

# The Perfect Harmony of the Numbers of the Hebrew Kings

*Scripture texts are from the King James Version of the Bible*

In the book *Adam When?*, calculations were made to provide an exact chronology from the year of creation (11,013 B.C.) to the laying of the temple foundation in 967 B.C. This was accomplished by carefully examining the Biblical record. Additionally, by God's mercy, the Biblical record of the chronology of the judges who judged Israel were ascertained. They judged Israel during the 360-year period from the time Israel came into the land of Canaan (1407 B.C.) until Saul was made king over Israel in the year 1047 B.C.

But what about the chronology of the kings who ruled over Israel? Does the Bible Give sufficient information so that we can determine an exact chronology of all the kings from the first king, Saul, to the last king, Zedekiah, who reigned until Jerusalem was completely destroyed by the Babylonians?

In this book, an endeavor is made to show that such a reconstruction of history is indeed possible. This is so because of the exquisite accuracy of God's Book, the Bible.

A book which sets forth an exact chronology of all the kings who ruled over Judah and Israel is not one that the average student of the Bible will find to be exciting reading. Who really is interested in which years Asa reigned over Judah or the time frame of Ahab's reign over Israel. Thus, it would appear that such a book has little to offer the reader and, therefore, is of insignificant importance.

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In actuality, however, a book detailing with great accuracy the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel is of great importance. This is so because there is probably no other body of Biblical citations that has done more to seem to invalidate the authority of the Bible than those pertaining to the duration of the reigns of these kings.

We read, for example, in one citation (II Chronicles 36:9) that Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign. Yet in another citation (II Kings 24:8), we read that he was 18 years old when he began to reign.

Or, for example, we read in I Samuel 13:1 that Saul was apparently one year old when he began to reign. Many more of these kinds of apparent errors can be cited in connection with the reigns of these kings.

The result of these apparent contradictions and errors is that a great many theologians have concluded that the numbers of the Bible are not accurate; they are not to be trusted. Perhaps they are not accurate, not because they were not accurate in the original manuscripts, but perhaps a scribe made an error in transcribing a later copy.

In any case, these apparent errors associated with the numbers of the Bible are very obvious and, therefore, they conclude that we cannot trust any numbers of the Bible.

If the ancient copies, from which we obtain our present Bible, are inaccurate insofar as the numbers of the Bible are concerned, then how can they be trusted concerning any part of the Bible.

This conclusion concerning the apparent inaccuracies of the numbers of the Bible destroys the authority of the whole Bible. If the ancient copies, from which we obtain our present Bible, are inaccurate insofar as the numbers of the Bible are concerned, then how can they be trusted concerning any part of the Bible. After all, numbers are words and the whole Bible consists of words. If some words of the Bible are not to be trusted, then how can we trust any words of the Bible. We thus can understand why so many Bible scholars do not trust the Bible. They like what they read when it pleases them, but a passage that does not please them can easily be set aside in their minds as having no binding authority.

Unfortunately, this undercurrent of mistrust is far more in place than we might think. So many preachers and teachers of the Bible stress that the Bible is the infallible, inerrant Word of God, yet in practice, they

subject themselves to the authority of the Bible only when it appears to agree with the theological ideas that they themselves or their church hold. But when the Bible appears to disagree with their theological position, the Biblical citation in question is disregarded or modified in their thinking so that it does agree with their theological position.

This kind of conduct is often consciously or unconsciously fostered and encouraged because they at some time in their studies have read commentaries that suggest the possibility of scribal error, particularly in connection with the numbers of the Bible.

Thus, we should readily understand that if it can be shown that there are no errors or contradictions regarding the numbers of the Bible, great strides will have been made in accepting the Bible as it should be accepted. There are no errors or real contradictions in the Bible. The whole Bible in the original languages is completely trustworthy. This includes every word whether it is a number or some other word.

The only errors that may be found will be those resulting from faulty translation into our present languages or because inferior Greek texts were used in translating the New Testament. Wonderfully, the King James translation has used the correct Greek copies.

So we should begin to understand that if any and all of the citations of the Bible that have any relationship to the chronologies of the kings of Judah and Israel can be accurately harmonized, a monumental source of potential mistrust of the Bible will have been removed.

So we should begin to understand that if any and all of the citations of the Bible that have any relationship to the chronologies of the kings of Judah and Israel can be accurately harmonized, a monumental source of potential mistrust of the Bible will have been removed. For this reason, the work done in preparing this book was done with great love and concern for the authority of the Bible.

Moreover, when each and every citation of the Bible that deals with the chronologies of the kings of Judah and Israel can be completely harmonized, the true believer is tremendously blessed. While he never doubted the perfect accuracy of the Word of God, to actually see this perfect accuracy exposed to his view is a wonderful encouragement. Indeed, this proves again that the Bible is God's Book. Only God could have crafted the Bible so that all of these apparent contradictions are not contradictions at all. And if these difficult numbers can be harmonized, then anything and everything in the whole Bible is in perfect harmony with everything else in the Bible.

We must bear in mind that the Bible was crafted by God. Each and every word, even each letter of each word, in the original languages was precisely what God desired. Because He is God, He could have designed the Bible so that any six-year-old child could clearly understand each and every teaching that God wished mankind to understand.

But God purposely wrote the Bible so that it would be difficult to discover many truths of the Bible. Jesus declares in

Mark 4:11-12:

And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: That seeing they may see, and not perceived; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

In Proverbs 25:2, He further declares:

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.

God declares in I Corinthians 2:11-14:

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

As we examine these three citations, we begin to understand that God purposely wrote the Bible to foster unbelief in the hearts of those who do not want the salvation of the Bible. For them, the Bible appears to contain errors, contradictions, and many things that apparently have no relationship to truth.

This, I believe, is the reason that the numbers that relate to the chronology of the kings of Judah and Israel so frequently to be in error.

But when we adopt Biblical principles, namely, that we are to trust that every word in the Bible in the original languages is God-breathed, that we are to compare Scripture with Scripture, and that we are to pray for wisdom, asking that the Holy Spirit will lead us into truth, then these supposed errors and contradictions will be eliminated. If they are not eliminated, it means that we must patiently wait upon God because ultimately they will be eliminated. This is so simply because the Bible is the Word of God.

Emphasis must be made once more: In trying to understand a difficult passage, we must never countenance the thought that perhaps a word or a phrase has been accidentally or purposely altered by a scribe in transcribing from one copy to another. We can rest assured that not only did holy men of old speak as God of the Holy Spirit moved them, but also God protected His Word so that it would be available in its pure form to succeeding generations.

### Basic Principles

Before we begin to develop the Biblical chronology of the kings of Judah and Israel, there are certain principles we must keep in mind. These principles are derived from the Bible as we compare Scripture with Scripture.

1. All of the Biblical data must be harmonized before an accurate chronological record can be established.
2. While most frequently a king ruled alone on the throne with no co-regency, there were kings who ruled under a co-regency with the previous king or a following king. In that case, the length of the reign of any king noted in the Bible can be:
  - a. The total length of reign including the time of co-regency with the previous king or a following king
  - b. The length of time he ruled alone, excluding the years of co-regency
  - c. The length of time he ruled as the dominant king even though a co-regency was in effect.
  - d. Of course, most frequently a king's reign did not include a co-regency.

Two methods of timekeeping were employed.

- a. The **first was the accession year system**. In this system, the first official year is the year following the year the king begins to reign. This first year was, therefore, the first full year of a king's reign. Thus, the last year of one king would not be the first official year of the next king; his first official year would be the year following the year the previous king died.
- b. **The second was the non-accession year system**. In this system, the first official year is the year the king begins to reign. Thus, the last year of one king would also be the first official year of the next king.

### Two Kinds of Timekeeping

The consequence of these two systems is that a king would officially reign one year longer by the non-accession year system than by the accession year system. The duration of each king's reign and each and every reference to a year within a king's reign must be examined from the standpoint of both systems in order to find harmony.

God carefully instructed us in the matter by an apparent contradiction that is recorded in connection with the reign of Ahaziah. We read in II Kings 8:25:  
In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign. But in II Kings 9:29 we read:  
And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah. How can this be if the Bible is without error?

### An Apparent Contradiction Helps Our Understanding

The apparently contradiction in these two verses is resolved if we look at the reign of Joram from the viewpoint of both systems. Chart 1 shows these reigns.

By looking at Chart 1, we can see why the year 842 B.C. is both the twelfth year of Joram and the eleventh year of Joram. It is the eleventh year by the accession year system, but it is the twelfth year by the non-accession year system.

Because God has given this apparent contradiction in connection with Joram's reign over Israel, we are able to harmonize many of the Biblical citations that otherwise would remain impossible to understand. Having been given this information concerning the reign of Joram, we now know that the Biblical record that gives the year of the reign of any king must be looked at both from the standpoint of the accession year system as well as from the standpoint of the non-accession year system.\*

In fact, we will find that in the nation of Judah, the duration of the reigns of every one of the kings was according to the accession year system.

In fact, we will find that in the nation of Judah, the duration of the reigns of every one of the kings was according to the accession year system. On the other hand, in the nation of Israel, the ten tribes, the duration of the reigns of the first eight kings was according to the non-accession year system and after this, all of the reigns were in accordance with the accession year system.

Nevertheless, when an event is recorded as having taken place in a certain year of a king, only by carefully harmonizing that particular event with all other events found in the Bible record of the king, can we know whether the year of the event was in accordance with the accession year system or the non-accession year system.

To say it in a different way: When an event is recorded as having taken place in a certain year of a king, was the numbering of that year started from the year he began to reign (non-accession year system), or was it started from the first full year of his reign (accession year system)? Either possibility existed and only by taking into account any other available applicable Biblical data can it be determined which numbering system was used by the citation in question.

For example, in **II Kings 15:22-23**, we read:

**And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead. In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years.**

\* See also page 34-35 where we learn that a citation concerning the reign of King Saul introduces us to the fact of an accession year system.

Later, when we harmonize this information with all other applicable Bible citations, we will find that the duration of the reign of Azariah (Uzziah), king of Judah, was according to the accession year system. And we will also find that the duration of the reigns of both Menahem, king of Israel, and his son, Pekahiah, were also according to the accession year system. Yet when we harmonize the above verses with all other applicable Biblical data, we will find that the fiftieth year of Azariah was his fiftieth year including the year that he became king. Thus, his fiftieth year was counted according to the non-accession year system, even though the total duration of his reign was according to the accession year system.

To further complicate matters, some of the kings were given two or even three names in the Bible. Thus, Joram is also name Jehoram. Azariah is also named Uzziah. Additionally, there were times when the kingdoms of Judah and Israel were very friendly with each other, even contracting marriages between the royal families. For example, Athaliah the daughter of Omri, king of Israel, married Jehoram, king of Judah (II Kings 8:25-26). Consequently, they gave identical names to some of their children. Thus, for example, from 853 B.C. to 842 B.C., Jehoram was the name of the king of Judah, and the king of Israel had the same name.

As we look at the foregoing principles, we can see why theologians have had a difficult time reconstructing the chronology of the kings of Judah and Israel. but God did not design the Bible to be easily understood. He wrote it so that the true believers must carefully search for truth, as God declares in Proverbs 25:2, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter."

This study is very important in that it shows in a fresh way the total dependability of the Bible. It shows that without any question the numbers and dates given in the Bible are entirely accurate.

Already we have begun to see that the development of the chronology of the kings of Judah and Israel appears quite complicated, in fact, so complicated that many readers might have difficulty following it. However, in spite of all of these difficulties and complications, by carefully comparing Scripture with Scripture, we shall be able to reconstruct with great exactness the chronological history of these two

nations. This study is very important in that it shows in a fresh way the total dependability of the Bible. It shows that without any questions the numbers and dates given in the Bible are entirely accurate. This fact gives further reassurance that every word in the Bible is absolutely trustworthy.

So we shall begin our study of the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel.

### Saul: The First King of Israel

Officially, Israel became a nation when Abraham was circumcised, and that was the year 2068 B.C. from 1877 B.C. to 1447 B.C., a period of 430 years, they were in Egypt. During this time, Israel grew into a nation of approximately two million people. After spending forty years wandering in the wilderness, they entered into the land of Canaan in the year 1407 B.C.

For the next 360 years, Israel was ruled over by men who were judges. However, in the year 1047 B.C., they rebelled against God and demanded a king like the kings who ruled the nations around them. God gave them a king, a man whose name was Saul.

Saul was killed in battle after a reign of forty years (Acts 13:21). Saul was followed by David, who also reigned for forty years (I Kings 2:11). During the last four years of his reign, David appointed his son Solomon to rule with him (I Kings 1:30-48). Solomon reigned for a total of forty years (I Kings 11:42), of which four years were in co-regency with David. Thus, King Saul reigned from 1047 to 1007 B.C. David reigned from 1007 to 967 B.C. Solomon reigned from 971 to 931 B.C.

### The Kingdom is Divided into Two Nations

The division of the kingdom of Israel was decreed before Solomon died. In his old age, Solomon's wives turned away his heart for other gods, so God took ten of the tribes from Solomon's son Rehoboam and gave them to another man, named Jeroboam (I Kings 11:4-13, 11:28-40). The nation of the two tribes was called Judah and the ten-tribe nation was called Israel.

Since Solomon died in the year 931 B.C., we know that the first year of his son Rehoboam, who ruled over Judah, was 931 B.C.

We can also know that the first year of Jeroboam, whom God appointed to rule over the ten tribes, was 931 B.C. In both instances, their first year by the non-accession year system was 931 B.C., while their first official year by the accession year system was the following year, 930 B.C. (see Chart 2). Remember that in the accession-year system the first full year of the reign of a king is counted as the first year of his reign. In the charts that are part of this study, the accession-year system is shown on the left side of heavy vertical lines. On the other hand, the non-accession-year system of counting the year the king began to reign is counted as the first year, is shown on the right side of the heavy vertical line (see Chart 2).

According to I Kings 14:21, Rehoboam reigned for seventeen years:

And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess.

Abijam his son reigned in his stead, I Kings 14:31:

And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. And Abijam his son reigned in his stead. According to I Kings 15:1-2, Abijam began to reign in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam and reigned for three years. Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah. Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom. When this information is harmonized with everything else the Bible offers on the subject, we find that the eighteenth year of Jeroboam was according to the non-accession year system (counting from the year he became king), the year 914 B.C. The seventeenth year of Rehoboam was according to the accession year system (counting from the first full year of his reign), which was also 914 B.C. Thus, the first year of Abijam was the year 914 B.C., according to the non-accession year system. According to the accession year system, his first full year of reign was 913 B.C. (see Chart 2).

In I Kings 15:8-9, we read that Asa the son of Abijam began to reign in the twentieth year of Jeroboam: And Abijam slept with his father; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah. When this is harmonized with all of the Biblical data, we discover that the twentieth year of Jeroboam that God had in

view was according to the accession year system (counting from the first full year). The twentieth year, which was 911 B.C., was the third year of the reign of Abijah according to the accession year system and was the first year of the reign of Asa according to the non-accession year system (counting from the year Asa became king). The following year, 910 B.C., became the first full year of Asa according to the accession year system (see Chart 3).

In I Kings 14:20 we read that Jeroboam reigned for twenty-two years:

And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead. In I Kings 15:25 the Bible declares that Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign in the second year of Asa and reigned over Israel two years:

And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years. To harmonize this information, we discover that the two years of Nadab were according to the non-accession year system as were the twenty-two years of Jeroboam, his father. The second year of Asa, when Nadab began to reign, was according to the non-accession year system.

From I Kings 15:28 we learn that in the third year of Asa, a contender for the throne of Israel, Baasha, killed Nadab and became king: "Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead." This was the year 909 B.C. as Chart 3 shows.

I Kings 15:33 indicates that Baasha reigned for twenty-four years: "In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years."

Again, we find that the third year of Asa was according to the non-accession year system.

### The Thirty-Sixth Year of Asa

In II Chronicles 16:1, we read an especially puzzling statement: "In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah."

When we examined the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel, we find that the last year of Baasha was 886 B.C., while the thirty-sixth year of Asa was 875 B.C., eleven years after Baasha died. How can this citation, which declares that Baasha came against Asa in Asa's thirty-sixth year, be harmonized?

... in this instance the thirty-sixth year of Asa was not the thirty-sixth year of his reign. Instead, it was the thirty-sixth year after the beginning of the reign of Rehoboam, when the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, became the nation of Judah.

It can be harmonized if we realized that in this instance the thirty-sixth year of Asa was not the thirty-sixth year of his reign. Instead, it was the thirty-sixth year after the beginning of the reign of Rehoboam, when the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, became the nation of Judah. Since Rehoboam began to reign in 931 B.C., the thirty-sixth year would have been the year 895 B.C. (931-36=895). Since Asa's first official year was 910 B.C., the year 895 B.C. was Asa's sixteenth year (see Chart 4).

Knowing this, we can harmonize several seemingly contradictory verses: I Kings 15:32, II Chronicles 14:1, and II Chronicles 15:19.

I Kings 15:32: And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

II Chronicles 14:1: So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years.

II Chronicles 15:19: And there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa. It appears that throughout the reigns of Asa and Baasha, there were enmity between them. However, there was a ten-year period during the early years of Asa's reign when relations between the two nations were quiet. In the sixteenth year of Asa, which was thirty-six years after Rehoboam became king, open warfare broke out between Asa and Baasha. This was brought about because many people of Israel were migrating into Judah. In II Chronicles 15:9-10, God speaks of Asa bringing together people from the nation of Israel into the nation of Judah:

And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. The fifteenth year was the thirty-fifth year since Judah began. This was the last year of the quiet ten years because the following year (thirty-sixth from the beginning of Judah), Baasha came

against Judah and built Ramah to stop the migration of people from Israel to Judah. We read in

**II Chronicles 16:1:**

In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

All of the Biblical citations, therefore, which speak of the thirty-fifth or the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa identify with the beginning of the nation of Judah in 931 B.C. when Rehoboam became king.

### **Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri**

Continuing our development of the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel, we read in

**I Kings 16:6** that Baasha died and his son Elah reigned: "So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead."

In **I Kings 16:8**, we read that it was in the twenty-sixth year of Asa that Elah began to reign over Israel, and he reigned for two years: "In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years."

Harmonizing the Biblical record, we find that Baasha died in the twenty-fourth year of his reign according to the non-accession year system, which was also the first year of his son, Elah, according to the same system, and the twenty-sixth year of Asa according to the same system (see Chart 5).

We then read in **I Kings 16:10** that Zimri killed Elah in the twenty-seventh year of Asa: "And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead."

We read in **I Kings 16:15-18** that Zimri reigned only seven days and was killed by Omri.

In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp. And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died. Harmonizing this information, we find that even as Jeroboam reigned over Israel for twenty-two years according to the non-accession system, Nadab for two years by the same system, and Baasha for twenty-four years by the same system, so, too, Elah reigned for two years by the same system. In the twenty-seventh year of Asa, by the same system, Elah was killed, Zimri reigned for seven days and was killed, and Omri began to reign (885 B.C.) (Chart 5).

### **Two Kings Reign Over Israel**

In **I Kings 16:23**, we have a citation that is very puzzling. We read that in the thirty-first year of Asa, Omri began to reign over Israel twelve years, six years at Tirzah: "In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah."

But from **I Kings 16:15-16**, we learned that Zimri was killed in the twenty-seventh year of Asa and Omri was made king. How can these seemingly conflicting statements be reconciled?

The solution is found in **I Kings 16:20-22**:

Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri. But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

In these verses we read that upon the death of Zimri there were two kings on the throne of Israel - Omri and Tibni. The capital at the time was a city name Tirzah. Remember that the previous kings of Israel all reigned in Tirzah (Baasha, twenty-four years in Tirzah, **I Kings 15:33**; Elah, two years in Tirzah, **I Kings 16:8**; and Zimri, seven days in Tirzah, **I Kings 16:15**). Omri also reigned in Tirzah, for six years (**I Kings 16:23**), but Tibni also started to reign when Omri began to reign. However, in the thirty-first year of Asa, the Bible informs us that Omri began to reign for twelve years.

When we harmonize this information, we find that Omri reigned a total of twelve years according to the same system, the non-accession system, by which all of the previous kings of Israel reigned.

When we harmonize this information, we find that Omri reigned a total of twelve years according to the same system, the non-accession system, by which all of the previous kings of Israel reigned. In the thirty-first year of Asa, by the accession year system, which coincided with the sixth year of Omri's reign

by the non-accession year system, Omri began to reign as sole king. Tibni, therefore, must have died the same year. This freed Omri so he was able to move the capital of Israel from Tirzah to Samaria. Thus, Omri began to reign in the year 885 B.C. In 880 B.C., he began to reign alone. His last year was the year 874 B.C. Of the next king of Israel, we read in

**I Kings 16:28-29:**

So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead. And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.

Harmonizing this information, we find that the thirty-eighth year of Asa, king of Judah, was according to the non-accession year system. In that year, Omri died and his son Ahab began to reign (see Chart 6).

#### **A Co-Regency of Asa and Jehoshaphat**

Continuing with the kings of Judah, we read in **I Kings 22:41-42:**

And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. Jehoshaphat was thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi.

When we harmonize this information, we learn that the fourth year of Ahab, according to the non-accession system (counting from the year Ahab became king), coincided with the beginning of Jehoshaphat's reign of twenty-five years, so that the first full year of the reign of Jehoshaphat, according to the accession year system, was the next year, 870 B.C. (Chart 7). However, since Jehoshaphat's father, Asa, reigned for forty-one years, and his forty-first year was 870 B.C., it means that Asa made his son Jehoshaphat to reign with him in the year before he died. This is understandable in the light of the information in **I Kings 15:23**. There we read that in his old age, he was diseased in his feet. **II Chronicles 16:12-13** graphically explains:

And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians. And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

So far, we might note, the length of reign of all the kings of Judah was counted by the accession year system, whereas the length of reign of all the kings of Israel was counted by the non-accession year system.

During the thirty-ninth year of Asa, his feet became greatly diseased so that the next year he made his son Jehoshaphat to reign with him. The following year, his forty-first year, he died (**II Chronicles 16:13**).

So far, we might note, the length of reign of all the kings of Judah was counted by the accession year system, whereas the length of reign of all kings of Israel was counted by the non-accession year system. Later, we will learn that when Jehoram the son of Ahab became king, both he and all the following kings of Israel counted the length of their reigns by the accession year system even as did the kings of Judah throughout Judah's history.

#### **A Co-Regency of Ahab and Ahaziah**

Returning to the kings of Israel, we read in **I Kings 22:40** and **I Kings 22:51:**

So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead... Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reign two years over Israel. When we harmonize this information, we discover that Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, began to reign in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat according to the accession year system. Since this was the twenty-first year of his father, Ahab, by the non-accession year system and since Ahab died in his twenty-second year, it means that Ahab made his son co-regent with him in the year before he died. Since his son Ahaziah reigned for two years, it means that Ahaziah died the same year Ahab died. This was the year 853 B.C. (see Chart 7), which is a very important year in helping us relate to Biblical calendar to the Julian calendar. We will address this matter later in our study (page 74).

Concerning the death of Ahaziah, we read in **II Kings**:

**II Kings 1:2:** And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease.

**II Kings 1:17:** So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah has spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son. We learn from these verses that Ahab's son Ahaziah, who had begun to reign with his father



the year before Ahab died, had an accident so that he died the same year his father died. Since Ahaziah did not have a son, his brother Jehoram, who was also the son of Ahab, began to reign. The beginning of the reign of Jehoram (Joram) over Israel was the second year, by the non-accession year system, of Jehoram, king of Judah.

In **II Kings 3:1**, we further read:

**Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years.**

Harmonizing this information, we discover that the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat was according to the accession year system. Thus, Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign in the year 853 B.C., the year Ahab died and the year Ahaziah died. Remember that Ahaziah was a son of Ahab and brother to Joram (see Chart 7). Remember that Ahaziah was a son of Ahab and brother to Joram. Joram or Jehoram reigned over Israel for twelve years.

At this juncture we will note something very interesting. Until Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign, the durations of the reigns of the kings of Israel were always reckoned by the non-accession year system. That is, the year they came to the throne was always counted as the first year. On the other hand, we might recall that all of the kings of Judah reigned in accordance with the accession year system so that the first full year of their reign was counted as the first year.

We will find that beginning with the reign of Jehoram (Joram) the son of Ahab, the duration of the reigns of the kings of Israel will be counted by the accession year system, the same system as that being used by the kings of Judah.

We will find that beginning with the reign of Jehoram (Joram) the son of Ahab, the duration of the reigns of the kings of Israel will be counted by the accession year system, the same system as that being used by the kings of Judah. Thus, from this time forward, the length of the reigns of the kings of Judah as well as the reigns of the kings of Israel will be counted in accordance with the accession year system.

### **A Jehoshaphat-Jehoram Co-Regency**

Returning now to the kings of Judah, we read in **II Chronicles 21:1 and 5**:

**Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And Jehoram his son reigned in his stead... Jehoram was thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.** To understand this citation, we must look very carefully at several other verses. We must first learn that Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, was killed the same year that Jehoram the son of Ahab was killed. We can then fit Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat into the chronological framework.

First, let us learn about the end of Jehoram, king of Judah, and the ascent of Ahaziah to the throne. In **II Chronicles 21:4**, we read of the wickedness of Jehoram:

**Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and divers also of the princes of Israel.** The term "risen up to the kingdom of his father" implies some kind of change in his reign over Judah. We harmonize all of the Biblical citations relation to Jehoram's reign over Judah, we will discover that for several years he had been co-regent with his father Jehoshaphat, but during the last four years of his father's reign, Jehoram had become the dominant king. The time he became the dominant king could have been when he "was risen up to the kingdom of his father," at which time he killed all of his brothers.

Because of Jehoram's great wickedness, God brought many terrible things into his life, including the fact that all of his sons except for the youngest, Jehoahaz (also called Ahaziah and Azariah) were killed by Arabians (II Chronicles 21:16-17). Following this, God struck him with an incurable disease so that at the end of two years, he died (II Chronicles 21:18-19). Upon his death, the people of Jerusalem made his son Ahaziah (Jehoahaz) king (II Chronicles 22:1).

In **II Kings 8:25-26a**, we read:

**In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign. Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem.**

We learn earlier that Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, which was the year 853 B.C. The twelfth year of Ahab's son Jehoram (Joram) was therefore either 842 B.C. or 841 B.C. Thus, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, must have begun to reign either in 842 B.C. or 841 B.C. We will learn that it was the year 842 B.C. (Chart 8).

We also learn from these verses that Ahaziah reigned for one year.

### Jehu Kills Two Kings

To continue, we must now look at the death of Ahaziah. His death took place at the same time that Joram, son of Ahab, was killed. Both of these kings were killed by Jehu, who would become the next king to reign over Israel. We read in II Kings 9:21, 24, and 27:

II Kings 9:21 And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth and Jezreelite.

II Kings 9:24 And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.

II Kings 9:27 But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. And they did do at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there.

Since all of the kings of Judah followed the accession year system, the year Jehoshaphat died would have been 846 B.C.

From these verses, we learn that Ahaziah, king of Judah, was killed at the same time as Joram, king of Israel, was killed. Since we have already learned that Joram, king of Israel, who was the son of Ahab, began to reign in the year 853 B.C. and reigned for twelve years, his twelfth year by the non-accession year system would have been 842 B.C., or by the accession year system, 841 B.C. Thus, since he was killed by Jehu at the same time that Ahaziah, king of Judah, was killed, we know that Ahaziah, king of Judah, was killed either in 841 or 842 B.C. (Chart 8). Later we will learn that it was in the year 841 B.C.

Additionally, we have learned that Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, began to reign in the year 871 B.C. and reigned for twenty-five years. Since all of the kings of Judah followed the accession year system, the year Jehoshaphat died would have been 846 B.C.

Before we attempt to harmonize all of the above, we should add one other Biblical citation. It is found in II Kings 8:16-17:

And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign. Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

Harmonizing all of these verses, we discover that in Judah there was a co-regency of Jehoshaphat and his son Jehoram, which had to have begun in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat according to the accession year system (Chart 8). Jehoram was a co-regent with his father Jehoshaphat until 846 B.C., when his father died. He continued to reign until 842 B.C., so that his total reign must have been twelve years according to the accession year system. His son Ahaziah began to reign in 842 B.C. upon his father's death and was killed the next year, 841 B.C., by Jehu.

From 849 B.C. until 846 B.C. (the year his father, Jehoshaphat died), Jehoram was the dominant king. These four years together with the four years he reigned alone add up to the eight years recorded in II Kings 8:16-17. They began in the fifth year according to the non-accession year of Joram (Jehoram), who was ruling over Israel in 849 B.C. Therefore, we have the citation of II Kings 8:16-17 that in the fifth year of Joram of Israel, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat began to reign. He had already been on the throne for several years as co-regent but in this year he became the dominant king. Thus, Joram of Israel began to reign in the second year of Jehoram of Judah's second year according to the non-accession year system (as II Kings 1:17 states), which was the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat according to the accession year system (see Chart 8).

Since Jehu killed both Ahaziah of Judah and Jehoram of Israel at the same time, it would have been in the year 841 B.C.

There is no discrepancy when we realize that the twelfth year was according to the non-accession year system, whereas the eleventh year was the same year, but figured according to the accession year system.

Interestingly, II Kings 8:25 records that it was in the twelfth year of Joram son of Ahab, king of Israel, that Ahaziah son of Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign, whereas in II Kings 9:29, we read that Ahaziah's reign began in the eleventh year of Joram, king of Israel. There is no discrepancy when we realize that the

twelfth year was according to the non-accession year system, whereas the eleventh year was the same year, but figured according to the accession year system.

### Ahaziah Age: 22 Years or 42 Years

A most puzzling pair of verses concerning Ahaziah are recorded in the Bible. In **II Kings 8:26**, we read: **Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri, king of Israel.**

But **II Chronicles 22:2**, concerning the same king of Judah, says:

**Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Athaliah the daughter of Omri.**

These two verses appear to be quite contradictory, but they can be harmonized perfectly.

How can this be? These two verses appear to be quite contradictory, but they can be harmonized perfectly.

We also learn from the Bible that the father of Ahaziah (also called Jehoash and Azariah) was Joram (also called Jehoram).

#### **II Kings 8:24-25:**

**And Joram [Jehoram] slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead. In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram [Joram] king of Judah begin to reign.** While Ahaziah became king of Judah because his father was king of Judah, his blood line reached into the kings of Israel through his mother, Athaliah, who was the daughter of Ahab, king of Israel. **II Kings 8:26** records, **"And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel."**

Omri was the father of Ahab and was the first king of Omri's dynasty that included Ahab and Ahab's son Joram. In **II Kings 8:27**, the Bible records that Ahaziah was "the son in law of the house of Ahab." The Hebrew word translated "son-in-law" literally means "related by marriage." Ahaziah was related by marriage to the house of Ahab because his father, King Joram of Judah, was married to the granddaughter of Omri, the father of Ahab. Thus, Ahaziah, though king of Judah, was also related to the dynasty of Omri, king of Israel.

Returning now to the two verses that appear to be contradictory, we find that they are identical except one gives the number 22 years and the other 42 years. Literally, these verses read, "A son of 22 (42) years was Ahaziah when he began to reign." This sentence structure is fairly often found in the Bible translated as these verses are translated. "A son of 22 years of Ahaziah when he began to reign" is translated "22 years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign."

But this language does not necessarily relate to the calendar age of the individual named. It can also relate to the dynasty of which he is a part. Ahaziah was actually a part of two dynasties. He was the blood line of David, whose dynasty began more than 150 years earlier, but he was also a son of the dynasty of Omri, whose first full year began 42 years earlier, in this year 884 B.C. (884-42= 842). Thus, we know that the 22 year citation (**II Kings 8:26**) relates to his age when he began to reign while the 42 year citation (**II Chronicles 22:2**) relates to the age of the dynasty of Omri, of which Ahaziah was a part and which began 42 years before Ahaziah began to reign. Thus, there is no contradiction in the teaching of these two verses.

Significantly, God named Jehu to destroy the whole house of Ahab (**II Kings 9:7-8a**). Because Ahaziah, even though he was king of Judah, was also the house of Ahab, he, too, was killed by Jehu. **II Chronicles 22:7-8:**

**And the destruction of Ahaziah was the God by coming to Joram: for when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. And it came to pass, that, when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them. The rest of the destruction of Ahaziah's line was by Athaliah who became queen of Judah when her son Ahaziah was killed.**

**II Chronicles 22:10: "But when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah."**

The only male in Ahaziah's family who escaped the sword was his baby son Joash. He was hidden away and did not become the next king of Judah until after Athaliah was killed. Joash was spared the sword

because of God's promise to David in II Kings 8:19:

Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him always a light, and to his children.

The information in II Chronicles 22:2 that ties Ahaziah's reign to the dynasty of a family that reigns in Israel helps us to understand a most puzzling verse concerning the reign of King Saul.

### Saul's Reign

The information in II Chronicles 22:2 that ties Ahaziah's reign to the dynasty of a family that reigns in Israel helps us to understand a most puzzling verse concerning the reign of King Saul who was the first king of Israel. His dynasty lasted only during the time of his reign because upon his death, the dynasty of the kings of Judah was that of the family of David.

We know from Acts 13:21 that Saul reigned for 40 years.

Acts 13:21: "And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years."

The only Old Testament citation that gives any detail concerning the time duration of the reign of Saul is in I Samuel 13:1: "Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel." This verse appears to say that Saul was one year old when he began to reign and he reigned for two more years. That conclusion is, of course, preposterous. In fact, many Bible scholars point to his verse as proof that the numbers recorded in the Bible are not trustworthy. But when we apply the knowledge we have received concerning the reign of Ahaziah, we can understand the truth of I Samuel 13:1.

Remember that there were two apparently contradictory citations concerning the reign of Ahaziah. In II Kings 8:26, we read that Ahaziah was 22 years of age when he began to reign (literally, a son 20 and 2 years was Ahaziah when he began to reign). But in II Chronicles 22:2, we learned that he was 42 years of age (literally, a son 40 and 2 years was Ahaziah when he began to reign). This apparent contradiction is harmonized in that the first citation indicates his age as 22 years when he began to reign, but the second citation indicates that it was 42 years earlier than the dynasty of the family of Omri began. Even though Ahaziah was a king who ruled over Judah, whereas Omri reigned over Israel, Ahaziah was tied into the dynasty of Omri because he was the son of King Joram of Israel who was married to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and granddaughter of Omri.

In I Samuel 13:1, we find the identical sentence structure to those verses that declare Ahaziah was a son of 22 years and a son of 42 years when he began to reign. Literally, I Samuel 13:1 says, "Son of a year Saul when he reigned." This is followed by the statement "and two years he reigned over Israel."

... so Saul's dynasty was one year old when Saul had been reigning for two years.

Because of what we learned from Ahaziah's reign, we can know that the phrase of I Samuel 13:1, "son of a year Saul when he reigned," could refer either to his age when he began to reign or to the beginning of the dynasty of which he was a part. Obviously, it could not be referring to his age because he was a grown man when he began to reign. Therefore, it must refer to the length of time since the beginning of the dynasty of which he was a part. That dynasty began when Saul began to reign because there was no king over Israel before him. Thus, even as the dynasty of Omri (which Ahaziah was related to because of his father's marriage to Omri's granddaughter), was 42 years old when Saul had been reigning for two years. This two-year reign is indicated by the language we read in I Samuel 13:1, which literally declares, "and two years he reigned over Israel."

But this sounds impossible. How could his dynasty be one year old when he had reigned for two years? The answer can be found if we remember that the kings of Judah all tied their reigns to the accession-year system. That is, the first legal year of their reign was the year during which they reigned a full year. If they became king the previous year but had not reigned a full year that year, the previous year was not counted.

Thus, Saul began to reign shortly after the first of the year. But his dynasty did not legally begin until the next year, which was the first full year that he reigned. Therefore, legally his dynasty was one year old when he had been on the throne almost two years.

In I Samuel 13:1, God is instructing us that the kings of Judah were to reign by the accession-year system in which the first full year of reign was to be counted as the first legal year of the king's reign.

In other words, in I Samuel 13:1, God is instructing us that the kings of Judah were to reign by the accession-year system in which the first full year of reign was to be counted as the first legal year of the king's reign.

It might be noted that the 42nd year of Omri's dynasty when Ahaziah began to reign is also counted by considering Omri's reign by the accession-year system. This is so even though the kings of Israel at that time of history counted their reigns by the non-accession-year system. As we learned earlier, Omri began to reign sometime during the year 885 B.C. but his first full year of reign was 884 B.C. And 42 years after 884 B.C., Ahaziah began to reign, in 842 B.C.

In conclusion, we have learned that these difficult verses are understandable when we carefully compare Scripture with Scripture. In fact, we learned that the accession-year system, by which the years of kings' reigns are counted from the first full year of the reign, began with the reign of Saul, the first king of Israel.

### Jehu Becomes King of Israel

Going on with the kings of Israel, we find that when Jehu killed Joram, king of Israel (II Kings 9:24), he became king, in 841 B.C. This year, like 853 B.C. (which was the last year of Ahab, king of Israel), is also a very important year because it helps to match the Biblical calendar with the secular or Julian Calendar (see page 74).

Concerning the death of Jehu, we read in II Kings 10:35-36: "And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead. And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty and eight years." These verses inform us that Jehu reigned for twenty-eight years and that his son Jehoahaz followed him (Chart 9). To help place these events in their proper place, we find the following information in

II Kings 11:1-3:

And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal. But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain; and they hid him, even him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain. And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land.

### Wicked Athaliah Reigns Over Judah

The Bible is showing us that when Jehu killed King Ahaziah of Judah in the year 841 B.C., Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, became the ruler of Judah. She attempted to remove all contenders to the throne by murdering all the royal seed. Only the baby Joash, the infant son of Ahaziah, escaped. In the seventh year, the priest Jehoiada brought Joash forth and had him crowned king.

II Kings 11:20-21:

And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king's house. Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign. Further help to harmonize this even with the reigns of the kings is found in

II Kings 12:1:

In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zibiah of Beer-sheba. In harmonizing these verses, we learn that Athaliah began to reign over Judah in 841 B.C., and Jehu began to reign over Israel in the same year.

In the seventh year of Jehu by the non-accession year system, which was the sixth year of Athaliah's reign over Judah by the accession year system, Athaliah was killed and Joash, who was also called Jehoash, began to reign. He reigned for forty years, and thus, he began to reign in the year 835 B.C.

The next citation we will read are in II Kings 10:35-36 and II Kings 13:1:

II Kings 10:36-36: And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead. And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty and eight years.

II Kings 13:1: In the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years. Jehu reigned for twenty-eight years, in accordance with the accession year system. Upon his death, in 813 B.C., his son Jehoahaz began to reign and reigned for seventeen years over Israel. Thus, the seventeenth year of Jehoahaz, according to the accession year system, was 796 B.C. Jehoahaz began to reign in the

twenty-third year of the reign of Judah's King Joash. The twenty-third year was in accordance with the non-accession year system (see Chart 10).

Continuing to look at the kings of Israel, we look next at **II Kings 13:9-10**, where the Bible reports: **And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead. In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years.**

In the thirty-seventh year of Judah's King Joash, in accordance with the accession year system, Jehoash (Joash) the son of the Israelite King Jehoahaz began to reign. This was the year 798 B.C. He reigned for sixteen years. This means that Jehoash reigned for three years as co-regent with his father Jehoahaz and his last year was sixteen years later in 782 B.C.

In **II Kings 14:1-2** we read that Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, began to reign in the second year of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, and reigned for twenty-nine years.

In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah. He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoiada of Jerusalem. The second year of Jehoash (Joash) was the second full year, the same year his father Jehoahaz died, which was the year 796 B.C. Since the last year of King Joash of Judah was 795 B.C., it means that the year before King Joash of Judah died, he made his son Amaziah co-regent with him. Thus, we know that Amaziah began to reign in the year 796 B.C. His twenty-ninth year would, therefore, have been the year 767 B.C.

To establish the reigns of the next king, following Amaziah of Judah, and the next king, following Jehoash of Israel, requires that we harmonize a number of verses.

#### **Joash, Amaziah, Azariah - Jehoash, Jeroboam**

To establish the reigns of the next king, following Amaziah of Judah, and the next king, following Jehoash of Israel, requires that we harmonize a number of verses. In **II Kings 14:15-16**, we read that Jehoash of Israel died and his son Jeroboam reigned.

**II Kings 14:15-16:** Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? **And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead.** In the following verse, we read that Amaziah, king of Judah, lived for fifteen years after the death of Jehoash, king of Israel (Chart 11).

**II Kings 14:17:** **And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years.** In **II Kings 14:18-21**, we read that King Amaziah of Judah was killed by his people and Azariah (also called Uzziah) was made king.

In **II Kings 14:18-21:** **And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he fled to Latish; but they sent after him to Latish, and slew him there. And they brought him horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.**

And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. According to these verses, Azariah was sixteen years old when he began to reign. This is echoed by the citation of **II Kings 15:1-2**, where we read that he began to reign in the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam, the king of Israel. He was sixteen years old when he began to reign and he reigned for fifty-two years.

**II Kings 15:1-2:**

In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign. Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, (Chart 11) and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zechariah of Jerusalem. In **II Kings 15:8**, we read that in the thirty-eighth year of Azariah, king of Judah, Zachariah the son of Jeroboam, king of Israel, began to reign, and he reigned for six months (Chart 12,).

**II Kings 15:8:** In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months.

Zachariah was followed by Shallum, who was not of Jerboa's family, who reigned for one month during Azariah's thirty-ninth year.

**II Kings 15:10:** **And Shallum the son of Jabs conspired against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.**

**II Kings 15:13:** **Shallum the son of Jabs began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria.**

With this much information, we can now harmonize the reigns of the Jewish king Joash, Amaziah, and Azariah. We can also harmonize the reigns of these kings of Israel: Jehoash, Jeroboam, Zachariah, and Shallum.

As we have already learned, Amaziah of Judah was made king one year before his father, King Joash of Judah, died in his fortieth year of reign. In Amaziah's seventh year (his eighth year counting the year he was made king), Azariah (Uzziah) became co-regent with him. This was 789 B.C. (Chart 11).

The occasion for the beginning of this co-regency between Azariah and his father Amaziah is given in II Kings 14:8-14. In these verses we read that Amaziah foolishly insisted on fighting with Jehoash the king of Israel. The consequence was the defeat of Amaziah and the plundering of Jerusalem. We read in verse 13 and 14: "And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah... and came to Jerusalem and brake down the wall of Jerusalem... and he took all the vessels that were found in the house of the Lord... and hostages..."

From Chart 13 we see that this information can be harmonized with the reign of these kings. Undoubtedly in the seventh year of Amaziah which was the ninth year of Jehoash this foolish action took place. It surely was at this time that "the people of Judah took Azariah, which was sixteen years old and made him king instead of his father Amaziah" because of the king of Israel. Jehoash had taken King Amaziah (II Kings 14:13) temporarily as a hostage. Thus, at this time a co-regency began.

Azariah continued to be co-regent with his father Amaziah until 767 B.C., when the people of Judah killed Amaziah so that his son Azariah (Uzziah) would be sole ruler. Azariah's rule began in the year 789 B.C., when he was made co-regent with his father, and extended over a period of fifty-two years, his last year being 737 B.C. His father, Amaziah, who was killed in the year 767 B.C., lived for fifteen years after the death of Jehoash, king of Israel, who died in the year 782 B.C. ( $782-767=15$ ), as declared in II Kings 14:17.

This means that Jeroboam reigned as co-regent with his father Jehoash for the first ten years of his forty-one year reign (Chart 11).

Harmonizing the kings of Israel, we learned from II Kings 15:1 that in the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam of Israel, Azariah began to reign. The first full year that Azariah of Judah reigned alone was the year 766 B.C., the year following the death of his father Amaziah. Thus, the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam, counting from the year he began to rule (by the non-accession year system), was the year 766 B.C. This means that he had begun to rule twenty-six years earlier, which was the year 792 B.C. But 792 B.C. was the sixth official full year (by the accession year system) of Jehoash, king of Israel, who was Jerboa's father. This means that Jeroboam reigned as co-regent with his father Jehoash for the first ten years of his forty-one year reign (Chart 11).

Therefore, the first full year of Jeroboam as sole ruler was the year 781 B.C., which was the fifteenth year of Amaziah, king of Judah, as II Kings 14:23 declares: "In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years."

Since Jeroboam, king of Israel, began to reign in the year 792 B.C., and he reigned for forty-one years, he died in the year 751 B.C. In the year he died, his son Zachariah became king and was king for six months in the thirty-eighth full year (accession year system) of Azariah (Uzziah) of Judah. The thirty-eighth year of Azariah was 751 B.C., which coincides with the year Jeroboam died (Chart 13).

### **Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem**

Zechariah reigned over Israel for only six months during the thirty-eighth year of Azariah (II Kings 15:8), and was followed by Shallum, who reigned over Israel only one month during the thirty-ninth year of Azariah (II Kings 15:13). The Jewish year begins in the month of Nissan, which is March or April of our year.

Therefore, Zechariah's six-month reign over Judah must have ended just before the first of Nisan in the year 780 B.C. inasmuch as the one-month rule of Shallum was in the thirty-ninth year of Azariah, which began the first of Nisan. Thus, Zechariah would have begun his reign late in 751 B.C. of our calendar and continued to March or April of 750 B.C. Shallum's reign of one month would definitely have been in 750 B.C.

We are not ready to examine a few more Biblical citations as we continue our reconstruction of the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel.

In II Kings 15:13-14, we read that Menahem killed Shallum and became king of Israel. Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria. For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

From II Kings 15:17, we learn that this event happened in the thirty-ninth year of Azariah, king of Judah, and that Menahem ruled over Israel for ten years.

II Kings 15:17: In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria. We have learned that the thirty-ninth full year (accession year system) of Azariah was 750 B.C.; thus, we know that Menahem began to rule in the year 750 B.C. We will discover that the ten years of his reign are reckoned by counting from the first full year of his reign, so his tenth year of reign would have been 740 B.C. (Chart 14).

Going on with the Biblical citations that help us learn about the king of Israel, we read in II Kings 15:22-23 that Menahem died in the tenth year of his reign over Israel and was succeeded by his son Pekahiah, who began his reign in the fiftieth year of Azariah, king of Judah, and reigned over Israel for two years:

And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead. In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years.

We find harmony when we realize that the fiftieth year of Azariah that is in view is the fiftieth year counting from the year Azariah began to reign over Judah (non-accession year system).

We find harmony when we realize that the fiftieth year of Azariah that is in view is the fiftieth year counting from the year Azariah began to reign over Judah (non-accession year system). This is the year 740 B.C., which is also the year Menahem died.

Next, we read in II Kings 15:25 that a captain of Pekahiah's army, named Pekah, revolted against Pekahiah and killed him. We read further in II Kings 15:27 that this was the fifty-second year of Azariah (Chart 14), king of Judah, and that Pekah reigned for twenty years.

II Kings 15:25: But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the kings house, with Argob and Arieah, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room.

II Kings 15:27: In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years.

Harmonizing this information, we learn that Pekahiah began to reign in 740 B.C. and was killed two years later, in 738 B.C., which was also the year Pekah began to reign. The year 738 B.C. was the fifty-second year of Azariah, king of Judah, counting from the year Azariah began to reign, 789 B.C. (non-accession year system).

As we continue to examine the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel, we see in

II Kings 15:32-33 that in the second year of Pekah, king of Israel, Jotham the son of Uzziah (Azariah) began to reign. He reigned for sixteen years.

II Kings 15:32-33: In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign. Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok.

On the other hand, we read in II Kings 15:30 that Hoshea killed Pekah, king of Israel, in the twentieth year of Jotham, king of Judah:

And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah. When we harmonize these Scripture verses, we find that Pekah began to reign in the year 738 B.C. In his second year, counting from the year he became king of Israel, Jotham, who had begun the previous year to reign as co-regent with his father Uzziah, now began to reign alone as king. It becomes clear that Uzziah made his son Jotham rule with him the year before Uzziah died. According to II Chronicles 26:16-23, near the end of Uzziah's reign, he arrogantly attempted to burn incense in the temple. For this sin, he immediately became leprous. We read in verse 21:

And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

Harmonizing this information with the fact that in the second year of Pekah, Jotham began to reign, we can understand that during the last year of Uzziah, his fifty-second by the accession year system,



Jotham his son began to reign as if he alone were the king.

Harmonizing this information with the fact that in the second year of Pekah, Jotham began to reign, we can understand that during the last year of Uzziah, his fifty-second by the accession year system, Jotham his son began to reign as if he alone were the king.

The twentieth year of Jotham by accession year reckoning was 718 B.C., which was also the twentieth year of Pekah, who was succeeded as king over Israel by Hoshea.

To understand and harmonize the citation of II Kings 15:32-33, where it indicates that Jotham reigned for sixteen years, we need more information. This is given to us in II Kings 16:1-2, where we read that in the seventeenth year of Pekah, Ahaz the son of Jotham began to reign over Judah. He reigned for sixteen years. **II kings 16:1-2:**

**In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign. Twenty years old was Ahaz when he begin to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father.** The seventeenth year of Pekah, counting from the first full year (accession year system) of his reign, was 721 B.C., but the seventeenth year of Pekah was also the seventeenth year of Jotham. Therefore, some kind of co-regency existed between Jotham and Ahaz as they ruled over Judah.

We can learn more about his co-regency from the information given in II Kings 17:1, where we read that Hoshea began to reign over Israel in the twelfth year of Ahaz, king of Judah, with Hoshea ruling for nine years: "In the twelfth year of Ahaz, king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years" (\*chart 15, pg. 53\*).

We have already learned that Hoshea killed Pekah in the year 718 B.C., which was also the twentieth year of Jotham's rule over Judah. Therefore, we can reconstruct this period of history and know that there was a co-regency between Ahaz and Jotham, with Ahaz beginning to reign in 730 B.C. He reigned for a total of sixteen years with his last year being 714 B.C.

In the seventeenth year of Pekah, king of Israel, Ahaz became the dominant king over Judah even though Jotham had been the dominant king for the previous sixteen years. From 721 B.C., which was the year following the first sixteen years of Jotham's rule, Ahaz became the dominant king.

Hoshea began to reign over Israel in the twentieth year of Jotham, which was the twelfth year of Ahaz. This was the year 718 B.C.

We read in **II Kings 18:1** that **Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, began to reign over Judah in the third year of Hoshea, king of Israel.** The third full year of Hoshea, counting from the first full year of his reign, was the year 715 B.C. This was the year, therefore, that Hezekiah began to reign. In **II Kings 18:9-11**, we find additional time references that relate the reign of Hoshea, the king of Israel, to Hezekiah, the king of Judah. We read:

**And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. From these verses, we learn that the city of Samaria was besieged by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, in the fourth year of Hezekiah, king of Judah, which is the seventh year of Hoshea, king of Israel.**

When we harmonize this information, we discover that the fourth year of Hezekiah is figured on the accession year basis (Chart 16). Likewise, the seventh year of Hoshea is figured the same way.

### **The End of the Ten-Tribe Nation of Israel**

Moreover, we learn that in the ninth year of Hoshea, again reckoned on the accession year basis, which was the sixth year of Hezekiah reckoned the same way, Samaria was taken, and from additional language of the Bible, we can know that this was the end of the kingdom of Israel that had begun at the death of Solomon.

The ninth year of Hoshea and the sixth year of Hezekiah were the year 709 B.C. (Chart 17). Later we will discuss why verse 9 tells us that it was Shalmaneser who assaulted the city, whereas in verse 10, the Bible simply declares that it was the king of Assyria who took the city.

This ends the history of the nation of Israel. Its history began when Jeroboam became their king in 931

B.C. and ended in 709 B.C., when Assyria conquered Samaria, the capital of Israel.

This ends the history of the nation of Israel. Its history began when Jeroboam became their king in 931 B.C. and ended in 709 B.C., when Assyria conquered Samaria, the capital of Israel.

Because the two nations, Judah and Israel, existed during the period 931 B.C. to 709 B.C., we have been able to reconstruct in a very precise way of chronology of the reigns of the kings of both nations. By carefully reading each and every verse that relates to the kings of Judah and Israel, we have been enabled to reconstruct this period of history with extreme accuracy. Every single verse in the Bible that bears on the subject has been fully harmonized. The "fit" of the reigns of the kings is so exact that if the reign of even one of the kings is shifted even one year, harmony will not be possible for several other kings.

When Israel ceased to exist as a nation, Judah continued for many years as a nation, but no longer could the chronology of the kings of Judah be harmonized with the kings of Israel. As we continue with the Bible citations, we have only one record of the kings of Judah.

However, we find that near the end of existence of the nation of Judah, God gives us extensive information concerning the reign of the king of Babylon, who destroyed Judah in 587 B.C. We will examine some of that evidence. When this Babylonian information is harmonized with the Biblical information relating to Judah, we will be helped in our reconstruction of the reigns of the kings of Judah from Hezekiah to the end of Judah in 587 B.C.

We should now return to Hezekiah to finish the chronology of the kings of Judah.

We have learned thus far that Hezekiah began to reign in the year 715 B.C. and his sixth year was 709 B.C. In II Kings 18:2, we read that Hezekiah reigned for twenty-nine years. Therefore, his last year would have been 686 B.C. (Chart 18). II Kings 1:2:

Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah.

#### Hezekiah and Manasseh were Co-Regents

The next king following Hezekiah was his son Manasseh, who ruled for fifty-five years, as we read in II Kings 21:1:

Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah. For two reasons, we immediately suspect that during a number of these fifty-five years, Manasseh was co-regent with his father Hezekiah.

The first reason is that he was a child of twelve years when he began to reign. It is true that other kings, like Joash (seven years old), and Josiah (eight years old), began to reign as children, but in their situations, their fathers who were reigning kings, were killed in untimely fashion. Hezekiah, who was Manasseh's father, reigned for twenty-nine years; his death was not a result of palace rebellion.

That brings us to the second reason. In Hezekiah's fourteenth year, he had become deathly ill. We read in II Kings 20:1:

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

And in II Kings 20:6:

And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

This event occurred in Hezekiah's fourteenth year (701 B.C.). We know this because his reign for twenty-nine years and fifteen of these years were added at the time of his illness. Since Hezekiah knew the year of his death, it seems very appropriate that he would begin to prepare his young son Manasseh for the kingship by making him co-regent during the closing years of his life.

Since Hezekiah knew the year of his death, it seems very appropriate that he would begin to prepare his young son Manasseh for the kingship by making him co-regent during the closing years of his life.

How many years was Manasseh co-regent with his father Hezekiah? We have no immediate information in the Bible that helps us. However, as we have already noted, near the end of Judah's history, the Bible gives us much information concerning the king of Babylon who destroyed Judah. Additionally, the secular record concerning the king of Babylon is sufficiently detailed and accurate so that we can harmonize this information with the Biblical record and know that we have truth.

Based on the preceding information, which we will develop later in our study, we know that Manasseh

began to reign in the eighteenth year of his father, Hezekiah, which was the year 697 B.C. His twelfth year, 685 B.C., was his first full year of reigning alone. The year of his death, which was his fifty-fifth year, was, therefore, 642 B.C. (see Chart 19).

The son of Manasseh, who reigned next, was Amon. We read in **II Kings 21:18-19**:

And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzzah: and Amon his son reigned in his stead. Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Harus of Jotbah. Amon reigned for two years. Therefore, he began to reign in the year 642 B.C. His first official year was 641 B.C., and he was killed in the second year of his reign, 640 B.C. **II Kings 21:23-24** records his untimely death:

And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house. And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.

### **Josiah: The Last Good King**

Josiah, Amon's eight year old son, was put on the throne in 640 B.C. and reigned for thirty-one years. **II Kings 22:1** records that:

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath. Since Josiah reigned for thirty-one years by the accession year reckoning, which was the way all of the reigns of the kings of Judah had been figured, his thirty-first year was 609 B.C. (see Chart 20). His death is recorded in **II Kings 23:29-30**: In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

His son Jehoahaz reigned only three months. **II Kings 23:31**:

Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

Therefore, he reigned during the year 609 B.C. He was deposed by Pharaoh Necho, as disclosed in **II Kings 23:33-34**:

And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold. And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliahkim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there.

**II Kings 23:26** says that Jehoiakim reigned for eleven years:

Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah.

Since Jehoakim began to reign in 609 B.C., his eleventh year was 598 B.C. (see Chart 20). In **Jeremiah 25:1**, we discover the next time reference to Jehoiakim.

There we read:

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all of the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon.

From this reference we know what year King Nebuchadrezzar began to reign. The fourth year of Jehoiakim was 605 B.C., which means that the first year of the Babylonian king was also 605 B.C. (Chart 20).

The next citation that we will examine is **II Chronicles 36:6**, where God informs us that Jehoikim was deposed by the king of Babylon: "Against him came up Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon."

In **II Kings 24:6**, we learn that Jehoiachin (also called Jeconiah and Coniah in the Bible), the son of Jehoiakim, became the next king.

In **II Kings 24:8**, we read that he was eighteen years of age when he began to reign and he reigned for three months. **II Kings 24:8**:

Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. But **II Chronicles 36:9** reports that he was eight years of age when he began to reign: Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of sight of the LORD.

This apparent contradiction is resolved when we recognize that Jehoiakim made his eight-year-old son

co-regent with himself almost immediately after Jehoiakim ascended the throne. In the year 609 B.C., Jehoiakim began to reign. The next year, 608 B.C., his eight-year-old son, Jehoiachin, was made co-regent with him. Thus, ten years later, when Jehoiachin was 18 years old, he was already reigning when his father, Jehoiakim, was taken to Babylon. Jehoiachin then reigned for three months and ten days before he was taken to Babylon (Chart 21). Additional information concerning the deposing of Jehoiachin is given in II Kings 24:12, where we read that it was the eighth year of King Nebuchadnezzar.

**II Kings 24:12:**

And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother and his servants, and his prices, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.

The eighth year of King Nebuchadnezzar was, therefore, 598 B.C. Following the deposing of Jehoiachin, we read in II Kings 24:17-18 that the king of Babylon made a brother king of Judah in place of Jehoiachin.

**II Kings 24:17-18:**

And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah. Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

The End of the Nation of Judah Zedekiah's first full year according to the accession year system was 597 B.C., and his eleventh year by the same system was 587 B.C. Since he was the last king of Judah, the year 587 B.C. ended the period of the kings of Judah. Jeremiah 32:1 gives another citation that describes the time relationship between the reigns of Zedekiah and Nebuchadnezzar:

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. The tenth year of Zedekiah by the accession year system was 588 B.C., as was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar by the non-accession year system. The end of Jerusalem is described in Jeremiah 52:12-15.

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The end of Jerusalem is described in Jeremiah 52:12-15. The Bible describes the precise day that the city was destroyed.

**Jeremiah 52:12-15:**

Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire: And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about. Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive certain of the poor of the people, and the residue of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude.

In this citation, God again emphasizes that this occurred in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar (in the non-accession year system).

In II Kings 24:12, we read that it was in the eighth year of King Nebuchadnezzar that Jehoiachin was taken to Babylon. In Jeremiah 52:28, the Bible records that it was in the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar that 3320 captives were taken. There is no discrepancy because the eighth year of the king is the same as the seventh year. Counting from the year 605 B.C., when King Nebuchadnezzar ascended the throne, we come to 598 B.C. as his eighth year. However, reckoning by the accession year system, the year 598 B.C. was his seventh year. Remember that in the accession year system, the year number one for a king was the first full year he reigned and, therefore, the year number one was the year immediately following the year he ascended the throne (see Chart 22).

Likewise, in Jeremiah 52:29, we read that in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, he carried away captive 832 persons. Remember, in Jeremiah 52:12-15, we read that it was in the nineteenth year that the captain of the guard carried away certain of the poor of the city. Again there is no contradiction. The eighteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar was the same year (587 B.C.) as the nineteenth year. The eighteenth year according to the accession year system started counting from his first full year as king (604 B.C.). The nineteenth year according to the non-accession year system started counting from the previous year (605 B.C.) when he actually became king.

By God's mercy, we have been able to reconstruct the calendar of history covering the entire period of the kings of Israel and Judah. In the next chapter, we will show why we can be certain that our starting date of 931 B.C. and our ending date of 587 B.C. are trustworthy.

## Chapter 2

### The Secular Record and Biblical Record

In the book *Adam When?* as well as in this volume, we have very carefully studied the Biblical evidence

that gives us the timetable of the history of the world. Because the Bible speaks very precisely and because we can trust it implicitly by virtue of the fact that it is God's Word, we have been enabled to develop the Biblical calendar from the beginning of time all the way to the end of the nation of the ten tribes of Israel, which were destroyed in 709 B.C. by the Assyrian king.

If we were to extend the calendar into our time, we must have a trustworthy means of relating our secular calendar to the Biblical calendar.

When we use the language of our calendar in dating creation or any other Biblical event, how do we know we have made a correct and accurate tie between the Biblical calendar and the secular calendar? It isn't that we need further corroboration. The Biblical information is so extensive and so consistent in tying the timing of significant Biblical events to the first coming and the second coming of Christ that we really do not need more proofs. But because the focus of the time line of history as developed from the Bible and presented in the book *Adam When?* and in this volume is so awesome, so incredibly important, we desire to seek out and weigh every shred of evidence that bears on this tremendously important subject.

Therefore, we still want to know: How do we begin to tie the Biblical calendar to the secular calendar? Apart from the corroborating evidence of the Biblical time paths, has this procedure been done accurately as the Biblical calendar is interrelated with the secular calendar, which we *The Measurement of Time Is Controlled by God* As we study the question of the calendar, the first principle that should be declared is that the measurement of time is not in the hands of men. The length of a day and the length of a year are carefully controlled by God. It is not mankind who has decided on the length of a day or that there are 365.2422 days in a year. God has done that. On the fourth day of creation, God placed the timekeepers in the sky, including the sun, the moon and the stars. We read in **Genesis 1:14-18:**

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw what it was good.

With this information in hand, we know that regardless of how man marks off the passage of time, he can never change the fact that there are 365.2422 days in the year. Using sophisticated equipment, astronomers can measure the movements of the celestial timekeepers, but they cannot change the results.

The fact that the movements of the heavenly bodies as well as that of the earth are entirely under the control of God and are designed by God to give mankind absolute timekeepers, provides the means by which the Biblical calendar can be harmonized with and tied into the secular calendar.

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The movements of the various heavenly bodies follow very precise paths that were established by God. These paths never vary. Thus, astronomers can predict with great accuracy when, for example, an eclipse will occur, when there will be a new moon, etc. He not only can predict similar future events with great accuracy, but he can also reconstruct with identical accuracy what has been the case at any time in the past. All of this becomes relevant when we realize that God has enabled man to keep records. Of course, no human record can approach the perfect accuracy of the Biblical record; nevertheless, the movement of the heavenly bodies has greater increased the accuracy of the record keeping of the secular writers.

Thus, if an ancient historian, in writing about the pharaohs of ancient Egypt, recorded that on such and such a day, in the third year of the reign of a particular pharaoh, there was a solar eclipse, we can immediately know what the possible years are for the third year of this pharaoh. This is so because astronomically during that period of history, there were only certain very precise days when a solar eclipse did occur.

Thus, even though the ancient secular record cannot be nearly as accurate as the Biblical record, these astronomical citations enable us to harmonize the two records. It might be noted that secular records, as seen in the ancient stelae and even entire libraries uncovered by archaeologists, give evidence of the extreme interest that ancient nations have had in astronomical events.

### **The Bible Gives Information Concerning Heathen Kings**

The second fact that greatly helps us to accurately tie the Biblical calendar to the secular calendar is that of the Biblical notices concerning heathen kings. As we carefully search the Bible, we sometimes

discover bits of information that concern heathen kings and sometimes it is precise information.

For example, the Bible is very clear that the pharaoh who resisted God's plan for the people of Israel to leave Egypt, died the same day that the Israelites crossed the Red Sea.

Another example is that the Bible declares in II Kings 24:12 that it was in the eighth year of the king of Babylon that King Jehoiachin was taken from the throne of Judah. In Nehemiah 2:1, God ties another Biblical event to the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes, king of the Medes and Persians.

Citations of this king, coupled with astronomical data that has been found in the ancient secular writings, assure us that we can accurately mesh the Biblical record with the secular calendar. We can continue our study, we will examine a number of tie-in points.

The records of the kings of Assyria and Babylon provide us with a number of excellent contacts between the Biblical record and the secular record. Information from Assyria and Babylon the records of the kings of Assyria and Babylon provide us with a number of excellent contacts between the Biblical record and the secular record. We will look first at the available information that relates to the kings of Israel. Thus far in our study, we have found that their first king was Jeroboam, who began to reign in 913 B.C., and their last king was Hoshea, who was killed in 709 B.C., at the time the ten tribes of the nation of Israel and their capital in Samaria ceased to exist.

Can we find a tie-in between these years and the secular record? The first tie we will find relates the secular record to the Biblical record in connection with two kings who reigned over Israel, Ahab and Jehu. We have found that if we are correct in indicating that the first king, Jeroboam, began to reign in 931 B.C., then, working very carefully through all the Biblical notices, we find that the last year of Ahab was 853 B.C. and the first year of Jehu was 841 B.C. (see pages 24-30 of this study). Is there any corroborating evidence in the secular records?

The reigns of Assyrian kings during the period from 891 B.C. to 727 B.C. are given very accurately in terms of our calendar. This is because of lists of kings that archaeologists have found that are quite complete for that period of time. They are tied very directly to the Julian calendar because of an eclipse of the sun that took place on June 15, 763 B.C., which is in the archaeological records of the eponymy of Bur-Sagale.

This astronomical fix has enabled archaeologists to know the precise years of the reigns of Assyrian kings who reigned earlier than 763 B.C. as well as kings who reigned later. In the Monolith Inscription of Shalmaneser III (an earlier Shalmaneser than the one recorded in the Bible), who reigned from 858 to 824 B.C., his victory over a Syrian coalition of twelve kings at Qargar is recorded and "Ahab; the Israelite," is named as one of these kings. This battle is placed in the sixth year of the Assyrian king, which would be 853 B.C.

Therefore, Ahab must have been alive and reigning in that year.

Additionally, on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, the Assyrian records the taking of tribute from the Israelite king, Jehu. This is dated in this ancient record as having taken place in the Assyrian king's eighteenth year of 841 B.C.

Thus, Jehu must have been reigning in the year 841 B.C. When we went through the Biblical record, we found that the last year of Ahab was 853 B.C. We also found that the first year of Jehu was 841 B.C.

This indicates an exact synchronization between the Biblical calendar and the Julian calendar. This is so because if the two calendars were shifted even one year in either direction from each other, either Ahab or Jehu would no longer identify with both the Biblical and the secular calendars. We thus have one very exact "fix" between the secular and the Biblical calendars.

## A Second "Fix"

A second exact "fix" between the two calendars will be found in connection with the destruction of Samaria in 709 B.C. The Biblical record based on 931 B.C. being the first year of Jeroboam's reign over Israel indicates that Israel's last king, Hoshea, was conquered in 709 B.C. by the Assyrian king.

The Biblical record of the end of Israel is found in II Kings 17:1-6 and II Kings 18:9-10.

### II Kings 17:1-6:

In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel were before him. Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents. And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by

the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

II Kings 18:9-10:

And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.

Significantly, in this citation, Shalmaneser, king of Assyria (he is Shalmaneser V of the archaeological record), began the assault on Samaria.

However, when the city was taken, Shalmaneser is not named. Rather, the Bible declares that the king of Assyria took Samaria. There is a very important reason why Shalmaneser is not named as the Assyrian king who took Samaria, but that reason is known because of information given in the secular record.

As indicated earlier in this study, because of the lists of kings that have been discovered on ancient tablets and because of the astronomical fix of 763 B.C., the Assyrian kings who reigned from 891 B.C. to 727 B.C. are given quite accurately. Actually, archaeologists have found an accurate list of kings all the way to 648 B.C., but they have one error and that is in connection with the reign of Shalmaneser V. Apparently, few records from his reigns have been found. However, a Babylonian tablet written during the reign of King Darius (500-499 B.C.), which covers Assyrian and Babylonian of his reign and his immediate successor was Sargon II. Based on this record, which was recorded more than two hundred years after Shalmaneser reigned, archaeologists place his reign from 727 to 722 B.C., and Sargon's reign from 721 or 722 to 705 B.C.

Because the Bible clearly states that Shalmaneser came against Hoshea, and because archaeologists place more credence in the archaeological record than in the Biblical record, they try hard to prove that Samaria was taken by Shalmaneser in the year 722 B.C. To accomplish this, they ascribe errors to the Bible, and try to show that Hoshea reigned twelve years earlier than the Bible says he did.

But when we start with the correct premise, that the Bible only is absolutely dependable, then we find beautiful corroboration between the Biblical and the secular record. But when we start with the correct premise, that the Bible only is absolutely dependable, then we find beautiful corroboration between the Biblical and the secular record. Indeed, we discover another "fix" that ties the Biblical calendar to the secular or Julian calendar. Let us develop this information.

### The King of Assyria – Sargon

As has already been indicated, the archaeological record, based on the statement of an historian who lived more than 200 years later, shows that Shalmaneser reigned for five years and was followed by Sargon. While there is little more known about Shalmaneser, considerable more is known about Sargon. Two tablets from Assyria indicate that the thirteenth year of Sargon as king of Assyria was his first year as king of Babylon. The secular record shows that 709 B.C. was the thirteenth year of Sargon. Thus, 709 B.C. was the year Sargon also became ruler of Babylon.

The archaeological record coming from the reign of Sargon is very extensive, because Sargon built the city Khorsabad in the closing years of his reign. Thiele reports:

Here in the final series of documents coming from the closing years of his reign, the capture of Samaria "at the beginning" of Sargon's rule is featured in great prominence for all posterity to remember. Thus it was on the annals appearing on the wall slabs of three of the halls of his newly constructed palace of Khorsabad. Thus also it was on the so-called Display Inscription (German, Prunkinschrift) found on the walls of room IV, VII, VIII and X of the palace of Khorsabad, giving a review of the events from Sargon's accession to his fifteenth year. Once more this was the case on the Display Inscriptions of room XIV, where again Sargon claims to have plundered the city of Samirina (Samaria) and the whole land of Israel. Yet again, on the Bull Inscription where he recounts the building of his famous palace at Dur Sharrukin he claims Samaria's overthrow. And finally, on the Pavement Inscriptions carved on the base of the palace gates, Sargon in a resume of the accomplishments of his reign vaunts himself as the conqueror of Samaria and of the whole land of Brit-Humria.

One of the records from the city of Khorsabad declares:

At the beginning of my royal rule, I the town of the Samaritans I besieged, conquered... for the god... who let me achieve this my triumph.

Curiously, archaeologists have not been able to harmonize this information with the Biblical record, which shows that Samaria was taken in 709 B.C.

And 709 B.C., according to the archaeologist record, was the year Sargon became ruler of Babylon. Even though he had ruled Assyria to some degree for the previous twelve years, in his thirteenth year, there was a substantial change in his rulership. First of all, it was the year he became ruler over Babylon. What else could have changed in that year?

We know from the secular record that Sargon reigned over Assyria from 722 to 705 B.C. There appears to be sufficient information available from the archaeological record to demonstrate this. But we know from the Biblical record that Shalmaneser also reigned over Assyria at least during the first seven of the years of the reign of Hoshea, and Hoshea's reign was in the year 718-709 B.C. Therefore, it is obvious that there was some kind of co.-regency between Shalmaneser and Sargon, beginning in the year 722 B.C.

In fact, there is some evidence that Sargon may have been the brother of Shalmaneser.

Because Sargon speaks of 709 B.C. as his first year, it may be that in the previous year, 710 B.C., Shalmaneser died. Thus, in the year 709 B.C., for the first time, Sargon was the sole ruler. It is possible that he died in his conflict with Samaria. In any case, it was Sargon who was the Assyria-Babylonian king who conquered Samaria in 709 B.C.

Possibly, little is found from the reign of Shalmaneser because Sargon could have destroyed much of the historical evidence of Shalmaneser reign. The records of his exploits found in the city of Khorsabad strongly suggest that he was a very vain man. Therefore, it surely would be in character for him to remove evidence that Shalmaneser, who had been co-regent with him for twelve years, would get any credit for this notable victory over Samaria. It's interesting that God turned the record around and named Shalmaneser and speaks of Sargon only as the king of Assyria.

In any case, I believe that we have a very solid "fix" between the Biblical record and the secular record, because of the extensive information from Sargon's reign that he destroyed Samaria. The placement of this event in the secular record is 709 B.C., which accords perfectly with the Biblical record.

In any case, I believe that we have a very solid "fix" between the Biblical record and the secular record, because of the extensive information from Sargon's reign that he destroyed Samaria. The placement of this event in the secular record is 709 B.C., which accords perfectly with the Biblical record.

### A Third "Fix"

The third "fix" that ties the Biblical record to the secular record relates to Hezekiah, king of Judah, in the year 701 B.C. We read in **II Kings 18:13**:

**Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.**

And in **II Kings 18:17**:

**And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rab-saris and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field.**

In the secular record, reference to this event has been found, which also dates it at 701 B.C. Dr. Finegan reports:

In the annals of Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.) the record of his "third campaign" (701 B.C) describes a siege of Jerusalem, doubtless conducted during the summer of that year, which may be the same as the siege which **II Kings 18:13** and **Is 36:1** put in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah.

Dr. Finegan uses the phrase "may be the same" because, as we learned earlier, archaeologists have dared to say that errors have come into the Bible, particularly in connection with the end of the nation of Israel. Since the Bible teaches so clearly that Hezekiah began to reign in the third year of Hoshea (**II Kings 18:1**), any reconstruction of the place of Hoshea in the chronological timetable is bound to weaken the trust of these archaeologists as to the place of Hezekiah in the chronological timetable.

When the Biblical record and secular record agree, we have evidence that the archaeologists and the astronomers have done their work accurately.

We know that the Bible is absolutely true. We see this again when the archaeological record places the campaign of Sennacherib against Jerusalem in 701 B.C., even as does the Biblical record. Remember that the secular record ties into the Julian calendar because of astronomical evidence. When the Biblical record and secular record agree, we have evidence that the archaeological and the astronomers have done their work accurately.

There is additional Biblical evidence that the year 701 B.C. is the fourteenth year of Hezekiah. It is found in **II Kings 19:29** in connection with the Bible's account of the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib. There we read:

And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.

We have learned that the Jubilee years of the Old Testament are always those years that end in 57 or 07.\* Thus, we are certain that the year 707 B.C. was a Jubilee year. The next six years, 706, 705, 704,



703, 702, and 701, were normal years, and the seventh year, 700 B.C., was a Sabbath year.

It was in the year 701 B.C. that Sennacherib laid siege to Jerusalem. Therefore, because of the siege, there would have been no planting or harvesting during the year 701 B.C. Because the next year, 700 B.C., was a Sabbath year, there was not to be any planting or harvesting that year. This was to be so even though the siege of Jerusalem was no longer taking place in 700 B.C.

Thus, the prophet Isaiah told Hezekiah that in this year (701 B.C.), since, in view of the siege, there could have been no planting, they were to eat what grew of itself. Since the second year was a Sabbath year, they could not plant, but God gave them permission to eat what grew of itself.

The third year was a normal non-Sabbath year, so they could again plant and harvest. By this citation, God has given additional evidence by which we are able to check the accuracy of the chronology, from the period starting with the entrance of Israel into Canaan in 1407 B.C., all the way to 701 B.C. If an error of one or more years had crept in, the statement of II Kings 19:19 would not fit.

So we have found three excellent "fixes" that relate the Biblical calendar to the Julian calendar. When we add those that identify with the pharaohs of Egypt and which we will presently examine, we can believe with the utmost confidence that **we can project our Julian calendar all the way back to creation in 11,013 B.C.**

### Information from Babylon

We should now tie the Biblical record to the secular record so that we can know that the death of Josiah was in 609 B.C. and the end of Judah came in 587 B.C.

A number of cuneiform texts from Babylon have been discovered and are now in the British Museum. One of them records that battle in which the king of Assyria, together with a large army of Egypt, tried to reconquer Haran, which the Babylonians had taken the previous year.

This battle took place in the summer of 609 B.C. This harmonizes with the account of II Kings 23:29: In his day Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him.

See "Appendix 1. The Year of the Jubilee."

The Bible records that the son of Josiah, Jehoahaz, then became king, but after three months, the king of Egypt took Jehoahaz captive and placed his brother Jehoiakim on the throne.

In Jeremiah 46:2, we find the record of the defeat of the Egyptians by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim.

Jeremiah 46:2:

Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaohnecho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah.

This is an important citation because according to the secular record, Nebuchadnezzar was the son of the Babylonian king, Nabopolassar.

It was while Nebuchadnezzar was engaged in conquering the Egyptian forces, which were in the Euphrates River area, that he received word that his father had died. Thus, the secular record indicates that in September 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon. Jeremiah indicates that this was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. In Jeremiah 25:1 the Bible speaks of this year as the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon:

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

Because Nebuchadnezzar ascended the throne in September of 605 B.C., his first year by the non-accession year system was 605 B.C. On the other hand, his official year by the accession year system was the next year, 604 B.C. Thus, the year 587 B.C., when he conquered Judah was his eighteenth year by the non-accession year system, and it was his eighteenth year by the accession year system.

### A Problem has Arisen in Calendar Alignment

In our effort to be as careful as possible to set forth any and all information that bears on our study, a problem must be introduced. Isn't it true that the secular and sacred calendars cannot be exactly aligned because each calendar has a different beginning month, and doesn't that create serious problems in aligning the two calendar records?

Let's examine that question.

It is true that there is no precise alignment between the Jewish calendar and the secular calendar. The first month of the Julian calendar is January, but the first month of the Jewish calendar is Nisan, which approximates our March or April. Exodus 12:1-2 states, "And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in

the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." (Esther 3:7) that Israel and the Passover was instituted. Nisan (Abib) was instituted by God to be the first month of the calendar year.

But in all probability, another calendar existed in which the seventh month, Tishri, was also looked upon at his first month of the year. Indeed on the third century after Christ, it was popularized as the beginning of the year even as today Rosh Hashanah, which is Tishri, is regarded as the Jewish New Year.

However, the Bible never speaks of any calendar except that Biblical calendar wherein Nisan 1 is beginning of each new year. It is true that two verse (Exodus 16:33, Exodus 34:22), are worded in such a way that they may possibly imply that a calendar beginning with Tishri 1 did exist. A non-Biblical source, the ancient Michnah, makes reference to both calendars by the words:

On the first of Nisan is New Year for kings and for festivals... On the first of Tishri is New Year for years, for release and jubilee years, for plantation and for the tithe of vegetables.\*

While the Michmah, which was an integral part of the Jewish Talmud is not God's Word, nevertheless, it agrees with the Biblical calendar wherein the beginning of a year in connection with the reign of kings was Nisan 1.

Remember that the Jewish months are governed by the moon. Each year a new moon, which begins a new month, comes at a different time.

Therefore, we must speak of Nisan as coming sometime in March or April. Therefore, any historical event that occurred between March-April and December 31 is always the same year, whether identified with the Jewish calendar or the Julian calendar.

On the other hand, an event that occurred between January 1 and March-April would be recorded as being one year earlier by the Jewish\*

Handbook of Biblical Chronology , by Jack Finegan, page 89.

calendar than by the Julian calendar. In almost all calendar calculations, this fact becomes of non consequence. All of the important feast days, from the Passover all the way through to the end of the feast of tabernacles, occurred after March-April (Nisan 1) and before December 31. Therefore, they would have been recorded as the same year by both the Jewish calendar and the Julian calendar.

Moreover, with rare exceptions, warfare occurred during the period from late spring to the fall of the year. Since it was in battle that kings were frequently killed, changes in rulership are, therefore, recorded as the same year by both calendar systems.

Furthermore, since Nisan 1 to December 31 is approximately a nine-month period, whereas January 1 to Nisan 1 is approximately three months, the likelihood of an event happening during the nine-month period, when the years by both calendars are equal, is far greater than an event occurring during the three-month period, when the calendars are one year apart.

#### **The Bible Guides Us through the Problem Years**

In addition, as we carefully study the Bible, we discover that God indicates in more than one instance that we should know that an historical event took place during the three-month period from January 1 of our calendar and Nisan 1 of the Jewish calendar, so that we will remain accurate when meshing the two calendars together.

For example, we read the account that God has given us in connection with the reign of Jehoiachin and the reign of Zedekiah, who followed him. We know from the Biblical record that Jehoiachin's father reigned for eleven years, and the last year of his reign was 598 B.C. We are then instructed by the Bible that Jehoiachin, his son, reigned for three months and ten days. Jehoiachin was followed by his uncle, Zedekiah, who reigned for eleven years. With no further information, we might then conclude that Jehoiachin's last year was 598 B.C. Jeconiah's (Jehoiachin) last month was probably also in 598 B.C., and Zedekiah's initial year was also 598 B.C., with his first official year being 597 B.C., because that was his first full year.

However, God gives us a little bit more information and also has supplied through the secular record even more detailed information so that we can more accurately know that Jehoiachin's last year was 598 B.C.

But Jeconiah's reign of three months and ten days began in December of 598 B.C. and ended in the early spring of 597 B.C. We can know with certainty that Zedekiah's reign began in the early spring of 597 B.C., so that according to the Julian calendar, both his accession year and his first official year by the accession year system was the year 597 B.C.

The clue to this detail is given in the Bible in II Chronicles 36:9- 10, where we read:

Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD. And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah his brother king of Judah and Jerusalem

The significant phrase is "when the year was expired." By the Jewish calendar, a year is expired just before Nisan 1. Therefore, approximately on Nisan 1, Jehoiachin was deposed and Zedekiah was made king. From the Biblical record alone, we know that it had to be shortly before Nisan 1 when this event occurred. If it had occurred after Nisan 1, there would be no harmony between Zedekiah's eleventh year and Nebuchadnezzar's nineteenth year, when Jerusalem was destroyed.

This citation does indicate, however, that Zedekiah was made king in 597 B.C. and 597 B.C., by the Julian calendar, was also his first official year. It also indicates that the bulk, if not all, of Jehoiachin's

reign of three months and ten days was in 597 B.C. by the Julian calendar.

#### More Information from Babylon

The secular record gives a bit more information so that we know that we have understood the Bible correctly.

A tablet from Babylon records:

In the seventh year, the month of Kislimu, the king of Akkad mustered his troops, marched to the Hattiland, and encamped against the city of Judah and on the second day of the month of Addaru he seized the city and captured the king. He appointed there a king of his own choice, received its heavy tribute and sent them to Babylon.

We know that by accession reckoning, the seventh year of Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Akkad, was 598 B.C. (his eighth year by the non-accession-year reckoning). We are advised that the second day of the month Addaru was March 16, 597 B.C. Three months and ten days earlier than March 16 was December 9, 598 B.C., which must have been the day Jehoiachin began to reign alone. Remember that the Bible gives evidence that Jehoiachin had been co-regent the previous ten years.

Thus, with this added information, we know that Jehoiakim reigned until December, 598 B.C., this being his eleventh year. Early in December, he was deposed and his son Jehoiachin, who had been reigning with him for ten years as a child co-regent, became king at the age of eighteen. Three months and ten days later, shortly before the beginning of the next

Jewish year, he was taken to Babylon and his uncle, Zedekiah, was placed on the throne. Thus, Jehoiachin reigned alone for a few days in 598 B.C. and his first official year was 597 B.C.

His uncle, Zedekiah, began to reign a few days before the end of the Jewish year that began in the spring of 598 B.C. His first full year or first official year thus began in the spring of 597 B.C. Therefore, in accordance with the secular or Julian calendar, he ascended the throne early in 597 B.C. and his first official year was 597 B.C.

It surely is significant how God gives this extra detail concerning the end of the reign of Jehoiachin. It assures us that we can accurately relate the Julian calendar to the Biblical calendar.

We have discovered a number of "fixes" between the Biblical calendar and the secular calendar. This assures us that we can accurately relate the Biblical events all the way from creation to our modern calendar.

This evidence we have presented is not exhaustive. For example, several "fixes" can be found in connection with the ancient Egyptian records (see Adam When?, pp. 106-159).

#### Conclusion

In this study, we have patiently examined each and every citation of the Bible that relates to the time and duration of the reigns of the kings who ruled over Judah and Israel. While at times the solution was very complex, we, nevertheless, have been able to harmonize Scripture with Scripture so that each and every verse became understandable. This is as it should be because the Bible is God's Book and, therefore, is inerrant and infallible. In fact, because any and all of the complex language concerning the reigns of these kings can be completely harmonized with perfect accuracy, we are greatly encouraged by this that everything else written in the Bible is equally trustworthy and dependable.

Moreover, by charting each of these reigns, we can more readily understand the interrelationships that existed between the kings. In any case, we praise God that we have been enabled to see in a fresh way the exquisite accuracy of the Bible.

#### Appendix I. The Year of the Jubilee

The Old Testament law demanded that the Jubilee year be observed at a very precise time which was set forth by God Himself. We turn to Leviticus 25 to determine this time. In [Leviticus 25:2](#), we read:

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD.

Verses 8 to 11a continue with the information:

And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you.

To determine the year during which the Jubilee was to be observed requires that we know the year Israel came into the land of Canaan.

To determine the year during which the Jubilee was to be observed requires that we know the year Israel came into the land of Canaan. That year was to be a Sabbath year and was to be followed by a series of seven seven-year periods with the next year after that being the Jubilee year.

From our very careful study of the Biblical calendars, we found from the Biblical data that Israel entered

the land of Canaan in the year 1407 B.C. (see pg ????, Adam When?). As we called for in the above verses, the year 1407 B.C. was therefore, a Sabbath year.

This year was to be followed by a series of seven seven-year period, the last year of each seven-year period was also to be a Sabbath year.

Thus, the sequence of years was as follows:

Entrance into the land of Canaan, 1407 B.C., a Sabbath year.

1. 1406, 1405, 1404, 1403, 1402, 1401,  
1400, a Sabbath year.

2. 1399, 1398, 1397, 1396, 1395, 1394,  
1393, a Sabbath year.

3. 1392, 1391, 1390, 1389, 1388, 1387,  
1386, a Sabbath year.

4. 1385, 1384, 1383, 1382, 1381, 1380,  
1379, a Sabbath year.

5. 1378, 1377, 1376, 1375, 1374, 1373,  
1372, a Sabbath year.

6. 1371, 1370, 1369, 1368, 1367, 1366,  
1365, a Sabbath year.

7. 1364, 1363, 1362, 1361, 1360, 1359,  
1358, a Sabbath year.

The next year was the fiftieth year, and it was to be the Jubilee year. Thus, 1357 B.C., which immediately followed the year 1358 B.C., was the first Jubilee year. The sequence of seven seven-year periods was then repeated so that 1307 B.C. became the next Jubilee year. From then on, therefore, every year ending in 57 or 07 was a Jubilee year. Thus, 7 B.C., when Christ was born, was also a Jubilee year.

## By Harold Camping

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**To Him be all glory and power and praise. Amen.**

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