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THE KNOTS OF 2 KINGS 11-14

(Chronologists and Kings XI)

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In the year 3119, Ahaziah of Judah and Jehoram of Israel were both slain by Jehu as he carried out his God-appointed task of eliminating the seed and house of Ahab (2 Kings 9:13-33). ~~Since the kings of Israel are usually counted as beginning their reign in the same year as the death of their predecessors, this year is also the first year of Jehu of Israel. In this same year, Queen Athaliah usurped the throne of Judah and ruled for seven inclusive years.~~

The reigns of the Davidic kings of Judah are given in exclusive years, as we have seen, but Athaliah is never said to be a king. There is no summary statement of her rule, which is actually an interregnum. Thus, the first year of her rule is the same as the last of her predecessor, Ahaziah of Judah (A.M. 3119). In the seventh year of her rule, which was also the seventh year of Jehu's reign over Israel, Joash of Judah was placed on the throne of Judah. This first year of Joash is an absolute year, and thus overlaps the seventh of Athaliah. Accordingly, in the chronology of Judah, only five absolute years are to be given to Athaliah (her first and last being counted as those of her predecessor and successor) (2 Kings 11:1-12:1).

(Since Athaliah's first year of rule was the same as Ahaziah's last, 3119, the years in the chart in the March 1992 issue of *Biblical Chronology* are off by one year, since I was relying on Anstey for those years. Subtract one year for each of those in that chart and in the essay after 3119.)

~~Naw it starts to get hard, and you will find it helpful to follow the chart. According to 2 Kings 13:1, Jehoahaz of Israel began to reign in the 23rd year of Joash of Judah. This would be Jehu's 29th year, and should overlap it, following the procedure used for the kings of Israel. But Jehu only reigned 28 years (2 Kings 10:36). Thus, in this instance, the years of Israel's kings are consecutive and not overlapping. Since the chronology is primarily tied to Judah, this is not a serious problem, and the text is clear.~~

Naw it really gets hard. According to 2 Kings 13:9-10, Jehoash of Israel came to the throne in the 37th year of Joash of Judah. This was also the 15th year of his father, King Jehoahaz of Israel, making this a co-regency since Jehoahaz reigned 17 years (2 Ki. 13:1).

Such a co-regency is not surprising. We looked at the events of Jehoahaz's reign in the March issue (*Biblical Chronology* 4:3). Hazael and his son, prince Ben-Hadad, oppressed Israel throughout Jehoahaz's reign. In the 18th year of Shalmaneser (3162; the 16th year of Jehoahaz), Hazael King of Syria fought Shalmaneser and was defeated. According to 2 Kings 13:4-5, the King of Syria (Hazael) was oppressing Israel, but God granted Israel a

year: so that he could devote his attention to dealing with Hazael. This enables us to settle a matter in the chart in the March issue: The relief granted by Yahweh to Israel in 2 Kings 13:5 came in 3162 (on the March chart, 3163), a year after the event mentioned in 2 Kings 13:4, which was the year Jehoash joined his father on the throne.

Nw, according to 2 Kings 14:1, Amaziah of Judah became king in the second year of Jehoash of Israel's reign. Anstey insists that Jehoash's reign starts over again when he becomes sole king (3164), which in his chronology means Jehoash of Israel's first year coincides with Joash of Judah's last year, and his second year with Amaziah of Judah's first year. Thus, Jehoash of Israel reigns 3 years as co-regent, and 16 years as sole king (2 Kings 13:10). The problem with this interpretation is that nowhere else do we start over with the count when a co-regent becomes sole king. As we saw in the April issue (*Biblical Chronology* 4:4), this is not how the co-regencies of Ahaziah of Israel, Jehoram of Judah, or Ahaziah of Judah are counted. Their total years include their terms as co-regents.

Thus, Anstey is almost certainly wrong. Our suspicion is strengthened by the very wording of 2 Kings 13:10, which says: "In the 37th year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in *maria, 16 years." This certainly suggests that Jehoash of Israel's 16 years begin with his co-regency in the 37th year of Joash of Judah; or better, in view of what we shall see further on 2 Kings 14:17, the 37th year of Joash of Judah was the accession year of Jehoash of Israel, whose count begins in the 36th year of Joash of Judah.

This forces on us another co-regency. Amaziah of Judah became king in the 2nd year of Jehoash of Israel, which was also the 39th year of Amaziah's father, Joash of Judah (2 Kings 14:1-2). This is year 3163. This raises two questions. First, how likely is this co-regency scenario? Second, is 3163 the accession year or the first year of Amaziah of Judah?

First, the text does indicate a likelihood of a co-regency. We read in 2 Kings 12:17-18 that Hazael King of Syria captured Gath and then marched against Jerusalem, but Joash of Judah took all the dedicated holy things out of the Temple and sent them as a bribe to Hazael, buying him off. If this was in 3161, just before Hazael went to war with Shalmaneser, we can see it as Hazael's money-raising raid on Judah. As we have seen, Hazael likely raided Israel in this year also.

Soon after this, Joash of Judah experienced a palace revolt on the part of his ministers: "And his servants arose and made a conspiracy, and struck down Joash at the

rovides more information. There we are told that Joash's mentor, Jehoiada the high priest, died at the ripe old age of 130 (2 Chron. 24:15), and after that the officials of Judah persuaded Joash to apostatize (w. 17-18). Prophets rebuked them, and they killed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada for his prophecies (w. 19-22). The next year, Hazael and the Syrians came up against Jerusalem on their fund-raising expedition (w. 23-24). Then we read: "And when they had departed from him (for they left him very sick), his own ministers conspired against him, and murdered him on his bed" (v. 25).

Now we see that after Hazael's attack, Joash of Judah was very sick. It makes sense that he put his son Amaziah on the throne as co-regent at this point, in 3163. During the following year, in 3164, Joash was murdered and Amaziah became sole king.

Thus, the co-regency hypothesis makes sense. Now to the second question: Was 3163 the first year or the accession year of Amaziah of Judah? I vote for its being his accession year, because as we saw last time it is most likely that this is how the author of Kings has been dealing with the Kings of Judah and Israel. (Look at the chart in *Biblical Chronology 4:4*. Amaziah of Judah's accession year was 3118, which according to 2 Kings 9:29 was when he

ing to 2 Kings 8:15-16)

Further evidence that 3163 was Amaziah's accession year comes from 2 Kings 14:17, which says that Amaziah lived for 15 years after the death of Jehoash of Israel. Jehoash reigned for 16 years, dying in 3177. This was Amaziah's 14th year. If we add 15 years, we come to 29, which was the year of his death.

To summarize (follow the chart): In 3161, Hazael invaded Israel and Judah to raise funds to fight Shalmaneser. Jehoahaz of Israel put his son Jehoash on the throne with him in view of this emergency. Joash of Judah sinned by giving the Lord's holy things to Hazael as a bribe, and Joash was struck with sickness as a punishment.

During the following year, 3162, God granted Israel relief from Hazael by causing him to lose to Shalmaneser. Meanwhile, Joash of Judah's condition worsened.

Early in 3163, Jehoahaz of Israel died, leaving his son Jehoash as sole king. Late in the year, during the time when Jehoash was reigning as sole king in Israel, Joash of Judah, whose condition was worsening, put his son Amaziah on the throne with him.

Finally, in 3164, Joash of Judah was slain by his retainers, and Amaziah of Judah emerged as king of Judah, probably early in the year.

YEAR	JUDAH	ISRAEL	HISTORICAL DATA, TESTIMONY, EVIDENCE, OR PROOF
3119	Ahaziah 1 Athaliah (1)	Jehu 12	2 Ki.8:25-26 Ahaziah of Judah and Jehoram of Israel slain by Jehu
3120	Athaliah (2)	Jehu 2	
3121	(3)	3	
3122	(4)	4	
3123	(5)	5	
3124	(6)	6	
3125	Joash (7) 1	7	2 Ki.11:4-16 Athaliah slain in 7th year of her rule 2 Ki.12:1 Joash reigns in Jehu's 7th year, 40 years
3126	2	8	
.....
3140	Joash 22	Jehu 26	
3141	23	Jehoahaz 1	2 Ki.13:1
.....
3160	Joash 36	Jehoahaz 14	
3161	Joash 37	Jehoahaz Jehoash ace.	2 Ki.13:9-10; Hazael invades Israel and Judah (2 Ki.12:17-18; 13:4; 2 Chron.24:23-24)
3162	Joash 38	Jehoahaz Jehoash 1	Shalmaneser's defeat of Hazael (2 Ki.13:5)
3163	Joash 39 Amaziah ace.	Jehoahaz Jehoash 2	Jehoahaz dies. 2 Ki.14:1; Joash sick (2 Chron.24:25)
3164	Joash 40 Amaziah 1	Jehoash 3	Joash slain (2 Ki.12:20)
3165	Amaziah 2	Jehoash 4	
.....
3177	Amaziah 14	Jehoash 16	Death of Jehoash of Israel
3178	Amaziah 15	Jeroboam ii 1	2 Ki.14:23
.....
3183	Amaziah 29	Jeroboam ii 15	2 Ki.14:17; Amaziah iii 15 years after death of Jehoash of Israel