

The Times of the Judges — A Chronology

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WHY A CHRONOLOGY OF THE JUDGES?

The period of the Judges may not at first seem highly relevant to the question of creation or evolution, yet it has a crucial part to play. Let me explain it. In 'Ex Nihilo', vol. 4(1), 1981, pp 10-13, the case for Biblical evidence for dating Noah's Flood was argued, and the following significant dates were arrived at: —

- (1) 2304 BC for the Flood.
- (2) 1447 BC for the date of the Exodus.
- (3) 1407 BC for the date of the Conquest of Canaan by Israel.
- (4) 967 BC for the laying of the foundation of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:1).

1 Kings 6:1 mentions that the Exodus from Egypt occurred 480 years before the foundation of Solomon's temple was laid. This statement is very plain and straight forward. If we are to believe the Scriptures we should take it at face value. The date of 967 BC for the laying of the foundation of Solomon's temple is not seriously in dispute, nor is the existence of King Solomon. However, modern archaeological interpretation questions much of the Scriptural record **before** that date, particularly as we go back beyond David to the times of the Judges. The date accepted by modern archaeological interpretation for the conquest of the land of Canaan by the Israelites is 1230 BC. This is in total contradiction to the record of 1 Kings 6:1 and to the literal interpretation of the Biblical record. In order to sustain 1230 BC as the conquest date we must deny that the Scriptural records before the days of Solomon are trustworthy historical documents and call them, to lesser or greater degree, myths. Such an interpretation is absolutely and totally inconsistent with the belief that the Bible is God's inspired Word. It is inconceivable that a God of truth would put His name to a group of legends and myths from a rag-tag mob of bedouins who simply adopted these myths and gelled them into

a firm record for nationalistic purposes once Solomon had come to the throne. But this is what modern archaeology appears to be claiming. Such reasoning is even being adopted by many theological colleges of the Western World. One has only to look at one of their textbooks, "The History of Israel" by John Bright. Nor have the popular volumes available to Christians helped the situation.

The chronology argued here is firmly based upon an insistence that:

- (1) The Scriptures are the Word of God from their very beginning,
- (2) the Scriptures are legitimate historical documents from their very beginning, and
- (3) the Scriptures' chronological framework is the framework on which the history of the ancient world should be based.

The times of the Judges, which in its broadest aspect means the time from the Exodus to Solomon, spans the 480 year period claimed by 1 Kings 6:1. It is therefore a key part of the historical record of the Scriptures, against which the archaeological record should then be interpreted.

It is the first and major historical point (working backwards) at which the creationist argument on the historicity of the Bible documents diverges from the evolutionary arguments.

Thus two steps are necessary: —

- Part 1. To clarify the period of the Judges itself according to the Scriptural record, because at present there exists no satisfactory internal chronology of the times of the Judges; and
- Part 2. A reinterpretation of the archaeological data against this framework for the times of the Judges.

The first part is the subject of the following discussion.

It is my belief that the necessary keys to interpretation of the internal arrangement of the times of the Judges are all present in Scripture, but some surprises are in store.

The Bible is a book based on history, and its spiritual message is based on covenants which are legal agreements that are therefore based on actual historical facts. The New Testament message is based on an historical record, with its Gospel message being based on a legal covenant made at Calvary. **The spiritual message of the Bible can only be valid if it rests on history that is valid.** The chronology of the times of the Judges is a key piece of the evidence that shows the validity of the Scriptures and enables a reinterpretation of the archaeological data to be made.

The conclusions reached in the following discussion are: —

- (1) From the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon's reign was 480 years — no more and no less.
- (2) The historical details of the Judges fit neatly into that span of time.
- (3) The Biblical details must be taken at face value to be of any worth.
- (4) A series of dates are determined through the period of the Judges.

The following discussion elaborates on the details of these conclusion.

Part 1

PREFACE

Up to the present time, there appears to be no satisfactory internal chronology of the period in the history of Israel known as "The times of the Judges". It is hoped that this study will provide the necessary solution to understanding that difficult period.

The unsatisfactory state of the chronology for this period has only contributed further to many people's serious doubts about this period's true historicity. Yet the Bible clearly identifies it as a **significant period of considerable length**. Current archaeological and Biblical interpretation of ancient history seriously limits the length and historicity of this period. By that interpretation the conquest of Canaan is dated to 1230 BC, a figure impossible to reconcile with literal Scriptural detail. And that interpretation demands acceptance of the 'documentary' hypothesis, or J.E.D.P. theory, a higher critical view of Scripture which does not accept internal dating.

In this study it is insisted that the above theory has not been validated for it rests on speculative foundations which are inconsistent with a literal reading of Scripture. It is therefore completely rejected.

Part 1 of this study aims only to elucidate the chronology in the Biblical framework. The further step of relating that chronology to the Egyptian chronology and outside events not mentioned in the Scriptural narrative has been partly attempted by Immanuel Velikovsky in "Ages in Chaos" and by Dr Donovan Courville in "The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications" to which I warmly refer the reader. Their conclusions are **not** however necessarily mine.

All texts referred to from the Scriptures have been taken at face value as literal claims of years elapsed, as if they came from any reasonable historical source, without any attempt to read into them allegorical or 'scribal error' interpretations.

THE PROBLEM

The strict definition of the times of the Judges is found in Acts 13:9-20. It is specifically that period of time beginning at the end of the Conquest of Canaan by Israel and ending at the beginning of the rule of Samuel the prophet (see Fig. 1).

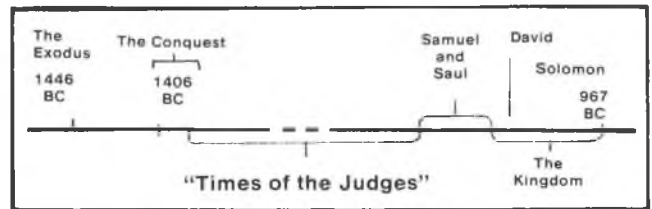


Figure 1 The strict definition of the times of the Judges

However, in this discussion my construction will relate to a wider period than this, namely, that period from the Exodus until the foundation of the Temple in the fourth year of the reign of Solomon (1 Kings 6:1) (see Fig. 2).

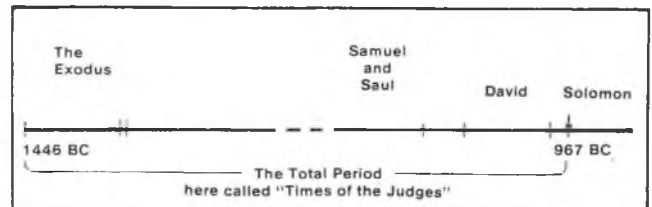


Figure 2 The definition of the times of the Judges used in this study.

Central to the controversy over the times of the Judges is 1 Kings 6:1, where it is stated: —
And it came to pass in the 480th 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.

The Long Chronology

If the periods mentioned in the Book of Judges and elsewhere in the Scriptures are added up in sequence, the times of the Judges would cover more than 480 years. This has resulted in an interpretation known as the long chronology, which assumes that the periods followed one another in a strict sequence.

In that chronological interpretation the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1 are taken as being God's rule, that is, the theocracy only. The rest of the time is interpreted as being the periods during which God looked on His people as being under judgement (which clearly they were). This does not give recognition to the other periods of time when Israel were "Lo-ammi" ("not my people" see Hosea 1:9). The discrepancy of years between the total number mentioned, added in linear fashion, and the 480 years of 1 Kings 6:1 are then recognised as the years of oppression and any correspondence of figures are then claimed as proving the case (see Fig. 3). These assertions however must be seriously questioned as unproven.

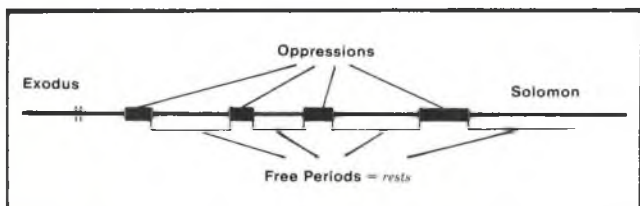


Figure 3 The long chronology (oppressions are not counted).

The Short Chronology

Another interpretation is known as the short chronology. This takes the statement in 1 Kings 6:1 as a literal scribal statement of elapsed time since the Exodus (see Fig. 4).



Figure 4 The short chronology (accepts simple elapsed time including oppressions and rests).

This view is favoured in this study for the following reasons:

- (1) It is an historical statement which should be taken at face value, there being no internal evidence to the contrary (as will be shown).

- (2) Interpreting it as anything other than an historical statement necessitates assumptions which are certainly not provable and may in fact be invalid.
- (3) The statement in 1 Kings 6:1 is typical of a statement that would be made by a scribe recording literal events (the very year and month are mentioned).
- (4) It is consistent with a literal exegesis of the Book of Kings. This verse appears to be the only chronological statement in Kings which has been interpreted in anything but a literal sense.

In this study it will be assumed that 1 Kings 6:1 should be taken at face value, that it is a literal record of the number of years elapsed since the Exodus. It will then be seen that it becomes the first key to open our understanding of the internal arrangement of the times of the Judges.

It will be shown that this premise is consistent with: —

- (1) the rest of Scripture,
- (2) the geography of the land,
- (3) the distribution of the tribes of Israel in the land, and
- (4) the details of the events.

Another controversial statement concerning the times of the Judges appears in Acts 13:20 where the King James Version implies that there were only 450 years covering the times of the Judges. However, Dr D. Courville in "The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications", vol. 1, p.9, has rightly shown that textual evidence would support the 450 years being a round figure referring to the time when Israel waited for their land by inheritance and not to their actual possession of it. The approximate 450 year period either begins with the promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:2-3) and ends with the conquest of the promised land, a total of 476 years in fact, **or** begins with the covenant of circumcision (Genesis 17) and ends with the conquest, a period of 451 years. Either one of these two possibilities is reasonable. The decision as to which does not alter the subject matter discussed here. That it is a round figure there can be no doubt, for the word 'about' in verse 20 makes this clear. It cannot therefore be claimed as an **exact** statement of elapsed time.

A more literal translation of the first few words of Acts 13:20 would be: —

and after these things (about years 450) He gave Judges until Samuel the prophet.

The 450 years therefore refers to the words 'these things' and those words correspondingly refer to all the events **prior** to the times of the Judges (see Fig. 5). This in no way tampers with the text.

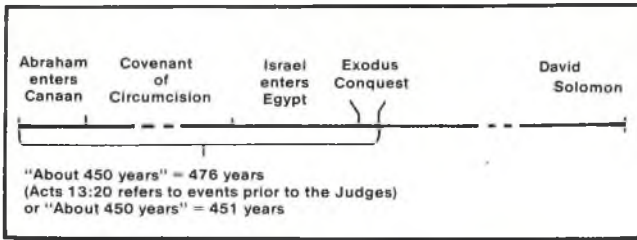


Figure 5 The 'about 450 years' of Acts 13:20.

Having accepted 1 Kings 6:1 as a record of actual elapsed time and the 450 years of Acts 13:20 as an occurrence prior to the times of the Judges, we are now able to begin to piece together the internal arrangements and arrive at final, though somewhat surprising, conclusions.

Furthermore, once it is noted that the Judges came from different parts of Israel and that the record does not say that every Judge succeeded his predecessor, the possibility immediately emerges that there could be **parallelisms** or **overlaps** in the internal arrangement. This possibility needs to be borne in mind as the subject is discussed.

In order to simplify the discussion I am going to set forth the known and stated time relationships from Scripture and arrange these in groups called periods, labelled period A, period B, period C, etc. Having arranged the Judges into periods we will then see what possibilities emerge for an arrangement of these periods relative to one another. So let us now look at these periods.

PERIOD A — JOSHUA AND JUDGES 1-3:7

Period A begins with the death of Moses which is described in Deuteronomy 34. In Joshua 1:2 God speaks to Joshua. *Arise, go over this Jordan thou and all this people unto the land which I do give to them.* The first part of period A is the actual conquest of the land (see Fig. 6). The length of this period is deduced from statements made by Caleb. In Joshua 14:7 Caleb recalls that he was 40 years old when he was sent to spy out the land, while in verse 10 he states that he is now 85 years old at the date of speaking, which was immediately after the Conquest. In the Book of Numbers, from chapter 10 onward, we find that the spies were sent into the land of Canaan in the early part of the second year after they came out of the land of Egypt. It was 40 years from the time they left Egypt until the time they crossed the Jordan, so by simple subtraction we find that a period of 6 years is occupied in conquering the land (see Fig. 7).

However, there is a second phase of period A that is often overlooked. Judges 2:7 says, *And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua.*

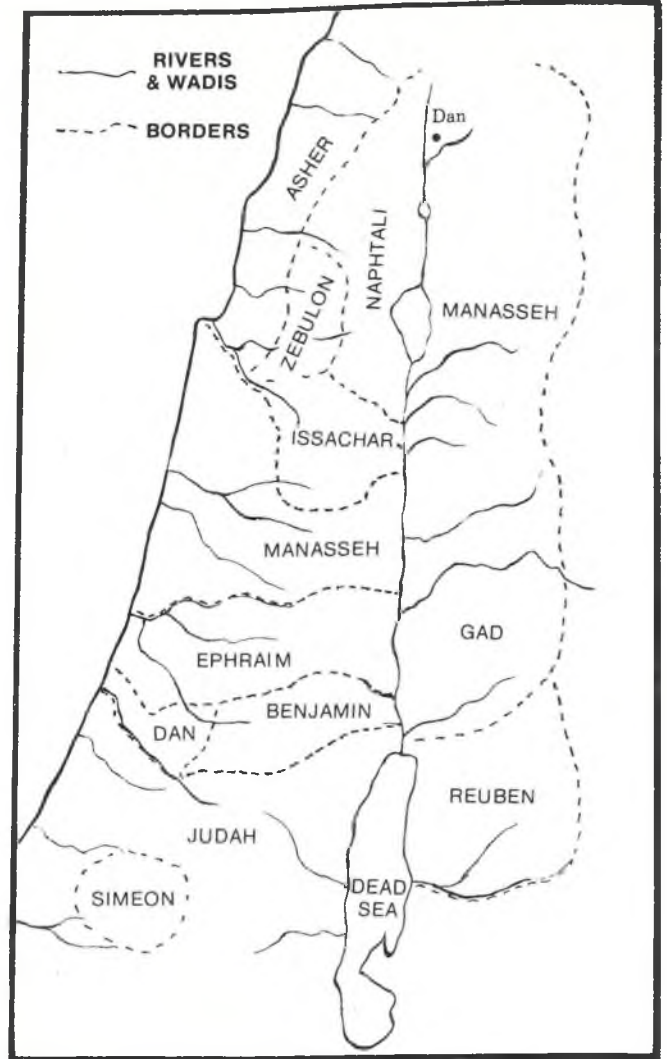


Figure 6 Settlement of the tribes of Israel in the land.

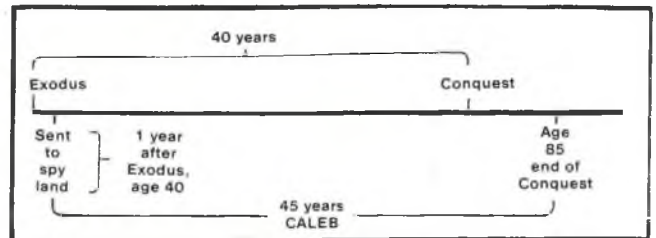


Figure 7 The life of Caleb and the length of the Conquest.

The same phrase is found in Joshua 24:31, *The elders that outlived Joshua.*

Two of these elders appear to be Caleb and Eleazar the High Priest. In Judges 1 we are told that the events of the chapter begin after the death of Joshua but we see Caleb in battle with Judah against the Canaanites. Similarly, in Joshua 24:33 after the record of Joshua's death we read, *And Eleazar the son of Aaron died.*

Now we do not know how long this period is, yet it

could have been of considerable length. Joshua 23:1 reports,

It came to pass a long time after that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old and stricken in age.

This attests an event preceding Joshua's death. Note that the Scripture claims this period was 'a long time'. In Judges 2 we are told that the first rebellion occurs **after** Joshua and all the elders have died. Thus the servitude under Chushan-Rishathaim (the beginning of period B) does not occur until **after** Joshua and all the elders died.

So we can conclude that period A is a period of 6 years 'plus', where all is spoken as "a long time". It is the period from the conquest and the settling of the land to the death of Joshua and all the elders associated with him, plus the following period until the servitude under Chushan-Rishathaim (see Fig. 8).

As to how long 'a long time' is we cannot set an exact figure, but it is instructive to look at the life of Joshua to estimate at least a part of that period.

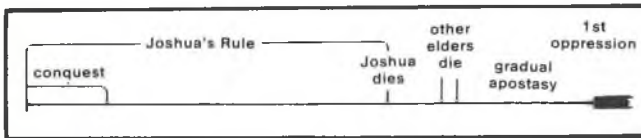


Figure 8 The times of the Judges — Period A.

We first meet this man in Exodus 17:9 where Joshua is already a commander of the army. In Exodus 24:13 he is spoken of as Moses' minister. In Exodus 33:11 he is at that time described as a 'young man'.

Now as far as I am aware, the oldest age in the Bible at which a man is described as young is at the age of 41 years. In 2 Chronicles 12:13 Rehoboam comes to the throne at the age of 41. In 2 Chronicles 13:7 Abijah his son describes Rehoboam at that age as being 'young and tenderhearted'.

Although it is beyond proof with Joshua, such an age would fit the facts.

- (1) He is described as a young man
- (2) He is supreme commander of the army.

This indicates a man of considerable experience. Now he is described as a young man in the first year of the Exodus and we then see him as described in the Book of Joshua some 40 years later, so at that time he would have been about 80 years of age or less if our previous reasoning is correct. Joshua 24:29 tells us that Joshua the son of Nun, a servant of the Lord, died being 110 years old, so Joshua's life during the events of the Book of Joshua was a **possible 30 years**.

But as the time span of period A extends to 'the

elders that outlived Joshua' plus time of increasing apostasy following this (as mentioned in Judges 2:6-7), then we are postulating a time span in excess of 30 years for period A, although it is impossible to ascertain the exact time covered.

PERIOD B — JUDGES 3:8-31

Period B commences in the third chapter of the Book of Judges. It begins with the rebellion of Israel against God after which we are told that the Lord sold them into the hand of Chushan-Rishathaim, King of Aram-Naharaim (= Mesopotamia) for a period of 8 years. At the end of 8 years he raised up Othniel, son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, to deliver the land, resulting, we are told, in the land resting from oppression for forty years (verse 11). Observing Othniel's position and relationship to Caleb, it would appear that this 8 year period most probably followed shortly after the death of Joshua and the elders that outlived him.

Judges 1:15 states that Othniel lived in the south land (Negev) and Chushan-Rishathaim attacked from Syria-Naharaim. From this observation we can conclude that in delivering Israel from Chushan, Othniel drove him out of the entire land from south to north and not just from a small portion (see Fig. 9). In other words, Chushan held the **total** land of Israel in captivity. We may thus conclude that it was unlikely that any other Judge ruled, or that any other ruler held any other portion of the land in captivity, contemporaneously.

Judges 3:12 tells us that the children of Israel rebelled **again**. God strengthened the hand of Eglon, King of Moab, and they served Moab for 18 years. (Eglon was also associated with AMMON and AMALEK. It is worth bearing in mind that two other authors (Velikovsky and Courville) identify Amalek with the HYKSOS Rulers of Egypt.) The indications are that the centre of the conquest was around Jericho (Deuteronomy 34:3) and its neighbouring territory and not the whole land, but it clearly would include much of Transjordan (see Fig. 10).

At the end of this period God raised up Ehud who slew the Moabites (Judges 3:29-30). This resulted in the land having rest for four-score (eighty) years.

Judges 3:31 tells us that there was another Judge called Shamgar who attacked and defeated some Philistine insurgents so delivering Israel (apparently during these 80 years of rest). The actual length of time he judged is not stated, but by virtue of the position of the account it would have been in the last part of the eighty years.

Period B covers a total of 146 years (see Fig. 11). This period is assumed to have followed **immediately** after period A by virtue of Othniel's relationship to

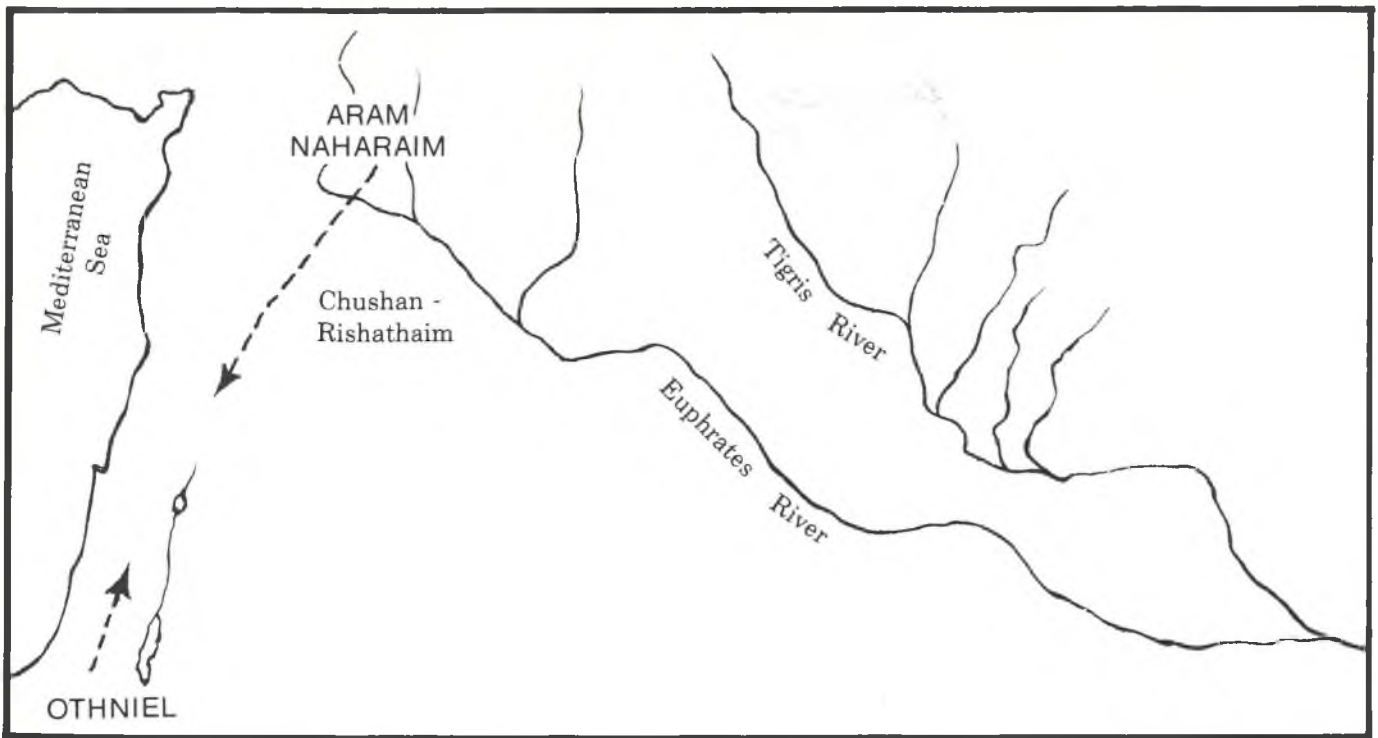


Figure 9 The kingdom of Chushan Rishathaim and his attack on Israel.

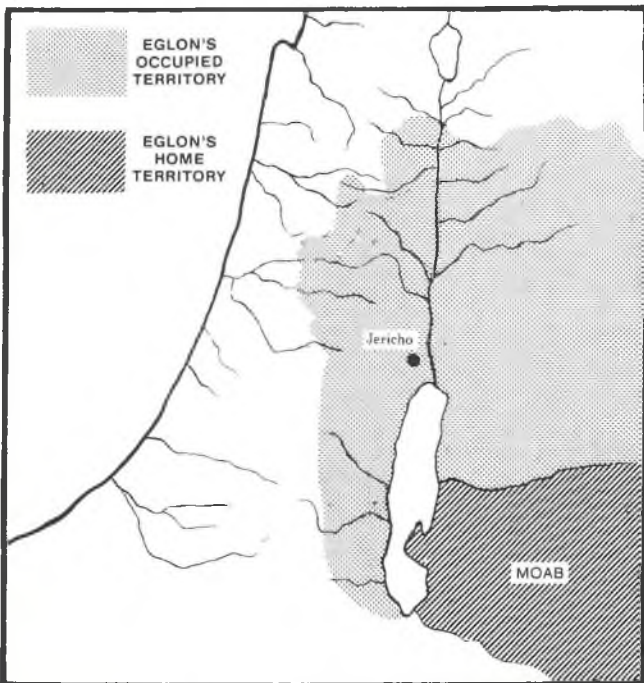


Figure 10 Probable area of Eglon's power. He ruled from Jericho, the city of palm trees.

Caleb, but definitely not overlapping, for the narrative allows for no such overlap.

PERIOD C — JUDGES 4 AND 5

We come to Period C in Judges chapter 4. When Ehud was dead, Israel did evil **again** (thus a further

rebellion) and God sold the Israelites into the hand of Jabin of Canaan, who oppressed them 20 years. At the conclusion of this 20 years He raised up Deborah and Barak. After a great victory, at the end of chapter 5, we are told the land had rest for 40 years, so Period C represents a period of 60 years (see Fig. 12).

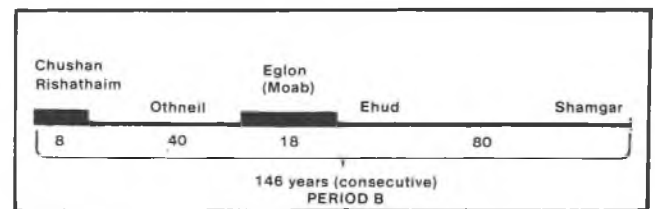


Figure 11 The times of the Judges — Period B.

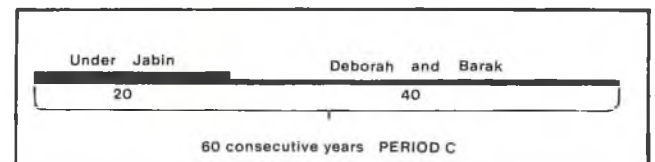


Figure 12 The times of the Judges — Period C.

It is most logical to conclude that Period C followed the end of Period B. This occurred after Ehud died because the resulting oppression could not have started until the 80 year period of rest from oppression had run its course.

The description of the 'rest', the following disobe-

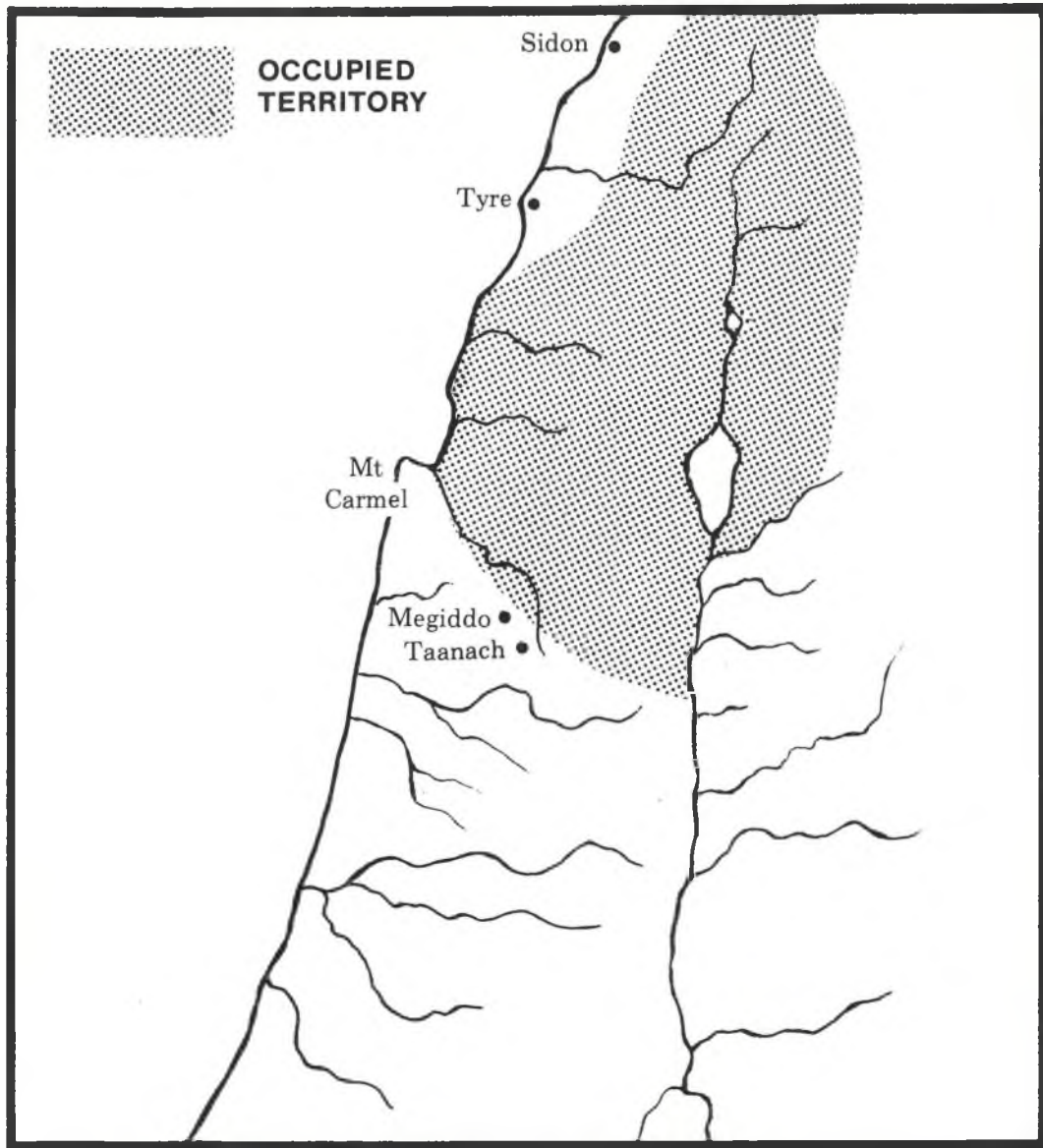


Figure 13 Jabin's occupied territory.

dience, and the oppression also suggests that the oppression followed immediately after this 80 years rest. There is no doubt that the children of Israel were beginning to turn away from God prior to the death of Ehud. Between the time of his death and the end of the 80 years rest was the period where Shamgar, the son of Anath, judged Israel. This period under Shamgar, son of Anath, appears to have been an unstable period owing to the spiritual drift of Israel at the close of Ehud's judgeship. Judges 5:6 says:

In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied and the travellers walked through byways.

It is most instructive to note the area where Jabin, King of Canaan ruled (see Fig. 13). It would appear to have been north of the Esdraelon and Jezreel

valleys through which the Kishon River flows. This geographical situation is of great significance in our later arrangement. There is no evidence of any oppression by Jabin of the southern half of Israel. **At this stage we appear to have a continual chronology from the time of the conquest onward and there appears to be no evidence of overlap in any of the events so far recorded (see Fig. 14).**

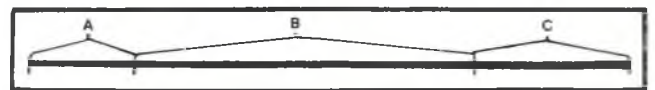


Figure 14 The times of the Judges the relationship between Periods A, B, and C.

PERIOD D — JUDGES 6-12

A correct perspective of this period is pivotal to a correct interpretation of the times of the Judges, the strategic point being the time that Jephthah arose to judge Israel. It is here we are given an important chronological statement that helps us to understand this period of time. The period commences at Chapter 6 verse 1, where we find that:

The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years.

The Midianites were associated with the Amalekites and the Children of the East. These people came from the south and the east in the manner of vandals attempting to destroy the land (see Fig. 15). It appears they overflowed much of the land, with the possible exception of that north of the Kishon River. This will become apparent in later discussion.

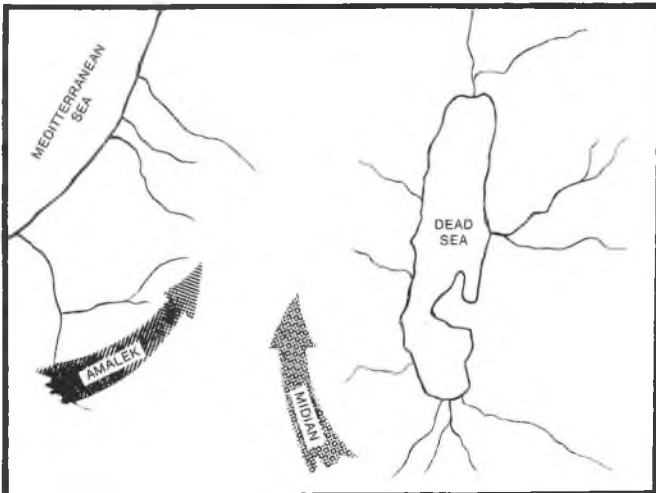


Figure 15 Region of conquest by the Midianites and Amalekites.

After the deliverance of the people under the leadership of Gideon we are told that the land rested for 40 years.

After the death of Gideon his son Abimelech asserted authority in the land and ruled from Shechem, reigning for 3 years until his death.

Chapter 10 tells us that **AFTER HIM** (indicating a definite chronological sequence), Tola the son of Puah arose to defend Israel and judged for 23 years. Verse 3 adds that **after** Tola, Jair arose and judged for 22 years, after which the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and so He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the children of Ammon.

There is a special emphasis on the children of Ammon who oppressed them for 18 years, particularly in the land of Gilead to the east of the River Jordan (see Fig. 16). Now if it was particularly in the

land of Gilead then it seems that this happened **after** Jair died because he judged from Gilead, and there is no indication of war in his days.

God then raised up Jephthah and delivered the land. In so doing we are told by Jephthah that the period Israel had dwelt in the land was 300 years (Judges 11:26), which would have been measured from the time of the crossing of Jordan. Even though this may possibly be a round figure, one can assume that it is reasonably close.

The first part of Period D is calculated as a period of 113 years beginning with God allowing Israel to fall into hands of the Midianites and ending when Jephthah delivered them.

The second part of Period D is very straightforward. We are told in chapter 12 verses 6-15, that Jephthah judged for 6 years, Ibzan of Bethlehem 7 years, Elon, a Zebulunite, 10 years, and Abdon the son of Hillel judged 8 years. The statements '**after him**' repeated in each case indicate a continuous chronology 31 years above and beyond the previous 113 years for Period D (see Fig. 17).

Now when Jephthah was contending with the King of Ammon, he stated that Israel had dwelt in the land 300 years (Judges 11:26). This period of 300 years began just prior to the crossing of the Jordan at the commencement of the conquest of the west bank.

Now adding all the years that have occurred chronologically in the narrative up to this point, we find that the total in fact exceeds 300 years. Altogether the time span totals 355 years and probably a few extra years as a result of the unknown length of time immediately after Joshua's death. Even if we assume that Jephthah's 300 years is a round figure (and this is not certain) a disagreement of 50 to 60 years is still too large a discrepancy to tolerate.

One possible solution exists **if there is some overlap of judgeships and that overlap could be 40-50 years**. Starting with the assumption that Jephthah's statement is accurate within plus or minus 10 years, which would be a tolerable approximation, we can begin to develop the concept of overlapping judgeships as a possible solution. Now on checking the possibility of overlap in the periods so far discussed, there appears no possibility between Periods A and B and again no possibility between Periods B and C, so this leaves us with a possible overlap of Periods C and D. As this overlap may be of the magnitude of 40 to 50 years, then the possibility arises that the 40 years 'rest' spoken of in Judges 5:31 following Deborah and Barak's victory and the 40 years 'rest' spoken of in Judges 8:28 when Gideon was Judge **could be one and the same period** (see Fig. 18).

At first inspection, this concept may appear to be inconsistent with the text. However, a very close ex-

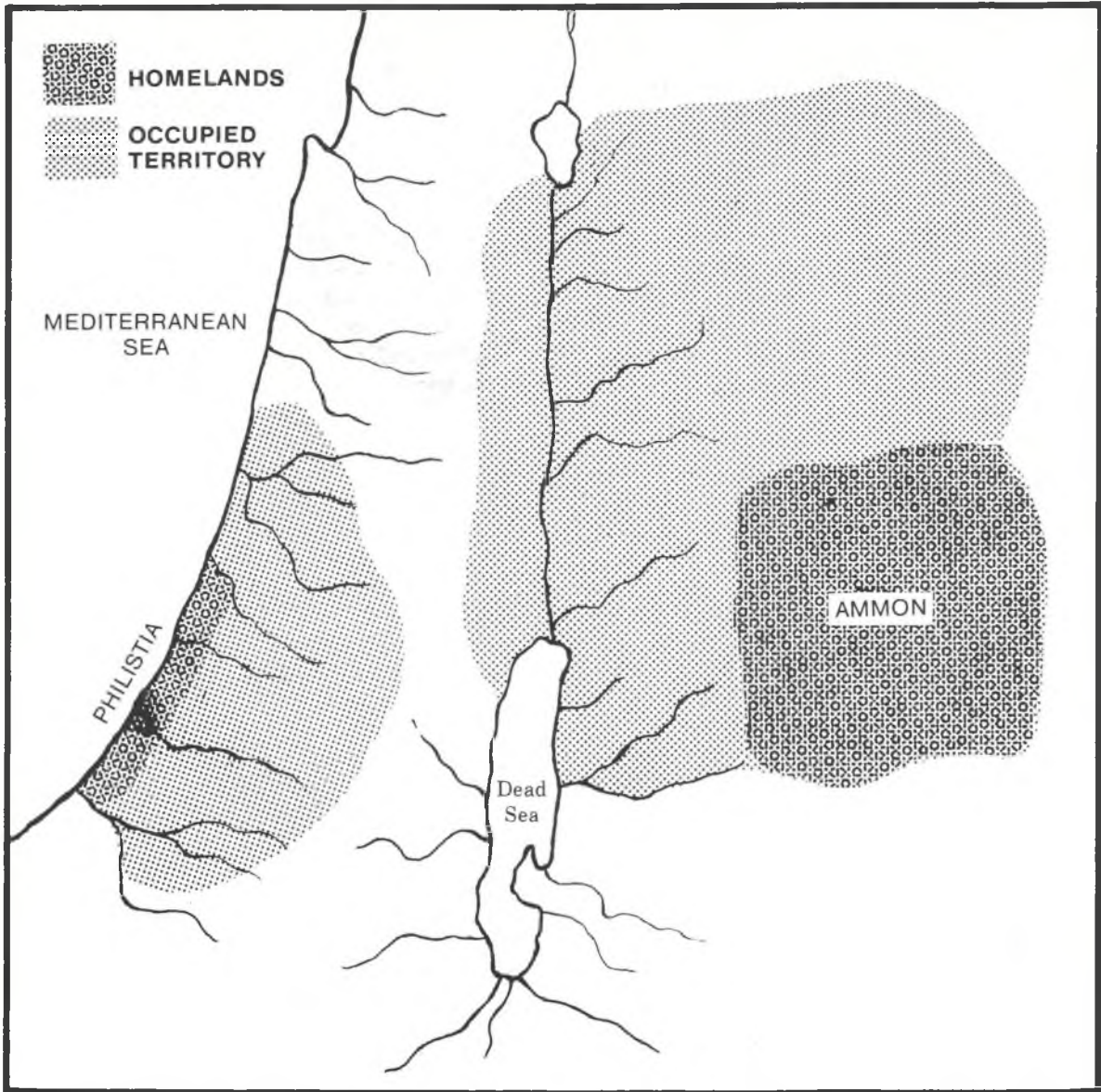


Figure 16 Territories occupied by Ammon and Philistines.

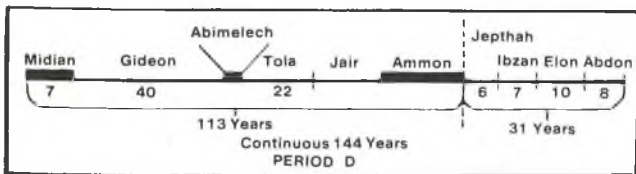


Figure 17 The times of the Judges — Period D.

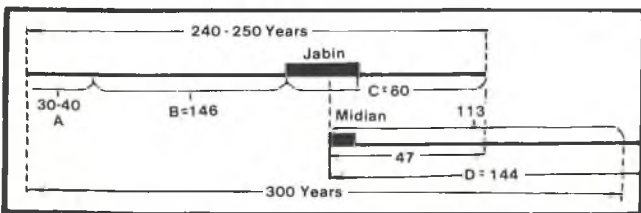


Figure 18 The times of the Judges — Period overlaps Period C.

amination of the Scripture passages involved shows that there is no inconsistency at all. A close examination brings out some very interesting points which fit together extremely well. Let us examine these points.

(a) Should these periods overlap, then Jabin who oppressed Israel for 20 years would share that oppression with the Midianites and Amalekites for at least the last 7 of those 20 years (see Fig. 18). Is there any support for this possibility?

I believe there is. Compare the formula of Judges 6:1 with the same formula in Judges 4:1 and 3:12. The word 'again' is noticeably absent from Judges 6:1. This to me is significant, opening up the distinct possibility that Judges 4:1 and 6:1 are in reality referring to the same rebellion, and not to a further rebellion which inclusion of the word 'AGAIN' would have indicated.

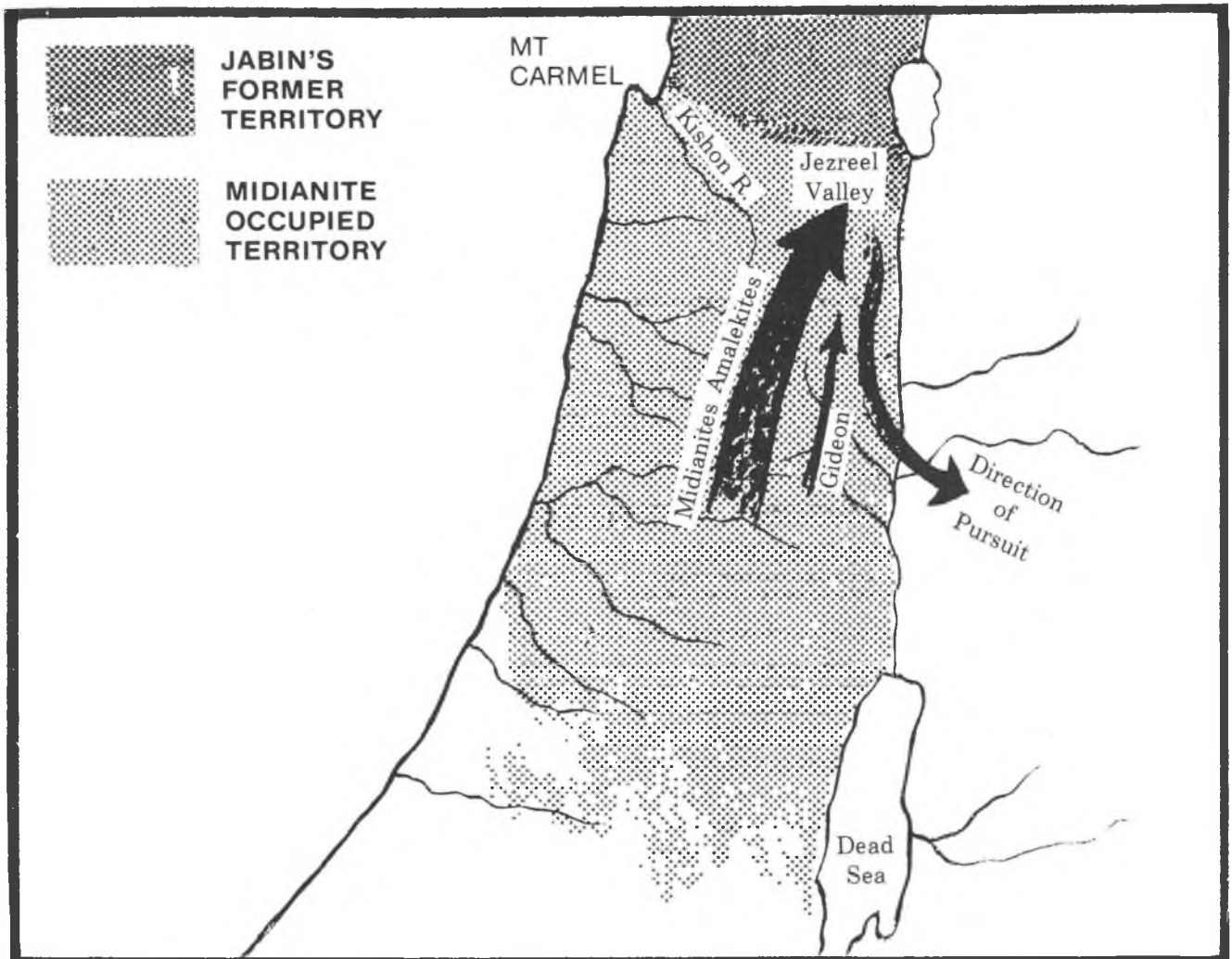


Figure 19 Movements of the armies of Midian and Amalek.

(b) It should be noted that Jabin appears to have only ruled over Israel north of the Kishon River, and the range of mountains running south-east from Mount Carmel (see Fig.13) It was from there that deliverance came. But it appears that the Midianites and Amalekites only ruled over Israel **south** of this same range of mountains.

This fact becomes apparent as the battle between Gideon and the Amalekites and Midianites is about to commence. Prior to Gideon mustering his army, the Midianites and Amalekites “gathered together and went over and pitched in the valley of Jezreel” Judges 6:33. In other words, they climbed over the mountains and went down into the valley of Jezreel. This is a perfect description of an army coming from south of this mountain range in the area of Ephraim and passing northward into the valley of Jezreel. But it should be recalled that this latter territory was formerly Jabin’s (see Fig. 13). The battle against Jabin had occurred in the valley of Esdraelon, the continuation west of the valley of Jezreel, and now the battle against Midian and

Amalek was about to take place in the valley of Jezreel itself (see Fig. 19).

Why should the Amalekites and the Midianites go up over the mountains and down into the valley of Jezreel when Gideon at that stage was not yet there in force, and the Midianites were probably not even aware of his preparations to attack them? It was in fact still several days before Gideon would muster his army. The most likely explanation of their movements is that political vacuum had been formed by the defeat of Jabin north of the mountain range, so the Amalekites and the Midianites were determined to fill that vacuum and take over where Jabin had been defeated.

(c) Instructive also are the statements surrounding the “rest” following Deborah and Barak, and the “rest” following Gideon. In Judges 5:31 it simply says, “and the land had rest for 40 years”. There is no indication that Barak acted as a ruler, whereas in Judges 8:28 it says “the country was in quietness 40 years **in the days of Gideon**”, indicating certainly the fact that Gideon was a ruler. Actually, they attempt-

ted to make him king, a position which he turned down. Barak came from north of the mountain range while Gideon came from the south.

If we assume the possibility of a joint judgeship, there is no real conflict. Furthermore, there is no difficulty either if we assume that Gideon was the ruler, and Deborah and Barak simply took their place among the people once again. The words fit both interpretations.

In suggesting that these periods overlap, we find that the 300 years of which Jephthah speaks fall into place (see Fig. 18). It also offers a possible explanation as to why the Amalekites and Midianites were active south of the range of mountains east of Carmel in the days of Jabin. Looking at the song of Deborah in chapter 5 of Judges, in verse 14 the name Amalek is associated with Ephraim, indicating at least the possibility that Amalek was already in the land in the region of Ephraim in Jabin's day. This land lay south of the mountain range.

A logical sequence of events would be as follows. Jabin first conquered Israel north of the mountain range (see Fig. 13 again). Towards the end of this period the Amalekites and their cousins the Midianites moved up from the south where they lived (see Fig. 15 again). The Amalekites and Midianites advanced northward to conquer Israel and to check the rising power of Jabin. Later God called Deborah, who moved northward to call Barak, and they together waged war in the north against Jabin and defeated him. Very soon afterwards, almost certainly in a matter of months, the Midianites and the Amalekites poured over the mountain range into the valley of Jezreel. At the same time God called Gideon, who issued a proclamation for the army to come together. God used only 300 of the 32,000 men who gathered around Gideon. These 300 men ascended northward to the valley of Jezreel to do the battle against the Midianites and the Amalekites. From there they drove the enemy southeastward across the Jordan River at Bethbarah and into eastern Israel where they were resoundingly defeated (see Fig. 19 again).

Instructive also is the passage in Psalm 83 where these two battles are brought together in the same Psalm. Although this does not actually prove the point, it does add a little circumstantial weight to the possibility that these two judgeships covered the same time span.

Continuing on through Period D, Jephthah then ruled for 6 years. He was followed by Ibzan, Elon and Abdon, who together judged Israel for another 25 years. However, before we completely leave Period D, it is important to point out a very interesting statement made in Judges 10:7 where prior to the deliverance by Jephthah it says:

The anger of the Lord was hot against Israel and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hand of the children of Ammon.

There was therefore a joint oppression by Ammon and the Philistines (see Fig. 16 again). But when we read the record of the deliverance under Jephthah, there is no mention of the Philistines but simply of the deliverance of the eastern portion of Israel from the Ammonites. This raises the very real possibility of further parallelism, this time between Periods D and E, the latter being the period of Philistine oppression and the life of Samson.

PERIOD E — JUDGES 13-16

Period E covers the time span of Israel's next rebellion as recorded in Judges 13, when God abandoned them to the hands of the Philistines for 40 years. But He raised up Samson to judge Israel. Samson judged for 20 years. We are told in Judges 15:20 that he judged "in the days of the Philistines". Therefore, we conclude that the 20 years of Samson were part of the same 40 years of the Philistine oppression (see Fig. 20).

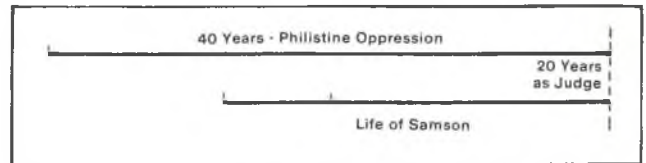


Figure 20 The times of the Judges — Period E.

It should be recalled here that in the latter part of Period D, before He raised up Jephthah, God delivered Israel into the hands of Ammon AND the Philistines. Therefore, it is here suggested that Period E may well have begun at the same time as the captivity of Ammon, before the days of Jephthah. Judges 10:7-8 would indicate that this was the case. Verse 8 states "and that year they (equals Ammon and the Philistines) vexed and oppressed. . ."

The total time span of Period E is 40 years, ending when Samson brought deliverance to Israel from the Philistines by destroying the Lords of the Philistines. He is the last of the judges mentioned in the Book of Judges, and so for the next period (period F) we have to look into the Books of Samuel.

Now it seems certain from the text that Samson was born in the days of the Philistines' rule over Israel, and that he died in the days of their rule, almost certainly ending their oppression when he destroyed the Lords of the Philistines in Gaza. Judges 13:1 states that the time the Philistines ruled over Israel was 40 years. Therefore, Samson must have died a man of 40 years or younger, for his whole life is spent within this 40 year rule of the Philistines.

Should our conclusion be correct, namely, that the Philistine rule began the same year as the Ammonite rule prior to Jephthah's rise to power (Judges 10:8 "that year they vexed. . . the children of Israel"), then again the possibility arises of a double judgeship, Samson judging in the southwest at the same time as Jephthah, Ibzan and Elon. Elon and Samson would then have died within year of each other. By the implied force of the Scripture, Samson broke the power of the Philistines at the catastrophe in Gaza and for the time being delivered Israel.

The next time we meet a judge in Scripture is in the Book of Samuel. He is Eli, and at the beginning of the narrative, Israel is free from the Philistine yoke. However, at the time of Eli's death they were beginning to reassert their power.

PERIOD F

1 Samuel 4:18 informs us that Eli died an old man having judged Israel for 40 years. It seems logical, and there is no apparent evidence to the contrary, that Eli judged Israel following the death of Abdon (and previously Samson). At the end of Eli's 40 years' judgeship an extremely significant event occurred (concurrently with his death), that is, the Philistines captured the Ark of the Lord. This event is described in Judges 18:30-31 as "the captivity of the land". It was the moment when Shiloh ceased to be the place of the Tabernacle, the Ark having been captured by the Philistines, and the Tabernacle transferred to Gibeon.

1 Samuel 5 informs us that the Philistines took the Ark of God and kept it in their country for 7 months (1 Samuel 6:1). After this time the Ark was sent on its way to Israel, where it first came to Bethshemesh and then was taken to the Levitical city of Kirjath-Jearim in south-west Israel (see Fig. 21).

The city of Kirjath-Jearim is mentioned again in 1 Samuel 7:1, "And the men of Kirjath-Jearim came and fetched up the Ark of the Lord and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill". It is instructive to note that the words "the hill" can be equally translated "Gibeah". This will have significance later. But for the moment just note that the Ark was in Kirjath-Jearim in the hill (or Gibeah) and that it was in the house of Abinadab.

1 Samuel 7:2 says, "And it came to pass while the Ark abode in Kirjath-Jearim, that the time was long; for it was 20 years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord". The statement is therefore quite plain that the Ark was in Kirjath-Jearim **for 20 years**.

Now the relevant question is, when did this 20-year period terminate? My answer to that question cuts across a very profound supposition made

about the times of the Judges and the times of the early kings, for the time when the Ark was removed from Kirjath-Jearim was the 7th year of the reign of David. I am therefore proposing that from Eli's death until the 7th year of David was a period of 20 years and 10 months, or in round figures, 21 years (see Fig. 22).

Some may object to this conclusion because the rule of Samuel and the reign of Saul, as well as the first 7 years of David's rule, must be fitted into this 20-year period and that is contrary to accepted interpretation. However, before rejecting this conclusion off-hand, can I urge you to follow my further arguments, regardless of your particular feelings towards this conclusion.

In 1 Chronicles 13:5-6 we are told that David gathered the people together to bring up the Ark of God from **Kirjath-Jearim**. In verse 6 it is stated that David went up and all Israel to **Baalah**. Comparison of this verse with Joshua 15:9 identifies Baalah as an alternative name for the city of Kirjath-Jearim (Joshua 15:60 actually gives a third name, that of Kirjath-Baal). 1 Chronicles 13:7 informs us that they carried the Ark of God in new cart out of **the house of Abinadab**. Note that this is the same name referred to in 1 Samuel 7, for it was in this house that the Ark was originally lodged. Turning to a similar record in Samuel 6:2 we read that David arose and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah to bring up the Ark of God. Verse 3 then informs us that the Ark came out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah, but remember that the word Gibeah can also be translated "the hill". This word Gibeah is not to be confused with Gibeah of Benjamin (Gibeah of Saul), but is in fact Gibeah (or the hill) of Kirjath-Jearim. Further confirmation of a city called Gibeah belonging to the tribe of Judah is found in Joshua 15:57. This can be none other than the city here under discussion (see Fig. 23).

2 Samuel 5 informs us that David brought up the Ark of the Lord in the 7th year of his reign after he had conquered the stronghold of Zion. So the total period from the death of Eli to the 7th year of David's reign is approximately 20 years and 10 months, and includes the 3 months that the Ark abode in the house of Obed-edom (2 Samuel 6:11).

If this interpretation of the 20 years mentioned in 1 Samuel 7:2 is to be sustained, then the incident of Samuel at Ebenezer (1 Samuel 7:12) must have occurred just after the return of the Ark of Israel from the Philistines, and not at the end of the 20-year period as many have assumed.

Now let us look at the other data which must be correlated with this period to see if this interpretation can in fact be substantiated, for it is obvious that the whole of the reign of Saul must be fitted into this period. Such a claim will raise objections from some

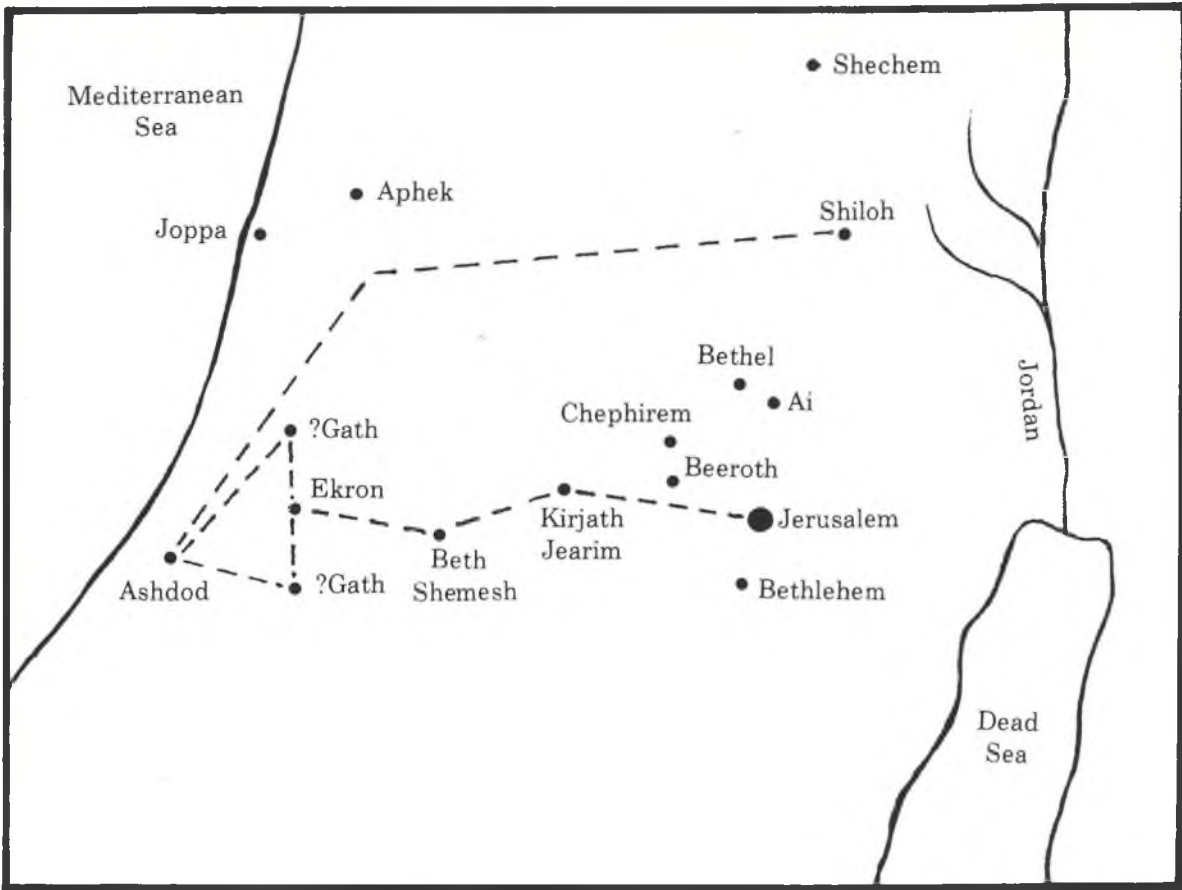


Figure 21 The journeys of the Ark.

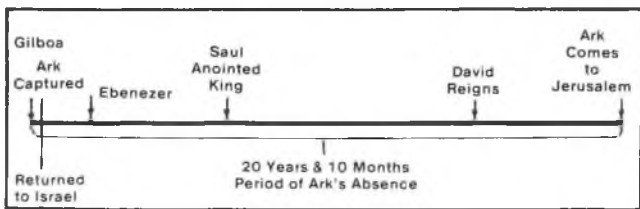


Figure 22 The period of the Ark's absence.

after reading Acts 13:21, for on superficial reading it appears that this verse claims that Saul reigned for 40 years. If this were the case then of course it is impossible to fit this into the 20-year period in question. Only two solutions are possible: —

- (1) Either the statement in Acts 13:21 is saying something else apart from its apparent meaning that Saul reigned for 40 years, or
- (2) The period of 20 years that the Ark was in Kirjath-Jearim does not represent the total period from Eli's death until the time during his reign when David removed it to Jerusalem.

I believe the solution to the problem lies entirely in Acts 13:21. In other words, it is my firm belief that the 20 years mentioned in 1 Samuel 7:2 **does in fact**

represent the total period from the death of Eli to the 7th year of David's reign.

The whole passage in Acts 13 appears to have been translated somewhat clumsily, and particularly is this so where a number of points are concerned.

In 'The Exodus Problem and its Ramifications' vol. 1, p.9, Dr Courville has shown that the "about 450 years" spoken of in Acts 13:20 in fact does not apply to the period of the Judges but instead falls before the period of the Judges. Bagster's Interlinear translates the verse: —

And after these things, about years 450, he gave Judges unto Samuel the prophet.

In other words, the term "about 450 years" (KJV) refers to the events that are described as "these things" which clearly refer to what has already been spoken of, namely, the time from when God chose Abraham until he eventually gave the land of Canaan to the children of Israel following their deliverance from Egypt. The term is not to be understood as an exact period of time, but as a round figure, as indicated by the use of the qualifying word "about". (The exact period was in fact either 476 years or 451 years as previously discussed.)

Now concerning also the same period of 40 years the Interlinear N.T. reads: —

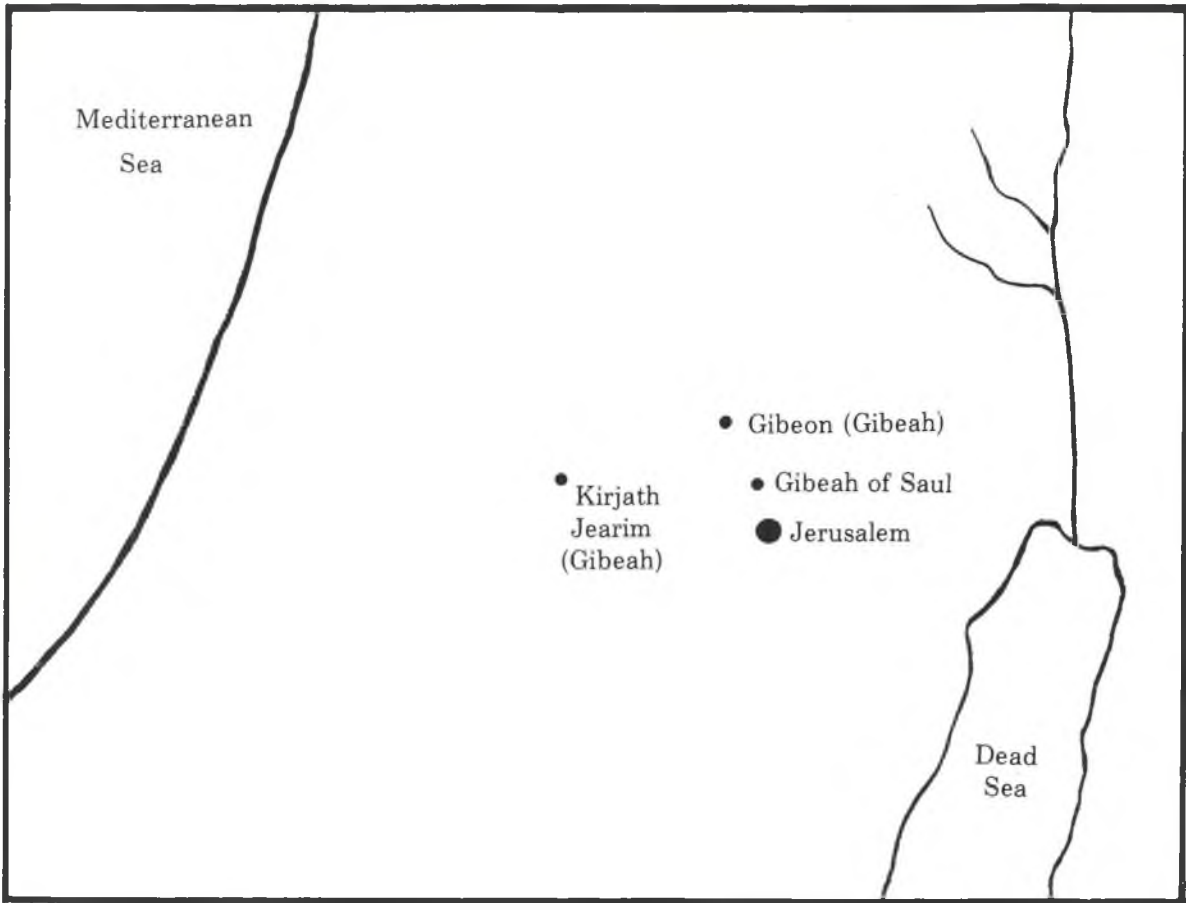


Figure 23 The Gibeahs.

He gave Judges until Samuel the prophet. And then they asked for a king and gave to them, God, Saul son of Cis a man of the tribe of Benjamin years 40.

What is being suggesting is that the words “years 40” in fact do not refer just to Saul son of Cis, but can also reasonably (without any violation of the text) apply to the **combined rule of Samuel and Saul**, the entire period is from the call of Samuel until the end of Saul’s reign being 40 years. There appears to be nothing in the text itself that would invalidate such a possible alternative interpretation. On the contrary, the very fact that there is conflict with the details of the Old Testament forces us to take this particular view, especially as it is **consistent with a literal rendering of the words**.

Let us now summarize what is being said about **this 40-year period**. Samuel was first called while Eli was still judge (1 Samuel 3). Then on Eli’s death, Samuel took over sole authority (1 Samuel 4). Finally, Samuel shared authority with Saul for a significant but unspecified period. Then on Samuel’s death, Saul ruled until slain at Gilboa (1 Samuel 31). This would mean that the 40-year period began with the call of Samuel and ended with the death of Saul (see Fig. 24).

Immediately the Old Testament details and New

Testament text cease to be in conflict.

Now if it is to be contended that such an interpretation is not valid, consider the alternative. If one accepts the 40-year period as applying only to Saul and the words in Acts 13 are interpreted in that manner, then the whole of that 40- year period, to be consistent, must begin **after** Samuel’s death because the words ‘after this’ must then be applied in that manner, meaning **after** Samuel the prophet. No amount of stretching of the Old Testament details will ever allow for 40 years between Samuel’s death and the death of Saul, for that is clearly chronologically impossible.

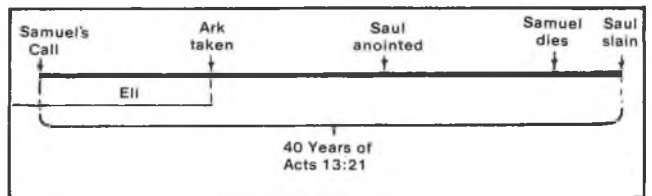


Figure 24 The 40 years of Acts 13:21.

A further possible interpretation exists. If Samuel is considered to be among the judges (which here he clearly is NOT), and after that Saul reigned for 40 years, then Saul’s reign would overlap the

period of the judges for an undetermined period while Samuel was alive. This would then make the statement of Acts 13:21 of no value whatsoever for the purpose of chronology.

Thus the only consistent and reasonable interpretation, the only one that makes the statement of Acts 13 of value for chronological purposes, is to accept the 40-year period as beginning with the call of Samuel and ending with the death of Saul.

There is still one minor objection to this interpretation that could be made on logical grounds. The story of Samuel's life clearly indicates that he was an old man when he died. The sort of age that comes to mind is 60 or 70 years, but the period from his call until his death must be fitted within the 40-year period spoken of in Acts 13. So we must define what the word 'child' means in reference to Samuel in 1 Samuel 3:8. There is really no problem here, for Samuel could quite easily be 25 years of age at his call and still be referred to as "a child" for the following reasons:

- (1) Twenty-five years of age was the age at which a Levite was eligible for service in the Tabernacle (Numbers 8:24). Samuel was clearly a Levite and also attended about the Tabernacle (1 Samuel 1:1 and 1 Chronicles 6:27-28). The fact that Samuel was a gift from Hannah to God in no way sets aside this rule of service.
- (2) The word "child" is not an unusual term for a person of that age (see 1 Samuel 16:11 and 17:33, and Appendix I).

Samuel then would have been at least 65 years of age at death, consistent with the term 'old'.

In conclusion, the times of the Judges in the strictest sense of the term ended at Samuel's call (Acts 13:20). Nonetheless, within the broader definition being used here, Period F covers the 40 years of Eli's judgeship plus the 20-year captivity of the Ark (see Fig. 25).

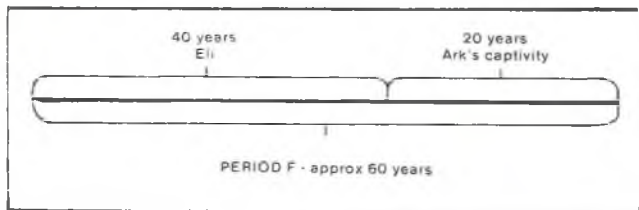


Figure 25 The times of the Judges — Period F.

PERIOD G

Period G is here defined as covering the period of rule by Samuel and Saul.

Now after Eli died, Samuel was judge over the land. (He was also a prophet.) It was while Samuel

was a judge that the people asked for a king, namely Saul. But if my interpretation of Acts 13:21 is correct, then Period G would have to begin when Samuel's judgeship began, when he was called by God as a young lad (at what age we can only speculate). Period G would be a period of 40 years beginning with that call of Samuel and ending with the death of Saul (see Fig. 26). It should be immediately obvious that Period G thus falls totally within Period F (refer back to Fig. 25).

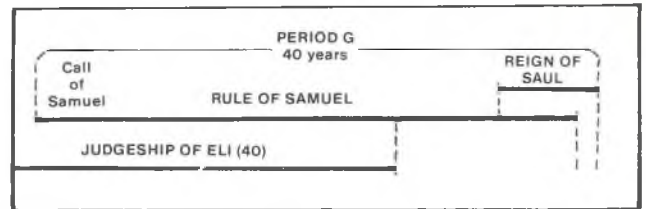


Figure 26 The times of the Judges — Period G.

The question now arises — is there any Old Testament evidence, apart from the facts concerning the Ark of the Lord, to suggest that Saul reigned less than 40 years? In fact, there is evidence.

FIRST, let us look at the rule of Saul as found in the Old Testament, the ages of his sons, and events surrounding that period. We will find some very interesting facts emerge.

Saul had at least four sons. They were:

- (1) Jonathan (who appears to have been the firstborn and heir to the throne),
- (2) Abinadab,
- (3) Melchishua (also called Ishua), and
- (4) Ishbosheth.

(See 1 Samuel 15:49 and 2 Samuel 2:8-10.)

Now the first three — Jonathan, Abinadab and Melchishua — were slain with Saul at Gilboa by the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:2). After the death of Saul, Abner (son of Ner) then put Ishbosheth on the throne of Israel (north). He reigned for two years, after which he was assassinated. 2 Samuel 2:10 says that he came to the throne at 40 years of age.

Now if Ishbosheth was 40 years of age and came to the throne **after** the death of Saul, but was not the firstborn of Saul (which place was occupied by Jonathan), then Jonathan at his death at Gilboa must have been **older than 40 years of age**. To suggest the age of 45, although we cannot guarantee that age, is not unreasonable (see Fig. 27).

If Jonathan was at least 45 years of age when he died (and the narrative suggests that he was not an old man), then when Saul began to reign Jonathan would only have been about 5 years of age **if Saul had reigned for 40 years**. But this contradicts the facts, because 1 Samuel 13:1-2 informs us that in the second year of the reign of Saul, when Saul was

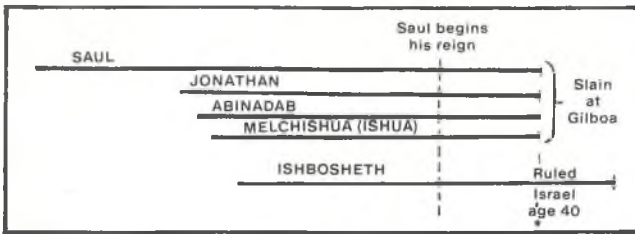


Figure 27 The dynasty of Saul

fighting against the Philistines, Jonathan himself was already a soldier and was in fact a leader in the army. Therefore, he must have been older than 20 years of age, the recognised age at which a man went to war (Numbers 1). So if Jonathan was then also an army leader, I suggest that he could have been anything up to 35 years of age without distorting the facts. Now if Jonathan was anywhere between 20 and 35 years of age in the second year of Saul's reign and lived another 39 years before his death (which would be the case had Saul reigned for 40 years), he would then have been anywhere between 60 and 75 years of age. Clearly the discussion in the Scriptures concerning Jonathan does not credit him with that sort of age. But an age of 45 at death is a perfectly reasonable figure that fits the description given of Jonathan (see also the discussion re Rehoboam who assumed the throne at the age of 41 years and was called "young and tenderhearted" 2 Chronicles 13:7). However, such an argument immediately necessitates that Saul reigned for less than 40 years.

Had Saul reigned for 40 years then Jonathan himself would have been 60–75 years of age at his death. Saul would have been at least 20 years older, which would have made him between 80 and 95 years of age when he died. Clearly this does not fit the description given of Saul who was obviously cut off before his natural end. But if he was approximately 65 years of age (although it could be a bit surprising to some at first), that is not necessarily an unreasonable figure. He would not be a young man, but then he would not have been grossly old either. He would have still been able to fight battles, as many did at that age if they were strong enough.

In other words, if Jonathan was over 20 years of age at the beginning of Saul's reign (he could have been anything up to 35 years of age) and died in his mid-forties, then clearly there is only a possibility of a maximum of 10 to 15 years for the reign of Saul. If the events of Saul's life are mapped out it can be seen that these events can be easily fitted into the time span of 10 to 15 years without any real difficulty (see Fig. 28).

It is of interest to note that Josephus accepted only 20 years for the reign of Saul ("Antiquities of the Jews" Book 6, Chapter XIV, p.9) although a later editor adds more.

SECONDLY, further evidence in support of a short reign by Saul is given in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel 4:5–6 the years of Israel and Judah's 'iniquity' are given as 390 + 40 which is 430 years. The prophecy refers to the siege of Jerusalem **which began in 588 BC** (Ezekiel 24:1–2, Jeremiah 52:4–6) and continued into 586 BC.

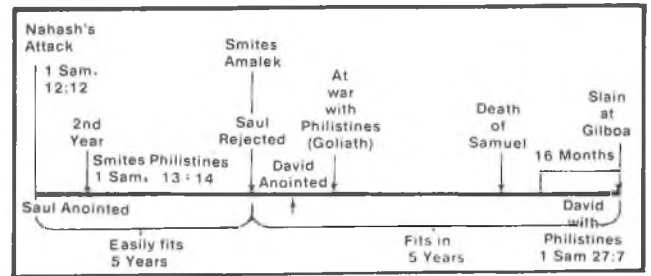


Figure 28 The life of Saul and his reign.

The 40 years of Ezekiel 4:5–6 (the sins of Judah) must be calculated back from 10th day of 10th month of 9th year of Ezekiel, that is **588 BC**. This brings us back to the 12th year of Josiah 628 BC (see Thiele, "A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings"). Significantly, in **that year** Josiah began to purge the **whole land of Israel and Judah** (2 Chronicles 34:3–7). The further 390 years of Ezekiel 4 then bring us back to the beginning of the kingdom and the inaugural year of the reign of Saul, that is, 1018 BC.

If the period of Israel's sins was 430 years, its starting point would have been 1018 BC (measuring back from the start of the siege). This is less than a decade before David's accession to the throne. Such a statement only seems to make sense if it refers to Israel's **KINGDOM**, beginning of course with its first king, Saul. This is clearly consistent with the above interpretation of the length of Saul's reign.

These 430 years of the kingdom would then explain the strange 70 years of desolation of the land as substitution for missed years of Sabbath (Jeremiah 25:11–12, Daniel 9:2, 1 Chronicles 36:21, Leviticus 26:34), the 70-year figure being arrived at in the following manner:

430 years gives 62 Sabbath years (to the nearest sabbath in front) or to be precise 61.5 missed Sabbath years, plus 8 (or more correctly 8.5) Jubilee years (Exodus 23:10–11, Leviticus 25:1–17), giving a total of 70 years.

Certainly the most reasonable starting point for the 430 years, that is, 1018 BC, is the beginning of the **KINGDOM**, but this is too early for the start of **David's** reign, which at the earliest was 1010 BC. Saul alone can be viewed as the starting point of these years and of the kingdom, but not if he is regarded as having reigned for 40 years.

In summary

Saul did not reign for 40 years, but in fact **he and Samuel together shared a joint 40-year period** and Saul himself reigned for less than 10 years. A 40-year period of Samuel and Saul (Period G) would naturally overlap the rule of Eli as the Scripture testifies. Furthermore, the period of captivity of the Ark naturally overlaps the reigns of both Saul and David (Period H).

PERIOD H

On Saul's death, David ascended the throne of Judah and later he assumed the combined throne of Israel. His reign covered a total of 40 years and he was followed by his son, Solomon. 1 Kings 6:1 claims that in the fourth year of Solomon's reign he laid the foundation of the House of the Lord (the Temple). This period is here called Period H, a maximum of 44 years until the building of the Temple. It is to be noted that is was a **maximum of 44 years** because Solomon initially reigned for a short period as a co-regent with David (1 Kings 1). It could be a year or two short of this figure if the figures for the two reigns include the period of co-regency (see Fig. 29).

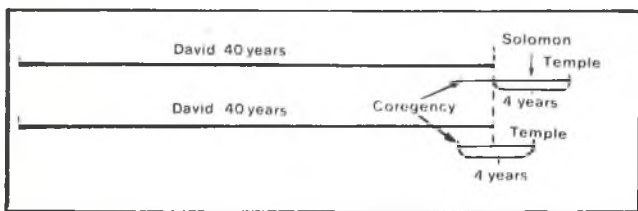


Figure 29 The times of the Judges — two possibilities for Period H.

There appears at present to be little that allows us to determine whether the 4th year of Solomon's reign was measured from David's death and is thus Solomon's sole reign, or from the beginning of Solomon's co-regency with David. Either is likely. However, as emphasis is stressed on the beginning of Solomon's reign in 1 Chronicles 29:22-23, 1 Kings 1 and especially 1 Kings 2:12, I am more inclined to accept that the 40 year reigns of David and Solomon were counted in sequence and so should not be counted as overlapping.

CONCLUSIONS

In this discussion of the chronology of the times of the Judges, I have attempted to show that the majority of events recorded follow on in continuous sequence. But to this rule there are three major exceptions:

- (1) The 40 year 'rest' after the defeat of Jabin and the 40 year 'rest' after Gideon's victory over the Midianites are one and the same period. My Period D therefore overlaps Period C.
- (2) The oppression by Ammon and the oppression by the Philistines, which resulted in Jephthah and Samson respectively coming to power, began concurrently. Thus Period E overlaps Period D.
- (3) Period F (Eli and the Ark's captivity) overlaps Period G (Samuel and Saul) and Period H (David and Solomon).

Other conclusions of note arrived at are the following:

- (4) The 20 years and 10 months' absence of the Ark of the Lord (in Philistia then Kirjath-Jearim) began at Eli's death and ended when David conquered Zion and took the Ark to Jerusalem.
- (5) Exception No. 3 demands a short reign for Saul of less than 10 years, shown here to be completely consistent with Biblical statements concerning this period.

It is to be noted that most of the time spans given for the periods within the times of the Judges are in whole figures. It is therefore unlikely that we are able to come to an **exact** absolute chronology, so the figures given are only a **close** approximation. Also to be noted is the fact that Solomon and David co-reigned for a very short time. However, as previously discussed, the 40-year reigns of David and Solomon are accepted as consecutive.

From outside sources the year 967 BC is here taken to be the year that Solomon laid the foundation of the Temple. (This is in accordance with Thiele's chronology for the Hebrew kings, as determined by comparison with Assyrian dates. That year has also been determined in accordance with the chronology of the kings of Tyre). Given the time spans for each of the periods within the times of the Judges as discussed above, we are thus in a position to now draw up a chronological table of events as in Figure 30. Because the records are given to us in terms of whole years, **a possible variation plus or minus 12 months is here accepted for every new political period**, and these variations are shown cumulatively in Figure 30. However, on taking into account that both positive and negative variations would probably be only 6 months either way, the average variation in dates (whole years) as stated will be only half of each figure.

From the conquest to Jephthah is recorded as having been 300 years (Judges 11:26). In the discussion above it was assumed that this was possibly a round figure. However, the calculations there arrived at a total of 304 years, plus or minus 8 years if

The foundation of the Temple	967 BC
Beginning of Solomon's reign	971 BC
Ark restored to Jerusalem 1004 BC ± 1	1004 BC
Accession of David to the throne 1011 BC ± 2	1011 BC
Death of Saul 1011 BC ± 2	1011 BC
Captivity of land and capture of Ark 1032 BC ± 3	1032 BC
Beginning of Eli's judgeship 1072 BC ± 4	1072 BC
Beginning of Abdon's judgeship 1080 BC ± 5	1080 BC
Beginning of Elon's judgeship 1090 BC ± 6	1090 BC
Beginning of Ibzan's judgeship 1097 BC ± 7	1097 BC
Beginning of Jephthah's judgeship 1103 BC ± 8	1103 BC
Captivity of the land under Ammon and the Philistines begins 1121 BC ± 9	1121 BC
Beginning of Jair's judgeship 1143 BC ± 10	1143 BC
Beginning of Tola's judgeship 1166 BC ± 11	1166 BC
Beginning of Abimelech's rule 1169 BC ± 12	1169 BC
Beginning of Gideon's judgeship 1209 BC ± 13	1209 BC
Beginning of Deborah and Barak's judgeship 1209 BC ± 13	1209 BC
Midianites begin to rule 1215 BC ± 14	1215 BC
Jabin begins to rule 1229 BC ± 14	1229 BC
Beginning of Ehud's judgeship 1309 BC ± 15	1309 BC
Beginning of Moabite captivity 1327 BC ± 16	1327 BC
Beginning of Othniel's judgeship 1367 BC ± 17	1367 BC
Chushan-Rishathaim's captivity 1375 BC ± 18	1375 BC
End of initial conquest 1400 BC	1400 BC
Crossing of Jordan 1406 BC	1406 BC
The Exodus from Egypt 1446 BC	1446 BC

Figure 30 A chronological table for the history of Israel during the times of the Judges.

whole year variations are accepted (but half years may in fact be closer). This leaves open the question as to whether it was in fact an exact period of time, for the possibility remains that the Israelite revolt against the Ammonites may well have taken place **on the 300 year anniversary** of the conquest by the Israelites. Such a moment may well have been loaded with political incentive for revolt.

From the beginning of the conquest to the beginning of the captivity of Chushan-Rishathaim is a total of 33 years, but a possible variation of 18 years is to be admitted in either direction.

The foregoing discussion has enabled us to chronologically tabulate in Figure 30 the whole period of Israel's history from the Exodus out of Egypt until the laying of the foundation of the House of the Lord. The times of the Judges covers a large portion of this period. The dates in Figure 30 can now be taken as years BC (within the limits of variation) for use as a **close** approximation in dating archaeological findings. That discussion is the subject matter of Part 2.

APPENDIX I — PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

I would like to add that I have at least two new bits of information which could add to the discussion in this study.

- (1) The use of Hebrew *na'ar* for child in 1 Samuel 3:8 does not lead to 'child' as a good modern translation. It is used of Josiah's and David's soldiers, and of persons of 17 or so at least. The word is translated 'youth' when used of David at the time of his fight with Goliath. Some have been worried that God should divulge to Samuel such an adult bit of news about judgement, etc., if Samuel was only 5 years old! So this is seen as confirming the idea that Samuel was probably at least 17, and if we take Levitical laws into account, he would have been 25 years as suggested, though he might of course have been on a trial service.
- (2) The Hebrew of 1 Samuel 13:1 *Ken shanah sha'ul be' — malko; u sh'etey shanim malak 'al Yisra'el*, has never been improved on. The NASB and RSV are rather naughty in trying to improve on the AV. Presumably they took their cue from Acts 13:21, which is explained in this study. This explanation is acceptable, being compatible with the explanation of the previous verse by Courville, vol. 1, pages 9-11. The NASB says 40 years, but the AV says one year — some difference!! But the Hebrew here really supports the AV, a point favouring the view taken in this study.

I am indebted to Dr Charles Taylor for the above comments.