

# BIBLICAL CHRONOLOGY

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## Daniel: Historical & Chronological Comments (VIII)

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### 16. The End of the Seventy Years (Daniel 9:1-2)

In the first year of Darius/Cyrus, Daniel observed that the 70 years of Jeremiah 25 had come to an end. These were years of the “desolations (plural) of Jerusalem.” Accordingly, Daniel confessed the sins of the people, asking by implication that Jerusalem now be restored.

These verses in Daniel 9 mean that the first year of Cyrus was the 71st year. This would be in the fourth quarter of 538 **BC**. Now, if we date the beginning of **these** 70 years in the 4th year of Jehoiakim, the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, the fourth quarter of 605 **BC**, as is usually done on the basis of Jeremiah 25, then we come up short by three years. If we begin in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim, the accession year of **Nebuchadnezzar**, the fourth quarter of 606 **BC**, on the basis of Daniel 1, then we come up short by two years. If we make the first year of Cyrus the same as the 70th year, which means the 70 years and the 70 weeks of years overlap by one year, then we are still off by one year.

There are three ways of resolving this difficulty. One is to say that the 70 years are only a round number. This is hardly satisfactory. The second, the traditional one, is to say that Darius the Mede ruled for two years and Cyrus only issued his decree in the third year after Babylon fell, in 536 **BC**. As we have seen, that hypothesis is no longer tenable.

The best explanation is that the 70 years of desolations begin with the death of Josiah, the last Godly king. This was in 608 **BC**, so that the first year of **Jehoiakim** began in the fall of that year. The year beginning then

(which was mostly in 607 **BC**) would be the **first** of the 70 years.

If we go back to Jeremiah 25, we find that that prophet does not say that the 70 years begin with Nebuchadnezzar. Rather, he says that the nations will serve Babylon for 70 years. According to Jeremiah 29:10, the 70 years are “for Babylon.” Jeremiah 25:11 is very precise, stating that “this whole land shall be a desolation and a horror, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon 70 years.” Continuing in verse 12, “And it will be when 70 years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation.” Notice that Jeremiah does not say that the land of Israel will be a desolation and a horror for all 70 years; in fact, it was not until 587 **BC** that the Temple and Jerusalem were destroyed utterly.

In 608 **BC**, Pharaoh Neco **marched** through Judah to fight **the** king of **Babylon**, **Nabopolassar**. **Josiah** sided with Babylon, and lost his life against **Neco**. Jeremiah composed a lamentation for him (2 **Chron. 35:20-27**). It is clear that Josiah, under Jeremiah’s tutelage, already saw himself as under Babylonian oversight.

Moreover, from Jeremiah 1:13-15 we see that from the beginning of his ministry, in the 13th year of Josiah, Jeremiah was called to proclaim the coming of Babylon. The prophecies of Jeremiah 2-20 seem to date from the **Josianic** period, and **all** predict the coming judgment.

For **all** these reasons, to assert that Jeremiah defined the 70 years as **beginning** with Nebuchadnezzar is an unsupportable assertion. When we simply count backwards from the conquest of Babylon we come to the death of Josiah, Judah’s last hope for a Godly **restoration**. This began the desolations of Jerusalem.

# Chronology of the Babylonian Captivity'

Note: 1. **BC** dates are in terms of current consensus chronology.

2. The Biblical year begins in the fall, "October 1," though **BC** dates begin January 1. **The BC dates in this chronology are for the year *after* the Biblical year begins.** I have grouped all events in the Biblical year inside the **BC** year. For details, see the Detailed Chronology.

<u>Date</u>	Captivity					<u>Events</u>
<b>608</b>	<b>0</b>					Death of Josiah fighting for Babylon Accession of <b>Jehoiakim</b>
<b>607</b>	<b>1</b>					<b>Jehoiakim 1</b>
<b>606</b>	<b>2</b>					<b>Jehoiakim 2</b>
605	3					<b>Jehoiakim 3</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar accession Nebuchadnezzar conquers Babylon Daniel sent to Babylon
604	4					<b>Jehoiakim 4</b> ; <b>Nebuchadnezzar 1</b> Jeremiah 25: <b>all</b> nations to serve Babylon 70 years
603	5					<b>Jehoiakim 5</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 2 First year <b>Jehoiakim</b> serves Nebuchadnezzar Daniel's graduation and elevation (Dan. 2)
602	6					<b>Jehoiakim 6</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 3 <b>Second</b> year <b>Jehoiakim</b> serves Nebuchadnezzar
601	7					<b>Jehoiakim 7</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 4 Third year <b>Jehoiakim</b> serves Nebuchadnezzar
600	8					<b>Jehoiakim 8</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 5 Nebuchadnezzar stalemated by Egypt <b>Jehoiakim</b> revolts
599	9					<b>Jehoiakim 9</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 6
598	10					<b>Jehoiakim 10</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 7 Nebuchadnezzar retakes Jerusalem 3023 Jews taken captive; Jeremiah <b>52:28</b>
597	11					<b>Jehoiakim 11</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 8 <b>Jehoiakim</b> dies. <b>Jehoiachin</b> rebels against Nebuchadnezzar Jerusalem <b>beseiged</b> <b>Jehoiachin taken</b> captive, with <b>10,000 Jews</b> Ezekiel goes into captivity
<b>***</b>						
593	15	Years After Desolation of Temple	Years From Desolation of Cities of Judah	Years From Destruction of Temple		<b>Zedekiah 4</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 12 Ezekiel ordained by God
592	16					<b>Zedekiah 5</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 13
591	17					<b>Zedekiah 6</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 14 God abandons Temple, <b>Ezk. 8-11</b>
590	18					<b>Zedekiah 7</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 15
589	19	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>Zedekiah 8</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 16
588	20	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>Zedekiah 9</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 17 <b>Zedekiah</b> revolts Investiture of Jerusalem begins Desolation of cities of Judah
587	21	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>Zedekiah 10</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 18 832 Jews into captivity; Jeremiah <b>52:29</b>
<b>586</b>	22	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>Zedekiah 11</b> ; Nebuchadnezzar 19

<b>585</b>	<b>23</b>	6	4	2	Nebuchadnezzar 20
584	24	7	5	3	Nebuchadnezzar 21
583	25	8	6	4	Nebuchadnezzar 22
582	26	9	7	5	Nebuchadnezzar 23
					745 Jews into captivity; Jeremiah <b>52:30</b>
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563	45	28	26	24	Nebuchadnezzar 42
562	46	29	27	25	Nebuchadnezzar 43
					Death of Nebuchadnezzar
561	47	30	28	26	<b>Evil-Merodach 1</b>
					<b>Jehoiachin</b> restored in 37th year of his captivity
560	48	31	29	27	<b>Evil-Merodach 2</b>
					<b>Evil-Merodach</b> slain
559	49	32	30	28	<b>Neriglissar 1</b>
558	50	33	31	29	<b>Neriglissar 2</b>
557	51	34	32	30	<b>Neriglissar 3</b>
556	52	35	33	31	<b>Neriglissar 4</b>
					<b>Death of Neriglissar</b>
555	53	36	34	32	<b>Labashi-marduk 1</b>
					<b>Labashi-marduk</b> slain
554	54	37	35	33	Nabonidus <b>1</b>
553	55	38	36	34	Nabonidus 2
552	56	39	37	35	Nabonidus 3
551	57	40	38	36	Nabonidus 4
					<b>Belshazzar</b> vice-regent l(?); Daniel 7
550	58	41	39	37	<b>Nabonidus 5; Belshazzar 2</b>
549	59	42	40	38	<b>Belshazzar 3</b> ; Daniel 8
***					
539	69	52	50	48	Nabonidus 16
					<b>Fourth quarter (beginning of next year, Hebrew):</b>
					Nabonidus 17
					Nabonidus flees
					<b>Belshazzar</b> proclaims self co-ruler
					Capture of Babylon by Ugbaru, for Persia
					Darius/Cyrus “receives” kingdom
					<b>Ugbaru</b> runs city for 17 days, dies
					Daniel candidate for governor; Daniel 6
538	70	53	51	49	Cyrus accession year
					<b>Cambyases, Prince of Persia, opposes Cyrus’s policy toward Jews</b>

I should remark that there are three other periods of 70 years that overlap this one. The second period of 70 years is indirectly mentioned in Haggai 1:4, which is in the second year of Darius. In the year after the 70 years of the Temple's desolations, Haggai rebukes the people for letting a whole year go by without getting to work rebuilding the Temple. The beginning of this 70 year period is recorded in Ezekiel 8-11, when God departed the Temple of Solomon and left it desolate. Ezekiel 8:1 dates the vision of the abominations in the Temple, and God's subsequent desolation thereof, in the 6th year of Zedekiah (= of **Jehoiachin's** exile), **or 591 BC**. The second year of Darius is set at 520 BC, the year after the completion of the 70 **years** of desolation. For **details**, see the chronology in chapter 19 below.

Second, Zechariah 1:12 reads: "How long wilt Thou have no compassion for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, with which Thou has been indignant **these** seventy years?" This period of indignation against the cities around Jerusalem refers to the initial investiture of the city (588 **BC**), which brought distress, naturally, on the cities roundabout. **Zechariah's** question is asked in the 70th year from that event. See chapter 19 below.

The same period of 70 years is alluded to in **Zechariah** 7:1 and 5, which tell us that in the 4th year

of **Darius** the people asked whether they should continue to mourn the events of the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred 70 years earlier. The events spoken of took place in the 9th-1 **1th** years of Zedekiah, 588-586 BC. The fasts spoken of in **Zechariah** 7 & 8 are listed in 8:19: "The fast of the 4th month (commemorating the city smitten on the 9th day of the 4th month in the 1 **1th** year of **Zedekiah**), and the fast of the 5th month (commemorating the burning of the Temple on the 7th day of the 5th month of **Zedekiah** 11), and the fast of the 7th month (commemorating the slaying of **Gedaliah** in the 7th month of Zedekiah 11), and the fast of the **10th** month (commemorating the inception of the siege on the **10th** day of the **10th** month of Zedekiah 9). " Thus, the first commemoration was in the 9th year of Zedekiah, and the 70 years of commemorations begin at this point. The 4th year of Darius is the year after these 70 years were completed.

A third possible 70-year period would begin with the actual fall of Jerusalem in 4th month of **586 BC**. This period would be up in the 4th month of 517 BC. Eight months later, in the 12th month of 516 BC, the Temple was completed. Thus, the Temple was torn down for 70 years, and was completely rebuilt by end of the 71st year.