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THE END OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH (Chronologies and Kings X11)

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As we saw last time, Uzziah became king of Judah in the 27th year of Jeroboam II, the year A.M. 3204. He reigned for 52 years. He was basically a good and devout king, but toward the end of his life he recapitulated the fall of Adam by trying to seize the prerogatives of the High Priest, and was cursed with leprosy. As a result, his son Jotham became Judge over Judah until his father's death (2 Ki. 15:5; 2 Chron. 26:16-21).

Uzziah's reign was long and relatively glorious, and the people were disturbed when he died. Imagine: if you had been ten years old when Uzziah became king, you would be 62 in the year of his death. What will happen now, you would wonder? God gave the answer through Isaiah the prophet, in Isaiah 6. In the year of Uzziah's death, Isaiah saw the true King of Judah on His throne, reigning serenely generation after generation.

Jotham acceded to the throne in 3256, the second year of Pekah of Israel (2 Ki. 15:32-38). Jotham, like his father, was a relatively good king – too good for Judah. God had warned Judah through Isaiah to repent, and they had not done so (Is. 6). So God began to trouble prosperous Judah by sending Pekah and Rezin king of Syria against them (2 Ki. 15:37).

Jotham's son Ahaz came to the throne in Pekah's 17th year (2 Ki. 16:1ff.). He was a bad king, the kind of king Judah merited for her sins. Evidently, Jotham was still on the throne, and Ahaz was actually Co-Regent for a while, but these years are given to Ahaz because they were appropriate for him. Ahaz in his sinfulness was the real king of sinful Judah; Jotham was just an aging monarch whom the people ignored.

The evidence for this state of affairs comes from 2 Kings 15:30, which says that Hoshea slew Pekah in the 20th year of Jotham king of Judah. Pekah reigned 20 years, and in what would have been his 21st, he was slain by Hoshea. This was the fourth year of Ahaz, according to the chronology, but we are told that it was also the 20th year of Jotham. Thus, the official chronology has assigned this year to Ahaz, as his fourth, even though Jotham was still on the throne as the supreme king of Judah.

We can imagine why Jotham would put Ahaz on the throne next to him before his death. Pekah and Rezin were troubling the nation, and perhaps for stability Jotham wanted to ensure who the next monarch would be. Also, Jotham may have seen Ahaz's waywardness, and may have wanted to coach him in statecraft before his death. At any rate, we don't know when Jotham actually died. We only know that the chronology says that Ahaz succeeded him, officially for the purposes of the chronology,

alive, Pekah and Rezin came against him. This is mentioned in 2 Kings 16:5 and in Isaiah 7. My guess is that this happened in Ahaz's third year, which was Jotham's 19th. This was the year before Hoshea slew Pekah, and my guess is that he took advantage of Pekah's military disaster to do away with him.

In this year, Isaiah prophesied that after 65 years, "Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people" (Is. 7:9). This interesting prediction implies that though Samaria was conquered and destroyed by Assyria 18 years later, Northern Israel still continued a national existence as a satellite of Assyria under Assyrian governors. It was another 47 years before Northern Israel, as a culture, was destroyed.

The cultural destruction of Northern Israel came about when Esarhaddon transported men from Babylon, Sepharvaim, Cuthah, Awa, and Hamath into Israel and settled them there (2 Ki. 17:24-40; Ezra 4:2-10). This event, we may suppose, happened 65 years after Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 7. These aliens mixed with the remnant of Israel and created a syncretistic religion, and became known as the Samaritans. This happened in 3339, the 25th year of the reign of Manasseh of Judah. Now, the king of Assyria also captured Manasseh for a while (2 Chron. 33:10-13). Anstey suggests, following George Smith, that these two events were connected (Anstey, pp. 216-217). If so, this was the time when Manasseh repented.

Bad king Ahaz put his son Hezekiah on the throne as Co-Regent in his 14th year, which was the third year of Hoshea or Israel (2 Ki. 18:1). This was 3285, and so 3286 is the first year of Hezekiah's reign, and the 15th of Ahaz's. Hezekiah reigned until 3314, when his son Manasseh succeeded him (2 Ki. 21:1).

Manasseh was the most wicked king Judah ever had, but sometime during his reign he repented, possibly around his 26th year, as we have seen. He died in 3369 and was succeeded by Armon, who reigned two years and was succeeded by Josiah (2 Ki. 21:18-19; 22:1). In Josiah's 8th year, 3379, he began to seek the Lord and obey Him (2 Chron. 34:3).

Ezekiel's 430 Years

This was an important event. It happened 40 years after the end of Northern Israel as a culture in 3339, and 430 years after the first year of David's reign in 2949. This gives us 390 years for Israel and 40 for Judah, which is what Ezekiel was told to bear as iniquity in Ezekiel 4. In my opinion, these are indeed the years of Ezekiel 4:5-6.

Isaiah 7, in my opinion, tells us when the end of Northern Israel occurred. That means that the 390 years of

The 40 years for Judah must be added to those of Israel, and logically commenced when those of Israel came to an end. This takes us to the 8th year of Josiah, when he tried to lead Judah in a final repentance, and failed. We are told in 2 Kings 24:3-4 that Judah never really repented for the sins of Manasseh, and that Judah's destruction came about because of those sins. Thus, the 40 years from the end of Ephraim to the 3rd year of Josiah seem to have been years of testing for Judah. Judah did not receive the repentance of Manasseh, and did not accept the reforms of Josiah. Thus, her doom was sealed in the 8th year of Josiah. (Admittedly, this seems rather strained, but as someone who has worked on Ezekiel 4 off and on for 20 years, it is the best I can do, and at least the years fit rather nicely.)

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Josiah was succeeded by Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim in 3402, and they were succeeded by Jehoiachin and Zedekiah in 3413. Nebuchadnezzar brought the Kingdom of Judah to an end in 3425. The years are arrived at by simply adding the reigns as given in the last chapters of 2 Kings.

The Temple Millennium

We have now arrived at the end of our survey of the Kings, and of our survey of Old Testament chronology. The book of Acts remains. Our detailed look at the kings has shortened Anstey's chronology slightly, and enables us to perfect the chronology suggested in *Biblical Chronology* 2:12 (Dec. 1990).

God pronounced Nebuchadnezzar king in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, A.M. 3406. This began the 70 years of captivity of Jeremiah 25:1 & 12 (see *Biblical Chronology* 2:11, Nov. 1990).

3475, and in this year the 490 years of Daniel 9 began.

These 490 years end in 3965.

Since the Messiah was "cut off" midway through the 70th week, the crucifixion of Christ came in 3961.

The destruction of the Temple 40 years later happened in 4001. Solomon's Temple was finished in the year 3000.⁷ The massacre of the "144,000" Jewish Christians in Jerusalem happened just before the destruction of the city, or probably in the year 4000 (see *Biblical Horizons* 27-29, and *Biblical Chronology* 2:11; the former can be obtained from *Biblical Horizons*, Box 1096, Niceville, FL 32586).

Thus, the age of the Old Covenant Temple was 1000 Years, and this probably is background for the statement in Revelation 20 that the reign of the saints will last 1000 years in the New Covenant, an event I have suggested began with the destruction of the Old Covenant Temple (see *BH* 27-29, just mentioned).

The destruction of the Temple in the year 4001 makes it tempting to try and lop off one year from the chronology of the Old Testament. We could do it if we start the 70 years of captivity, and the subsequent 490 years of Daniel 9, in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim, as Daniel 1:1 might suggest. This would mean that Nebuchadnezzar's 1st year covers part of both the 3rd and 4th years of Jehoiakim, which might be the case if Nebuchadnezzar's accession were counted as happening in the spring and the kings of Judah's in the fall. In that case, Nebuchadnezzar became king during Jehoiakim's 3rd year, and the former's 1st year continued into the latter's 4th.

This would put the destruction of the Temple in the year A.M. 4000, exactly a millennium after the first Temple was built.

And it would date the creation of the world in the year 3930 B.C.