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## "PROFESSING THEMSELVES TO BE WISE"

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL: –

A few days ago a Brother put into my hands a little booklet published in America, with the object of demolishing faith in the Scripture chronology as shown in the STUDIES, and to show that the deductions which have been drawn are hopelessly wrong. I found the booklet very dull, with its many reiterations of statements that the findings of Vol. 2 are at fault. Because it cannot do better it quotes Vol. 2 on the necessity of a correct chronology, and that a difference of a single year in that shown would throw the harmony into discord. Then it goes on to "prove" the chronology is wrong, and being ill-content, it proceeds to make the discord. The claim is that Jehoram, of Judah, did not reign as king of Judah for eight years, as the Scriptures say, but that he reigned four years with his father Jehoshaphat, and only four as real king. As I happened to be familiar with the passages bearing on this point of history I replied at once to the question put to me, and the suggestion was made that [R4601 : page 136] I send the reply to you, and in case you may have nothing better at hand, you may judge it worth while to use it.

The difficulty is raised by the attempt to correspond the events of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, a task which, so far as chronology is concerned, must always give unsatisfactory results, because of the peculiar methods of reckoning the years of a reign, and because no attempts were made to give details. The Father knew *our* needs, and caused a second account to be given, one which gives an unbroken record of the kings of Judah from David to the end of the kingdoms. That which the book of Kings did not give we have in the books of the *Chronicles*,

surely a direct word to us from our God, and surely a sufficient ground for our faith. But take the passage upon which all this opposition is based, and it will be found to be a confirmation rather than a source of doubt; it strengthens our faith!

Here is the account of the kings of Judah and Israel about that time: Asa was contemporary with Ahab of Israel, three years. (I Kings 22:41.) His son, Jehoshaphat, reigned twenty-five years. In the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat, Ahaziah of Israel began to reign and is said to have been king two years. But in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram of Israel was made king, and he reigned for twelve years. In his fifth year Jehoshaphat died and Jehoram of Judah reigned in his stead, and in the twelfth and last year of Jehoram of Israel Jehoram of Judah died, having reigned eight years. (I Kings 22:42,51; 2 Kings 3:1; 8:16,25.) These passages and this item of history well illustrate the difficulty of getting a certain chronology from a comparison of the lives of the kings of Judah and Israel; but it also shows that the account in Chronicles is reliable, for the total years under review agree even though the details do not show the closest harmony, owing, as we have said, to the method of counting which obtained. In this period the number of years for Judah is: Asa, three years; Jehoshaphat, twenty-five; Jehoram, eight; total, thirty-six. The number for Israel is: Ahab, twenty-two years; Ahaziah, two; Jehoram, twelve; a total of thirty-six, exactly the same as recorded of Judah when we take the Scripture statement that Jehoram of Judah reigned eight years.

With much love in the Lord, your brother,

J. HEMERY.

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