

UNITED AND DIVIDED KINGDOM UNCERTAINTIES

The Divided Monarchy. For the period of the Divided Monarchy an entirely different situation is found. Here there are an abundance of data which may be checked against each other, and which are no longer round. Four Biblical yardsticks are here provided—the lengths of reign of the rulers of Judah and those of Israel, and the synchronisms of Judah with Israel and of Israel with Judah. Furthermore, a number of synchronisms with the fixed years of contemporary Assyria make possible a check with an exact chronological yardstick, and make possible the establishment of absolute years B.C. for the period of the kings.

Various methods were employed in the ancient East for reckoning the official years of kings. When Solomon's kingdom was first divided, Judah followed those nations where the year when a ruler took the throne was termed his "accession year." Israel, on the other hand, followed those nations where a king termed his initial year his "first year." According to this latter method the year when a king began to reign was always counted twice—as the last year of his predecessor and as his own first official year. Thus reigns reckoned according to this method were always one year longer in official length than those reckoned according to the former method, and there was always a gain of one year for every reign over absolute time. The following graphs will make these two methods of reckoning clear, and will show how the totals of Israel for this period increase by one year for every reign over those of Judah:

CHRONOLOGY

	Reference	Years
Oppression under Cushan-rishathaim	Judg. 3:8	8
Deliverance under Othniel; rest	Judg. 3:11	40
Oppression under Eglon of Moab	Judg. 3:14	18
Deliverance by Ehud; rest	Judg. 3:30	80
Oppression under Jabin of Hazor	Judg. 4:3	20
Deliverance under Deborah; rest	Judg. 5:31	40
Oppression under Midian	Judg. 6:1	7
Deliverance under Gideon; rest	Judg. 8:28	40
Reign of Abimelech	Judg. 9:22	3
Judgeship of Tola	Judg. 10:2	23
Judgeship of Jair	Judg. 10:3	22
Oppression of Gilead by Ammon	Judg. 10:8	18
Judgeship of Jephthah	Judg. 12:7	6
Judgeship of Ibzan	Judg. 12:9	7
Judgeship of Elon	Judg. 12:11	10
Judgeship of Abdon	Judg. 12:14	8
Oppression under the Philistines	Judg. 13:1	40
Judgeship of Samson	Judg. 15:20; 16:31	20
Judgeship of Eli	I Sam. 4:18	40

The United Monarchy. Due to a number of uncertainties the absolute date for the establishment of the United Monarchy can not be given. The OT does not give the length of the reign of Saul, but Paul in a sermon at Antioch refers to it as 40 years (Acts 13:21). If Saul reigned a full 40 years, David was not born until ten years after Saul began his reign, for he was 30 when he took the throne (II Sam. 5:4).

		Old king		New king						
Accession-year reckoning		last year	accession year	1st year		2nd year		3rd year		
Non-accession-year reckoning		last year	1st year	2nd year		3rd year		4th year		
JUDAH, official years:		22	23	46	47	58	61	78	79	
Rehoboam 17	Abijam 3	Asa 2nd	3rd	26th	27th	38th	41	Jehoshaphat 17th	18th	
Jeroboam	22	Nadab 2	Baasha 24	Elah 2	Omri 12	Ahab 4th		22	Ahaziah 2	Jehoram
					Zimri					
ISRAEL, official years:		22	24	48	50	62	66	84	86	
Excess years for Israel		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	