

THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES



**PASTOR RUSSELL'S CHRONOLOGY
VERSES
THE NEW CHRONOLOGY**

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THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES

INTRODUCTION

BELIEVE WHAT YOU CAN PROVE: Sincere Bible Students want to “**prove all things, hold fast that which is good**” (1 Thess. 5:21 KJV). Along this noble vein, some have begun to consider the new thoughts on chronology, but have found themselves overwhelmed and confused by too much detail. Without having proved this “new chronology” to themselves—forgetting that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link—they have begun to doubt the easy-to-follow and sound chronology presentation of Volume 2 of *Studies in the Scriptures, The Time Is At Hand*. To such we caution, **DO NOT BE PERSUADED BY WHAT YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND**—but only by what you can fully understand and prove to yourself.

HOW THE “NEW CHRONOLOGY” WILL BE REFUTED: This new view of chronology promotes the removal of approximately 170 years from our Bible Student chronology, moving the end of 6,000 years from Adam’s creation from the year 1872 to 2043. The biggest piece of this proposed 170-year adjustment is 101 years removed from the period of the Judges. Once this 101-year adjustment is clearly demonstrated to be wrong, the whole “New Chronology” structure collapses since this leaves only 69 years, which then would end 6,000 years in 1942. No sanctified mind would conclude that the Mediatorial Reign began in 1942.

THE FACTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES: We hold no ill will toward any who are receptive to the “New Chronology. Nor do we question their sincerity and love for the Lord. Yet it is in the spirit of love and truth seeking that we enthusiastically present this defense of the Second Volume chronology. We are convinced that when inquiring brethren are presented with all the facts, the truth regarding the length of the period of the Judges will be obvious. To the honest Truth seeker we believe this presentation will be faith strengthening, as it will help to demonstrate that the “meat in due season” (Luke 12:37, 42) upon which we have been feasting for over a century is accurate and complete. As Dan 12:9, 10 says, “*Go {your way,} Daniel, for {these} words are concealed and sealed up until the end time... those who have insight will understand.*” NASV

DON’T SINK THE SHIP: The harmony, consistency and interlocking nature of the details of Truth are such that God’s plan ties together beautifully and perfectly. When caught up in assertedly more precise detail, it can be difficult to step back and look at the overall picture, to see how replacing established valid details of the Truth is like unscrewing and replacing pieces of the hull of a ship with the wrong replacement sizes. Ultimately this results in the ship sinking.

“NEW CHRONOLOGY” ARGUMENTS ANSWERED: As we investigate the length of the period of the Judges, we have attempted to faithfully and honestly answer all arguments presented against the Volume 2 view of 450 years. We will respond to the following three questions raised by the “New Chronology,” plus much more:

- 1) How do we resolve the conflict between the 480 years in 1 Kings 6:1 (from the Exodus to the 4th year of Solomon) with the 450 years of the Judges in Acts 13:20?
- 2) Does the internal evidence in the book of Judges support an overlapping of various Judges so as to arrive at a reduction from 450 years to only 349 years for the period of the Judges?
- 3) Are the five generations in the Book of Ruth’s genealogy of David too implausibly few (with each father’s average age of 142 years at the begetting of a son) and, therefore, irreconcilable with a 450-year period of the Judges?

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ACTS 13:20 & 1 KINGS 6:1

In Acts 13:20 the Apostle Paul says the period of the Judges is 450 years. 1 Kings 6:1 says that the period from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon is only 480 years. These two verses are in conflict with each other. Here is why:

Let's start with our total of 480 years from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon.

Now let us deduct 40 (in the wilderness), 6 (in dividing the land), 40 (Saul), 40 (David), 4 (Solomon) = 130 years, leaving only 350 for the Judges; whereas Paul says it was 450.

480 period from the Exodus to Solomon's 4th Year

- 40 in the wilderness
- 6 in dividing the land
- 40 Saul's reign
- 40 David's reign
- 4 Solomon (to building of Temple starting in his 4th yr.)

= **350** Disagrees with Acts 13:20 for the period of the Judges

Pastor Russell believed there must be an error in Kings, being short by 100 years, leaving Paul's statement correct as 450 years for the Judges, the changes indicated by the numbers in bold

580 period from the Exodus to Solomon's 4th Year

- 40 in the wilderness
- 6 in dividing the land
- 40 Saul's reign
- 40 David reign
- 4 Solomon (to building of Temple starting in his 4th yr.)

= **450** Agrees with Acts 13:20 for the period of the Judges

1 KINGS 6:1 & BROTHER RUSSELL

In Reprint 1980 Br. Russell says, "*The record of `1 Kings 6:1` is evidently a transcriber's error, 480 being stated instead of 580. The latter agrees perfectly with the Apostle's statement (Acts 13:19,20), and is in accord with the lapping and broken periods of the Judgeships and captivities recorded in the Book of the Judges.*"

In HG104:6, Brother Russell says, "*Leaving 350 years for the period of the judges whereas the time as given in the Judges in 19 periods makes a total of 450 years. Admitting the single mistake of 480 years for 580 in the Kings will set it right.*"

THE 450 YEARS OF ACTS 13:20

Acts 13:19-21 – “When he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot. After that he gave them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. Afterward they desired a king: and God gave them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.” KJV

In Volume 2, page 49, Brother Russell says, “We come now to the most difficult portion of chronology, the period from the division of the land to the anointing of Saul as king. It is usually termed the period of the Judges, though the Judges did not fill the office continuously. The record given in the book of Judges and 1 Samuel mentions nineteen periods, approximating a total of four hundred and fifty years; but they are disconnected, broken, lapped and tangled so much that we could arrive at no definite conclusion from them, and should be obliged to conclude as others have done, that nothing positive could be known on the subject, were it not that the New Testament supplies the deficiency. Paul states that after God divided their land to them by lot, “He gave unto them Judges about [during] the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the Prophet. Afterward they desired a king, and God gave unto them Saul.” **Acts 13:19-21** “

The “New Chronology” view concedes that the 450 years of Acts 13:20 applies to the period of the Judges, but only as a listing of years of Judges and Oppressions, the pieces of which can be recombined and rearranged to overlap each other and actually arrive at a shorter period of 349 years.

The Apostle Paul also mentions three other periods in the Bible.

Acts 13:18 about 40 years in wilderness
Acts 13:21 space of 40 years Saul’s reign
Gal. 3:17 430 years Abraham to Exodus

In each of these cases we accept the period exactly as given, so it would seem consistent to do the same with the 450 years of the period of the Judges. Even in Acts 13:18 where Paul speaks “about 40 years in the wilderness,” we take his word “about” to mean “exactly” 40 years in the wilderness.

Dean Alford, one of the foremost Greek scholars of the 19th century, says of Acts 13:20, “*Treating the reading of ABCN (variant Greek texts) as an attempt at correcting the difficult chronology of our verse, and taking the words as they stand, no other sense can be given to them, than that the time of the judges lasted 450 years. The dative ἐτεσιν [years] implies the duration of the period between ταῦτα [these things] and Samuel the prophet, inclusive...*”

A. Domestic says, “...according to this chronology there are 450 which agrees with St. Paul (Acts xiii. 20.) I know it is supposed that some of the Judges were contemporaneous with each other... but this idea would be quite opposite to the literal reading of the Scriptures, which describes them as one Judge after the other.” -- The Coming Crisis, pg 9, Bible Chronology, 1860

Rev. Henry Cowles, D.D. says, “The internal dates in the Book of Judges demand the long period and can not be harmonized with the short one.—Thus Judges 11:26 shows that the Hebrews had then dwelt in Heshbon Aroer and along the coast of Arnon 300 years. These years lie between the entrance into Canaan and the beginning of Jephthah’s judgeship.... It is entirely impossible to bring these internal dates in the history within the short period of 339 years for the Judges.” -- The Pentateuch, In Its Progressive Revelations of God to Men, 1874.

EUSEBIUS CITES PAUL'S 450 YEARS

Eusebius Website: <http://www.attalus.org/translate/eusebius0.html>

Eusebius was bishop of Caesarea Palestine from about A.D. 314 to A.D. 340. He said that "...*there were 534 years after Joshua. As well as the 450 years, which he [Apostle Paul] assigns to the judges until Samuel, there must be added 40 years for Saul, another 40 years for David, and the four years of Solomon's reign before the building of the temple, which makes a total of 534 years from Joshua the successor of Moses until Solomon.*"

Eusebius numbers are in bold in our chart below.

- 580 period from the Exodus to Solomon's 4th Year
- 40 in the wilderness
- 6 in dividing the land
- **40** Saul's reign
- **40** David reign
- **4** Solomon (to building of Temple starting in his 4th yr.)
-
- = **450** Agrees with Acts 13:20 for the period of the Judges

EARLY CHRONOLOGISTS ON 1 KINGS 6:1

1 Kings 6:1 - *It came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.*

There are no Hebrew surviving manuscripts that date back to the early centuries of the Christian Era except for the Dead Sea Scrolls, but these are of no help in evaluating 1 Kings 6:1. Josephus and Early Christian writers who concerned themselves with chronology make no reference to the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1. Some early chronologists that make reference to 1 Kings 6:1 do refer to the period of time identified in it, namely the period from the Exodus to the 4th Year of Solomon.

According to **F. C. Cook's** notes on 1 Kings 6:1, "It was quoted by the early church father Origen *WITHOUT* the words 'in the four hundred eightieth year after the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt'."

Theophilus of Antioch was a Christian elder who wrote about the year 170. He gives the period as 566 years, yet he makes no reference to the supposed 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1.

Clement of Alexandria, writing about the year 190, observed that the majority of chronologists he knew of recorded this period between 576 and 595 years, yet he makes no reference to the supposed 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1.

Josephus identifies this period as being 592 years.

None used the reading of our common version of 480 years, nor the 440 years of the Septuagint. It seems impossible that these early chronologists could have missed the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1, had it been in the original Hebrew text.

SCHOLAR QUOTES ON 1 KINGS 6:1

BARNES NOTES

Barnes notes says, *“Though the books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel furnish us with no exact chronology, they still supply important chronological data – data which seem to indicate for the interval between the Exodus and Solomon, a period considerably exceeding 480 years. For the years actually set down amount to at least 580...”*

F. C. COOK

F. C. Cook noting that the text was *“not free from suspicion,”* concludes *“that the words in the four hundred and eightieth year are an interpolation into the sacred text which did not prevail before the third century...”*

(F. C. Cook, M.A., Canon of Exeter, Preacher at Lincoln's Inn, and Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen in the 1870's)

H. F. CLINTON

H.F. Clinton in volume one of *Fasti Helenici* says, *“We have the authority, then, of St. Paul for 579 years... This... is inconsistent with the date in the book of Kings, which reckons the foundation of the temple in the 4th year of Solomon to be in the 480th year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt. But the computation of St. Paul delivered... outweighs the authority of that date; and we may agree with Jackson and Hales in rejecting it.”* (Clinton, volume I:312-314)

HALES

In his work, *“A New Analysis of Chronology and Geography, History and Prophecy,”* Hales states that: *“An irrational chronology is indeed the parent of Scepticism and Infidelity. The period of 480 years, from the Exode to the foundation of Solomon's Temple, is also too short, and is plainly repugnant to the tenor of Scripture...”*

Hales says that *“...the period of 480 years is itself a forgery, foisted into the Hebrew text of 1 Kings vi. 1.”* (Hales, volume I:221-222) and also says that *“The number in the Hebrew text, 480 years, is also spurious, as was proved in the review of the Jewish chronology.”* (Hales, volume I:298)

McCLINTOCK & STRONG

In McClintock & Strong, Volume IV, page 1078 under the subject "JUDGES, BOOK OF."
“IX. Chronological Difficulties. ... The length of the interval between Joshua's death and the invasion of Chushan-rishathaim, and of the time during which Shamgar was judge, is not stated.... One solution questions the genuineness of the date in 1 Kings. Kennicott pronounces against it (Diss. Genesis 80, § 3) because it is omitted by Origen when quoting the rest of the verse. It is also urged that Josephus would not have reckoned 592 years for the same period if the present reading had existed in his time.”

REV. HENRY COWLES, D.D.

“Josephus makes the interval from the Exodus to the founding of the temple 592 years, and not 480. The Jews in China also make it 592—facts which favor the supposition that the Hebrew text of 1 K. 6:1, is in error. It can not be supposed that either Josephus or the Chinese Jews adjusted their figures to harmonize with Paul”-- The Pentateuch, In Its Progressive Revelations of God to Men, by Rev. Henry Cowles, D.D., 1874.

SCHOLAR QUOTES ON 1 KINGS 6:1 (continued)

PATRICK FAIRBAIRN

"...the statement in 1 Ki. vi. 1 is manifestly at variance with the data supplied by the history itself, there is no remedy but to admit that the text has been somehow corrupted. There is the less difficulty in making this admission, from the circumstance that there is no reference to this date by any of the various writers who compiled histories of the Jews from the materials supplied in the Bible down to Eusebius, who first employed it as the basis of some chronological hypothesis." -- The Imperial Bible-dictionary: Historical, Biographical, Geographical, and Doctrinal :- Page 325, by Patrick Fairbairn – 1866, Chronology, IV. From the Exode to the Foundation of Solomon's Temple, pg 325.

JOSEPH ANUS, D.D.

"Usher makes the fourth period 480 years (479 years 16 days), taking as his guide 1 Kings vi.1. If the reading of that passage is correct, the question is decided. But there are strong doubts concerning it. The LXX indicates by various readings the uncertainty of the text. In 2 Chron. iii. 2 (the parallel passage), there is no date. Josephus, Theophilus, and others who have left systems of chronology, seem to have been ignorant of this computation, which is first mentioned in the 4th century by Eusebius."
The Bible Hand-Book, by Joseph Anus, D.D., Chronology-Times of the Judges, pg 249, 1873

WILLIAM SMITH, D.C.L, L.L.D AND HENRY WACE, D.D. [speaking of 1 Kings 6:1]

"Josephus counted that interval 592 years, which agrees closely enough with the 450 years assigned to the period of the Judges in the received text of Acts xiii. 20. Clement of Alexandria (Strom. i. 21), as Eusebius notes, does not substantially disagree from the computation of Josephus." -- A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines, Edited by William Smith, D.C.L., LL.D., and Henry Wace, D.D., Principal of King's College, London; Preacher at Lincoln's Inn, Volume II., Eaba-Hermocrates, London: John Muyrrary Albemarel Street, 1880. Chronicle of Eusebius pg 350

REV. LYMAN ABBOTT

"There is, however, good reason to doubt the authenticity of the date given in 1 Kings 6:1. It is the only passage in the O.T. which contains the idea of dating an era. The verse is quoted by Origen without the date, and it is believed by good critics to be an interpolation of the third century." -- The Acts of the Apostles, by Rev. Lyman Abbott, A. S. Barnes & Compnay, 1876, Ch. XIII. The Acts, pg 153

EUSEBIUS ON 480 YEARS OF 1 KINGS 6:1

By the time of Eusebius in the early 4th Century, we believe this error had already crept in to 1 Kings 6:1. Eusebius participated in the Council of Nicaea debate. He is known as the Father of Church History. We believe Eusebius helps us to understand how this error crept into 1 Kings 6:1. Eusebius says the following:

"The book of Kings expressly states that there were 440 (or 480) years from the exodus until Solomon. But if we look at the dates of each of the judges, and also count separately the times of foreign rule which are mentioned in the book of Judges, there is a total of 600 years between Moses and Solomon. This total of 600 years is divided up as follows:

- *Moses in the wilderness - 40 years*
- *Joshua - 27 years*
- *Judges and foreigners - 450 years*
(as the Apostle states, in accordance with the book of Judges)
- *Samuel and Saul - 40 years*
- *David - 40 years*
- *Solomon (until the building of the temple) - 4 years”*

Eusebius and the Jewish Teachers appear to make the same mistake of making the period from the Exodus to the 4th Year of Solomon to be 600 years, instead of 580 years. They arrive at this error by adding to the 6 years of dividing of the land, another 20 or 21 years for the balance of Joshua’s judgeship. This is an error, since the time of Joshua’s judgeship should be included in the 450 years. Notice the bold numbers below.

600 period from the Exodus to Solomon’s 4th Year
 - 40 in the wilderness
 - **27** Joshua + dividing the land [This is an error as Joshua should be included in the 450 years below.]
 - 40 Saul’s reign
 - 40 David reign
 - 4 Solomon (to building of Temple starting in his 4th yr.)

 = 450 Agrees with Acts 13:20 for the period of the Judges

Although the sum of these whole numbers actually comes out to 601 years, Eusebius arrives at 600 years, possibly by working with fractions of years.

So again, Eusebius and the Hebrew teachers arrive at 600 years for this period of time in 1 Kings 6:1 from the Exodus to the 4th year of Solomon. Eusebius goes on to say:

“The book of Kings clearly states that, from the exodus of the children of Israel until Solomon and the building of the temple, there was a total of 440 years [in the Septuagint]; according to the Hebrew version, it was 480 years. The third book of Kings says as follows [1 Kings, 6:1]: “It happened in the 440th year after the exodus out of Egypt, that Solomon began to build the house of the Lord.” In the Hebrew version, it says “It happened in the 480th year” because the Jewish teachers, by a careful calculation, decided that the total came to 480 years. They did not count separately the years in which the foreigners are said to have ruled over the people [of Israel], but counted just the time that the judges ruled them, and included within this the periods of foreign domination. And this must be how it is done, because it is the only way that the total can be made to be 480 years....”

“...However, if we follow the account in the book of Kings, we will have a total of 480 years, because the 120 years, during which the Hebrews were ruled by foreigners, have been removed. Instead, the years of their enslavement will have been combined with the years of their freedom in a single total, which is how the Hebrews themselves count it. That is how we will calculate the dates here, by assuming that the times of foreign rule are included in the number of years assigned to each of the judges.”

Eusebius and the Hebrew teachers initially calculated 600 years for the period from the Exodus to Solomon’s 4th year. But in the end, they concluded that this period could be reduced to the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1 by removing 120 years for the periods of oppressions. (Eusebius wanted to shorten the period of the Judges to cause the five generations covering the book of Judges to be reduced to a more

reasonable average age per generation. We will cover this issue in a later section.) The initial corruption of 1 Kings 6:1 was likely made near the end of the 3rd century, as we find no mention of it prior to Eusebius' comments in the early 4th century.

How did Eusebius and the Hebrew teachers arrive at 120 years for the periods of oppressions? We suggest the summary below:

6	Division/Conquering of the Land (not in full control of it)
8	years servitude to king of Mesopotamia
18	years servitude to Moab
20	years servitude to Jabin (20th yr, part of 80 years)
7	years bondage under Midian
3	years reign of Abimelech (oppression by a corrupt ruler)
18	years period of oppression of Ammon
40	years oppression by the Philistines

120	Total Years

Next Eusebius tells us: *“Therefore, the chronology which we use for this period will be as follows:*

From Moses to Solomon

- *Moses - 40 years*
- *Joshua - 27 years*
- *foreigners and Othniel the judge - 40 years*
- *foreigners and Ehud the judge - 80 years*
- *foreigners and Deborah and Barak - 40 years*
- *foreigners and Gideon - 40 years*
- *Abimelech - 3 years*
- *Tola - 23 years*
- *Jair - 22 years*
- *foreigners and Jephthah the judge - 6 years*
- *Ibzan - 7 years*
- *Abdon - 8 years*
- *foreigners and Samson - 20 years*
- *In his time, the Trojan war was fought.*
- *Eli - 40 years*
- *Samuel and Saul - 40 years*
- *David - 40 years*
- *Solomon (until the building of the temple) - 4 years*

In total, from Moses and the exodus out of Egypt until the building of the temple, 480 years. “

In Eusebius' calculation, no amounts are allocated to the periods of oppressions. Hence, he derives 480 judging years, instead of his original total of 600 years (which we believe should be 580 years.) Why did the Jewish teachers in Alexandria, Egypt, insert the number 440 years into the Septuagint Bible, instead of the 480 years in the Hebrew Bible? Eusebius does not tell us why, but the answer now seems obvious. If in addition to the 120 years of oppressions they deducted out the 40 years of Eli's unfaithful judgeship, they would then arrive at 440 years.

In conclusion, we believe that the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1 is a corruption added to the text by the Hebrew teachers, based on the erroneous conclusion that they needed to remove the 120 years of the periods of oppressions and disfavor when counting from the Exodus to Solomon's 4th year.... And now you know the rest of the story.

CAN WE CALCULATE 450 YEARS FROM THE BOOK OF JUDGES?

Quoting again from Bro. Russell, In Volume 2, page 49, *“The record given in the books of Judges and 1 Samuel mentions nineteen periods, approximating a total of four hundred and fifty years; but they are disconnected, broken, lapped and tangled so much that we could arrive at no definite conclusion from them, and should be obliged to conclude as others have done, that nothing positive could be known on the subject, were it not that the New Testament supplies the deficiency.”*

Although we agree with Bro. Russell that these 19 periods cannot be added up to arrive at 450 years with certainty, another solution may be found in Jephthah’s 300 years (to be discussed). First, let’s take a look at the exercise of trying to add up periods of judgeships and oppressions to arrive at 450 years.

EUSEBIUS ADDS UP 450 YEARS

Eusebius says the following: *“The book of Judges is in agreement with his account, and assigns 450 years to the judges until Samuel, which are divided up as follows:*

According to the book of Judges

- *After Joshua, rule by foreigners - 8 years*
- *Othniel - 40 years*
- *foreigners - 18 years*
- *Ehud and Shamgar - 80 years*
- *foreigners - 20 years*
- *Barak and Deborah - 40 years*
- *foreigners - 7 years*
- *Gideon - 40 years*
- *Abimelech - 3 years*
- *Tola - 23 years*
- *Jair - 22 years*
- *foreigners - 18 years*
- *Jephthah - 6 years*
- *Ibzan - 7 years*
- *Elon - 10 years*
- *Abdon - 8 years*
- *foreigners - 40 years*
- *Samson - 20 years*
- *Eli, in whose time Samuel was born - 40 years*

The total for all the judges until Samuel is 450 years.

The total is consistent with the words of the holy Apostle.”

So we see that Eusebius believed he could add up the years and arrive at 450.

BROTHER MORTON EDGAR ADDS UP 450 YEARS

In his 1948 study, Brother Morton Edgar attempted to add up the Judges and periods of oppression. First he provided the list he believed Brother Russell was referring to of “*nineteen periods, approximating a total of four hundred and fifty years.*”

“Let us repeat the list as given, and then we can consider the irreconcilable Scriptures referred to:

Period	Years	Period Identity	Scripture Reference
1	8	Servitude to Mesopotamia	Judges 3:8
2	40	Judgeship of Othniel	“ 3:9-11
3	18	Servitude to Moab	“ 3:1
4	80	Rest under Ehud	“ 3:15-30
5	20	Servitude to Jabin	“ 4:1-3
6	40	Rest under Deborah	“ 5:31
7	7	Bondage under Midian	“ 6:1
8	40	Rest under Gideon	“ 8:28
9	3	Reign of Abimelech	“ 9:1-22
10	23	Judgeship of Tola	“ 10:1,2
11	22	Judgeship of Jair	“ 10:3
	301	(sub-total)	Judges 11:26
12	18	Oppression of Amon	“ 10:8
13	6	Judgeship of Jephthah	“ 12:7
14	7	Judgeship of Ibzan	“ 12:8,9
15	10	Judgeship of Elon	“ 12:10,11
16	8	Judgeship of Abdon	“ 12:12-15
17*	40	Oppression of Philistines	“ 13:1
18	40	Judgeship of Eli	1Sam. 4:12-18
19**	20	Judgeship of Samuel	“ 8:5
	450	TOTAL	Acts 13:20,21

NOTES:

* During the last 20 of this 40 years Samson judges Israel...Judges 15:20; 16:30-31.

** Until Israel asked for a king. It was during Samuel’s judgeship that the ark remained in Kirjath-jerim...1 Sam 7:2”

Next, Brother Edgar goes on to explain why this list cannot be accepted as is. He says, “*...we can quote Scriptures which prove that the list cannot be accepted as it stands. For instance the 8 years of servitude to Mesopotamia is the first period of the list. But a punishment of servitude could not follow immediately after the end of the wilderness journey when Joshua led the people into the land of promise. For the Scripture declares:*

“And the people served the Lord (not the king of Mesopotamia) all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel” (Judges 2:7).

Before the punishment of servitude because of unfaithfulness could be due, that faithful generation which served the Lord under the elders that outlived Joshua must have died out, and an unbelieving generation have taken its place, on which the punishment came.

“And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old ... and also that (faithful) generation were gathered unto their fathers: And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” (Judges 2:8-10).”

So Brother Edgar's point is that if one includes the time that Joshua and the elders judged, before the first oppression, and added that to the list, the 450 years would increase. Hence Bro. Russell tells us that this list is "lapped and tangled." In other words there would have to be some sort of overlap to bring us back to 450 years.

Brother Edgar attempts to resolve this problem and comes up with his own proposed list of periods totaling 450 years. He refers to Judges 11:13-15, 25-26 which indicates the period from entering Canaan to the Judge Jephthah was 300 years. With this huge block of time established he adds on the remaining periods of Judges to arrive at a total of 456 years, which can be reduced to 450 years by deducting the 6 years period for the division of the land. (See below.)

From Entering Canaan (Judges 11:26) ..	300 years
Jephthah	6 years
Ibzan	7 years
Elon	10 years
Abdon	8 years
Philistines (last 20 Samson)	40 years
Eli	40 years
Samuel	45 years
Total from end of wilderness journey....	456 years
Less: the division of the land	- 6 years
Total period of the Judges	<u>450</u> years

It is possible to add up the years of the Judges and come out to 450. The two biggest problems are 1) we cannot determine exactly how long it took Joshua and the elders to die out before the Mesopotamian oppression and 2) we are not certain how long Samuel was a judge before Saul became king. Yet the time of "Joshua and the elders" might be considered a non-issue since Jephthah's 300 years can be used to determine the period from the entering of the land of Canaan up to the beginning of Jephthah's judgeship, inclusive of the time of "Joshua and the elders." In this case, the adding up of the individual judgeships and oppressions in the 300 year block seems unnecessary. Hence the only outstanding issue is Samuel.

SHOULD SAMUEL BE INCLUDED IN THE 450 YEARS?

Samuel is described as a judge in 1 Sam 7:15 and should therefore be included in the period of the Judges. If Samuel were not part of the 450 years, you would have to add an additional period into the chronology for the time of Samuel between the 450 years and the time Saul became king. Yet, according to Acts 13:20, 21 Saul's 40-year reign immediately follows the 450 year period of the Judges.

In R3102: page 330, Bro. Russell says, "*ISRAEL'S HISTORY from the time of the division of Canaan amongst the tribes until the anointing of Saul to be their king, a period of 450 years, is called the period of the judges-- Joshua being the first judge and Samuel the last.*" (see also R5645: page 74)

A comment from the Companion Bible Appendix 50 page 41, may help to shed light on this question. "St. Paul's testimony is that "God gave (them) Judges about 450 years until Samuel the prophet" – (Acts 13:20)... The adverb of time here translated until (hoes, until, as long as), marks the completion of an action up to the time of the commencement of another. Here, it denotes the fulfillment of the times of the Judges ending with the close of Samuel's forty years and the commencement of the kingdom."

The Analytical Greek NT views this more as a word modifying the noun rather than modifying the verb as proposed in the Companion Bible. Either way, the same conclusion is to be drawn. In tracing the use of the word "until" (Strong's 2193) in Acts, one will find it hard to argue that this "genitive preposition" (Analytical Greek New Testament – Copyright 1981 Baker), is not inclusive of the noun described. So again we would argue that "until" is inclusive of Samuel.

In support, below are some more *noun inclusive* examples of the use of "until" (Strong's 2193) as used in Acts:

Acts 11:19 - Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled "as far as" (Strong's 2193) Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. KJV

Acts 11:22 - they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go "as far as" (Strong's 2193) Antioch. KJV

Acts 13:47 - For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation "unto" (Strong's 2193) the ends of the earth. KJV

Acts 17:15 - they that conducted Paul brought him "unto" (Strong's 2193) Athens: KJV

Acts 23:14 - And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing "until" (Strong's 2193) we have slain Paul. KJV

ARE JOSHUA AND THE ELDERS INCLUDED IN THE 450 YEARS?

R3102 quoted above says yes. Acts 13 agrees saying:

When he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot. After that he gave them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. Afterward they desired a king: and God gave them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years. (Acts 13:19-21)

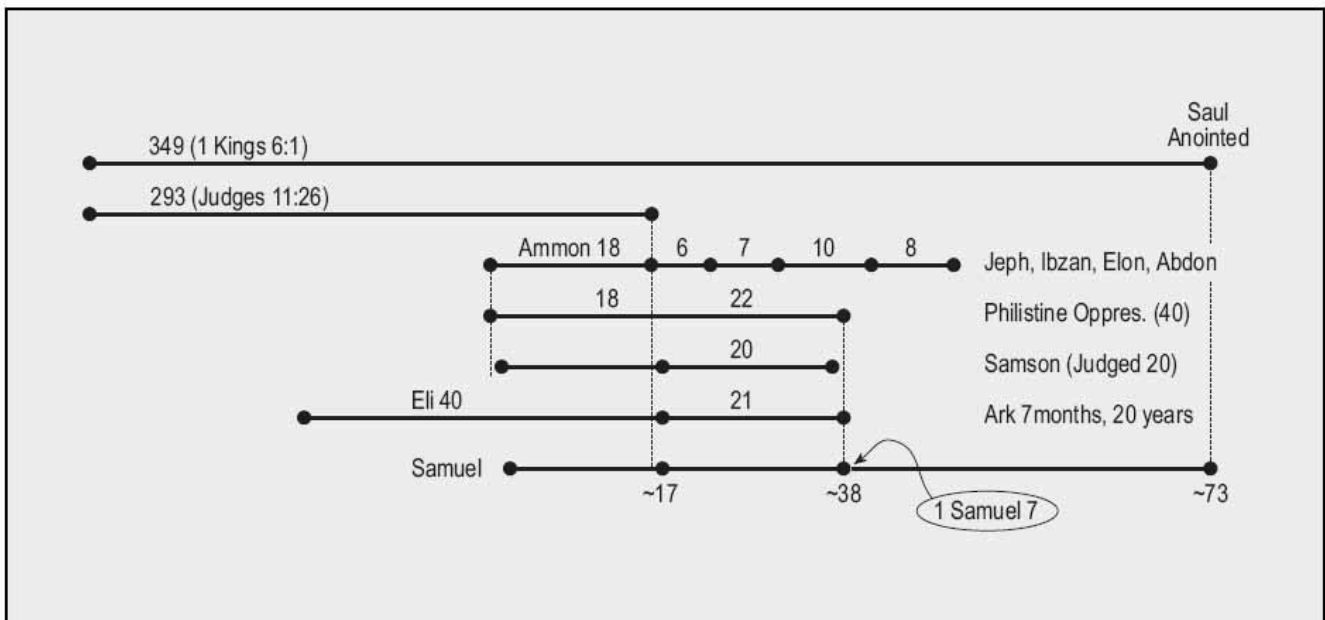
The passage says that God gave them Judges for 450 years AFTER the division of the land. Therefore the 450 years immediately follows the division of the land. Therefore Joshua and the Elders must have died in the early part of the 450 years, just as Brother Morton Edgar proposes in his 1948 study.

DO OVERLAPPING JUDGES SHORTEN THE PERIOD TO ONLY 349 YEARS?

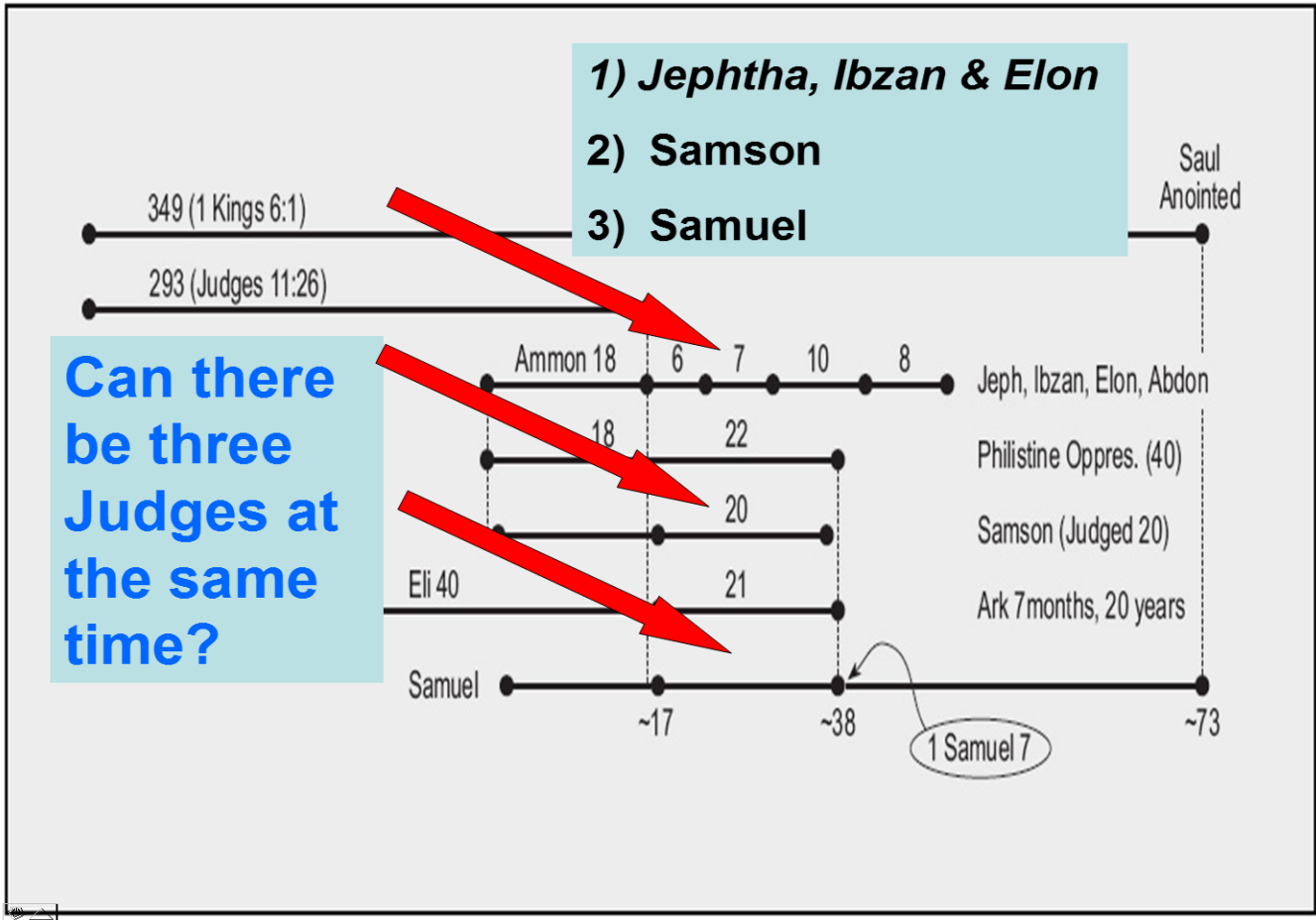
- Can two or more Judges have judged at the same time?
- Can Judges have been over certain areas rather than the whole of Israel?
- Can the period of the Judges be shortened to 349 years?

Judges 11:13-15, 25-26 indicates the period from entering Canaan to the Judge Jephthah was 300 years. In order to adjust the period of the Judges down to 349 years, the remaining seven Judges would have to be compressed into nearly 50 years for the 1 Kings 6:1 account to be correct.

The following “New Chronology” chart of overlaps arrives at a total of only 349 years for the period of the Judges. Some might view this as a confirmation of the 480 years indicated in 1 Kings 6:1.



As you will notice from the chart, Samuel and Samson are Judges at the same time. Also at the same time Jephthah, Ibzan & Elon judge consecutively. This means that we have three Judges at the same time. In this chart, Eli comes before several Judges, even though we do not see him appear on the scene until the book of 1 Samuel.



This “New View” of Chronology presumes that Judges were raised as needed by the spirit of the Lord for special needs and often in local areas, allowing for other consecutive Judges meeting different needs and covering different areas. Although overlapping Judges are not generally assigned to episodes before the time of Jephthah, the “New View” believes this to be the case during the last 49 years of the period of the Judges. Although we have not been able to find any thought of overlapping Judges from early chronologists, this concept is the common thinking among modern scholars.

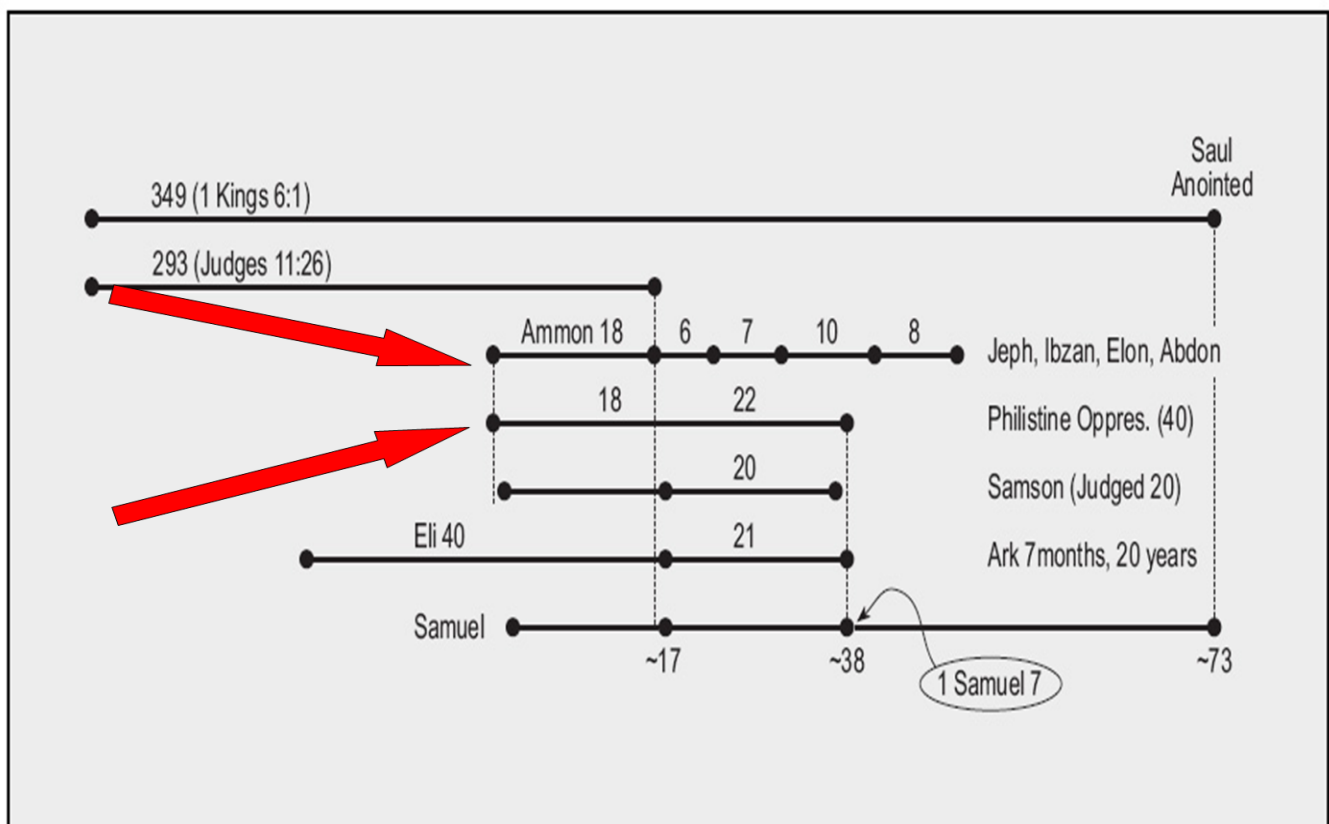
Yet how can there be overlaps when every last Judge is said to have “judged Israel?” Even if their sphere of influence may have been more focused in a specific area (as is true of Samuel’s yearly circuit), they were counted as being Judges of all of Israel, as is supported by the following citations. (Othniel Judges 3:10; Ehud Judges 3:15; Deborah Judges 4:4; Gideon Judges 6:14; Tola Judges 10:2; Jair Judges 10:3; Jephthah (Judges 12:7); Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon (Judges 12:8-14), Samson Judges 15:20 & 16:31; Eli (1 Samuel 4:8); Samuel (1 Samuel 7:15-17).

Even though the Philistine oppression focused in the southwest of Israel, this should not be construed to mean that the oppression was not of the whole of Israel. All oppressions were counted as **oppressions of Israel**, whether or not there were portions of Israel not as directly impacted. For example, 1) the Servitude to Mesopotamia (Judges 3:8) is not specific as to what areas in Israel were affected. 2) The Moab oppression (Judges 3:12-14) is not specific as well but indicates taking the City of Palms near Jericho. This suggests an incursion from the East to the West over the Jordan River. 3) Jabin likely oppressed the whole of Israel. 4) The Midian oppression was only as far as Gaza (Judges 6:4). This suggests a southern incursion, which may not have directly impacted Middle or Northern Israel.

McClintock & Strong: Volume IV, page 1078 under the subject "JUDGES, BOOK OF" and section IX. *Chronological Difficulties:* "1 Kings... is generally adopted, partly on account of its agreement with Egyptian chronology. Most of the systems therefore shorten the time of the judges by reckoning the dates as inclusive or contemporary. But all these combinations are arbitrary. The same may be said of Keil's scheme, which is one of those least open to objection. He reckons the dates successively as far as Jair, but makes Jephthah and the three following judges contemporary with the 40 years of the Philistine oppression (comp. 10:6-13:1) and by compressing the period between the division of the land and Chushan-rishathaim into 10 years; and the Philistine wars to the death of Saul into 39, he arrives ultimately at the 480 years. Ewald and Bertheau have proposed ingenious but unsatisfactory explanations — differing in details, ... But the whole theory of the parallel or contemporaneous rule of two or more judges, upon which all these shortenings of the period in question proceed, is purely arbitrary. ... Jephthah successors, whose rule must also be made contemporary with the Philistine oppression during 40 years, had no special connection whatever with the eastern tribes. Ibzan belonged to Bethlehem, and was buried there; Elon stood in the same relation to the tribe of Zebulun, and Abdon to Pirathon in the land of Ephraim. So far as we know, these are fair specimens of the connections which the judges had with the different localities of the land of Israel, and there is no ground for restricting the rule of one of them more than that of another to a part of the land. We are pretty sure that this was not the case with Deborah and Barak, nor with Gideon, nor, certainly, with Samuel; why imagine it with any of the rest?"

PHILISTINE & AMORITE OPPRESSIONS

The supposed greatest support in the Book of Judges for a shortened period is the view that the 40-year Philistine oppression and the 18-year Amorite oppression are both mentioned in Judges 10:7 and began as contemporaneous episodes, each affecting a different portion of Israel (depicted in the chart below).



We feel this is a misrepresentation of the text. It is very easy to interpret this passage to mean that the Philistines participation in crushing Israel was in the first year only (“that year”) and that the Amorites alone continued to do so for 18 more years on the East side of Jordon, or perhaps just in the 18th year as Bro. Edgar suggests. See how various translations support this.

Rotherham: *Judges 10:7 “So the anger of Yahweh kindled upon Israel,—and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the sons of Ammon; 8 and **they enfeebled and oppressed the sons of Israel in that year**,—eighteen years, did they this unto all the sons of Israel who were beyond the Jordan, in the land of the Amorites, that was in Gilead.”*

Youngs Literal Translation: *Judges 10:7 “and the anger of Jehovah burneth against Israel, and He selleth them into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the Bene-Ammon, 8 and **they crush and oppress the sons of Israel in that year**—eighteen years all the sons of Israel who are beyond the Jordan, in the land of the Amorite, which is in Gilead.”*

New American Standard Version: *Judges 10:7 “And the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the sons of Ammon. 8 And **they afflicted and crushed the sons of Israel that year**; for eighteen years they afflicted all the sons of Israel who were beyond the Jordan in Gilead in the land of the Amorites.”*

Bible in Basic English: *Judges 10: 7 “And the wrath of the Lord was burning against Israel, and he gave them up into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the children of Ammon. 8 **And that year the children of Israel were crushed under their yoke**; for eighteen years all the children of Israel on the other side of Jordan, in the land of the Amorites which is in Gilead, were cruelly crushed down.”*

New International Version: *Judges 10:7 “...he became angry with them. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites, 8 who **that year shattered and crushed them**. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites on the east side of the Jordan in Gilead, the land of the Amorites.”*

Who continued to oppress Israel after the first year? Was it the Philistines or the Amorites or both? Was any of this in Philistine territory?

New International Version: *Judges 10: 8 “...For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites on the east side of the Jordan in Gilead, the land of the Amorites.”*

We only know for certain that the Amorites continued to oppress Israel after the first year. This 18-year oppression was in Amorite territory, not Philistine territory. Of the Philistines, the verse only says that they crushed Israel the first year. To presume more from this verse becomes very subjective and cannot be proven.

Further evidence refutes the view that the Philistine and Amonite oppressions occurred as contemporaneous events.

Judg 13:1 – “*And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.*” (KJV)

If both oppressions started at the same time, we would expect Judges 13:1 to tell us that the Lord delivered Israel into the hands of both the Amorites and the Philistines. But Judges 13:1 clearly omits any mention of the Amorite oppression, arguing against the theory of contemporaneous oppressions.

DIFFICULTIES WITH OVERLAPS

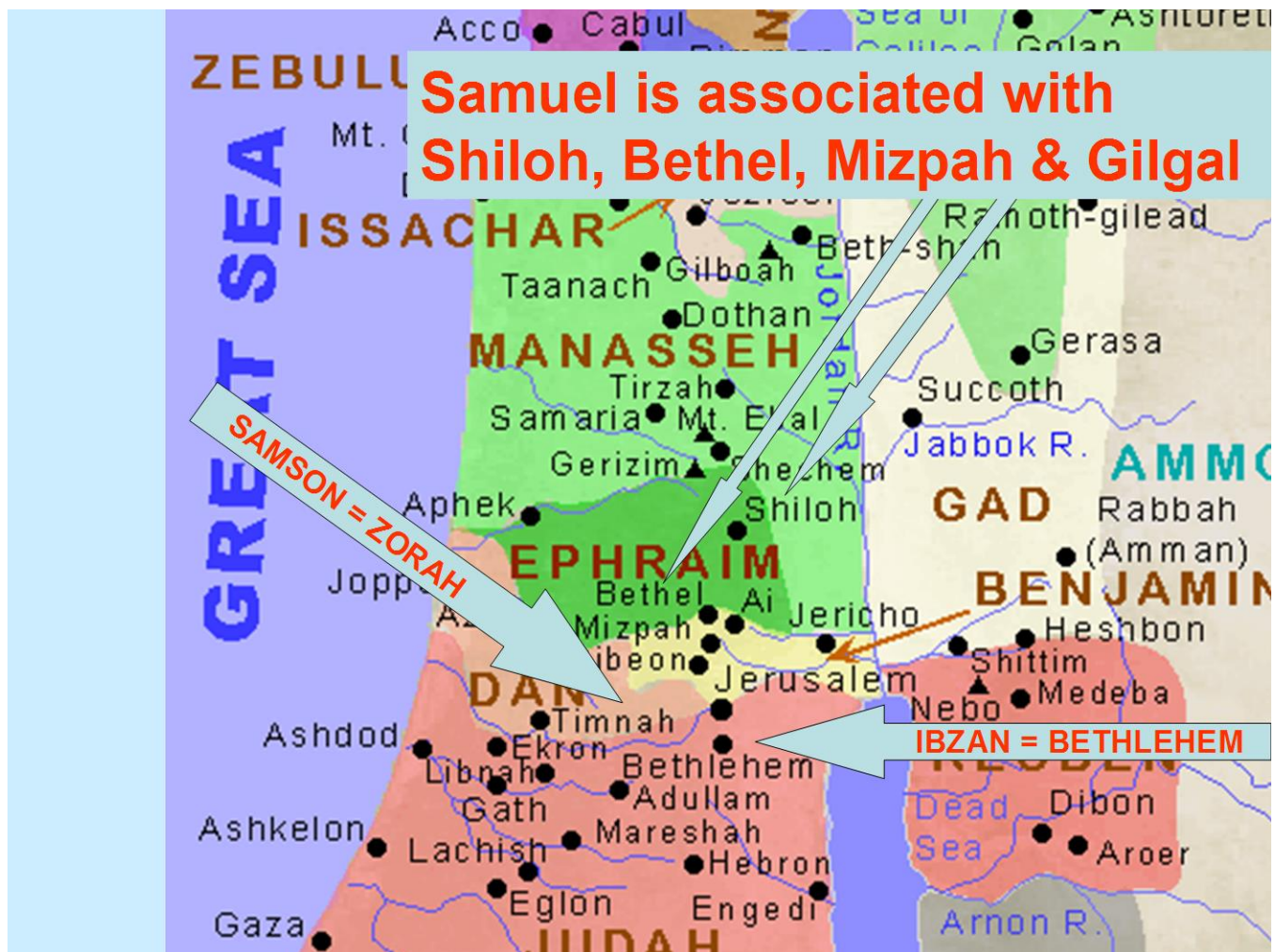
Let us look at the three Judges who supposedly all judged at the same time. Can there be three Judges at the same time?

- 1) Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon & Abdon (consecutively)
- 2) Samson
- 3) Samuel

It does not seem credible that four judges, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, should rule the eastern tribes in uninterrupted succession, without attempting to drive out the Philistines and support Samson in his struggle. In fact, some of them judged in the area that the Philistine oppression occurred.

Notice from the map and arrows below that three supposedly contemporaneous Judges are all in the same general area of Northern Judah and Ephraim. This does not sound to us like a scenario where different Judges are judging different areas at the same time. There are three Judges in the same general area, rather than spread throughout Israel, and in the area where the Philistine oppression was to occur.

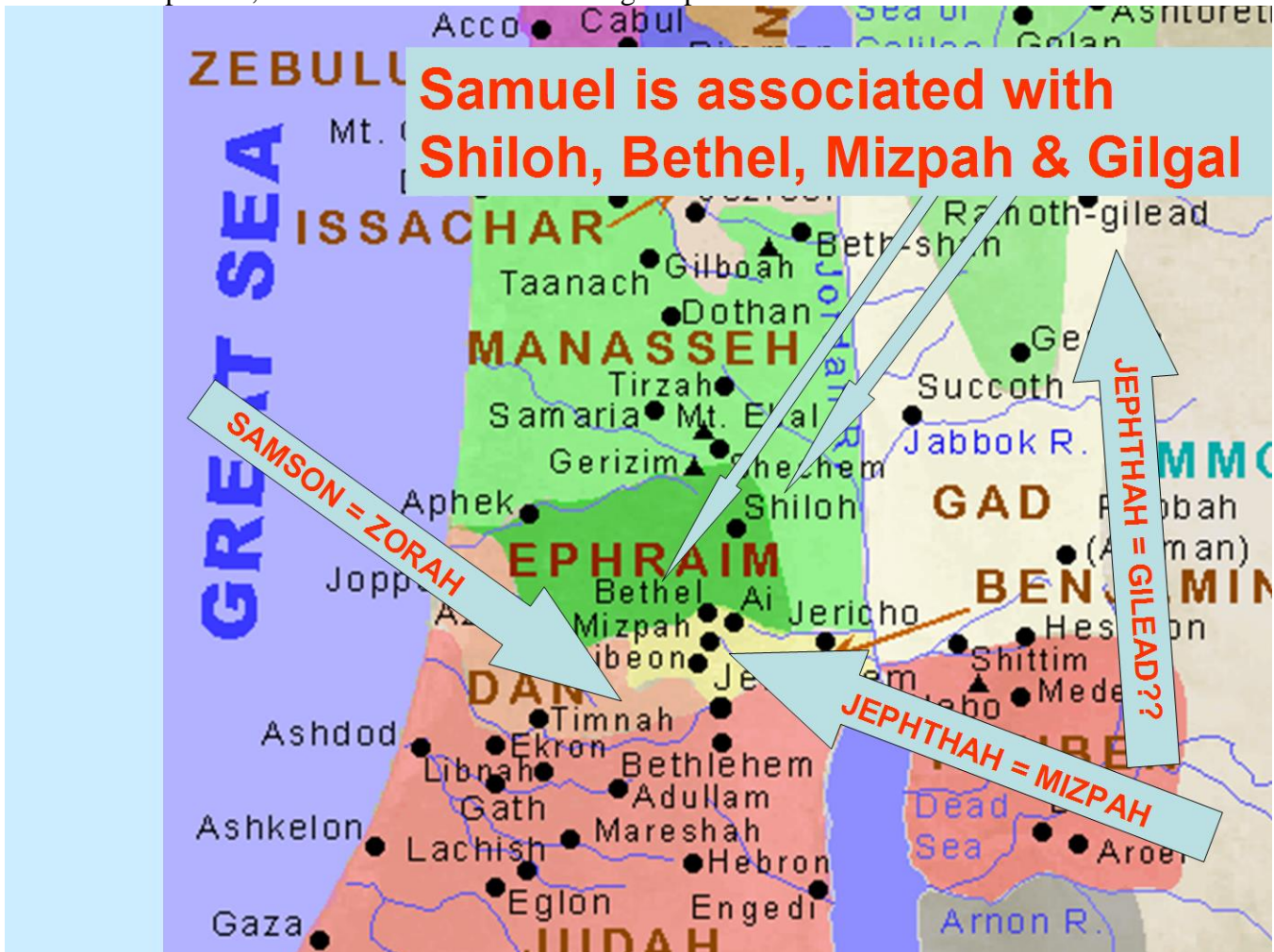
Regarding **Ibzan**, Bethlehem is very close to the area where Samson lived (less than 15 miles per Judges 13:25) and it is less than 35 miles from Bethlehem to Ashdod, the nearest major Philistine city. In our opinion, had they judged at the same time, we believe the spheres of influence of these two Judges would have geographically overlapped. If Judges had judged contemporaneously, we would expect to see them more spread out into northern Israel and east of the Jordan. (See the map below).



1 Samuel 7:15 “And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. 16 He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places. 17 But he always returned to Ramah, for his home was there. There he judged Israel, and there he built an altar to the LORD.”NKJV

In 1 Samuel 7:3, Samuel spoke to **ALL** the House of Israel at Mizpeh. 1 Sam 7:17 indicates Samuel judged Israel (it does not limit his Judgeship to the south). Yet at the same time, the “Shortened Judges” view would have **Elon** in the north as a Judge, presumably of only northern Israel.

As we saw from 1 Samuel 7:15, Samuel was a Judge all his life. Under a “Shortened Judges” scenario **Abdon**, from Ephraim would have judged contemporaneously with Samuel. Samuel’s yearly circuit included Bethel & Mizpah. Bethel & Mizpah were on the border between Ephraim and Benjamin. Under the Shortened Judges view, it would then be impossible to suggest that Samuel’s judgeship did not include Ephraim, which was also under the Judgeship of Abdon.



Now Jephthah also would have supposedly been judging at the same time as Samuel and Samson. Where did Jephthah live while he was judging? Some scholars believe Jephthah lived in Gilead, as indicated in the map above.

McClintock & Strong

In McClintock & Strong, Volume IV, page 1078 under the subject "JUDGES, BOOK OF" and the section: Chronological Difficulties: “There is nothing in the book of Judges to warrant the supposition that the national unity was completely broken up, so that there ever were two independent judges ruling different parts of Israel: ... Nor is there anything in the history which suggests the restriction of *Jephthah's jurisdiction* to the east of Jordan. On the contrary, Mizpeh of Gilead (Judges 11:29) seems

to be distinguished from Mizpeh simply so called, where he took up his house (ver. 34), where he uttered all his words before the Lord (ver. 11), and where the children of Israel had assembled themselves together and encamped (Judges 10:17); and it will be difficult to assign a reason for thinking that this was not the Mizpeh in Benjamin, where at other times the people of the Lord were used to meet in those days (Judges 20:1; 1 Samuel 7:5, 6; 10:17).

We agree with McClintock & Strong. Jephthah's home is called "Mizpeh" (vs 34). Throughout the book of Judges, the scriptures when mentioning "Mizpeh" (Strong's 4709) are referring to Mizpeh of Benjamin, a common place of national assembly. Judges 11:29 speaks of Jephthah passing through a different Mizpeh, "Mizpeh (Strong's 4708) of Gilead" on his way to battle the Amorites. Jephthah starts in "Mizpeh" then later passes through "Mizpeh of Gilead." Both cannot be the same place.

Judges 11:11 - Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh. AKJV

Judges 11:29 - ... Jephthah... passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over to the children of Ammon. AKJV

Judges 11:34 - And Jephthah came to Mizpeh to his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances: and she was his only child. AKJV

Clearly then Jephthah lived in Mizpeh, one of the very same towns in Samuel's circuit. Can we believe that both Samuel and Jephthah judged in Mizpeh at the same time? Can we believe that Samuel would not have joined Jephthah in his campaign against Ammon?

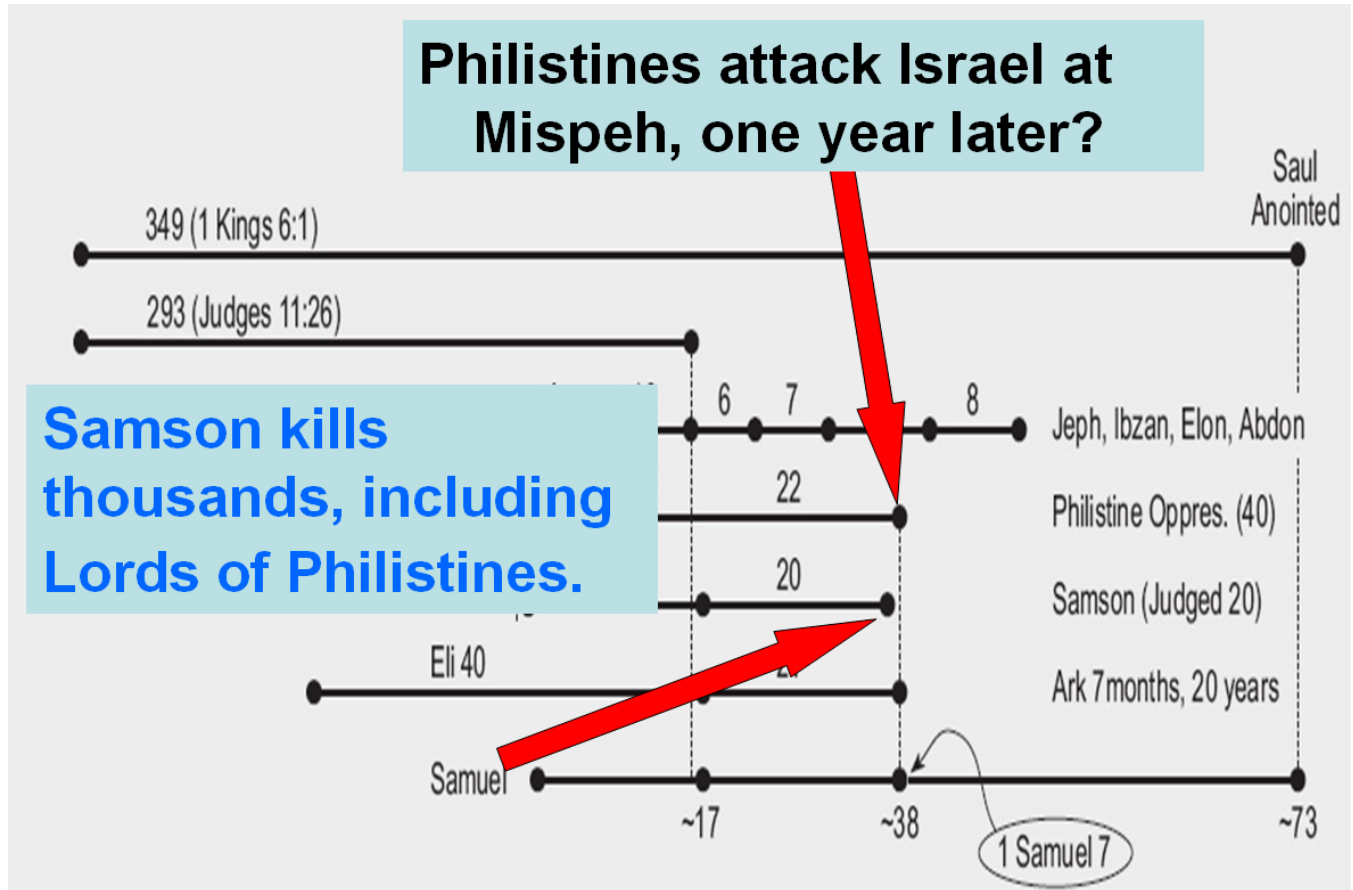
JOSEPHUS' TESTIMONY:

"After Abdon was dead, the Philistines overcame the Israelites and received tribute of them for forty years." Antiquities of the Jews, Cha 8, par 1.

The New Chronology has Abdon after Samson, Josephus has him before. We have no reason to doubt Josephus record as no of the ancient historian or chronologist can be found that overlaps judges with other judges. They all viewed the judges as sequential.

DID SAMSON END THE 40-YEAR PHILISTINE OPPRESSION?

According to the “New Chronology,” Samuel (not Samson) ended the 40-year Oppression when the Philistines attacked Israel at Mizpeh (1 Samuel 7), supposedly one year after Samson collapsed the temple killing thousands of Philistines. (See chart below.) Is it credible to believe that the Philistines would have recovered and have been prepared to battle Israel one year after their devastating defeat at the hands of Samson? We think this is extremely unlikely, if not impossible.



Let us first get the context from Judges 16:

“23 Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice. And they said: “Our god has delivered into our hands Samson our enemy!” 24 When the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said: “Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, The destroyer of our land, And the one who multiplied our dead.” ...27 Now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there — about three thousand men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed.... the temple fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.” NKJV

Sometimes Samson is thought as having killed 3,000 at his death, but notice that verse 27 says “the temple was full of men and women” and also “about three thousand men and women [were] on the roof.” In any stadium or theater, the upper deck usually seats less than the main auditorium area. Perhaps there were closer to 10,000 killed. (This is the number of Moabites killed under Ehud, who ended that oppression - Judges 3:29-30.) In any case, this would have been more than just a major blow against the Philistines; it was a devastating surgical strike against the Philistine’s civil, military and financial structures, so damaging that it would have taken them years to fully recover, rebuild and reestablish their government, military and businesses.

In support, notice that verse 23 tells us that all the “lords of the Philistines” were there. Notice also how verse 24 says, “*Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy, The destroyer of our land, And the one who multiplied our dead.*” The Philistine’s top military officers would not have been left off the invitation list of this celebration of the defeat of their greatest military enemy. And no doubt, the top government leaders and businessmen would not have missed this momentous celebration.

In one year’s time, would new “lord’s of the Philistines” (and other government leaders) have all been chosen and be in full political control of the people and military? Would new military leaders have been appointed and gained the confidence of and control over their soldiers? With the death of the Philistines lord’s, top government officials, top military officers and top business leaders, can one reasonably conclude that in one years’ time they would have so fully recovered as to confidently attack Israel at Mizpeh (1 Samuel 7)? We think not.

JOSEPHUS TESTIMONY:

Josephus supports the view that Samson ended the forty-year Philistine oppression.

“*Now after the death of Samson, Eli the high priest was governor of the Israelites.*” Antiquities of the Jews, Cha 9, par 1.

The New Chronology has Eli contemporary with Samson, not after, and has Samuel later ending the forty-year Philistine oppression. This would be impossible if Eli followed Samson as Josephus tells us.

DID THE 40-YEAR PHILISTINE OPPRESSION CONTINUE INTO 1 SAMUEL?

MANY PHILISTINE CONFLICTS

In order to compress the period of the Judges into only 349 years, we are told that the 40-year Philistine Oppression associated with Samson extended into the time of Eli and Samuel in the book of 1 Samuel. Yet if this is not true, the whole argument of a shortened period of the Judges collapses.

Other conflicts with the Philistines that can be found in the Bible are not assumed to be part of the 40-year oppression associated with Samson. Long before this, Shamagar killed 600 Philistines (Judges 3:31). Samson did not completely deliver Israel (Judges 16:27-30), nor did Samuel (1 Samuel 7). The Philistines challenged Israel with Goliath (1 Samuel 17), they slew Saul and his sons (1 Samuel 31) and David continued to battle the Philistines after becoming king (2 Samuel 5:17-25; 21:15-22; 23). Finally by the time of Solomon, the Philistines were fully subdued and under the rule of Israel. (1 Kings 4:21)

The statement in Judges 13:5 that Samson “...*shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines*” does not mean that Samson would not end the forty-year oppression, but that the relief would be temporary. The Philistines would continue to come back and harass Israel for more than another century, through the time of Eli, Samuel, Saul and David.

The beginning of 1 Samuel provides no hint that the Israelites were under an oppression of any sort. The free travel (1 Samuel 1) of the people to Shiloh at the time of Eli to worship each year is indicative of a period of peace and security.

NO ARMY DURING OPPRESSION

In 1 Samuel 4:1, 2, the army of Israel meets the Philistines in battle. Yet, if this were during a period of oppression, as proposed by the “New Chronology,” we would not expect Israel to have an army prepared for battle. In 1 Samuel 7, after another 20 years of oppression, the Philistines attack Israel at Mizpeh. In contrast to 1 Samuel 4, the Israelites in 1 Samuel 7:7 are described as being “afraid” of the Philistines. After God discomfits the Philistines, the men of Israel chase after and smite the Philistines (verse 11). No mention is made of an “army” of Israel as in 1 Samuel 4, because they had no standing army during this second Philistine oppression.

Other examples show how Israel was not well armed during the periods of Philistine domination. In a later episode, in 1 Samuel 13:19-23, Saul’s men had no swords or spears because the Philistines permitted no blacksmiths in the land of Israel. Also in Judges 15:10-14, the men of Judah turned over Samson to their Philistine rulers. Under this Philistine oppression, fearful Israel was not even prepared to battle the enemy in order to defend their own Judge.

The point is that leading up to 1 Samuel 4, Israel was enjoying a period of peace and rest under Eli, in which the people could freely travel each year to Shiloh to worship. In 1 Samuel 4-7, Israel experienced a 20-year oppression, from which Samuel delivered them. Had 1 Samuel 4 been part of the 40-year oppression associated with the time of Samson, Israel would not have had a confident army, with weapons of war, ready to meet the Philistines in battle.

FINAL TWO EPISODES SEQUENTIAL

The “New Chronology” applies the final two episodes to earlier times in the period of the Judges. This seems necessary to more easily connect the 40-year oppression beginning in Judges 13 and making it end in 1 Samuel 7. Otherwise, more events are added into the 40-year oppression, each of which gives no hint of a Philistine oppression. And if these two stories were proven to be sequential, it would add great weight to the view that the entire book is consistently sequential.

Remember that Samson was from the tribe of Dan and lived between Zorah and Eshtaol (Judges 16:31), which during his life was just north of Judah (in the south part of Israel). In the next story, we see the tribe of Dan moving far north to Laish (Judges 18:1, 2, 27-31). This story is clearly sequential, because Dan was still in the southern part of Israel during the time of Samson. Judges 18:11 speaks of the tribe of Dan as sending north “six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war.” Since we know that the Israelites were not well armed during the Philistine oppressions, this episode clearly took place later.

In the final story, the tribe of Dan is shown to be located in the north (the move having taken place in the previous story).

Judges 20:1 *Then all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan [far north] even to Beersheba [far south], with the land of Gilead [east], to the LORD in Mizpeh. 2 And the chief of all the people, even of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen that drew the sword. AKJV*

At this point, not only has the tribe of Dan moved north, but all Israel was armed with swords and with no indication of a Philistine oppression.

Clearly the Philistine oppression was ended with Samson’s victory back in chapter 16.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA VIEWED JUDGES AS SEQUENTIAL

Website: http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-02/anf02-57.htm#P5237_1583017

Clement of Alexandria listed each of the Judges, the length of their reign, and then indicated that they reigned in sequence, one after another. He made no attempt to shorten the period with overlaps of judgeships or oppressions. Clement of Alexandria said, “...*the people having again transgressed, came under the power of the foreigners, the Philistines, for forty years. But on their returning [to God], they were led by Samson, of the tribe of Dan, who conquered the foreigners in battle. He ruled twenty years. And after him, there being no governor, Eli the priest judged the people for forty years. He was succeeded by Samuel the prophet.*”

We cannot say that Clement of Alexandria’s opinion proves anything, but it is interesting to note that this early Christian writer viewed the time of the Philistine oppression to Samuel as consecutive, not overlapping.

Eusebius points out that “*Clement of Alexandria reckoned that there were 674 years from Joshua the successor of Moses until the building of the temple.*” Clement’s error moves in the direction of making the period of the Judges even larger than 450 years, not smaller.

GENEALOGY OF DAVID IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

Ruth 4:18-22 - 18 *Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; 19 Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; 20 Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; 21 Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; 22 Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.* NKJV

The case is made that if the period of the Judges is 450 years long, as Bro. Russell taught, that this is too long a span of time for just five generations. The suggested calculation is that each generation would then have begotten a son at the average age of 142.

Rahab 40 Boaz 142 Obed 142 Jesse 142 David

It's suggested that Rahab could have been 40 years old when giving birth to Boaz. This list takes us from the entering of the land of Canaan to the birth of David 10 years after the end of the period of the Judges (466 years). David was age 30 at the end of Saul's 40-year reign, meaning David was born 10 years into Saul's reign.

The Shortened Judges view suggest this problem might possibly be resolved by an adjustment down from 450 years to only 349 years for the period of the Judges. This solution diminishes, but does not nearly eliminate the problem, for we are then asked to presume that the average age that each father begat a son is 108 1/3 years. This is an improvement but hard to believe, especially when our expectation is that each father would at least see their son grow to manhood, adding at least another 18 years to their life.

It is likely that the generations from Perez (son of Judah) to David in Ruth 4:18-22 are missing generations, as this is not uncommon in Biblical genealogies. In genealogical reckonings, all generations need not be included to establish a lineage. The lineage is based on a person's family tree by tribe, clan, and family group. Chronology must include the exact years from one generation to the birth of the next genealogical link, so that the years can be accurately counted to arrive at a sum of years.

BEGOTTEN USED BROADLY IN SCRIPTURES

RUTH'S SON

In Ruth 4:17 Ruth's child is called "a son born to Naomi," Ruth's mother-in-law and not even an ancestor of the child in the strict sense. The word "born" (Strong's 3205) is the same word for "begat" used in the genealogy list in verses 18-22.

Ruth 4:13, 17

13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. ... 17 Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "There is a son **born** to Naomi. And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David." (see another example in Deuteronomy 23:7-8)

In the book of Ruth, the inspired writer intended to transmit David's genealogy links, not chronology.

HEZEKIAH'S SONS

In regard to the meaning of the word beget, let us examine

2 Kings 20: *"17 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.*

*18 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt **beget**, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. KJV*

[beget here is the same Hebrew word used in Ruth 4:18-22]

According to Mathew Henry's Commentary regarding the genealogy in Matthew 1, "6. *In the pedigree of the kings of Judah, between Joram and Ozias (v. 8), there are three left out, namely, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah; and therefore when it is said, Joram begat Ozias, it is meant, according to the usage of the Hebrew tongue, that Ozias was lineally descended from him, as it is said to Hezekiah that the sons which he should beget should be carried to Babylon, whereas they were removed several generations from him. It was not through mistake or forgetfulness that these three were omitted, but, probably, they were omitted in the genealogical tables that the evangelist consulted, which yet were admitted as authentic. Some give this reason for it: It being Matthew's design, for the sake of memory, to reduce the number of Christ's ancestors to three fourteens, it was requisite that in this period three should be left out, and none more fit than they who were the immediate progeny of cursed Athaliah, who introduced the idolatry of Ahab into the house of David, for which this brand is set upon the family and the iniquity thus visited to the third and fourth generation. Two of these three were apostates; and such God commonly sets a mark of his displeasure upon in this world: they all three had their heads brought to the grave with blood."*

(from Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.)"

ARPHAXAD'S SON

Cainan's name does not appear in 1 Chronicles 1:18-24 (except in the Septuagint), but does appear in Luke 3:36. If in 1 Chronicles 1:18 Arphaxad begot Shelah, how can we now put Cainan in between? It can only occur if the Bible allows for skipped generations in lineages.

1 Chronicles 1:17-23

"17 The sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech. 18 Arphaxad begot Shelah, and Shelah begot Eber. 19 To Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan. 20 Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, 21 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 22 Ebal, Abimael, Sheba, 23 Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan." NKJV

Luke 3:34-38

"34 the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, 35 the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, 36 the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, 37 the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan, 38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God." NKJV

Let us also take a look at another related verse.

Gen 11:12 *“Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begot Salah (Shelah ASV).”* NKJV

Some argue that based on this text, Arphaxad was the direct father of Shelah and there was no time for another generation between. First, let us remember that the word beget is used broadly enough in scripture to not only apply to the direct/immediate father. Second, after the flood the priority was to replenish the earth as quickly as possible (Genesis 9:1). To have begotten children at a very young age should not be a surprise. It is not even unheard of in modern times. The famous country singer Loretta Lynn bore her first child when she was 14. This daughter in turn had her first child when she too was 14. Thus Loretta Lynn was a grandmother at age 28! Arphaxad could have fathered Cainan when he was 17 or 18. Similarly, Cainan could have fathered Shelah when he was 17 or 18. In this way Arphaxad could be said to have *begotten* Shelah when he was 35.

EVIDENCE FOR SKIPPED GENERATIONS

MATTHEW’S ACCOUNT OF JESUS’ GENEALOGY

The wide meaning of the noun *son* in the genealogies is shown in Matthew 1:1: *“Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”* This phrase prepares the reader for the view that the noun son may connect a person with any one of his ancestors, however remote.

Matthew 1:1 – *“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”* KJV Notice also how Joseph is called the son of David, even though this is only remotely true.

Matthew 1:20 – *“But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, **Joseph, thou son of David**, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.”* KJV

An indication that biblical genealogies are not always exclusively father-son relationships is the comparison of Matthew's genealogy with that of Chronicles. (1) First, Matthew 1:8-9 states, *“and Jehoram **begat** Uzziah, Uzziah **begat** Jotham.”* However, 1 Chronicles 3:11-12 includes *“Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah”* between Jehoram and Jotham, showing that in Matthew's genealogy, Jehoram was not the immediate father of Jotham but an ancestor. (2) Second, Matthew 1:11 states *“Josiah **begat** Jeconiah,”* but 1 Chronicles 3:16 includes *“Jehoiakim”* between Josiah and Jeconiah, thus we know that Josiah was not the immediate father of Jeconiah. (3) Third, Matthew skipped the names of Zerubbabel's sons, Meshullam and Hannaniah from 1 Chronicles 3:19 and went to the ancestor Abiud of either of the two sons (Matthew 1:13).

Notice again, the word beget is used when a direct father-son relationship is not the case. Sometimes it is used of forefathers to establish lineage links. Since the word *“begat”* does not necessarily refer to a father-son relationship, Matthew could structure his genealogy to intentionally limit the genealogy to three sections of 14 names, totaling 42 names. Ruth 4:18-22 adopts a similar symmetry by applying five generations before the entering of the land and five generations after.

ESAU’S GENEALOGY

Grandsons of Esau were called the sons of Esau’s three wives. (Genesis 36:11,12, 17) Amalek was called the Son of Adah, Esau’s wife, even though he was really the son of a concubine. (Genesis 36:12,15,16; 1 Chronicles 1:36)

ZERUBBABEL

Zerubbabel is called familiarly the son of Shealtiel (Ezra 3:2; Haggai 1:1), and is so stated to be in the genealogies of both Matthew. 1:12 and Luke 3:27, though in reality he was his nephew (2 Chronicles 3:17-19). The descent as reckoned in genealogies is not always that of actual parentage appears from the comparisons of the ancestry of our Lord as given by Matthew and by Luke.

Matthew 1:12 – “*And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and **Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel.***” NKJV

1 Chronicles 3:17-24 - “*17 And the sons of Jeconiah were Assir, **Shealtiel** his son, 18 and Malchiram, Pedaiiah, Shenazzar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. 19 **The sons of Pedaiiah were Zerubbabel and Shimei...**” NKJV*

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Nebuchadnezzar wasn't really the "father" of Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, since Nabonidus was, but he was his forefather (see Daniel 5:2, 11, 18).

KING DAVID

Sometimes "father" means "ancestor" in Scripture, as where King David was called King Asa's "father" (I Kings 15:11, 24; cf. II Kings 15:38, Deuteronomy 26:5).

ANCESTORS OF EZRA

Ahimaaz, Azariah and other ancestors of Ezra were omitted from the list in Ezra 7:1- 5 but included in the list in I Chronicles 6:3-15.

ADMIN

This possible skipped generation is not likely, but is worth considering. The name “Admin” is included in the Revised Standard Version and not given elsewhere; it appears in a Coptic Greek Manuscript but not in most other early manuscripts. The Textus Receptus from which the KJV was translated makes Admin and Amminadab the same person, while some other texts (and Tischendorf) separate these as two different people. The Greek New Testament/UBS-3rd edn., indicates the most likely reading from the early manuscripts is: Judah, Pharez, Hezron, Arni, Ram, Aminadab... , with no other reading having enough credible evidence. [Even this reading does not have overwhelming evidence; but the apparent reading of "p4" was from the 3rd century, and it has a little decent support.]

WAS 108 TOO OLD TO BEGET A SON?

Here are some of the ages of deaths of people found in the Bible:

- 148 Nahor (Abraham's grandfather) – Gen 11:24, 25
- 205 Terah (Abraham's father) - Gen 11:32
- 175 Abraham - Gen 25:7-10
- 127 Sarah - Gen 23:1, 2
- 180 Isaac - Gen 35:27-29
- 137 Ishmael - Gen 25:17
- 147 Jacob - Gen 49:29-50:14
- 110 Joseph - Gen 50:25, 26
- 123 Aaron - Num 33:39
- 120 Moses - Duet 34:7
- 110 Joshua - Josh 24:29
- 98 Eli - 1 Samuel 4:15**
- 70 King David - 1 Chron 29:26-28 (30 yrs old when Saul died. Reigned 40 years.)
Died at ripe old age.)**
- 80 Barzillai - 2 Samuel 19:32 (Very aged man, 80 yrs old.)**
- 54 King Amaziah - 2 Kg 14:2
- 68 King Azariah - 2 Kg 15:2
- 130 Jehoiada - 2 Chron 24:15 (Old and full of days.)

Notice these are ages of the deaths of these Bible characters, not their age when they begat sons. We see the expected trend downward in age as we move further in time from Noah. King David is said to have died at a ripe old age (calculated at 70) and the people that follow on the list seem to make the 108 age for begetting a son unreasonable, especially when we would expect that the father would believe he would live long enough to take care of his son until the child reached adulthood and could take care of himself. The biggest case to be made for begetting children at 108 would be Jehoiada from the period of the Kings. It is extremely difficult to find the age of a person's death in the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles. The fact that Jehoida's age at death is mentioned at all must mean that it was very remarkable for anyone to have lived that long at that time. Could Jehoiada have begotten a son at 108 and lived to see him grow up? Could people during the period of the Judges have done the same? Although we cannot rule this out as impossible, we think it extremely unlikely, even if Boaz and Jessie were older (we don't know how old) when they had their sons (who are listed in the genealogy of David). This does not mean that the other men in this lineage waited till they were extremely old to have children. That would be unusual and unlikely. If we were to find the rare man today who lived to be 110, would we expect that he had begotten his last child eighteen years earlier at the age of 92?

SCHOLARS COMMENTS

Jameson, Fausset and Brown: Regarding Ruth 4:18-22, JFB—says, “*It is evident that whole generations are omitted; the leading personages only are named, and grandfathers are said, in Scripture language, to beget their grandchildren, without specifying the intermediate links.*”

Keil & Delitzsch - “According to the genealogy of Christ in Mat 1:5, Salmon married Rahab; consequently he was a son, or at any rate a grandson, of Nahshon, and therefore all the members between Salmon and Boaz have been passed over. Again, the generations from Boaz to David (Rth 4:21, Rth 4:22) may possibly be complete, although in all probability one generation has been passed over even here between Obed and Jesse. It is also worthy of notice that the whole chain from Perez to David consists of ten links, five of which (from Perez to Nahshon) belong to the 430 years of the sojourn in Egypt, and five (from Salmon to David) to the 476 years between the exodus from Egypt and the death of David. This symmetrical division is apparently as intentional as the limitation of the whole genealogy to ten members, for the purpose of stamping upon it through the number ten as the seal of completeness the character of a perfect, concluded, and symmetrical whole...**Evidence for dropped generations:** “Ruth 4:18-22 ..the omission of unimportant members becomes still more apparent in the statement which follows, viz., that Nahshon begat Salmah, and Salmah Boaz, in which only two generations are given for a space of more than 250 years, which intervened between the death of Moses and the time of Gideon. Salmah (*sal^amaah* (OT:8008) or *sal^amaa'* (OT:8007), 1 Chron 2:11) is called Salmon in v. 21; a double form of the name, which is to be explained from the fact that Salmah grew out of Salmon through the elision of the n, and that the terminations an and on are used promiscuously, as we may see from the form *shir^ayaah* in Job 41:18 when compared with *shir^ayaan* in 1 Kings 22:34, and *shir^ayown* (OT:8302) in 1 Samuel 17:5,38 (see Ewald, §163-4).” (from Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.)

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

ACTS 13:20

- It would be most consistent with Paul's other statements to accept the 450 years exactly as given.
- Early chronologists agree with Brother Russell on 450 years for the period of the Judges.

1 KINGS 6:1

- Josephus and Early Christian chronologists...
 - make no reference to the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1
 - refer to the period of time identified in it, from the Exodus to the 4th Year of Solomon.
 - identify that period as much greater, between 560 and 595 years
- Many Bible Scholars believe the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1 to be spurious.
- Eusebius says that the Hebrew Teachers arrived at 480 years in 1 Kings 6:1 by the ridiculous method of deducting the years of foreign rule out of the actual total for that period from the Exodus to the 4th year of Solomon.

OVERLAPPING JUDGES?

- Compressing seven Judges into nearly 50 years to reduce the period of the Judges to 349 years is inconsistent with the sequential judgeships of the previous 300 years.
- All Judges are said in scripture to have judged "Israel," not just a local area.
- If there were overlapping Judges, we would expect them to be spread out. Yet most of the later Judges lived in the areas of Ephraim and northern Judah, within only a few miles of each other.
- There is no clear scriptural evidence to prove that the Philistine and Amorite oppressions overlapped.
- Internal evidence from the Book of Judges proves that Samson ended the 40-year Philistine oppression, and that this oppression could not have extended into the book of 1 Samuel.

GENEALOGY OF DAVID

In light of all this evidence, we think it very likely that there are skipped or missing generations in the Genealogy of David in the Book of Ruth. The word "beget" as used in Ruth 4:18-22 is not limited to a direct father-son relationship, but it is used in genealogies to establish a lineage connection.

PASTOR RUSSELL'S THOUGHTS

“We do not claim it as ‘our’ chronology: on the contrary, we claim it is God's chronology, supplied in the Bible to all that are his, and for our common use and behoof. We fear human speculations and manufactures along these lines...” R1974: page 103

“The Bible, and the Bible alone, supplies such a chronology as the people of God can rely upon; and our conviction that God did intend to give us a Bible record of all past time is strengthened by the fact that the only broken periods in the Old Testament record are ‘bridged’ by New Testament records.” R1975: page 105

Regarding some proposing similar revisions to chronology, Pastor Russell said, *“Their ‘Bible Chronology’ is defective; because in certain places where the historic account of the Bible is broken, they have neglected to take the divinely given ‘bridging’ for those ‘chasms,’ specially provided by the Lord in the New Testament; hence the difference between it and the simple, easily comprehended, Bible chronology presented in MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., Chapter II. (See p.42) The largest portion of this error (100 years) is made in reckoning the period of the Judges.” R1974: page 103*

“Nor is this pointing out of the seventh epoch, or Millennium, the only value of chronology; for while we shall present several lines of prophecy entirely independent of chronology, it is the measure by which several lines of prophecy are established. The perfect agreement between these two classes of prophetic teaching, some dependent on, and some independent of, chronology, is very strong proof, not only of the correctness of those applications, but also of the correctness of the chronology which shows this harmony; on the same principle that a key which will unlock a treasure-casket difficult to open is evidently the true key. The chronology given below harmonizes the various prophetic statements relating to Christ's Kingdom and its establishment, by showing their relative order and time. Chronology is the stem or handle by which all the prophetic time-proofs, as notches or wards of the key, are held together and operated.” Volume 2, pg 41, par 2

FINAL THOUGHTS

Chronology is the foundation upon which time prophecy is built. We know that it is said of Christ “Whom the heavens must receive until the time of restitution of all things” Acts 3:20. The 7th Thousand Year Day marks the time of Christ's return and restitution. Sevens are used throughout the Bible. 7 x 7 Sabbath days brings one to Pentecost. 7 x 7 Sabbath years brings one to the Jubilee year. And 50 x 50 Jubilee years brings one to the Grand Antitypical Jubilee in 1874, or to the Grand 7th Thousand Year Sabbath/Jubilee. The Jubilees of Leviticus 25 were a time to set slaves free and to return lost land to former owners. Antitypically since our Lord's Return in 1874, we see the cry for liberty, freedom and human rights around the world as never before. Land has been returned to the former colonies of European empires; and these former colonies have become independent countries. These are the small beginning stages of restitution leading toward a much grander and complete fulfillment once the Mediator is complete and ready to act. The reliable chronology provided by the Lord to the 7th Messenger / Wise Steward (Luke 12:37, 42) has stood the test of time, and we can firmly trust that the Lord has provided “meat in due season” that is accurate and true. Like Abraham, we must be patient, trusting in God's plan, not our own solutions.

Your fellow servant in the Lord

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