

often associated with the 400th anniversary of the cult of the god Seth at Tanis (cf. Haremhab Stele, *ANET*, 252-53), provide a fixed reference point to any biblical event.

Many scholars would place the Patriarchs in the MB I period (2000-1800 B.C.E.), a conjecture based on the putative similarities between their seminomadic lifestyle as described in Genesis and the Amorite movements known from archaeology and the Mari documents. A few place them in the LB Age (1550-1200 B.C.E.), considering the affinities between the social customs in the patriarchal stories and the Nuzi texts (cf. Dever *IJH*, 92-102).

There is also no agreement as to the identity of the Pharaoh of the enslavement. The reference to the garrison cities Pithom and Raamses, built by the enslaved Israelites (Exod 1:11), indicates Rameses II, the resplendent ruler of the 19th Dynasty (1290-1224 B.C.E.). But this oft-proffered identification conflicts with the date in 1 Kgs 6:1: Solomon began to build the Temple "480 years after the Israelites left Egypt, in the fourth year" of his reign. Since Solomon's fourth regnal year is dated ca. 964 B.C.E. (see E.7 below), this would place the Exodus in the year 1444 B.C.E., almost two centuries earlier than the most plausible dating of the Exodus (i.e., the end of the 13th century B.C.E., the age of Rameses II-Merneptah. (On the literary nature of the "480 years," see further below.)

D. From the Conquest to the Monarchy

According to the biblical data, after a 40-year period of wandering (Num 32:13), the Israelites entered the land under the leadership of Joshua, who led them in battle for 5 years (Josh 14:10). This initial stage was followed by the dispersal of the tribes to their territorial allotments throughout Canaan, after which they suffered alternating periods of oppression and deliverance lasting, according to Judges, some 470 years.

Table 4.
The Judges

	Years of Oppression	Years of Deliverance	Source
Cushan-rishathaim	8		Judg 3:8
Othniel		40	Judg 3:11
Eglon	18		Judg 3:14
Ehud		80	Judg 3:30
Jabin	20		Judg 4:3
Deborah		40	Judg 5:31
Midianites	7		Judg 6:1
Gideon		40	Judg 8:28
Abimelech		3	Judg 9:22
Tolah		23	Judg 10:2
Jair		22	Judg 10:3
Ammonites	18		Judg 10:8
Jephthah		6	Judg 12:7
Ibzan		7	Judg 12:9
Elon		10	Judg 12:11
Abdon		8	Judg 12:14
Philistines	40		Judg 13:1
Samson		20	Judg 15:20
Eli		40	1 Sam 4:18
Samuel		20+	1 Sam 7:2

Innumerable attempts have been made at reconciling the total years recorded in Judges with other data concerning the premonarchic settlement period gleaned from Joshua and Samuel. The years of deliverance, during which the Israelite tribes were ruled by what scholars term the "major" judges, are expressed in typological numbers "20," "40," "80" and are likely to be from the hand of the Deuteronomistic editor of Judges; the uneven years of judgeship of the remaining "minor" tribal chieftains appear to have been drawn from a traditional listing of unknown origin. But while the final edition of Judges may be the work of Deuteronomistic historiographers, there is no explicit indication that the book's chronology was coordinated with any of the other calculations in the overall Deuteronomistic history Joshua through Kings. The round figure of Israel's 300-year settlement in Transjordan (Judg 11:26) is not helpful in this regard. And the 480 years of 1 Kgs 6:1 is too large to cover the years recorded for the period of the Exodus until the founding of the Temple; only by assuming overlapping figures for the Philistine oppression and certain late interpolations can one approach the total given in 1 Kgs 6:1 (so, e.g., *NDH*, 18-25). The figure 480 most likely comprises 12 generations of 40 years each, based on twelve leaders of Israel between the Exodus and the building of the Temple; e.g., Moses, Joshua, Othniel (Judg 3:11), Ehud (Judg 3:30), Deborah (Judg 5:31), Gideon (Judg 8:28), Samson (Judg 16:31), Eli (1 Sam 4:18; cf. LXX: "twenty"), Samuel (1 Sam 7:2, 15), Saul (1 Sam 13:1; cf. Acts 13:21; *Ant* 6.378), David (2 Sam 5:4; 1 Kgs 2:11), Solomon (1 Kgs 11:42) (cf. Rowley 1950: 77-96). Priestly traditions preserved in the book of Chronicles similarly counted 12 generations from Aaron, brother of Moses and Israel's first High Priest, to Azariah, the priest who served in Solomon's Temple (1 Chr 5:29-36).

Because most of the events described for the period down to Samuel's judgeship were local, absolute dating has to reckon with the possibility that a number of judges were contemporaries, though the Deuteronomistic editors portrayed them as ruling "all Israel" in succession. David began his rule in Hebron ca. 1005 (see E.7 below); hence the events depicted in Joshua-Samuel fall during the approximately two centuries which separate the Exodus from David's rise to power.

E. The Monarchic Period

The chronological presentation in the book of Kings is the most systematic of any in the Bible. The editorial framework gives the following data for each king of Judah and Israel: his age at accession, the length of his reign, and a synchronic note concerning the regnal year of his royal contemporary in the neighboring kingdom.

It has often been pointed out that 430 regnal years are recorded for the Davidic kings from the beginning of the construction of the Temple under Solomon until its destruction during the reign of Zedekiah, and that this figure, together with a supposed 50-year exile, constitutes a second 480-year period (cf. 1 Kgs 6:1; and see D above) which marked the epoch from the First to the Second Temple (so, e.g., Koch 1978). But if such indeed was the intention of the ancient chronographer, it is nowhere stated nor is the sum of years ever given (cf. Begrich 1929:

14–16). (Note, though, that Ezekiel counted 430 sinful years for which Israel and Judah would have to do penance; Ezek 4:5–6.)

1. History of Research. Scholars of the late 19th century were skeptical regarding both the historical value of the synchronisms and the fidelity of the textual tradition of the regnal year totals (cf. Wellhausen 1875). A more just appreciation of the biblical data is now possible as ancient Israel's chronological reckoning is illuminated by the practices of its neighbors. Mesopotamian examples of synchronic chronologies have lent credibility to biblical synchronisms (Lewy 1927). Studies by Kugler (1922) and Begrich (1929) treat the Assyrian-Israelite synchronisms as pivotal points in their reconstructions. Though he leaned heavily upon extrabiblical data, Albright was less sanguine about the possibility that the numbers were "handed down through so many editors and copyists without often becoming corrupt," and so "corrected" items in several key reigns (Albright 1945: 17; cf. Mowinckel 1932: 163–64).

Contrariwise, the major work of E. R. Thiele (1983) proceeds from the assumption of the basic soundness of the Hebrew text. This entails an elaborate system of calendrical and regnal patterns which were operative at different times in the two kingdoms. H. Tadmor (*EncMiqr* 4: 245–310) bases his chronology upon considerations similar to those of Begrich and Thiele, but assumes far fewer systemic fluctuations; items which are inexplicable are regarded as late editorial calculations or errors.

Thiele's work has become a cornerstone of much recent chronological discussion (cf. De Vries *IDB* 1: 580–99; *IDBSup*: 161–66); but his harmonizing approach has not gone unchallenged, especially because of the many shifts in the basis of reckoning dates that it requires (e.g., Jepsen 1968: 34–35)—shifts which were unlikely in actual practice. The numerous extrabiblical synchronisms he invokes do not always reflect the latest refinements in Assyriological research (cf. E.2.f below). In many cases, he posits an undocumented event in order to save a biblical datum (e.g., the circumstances surrounding the appointment of Jeroboam II as coregent; Thiele 1983: 109). While also somewhat conservative in his approach to the figures in MT, Tadmor's pragmatic reconstruction delves into the process by which the redactor(s) of Kings compiled their chronological framework from heterogeneous materials, sometimes leaving traces in textual inconsistencies (*Tadmor EncMiqr* 4: 45).

2. Terminology. The key terms in the discussion of monarchic chronology are: (a) regnal year, (b) accession year, (c) accession year (or postdating) system, (d) non-accession year (or antedating) system, (e) coregency, and (f) absolute dates.

a. Regnal Year. The official "royal year" was reckoned from the start of the New Year. The month of Nisan (March–April) is the first month of the *cultic* year (cf. Exod 12:2; Num 28:16); the month of Tishri (September–October) marks the start of the *agricultural* year with the onset of the rainy season (Exod 23:16; 34:22. Note that the terms used in these verses, *šp̄t haššānā*, "the end of the year" and *tēqūpat haššānā*, "the turn of the year," refer to the seasons of the year and are not calendrical terms, as is the synonymous expression *tēšābat haššānā*, "the turn of

the year," 2 Sam 11:1; 1 Kgs 20:22, 26; 2 Chr 36:10; cf. Clines 1974). The Mishnah records that the New Year "for kings and pilgrimage festivals" was counted from Nisan (*m. Roš. Haš.* 1:1), as was the practice in Mesopotamia, but this statement has often been taken to reflect postbiblical practice. Some scholars hold that the regnal year ran from Tishri to Tishri (Mowinckel; Thiele); others from Nisan to Nisan (Kugler; Lewy; Tadmor); while still others argue for different calendars in Judah and Israel, with shifts made at certain junctures (Begrich; Morgenstern).

Though the evidence is inconclusive, it appears that a Nisan calendar was in use in S Judah, while in N Israel, a Tishri calendar was used. The posited half-year difference between the two kingdoms can be seen in the notice of the 6-month reign of Zechariah of Israel (2 Kgs 15:8) which is synchronized with the 38th year of Azariah of Judah; while the 1-month reign of his successor Shallum is in the 39th year of Azariah (2 Kgs 15:13). In Judah, the regnal New Year had passed, while in Israel, the regnal year had not yet ended; if it had, Zechariah would have been credited with 2 years (by nonaccession reckoning, see d below).

The counting of N Israel's regnal years from Tishri rather than Nisan may have been prompted by a desire to be independent of Judah's practice. On the other hand, the shift of one month in the celebration of the autumn festival, from the 7th to the 8th month, proclaimed by Jeroboam I (1 Kgs 12:32), looks like an accommodation to local tradition (according to Talmon 1958, based upon climatic considerations), Deuteronomistic editorial criticism notwithstanding.

b. Accession Year. The "accession year" is the period from the king's taking the throne until the start of the New Year (Akk *rēš šarrūti*; Heb *šēnat molkô*; cf. 2 Kgs 25:27; not equivalent to the nonchronological Hebrew term *rēšūt mamleket*, "the beginning of the reign," Jer 28:1; cf. Tadmor *EncMiqr* 4: 49).

c. Accession-year (or Postdating) System. This system counts the years of a king's reign only from the first full "regnal year" after his accession year. Assyrian and Babylonian texts employ this system of postdating throughout.

d. Nonaccession-year (or Antedating) System. This system does not recognize an accession year, and so counts the first year of a king's reign from his actual taking the throne; thus, in the antedating system the last year of the deceased king and the first one of his successor, which are the same year, are counted twice. Antedating was employed in Egypt for most of its history.

In Judah and Israel, the chronological data can, for the most part, be understood on the assumption that the nonaccession system in counting regnal years was in use. However, toward the middle or end of the 7th century, under the strong assimilatory pressures of the Mesopotamian empires, Judah apparently adopted the accession-year system.

e. Coregency. This term refers to the designation of a royal heir during the lifetime of the reigning monarch. Coregency seems not to have been the regular practice in either Israel or Judah; generally, unusual historical circumstances led to such an appointment which sought to insure the continuity of the ruling family on the throne (contrast Na'aman 1986: 83–91). The number of cases of coregency explicitly recorded in Kings is not great; some-

times the synchronisms lead one to suspect a period of coregency—an overlap counted in the total regnal years of both kings. Thus, e.g., Jotham judged the “people of the land” as coregent following Azariah’s leprosy (2 Kgs 15:5). Azariah himself was coregent with his father Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:21).

f. Absolute Dates. Absolute chronology can be achieved through correlation of biblical dates with extrabiblical ones that are fixed astronomically. Most reliable are the Assyro-Babylonian dates, preserved in eponym (Akk *limu*—a high official after whom the year was named) and king lists, and chronicles. Thus, e.g., the three-month reign of Jehoiachin at the end of which Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 24:8, 12) can be set in December 598–March 597 B.C.E. by reference to the precise dates recorded in the Babylonian Chronicle (see Table 5). (Several of Nebuchadnezzar’s regnal years are noted in the concluding sections of Kings, no doubt under the bureaucratic influence of his hegemony over Judah’s affairs [2 Kgs 24:12; 25:8, 27; cf. Jer 52:30].)

Egyptian dates, on the other hand, are still in question at certain crucial historical junctures. E.g., the invasion of Shishak in the fifth year of Rehoboam (1 Kgs 14:25), the only recorded Egyptian-Israelite synchronism, is primarily dated by reference to biblical coordinates (Kitchen 1973: 72–76).

A list of absolute dates, indicating their sources follows:

Table 5.
Absolute Dates for Events during the Monarchy

Event	Date	Source	Biblical Citation
Ahab participates in Battle of Qarqar against Shalmaneser III	853	Monolith Inscription 6th year of Shalmaneser III (ANET, 278–79)	
Jehu renders tribute to Shalmaneser III	841	Annals: 18th year of Shalmaneser III (ANET, 280)	
Joash renders tribute to Adad-nirari III	796	Stele inscription (Iraq 30 [1968]: 141–42)	
Menahem renders tribute to Tiglath-pileser III	740	Stele inscription (BASOR 206 [1972]: 40–42)	
	738	Annals: 8th year of Tiglath-pileser III (ANET, 283)	2 Kgs 15:19
Ahaz renders tribute to Tiglath-pileser III	734	Summary inscription Tiglath-pileser III (ANET, 282)	
Pekah removed ; Hoshea ascends throne in Israel	732	Summary inscription Tiglath-pileser III (ANET, 284)	2 Kgs 15:30; 17:1
Fall of Samaria	722	Babylonian Chronicle: 5th year of Shalmaneser V (Grayson 1975: 73: 27–31)	2 Kgs 17:6aα
Recapture of Samaria and exile of inhabitants	720	Annals: 2nd year of Sargon II (ANET, 285)	2 Kgs 17:6aβ-b
Assyrian Campaign to Judah	701	Annals: Sennacherib (ANET, 287–88)	2 Kgs 18:13–19.36

Manasseh renders tribute and service to Assyria	ca. 674	Prism B: Esarhaddon (ANET, 291)	
	ca. 668	Annals Prism C: Ashurbanipal (ANET, 294)	
Battle of Carchemish	605	Babylonian Chronicle: 21st year of Nabopolassar (Grayson 1975: 99: 1–5)	Jer 46:2
Capture of Jerusalem	597	Babylonian Chronicle: 7th year of Nebuchadnezzar (ANET, 564)	2 Kgs 24:12
Release of Jehoiachin	561	Accession year of Amel-Marduk (Parker-Dubberstein 1956: 12)	2 Kgs 25:27

Besides pinpointing individual events, these absolute dates determine the limits of scholarly conjecture. Menahem’s reign could not have ended in 742, as Thiele supposes (1983: 139–62), if Menahem is listed among the kings who rendered tribute to Tiglath-pileser III four years later, in 738. Similarly, a widely accepted interpretation of Assyrian inscriptional data from the days of Tiglath-pileser III which led to the identification of Azariah of Judah with a certain Azriyau has been refuted (cf. Na’aman 1974); as a result, an absolute date for Azariah’s reign is no longer available.

3. The Sources and Their Editing. The précis of monarchic chronology which follows is based upon these premises:

(a) The lengths of reigns and the synchronisms recorded in Kings ultimately derive from king lists and a synchronic chronicle. We cannot say whether the Deuteronomistic editor had access to the original materials or whether the data was already incorporated in “the Annals of the Kings of Judah” and “the Annals of the Kings of Israel”—those composite works he so often refers to (Lewy 1927: 7; Begrich 1929: 173–74). Nothing is known about these “annals,” their relation to archival data, or their comprehensiveness. The material concerning the N kingdom likely reached Jerusalem in compiled form soon after the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C.E. The Judean royal archives were accessible at the time the first edition of Kings was prepared, presumably during the reign of Josiah. The editorial attempt to integrate such diverse sources, and at the same time remain faithful to their differences, explains some of the conflicting chronological figures now in Kings.

(b) Some of the Judean synchronisms appear to be late calculations of the Deuteronomist who had no firsthand knowledge of the history of the N kingdom (cf. Aharoni 1950). This explains the synchronization of the reigns of the Judahite kings Jotham (2 Kgs 15:32) and Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:1) and the bloated figure of a 20-year reign for the Israelite Pekah (2 Kgs 15:27), who actually reigned just 2 years (see E.5 below). Similarly, the synchronization of Hezekiah’s 6th year, the year that Samaria fell, with Hosh-ea’s 9th year (2 Kgs 18:10) proves to be an erroneous assumption (as shown by the absolute dates for Israel’s last decade).

4. From the Fall of Samaria to the Fall of Jerusalem. The number of years between these two landmark events

is reckoned in the Bible with respect to the reigns of the kings of Judah (see Table 6).

Table 6.
From the Fall of Samaria to the Fall of Jerusalem

	Total reign	Source
Hezekiah	29	2 Kgs 18:2
Manasseh	55	2 Kgs 21:1
Amon	2	2 Kgs 21:19
Josiah	31	2 Kgs 22:1
Jehoahaz	3 mths	2 Kgs 23:31
Jehoiakim	11	2 Kgs 23:36
Jehoiachin	3 mths	2 Kgs 24:8
Zedekiah	11	2 Kgs 24:18

Working from the absolute dates provided above, it appears that the accession-year system was in use during the final decades of Judah. Jehoiachin surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar in March 597 B.C.E. His father Jehoiakim had come to the throne in 609/8 (according to the Babylonian Chronicle and the date in Jer 46:2 for the battle of Carchemish in the king's 4th year = 605/4). In that same year, 609 B.C.E., Josiah met his death at Megiddo and Jehoahaz was deported to Egypt after a short 3-month reign. Accordingly, Josiah reigned from 639–609. Thus, keeping in mind that Samaria was captured in the 6th year of Hezekiah, 83 years had elapsed from the fall of Samaria to the accession of Josiah (722–639). The total for the three kings who reigned during this period, however, adds up to 81 years. The missing two years may be accounted for by assuming that the chronographer disregarded the partial years of these kings, though if the nonaccession-year system were then still in use, he should have included them in his counting.

The datum given in 2 Kgs 18:13 that Sennacherib attacked Judah in Hezekiah's 14th year has generated much controversy. Assyrian inscriptions indicate an attack in 701, thus Hezekiah's reign would have begun in nonaccession year 714 or accession year 715 (Mowinckel; Albright; Thiele). This calculation not only contradicts the synchronism in 18:10 in which the year of Samaria's fall (722) was Hezekiah's 6th year, but the 715/14 date requires extending the reign of Ahaz his father and shortening that of his son Manasseh (Albright 1945: 22) or positing a coregency for Manasseh (Thiele 1983: 174). Preferable is the alternate solution which takes the "14th year" date as belonging to the prophetic story of Hezekiah's illness (2 Kings 20) which tells of the promise to the king of an additional 15 years of life (20:5), thus giving Hezekiah a 29-year reign (cf. 18:2). The present position of the date in 18:13, rather than its original one at the head of 2 Kings 20, is likely due to late editing of all the traditions concerning Hezekiah (cf. Cogan and Tadmor 2 Kings AB). The mention of the Egyptian Taharqa in 2 Kgs 19:9 as having fought against Sennacherib was once thought to be decisive in restoring a second Assyrian campaign in the second decade of the 7th century (Albright; Thiele); for if Taharqa became king in 690 at age 20, he could not have fought the Assyrians in 701. But this interpretation of the Egyp-

tian evidence is unwarranted (Kitchen 1973: 161–72) and leaves modern historians with a single campaign to Judah in 701 B.C.E.

The date of Jerusalem's fall and the destruction of the Solomonic Temple is also in dispute. According to the Babylonian Chronicle, Zedekiah was appointed king in March 597, Nebuchadnezzar's 7th year; thus Zedekiah's 11th year, the year Jerusalem was taken (2 Kgs 25:2), was the summer of 587 (cf. Freedman). But if Jehoiachin was deported only in Nebuchadnezzar's 8th year (as 24:12), then Zedekiah's accession year would have been 597/96. Whether Zedekiah's 1st regnal year is counted from Tishri 597 (Thiele, Malamat) or Nisan 596 (Tadmor), in both cases Jerusalem fell in 586.

5. **From Jehu until the Fall of Samaria.** The assassination of Jehoram of Israel and Ahaziah of Judah by the usurper Jehu (2 Kgs 9:21–28) provides a convenient point for calculating the chronology of both kingdoms since new rulers took their respective thrones simultaneously.

Table 7.
From Jehu until the Fall of Samaria

	Total reign	Source
ISRAEL		
Jehu	28	2 Kgs 10:36
Jehoahaz	17	2 Kgs 13:1
Joash	16	2 Kgs 13:10
Jeroboam	41	2 Kgs 14:23
Zechariah	6 mths	2 Kgs 15:8
Shallum	1 mth	2 Kgs 15:13
Menahem	10	2 Kgs 15:17
Pekahiah	2	2 Kgs 15:23
Pekah	20	2 Kgs 15:27
Hoshea	9	2 Kgs 17:1
<i>Total</i>	143 yrs 7 mths	
JUDAH		
Athaliah	7	2 Kgs 11:4
Jehoash	40	2 Kgs 12:2
Amaziah	29	2 Kgs 14:2
Azariah	52	2 Kgs 15:2
Jotham	16	2 Kgs 15:33
Ahaz	16	2 Kgs 16:2
Hezekiah	[6]	2 Kgs 18:10
<i>Total</i>	166 yrs	

Jehu paid tribute to Shalmaneser III in 841 (see Table 5), which may have been a year or so after he seized the throne (cf. 2 Kings 9–10). Between 842 and 722, a period of 120 years had lapsed. But the total regnal years listed for both N Israel and S Judah are too high (for Israel: 143 yrs, 7 mths; for Judah: 166 yrs). By assuming a number of coregencies and overlapping reigns, as is explicitly stated of Jotham (cf. 2 Kgs 15:5), most of the figures can be accommodated.

a. **Israel.** The synchronisms in 2 Kgs 13:1 and 13:10 show that the 17-year reign of Jehoahaz includes a 3-year coregency with his father Jehu. Similarly, Jeroboam had a 4-year coregency with his father Jehoash which is included in the total 41 years of Jeroboam's reign (cf. 2 Kgs 14:17, 23; 15:8). The Judean synchronism in 2 Kgs 15:1 would

give Jeroboam a reign longer than listed, 53 years instead of 41 and seems to be an error (cf. Josephus, *Ant* 9 §216, for a different synchronism). Pekah's 20 years (2 Kgs 15:27) are more difficult to explain. He was removed from the throne in a coup led by Hoshea in 732 (see Table 5), and if he took the throne in Azariah's 52d year (2 Kgs 15:27) (= 734/33), then Pekah actually ruled in Samaria for a little more than 2 years. The figure "20" has been thought to include the years he ruled "in Gilead as pretender to the crown of Israel" as well as those of his "official" rule in Samaria (Vogelstein; Thiele; Tadmor). Hoshea, who came to the throne in 732/31 with the approval of his overlord Tiglath-pileser III, ruled for 9 years until the winter of 724, after which Samaria continued without a monarch during the 3-year siege by Shalmaneser III.

b. Judah. Azariah served as coregent for 15 years with his father Amaziah (2 Kgs 14:17), after Amaziah had been defeated and taken captive by Jehoash of Israel (14:13). When Azariah was stricken with leprosy, his son Jotham "judged the people of the land" (15:5) in his stead. All of Jotham's rule (preserved in two conflicting traditions: a 20-year reign in 15:30; a 16-year reign in 15:33), as well as part of the years of his son Ahaz, overlapped with the 52 years credited to Azariah. In one instance, synchronisms show that Jehoash of Judah ruled just 39 years which were rounded off to the typological number "40" (2 Kgs 14:2, 23).

6. From the Division of the Monarchy to Jehu. Upon the death of Solomon, the kingdom split into two (1 Kings 12), and assuming that this event occurred close to the accession of Rehoboam son of Solomon, the period from the secession of N Israel down to the revolt of Jehu is of equal length in both Israel and Judah (since Jehu assassinated both Joram of Israel and Ahaziah of Judah; 2 Kgs 9:24, 27). Yet the total regnal years for the two kingdoms do not bear this out. While some synchronisms show that the totals can be reduced, other synchronisms are contradictory. Furthermore, an excessive number of years emerge from the biblical data for the 13-year period delimited by the absolute dates 853–841 B.C.E. (see E.2.f above).

Table 8.

From the Division of the Monarchy to Jehu

	Total Reign	Source
ISRAEL		
Jeroboam	22	1 Kgs 14:20
Nadab	2	1 Kgs 15:25
Baasha	24	1 Kgs 15:33
Elah	2	1 Kgs 16:8
Zimri	7 days	1 Kgs 16:15
Omri	12	1 Kgs 16:23
Tibni		1 Kgs 16:23
Ahab	22	1 Kgs 16:29
Ahaziah	2	1 Kgs 22:52
Jehoram	12	2 Kgs 3:1
<i>Total</i>	98 yrs and 7 days	
JUDAH		
Rehoboam	17	1 Kgs 14:21
Abijam	3	1 Kgs 15:2

Asa	41	1 Kgs 15:10
Jehoshaphat	25	1 Kgs 22:42
Jehoram	8	2 Kgs 8:17
Ahaziah	1	2 Kgs 8:26
<i>Total</i>	95 yrs	

a. Israel. From the synchronisms (1 Kgs 16:15, 23), it can be determined that Omri's 12 years include the 4-year struggle with Tibni over the throne of Israel; the notice of his 6-year residence in the capital Tirzah (16:23) points in the same direction. Ahab's 22 years include a 2-year coregency.

The synchronism in 2 Kgs 1:17 of Jehoram son of Ahab with Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat of Judah belongs to the LXX chronological system (see E.8 below); it contradicts 3:1 which fits the other data in the MT and so would seem to be a posteditorial addition.

The surplus of regnal years for 853–41 (from Qarqar to the death of Ahab at Ramoth-gilead = approx. one year; 2-year reign of Ahaziah; 12-year reign of Jehoram; Jehu's coup = approx. one year) necessitates shortening the reign of Jehoram to about 10 years (cf. Tadmor *Enc-Miqr* 4: 59; contrast Thiele 1983: 76–77).

b. Judah. The synchronisms for Jehoshaphat show that he served as coregent for 3 years (1 Kgs 22:52) and that Jehoram his son was likewise coregent for 4 years (2 Kgs 8:17).

7. The United Monarchy. The chronological traditions concerning Israel's first three monarchs are all problematic, so that only approximations of the length of their reigns can be offered.

The data on Saul's reign in the MT is corrupt: "Saul was [. . .] years old when he took the throne and he reigned [. . . +] two years" (1 Sam 13:1); the LXX versions are either defective or missing, while Josephus (*Ant* 6 §378; cf. 10 §143) and Acts 13:21 give the paradigmatic "40 years." For David, his 7½ years in Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem are rounded off to the paradigmatic "40 years" (2 Sam 5:4). Saul's son Ishbaal is said to have ruled for two years in Transjordan over the survivors of the Gilboa debacle (2 Sam 2:10), but this period ostensibly parallels David's early years in Hebron. The 40 years assigned to Solomon (1 Kgs 11:42) looks to be of similar typological origin and there is no way of knowing just how long the overlap between Solomon and his failing father lasted (cf. 1 Kings 1).

Moreover, there are no absolute dates for this period, save perhaps the date for start of the Temple construction in Solomon's 4th year (1 Kgs 6:1) which might be correlated with the 12th year of Hiram I of Tyre, who took the throne 155 years before the founding of Carthage (Josephus, *AgAp* 1.126). But discrepancy among the classical authors prevents exact dating of the founding of Carthage; most scholars date the event to 814 B.C.E.; others, who follow a minor tradition, set it in 825 B.C.E. (Liver 1953). Furthermore, doubts have even been raised about Josephus' reliability altogether (Katzenstein 1973: 80–83). Therefore, the dates offered in Table 9 have a margin of error wider than usual.

8. The Chronology of the Monarchy in the LXX. A major divergence from the chronology of the Divided Monarchy as presented by MT appears in Lucianic manu-

scripts of the LXX, especially for the period from Omri to Jehu. According to the MT synchronisms of Omri, his 12-year reign includes 4 years during which he contended with Tibni over the throne of Israel (cf. 1 Kgs 16:15, 23). An alternate construing of the text preserved in the Old Greek translation gives Omri all 12 years as sole ruler, and it not only reworks all the succeeding synchronisms with the kings of Judah but it also reorders the sequence of their reigns. It also identifies the king of Judah in 2 Kings 3 as Ahaziah (as opposed to MT's Jehoshaphat). It has been argued that the Old Greek chronology is original and that the MT is a secondary development adjusted to accommodate the prophetic narratives concerning Elijah and Elisha (Shenkel 1968; cf. Miller 1967: 281-84); but several of the Greek calculations (e.g., Zimri is assigned 7 years) and its repositioned textual units (e.g., 1 Kgs 16:28^{a-h} [= 1 Kgs 22:41-51]) do not recommend themselves as original (cf. Gooding 1970). The Greek may represent the earliest preserved attempt at revising imagined difficulties in MT's chronology (Thiele 1983: 88-94).

9. **The Chronology of the Monarchy in the Book of Chronicles.** Chronicles adopts for the most part the regnal data of Kings concerning Judah's monarchs, while shunting that of the N kingdom of Israel. In but a single instance is there any serious discrepancy between the two works: in Asa's 36th year, he was attacked by Baasha of Israel (2 Chr 15:19), who according to Kings was long since dead (in 1 Kgs 15:33 Baasha began his 24-year reign in Asa's 3d year). Crediting the higher figure for Baasha's reign requires assuming that it was calculated on a system which reckoned dates from the rule of Jeroboam I, as well as altering the numbers assigned other monarchs (Albright 1945: 20; cf. Thiele 1983: 84-86).

A number of dates in Chronicles are used in a literary fashion and have no chronological significance. The notice that Hezekiah undertook a cult reform "in the first month of the first year of his reign" (2 Chr 29:1) means only that the king's very first act of state concerned the Temple (cf. Cogan 1985). Similarly, the dates assigned to the Great Reform of Josiah (2 Chronicles 34-35), spread over 10 years, depict the king attending to cultic matters immediately upon reaching his majority (contrast 2 Kings 22-23). Other nonchronological items in Chronicles include the formulaic date "in the third year" (2 Chr 11:7; 17:7).

All of the data pertaining to the monarchic period can thus be synthesized to yield a plausible chronology for the kings of S Judah and N Israel (see Table 9):

Table 9.
Kings of Judah and Israel

Judah		Israel
	Saul	ca. 1025-1005
	David	ca. 1005-965
	Solomon	ca. 968-928
Rehoboam	928-911	Jeroboam I 928-907
Abijam	911-908	Nadab 907-906
Asa	908-867	Baasha 906-883
Jehoshaphat	870-846*	Elah 883-882
Jehoram	851-843*	Zimri 882
Ahaziah	843-842	Tibni 882-878**
Athaliah	842-836	Omri 882-871

Joash	836-798	Ahab	873-852
Amaziah	798-769	Ahaziah	852-851
Azariah	785-733*	Joram	851-842
Jotham	759-743*	Jehu	842-814
Ahaz	743-727*	Jehoahaz	817-800*
Hezekiah	727-698	Jehoash	800-784
Manasseh	698-642	Jeroboam II	788-747*
Amon	641-640	Zechariah	747
Josiah	639-609	Shallum	747
Jehoahaz	609	Menahem	747-737
Jehoiakim	608-598	Pekahiah	737-735
Jehoiachin	597	Pekah	735-732
Zedekiah	596-586	Hoshea	732-724

*Includes years as coregent **Rival rule

F. The Exile and the Restoration

The Judean expatriates in Babylon counted the years of their exile from the deportation of Jehoiachin by Nebuchadnezzar in the spring of 597 (Ezek 1:1, 2; 3:16; 8:1; 20:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1, 17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1, 17; 33:21; 40:1; cf. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20* AB, 8-11). The appended note on the release of King Jehoiachin from prison in 2 Kgs 25:27-30 counts by the same era. According to the Chronicler, when the Persian king Cyrus, in his first year, permitted the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple (2 Chr 36:23), it was in fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy of a 70-year exile (Jer 25:11-12). But Achaemenid sources count the years of Cyrus' reign from his conquest of Babylon in 539, less than 50 years after the destruction of Jerusalem. Perhaps the end point of the Chronicler's 70-year epoch is the year of dedication of the rebuilt Temple, 515 (Ezra 6:15; cf. Zech 1:12).

In postexilic historic and prophetic literature events are dated by reference to the regnal years of the Persian kings, as was common throughout the empire. The assertion that the native Israelite sabbatical year cycle, known from late Second Temple texts, was in actual calendrical use in the 5th century (Demskey 1985: 43-44), cannot be supported by solid evidence.

Because a distinction is not made in the biblical record between Persian kings bearing the same name, and because the Greek translations and Josephus present a different order of events (especially Neh 7:73-8:12 relating to the activities of Ezra the scribe, which appears in Greek and in Josephus after Ezra 10 [cf. 1 Esdr 9:37-55; *Ant* 11 §154-58]), it is often suggested that, contrary to MT, Nehemiah preceded Ezra. Recent papyrus finds at Wadi Daliyeh, though not providing absolute dates, establish the succession of the contemporary Samaritan governors and confirm the MT sequence (Cross 1975). Perhaps the principle of composition of certain disordered units, e.g., Ezra 4:6-24, was thematic association, rather than chronology.

The identification of the Persian kings in Table 10 assumes that the biblical text is intact (contrast Albright 1963: 93); Ezra preceded Nehemiah (as in MT).

Table 10.
Persian Kings in Postexilic Literature

Cyrus (539-530):	Ezra 1:1; 4:3; 5:13; 6:3, 14
Darius I (521-486):	Ezra 4:5, 24; 5:6; 6:1, 13; Hag 1:1, 15; 2:10; Zech 1:1, 7; 7:1

Xerxes I (485–465):	Ezra 4:6
Artaxerxes I (464–424):	Ezra 4:7, 8, 11, 23; 6:14; 7:1; 8:1; Neh 2:1; 5:14; 13:6
Darius II (423–404):	Neh 12:22

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NEW TESTAMENT

Any attempt to reconstruct the chronology of the NT must be tentative at best. The primary intention of the Gospels and other NT writings is not historical or biographical—they are documents of faith intended to pro-