

for the sojourn in Egypt, it makes possible an entry of the Hebrews into Egypt near the beginning of the semi-Semitic Hyksos Dynasty (ca. 1700-1565 B.C.). It also accounts for the fact that no mention is made of Egyptian inroads into Palestine in the books of Joshua and Judges, as very likely would have been the case had the Exodus occurred before the great Asiatic campaigns of Seti I (1319-1301) and Ramses II (1301-1234). Archaeological evidence from the Transjordan similarly favors a thirteenth-century Exodus.

A date for the Exodus ca. 1290 or 1280, during the reign of Ramses II, has found wide favor (see RAMSES 2). In addition to the items of evidence just mentioned, a major argument for this date is based upon the statement of Exod. 1:11 that the Hebrews built Pithom and Ra-amess. The latter can hardly be any other than Per-Ramesse, almost certainly the same as Avaris-Zoan, the Delta capital of the Hyksos and the new capital of Ramses II, which he claims in his inscriptions to have built. That the name Ra-amess is not merely an anachronism, as some have claimed, is indicated by the fact that this city was apparently not occupied from the expulsion of the Hyksos (ca. 1565) until the accession of Ramses II.

As for the Habiru, there are several considerations which argue against their identification with Joshua's army. One is that further references to this people have been found in Babylonian and Hittite sources, in the NUZI texts, and in a text from Ras Shamra (see UGARIT), plainly indicating that the Habiru movement was far broader than the conquest of Canaan by the biblical Hebrews. Another major consideration is that when the Habiru raids in the Amarna Letters are compared with the report of Joshua's conquest, there are actually more differences than resemblances. A theory of a double entry into Canaan, appearing in several variations, attempts to reconcile an early fall of Jericho with this late date for the Exodus, and to account for an association of the Hebrew tribes with the fourteenth-century activities of the Habiru in Palestine. See ISRAEL, HISTORY OF, § 2.

In any case, most scholars agree that the Exodus must have occurred before 1229 B.C., the fifth year of MER-NE-PTAH, in which year this Pharaoh claims to have defeated "Israel" in the land of Palestine. There will continue to be uncertainty, however, concerning the exact time of the descent into Egypt and the duration of the Hebrews' sojourn there.

On the evidence for an Exodus ca. 1290, it is apparent that the intervening period until Solomon is far shorter than the 480 years required by 1 Kings 6:1. Certain genealogies of this period demand a shorter interval, however. Thus Gen. 36:31-39 lists only eight Edomite kings reigning, according to the obvious intent of the passage, in the period culminating with the reign of Saul. Since a king was already ruling in Edom in Moses' time (Num. 20:14), these eight (or fewer) kings would have to fill a gap of approximately four hundred years if the Genesis passage is to agree with 1 Kings 6:1. Even worse, the six generations from Nahshon the contemporary of Moses (Exod. 6:23) to Solomon (Ruth 4:20-22) would have to stretch over this same period, unless long gaps in this genealogy are to be assumed.

It should be pointed out, moreover, that the chronology demanded by the books of Judges and Samuel actually far exceeds the figure of 480 years. As will be seen from Table 3, a total of 554 years plus two periods of unknown length occupy the interval from the Exodus to the founding of Solomon's temple. Josephus evidently based his estimate of 592 (Antiq. VIII.iii.1) or 612 (Apion II.ii) years for this period upon this observation (cf. Acts 13:18-21).

Unfortunately, there are no references to contemporary events in the records of this period sufficiently clear to be of use to us. The victory of Siseia (Judg. 4-5) is variously dated from 1200 to 1100 B.C., and references to the Philistines, who came to Palestine ca. 1175, offer little chronological help. Judg. 11:26, which might indicate a fifteenth-century Exodus if this could be substantiated on other evidence, is perhaps the result of later calculation.

It is doubtless necessary to recognize that in many cases the judges were contemporaries of one another, exercising authority over limited tribal areas. This is certainly the case with Abimelech, who was regarded as an illegitimate ruler, and is very probable with regard to Samson and various others. See JUDGES; JUDGES, BOOK OF.

In any case, the figures of Table 3 indicate a tendency to schematization, with the employment of units, multiples, and fractions of 40 years. The schematic character of 1 Kings 6:1 itself has often been emphasized. Its 480 years, composed of 12 units of 40, was very likely obtained by subtracting all the years of oppression and the years of Abimelech, reducing the total of 554 years to 440, which would allow 20 years to Joshua and the Elders and 20 to Saul. Following a similar calculation, the LXX of 1 Kings 6:1 reduces its 544-year total to 430, the exact equivalent of the Hebrews' sojourn in Canaan and in Egypt according to its version of Exod. 12:40.

3. From Solomon's temple to the Exile. a. *Problems and methods.* When they come to the period of the Divided Monarchy, students of biblical chronology are at first sight delighted with the wealth of data available to them. First, there is a complete list of kings for both Judah and Israel, with the lengths of their respective reigns; second, synchronisms are provided for the accession of each king in terms of his contemporary's reign; third, the age of the kings of Judah at the time of their accession is stated; further, certain important events are dated either to a certain year or by the interval elapsed since another significant event; still further, certain biblical events are co-ordinated with contemporary occurrences in secular history. With so much information on hand, it would seem that the reconstruction of the chronology of this period should be a simple matter.

Nonetheless, various scholars who have worked with these data have found the chronology of this period almost beyond solution. They have discovered, to their dismay, that many of the above details seem to contradict one another. E.g., the total of years for Judah does not agree with the total for Israel; besides, the totals of either kingdom do not seem to fit the synchronisms. But worst of all is that the chronologies which many have attempted to construct from the biblical data fail to agree with historical information now available from a considerable variety of Assyrian and Babylonian documents.

Before discussing the problems connected with the biblical figures for this period, a statement of the high reliability of Assyrian chronology is in order. As contrasted, e.g., with the notorious ambiguity of many Egyptian historical records, the dependability of the Assyrian documents is outstanding. We know, for one thing, that the Assyrians (and Babylonians) kept their calendar year in precise accord with the solar year (see CALENDAR § 1). We also find in the Assyrian documents the employment of a method of dating which has proved to be of invaluable assistance for establishing absolute dates. Although the Assyrians did not date events by any given era, they did assign to each year the name of an eponym or limmu, as he was called, an official (sometimes the king himself) especially designated for this purpose. Assyriologists have been able to compile a complete list of these eponyms from 892 to 648 B.C.

Besides the name of the eponym for each year, this list mentions the years when the Assyrian kings began their reigns and gives the most notable political event of almost every year; but the most valuable of all its data is the mention of an eclipse of the sun in the month Simanu in the year of Bur-Sagale, which astronomers have calculated to have occurred on June 15, 763 B.C. Upon the basis of this calculation every other year in the eponym list can be fixed.

The dates of this list have been absolutely confirmed by other ancient chronological documents, the most important of which are the Khorsabad King List and the Canon of Ptolemy. The former is dated by the scribe who prepared it in the second eponymy of Adad-bel-ukin, the same as the eighth year of Tiglath-pileser III, 738 B.C. In the body of the Khorsabad List a complete succession of Assyrian kings is given from the beginning down to 745 B.C., in many cases with the length of reign, and the data of this list are in perfect agreement with the Eponym List. The Canon of Ptolemy, though coming from the second century A.D., records the reigns of Babylonian kings back to Nabonassar in 747 B.C., as well as the reigns of later Persian, Ptolemaic, and Roman rulers. Its accuracy has been established by Ptolemy's mention in another writing of numerous solar, lunar, and planetary positions, including eclipses, all dated in the reigns of the various kings mentioned in his canon. In every case astronomers have confirmed these data exactly.

With the aid of this fixed chronology for the Assyrian and Babylonian kings, some of their contacts with biblical kings mentioned in cuneiform records can be given an absolute date. The most important are the following:

a) The battle of Shalmaneser III (859-824) in his sixth year with Ahab and the Syrian allies at Qarqar, 853 B.C. (Monolith Inscription, ANET 278).

b) Shalmaneser III receives the tribute of Jehu in his eighteenth year, 841 (Annals and Black Obelisk, ANET 280, ANEP 122).

c) Tiglath-pileser III (745-727) receives tribute from Azariah and Menahem between 743 and 738, and is in contact with Jehoahaz (Ahaz), Pekah, and Hoshea in unstated years (Building Inscription, Annals, ANET 282-84).

d) Sargon II (722-705) captures Samaria in his accession year, 722/21 (Khorsabad Inscriptions,

ANET 284 f); but cf. the Eponym List and Babylonian Chronicle 1:28, which put this event in the last year of Shalmaneser V (727-722), 723/22.

e) Sennacherib (705-681) besieges Hezekiah in his fourth year, 701 (Oriental Institute and Taylor Prism, ANET 287-88).

f) Neco at the siege of Harran, Tammuz to Elul in the seventeenth year of Nabopolassar (626-605), 609 (Cadd Chronicle, ANET 305).

g) The Battle of Carchemish in Nabopolassar's twenty-first year, 605 (B.M. 12946; cf. Jer. 25:1; 46:2).

h) Nebuchadrezzar II (605-562) captures Jerusalem on 2 Adar of his seventh year, March 16, 597 (D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, pp. 33, 73).

It is certain that most Assyrian and Babylonian chronological records deserve great confidence. Much of modern scholarship has denied this confidence to the biblical records, however, on the ground that these do not seem to agree with Assyrian chronology. There are still some, it is true, who prefer to ignore the demands of contemporary history for the sake of what they imagine to be a biblical chronology, explaining the discrepancies in the biblical figures as best they can, mainly by assuming several periods of interregnum in the lists of kings. This is a course, however, which enlightened scholarship refuses to follow. Convinced of the basic reliability of the cuneiform records, one is certain that something is wrong with the biblical data or with current methods of interpreting these data. Despite the fact that in recent decades more respect has been shown for the synchronisms and other figures than was usual during the ascendancy of the Wellhausen school, almost all chronologies of the Divided Monarchy are still forced to emend many of the biblical figures in order to bring them into a harmonious pattern and to make them agree with the Assyrian data.

Since scholarship in general has been passing through a period of profound doubt concerning the trustworthiness of the entire biblical tradition, it is small wonder that the Hebrew scribes have been easily accused of inaccuracy in recording chronological materials. Now, however, that the biblical tradition and the MT are being strikingly confirmed in countless ways, it is certainly in order that scholarship should again approach these chronological records with a mind open to the possibility, or even the likelihood, that they are, after all, substantially correct. A priori, the Hebrew scribes ought to deserve as much confidence, unless proved absolutely wrong, as the scribes of other peoples.

Happily, knowledge is at present available which makes it unnecessary to yield either the testimony of secular records or of the biblical text. It is possible to fit almost all the biblical data, unrevised, into a perfectly harmonious pattern while at the same time bringing this pattern into agreement with Assyrian and Babylonian records. One can do this by understanding thoroughly the methods and devices employed by the Hebrew scribes in recording their data.

It must be said that ancient attempts to improve the chronological statements of the MT, as in the LXX and in the writings of Josephus, have been demonstrated to be nothing more than that—attempts

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to emend what was not understood. They have no independent evidential value for the correct chronology of the Divided Monarchy, and modern systems based upon them are badly in error.

What then were the chronological methods of the Hebrew scribes? We must discover these through close study of the text and through careful experimentation. Several alternatives must be faced. First, it must be decided whether the scribes of Judah and Israel dated their kings by the accession-year or by the nonaccession-year method; then, which new-year day each kingdom employed, whether spring (Nisan) or fall (Tishri); further, how the scribes of each realm reckoned the reigns of their neighbors' kings, and whether each group of scribes was consistent in following a particular method throughout the whole period of the Divided Monarchy. Finally, the existence of any interregna or coregencies must be discovered. It will be apparent that possible combinations of these factors are numerous enough to lead to great complexity. Of the many combinations which have been tried by biblical chronologists, only the one here described, which is essentially that first proposed by Edwin R. Thiele (*see bibliography*), seems to give satisfactory results.

First of all, then, the method of counting reigns must be determined. The nonaccession-year system, in vogue in Egypt in ancient times, allowed a king to count the year of his accession as his first official year, while the same year also counted as the last official year of his predecessor. Also called the antedating system, this method resulted in counting one year too many in each reign. On the other hand, the accession-year or postdating system, which was the basis for reckoning in much of the Near East and in Mesopotamia, did not count a king's reign until the first new year after his predecessor's death. The portion of a year remaining between the predecessor's death and the new year was counted as the new king's accession year, and reigns which were too short to reach a new year were not counted. Under this system the true length of each reign was recorded.

A close examination of the early reigns of the Divided Monarchy reveals that Judah followed the postdating system, while Israel employed antedating, although later each kingdom changed its method. Thus the years of the kings of Judah till Omri's death (I Kings 14:21; 15:2; 16:29) total fifty-eight, while the years of the kings of Israel during the same period (14:20; 15:25, 33; 16:8, 23) total sixty-two, despite the fact that both kingdoms began in the same year. The only explanation of this phenomenon is that Israel's kings were antedated, resulting in excess years, while Judah's kings were postdated according to actual years of reign. The interesting fact that for this period Israel has only four excess years with five kings provides a vital clue to another of the chronological problems mentioned above—viz., the method of reckoning employed by Hebrew scribes for kings of the neighboring realm. Evidently the synchronism of I Kings 16:29, giving Asa thirty-eight years at Omri's death, is reckoned in terms of Israel's method of antedating. Omri actually died in Asa's thirty-seventh year, and the true length of the period in question was fifty-seven years. We have here then an illustration of the fact that the scribes

of each realm applied the methods of their own kingdom to the kings of the other realm, and this is a practice which proves to have been consistently followed.

A further problem concerns the beginning of the new year for each kingdom. For Judah we have direct evidence that the year was counted from the first of Tishri (September-October). I Kings 6:1, 37-38; II Kings 22:3; 23:23, together with the archaeological evidence of the Gezer Calendar, plainly demand such a reckoning. (For details, *see* CALENDAR § 2.) Moreover, a Tishri new year for Judah is demanded by the chronological data now under consideration.

The opposite is required for Israel. Although we have no direct statement that Israel reckoned the years of her kings from a new year in Nisan (March-April), a close scrutiny of certain synchronisms and lengths of reign makes it apparent that this was the case. Thus Rehoboam is said to have reigned seventeen years (I Kings 14:21), evidently from a new year in Tishri. During his seventeenth year he died, and his son Abijam reigned in his stead. This, Abijam's accession year, is said to have been Jeroboam's eighteenth year (15:1), even though it is a Judahite scribe who made the notation (*see above*). Since Rehoboam and Jeroboam began their reigns in the same year (ch. 12), it is evident that the latter reckoned his rule from a Nisan new year, and thus that Abijam must have begun his reign between the months of Nisan and Tishri. If it be supposed that, despite the fact that a Judahite scribe recorded this synchronism, the eighteenth year of Jeroboam was calculated by the antedating method (hence one year too high), then one must reckon with the synchronism given for Asa's accession after Abijam's three-year reign (I Kings 15:2, 8), which is the twentieth year of Jeroboam (vs. 9). If the scribe had been figuring Jeroboam's reign by Tishri years and by the antedating system, this would have had to be Jeroboam's twenty-first year. As it is, Asa began to reign between Tishri and Nisan—i.e., during the six months after the beginning of his father's third year and before the end of Jeroboam's twentieth.

Further examples could be given. Some will be noted in the discussion to follow, but at this point it must suffice to say that on the basis of Nisan years for Israel and Tishri years for Judah, many perplexing difficulties disappear and a pattern of harmony results. A Nisan new year was observed from ancient times in Babylonia and Assyria. The traveling new year of the calendar in Egypt, where Jeroboam found refuge from Rehoboam before the beginning of his reign (I Kings 11:40; 12:2), was celebrated in the springtime at this period. Since Jeroboam is known to have been an innovator with calendrical reckoning (cf. 12:32-33), it is easy to believe that he might have introduced the Nisan new year in his realm.

A further question which must be dealt with concerns the existence of interregna or coregencies. As has been mentioned, the totals of years for Judah and for Israel do not agree, and this discrepancy cannot be accounted for solely on an understanding of the modes of reckoning employed by the ancient scribes. From the disruption of the realm at Solomon's death to Jehu, Judah's years total 95, while

Israel's years total 98 plus 7 days. From Jehu to the fall of Samaria, Judah's years total 166, and Israel's total 143 plus 7 months. These discrepancies might be accounted for, at least in some instances, by the supposition of interregna (apart from the very unlikelihood of such a supposition), were it not for the fact that for the latter period Assyria's chronology allows no more than 120 years, indicating that both Judah's and Israel's totals must be shortened rather than lengthened. The only way in which a shorter total may be obtained is on the theory that coregencies existed at certain times in this period.

What is the evidence for the existence of coregencies in the Divided Kingdom? First of all, II Kings 8:16 (MT) plainly states that Jehoram of Judah began his reign while his father, Jehoshaphat, was still king. Another item of evidence for this coregency is found in 1:17; 3:1, where Joram of Israel is said to have begun his rule both in the second year of Jehoram and in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat. The only way to resolve these seeming inconsistencies is to posit a coregency for Jehoram beginning in his father's seventeenth year. The further statement of 8:16 that Jehoram began to reign in the fifth year of Joram of Israel must be understood to refer to the beginning of his independent reign.

There is good evidence, besides, for five additional coregencies during the period of the Divided Kingdom, plus one other in Judah after the fall of Samaria. Of these coregencies, the one for which there is the most direct statement is that of Jotham with Azariah (II Kings 15:5); others which may be legitimately deduced from chronological and similar indications are those of Jehoshaphat with Asa, Jeroboam II with Jehoash, Azariah with Amaziah, Ahaz with Jotham, and Manasseh with Hezekiah. Six of these coregencies pertained to the Judahite realm, while only one was in the N kingdom. Undoubtedly the wisdom of the kings of Judah in providing for the certain succession of their proper heirs through appointing them to coregencies before their own deaths, as was the case in most instances, accounts to a great extent for the remarkable stability of their dynasty.

On the basis of the above discussion we are now in a position to compare the biblical figures with known dates in contemporary secular records. If a pattern of harmony results, we have strong presumptive evidence that our interpretation is correct.

To recapitulate, then, one may say that the methods of the Hebrew scribes were the following: Judah's scribes dated their kings from a Tishri new year by the postdating method (changed, as we shall see, to the antedating method in Jehoram's reign and back again to postdating in the reign of Amaziah); Israel's scribes conversely dated from Nisan on the antedating basis (changed to postdating in the reign of Jehoash); both groups of scribes were consistent in figuring the reigns of the neighboring kingdom by their own methods; both took account of coregencies, sometimes expressing the length of a given reign from the beginning of a coregency and sometimes from the beginning of independent rule.

Since Ahab's son Ahaziah reigned two years (I Kings 22:51), and another son Joram (or Jehoram) reigned twelve years (II Kings 3:1), both figures being reckoned by antedating for a total of twelve

actual years; and since, as we have seen, this twelve-year period is the precise interval provided by the Assyrian records for the period between Shalmaneser III's contact with Ahab (853) and his contact with Jehu (841), we are forced to the conclusion that 853 was Ahab's last year, while 841 was the first year of Jehu. Thus we have two firm points for dating the various reigns of the Divided Monarchy. We also have a valuable confirmation that the antedating method was indeed in use in the N kingdom at this period.

Dating back from Ahab's death by the antedating method and subtracting a total of seventy-eight years and seven days, we arrive at 931 B.C. as the year of the beginning of Jeroboam's reign. This was also the year of Rehoboam's accession and of Solomon's death.

It will now be necessary to outline the chronology of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah from the Disruption to the Babylonian exile, using the dates already established as a firm basis for others and applying to the biblical figures the precise methods of the Hebrew scribes as described above. In Tables 4 and 5 all the reigns and coregencies of Israel and Judah are placed in graphic relationship with one another, along with the scripture references, lengths of reign and synchronisms, important events, dates, and contacts with foreign kings.

*b. From Solomon's temple to Jehu.* We have established the year 931 as the beginning of the reigns of both Rehoboam and Jeroboam. Thirty-six years previous to this, in Solomon's fourth year, the foundation of the temple had been laid. This was the year 967, the date furnished in our discussion above.

Although most scholars have favored a date for the Disruption close to 931, some recent chronologies have placed it as late as 922. Arguments for 922 have been based mainly on a Tyrian king list presumably cited by Josephus, and on the supposition that Shishak's raid in Rehoboam's fifth year (I Kings 14:25) must be dated too late to agree with 931 as the date of the Disruption. Such arguments are, however, too speculative in nature to weigh against the strong evidence for a 931 date.

The SHISHAK of I Kings 11:40; 14:25 was the vigorous Sheshonk or Shoshenq I, founder of the Twenty-Second Dynasty in Egypt. Recent dates assigned to him are 935-914, although the evidence for this is not altogether certain. This king has left in an undated inscription a record of the Palestinian cities captured by him on his campaign of 926/25.

After Jeroboam's reign of twenty-one actual years, his son Nadab came to the throne. In the statements that Nadab began to rule in Asa's second year (I Kings 15:25) and that Baasha slew Nadab in Asa's third year, after Nadab had reigned for two years (vs. 28, 33), we have another indication that in this period Israel reckoned by the antedating method, while Judah reckoned by postdating.

When we come to the reign of Baasha, an interesting chronological problem arises. I Kings 16:8 records that this king ruled for only twenty-four years (twenty-three by actual reckoning), after which he was succeeded by his son Elah. Confirmation for this figure is found in the further statement that Elah began to rule in Asa's twenty-sixth year. Yet we read

Table 4

## Chronology of the Divided Kingdom

Legend: AR—accredited reign  
 CR—years of coregency  
 a/d—antedating or nonaccession-year system  
 p/d—postdating or accession-year system

Scripture References	Rulers of Judah (Tishri Years)	Rulers of Israel (Nisan Years)	Dates B.C.	Dated Foreign Contacts
I Kings 14:20-21; II Chr. 12:13	REHOBOAM King 17 years p/d	JEROBOAM King 22 years a/d	931/30	
I Kings 14:25; II Chr. 12:2	5 Rehoboam p/d		926/25	Shishak's invasion
I Kings 15:1-2; II Chr. 13: 1-2	ABIJAM 18 Jeroboam p/d King 3 years p/d		913	
I Kings 15:9-10; II Chr. 16:13	ASA 20 Jeroboam p/d King 41 years p/d		911/10	
I Kings 15:25		NADAB 2 Asa a/d King 2 years a/d	910/09	
I Kings 15:28, 33		BAASHA 3 Asa a/d King 24 years a/d	909/08	
II Chr. 14:9, 15:10; cf. 15:19	Victory celebration, 15 Asa p/d		896/95	Zerah's invasion
II Chr. 16:1	War with Baasha, 16 (MT 36) Asa p/d	Baasha builds Ramah	895/94	
I Kings 16:8		ELAH 26 Asa a/d King 2 years a/d	886/85	
I Kings 16:10, 15		ZIMRI 27 Asa a/d King 7 days	885/84	
I Kings 16:21-22		OMRI-----TIBNI	885/84	
I Kings 16:23		6 years a/d in Tirzah		
I Kings 16:23		Sole rule, 31 Asa a/d; total rule 12 years a/d	880	
I Kings 16:29		AHAB 38 Asa a/d King 22 years a/d	874/73	
I Kings 22:42; II Chr. 20:31; cf. 16:12	Jehoshaphat coregent in 38 Asa a/d Total reign 25 years		873/72	
I Kings 22:41	JEHOSHAPHAT, sole reign, 4 Ahab p/d		870/69	
II Chr. 17:7; cf. II Kings 1:17; 3:1; 8:16 MT	Reform in 3rd year		867/66?	
	Jehoram coregent		854/53 853	Battle of Qarqar
I Kings 22:51		AHAZIAH 17 Jehoshaphat a/d King 2 years a/d	853	

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Table 4 (continued)

Scripture References	Rulers of Judah (Tishri Years)	Rulers of Israel (Nisan Years)	Dates B.C.	Dated Foreign Contacts
II Kings 1:17 II Kings 3:1		J(EH)ORAM 2 Jehoram CR a/d 18 Jehoshaphat a/d King 12 years a/d	852	
II Kings 8:16-17; II Chr. 21:5, 20	JEHORAM, sole reign 5 Joram a/d Sole reign 8 years a/d		848	
II Chr. 21:19	Sick 2 years			
II Kings 9:29 II Kings 8:25-26; II Chr. 22:2	AHAZIAH 11 Joram p/d 12 Joram a/d King (part of) 1 year		841	
II Kings 10:36; 11:3-4; II Chr. 22:12	ATHALIAH (Queen 7 years a/d)	JEHU King 28 years a/d	841	
II Kings 12:1; II Chr. 24:1	J(EH)OASH 7 Jehu a/d King 40 years a/d		835	Jehu pays tribute to Shalmaneser III
II Kings 12:6	Repairs on temple in 23rd year		814/13	
II Kings 13:1		J(EH)OAAHAZ 23 Joash a/d King 17 years a/d	814/13	
(From this point all reigns are p/d)				
II Kings 13:10		J(EH)OASH 37 Joash King 16 years	798	
II Kings 14:1-2; II Chr. 25:1	AMAZIAH 2 Jehoash King 29 years (counting years of retirement)		797/96	
II Kings 14:23; cf. 15:1		Jeroboam coregent in 15 Amaziah Total reign 41 years	793/92	
II Kings 14:21; II Chr. 26:1; cf. II Kings 15:2, 8, 13, 23, 27	AZARIAH (UZZIAH) King at his father's captivity		792/91	
II Kings 15:2; II Chr. 26:3	Total reign 52 years			
II Kings 14:23		JEROBOAM II, sole reign, 15 Amaziah	782/81	
II Kings 14:17; II Chr. 25:25	Amaziah lives 15 years after Jehoash' death			
II Kings 15:1	Azariah's sole reign, 27 Jeroboam CR		768/67	
II Kings 15:8		ZECHARIAH 38 Azariah King 6 months	753/52	

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## Chronology of the OT

le 4 (continued)

Scripture References	Rulers of Judah (Tishri Years)	Rulers of Israel (Nisan Years)	Dates B.C.	Dated Foreign Contacts
I Kings 15:13		SHALLUM 39 Azariah King 1 month	752	
I Kings 15:17		MENAIHEM 39 Azariah King 10 years (Accredited reign of Pekah)	752/51	
I Kings 15:32; cf. 15:5, 30; I Chr. 26:21	Jotham coregent 2 Pekah AR		750	
I Kings 15:33; I Chr. 27:1, 8	Jotham's reign from coregency to core- gency 16 years			
I Kings 15:19- 20			742/41	Menahem and Azariah pay tribute to Tiglath- pileser III
I Kings 15:23		PEKAHIAH 50 Azariah King 2 years	742/41	
I Kings 15:27		PEKAH 52 Azariah Accredited reign 20 years (from Shallum)	740/39	
I Chr. 27:5	JOTHAM, sole reign At least 3 years sole reign		740/39	
I Kings 16:1	Ahaz coregent in 17 Pekah AR		735	
I Kings 16:5-10; I Chr. 28:5- 6, 20-21; cf. Isa. 7:1 ff; 8:1-4	Ahaz wars with Israel and Syria, appeals to Assyria		734-732	Tiglath- pileser III in Palestine
I Kings 16:2; I Chr. 28:1	AHAZ, sole reign Rule for 16 years		732/31	Tiglath- pileser deposes Pekah
I Kings 15:30		HOSHEA 20 Jotham CR King 9 years	732/31	
I Kings 17:1		3-year siege of Sa- maria begins in 7 Hoshea	725/24	
I Kings 17:5; 18:9		Samaria falls in 9 Hoshea	723/22	
I Kings 17:6; 18:10			722/21	Accession year of Sargon II

I Chr. 16:1 that Baasha built Ramah and began  
the war with Judah in Asa's thirty-sixth year.  
This is not the only point in which Kings and Chron-  
icles seem to disagree about the details of Asa's and  
Baasha's reigns. I Kings 15:16, 32, states that there  
was war between these two kings all their days; yet  
I Chr. 14:1, 6, informs us that Judah enjoyed peace

for the first ten years of Asa's reign, and in 15:19 we  
read the strange statement that "there was no more  
war until the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Asa."

Now if the thirty-sixth year of II Chr. 16:1 were  
correct, it is apparent that Rehoboam's reign would  
have to be substantially shortened, perhaps bringing  
his accession, with adjustments in the lengths of some

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of the other reigns, to the late date mentioned above,  
922 B.C. This procedure would have the severe addi-  
tional disadvantage, it should be realized, of reduc-  
ing to meaningless a whole series of synchronisms  
(I Kings 15:1, 9, 25, 33; 16:8, 10, 15, 23, 29). Never-  
theless, support for the superiority of II Chr. 16:1 has  
been sought in the references to Ben-hadad, king of  
Syria, as Asa's ally in I Kings 15:18-20; II Chr. 16:4.  
An inscription of Ben-hadad I has been dated by  
orthographic evidence between 875 and 825. How-  
ever, the length of this king's reign is not known.  
There exists no argument which would make it im-  
possible for him to have been Asa's ally shortly after  
the beginning of the ninth century B.C. See BEN-  
HADAD I.

Actually, II Chr. 15:19 according to the Hebrew  
text does not contain the word "more." It simply  
states that there was no war in Asa's reign until his  
"thirty-fifth year." And then in the "thirty-sixth  
year" the conflict began with Baasha. I Kings 15:  
16, 32, can easily be understood to mean that con-  
tinual enmity existed between these kings, although  
without open warfare until the hostilities under con-  
sideration. The clue to an understanding of the  
"thirty-sixth year of Asa" is doubtless to be found  
in the preceding reference to the "thirty-fifth year."  
What the conflict was that occurred in Asa's "thirty-  
fifth year" is not stated in II Chr. 15:19, but the con-  
text does contain reference to warfare—viz., the  
invasion of Zerah (see ZERAH 4) and Asa's triumph  
(14:9-14), culminated by a great victory celebration  
and covenant ratification in Asa's fifteenth year  
(15:10). Is it not altogether likely that II Chr. 15:19  
is a misplaced reference to this conflict? And, since  
many people from Ephraim and Manasseh were de-  
fecting to Asa's apparently victorious cause (15:9),  
should we not seek here the motive for Baasha's  
building Ramah and closing the border (16:1)?  
Baasha certainly would not wait for twenty years to  
take such action.

There are two possible explanations for the  
"thirty-fifth" and "thirty-sixth" years of II Chr. 15:  
19; 16:1. If the figures are correct, they could origi-  
nally have referred to the beginning of the Divided  
Monarchy; if the reference to Asa's reign is correct,  
they could represent a very understandable scribal  
error for "fifteenth" and "sixteenth." The latter  
alternative would seem the most likely, since there  
are no other examples of dating from the Disruption,  
while the books of Chronicles do contain instances of  
scribal slips in the recording of numbers. Besides, the  
first alternative would place the war with Zerah,  
thirty-five years after the Disruption, in Asa's four-  
teenth year, 897/96, while the victory celebration is  
dated in his fifteenth year, 896/95. The text does not  
seem to make very likely an interval of a year be-  
tween these events. It is better, therefore, to date the  
war with Zerah and victory celebration in Asa's fif-  
teenth year, 896/95, and the war with Baasha in  
Asa's sixteenth year, 895/94.

The figures provided in I Kings 16:23 for Omri's  
reign have caused considerable confusion. It is best  
to take this verse as a conflation of chronological  
data from various sources. According to the record  
Omri actually began to reign in Asa's twenty-seventh  
year, since Zimri reigned before him for only seven

days (vs. 10, 15); but Omri's capital remained in  
Tirzah while he struggled against his rival Tibni  
(vs. 21-22), whom he killed in Asa's thirty-first year.  
With Tibni out of the way, Omri proceeded to build  
a new capital in Samaria (vs. 24). Omri's total reign  
was twelve years (by antedating), the first six of  
which had been spent in Tirzah.

We have good evidence that there were two  
coregencies in Judah in this period. The coregency  
of Jehoram with his father, Jehoshaphat, has been  
explained above. The other coregency was that of  
Jehoshaphat with his father, Asa. The evidence for  
this coreign is as follows: Ahab's reign began in Asa's  
thirty-eighth year (I Kings 16:29). Asa's forty-one-  
year reign (15:10) ended, therefore, in Ahab's fourth  
year, which is given as the beginning of Jehosha-  
phat's rule in 22:42. Yet this same verse states that  
Jehoshaphat ruled for twenty-five years, after which  
he was succeeded by Jehoram. Jehoshaphat's reign  
must count from the beginning of a coregency with  
Asa three years before the latter's death, because  
Joram of Israel became king in Jehoshaphat's eight-  
eenth year (II Kings 3:1) and Jehoram began his  
sole reign in the fifth year of Joram (8:16). II Chr.  
16:12 furnishes the valuable information that Asa  
became seriously ill in his thirty-ninth year, which  
would be sufficient reason for the establishment of a  
coregency at that time.

Ahab was included among the Syrian allies who  
fought against Shalmaneser III of Assyria at Qarqar  
on the Euphrates in the year 853. As has been in-  
dicated above, 853 was Ahab's last year. We know,  
however, that Ahab was not killed at Qarqar but  
lived long enough to turn against his erstwhile ally  
Ben-hadad (called Hadad-Ezer in the Assyrian rec-  
ord) with the help of Jehoshaphat. Since his army  
had suffered less severely at Qarqar than had the  
army of Ben-hadad, Ahab may have considered this  
an ideal time to throw off the Syrian hegemony. He  
was, of course, mistaken. As I Kings 22:29-38 in-  
forms us, Ahab died in battle at Ramoth-gilead,  
probably shortly before the month Tishri in his  
twenty-second year, in the seventeenth year of King  
Jehoshaphat (16:29; 22:51).

As has been mentioned, Jehoram of Judah began  
his sole reign in his brother-in-law Joram's fifth year  
(cf. II Kings 8:18). Since this is a synchronism for  
Judah, this ought to be the actual fifth year, cal-  
culated by postdating, and would fall in the year  
847. However, if we assume postdating for Judah in  
this period, the one-year reign of Ahaziah (II Kings  
8:26) plus the preceding eight-year reign of Jehoram  
(vs. 17), dating back from the beginning of Jehu's  
reign in 841, would demand 850 instead of 847 as  
the year of Jehoram's accession. It should be obvious  
that the Judean court, so much under the influence of  
the house of Ahab at this period, had changed to  
Israel's method of antedating. Thus Jehoram began  
his rule in Joram's actual fourth year, 848, and  
reigned only seven years, while his son Ahaziah  
reigned only part of one year. The double synchro-  
nism for Ahaziah's accession found in II Kings 8:25;  
9:29 confirms this fact. A scribe who was obedient to  
the court's demands recorded this as occurring in  
Joram's twelfth year, while another scribe, perhaps  
in defiance of the court or else living in a later pe-

riod, recorded it as Joram's eleventh year. Incidentally, these synchronisms are added confirmation that Judah was using a Tishri year, while Israel was observing a new year in Nisan, since only by this arrangement could Jehoram's eight-year reign, followed by the accredited year of Azariah, fall in Joram's twelfth and last year.

The house of Ahab came to a bloody end with the revolt of Jehu in 841, which was also the year that Jehu paid tribute to Shalmaneser III, according to the Black Obelisk. Not only did Joram of Israel die, but Jehu killed Ahaziah of Judah as well (II Kings 9:24, 27), taking the throne of Israel for himself and leaving the S kingdom to Athaliah (11:1). Thus the year 841 is of utmost importance for the chronology of the Divided Monarchy, marking as it does the end of two parallel reigns and the beginning of two others.

It must be stressed at this point that the figures in the MT for lengths of reign and synchronisms have so far proved to be in perfect harmony with one another and with the Assyrian dates, the only exception being II Chr. 15:19, 16:1. Difficulties arise, not so much from the figures as from erroneous ways of interpreting them. There is a strong presumption, therefore, that the figures for the following reigns can similarly lead to reliable results if they are properly interpreted.

c. *From Jehu to the fall of Samaria.* Although the length of Athaliah's rule is not stated in the Bible, we are informed that the boy Joash took her throne and that she was put to death in her seventh year (II Kings 11:4). Since it is also stated that Joash began to reign in Jehu's seventh year (12:1), it is apparent that both kingdoms were counting by the antedating method. Thus Athaliah actually reigned for only six years, and Joash' forty official years (12:1) actually amounted to only thirty-nine.

We may also be certain that antedating was in vogue in both kingdoms when Jehoahaz succeeded Jehu after the latter's twenty-eight-year reign (II Kings 10:36), since this is stated as taking place in the twenty-third year of Joash (13:1), and Athaliah's seven-year reign had preceded that of Joash. A change in method of reckoning was introduced in the next reign, however. After Jehoahaz had reigned seventeen official years, his son Jehoash came to the throne in Joash' thirty-seventh year (13:10). Since Israel was following a Nisan and Judah a Tishri year, this synchronism can fit the period between Nisan and Tishri of Joash' thirty-seventh year, but only if this year is counted by postdating. Thus we see that Jehoash of Israel changed to the method of postdating, the practice formerly in vogue in Judah and now apparently becoming increasingly prevalent throughout the Near East with the spread of Assyrian influence. That Amaziah the son of Joash soon followed suit is certain from the synchronism for his accession in the second year of Jehoash (14:2). Even though the latter had already adopted the postdating method, Amaziah would have counted his own accession year as the third year of Jehoash, had he not himself made the change to postdating. Until the end both kingdoms adhered to this method without further change.

Jehoash reigned sixteen years (II Kings 13:10),

after which he was succeeded by his son Jeroboam in the fifteenth year of Amaziah (14:23). Amaziah reigned twenty-nine years (14:2)—i.e., until Jeroboam's fifteenth year. However, we are informed that Azariah (or Uzziah) succeeded to the throne of Judah in Jeroboam's twenty-seventh year (15:1). We have here an excess of twelve years for Jeroboam. This excess of twelve years at Azariah's accession is plain indication of a coregency of Jeroboam with his father beginning in the latter's fifth year, 793/92, and it appears that we should count Jeroboam's forty-one-year reign (14:23) from this date. Since Jeroboam's coregency began in Amaziah's third year, 793/92, his above-mentioned accession in Amaziah's fifteenth year must be understood to refer to the beginning of his sole reign at the death of his father. As a matter of fact, II Kings 14:17 reports the unusual but significant item that Amaziah lived fifteen years after Jehoash' death (and the beginning of Jeroboam's sole reign), thus filling out his twenty-nine years.

There was, however, a second coreign involved in these reigns which further complicates our chronology, that of Azariah with Amaziah. II Kings 15:1 provides the synchronism for the beginning of Azariah's sole reign. This was in the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam's coregency, as we have seen, yet the synchronism for Zechariah at the end of Jeroboam's forty-one years (fourteen years later) is the thirty-eighth year of Azariah (vs. 8). This indicates that Azariah shared his father's throne twenty-four years—i.e., from Amaziah's sixth year, 791/90.

There is doubtless great significance in the fact that Jeroboam II began his coregency in 793/92 and Azariah came to the throne so soon afterward, in 791/90. II Kings 14:7-14; II Chr. 25:6-25 tell of a war between Amaziah and Jehoash, provoked by the former after a successful campaign against Edom. In this war Jehoash defeated Amaziah at Beth-shemesh, destroyed part of the wall of Jerusalem, and took Amaziah captive, apparently at least until his own death in 782/81. In all likelihood Jehoash took the precaution of appointing Jeroboam as his coregent shortly before the beginning of this conflict, so that 792 is the probable date of Beth-shemesh and of Amaziah's capture. Although it is likely that Jeroboam released the latter after the death of his father, Jehoash (this being then the significance of II Kings 14:17), it is apparent that the people of Judah would place another king on the throne in Amaziah's absence. This would be Azariah, whose first (official) year was 791/90. But very likely Azariah was actually enthroned a year earlier, in 792/91, and counted this as his accession year, not expecting his father's release. It is doubtful, therefore, whether we should speak of a coregency in the usual sense. When Amaziah did return and attempted to reassert authority, a conspiracy arose to have him assassinated—the incident is recorded in the misplaced notice of II Kings 14:19-21.

The date of Azariah's accession is extremely important for the years to follow, because no fewer than five kings of Israel are dated by it. Zechariah took the throne at the end of Jeroboam's forty-one-year reign, in Azariah's thirty-eighth year, which would be between Nisan and Tishri, 753. Six months later

in Azariah's thirty-ninth year, 753/52, Shallum slew Zechariah, but reigned only one month (II Kings 15:13), after which he was himself assassinated by Menahem, this being also in the thirty-ninth year of Azariah (vs. 17). Since we are not told exactly in which months the short reigns of Zechariah and Shallum fell, we must determine the beginning of Menahem's reign on the basis of Pekahiah's accession in Azariah's fiftieth year (vs. 23). This was the year 742/41. Sometime after Tishri, 742, and before Nisan, 741, Menahem's ten-year reign came to an end; hence his accession year was 752/51. This means that Shallum's one-month reign straddled the Nisan new year of 752, and that Zechariah's reign was from Elul, 753, to Adar, 752.

The reign of Menahem provides another contact with a king of Assyria, in this case Tiglath-pileser III, who came to the throne in 745 B.C. II Kings 15:19-20 speaks of Menahem's paying tribute to Pul of Assyria, whom we know from cuneiform sources to be the same as TIGLATH-PILESER (cf. I Chr. 5:26). In the "Annals" of this king both Menahem of Israel and Azariah of Judah are mentioned as among those who showed subjection to him in his first W campaign, which began in his third actual year of reign, 743. A problem arises because Menahem and Azariah are mentioned in the section appearing immediately before the record of Tiglath-pileser's ninth year. The assumption has therefore been that these kings were still alive in 738, too late for the chronology with which we are working. The "Annals" have revealed upon further careful study, however, that the entire six-year campaign of Tiglath-pileser III in the W is described in terms of a geographical unit and not by separate years. As a matter of fact, there is no mention of separate years between the third and the ninth. There are, on the other hand, indications which show that the events connected with Menahem and Azariah actually occurred toward the beginning of the campaign, perhaps in Menahem's last year, 742/41.

In an undated tablet of Tiglath-pileser, Ahaz of Judah is also mentioned as tributary to him; and in still another tablet of uncertain date this Assyrian king claims to have put Menahem under tribute, to have caused Pekah's overthrow, and to have placed Hoshea in Pekah's place. Since, as we shall see, Pekah died in 732/31, several years after Menahem's death by any reckoning, we have confirmation that Tiglath-pileser did not mention his contacts with the Hebrew kings in strict annalistic order.

After Pekahiah's two-year reign, Pekah seized the throne. This was in the fifty-second and last year of Azariah, 740/39 (II Kings 15:23-27). Pekah is said to have reigned twenty years, thus until 720/19; but in addition to creating complete confusion in the chronology of this period, this reckoning makes impossible the above synchronism with Tiglath-pileser III, who died in 727. The Assyrian Eponym List helps us at this point, listing the years 734-732 as "against Philistia" and "against the land of Damascus." Unfortunately we do not know in which year of this last W campaign of Tiglath-pileser Pekah was overthrown, but, as we shall see, the whole pattern of the period makes 732/31 the most probable.

Now, if 732/31 was the year of Pekah's death, it

is apparent that II Kings 15:27 credits his reign with twelve years too many. A likely explanation for this is that Pekah usurped the reigns of Menahem and his son Pekahiah, reckoning his own reign from the death of Shallum in 752. Pekah is said to have been a high officer at the royal court (vs. 25). Having undertaken to wipe out the house of Menahem, which he may have secretly regarded as illegitimate even while working in its service, he sought to efface from the record the years that it had held the throne by claiming them as his own.

It has been noted that Pekah began to reign in Azariah's fifty-second year, 740/39. Presumably this would also be the year of Jotham's accession; however, II Kings 15:32 states that the latter began to reign in Pekah's second year, implying an interregnum. The truth is that, far from an interregnum existing between Azariah's and Jotham's reigns, we have a definite statement that Jotham ruled for a period as coregent when his father became a leper (vs. 5). Besides, Hoshea's accession in the year 732/31 is spoken of as occurring in Jotham's twentieth year (vs. 30), bringing the time when Jotham began to reign, evidently as coregent, to the year 751/50. The synchronism of Jotham's accession for Pekah's second year thus refers to the beginning of his coregency in terms of Pekah's accredited reign thrown back to 752/51. The conclusion is that Jotham became coregent between Nisan and Tishri, 750. Another synchronism in terms of Pekah's usurped reign is that of Ahaz, whose accession is dated in the latter's seventeenth year (II Kings 16:1), which was 735/34. There were evidently scribes in the Judean court who sympathized with Pekah's attitude toward the house of Menahem.

Jotham is credited with a sixteen-year reign (II Kings 15:33). That these years were counted from the beginning of his coregency in 750, and not from his father's death in 740/39, is certain for the reason that Ahaz began his sixteen-year reign in 732/31, reckoning back from the beginning of the reign of his son Hezekiah, whose fourteenth year (18:13) was the year of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah, 701. But if Jotham reigned sixteen years from 751/50, Ahaz must have ascended the throne in 736/35 (counting no accession year for Jotham, since he came to the throne as coregent). This points to the same date that we have obtained on the basis of II Kings 16:1. Ahaz began to reign with his father (or instead of his father) between Nisan and Tishri, 735. Vss. 5-10 and parallel references in Chronicles and Isaiah inform us of Ahaz' collaboration with Tiglath-pileser III in that king's campaign against Philistia and Damascus (dated by the Eponym List in 734-732, as we have seen), and it was doubtless a pro-Assyrian party that forced Jotham to yield the throne at this time and considered this to be the end of his reign. The total length of Ahaz' reign was, however, counted from the beginning of his sole rule, beginning in the year of Jotham's death, 732/31; this reckoning was doubtless the work of anti-Assyrian scribes in Hezekiah's reign.

Hoshea, the last king of Israel, seized the throne in 732/31 and reigned nine years (II Kings 17:1). The beginning of Shalmaneser V's three-year siege of Samaria is dated in Hoshea's seventh year (18:9),

and Samaria's fall is dated in his ninth year (17:6; 18:10). According to this reckoning Samaria fell in 723/22, Shalmaneser's last year.

The biblical text asserts that Shalmaneser captured Samaria (II Kings 18:9-10). However, the Khorsabad texts of his successor, Sargon II, definitely claim the fall of Samaria for Sargon's accession year, 722/21, and this is the date that has been generally accepted for this momentous event. If Samaria fell in 722/21, it is obvious that there are errors in the biblical text. There are reasons, however, to doubt Sargon's claim. The first is that this king does not mention the capture of Samaria in his early annals; he boasts of this success only in the inscriptions in his palace at Khorsabad, which he completed shortly before his death. Moreover, the Babylonian Chronicle 1.28 (a more disinterested witness) claims the capture of Samaria for Shalmaneser. Even more important, the Eponym List mentions the repair of a temple as the memorable event of Sargon's accession year, 722/21, while listing a campaign against a city whose name is unfortunately lost for the last three years of Shalmaneser's reign, 725-723. There can be little doubt that the city in question was Samaria, and that therefore this city actually fell in 723/22. It is, of course, possible that Sargon took part in the Samaria campaign as a leading general, and this would be sufficient justification in his own mind for claiming it as an achievement of his own reign, which began so soon afterward.

All the biblical and Assyrian dates for the period of the Divided Monarchy have now been fitted into a harmonious pattern, with the exception of the following four: Hoshea's accession in the twelfth year of Ahaz (II Kings 17:1); Hezekiah's accession in the third year of Hoshea (18:1); Hezekiah's fourth year equivalent to Hoshea's seventh (18:9); Hezekiah's sixth year equivalent to Hoshea's ninth (18:10). It is obvious that these synchronisms threaten to upset the chronology which has here been worked out. As a matter of fact, they have caused endless trouble for generations of biblical chronologists. There is, however, a significant consistency about these four figures: they all pertain to Hoshea's reign; the figure for Hoshea is twelve years too low; the figures for Ahaz and Hezekiah are thirteen years too high. They are therefore best explained as a late and mistaken calculation by an editor who did not understand the correct method of figuring the twenty accredited years of Pekah (15:27). This editor failed to realize that Pekah had usurped the twelve years of Menahem and Pekahiah, and hence he placed the events of Hoshea's reign twelve years too late. He evidently did have reliable data indicating when Ahaz and Hezekiah began their reigns, but since these Judean kings followed a Tishri rather than a Nisan year, he placed their reigns thirteen years too high in relation to the reign of Hoshea.

*d. From the fall of Samaria to the Babylonian exile.* The campaign of SENNACHERIB against Hezekiah in the year 701 has already been mentioned. Since this took place in Hezekiah's fourteenth year (II Kings 18:13), we see that this king began to reign in 716/15. This accords with the description in II Chr. 29 of a Passover celebration in his first year, which implies that Samaria had already fallen. It is further

attested by other figures concerning Hezekiah's reign. II Kings 18:2 states that he ruled twenty-nine years, thus for fifteen years after his contact with Sennacherib in 701. This is the exact length of time that was promised to him after he became sick during the siege of Jerusalem (20:6).

There has been considerable discussion of whether Sennacherib made one or two campaigns against Judah, because of the mention of the Ethiopian king TIRHAKAH in II Kings 19:9. Recent research has dated the beginning of Tirhakah's reign in 690/89, so that if Sennacherib came into conflict with him during Hezekiah's reign, this must have been *ca.* 688.

Between Hezekiah's accession in 716/15 and Jehoiachin's captivity in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar, 597 (II Kings 24:12), there are recorded seven reigns with a total of 128 years and 6 months. This is almost 11 years too long. Once again we face the alternative of errors in the record or of a coregency. In the face of the amazing accuracy of the chronological figures so far examined, it is not easy to assume an error. But if a coregency existed, who was it that shared his father's throne? Because there are no direct hints in the record, we must arrive at an answer by elimination. It was not Amon, Jehoahaz, or Jehoiachin, because their three reigns were too short, nor could it have been Josiah or Jehoiakim, whose reigns came between these three.

We have, as a matter of fact, definite dates for the accession of Josiah and of Jehoiakim. Both dates can be deduced from Jer. 25:1-3, which states that the fourth year of Jehoiakim was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, and that Jehoiakim's fourth year came twenty-three years after Jeremiah's call in the thirteenth year of Josiah. These two synchronisms appear to have come from different hands, because they have been calculated by different methods. Since Nebuchadnezzar's first official year began in Nisan, 604, this would synchronize with part of Jehoiakim's fourth year, which began, however, in Tishri, 605, according to the established method for Judean kings. We may conclude from this that Jehoiakim's accession occurred in 609/08. Jeremiah's twenty-third year was apparently reckoned on a Nisan basis, beginning in 605. Thus his first year was in 627/26, Josiah's thirteenth year was in 628/27, and Josiah's accession was in 641/40. Amon's two-year reign began in 643/42.

We have now narrowed down the period of uncertainty to two reigns. Hezekiah came to the throne in 716/15, and Manasseh died in 643/42. In this period of seventy-three actual years the eighty-four accredited years must lie. Unless the figures are in error, there is no escape from the conclusion that Manasseh shared his father's throne eleven years, beginning in 697/96. A likely reason for this would be Hezekiah's probably chronic sickness and his knowledge of impending death. Even though his son was only twelve years old when Hezekiah placed him beside him (II Kings 21:1), we can readily understand this doomed man's taking such a precaution to ensure the continuation of his line.

For the chronology of Judah's last years there are three important Babylonian dates. The first is the siege of Harran from Tammuz to Elul, 609, Nabopolassar's seventeenth year. A cuneiform document

and Samaria's fall is dated in his ninth year (17:6; 18:10). According to this reckoning Samaria fell in 722/21, Shalmaneser's last year.

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All the biblical and Assyrian dates for the period of Divided Monarchy have now been fitted into a harmonious pattern, with the exception of the following four: Hoshea's accession in the twelfth year of Ahaz (II Kings 17:1); Hezekiah's accession in the fourth year of Hoshea (18:1); Hezekiah's fourth year equivalent to Hoshea's seventh (18:9); Hezekiah's fifth year equivalent to Hoshea's ninth (18:10). It is doubtful that these synchronisms threaten to upset the chronology which has here been worked out. As a matter of fact, they have caused endless trouble for generations of biblical chronologists. There is, however, a significant consistency about these four dates: they all pertain to Hoshea's reign; the figure for Hoshea is twelve years too low; the figures for Ahaz and Hezekiah are thirteen years too high. They therefore best explained as a late and mistaken calculation by an editor who did not understand the correct method of figuring the twenty accredited years of Pekah (15:27). This editor failed to realize that Pekah had usurped the twelve years of Ahaz and Pekahiah, and hence he placed the dates of Hoshea's reign twelve years too late. He evidently did have reliable data indicating when Ahaz and Hezekiah began their reigns, but since the Judean kings followed a Tishri rather than a Nisan year, he placed their reigns thirteen years too high in relation to the reign of Hoshea.

1. *From the fall of Samaria to the Babylonian exile.* A campaign of Sennacherib against Hezekiah in year 701 has already been mentioned. Since this took place in Hezekiah's fourteenth year (II Kings 18:13), we see that this king began to reign in 726/15. This accords with the description in II Chr. of a Passover celebration in his first year, which implies that Samaria had already fallen. It is further

attested by other figures concerning Hezekiah's reign. II Kings 18:2 states that he ruled twenty-nine years, thus for fifteen years after his contact with Sennacherib in 701. This is the exact length of time that was promised to him after he became sick during the siege of Jerusalem (20:6).

There has been considerable discussion of whether Sennacherib made one or two campaigns against Judah, because of the mention of the Ethiopian king Tirhakah in II Kings 19:9. Recent research has dated the beginning of Tirhakah's reign in 690/89, so that if Sennacherib came into conflict with him during Hezekiah's reign, this must have been ca. 688.

Between Hezekiah's accession in 716/15 and Jehoiahin's captivity in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar, 597 (II Kings 24:12), there are recorded seven reigns with a total of 128 years and 6 months. This is almost 11 years too long. Once again we face the alternative of errors in the record or of a coregency. In the face of the amazing accuracy of the chronological figures so far examined, it is not easy to assume an error. But if a coregency existed, who was it that shared his father's throne? Because there are no direct hints in the record, we must arrive at an answer by elimination. It was not Amon, Jehoahaz, or Jehoiahin, because their three reigns were too short, nor could it have been Josiah or Jehoikim, whose reigns came between these three.

We have, as a matter of fact, definite dates for the accession of Josiah and of Jehoikim. Both dates can be deduced from Jer. 25:1-3, which states that the fourth year of Jehoikim was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, and that Jehoikim's fourth year came twenty-three years after Jeremiah's call in the thirteenth year of Josiah. These two synchronisms appear to have come from different hands, because they have been calculated by different methods. Since Nebuchadnezzar's first official year began in Nisan, 604, this would synchronize with part of Jehoikim's fourth year, which began, however, in Tishri, 605, according to the established method for Judean kings. We may conclude from this that Jehoikim's accession occurred in 609/08. Jeremiah's twenty-third year was apparently reckoned on a Nisan basis, beginning in 605. Thus his first year was in 627/26, Josiah's thirteenth year was in 628/27, and Josiah's accession was in 641/40. Amon's two-year reign began in 643/42.

We have now narrowed down the period of uncertainty to two reigns. Hezekiah came to the throne in 716/15, and Manasseh died in 643/42. In this period of seventy-three actual years the eighty-four accredited years must lie. Unless the figures are in error, there is no escape from the conclusion that Manasseh shared his father's throne eleven years, beginning in 697/96. A likely reason for this would be Hezekiah's probably chronic sickness and his knowledge of impending death. Even though his son was only twelve years old when Hezekiah placed him beside him (II Kings 21:1), we can readily understand this doomed man's taking such a precaution to ensure the continuation of his line.

For the chronology of Judah's last years there are three important Babylonian dates. The first is the siege of Harran from Tammuz to Elul, 609, Nabopolassar's seventeenth year. A cuneiform document

Table 5  
Chronology of Judah, 716-561 a.c.

Scripture References	Rulers and Important Events (Tishri Years p/d)	Dates a.c.	Dated Foreign Contacts
cf. II Kings 18:13	HEZEKIAH	716/15	
II Kings 18:2; II Chr. 29:1	King 29 years		
II Chr. 29:3 ff	Passover in 1st year	715/14	
II Kings 18:13; Isa. 36:1	Jerusalem besieged, 14 Hezekiah	701	Sennacherib's invasion
II Kings 20:6; Isa. 38:5	Hezekiah sick; he lives 15 more years		
II Kings 21:1; II Chr. 33:1	Manasseh coregent; total reign 55 years	697/96	
II Kings 19:9; Isa. 37:9		688?	Sennacherib against Tirhakah
II Kings 19:37	MANASSEH, sole reign	687/86 681	Esarhaddon king of Assyria
II Kings 21:19; II Chr. 33:21	AMON King 2 years	643/42	
II Kings 22:1; II Chr. 34:1	JOSIAH King 31 years	641/40	
II Chr. 34:3	First reform in 12th year	629/28	
Jer. 25:1-3; 1:2	Jeremiah's call in 13 Josiah; 23 years until 4 Jehoikim (Nisan reckoning)	627	
II Kings 22:3; 23:23; II Chr. 34:8; 35:19	Finding of Law scroll; second reform in 18th year	623/22	
II Kings 23:29; II Chr. 35:20 ff	Death at Megiddo	609	Neco at Harran, Tammuz to Elul
II Kings 23:31; II Chr. 36:2	JEHOAHAZ King 3 months	Tammuz, 609	
II Kings 23:36; II Chr. 36:5	JEHOIAKIM King 11 years	Tishri, 609	
Jer. 46:2	4 Jehoikim (Nisan reckoning)	605	Battle of Carchemish
		Sept. 7, 605	Nebuchadnezzar's accession, 1 Elul
Jer. 25:1	Jeremiah's 23rd year, 4 Jehoikim, 1 Nebuchadnezzar	604/03	Nebuchadnezzar's first official year
II Kings 24:1	3 years' subservience to Babylon		
II Kings 24:8; II Chr. 36:9	JEHOIACHIN King 3 months (plus 10 days?)	Dec., 598	
Jer. 52:28	Jerusalem captured, 7 Nebuchadnezzar	Mar. 16 (2 Adar), 597	
II Kings 24:12; cf. Ezek. 40:1	Jehoiachin's deportation, 10 Nisan of 8 Nebuchadnezzar	Apr. 22, 597	
II Kings 24:18; Jer. 52:1; II Chr. 36:11	ZEDEKIAH King 11 years	597	

Based on the chronology of Edwin R. Thiele

Table 5 (continued)

Scripture References	Rulers and Important Events (Tishri Years p/d)	Dates B.C.	Dated Foreign Contacts
II Kings 25:1; Jer. 39:1; 52:4; Ezek. 24:1-2 Jer. 32:1	Jerusalem besieged on 10 Tebeth of 9 Zedekiah	Jan. 15, 588	
II Kings 25:3-4; Jer. 39:2; 52:6-7 II Kings 25:8; Jer. 52:12; cf. 52:29 Jer. 41:1 ff	Jerusalem under siege during 10 Zedekiah, 18 Nebuchadrezzar The wall is breached, 9 Tammuz of 11 Zedekiah The city and temple are burned on 7 (10) Ab, 11 Zedekiah, 19 (18) Nebuchadrezzar Second deportation Gedaliah's murder in 7th month	587 July 19, 586 Aug. 15, 586	
Ezek. 33:21	News of the fall of Jerusalem reaches the exiles on 5 Tebeth of 12th year of Jehoiachin's captivity (Nisan reckoning)	Sept.-Oct. 586 Jan. 8, 585	
Jer. 52:30 Ezek. 40:1	Third deportation in 23 Nebuchadrezzar Vision of new temple, 10 Nisan of 25th year of Jehoiachin's captivity, 14th of the destruction of the temple (Nisan reckoning)	582/81 Apr. 18, 573	
II Kings 25:27; Jer. 52:31	Jehoiachin released from prison on 27 Adar of the 37th year of his captivity, in accession year of Amel-Marduk (Evil-merodach)	Mar. 21, 561	

mentions that an Egyptian army joined with the Assyrians in this attack upon the Babylonian garrison. The king of the Egyptians was no other than the Neco who killed Josiah at Megiddo while marching to the Euphrates (II Kings 23:29), and who was back in Palestine three months later to set Jehoahaz off the throne of Judah (vs. 31-34). Since Tammuz to Elul is exactly three months, it is almost certain that Josiah's death occurred shortly before the siege of Haran in 609.

A second date is that of Nebuchadrezzar's victory over Neco at Carchemish. This is now definitely known to be 605, in Nabopolassar's twenty-first year, which was also the accession year of Nebuchadrezzar. Jer. 46:2, which speaks of this battle, evidently reckoned Jehoiakim's fourth year, with which it is synchronized, upon the Nisan basis used by Jeremiah in the passage mentioned above.

A third date is that of Nebuchadrezzar's first capture of Jerusalem and deportation of Jehoiachin. We now know definitely that this occurred on the second of Adar in Nebuchadrezzar's seventh year, March 16, 597. It is true that II Kings 24:12 speaks of Jehoiachin's captivity beginning in Nebuchadrezzar's eighth year; but since Adar is the last month of the year, the actual deportation, which probably did not take place for several weeks, may have occurred after the new year. Ezek. 40:1 indicates that Jehoiachin's captivity began on the tenth of Nisan, 597.

The important features of the period from Josiah's death to the Exile are accordingly as follows: Josiah died probably in Tammuz, 609, and was succeeded by Jehoahaz, who reigned until after Tishri of the same year. Thus the remaining months of 609 and 608 until the next Tishri counted as Jehoiachin's ac-

cession year. In 605 Nebuchadrezzar defeated Jehoiakim's ally Neco at Carchemish, and perhaps it was then that Nebuchadrezzar put Jehoiakim under tribute for three years (II Kings 24:1; cf. also Dan. 1:1). Shortly after the beginning of his eleventh year, in December, 598, Jehoiakim died and was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin (II Kings 24:6), who surrendered to Nebuchadrezzar, after ruling for only three months (vs. 8), on March 16, 597. Zedekiah then took the throne for eleven years (vs. 18). When he revolted, the Babylonian army again put Jerusalem under siege. This was on the tenth day of the tenth month in Zedekiah's ninth year, January 15, 588 (25:1). The wall was broken through on the ninth day of the fourth month of his eleventh year (vs. 3-4), and on the seventh day of the following month the temple was burned (vs. 8-9). A great deportation followed, as also the events recorded in chs. 39-42 of Jeremiah. After Jehoiachin had been a captive in Babylon thirty-seven years, during the latter part of which he was held in prison, he was released on the twenty-seventh of Adar in Amel-Marduk's accession year—i.e., shortly before the Nisan new year marking the official beginning of this new king's reign (II Kings 25:27).

There remains but one question more: in which year was Jerusalem destroyed? Formerly 586 was widely accepted as the year, because II Kings 25:8 places Jerusalem's fall in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar (cf. Jer. 32:1). But when 609 was shown to be the likely date of Josiah's death, Jehoiachin's captivity was most readily set in 598 and the fall of Jerusalem in 587. The three deportations mentioned in Jer. 52:28-30, synchronized for Nebuchadrezzar's seventh, eighteenth, and twenty-

Table 6  
Chronology of Postexilic Judaism, 539-4 a.c.

Scripture References	Dated Events and Native Rulers	Dates a.c.	Foreign Rulers
Ezra 1:1; I Chr. 36:22	Edict for return of exiles in 1st official year of Cyrus as ruler of Babylon	ca. 538	Cyrus (ruler of Babylon) 539-530
Ezra 3:6	The altar set up on 1 Tishri of 1st year of return	Sept., 538	
Ezra 3:8	Work begun on temple, Nisan of 2nd year	Mar.-Apr., 537 530-522 525	Cambyes
	Elephantine colony of Jews established in Egypt before Cambyes' conquest in this year	522-486	Darius I
Ezra 4:24; Hag. 1:1, 15 Ezra 6:15	Work on temple resumed in Elul of 2 Darius Temple finished, 3 Adar of 6 Darius	Aug.-Sept., 520 Mar. 12, 515 486-465	
Ezra 4:6	Opposition to the Jews	465-424	Artaxerxes I Longimanus
Ezra 4:7-23 Neh. 2:1; 5:14	Opposition to the Jews Nehemiah's first governorship, 20-32 Artaxerxes	445-433 432	
Neh. 13:6	Nehemiah's return to Persia in 32 Artaxerxes and second governorship	428	Xerxes II
Ezra 7:7	Ezra's return in 37 (MT 7) Artaxerxes	424-423 423-404 404-358 358-338 338-336 336-331 336-323	Darius II Artaxerxes II Mnemon Artaxerxes III Arses Darius III Codomannus Alexander the Great
	Fall of Tyre, end of Persian rule Palestine under the Ptolemies Beginning of Seleucid era	332 323-198 Oct., 312 223-187	
I Macc. 1:54	Persecution of the Jews and pollution of the temple on 15 Chislew, 145th year of Seleucid era	187-175 175-163	Antiochus III the Great Seleucus IV Antiochus IV Epiphanes
I Macc. 4:52	JUDAS MACCABEUS The temple purified on 25 Chislew, 148th year of Seleucid era	Dec., 167 166-160 Dec., 164	

Table 6 (continued)

Scripture References	Dated Events and Native Rulers	Dates B.C.	Foreign Rulers
I Macc. 10:21	JONATHAN High priest in Tishri, 160th year of Seleucid era	163-162	Antiochus V
		162-150	Demetrius I
		160-142	
		Sept.-Oct., 152	
		150-145	Alexander Balas
I Macc. 13:41	SIMON Recognized as legitimate ruler in 170th year of Seleucid era	145-142/1	Antiochus VI
		145-139/8	Demetrius II
		142-134	
		142	
		139/8-129	Antiochus VII, Sidetes
		134-104	
		104-103	
		103-76	
		76-67	
		67-63	
	JOHN HYRCANUS JUDAS ARISTOBULUS ALEXANDER JANNEUS ALEXANDRA ARISTOBULUS II Pompey takes Jerusalem HYRCANUS II ANTIGONUS MATTATHIAS HEROD THE GREAT	63	
		63-40	
		40-37	
		37-4	

third years, were taken as confirmation for these dates. Now, however, that Jehoiachin's surrender is definitely dated in Adar, 597, a 587 date for Jerusalem's destruction can be defended only on the unlikely supposition that II Kings (and parallel sources) dated Zedekiah's reign by Nisan years.

Actually there remains very little support for this supposition. It is true that we find Jeremiah reckoning by a Nisan new year (25:1; 46:2). This is also true of Ezekiel, but this fact cannot be adduced as support for 587, because if 587 were the year of Jerusalem's fall, Ezekiel's chronology would have to be based on Tishri years (this being the only likely explanation of Ezek. 33:21). The only data which still definitely favor the 587 date are the deportations mentioned in Jer. 52:28-30.

There is no sufficient reason to suppose that the writer or writers of the books of Kings, who had so long and consistently stuck to a Tishri reckoning for Judah, and who continued to reckon on this basis even for the date of Jehoiachin's release from prison long after the destruction of Jerusalem (II Kings 25:21), would at this one point in the records change to Nisan reckoning. There is then no reasonable escape from a 586 date for Jerusalem's fall. This is demanded by Ezek. 33:21, which employs Nisan reckoning to date the arrival of a messenger in Babylon with the tragic news of Jerusalem's fall, presumably only a few months after this event, in the twelfth year of Jehoiachin's captivity. It is also demanded by Nisan reckoning in Ezek. 40:1, which

dates the fourteenth year of Jerusalem's fall in the twenty-fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity.

It will be admitted that problems still remain in connection with the deportations of Jer. 52:28-30. It is very strange that this passage mentions so few captives, if these deportations are intended to represent those of Jehoiachin and of Zedekiah (cf. II Kings 24:14, 16; 25:11-12). Perhaps the captivity of the seventh year can be equated with that of 597, since we now know that Jehoiachin did surrender in Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year. But then we still have no adequate explanation for the deportation of Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth year. Perhaps these three deportations have been reckoned by antedating, a method which had been earlier used in Israel and Judah and which continued to be used at various times in parts of the ancient Near East.

4. After the return. For the chronology of the postexilic period it is not necessary to go into any detailed explanations. Although much of the OT was put into final form during this period, historical records pertaining to it are exceedingly few. The period between 515 and 445 and the period between 428 and ca. 175 are almost completely blank. Nonetheless, the general chronology of the period is well established from many reliable historical sources. The beginning of the Seleucid era in 312 B.C. was particularly important. For the few chronological details concerning postexilic times that have come down to us in the OT and the Apoc., see Table 6.

A vexed problem has long been the date of Ezra's

return. If Ezra returned in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I (Ezra 7:1), the date would be 458, and he would have preceded Nehemiah. But there are indications that the latter came to Jerusalem before Ezra; hence the seventh year of Artaxerxes II (397) has been proposed. This, however, separates Ezra completely from Nehemiah. Perhaps the best solution is to adopt the suggested reading that Ezra's return was in the thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes I, 428. See EZRA-NEHEMIAH.

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S. J. DE VRIES

**CHRONOLOGY OF THE NT, THE.** The dating of the events narrated in the NT is a frustrating task, partly because of the paucity of available information and partly because of the complications of the ancient CALENDAR.

Early Christian history was beneath the notice of the secular historians, the only exception being when Tacitus, describing the fire of Rome and the persecution which followed, remarks that the Christians derived their name from Christ, who was executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate (Ann. XV.44). Among the NT writers only Luke had any interest in relating Christian history to world history, and even the facts which he supplies cannot always be successfully translated into dates. The other writers occasionally make statements from which chronological inferences can be drawn, but in almost every case there is room for doubt or divergence of opinion.

From the time of Julius Caesar the Romans used a solar calendar with the year beginning on January 1, but they had no single system of regularly numbered years. The Roman numerals made the use of the era *ab urbe condita* too cumbersome for general use, and years were commonly identified either by

the names of the consuls or by the regnal years of the emperor, which were reckoned from the day of his accession and therefore did not coincide with the calendar year. The Jews used a lunar calendar, and a complicated series of calendar changes in the past had left them with two New Year's days, six months apart (R.H. 1.1). The ecclesiastical year, which was used for reckoning festivals and the reigns of Jewish kings, began on Nisan 1 (which could fall anywhere from early March to early April). The civil year, which was used for other purposes including the reigns of foreign kings, began on Tishri 1. The lunar year of approximately 354 days was kept in line with the seasons of the solar year by the periodic intercalation of a thirteenth month (Veadar) between Adar and Nisan.

These two reasons together mean that it is rarely possible to date any NT event with precision and certainty; we must be content, for the most part, with probabilities and approximations.

#### A. The life of Jesus

1. The Nativity
  - a. The death of Herod
  - b. The census
2. The age of Jesus
3. The beginning of the ministry
  - a. John the Baptist
  - b. The building of the temple
4. The duration of the ministry
5. The Crucifixion
  - a. Patristic evidence
  - b. The evidence of astronomy

#### B. The apostolic age

1. Absolute dating
  - a. The death of Herod Agrippa I
  - b. The famine
  - c. The edict of Claudius
  - d. The procuratorship of Gallio
  - e. The procuratorship of Festus
2. Relative dating, A.D. 30-50
3. Relative dating, A.D. 50-70

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**A. THE LIFE OF JESUS.** The gospels provide a small amount of chronological data for the life, ministry, and crucifixion of Jesus. For each period or event the evidence can be variously interpreted, and all the possibilities must be set out in full in the hope that the combined results will indicate which way the balance of probability lies.

1. The Nativity. a. *The death of Herod.* According to Matt. 2:1, Jesus was born during the reign of Herod the Great, and the stories of the wise men and the flight into Egypt seem to imply that he was at least two years old at the time of Herod's death. Luke is less definite on this point, but he does say that John the Baptist was less than six months older than Jesus and that the announcement of his birth to Zechariah came in Herod's reign (1:5).

Now Josephus tells us that Herod died in the thirty-seventh year after the decree of the Roman Senate which declared him king of Judea (40 B.C.), and in the thirty-fourth year after his actual assumption of power; that his last illness was immediately preceded by an eclipse of the moon; and that his death was closely followed by the Passover (Antiq.