too long by about 40 to 50 years, depending on who you read. The latest reconstruction by Thiele is but one of many attempts in the last 100 years to adjust the biblical account to match the current conjectured chronology of the Assyrians. Thiele very creatively manipulated the biblical data to eliminate about 40 years of history. He did this by constructing viceroy relationships to collapse the length of a king's reign by overlapping it with the king's predecessor. He was the first person we know of to make such a detailed reconstruction of the divided kingdom using this approach. (Variations on his scheme can be traced back at least 75 years before him.) By this, he gave his shortened chronology much credibility. Having it published by a well known university press instead of by his church denomination considerably helped his cause.

Let us look at the three dates where Assyrian and biblical history are supposed to intersect. These three dates are the main reason for abridging the biblical chronology. These dates are 841 BC, 853 BC and 701 BC. [5] There is no mention in the Bible of the events that supposedly happened in the years of the first two dates. Their intersection with biblical history rests entirely on secular interpretations of Assyrian records, not on biblical data.

## 841 BC

This date is documented on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III. Thiele states:

“The date of 841 is established by Jehu's payment of tribute to Shalmaneser III of Assyria in that year and, together with 853, becomes one of the basic dates in Hebrew history. Although the Bible makes no mention of Jehu's payment of tribute to Assyria, Shalmaneser III mentions that in the eighteenth year of his reign he went against "Hazael of Aram," shut him up in "Damascus, his royal city," and "received tribute of the men of Tyre, Sidon and of Jehu, the son of Omri.”

From the Bible, it is easy to deduce that Jehu started to reign about 12 years after the death of Ahab. This would fix the date for the death of Ahab at 853 BC and the first year of Jehu at 841 BC.

At first glance this seems to be impeccable evidence for discarding the longer biblical chronology. According to it, Ahab died in 897 BC and Jehu started to reign about 885 BC. If this were so, obviously Jehu would be dead and gone long before Shalmaneser III started to reign. However, remember that very few archaeologists are Christians and most are hostile to the Word of God. Therefore, expect anything they find to be *interpreted* in the worst possible way to confound Bible-believing Christians. Once these *interpretations* are published, they seem to get a life all of their own and many *Christian* authors echo them without bothering to check what was actually found. This was the very reason the Christian Church caved in on evolution and why many churches ignore the historical portions of the Old Testament as being unreliable. It is a slippery road to liberalism that is well greased with the opinions of scholars.

Fossils and radiometric dating seemed to provide the *absolute* truth as to the age of the world until someone took the time to see what assumptions are involved. Likewise, in this case it is extremely important to determine what was actually found and ignore the *just so stories* that became associated with

the find. We had to search many sources before we found one that was honest enough to admit what was really found and what it meant.

The basis of what Thiele stated comes from the inscriptions found on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III. We found the following in a Bible dictionary.

“The text depicts Shalmaneser’s triumphs over several kingdoms of Syria and the West. Of special interest to Bible students is one panel in the second row in which a bearded Semite bows before the king while his servants present gifts. The text refers to the humble suppliant as Jehu, son of Omri (a name by which all Israelite kings were identified, whether of the Omride dynasty or not) and describes the gifts he brought. The event, apparently from the year 841 BC, gives us the earliest surviving picture of an Israelite and shows how such a person might have appeared to an Assyrian sculptor. There is no evidence, however, that the obelisk was actually depicting the Israelite monarch Jehu.” {6}

So, except for the fact we are not certain of the actual date of the obelisk and who is in the picture, we are in fine shape! Just as the Israelite kings were described as *sons of Omri*, when many were not, likewise many may have been identified with the name *Jehu*. We do not have enough evidence from secular history to determine this.

Much more damaging is the evidence uncovered by Faulstich. He documents that much of the information on the Black Obelisk that is attributed to Shalmaneser was taken from earlier monuments. {7} Are we so egocentric as to think historical revisionism is a recent phenomenon? This plagiarism was so common in Assyrian history that the father of Shalmaneser III pronounced a special curse on later kings who tried to steal his fame by ascribing deeds he had done to themselves. Faulstich goes on to document inconsistencies among the Black Obelisk, the Tigris Inscriptions, the Statue Inscriptions and the Bull-Colossi.

This type of historical revisionism results in the collapsing of historical events into a shorter time frame. From the inspired biblical accounts, we know this has happened. Rarely do we find historians mentioning the problems with Assyrian chronology when they use Assyrian data to amend the biblical chronology. Thiele and McFall are very silent on this. As in the case of Alexander’s wound, we will likely never know the correct story.

## 853 BC

This was the date of the famous battle of Qarqar that was fought between Shalmaneser III and an anti-Assyrian coalition. The Bible dictionary lists *A-ha-ab-bu Sir'-i-la-a-a* as supplying 2000 chariots and 10,000 men for this battle. *A-ha-ab-bu* is taken to mean *Ahab*. *Sir'-i-la-a-a* is taken to mean *Israel*. {8} This is given as proof positive that the Ahab of 1 Kings was present at this battle.

This word may be translated *Ahab* but that does not prove that it was the King Ahab of the Bible. Several possibilities exist. In ancient history, it is the rule, not the exception, that different writers gave the same person different names. Consider this example:

“After Laborosoarchodus, who was disposed of by his subjects for his acts of villainy, Nebuchadnezzar’s grandchild by his daughter succeeded him. The new king was his son by Evilmerodach and called by Berosus, *Nabonidus*, but by Herodotus, *Labyntus*, by Abydenus, *Nabannidochus* and by Daniel, *Belshazzar* or *Baltazar*.” {9}

Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson had at least four or five different names depending on who wrote the history! Just because you see a historian use a name that is the same as a name mentioned elsewhere by a different historian, you cannot assume both historians are referring to the same individual. You must study the context to be sure. This is the major failing of Assyrian history. Because the material is so scanty and fragmentary, we often do not have enough information to be absolutely sure of who we are reading about

and if we are interpreting it correctly. However, that has never stopped a scholar from spinning a good story about what he thinks it says. If he has enough prestige, his story will soon become the gospel.

Another possibility is that the person in command of the force was a general of a king of Israel and not the king himself. Saul, David, Solomon and Pekah had generals over their armies and the names are recorded in the scriptures.

The story may be improbable given the events that happened during Ahab's reign. He suffered a three year drought that destroyed most of the livestock in the kingdom. Just a few years before this alleged event at Qarqar took place, Ahab was invaded by Benhadad. In that battle, Ahab was scarcely able to muster 7000 soldiers much less any chariots or horsemen. However, the story is that he sent 10,000 troops and 2000 chariots to this battle at Qarqar. This was no small force, especially considering the large number of chariots.

Another explanation was touched on previously—historical revisionism. The events described here likely happened, but at an earlier date, since the inscriptions were most likely doctored by a later king to enhance his glory.

No doubt some king from Israel sent an army to the battle of Qarqar. However, it was not likely King Ahab. We shall see later when we look at the biblical problems, how much the texts of the Bible were twisted to force Ahab into this later time period when the battle of Qarqar took place.

## **701 BC**

We are not certain why this date is essential to Thiele's chronology. If Thiele had not made this synchronisation with Hezekiah, he would have had much less criticism of his scheme. Thiele conjectures that this was the date that Sennacherib invaded Hezekiah in the 14th year of his reign. By forcing this synchronisation, Thiele ignores several synchronisations of the biblical text. We shall discuss this under the heading of the "Third Biblical Example".

## **Biblical Considerations**

The main problem with all attempts to harmonize the Bible with Assyrian chronology is the violence it does to the scriptures. To remove about 40 years from a chronology, as well defined as the one we have in the Bible, requires some very creative exegesis or worse, discarding numbers that do not fit our preconceived ideas. This is a classic case of starting with evidence outside the Bible and making the Bible say what we want to hear. In the preface to the third edition, Thiele stated: *{10}*

“The only basis for a sound chronology of the period to be discussed is a completely unbiased use of biblical statements in the light of all other knowledge we can bring to bear on the problem, notably the history and chronology of the ancient Near East.”

This statement indicates Thiele's approach to the Word of God and secular history. For Thiele used the supposed dates from Assyrian chronology, which allegedly intersect with the biblical chronology, to force-fit the biblical data into the mould of secular chronology. We will only deal with the most serious problems in his work.

## **First Biblical Example**

To collapse the biblical history, you must create overlapping reigns of kings so that the total length of the period is significantly shortened. The fun really begins with Uzziah. Up until then, the dates on Thiele's and McFall's chronology are within a couple of years of the one derived from the longer biblical chronology.

As we said, there is very little disagreement with the longer reconstruction for the first 150 years even to the 12 year viceroyship of Jeroboam II with Jehoash. This is not only true for Thiele but for all reconstructions done in the last 100 years that we have seen published. However, at this point, all the chronologies diverge from the traditional chronology. Thiele stated that in the 27th year of Jeroboam, Uzziah became sole king and that he had a viceroy relationship with his father for 24 years. The only rationale for selecting a 24 year period is that Thiele can make it fit with current archaeological expectations. Again, Josephus and all the writers before 1850 never guessed that there was a viceroyship of any length, much less 24 years for Uzziah. The Bible says:

“And *they* brought him (Amaziah, Uzziah’s father) on horses, and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. And all the people of Judah took Azariah (Uzziah) which *was* sixteen years old and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.” (2 Kings 14:20,21)

“In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, began Azariah (Uzziah) the son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign. Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem...” (2 Kings 15:1,2)

By all rules of exegesis, one would conclude that Uzziah was made king when he was 16 years old after the death of his father. This event happened in the 27th year of Jeroboam. Not so according to Thiele and others! A little arithmetic will show that it is rather difficult to be made king 8 years before you were born! For if you came to the throne when you were 16 but had been a viceroy with your father for 24 years already, you were made viceroy 8 years before you were born! According to Thiele, McFall and others the text is incorrect. It should read in the 3rd year of Jeroboam not the 27th. <sup>(11)</sup> By happy chance, by having Uzziah as viceroy for 24 years, Thiele can manipulate the rest of the numbers for Uzziah’s reign without violating too many synchronisms. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO BIBLICAL OR SOUND LOGICAL REASON FOR THIS AMENDMENT.

Before we proceed to the next example, a little historical note is of interest. Thiele was not the first one to propose Uzziah’s imaginary viceroy relationship. We found it in a very old Bible produced around 1900 and in the 1909 International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia (ISBE). <sup>(12)</sup> The latter also documents this non-existent viceroy relationship that Uzziah had with his father for exactly the same period of 24 years. However, it creates a 12-year viceroy relationship between Uzziah and his son, Jotham and has Pekah becoming king in the 52nd year of Uzziah as one would expect. Unless one checked the Bible and found out that Pekah ruled for 20 years one would not notice a problem. However, the ISBE chart shows Pekah coming to the throne in 736 BC. This means his rule finished in 717 BC four years after the fall of his kingdom of Samaria in 721 BC. This is a tad ridiculous. No doubt some wag pointed out this piece of illogic to the theological ‘experts’ and this view was quietly dropped.

This brings us to the next example and how Thiele found another place to delete these 12 years from the chronology.

## **Second Biblical Example**

To delete the 12 years requires incredible ingenuity. Thiele worked on the reign of Pekah just as the ISBE had done many years earlier. Read the following scripture texts carefully:

“In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah (Uzziah) king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, *and reigned* ten years in Samaria.” (2 Kings 15:17)

“And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son began to reign in his stead. In the fiftieth year of Azariah (Uzziah) king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* two years. ... But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king’s house, with Argob and Arieah, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him and reigned in his room. ... In the two and fiftieth year of

Azariah (Uzziah) king of Judah Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned twenty years.*” (2 Kings 15:22-27)

There are two views on how to understand this passage.

a) The traditional view to those who are not under the influence of modern scholarship is this. Menahem reigned for 10 years, followed by his son, Pekahiah, who reigned for two years. Pekahiah was murdered by his commander, Pekah, who in turn reigned for 20 years. By normal rules of exegesis, this would be the most normal way to understand the text. Accession dating <sup>[13]</sup> is used in all these examples.

Uzziah Regal Year	Northern Kingdom King
39	Menahem, 10 years (2Ki 15:17)
50	Pekahiah, 2 years (2Ki 15:23)
52	Pekah, 20 years (2Ki 15:27)

39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	-Years of Uzziah
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				-Reign of Menahem
											1	2		-Reign of Pekahiah
													1	-Reign of Pekah

b) Both Thiele and McFall would have the diagram look like this:

39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	-Years of Uzziah
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				-Reign of Menahem
											1	2		-Reign of Pekahiah
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	-Reign of Pekah

Absolutely no biblical justification is given for starting the reign of Pekah in the 39th year of Uzziah. They say Pekah was a rival king in Gilead to both Menahem and Pekahiah and Pekah really started his sole reign in the 52nd year of Uzziah. The Bible says that Pekah was the captain of Pekahiah, not a rival king reigning in Gilead. Further, the Bible says Pekah started to reign in the 52nd year not the 39th year of Uzziah.

Lets look at all the kings of the Northern Kingdom who were dated by the reign of Uzziah.

Uzziah Regal Year	Northern Kingdom King
38	Zachariah, 6 months (2Ki 15:8)
39	Shallum, 1 month (2Ki 15:13)
39	Menahem, 10 years (2Ki 15:17)
50	Pekahiah, 2 years (2Ki 15:23)
52	Pekah, 20 years (2Ki 15:27)

By all rules of exegesis, one would think these kings in the Northern Kingdom reigned sequentially. Not so if you have the guide of enlightened scholarship. It is obvious that Menahem’s and Pekahiah’s reigns overlap the first 12 years of Pekah’s reign, or is it? Both Thiele and McFall wrest the obvious meaning of the Bible. *{2Ki 15:25,27}* THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO BIBLICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS. Indeed, they use different rules when it suits them. In the first example we gave, they said the synchronisation date referred to the time when Uzziah was made viceroy. In this case, they say the synchronisation refers to the time when Pekah became sole king. You cannot have it both ways and no matter which way Thiele and McFall go, they create logical inconsistencies in the text. Further the "just-so-story" they created about Pekah is pure fiction and contradicts the Bible. *{2Ki 15:25}* Pekah was a commander of Pekahiah and not a rival king to him!

### Third Biblical Example

Thiele holds to a synchronisation for the year 701 BC to make it the 14th year of the reign of Hezekiah when Sennacherib invaded Judah. Thiele is forced to discard three synchronisations to do this. According to the Bible:

- a) Hezekiah started to reign in the 3rd year of Hoshea. {2Ki 18:1,2}
- b) In the 6th year of Hezekiah and the 9th year of Hoshea, Israel was captured. {2Ki 18:10}
- c) In the 12th year of Ahaz, Hoshea began to reign over Israel. {2Ki 17:1}

Thiele claims these are late amendments to the biblical text and is honest enough to admit he cannot make these verses fit his chronology. In forcing this synchronisation, Thiele has Hezekiah and his son, Manasseh, co-reigning for at least 11 years. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO BIBLICAL EVIDENCE to support this aside from this forced synchronisation.

Thiele also runs into problems with the secular chronology of Babylon. The Bible says that Hezekiah was visited by representatives from Merodachbaladan, the king of Babylon. According to our understanding of Ptolemy's canon, this king ruled in Babylon from 721-710 BC and then died. If Thiele had not tried to force this connection with Sennacherib for the year 701 BC, he would not have had this problem.

According to Assyrian chronology, this *Sennacherib*, whoever he was, went on and reigned for a number of years after this invasion. The Bible states he returned to his own land and was killed by his sons. {2Ki 19:36,37} No great time is implied between the unsuccessful invasion and his untimely death. According to Tobit in the Apocrypha, Sennacherib returned and conducted some ethnic cleansing to rid the land of Jews. About 55 days after his return, he was murdered by his two sons. {APC Tob 1:15-22} Verse 15 states that Sennacherib's *estate was troubled*. This may refer to the loss of the 185,000 men in the campaign against Hezekiah. {2Ki 19:35} If so, it would account for Sennacherib's fury against any Jews he found.

McFall tries to salvage the synchronisms that Thiele discards by saying Hezekiah reigned as viceroy with his father for the first 16 years of his reign. Then he commenced his sole reign after the death of his father in 715 BC. Thereby, the synchronisations Thiele could not make fit, McFall does. (This solution is not new and was proposed 40 years ago in the New Bible Dictionary. Thiele never accepted it.) This creates some real exegetical problems, for in the 6th year of Hezekiah, Israel fell and in the 14th year Hezekiah was invaded by Sennacherib. By all rules of logic, you would assume about 8 years elapsed between these events. Wrong! According to this 'New Math' over 22 years elapsed if you use Thiele's dates of 723 BC for the fall of Israel and 701 BC for the invasion by Sennacherib! McFall tries to wiggle out of this by claiming the first date (6th year) was from the time Hezekiah was made viceroy with his father and the second date (14th year) was dated from the time Hezekiah became sole king. How would anyone know this if he was reading just the Bible?

Earlier Bible dictionaries like the 1909 ISBE did not require this synchronisation and we really wonder if it is required either. The biblical record does not list all the invasions and battles that Israel and Judah fought. Nations generally avoid documenting their disastrous defeats so it should come as no surprise that the earlier ill-fated invasion is passed by in silence in the Assyrian records. Also, the name for a particular person, may not resemble the name given to him in another country. Ancient history abounds with examples of this.

## Other Issues

There are many more problems with Thiele's chronology (and McFall's amendments) which space does not permit us to deal with. How much time should be wasted refuting a defective system? Until we get good biblical answers for the 24 year vice-regency of Uzziah and the 12-year overlap of Pekah with the other kings of Israel, not to mention the many conflicts introduced by these changes, we should not surrender the older, longer chronology of the Bible.

Since most historians for the Egyptian period have blindly accepted Thiele's dates, they are labouring under a 40 to 50 year error when they try to align Egyptian history with biblical history. Egyptian history is challenging enough without being handicapped by the errors introduced by Thiele's dubious dating procedures! It is most amusing to see them conjecture who the pharaoh of the Exodus was in 1446 BC when the biblical date for the Exodus is closer to 1491 BC!



## Conclusion

The arbitrary nature in which Thiele, McFall and others handle the biblical text is obvious. Their methods are no different than the methods of those who came before them and amended the Bible based on what they thought the Assyrian records stated. All who do this create imaginary viceroy relationships when it suits them. Sometimes they count years from when a king became a viceroy, sometimes from when he became sole king. The only reason for this is to escape the logical contradictions they created by their incorrect initial assumptions. The longer chronology consistently measures time from when a king became viceroy. This procedure is in accord with the oldest Talmudic understanding of how this was done. Thiele, McFall and others sweep aside methods of interpretation that are derived from the most ancient writers, in favour of a new capricious way of handling the text according to the external dictates of archaeology. Their work has indeed rendered the numbers of the Hebrew Kings most mysterious.

Christians have largely abdicated the fields of history and archaeology to those who are worldly wise. Many have been told, even in Bible Colleges, that the historical portions of the Bible are unreliable. This is hardly faith building! Fifty years ago, most Christians did not have ready access to the wealth of material we have today concerning science and evolution. We can thank Dr. Henry Morris and others who have followed in his steps for this. We do not have all the answers about Assyrian chronology and how it fits with the Bible. However, we must learn the same lesson about *history* as we learned about *science*. True science does not conflict with the Bible. Likewise, true history agrees with and does not refute the Scriptures. Pray that God will raise up Christians in the field of history to help us write a true history that honours the Bible.

Lewis Dabney was a *voice crying in the wilderness* 140 years ago. He recognised most clearly the problems and sounded a warning against the dangers of science, *falsely so called*, to the church. No one listened and the church madly pursued a course of compromise which would have destroyed her, but for the grace of God. At that time he said concerning attacks made by geologists against the Bible: *{14}*

“The authority of the Bible, as our rule of faith, is demonstrated by its own separate and independent evidences, literary history, moral, internal, prophetic. It is found by the geologist in possession of the field, and he must assume the aggressive, and positively dislodge it from its position. The defender of the Bible need only stand on the defensive. That is, the geologist must not content himself with saying that his hypothesis, which is opposed to Bible teachings, is plausible, that it cannot be scientifically refuted, that it may adequately satisfy the requirements of all the physical phenomena to be accounted for. All this is naught, as a successful assault on us. We are not bound to retreat until he has constructed an absolutely exclusive demonstration of his hypothesis; until he has shown, by strict scientific proofs, not only that his hypothesis *may be* the true one, but that *it alone can be* the only true one; that it is impossible any other can exclude it.”

What applies to attacks on the Bible from geology applies equally to attacks from historians and archaeologists. The Bible is the only book that provides a continuous history from creation down to the death of Nebuchadnezzar. More importantly, the Bible is the inspired Word of God and is without error. Assyrian chronology is not inspired and is fraught with errors. Both Thiele and McFall have too low a view of inspiration. If what they claim is true, why should we ever trust any historical portion in the Bible until it has been interpreted by the *sure word* of the archaeologist? If we cannot trust the numbers in the Bible, why should we trust the words between the numbers? Are we to trust the fallible word of sinful fallen men who have yet to get their first theory right? Or are we to trust the infallible Word written by God, who has yet to make his first mistake and never will? *{15}*

## Addendum:

The author strongly suggests to any critics that before responding to this item, they first download the work cited in footnote 15 and ensure that their arguments are derived from and based on the authority of the Bible.

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6. Entry "Shalmaneser, Black Obelisk of," p. 409, *New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology*, 1983, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI.
7. Faulstich, E. W., *History, Harmony & The Hebrew Kings*, 1986, Chronology Books, Spencer, IA. p. 143-157.
8. Ibid 7, Entry "Qarqar," p. 376.
9. James Ussher, 1650, *Annales Veteris Testamenti*, J. Fleisher & L. Sadler, London, England, p. 139. (This work is in Latin. In this revised English edition, the paragraph number is 913 on page 113.)
10. Ibid. 3, p. 16; Ibid 2, p. vi; Ibid 1, p. vi.
11. Ibid 3, p. 119; Ibid 2. p. 83; Ibid 1; p. 68-70. Each edition treats this matter in less detail than the previous edition.
12. Article, "Chronology of the Old Testament," vol. 1, p. 640, *The International Bible Encyclopaedia*, 1929, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA. (The original publication was published in 1909. Editor.)
13. Accession dating means that a king did not start counting his years of reign until the Jewish New Year was past. So the length of his reign is really given in the number of Jewish New Years he celebrated. According to the Bible this was in Nisan. (Exodus 12:2) According to Thiele and McFall, the godly Southern Kingdom used Tishri (about October) and the ungodly Northern Kingdom used Nisan (about April). No convincing proof is given except they say the *it works*.
14. Robert Lewis Dabney, 1982, *Discussions of Robert Lewis Dabney*, Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, PA, vol. 3, p. 136
15. A detailed outline of the longer chronology is available from the author and is available for download from Answers in Genesis web site. In it, he considers all the numbers in not just Kings and Chronicles but from the prophets as well. All popular problems with the chronology are addressed in detail.

## Appendix E- Some Objections Considered

When we published the article "Evidentialism—The Bible and Assyrian Chronology," Dr. Leslie McFall raised some issues in a letter that we will now deal with. It was quite satisfying to note that no one could point to any error in the divided kingdom article that would require one date to be altered. That alone is a necessary and sufficient condition to overthrow their defective systems of chronology.

Space will only permit us to reply to one of Dr. McFall's items dealing with 2Ki 15:8. That should be sufficient to show the bankruptcy of the chronology based on Assyrian conjectures. We shall reply under the following heads:

- a) Interregnum Phobia is totally unjustified
- b) Unwarranted biblical contradictions created by the Assyrian academy
- c) Source of Assyrian academy conjectures—David Luckenbill's vivid imagination
- d) Other problems—Sabbatic, Jubilee cycle

Dr. McFall noted two scriptures that he claims would invalidate the concept of interregnums in the Northern Kingdom. We will deal with the concept of interregnums first.

### Interregnum Phobia

The concept of interregnums in biblical history seems strange at first to those who are not aware of the history for that period. The fact that the Bible does not directly mention them should not be a concern if the information can be logically deduced from the biblical data. The Bible does not mention viceroy relationships or the trinity either but these can all be logically deduced from the Scriptures and few Christians doubt these. If the logical reasoning is correct, such deductions are just as valid as the scriptures themselves. (This may come as a shock to "modern evangelicals" who decry the use of logic. Those of the Reformed faith are quite familiar with this concept and have enshrined it in Article VI of Chapter I of the Westminster Confession of Faith.) Here is a trivial example to illustrate the point. Nowhere does the Bible say Absalom was the son of a king of Israel. This fact can be deduced from the Bible because we know that Absalom was the son of David and David was a king of Israel. Therefore, applying logic, Absalom was the son of a king of Israel.

The concept of interregnums is not new and was common in this period of history among foreign nations. Therefore, we should not be surprised, given the political turmoil in the Northern Kingdom, to find one or more interregnums during the death-throes of that kingdom. Before each interregnum, the king was murdered. *{Am 7:11 2Ki 15:30}* The Southern Kingdom was much more stable during this time and we should not expect to find interregnums there.

From history, we know of at least four interregnums in foreign countries.

- 1) In 704 BC, after Arkeanos, there was no king in Babylon for two years. *{Ptolemy, Canon of Kings}*
- 2) In 688 BC, there was no king in Babylon for eight years. *{Ptolemy, Canon of Kings}*
- 3) In 687 BC, civil disorder increased in Egypt, because there was no king for two years. *{Diodorus Sicculus, Book 1, Chapter 66 (page 227 in Loeb edition)}*
- 4) In 637 BC, there was a one year interregnum in Babylon. *{Gershon Galil, The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah, p. 120.}*

All serious students of history know about these interregnums. We are not surprised that those advocating the use of the conjectured Assyrian Chronology to amend the Bible, conveniently forget about them, and recoil in horror at such a concept for they know that if the concept is allowed, it is fatal to their schemes of interpretation. Neither Dr. Thiele or Dr. McFall breathe a word about this and indeed it is one of the

best kept secrets of the Assyrian Academy. Indeed Galil goes so far as to state in his basic assumptions (without proof) there were no interregnums in the biblical chronology! This begs the question—“How does he know?”

Therefore, the problem is not with the concept of interregnums, but with trying to reconcile the alleged reconstructions of Assyrian history with the biblical chronology. In order to do so, it just so happens that two interregnums in the Northern Kingdom must be eliminated. This raises two questions.

1) Can this be done without compromising the biblical chronology? We have shown that this is impossible but will go over the same ground in more simple terms so you will be able to clearly see the problem.

2) How do we know the reconstruction of the Assyrian Chronology is accurate?

Only Dr. McFall’s letter mentions any biblical data, and we will deal with those issues first. All biblical quotations are from the Authorized Version unless otherwise noted.

### 1) **1 Kings 15:8**

This verses says that:

“In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah (Uzziah) king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months.”

Dr. Mcfall says that Jeroboam II died in the 38th year of Uzziah before Zachariah came to the throne. Although the actual verse mentions nothing of this (however, it may be inferred from 2Ki 14:29), lets grant this conjecture and see if it is logically consistent with the statements of the scripture. If Dr. McFall can prove his claim correct from the Bible, then the first interregnum is a fiction of Ussher. If he cannot, then the whole Assyrian based reconstruction of the biblical chronology is incorrect and comes tumbling down like a house of cards.

### **Required to Prove:**

There was no interregnum after the death of Jeroboam II and his son Zachariah reigned immediately after his father.

### **Proof:**

“And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.” *{2Ki 14:28}*

“In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months.” *{2Ki 15:8}*

(Before we proceed, we should note that the phrase "reigned in his stead" does not necessarily mean the son directly reigned after his father. If there are no other time statements relating to the transition, this may be a safe assumption to make. You can assume that if you are making a list of kings, the son ruled after his father in that order. This exact same Hebrew phrase occurs in 1Ki 22:50 and even Dr. McFall admits that if you were to assume that Jehoram started to reign after the death of Jehoshaphat you would be incorrect. How do you know? There are other time statements that define the time when Jehoram began to reign. These MUST be used to qualify and interpret this verse.)

In the case before us, there indeed are other scriptures containing time statements to consider and we cannot take 2Ki 14:28, 15:8 in isolation:

“In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah (Uzziah) son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign.” *{2Ki 15:1}*

Therefore according to Dr. McFall, Uzziah must have been viceroy for 24 years because he was made sole king in the 27th year of Jeroboam and Jeroboam died in the 38th year of Uzziah when his son Zachariah ruled.

But the next verse states:

“Sixteen years old was he (Uzziah) when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem.” *{2Ki 15:2}*

We have arrived at a contradiction for it is impossible to do anything eight years before you are born! (24-16 = 8 years) To avoid this problem Dr. McFall says this refers to the first time Uzziah was made viceroy and the verses should now be read as follows:

“In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign **AS SOLE KING**. Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign **AS A VICEROY TWENTY FOUR YEARS EARLIER**.”

The bolded text in capitals is Dr. McFall’s amendment interpretation to the text. This is a neat dodge and no proof is given. Dr. McFall is forced to put forth this interpretation because of his premise that there are no interregnums. The problem now gets worse for look at these verses:

“19. Now they made a conspiracy against him (Amaziah) in Jerusalem: and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there. 20. And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. 21. And all the people of Judah took Azariah (Uzziah), which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.” *{2Ki 14:19-21 with a parallel passage in 2Ch 25:27-26:1}*

Ask a child what these verses mean and he will tell you without exception that the people killed Amaziah and made Uzziah king when he was 16 years old. Here we have a second contradiction!

Dr. McFall is aware of this and digs himself in still deeper and says the verses must be read as follows:

“<<21. And all the people of Judah took Azariah (Uzziah), which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.>> 19. Now **TWENTY-FOUR YEARS LATER**, they made a conspiracy against him (Amaziah) in Jerusalem: and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there. 20. And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.” *{2Ki 14:19-21}*

“<<1. Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who [was] sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah.>> 27. Now after the time **TWENTY-FOUR YEARS LATER** that Amaziah did turn away from following the LORD they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish: but they sent to Lachish after him, and slew him there. 28. And they brought him upon horses, and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah.” *{2Ch 25:27-26:1}*

The king—not the people—appointed his viceroy. Israel was not a democracy, at least not when there was a living king as there would have been in this case if Dr. McFall’s conjecture is correct. The text in capitals is Dr. McFall’s amendment to the text. Dr. McFall forces an unnatural order on the historical narrative by claiming that verse 21 should really come before verse 19 in the Second Kings passage and likewise a similar transposition in the passage cited from Second Chronicles as you can see in our reproduction. (This violates accepted rules of Hebrew grammar.) This begs the question, if the writer of Kings got the verses in the wrong order, why did not the later writer of the Chronicles fix it up? The

only rationale for Dr. McFall's amendment is trying to eliminate this interregnum. It seems the Holy Spirit has gone to great pains to make such an amendment by Dr. McFall untenable.

No proof is given for this amendment either, except for Dr. McFall's commitment to Assyrian Chronology. Stating something is so does not prove it so, at least when I went to university. Likewise it is a *no-no* to use your premise as part of your proof. This logical fallacy has a cute Latin name *Petito Principii* and is known in English as *Begging the Question*. The only way you can prove there was no interregnum after the death of Jeroboam II is if you assume there are no interregnums and then read the scripture in that light. Dr. McFall's rationale for this assumption is his commitment to Assyrian chronology which forces him to delete 40 or so years from the divided kingdom. If you honestly start from the Word of God and that alone, you will never arrive at a chronology remotely resembling what Dr. McFall promotes. The very fact that the best theologians down through the millennia never dreamed of this gloss Dr. McFall and Dr. Thiele force on these scriptures, should make one very wary of their novel theories.

## Review of Pivotal Dates in Assyrian Chronology

### 1. Fall of Samaria 723 BC and the Assyrian Eponym List

Lets look at a section of the Assyrian Eponym List so you can see for yourself how flimsy the evidence is for Assyrian history.

Dr. Thiele firmly declares that Samaria fell in 723 BC and adjusts the biblical chronology two years to shift the biblically deduced date of 721 BC to 723. (If the integrity of the scriptures was not at stake this is no big deal!) This he claims is supported by the Eponym List and publishes a copy of the list in Appendix F of his work "The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings." Lets take a look at what was actually published. Dr. Jones has provided this information and I can do no better than quote him directly. *{Dr. Floyd Jones, Chronology of the Old Testament, p. 190, KingWord Press, The Woodlands, Texas, 1999}*

...Unfortunately, the register is badly mutilated for the years 725-720, nonetheless Luckenbill has restored them to read: *{Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, Vol. II., p. 437. NY: Greenwood Press. 1968}*

726	Marduk-bel-usur	(governor) of Amedi	in the land
725	Mahde	(governor) of Nineveh	against [Samaria]
724	Ash-ishmeani	(governor) of [Kakzi]	against [Samaria]
723	Shalmaneser	king of Assyria	against [Samaria]
722	Urt-ilia	[field-marshal]	[the foundation of the temple of Nabu was torn up for repairs)]
721	Nabutaris	[high chamberlain]	[Natu entered the new temple]

However, the fact is the eye/mind cannot properly appreciate the full significance of the fragmented nature of the above even with the brackets and parenthesis present. The true extent of the mutilation can be seen below. Bear in mind that this is how the register actually appears, only without the years being listed.

726	Marduk-bel-usur	of Amedi	in the land
725	Mahde	of Nineveh	against
724	Ash-ishmeani	of	against
723	Shalmaneser	king of Assyria	against
722	Urt-ilia		
721	Nabutaris		

This then is the *Only* Assyrian evidence which is uncontested. The rationale for using it to establish the date for the fall of Samaria is:

1. the Biblical account states that the siege of Samaria lasted *three* years.

2. The Eponym List has the word "against" *three* years in succession (725-723) with the name of enemy location completely missed, and
3. the coincidence of both "three's" was deemed by Luckenbill (Olmstead also) as the "restoration" as shown in the first listing and subsequent "fixing" of the date of the fall of Samaria as being BC 723.

This ends the quote from Dr. Jones. As one can see the 723 BC date for the fall of Samaria rests firmly on scholarly conjecture and interpolation. There are better foundations to build a history on! There is absolutely no evidence from the actual Eponym List to contradict the established date of 721 BC or any other date you wish for the fall of Samaria BECAUSE the translated list, when the scholarly interpolations are deleted, NEVER MENTIONS SAMARIA!

Even worse for Luckenbill is a later independent translation of the Eponym List done in 1994 which has even less data and none of Luckenbill's interpolations. Consider this and note the text in [ ] is conjectured:

726	Marduk-belu*-usur	[of Ame]di	i[ ]
725	Mahde	of Nineveh	to [ ]
724	Ashur*-ishmeani	[of Kili]zi	to [ ]
723	Shalmaneser (V)	king [of Assyria]	t[o ]
722	Niurta-ilaya*	[ ]	[ ]
721	Nabu-taris	[ ]	t]i

I marked the name changes with an "\*". Note the major change in the name for the entry for 722 BC. Luckenbill did not even mark the interpolated text correctly! What this does establish is that Luckenbill has a very vivid imagination and any translation he does should be carefully checked for accuracy to make sure nothing is read into the translations.

## 2. Jehu and the Black Obelisk in 841 BC

Dr. Thiele accepts as an established fact that Jehu paid tribute to Shalmaneser in 841. As we pointed out in the article, there is NO EVIDENCE, that the obelisk was actually depicting the Israelite monarch Jehu. So much for this date! Are you surprised that the translation *scholars* use to justify this was done by Luckenbill? The only rationale for even thinking it was Jehu is the alleged presence of Ahab at the battle of Qarqar in 853 BC. Even that rests on much conjecture! Dr. Jones pointed out that the image of the individual in the picture shows him with a rounded beard, something the Jewish law had forbidden. This casts further doubt that this was really Jehu.

## 3. Ahab and the battle of Qarqar. 853 BC

This is the most critical date for if it can be established beyond a shadow of a doubt, then there are serious problems with the Hebrew Bible text we have. Again we can do no better than quote Dr. Floyd Jones on this matter:

“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 twelve 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".”

Before we continue with Dr. Jones's quote note that Luckenbill translates this as *Ahab of Samaria*. and notes that he had 2000 chariots and 10,000 men. Now the Hebrew and Assyrian language are quite closely related. In their consonantal form (as we would expect to see on inscriptions) we would expect the same names to share at least the same consonants. IN BOTH OF THESE CASES THEY DIFFER FROM THE HEBREW CONSONANTAL FORM! Hence it would be reasonable to conclude that we are not talking about the same person as Ahab in the Bible. This is especially true when we look at the history of Ahab. His kingdom had a forty-two month drought. Today, much shorter droughts in Africa virtually eliminated the livestock including horses and no doubt this was true in Ahab's case too. In spite of this we are to believe that Ahab had more chariots than even Solomon who only had 1400? About seventy years

earlier Israel could field an army of 800,000 men, where as now Ahab is hard pressed to get even one percent of this total yet we are to believe he had more chariots than Solomon! Where did all the horses come from to pull these? Also, when Ahab was attacked a few years before his death, he could only muster a force of 7000 men. The ratio of chariots to men does not correspond to actual battles for the number of chariots is much too high for the fighting force or the number for the men is low by at least an order of magnitude or more. Something is very wrong here.

Dr. Jones *{1}* notes further:

Most Assyriologists understand "A-ha-ab-bu Sir-i-la-a-a" 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 three hundred 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: *{2}*

“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: *{3}*

“... 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.” *{4}*

Thus says Dr. Jones. Space does not permit us to deal with the second verse mentioned by Dr. McFall. See Dr. Jones’s work for a full treatment of that point.

## **Sabbatical and Jubilee Cycles**

These two cycles run like a checksum through biblical history. When one accurately reconstructs biblical history, he should expect the cycles to agree with secular history for Josephus records a Sabbatical year in 163 BC and 37 BC. This agrees with the start of the first Sabbatical year as deduced from the Bible by Ussher of 1445 BC and the resulting cycles. If you start to delete years (unless they are a multiple of 7 for the Sabbatic cycle) from the Divided Kingdom, you can no longer make the Sabbatic cycle agree with the observations of Josephus. Ussher noted some very interesting Jubilee years in history:

- a) When Solomon finished the temple in the eighth month (about November) of 1005 BC, he waited until the seventh month (about October) of the following year to dedicate this multi-billion dollar building—the seventh month of 1004 BC was the start of a Jubilee.
- b) The seventh month of the same year of Hezekiah’s deliverance from the Assyrians in 710 BC, was the start of a Jubilee.
- c) The Jubilee year in 563/562 BC marked the year when Nebuchadnezzar was freed from his insanity and Jeconiah was freed from his imprisonment.
- d) The last Jubilee in biblical history heralded the start of the ministry of John the Baptist in the fall of 26 AD.



The last three relationships are lost if one follows the Assyrian Academy's reconstruction of biblical history. Space does not permit me to go into greater detail on this, except to note that not one of the conjectured reconstructions of the Divided Kingdom by the Assyrian Academy, agrees with the Sabbatic cycles and they do not even mention the subject! Ussher's reconstruction agrees perfectly.

### **Conclusion:**

Enough has been said to show the following:

- a) Interregnums were relatively common during this period of history and to arbitrarily exclude them based on preconceived notions is unjustified.
- b) In dealing with the first interregnum in Israel, we have shown that you cannot eliminate it without severely undermining the obvious meaning of the text in at least five places!
- c) The Assyrian data used to eliminate the interregnums in Israel is in itself highly suspect.
- d) No one could point to any error in my article on the Divided Kingdom that required one date to change. This is not surprising since the errors noted were mainly obscure spelling errors—blunders according to Dr. McFall!—and that in itself undermines their position.

This is a whole new area for creationists to explore and reclaim back from the secular *scholars*. Dr. Floyd Jones's ground-breaking work, *Chronology of the Old Testament* has opened the way for further research. His work is available from AiG for those who are really serious about the farce some scholars have made of the biblical history by their Assyrian conjectures. Dr. Jones's work contains a much fuller treatment of the points raised in these letters plus many other issues dealing with biblical history.

{1} Dr. Floyd Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament*, p. 159,160., Kings Word Press, The Woodlands, TX., 1999.

{2} Faulstich, *History, Harmony & the Hebrew Kings*, op. cir., p. 144. See pp. 143-157 where he details his thesis.

{3} *Ibid.*, p. 157.

{4} Luckenbill, *ARAB*, op. cit., Vol. 1, sec. 626, p. 232.

## Appendix G The Seder Olam Rabbah—Why Jewish Dating is Different

The *Seder Olam Rabbah* <sup>{1}</sup> or the ‘Book of the Order of the World’ was compiled by Rabbi Yose ben Halaftha (died 160 AD) and is to this day the traditional Jewish chronology. <sup>{2}</sup> From this ancient work, the Jewish people reckon the current year (2003 AD) as 5763 and understand it to be the number of years since the Creation.

At the time the *Seder Olam* was compiled, the Jews generally dated their years from 312 BC—the beginning of the Seleucid era. For the next few centuries, the *Seder Olam* was of interest exclusively to only students of the Talmud. <sup>{3}</sup>

When the centre of Jewish life moved from Babylonia to Europe during the 8th and 9th centuries AD, calculations from the Seleucid era became meaningless. Over those centuries, it was replaced by that of the *anno mundi* era (AM = ‘from the creation of the world’) of the *Seder Olam*. From the 11th century, *anno mundi* dating became dominant throughout most of the world’s Jewish communities. <sup>{4}</sup>

As Old Testament Scripture is the basis for *Seder Olam* dating, we would suppose the Jewish chronology to be similar to that of Ussher’s and thus expect them to place the Creation date around 6,000 years ago. Yet rather than 4004 BC, the *Seder Olam* places Creation at 3761. The question thus becomes: on what basis do the Jews number their years such that a 243-year shortfall occurs?

### The Missing Years: <sup>{5}</sup>

#### 1. From the Creation to the birth of Abraham

Ussher	2008 years	4004-1996 BC
Seder Olam	1948 years	3761-1811 BC
		(exclusive reckoning)
shortfall	60 years	

Terah was 130 years old rather than 70 when Abraham was born (Ge 11:26; but cf. Ge 11:32 12:4 where 205-75 = 130). Thus the first deficit is about 60 years.

#### 2. From the birth of Abraham to the Exodus

Ussher	505 years	1996-1491 BC
Seder Olam	500 years	1811-1311 BC
shortfall	5 years	

Abraham was 75 years old when the covenant was made; <sup>{Ge 12:4}</sup> the Exodus was 430 years later. <sup>{Ga 3:17 Ex 12:40-41}</sup> Without New Testament revelation for clarification, the *Seder Olam* reckons five fewer years. The shortfall now totals 65 years.

#### 3. From the Exodus to the laying of the Temple Foundation <sup>{1Ki 6:1}</sup>

Ussher	480 years	1491-1012 BC
		(inclusive reckoning)
Seder Olam	480 years	1311-831 BC
shortfall	0 years	

As there is no difference, the total shortfall remains at 65 years.

#### 4. From the foundation of the first Temple to the consecration of the Second Temple

Ussher	497 years	1012-515 BC
Seder Olam	480 years	831-351 BC
shortfall	17 years	

Differing decisions in placing the dates of the Kings of Israel with respect to the Kings of Judah during the period of the divided monarchy account for these 17 years.

Thus far, the *Seder Olam* reckons 82 (65 + 17) fewer years over a 3,489 year span (4004-515) from Creation to the consecration of the Second Temple—of which the major part concerns the age of Terah at Abraham’s birth.

#### 5. From the consecration of the Second Temple to its destruction by Titus of Rome

Ussher	584 years	515 BC-70 AD
Seder Olam	420 years	351 BC-70 AD
shortfall	164 years	

Here we see the main source of the discrepancy found in the *Seder Olam*’s shorter chronology. Its 420 years are divided into spans of 34, 180, 103, and 103 years of successive foreign rule over Israel. As shown in that which follows, it is remarkable that the 164-year disparity is almost entirely from within (a; see below), the first or Persian period. The remaining three periods closely approximate that of the standard chronology. *{6}*

- a) 34 years (351-317 BC) for the remainder of the Persian rule over Israel: from the dedication of the Second Temple to Ptolemy I Soter’s invasion of Jerusalem. (Ptolemy I was one of Alexander the Great’s favourite generals—also called Soter or Saviour, 367?-283 BC. After Alexander’s death in 323, he seized Egypt as his share of the divided Greek empire and assumed the title ‘King of Egypt’.)
- b) 180 years (317-137 BC) for the Grecian rule: from Ptolemy’s invasion to the times when Simon the Maccabean became ruler in Israel and Rome recognized the independence of the Jewish state.
- c) 103 years (137-34 BC) for the rule of the Hasmonean (Maccabean) family in Israel: from Simon to the beginning of the reign of Herod the Great.
- d) 103 years (34 BC-70 AD) for the Herodian rule until the destruction of the Temple.

There is some discrepancy with the standard dates in the later three periods (b, c, & d). The standard date for Alexander’s defeat of Darius is 331 BC rather than the *Seder Olam*’s 321. It gives Simon’s rule as beginning in 142 BC (not 137) and Herod’s in 37 BC (not 34). *{7}*

But what are we to understand from (a) where the *Seder Olam* allows only 34 years for the remainder of the Persian period? Indeed, by *Seder Olam* reckoning there are only 30 years from the dedication of the Second Temple to Darius’ defeat at the hands of Alexander in ‘321’ BC and merely four years after that unto Jerusalem’s capture by Ptolemy following Alexander’s death.

Moreover, here the two systems exhibit a striking contrast. The Ptolemaic chronology lists eight Persian kings from Darius I Hystaspes to Darius III Codomannus, the king whom Alexander overcame. However, the *Seder Olam* identifies the Darius who was reigning during the dedication of the Second Temple as the same Darius that Alexander defeated. *{8}*

Recording only five Persian monarchs, the *Seder Olam* gives the following chronology for its 52/53-year depiction of Persian History:

1. Darius the Mede reigns 1 year  
3389-3390 AM (374-373 BC)  
Babylon conquered  
Daniel in the lions den
2. Cyrus reigns 3 years  
3390-3392 AM (373-371 BC, inclusive)  
The Jews return  
Second Temple construction begins

3. Artaxerxes (Cambyses) reigns one half year  
3393 AM (370 BC)  
Temple construction halted
4. Ahasuerus reigns 14 years  
3393-3407 AM (370-356 BC)  
Esther chosen Queen  
Esther bears Darius the Persian
5. Darius the Persian reigns 35 years  
3407-3442 AM (356 BC)  
Temple construction resumes 3408 AM (355 BC)  
Second Temple dedicated 3412 AM (355 BC)  
Ezra comes to Jerusalem 3413 AM (350 BC)  
Nehemiah comes to Jerusalem 3426 AM (337 BC)  
Darius defeated by Alexander 3442 AM (321 BC)

Thus the *Seder Olam* depicts the Kingdom of Persia as lasting a mere 53 years from 374 to 321 BC, rather than about 207 years (538-331 BC). <sup>[9]</sup>

Over the centuries, orthodox rabbis have differed somewhat in their listing of the Persian kings, but they generally have not departed from the 52/53-year parameter established within the *Seder Olam*. <sup>[10]</sup>

The result of this shorting of the span of the Persian Empire is that the paramount prophecy and major foundation block of chronology—the Daniel 9:25 seventy weeks of years—has become dislodged. Furthermore, this shorting as perpetuated within the *Seder Olam* is deliberate!

While not openly admitting this, present day Jewish scholars acknowledge that there is something enigmatic about the *Seder Olam*'s dating. For example, after stating that the commonly received dates in the Ptolemaic chronology 'can hardly be doubted', Rabbi Simon Schwab nevertheless goes on to uphold his own tradition: <sup>[11]</sup>

“It should have been possible that our Sages—for some unknown reason—had ‘covered up’ a certain historic period and *purposely eliminated and suppressed all records and other material pertaining thereto*. If so, what might have been their compelling reason for so unusual a procedure? Nothing short of a *Divine command* could have prompted...those saintly ‘men of truth’ to leave out completely from our annals a period of 165 years and to correct all data and historic tables in such a fashion that the subsequent chronological gap could escape being noticed by countless generations, known to a few initiates only who were duty-bound to keep the secret to themselves.” (emphasis Schwab’s)

This is an astonishing proposal! Schwab, along with other Jewish commentators, further suggests that the reason God directed the sages of the 2nd century AD to become involved in falsifying the data was to confuse anyone who might try to use the prophecies of Daniel to predict the time of the Messiah’s coming.

This was supposedly done to honour Da 12:4: ‘shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end’. He adds that the reason the sages had adopted the non-Jewish Seleucid Era calendar was part of the scheme to do just that—to close up the words and seal the book of Daniel. <sup>[12]</sup> Schwab also states that if the 165 years were included it would reveal, ‘we are much closer to the end of the 6th Millennium than we had surmised’ <sup>[13]</sup> (Schwab mentions this date as the time when many rabbis expect Messiah to come.)

But can any sincere reader accept such a flimsy reason as justification for distorting history. It actually accuses God himself of perpetrating a dishonest deception.

Indeed, it is manifestly apparent that the real reasons for the deliberate altering of their own national chronology in the *Seder Olam* were: (1) to conceal the fact that the Da 9:25 prophecy clearly pointed to Jesus of Nazareth as its fulfilment and therefore the long awaited Messiah (2) to make that Seventy Week of years prophecy point instead to Simon Bar Kokhba!

Rabbis in the century immediately following Christ Jesus had a tremendous problem with so direct a prophecy as Da 9:24-27. This chapter speaks of Messiah's appearing 69 'weeks' (i.e., 69 sevens) or 483 years after the going forth of a commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem. This 538 BC prophecy [Da 9:1] unmistakably points to the start of the ministry of Jesus Christ in 29 AD.

Such must either be acknowledged and his person accepted or completely erased from Jewish consciousness. The latter could be accomplished if the 69 (or 70) weeks of years could somehow be made to apply to the century after the life of Christ. Then it would be possible for the rabbis to point to *another messiah* who, as circumstances would have it, was cut off in death some 100 years after the crucifixion of our Lord. [14]

The 10th day of the month Ab (c.mid-August) is a great day of sorrow to Israel. On this day in 588 BC, the Babylonians destroyed Solomon's Temple. Further, the Second Temple was laid waste by the Romans under Titus on the same day in 70 AD. And on this very day in 135 AD, at the conclusion of a 3½-year revolt, the Romans crushed the army of the 'messianic' Simon Bar Kokhba (also spelled 'Cocheba').

Bar Kokhba had been declared the long-awaited Messiah by the foremost Jewish scholar of that day, the highly venerated Rabbi Akiva (Akiba) ben Joseph. In 130 AD, Emperor Hadrian of Rome declared his intention to raise a shrine to Jupiter on the site of the Temple, [15] and in 131 he issued a decree forbidding circumcision as well as public instruction in the Jewish Law. [16] Having preached peace all his life, the 90 year-old Akiva gave his blessing to the revolution by proclaiming that Bar Kokhba was the 'star out of Jacob' and the 'sceptre out of Israel'. [Nu 24:17] [17]

In his 98th year Akiva was eventually imprisoned and condemned to death by the Romans. [18] Among the many accolades heaped upon Akiva, that which elevated him as a pre-eminent authority, was the acknowledging of him as 'the father of the Mishnah'. [19] Such prominence gave great weight to the messianic expectancy Akiva placed upon Bar Kokhba.

Akiva's students became some of the most prominent sages of the following generation. Among these was Yose (Josi) ben Halafta. Akiva's influence on Halafta is apparent from a statement made concerning his education; it was merely said that Rabbi Akiva had been his teacher. [20] As his mentor, Akiva's regard for Bar Kokhba would have been thoroughly imbedded in Yose. [21]

The preceding overview explains why the *Seder Olam* is held in such veneration and why the Jews still use it for their national dating. Yet the fact remains that it is a dishonest attempt to conceal the truth with regard to the Da 9:24-27 prophecy.

By removing the 164 (or 165) years from the duration of the Persian Empire, Rabbi Halafta was able to make the 483 year Da 9:24-27 prophecy fall reasonably close to the years prior to the 132 AD revolt during which Bar Kokhba rose to prominence as Israel's military and economic leader. [22] Then with Akiva proclaiming, 'This is the King Messiah' [23] followed by 'all the contemporary sages regarded him as the King Messiah', [24] the Jewish populace united around this false hope.

Dio Cassius states that the whole of Judea was in revolt. To quell the rebellion, Hadrian dispatched Julius Severus, his ablest general, from Britain. The Romans destroyed 985 towns in Palestine and slew 580,000 men. A still larger number perished through starvation, disease, and fire. All Judah was laid waste, and Bar Kokhba himself fell while defending Bethar. [25]

Even more astonishing is that ‘even in later generations, despite the disappointment engendered by his defeat, his image persisted as the embodiment of messianic hopes’. [26] Indeed, the consistent verdict of Jewish historians is: ‘The most important historical messianic figure was surely Bar Kokhba’. [27]

Yose ben Halafta [28] and his fellow compilers of the *Seder Olam* sought to terminate the 69 ‘weeks of years’ as close to the 132 AD revolt as possible, but they were limited as to where they could make the ‘cuts’. As the chronology of the Seleucid era onward was firmly fixed among the Jews, years could not be pared from their history after 312 BC.

Since the Da 9:24-27 prophecy dealt with a decree that was biblically and historically issued by a Persian monarch, this left only the Persian period of history for them to exploit. The Persians had been so hated by the Greeks and later by the Moslems that these two conquerors destroyed nearly all of the Persian records. This has created great difficulty in recovering their sequence of kings, the length of their reigns, and thereby their chronology. Thus, the Persian period was readily vulnerable to manipulation. [29]

This author offers the conclusions given herein as the only reasonable, logical deductions that can be drawn from the historical and biblical facts.

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- [1] The *Seder Olam* is divided into three parts, each consisting of ten chapters (called tractates). Part One gives the dates of major events from the Creation to the crossing of the Jordan River under Joshua’s command. Part Two extends from the Jordan crossing to the murder of Zachariah, King of Israel. [2Ki 15:10] Chapters 21-27 of Part Three extend to Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of the Temple, and chapter 28 to the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus. Chapter 29 and the first part of 30 cover the Persian period. The remainder of chapter 30 contains a summary of events from the conquest of Persia by Alexander to the AD 132 Bar Kokhba (also spelled ‘Cocheba’) revolt during the reign of Hadrian (AD 76-138). *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, Israel: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1971), Vol. 14, ‘Seder Olam Rabbah’, pp. 1091-1092.
- [2] Jack Moorman, *Bible Chronology: The Two Great Divides* (Collingswood, NJ: Bible For Today Press, 1999), pp. 10-15. Moorman’s research was a primary source for this exposé.
- [3] *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, Israel: Keter Publishing House, Ltd., 1971), Vol. 14, ‘Seder Olam Rabbah’, p. 1092.
- [4] *Ibid.*
- [5] Not having access to *Seder Olam* for this exposé, the numbers are those recorded by Moorman. As his source occasionally reckoned exclusively or inclusively, so did he. Most Jewish dates may be confirmed in Finegan, *Handbook, op. cit.*, p. 130.
- [6] Moorman, *Bible Chronology: The Two Great Divides, op. cit.*, p. 12.
- [7] *Ibid.*
- [8] Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, (London: Marshall Bros., 1913), pp. 23-24.
- [9] Moorman, *Bible Chronology: The Two Great Divides, op. cit.*, p. 12.
- [10] *Ibid.* p. 13.
- [11] Simon Schwab, ‘Comparative Jewish Chronology’, *Dr. Joseph Breuer Jubilee Volume* (NY: Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch Publications Society, Philipp Felheim Inc., 1962), p. 188.
- [12] Shimon Schwab, ‘Comparative Jewish Chronology’, *Selected Speeches: A Collection of Addresses and Essays on Hashkafah, Contemporary Issues and Jewish History* (Lakewood, NJ: CIS Pub., 1991), pp. 270-272.
- [13] Schwab, ‘Comparative Jewish Chronology’, *Dr. Joseph Breuer Jubilee Volume, op. cit.*, pp. 190-191.
- [14] Of course no such admission by any of the Jewish sages can be cited, but the facts are obvious.
- [15] Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, Vol. VIII, Loeb (2000), Bk. 69, p. 447.
- [16] Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization. Caesar and Christ*, Volume 3 (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1944), p. 548.
- [17] *Encyclopedia Judaica, op. cit.*, Vol. 2, ‘Akiva’, p. 489.
- [18] Durant, *The Story of Civilization. Caesar and Christ, op. cit.*, pp. 548-549.
- [19] Akiva made a preliminary gathering and formulation of the material for the six orders (containing 63 chapters or tractates) of that religious code which was the heart of the Talmud. Near the end of the 2nd century, Judah ha-Nasi completed the work. Moorman, *Bible Chronology: The Two Great Divides, op. cit.*, p. 14.
- [20] *Encyclopedia Judaica, op. cit.*, Vol. 16, ‘Yose ben Halafta’, p. 852.
- [21] *Ibid.* p. 853. Yose ben Halafta’s own influence may be seen in that some of his writings were included in Judah ha-Nasi’s final editing of the Mishnah, and his name is mentioned in 59 of its 63 tractates. Though referred to in the Mishnah and Talmud, Halafta’s *Seder Olam* is not a formal part of that work. Nevertheless, it is a work of Talmudic authority, and to openly contradict it would be unthinkable to orthodox Jews.

As Rabbi Schwab stated: “... our traditional chronology is based on *Seder Olam* because of the authority of its author. It is therefore quite inconceivable that any post-Talmudic teacher could possibly ‘reject’ those chronological calculations which have been the subject of many a Talmudic discussion.” (Schwab, *Dr. Joseph Breuer Jubilee Volume, op. cit.*, p. 186.) Thus it is that the *Seder Olam* is held in such high esteem and is still used by the Jews for their national dating.

- [22] *Encyclopedia Judaica, op. cit.*, Vol. 4, ‘Bar Kokhba’, p. 230.
- [23] *Ibid.*
- [24] *Ibid.*, p. 231.
- [25] Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, Vol. VIII, *op. cit.* Bk. 69, pp. 449-450; Durant, *Caesar and Christ, op. cit.*, p. 548.
- [26] *Encyclopedia Judaica, op. cit.*, Vol. 4, ‘Bar Kokhba’, p. 231.
- [27] *Ibid.* Vol. 11, ‘Messiah’, p. 1410.
- [28] Not only do the Jews venerate Jose because the *Seder Olam* had its origin in his school, he is regarded with a near superstitious reverence. This may be seen in that it was said: ‘that he was worthy of having the prophet Elijah reveal himself to him regularly in order to teach him’. *Encyclopedia Judaica, op. cit.*, Vol. 16, ‘Yose ben Halafta’, p. 853.
- [29] Yet despite all that has been said concerning the Jews veneration for Jose, the *Encyclopedia Judaica* forthrightly admits: ‘the most significant confusion in Jose’s calculation is the compression of the Persian period, of the rebuilding of the Temple by Zerubbabel in 516 BC to the conquest of Persia by Alexander, to no more than 34 years’ (*Encyclopedia Judaica, op. cit.*, Vol. 14, ‘Seder Olam Rabbah’, p. 1092.)



## Appendix I-Archaeology and the Bible

by Phillip Climer

The December 18, 1995, issue of *Time* magazine had as its cover story, "IS THE BIBLE FACT OR FICTION? Archaeologists in the Holy Land are shedding new light on what did—and did not—occur in the greatest stories ever told." The article describes recent archaeological finds in Israel and surrounding areas, and then categorizes public and scholarly reaction to these finds into three main groupings: "Jewish and Christian Ultraconservatives," who do not believe any part of the Bible is fiction; "Atheists," who want to debunk the whole Bible; and "the moderate majority," who want to be sure that the Bible is scientifically "grounded in truth."

As Christians we fall into what *Time* calls the "Ultraconservative" group. We believe that the Bible is infallible not only in spiritual matters, but also in accounts with historical and geographical content.

When archaeologists excavate Biblical lands and based on their findings, reach conclusions that differ with the historical account of Scripture, how should a Christian respond? To say that we accept the Word of God by faith, whatever the claims of archaeology or any other branch of science, is the correct reply. However, making that statement without any further explanation may sound as though we are pitting blind irrational faith against rational scientific research. This essay is intended to demonstrate that while the science of archaeology may be reasonable, it is not truthful; and *a faith that provides truth is much to be preferred over a research program that does not.*

Of the other two groups mentioned in the magazine article, we can easily understand the "Atheists." We accept the Bible as true; they reject it. As *Time* points out, even when archaeology supports a Biblical narrative, the atheists are likely to reject both Scripture and science. Their position is one of faith, as much as is ours; it is just that the object of their faith is their own ideas. But what is one to make of the third category, the "moderate majority"?

Many Evangelicals fall into this category, for they are delighted whenever an archaeological find supports a part of Scripture, or as *Time* says, "strengthens the Bible's claim to historical accuracy." But if a supportive archaeologist enhances Scripture's claim to accuracy, does a scientific detractor weaken the Bible's claim to truth? And if Christians accept only those archaeological findings that they agree with, can they not be justly accused of being childish in their refusal to face up to disagreeable facts?

The whole unfortunate enterprise of trying to verify the claims of Scripture with the findings of archaeology rests on a conflict between the science of archaeology and the Christian faith on the question, "What is truth?" To focus on this dispute, let us confront the claims of archaeology with the simple question, "How do you know?" The answer to this one question reveals the principles upon which are based all claims to knowledge and truth by any science, philosophy, or religion.

To begin with, we must know what the science of archaeology is, and the type of claims it makes. Secondly, we must compare and contrast archaeological information and Biblical truth. Finally, against this background, let us review the conflict that *Time* calls "fact vs. faith."

### Archaeological Information

Archaeology is "the scientific study of extinct peoples through skeletal remains, fossils, and objects of human workmanship (as implements, artifacts, monuments, or inscriptions) found in the earth" (*Webster's Third International Dictionary of the English Language*, 1981.) Archaeologists excavate and sift through the remains of ancient civilizations and then try to piece together their findings into a coherent picture of how the people of that society lived, and how its institutions functioned.

Perhaps the most important artifact that any civilization leaves behind is its body of literature. Many societies in the ancient Middle East left their writings in stone (the hieroglyphs of Egypt), or on soft clay



tablets that hardened into stone over time (the Babylonians and Assyrians). The ancient Hebrews apparently used paper or possibly animal skins. Since these materials decompose, documents written on them had to be recopied time and again. Archaeologists generally accept hieroglyphs and clay tablets as being more accurate than paper manuscripts, since the former are more likely to be the original writings. There is obviously much less room for error or editing in a document carved on stone than on a manuscript copy several times removed from the original.

The *Time* article gives several examples of archaeologists rejecting Biblical manuscripts in favour of their own theories based on other artifacts. The book of *Joshua*, chapter 6, records the destruction of the walls of Jericho, allowing the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua to conquer the city. *Time* tells us that after extensive excavations at the site of ancient Jericho, archaeologists have determined that the location was abandoned between about 1500-1100 BC. According to them, no walled cities existed during this time in this area of Canaan. Conservative Biblical scholars and archaeologists also disagree on the date of the Israelite entrance into Canaan, but they both agree that it falls well within the time range mentioned above. Given this chronology, modern archaeology concludes that the Hebrews moved onto vacant or sparsely populated land. This thinking allows no walls to come tumbling down, and no city to conquer. The sceptics also doubt that Joshua even existed. Without a battle, who needs a general? Now let us ask the test question: How do they know that Jericho and its walls did not exist during this time period?

Just as our society paves over old streets and erects new buildings over the remains of old foundations, so ancient civilizations built towns and cities over the debris of earlier structures. When archaeologists excavate a site they divide it into different levels, each level or layer corresponding to a defined era of human habitation or abandonment. The methods by which a date for a particular level is determined are quite involved, and a detailed explanation of them is beyond the scope of this essay.

To gain some idea of what is involved, consider a future archaeologist excavating our civilization and finding only ceramic dishes up to a certain level. Above that level, he finds plastic and ceramic dishes. Suppose he also finds some sort of preserved calendar dated "1950" with the plastic dishes. He now has his dating "key": the calendar and the plastic dishes. This key tells him that at his initial site plastic dishes were not in use before 1950. If he encounters plastic dishes at any other site, he assumes that the level in which he finds them was inhabited in 1950 or later. At Jericho, the scientists found some sort of artifacts (probably pottery) at a certain level that allowed them to date that level at 1500-1100 BC, based upon their "key" with similar artifacts at other excavations. This particular level did not contain the foundations or remains of any city walls, buildings, or other structures that would indicate a city. How to explain this discrepancy with the Biblical account? The earliest extant manuscript of the book of *Joshua* dates from a period hundreds of years after the events described in the book. Sceptics theorize that such a manuscript, in being recopied from a decaying original, could have been altered by a zealous scribe, seeking to glorify his God and the history of his nation by inventing a battle that never occurred and a leader who never existed.

The archaeologists who excavated Jericho published their theory. These findings were debated and ultimately accepted by most of the archaeological community. Unless and until some new evidence comes along, the modern science of archaeology has determined that the Israelite conquest of Canaan as described in the book of *Joshua* is not factual. Specifically, Joshua did not fight the battle of Jericho. This is an archaeological "truth," or more accurately, a testing by archaeological research methods of a Biblical story, and the Bible fails the test.

Conservative Biblical scholars disagree, but their objections are tainted, because they are trying to prove the Bible, instead of looking at it objectively—or so the scientists say. Now if religious bias is the problem, perhaps we could demonstrate the objectivity of archaeology in the reconstruction of ancient civilizations by examining a site that has no religious significance today, but one that has been widely excavated by numerous scientists. In such a case, there would be no believers to muddy the waters for the clear-thinking scientists. There are many such sites; perhaps the most famous is Troy.

## **Searching for Troy**

In approximately 800 BC a blind Greek poet named Homer composed the first (and arguably the greatest) poem of European literature: *The Iliad*. This epic work tells of a great war fought approximately 400 years earlier, between a number of Greek city-states and the rich and powerful city of Troy, on the coast of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). Perhaps the reader recalls some of the particulars of this story. Helen, queen of Sparta, was carried off to Troy by Paris, a prince of the Trojan royal family. Outraged, a number of Greek cities combined forces, sailed to Troy, and besieged the city for ten long years. They were not able to breach the massive walls of Troy, so finally they resorted to subterfuge. By means of a giant hollow wooden idol, the famed Trojan horse, the Greeks infiltrated Troy. The gates were thrown open, and the city was lost. Those Trojans not killed were enslaved, and Troy itself was burned and demolished. The victorious Greeks sailed home with the beautiful Helen, the cause of it all, "the face that launched a thousand ships."

Since Roman times scholars have debated *The Iliad*: Does it describe a real war, or is it just a myth? If there was such a war, how accurate is Homer's telling of it? In the 1850's, modern archaeology took up the debate. For the last 140 years team after team of scientists has excavated a now deserted site on the coast of Turkey. Their very impressive and voluminous findings were reviewed by a recent documentary series on public television, *In Search of the Trojan War*. According to this program, the site suspected to contain the ruins of Troy was continuously occupied by humans for over 5,000 years. It contains 50 separate levels. Nine of these levels show the characteristics of true cities, that is, walls, palaces, etc. Nine of the levels also show signs of violent destruction, either by warfare or natural disaster, such as earthquakes.

What of Homer's Troy? Which level, if any, matches the magnificent city of *The Iliad*? Did the Trojan War really happen? Almost a century and a half of modern scientific investigation, without any religious interference or bias, has yielded a new answer for each new investigator. The archaeological "truth" about Troy changes with each generation of archaeologists. The original excavator "proved" that *The Iliad* was as accurate as Christians believe the Bible to be. A later archaeological team threw out most of his conclusions and "proved" that Homer exaggerated greatly, if he told the truth at all. A subsequent generation of diggers "proved" that an earthquake largely destroyed Troy, and that pirates finished the job. And so on. The only points on which all the experts agree are that the site was inhabited for thousands of years, and it is now abandoned. But what of the sophisticated techniques for dating artifacts and levels of occupation? Each artifact was precisely catalogued by the team that found it. Each highly trained archaeologist looked at those catalogued findings, possibly made some excavations of his own, and then came up with a different interpretation to explain how all those artifacts got there.

The narrator of the documentary series takes us through these diverse theories in six hours of analysis. At the end, he makes this startling observation on the archaeological search for truth about the Trojan war: "*There can never be a final word, only a new interpretation by each generation in terms of its own dreams and needs.*" This is the "proof," the "knowledge," and the "truth" that modern archaeology gives us: "... never a final word, only a new interpretation..."

### **Ever Learning...Never Able...**

Returning to archaeological excavations in the lands of the Bible, let us review the case of Joshua and the battle of Jericho. The current secular view is that no battle took place there, and no walls existed. The proof is in the pottery, so to speak. But the final archaeological word is not in, and it never will come in. This is not the conclusion of a religious fanatic defending Scripture; this is a limitation of the method of the science of archaeology, as demonstrated in the search for Troy.

The sceptic may think that we are playing with words in reaching this conclusion. Perhaps he would say that the present theory of "no walls at Jericho" is *substantially* true, and that later excavations in the area will "fine tune" it. The sceptic would be wrong. In archaeology any theory, no matter how well established, can be turned on its head by the next shovelful of dirt at the next dig. The *Time* article provides us with just such an example.

Many secular archaeologists questioned the existence of King David, because there are no records of him dating from the time of his rule (traditional dates 1025-985 BC). As with Joshua and the conquest of Canaan, these scientists speculate that the legend of David may have been added by a scribe recopying documents at a much later date, trying to "improve" the history of Israel. But in modern Israel in 1993 an inscription in stone dating from about 900 BC was found containing the phrases "House of David," and "King of Israel." That one inscription was enough to turn sceptical opinion around: Now archaeologists generally accept that David really existed.

A monument and inscription from 1200 BC commemorating Joshua's victory at the mighty walls of Jericho would similarly turn the archaeological world's theory of the Hebrew conquest of Canaan on its head. Does such a monument exist? Who can say? But it is certainly true that the archaeological "truth" about Joshua and Jericho will not be the same fifty years from now as it is today, or as it was fifty years ago.

The reader may question the phrasing in saying that the truth of a past event is going to change every fifty years. How does the truth of the past change? Obviously, it never does. We have an account in writing of Joshua and the Israelites conquering the walled city of Jericho. Now that event either took place or it did not take place. The same can be said for any event for which we have record. The Greeks sailed to Troy to get Helen, or they did not. The theorizing of modern day archaeologists does not change a jot or tittle of history, because it is already past; it is out of their grasp; they can never re-live or recall those events. Even if an archaeologist constructed a hypothesis that was absolutely accurate in explaining the Trojan War or Joshua and the battle of Jericho, no one could ever know it was absolutely accurate, because no one can go back in time and test the hypothesis against reality.

This may all seem very basic, but it demonstrates that archaeological research fails to give us historical truth not just occasionally, but consistently. No hypothesis of history based upon archaeological research has ever or can ever be shown to be true. The theories will continue to pour out of the minds of archaeologists, but none of them will ever be proved either. Naturally this conclusion includes written records also. We do not know if those indestructible clay tablets of the Assyrians or Hittites are true or not, and we never will. The same can be said for the Egyptian hieroglyphs and even for our friend Homer. He tells a wonderful story, but we will *know* if Achilles and Hector fought outside the walls of golden Troy only when we get a Word from God on the subject.

## **Biblical Truth**

Scientifically, we do not know if the Bible is true, and we never will. That, of course, does not derogate from the truth or authority of Scripture, for two reasons: Scripture is self-authenticating; and science cannot prove anything true.

Scripture teaches that from eternity past God predetermined everything, everyone, every action, and every moment. By his Spirit and his Word he executed his eternal plan and brought the universe and time itself into existence. Since he is creator of all, including time, he stands outside of it and is therefore unchanging. When he inspired the prophets and apostles to write down that portion of his eternal plan which he chose to reveal to us, he directed them to write his *unchanging* Word describing his *unchanging* plan. When it comes to the past, how could anyone possibly imagine a more authoritative history than the Word of the one who determined that history and then brought it to pass?

Revisiting Joshua and Jericho one last time, let us pose the same question to the Biblical narrative that we did to the archaeological theory. How do we know that the Scriptural account of the battle of Jericho is true? Because the Bible says so. No hypotheses here, no guesses, just truth, from the God of truth, who not only infallibly knows the events at Jericho, but also predetermined them and brought them to pass. To doubt the veracity of any historical event in Scripture is to doubt the very nature of God Himself.

The "moderate majority" will discount the previous argument as an evasion, circular reasoning, irrationalism, and double-talk. It is simply wrong, say they, to believe that the Bible speaks truthfully on historical matters because it says it does. The Bible itself must be checked, or "verified." But by what can Scripture be corrected? What is the standard the moderates use to judge the Bible? Archaeological methods of research can provide us with mountains of information about—or at least mountains of—pottery and spears used in ancient Israel, and we should respect that information, and the scientists who work so diligently to extract and study the artifacts they find. But any theory they devise concerning any part of Biblical history is by the nature of their own inductive method tentative and inconclusive. One cannot verify any narrative with a worse theory. The "moderate majority" cannot legitimately test Biblical history with scientific methodology, and since there currently are no other possibilities with which to verify it, they must either receive the Scriptural narrative in faith or reject it for no good reason.

The reader may wonder why this discussion of archaeology and the Bible has been limited to the Old Testament, and why the subject of miracles has not been considered more extensively. Aside from time and space constraints, there are two main reasons: The New Testament manuscripts are now generally accepted, even among sceptics. (A few generations ago they were not accepted as genuine, but someone came up with a new theory and now they are.) The sceptics do not believe what the manuscripts say, but they do, at least for the moment, accept them as dating from the apostolic age. Second, archaeological methods of research cannot give us a true theory of any event that is *not* a miracle. Given that failure, how can archaeologists even begin to comment with any credibility upon Bible history that contains many miracles, such as the Gospels?

### "Fact vs. Faith"

The notion of "fact vs. faith," as *Time* put it, now can be seen in all of its absurdity. *To test any Scriptural historical account by means of any theory of archaeology is to test that which cannot be false by means of that which cannot be true.* It is the height of absurdity.

The Bible is the only means by which God reveals his plan of redemption to his people. As such, it is primarily concerned with spiritual matters, and when we read it we should also be primarily concerned with the spiritual knowledge it contains. But the great drama of redemption is being played out upon the stage of the visible universe and history. We cannot fully appreciate the scope and grandeur of God's plan of salvation if we neglect the platform upon which it is presented. We must not take lightly the denial of the accuracy of Biblical history by modern archaeology. If we do not proclaim the truth about Joshua and Jericho and King David or any other historical narrative in Scripture, we are guilty of not proclaiming "the whole counsel of God." We are in a battle for truth, and we must look to God for patience and courage to see our way through it.

When the youthful David visited his brothers on the battlefield, he heard Goliath taunting Israel. He was outraged, asking, "who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" *[1Sa 17:26]* David immediately volunteered to face Goliath in combat, and he slew that blasphemer.

David had to battle the enemies of Israel militarily. Our war with the enemies of Christ is spiritual and intellectual in nature, but it is just as real, and even more deadly. As Christians our posture should be one of righteous indignation against the giant of sceptical archaeology that slurs the truth of the Word of Almighty God. Who are these archaeologists who think they can disprove Scripture with a piece of broken pottery dug out of the mud? Who are the "moderate majority" who dare tell us what parts of the Bible are "reasonable" to believe? Let us be as eager to confront the giant of archaeology as David was to confront the Philistine champion. In the struggle between the eternal Word of God and secular theories, we know by revelation that God will crush all anti-Christian arguments and imaginations under our feet. *"Is not my word like fire?" says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? [Jer 23:29]* Phillip Climer is a free-lance writer living in California.

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