

But when did the co-reign of Azariah begin? It seems that we can only tell from counting backward from the reign of Menahem. Menahem acceded not earlier than 747 in the 39th year of Azariah. But could not Menahem have acceded later? It seems that the only reason we should say that Menahem reigned from 747-737 is to allow adequate intervals for his successors. The later we put Menahem's rule the more we must telescope Azariah's and Jotham's reigns, but at all events we must assume Azariah, Jotham, and Ahaz all co-kings at once¹ as we shall show, and therefore further telescoping is not impossible. But Menahem was succeeded by Pekahiah, for two years, and then by Pekah, who was the real king of Israel for a time at least as shown by his wars against Jotham (II K.15:37) and ~~xxxshxxmxhyxxm~~ Ahaz. (Isaiah 7). If therefor we assign Pekah three years alone, 735-732, and Pekahiah two years, 736-735, we put Menahem's reign at 746-736 at the latest, or, as we have said, 747-737 at the earliest. It seems we should allow Pekah at least these three years alone not only because his position was strong enough to be mentioned by the Assyrians² as well to allow his fighting against Jotham and Ahaz, but also because Ahaz is said to have acceded in Pekah's 17th year (II K.16:1,2), which would indicate that perhaps Pekah was the real king at that time. We shall not be far wrong by taking Menahem's reign from 747-737, making Azariah's reign, which began 39 yearsbefore, to be from 786 to 735. "The year that king Uzziah died" (Isa.6:1) therefore was 735 or very close to it. We need not be disturbed at having three kings on the throne of Judah at once, for we have reason to say that the overlapping

1. Thus Mach, loc. cit.; and Davis loc.cit. also.

2. Barton op. cit. p.464.