

*Dating  
the  
Desolation*



Desolation of Jerusalem

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the  
Desolation*

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## INTRODUCTION

The “Times of the Gentiles” has been the subject of 19th century dispensational focus as well as part of the 20th century Bible Student fabric of chronology and signs of the times studies. One line of reasoning is based on the “seven times” of Leviticus 26. This is projected to be 2,520 years from the final overthrow of Jerusalem and extends to the expiring of the Gentile lease of power in AD 1914. This was first explained by Pastor Russell as early as 1876 in the “Bible Examiner” and then in 1889 in “Studies in the Scriptures” Volume II, as a period beginning in 606 BC and extending to AD 1914.

The year 606 for the destruction of Jerusalem was not generally supported by historians of that day nor since.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding, Pastor Russell regarded secular history as obscure prior to 536 BC and saw the Scriptures to clearly mark this date. The 1914 end of the prophecy was also found to be in harmony with other prophecy, chronology and parallel studies. So far as we know, he never presented evidence for any other dating for the fall of Jerusalem.

Challenge to this dating has persisted with mounting evidence in recent years. As Bible Students we cannot ignore history; in fact we use it. While we may not be able to verify exactly every event, and even use deductive reasoning on some points, we have a reasonable basis in history for confirming many prophetic and historical turning points. These include the BC dates: 2045, 1813, 1615, 1575, 606, 536, and 454 as well as a number of AD dates ie. 70, 539, 1517, 1799, 1874, 1878, and 1914. Some events may be obscure and we rely more on Scripture to determine what secular history does not clearly record. But sometimes the historical testimony persists and it would be right that we address it as best we can. R.L.Wysong wrote in “The Creation-Evolution Controversy:”

“Truth welcomes deliberate criticism, perusal, inspection, scrutiny, and review. A faith built upon a solid rational foundation invites criticism and welcomes refinement. If truth is our goal, why not open our views to close scrutinization: If we have the truth, our views will stand, if we don’t, let them fall.”

This paper attempts to address the challenge. We seek to have a substantial basis for our faith (Heb. 11:1). We do not claim to be neutral in this approach and such may be interpreted as less than objective. While we must not ignore the evidence, we realize reasonable minds reach different conclusions given the same testimony. Indeed, those who have sincerely presented the contrary evidence have a substantive basis in the historical record. However, where the historical evidence is subject to some question, we must allow faith based on an aggregate view of Scripture to rise above academic interpretation of ancient history. With this background, this paper may be considered a defense for the 606 dating and an examination of the countering evidence with some measure of objectivity.

Notwithstanding our attempt to look objectively at the historical and archaeological evidence, we are compelled to say this is not an exact science. In this respect we quote from William I. Mann on R.561 in December 1883:

“The subject of ancient chronology is confessedly a very difficult one. Of many early and important events there are no reliable dates; of others, different authors assign widely different periods. As we search backward, the further we go the less reliable is the history, until—outside of the Scriptures—we finally reach the fabulous age, where all is myth and imagination.

There are a number of reasons for this condition of things.

1. Chronology was, apparently, very little used in the earlier ages.
2. Different eras in starting points were used by different authors, and by the same author at different times.
3. Several ways of reckoning time were used.
4. Printing being unknown, and original documents unattainable, much was written from tradition and conjecture.
5. We do not in many cases have the first or actual record, but only second or third-handed and often conflicting statements.
6. Where the original records exist, as in Egyptian hieroglyphics or Babylonian bricks, we are still dependent on meager and conjectural translations.

The Bible, so far as it gives chronology, seems to be the only reliable source, but of course it is reliable, in the fullest sense, only to those who have faith in it.

Between one and two hundred different systems of chronology have been formed; most of them, too, by men of learning and research; so that it is not wise to become dogmatic over the date of ancient events which rest on profane, and therefore possibly unreliable history. Much less does it become a professed Christian to attempt to undermine the Scriptures by combating them with data which are acknowledged to be only approximate.”

We will first look at the overall period of the prophecy and how Pastor Russell arrived at the 606 dating. Next we will examine the sources of evidence used to challenge this position, and alternatives to deal with the evidence. Then treatises in defense of the 606 dating will be reviewed, followed by a comparison of some key Scriptures and a conclusion summary. A supplementary section is appended to assemble Scriptures on the era of Nebuchadnezzar, Darius and Cyrus, the 70-year prophecies and Gentile Times for convenient reference.

A final note on dating is in order. For simplicity, reference is made only to whole years projected according to the Gregorian calendar. It is recognized that there were both Spring and Autumn year systems among the nations of the Near East. But historians generally project a view of January calendar years in the BC period for consistent reference. This system also projects that 1 BC is followed by AD 1 with no year “zero” between.<sup>2</sup> Historians have also accounted for “accession” and “non-accession” year systems for counting the years of a reign. This is useful to identify the month of a year in which an event occurred. However, this paper simply deals with projected whole Julian years.

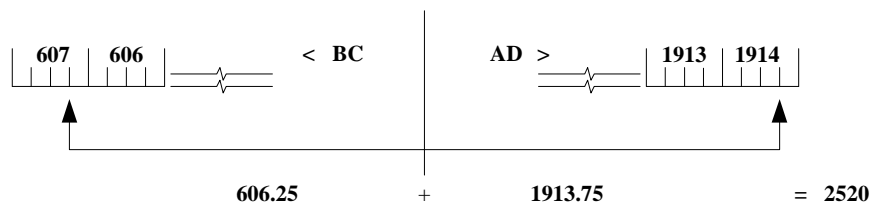
These notes were originally prepared simply as a research project. They later became a useful resource for others. We assume the readers are well familiar with the writings of Pastor Russell and specially those of Volumes II and III of “Studies in the Scriptures.” The premises established there are not repeated here except as they relate to the general Scriptural evidence.

This treatise should not be considered a final statement of the case. There are areas for expansion and clarification. The Scripture prophecies themselves need continuing focus with a clear understanding. The historical and archaeological records need to be viewed in greater detail. So we welcome your input on this subject.



## THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

The prophetic testimony is drawn from evidence in Genesis, Leviticus, Ezekiel, Daniel and Luke. This line of evidence follows a period of 2,520 years of Gentile dominion over Israel from 606 BC to AD 1914, normally stated as full years. Actually the period runs from the Autumn of 607 BC to the Autumn of 1914. Mathematically this is expressed as:  $606.25 + 1913.75 = 2,520$ . This considers that there were 606 and a quarter years in the BC period and 1913 and three quarter years in the AD period. (Edgar: Great Pyramid Passages Vol.2, Par.597) This is illustrated as:



The general designation is 606 to 1914, as these are the most complete years at each end. A full account of the prophetic evidence can be found in “*Studies in the Scriptures*” Volume II, study IV, Page 73. This period is understood to begin with the fall of Jerusalem at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the dethroning of Judah’s last king, Zedekiah, and also involves the deportation of Jews to Babylon and the desolating of the land for 70 years until the decree of Cyrus in 536 allowing Jews to return.

Secular history usually represents 536 for the decree of Cyrus and generally 587/586 for the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar for the fall of Jerusalem and the fall of Zedekiah, with some notable exceptions.<sup>3</sup> This represents a difference of 20 years from traditional Bible Student chronology and allows only 50 years from the destruction of Jerusalem until the decree of Cyrus. The use of such a date involves several other adjustments in the chronological and prophetic chain for periods beginning before this date. This includes the 6,000 years from Adam and the Jewish Age Double.

Evidence in the last 50 years from the historical, astronomical and archaeological field have added to the 587/586 dating. Bible Students have several different options as how to regard these challenges.

1. Evaluate the evidence and demonstrate its weak areas, challenge the interpretation of secular history, and confirm the traditional views.
2. Seek ways to accommodate secular history to present views of Bible chronology by maintaining the dates but redefining the events and persons to which the prophetic periods are attached.
3. Adopt the evidence and adjust the chronology and prophetic interpretation as necessary.
4. Make no response to the evidence and wait for all truth to be revealed in God’s own time.

There may be other options than these, but we think items 2,3 and 4 have serious consequences. Certainly the question will persist if ignored.

It has been proposed that the 1914 date is an inheritance from Nelson H. Barbour originating in the first issue of his publication, “*Herald of the Morning*,” June 1875. Actually Barbour didn’t originate the study on the Gentile Times. The topic and dating was a focus of study in Europe and America from the 1830s onward. In 1842 William Miller treated it in a book titled, “*The Second Coming of Christ*.” Though he begins the prophecy from the earlier overthrow of the ten northern tribes by the Assyrian Esarhaddon, yet he used the same chronology for dating the captivity by Nebuchadnezzar in 607 BC. Various treatises on pre-millennialism and the Gentile times appeared in England in the 1850s and 1860s. H.G.Guinness expounded on this prophecy in the 1880s in “*Approaching the end of the Age*” and “*Light for the Last Days*.”

That Pastor Russell built on and refined the studies of others is evident. Thirteen years before publishing Volume II of *Studies in the Scriptures*, he printed an article in the October 1876 issue of *"The Bible Examiner"* with essentially the same explanation of the 2,520 years from 606 BC through AD 1914 as later printed in Volume II. There was obviously an on-going collaboration in the study and refining of the subject. For many Bible Students the events of 1914 established the correctness of his compilation and presentation of this prophecy.

He presents the date of 606 BC by using Ptolemy's date for the first year of Cyrus as 536, adding 70 years for the desolation and arriving at 606. See *"Studies in the Scriptures"* Volume II, pages 79-80. Basically the whole chronology presentation follows the same methodology. 3,522 years of Bible history are accounted from Adam through the period of the kings. Seventy years desolation are added, and secular history is used from 536 BC.

In summary this is what is presented in Volume II, page 42:

$$3,522 + 70 + 536 + 1872 = 6,000 \text{ years.}$$

In volume II of *"Studies in the Scriptures"* page 52, Pastor Russell makes a concise statement regarding the identity of the 70 years:

Usher dates the seventy years desolation *eighteen years* earlier than shown above—i.e., before the dethronement of Zedekiah, Judah's last king—because he figured the king of Babylon took many of the people captive at that time. [Note, however, this partial captivity occurred *eleven*, not eighteen, years before the dethronement of King Zedekiah.] (2Chron.36:9,10,17; 2Kings 24:8-16) He evidently makes the not uncommon mistake of regarding those seventy years as the period of *captivity*, whereas the Lord expressly declares them to be seventy years of *desolation* of the land, that the land should lie "desolate, without an inhabitant." Such was not the case prior to Zedekiah's dethronement. (2Kings 24:14) But the desolation which followed Zedekiah's overthrow was complete; for, though some of the poor of the land were left to be vine-dressers and husbandmen (2Kings 25:12), shortly even these—"all people, both small and great"—fled to Egypt for fear of the Chaldees. (Verse 26) There can be no doubt here: and therefore in reckoning the time to the *desolation of the land*, all periods up to the close of Zedekiah's reign should be counted in, as we have done.

On Reprint page 3437, after quoting the above, he says:

From the foregoing it is evident that the time of writing DAWN II, we were fully aware that "Ptolemy's Cannon" and "Usher's Chronology" cut short the "*seventy years*" "desolation of the land," and counted them as but *fifty-one* years, Usher endeavoring to make the Bible account agree with "Ptolemy's Cannon." We, however, have followed the Bible record exactly and persistently, and took secular history only where Bible history ended. We cannot make seventy years' *desolation of the land* into fifty-one years' desolation for the sake of harmony with Ptolemy. (Dan.9:2; 2Chron.36:21) Indeed we reject all of Ptolemy's Canon back of the first year of Cyrus, 536 A.D.—the farther back it goes, the greater its errors.

There is also this treatment of the subject on Reprint 1372 where Pastor Russell writes:

It was in fulfillment of this covenant on God's part that the events of this lesson came to pass. Judah, like backsliding Israel (the ten tribes), which had been previously carried away captives (2Kings 17:1-24), had not profited by that example of the Lord's displeasure, nor by the warnings of his prophets, but had outrivalled her sister in corruption (Jer.3:8); and now her cup of iniquity was full and the Lord poured upon her her merited punishment, due alike to king and people; for "neither Zedekiah, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the Lord which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah."

The seventy years which followed the overthrow here depicted are frequently referred to as the seventy years captivity, but the Scriptures designate them the seventy years desolation of the land—a desolation which had been predicted by the prophet Jeremiah (25:11), saying,



“And this whole land shall be a desolation, and this nation shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” The completeness of the desolation is shown in verses 8 and 9 of this lesson and also in 2Chron.36:17-21; and although the king of Babylon allowed certain of the poor of the land to remain, and gave them vineyards and fields, yet it was the Lord’s purpose that the land of Israel should be *desolate* seventy years, and so it was. In the same year Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had made governor and under whom many of the Jewish fugitives were disposed to return from neighboring countries, was assassinated, and the entire population speedily removed into Egypt for fear of the wrath of the king of Babylon.—2Kings 25:21-26; Jer.41:1-3; 43:5,6.

The reason why the land must be *desolate*, and that for exactly seventy years, is a very interesting study, and it is clearly stated to be—“To fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath to fulfill threescore and ten [70] years.” (2Chron.36:21.) For a full explanation of this See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., Chap. vi. The significance of the seventy years desolation is shown on page 191.

Pastor Russell examines the principles of using the sacred record versus astronomy and secular connections prior to 536 BC in a lengthy article on Reprint page 1974 and in a short article on page 3467. Further support for the 70 year prophecy beginning with the overthrow of Zedekiah is found on Reprint pages 2401-2. Addressing those who used other dates for Nebuchadnezzar’s reign and consequently his 19th year when Jerusalem was burned, he writes on Reprint pages 1975-6:

If then, we rely upon the Bible as an inspired declaration on the subject, why should we not use it *as far as it goes*—to the “seventy years of desolation of the land,” and thus to Cyrus. Why not believe that God intended thus to provide a chronology as long as it was needed?

But did not Messrs. Totten, Dimbley and Usher pursue this safe plan, and make use of the inspired chronology of the Bible as far as it will go,—down to the first year of Cyrus? No, they did not. They admit that the first year of Cyrus was the end of the “seventy years of desolation of the land;” and that date is well established as BC 536; but instead of *following* the Bible line of chronology back of that, and making the uncertain dates of secular history conform to the positive statements of the Bible, they reverse the matter, and attempt to make the Bible record agree with the secular dates, admitted to be quite obscure and uncertain. For instance, they adopt the uncertain secular date for the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign; and then referring to Dan.1:1, they *thus* fix the date of Jehoiakim’s reign and alter other matters to suit. Then again, they apply the “seventy years” as years of *captivity* and begin them in the third year of Jehoiakim; whereas the Scriptures unequivocally declare, repeatedly, that those were years of “desolation of the land,” “without an inhabitant.” (Jer.25:11,12; 29:10; 2Chron.36:21; Dan.9:2.) In this manner the remainder of the reign of Jehoiakim and all the reign of Zedekiah (18 years) are reckoned in as part of the “seventy,” whereas Scripturally they were previous and, therefore, additional years.

Recent treatises propose to change two tenets of this view of the Scriptures. First the phrase, “the uncertain secular date for the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign” is claimed to be well established by further research and discovery to be 604 BC and hence his 19th year in which Jerusalem fell was 586 BC.

The second area of challenge is whether the 70 years prophecy applies exclusively to “desolation of the land.” It is claimed that many scriptures have a broader application including earlier captivities and also other nations. This argument would apply the prophecy before the fall of Jerusalem and include the previous invasions and captives taken by Nebuchadnezzar.

The second argument appears to be a rationale only given that the first premise can be proved. Therefore, we should carefully scrutinize texts like Isa.23:15,17 and Zech.1:12; 7:5 and recognize that they refer to the same periods as 2Chron.36:21 and Jer.25:12; 29:10. We will mainly focus on the lines of evidence produced to establish the first year of Nebuchadnezzar.

## DARIUS THE MEDE AND CYRUS THE GREAT:

Before looking at the events that mark the beginning of the Gentile Times, it may be well to identify the events surrounding 536 BC. This has traditionally been the date accepted as ending the 70 years of desolation that begin the Gentile Times.

The date for the first year of Cyrus is fixed by majority consent of ancient chronologers in 559 BC. Some say he headed a revolt and captured the Median king Astyages. Others fix the date at which Cyrus assumed command of the Persian army. Ptolemy has a shorter reign for Cyrus of only 9 years beginning at the fall of Babylon, 538 BC. Cyrus' death is fixed by Ptolemy and confirmed by H.F. Clinton as 529 BC. The year of his decree for liberty to Jewish captives in Babylon fell in the midst of his reign, after the fall of Media and then of Babylon. This is called the "first year of Cyrus" in Ezra 1:1. This must refer to his first year of administration over the Jews, being the first year of their release and revival of Judaism. This is not the same as history's first recorded year for Cyrus.

This leaves the question, who was "Darius the Mede" noted in the book of Daniel, after the fall of Babylon and when was the year of Cyrus' decree? History generally concurs that the armies of Cyrus entered Babylon and conquered the city without a major battle in 538 BC. Belshazzar, the local governor, was slain and Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, deposed.

Darius the Mede of the book of Daniel is not the same as Darius Hystaspis of Ezra and Haggai. Darius Hystaspis was the grandson of Cyrus' uncle. He succeeded to the Persian throne in the generation after Cyrus' son, Cambyses II. This is certainly not the Darius noted in the book of Daniel.

Darius the Mede was on the throne of Babylon after its fall to the Medes and Persians by Cyrus. He was either appointed by Cyrus or shared a co-regency over the domain. Who was this Mede and how long he ruled has been an issue of some question. His identity is extremely obscure in history. McClintock and Strong offers the opinions that Darius was:

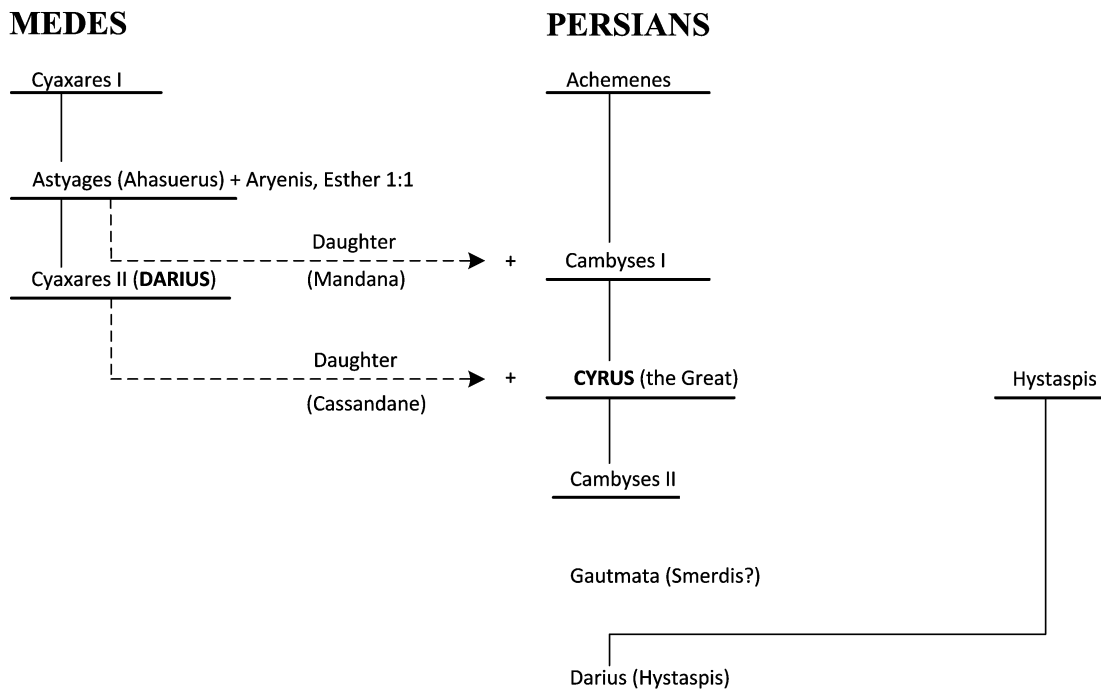
1. The same as Astyages, the last king of the Medes.
2. A son of Astyages, Cyaxares II.

Albert O. Hudson, of England, agrees with the first proposition. In the "*Bible Study Monthly*" 1980 Vol.57, No.5, he makes a case that it was Astyages, who was Darius, and was blood related to the Babylonian house of Nebuchadnezzar, through his sister. His position is consistent with Herodotus who claims Astyages was the last Median ruler and that he had no male successor. In effect this means there was no Cyaxares II.

The second proposition is based on the record of Xenophon, a Greek historian and philosopher who wrote about 400 BC, and a view adopted by Josephus. Cyaxares II is reported to be the uncle (mother's brother) to Cyrus. At the same time he was Cyrus' father-in-law. Cyrus married his cousin, the daughter of Cyaxares II. This marriage was a gesture of solidarity between the two empires after Cyrus' uncle (a Mede) showed jealousy over Cyrus' successes and prominence. Cyaxares had only a daughter and no male heir to the throne. Cyrus heaped praise on his uncle and married his uncle's daughter, before undertaking the joint forces campaign against Babylon. He then awaited for his uncle's death before assuming the sole rulership. Josephus writes in *Antiquities* X,11,4:

When Babylon was taken by Darius, and when he, with his kinsman Cyrus, had put an end to the dominion of the Babylonians, he was sixty-two years old. He was the son of Astyages, and had another name among the Greeks. Moreover, he took Daniel the prophet, and carried him with him into Media, and honored him very greatly, and kept him with him; for he was one of the three presidents whom he set over his three hundred and sixty provinces, for into so many did Darius put them.

The following family tree is offered as the likely relationships between the Medes and Persians. Here we see the sister (Mandana) of Darius the Mede as the mother of Cyrus the Great, and Cyrus with a Persian father married the Daughter of his uncle Darius to bond the two empires.



Dr. John Whitcomb in “*Darius the Mede*” makes a well researched case for Darius being a certain Gubaru noted in the Nabonidus Chronicle. He extensively cross references this person in other Babylonian documents indexed in the Chicago Oriental Institute. He contends Gubaru was a de facto king or district governor appointed by Cyrus. Whitcomb answers objections to this hypotheses and challenges other theories on his identity.

Whatever his identity, we are interested to know the duration of his rule. The release of Jews under Cyrus’ decree does not appear to have occurred until Darius is off the scene. McClintock and Strong says this occurred in 536 BC, “*at the close of the two years, during which Darius the Mede held the viceroyship of Babylon.*” It should be noted that these two years are a deduction affirmed by a number of historians.<sup>4</sup>

Medo-Persia was able to overthrow the long standing kingdom of Babylon. Xenophon reports this coalition was with Cyaxares II, son of Astyages. If this was Cyrus’ uncle and/or father-in-law, there was good reason for sharing authority in the kingdom.

In Daniel 9, the first year of Darius (over Babylon), Daniel understood Jeremiah’s prophecy that the desolation of Jerusalem would last 70 years. Later in the chapter Daniel is given the vision concerning the 70 weeks to “seal up the vision and prophecy.” As Bible Students, we understand the larger scope of this vision extending to the advent of the Messiah. Nevertheless 70 weeks are literally 1 year, 4 and a half months. The date for the fall of Babylon is generally accepted as being about October 538 BC. If Daniel regarded the 70-year prophecy of Jeremiah at all literal, 70 more weeks would extend exactly to the Spring of 536 BC as the date for Darius’ death and Cyrus decree.

Charles Rollin in “*Ancient History*,” suggests that at the death of Darius, Daniel was instrumental in approaching Cyrus on the importance of the 70-year prophecy of Jeremiah. Knowing there was no immediate heir to the Persian throne, Cyrus waited for his uncle’s death before assuming the unopposed monarchy over both Media and Persia. At this point the smaller of the two horns (Persia) on the Medo-Persian ram of Daniel 8:3 became the greater. Cyrus, being a man accustomed to consulting the “gods,” and interested in stabilizing the realm once dominated by the Babylonians, now issued his famous decree, Ezra 1:1-3.

## THE ISSUE:

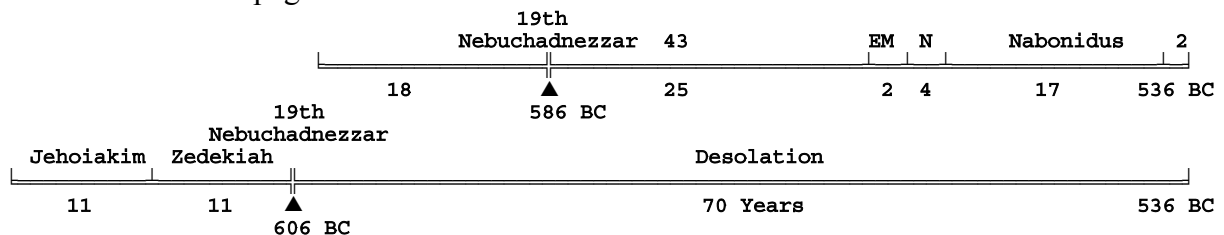
Pastor Russell treated the 70 years after Zedekiah from a Scriptural viewpoint and did not trace the Babylonian kings during this time. This, along with prior Scripture Chronology, provides the link to 536 BC as the first year of Cyrus, an acknowledged but not proven date in secular in history.

The claim is made by secular historians that the Babylonian kings only occupied 50 years from the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar (when Jerusalem fell), to Cyrus. The orthodox position is that Jerusalem fell 20 years after 606 BC, namely in 586 BC.

Historians assert these reigns can be established as:

		21 years	Nabopolassar	625-605 BC
From 19th year	{ 25 2 4 0 17 2 = 50	43 years	Nebuchadnezzar	604-562
		2 years	Evil-Merodach	561-560
		4 years	Neriglissar	559-556
			Labash-Marduk (a few months)	556
		17 years	Nabonidus	555-539
		2 years	Cyrus co-regency with Darius	538-537
		7 years	Cyrus sole regency over Babylon	536-529

Graphically this is illustrated below with Bible Student chronology underneath. Details of these two systems are shown on page 60.



Secular history uses a number of sources to establish the time links back to the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar for the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. These include both historians and original documents. Nevertheless, the date for the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar is only deduced from other reference points and lacks any Babylonian chronicle for that exact year. Edwin Thiele admits in his book, *"A chronology of the Hebrew Kings,"* Pages 70-71:

"We have no record from a Babylonian source for the interesting years 588 to 586 when, according to the Biblical record, Nebuchadnezzar was engaged in his final siege of Jerusalem. It is to be sincerely hoped that the Babylonian tablets for that important period will some day be recovered."

The main historians are:

Herodotus: (484-420 BC) Wrote a history of the Greco-Persian Wars that stands as the first great narrative and critical history in the ancient world.

Ctesias: Britannica: "(400 BC) Greek physician and historian of Persia and India whose works were the only historical writings of his time based on official Persian sources...Ctesias began writing his *'Persica,'* a history of Assyria-Babylonia in 23 books covering the period of the ancient Assyrian monarchy, the founding of the Persian kingdom, and the history of Persia down to 398 BC. Although his material was gathered from Persian archives and state records, its credibility is dubious because of its legendary quality and the fact that Ctesias was writing expressly to contradict the chronology of the Greek historian Herodotus."

- Berosus: A Babylonian priest who wrote a history named, “Babylonia” in 281 BC. His writings are lost, but extracts exist in the writings of Josephus and Eusebius.
- Xenophon: Born at Athens in 445 BC. At an early age he became a pupil of Socrates. At the age of 40 he joined an expedition to travel and fight with the Persian army. He wrote both as a journalist and historian. In a work titled “Cryopaedia,” he relates the history of Cyrus and the beginning of the Persian empire. He does not write extensively of events before this.
- Polyhistor: Died in 35 BC. His most important work, of which only fragments exist, consists of 42 books of historical and geographical accounts of nearly all the countries of the ancient world. His other notable treatise is about the Jews; it reproduces in paraphrase relevant excerpts from Jewish, Samaritan, and Gentile writers.
- Ptolemy: AD 70-160. He wrote “The Almagest” showing the reigns of Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian kings. He also dates various astronomical observations. Ptolemy based his historical information on sources dating from the Seleucid period, which began more than 250 years after Cyrus captured Babylon. It is not surprising that Ptolemy’s figures agree with those of Berosus.<sup>5</sup>

The weakness of historical sources lies in the fact that the oldest account is 200 years after the events in question, while the historians had their own bias and lack of objectivity. There is evidence that later historians used the accounts of earlier writers and generally did not have access to original Assyrian and Babylonian records, except for Ctesias and Berosus; and the account of Ctesias has been called into question. Therefore Berosus is the only credible writer near the events having access to state records.

The crucial 43 + 2 + 4 + 17 year sequence for Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, Neriglissar and Nabonidus come from Berosus and Ptolemy. If Ptolemy used Berosus as a resource, we are left to Berosus alone for this historical testimony. George Rawlinson in his work, “Five Great Monarchies” Volume II, Pages 43-52, analyzes the major historians and their relative value. From this it is apparent that we need original sources and verification if we are to focus on the specifics of a 20 year period. Original sources include:

- Babylonian Chronicle: Cuneiform texts catalogued in the British Museum.
- Babylonian King lists: Cuneiform texts covering the Neo-Babylonian era.
- Royal Inscriptions: Building inscriptions, cylinders, steles, annals, etc.
- Business Documents: Thousands of cuneiform texts of economic and administrative items such as contract tablets, official letters and legal records.
- Astronomy Diaries: A group of documents in the British Museum recording astronomical observations by astronomers at Babylon. More than 1,200 fragments were discovered in the 1870s and 1880s, of which about one third are dateable. Only 6 are dated from the seventh through the sixth centuries BC. The others are more recent.

A number of writers and historians support a traditional view of the Babylonian period from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus that differs with Bible Student Chronology. Some of the contemporary treatises are: Carl O. Jonsson, “*The Gentile Times Reconsidered*” and Edwin R. Thiele in, “*A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings*” and “*The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings.*”<sup>6</sup> Though the testimony would seem consistent, we pose the following questions on the evidence.

**Evidence # 1** is the British Museum document (BM 21946) that establishes the length of the reign of Nabopolassar (the father to Nebuchadnezzar) as 21 years. This is not significant in itself, except to confirm elements of the “bridge” statement in evidence # 4. Nabopolassar’s reign comes prior to the 50/70 year period in question.

**Evidence # 2** is a king list which also verifies 21 years for Nabopolassar and 43 for Nebuchadnezzar. The latter can also be verified by comparing 2Kings 24:12; 25:27 and Jer.52:31. (Nebuchadnezzar 8th thru 43 = 36 + 1 Evil-Merodach = 37) But the list is damaged in the years of the last 3 kings of Babylon, Neriglissar, Labash-Marduk and Nabonidus. In each case the damaged portion is the statement of the first portion of years of the reign, followed by an undamaged additive segment of years. What was the purpose of stating the reign in two segments? Evil-Merodach, Labash-Marduk and Neriglissar may be the least verifiable reigns in this whole sequence. If between them there existed 20 more years than assumed, the chronology would concur with the Volume II presentation.

**Evidence # 3** is the Adda-Guppi Stele and is the only evidence that confirms the entire 43 + 2 + 4 + first 9 years of Nabonidus. This is possibly a strong challenging evidence as it not only twice lists the segments but also gives the aggregate total years and agree with those of Ptolemy’s Canon. Key questions regarding this inscription are:

1. Stele H1,A, discovered in 1906 was found to have this portion of the text damaged. A “duplicate” stele (NABON H1,B) was found in 1956 with this portion in tact. Is the authenticity of the second clearly verifiable? How common was it to have duplicate commemorative plates made of a mother’s history?
2. Is the translation of the text credibly and verifiably translated? Particularly, is there any question as to the rendering of the 2 and 4 years of Evil-Merodach and Neriglissar?
3. Can the text be accurately attributed to Nabonidus’ mother in the ninth year of his reign? Did she dictate it, or was it written by a later writer concerning her?
4. Pritchard’s translation of the text reveals two inclusive lists. The first is for the last 22 of Assurbanipal, 3 Ashur-etil-ili, 21 Nabopolassar, 43 Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Evil-Merodach, 4th year of Neriglissar. This is said to sum to 95 years. The second list includes 21 Nabopolassar, 43 Nebuchadnezzar, 4 Neriglissar. This is said to span 68 years. Has no one noticed the discrepancy of omitting 2 for Evil-Merodach in the second list that otherwise would have totaled 70 years? What does this do to the credibility of the document?

**Evidence # 4**, The Hillah stele is also an inclusive inscription and forms a “bridge” over the critical reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach and Neriglissar to the accession year of Nabonidus. The temple at Haran had been in ruins for 54 years when it was restored. In other documents it is determined that it was “looted” in the 16th year of Nabopolassar.

1. Does the text say the 54 years reach to “accession year” of Nabonidus?
2. Are “looting” and “destroyed” synonymous and occur at the same time, or could the destruction have occurred during Nebuchadnezzar’s reign?
3. Does Nabonidus claim to have done the work in the same year as his dream, or does it refer to a work done earlier?
4. Do we have evidence that the temple was restored by Nabonidus and is it the same one that was destroyed?

**Evidence # 5** is based on the absence of any accounting in commercial texts for periods longer than allotted for the last 3 kings of Babylon. While thousands of such texts have been unearthed, this is a massive task to correlate and draw conclusions from this material. The main source of information is an 1878 report by W.C.Boscawen. We currently have no means to critically examine and independently review this evidence. Yet, until now, no one has produced hard evidence that only two years for Evil-Merodach are accounted for in this record.

**Evidence # 6** is a genealogy of a Babylonian financial firm (Egibi) that forms a “time-bridge” from Nebuchadnezzar to the Persian empire. The evidence is that Nabu led the firm for 38 years from the 23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar to the 12th year of Nabonidus. If this is so, there is no room for an additional 20 years in the secular record in this segment. However, a translation of these documents are not available to us.

1. Does it say 38 years and identify the beginning as the 23rd of Nebuchadnezzar and the end as the 12th of Nabonidus? From what event do the 23 years begin to count?
2. Are all successors clearly accounted for to Darius Hystaspis?
3. Nothing in this genealogy, nor in the financial records of evidence #5, are cited to indicate the year or occasion of Nebuchadnezzar’s campaign against Judea and Jerusalem. Is this a logical void in these records if they cover the concerned years?

**Evidence # 7** is an astronomical diary indicating lunar and planet sightings in the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar. This tablet is identified as VAT 4956 and is kept in the Berlin Museum. We have reviewed a translation of this document. Other than noting the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar, it would take a meteorologist and astronomer to separate all the weather and planetary conditions in order to identify their place in history. It purports to record two astronomical events in the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar. The first is a lunar eclipse in that year. The second is that the planet Saturn could be observed “opposite the Southern Fish of the Zodiac.” This would be south of the constellation of Aquarius. As Saturn moves through the whole Zodiac in 29.5 years, it could be observed in this position only every 29.5 years for a period of about 2.5 years. Such a conjunction and a lunar eclipse occurred in 568 BC, but not 20 years earlier. The text was first published by Paul V. Neugebauer and Ernst F. Weidner in 1915. It has become customary for all modern historians to conform all dating schemes to the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar in 568 BC as being absolute. Notwithstanding, we still have some questions.

1. Are there multiple documents related together to formulate this evidence?
2. Does it specifically mention a “lunar” eclipse, or could it have been a solar eclipse?
3. Are there deductions or clear statements about the positions of moon and planets in that particular year? What other astronomical observations mentioned in the document?
4. The document is admittedly a copy made in the third century BC of an earlier original. Neugebauer has translated the text and observes that twice in the text the copyist added the comment “broken off, erased,” indicating he was unable to decipher a word in the copy. When was the copy made? Were any assumptions made or supplementary information added to the copy that was not part of the 37th year observations?
5. Can there be any question as to the correctness of the copy relating to the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar II and no other person? If the 30th year of Nebuchadnezzar was intended instead of 37, it would accord with the year 596 BC of Bible Student Chronology, just 28 years before the date in question. (See page 60 of these notes.) Saturn would have been in the same position and well within the 2.5 year window of the 29.5 year cycle. It will also be noticed that there was also a solar eclipse in the same Babylonian calendar year. Could VAT 4956 be referring to 596 BC rather than 568 BC?
6. Is the 37th year clearly indicated to that part of what is considered the 43 year reign of Nebuchadnezzar II which entirely followed the 21 year reign of his father, Nabopolassar? If the 37th year included any part of overlapping with his father or part of any other total years of reign, it would indicate a different year to look for a lunar eclipse.

The important question is: How much deductive analysis is applied to the discovered documents, and how much pre-conditioning have historians and archaeologists been subjected from the King Lists of Ptolemy and Berosus?<sup>7</sup> Rolf Furuli in: *Assyrian, Babylonian and Egyptian Chronology*, V.II deals extensively with the above questions and authenticity, reading and backward calculations in this diary.

## ALTERNATIVES:

There a number of consequences for removing 20 years from accepted Bible Student chronology. Changing the length of the Jewish Double and Parallels would change the basis of harmonizing and confirming evidence for the Jewish and Gospel dispensations and harvests. Several approaches might be taken to the above evidence.

1. We could accept the secular history dates without finding 20 years in our chronology and adjust our accepted chronology and prophecies accordingly. This option should not be taken lightly, and one should look to every Biblical consequence of such a change.

2. We could accept secular history for 587/586 being the 19th of Nebuchadnezzar and hence the 11th of Zedekiah. To preserve the integrity of the parallels and the 6,000 years, 20 years must be found in our chronology before Zedekiah.

Finding 20 years *before entering Canaan* would project the beginning of the Jubilees 20 years later and move the 19th Jubilee from 626 to 606 BC. That would be the 3rd year of Jehoiakim. The next year, 605 would be the 4th or the earliest date to begin the 70 years, extending through 536, the year of Cyrus' decree. But should the year 536 be counted as part of the 70-year captivity, or the year of release?

However, finding 20 years *after entering Canaan* would extend the available Jubilee years by 20. The 19th would still be 626 BC and 605 would still be the 4th year of Jehoiakim as a possible starting for the 70 years. It would be 39 years instead of 19 from the last Jubilee to the year 587.

Either of these approaches makes 70 years "captivity" measure from the 4th year of Jehoiakim. But it leaves only 50 years "desolation" from 586 through 537, or 51 years through the year of the decree, 536. If the year 536 is included, it is interesting that this option not only focuses on the 19 permitted Jubilee cycles set off from the 70 Sabbath prophecy, but sets apart an enforced desolation of only 51 for the balance of the prophecy. The picture of 51 times 49 years would seem to have an additional emphasis, but it would have to begin in the Autumn of 607. There is nothing in this option that allows for the antitypical Jubilee to begin in the Autumn of 607 BC, for it projects 605 for Jehoiakim's 4th year.

3. We could conclude that the events in Scripture or secular history referring to Nebuchadnezzar, were really referring to his father, Nabopolassar. It will be noticed that the 1st, 2nd, 8th, 18th and 19th years of Nebuchadnezzar in scripture according to Bible Student chronology correspond to the same years of Nabopolassar according to secular history. Morton Edgar pointed to this possibility in his 1936 paper on "Bible Chronology," page 7:

"It is interesting to notice that Ptolemy gives the date 625 BC for the beginning of the reign of the Babylonian king Nabopolassar, who is said to be the father of Nabokolassar. But modern historians translate both these names 'Nebuchadnezzar,' as can be seen in the Babylonian section of the British Museum. If Nabopolassar is the Nebuchadnezzar of the Bible, his 19th year would have been 606 BC, which is agreeable with Bible Chronology. We should not overlook the possibility that ancient historians, of the days before Ptolemy, may have mixed up the identities of these two Babylonian kings, Nabopolassar and Nabokolassar, whose names are so much alike; just as we know they mixed up the identities of the two Persian kings, Xerxes and Artaxerxes."

4. We could question the validity of secular history on points that differ with our understanding of Scripture and prophetic links, concluding the secular historical record is wrong. This option rejects traditional history, but does not explain the missing 20 years in secular history, unless based on other historical or forthcoming astronomical evidence to confirm our accepted chronology.



## TREATISES:

The first half of the twentieth century saw only three extended Bible Student defenses of the 607/606 burning of Jerusalem and 70 years desolation. These are Julian T. Gray, "Which is the True Chronology," copyright 1934; Paul S. Johnson, "*Epiphany Studies in the Scriptures*" series 7, "*Gershonism*," copyright 1938; and Morton Edgar, "*Great Pyramid Passages*," copyright 1924.

Gray focuses on the prophecy of an eclipse in Amos 8:9 as a sign marking the beginning of a siege by Tiglath-Pileser III against the 10 Tribe Kingdom of Israel. Astronomical evidence is cited for this eclipse occurring June 15, 763 BC. He draws on companion Scriptures and also the Eponym Canon to identify this event in the 15th year of Jotham, King of Judah. He identifies three years of the canon with noted sieges against Philistia and Damascus as corresponding to: 1. the year that Pekah and Rezin came to Judah to negotiate an alliance, but refused by Jotham; 2. the following year Jotham dies in his 16th year of reign and is succeeded by Ahaz of Judah, 3. lastly, the year of Pekah's death and the accession of Hoshea of Israel and captivity of Rezin, king in Damascus.

Gray makes the point that the eclipse of Amos was that of 763 BC and that this is in perfect harmony with the kings dating of Volume II. He contends that the Eponym Canon is in error by placing the only noted eclipse 29 Eponyms earlier in a period of Assyrian turmoil. The Eponym Canon ends before connecting with agreed dates, so a continuous link is not established. Nevertheless, Gray agrees with the sequences, but proposes the eclipse was fictitiously placed. He shows that historians have accepted the 763 date but aligned earlier Bible history around it, thus projecting a later date for Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. Gray shows that a later placement of the 763 eclipse in the Canon would establish synchronization with the Canon noted for the demise of northern Israel. This places the Amos eclipse prophecy to mark the 12th year of Tiglath-Pileser, while confirming Bible Student dating.

Gray also raises a serious question whether Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem in the 4th year of Jehoiakim or merely stirred up Judah's neighbors against Jerusalem until he could later muster his own forces. This would remove the premise of beginning a 70-year period for a captivity in that year. He also notes that the assigned dating to the Canon fails to account for the 65 years of Isa.7:8. He presents evidence for a corrected dating assignment which accounts for 65 years from the 13th year of Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria to the death of Esarhaddon.

His line of evidence would establish the link of chronology down to 607 as being the last year of Zedekiah. He does not attempt to trace the Babylonian chronology records. He does, however, make a commendable defense for applying the Scripture references of 70 years to the period from the desolation of Jerusalem to 536 BC. Gray also considers the consequences of alternate chronologies as affecting not only the Jewish double but a very interesting type or double of the seven times of 2,520 years as first proposed by Morton Edgar. Gray's Treatise should be considered in its entirety to appreciate his compelling arguments.

Chapter 6 of P.S.L.Johnson's book on Gershonism treats of this chronological question. There are many lines of reasoning suggested. They are not all consistent with each other. One on page 435 is quite interesting on the possibility of the accounts of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar being transposed by the historians or transcribers, and thereby accounting for correspondence with Ptolemy's Canon. However, this proposition overlooks the "bridge" statement of 2Kings 25:27 and Jer.52:31 that must allow only 37 years between the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar and Evil-Merodach, leaving no room for 21 years of Nabopolassar to follow.

There is one very interesting analysis beginning on page 440 treating a discrepancy in Josephus' account of the reign of Evil-Merodach, and introduces an uncertainty in his reign. First he assigns 18 years and subsequently only 2 years for his reign. This occurs in Antiquities, Book 10, Chap. 11, Section 2, which differs with Apion, Book 1, Section 20. P.S.L.Johnson suggests the Greek account

for 22 being Kappa (κ) and Beta (β), that the Kappa (for 20), was accidentally omitted in transcribing Ptolemy's Canon, leaving only 2 years for Evil-Merodach, instead of an intended 22 years.

This would exactly account for the missing 20 years to make 70 years of desolation before Cyrus. But the possibility needs to be compared against the original cuneiform documents. By comparing 2Kings 24:8,12 with 2Kings 25:27 and Jer. 52:31 we find that Jehoiachin was only 55 when released by Evil-Merodach. He lived "*until the day of his death, all the days of his life,*" under this monarch's protection. Even though Evil-Merodach met an untimely death by murder, there is a serious question whether this was only 2 more years as accounted for in Ptolemy's Canon. McClintock & Strong says of him:

*"Hales identifies him with the king of Babylon who formed a powerful confederacy against the Medes, which was broken up, and the king slain by Cyrus, then acting for his uncle Cyaxares...He thus appears to have reigned but two years, which is the time assigned to him by Abydenus and Berosus. At the end of this brief space Evil-Merodach was murdered by Neriglissar, a Babylonian noble married to his sister, who then seized the crown. The other ancient authorities assign him different lengths of reign"*

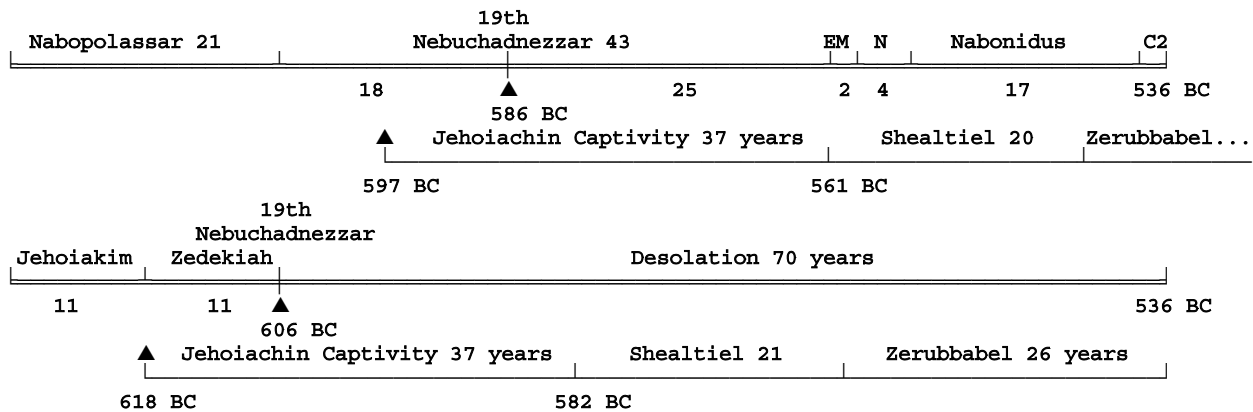
George Rawlinson in "*Five Great Monarchies*" vol. III, page 62 says of him:

*"The successor of Nebuchadnezzar was his son Evil-Merodach, who reigned only two years, and of whom very little is known. [Footnote: So the Astronomical Canon and Berosus. Polyhistor (l.s.c) gave him 12 years, and Josephus (Ant. Jud. X. 11, 2) 18 years.] We may expect that the marvelous events of his father's life, which are recorded in the book of Daniel, had made a deep impression upon him, and that he was thence inclined to favor the persons, and perhaps the religion of the Jews. One of his first acts was to release the unfortunate Jehoiachin from the imprisonment in which he languished for thirty-five years, and to treat him with kindness and respect... At any rate he had been but two years on the throne when a conspiracy was formed against him; he was accused of lawlessness and intemperance; and his own brother-in-law, Neriglissar, the husband of a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, headed the malcontents; and Evil-Merodach lost his life with his crown."*

The two year reign of Evil-Merodach further comes into question in light of the Biblical account of Zerubbabel, who was the grandson of Jehoiachin (Matt. 1:12; Ezra 3:2,8; 5:2). Jehoiachin went into captivity at the age of 18 and was incarcerated until the first year of Evil-Merodach (2Kings 24:8). He and his mother were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon and kept under close confinement (Jer. 29:2; Ezek. 19:8,9;). After 37 years he put off his prison garments and was released by Evil-Merodach (Jer. 52:31-34). It is unlikely that he even married until this release in his 55th year. Sufficient time must be allowed for Jehoiachin, Shealtiel and Zerubbabel to fill their recorded roles before the first year of Cyrus, 536 BC. In the first year of Cyrus, Zerubbabel was living at Babylon, and was the recognized prince of Judah in the Captivity. Upon the issue of Cyrus's decree, he immediately availed himself of it. He received from Cyrus the office of governor of Judea. In this role he assembled the Priests from 20 years old and upward and laid the foundations of the temple. Surely he was above this age himself at this time. Ezra 3:2,8; 5:2; 6:1-5; Hag. 1:1-4,11,14; 2:1-4

According to secular history, Jehoiachin was released in 561 BC. Such a date leaves only 26 years for his son, Shealtiel, to be born, mature to at least 20, then for him to marry and bear Zerubbabel, and thence for him to mature to at least 25 to lead the released captives back to Judea. Secular history allows at most only 26 years for events that require a minimum of 45 years. According to the Bible chronology the first year of Evil-Merodach would have been 582 BC. This allows an ample 47 years for the requirements of these two generations.

This problem is illustrated in the following two diagrams. The first is the secular record followed by the traditional Bible Student time line.



Morton Edgar treats the 70 years on pages 26-32 in volume II of *“Great Pyramid Passages.”* Although Edgar does not deal with the archaeological record, he does address the Scripture record extensively. His explanation should not be underestimated and needs to be considered by any who would try to explain the Scriptures as applying to 586 BC. He makes the point that Jeremiah’s prophecy of 70 years “was in fulfillment of the prophecy by Moses, that the land might enjoy its sabbaths of rest.” He shows this could not have begun before the 11th year of Zedekiah. He also explains that Jeremiah “did not recognize any captivity of Judah pervious to that of Jehoiachin,” according to Jer.27-28. This would prohibit a captivity in the 4th year of Jehoiakim.

Edgar and Gray agree that there was no “captivity” in the 4th year of Jehoiakim. Edgar cites Jer.25:1-12 and 36:1-16 to show that in the 4th year of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah prophesied that if they would turn from evil the Lord would do them no hurt. They thus proclaimed a fast in 5th year of Jehoiakim and the plague came not in the 5th year. Then in the 6th year Jehoiakim cut and burned Jeremiah’s scroll. Thence Jeremiah wrote another, repeating the prophecy that *the king of Babylon would yet come against the land and make it desolate*. The prophecy of the 70 years originally written in the 4th year of Jehoiakim, was now rewritten and still being forecast in the 6th year of Jehoiakim. In any case *the 70-year prophecies concern “desolation” and not captivity*.

Edgar then explains that the first deportation of the Jews took place in the 8th year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (2Kings 24:1-12; Jer.24:1-10); and the second and final deportation was at the dethronement of Zedekiah eleven years later. (2Kings 24:18-19; 25:1-11) He considers Jer.29:1-14 addressed to the “remnant” as beginning their 70 years in Babylon when Zedekiah was dethroned.

Finally he considers Dan.1:1. He says this is best understood as being the 3rd year of Jehoiakim’s *vassalage* to Nebuchadnezzar. This began in his 8th year according to 2Kings 24:1 and Josephus. He offers this as the best reconciliation of Dan.1:1,5 and 2:1. He presents evidence that Dan.2:1 may have originally been written as the 12th year of Nebuchadnezzar.

Edgar’s arguments are clear and forthright. His detailed defense for the 606 BC dating for Jerusalem’s fall offers a comprehensive explanation of the Scripture record.

Immanuel Velikovsky in his book, *“Ramses II and His Times”* raises a serious challenge to the traditional interpretation of the historical record. It is worth here quoting a major part of his reasoning which begins on page 104.

Berosus wrote that Cyrus, the Persian, conquered Babylonia in the seventeenth year of Nabonidus.

The Talmud and the Midrashim agree in general with Berosus on the length of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, assigning to it from forty to forty-five years. In the Scriptures as in Berosus he was succeeded by Evil-Merodach. The Scriptures, however, do not mention

that Evil-Merodach was followed by Neriglissar, and he in turn by his son, who was still a boy. The capture of Babylon by the Persians is described in the Book of Daniel, and the feasting king, who drank from the vessels of the Temple of Jerusalem and who saw the handwriting on the wall the night the kingdom fell, is called Belshazzar. Belshazzar, according to an inscription of Nabonidus, was his heir and co-ruler.

Nabonidus, remembered as the king-archaeologist who dug for old foundation inscriptions, in an inscription of his own wrote of the events that led to his reign in these words:

“Unto the midst of the palace they brought me and all of them cast themselves at my feet. I am the powerful representative of Nebuchadnezzar and Neriglissar, my royal predecessors. Amil-Marduk, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and Labash-Marduk, the son of Neriglissar, *they distorted the ordinances.*”...

For some time we have also been in possession of a well preserved votive stele of the mother of Nabonidus, a priestess who reached the venerable age of one hundred and five years. The stele gives the names of the kings under whom she lived, having been born in the twentieth year of Assurbanipal; The succession of the kings and the length of their reigns are the same as in Berosus, who flourished three hundred years after Nebuchadnezzar. The stele only omits the boy, son of Neriglissar.

With all this evidence at hand there should be no difficulty. However, the building inscriptions of Neriglissar *conceal a problem*. Already in the opening sentence of both these tablets, Neriglissar proclaims: “I am the son of the King of Babylon, Bel-sum-iskun.”

Nebuchadnezzar reigned in Babylon over forty years, and before him his father Nabopolassar reigned for more than twenty years. So who was Bel-sum-iskun, King of Babylon, if Neriglissar reigned after Nebuchadnezzar? There was no answer to this question. In Neriglissar’s most important inscription he calls his father Bel-sum-iskun, of whom nothing is known...With the data now at our disposal identification of Bel-sum-iskun with any known sovereign is difficult..

Neriglissar recorded that he found Esagila, the great temple in Babylon, in a state of decay: “Esagila...its walls were ruined, its joints did not hold together, its sills were no more firm. I put its foundation on its old base stone, I built high its wall.”

If he really reigned two years after Nebuchadnezzar, it is odd that Esagila should have fallen into such a ruinous state in so short a time. Nebuchadnezzar is renowned for his building activities as not many kings of antiquity are; he built a repaired temples all over the country; but more than of any other sacarium he took care of Esagila, the great temple. His religious inscriptions often begin like: “Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, the caretaker of Esagila and Esida, the son of Nabopolassar, the King of Babylon, am I.”

He mentioned his office of guardian of Esagila even before the fact that he was the son of Nabopolassar... Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt it from the foundation to the roof and covered it all around with gold.

How, then, could it be that two years after his death—and no enemy ravished Babylon in the meantime—the joints of the temple of Esagila did not hold together, its sills were no longer firm, and its foundations needed complete repair?

A look at a photograph of the excavation of Esagila with its enormous wall structures composed of millions of bricks inscribed with the name of “Nebuchadnezzar, the caretaker of Esagila,” is sufficient to make one realize the weakness of any suggestion that after Nebuchadnezzar’s death the walls and foundations of Esagila were found in a ruinous state.

In the other inscription Neriglissar recounted how the king’s palace in Babylon became ruined and was no longer habitable. “The palace...ruined over the shore of Euphrates, its joints burst. Its crushed walls I demolished and I reached the ground water. In sight of the ground water I put its foundation firm with asphalt and burned bricks. I built it and accomplished it.”

This was the palace Nebuchadnezzar occupied as king of Babylon... Nebuchadnezzar wrote of remodeling and enlarging it, a work done thoroughly: “Its foundation upon the bosom of the abyss I laid down deeply.”...

How could it be that the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, built to endure for many generations, fell into ruin, its mighty walls crushed, its foundations shattered, a few years after his death?

But we also have archaeological evidence. The ground about the foundation of the palace was excavated, and a wall of square stones was found, immense blocks held together by wooden clamps covered with asphalt. The structure stands in the ground water, on the rock formation in the depth, “the breast of the nether world.” Every block in the third row above the ground water bears the inscription, “Nebuchadnezzar...am I. The foundation of the Palace of Babylon I made with mountain blocks.” Not only did the blocks remain in their place for the two years following the death of Nebuchadnezzar, but even today they are in perfect order, over twenty-five hundred years after they were set and joined.

*The archaeological data given here concerning the condition of the palace and the temple of Esagila do not accord with the accepted succession of the kings of Babylon.* This is a most serious situation. In the contradiction brought to light here, on one side there are the following pieces of evidence: (1) the statement on the tablet British Museum 2194 that says on which day Nabopolassar died and on which day, soon thereafter, Nebuchadnezzar, summoned to return to Babylon, mounted the throne; (2) the tomb plates of the mother of King Nabonidus that name Neriglissar (but not his son Labash-Marduk) as following Nebuchadnezzar and his son Evil-Marduk, but do not name Neriglissar or a Labash-Marduk before Nebuchadnezzar; (3) the throne statement of Nabonidus, who does not enumerate the predecessors, but refers only to Nebuchadnezzar and his minor son Evil-Marduk, and to Neriglissar and his minor son Labash-Marduk; and, finally, (4) the record of Berossus, which coincides all the way with the statement on the tomb plates of the mother of Nabonidus, with the exception that he places Labash-Marduk, son of Neriglissar, after him, and she does not...

The enumerated testimonies for the order of the kings of Neo-Babylonian Empire, with Nebuchadnezzar following immediately upon Nabopolassar, can be safely reduced from four to two—Nabonidus does not discuss the throne sequence following Nabopolassar’s death, and Berossus seems to have had the tablet of Nabonidus’ mother as his main source. On the other hand, the existence of King Neriglissar after Nebuchadnezzar and Evil-Marduk is well established, first of all on the testimony of Nabonidus’ mother.

Velikovsky proceeds to produce evidence that Nebuchadnezzar purposely falsified state records concerning his reign and accession to the throne. Pages 119-139 “Changing Hisotry”

It is frequently related that Nebuchadnezzar fought the battle on the field of Carchemish while he was still a prince but returned from the Egyptian frontier because of the urgency connected with the succession to the throne. The truth appears to be that he returned because he was accused of coveting the throne of the empire...

It appears that Nebuchadnezzar, after having mounted the throne, was plagued by the thought that his achievement had been effected through treachery and breach of a solemn oath... As years passed by, a desire grew in Nebuchadnezzar *to obliterate the past and to have it appear that he was, from the beginning, a legitimate heir to the throne of his father Nabopolassar.*

*He had to falsify history in order to validate his claim to a rightful succession to the throne...* The historians of subsequent generations—the composer of the Babylonian Chronicle who lived in the Persian period (–538 to –332) and Berossus who lived at the beginning of the Hellenistic time—were misled. Trusting in the official government source dating from Nebuchadnezzar’s long reign, they accepted his version of history... His own reign has been reported as of various durations—forty, forty-three, forty-five or more, up to forty-eight years.

If any of his case is correct, it throws most serious doubt on the traditional rendering of the years and events of his reign.

## COMPARING SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE:

### 2Chron.36:5-6

This is a summary chapter covering the main events in the successive reigns of Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he began to reign. He reigned for 11 years when Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem and bound him with the intention to carry him to Babylon. Most expositors believe this act was not carried out. He was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin who was taken captive to Babylon after only 3 months of reign in Jerusalem.

The first captivity mentioned is in the last year of Jehoiakim and in the first 3 months of Jehoiachin. This was in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar. There is no captivity mentioned in the 4th year of Jehoiakim. If there was one, this would be the natural place to mention it.

### Jer.25

This chapter appears to be giving the details that preceded the events of chapter 24. The 4th year of Jehoiakim was the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

Jeremiah reminds the people of Judah of the message of the prophets who called for repentance. In verses 9-13 he forecasts the 70 years of desolation. This parallels the details of:

### Jer.36

Verses 1-4 record that in the 4th year of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah commissioned Baruch to record his discourse in a book. This was read in public on a great fast day in the 9th month towards the end of the 5th year of Jehoiakim (ver.9). At the time of this fast day Nebuchadnezzar had not yet come. In the 9th month (ver.22) the roll was read to Jehoiakim. He then had the roll cut and burned. After this act of contempt, Jeremiah re-wrote the scroll. Hence Nebuchadnezzar did not come against Jerusalem until the end of the 5th or 6th year of Jehoiakim.

### 2Kings 24

This chapter appears to parallel 2Chron.36 but with more details. Jehoiakim began his reign being subject to Egypt under Pharaoh Neco. After Nebuchadnezzar's victory at Carchemish, Jehoiakim became the servant of Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar as noted in verse 1. Jehoiakim was henceforth subservient to Nebuchadnezzar for the next 3 years and then rebelled. This would be in the 8th year of Jehoiakim. We learn from verse 12 that Nebuchadnezzar returned in the 8th year of his own reign after Jehoiakim died, having reigned 11 years. He took captive Jehoiachin, Jehoiakim's son, after reigning only 3 months, and installed Zedekiah in Jerusalem. Verse 13 says he also took treasures from the temple. Lang's Commentary traces this sequence of events.

### 2Chron.36:9-11

After reigning 3 months and 10 days, Nebuchadnezzar deported Jehoiachin to Babylon and set up Zedekiah in his stead. Zedekiah reigned 11 years.

### Jer.24

After the captivity of Jehoiachin with princes and craftsmen, in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah tells an allegory of good and bad figs. The good figs are those taken to Babylon and who would return. The evil figs are Zedekiah and his princes, upon whom will come the sword, famine and pestilence till they be consumed from off the land (vs. 10). This coming judgment seems to be a reference to his 70-year prophecy. This allegory is a warning and does not indicate that the captivity of Jehoiachin was the fulfillment of his prophecy.

#### Jer.29

The setting is Jeremiah's letter to the captives in Babylon who were deported with Jehoiachin after the death of Jehoiakim. It was written early in the reign of Zedekiah and sent by his messenger, as Zedekiah himself made a trip to Babylon in his 4th year (Jer.51:59).

There were false prophets that explained the present captivity as a mere episode and that these captives would soon return (verses 8-9,15-21). As long as Jerusalem and the temple were standing, the main foundation of the theocracy was unshaken and hope remained that the present adversity might be followed any moment by a turn for the better. Because of this false hope, Jeremiah counseled the captives to plant gardens, raise families and generally to prepare for a long stay (verses 5-7,28).

Jeremiah refers to his 70-year prophecy, only after which they could return (verse 10). The proper rendering for verse 10 is "After 70 years be accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you..." Notice he does not say, After 70 years of *your* captivity. "Your captivity" is used in verse 14, referring to their ultimate release. Our understanding of the 70 years *for* Babylon of verse 10 indicates Babylon's ascendancy over Judah in the destruction of Jerusalem, after which this hope of an early return of a few captives would surely expire. Jeremiah does not calculate from the present, but he has in mind the absolute period of duration appointed to the Babylonian empire. The 70 years primarily represent the years of the Babylonian empire over Jerusalem.

Jeremiah makes reference to his prophecy of 25:11-12, and here in 29:17-18 refers to his allegory of bad figs in 24:8-10. He forecasts the desolating of the land which was imminent in the early years of Zedekiah, the last appointed king. Even if a case were made that the 70 years began with these captives, the reference would be to the years of Jehoiakim (11) and Nebuchadnezzar (8), not Jehoiakim (4) and Nebuchadnezzar (1) as required by traditional chronology.

#### Jer.40-43:7

After the army of Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed Jerusalem and carried off its inhabitants to exile in Babylon, a few towns in the kingdom of Judah survived unscathed and a few farmers were allowed to remain in the vicinity of the capital. With Judah defunct and almost depopulated, the Babylonians named Gedaliah governor over the meager population. Gedaliah set up his capital seven miles north of its ruins, at Mizpah.

Some Jews fled Judah to find refuge southward in Edom across the river Jordan among the Ammonites and Moabites. Some of these led by Ishmael and spurred by the Ammonite king, entered Mizpah and assassinated Gedaliah, his advisers, and his Babylonian guards. Gedaliah's followers, fearing that they might be blamed by their Babylonian masters for the slaughter, swiftly fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them. This virtually left the land depopulated and desolate. See 2Kings 25:25-26. The prophecy of desolation was then fulfilled. Jer.44:6,22.

#### Zech.1:1,12

The setting is after the release from Babylon by Cyrus, in the second year of Darius (Hystaspis). Since the 70 years of desolation had expired, the question was, how much longer would full mercy on Jerusalem be delayed, as yet only the foundation of the temple had been laid. Although the people were free to return to the land, they were in a sad state. The capital was still mostly in ruins, its walls and gates broken and not restored.

#### Zech.7:1-7

This chapter occurs 2 years after the events of the first chapter, in the fourth year of Darius (Hystaspis). The first three verses are an account of the occasion of the prophet's oracle, ie. the 4th year of Darius, during the rebuilding of the temple. Representatives of those still in Babylon inquired of the priests if it was still appropriate to continue their practice of fasting.

In verses 4-7 Zechariah rebukes them for the formalism of their services. The example is their fasting on the anniversary of the murder of Gedaliah in the year Jerusalem was destroyed (Jer. 41:1). The KJV renders the practice for “*those 70 years.*” Leeser says, “*already these 70 years.*” Other translators simply say, “*these 70 years.*” This has led some to understand the prophet was saying the 70 years were extending to this year of his writing, the 4th year of Darius, 518 BC. This would project the destruction of Jerusalem back to 587 BC and extend through 518 BC.

This view supports a dual 70 years. One of the captivities would measure from 607/606 (supposed to be the 4th year of Jehoiakim) to 536, the year of release under Cyrus. A second 70 years are assumed to run from the desolation of Jerusalem in 587 to 518, when the temple was built. Alternately, we propose this statement in Zech.7 can as well be referring to the single 70 years from the fall of Jerusalem to the year of release. Hence the continued mourning was inappropriate and displayed a lack of faith after the release and completion of the 70-year prophecy. Anyway, did the people dedicate themselves and fast unto God during any of the 70 years? So God through Zechariah says, what difference did it make whether afterward they continued a fast in memory of Gedaliah or not?

Dan.1:1,5-6,18; 2:1,46-49

Here is an apparent internal conflict of reigning year correspondences. According to Jer. 25:1-3, the year of Jehoiakim (4) was the same as Nebuchadnezzar (1). Here Nebuchadnezzar is called “King of Babylon” in Jehoiakim (3). Then at the end of 3 full years of training he interpreted the dream in Nebuchadnezzar (2). How could this be Nebuchadnezzar (2) and yet have 3 years transpire within any period of his kingship by his second year of reign? Either Nebuchadnezzar was not king at the point of Dan.1:1 or Dan.2:1 was not Nebuchadnezzar (2) or the period of training was less than 3 years.

Julian Gray understands the third year of Jehoiakim as the third year of his vassalage to Nebuchadnezzar. This would be the 11th and last year of his reign and Nebuchadnezzar (8). He takes the second year mentioned in Dan.2:1 as the second year of his universal rule over Jerusalem, ie. 2 years after the fall of Jerusalem.

Morton Edgar also regards the third year of Jehoiakim as the year of his vassalage, ie. from his 8th or 9th to his 11th year. But in Dan.2:1 he assumes a transcript error was made and the 2 should be 12. The Ferrar Fenton translation also has a footnote supporting this position.

Most scholars take the 3rd year of Jehoiakim to be the year that Nebuchadnezzar set out from Babylon before his accession to the throne the following year, and that Daniel actually went into captivity in Jehoiakim (4) and Nebuchadnezzar (1). They also accept the 2nd year in Dan. 2:1 as being correct.

If Daniel was taken in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim, there is a disparity with the siege of Jer. 25:1 after the battle of Carchemish. Even if he was taken captive in Jehoiakim (3), it is still unlikely he began his schooling till the next year when Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon and ascended the throne the following year. Then there was less than 3 full years of schooling till Nebuchadnezzar (2) mentioned in Dan.1:5-6,18; 2:1. It is possible that 3 years was the appointed time for training in Dan.1, but that Daniel was called into service before it was completed, as recorded in chapter 2.

The events of Dan.1:1-2 appear very consistent with 2Kings 24:12-13. That, however, would have been at the end of Jehoiakim’s reign and the first year of Jehoiachin and the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar. Yet such events are not elsewhere recorded for the 3rd year of Jehoiakim.

Whenever this captivity occurred, it would not seem to confirm the beginning of the 70 years prophecy of Jeremiah at this point any more than previous times of harassment from Israel’s neighbors or partial captivities that had gone before. There was a continuity of the kings of Judah until Zedekiah. Then the crown of the kingdom was removed (Ezek.21:25-27).



## A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION:

Morton Edgar and McClintock & Strong noted the phenomena that both Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar were referred to by historians with similar Greek spelling of their names. We have already noted (Alternative #3), the possibility that Scripture does not distinguish between this father and son of history. Particularly, note the exact correspondence on the chronology table on page 60, between the Scripture record for Nebuchadnezzar and the secular years of Nabopolassar.

We propose that the references in Kings, Chronicles, Jeremiah and Daniel that note the first 21 years of Nebuchadnezzar may actually refer to Nabopolassar. He was the father of the one history styles Nebuchadnezzar II. This has four premises:

1. Scriptures refer to one head of Babylon with only the slightest variation in the Hebrew version of his name (Strongs #5019 and 5020). Greek sources render the spelling of father and son with only one letter difference or simply distinguished as Nebuchadnezzar I and II.
2. Some ability to synchronize Biblical and secular history during his life.
3. This could account for the title in Dan. 1:1, “King of Babylon,” and Dan. 2:38-39, “Thou art the head of gold.” The title might properly apply either to the father as the first king of Babylon or to his successor son with dominance over Jerusalem and Judea.
4. Jer. 27:7, “All nations will serve him and *his son and his grandson* until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him.” If this is a direct genealogy, it *could only apply to Nabopolassar*, the Biblical Nebuchadnezzar (I). Nabopolassar was the father of Nebuchadnezzar (II) and grandfather of Evil-Merodach. There were *only three generations of this line*. Thereafter this grandfather line was usurped by Neriglissar, the brother-in-law of Evil-Merodach. If the historical Nebuchadnezzar(II) is considered as the Nebuchadnezzar of Scripture, then *only a son* came to the throne, *but no grandson*.

An outstanding question on this approach may be to account for the seven years of madness in the shorter reign of Nabopolassar. It possibly occurred in the eleven years after installing Zedekiah into office. This could partly account for Zedekiah’s presumption to rebel against such a notable figure. Or it may have occurred in the reign of his son, Nebuchadnezzar. It would have served to humble his dreams of glory. In any case, it appears from Daniel 4, his recovery was the last record of this eminent figure, before Daniel chronicles some of his successors.

There may yet remain two questions on this proposal. 2Kings 25:27 and Jeremiah 52:31 say Jehoiachin was released from prison after 37 years, upon Nebuchadnezzar’s death in the first year of Evil-Merodach. The second question arises from Jeremiah 52:30 which records the twenty third year of Nebuchadnezzar. These events could not occur within the 21 year reign Nabopolassar. There would also be more than 37 years from the eighth year of Nabopolassar to the first year of Evil-Merodach as recorded in history.

A possible explanation is that the 43 years for Nebuchadnezzar included the 21 of his father and continued to count only 22 of his own. This means he counted his first year as number 22 through his twenty second as number 43, and that Scripture simply used the public record of 1-43. It also implies that Evil-Merodach reigned much longer than two years after Nebuchadnezzar. This is plausible given Velikovsky’s observations and P.S.L Johnson’s critique of Josephus cited earlier in these notes and McClintock and Strong’s article quoted hereafter.

It should be noticed that this suggestion leaves the Biblical time line in tact. It only questions the events ascribed by history to Nebuchadnezzar II, where they correlate to the Biblical Nebuchadnezzar I (Nabopolassar), the father. Nebuchadnezzar may have counted all his father’s reign with his own. It should also be noted that Nebuchadnezzar, in Scripture and archaeology, never credits his father with founding Babylon. He seems to have usurped this glory for himself.

## CONCLUSION:

The defense for the 587/586 dating of Jerusalem's fall under Nebuchadnezzar is not irrefutable or without weakness. Neither can a defense of the 607/606 date be built from records of secular history or archaeology alone, without Scripture. The sacred record is paramount.

The methods of evidence and dating are quite different in secular and Bible Student circles. Secular history builds *backward* from known points and extends its way further back with records of contiguous or bridged links. Biblical history builds on genealogical and Scripture bridged statements *forward* from Adam to Zedekiah, there adding the 70-year prophecies and thence from 536 BC following the secular history record to modern times. The historian accepts his evidence as absolute and then accommodates Scripture events into the record where agreement exists. He is ready to question the Scripture account where inconsistency exists. Bible Students have followed the Scripture record as absolute and looked to secular history for confirmation where there is concurrence and questioned the accuracy of secular history where there is disagreement.

Secular history is not concerned with the prophetic consequences which Bible Students view seriously. While attentive to the evidence produced by secular history, we need not wholly depend upon it to the extent of stretching the natural application of Scripture or shelving confirming prophetic interpretation and harmonies. These harmonies and correlations are at times remarkable, and become part of the confirming evidence. An example is Morton Edgar's eight chronology charts. Notice the impact of removing 20 years in the period before Cyrus.

The two procedures make the 70-year prophecies a target of special focus. Secular history accounts for only 50 years from the fall of Jerusalem to the first year of Cyrus. This notion prohibits the 70-year prophecy to span from the fall of Jerusalem to 536. To accommodate the full BC portion of the 6000 years, the missing 20 years would need to be found in an earlier chronology link. This would have to be found after the death of Jacob, to preserve 1845 years of the Jewish double (Mishneh), or after entering Canaan to preserve the typical Jubilees begun in 1575 BC. Without a full 70 years between Jerusalem and Cyrus, the 2520 years of Gentile Times could still measure from 606 BC, but from another event than the burning of Jerusalem.

If our accepted chronology be reduced by 20 years, Josiah would have died in 609 during the 17th year of Nabopolassar, the first king of Babylon. Whereas 2Kings 23:29 says Pharaoh Neco went against the *king of Assyria* (apparently Assurbanipal) prior to Babylon under Nabopolassar.

Any revision of Bible chronology must square with the events and prophecies recorded. Any new basis should at least provide equal or better harmonies, enlightenment and satisfaction as previous explanations. The search for historic records and archaeological evidence is an ongoing and emerging science. On the other hand we have the entire Word of God, "that the man of God be thoroughly furnished..." 2Tim.3:17. Our understanding may not be complete, but we have the entire resource. In our progress we need to heed Phil.3:16, "Let us hold true to what we have attained." We are content to state the evidence for Bible Student chronology that preserves the integrity of prophetic links. Conflicts with the secular record may be due to errors in its own recording or its interpretation. The following points support this conclusion.

1. The 15th year of Jotham and eclipse of Amos 8:9 being 763 BC, as presented by Julian Gray, is a confirmation of 607 being the 11th year of Zedekiah and the destruction of Jerusalem. It's premise has not been satisfactorily answered by secular history.

2. The reign of Evil-Merodach is very obscure in secular history. It is reasonable to suppose he reigned longer than 2 years to account for Hales' statements of his exploits and Jer.52:31-33 concerning the balance of Jehoiachin's life under the protection of Evil Merodach. P.S.L. Johnson's proposition of 22 years here may be reasonable. This would add the needed years for the two generations of Shealtiel and Zerubbabel between Jehoiakim and Cyrus as noted above.

3. Neriglissar refers to his father as Bel-sum-iskun, “King of Babylon.” If this is a true statement and not a reference to a regional chief position, then this king is missing from Ptolemy’s Canon and could account for all or a portion of the missing 20 years in secular history. Why he was omitted could relate to the conspiracy to overthrow Evil-Merodach, who was the son of Nebuchadnezzar, by Evil-Merodach’s own brother-in-law, Neriglissar.

4. Secular evidence is largely based on historians. This evidence is fragile, as there were only two who were on the scene to glean from original sources. The oldest is Herodotus who lived within 200 years of the events. His sources were verbal accounts and interviews. He did not have access to state libraries and does not give dating material for the fall of Jerusalem or the successors to Nebuchadnezzar. Ctesias was next and did have access to state library records of Persia, but elsewhere he shows speculative and fanciful excursions. If he was not careful and complete or if errors occurred in recording the reigns of Babylonian kings, his record may be flawed. Berosus is really only the second historian that records dating for the period of Nebuchadnezzar and forward. His account is more credibly written than that of Ctesias and can be considered an independent source. He was a Babylonian priest and apparently had access to state records. However, his primary source appears to be the Adda-Guppi Stele and serious questions are raised about the basis of its accuracy.

5. Though archaeological records are considered original sources, concern is raised when their interpretation is premised on historical writers. Events are clearly recorded for specific years of kings. The deduced BC years are considered “absolute” when based on continuous links before 536 BC. For the period in question, I know of only one eclipse mentioned in these records for the 37<sup>th</sup> year of Nebuchadnezzar, corresponding to 568 BC. But is this 37<sup>th</sup> year measured from the same beginning as the Scriptures use to count his 19<sup>th</sup> year? With all the archaeology evidence, *there is not a single account* of the exploits of his 19<sup>th</sup> year, nor any direct linkage of it to astronomical observations. Therefore the events assumed for 586 BC are a matter of *deduction* for historians.

6. We understand the Scripture account of the 70 years began with the burning of Jerusalem. Earlier applications appear to be an accommodation for the assumption of a 586 BC dating for the fall of Jerusalem. Note particularly the texts Jer.25:11-12; 2Chron.36:20-21 show the land would enjoy its Sabbaths for 70 years when it was “desolate.” Lev.26:33-35 (NAS) sets in contrast the “desolation” of the land with “when you were living on it.” It could hardly be called “desolate” before the fall of Jerusalem. In fact after the population was deported to Babylon and the few remnants fled to Egypt, Jeremiah (44:6,21-22) says the prophecy of “*desolation*” was fulfilled upon the towns Judah *and the streets of Jerusalem*.

Revisions begin the 70-year prophecy of captivity with an earlier siege of Nebuchadnezzar in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim. Nebuchadnezzar reconquered Carchemish (after the Egyptian victory following Josiah) in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim. He then laid siege to Jerusalem, made Jehoiakim a subject and took some vessels from the temple. There are no cuneiform documents supporting a captivity then. Josephus states that with the Carchemish victory, Nebuchadnezzar conquered all of Syria-Palestine “*excepting Judea*.” The captivity of Jehoiachin and other Jerusalem residents did not occur until Nebuchadnezzar’s 8<sup>th</sup> year, 2Kings 24. Moreover, Jer.52:28-30 carefully reports captives only in his 7<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> years, not his accession year. Jer.25:8-27 warns of a *future desolation*. Nebuchadnezzar’s first affront to Jerusalem was only a precursor of a *future desolation of 70 years*.

These texts include two aspects of prophecy. First, the land lying desolate 70 years is to fulfill its Sabbaths. The second, is serving the king of Babylon for 70 years of captivity. These events are part of a single prophetic judgment. There were captivities before Nebuchadnezzar, but none lasted longer than 50 years. It can reasonably be ascertained that none occurred during a Jubilee year. The 70-year prophecies measure from a continuous and complete captivity that would curtail Jubilee provisions. This was not so in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Jehoiakim. The year before was a Jubilee and nothing prevented its agriculture provisions or even their rebelling against Babylon until 19 years later when the population was deported and no king was left in Jerusalem.

7. Ezekiel 21:2 is addressed to “Jerusalem” and the “land.” Even though Zedekiah was a “puppet” king, he had the power to assert independence and rebel. Verses 25-27 refer to removing the crown in which it shall “be no more.” It is reasonable to apply this to Zedekiah’s removal but not earlier. It is also unreasonable to begin measuring the 70 years of “desolation” prior to the removal of his crown. These two events seem to occur at the same time with the destruction of Jerusalem, whatever the year. Such texts as 2Chron.36:19-23 are straightforward statements that the 70 years reach from the burning of the temple to the decree of Cyrus. Other renderings of the text put an abnormal strain on the meaning of the Hebrew and context.

8. It will be noticed that the Jews in the land up to the destruction of the temple placed a false trust in their possession of that temple. They considered all defeats as only temporary set backs, as long as they occupied Jerusalem and the temple. In Jer.7:4-7, Jeremiah warned them not to place their trust in the temple, and that if they would amend their ways and execute justice, God would allow them to continue in the inheritance of their fathers. Only with the burning of the temple did this offer expire. The destruction of the temple removed any false trust and began the judgments written. Jeremiah’s words keep open the option of repentance until the temple was destroyed, and would preclude the 70-year prophecy beginning earlier.

9. Jer.52:12 and 2Kings 25:8 indicate the Jewish temple was burned on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the 5<sup>th</sup> month Av. The date is doubly fixed in Jewish memory as Josephus noted Titus set fire to the second temple in AD 70 on the same day. The 10<sup>th</sup> of Av occurred on August 2 in 1914. This is the day the guns of August were loosed that set the European monarchies on fire. Each day thereafter expanded the war. Jewish authors have noted this date of WWI as a turning point in their earlier history. This would be a fitting counterpart to the Gentile torching of the typical temple when, just 2520 years later, God set the torch to the Gentile dominion. It would be less a counterpart of any lesser event in Jewish history.

10. There is great difficulty of searching and verifying the historical and archaeological record. We have but fragments of either. We have no way to verify original texts and translations. We are dependent on various interpretations to make any sense of them. Velikovsky raises some valid objections to the traditional sequence of Babylonian kings and makes a strong case for Nebuchadnezzar falsifying his regnal year. Could it be so with those following him? He shows that Berossus’ main source was probably a memorial stele of Nabonidus’ mother (the Adda-Guppi Stele). On the other hand we have the Scriptures, a most thorough supply for our needs. 2Tim.3:16-17; 2Pet.1:19-20. Some day all historical and archaeology records will be clear. Until there is perfect clarity, the Scriptural record is considered more consistent and reliable.

Our conclusion still sides with dating the Scripture and prophecy upon 607/606 BC for the destruction of Jerusalem, in Zedekiah’s 11<sup>th</sup> year, in Nebuchadnezzar’s 19<sup>th</sup> year. The most direct understanding of the Biblical statements is that the 70 years began with the complete desolation of Judah after Jerusalem was destroyed (Jer.25:8-11; 2Chron.36:18-23; Dan.9:2). Hence, counting back 70 years when the Jews returned to their homeland in 537 BC, we arrive at 607 BC for the date when Nebuchadnezzar, in his 18<sup>th</sup> regnal year, destroyed Jerusalem, removed Zedekiah, the last of the Judean kings, from the throne in Jerusalem. Ezek.21:19-27.

Differences remain between the secular and these interpretations of Scripture. Here we have to exercise objectivity as respects the evidence from history or Scripture. Given that the historical record has room to question its absolute verity, we will maintain 70 years in Babylon as being the Bible presentation. Other explanations do not better harmonize *all the lines of chronology and prophecy* with history than that presented in the first three volumes of “*Studies in the Scriptures.*”

Finally we urge all considering this subject to keep it in perspective with all the sanctifying elements of present truth (2Tim.3:16-17). Let us build one another up in the most holy faith once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3,20).

## Q U O T E S

### Josephus

“Antiquities” Book X:VI:1, page 305

Now in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, one whose name was Nebuchadnezzar took the government over the Babylonians, who at the same time went up with a great army to the city Carchemish, which was at Euphrates, upon a resolution he had taken to fight with Neco king of Egypt, under whom all Syria then was. And when Neco understood the intention of the king of Babylon, and that this expedition was made against him, he did not despise his attempt, but made haste with a great band of men to Euphrates to defend himself from Nebuchadnezzar; and when they had joined battle, he was beaten, and lost many in battle. So the king of Babylon passed over Euphrates, and took all Syria, as far as Pelusium, **excepting Judea**. But when Nebuchadnezzar had already reigned **four years, which was the eighth of Jehoiakim’s government** over the Hebrews, the king of Babylon made an expedition with mighty forces against the Jews, and required tribute of Jehoiakim, and threatened upon his refusal to make war against him. (2Kings 24:1,12)

Book X:VIII:2, page 310

Now the city was taken on the ninth day of the fourth month, in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah. They were indeed generals of the king of Babylon, to whom Nebuchadnezzar committed the care of the siege, for he abode himself in the city of Riblah.

Book XI:1, page 316

Now when king Nebuchadnezzar had reigned **forty-three years**, he ended his life. He was an active man, and more fortunate than the kings that were before him. Now **Berosus** makes mention of his actions in the third book of his Chaldaic History, where he says thus: “When his father Nebuchodonosor [Nabopolassar] heard that the governor whom he had set over Egypt, and the places about Celesyria and Phoenicia, had revolted from him, while was not himself able any longer to undergo the hardships [of war], he committed to his son Nebuchadnezzar, who was **still but a youth**, some parts of his army, and sent them against him. So when Nebuchadnezzar had given battle, and fought with the rebel, he beat him, and reduced the country from under his subjection, and made it a branch of his own kingdom; but about that time it happened that his father Nebuchodonosor fell ill, and ended his life in the city Babylon, when he had reigned **twenty-one years**; and when he was made sensible, as he was a little time, that his father Nebuchodonosor was dead, and having settled the affairs of Egypt, and the other countries, as also those that concerned the captive Jews, and Phoenicians, and Syrians, and those of the Egyptians nations; and having committed the conveyance of them to Babylon to certain of his friends, together with the gross of his army and the rest of the ammunition and provisions, he went himself hastily, accompanied with a few others, over the desert, and came to Babylon. So he took upon him the management of the public affairs, and of the kingdom which had been kept for him by one that was the principal of the Chaldeans, and he received the entire dominions of his father, land appointed, that when the captives came, they should be placed as colonies, in the most proper places of Babylonia.”

But now, after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach his son succeeded in the kingdom, who immediately set Jeconiah at liberty, and esteemed him among his most intimate friends...When Evil-Merodach was dead, after a reign of **eighteen(?)** years, Niglissar [Neriglissar] his son took the government, and retained it **forty(?)** years, and then ended his life; and after him the succession in the kingdom came to his son Labosordacus [Labash-Marduk], who continued in it in all but **nine months**; and when he was dead, it came to Baltasar [Belshazzar], who by the Babylonians was called Naboandelus; against him did Cyrus, the king of Persia, and Darius the king of Media, make war.

“Apion” Book I:19-21, page 867-868

**Berosus** shall be witness to what I say: he was by birth a Chaldean, well known by the learned, on account of his publication of the Chaldean books of astronomy and philosophy among the Greeks... He also gave us an account of that ark wherein Noah, the origin of our race, was preserved, when it was brought to the highest part of the Armenian mountains; after which he gives us a catalogue of the posterity of Noah, and adds the years of their chronology, and length down to Nabolassar [Nabopolassar], who was king of Babylon, and of the Chaldeans. And when he was relating the acts of this king, he describes to us how he sent his son Nabuchodonosor [Nebuchadnezzar] against Egypt, and against our land, with a great army, upon his being informed that they had revolted from him; and how, by that means, he subdued them all, and set our temple that was at Jerusalem on fire; nay, and removed our people entirely out of their own country, and transferred them to Babylon; when it so happened that **our city was desolate during the interval of seventy years, until the days of Cyrus king of Persia**... I will set down **Berosus’s own accounts**, which are these: “When Nabolassar, father of Nabuchodonosor, heard that the parts of Celesyria and Phoenicia, had revolted from him, he was not able to bear it any longer; but committing certain parts of his army to his son Nabuchodonosor, who was then but **young**, he sent him against the rebel: Nabuchodonosor joined battle with him, and conquered him, and reduced the country under his dominion again. Now it so fell out that his father, Nabolassar fell into a distemper at this time, and died in the city of Babylon, after he had reigned **twenty-nine years(?)**. But as he understood, in a little time, that his father Nabolassar was dead, he set the affairs of Egypt and the other countries in order, and committed the captives he had taken from the Jews, and Phoenicians, and Syrians, and of the nations belonging to Egypt, to some of his friends, that they might conduct that part of the forces that had on heavy armor, with the rest of his baggage, to Babylonia; while he went in haste, having few with him, over the desert to Babylon; whither, when he come he found the public affairs had been managed by the Chaldeans, and that the principal person among them had preserved the kingdom for him. Accordingly, he now entirely obtained all his father’s dominions. He then came, and ordered the captives to be placed as colonies in the most proper places of Babylonia.”

Now as to what I have said before about the temple at Jerusalem, that it was fought against by the Babylonians, and burnt by them, but was opened again when Cyrus had taken the kingdom of Asia, shall now be demonstrated from what Berosus adds further upon that head; for thus he says in his third book: “Nabuchodonosor, after he had begun to build the for mentioned wall, fell sick, and departed this life, when he had reigned **forty-three years**; whereupon his son Evil-Merodach obtained the kingdom. He governed public affairs after an illegal and impure manner, and had a plot laid against him by Neriglisoor [Neriglissar], his sister’s husband, and was slain by him when he had reigned but **two years**. After he was slain, **Neriglisoor**, the person who plotted against him succeeded him in the kingdom and **reigned four years**; his son **Laborosoarchod** [Labash-Marduk] obtained the kingdom, though he was but a child, and kept it **nine months**; but by reason of the very ill temper and ill practices he exhibited to the world, a plot was laid against him also by his friends, and he was tormented to death. After his death, the conspirators got together, and by common consent put the crown upon the head of **Nabonnedus** [Nabonidus], a man of Babylon, and one who belonged to that insurrection. In his reign it was that the walls of the city of Babylon were curiously built with burnt brick and bitumen; but when he was come to the **seventeenth year** of his reign, Cyrus came out of Persia with a great army; and having already conquered all the rest of Asia, he came hastily to Babylonia. When Nabonnedus perceived he was coming to attack him, he met him with his forces, and joining battle with him was beaten, and fled away with a few of his troops with him, and was shut up within the city Borsippus. Hereupon Cyrus took Babylon, and gave order that the outer walls of the city should be demolished, because the city had proved very troublesome to him, and cost him a great deal of pains to take it.”

These accounts agree with the true histories in our books; for in them it is written that Nebuchadnezzar, in the **eighteenth year** of his reign, laid our temple desolate, and so it lay in that state

of obscurity for **fifty years**; but that in the second year of the reign of Cyrus its foundations were laid, and it was finished again in the second year of Darius. [521-517 BC]”

### **Morton Edgar**

“Great Pyramid Passages” Volume II (1924), pages 26-32

It is evident from a consideration of texts, that the 70 years of desolation spoken by Jeremiah was in fulfillment of the prophecy of Moses, that the land might enjoy its sabbaths of rest, because when the people were in the land they would not let it rest.

Although the teaching of the Scriptures regarding this period of 70 years desolation is very clear, it has been strangely obscured by Usher and other chronologers. They have imagined that the 70 years began in the 3rd or 4th year of the reign of Jehoiakim, 19 or 18 years before Zedekiah’s dethronement. This, of course, would shorten the chronological chain previous to AD 1, and thus make the six millenniums from the creation of Adam end 19 or 18 years after AD 1872. They recognized that the land was not “desolate without inhabitant” during the remaining 7 or 8 years of Jehoiakim and the 11 years of Zedekiah, and they therefore termed the 70 years as a period of **captivity**. But the **Scriptures are emphatic that no captivity began in the 3rd or 4th year of Jehoiakim, nor, indeed, till after the death of that king.**

Jeremiah, also did not recognize any captivity of Judah previous to that of Jehoiachin (See Jer.27:16-22; and note that this utterance of Jeremiah was during the 4th year of Zedekiah; for the Variorum Bible points out that in verse 1 of this 27th chapter Zedekiah is the king meant, as is shown by comparing verses 3 and 12, and verse 1 of chapter 28.)

It was in the 4th year of Jehoiakim, which was also the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer.25:1), that Jeremiah promised the Jews that if they would turn from evil the Lord would do them **no hurt**; otherwise the king of Babylon would come against them (Jer.25:1-12; 36:1-3). The fear of an invasion had the effect of causing the people to proclaim a fast, and endeavor to influence Jehoiakim to repent (Jer.36:4-10,16). This fast was held in the 9th month of the 5th year, so that the Lord did them “no hurt” previous to the 6th year of Jehoiakim (Jer.36:9). [The Septuagint reads the 9th month of the 8th year, which is probably correct.] But Jehoiakim cut up and burnt the “roll of the book” in which Jeremiah had written against him, and Jeremiah required to write another roll, in which he repeated his prophecy that “the king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land [make it desolate], and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast” (Jer.36:22-23). Because of this act of contempt in cutting up the roll, the Lord brought Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem, and Jehoiakim was bound in chains to be carried to Babylon (2Chron.36:2-7). Nebuchadnezzar, However, did not pursue his original intention to take Jehoiakim captive, but made him pay tribute instead, and carried off some of the vessels of the temple, being content with this alone. At the end of three years’ subjection Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, with the result that the Lord harried him by sending against him bands from the surrounding countries, the people of which were now under the power of Babylon, until Nebuchadnezzar was free to come in person to besiege Jerusalem (2Kings 24:1-4,7).

Jehoiakim was not taken captive to Babylon; but after reigning eleven years he died, being probably assassinated by his infuriated subjects when they saw Nebuchadnezzar coming to lay siege against the city... We read that it was **at that time** (11 years before Zedekiah’s dethronement) that Nebuchadnezzar and his servants came and besieged Jerusalem (2Kings 24:8-11); and Jehoiachin (son of Jehoiakim) evidently thought it hopeless to resist, and surrendered himself with all his princes and all the chief of the land into the hands of the king of Babylon (2Kings 24:10-17). This, the **first** deportation of captives to Babylon, took place in the 8th year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (2Kings 24:12; Jer.24:1-10); and the second and final deportation was at the dethronement of Zedekiah eleven years later, in the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar (2Kings 24:18,19; 25:1-11).

Verses 28-30 of Jer.52 show that the writer understood that the first captivity of Judah was after the death of Jehoiakim, 11 years before the final destruction of Jerusalem.

The 70 years spoken by Jeremiah is shown in Jer.29:1-14 to have begun to count from the time when the **remnant** (or **residue**—same word in the Hebrew) in Jerusalem were taken captive by Nebuzaradan, the captain of Nebuchadnezzar. It was in the 4th month of his 11th year that Zedekiah was taken captive (2Kings 25:2-7; Jer.39:2-7), while in the 5th month Nebuzaradan carried away the **remnant** to Babylon (2Kings 25:8-11; Jer.39:8,9). It was this **remnant** or **residue**, as well as to all those who, 11 years before, had gone into captivity with Jehoiachin or Coniah (compare Jer.24:1,8), that Jeremiah sent the letter, telling them to settle down in Babylon, for the Lord would not visit them till 70 years were accomplished (See Jer.29:1,2).

We believe that the foregoing Scriptural data definitely fixes the commencement of the 70 years period from the 7th month, in the 11th year, of the reign of Zedekiah, Judah's last king.

The following facts should be remembered: (1) Ptolemy's Canon places the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar in the year 604 BC. (2) The 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar was in the 4th year of Jehoiakim—Jer.25:1. (3) Jerusalem was destroyed in the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar—2Kings 25:2,8. (4) Jehoiakim and Zedekiah each reigned 11 years in Jerusalem—2Chron.36:5,11. (5) The Jews returned to Jerusalem at the end of the 70 years in the 1st year of Cyrus, 536 BC, which is a generally accepted date—2Chron.36:19-23.

All who will seek to satisfactorily harmonize the above chronological records of the Scriptures, with the Canon's date for the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar, will soon prove to himself the impossibility of the task.

Accepting the united testimony of the sacred writers that Jerusalem and the land lay desolate for 70 full years, the chronological data of the Scriptures are harmonious.

“Bible Chronology, an open letter” (1936), pages 6-7

But while Brother Russell saw reason to accept as accurate most of Ptolemy's dates, there are two which he did not accept, namely, the date for the beginning of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, 604 BC, and that for the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, 464 BC. In these instances he followed the Bible indications, that is, 625 BC for Nebuchadnezzar, and 474 BC for Artaxerxes. For the Scriptures declare that it was in the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar that this king destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and **laid the land waste without an inhabitant for 70 years**—See 2Chron.36:11-23; 2Kings 25:8-12,25,26. And as the 70 years' desolation ended in Cyrus' 1st year, 536 BC it began in 606 BC. 606 BC must therefore have been the 19th year of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, and hence 625 BC his 1st year.

As for the reign of Artaxerxes,—it was the 20th year of this king that God's servant, Nehemiah, received his authorization, or commandment to restore and build Jerusalem (as recorded in the Book of Nehemiah); and the prophetic time-features of the Bible require that this 20th year was 454 BC. Hence the 1st year of Artaxerxes must have been 474 BC.

It is interesting to notice that Ptolemy gives the date 625 BC for the beginning of the reign of the Babylonian king Nabopolassar, who is said to be the father of Nabokolassar. But modern historians translate both these names “Nebuchadnezzar,” as can be seen in the Babylonian section of the British Museum. If Nabopolassar is the Nebuchadnezzar of the Bible, his 19th year would have been 606 BC, which is agreeable with Bible Chronology. We should not overlook the possibility that ancient historians, of the days before Ptolemy, may have mixed up the identities of these two Babylonian kings, Nabopolassar and Nabokolassar, whose names are so much alike; just as we know that they mixed up the identities of the two Persian kings, Xerxes and Artaxerxes.



## Britannica

“Chronology” page 576

The source from which the exploration of Mesopotamian chronology started is a text called Ptolemy’s Canon. This king list covers a period of about 1,000 years, beginning with the kings of Babylon after the accession of Nabonassar in 747 BC. The text itself belongs to the period of the Roman Empire and was written by a Greek astronomer resident in Egypt. Proof of the fundamental correctness of Ptolemy’s Canon has come from the ancient cuneiform tablets excavated in Mesopotamia, including some that refer to astronomical events, chiefly eclipses of the Moon. Thus, by the time excavations began, a fairly detailed picture of Babylonian chronology was already available for the period after 747 BC. Ptolemy’s Canon covers the Persian and Seleucid periods of Mesopotamian history, but this section will deal only with the period up to the Persian conquest (539 BC).

The chief problem in the early years of Assyriology was to reconstruct a sequence of Assyria for the period after 747 BC. This was done chiefly by means of limmu, or eponym, lists, several of which were found by early excavators. These texts are lists of officials who held the office of limmu for one year only and whom historians also call by the Greek name of eponym. Annals, or the campaigns mentioned in them, were dated by eponyms who figured in the eponym lists. Moreover, some of the Assyrian kings in the annals were also kings of Babylonia and as such were included in Ptolemy’s Canon.

Good progress was therefore being made when, soon after 1880, two chronological texts of outstanding importance were discovered. One of these, now known as King List A, is damaged in parts, but the end of it, which is well preserved, coincides with the first part of Ptolemy’s Canon down to 626 BC. The other text, the Babylonian Chronicle, also coincides with the beginning of the canon, though it breaks off earlier than King List A. With the publication of these texts, the first phase in the reconstruction of Mesopotamian chronology was over. For the period after 747 BC, there remained only one serious lacuna—i.e., **the lack of the eponym sequence for the last 40 years or so of Assyrian history**. This had not been established by the early 1970s.

“Eclipse” page 195

The Assyrian eponym canon, which preserves the names of the annual magistrates who gave their names to the years, records under the year that corresponds to 763-762 BC: “Insurrection in the city of Ashur. In the month Sivan the sun was eclipsed.” The reference must be to the eclipse of the Sun on June 15, 763 BC. A reference to the same eclipse has been found in the Bible: “And on that day, says the Lord God, I will make the sun go down at noon, and darken the earth in broad daylight” (Amos 8:9).

“Mesopotamia, and Iraq” page 988

Nabopolassar had named his oldest son after the famous king of the second dynasty of Isin, had trained him carefully for his prospective kingship, and had shared responsibility with him. When the father died in 605, Nebuchadrezzar [Nebuchadnezzar] was with his army in Syria; he had just crushed the Egyptians in a cruel, bloody war and pursued them into the south. On receiving the news of his father’s death, Nebuchadrezzar returned immediately to Babylon. In his numerous inscriptions he tells but rarely of his many wars. The Babylonian chronicle is **extant only for the years 605-594**, and not much is known from other sources about the later years of this famous king.

Judah rebelled again in 589; Jerusalem was under siege. The city fell after 18 months of siege and was completely destroyed. Many thousands of Jews were forced into “Babylonian exile,” and their country was reduced to a province of the Babylonian Empire.

Awil-Marduk (in the Old Testament Evil-Merodach, 561-560), the son of Nebuchadrezzar, was unable to win the support of the priests of Marduk. His reign did not last long, and he was soon

eliminated. His brother-in-law and successor, Nergal-shar-usur (in classical source, Neriglissar, 559-556), was a general who undertook a campaign in 557 into the “rough” Cilician land, which may have been under the control of the Medes. His still-minor son Labash-Marduk was murdered not long after that, allegedly because he was not suitable for his job.

### **McClintock & Strong**

“Chronology” page 304

From the Destruction of Solomon’s Temple to the Return from Babylon.—The determination of the length of this period depends upon the date of the return to Palestine. The decree of Cyrus leading to that event was made in the first year of his reign (Ezra 1:1), which, if it date from his conquest of Babylon, as determined by Ptolemy’s Canon, would be 538 BC; but the decree in question appears to date from his personal superseding of “Darius the Mede” at Babylon, 536 BC, where the edict was evidently issued. Others date the decree from the earlier point, and suppose that so great a migration must have occupied much time; they therefore allow **two years** as not too long an interval for its complete accomplishment after the promulgation of the decree.

Another method of arriving at the time in question is by means of fixing the termination of the so-called “**70 years’ captivity.**” Two numbers, held by some to be identical, must here be considered. One is the period of 70 years, during which the tyranny of Babylon over Palestine and the East generally was to last, prophesied by Jeremiah (25), and the other, the 70 years of the city’s overthrow and utter depopulation (2Chron.36:21; Dan.9:2). The commencement of the former period is plainly the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar (as viceroy), and 4th (according to Dan. 1:1, the 3rd complete) year of Jehoiakim (Jer.25:1), 606 BC, when the successes of the king of Babylon began (46:2), and the miseries of Jerusalem (25:29); and its conclusion will be the fall of Babylon (ver. 12). The famous 70 years of captivity would seem to be the same period as this, since it was to **terminate with the return of the captives (Jer.29:10)**. The second period of 70 years dates from the burning of the Temple late in 588 BC (Ezek.40:1), and **terminates with its complete reconstruction**, some time in 517 BC (Ezra 6:15). The two passages in Zechariah, which speak of such an interval as one of desolation (1:12), and during which fasts connected with the captivity had been kept (7:5), are quite reconcilable with this explanation. These two passages are of the **2nd and 4th years of Darius Hystaspis**, in whose 6th year the Temple was finished.

“Chronology” page 306

Jehoiakim and Nebuchadnezzar.—In Jer.25:1 the first year of Nebuchadnezzar coincides, wholly or in part with 4 Jehoiakim; 2Kings 24:12, the epoch of Jeconiah’s captivity and of Zedekiah’s reign lies in 8 Nebuchadnezzar; *ibid.* 25:8, the 11th of Zedekiah, the 5th month, 10th day, lies in 19 Nebuchadnezzar; and Jer.52:31, the 37th of Jeconiah, 12th month, 25th day, lies “in the year that Evil-Merodach began to reign.” From these synchronisms it follows demonstrably that, **in this reckoning, Nebuchadnezzar has 45 years of reign, two years more than are assigned to him in the Astronomical Canon**, where his reign of 43 years begins  $\text{Æ. Nab. } 144 = 604 \text{ BC}$ ; consequently, that his reign in the Jewish reckoning bears the date from the year 606 BC. Hence it results that the year of the taking of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple is 588 BC. Those chronologists who, not having carefully enough collated and discussed the testimonies, accept unquestioned the year 604 BC as that first year of Nebuchadnezzar which coincides with 4 Jehoiakim, place the catastrophe two years later, BC 586. With this latitude for difference of views, the synchronism 1 Nebuchadnezzar = 4 Jehoiakim = 606 or 604 BC, has long been generally taken by chronologists as the connecting link between sacred and profane annals, the *terminus a quo* of the ascending reckoning.

“Nebuchadnezzar” pages 897-901

Nebuchadnezzar was the son and successor of Nabopolassar, the founder of the Babylonian empire. He appears to have been **of marriageable age at the time of his father’s rebellion** against

Assyria, 625 BC; for, according to Abydenus, the alliance between this prince and the Median king was cemented by the betrothal of Amuhia, the daughter of the latter, to Nebuchadnezzar, Nabopolassar's son. Little further is known of him during his father's lifetime. At any rate, a few years later, he was placed at the head of a Babylonian army, and sent by his father, who was now old and infirm, to chastise the insolence of Pharaoh-Neco, king of Egypt. This prince had recently invaded Syria, defeated Josiah, king of Judah, at Megiddo, and reduced the whole tract, from Egypt to Carchemish on the upper Euphrates, which in the partition of Assyrian territories on the destruction of Nineveh had been assigned to Babylon (2Kings 23:29,30). Neco had held possession of these countries for about **three years**, when (606 BC) Nebuchadnezzar led an army against him, defeated him at Carchemish in a great battle (Jer.46:2-12), recovered Coele-Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine, took Jerusalem (Dan.1:1-2), pressed forward to Egypt, and was engaged in that country or upon its borders when intelligence arrived which recalled him hastily to Babylon. Nabopolassar, after reigning **twenty-one years**, had died, and the throne was vacant; or, as there is some reason to think, Nebuchadnezzar, since he appeared to be the "king of Babylon" to the Jews, had really been associated with his father (Jer.24:1; Dan.1:1). In some alarm, however, about the succession, he hurried back to the capital, accompanied only by his light troops; and crossing the desert, probably by way of Tadmor or Palmyra, reached Babylon before any disturbance had arisen, and entered peaceably on his kingdom (604 BC)...It was at this time that Daniel and his companions were brought to Babylon, where they presently grew into favor with Nebuchadnezzar, and became persons of very considerable influence (Dan.1:3-20).

Jehoiakim—who, although threatened at first with captivity (2Chron.36:6), had been finally maintained on the throne as a Babylonian vassal—**after three years of service** "turned and rebelled," probably trusting to be supported by Egypt (2Kings 24:1). Jehoiachin reigned only three months; for on his showing symptoms of disaffection, Nebuchadnezzar came up against Jerusalem for the third time, deposed the young prince (whom he carried to Babylon, together with a large portion of the population of the city, and the chief of the Temple treasures), and made his uncle, Zedekiah, king in his place...Nebuchadnezzar commenced the final siege of Jerusalem in the **ninth year of Zedekiah—his own sixteenth year** (early in 589 BC)—and took it nearly **two years later** (latter part of 588 BC)...Nebuchadnezzar then returned to Babylon with Zedekiah, whom he imprisoned for the remainder of his life...He died in the year 561 BC, at an **advanced age (83 or 84), having reigned forty-three years**. A son, Evil-Merodach, succeeded him.

The Canon of Ptolemy consists of a catalogue, arranged in chronological order. According to this catalogue, Nabopolassar (Ναβουπολάσσαρος) was succeeded by Nabokolassar (Ναβοκολάσσαρος), 605 BC. This Nabokolassar is therefore presumed to be the Nebuchadnezzar of Scripture. Nabopolassar, the father of Nabokolassar, is supposed to have been the first Chaldean monarch of Babylon, and to have disunited it from the Assyrian empire.

It will be observed that both Nebuchadnezzar (styled by some *the Great*) and his father are here **equally named Nabuchodonosor**, but in the citation of the same narrative from Berosus by Josephus (*Apion*. I, 19) the father of Nebuchadnezzar is called Nabolassar (Ναβολάσσαρος), corresponding nearly with the Nabopolassar of Ptolemy; which has induced **some to suppose the name Nabuchodonosor in the former citation to be an error of transcription**...Some foundation has thus been afforded for considering Nebuchadnezzar as a general name for Babylonian sovereigns. The conqueror of Nineveh is also called by the name of Nabuchodonosor in Tobit xiv:15, and is on this account styled by some *Nebuchadnezzar the First*.

Probably the first capture of Jerusalem (Dan.1:1) took place during **the last years of the reign of Nabopolassar**, in the expedition mentioned by Berosus, but the Canon of Ptolemy dates the commencement of his reign from the death of his father, when he became sole king of Babylon.

“Cyrus” page 638

The “first year of Cyrus” there spoken of is not the year of his elevation to power over the Medes, nor the date of the conquest of Persia, nor yet that of the fall of Babylon, 538 BC; but at the close of the two years succeeding this last event, **during which, “Darius the Mede” held the viceroyship of Babylon, i.e. in 536 BC.** It was not till then that Cyrus became actual ruler over Palestine, which continued to be attached to the Babylonian department of his empire.

“Darius the Mede” pages 676-677

The statement (Dan.6:28) that “Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian,” seems to represent him as the immediate predecessor of Cyrus...Herodotus and Ctesias, differing widely in other respects, agree in making Astyages the last king of the Median dynasty, with no male heir, conquered and deposed by Cyrus, first king of the Medo-Persian dynasty at Babylon. Xenophon, however, in the *Cyropædia* (i,5,2) introduces, as son and successor of Astyages, and uncle (mother’s brother) of Cyrus, acting under whose orders Cyrus takes Babylon, and receives in marriage his daughter, unnamed, with Media as her portion...That this Darius was Cyrus’s father-in-law, probably rests at last on the supposed authority of Xenophon.

Darius is represented as the personal name of “Astyages,” the last king of the Medes...Daniel himself passed from the service of Darius to that of Cyrus, and did not again return to Babylon.

The “Darius” in question was *Cyaxares* II, the son and successor of Astyages, who is commonly regarded as the last king of Media. It is supposed that the reign of this Cyaxares has been neglected by historians from the fact that through his indolence and luxury he yielded the real exercise of power to his nephew Cyrus, who married his daughter, and so after his death received the crown by direct succession...On the other hand, Herodotus expressly states that “Astyages” was the last king of the Medes, that he was conquered by Cyrus, and that he died without leaving any male issue (Herodotus i,73,109,127 sq.).

## Froom

“The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers” Volume I, page 236

**Nabonassar is said to have destroyed the Babylonian king lists up to his time** in order to start a series beginning with his own reign. In the eighth century BC, astronomy was beginning a new era of investigation in the East, and as a result provided later western chronology with data by which kings; reigns could be numbered and checked. This doubtless gave rise to the Nabonassar Era, reckoned by Ptolemy in terms of the Egyptian calendar year.

Appendix A, page 915

Nebuchadnezzar’s Reign Astronomically Fixed– The date of 605 BC for Nebuchadnezzar’s accession is **based on Ptolemy’s canon and on a Babylonian source document—a clay tablet bearing a series of astronomical observations dated in the thirty-seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign.** The astronomical data on this tablet enable us to identify definitely Nebuchadnezzar’s thirty-seventh year as 568/67 BC. Thus the first year of his reign was 604 BC, That is, the lunar year 604/3, spring to spring, for the Babylonian calendar year began on Nisan 1, from a spring new moon.

This same date, 604/3 BC, long known as the first year of Nebuchadnezzar from Ptolemy’s canon, and corroborated by this ancient tablet, was the basis upon which older historians arrived at 606 as the accession date. This figure was based on theological grounds in an attempt to reconcile a supposed conflict between Nebuchadnezzar’s accession date and Daniel’s narrative. And this astronomical tablet helps to demonstrate that the conflict does not really exist in the light of newer knowledge.

## Rollin

“Ancient History” Volume I, “The Second Assyrian Empire” page 462:

This second Assyrian empire continued two hundred and ten years, reckoning to the year in which Cyrus, who was become absolute master of the East, by the death of his father Cambyses, and his father-in-law Cyaxares, published the famous edict whereby the Jews were permitted to return into their own country, **after the captivity of seventy years** at Babylon.

Belesis. He is the same as Nabonassar, from whose reign began the famous astronomical epochs at Babylon, called from his name the era of Nabonassar. In the Holy Scripture he is called Baladan (2Kings 20:12). He reigned but **twelve years**, and was succeeded by his son,

Merodach-Baladan. This is the prince who sent ambassadors to king Hezekiah, to congratulate him on the recovery of his health, of which we shall speak hereafter. After him there reigned several other kings at Babylon, with whose story we are entirely unacquainted.

Page 466:

Esarhaddon (2Kings 19:37). We have already observed, that after Merodach-Baladan, there was a succession of kings of Babylon, of whom history has transmitted nothing but the names. The royal family becoming extinct, there was an **interregnum of eight years**, full of troubles and commotions. Esarhaddon taking advantage of this juncture, made himself master of Babylon, and annexing it to his former dominion, reigned over the two united empires **thirteen years**.

Page 467:

Esarhaddon, after a prosperous reign of **thirty-nine years**, over the Assyrians and thirteen over the Babylonians, was succeeded by his son,

Saosduchinus. This prince is called in Scripture, Nebuchodonosor, which name was common to the kings of Babylon. To distinguish this from the others, he is called Nebuchodonosor I. [Rollin here uses the Greek and LXX spelling of Nebuchadnezzar or Nebuchadrezzar as a variant spelling.]

Page 468:

Saracus, otherwise called Chyna-Ladanus. This prince succeeded Saosduchinus, and having rendered himself contemptible to his subjects by his effeminacy, and the little care he took of his dominions, Nabopolassar, a Babylonian by birth, and general of his army, usurped that part of the Assyrian empire, and reigned over it **one and twenty years**.

Nabopolassar. This prince, the better to maintain his usurped sovereignty, made an alliance with Cyaxares, king of the Medes. With their joint forces they besieged and took Nineveh, killed Saracus, and utterly destroyed that great city.

The Babylonians and the Medes, having destroyed Nineveh, became so formidable, that they drew upon themselves the jealousy of all their neighbors. Neco, king of Egypt, was so alarmed at their power, that to stop their progress he marched towards the Euphrates, at the head of a powerful army, and made several considerable conquests.

Nabopolassar finding, that, after the taking of Carchemish, by Neco, all Syria and Palestine had revolted from him, and neither his age nor infirmities permitting him to go in person to recover them, he made his son Nebuchodonosor **partner with him in the empire**, and sent him away with an army, to reduce those countries to their former subjection.

From this time the Jews began to reckon the years of Nebuchodonosor, viz.: from the **end of the third year of Jehoiakim**, king of Judah, or rather from the beginning of the fourth. But the Babylonians compute the reign of this prince only from the death of his father, which happened **two years latter**.

Nebuchodonosor II or Nebuchadnezzar. (Jer.46:2; 2Kings 24:7) This prince defeated Neco's army near Euphrates, and retook Carchemish. From thence he marched towards Syria and Palestine, and reunited those provinces to his dominions.

Towards the end of the fifth year of Jehoiakim, Nabopolassar, king of Babylon died, after having **reigned one and twenty years**. As soon as his son Nebuchodonosor was informed of his death, he

set out with all expedition for Babylon, taking the nearest way through the desert, attended only by a small retinue, leaving the main body of his army with his generals, to be conducted to Babylon with the captives and spoils.

Page 474:

Being affected with the most sincere gratitude, he caused, by a solemn edict, to be published through the whole extent of his dominions, what astonishing and miraculous things God had wrought in his person.

One year after this, Nebuchadnezzar died, having **reigned forty-three years**, reckoned from the death of his father. He was one of the greatest monarchs that ever reigned in the East. He was succeeded by his son,

Evil-Merodach. (2Kings 25:27-30) As soon as he was settled on the throne, he released Jeconiah, king of Judah, out of prison, where he had been **confined near seven and thirty years**.

In the reign of this Evil-Merodach, which lasted but **two years**, the learned prince Daniel's detection of the fraud practiced by the priests of Bel; the innocent artifice by which he contrived to kill the dragon which was worshiped as god; and the miraculous deliverance of the same prophet out of the den of lions, where he had victuals brought him by the prophet Habakkuk.

Evil-Merodach rendered himself so odious by his debauchery, and other extravagances, that his own relations conspired against him and put him to death. Neriglissar, his sister's husband, **and one of the chief conspirators**, reigned in his stead. Immediately on his accession to the crown, he made great preparations for war against the Medes, which made Cyaxares send for Cyrus out of Persia to his assistance. This story will be more particularly related by and by, where we shall find that this prince was slain in battle, in the fourth year of his reign.

Laborosoarchod [Labash-Marduk], his son, succeeded to the throne. This was a very wicked prince. Being naturally of the most vicious inclinations, he indulged them without restraint when he came to the crown; as if he had been invested with sovereign power, only to have the privilege of committing with impunity the most infamous and barbarous actions. He reigned but nine months; his own subjects, conspiring against him, put him to death. His successor was Labynit, or Nabonid. This prince had likewise other names, and in Scripture that of Belshazzar. It is reasonably supposed that he was the son of Evil-Merodach, by his wife Nitocris, and consequently the grandson to Nebuchadnezzar, to whom, according to Jeremiah's prophecy, the nations of the East were to be subject, as also to his son, and his grandson after him: "all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his sons's son, until the very time of his land shall come."

Page 485: "The History of the Kingdom of the Medes"

The first care of Cyaxares, as soon as he found himself again in peace, was to resume the siege of Nineveh, which the irruptions of the Scythians had obliged him to raise. Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, with whom he had lately contracted a particular alliance, joined with him in the league against the Assyrians. Having, therefore, united their forces, they besieged Nineveh, took it, killed Saracus the king, and utterly destroyed that mighty city.

God had foretold by the prophets, above a hundred years before, that he would bring vengeance upon that impious city for the blood of his servants, with which the kings thereof had gorged themselves, like ravenous lions. (Nahum 1:2,5,6; 2:1-4,6,9,10-12; 3:1-3)

Page 487:

The two armies enriched themselves with the spoils of Nineveh; and Cyaxares, prosecuting his victories, made himself master of all the cities of the kingdom of Assyria, except Babylon and Chaldea, which belonged to Nabopolassar.

After this expedition, Cyaxares died, and left his dominions to his son Astyages. Astyages reigned **thirty-five years**. This prince is called in Scripture Ahasuerus. Though his reign continued no less than thirty-five years, yet we have no particulars recorded of it in history. He had two children, whose names are famous, namely, Cyaxares, by his wife Aryenis, and Mandana by a former

marriage. In his father's lifetime, he married Mandana to Cambyses, the son of Achemenes, king of Persia; from this marriage sprung Cyrus, who was born but one year after the birth of his uncle Cyaxares. The latter succeeded his father in the kingdom of the Medes.

Cyaxares II. This prince is in Scripture called Darius the Mede. Cyrus, having taken Babylon, in conjunction with his uncle Cyaxares, left it under his government. After the death of this uncle, and this father Cambyses, he united the kingdoms of Medes and Persians into one.

### **Rawlinson**

"Five Great Monarchies" Volume I, page 149

Berosus and Critodemus are said by Pliny to have declared that the Babylonians had recorded their stellar observations upon bricks for 480 years before the era of Phoroneus.

Page 151:

The Canon of Ptolemy covers, in fact, the whole interval between the reign of Pul and the close of the Babylonian Empire, giving for the period of the seventh dynasty 13 reigns in 122 years, and for that of the eighth 5 reigns in 87 years. [The Canon mentions five only of these kings, omitting one (Laborosoarchod, *Labash-Marduk*), because he reigned less than a full year.]

Page 152:

The "Canon of Ptolemy," which contained an exact Babylonian computation of the time from 747 BC to 331 BC, is generally allowed to be a most authentic document, and one on which we may place complete reliance. [Mr. Bosanquet is **almost the only chronologer who still disputes the accuracy of this document.** (See "Messiah the Prince," Appendix, pp.455-8, 2nd edition.)]

Page 160:

Now, according to Polyhistor (**who here certainly repeats Berosus**), Zoroaster was the first of those eight Median kings who composed the second dynasty in Chaldea.

Page 165:

It is unfortunate that no writer has left us a list corresponding in Babylonian history with that which Manetho put on record for Egyptian. [One might have hoped to obtain some help for Ctesias's Assyrian list, as it went back at least as far as 2182 BC, when Assyria was a mere province of the Chaldean Empire. **But it presents every appearance of an absolute forgery**, being composed of Arian, Semitic, Egyptian, and Greek appellations, with a sprinkling of terms borrowed from geography.]

Pages 173-174:

[The words of Polyhistor are reported to us by Eusebius in a work (his *Chronica*) the original of which is lost, and which we have only in an Armenian version. Polyhistor himself does not appear to have read the work of Berosus. He derives his knowledge of it from Apollodorus. Thus **we have Berosus at fifth hand**—through Apollodorus, Polyhistor, Eusebius, and the Armenian translator.]

"Five Great Monarchies" Volume II, page 45

Now, putting aside authors who merely re-echo the statements of others, there seem to be, in the present case, **two and two only distinct original authorities—Herodotus and Ctesias.** Of these two, Herodotus is the earlier. He writes within two centuries of the termination of the Assyrian rule, whereas Ctesias writes at least thirty years later. [Ctesias returned from Persia to Greece in the year 398 BC. He may have published his *Persica* about 395 BC. Xenophon quotes it about 380 BC.] He [Herodotus] is of unimpeachable honesty, and may be thoroughly trusted to have reported only what he had heard. He traveled in the East, and had done his best to obtain accurate information upon Oriental matters, consulting on the subject, among others, the Chaldeans of Babylon.

Ctesias, like Herodotus, had the advantage of visiting the East. It may be argued that he possessed even better opportunities than the earlier writer for becoming acquainted with the view which the Orientals entertained of their own past. Herodotus probably devoted but a few months,

or at most a year or two, to his Oriental travels; Ctesias passed seventeen years at the Court of Persia. Herodotus was merely an ordinary traveler, and had no peculiar facilities for acquiring information in the East. Ctesias was court-physician to Artaxerxes Mnemon, and was thus likely to gain access to any archives which the Persian kings might have in their keeping. [Ctesias appears to have stated that he drew his history from documents written upon parchment belonging to the Persian kings.]

Page 46-47:

The cuneiform monuments, while they generally confirm Herodotus, contradict Ctesias perpetually. He is at variance with Manetho on Egyptian, with Ptolemy on Babylonian, Chronology. **No independent writer confirms him on any important point.** His Oriental history is quite incompatible with the narrative of Scripture.

The Chronology of Berosus was, apparently, not very different from that of Herodotus.

Page 124:

Polyhistor's authority beyond a doubt was Berosus.

Page 391-392:

There is strong reason for believing that Nineveh fell about 625 or 624 BC. [This belief rests primarily on the statements of Abydenus and Polyhistor, which connect the fall of Nineveh with the accession of Nabopolassar—**an event fixed by the Canon of Ptolemy to 625 BC.** The value of these writers depends of course wholly on their representing to us, where they agree, the statements of Berosus.

Page 396:

All we know on the subject of the last siege of Nineveh is that it was conducted by a combined army of Medes and Babylonians, the former commanded by Cyaxares, the latter by Nabopolassar or Nebuchadnezzar, [The book of Tobit makes Nebuchadnezzar the actual commander] and that it was terminated, when all hope was lost, by the suicide of the Assyrian monarch.

Page 427:

If it be asked how Media, in her hour of peril, came to receive no assistance from the great Powers with which she had made such close alliances—Babylonia and Lydia—the answer would seem to be that Lydia was too remote from the scene of strife to lend her effective aid, while circumstances had occurred in Babylonia to detach that state from her and render it unfriendly. Nebuchadnezzar had died in 561 BC, three years before the Persian revolt broke out. His son, Evil-Merodach, who would probably have maintained his father's alliances, had survived him but two years: he had been murdered in 559 BC by a brother-in-law, Nergal-shar-ezer or Neriglissar, who ascended the throne in that year and reigned till 555 BC. This prince was consequently on the throne at the time of Astyages' need. As he had supplanted the house of Nebuchadnezzar, he would naturally be on bad terms with that monarch's Median connections.

“Five Great Monarchies” Volume III, page 44

When the Medes first assumed an aggressive attitude towards Assyria, and threatened the capital with a siege, Babylonia apparently remained unshaken in her allegiance... Simultaneously with the advance of the Medes against the Assyrian capital from the east, we hear of a force threatening it from the south, a force which can only have consisted of Susianians, of Babylonians, or of both combined. [There is some reason to think that **Bel-sum-iskun, the father of Neriglissar, assumed the title of king of Babylon at this time.** A fragment belonging to the reign of Asshur-emidilin, the last Assyrian king, seems to speak of his taking possession of the Babylonian throne.]

Page 62:

The successor of Nebuchadnezzar was his son Evil-Merodach, who reigned only two years, [So the Astronomical Canon and Berosus. Polyhistor gave him 12 years, and Josephus 18 years.]



Page 63:

It is remarkable that Neriglissar calls himself the son of Bel-sum-iskun, “**king of Babylon**”—**a monarch whose name does not appear in Ptolemy’s list**, but who is probably to be identified with a chieftain so called, who assumed the royal title in the troubles which preceded the fall of the Assyrian Empire.

“Seven Great Monarchies” Volume II, page 85

The list of Median kings in Ctesias, so far as it differs from the list in Herodotus, **seems to be a pure forgery**—an extension of the period of the monarchy by the conscious use of a system of duplication. Each king, or period, in Herodotus occurs in the list of Ctesias twice—a transparent device, clumsily cloaked by the cheap expedient of a liberal invention of names. Even the list of Herodotus requires curtailment. His deïoces, whose whole history reads more like romance than truth—the organizer of a powerful monarch in Media just at the time when Sargon was building his fortified posts in the country and peopling with his Israelite captives the old “cities of the Medes”—the prince who reigned for above half a century in perfect peace with his neighbors, and who although contemporary with Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Assurbanipal, all kings more or less connected with Media—is never heard of in any of their annals, must be relegated to the historical limbo in which repose so many “shades of mighty names;” and the Herodotean list of Median kings must at any rate, be thus far reduced.

Pages 91-95:

How long the dominion of the Scyths endured is a matter of great uncertainty. It was no doubt the belief of Herodotus that from their defeat of Cyaxares to his treacherous murder of their chiefs was a period of exactly twenty-eight years. During the whole of this space he regarded them as the undisputed lords of Asia. It was not till the twenty-eight years were over that the Medes were able, according to him, to renew their attack on the Assyrians, and once more to besiege Nineveh. But this chronology is open to great objections. There is strong reason for believing that Nineveh fell about 625 or 624 BC; but according to the numbers of Herodotus the fall would, at the earliest, have taken place in 602 BC. There is great unlikelihood that the Scyths, if they had maintained their rule for a generation, should not have attracted some distinct notice from the Jewish writers.

Chaldea, though it had been now for above half a century an Assyrian fief, and had borne the yoke with scarcely a murmur during that period, could never wholly forget its old glories, or the long resistance which it had made submitting to its northern neighbor. The overtures of the Median monarch seem to have been favorably received; and it was agreed that an army from the south should march up the Tigris and threaten Assyria from that quarter, while Cyaxares led his Medes from the east, through the passes of Zagros against the capital. Rumor soon conveyed the tidings of his enemies’ intentions to the Assyrian monarch, who immediately made such a disposition of the forces at his command as seemed best calculated to meet the double danger which threatened him. Selecting from among his generals the one in whom he placed most confidence—a man named Nabopolassar, most probably an Assyrian—he put him at the head of a portion of his troops, and sent him to Babylon to resist the enemy who was advancing from the sea. The command of his main army he reserved for himself, intending to undertake in person the defense of his territory against the Medes. This plan of campaign was not badly conceived; but it was frustrated by an unexpected calamity. Nabopolassar, seeing his sovereign’s danger, and calculating astutely that he might gain more by an opportune defection from a falling cause than he could look to receive as the reward of fidelity, resolved to turn traitor and join the enemies of Assyria. Accordingly he sent an embassy to Cyaxares, with proposals for a close alliance to be cemented by a marriage. If the Median monarch would give his daughter Amuhia (or Amytis) to be the wife of his son Nebuchadnezzar, the forces under his command should march against Nineveh and assist Cyaxares to capture it. Such a proposition arriving at such a time was not likely to meet with a refusal. Cyaxares gladly came into

the terms; the marriage took place; and Nabopolassar, who had now practically assumed the sovereignty of Babylon, either led or sent a Babylonian contingent to the aid of the Medes.

The siege of Nineveh by the combined Medes and Babylonians was narrated by Ctesias at some length. He called the Assyrian king Sardanapalus, the Median commander Arbaces, the Babylonian Belesis. Though **he thus disguised the real names**, and threw back the event to a period a century and a half earlier than its true date, there can be no doubt that he intended to relate the last siege of the city, that which immediately preceded its complete destruction.

Still, as **Ctesias is a writer who delights in fiction**, and as it seems very unlikely that he would find a detailed account of the siege, such as he has given us, in the Persian archives, from whence he professed to derive his history, no confidence can be placed in those points of his narrative which have any further sanction. All that we know on the subject of the last siege of Nineveh is that it was conducted by a combined army of Medes and Babylonians, the former commanded by Cyaxares, the latter by Nabopolassar or Nebuchadnezzar.

The fall of the city was followed by a division of the spoil between two principal conquerors. While Cyaxares took to his own share the land of the conquered people, Assyria Proper, and the countries dependent on Assyria towards the north and north-west, Nabopolassar was allowed, not merely Babylonia, Chaldea, and Susiana, but the valley of the Euphrates and the countries to which that valley conducted. Thus two considerable empires arose at the same time out of the ashes of Assyria—the Babylonian towards the south and the south-west, stretching from Luristan to the borders of Egypt, the Median towards the north, reaching from the salt desert of Iran to Amanus and the Upper Euphrates. These empires were established by mutual consent; they were connected together, not merely by treaties, but by the ties of affinity which united their rulers.

Page 103-106:

Cyaxares on his part, was not content to bring against the confederates merely the power of Media. He requested and obtained a contingent from the Babylonian monarch, Nabopolassar, and may not improbably have had the assistance of other allies also. With a vast army drawn from various parts of inner Asia, he invaded the territory of the Western Powers, and began his attempt at subjugation...The war continued six years, and the Medes had eventually made no serious impression, when a remarkable circumstance brought it suddenly to a termination.

The two armies had once more met and were engaged in conflict, when in the midst of the struggle, an ominous darkness fell upon the combatants and filled them with superstitious awe. The sun was eclipsed, either totally or at any rate considerably, so that the attention of the two armies was attracted to it; and, discontinuing the fight, they stood to gaze at the phenomenon. In most parts of the East such an occurrence is even now seen with dread—the ignorant mass believe that the orb of day is actually being devoured or destroyed, and that the end of all things is at hand...On the present occasion it is said that, amid the general fear, a desire for reconciliation seized both armies. Of this spontaneous movement two chiefs, the foremost of the allies on either side, took advantage. Syennesis, king of Cilicia, the first known monarch of his name, on the part of Lydia, and a prince whom Herodotus calls “Labyntus of Babylon”—probably either Nabopolassar or Nebuchadnezzar—on the part of Media, came forward to propose an immediate armistice; and, when the proposal was accepted on either side, proceeded to the more difficult task of arranging terms of peace between the contending parties...The territorial basis of the treaty was thus what in modern diplomatic language is called the status quo matters, in other words, returned to the position in which they had stood before the war broke out. The only difference was that Cyaxares gained a friend and an ally where he had previously had a jealous enemy; since it was agreed that the two kings of Media and Lydia should swear a friendship, and that, to cement the alliance, Alyattes should give his daughter Arytenis in marriage to Astyages, the son of Cyaxares. The marriage was arranged took place soon afterwards, while an oath of friendship was sworn at once.

In one quarter only was this rest for a short time disturbed. During the troublous period the

neighboring country of Egypt, which had recovered its freedom, and witnessed a revival of its ancient prosperity, under the Psamatik family, began once more to aspire to the possession of those provinces which, being divided off from the rest of the Asiatic continent by the impassable Syrian desert, seems politically to belong to Africa almost more than to Asia. **Psamatik I., the Psammetichus of Herodotus**, had commenced an aggressive war in this quarter, probably about the time that Assyria was suffering from the Median and then from the Scythian inroads. He had besieged for several years the strong Philistine town of Ashdod, which commands the coast-route from Egypt to Palestine, and was at this time a most important city. Despite a resistance which would have wearied out any less pertinacious assailant, he had persevered in his attempt, and had finally succeeded in taking the place. He had thus obtained a firm footing in Syria; and his successor has able, starting from this vantage-ground, to overrun and conquer the whole territory. About the year 608 BC, **Neco, son of Psamatik I.**, having recently ascended the throne, invaded Palestine with a large army, met and defeated Josiah, king of Judah, near Megiddo in the great plain of Esdraelon, and pressing forward through Syria to the Euphrates, attacked and took **Carchemish**, the strong city which guarded the ordinary passage of the river. Idumea, Palestine, Phoenicia, and Syria submitted to him, and for **three years** he remained in undisturbed possession of his conquest. Then, however, the Babylonians, who had received these provinces at the division of the Assyrian Empire, began to bestir themselves. Nebuchadnezzar marched to **Carchemish**, defeated the army of Neco, recovered all the territory to the border of Egypt, and even ravaged a portion of that country. It is probable that in this expedition he was assisted by the Medes. At any rate **seven or eight years afterwards**, when the intrigues of Egypt had again created disturbances in this quarter, and Jehoiakim, the Jewish king, broke into open insurrection, the Median monarch sent a contingent, which accompanied Nebuchadnezzar into Judea, and assisted him to establish his power firmly in South-Western Asia.

This is the last act that we can ascribe to the great Median king. He can scarcely have been much less than **seventy years old** at this time; and his life was prolonged **at the utmost three years longer**. According to Herodotus, he died 593 BC, after a reign of exactly forty years, leaving his crown to his son Astyages, whose marriage with a Lydian princess was above related.

Page 230:

The history of the Babylonian Empire commences with Nabopolassar, who appears to have mounted the throne in the year 625; but to understand the true character of the kingdom which he set up, its traditions and its national spirit, we must begin at a far earlier date...

Pages 239-242:

Of the reign of Nabopolassar the information which has come down to us is scanty. It appears by the canon of Ptolemy that he dated his accession to the throne from the year 625, and that his reign lasted twenty-one years, from 625 to 604 BC. During the greater portion of this period **the history of Babylon is a blank**. Apparently the "golden city" enjoyed her new position at the head of an empire too much to endanger it by aggression; and, her peaceful attitude provoking no hostility, she was for a while left unmolested by her neighbors. Media, bound to her by formal treaty as well as by dynastic interests, could be relied upon as a firm friend; Persia was too weak, Lydia too remote, to be formidable; in Egypt alone was a combination of hostile feeling with military strength such as might have been expected to lead speedily to a trial of strength; but Egypt was under the rule of an aged and wary prince, one trained in the school of adversity, whose years forbade his engaging in any distant enterprise, and whose prudence led him to think more of defending his own country than of attacking others.

In 610 BC probably the very year of the eclipse—Psammetichus died and was succeeded by his son Neco, who was in the prime of life and who in disposition was bold and enterprising. This monarch very shortly after his accession cast a covetous eye upon Syria, and in the year 608 BC, having made vast preparations, he crossed his frontier and invaded the territories of Nabopolassar. Marching along the usual route, by the Shephelah and the plain of Esdraelon, he learned, when he neared Megiddo,

that a body of troops was drawn up at that place to oppose him. Josiah, the Jewish king, regarding himself as bound to resist the passage through his territories of an army hostile to the monarch of whom he held his crown, had collected his forces, and having placed them across the line of the invader's march, was calmly awaiting in this position the approach of his master's enemy. Neco hereupon sent ambassadors to persuade Josiah to let him pass, representing that he had no quarrel with the Jews, and claiming a divine sanction to his undertaking. But nothing could shake the Jewish monarch's sense of duty; and Neco was consequently forced to engage with him, and to drive his troops from their position. Josiah, defeated and mortally wounded, returned to Jerusalem where he died. Neco pressed forward through Syria to the Euphrates; and carrying all before him, established his dominion over the whole tract lying between Egypt on the one hand, and the "Great River" upon the other. On his return three months later he visited Jerusalem, deposed Jehoahaz, a younger son of Josiah, whom the people had made king, and gave the crown to Jehoiakim, his elder brother.

At length, in the year 605 BC, Nabopolassar, who felt himself unequal to the fatigues of a campaign, resolved to entrust his forces to Nebuchadnezzar, his son, and to send him to contend with the Egyptians. The key of Syria at this time was Carchemish, a city situated on the right bank of the Euphrates, probably near the site which was afterwards occupied by Hierapolis. Here the forces of Neco were drawn up to protect his conquests, and here Nebuchadnezzar proceeded boldly to attack them. A great battle was fought in the vicinity of the river, which was utterly disastrous to the Egyptians, who "fled away" in confusion, and seem not to have ventured on making a second stand. Nebuchadnezzar rapidly recovered the lost territory, received the submission of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, restored the old frontier line, and probably pressed on to Egypt itself, hoping to cripple or even to crush his presumptuous adversary. News arrived from Babylon that Nabopolassar was dead; and the Babylonian prince, who feared a disputed succession, having first concluded a hasty arrangement with Neco, returned at his best speed to his capital.

Nebuchadnezzar is the great monarch of the Babylonian Empire, which, lasting only 88 years—from 625 to 538 BC—was for nearly half the time under his sway. It is scarcely too much to say that, but for Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonians would have had no place in history.

**We have no complete, or even general account of Nebuchadnezzar's wars.** Our chief, or almost sole, information concerning them is derived from Jewish writers.

Pages 249-250:

Nebuchadnezzar expired at Babylon in the forty-fourth year of his reign, 561 BC, after an illness of no long duration. He was probably little short of eighty years old at his death.

The successor of Nebuchadnezzar was his son Evil-Merodach, who reigned only two years, and of whom very little is known. **[So the Astronomical Canon and Berosus. Polyhistor gave him 12 years, and Josephus 18 years.]** We may expect that the marvelous events of his father's life, which are recorded in the Book of Daniel, had made a deep impression upon him, and that he was thence inclined to favor the persons, and perhaps the religion, of the Jews. One of his first acts was to release the unfortunate Jehoiachin from the imprisonment in which he had languished for thirty-five years, and to treat him with kindness and respect. At any rate he had been but two years upon the throne when a conspiracy was formed against him; he was accused of lawlessness and intemperance; his own brother-in-law, Neriglissar, the husband of a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, headed the malcontents; and Evil-Merodach lost his life with his crown.

Neriglissar, the successful conspirator, was at once acknowledged king. He is probably **identical with the "Nergal-sharezer, Rab-Mag," of Jeremiah [Jer.39:3,13]**, who occupied a prominent position among the Babylonian nobles left to press the siege of Jerusalem when Nebuchadnezzar retired to Riblah. The title of "Rab-Mag," is one that he bears on his bricks. It is remarkable that Neriglissar calls himself the son of Bel-sum-iskun, "king of Babylon"—**a monarch whose name does not appear in Ptolemy's list**, but who is probably to be identified with a chieftain so called, who assumed the royal title in the troubles which preceded the fall of the Assyrian Empire.

During his short reign of three years and a few months, Neriglissar had not time to distinguish himself by many exploits. So far as appears, he was at peace with all his neighbors, and employed his time principally in the construction of the Western Palace at Babylon.

### George Smith

“The History of Babylonia” pages 174-175

Babylon was strongly fortified, and its people were trusting in their defenses and holding high festival, when the Persians, who had made a canal above the city, and diverted part of the waters of the river, forded the Euphrates in the night, and entered the city by the river gates, which has been left unguarded during the festival. Belshazzar, son of Nabonidus, was slain in the attack, and the city fell into the hands of Cyrus, 539 BC.

The book of Daniel here states that Darius, son of Ahasuerus, took the kingdom, while ancient authors generally represent Cyrus as sole leader of the conquest. Much discussion has arisen as to the personality of this Darius; some suppose him to be Astyages, the grandfather of Cyrus; others make him the same as Cyaxares, son of Astyages; while a third section consider him to be a Median prince, otherwise unknown to history.

The inscriptions have as yet afforded no information on this point, but we may be certain that the rule of this Darius was short, and Ptolemy’s Canon, our best chronological authority, places the first year of Cyrus 538 BC.

“The Assyrian Eponym Canon” pages 150-151

There is, however, a larger body of readers who do not wish to enter themselves into chronological discussions, and only desire to know what conclusions may fairly be drawn from the monuments, the extracts and translations being so many pieces of evidence to them in any case of doubt. Without some plan for the solution of these chronological problems, the work would appear to these, my most numerous class of readers, incomplete; and even those who wish to found their own opinions on the evidence always desire to see the conclusions of other students. With these excuses I put forward the following comments and views, without any desire to attach too much weight to them. On most points they represent what appear to me as the true explanations and dates, but **I cannot say I am certain even on the main points**, and I hold myself ready to change all my conclusions, if satisfactory evidence should turn up against them. **Caution in this matter appears to me all the more necessary from the difficulty in reconciling the Assyrian statements with those of the Bible, and the widely different views expressed by the best scholars who have investigated the subject.**

Page 154:

Although there are undoubtedly some errors in the numbers given in the Book of Kings, yet **I believe that the Biblical chronology of the period following the death of Solomon, is in the main correct**, or very nearly so; for this reason, I cannot agree with the school of Bunsen and Brandes, who reduce the Biblical dates by over forty years.

I would suggest instead of these chronological alterations, that **some of the Biblical names in the Assyrian annals on which they are based, either do not refer to the kings supposed, or are errors on the part of the Assyrians**. If we allow that the Ahab and Jehu mentioned in the Assyrian records may not be the Ahab and Jehu of the Bible, we are not under the necessity of altering the chronology of either nation in order to make the Assyrian notices fit the time of the Hebrew monarchs.

Page 157:

Greek and Oriental chronology meet at the capture of Babylon by the Medes and Persians under Cyrus. Our best authority, the canon of Ptolemy, places the first year of Cyrus 538 BC, which would indicate 539 BC, as the date of the capture of Babylon and the fall of the Babylonian monarchy.

Page 160:

**No Assyrian date can be fixed with any certainty after the date of the accession of Nabu-pal-uzur or Nabopolassar at Babylon in 626 BC;** and this event appears to have closely followed the death of Assurbanipal, king of Assyria.

**In the whole of this period Assyrian chronological evidence is entirely wanting,** for although the later eponyms, whose names I have given in pp., 70,71, belong to the period from 643 to 610 BC, and probably extend to near its close, yet the order of the names is uncertain, and no political events are fixed to their eponyms.

Page 183:

In the year 763 BC an event happened in Assyria which appears also to have been noticed in Palestine; this was a great solar eclipse, which Mr. J.W.Bosanquet has happily connected with the passage in Amos 8:9. There appears also a slight allusion to it in 5:8.

### **Henry Fynes Clinton**

“Fasti Hellenici” Volume I, Page 269

From the age of Tobit it appears that Nineveh was standing in 610 BC. For he became blind in the year 710, and survived that accident 100 years; and yet he died before the fall of Nineveh. The city was taken by Nabuchodonosor and Ahasuerus. **Nabuchodonosor may be either the father of Nebuchadnezzar, or Nebuchadnezzar himself acting for his father;** and this passage will not determine whether Nineveh was taken before the accession of Nebuchadnezzar. But a prophecy of Jeremiah written in the first year of the captivity 605 BC seems to imply that the city was then destroyed; for in the particular enumeration of all the kings of the North far and near, and all the kingdoms of the world, etc., Assyria and Nineveh are not named.

Page 277:

In Abydenus Sardanapalus appears under his right description as a king of Assyria; and as he is the last but one of the Assyrian kings, he appears to be the same person as Nabuchodonosor of the book of Judith, who began to reign 44 years, and invaded Judea 27 years before the destruction of Nineveh. And **this may have been the cause of the error of Polyhistor,** who calls Nabopolassar by the name of Sardanapalus. **Nabopolassar was sometimes called Nabuchod-onosor, and this similarity of name may have produced the mistake.** This error of Polyhistor substituting a Babylonian for an Assyrian reign violates the true chronology in three principal points.

Page 279:

**Herodotus omits the short and troubled interval of six years,** which occurred between the death of Nebuchadnezzar (Labynetus I) and the accession of Nabonnadius [Nabonidus], and passes to the last Chaldean king of Babylon, Labynetus II, the son according to his account of Nebuchadnezzar and Nitocris.

Page 319:

The amount of the fifth period from the death of Josiah to the destruction of the temple is determined by Usher to about 22y.0m.25d. In this period the positions of all the preceding epochs are first ascertained, by measuring the dates of Scripture with profane testimony. **The fourth year of Jehoiakim was still current 70 years before the 1st of Cyrus** (according to Scripture reckoning) at Babylon. We are enabled, however, to bring Scripture and profane accounts to a still nearer coincidence, by comparing the history of Zedekiah and Jehoiachin with the dates assigned to the Babylonian kings by the Astronomical Canon.

“Fasti Hellenici” Volume II, Page 366-7, 372

There are doubtless many occasional facts in early profane history, in which the obscure and uncertain traditions preserved to us by the Greeks derive light and confirmation from the authentic narrative of Scripture. But the reign of Cyrus at Babylon is the point at which the chain of sacred

chronology is taken up and continued by profane history. At the termination of the captivity, in the first year of Cyrus, Scripture chronology is measured with profane. By determining the position of this date we determine all the preceding epochs.

The adjustment of this period of seventy years to the reigns of the Babylonian kings is perplexed and embarrassed with many difficulties.

In the first year of Darius' reign, *Daniel understood by the books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.* That address of Daniel was more naturally made a year or two before the restoration of the Jews, than seventeen or twenty-two years before that even. Again, *Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.* This implies that the two reigns were successive, rather than divided by an intermediate reign of seventeen years.

### **Robert R. Newton**

“The Crime of Claudius Ptolemy” pages 344,372-375

Even when Ptolemy pretends to base his theories completely upon his own observations, he must have actually based them upon observations by others. However, we cannot reconstruct the fabrication in these cases.

Ptolemy states the dates of seven lunar eclipses with the aid of the Babylonian kings. However, he never gives any more of the Babylonian date than the year. This contrasts strongly with his treatment of other calendars. In dealing with any other calendar, Ptolemy gives the full date in that calendar, and he then gives the equivalent in the Egyptian calendar. The exceptions are so few that they can easily be accidental.

Let us see how Ptolemy would go about fabricating a Babylonian record of a lunar eclipse. He would start by determining the Egyptian date of an eclipse that he wants to use, and he would then fabricate the exact circumstances to use (magnitude and hour) as he wants them. It is important to realize that this process gives the date of an actual eclipse, and that the fabricated circumstances are fairly close to the truth. He then wants to give the date in the Babylonian calendar, but he cannot for the reasons that have been outlined. All he can give is the Babylonian year.

It is also important to realize that Ptolemy does not need an authentic king list in order to give a year in the Babylonian fashion. Even if his king list is fabricated, he can still use it in order to assign a specific year of a specific king to his fabricated eclipse record.

Now let us see what happens to a modern historian or chronologist who studies Ptolemy's eclipse records. He sees that there is a list of kings and their reigns. He also sees that Ptolemy dates a lunar eclipse in the first year of Mardokempad, for example, on a certain month and day in the Egyptian calendar, at a certain hour on that day, and he states the fraction of the moon that was shadowed during the eclipse. The historian uses Ptolemy's king list to find the year in our calendar and he uses the Egyptian month and day to find the complete date in our calendar. He then finds by astronomical calculations that there was an eclipse on that date, that it came close to the hour that Ptolemy states, and that the stated amount of shadowing is also close to correct. This agreement between Ptolemy and modern astronomy happens not just once but seven times.

The historian or chronologist naturally concludes that there is overwhelming evidence confirming the accuracy of Ptolemy's king list, and he proceeds to use it as the basis for Babylonian chronology. Yet there is no evidence at all. The key point is that there may have been no Babylonian record at all. **Ptolemy certainly fabricated many of the aspects of the lunar eclipses, and he may have fabricated all of them.** When he fabricated them, it did not matter whether he used a correct king list or not. Any king list he used, regardless of its accuracy, would seem to be verified by eclipses.

For example, according to Ptolemy's king list, Ilulæus reigned for 5 years and his successor Mardokempad reigned for 12. Suppose that Ptolemy's list had omitted Mardokempad but assigned 17 years to Ilulæus. Instead of putting an eclipse in the 1st year of Mardokempad, Ptolemy would

put the same eclipse in the 6th year of Ilulæus. From the altered list, we would still establish that the eclipse was on 720 March 19, and we would still have the same apparent verification of the king list.

It follows that **Ptolemy's king list is useless in the study of chronology**, and that it must be ignored. What is worse, much Babylonian chronology is based upon Ptolemy's king list. All relevant chronology must now be revised and all dependence upon Ptolemy's list must be removed.

### **Scientific American**

October 1977, page 80

#### **Ptolemy's forgery may have extended to inventing the length of reigns of Babylonian kings.**

Since much modern reconstruction of Babylonian chronology has been based on a list of kings that Ptolemy used to pinpoint the dates of alleged Babylonian observations, according to Newton "all relevant chronology must now be reviewed and all dependence upon Ptolemy's [king] list must be removed."

March 1979, page 90 "The Acquittal of Ptolemy" (a rebuttal of the previous article)

Newton's accusation is scarcely a trivial one. Ptolemy is considered the greatest astronomer of antiquity... In *The Crime of Claudius Ptolemy* Newton charges the astronomer with the systematic fabrication of the data that underlay his theory of planetary motions. That makes Ptolemy, writes Newton, "the most successful fraud in the history of science" and the author of a book that "has done more damage to astronomy than any other work ever written."

Ptolemy's observations confirm his theoretical calculations with such accuracy that from the viewpoint of modern science they suggest fabrication. Victor E. Thoren of Indiana University and Owen J. Gingerich of Harvard University have independently pointed out that this kind of precision is completely understandable from the viewpoint of ancient science. The people who did astronomy in Ptolemy's time were mathematicians, who concerned themselves with proof, rigor, logic and consistency rather than with observational accuracy... It was not until development of statistical and probabilistic methods at the end of the 18th century that natural philosophers started to report all random observations, because only then did they have techniques for interpreting large bodies of imprecise data by calculating means, medians, standard deviations and the like.

### **David M. Rhol**

"Pharaohs and Kings" Pages 9,38

Historians simply add up the sequence of regnal years backwards from the birth of Christ to the event they wish to date. History is, however, never so simple, for there are many other factors which have to be taken into account—such as CO-REGENCIES, PARALLEL DYNASTIES and INTERREGNA. If mistakes have been made in the reconstruction of that framework then the great edifice of pre-Christian history would be an artificial construct with only a superficial integrity.

How do we know if historians have built a reliable structure for us to place Ramesses II and Tutankhamun in time? The honest answer is we take it for granted that they know what they are doing. In the same way, today's academics themselves have relied on the framework supplied by their predecessors. But more recent research has led to the belief that fundamental mistakes in the currently accepted chronology were made in the formative years of ancient world studies.

I take the view that it is certainly possible and reasonable to write a history of the Israelites based on the evidence provided by archaeology and the narrative texts. My point of departure from the stand of Thomas L. Thompson, for example, is my preparedness to accept that the Old Testament narratives are as valid a source for ancient history as any other ancient document.



## NEBUCHADNEZZAR / CAPTIVITY

(All quotes from ESV)

2KI 23:29 In his <Josiah's> days Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates. King Josiah went to meet him, and Pharaoh Neco killed him at Megiddo, as soon as he saw him.

30. And his servants carried him dead in a chariot from Megiddo and brought him to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's place.

2KI 24:1 In his <Jehoiakim's> days, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and **Jehoiakim became his servant three years**. Then he turned and rebelled against him.

2. And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldeans and bands of the Syrians and bands of the Moabites and bands of the Ammonites, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by his servants the prophets.

3. Surely this came upon Judah at the command of the LORD, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done,

4. and also for the innocent blood that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD would not pardon.

7. And the king of Egypt did not come again out of his land, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the river Euphrates.

8. Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

9. And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

10. At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to Jerusalem, and the city was besieged.

11. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city while his servants were besieging it, and Jehoiachin the king of Judah gave himself up to the king of Babylon, himself and his mother and his servants and his officials and his palace officials. **The king of Babylon took him prisoner in the eighth year of his reign.**

18. Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he **reigned eleven years in Jerusalem**. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

2KI 25:1 And in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem and laid siege to it. And they built siegeworks all around it.

2. So the city was besieged **till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah**.

3. On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.

8. In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month--**that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar**, king of Babylon--Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem.

9. And he burned the house of the LORD and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down.

10. And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem.

11. And the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon, together with the rest of the multitude, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried into exile.

22. And over the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, he appointed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, governor.

27. And **in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah**, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison.

1CH 6:15 and Jehozadak went into exile when the LORD sent Judah and Jerusalem into exile by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

2CH 35:17 And the people of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days.

18. No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as was kept by Josiah, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
19. In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept.
20. After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, **Neco king of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out to meet him.**

2CH 36:5 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and **he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.** He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God.

6. Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and bound him in chains to take him to Babylon.
7. Nebuchadnezzar also carried part of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon and put them in his palace in Babylon.
8. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and the abominations that he did, and what was found against him, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. And Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.
9. Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and **he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem.** He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.
10. In the spring of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon, with the precious vessels of the house of the LORD, and made his brother Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.
11. Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and **he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.**
13. He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God. He stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD, the God of Israel.
18. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon.
19. And they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its palaces with fire and destroyed all its precious vessels.
20. He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and **they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.**
22. Now **in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled,** the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:

EZR 1:1 **In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia,** so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:

2. “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.
3. Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem.
4. And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.”

7. Cyrus the king also brought out the vessels of the house of the LORD that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods.
8. Cyrus king of Persia brought these out in the charge of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah.

EZR 2:1 Now these were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried captive to Babylonia. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town.

EZR 5:12 But because our fathers had angered the God of heaven, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house and carried away the people to Babylonia.

13. However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, Cyrus the king made a decree that this house of God should be rebuilt.
14. And the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple that was in Jerusalem and brought into the temple of Babylon, these Cyrus the king took out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered to one whose name was Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor;

EZR 6:5 And also let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that is in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and brought back to the temple that is in Jerusalem, each to its place. You shall put them in the house of God.

NEH 7:6 These were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town.

EST 2:6 who had been carried away from Jerusalem among the captives carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away.

ISA 23:15 In that day Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, like the days of one king. At the end of seventy years, it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the prostitute:

16. Take a harp; go about the city, O forgotten prostitute! Make sweet melody; sing many songs, that you may be remembered.
17. **At the end of seventy years**, the LORD will visit Tyre, and she will return to her wages and will prostitute herself with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth.

JER 1:1 The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin,

2. to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign.
3. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month.

JER 21:1 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur the son of Malchiah and Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah, saying,

2. "Inquire of the LORD for us, for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is making war against us. Perhaps the LORD will deal with us according to all his wonderful deeds and will make him withdraw from us."
3. Then Jeremiah said to them:
4. "Thus you shall say to Zedekiah, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands and with which you are fighting against the king of Babylon and against the Chaldeans who are besieging you outside the walls. And I will bring them together into the midst of this city.

5. I myself will fight against you with outstretched hand and strong arm, in anger and in fury and in great wrath.
6. And I will strike down the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast. They shall die of a great pestilence.
7. Afterward, declares the LORD, I will give Zedekiah king of Judah and his servants and the people in this city who survive the pestilence, sword, and famine into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of their enemies, into the hand of those who seek their lives. He shall strike them down with the edge of the sword. He shall not pity them or spare them or have compassion.'
8. And to this people you shall say: 'Thus says the LORD: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.
9. He who stays in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, but he who goes out and surrenders to the Chaldeans who are besieging you shall live and shall have his life as a prize of war.

JER 22:24 As I live, declares the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet ring on my right hand, yet I would tear you off

25. and give you into the hand of those who seek your life, into the hand of those of whom you are afraid, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and into the hand of the Chaldeans.

JER 24:1 After Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken into exile from Jerusalem Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, together with the officials of Judah, the craftsmen, and the metal workers, and had brought them to Babylon, the LORD showed me this vision: behold, two baskets of figs placed before the temple of the LORD.

JER 25:1 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, **in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon),**

2. which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem:
3. For twenty-three years, from the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken persistently to you, but you have not listened.
4. You have neither listened nor inclined your ears to hear, although the LORD persistently sent to you all his servants the prophets,
5. saying, 'Turn now, every one of you, from his evil way and evil deeds, and dwell upon the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers from of old and forever.
6. Do not go after other gods to serve and worship them, or provoke me to anger with the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm.'
7. Yet you have not listened to me, declares the Lord, that you might provoke me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm.
8. Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: Because you have not obeyed my words,
9. behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation.
10. Moreover, I will banish from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp.
11. **This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.**
12. Then **after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon** and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste.

- JER 26:4 You shall say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law that I have set before you,
5. and to listen to the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not listened,
  6. then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth.’
  7. The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD.
  9. Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘This house shall be like Shiloh, and **this city shall be desolate, without inhabitant**’?

- JER 27:2 Thus the LORD said to me: “Make yourself straps and yoke-bars, and put them on your neck.
3. Send word to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the sons of Ammon, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon by the hand of the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah.
  6. Now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and I have given him also the beasts of the field to serve him.
  7. **All the nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson**, until the time of his own land comes. Then many nations and great kings shall make him their slave.
  8. But if any nation or kingdom will not serve this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, declares the LORD, until I have consumed it by his hand.
  12. To Zedekiah king of Judah I spoke in like manner: “Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people and live.
  16. Then I spoke to the priests and to all this people, saying, “Thus says the LORD: Do not listen to the words of your prophets who are prophesying to you, saying, ‘Behold, the vessels of the LORD’s house will now shortly be brought back from Babylon,’ for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you.
  17. Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon and live. Why should this city become a desolation?
  18. If they are prophets, and if the word of the LORD is with them, then let them intercede with the LORD of hosts, that the vessels that are left in the house of the LORD, in the house of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem may not go to Babylon.
  19. For thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, the sea, the stands, and the rest of the vessels that are left in this city,
  20. which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take away, when he took into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem—
  21. thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that are left in the house of the LORD, in the house of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem:
  22. “They shall be carried to Babylon and remain there until the day when I visit them, declares the LORD. Then I will bring them back and restore them to this place.”

- JER 28:1 **In that same year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fifth month of the fourth year**, Hananiah the son of Azzur, the prophet from Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying,
2. “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon.
  3. Within two years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the LORD’s house, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon...”
  11. And Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, “Thus says the LORD: Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all the nations within two years.” But Jeremiah the prophet went his way.
  14. For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have put upon the neck of all these nations an iron yoke to serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and **they shall serve him...**”

JER 29:1 These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

2. This was after King Jeconiah <Jehoiachin> and the queen mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metal workers had departed from Jerusalem.
3. The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan and Gemariah the son of Hilkiyah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.
4. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:
5. Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce.
6. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease.
7. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.
8. For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream,
9. for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.
10. For thus says the LORD: **“When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.”**
11. For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, **to give you a future and a hope.**

JER 32:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD **in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar.**

2. At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah.
28. Therefore, thus says the LORD: Behold, I am giving this city into the hands of the Chaldeans and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall capture it.
29. The Chaldeans who are fighting against this city shall come and set this city on fire and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs offerings have been made to Baal and drink offerings have been poured out to other gods, to provoke me to anger.

JER 34:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms of the earth under his dominion and all the peoples were fighting against Jerusalem and all of its cities:

2. Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah and say to him, Thus says the LORD: “Behold, I am giving this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.”

JER 35:11 But when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against the land, we said, ‘Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans and the army of the Syrians.’ So we are living in Jerusalem.

17. Therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I am bringing upon Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the disaster that I have pronounced against them, because I have spoken to them and they have not listened...”

JER 36:1 **In the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD:**

2. “Take a scroll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah and all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah until today.
3. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the disaster that I intend to do to them, so that every one may turn from his evil way, and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.”
9. **In the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, all the people in Jerusalem and all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem proclaimed a fast before the LORD.**

JER 37:1 Zedekiah the son of Josiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah, reigned instead of Coniah <Jehoiachim> the son of Jehoiakim.

5. The army of Pharaoh had come out of Egypt. And when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem.
6. Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet:
7. Thus says the LORD, God of Israel: Thus shall you say to the king of Judah who sent you to me to inquire of me, Behold, Pharaoh's army that came to help you is about to return to Egypt, to its own land.
8. And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city. They shall capture it and burn it with fire.

JER 39:1 **In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah**, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and besieged it.

2. **In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, a breach was made in the city.**
5. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. And when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, at Riblah, in the land of Hamath; and **he passed sentence on him.**
6. The king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah at Riblah before his eyes, and the king of Babylon slaughtered all the nobles of Judah.
7. He put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him in chains to take him to Babylon.
8. The Chaldeans burned the king's house and the house of the people, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem.
9. Then Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, carried into exile to Babylon the rest of the people who were left in the city, those who had deserted to him, and the people who remained.
10. Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, left in the land of Judah some of the poor people who owned nothing, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.
11. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave command concerning Jeremiah through Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, saying,
12. "Take him, look after him well, and do him no harm, but deal with him as he tells you."

JER 40:11 Likewise, when all the Judeans who were in Moab and among the Ammonites and in Edom and in other lands heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, as governor over them,

12. then all the Judeans returned from all the places to which they had been driven and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah. And they gathered wine and summer fruits in great abundance.

JER 43:5 But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces took all the remnant of Judah who had returned to live in the land of Judah from all the nations to which they had been driven—

6. the men, the women, the children, the princesses, and every person whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan; also Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah.
7. And they came into the land of Egypt, for they did not obey the voice of the LORD. And they arrived at Tahpanhes.
10. and say to them, Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will set his throne above these stones that I have hidden, and he will spread his royal canopy over them.

JER 44:2 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: You have seen all the disaster that I brought upon Jerusalem and upon all the cities of Judah. Behold, **this day they are a desolation, and no one dwells in them,**

6. Therefore my wrath and my anger were poured out and kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, and **they became a waste and a desolation, as at this day.**

21. As for the offerings that you offered in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and your officials, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them? Did it not come into his mind?
22. The LORD could no longer bear your evil deeds and the abominations that you committed. Therefore **your land has become a desolation and a waste and a curse, without inhabitant, as it is this day.**
28. And those who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah, few in number; and all the remnant of Judah, who came to the land of Egypt to live, shall know whose word will stand, mine or theirs.
29. This shall be the sign to you, declares the LORD, that I will punish you in this place, in order that you may know that my words will surely stand against you for harm:
30. Thus says the LORD, Behold, I will give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of those who seek his life, as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who was his enemy and sought his life.

JER 46:1 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations.

2. About Egypt. Concerning the army of **Pharaoh Neco**, king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates at Carchemish and **which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah**, king of Judah:
13. The word that the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet about the coming of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to strike the land of Egypt:
25. The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, said: “Behold, I am bringing punishment upon Amon of Thebes, and Pharaoh and Egypt and her gods and her kings, upon Pharaoh and those who trust in him.
26. I will deliver them into the hand of those who seek their life, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and his officers. Afterward Egypt shall be inhabited as in the days of old, declares the LORD.
27. But fear not, O Jacob my servant, nor be dismayed, O Israel, for behold, I will save you from far away, and your offspring from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return and have quiet and ease, and none shall make him afraid.
28. Fear not, O Jacob my servant, declares the LORD, for I am with you. I will make a full end of all the nations to which I have driven you, but of you I will not make a full end. I will discipline you in just measure, and I will by no means leave you unpunished.”

JER 50:17 **Israel is a hunted sheep driven away by lions.** First the king of Assyria devoured him, and now at last Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has gnawed his bones.

18. Therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing punishment on the king of Babylon and his land, as I punished the king of Assyria.

JER 51:33 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: “The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time when it is trodden; yet a little while and the time of her harvest will come.”

34. Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon has devoured me; he has crushed me; **he has made me an empty vessel**; he has swallowed me like a monster; he has filled his stomach with my delicacies; he has rinsed me out.

JER 52:1 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king; and **he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.** His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

4. And **in the ninth year of his reign**, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem, and laid siege to it. And they built siegeworks all around it.
5. So **the city was besieged till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.**
6. On the ninth day of the fourth month **the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.**



12. In the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard, who served the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem.
13. And he burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down.
27. And the king of Babylon struck them down, and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was taken into exile out of its land.
28. This is the number of the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year, 3,023 Judeans;
29. **in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar** he carried away captive from Jerusalem 832 persons;
30. in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Judeans 745 persons; all the persons were 4,600.
31. And **in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah**, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, **Evil-merodach** king of Babylon, in the year that he became king, graciously **freed Jehoiachin** king of Judah and brought him out of prison.
32. And he spoke kindly to him, and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon.

EZE 24:1 In the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me:

2. Son of man, write down the name of this day, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day.

EZE 26:7 For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, and with horsemen and a host of many soldiers.

EZE 29:17 In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me:

18. Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made his army labor hard against Tyre. Every head was made bald, and every shoulder was rubbed bare, yet neither he nor his army got anything from Tyre to pay for the labor that he had performed against her.
19. Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall carry off its wealth and despoil it and plunder it; and it shall be the wages for his army.

EZE 33:21 In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, a fugitive from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has been struck down."

EZE 40:1 In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was struck down, on that very day, the hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me to the city.

DAN 1:1 **In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim** king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

3. Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility—
5. The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. **They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king.**
18. At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.
19. And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king.

DAN 2:1 **In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar**, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him.

28. but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days...
38. and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—**you are the head of gold.**
46. Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him.

DAN 3:1 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its breadth six cubits. He set it up on the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

2. Then King Nebuchadnezzar sent to gather the satraps, the prefects, and the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the justices, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces to come to the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.
4. And the herald proclaimed aloud, “You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,
5. that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.
6. And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace.”
7. Therefore, as soon as all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, all the peoples, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.
8. Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and maliciously accused the Jews.
9. They declared to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever!
13. Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king.
14. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, “Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?”
16. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.”
19. Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated.
24. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.”
26. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here!” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire.
28. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king’s command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God.

DAN 4:1 King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you!

2. It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me.
3. How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and **his dominion endures from generation to generation.**
4. I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace.
18. This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, saw. And you, O Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation, but you are able, for the spirit of the holy gods is in you.”

28. All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.
31. While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you,
33. Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.
34. At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation;
37. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

DAN 5:2 Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessels of gold and of silver that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them.

11. There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers,
13. Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, "You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah.
18. O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty.
22. And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this,

DAN 9:1 **In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede**, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—

2. <Masoretic Text:> **in the first year of his reign** I Daniel meditated in the books, over the **number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah** the prophet, that He would **accomplish for the desolations of Jerusalem seventy years.**

ZEC 1:1 In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, saying,

2. The LORD was very angry with your fathers.
7. On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat, **in the second year of Darius**, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo,
12. Then the angel of the LORD said, "O LORD of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which you have been angry **these seventy years?**"

ZEC 7:1 **In the fourth year of King Darius**, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev.

4. Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me:
5. "Say to all the people of the land and the priests, When you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh, **for these seventy years**, was it for me that you fasted?
6. And when you eat and when you drink, do you not eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves?
7. Were not these the words that the LORD proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous, with her cities around her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited?"
13. "As I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear," says the LORD of hosts,
14. "and I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations that they had not known. Thus **the land they left was desolate, so that no one went to and fro, and the pleasant land was made desolate.**"

# DARIUS THE MEDE

(All quotes from ESV)

DAN 1:21 And Daniel was there **until the first year of King Cyrus.**

DAN 5:30 That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed.

31. And **Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.**

DAN 6:1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom;

2. and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss.
3. Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.
6. Then these presidents and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live forever!
7. All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.
8. Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.”
9. Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.
17. And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel.
25. Then **King Darius wrote to all the peoples**, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you.
26. I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end.”
28. So **this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.**

DAN 8:1 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after that which appeared to me at the first.

3. I raised my eyes and saw, and behold, a ram standing on the bank of the canal. It had two horns, and both horns were high, but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last.
4. I saw the ram charging westward and northward and southward. No beast could stand before him, and there was no one who could rescue from his power. He did as he pleased and became great.

DAN 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, **by descent a Mede, who was made king** over the realm of the Chaldeans—

2. in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the **desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.**

DAN 11:1 And as for me, **in the first year of Darius the Mede**, I stood up to confirm and strengthen him.

2. And now I will show you the truth. Behold, three more kings shall arise in Persia, and a fourth shall be far richer than all of them. And when he has become strong through his riches, he shall stir up all against the kingdom of Greece.

## GENTILE TIMES

(All quotes from ESV)

GEN 49:10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

LEV 26:18 And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again **sevenfold for your sins**,

19. and I will break the pride of your power, and I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze.

20. And your strength shall be spent in vain, for your land shall not yield its increase, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit.

21. Then if you walk contrary to me and will not listen to me, I will continue striking you, **sevenfold for your sins**.

23. And if by this discipline you are not turned to me but walk contrary to me,

24. then I also will walk contrary to you, and I myself will strike you **sevenfold for your sins**.

27. But if in spite of this you will not listen to me, but walk contrary to me,

28. then I will walk contrary to you in fury, and I myself will discipline you **sevenfold for your sins**.

29. You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters.

30. And I will destroy your high places and cut down your incense altars and cast your dead bodies upon the dead bodies of your idols, and my soul will abhor you.

31. And I will lay your cities waste and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your pleasing aromas.

32. And **I myself will devastate the land**, so that your enemies who settle in it shall be appalled at it.

33. And **I will scatter you among the nations**, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.

34. **Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate**, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its Sabbaths.

35. As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest that it did not have on your Sabbaths when you were dwelling in it.

40. But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery that they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me,

41. so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies--if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity,

42. then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land.

43. But **the land shall be abandoned by them and enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them**, and they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they spurned my rules and their soul abhorred my statutes.

44. Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not spurn them, neither will I abhor them so as to destroy them utterly and break my covenant with them, for I am the LORD their God.

EZE 21:25 And you, O profane wicked one, prince of Israel, whose day has come, the time of your final punishment,

26. thus says the Lord GOD: **Remove the turban and take off the crown**. Things shall not remain as they are. Exalt that which is low, and bring low that which is exalted.

27. A ruin, ruin, ruin I will make it. This also shall not be, until he comes, the one to whom judgment belongs, and I will give it to him.

DAN 2:36 This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation.

37. You, O king, the king of kings, **to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom**, the power, and the might, and the glory,
38. and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold.
39. Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.
40. And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these.
41. And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay.
42. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle.
43. As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.
44. And **in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom** that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever,
45. just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. **The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.**

DAN 4:13 I saw in the visions of my head as I lay in bed, and behold, a watcher, a holy one, came down from heaven.

14. He proclaimed aloud and said thus: "Chop down the tree and lop off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches.
15. But leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, amid the tender grass of the field. Let him be wet with the dew of heaven. Let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth.
16. Let his mind be changed from a man's, and let a beast's mind be given to him; and **let seven periods of time pass over him.**
17. The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men."
23. And because the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, "Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump of its roots in the earth, bound with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field, and let him be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven periods of time pass over him,"
24. this is the interpretation, O king: It is a decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king,
25. that you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. You shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and you shall be wet with the dew of heaven, and **seven periods of time shall pass over you**, till you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will.

LUK 21:23 Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people.

24. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, **until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.**

## End Notes

1. (Page 1) All secular chronologies that I am aware of contradict Biblical evidence. This, in itself, means little to someone who thinks the Bible is largely myth. But there is much evidence that contradicts this negative view of the Bible. One should also learn to distinguish between Biblical evidence and Biblical interpretations of evidence. *Chronology Papers*, Walter R. Dolen.

2. (Page 2) In historical dating of events there is no year AD 0 [zero]. The year immediately previous to AD 1 is always called BC 1. This must always be borne in mind in reckoning chronological and astronomical intervals. The sum of nominal years BC and AD must be diminished by 1. Thus, from Jan. 1, BC 4713 to Jan 1, AD 1582, the years elapsed are not 6295, but 6294. John J. Bond, *Handy Book of Rules and Tables for Verifying Dates with the Christian Era*

In astronomical dating there is a year 0 and the BC dates are always one short of the historical dating system. Normally, astronomical dates are marked with a minus sign (-) in front of the date, and -4 equals 5 BC.

3. (Page 3) There are notable differences in dating the fall of Jerusalem. Africanus (3rd century AD), the first Christian chronologer, shows that Jerusalem fell in 629 BC (Archer, *Jerome's Commentary*, p.96). But Hippolytus (3rd century AD), stated that Jerusalem fell in 664 BC (Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, p.147). Yet, Jerome, in the late fourth and early fifth century AD, who was an editor of the chronologies of Africanus and Eusebius, said Jerusalem fell in the year 591 BC. See Finegan, *ibid.*, p.185.

4. (Page 7) The [Ptolemy] Canon dates the accession of Cyrus, not from the capture of Babylon itself, BC 536, but from his decisive victory over the rebellious king of Babylon, who is called Nabonadius, about two years before, BC 538 when he defeated him in a pitched battle, and drove the Babylonians into the city. *Hales's Chronology*, Vol.I, London 1830.

The capture of Babylon is rightly placed in BC 538; and the edict for the return of the Jews, at the end of BC 536, was the first year of Cyrus, computed from the death of Darius the Mede. *Fasti Hellenici*, Vol.II, Henry Fynes Clinton, 1841.

Cyaxares is called in Scripture Darius the Mede. We shall find that under his reign, which lasted but two years, Daniel had several revelations...Cyaxares dying at the end of two years, and Cambyses likewise ending his days in Persia, Cyrus returned to Babylon, and took upon him the government of the empire. *Ancient History*, Charles Rollin, 1838.

5. (Page 9) The Ptolemaic Canon or Chronology is the work of Claudius Ptolemaeus. He authored the Ptolemaic System of Astronomy. This is the system where the earth is stationary and all the heavenly bodies rotate around the earth. This system was replaced by the Copernican system in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. *Ptolemy's Canon* or Chronology is merely a list of kings with the years of their reigns that was included in his *Almagest*. It had no explanatory notes to justify the form of the list. He is contradicted by Persian national traditions preserved by *Firdausi* (about 931-1020 AD), by the Jewish national traditions preserved in the *Sedar Olam Rabbah*, and by the writings of Josephus.

6. (Page 9) In 1951 Edwin R. Thiele, a Seventh-Day Adventist, published a study titled *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. Published by the University of Chicago Press, Thiele was widely heralded as having solved the problem of the chronology of the Kings. Thiele's work was revised slightly for publication by Eerdmans in 1965 and again in an edition from Zondervan in 1983. Though considered a Biblical Chronologist, he largely depends on astronomical and secular records. (p.34) "If Biblical chronology seems to be a variance with the Assyrian chronology, it may be because of errors in the Hebrew records." (P.71) "Ptolemy's canon gives precise and absolutely dependable data concerning the chronology of a period beginning with 747 BC." (P.72) "When the student has at his disposal chronological materials so dependable as the Assyrian eponym list and the Ptolemaic canon, he may have complete assurance that he has a solid foundation on which to build." What Thiele overlooks is that the kings list was adjusted to reflect the Ptolemaic Canon, which in itself is dubious.

7. (Page 11) Mathematical theory played the major role in Babylonian Astronomy as compared with the very modest role of observations whose legendary accuracy also appeared more and more to be only a myth... [Ptolemy] remarks that the old observations [from Babylon] were made with little competence, because they were concerned with appearances and disappearances and with stationary points [of heavenly bodies], phenomena which by their very nature are very difficult to observe...This presupposes the accuracy of the initial values, a hypothesis which is far from even being plausible.

*The Exact Sciences In Antiquity*, 1951, Otto Neugebauer.

This means that Babylonians did not even have the correct charts or accurate knowledge of the movements of heavenly bodies. Where charts existed, they were based on limited observations and "rounded off" for the purpose of making whole number calculations. The writing of VAT 4956 is casual. In one place he even mentions that he didn't make any observations because he simply wasn't in the mood! That precludes the writer of being a Babylonian official. VAT 4956 is admittedly a copy made in the third century BC of an earlier personal diary. Twice in the text appears the notation "broken off, obliterated." The scribe acknowledged that he was working from a defective copy. It is possible that its historical information is simply that which was accepted in the Seleucid period. Can we be sure whether the copyist added or altered the 37<sup>th</sup> year in accord with the prevailing chronology?

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BC	650	10	Josiah	
	649	11		
	648	12		
	647	13	Jeremiah begins ministry	Jer 1:1-2
	646	14		
	645	15		
	644	16		
	643	17		
	642	18	Law found/Passover	2Ch 34:8,14
	641	19		
	640	20		
	639	21		
	638	22		
	637	23		
	636	24		
	635	25		
	634	26		
	633	27		
	632	28		
	631	29		
	630	30		
	629	31	Josiah/Neco/Charchemish(1)	2Ki 23:29; 2Ch 35:20
	628	1	Jehoiakim	
	627	2		
	626	3	(Last Jubilee year)	
	625	4	Neb/Neco/Charchemish(2)	Jer 25:1-3; 46:2
	624	5		1←Neb.
	623	6		2
	622	7		3
	621	8	Rebellion	2Ki 24:1-2
	620	9		4
	619	10		5
	618	11	Jehoiachin king/captive	2Ki 24:6-12
	617	1	Zedekiah	8←
	616	2		9
	615	3		10
	614	4	29 years 4 months	11
	613	5	Ezekiel's vision	Ezek 1:1-4
	612	6		12
	611	7		13
	610	8		14
	609	9		15
	608	10	Nebuchadnezzar siege begins, year 18	18←
	607	11	Jerusalem burned	2Ki 25:2,8-11 Jer 38:28
	606	1	Land desolate 70 years	2Ch 36:21
	605	2		Jer 25:11-12
	604	3		20
	603	4	745 Prisoners. Jer 52:30 (not from Jueda but Egypt 2Ki 25:25-26; Jer 41:1,16-17)	21
	602	5		22
	601	6		23←
	600	7		24
	599	8		25
	598	9		26
	597	10		27
	596	11		28
	595	12		29
	594	13		30
	593	14	Ezekiel's Vision	Ezek 40:1
	592	15		31
	591	16		32
	590	17		33
	589	18		34
	588	19		35
	587	20		36
	586	21		37
	585	22		38
	584	23		39
	583	24		40
	582	25	Jehoiachin released	Evil-Merodach
	581	26	2Ki 25:27	1←
	580	27	Jer 52:31	
	579	28		
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	540	67		
	539	68	Babylon/Belshazzar conquered, Dan 5:31; 9:1-2	
	538	69	Cyrus/Darius co-regency	
	537	70	Jer 29:10; Zech 1:7,12	
	536	1	Cyrus sole rule of Babylon/Decree	Ezra 1:1-4

BC	650	20	Assurbani-pal (Assyria)	
	649	21		
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	629	41		
	628	42		
	627	1	Assur-etillu-ili (Assyria)	
	626	2		
	625	3		
	624	4	Nabopolassar (Babylon)	←
	623	5	Fall of Nineveh (625?)	←
	622	6		
	621	7		
	620	8		
	619	9		
	618	10		
	617	11		
	616	12		
	615	13		
	614	14	Fall of Nineveh (?)	
	613	15		
	612	16		
	611	17		
	610	18	Harran	* Solar
	609	19	Carchemish(1)?	
	608	20		
	607	21		
	606	22	Nebuchadnezzar coregency	
	605	23	Carchemish(2)	
	604	24	Nebuchadnezzar	
	603	25		* Solar
	602	26		
	601	27		
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	562	66		
	561	67		
	560	68		
	559	69		
	558	70		
	557	1		
	556	2	Evil-Merodach	
	555	3		
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THE CANON OF PTOLEMY.

ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ ΚΑΝΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ  
ΑΣΣΥΡΙΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΗΔΩΝ.

	Ετη	Συνα- γωγή.
α	Ναβονασαρου . . .	ιδ ιδ
β	Ναδιου . . . . .	β ιγ
γ	Χωζιρου και Πορου .	ε κα
δ	Ιουγαιου . . . . .	ε κγ
ε	Μαρδοκεμπαδου . .	ιβ λη
γ	Αρκιανου . . . . .	ε μγ
ζ	Αβασιλευτου πρωτου	β με
η	Βηλιβου . . . . .	γ μη
θ	Απροναδιου . . . .	γ νδ
ι	Ριγηβηλου . . . . .	α νε
ια	Μεσεσιμορδακου . .	δ νθ
ιβ	Αβασιλευτου δευτερου	η ξζ
ιγ	Ασσαραδινου . . . .	ιγ π
ιδ	Σαοσδουχινου . . . .	κ ρ
ιε	Χυνιλαδανου . . . .	κβ ρκβ
ιι	Ναβοπολλασαρου . .	κα ρμγ
ιζ	Ναβοκολλασαρου . .	μγ ρπη
ιη	Ιλουαροδαμου . . . .	β ρπη
ιθ	Νιρικασσολασαρου .	δ ρρβ
κ	Ναβοναδιου . . . . .	ιζ σθ

ΠΕΡΣΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΣ.

κα	Κυρου . . . . .	θ σιη
κβ	Καμβυσου . . . . .	η σκγ
κγ	Δαρειου α. . . . .	λη σξβ
κδ	Ξερξου . . . . .	κα σπγ
κε	Αρταξερξου α. . . .	μα τκδ
κη	Δαρειου β. . . . .	ιβ τμγ
κζ	Αρταξερξου β. . . .	μγ τπθ
κη	Ωχου . . . . .	κα υι
κθ	Αρωγου . . . . .	β υιβ
λ	Δαρειου γ. . . . .	δ υιγ
λα	Αλεξανδρου Μακε- δονος . . . . .	η υκδ

ΕΤΗ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΜΕΤΑ ΤΗΝ  
ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ  
ΤΕΛΕΥΤΗΝ.

α	Φιλιππου του μετ' Αλεξανδρον τον κτιστην . . . . .	ζ ζ
β	Αλεξανδρου Αιγου .	ιβ ιθ

ΕΛΛΗΝΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΣ ΕΝ  
ΑΙΓΥΠΤΩ.

γ	Πτολεμαιου Λαγου .	κ λθ
δ	Πτ. Φιλαδελφου . .	λη οζ
ε	Πτ. Ευεργετου α. . .	κε ρβ
γ	Πτ. Φιλοπατορος . .	ιζ ριθ
ζ	Πτ. Επιφανους . . .	κδ ρμγ
η	Πτ. Φιλομητορος . .	λε ροη
θ	Πτ. Ευεργετου β. . .	κθ σζ
ι	Πτ. Σωτηρος . . . .	λη σμγ
ια	Πτ. Διονυσου . . . .	κθ σοβ
ιβ	Κλεοπατρας . . . .	κβ σρδ

ΡΩΜΑΙΩΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙΣ.

ιγ	Αυγουστου . . . . .	μγ τλζ
ιδ	Τιβεριου . . . . .	κβ τνθ
ιε	Γαιου . . . . .	δ τξγ
ιγ	Κλαυδιου . . . . .	ιδ τοζ
ιζ	Νερωνος . . . . .	ιδ τρα
ιη	Ουεσπασιανου . . . .	ι να
ιθ	Τιτου . . . . .	γ υδ
κ	Δομετιανου . . . . .	ιε υιθ
κα	Νερωνα . . . . .	α υκ
κβ	Τραιανου . . . . .	ιβ υλθ
κγ	Αδριανου . . . . .	κα υξ
κδ	Αντωνινου . . . . .	κγ υπγ

PTOLEMY'S CANON OF KINGS OF  
THE ASSYRIANS AND MEDES.

	Each.	Sum.
1	Nabonassar . . . .	14 14
2	Nadius . . . . .	2 16
3	Khozirus and Porus .	5 21
4	Jougaius . . . . .	5 26
5	Mardocepadus . . . .	12 38
6	Archianus . . . . .	5 43
7	First Interregnum . .	2 45
8	Belibus . . . . .	3 48
9	Apronadius . . . . .	6 54
10	Regibelus . . . . .	1 55
11	Mesesimordachus . .	4 59
12	Second Interregnum .	8 67
13	Asaridinus . . . . .	13 80
14	Saosduchinus . . . .	20 100
15	Khuniladanus . . . .	22 122
16	Nabopolassar . . . .	21 143
17	Nabokolassar . . . .	43 186
18	Ilvarodamus . . . . .	2 188
19	Nerikassolasar . . . .	4 192
20	Nabonadius . . . . .	17 209

PERSIAN KINGS.

21	Cyrus . . . . .	9 218
22	Cambyses . . . . .	8 226
23	Darius I. . . . .	36 262
24	Xerxes . . . . .	21 283
25	Artaxerxes I. . . . .	41 324
26	Darius II. . . . .	19 343
27	Artaxerxes II. . . . .	46 389
28	Ochus . . . . .	21 410
29	Arogus . . . . .	2 412
30	Darius III. . . . .	4 416
31	Alexander of Mace- don . . . . .	8 424

YEARS OF THE KINGS AFTER  
THE DEATH OF KING  
ALEXANDER.

1	Philip, after Alexander the Founder . . . . .	7 7
2	Alexand. Ægus . . . .	12 19

KINGS OF THE GREEKS IN  
EGYPT.

3	Ptolemy Lagus . . . .	20 39
4	— Philadelphus . . . .	38 77
5	— Euergetes I. . . . .	25 102
6	— Philopator . . . . .	17 119
7	— Epiphanes . . . . .	24 143
8	— Philometor . . . . .	35 178
9	— Euergetes II. . . . .	29 207
10	— Soter . . . . .	36 243
11	— Dionysius . . . . .	29 272
12	Cleopatra . . . . .	22 294

KINGS OF THE ROMANS.

13	Augustus . . . . .	43 377
14	Tiberius . . . . .	22 399
15	Caius . . . . .	4 403
16	Claudius . . . . .	14 417
17	Nero . . . . .	14 431
18	Vespasian . . . . .	10 441
19	Titus . . . . .	3 444
20	Domitian . . . . .	15 459
21	Nerva . . . . .	1 460
22	Trajan . . . . .	19 479
23	Adrian . . . . .	21 490
24	Antoninus . . . . .	23 513

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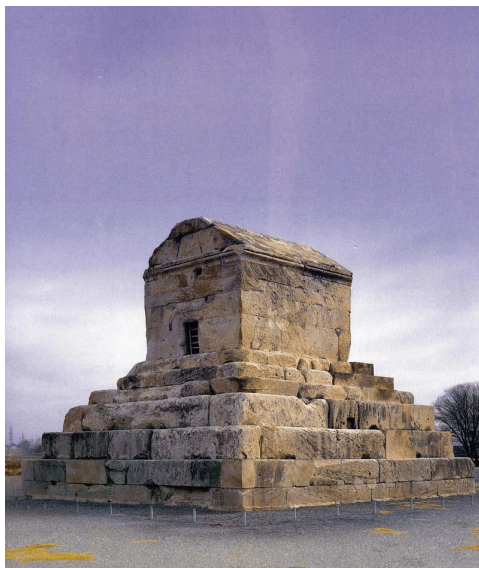
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Cyrus the Great  
( liberator )



Tomb

