

GOT

GOD OR TYRANTS

A STUDY OF 1 AND 2 KINGS

How well do you know the book of Kings?

Take the quiz below:

1. In his old age, King David had a young lady brought into his chamber to keep him warm. What was her name?
 - a. Bathsheba
 - b. Abishag
 - c. Jezebel
 - d. Abigail

2. The longest reign of a king from the Southern Kingdom (Judah) was...
 - a. 28 years
 - b. 40 years
 - c. 52 years
 - d. 55 years

3. Circle those ways in which a king of Judah or Israel died:
 - a. Natural causes
 - b. In battle
 - c. Assassination
 - d. Suicide
 - e. Struck down by the LORD
 - f. Disease

4. For what did Solomon pray when God said to him in a dream, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”?
 - a. An abundance of wealth
 - b. A wise mind
 - c. A discerning heart
 - d. Relief from his enemies

5. Elijah summoned the prophets of Baal to the top of Mount Carmel. Which important modern Israeli city is built on the slopes of Mount Carmel?
 - a. Tel Aviv
 - b. Haifa
 - c. Jerusalem
 - d. Caesarea Maritima

6. How short was the shortest reign of a King of Israel... and what was his name?
 - a. 1 day (Amazoash, Zimri, Shallum, or Ahaziah)
 - b. 1 week (Amazoash, Zimri, Shallum, or Ahaziah)
 - c. 1 month (Amazoash, Zimri, Shallum, or Ahaziah)
 - d. 1 year (Amazoash, Zimri, Shallum, or Ahaziah)

7. How many kings of Israel were faithful to the LORD?
 - a. 0
 - b. 2
 - c. 5
 - d. 7

8. How many kings of Juday were faithful to the LORD (no “halfies”)?
 - a. 0
 - b. 4
 - c. 10
 - d. 12

9. Which prophet performed more miracles (as recorded in Scripture)?
 - a. Elisha outperformed Elijah
 - b. Elijah outperformed Elisha
 - c. Elijah and Elisha performed the same amount
 - d. Neither Elijah nor Elisha performed miracles

10. Who had a servant named Gehazi?
 - a. David
 - b. Elijah
 - c. Solomon
 - d. Elisha

11. Circle all the following descriptions of the book of 1 & 2 Kings that are true:
 - a. Originally, they were one book written on one scroll
 - b. They cover a period of slightly more than 400 years
 - c. They are generally positive concerning the kings of Judah
 - d. They are complementary to the books of 1 & 2 Chronicles

12. Circle all the “extra-Biblical” books referenced in 1 & 2 Kings:
 - a. The Book of Jashar
 - b. Annals of the Kings of Isreal
 - c. Annals of Solomon
 - d. Annals of the Kings of Judah

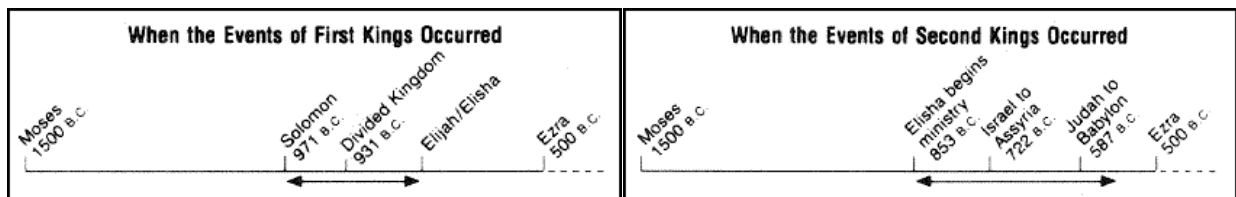
13. Which King of Judah presided over a great “reformation”?
 - a. Jehoshaphat
 - b. Jehoram
 - c. Jotham
 - d. Josiah

14. Which brook did Elijah drink from during the years of drought in Israel?
 - a. The Kidron
 - b. The Tigres
 - c. The Kerith
 - d. The Arnon

15. Which set of prophets figure prominently in the books of 1 & 2 Kings?
- Ezekiel and Daniel
 - Ezra and Nehemiah
 - Zephaniah and Zechariah
 - Elijah and Elisha
16. Elijah was taken up into heaven in...
- A spaceship
 - A whirlwind
 - A chariot of fire
 - A hurricane
17. What accompanied Elisha, at times, when he prophesied?
- A person playing a lyre (thus, the word, “lyricist”)
 - A person riding a donkey
 - A person playing a harp
 - No one; this is just a silly question
18. Which wicked king illegally took a vineyard from a man named Naboth?
- Ahab
 - Ahaz
 - Manasseh
 - Asa
19. Judah was ruled for a while by a queen who had no king alongside her.
- This statement is false.
 - This statement is true.
 - This statement is true for Israel, not Judah.
 - This statement is true for both Israel and Judah.
20. How prominently does “The LORD” figure in two books dedicated to the rule of kings, most of whom were wicked?
- “The LORD” is hardly mentioned.
 - “The LORD” is mentioned, but infrequently.
 - “The LORD” is mentioned more than 500 times.
 - “The LORD” is mentioned only 50 times, mostly by Elijah and Elisha.

God or Tyrants: A Study of 1 & 2 Kings – A Study Outline

- 1. Lesson 01 (no reading)**
Overview and Preparation
- 2. Lesson 02 (1 Kings 1:1 – 4:34)**
36/1600
- 3. Lesson 03 (1 Kings 5:1 – 10:29)**
Indiana Jones
- 4. Lesson 04 (1 Kings 11:1 – 16:34)**
How to Ruin a Kingdom
- 5. Lesson 05 (1 Kings 17:1 – 19:21)**
A Prophet's Prophet
- 6. Lesson 06 (1 Kings 20:1 – 2 Kings 2:25)**
Chariots of Fire
- 7. Lesson 07 (2 Kings 3:1 – 8:6)**
The Mantle Bearer
- 8. Lesson 08 (2 Kings 8:7 – 12:21)**
Saving Christmas
- 9. Lesson 09 (2 Kings 13:1 – 17:41)**
The Point of No Return
- 10. Lesson 10 (2 Kings 18:1 – 21:26)**
From +30,000 to -36,000
- 11. Lesson 11 (2 Kings 22:1 – 25:30)**
A Reformation without Luther
- 12. Lesson 12 (no reading)**
Summary and Conclusion



An Introduction to the Books of 1 & 2 Kings

- I. The place of Kings within the Scripture text
 - A. Early Greek manuscripts of the Old Testament
 - 1. Samuel and Kings combined under the title “Kingdoms” or “Reigns”
 - a. 1 & 2 Samuel = 1 & 2 Kingdoms
 - b. 1 & 2 Kings = 3 & 4 Kingdoms
 - 2. The Septuagint divided the books into four historical books
 - B. In the Hebrew Scriptures...
 - 1. ... the book of Samuel was one book (one scroll?)
 - 2. ... the book of Kings was one book
 - C. English Bibles generally adopted a combination of the two
 - 1. The fourfold division of the Greek manuscripts
 - 2. The twofold names of the Hebrew Scriptures
 - 3. Therefore, English Bibles contain 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings
 - D. The books of Samuel and Kings cover the era of Israel under the kings
 - 1. 1 Samuel – Saul
 - 2. 2 Samuel – David
 - 3. 1 Kings – Solomon and the divided kingdom
 - 4. 2 Kings – The fall of the divided kingdom of Israel and Judah
 - E. The books of the Kings on the broader outline of the Old Testament
 - 1. In the Hebrew Scriptures: one of the Prophets
 - a. “Former Prophets” (Joshua – 2 Kings [not including Ruth])
 - b. “Latter Prophets” (Isaiah – Malachi [without Lamentations and Daniel])
 - c. 1 & 2 Kings were the last of the Former Prophets
 - 2. In the Greek/English Bibles: one of the Historical books
 - a. Twelve historical books
 - b. Joshua through Esther
- II. The author of the book of Kings
 - A. Higher Critical Scholarship – The Deuteronomistic School
 - 1. Written in the late 8th or early 7th century in order to align with the reforms implemented under King Josiah (640-608 B.C.)
 - 2. Assumes that Deuteronomy is a late document composed to support Josiah’s reforms
 - 3. Not the product of one author, but of many editors
 - B. Jeremiah, the prophet
 - 1. Attested to by traditional Jewish scholarship as the writer/compiler
 - 2. The similarity of Jeremiah 52 with 2 Kings 24/25
 - 3. There is no compelling reason to eliminate Jeremiah as the author
 - 4. Jeremiah is never mentioned by name in Kings, though he was a prominent prophet at the time.
 - 5. Against his authorship, however, the final portions of 2 Kings
 - C. An anonymous editor/compiler/author
 - 1. Allows for the final portions of 2 Kings
 - 2. Probably someone who was taken into exile (Ezra or Ezekiel?)
 - 3. Used sources for some information
 - 4. Had a sense of how the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah were built on their covenant relationship with the LORD

III. Sources used in the book of Kings

A. Specifically mentioned

1. Acts of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41)
2. Chronicles/Annals of the Kings of Israel (17x in 1 Kings 14:29 – 2 Kings 15:31)
3. Chronicles/Annals of the Kings of Judah (1 Kings 15:23)

B. Not specifically mentioned, but proposed by some scholars

1. Memoirs of David (1 Kings 1:1 – 2:11)
2. Elijah/Elisha Prophetic Cycle with the House of Ahab (1 Kings 16:29 – 2 Kings 13)
3. An “Isaiah Source” (2 Kings 18:13 – 20:19 almost identical to Isaiah 36:1 – 39:8)
4. An independent “Prophetic Source”
5. Two concluding “Historical Abstracts” (2 Kings 25:22-26, 27-30)

IV. Dates and Chronology for the book of Kings

A. The books of Kings were Written between 560 and 538/539 B.C.

1. The last event recorded in 2 Kings 25:27-30 is the release of Jehoichin from prison during the 37th year of his imprisonment (560 B.C. [597 minus 37 years of captivity = 560]). This marks the earliest date that Kings could have been completed
2. Since there is no mention of a return to Jerusalem after the captivity, it is probable that the book was written before that event in 538/539 B.C. This marks the latest date that Kings could have been written.

B. This material covers a period from the end of David’s reign (c. 970 B.C.) to the captivity of Israel (587/586 B.C.) and then the release of Jehoiachin (560 B.C.).

C. Foreign Powers Mentioned in the Books of Kings

Egyptians	An unnamed Pharaoh Shishak [945-924] So or Osorkon [726-715] Necho [609-594]	1 Kings 3:1
Arameans	Rexon [940-915]	1 Kings 11:23-25;
	Tabrimmon [915-900]	15:18
	Ben-Hadad I [900-960]	1 Kings 15:18
	Ben-Hadad II [860-841]	1 Kings 15:18, 20
	Hazael [841-806]	1 Kings 20
		2 Kings 8:15
	2 Kings 13:3	
	Ben-Hadad III [806- 770]	2 Kings 15:37
	Rezin [750-732]	
Phoenicians	Ethbaal [874-853]	1 Kings 16:31
Edomites	Hadad [?]	1 Kings 11:14-22
Moabites	Mesha [853-841]	2 Kings 3:4ff.
Assyrians	Tiglath-Pileser III [745-727]	2 Kings 15:19-22
		2 Kings 17:3-6
	Shalmaneser V [727-722]	Isaiah 20:1; 2 Kings 18:17
	Sargon II [721-705]	2 Kings 18-19
	Sennacherib [704-681]	
Babylonians	Merodach-Baladan II [703]	2 Kings 20:12-13
		2 Kings 24-25
	Nebuchadrezzar [604-562] Evil-Merodach [562-560]	2 Kings 24 – 25

V. The Literary Structure of Kings

- A. Kings is mostly in chronological order from the rise of Solomon to the fall of Jerusalem
- B. Some parts of Kings are thematic:
 1. The summary account of Solomon’s administration (1 Kings 4)
 2. The overview of Solomon’s architectural achievements (1 Kings 5:1--7:12)
 3. Events related to Jeroboam I and Hezekiah (1 Kings 13; 14:1-20; 2 Kings 18:7-19:37; 20)
 4. The prophetic ministries of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17--2 Kings 8:15)
- C. The formulaic structure of the “kings” accounts:
 1. The Judahite Kingship:
 - a. Introduction of the kings:
 - 1) By name
 - 2) Name of the king’s father
 - 3) Report of the kings accession (usually synchronized with the reign of his Israelite counterpart)
 - b. Biographical information is given:
 - 1) The king’s age at accession
 - 2) The length of the king’s reign
 - 3) The name of the queen mother
 - 4) Jerusalem as the capital of the king
 - 5) An evaluation of the king’s moral character and spiritual leadership
 - c. Closing Information:
 - 1) Identification of additional sources documenting information about the kings reign
 - 2) A death and burial statement
 - 3) An announcement of the king’s successor
 2. Israelite Kings:
 - a. Basically the same as above
 - b. In the biographical information the following changes were made:
 - 1) The royal city was usually Samaria
 - 2) The name of the queen mother was usually omitted
 3. Placed within a king’s reign were placed:
 - a. Prophetic speeches (1 Kings 18:20-29)
 - b. Direct discourse (2 Kings 18:19-27)
 - c. Wisdom sayings (1 Kings 20:11; 2 Kings 14:9)
 - d. Poetic materials (1 Kings 22:17; 2 Kings 19:21-28)
- D. Differences between the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles:
 1. The Books of Samuel
 - a. Author uses a biographical style
 - b. Author writes thematically from a “special interest in the prophetic unfolding of the kingdom of Israel, especially as centered in... the house of David ...”
 2. The Books of Kings
 - a. The author relates the facts in a narrative-annalistic format
 - b. The author “attempts to give a balanced account of the general activities that characterized the outworking of the divine covenant in Israel’s first kingdom period.”
 - c. The author gives attention to the royal and prophetic elements of the Kingdom
 - d. The author is interested in the Kings of Israel and Judah
 - e. The kings are evaluated by the Mosaic law

3. The Books of Chronicles
 - a. Author uses a theological viewpoint
 - b. The author writes from the particular viewpoint of divine evaluation of how Israel (and particularly Judah) responded to the revealed standards of the sovereign God, ...”
 - c. The author emphasizes the “priestly elements in the nation’s history, such as the temple and worship ...”
 - d. The author is primarily interested in the kings of Judah
 - e. In 2 Chronicles the kings of Judah are evaluated in reference to David and the worship of YHWH
- VI. The Nature of The Divided Kingdom:
- A. The Less Stable Northern Kingdom – Israel:
 1. Only existed as an independent nation for 209 years
 2. All of the kings were characterized as “evil” because they continued the “golden calf cult of Jeroboam
 3. The average reign was ten years
 4. There were nine different ruling families
 5. Charisma was as important as ancestry to take the throne
 6. The fate of all the kings was tragic:
 - a. Seven kings were assassinated
 - b. One king committed suicide
 - c. One king was stricken by God
 - d. One king was taken to Assyria
 - B. The More Stable Southern Kingdom--Judah:
 1. Existed a century and half longer than the northern kingdom for 345 years
 2. The reign of Judah’s 19 kings and one queen averaged more than 17 years each
 3. The Davidic family was the only family that claimed the throne Queen Athaliah’s evil reign was the only interruption to the Davidic family
 4. Judah also had tragic fates for the kings:
 - a. Five kings were assassinated
 - b. Two kings were stricken by God
 - c. Three kings were exiled to foreign lands
 5. But eight (?) of Judah’s rulers were “good” because they followed the example of David and obeyed YHWH
- VII. PURPOSES FOR THE BOOKS OF KINGS:
- A. To “complete the written history of Hebrew kingship as a sequel to the books of Samuel”
 - B. To show the repeated, divine reasons for the fall of the Jewish nation
 - C. To “relate the history of the Hebrew united and divided monarchies in their ‘covenant failure’“
 - D. To legitimize “the Davidic dynasty through the agency of the prophetic office because the kingship covenant previously announced by Nathan sanctioned the tribe of Judah and the family of David as rightful heirs to the Hebrew throne.”
 - E. To warn the kings and the people of the consequence of covenant disobedience
 - F. To demonstrate that the one who was to fulfill the promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 had not yet arrived since none of the kings who followed David were greater than David
 - G. To provide hope for Israel through the two historical appendices that God would yet fulfill his promise to the house of David

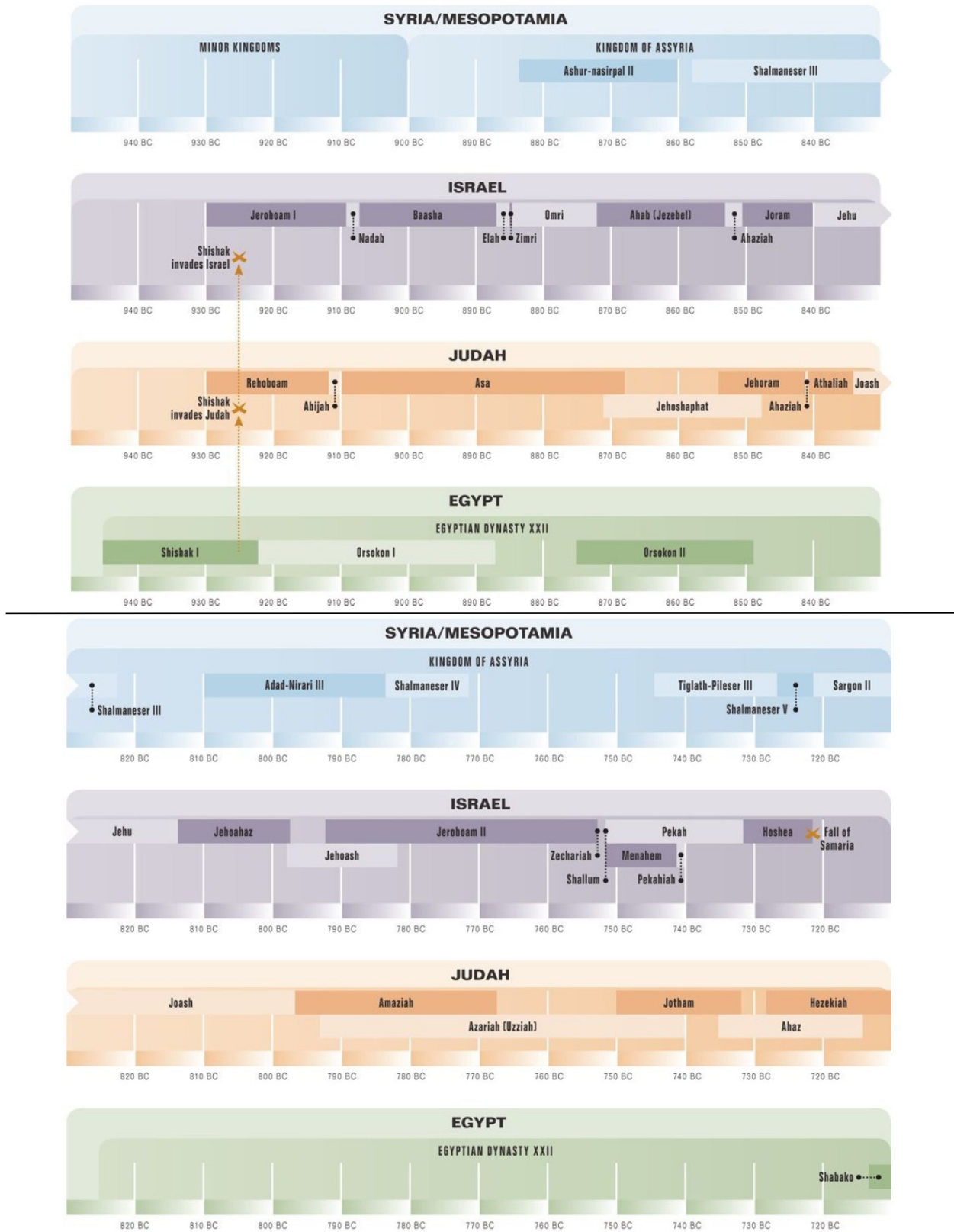
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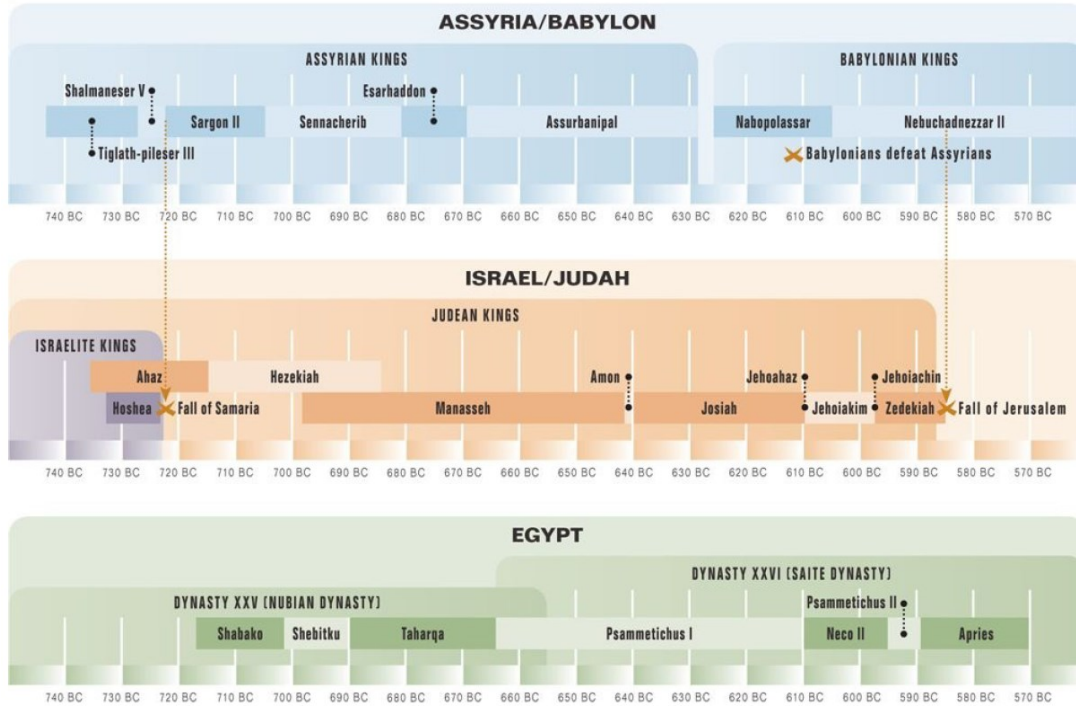
1,2 Kings can be broadly outlined by relating their contents to the major historical periods it describes and to the ministries of Elijah and Elisha.

1. The Solomonic Era ([1:1;12:24](#))
 - 1.1. Solomon's Succession to the Throne ([1:1;2:12](#))
 - 1.2. Solomon's Throne Established ([2:13-46](#))
 - 1.3. Solomon's Wisdom ([ch. 3](#))
 - 1.4. Solomon's Reign Characterized ([ch. 4](#))
 - 1.5. Solomon's Building Projects ([5:1;9:9](#))
 - 1.5.1. Preparation for building the temple ([ch. 5](#))
 - 1.5.2. Building the temple ([ch. 6](#))
 - 1.5.3. Building the palace ([7:1-12](#))
 - 1.5.4. The temple furnishings ([7:13-51](#))
 - 1.5.5. Dedication of the temple ([ch. 8](#))
 - 1.5.6. The Lord's response and warning ([9:1-9](#))
 - 1.6. Solomon's Reign Characterized ([9:10;10:29](#))
 - 1.7. Solomon's Folly ([11:1-13](#))
 - 1.8. Solomon's Throne Threatened ([11:14-43](#))
 - 1.9. Rehoboam's Succession to the Throne ([12:1-24](#))
2. Israel and Judah from Jeroboam I/Rehoboam to Ahab/Asa ([12:25;16:34](#))
 - 2.1. Jeroboam I of Israel ([12:25;14:20](#))
 - 2.2. Rehoboam of Judah ([14:21-31](#))
 - 2.3. Abijah of Judah ([15:1-8](#))
 - 2.4. Asa of Judah ([15:9-24](#))
 - 2.5. Nadab of Israel ([15:25-32](#))
 - 2.6. Baasha of Israel ([15:33;16:7](#))
 - 2.7. Elah of Israel ([16:8-14](#))
 - 2.8. Zimri of Israel ([16:15-20](#))
 - 2.9. Omri of Israel ([16:21-28](#))
 - 2.10. Ahab of Israel ([16:29-34](#))
3. The Ministries of Elijah and Other Prophets from Ahab/Asa to Ahaziah/Jehoshaphat (chs. [17-22](#))
 - 3.1. Elijah (and Other Prophets) in the Reign of Ahab ([17:1;22:40](#))
 - 3.1.1. Elijah and the drought ([ch. 17](#))
 - 3.1.2. Elijah on Mount Carmel ([ch. 18](#))
 - 3.1.3. Elijah's flight to Horeb ([ch. 19](#))
 - 3.1.4. A prophet condemns Ahab for sparing Ben-Hadad ([ch. 20](#))
 - 3.1.5. Elijah condemns Ahab for seizing Naboth's vineyard ([ch. 21](#))
 - 3.1.6. Micaiah prophesies Ahab's death; its fulfillment ([22:1-40](#))
 - 3.2. Jehoshaphat of Judah ([22:41-50](#))
 - 3.3. Ahaziah of Israel ([22:51-53](#))
4. The Ministries of Elijah and Elisha during the Reigns of Ahaziah and Joram ([2ki 1:1;8:15](#))
 - 4.1. Elijah in the Reign of Ahaziah ([ch. 1](#))
 - 4.2. Elijah's Translation; Elisha's Inauguration ([2:1-18](#))
 - 4.3. Elisha in the Reign of Joram ([2:19;8:15](#))
 - 4.3.1. Elisha's initial miraculous signs ([2:19-25](#))

- 4.3.2. Elisha during the campaign against Moab ([ch. 3](#))
- 4.3.3. Elisha's ministry to needy ones in Israel ([ch. 4](#))
- 4.3.4. Elisha heals Naaman ([ch. 5](#))
- 4.3.5. Elisha's deliverance of one of the prophets ([6:1-7](#))
- 4.3.6. Elisha's deliverance of Joram from Aramean raiders ([6:8-23](#))
- 4.3.7. Aramean siege of Samaria lifted, as Elisha prophesied ([6:24;7:20](#))
- 4.3.8. The Shunammite's land restored ([8:1-6](#))
- 4.3.9. Elisha prophesies Hazael's oppression of Israel ([8:7-15](#))
- 5. Israel and Judah from Joram/Jehoram to the Exile of Israel ([8:16;17:41](#))
 - 5.1. Jehoram of Judah ([8:16-24](#))
 - 5.2. Ahaziah of Judah ([8:25-29](#))
 - 5.3. Jehu's Revolt and Reign in Israel (chs. [9-10](#))
 - 5.3.1. Elisha orders Jehu's anointing ([9:1-13](#))
 - 5.3.2. Jehu's assassination of Joram and Ahaziah ([9:14-29](#))
 - 5.3.3. Jehu's execution of Jezebel ([9:30-37](#))
 - 5.3.4. Jehu's slaughter of Ahab's family ([10:1-17](#))
 - 5.3.5. Jehu's eradication of Baal worship ([10:18-36](#))
 - 5.4. Athaliah and Joash of Judah; Repair of the Temple (chs. [11-12](#))
 - 5.5. Jehoahaz of Israel ([13:1-9](#))
 - 5.6. Jehoash of Israel; Elisha's Last Prophecy ([13:10-25](#))
 - 5.7. Amaziah of Judah ([14:1-22](#))
 - 5.8. Jeroboam II of Israel ([14:23-29](#))
 - 5.9. Azariah of Judah ([15:1-7](#))
 - 5.10. Zechariah of Israel ([15:8-12](#))
 - 5.11. Shallum of Israel ([15:13-16](#))
 - 5.12. Menahem of Israel ([15:17-22](#))
 - 5.13. Pekahiah of Israel ([15:23-26](#))
 - 5.14. Pekah of Israel ([15:27-31](#))
 - 5.15. Jotham of Judah ([15:32-38](#))
 - 5.16. Ahaz of Judah ([ch. 16](#))
 - 5.17. Hoshea of Israel ([17:1-6](#))
 - 5.18. Exile of Israel; Resettlement of the Land ([17:7-41](#))
- 6. Judah from Hezekiah to the Babylonian Exile (chs. [18-25](#))
 - 6.1. Hezekiah (chs. [18-20](#))
 - 6.1.1. Hezekiah's good reign ([18:1-8](#))
 - 6.1.2. The Assyrian threat and deliverance ([18:9;19:37](#))
 - 6.1.3. Hezekiah's illness and alliance with Babylon ([ch. 20](#))
 - 6.2. Manasseh ([21:1-18](#))
 - 6.3. Amon ([21:19-26](#))
 - 6.4. Josiah ([22:1;23:30](#))
 - 6.4.1. Repair of the temple; discovery of the Book of the Law ([ch. 22](#))
 - 6.4.2. Renewal of the covenant; end of Josiah's reign ([23:1-30](#))
 - 6.5. Jehoahaz Exiled to Egypt ([23:31-35](#))
 - 6.6. Jehoiakim: First Babylonian Deportation ([23:36;24:7](#))
 - 6.7. Jehoiachin: Second Babylonian Deportation ([24:8-17](#))
 - 6.8. Zedekiah: Third Babylonian Deportation ([24:18;25:21](#))
 - 6.9. Removal of the Remnant to Egypt ([25:22-26](#))
 - 6.10. Elevation of Jehoiachin in Babylon ([25:27-30](#))

The Kings in Historical Context





Chronology of Foreign Kings

A chronology of selected foreign kings who are pertinent to the study of Judah/Israel history.

ASSYRIA	
Tilgath-Pileser III	745-727 *
Shalmaneser V	727-722
Sargon II	721-705
Sennacherib	705-681
Esarhaddon	681-669
Ashurbanipal	669-627
BABYLONIA	
Nebuchadnezzar II	605-562
Nabonidus	556-539
Belshazzar	Coregency with Nabonidus 553(?) - 539
PERSIA	
Cyrus the Great	559-530
Cambyses	530-522
Darius I the Great	522-486
Xerxes (Ahasuerus)	486-465
Artaxerxes I	465-424
Darius II	423-404

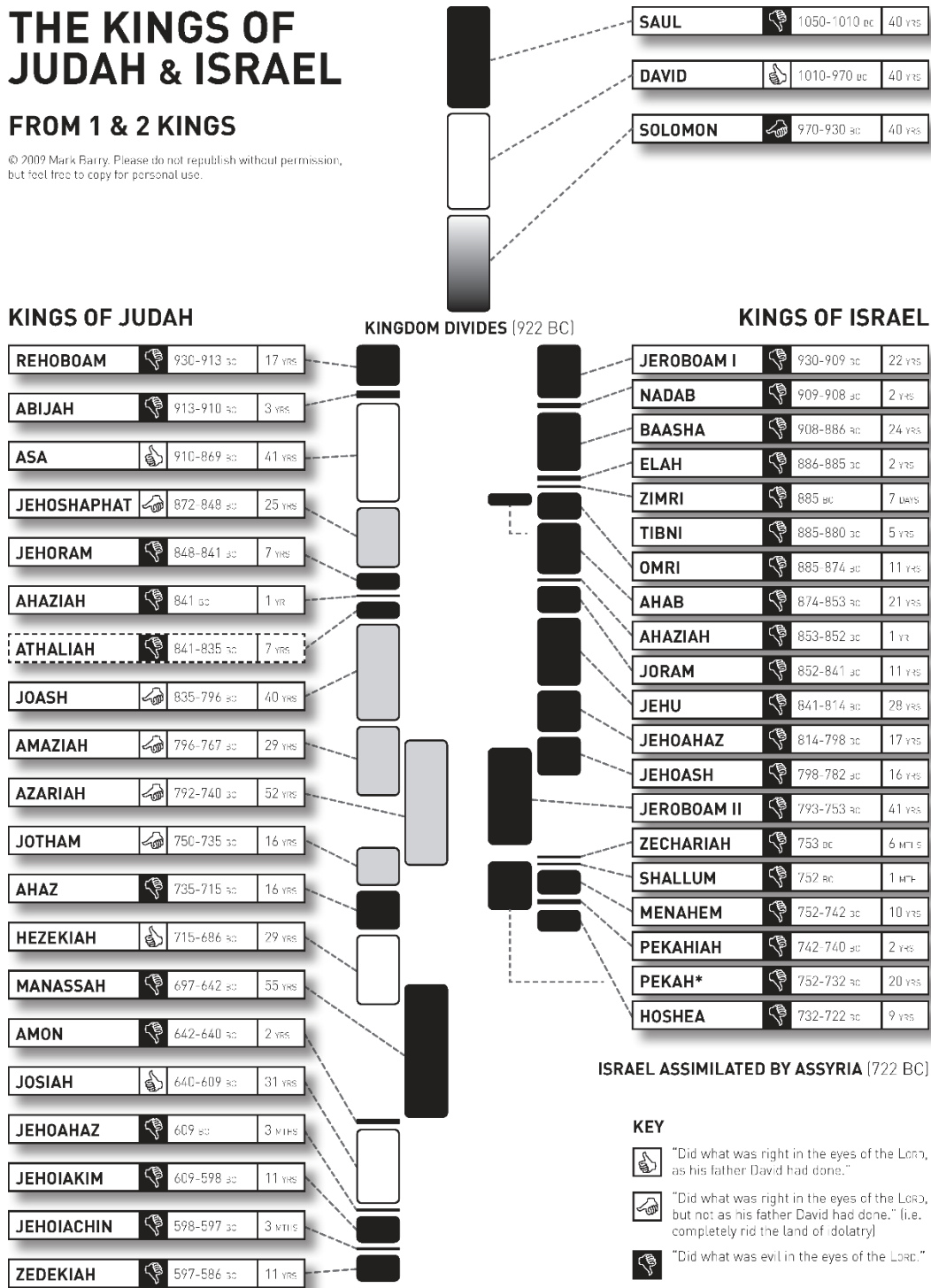
* All dates are B.C. and are those of the kings' reigns.

The Kings of Judah and Israel

THE KINGS OF JUDAH & ISRAEL

FROM 1 & 2 KINGS

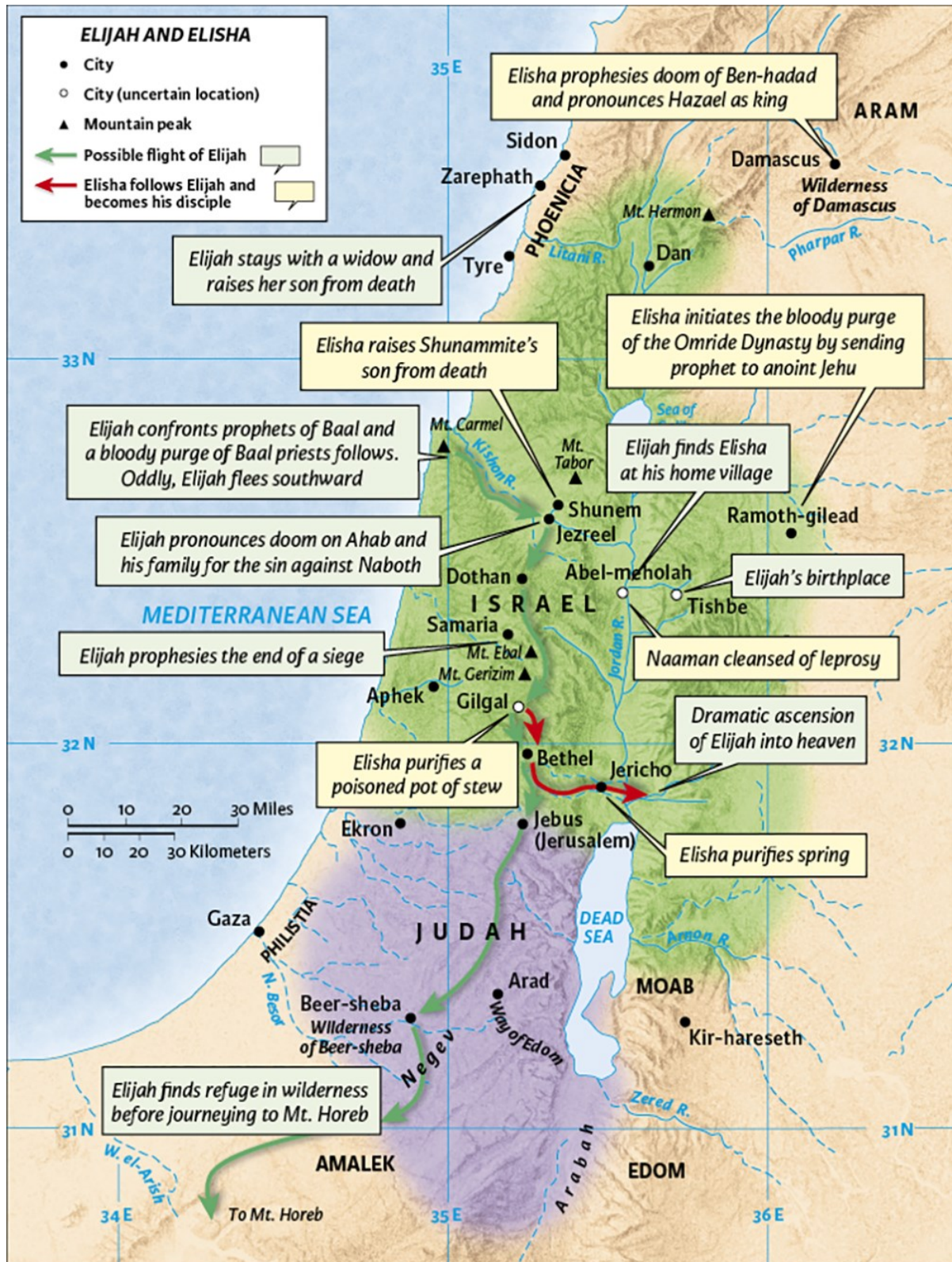
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Map of the Divided Kingdom



Map of Elijah and Elisha's Ministries



The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings

It is difficult to synchronize the dates given in the books of Kings with our modern calendar.

The years of the kings of Assyria can be connected to the years of our calendar with a relatively high degree of accuracy by using the detailed annual lists of the reigns of the Assyrian kings, combined with astronomical records. There are a number of synchronisms that connect given years of the reign of an Assyrian or Babylonian king with a given year of an Israelite king (example: the tenth year of King A of Assyria was the eighth year of King B of Israel). If we can date the year of the Assyrian king to our calendar, we can also date the year of the Israelite king to a year in our calendar. It, nevertheless, is not possible to date the events of an Israelite king to an exact day, month, and year of our calendar. There are a number of reasons for this.

The first is that Jewish and Babylonian calendar years do not match up evenly with our solar years of 365 (or 366) days, which begin in January. The biblical books dated kings' reigns in terms of two different calendar years: one of which began with the month of Nisan at the time of the spring equinox and the other which began with Tishri at the autumn equinox. Their years did not have a uniform number of months or days. Because twelve lunar months, which total approximately 354 days, do not equal one solar year, the Jewish and Babylonian lunar calendars occasionally had to add a thirteenth month to a year in order to bring the lunar calendar back into line with the solar year and to keep the agricultural seasons in the right months. The beginning of both their months and their years were not determined by a set mathematical formula but by observation, so their calendar did not follow a predictable mathematical pattern as our modern calendar does. Because of the irregular nature of their calendar, all systems of trying to link days of the month in these books to an exact day in our calendar are dubious. Another complication is that throughout history, calendar systems have received occasional corrections and adjustments, and we may not have knowledge of all of these adjustments.^a

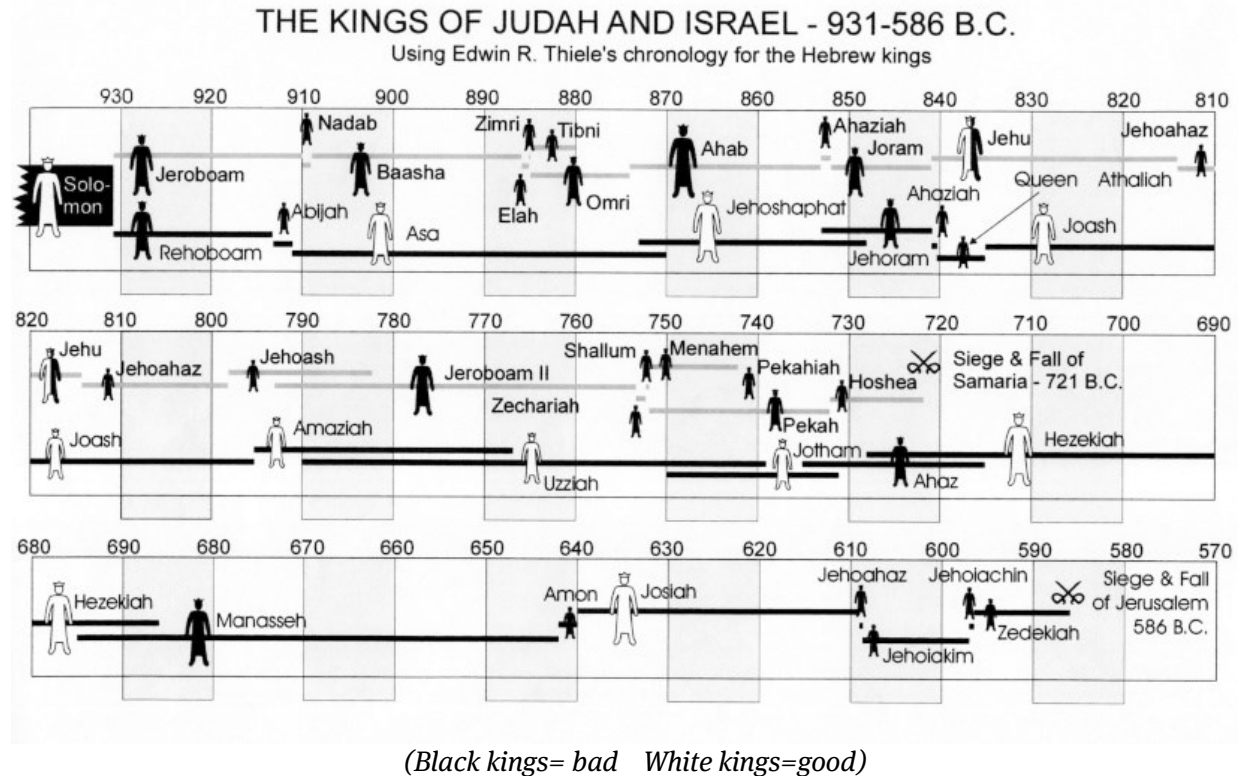
The biblical writers also had two different ways of counting the number of years in a given king's reign. One system counted the first partial calendar year of a king's reign as his first regnal year. The other system did not count the first partial year as part of his reign, but counted the first complete calendar year of his reign as his first regnal year. Because of this, a given calendar year of a king's reign could be counted as either the first or the second year of his reign depending on which system was being used. (The same one-year discrepancy would pertain also to all his other years.) A king might be credited with a reign of five years or six years depending on which system was being used. If two different biblical authors were using two different systems, they might report different dates for the same event.

A third problem is there were sometimes two or more kings ruling at the same time. (This is called a co-regency.) If a certain king ruled together with his father for five years, is the first year after his father's death the first year of his reign or the sixth? There was not one standard way of accounting for this, and even when the Bible provides evidence that suggests a co-regency, it does not always give the length of the co-regency.

For all of these reasons it is not possible to date events in the reigns of Israelite kings to precise days in our calendar. In fact, until relatively recently, many scholars claimed that the chronology of the Hebrew kings was a hopeless mess of contradictions and errors. Shortly after World War II a scholar named Edwin Thiele did a brilliant job of deciphering what he called "the mysterious numbers of the Hebrew kings." Except for his treatment of the reign of Hezekiah, his system gives a reliable re-creation

of the chronology of the Hebrew kings, though uncertainties remain. This was a feat of tremendous importance because it demonstrated that scholars' criticism of the Bible is frequently based on their own ignorance of the system employed in the Bible, rather than on errors in the biblical text.

Here is a summary of these studies in chart form and in list form. All the dates are subject to a margin of error of one year. In some cases there is a larger margin of error.



The Dates of the Kings of Israel and Judah

Israel			Judah		
King	Overlapping Reigns	Reign	King	Co-regency	Reign
Jeroboam I		931/30-910/9	Rehoboam		931/30-913
			Abijah/Abijam		913-911/10
Nadab		910/9-909/8	Asa		911/10-870/69
Baasha		909/8-886/85			
Elah		886/85-885/84			
Zimri		885/84			
Tibni		885/84-880			
Omri	885/84-880	880-874/73			
Ahab		874/73-853	Jehoshaphat	873/72-870/69	870/69-848
Ahaziah		853-852	Jehoram	853-848	848-841
Joram		852-841	Ahaziah		841
Jehu		841-814/13	Athaliah		841-835
Jehoahaz		814/13-798	Joash		835-796

Israel			Judah		
King	Overlapping Reigns	Reign	King	Co-regency	Reign
Jehoash		798-782/81	Amaziah		796-767
Jeroboam II	793/92-782/81	782/81-753	Azariah	791/90-767	767-740/39
Zechariah		753-752			
Shallum		752			
Menahem		752-742/41	Jotham	751/50-740/39	740/39-736
Pekahiah		742/41-740/39	Ahaz	742-736 728-715	736-728
Pekah	752-740/39	740/39 -732/31			
Hoshea		732/31-723/22	Hezekiah	728-715	715-697
			Manasseh		697-642/41
			Amon		642/41-640/39
			Josiah		640/39-608
			Jehoahaz		608
			Jehoiakim		608-597
			Jehoiachin		597
			Zedekiah		597-586

For a recent, detailed study of the chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah see the *Concordia Commentary: 1 Kings, 1-11*, pages 31-93. The author concludes with an appropriate summary of the current status of the problem.

While this commentary has decided upon and will use the chronology set forth in the preceding pages, there is still keen awareness that this issue certainly has not been settled once and for all. Archer's words are most appropriate: "Since chronology is a branch of historical science, it is constantly subject to revision. Even among conservative scholars there is some divergence. ... A certain amount of flexibility must always be preserved and appropriate adjustments made as new evidence comes in" (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, p 322). The reader is encouraged to compare the preceding pages with other chronologies of the divided monarchy that have been set forth. One such example is found in Andrew Steinmann's *From Abraham to Paul: A Biblical Chronology*, p 127-169.

The same may be said for the chronology followed in this study Bible. The authors of Kings and Chronicles have provided us with data for constructing a reliable, approximate chronology for the kings of Israel and Judah, often with a plus or minus of one year in terms of our calendar, but many of the details remain uncertain or debatable.

^a - This problem of calendar discrepancy and repair is not entirely an ancient phenomenon. George Washington was born in Virginia on February 11, 1731, according to the Julian calendar in use at the time of his birth. So if he had a birth certificate, February 11, 1731 would be the date listed on it. In 1752, however, Britain and all its colonies adopted the Gregorian calendar which moved Washington's birthday a year and eleven days to February 22, 1732. Another recent example of this type of dating issue is the question whether the Russian Revolution of 1917 happened in October (Julian calendar) or November (Gregorian calendar). It also accounts for dating difference between Russian Easter and Western Easter.