
The Judges

Times and Timeline

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Chronology is the backbone of history. ... Without exact chronology there can be no exact history. Until a correct chronology of a nation has been established, the events of that nation cannot be correctly integrated into the events of neighboring states. If history is to be a true and exact science, then it is of fundamental importance to construct a sound chronological framework about which may be fitted the events of states and the international world.

– Edwin Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*,
Chapter 1



Permit me, right at the outset, to caution everyone against believing that there can be complete accuracy with respect to chronology. Indeed, we would benefit by contemplating what that wise Teacher told his acquaintances: 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority' (Acts 1:7). It seems to me that Jesus as God and Lord, delivered this succinct verdict not solely regarding the end of the world but about all times, in order to discourage those who would dare attempt such a futile undertaking”

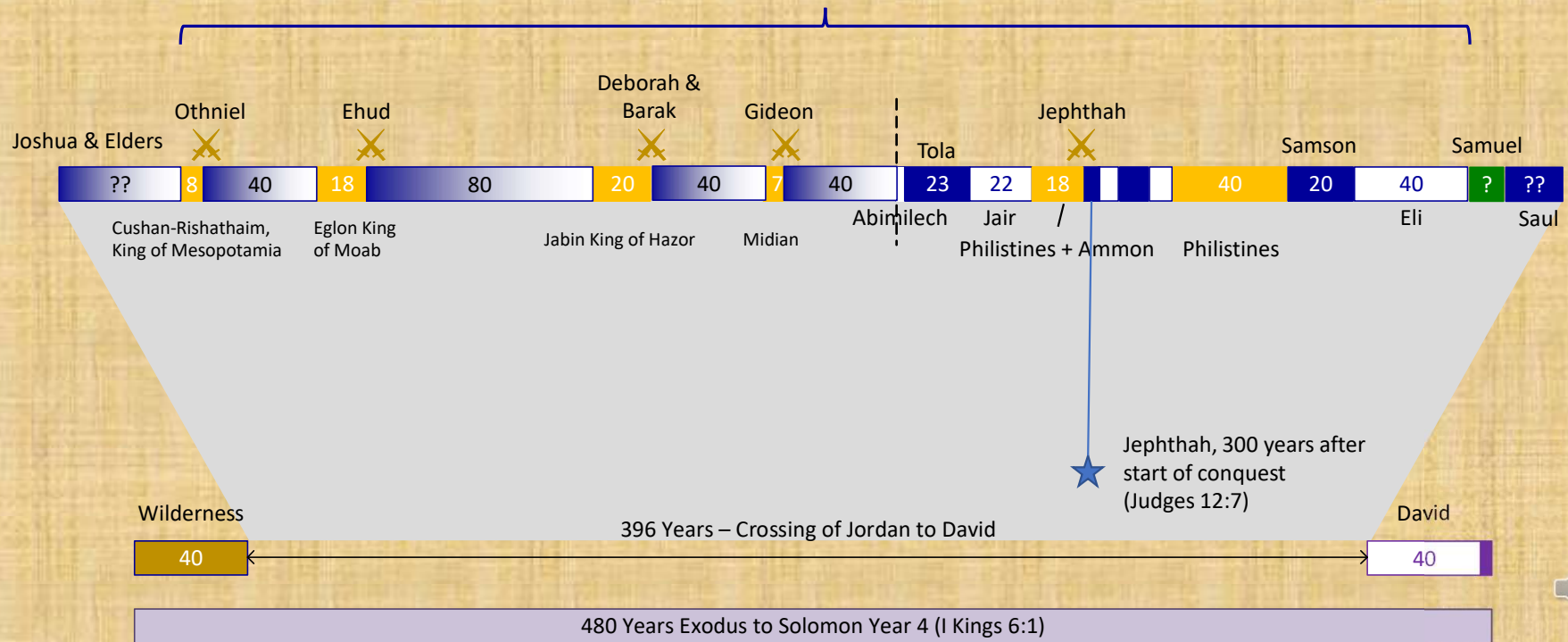
– Eusebius of Caesarea, introduction to his *Chronicle*. 325 AD



The Problem – Too many Years, Not Enough Time

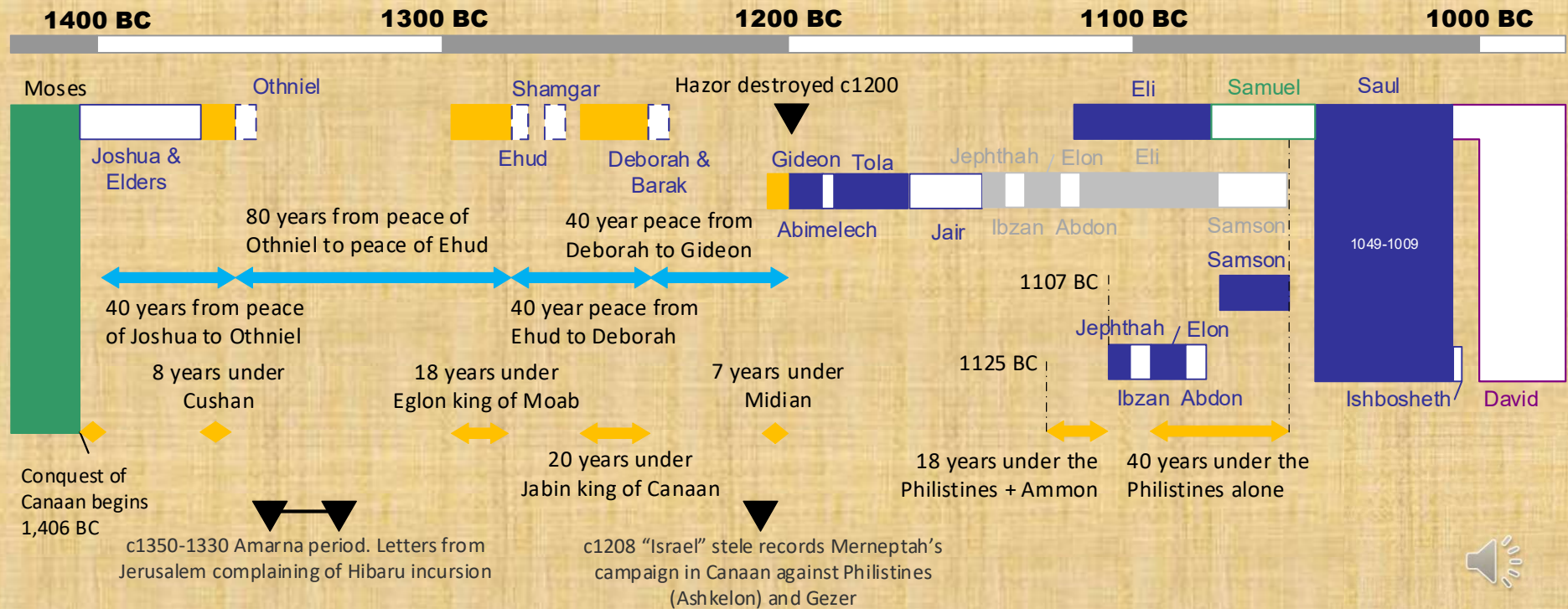
After that He gave them judges for about 450 years until Samuel the prophet
 – Acts 13:20 NKJV

450 Years



Other Attempts at Resolution

Ussher / Nolan-Jones Judges Chronology



Early and Late Periods

Remarkable	Unremarkable	Oppressors
Othniel	40 year gap	Cushan-Rishathaim (Mesopotamia / Mittani)
Ehud	80 year gap	Eglon (Moab)
Shamgar Deborah	40 year gap	Jabin (Hazor)
Gideon	40 year gap	Midian
Abimilech	Tola, Jair	
Jephthah	Ibzan, Elon, Abdon	Philistines + Ammon (Egypt)
Samson		Philistines (Egypt)



Flavius Josephus

Only significant judges recorded

All judges recorded

5.271 [Ibzan] did nothing in the seven years of his administration that was worth recording or deserved a memorial ...
 5.272 When Ibzan was dead after this manner, neither did Elon, who succeeded him in the government, and kept it ten years, do anything remarkable ...

Josephus – Filling in the blanks

Event	Biblical Reference	Biblical Years	Josephus Years	Josephus Reference
Exodus		Start	Start	
Jordan Crossed	Joshua 5:6, Deut 29:5, Many others	40	40	
Conquest Complete	Joshua 14:10. 45 years from initial spying	7	7	Ant 5.117: Joshua for 25 years after Moses. Ant 5.84-85 18 years from death of Joshua to first judge. 43 years total conquest to first judge, including 8 year oppression
Death of Joshua and Elders	Joshua 24:31, Judges 2:7	Not Given	28	
Oppression by Cushan-Rishathaim, King of Mesopotamia	Judges 3:8	8	8	
Othniel - Judah	Judges 3:11	40	40	Ant 5.184
Oppression by Eglon, King of Moab	Judges 3:14	18	18	Ant 5.187
Ehud	Judges 3:30	80	80	Ant 5.197. Note 5.198 curiously indicates "a short breathing time" after the Moabites before the oppression by Jabin
Shamgar / Philistines	Judges 3:31, Judges 5:6 - Shamagar was alive at the time of Deborah	Not Given	< 1 year	
Oppression by Jabin King of Hazor	Judges 4:3	20	20	Ant 5.200
Deborah & Barak	Judges 5:31	40	40	Ant 5.209
Oppression by Midian	Judges 6:1	7	7	Ant 5.210 Chapter Heading
Gideon / Jerubbaal	Judges 8:28	40	40	Ant 5.232

Early Period – Before Abimilech.
Alternating periods of peace and oppression



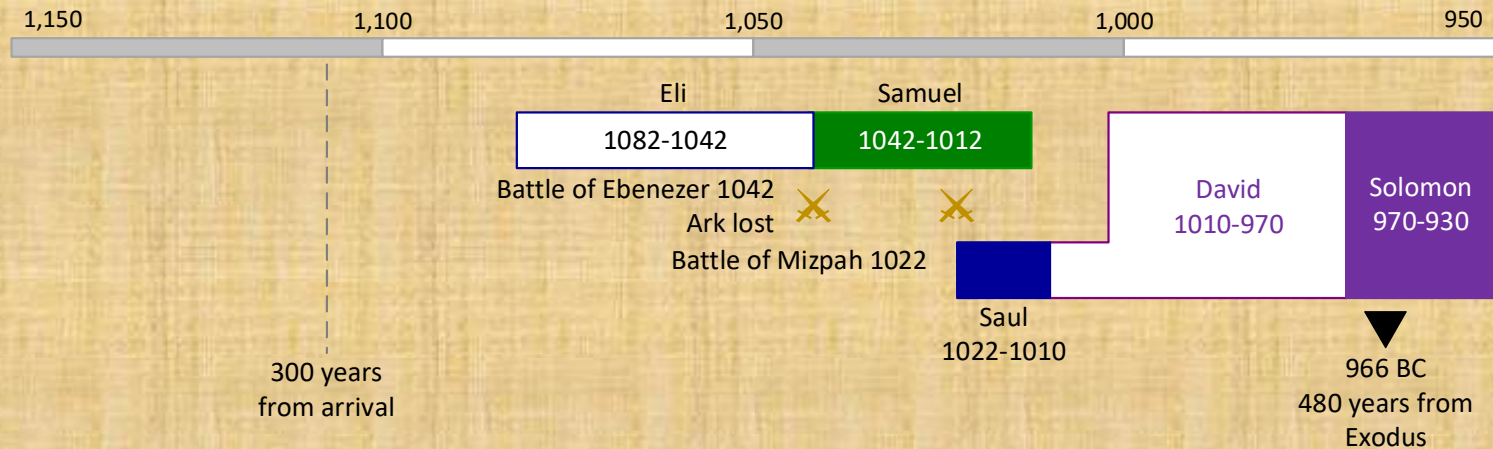
Josephus – Filling in more blanks, and leaving new ones

Event	Biblical Reference	Biblical Years	Josephus Years	Josephus Reference
Abimelech	Judges 9:22	3	3	Ant 5.239 referring to Jotham's time in hiding
Tola - Ephraim	Judges 10:2	23	Missing	None
Jair - Gilead	Judges 10:3	22	22	Ant 5.254
Oppression by Philistines + Ammon	Judges 10:8	18	18	Ant 5.263
Jephthah - Gilead	Judges 12:7, 300 years Judges 11:26	6	6	Ant 5.270. 300 years Ant 5.262
Ibzan - Judah	Judges 12:8	7	7	Ant 5.271
Elon - Zebulun	Judges 12:11	10	10	Ant 5.272
Abdon - Ephraim	Judges 12:1	8	Not Given	Ant 5.273
Oppression by Philistines	Judges 13:1	40	40	Ant 5.275
Samson - Dan	Judges 15:20 - "In the days of the Philistines"; Judges 16:31	20	20	Ant 5.316
Eli - Levi	I Samuel 4:18	40	40	Ant 5.357
Samuel - Levi	None	Not Given	12	Ant 6.292
Saul	No OT reference. Acts 13:21 gives 40 years	Not Given	20	Ant 6.378, 10.143. Ant 6 heading gives 32 for Samuel and Saul combined
David	II Samuel 5:5	40	40	
Solomon	To Foundation of Temple, I Kings 6:1	4	4	
Total		541	570	Composite total of 601 years (570 + 23 + 8)

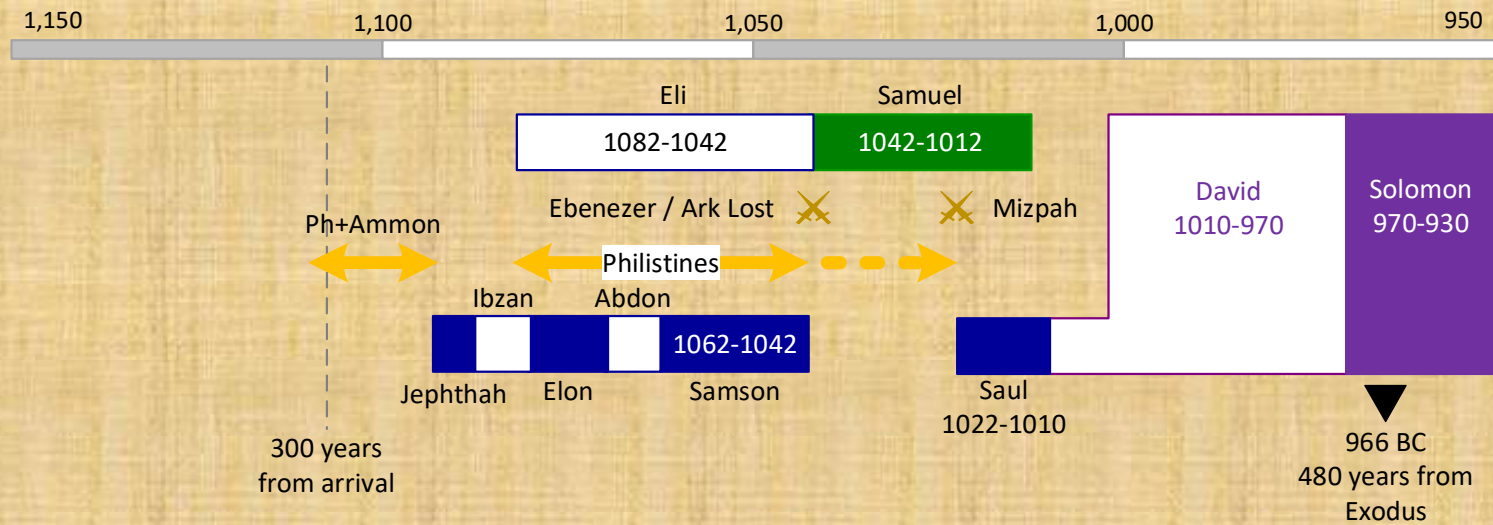
Late Period – After Abimelech. Continuous sequence of judges

Total of 517 years from Jordan crossing to David to squeeze into 396 years

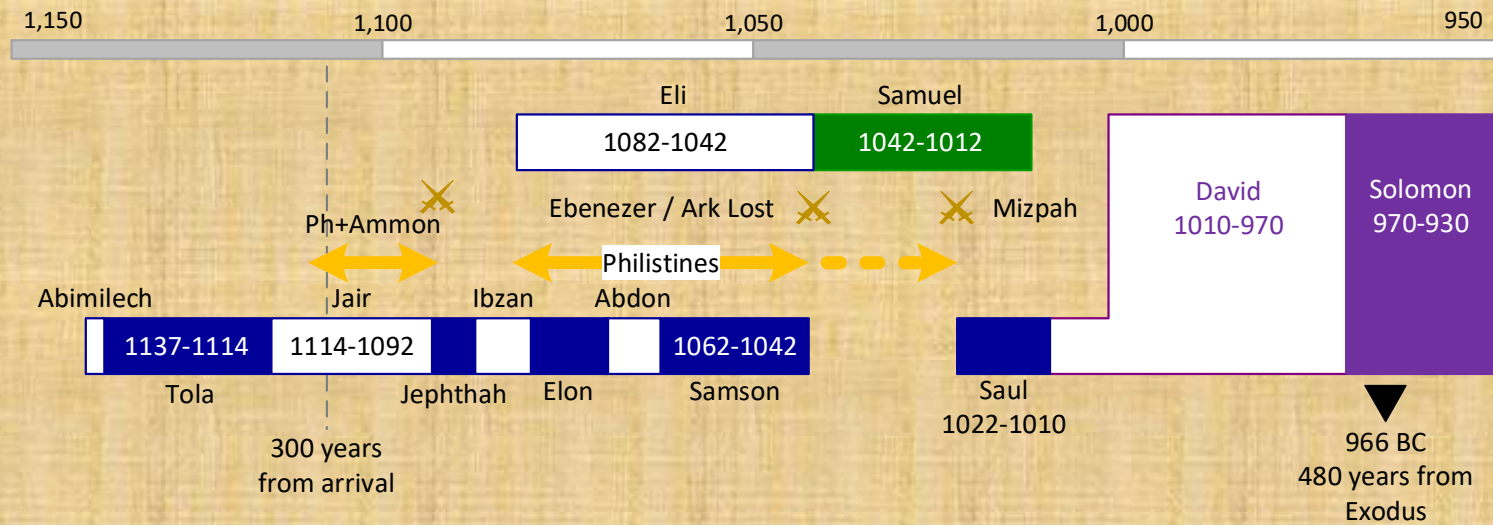
Starting at the end – the late, late period



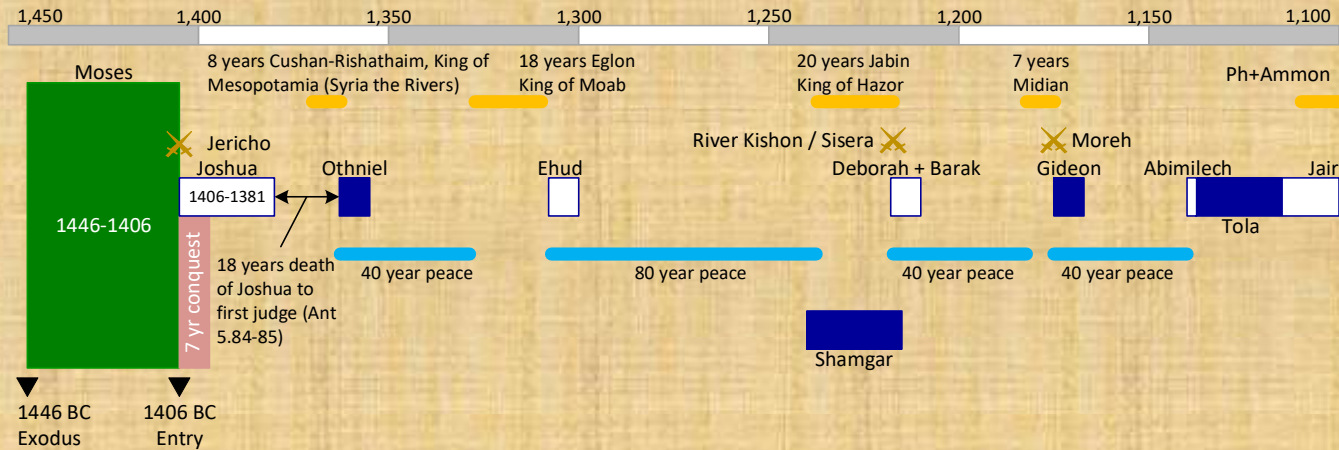
The Philistine Oppressions



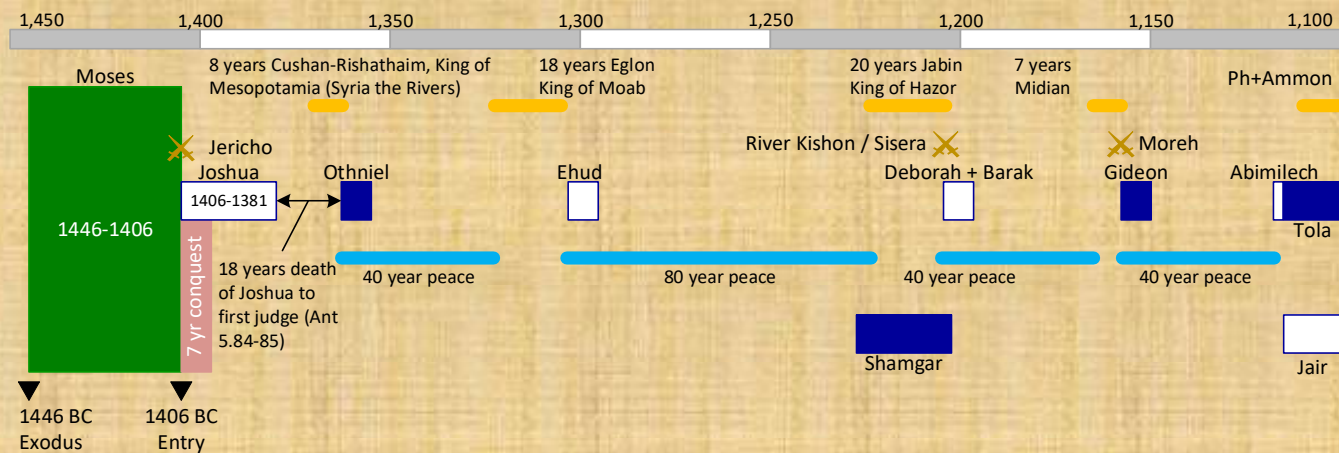
The Late Period



Early Period: Two Options



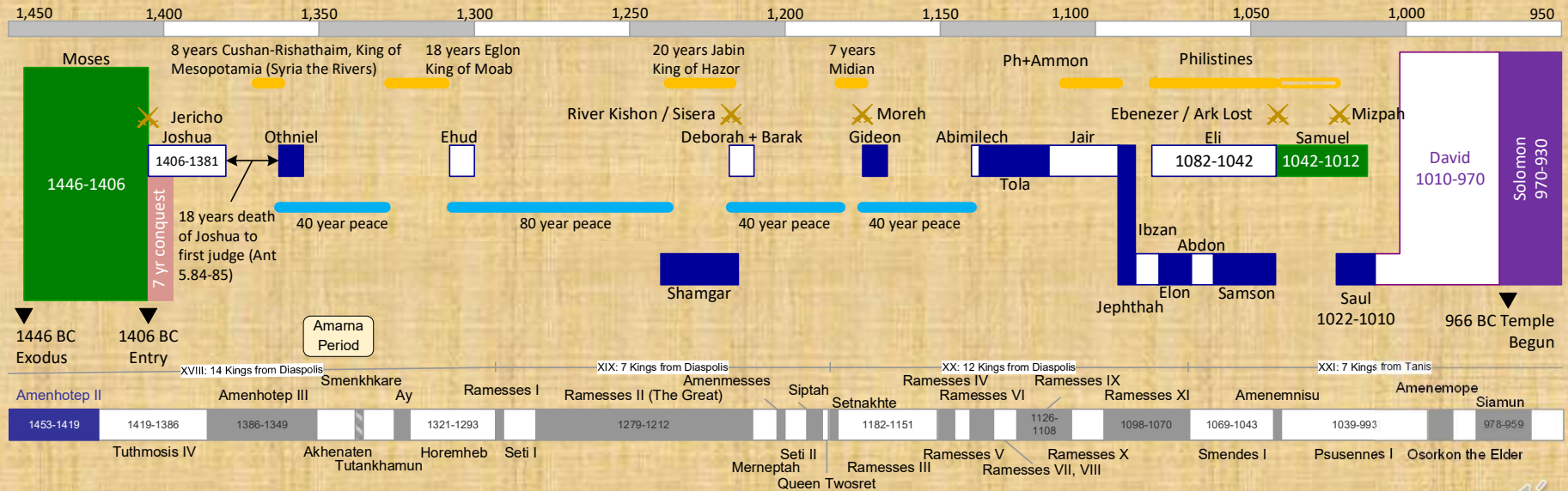
1) 40/80 year intervals are schematic. Actual periods average 35/70 years



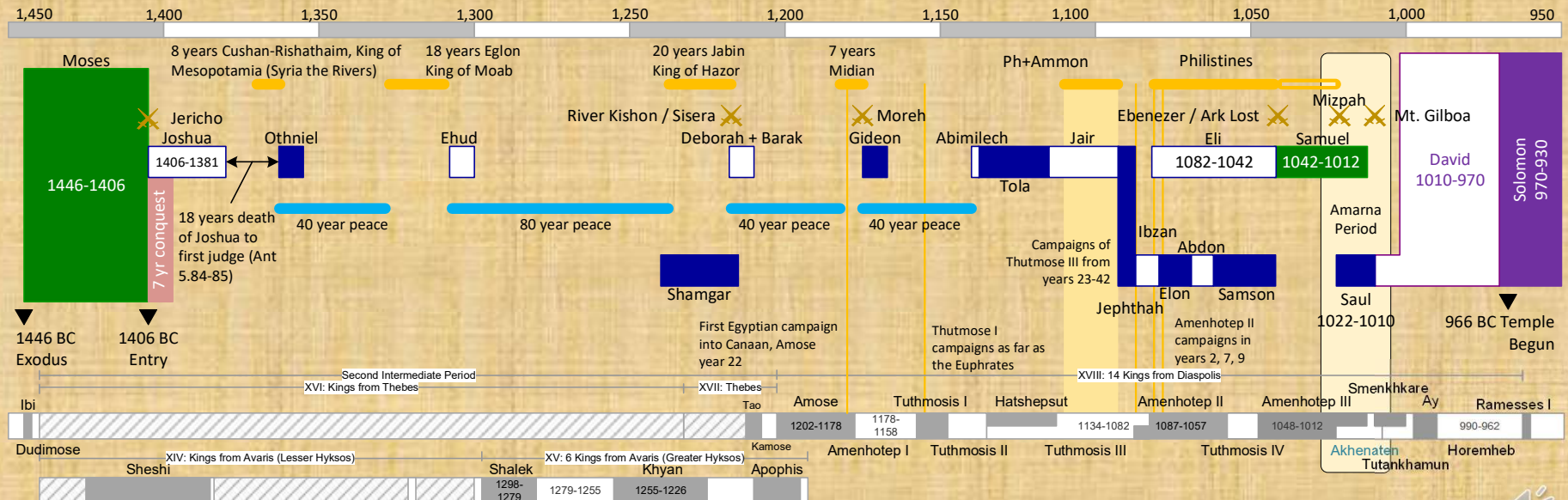
2) 40/80 year intervals are exact. Jair moves into parallel with Tola. Perhaps indicated by Josephus' omission of Tola?



The Judges Timeline in the Orthodox Chronology



The Judges Timeline in the New Chronology



Thank You

