

Synchronisation of the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel

David Austin

The events of the kingdom of Judah during this period have been synchronised with those of the kingdom of Israel in a table of parallel chronologies. This table gives a clear indication as to when the 390-year period of Ezekiel 4:5 occurred. It also shows the remarkable accuracy of the numbers stated in the Scriptures with respect to the time of the Divided Kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

The main purpose of presenting this article is to show the remarkable accuracy of the numbers stated in the Scriptures in respect of the time of the Divided Kingdoms of Judah and Israel. In compiling the table in parallel form, it was necessary to vary the BC and AM dates from both conventional and some biblical chronologists' times. The dates presented agree with Philip Mauro¹ and Martin Anstey² to the end of 1 BC, and differ from those of Bishop Ussher³ by approximately 42 years. This is mainly due to reasons mentioned below.

Some variations to other chronologists

Bishop Ussher / Larry Pierce, and Floyd Jones

The KJV, NIV, NKJV and the NASB by a straightforward reading, indicate that under Ehud (Judges 3:12–30) “the land had rest fourscore years”. In other words Ehud judged for 80 years. Yet in Bishop Ussher's *The Annals of the World*,⁴ paragraph 347, he stated that in 1325 BC “God raised up Ehud the son of Gera”. In paragraph 350 he states that in 1305 BC, “After the death of Ehud, the Israelites sinned again”, which is only 20 years after the commencement of Ehud's judgeship. However, Ussher and Floyd Jones's⁵ arguments on Judges 3:12–30 are not convincing, and the chronology should be allowed to stand in its plain sense.⁶ A relevant feature by a Hebrew Scholar on the Hebrew accents of Judges 3:30 gives an emphatic ‘no’ to his contention.⁷

Table 1 shows that there must be an interregnum in Judah of approximately 11 years between the reign of Amaziah of Judah and Uzziah of Judah when no king reigned and Amaziah was defeated in battle, captured, part of the wall of Jerusalem was broken down, treasure was plundered, and Judah was reduced to vassalage (see 2 Kings 14:1–18; 15:1–2). Instability was quite evident at this time. Now if there was no interregnum in Judah at this time then the total number of years for Judah (see table), would be 386 and Israel's total would be 397 (not 390 years, see below), for *the same period of time. We cannot have this.* Yet Bishop Ussher, it seems, does not allow for an interregnum here. He says,

“In the 15th year of Amaziah, Jeroboam II began to reign as sole king for 41 years (2 Ki 14:23). However, in 2 Ki 15:1 we find that Uzziah became the king in the 27th year of Jeroboam. To reconcile

this (and I am using his own words) we must assume that Jeroboam was made vice-roy for 12 years in the 4th year of Amaziah or in the 6th year of Jeroboam's father, Jehoash.”⁸

All this is stated here without any biblical or secular historical support.

On the same page as above⁸ against Lightfoot and others (who believed that there was an interregnum here and that Uzziah reigned in the 27th year of Jeroboam and Jeroboam was not a viceroy⁹ with his father), Ussher or his editor states,

“This would create an interregnum in the SK [Southern Kingdom, i.e. Judah] of 13 or so years, thus extending the entire period of the divided kingdom by that much to about 403 years. However, as pointed out earlier, we know the total length of the divided kingdom was 390 years, hence this explanation cannot be correct.”

My comment on the above is this: the 390 years of the divided kingdom ended in the 4th year of Zedekiah's reign and in the 4th year of Jehoiachin's captivity (see table 1). It was in the very next year (Ezekiel 1:1–3), after the ‘crime had been committed’, that Ezekiel was given his vision (Ezekiel 4:1–17). There were 7 more years of Zedekiah's reign until the destruction of Jerusalem, making a total of 397 years (where there is one interregnum in Judah and two in Israel), not 403 for that period.

According to both Ussher¹⁰ and Jones,¹¹ the 490 years of Daniel 9:15–27 commenced in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, about 80–82 years after the Children of Israel returned from captivity, not immediately after the 70 years of captivity had been completed. I am convinced that the latter position is correct and that Daniel's prayer for ‘no procrastination’ was answered immediately and was made effective in the 1st year of Cyrus.¹² One of the arguments I set forth was the fact that the building of the city, the temple, the streets, etc. all commenced from this 1st year of Cyrus by the authorisation of *one all-inclusive decree*, and it was not necessary for there to be a further, separate decree 80–82 years later. Archaeologist David Down has the Cyrus Cylinder stating:

“I am Cyrus, king of the world, legitimate king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad ... All the kings of the entire world brought their heavy tributes and kissed my feet in Babylon ... I (also)

gathered all their (former) inhabitants and returned (to them) their habitations ... *I endeavoured to repair their dwelling places* [emphasis mine].”¹³

Compare this above statement from the Cyrus Cylinder with the letter sent by Cyrus to the governors of Syria:

“I have given leave to as many of the Jews... to return to their own country, *and to rebuild their city* [emphasis is mine].”¹⁴

Also compare the above with what Floyd Jones states: “Neh.2:1, 2:3, 2:8—The commandment *to build Jerusalem* [emphasis mine] was given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes in the year 454 BC”¹⁵ which is, according to Floyd Jones’ dates, about 80–82 years after the Jews returned from captivity. This 80–82 year variation considerably affects the length of the AM and BC years in the OT period and so the necessity of changing the dates.

Edwin Thiele

I was considerably helped, in reference to submitting this table on the Divided Kingdoms of Judah and Israel, by reading Larry Pierce’s article, ‘Evidentialism—the Bible and Assyrian chronology’,¹⁶ Pierce states,

“*Our understanding of the sciences pertaining to origins has been greatly enhanced as a result of using the Bible first approach. ... One area which has been almost totally untouched is the area of Biblical chronologies, especially for the period when Israel was divided into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah* [emphasis mine].”

He shows that Thiele very creatively manipulated the chronology of this period, e.g. “he did it by constructing viceroy relationships to collapse the length of a king’s reign by overlapping it with the king’s predecessor.”

In order “to force-fit the biblical data into the mould of secular chronology”¹⁷ Thiele, whose book *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*¹⁸ has been recognised, by many, as a classic, comes up with some ridiculous ideas such as Azariah (Uzziah) coming to the throne when he was 16 years of age; but he had already been a viceroy for 24 years, so therefore he was ‘miraculously’ performing his duties as a viceroy 8 years before he was born. To overcome this problem, Thiele, McFall and others say the text is incorrect and that it should read “in the 3rd year of Jeroboam”, not the 27th. *This is one way to get rid of the interregnum in Judah as mentioned above.* In the copy of the 1983 edition of Thiele’s book (the book has been published three times with major revisions between each printing, according to Pierce¹⁹), on page 129 it refers to Pekah, who “began his twenty years in 752 as a rival of Menahem, who also began that year”. Both Thiele and McFall²⁰ say that Pekah was a rival king in a different place (Gilead) to both Menahem and Pekahiah. However, this is impossible if Pekah was Pekahiah’s captain in his army (2 Kings 15:25).

Conclusion

In the past, there has been a need to resort to assumptions supported neither in secular nor biblical history to deal with co-regencies, accession and non-accession years, interregnums, conventional chronological dates, overlappings, etc., during the time of the Divided Kingdoms of Judah and Israel. It would have taken another table to list all of these. The facts in the synchronisation presented here, in contrast, are all supported by Scripture and solve these previous problems. The value of these parallel chronologies should therefore be evident. Moreover, they provide further evidence of the remarkable accuracy of the numbers stated in the Scriptures.

Table 1. The divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

Judah				Israel			
King	AM and BC Dates*	Reference	Years†	King	AM and BC Dates*	Reference	Years†
Rehoboam	3144–3160 AM (902–886 BC)	1 Kings 14:21.	17	Jeroboam 1st	3144–3164 AM (902–882 BC)		21
Abijam	3161–3163 AM (885–883 BC)	Reigned from the 18 th yr of Jeroboam (3161)—1 Kgs 15:1–2.	3	Nadab	3165 AM (881 BC)	1 Kgs 15:25. Reigned 2 yrs but 3166 was a non-accession yr (NAY).	1
Asa	3164–3204 AM (882–842 BC)	3163 was the accession yr (AY) for Asa and last yr of Abijam. Also the 20 th yr of Jeroboam of Israel (1 Kgs 15:9–10). In 39 th yr of Asa (3202), he was diseased until death (2 Chron. 16:12)	41	Baasha	3166–3188 AM (880–858 BC)	1 Kgs 15:28, 33. From the 3rd yr of Asa he reigned 24 yrs, but 3189 was a NAY.	23
				Elah	3189 AM (857 BC)	1 Kgs 16:8–10. Began to reign in 26 th yr of Asa (3189); killed in 27 th yr of Asa.	1

Judah			Israel				
			Omri	3190–3200 AM (856–846 BC)	1 Kgs 16:15. In 27 th yr of Asa, Zimri reigned 7 days, (3190). Israel divided into 2 parts, Tibni and Omri (1 Kgs 16:21–22). In 31 st yr of Asa (3194), Omri began sole reign including 2 yrs at Tirzah after 4 'Tirzah' yrs with Tibni (1 Kgs 16:23). 6 yrs at Tirzah and 6 yrs at Jerusalem = 12 less 1 NAY (1Kgs 16:23).	11	
Jehoshaphat	3205–3229 AM (841–817 BC)	In 3204 (4 th yr of Ahab— 1 Kgs 22:41), which was also the last yr of Asa, Jehoshaphat began to reign as co-rex. Reigned 25 yrs (1 Kgs 22:42).	25	Ahab	3201–3221 AM (845–825 BC)	Began reign in 38 th yr of Asa (3201—1Kgs 16:29). Reigned 22 yrs less NAY 3222.	21
				Ahaziah (of Israel)	(no years—see next column)	He reigned in 17 th yr of Jehoshaphat's sole reign (3221) which was Ahab's last (3221), so was co-rex in that yr. 3222 was an NAY given to Jehoram of Israel (1 Kgs 22:51).	Nil
Jehoram (of Judah)	3230–3232 AM (816–814 BC)	He reigned only 3 yrs as sole king. There were 3 different types of reign for Jehoram of Judah. (i) 3221–3225: <i>viceroys</i> . ⁹ Yrs given to Jehoshaphat (5 yrs, cf. 2 Kgs 1:17, 3:1) So not counted as yrs reigning. See below on 2 Kgs 8:17. Jehoram <i>of Israel</i> began reign in 2 nd yr of Jehoram of Judah's viceroy reign. (3222). (ii) 3226–3229. Refer to 2 Kgs 8:16 where in the 5 th yr (3226) of Jehoram of Israel. He began to reign (4 yrs) as <i>viceregent</i> . These yrs are not counted. (iii) 3230–3232 = sole reign. (3 yrs) (i) & (iii) equal 8 yrs of reigning but only 3 yrs 'sole reign' <i>counted</i> as reigning, cf. 2 Kgs 8:17 (reigned 8 yrs in Jerusalem).	3	Jehoram (of Israel)	3222–3233 AM (824–813 BC)	Began to reign in 18 th yr of Jehoshaphat's sole reign (3222—2 Kgs 3:1). Reigned 12 yrs (2 Kgs 3:1). Also 2 Kgs 1:17 says he began reign in 2 nd yr of <i>Jehoram of Judah's</i> viceroy's reign (3222). He was slain in 3233.	12

Judah				Israel			
Ahaziah	3233 AM (813 BC)	Co-rex in last sole yr of Jehoram of Judah (3232). Given to Jehoram of Judah. This yr was also the 11 th yr of Jehoram of Israel. (3232—Refer 2 Kgs 9: 29). Ahaziah reigned 1 sole yr (3233—2 Kgs 8:25–26) and then slain. Note: <i>Ahaziah of Judah (3233) and Jehoram of Israel (3233) were both slain in the same year (2 Kgs 9:24–28), so the sub-totals of yrs (both kingdoms) will be the same.</i>	1				
		Subtotal = 90 yrs (3144–3233).				Subtotal = 96 (incl. NAYs) – 6 NAYs = 90 yrs (3144–3233).	
Athaliah	3234–3239 AM (812–807 BC)	Reigned 6 yrs (2 Kgs 11:3–4). The 7 th yr is given to Joash (3240—see Joash below).	6	Jehu	3234–3261 AM (812–785 BC)	Reigned 28 yrs (2 Kgs 10:36).	28
Joash of Judah	3240–3279 AM (806–767 BC)	In the 7 th yr of Jehu, which would also be the 7 th yr of Athaliah, Joash began to reign—40 yrs (2 Kgs 12:1).	40	Jehoahaz	3262–3278 AM (784–768 BC)	Jehoahaz succeeded Jehu in 23 rd yr of Joash (2 Kgs 13:1—3262). Reigned 17 yrs.	17
Amaziah	3280–3308 AM (766–738 BC)	Succeeded Joash in 2 nd yr of Jehoash's sole reign (3280—2 Kgs 14:1). In 15 th yr of Amaziah's reign (3294) Jeroboam 2 nd begins to reign (2 Kgs 14:23). Reigned 29 yrs (2 Kgs 14:2).	29	Joash of Israel	3279–3293 AM (767–753 BC)	3276–3278: Co-Rex with Jehoahaz because Jehoash began reign in 37 th yr of Joash of Judah (3276—2 Kgs 13:10). Reigned 16 yrs—3279–3294 less 3294, co-rex, given to Jeroboam 2 nd (see below).	15
Interregnum (no king)	3309–3319 AM (737–727 BC)	It was not until 27 th yr of Jeroboam 2 nd that Uzziah began to reign (3320). Amaziah defeated in battle and captured, part of wall broken, treasure plundered, and Judah reduced to vassalage.					

Judah			Israel				
		(Refer to 2 Kgs 14:1–18; 15:1–2). Instability evident in Judah for 11 yrs.	11	Jeroboam 2nd	3294–3334 AM (752–712 BC)	In 15 th yr of Amaziah (3294) Jeroboam 2 nd began to reign. He reigned 41 yrs in Samaria (2 Kgs 14:23).	41
Uzziah	3320–3371 AM (726–675 BC)	Begins reign in 27 th yr of Jeroboam 2 nd . Reigned 52 yrs (2 Kgs 15:2), summarised below in ‘New Year’ years. 3320–3334: Jer 2 nd = 15; 3335–3356: Interregnum, (Israel) = 22; 3357: Zechariah = 1; 3358: Shallum = 1; 3359–3368: Menahem = 10; 3369–3370 Pekahiah = 2; 3371: 1st yr of Pekah and last of Uzziah (1 Kgs 15:27)= 1. Total yrs of Uzziah = 52		Interregnum	3335–3356 AM (711–690 BC)	This was a period where history points to the straightened character of the times (2 Kgs 14:26). The next king who is mentioned (2 Kgs 15:8) was Zechariah, who began his reign in the 38 th yr of Uzziah (3356).	22
				Zechariah	3357 AM (689 BC)	In 38 th yr of Uzziah (3357) he reigned for 6 mths (2 Kgs 15:8).	1
				Shallum	3358 AM (688 BC)	In the 39 th yr of Uzziah he reigned for 1 mth (2 Kgs 15:13).	1
				Menahem	3359–3368 AM (687–678 BC)	The 39 th yr of Uzziah, was Shallum’s ‘New Year’ yr and Menahem’s AY who reigned for 10 yrs (2 Kgs 15:17).	10
Jotham	3372–3387 AM (674–659 BC)	Began reign in 2 nd yr of Pekah, (3372), reigned for 16 yrs, died, and then Ahaz reigned in his stead (2 Kgs 15:32–38). See Notes on Pekah.	16	Pekahiah	3369–3370 AM (677–676 BC)	Reigned in the 50 th yr of Uzziah (3369—2 Kgs 15:23) 2 yrs.	2
				Pekah	3371–3390 AM (675–656 BC)	Began reign of 20 yrs in 52 nd yr of Uzziah (3371—2 Kgs 15:27). Hoshea made a <i>conspiracy</i> against Pekah in the 20 th yr of Jotham (2 Kgs 15:30). These 20 yrs were not ‘reigning’ yrs, Jotham only reigned 16 yrs (3372–3387 AM). Were there 4 yrs of Jotham when he “was over the house, judging the people of the land” (2 Kgs 15:5)? And did Hoshea start a conspiracy in that 20 th yr of Jotham (3387 AM) which lasted until the death of Pekah in 3390 AM?	20

Judah				Israel			
Ahaz	3388–3401 AM (658–645 BC)	Ahaz begins reign in the 17 th yr of Pekah (3387), the accession yr given to Jotham which was his last yr (3387). Ahaz reigned for 16 yrs (2 Kgs 16:1–2), but 2 yrs, 3402–3403 were given to Hezekiah who began to reign in the 3 rd yr of Hoshea (3401—2 Kgs 18:1).	14	Interregnum	3391–3398 AM (655–648 BC)	After Pekah was slain in 3390 there was instability, attacks, anarchy, etc. in the N.K. (See 2 Kgs 15:29–30). There was no king on the throne of Israel until the 12 th yr of Ahaz of Judah (3399). See below on Hosea and 2 Kgs 17:1.	8
Hezekiah	3402–3407 AM (644–639 BC) which was to the end of NK. Then from 3408–3430 AM (638–616 BC) there was only a single kingdom—Judah).	Hezekiah was co-rex to Ahaz in 3 rd yr of Hoshea (2 Kgs 18:1), which was also Ahaz’s last as sole king (3401). He then reigned 6 more yrs in N.K. (3402–3407: 2 Kgs 18:10) until in the 9 th yr of Hosea (3407) when Samaria was taken. Reigned 23 yrs (in single kingdom) totalling 29 yrs for whole reign (2 Kgs 18:2).	29	Hoshea	3399–3407 AM (647–639 BC)	Began reign in 12 th yr of Ahaz (3399). Reigned 9 yrs ‘in Samaria over Israel’ until ‘the king of Assyria took Samaria’ (2 Kgs 17:1–6).	9
Manasseh	3431–3485 AM (615–561 BC)	Reigned 55 yrs (2 Kgs 21:1).	55	Yrs of captivity (Israel) after Samaria was taken to 4th yr of Jehoiachin’s captivity	3408–3533 AM (638–513 BC)		126
Amon	3486–3487 AM (560–559 BC)	Reigned 2 yrs, then slain (2 Kgs 21:19).	2				
Josiah	3488–3518 AM (558–528 BC)	Reigned 31 yrs, then slain (2 Kgs 22:1; 23:29). (Josiah’s reign from 13 th yr to 31 st yr = 19 yrs. Jehoiakim’s reign from 1 st to 4 th yr = 4 yrs. Total = 23 yrs (Jer 25:1–3).	31				
Jehoahaz	3518 AM (528 BC)	Reigned 3 mths (2 Kgs 23:31) in Josiah’s last yr of 3518.	Nil				
Jehoiakim	3519–3529 AM (527–517 BC)	Reigned 11 yrs (2 Kgs 23:36; 24:6) then died.	11				
Jehoiachin	3529 AM (517 BC)	Reigned 3 mths and 10 days in the yr (3529) which was Jehoiakim’s last, until it ‘was expired’ (2 Chron 36:9–10).	Nil				

Judah				Israel			
Zedekiah	3530–3540 AM (516–506 BC)	Reigned 11 yrs in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 24:18). Jehoiach had been captive in Babylon and during Zedekiah’s reign (4 yrs) the 390 yrs of Israel’s rebellion had run its course. In the 5 th yr of Jehoiachin’s captivity (refer to Ezekiel 1:1–4; 4:5—Yr 3534), Ezekiel was instructed to ‘bear’ the iniquity of punishment for ‘crime already committed’ (see the example in Numbers 14:34).	11	Remaining yrs of captivity to Destruction of Jerusalem	3534–3540 AM (512–506 BC)		7
Subtotal of yrs from the start of Rehoboam I’s reign to the 4th Yr of Jehoiachin’s captivity (3144 AM–3533 AM) = 390 yrs.				Subtotal of yrs to the 4th Yr of Jehoiachin’s captivity = 390 yrs.			
Grand Total				Grand Total			
397				397			

* AM = Anno Mundi (latin: “in the year of the world”); calendar era based on the biblical creation of the world.

BC = Before Christ

† ‘New Year’ years

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4. Ussher, ref. 3, p. 53, paragraphs 347–350.
5. Jones, F., *Chronology of the Old Testament*, King’s Word Press, The Woodlands, TX, pp. 73–75, 1999.
6. Austin, D., Three chronological periods of the Old Testament, *J. Creation* 22(3):51–58, 2008.
7. Graves, D., The land enjoys rest for eighty years; in: Austin, ref. 6, p. 55.
8. Ussher, ref. 3, p. 901.
9. Ussher, ref. 3, pp. 893–894: “Vice-regent: This is like an assistant or co-king. the regular king was still on the throne.” “Viceroy: This position is considered to be defacto king. The viceroy’s father was still alive, but the viceroy was running the kingdom. There were two reasons why a king made his son viceroy. First, the father was going to war and wanted to make sure of a smooth transition in case he was killed. Secondly, the father was in ill health and not able to manage the kingdom any more.”
10. Ussher, ref. 3, p.152, paragraph 1228.
11. Jones, ref. 5, pp. 262–263.

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