



# The Caller

A Weekly Newsletter of the Elizabethtown church of Christ

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## Confidence Corner

In this week's *Caller*, we will once again use the inside space of the bulletin to finish what we start here in *Confidence Corner*. I do not plan to use this format past this week. But due

to the fact that this article will address what I briefly mentioned in the Wednesday Bible Study, I need more space than the main inside article and/or *Confidence Corner* allots.

I want to consider some thoughts regarding the chronology of the Hebrew kings. I mentioned last week in Wednesday Bible Study that I would not take the time to discuss this detailed topic in class I had done before. Since some have shown interest I thought I would write a brief article.

I guess I first ran across this topic when as a young preacher I had gone to a book sale at the Ohio Valley College Library. I was picking up a number of books that looked very good to me, but because I was a young preacher and uninformed regarding books, I was not certain if I had obtained good deals. I knew at worst, I had picked up some books for .50 cents (some even at .25 cents)—they would surely be worth that small amount. Needless to say, I ended up with a number of outstanding books (The Heart of Hebrew History, The Heart of the New Testament, etc). One of those books I picked up that day was Edwin R. Thiele: *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. It was on this occasion that as a new Christian and preacher, I had first really heard about the chronology problem of the Hebrew kings; Thiele's book was the beginning of a very fascinating study regarding this topic.

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1. Teach or assist a Bible Class.
2. Send a card or make a call
3. Invite someone over to your house.
4. Prepare a meal for someone in need.
5. Visit those that have been gone from services.
6. Introduce yourself and greet a visitor.
7. Take a free Bible Correspondence Course.
8. Answer the Bible Question in the bulletin.
9. Invite someone to service.
10. Go door knocking for special events.
11. Have a personal Bible Study.
12. Be a part of the Quilting Outreach program.
13. Assist in the Jail Ministry.
14. Drive the bus and pick up people for services.
15. Host a Youth Devotional.
16. Set-up and Clean-up for Potlucks.
17. Hand out announcement sheets before services.
18. Be a CSG Leader for one quarter.
19. Decorate the bulletin boards.
20. Visit those in the hospital or nursing home.
21. Serve on the Lord's table.
22. Plan an activity for your CSG group.

The list is endless.....

### **Sunday's Sermons:**

**A.M. — What Would You Ask God?**

**Ecc 12:13-14**

**P. M. — America America**

**Daniel 2:19-23**

The chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah rests primarily on a series of reign lengths and cross-references within the books of Kings and Chronicles. The accession of each king is dated in terms of the reign of his contemporary in either the southern Kingdom of Judah or the northern Kingdom of Israel. Also, the attempt at fitting them into the chronology of other ancient civilizations causes problems for some.

For example, some of the biblical cross-references did not seem to match, so that a reign that is said to have lasted for 20 years results in a cross-reference that would give a result of either 19 or 21 years. Thiele noticed that the cross-references given during the long reign of King Asa of Judah had a cumulative error of 1 year for each succeeding reign of the kings of Israel. He explained this pattern as a result of two different methods of reckoning regnal years: the *accession year* method in one and the *non-accession year* method in the other. Under the accession year method, if a king died in the middle of a year, the period to the end of that year would be called the "accession year" and Year 1 of the new king's reign would begin at the new year. Under the non-accession year method, the period to the end of the year would be Year 1 of the new king and Year 2 would begin at the start of the new year. Israel appears to have used the non-accession method, while Judah used the accession method until Athaliah seized power in Judah when Israel's non-accession method appears to have been adopted in Judah.

Thiele also thought that Israel counted years using a method where the new year started in the spring month of Nisan, while Judah counted years using another method that began counting in the autumn month of Tishrei. These factors seem to explain many of the apparent inconsistencies in the cross-references. Though Thiele did not know it at the time, a scholar from Belgium some years before had also come to this same conclusion.

Based on his conclusions, Thiele showed that the 14 years between Ahab and Jehu were really 12 years. He was then able to date the reigns more exactly and allowed information that lined up with the information in two records of the ANE (Ahab is mentioned in the Kurk Stele and Jehu is mentioned on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III). These two events are dated by Assyrian chronology as being 12 years apart, Ahab must have fought the Assyrians in his last year and Jehu paid tribute in his first year.

Thiele actually conceded a mistake when there does not appear there was one in trying to reconcile the Biblical chronological data from the books of Kings and Chronicles between Hoshea of Israel and Hezekiah of Judah. Oddly, it is at that precise point that he himself makes a mistake, by failing to realize that Hezekiah had a co-regency with his father Ahaz, which explains the Hoshea/Hezekiah synchronisms.

John F Board

Elizabethtown, KY