

does not work out on examination. There are probably certain cases where the two are looking at a matter from different viewpoints and the apparent disharmony of numbers would be easily explained if we knew all the factors. There are other cases in which the apparent disharmony may be due to an early error in copying. The Bible, like other ancient books, has had to be copied and recopied. It is impossible to copy a book of any length without occasional mistakes creeping in. No other ancient book has been preserved so exactly as the Bible. The copies were made with extreme care, and diligently checked. Yet sometimes copyists' errors have crept in and remained, and this is easier to happen in the case of numbers than of words. Since this is so it becomes an evidence of the remarkable accuracy of the preservation of our Biblical manuscripts, that we so seldom find discrepancies in the numerical statements of Kings and Chronicles. Occasionally a very early error in copying occurred, and sometimes we cannot be sure which of the two books contains the error, but these cases are very few in number.

The real problem is with the synchronisms in the chronology of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. Here archeology has brought interesting evidence of parallels from other countries. In some countries the custom was to start counting a reign from the day a king died, so that the rest of that year would rank as the first year of the reign of his successor. In other countries it was customary at certain periods not to begin a king's reign until the first New Year after the death of his predecessor. Thus the rest of the year in which his predecessor died would be called his accession year, and his first year would not begin until the next New Year. It is easy to see that if thirty kings were listed in both systems, so that the year in which each king died was counted as two years in one system, but as one in the other, the two lists would differ by thirty years. At certain crises in the history of Israel a change in the method of numbering may have occurred. An American scholar, Dr. Edwin R. Thiele,