

Dealing With the Zero

The reason an error of one year is often made in computing intervals from B.C. to A.D. dates is easily understood when the 2 reckonings are tabulated for comparison:

Chronological Reckoning:	Astronomical Reckoning:
5 B.C.	—4
4 B.C.	—3
3 B.C.	—2
2 B.C.	—1
1 B.C.	0
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A.D. 1	1
A.D. 2	2
A.D. 3	3
A.D. 4	4
A.D. 5	5

Except in astronomical works, dates are customarily given by the chronological, or historical, method, in the B.C.-A.D. scale.

Chronology. [A non-Biblical word derived from the Greek words *chronos*, "time," and *logos*, "word," "speech," "reason."] The study of time relationships between periods and events in the Bible record requires a discussion of methods of reckoning as well as a survey of the different historical periods and the data on which the chronological pattern is based. The subject will be discussed under various heads and summarized in tables of dated or approximately dated events of Bible times.

I. Basis of Ancient Chronology. The ancients did not record dates according to the system we use, nor did the different nations reckon time by one calendar, as practically the whole world does today. Therefore, our success at dating ancient events—that is, at assigning them dates in our own B.C.-A.D. scale of years—depends on our understanding of ancient methods and on the amount of information we have about the events. That is why there is sometimes uncertainty or difference of opinion on Biblical dating.

Due to omissions, repetitions, and other variations in the genealogical lists, the endeavor to establish times by the evidence of such lists must be regarded as highly precarious. Compare, for instance, the line of descent of Samuel and his sons from Levi and Kohath as recorded in I Chronicles 6:22-28 and in verses 33-38, and see I Samuel 8:2 for the names of these sons. Compare also the various lists of the sons of Benjamin and their descendants as found in Genesis 46:21; Numbers 26:38-40; I Chronicles 7:6-12; and 8:1-40. The variations in existence here and in many other lists indicate the dangers involved in dogmatic reconstructions based only on genealogical evidence.