Old Testament Introduction
Chapter 28,
Philosophy of Chronology 1

***Introduction***

We had hoped that the chronology of the Hebrew kings would be a simple matter of opening a standard book, showing comparisons, and drawing conclusions. That was two months ago, and we are still not close to developing a cohesive, consistent, and reliable chronology of the Hebrew kings.

We especially found the methods and presuppositions of Edwin R. Thiele to be unsatisfactory. We may not change or improve Dr. Thiele’s dates very much, but at least we will make a point or two.

Along the way we will explore two issues from practical mathematics: namely, counting numbers and zero.

We will also broaden the field of evidence. We regret that we are not able to broaden this field further, but at least we will have made a start. We will focus on the Septuagint (LXX), the Vulgate, and the Masoretic Text as the main witnesses to the Hebrew prototype.[[1]](#endnote-1) Why these three, you ask? Aren’t there other witnesses? Yes, there are several other witnesses, all beyond our reach for research. These three witnesses are particularly important because the Orthodox Church largely follows the Septuagint; the Roman Catholic Church largely follows the Vulgate; and a good many Protestants follow the Masoretic Text. This set embraces well over 90% of all Christianity. We hope to get Christians to take a look at the way other Christians see the Bible and give everybody a fair hearing.

When I began this process around 1968,[[2]](#endnote-2) I was doggedly attached to the Masoretic Text; as well as being a firm supporter of the “Majority Text” viewpoint. Today, I’ve come to believe that the Septuagint is historically and canonically superior to all others. The point of this study is not to beat that point to death; rather to put as many pieces of evidence as possible, face-up on the table, and let you draw your own conclusions. All evidence deserves a fair and impartial hearing. If I have drawn unwarranted conclusions, you will find the data to prove me wrong in front of you. Wherein, I have made mistakes, you will have the material you need to point them out, and correct them.

If all of us work hard at this, we can hope to come more closely united as brothers and sisters in Christ. If real qualified scholars take up this kind of study, we can bring a great deal more evidence to the table.

A good philosophy of chronology must provide for a foundation in mathematics, the maximization of all available evidence, and a solid consideration of text criticism: for no sensible chronology can be built from an unsound text, minimum evidence, and shaky math. It must open the door to linkages from multiple cultures, and give considerable effort to understanding a variety of viewpoints. Here is a start.

***Numbers***

Chronologers commonly involve themselves in intricate discussions over the differences between accession or postdating and its opposite, nonaccession or antedating. Not only is the terminology confusing, but it is highly improbable: we can’t even prove that the two systems exist in antiquity. Chronology, like all of mathematics, obviously depends on the historical development of mathematics. As we all know, our first concepts of mathematics amount to learning to count on our fingers and toes. There is no zero, or concept of zero, in this elementary counting number system.

All elementary chronologies are simple counting number systems and nothing more: terming these elementary chronologies nonaccession or antedating is not helpful or useful. None of these elementary chronologies has a zero concept. Length is a concept of a bone or stick devoid of any idea that one end is zero and the other end is some positive value. Accession or postdating systems are simply not in existence: they are simply too sophisticated for the earliest chronologists.

So when did zero concepts begin to develop among men? The answer to that question, at least in part, appears to be, not until the seventh century AD. Yes, zero was used as a place holder before that, but there was little or no concept of zero as a decimal digit, the average of – 1 and + 1.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_mathematics#Prehistoric_mathematics>

The use of zero as a placeholder can be traced to the Fertile Crescent between 400 and 300 BC. Any concept of zero as a decimal digit might have begun to take shape as early as the fifth century AD; even so it does not achieve full orbed development until the seventh century AD. This makes the development of any accession or postdating system prior to the seventh century AD very unlikely. For accession or postdating systems to be a reality would imply that early Israelite chronologers actually discovered or invented zero as a decimal digit concept: this centuries before zero by any name was used even as a place holder elsewhere in the world. Israelite mathematics was simply not that highly developed between 1000 and 516 BC. Neither was anybody else’s dating or mathematics. All dating systems were nonaccession or antedating systems: simple counting methods.

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/history-of-zero/>

For verification that this is true we need only look as far as the crucifixion and resultant death of Christ which lasted over Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: exactly three days. If a zero concept is introduced, we are forced to acknowledge that death did not take place at the exact start of Friday, or even close to it. Resurrection took place very early on Sunday morning, long before the close of a twenty-four-hour day. In all, Jesus may have been dead for a little more than thirty-six hours, less than two full days by any assessment. For this cause some have gone so far as to suppose a Thursday crucifixion, or even a Wednesday crucifixion. The death of Christ clearly supposes a simple counting method.

If we dig farther, we discover that the authors of our present day calendars had no zero concept: for the numbers run in sequence 3 – 2 – 1 – 1 – 2 – 3, without any zero. This may be an aggravation to modern mathematicians, but it shows that no zero or accession dating concept was extant at that time.

Since accession or postdating is so very improbable we must attempt to resolve *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*[[3]](#endnote-3) employing only simple counting methods.

***Text Criticism***

Sadly, Dr. Thiele[[4]](#endnote-4) exhibits a very jaundiced attitude toward the Septuagint, or anything else that is not Masoretic Text (MT or M) or Textus Receptus (TR) or King James Version (KJV). This cannot be a scientifically neutral point of view since it sweeps aside mountains of evidence with one lonely presupposition: specifically, anything not MT, TR, or KJV must be corrupt.

**What’s at stake here?**

The Septuagint (LXX) is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament completed no later than 50 BC,[[5]](#endnote-5) exclusively by Jews for Jewish worship, in large part because: a. Greek was now the legally official language of Israel; and b. Greek was the everyday language that most Israelites spoke. It is a myth to claim that Aramaic remained as the first language of the Israelites. The existence of the Septuagint in widespread use, points to Greek. The New Testament points to Greek. As such, the Septuagint is the witness to the oldest Hebrew prototype. The Septuagint is evidently the document from which Christ and the Apostles preached: hence the Septuagint authority and witness cannot simply be replaced by newly found ancient documents.[[6]](#endnote-6)

The Vulgate is a Latin translation of the Hebrew Old Testament completed in the late fourth century by Saint Jerome. As such, the Vulgate is the witness to the second oldest Hebrew prototype. We could argue that Symmachus influenced Jerome; indeed we are simplifying a complex field to make an important point; there may well be other witnesses that we have bypassed. Nevertheless, Jerome is a dominant witness, and his work is based on a very old Hebrew prototype.[[7]](#endnote-7)

The Masoretic Text is a collection and evaluation of late Hebrew manuscripts in attempt to standardize the Hebrew Scripture to some extent.[[8]](#endnote-8) However, the Masoretic Text is based on a relatively modern prototype. Not only is it the latest player in the game, but is also exhibits a deliberate removal of several books from the Old Testament on the grounds that they are not canonical: this effort may have begun as early as 70 AD, but that is far from certain. It is fair to ask what canonical authority the Masoretes have; since they have no temple, Ark, Ephod, Urim, or Thummim? Nor is the Shəkinah present among them.

The point is that, of all the Hebrew prototypes we might find on this earth, the Septuagint is by far the oldest, and as such, deserves at least an equal hearing. Moreover, because it is by centuries the oldest witness, it stands an excellent statistical chance of being the best witness.

Thiele references a mere twelve verses in his final evaluation of the Septuagint. Even these are not his own: he is dependent on the prior study of Burney for his information.[[9]](#endnote-9)

Consequently, we conducted our own study hoping that it might form the basis for a more thorough and complete analysis. We make no pretense to being text scholars, nor do we have access to the library resources for such work.

In our study we are deeply indebted to the following sources for information.

* <http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/default.asp>
for the liturgical text of the Greek Orthodox Church, for Brenton, and for a feel for the “Larger Cambridge Septuagint” text studies, which we hope lie behind Brenton.
* <http://qbible.com/brenton-septuagint/1-kings/14.html>
for clarification and confirmation of Brenton whenever necessary.
* <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
for the King James Version (KJV) and other English studies which depend on the MT, for Biblia Sacra Vulgata (VULGATE), and for The Westminster Leningrad Codex (WLC).
* <http://www.newadvent.org/bible/gen001.htm>
for additional clarification and insights into the Greek and Latin text.
* Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (WBS, Stuttgart, 1935: Vol I, 1184 pages; Vol II, 941 pages) for a feel for the “Larger Göttingen Septuagint” text studies which we hope lie behind Stuttgart.
* Taylor, Bernard A., *Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*: Expanded Edition (Hendrickson, Peabody, MA, 2009: 591 pages) for Greek lexical support.
* Davidson, Benjamin, *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1970: 784 pages) for Hebrew lexical support.

**Our Method**

We began by collecting relevant verses. We started with the list provided in James F. Scott’s “Scripture Index.”[[10]](#endnote-10) To this copious list we added verses from these same Bible books listed by Scott, verses which contained the word, year, in association with a number from the King James Version (KJV). We used the KJV because it avoids any copyright issues; it is easily subjected to a computer search for the word, year; you can also read it easily to get the broader picture; and it seems to be Thiele’s starting point. Finally, we added any verses that seemed to have chronological importance or other interest, which verses were discovered by any other available means. The result was a table of 852 verses or sets of verses, two of which are from Luke: 850 potential specimens from the Old Testament and thirteen different books in our total collection.

Since we do not have access to good critical editions[[11]](#endnote-11) such as the “Larger Cambridge Septuagint” or “Larger Göttingen Septuagint” we fashioned a crude substitute. Data was entered into our 850 row table; the columns contain: A. the list of verses; B. the KJV[[12]](#endnote-12) numerical evidence, later replaced by MT; C. the Elpenor[[13]](#endnote-13) study of LXX; D. a German[[14]](#endnote-14) study of LXX; E. Brenton’s[[15]](#endnote-15) study of LXX; and F. Vulgate[[16]](#endnote-16).[[17]](#endnote-17) When a verse contained more than one number, each number was placed in its own row (for example: 1 S 13:1 a, 1 S 13:1 b). By this simple tactic we hope to at least get a practical feel, a grasp of the scope of the problem; what might be involved in a real scientific study; and possibly even generate enough interest among young people who will become capable of doing the work properly.

Compiling this table proved to be a greater task than at first imagined. Especially in Jeremiah, whole chapters have been moved from their original positions. So, we developed a matrix, with the help of Elpenor[[18]](#endnote-18), which would cross link every Septuagint, Vulgate, and Masoretic text to the same KJV base. Other books exhibited the same problem, but not to the extent of Jeremiah. Sometimes, it seemed as if the ancient scribes had carelessly dumped puzzle pieces on the floor and swept them up in any random order: one puzzle eventually being assembled in one order, and another assembled according to a completely different plan. We may not have been the first to unscramble this tangled mess; still God blessed us with a large measure of success. One might expect that this confusion might result in a very uncertain and unreliable outcome, yet such is not the case.

Our next step is to remove all those verses which have no numerical evidence whatsoever. Thiele has a tendency to chase evidence which is not relevant to the topic of chronology.

**Our Findings**

Of the total of 850 Old Testament specimens examined, 486 specimens remain after removing all specimens that contain no numerical data, or that simply do not exist[[19]](#endnote-19) in Scripture. Still, not all numerical data was referenced: we simply did not see the need to track all seemingly trivial numbers (for example: how many Levites were over 20 years of age). Even so, quite a few of these seemingly trivial numbers were examined, especially where they exposed an alleged defect. The numbers which have no chronological importance form a sort of statistical control group: they give us a feel for how various scribes handle numbers.

Of the 486 numerical specimens, all were examined with two computer routines. The first routine ran an if-test comparing maximum row values to minimum row values and reported any numerical divergence of any kind. The second routine ran an if-test counting missing data. Both of these test results were counted using a numerical count routine. Finally, these numbers were used to calculate a percent of divergence from the 486 numerical total. We discovered that 7%, 32 of the specimens examined contained some numerical divergence, while another 14%, 68 had missing data. So, in all we have a 79% assurance that the numerical data in the thirteen books examined is absolutely rock solid: there is absolutely no divergence involved; whether you chose a Greek, Latin, or Masoretic source to represent a prototypical Hebrew document, the same result occurs. We believe that this, in and of itself, seems rather amazing, considering the age, and time span covered by the supporting documents. Of course, this is merely our opinion, since we have no control groups with which to draw comparison (for example: chronological divergence in Assyrian annals, or in Shakespeare).

Now we will conduct a visual inspection of all 486 specimens looking for other divergences manually. At the same time we will manually examine each of the 100 computer discovered divergences. We will also trace and replace the KJV evidence for divergent verses back to the MT: the M column for detailed studies is now MT, rather than KJV. In each case we will attempt to provide a report, and propose an explanation.

**Our Details**

1 Samuel 4:15 KJV, “Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.”[[20]](#endnote-20)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B[[21]](#endnote-21) | V |
| 1 S 4:15 a | 98  | 90  | 90  | 90  | 98  |

A word about table presentations.[[22]](#endnote-22)

The point of the narrative appears to be that Eli is very old, in his nineties. Thus the difference between 90 and 98 seems unimportant, and to detract from the narrative. It appears as if a later scribe was unnecessarily perfectionistic, and moved with unwarranted compulsion, added the unnecessary detail to the verse. Such addition always runs the risk of being wrong. Ninety carries the point adequately all by itself. Numbers of this type are almost always reported in the format of 90 years and 8 years, or 8 years and 90 years: so it is easy to drop a number or equally to add a number. The case cannot be proved absolutely; yet, we don’t believe it matters. It has no evident bearing on chronology. Still, addition appears to be much more probable than deletion. Few scribes would be willing to delete extant evidence; on the other hand, a marginal note may be easily incorporated.

1 Samuel 4:18 KJV, “And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 S 4:18 a | 40  | 20  | 20  | 20  | 40  |

Again, the correct number is difficult to detect: 40 seems unlikely considering the quality of Eli’s service (he is replaced by Samuel); 20 seems unlikely considering Eli’s great age. Chronologically, neither number appears to make any difference. Eli dies in disgrace, and his numbers are detached from other chronological data. Had Eli lived and died with honor, his numbers would most likely be connected to the chronological sequence. This is a period of great turmoil in Israel so nothing much is stable other than the fact that the Ark has gone on vacation.

1 Samuel 13:1 KJV, “Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,”[[23]](#endnote-23)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage[[24]](#endnote-24) | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 S 13:1 a | a  | --- | --- | --- | 1  |
| 1 S 13:1 b | 2  | --- | --- | --- | 2  |

The evidence is so patently fabricated that it provides strong evidence that scribes were all too willing to add to Scripture. It seems that this verse never existed as part of Scripture. The scribe, attempting to provide “missing” information, botched the job. Credible numbers for Saul must be taken from the New Testament. Even so, Saul is also discredited and disgraced, so his numbers do not connect with any chronological sequence. Both 1 Samuel 13:1 a and b exhibit the common pattern with no match found.

1 Samuel 27:7 KJV, “And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.”

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 S 27:7 a | 1???  | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 S 27:7 b | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  |

M has the idiom, days and four months, without any mention of years, which would commonly be construed as meaning four full months.[[25]](#endnote-25) Here M is not even supported by V. Moreover, the expected idiom for a full year would be a year of days, which is missing. Again, a scribe has been caught tampering with the evidence. There is very little evidence that David spent more than 4 months among the Philistines. There is no real divergence here, except that of English translations.

2 Samuel 15:7 KJV, “And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron.”[[26]](#endnote-26)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 2 S 15:7 a | 40  | 40  | 40  | 40  | 4  |

The question is, what does 40 mean? It cannot mean David’s 40th year in office: for he only served 40 years in office, and that leaves no time for Absalom’s rebellion to take place. It cannot mean Absalom’s age: for that would also place the date close to David’s death.[[27]](#endnote-27) It could be David’s age, which would be ten years into David’s reign: yet, this makes Absalom too young to father a child or avenge a rape; besides, the text does not say this. So, it is very easy to sympathize with V’s desire to correct the error. On the other hand the difference between arba’ah (4) and arba’im (40) is extremely slight: V may very well preserve the correct reading. We are presented with an unsolvable riddle.

2 Samuel 24:13 KJV, “So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days’ pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.”

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 2 S 24:13 a | 7  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 7  |
| 2 S 24:13 b | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  |
| 2 S 24:13 c | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  |

However, 1 Chronicles 21:11-12 addresses the same situation without any divergence.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 C 21:12 a | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  |
| 1 C 21:12 b | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  |
| 1 C 21:12 c | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  | 3  |

We are left with the conclusion that the 7 in M is defective and the Hebrew prototype does have 3 & 3 & 3 without any divergence.

1 Kings 2:39 KJV, “And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 2:39 a | 3  | --- | 3  | 3  | 3  |
| 1 K 2:39 b | 2  | --- | 2  | 2  | --- |

It seems likely that the text for E was lost; that 3 & 2 are good numbers; yet, the actual number of slaves is in slight doubt, because of V.

1 Kings 5:11 KJV (1 Kings 5:25 in Greek and M), “And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.”

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 5:11 a | 20,000  | 20,000  | 20,000  | 20,000  | 20,000  |
| 1 K 5:11 b | 20  | 20,000  | 20,000  | 20,000  | 20  |

These numbers may well be identical: M has 20 kors, E and G have 20,000 baths, and V has 20 choros: 1 kor may be 1,000 baths in liquid measurement, we are not certain. The text deserves the benefit of the doubt. We have no idea where the KJV 1 Kings 5:11 verse numbering came from, perhaps V.

1 Kings 6:1 KJV, “And 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 Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 6:1 a | 480  | 440  | 440  | 440  | 480  |
| 1 K 6:1 b | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  | 4  |
| 1 K 6:1 c | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  |
| 1 K 6:1 d | 1 K 6:37 | 4  | 4  | 4  | 1 K 6:37 |
| 1 K 6:1 e | 1 K 6:37 | 2  | 2  | 2  | 1 K 6:37 |
| 1 K 6:1 f | 1 K 6:38 | 11  | 11  | 11  | 1 K 6:38 |
| 1 K 6:1 g | 1 K 6:38 | 8  | 8  | 8  | 1 K 6:38 |

1 Kings 6:1 Brenton, “And it came to pass in the four hundred and fortieth year after the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, in the fourth year and second month of the reign of king Solomon over Israel, that the king commanded that they should take great [and] costly stones for the foundation of the house, and hewn stones. And the men of Solomon, and the men of Chiram hewed [the stones], and laid them [for a foundation]. In the fourth year he laid the foundation of the house of the Lord, in the month Ziu, even in the second month. In the eleventh year, in the month Baal, this [is] the eighth month, the house was completed according to all its plan, and according to all its arrangement.”

There is only one significant divergence here: is the correct number 480 or 440? Since this is an extremely important chronological number, we have given it full and careful consideration elsewhere. Our final conclusion is that 440 is correct because it makes a near perfect match with Egyptian chronology possible. The first 4 & 2 do not diverge at all. The remaining four numbers only appear to diverge because M has relocated them at 1 Kings 6:37 and 38. Thus four apparent divergences do not exist here; four other divergences at 1 Kings 6:37 and 38 do not exist either. Neither E nor G can possibly be the source of these verse dislocations.

1 Kings 6:37 KJV, “In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the Lord laid, in the month Zif (2nd).”

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 6:37 a | 4  | 1 K 6:1 | 1 K 6:1 | 1 K 6:1 | 4  |
| 1 K 6:37 b | Zif  | 1 K 6:1 | 1 K 6:1 | 1 K 6:1 | Zio  |

This is the same problem we solved at 1 Kings 6:1: there is no divergence.

1 Kings 6:38 KJV, “And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.”

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 6:38 a | 11  | 1 K 6:1 f | 1 K 6:1 f | 1 K 6:1 f | 11  |
| 1 K 6:38 b | 8  | 1 K 6:1 g | 1 K 6:1 g | 1 K 6:1 g | 8  |
| 1 K 6:38 c | 7  | --- | --- | --- | 7  |

This is the same problem we solved at 1 Kings 6:1: there is no divergence until we reach row 1 Kings 6:38 c. Verse 6:38 does not exist in Greek and no corresponding match was found. This pattern will be repeated several times; we will suggest that it has a common cause. 1 Kings 6:38 c shows the common pattern with no match found.

1 Kings 7:1 KJV, “But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.”

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 7:1 a | 13  | 1 K 7:38 | 1 K 7:38 | 1 K 7:38 | 13  |

1 Kings 7:38 Brenton, “And Solomon built a house for himself in thirteen years.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 7:38 a | 1 K 7:1 | 13  | 13  | 13  | 1 K 7:1 |

Two more cases where there is no divergence, only relocated verses, when 7:1 and 7:38 are seen as the same verse.

1 Kings 8:1 KJV, “Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion.” No data was found in KJV. However,

1 Kings 8:1 Brenton, “And it came to pass when Solomon had finished building the house of the Lord and his own house after twenty years, then king Solomon assembled all the elders of Israel in Sion, to bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, this is Sion.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 8:1 a | --- | 20  | 20  | 20  | --- |

No corresponding match was found for the missing information.

1 Kings 8:2 KJV, “And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 8:2 a | 7  | Athanin | Athanin | Athanin | 7  |

While the numeral 7 is not repeated, the word Athanin is present. Since Athanin is the 7th month, repetition of the numeral is redundant. This is a case of apparent defect where no real defect is found.

1 Kings 9:25 KJV, “And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the Lord, and he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the Lord. So he finished the house.”

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 9:25 a | 3  | --- | --- | --- | 3  |

Verses 9:15-25 do not exist in the Septuagint. This is another instance where a scribe appears to have added irrelevant notes to Scripture. This seems to be a weak attempt to defend Solomon against the charge of idolatry. This is the same pattern we called attention to previously.

1 Kings 10:14 KJV, “Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold,”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 10:14 a | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |
| 1 K 10:14 b | 666  | 666  | 666  | 666  | 666  |

This is just an interesting sidetrack verse in that it shows 666 as a focus on gold and wealth, rather than on worship and wisdom. We threw it in as an item of interest for prophecy buffs. It has no divergence.

1 Kings 14:20 KJV, “And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K14:20 a | 22  | --- | --- | --- | 22  |

The common pattern with no match found except in notes.

1 Kings 15:2 KJV, “Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. and his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 15:2 a | 3  | 3  | 6  | 3  | 3  |

Both numbers may be correct. G may include a 3-year coregency. We will need more evidence from the chronological sequence. If coregency is not possible, then the Septuagint witness is uncertain and 3 is more likely correct.

1 Kings 15:9 KJV, “And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 15:9 a | 20  | 24  | 24  | 24  | 20  |

Again, we will need more evidence from the chronological sequence. If 6 is correct in 1 Kings 15:2; then 24 is most likely correct here. Since 1 Kings 15:2 and 1 Kings 15:9 appear to be integrally linked; the consistent witness to 24 in Septuagint, seems to favor 6 at 1 Kings 15:2. This would mean that E contains the potential error.

1 Kings 16:8 KJV, “In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 16:8 a | 26  | --- | --- | --- | 26  |
| 1 K 16:8 b | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 2  |

1 Kings 16:8 a sows the common pattern with no match found.

1 Kings 16:10 KJV, “And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 16:10 a | 27  | --- | --- | --- | 27  |

The common pattern with no match found.

1 Kings 16:15 KJV, “In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 16:15 a | 27  | --- | --- | --- | 27  |
| 1 K 16:15 b | 7  | 7  | 7  | 7  | 7  |

1 Kings 16:15 a shows the common pattern with no match found.

1 Kings 16:21 KJV, “Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 16:21 a | halves  | divides | divides | divides | 2  |
| 1 K 16:21 b |  1/2 |  1/2 |  1/2 |  1/2 |  1/2 |
| 1 K 16:21 c |  1/2 |  1/2 |  1/2 |  1/2 |  1/2 |

M has divided into halves. Greek has the word, divides, alone, instead of divided in 2 parts (V). We believe that 2 parts was an unnecessary redundancy in the time of the Hebrew prototype.

1 Kings 16:29 KJV, “And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 16:29 a | 38  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 38  |
| 1 K 16:29 b | 22  | 22  | 22  | 22  | 22  |

Here is another number that will require evaluation of the chronological sequence for final determination. 1 Kings 16:29 Brenton, “In the second year of Josaphat king of Juda, Achaab son of Ambri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years.” It is entirely possible that the 38th year of Asa is the same as the 2nd year of Josaphat.

1 Kings 20:15, “Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty-two: and after them he numbered all the people, even all the children of Israel, being seven thousand.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 20:15 a | 232 | --- | --- | --- | 232 |
| 1 K 20:15 b | 7,000 | --- | --- | --- | 7,000 |
| 3 K 21:15 a | --- | 230 | 230 | 230 | --- |
| 3 K 21:15 b | --- | 7,000 | 60,000 | 7,000 | --- |

This verse especially interesting because of the disagreement over 60,000 supported by Vaticanus; while 7,000 is supported by Origen. We expected E to follow G rather than Origen; yet it does not. New Advent has 60,000 in the parallel Greek text; but 7,000 in English and Latin. Brenton has 7,000; yet, Brenton seems easily swayed by M. The Orthodox Church site also has 7,000. We hardly know what to make of this difference. The more reasonable figure is 60,000; the oldest manuscript support seems to be 60,000; yet, 7,000 seems to be more widely supported. Figure?

1 Kings 22:51 KJV, “Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 22:51 a | 1 K 22:52 | 1 K 22:52 | 1 K 22:52 | 17  | 1 K 22:52 |
| 1 K 22:51 b | 1 K 22:52 | 1 K 22:52 | 1 K 22:52 | 2  | 1 K 22:52 |

1 Kings 22:52 E translated, “And Ochozias son of Achaab reigned over Israel in Samaria: in the seventeenth year of Josaphat king of Juda, Ochozias son of Achaab reigned over Israel in Samaria two years.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 1 K 22:52 a | 17  | 17  | 17  | 1 K 22:51 | 17  |
| 1 K 22:52 b | 2  | 2  | 2  | 1 K 22:51 | 2  |

Here again 1 Kings 22:51 and 52 reconcile each other without divergence. The verses are simply numbered differently by one verse.

2 Kings 1:17 KJV, “So he died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 2 K 1:17 a | 2  | --- | --- | --- | 2  |

The common pattern with no match found.

2 Kings 1:18 Brenton, “… Joram son of Achaab reigns over Israel in Samaria twelve years [beginning] in the eighteenth year of Josaphat king of Juda….”[[28]](#endnote-28)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 2 K 1:18 a | 2 K 3:1 | 12  | 12  | 12  | 2 K 3:1 |
| 2 K 1:18 b | 2 K 3:1 | 18  | 18  | 18  | 2 K 3:1 |

2 Kings 3:1 KJV, “Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 2 K 3:1 a | 18  | 18  | 18  | 18  | 18  |
| 2 K 3:1 b | 12  | 12  | 12  | 12  | 12  |

While 2 Kings 1:18 Greek and 2 Kings 3:1 do reconcile each other, there is an unexplained duplication. The numerical order is also reversed; which creates a chiasm between the two verses.

2 Kings 8:2 KJV, “And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 2 K 8:2 a | 7  | 7  | 7  | 7  | --- |

The 7 is found in both the preceding and succeeding verses. The Latin economy and efficiency of words, most likely could not tolerate the triple repetition. The meaning is not changed, so little real divergence exists.

2 Kings 14:17 KJV, “And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 2 K 14:17 a | 15  | 15  | 15  | 15  | 25  |

The problem is a simple error in V. Perhaps a scribe had confused “viginti quinque annis” with “viginti de quinque annis” or “quinquede-viginti annis.”

2 Kings 15:13 KJV, “Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 2 K 15:13 a | 39  | 39  | 39  | 39  | 39  |
| 2 K 15:13 b | a  | --- | --- | a  | 1  |

Only V has the actual numeral. KJV and B suffice with the indefinite article substitution for the numeral which is common enough in English. Greek has no indefinite article, so the absence of any other specification may substitute for one. M, E, and G all use the expression month of days: so it is difficult to understand this expression as meaning anything other than a 29.5 day synodic month. Thus the expressions are equivalent and no divergence exists.

2 Kings 15:25 KJV, “But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieh, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 2 K 15:25 a | 50  | 50  | 50  | 50  | 50  |
| 2 K 15:25 b | Gileadites | 400  | 400  | 400  | Gileadites |

It appears that the Greeks may have taken the term, Gileadites, to signify a military unit of 400 men, a battalion. This may be correct. Gileadites may possibly indicate people from Gilead or a battalion. Alternately, Gileadites may indicate the name of a specific battalion, The Gileadites, the 101st. The justification for such a change from the Hebrew prototype would be that Gileadites had lost any common meaning among the populace. Septuagint simply chose the most sensible substitute. This could be a divergence, but it is not necessarily a divergence. 400 is also older than Gileadites, and may be correct.

2 Kings 22:3 Brenton, “And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josias, in the eighth month, the king sent Sapphan the son of Ezelias the son of Mesollam, the scribe of the house of the Lord, saying,”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 2 K 22:3 a | 18  | 18  | 18  | 18  | 18  |
| 2 K 22:3 b | --- | 8  | 8  | 8  | --- |

The 8th month appears to be a true divergence; yet, it does not seem to have any chronological impact.

2 Kings 25:1 KJV, “And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 2 K 25:1 a | 9  | 9  | 9  | 9  | 9  |
| 2 K 25:1 b | 10  | 10  | 10  | 10  | 10  |
| 2 K 25:1 c | 10  | --- | --- | --- | 10  |

2 Kings 25:1 c shows the common pattern with no match found.

2 Kings 25:2 Brenton, “And the city was besieged until the eleventh year of king Sedekias on the ninth day of the month.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 2 K 25:2 a | 11  | 11  | 11  | 11  | 11  |
| 2 K 25:2 b | 2 K 25:3 | 9  | 2 K 25:3 | 9  | 2 K 25:3 |

2 Kings 25:3 KJV, “And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.”

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Passage | M | E | G | B | V |
| 2 K 25:3 a | 9  | 2 K 25:2 | 9  | 2 K 25:2 | 9  |
| 2 K 25:3 b | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

Even though 2 Kings 25:2 and 3 reconcile each other, a new problem is introduced. Ordinarily, we would expect the expression “on the ninth day of the month” to mean specifically the first month. M does not have 4, so this is a KJV invention of unknown source: if a blunder, it is a widely copied one.

[[29]](#endnote-29)

1. Readers should understand that none of these are standardized single editions. Each name LXX, MT, Vulgate represents a large collection of manuscripts; in some cases, manuscript families; in other cases, the manuscript evidence available around 1000 AD has deteriorated into dust. There is no one single answer. In some cases there may be hundreds, even thousands of answers: sorting this information is no small task. At least two major universities are devoted to LXX studies. The work of the Masoretes covered centuries. We blame the Vulgate on the single work of Jerome; who knows what energies the Roman Catholic Church has applied to such studies, down through the years. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The year I first became a devoted serious Christian disciple. I had been baptized in 1937. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Thiele, Edwin R., (Kregel, Grand Rapids, 1983: 253 pages) [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. ibid [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. I simply proposed a date that was so late in time it would be impossible to attack. This is a bit like saying that WWII was over by 1975: yes, and a good while earlier too. A serious Septuagint expert would defend much earlier dates for Septuagint completion, and with far greater detail: for example, Beckwith, Roger T., *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church* (Wipf & Stock, Eugene, OR, 1985: 528 pages) [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic_Text> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Thiele, page 209. Burney, C. F., *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903) pages xli ff [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Thiele, page 249 ff. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/ioscs/editions.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Kings%201&version=KJV> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. <http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/default.asp> [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (WBS, Stuttgart, 1935: Vol I, 1184 pages; Vol II, 941 pages) [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. <http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/default.asp>

<http://qbible.com/brenton-septuagint/1-kings/14.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+1&version=VULGATE> [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Why are three columns devoted to the Septuagint while only one each is devoted to MT and V? Both MT and V are easily found in widely accepted authoritative versions; for example:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+1&version=WLC>

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+1&version=VULGATE>

No such authoritative version of Septuagint exists. When I began such studies around 1975 two major centers of Septuagint studies were in existence, one in England and the other in Germany. These two divided the work between them, several books coming from each source: a complete critical edition of the Greek Old Testament was completely out of reach for even the wealthiest student; besides, which of us could read it, we had other priorities. Since that time the computer age and internet have exploded upon us. Yes, I know, it is hard to imagine, in 1975 we still read books printed on paper, there were no personal computers, no internet commonly available, these things were just springing to life in rudimentary form. I bought my first personal computer, a TI99 4A, around 1985, there was still no internet available to me. Now Elpenor appears to be the next big thing in Septuagint studies with the promise of an Orthodox Church lexical copy. One cannot simply go to the internet and start Septuagint studies; one must patch together as best one may. We hope that Brenton’s work expresses some insight into the English Septuagint studies; that Rahlfs is faithful to the German work; and that Elpenor will give us fresh insight into older Greek practices. Both Brenton and liturgical information come from Elpenor:

<http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/default.asp>

Thus our humble three columns devoted to the Septuagint are a grasp to get one good idea of what the Septuagint really says; which is not so easily accomplished, having required the best minds of two major study centers as well as the best minds of the Orthodox Church. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. <http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/default.asp> [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Verses falsely referenced in the Scott “Scripture Index” that could not be found. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Interestingly, the Greek and Hebrew idiom appear to be the same: both use the formula that X was a son of N years. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. We hasten to point out that we have no way of tracking the source for Brenton’s study, so Brenton is only useful as a control on the English study (E). Even here, Brenton’s work, though truly monumental in his day, contains enough translation errors to need correction. In no way can Brenton be considered to have the weight of a source. The only sources of which we are aware are Septuagint: the Cambridge studies, the Göttingen studies, and the liturgical text used by the Greek Orthodox Church for millennia; Vulgate: Roman Catholic Church source documents; Masoretic Text: surviving manuscripts. We are merely using contrived devices to get a feel for the scope and impact of these sources, which are not directly available to us.

Note that the Dead Sea Scrolls cannot be considered as a witness to M: rather they are a witness to that Hebrew prototype from their own age. Since there is no evidence that they were active in temple use or by Christ or the Apostles, they bear minimal weight other than artefactual curiosities. They bear direct evidence of use in their specific communities only. Proof that such use extended outside that specific community is harder to come by. We ought not get too excited over recent finds: for we already have an excellent grasp of the Scripture in use in places of authority. Christ and the Apostles, as well as a majority of the common people used the Septuagint. Highly educated people such as the Jerusalem scribes of the Pharisees and Sadducees had some knowledge of Aramaic and a late form of Hebrew. Galilean peasants retained a bare salting, a sprinkling of the old words. Nobody in 4 BC had any grasp of Hebrew as Moses knew it: they were a full millennia removed from the reality of Moses. By 516 Hebrew was already a dead language, replaced by Aramaic: scribes, scholars had to translate the Hebrew into Aramaic for the popular understanding. After Alexander, Greek would begin to replace Aramaic. Since the Roman nobility preferred Greek to Latin, Latin would not come into play until Church outreach extended to the Roman peasantry well into the late first and early second century. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Table data presentations are always in the order: KJV/MT (M), Elpenor study (E), German study (G), Brenton’s study (B), Vulgate (V). Since the order of reporting statistics is always the same, we will henceforth abbreviate our table headings (M, E, G, B, and V) to make reading less tedious. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. MT, literally reads, “Saul was a son of 1 year (1 year old) and he reigned for 2 years over Israel.” [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. This verse does not exist in Greek. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. See 1 Kings 14:20 for a similar construction. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Literally, “after 40 years had ended.” [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. David lived from age 30 to 70. Prior to 30 he had little time for family life, because Saul made him a hunted man. If Absalom was born between David’s 20th and 30th years, David would be between 60 and 70 when Absalom’s rebellion began. This does not appear to be enough time to complete the remaining events of David’s life. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. 2 Kings 1:18 is considerably longer in Greek. This is the part of 2 Kings 1:18 labeled 18α. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. If you have been blessed or helped by any of these meditations, please repost, share, or use any of them as you wish. No rights are reserved. They are designed and intended for your free participation. They were freely received, and are freely given. No other permission is required for their use. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)