

Supplement: The Ahaziah and Jehoiachin Discrepancies

2 Kings 8:26 (NKJV) - *Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king...*

2 Chron. 22:2 (NKJV) - *Ahaziah was forty-two* years old when he became king...*

2 Kings 24:8 (NKJV) - *Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king...*

2 Chron. 36:9 (NKJV) - *Jehoiachin was eight* years old when he became king...*

Some translations read similarly to the NKJV and most of them include footnotes.

Other translations read twenty-two and eighteen in Chronicles, respectively.

Opponents of the Bible would love to point to the NKJV readings as examples of genuine contradictions. But there is an explanation which resolves the problem.

First, we can conclude that Ahaziah was 22, because his father, Jehoram, reigned from ages 32 to 40. Therefore, Jehoram was about 18 when Ahaziah was born. If Ahaziah had been 42, then he'd have been two years older than his own father. Jehoiachin was clearly not 8, based on the descriptions of his reign in 2 Kings 24:9 and Ezekiel 19.

Some of the ancient versions disagree in the Chronicles verses. Our translations are all primarily based on the Masoretic Text, a restoration of the Old Testament from Hebrew manuscripts. The oldest Masoretic version available to us is from around 1000 AD. A few centuries before Jesus, the Old Testament was translated into Greek. The Greek translation manuscripts are collectively called the Septuagint or LXX. Other ancient translations and additional Hebrew manuscripts also exist. The various manuscripts and ancient versions are often the first place textual critics and translators look when a discrepancy like this arises.

Many translators' footnotes in Chronicles disclose that some of the ancient texts have the incorrect numbers and others have the correct numbers. In fact, many translations use the correct numbers from non-Masoretic sources. Their readers would not even be aware of the discrepancies without reading the footnotes.

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For 2 Chronicles 22:2, the NET and others note that the LXX and Syriac versions have twenty-two, in agreement with 2 Kings 8:26. For 2 Chronicles 36:9, the NIV and others note that one Hebrew manuscript, some LXX texts, and the Syriac version have eighteen, in agreement with 2 Kings 24:8.

Ancient Hebrew used small marks for numbers. It's easy to see how a small mistake in one copy could create a branch of manuscripts containing the errors. Through textual criticism, we can determine that the original readings in Chronicles agreed with Kings, as reflected in most translations or their footnotes. Such copyist errors are rare, usually easy to resolve, and never concern a text vital to our understanding of God's will. We can be confident that God's word has remained intact throughout the ages and been accurately translated into our current dialect.

Christian apologists have made their articles on such matters freely available online and widely accessible in commentaries, study Bibles, other books, videos, etc.

Two free resources I recommend are:

ChristianCourier.com

ApologeticsPress.org