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**ANCIENT CHRONOLOGY**

So far as we know, no nation carried on a system of numbering years consecutively for long periods of time before 312 B.C. and only Syria did so during the succeeding centuries, up to the 5th century A.D.

In ancient Assyria a man was designated each year as the "limu" for that year, and events were dated by his name. In Rome the year was designated by the names of those who were consuls. Thus in Assyria a year might be the year of Nabu-zer-iddin. In Rome a year might be the year of the consulate of Antony and Lepidus. In some other countries, such as Egypt, the years were numbered according to the ruler. Thus we might read that an event happened in the 20th year of a certain pharaoh. In Israel and Judah years were numbered this way according to the king.

It has been very hard to figure out how many years before Christ various events occurred, because sometimes a king would make his son ruler along with himself during part of his reign. Thus a certain year might be the 40th year of the reign of Hezekiah and also the fifth year of the reign of Jotham, and either number could be used in referring to it. Another cause of difficulty has been the fact that in some kingdoms and some periods when a king died in the course of the year the rest of the year would be called the first year of his successor, while in other kingdoms or periods a successor's first year would not be considered as beginning until a new year began. Thus the unraveling of ancient chronology previous to the time when numbers were given to the years over long periods of time was a difficult problem. In the book to which you refer, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, Thiele made a very fine effort to calculate precise dates for the kings of Israel and Judah -- a task that had previously seemed to all critical scholars to be utterly impossible. We have no certainty that Thiele's theories are correct in every point, but he made a very great advance in this study.