

# JEREMIAH'S 70 YEARS PROPHECY

## THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY





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THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

**J**eremiah was called to be a prophet from his birth (Jer. 1:5), and prophesied to the nation of Judah (the Southern Kingdom of Israel) from around 627 B.C. (Jer. 25:3) until its destruction around 586 B.C. He lived during a time of great distress and apostasy for the people of Israel. He also lived during the rise of one of the greatest empires of ancient history – Babylon, and during the reign of its illustrious king, Nebuchadnezzar. It was Nebuchadnezzar who, after the Southern Kingdom of Judah successfully held off Assyrian forces in 701 B.C., brought a series of invasions against them, ultimately conquered and destroying Jerusalem and the Temple around 586 B.C. And it was Jeremiah who had prophesied that God would use Nebuchadnezzar as His instrument of judgment against the apostate kingdom of Judah. He recorded these events in the Old Testament book that bears his name.

Jeremiah's prophecy about the impending Babylonian invasion and the captivity of the Jews is undoubtedly his most well-known prophecy – and is linked with a duration of 70 years. But this 70-year period has been problematic for some commentators to identify precisely. Can we identify these 70 years with any confidence? Some have come to the conclusion that these 70 years that the Bible speaks

of are only approximate. Is this true? Were these prophecies fulfilled accurately? And can it be proven using our understanding of ancient history? In this study, we will explore this in depth and try to determine if what we know from history aligns with what the Bible says about these prophetic 70-years. Let's begin!

## CHAPTER 2

### SETTING THE STAGE

God had a special, divine purpose for Israel when He called them into existence as a nation. Their mission and purpose was to be a set apart nation exemplifying the holiness and righteousness of God to the other nations that surrounded them – nations that were steeped in idolatry and paganism. They were to be a light of God’s truth and God’s Word to the world – ultimately producing the Messiah, who, as an ultimate representative Son of the nation, would embody and carry out this mission.

All throughout the Old Testament, it repeatedly states that Israel was to be a nation set apart and holy unto the Lord. But tragically, they have never yet fulfilled this mission, and instead, ended up as a divided nation (into Northern and Southern Kingdoms), steeped in idolatry, pursuing the worship of false gods. Israel would become completely apostate, even going as far as sacrificing their own children on the altars of pagan deities. They would “pass them through the fire,” or in other words, incinerate their babies in fiery metal furnaces shaped as pagan idols. They began to do exactly as the pagan nations surrounding them did – in complete disobedience to God’s covenant.

But in order to better set the stage for understanding Jeremiah’s

prophecies of God's judgment, let's take some time to understand the historical timeline of events that led to this judgment.

### **-The Backdrop:**

At the beginning of their establishment as a nation, Israel had been miraculously delivered out of slavery in the land of Egypt and brought into the Promised Land of Canaan to inherit the land God had intended for them. Many years prior to this, God had promised Israel's forefathers – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – that their descendants would inherit this land.

In Genesis 12, this covenant is initiated by God and given to Abraham.

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:”

-Genesis 12:1

This promise of a land that would be inherited by Abraham's descendants was continued in Genesis 15...

“In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:”

-Genesis 15:18

We need to recognize that this covenant God made with Abraham was not conditional. It did not depend upon Abraham doing or not doing anything. God simply promised it unconditionally. The land belongs to the seed of Abraham. As the story of Genesis continues, we then see that this promise gets confirmed through Abraham's son, Isaac...

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"I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

-Genesis 17:7-8 (NASB)

The Abrahamic Covenant was then confirmed to Abraham's grandson – Isaac's son Jacob...

"And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;"

-Genesis 28:13

So, the covenant originally made with Abraham is then reconfirmed through his son Isaac and then his grandson, Jacob. Jacob's name is then changed to Israel, and his twelve sons became the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Let's continue forward now to the actual establishment of the nation of Israel under Moses. As time passed, the family of Jacob and his sons had resettled in Egypt after one of his sons (Joseph) had become second in command over that nation. The Egyptians greatly honored Joseph's family, as it was due to his prophetic dreams and wisdom that prevented their starvation over a period of great famine. But over time, a man who did not know Joseph became king (or Pharaoh) of Egypt, and seeing the Hebrews' prosperity, feared they would eventually outnumber the native Egyptians. Because of this, the Egyptians under this new Pharaoh enslaved the Hebrew people, bringing about the story of Moses in the book of Exodus.

Through God's intervention of the plagues in Egypt, the descendants of Abraham who had become slaves there were now released from bondage. Under Moses' leadership, they were brought into the wilderness to Mount Sinai where they were given the Mosaic or Old

Covenant – the Law. We are again told of God’s purpose for the creation of Israel in Deuteronomy 7...

“For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth.”

-Deuteronomy 7:6

In the verses that follow, God reassures Israel of His perpetual, unending commitment to the covenants He made with their forefathers, referring back to the unconditional covenants given to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). He tells them...

“The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

-Deuteronomy 7:7-8

But a critical point here that we must recognize is that the Mosaic Covenant, which God gave to Israel here at Mount Sinai, did have conditions (unlike the earlier unconditional covenants made with their forefathers). In fact, Deuteronomy 28 tells us of the blessings and the cursings that came along with the Mosaic Covenant for Israel in the land that they were given. If they were obedient to it, they would experience the blessings in the land; but if they were disobedient to it, they would experience the cursings and be temporarily evicted from the land.

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 begins to tell of the blessings if Israel obeyed the covenant...

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“Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I am commanding you today, that the Lord your God will put you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings will come to you and reach you if you obey the Lord your God:”

-Deuteronomy 28:1-2 (NASB)

Chapter 28 then goes on to list all of the many ways Israel would experience blessings in the land if they obeyed the covenant. But in Verse 15, God introduces the cursings for disobedience to the covenant...

“But it shall come about, if you do not obey the Lord your God, to be careful to follow all His commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:”

-Deuteronomy 28:15 (NASB)

The rest of the chapter goes on to detail the awful cursings that would come upon Israel for turning back on the covenant she had entered into with God. Among the cursings, are promises that Israel would be given over to foreign enemies who would conquer their land and bring the people into captivity as judgment for their disobedience...

“The Lord will bring you and your king, whom you appoint over you, to a nation that neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods, made of wood and stone. And you will become an object of horror, a song of mockery, and an object of taunting among all the peoples where the Lord drives you.”

-Deuteronomy 28:36-37 (NASB)

“The Lord will bring a nation against you from far away, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down; a nation whose language you will not understand, a nation with a defiant attitude, who will have no

respect for the old, nor show favor to the young. Furthermore, it will eat the offspring of your herd and the produce of your ground until you are destroyed; a nation that will leave you no grain, new wine, or oil, nor the newborn of your cattle or the young of your flock, until they have eliminated you. And it will besiege you in all your towns until your high and fortified walls in which you trusted come down throughout your land, and it will besiege you in all your towns throughout your land which the Lord your God has given you.”

-Deuteronomy 28:49-52 (NASB)

“And it will come about that, just as the Lord rejoiced over you to be good to you, and make you numerous, so will the Lord rejoice over you to wipe you out and destroy you; and you will be torn away from the land which you are entering to possess. Furthermore, the Lord will scatter you among all the peoples, from one end of the earth to the other; and there you will serve other gods, made of wood and stone, which you and your fathers have not known. Among those nations you will find no peace...”

-Deuteronomy 28:63-65 (NASB)

And so, we can see the precision of the judgments prophetically detailed for us all the way back in Deuteronomy during the lifetime of Moses! God tells Israel that he would bring foreign nations against them, that these nations would besiege and conquer their cities, and that they would be removed from the land and brought into captivity on foreign soil. Although these prophecies go far beyond just the actions of Babylon, we can see their partial fulfillment in the judgment that God would inspire Jeremiah to warn Judah of.

### **-The Transgressions Of The Northern And Southern Kingdoms:**

Although Israel was given a lengthy list of instructions for how to conduct themselves as a righteous nation in the land God had given them, they soon fell into apostasy. In fact, it was only the third king of Israel – Solomon – that led the people into idolatry.

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1 Kings 11:4-11 (NIV) records that... “As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. So, Solomon did evil in the eyes of the Lord... On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites... The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord’s command.”

God had instructed the Israelites not to intermarry with the surrounding pagan nations (1 Kings 11:2, et al.). He had also instructed the Israelite kings not to amass horses, wealth, or wives (Deut. 17:14-20). These commands were designed to prevent the king from trusting in military might, following foreign gods, and relying on wealth instead of on God.

Solomon violated both of these commands – and did so in extreme measure. For instance, Solomon took numerous wives and concubines from surrounding nations, many as a political means to securing and expanding his kingdom. 1 Kings 11:3 states that Solomon had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. Obviously, God “allowed” Solomon to have these wives, but allowance is not the same as approval. Solomon’s marital decisions were in direct violation of God’s Law, and there were consequences. These wives and concubines brought with them their foreign pagan deities, and ultimately corrupted the heart of Solomon, turning him away from the worship of the one true God.

After the reign of Solomon, as punishment for his sin, the once unified nation split into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). The capital of Israel became Samaria and the capital of Judah was Jerusalem. The far majority of the kings of both kingdoms were wicked and did evil before the Lord. However, the Southern Kingdom did have several good kings. But the Northern Kingdom had nothing but wicked, ungodly kings that led the people

away from the worship of the one true God and abounded in every sort of sin. Because of how evil the kings of Israel were, God sent them some of the most powerful prophets – men such as Elijah and Elisha. But nevertheless, the Northern Kingdom did not turn from evil.

“Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.”

-2 Kings 17:13

Despite the warnings of the prophets, Israel made no repentance from evil. Around 722 B.C., the Northern Kingdom of Israel was overtaken into judgment by the Assyrians under Shalmaneser V. After first forcing tribute payments, Shalmaneser later laid siege to the capital city of Samaria when the king refused to pay. Following a three-year siege, Assyria carried away the Israelites into captivity and dispersed them among the cities of their provinces. (2 Kings 17:5-6). In addition to exporting a large number of the native inhabitants of Israel, the Assyrians also imported foreign inhabitants in order to further weaken Israel as a culture and loosen their ties to the land.

“And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.”

-2 Kings 17:24

Later, around 701 B.C., the Assyrians under Sennacherib marched south into Judah, the Southern Kingdom; however, due to the prayers of the godly King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, the Assyrians were unable to capture Jerusalem. The Lord intervened by sending an angel to slay a great number of the Assyrian soldiers (2 Chronicles 32:22).

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So, we see that at this point, because of the Northern Kingdom of Israel's great wickedness, they were judged and removed prior to the later judgment that Judah faced.

“Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.”

-2 Kings 17:18

So, what was left of the Northern Kingdom of Israel was under Assyrian rule, and a great number were deported into exile in Assyria. Only the Southern Kingdom of Judah was left.

Yet, despite the fact that Judah's punishment was delayed because of her few good kings, the people still did not serve the Lord. Hezekiah's son Manasseh who succeeded him was the most wicked king the Southern Kingdom had seen yet. 2 Chronicles 33 records the way in which Manasseh plunged Judah back into sin. Although he had somewhat of a change of heart later on, his son Amon who ruled for a short time after him, again plunged Judah back into wickedness.

Amon's son, Josiah, was the final good king of the Southern Kingdom. Under his reign, a lost copy of the Law was found hidden in the Temple (2 Chronicles 34). When it was read to Josiah, and he recognized how far the Southern Kingdom had drifted from the commandments of God (as well as the promised punishments for doing so), he tore his clothes in mourning. Josiah then began to institute the most systematic religious reforms Judah had ever experienced. He destroyed the institutions of pagan worship that his predecessors had established and he restored the Levitical system of worship of the one true God as required in the Law. He also re-established the Passover celebration as described in the Law.

King Josiah however met an unfortunate death during battle with Pharaoh Necho of Egypt. Three of Josiah's sons (Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah), as well as Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin all ruled after him and were weak and ungodly kings. It was during the short reigns of these kings that the power center of the region was changing from

Assyria to Babylon – with Egypt to the south still being a major threat as well.

The Southern Kingdom of Judah was stuck in the unfortunate geography of being a buffer state between Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon. Because of their refusal to turn from evil, God would end up punishing Judah through multiple invasions of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, whose kingdom was rising to prominence. There are three invasions we will familiarize ourselves with in order to better understand the captivity of the Jews in Babylon. But first, we need to recognize several significant prophecies regarding this coming judgment.

### **-The Warnings Of Jeremiah:**

Jeremiah was the son of Hilkiah, a priest, from the Benjamite village of Anathoth (Jer. 1:1) during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah. Jeremiah's ministry was active until after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the First Temple in 587/6 B.C. The difficulties he encountered, as described in the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations, have prompted scholars to refer to him as “the weeping prophet”.

Israel had been unfaithful to the laws of the covenant and had repeatedly forsaken God over time by worshiping false gods such as Baal (Jer. Ch.'s 2, 3, 5, 9). The people of Israel had even gone as far as building high altars to Baal in order to burn their children in fire as offerings (Jer. 19:4-5). The nation had broken the covenant and not repented, causing God to withdraw His blessings related to the Mosaic Covenant – which like we mentioned, was a conditional covenant. If they kept the covenant, God had promised blessings. But if they broke the covenant, He promised cursings. After centuries of apostasy towards this covenant, it was now time to introduce the cursings of judgment.

And so, God would use the king of Babylon as His instrument of judgment upon the apostate kingdom of Judah, as was promised in the “blessings and cursings” that God had issued to Israel through Moses in Deuteronomy 28.

Jeremiah was called to prophetic ministry around 626 B.C.<sup>1</sup> He was

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called by God to prophesy of Jerusalem's coming destruction that would occur by invaders from the north. In Chapter 1 of Jeremiah, God begins to reveal the impending doom for Judah. In Verses 13-16, we read the following...

"And the word of the Lord came unto me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I said, I see a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the north.

Then the Lord said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.

For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the Lord; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah.

And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands."

-Jeremiah 1:13-16

Then in Jeremiah Chapter 4, God declared again that Judah would be invaded by enemies from the north (Verses 5-9). God challenged Judah to flee to her fortified cities (Verse 5) because God was "bringing disaster from the north, even terrible destruction" (Verse 6). The verses that follow picture the cities lying in ruins and the people in sackcloth (Verses 7-9). In dramatic fashion, God foretold how the enemy would advance (Verses 11-17). The verses that follow (Verses 18-20) declare that this was brought upon Judah by her ungodly conduct, which resulted in "the whole land" lying "in ruins." The destruction of Judah was also then foretold in Verses 21-31.

But in Jeremiah 5:19, God tells Judah...

"Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours."

-Jeremiah 5:19

God declares in Jeremiah 6:19 that He would bring disaster upon this people, the fruit of their schemes, because they have not listened to His words and have rejected His Law. In Verse 22, He again says that a great army will come from the north.

In Jeremiah 9:25-26, we are told that God's judgment would extend not only to Israel, but to the surrounding nations as well, including Egypt, Edom, Moab, Ammon, and others.

Jeremiah Chapter 13 speaks of the coming exile. When the people asked why this was happening to them, God declared, "All Judah will be carried into exile, carried completely away" (Verse 19). In Verse 22, He says that this will happen because of their many sins.

After hearing of the things Jeremiah had been prophesying, Pashur, the corrupt High Priest, beat him and threw him in prison. Jeremiah then unleashed a scathing prophecy to him, detailing the future judgment of Judah and Jerusalem, and even prophesying of Pashur's own death...

"For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold it: and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword.

Moreover I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon.

And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies."

-Jeremiah 21:4-6

Jeremiah would continue to prophesy throughout the three invasions of Nebuchadnezzar against Judah – much to the dismay of Judah's installed puppet king and his minions. Jeremiah would

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implore the king to repent, and to not revolt against Babylon, as this was God's judgment against Judah that they must endure as punishment for their sins. He continued to warn that if they did choose to revolt against the Babylonian subjugation, then a much worse punishment would happen – the complete destruction of the city and the desolation of the entire land, like he had prophesied all along. Of course, Jeremiah's advice was ignored by the king, his advisors, and his lackey High Priest, bringing about the exact judgments he warned of.

### **-Introduction To The 70 Years Passages:**

We now need to transition our focus to the passages that discuss a period of 70 years in connection with the Babylonian captivity and servitude. Not only did Jeremiah prophesy about the coming judgment of Judah at the hands of Babylon, but he also spoke of a duration of 70 years in connection with this judgment. There are several passages in Scripture that describe a 70-year duration being somehow associated with it, and two of them are prophecies by Jeremiah.

But before we read them, let's recognize that this issue of "70 years" has stumped many commentators who have attempted to define the beginning and ending points of this duration. In fact, many have come to the conclusion that the Bible's mention of 70 years only approximately aligns with what we know from ancient history. Many have concluded that the length is not 70 years exactly, but is several years less than 70. In addition, some even claim that this period fell far short of 70 years.

Is this true? How accurate can we actually be with our understanding of this prophetic time period, according to the commonly-accepted dating of well-known events from ancient history? Are there simple mistakes these commentators are making? Are there key aspects of calculation that they might be overlooking or not even acknowledging? We will explore this in detail throughout the remainder of this study!

The first thing we need to understand is that the Bible mentions

this 70-year duration in several places, and each seems to convey a slightly different meaning. Is this a lack of precision on the part of the Biblical text? Or, is it a hint that we need to expand our thinking when interpreting these prophecies?

We strongly advocate for the latter. In fact, the more you study Bible prophecy, the more you begin to recognize that it's often-times not as straightforward as you might think. What we mean is that Bible prophecies often have multiple fulfillments. In other words, the fulfillment of a prophecy may have various dimensions, applications, references, or stages of fulfillment. Rather than conveying a lack of precision, as we will see, the multiple applications of fulfillment that seem to be tied to the 70-years will surely leave you astonished at the level of multi-dimensional precision of these prophecies! With this in mind, let's now take a look at the three main prophecies that speak of this 70-year period...

- The first passage is Jeremiah 25:9-12...

“Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.

Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.

And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations (Judah and the surrounding nations – Verses 1-2) shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.”

-Jeremiah 25:9-12

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The setting of this prophecy was 605 B.C., apparently just prior to the first invasion of Nebuchadnezzar. In this prophetic passage, the focus seems to be the servitude of not only Judah, but the surrounding nations as well, at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. It clearly says that these nations will serve the king of Babylon for seventy years. It also clearly says that at the end of the seventy years, Babylon would be overthrown. So, from this passage, we get the idea of a 70-year duration of Babylonian sovereignty over Judah and the surrounding nations. It describes the whole land being in a state of desolation, yet this particular passage doesn't directly say anything about an exile or a captivity. It is only later that we find out in Daniel 1:1-2 that Nebuchadnezzar took some of the Judean royal family and aristocracy captive during this first invasion.

- The second passage is Jeremiah 29:10...

“For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.”

-Jeremiah 29:10

The context here is a letter Jeremiah sent to those who had been carried off into Babylonian captivity during Nebuchadnezzar's second invasion around 598/7 B.C. This context is shown to us in Verse 1 of this chapter. Nebuchadnezzar's second invasion is recorded in 2 Kings 24:11-16.

It seems clear from this prophetic passage that Jeremiah is telling the deported captives in Babylon that after a total of 70 years in exile (or “after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon”), God would begin to bring them back to Judah and restore the nation. So, this passage appears to describe a total of 70 years of captivity in Babylon.

- The third passage is 2 Chronicles 36:17-21...

“Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees (the Babylonians), who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.

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.

And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:

To fulfil 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 fulfil threescore and ten years.”

-2 Chronicles 36:17-21

Unlike the first two passages, this one is not a prophecy, but instead, is a historical recording of what happened after-the-fact. But it’s an important passage because it gives us further clarity regarding the subject of this 70-year period and what it refers to.

The context of this passage is the third invasion of Jerusalem, in which Nebuchadnezzar’s army destroyed the city and took even more people into captivity – this occurring in 586 B.C. This passage, although it also mentions the captivity, seems to focus on 70 years (“threescore and ten years”) in relation to a period of desolation of the land in which it “rested” from cultivation. In other words, the focus in this passage is the land. It makes reference to the sabbaths of the land, or in other words, the instruction that God gave Israel in Leviticus 25 to let their land lie fallow every seventh year. This passage seems to convey the idea that because Israel did not obey this command for a long period of time, they “owed God those sabbath years,” and so they were carried off into captivity in order to initiate this 70-year period of “rest” for the land.

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There are several later passages in the Old Testament that also reference the 70-years after-the-fact, which we will examine later on. But from these three, we can observe that these 70-years are a period of judgment that may possibly have three different dimensions of fulfillment:

1. 70 years of Babylonian domination
2. 70 years of captivity for the nation
3. 70 years of desolation for the land

In the next several chapters of our study, we will analyze each of these in more depth and uncover whether there is sufficient evidence to say that this 70-year prophecy was in fact fulfilled! And if it was, how many dimensions of fulfillment did it have? And just how precise has it been? We will find out in this study!

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1. -Tremper Longman, *Jeremiah, Lamentations*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008, p. 6.

## CHAPTER 3

### 70 YEARS OF BABYLONIAN DOMINATION

**T**he first possible dimension of fulfillment for the 70 years that we will discuss is 70 years of Babylonian domination. As you may recall, we noticed that in the first of our three key passages relating to the 70 weeks (Jer. 25:9-12), that the focus seems to be the servitude of not only Judah, but the surrounding nations as well, to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. It clearly says that these nations will serve the king of Babylon for 70 years. It also clearly says that at the end of the 70 years, Babylon would be overthrown. Let's reread this passage...

“Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.

Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.

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And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.”

-Jeremiah 25:9-12

First, let's again make note that this speaks of the surrounding nations as well as Judah, all being subject to Babylon. To see this more clearly, let's continue reading this chapter and see just how clear God is that the entire region was getting ready to drink of the cup of God's judgment through the rise of Babylon...

“For thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it.

And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them.

Then took I the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the Lord had sent me:

To wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; as it is this day;

Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people;

And all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod,

Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon,

And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which are beyond the sea,

Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all that are in the utmost corners,

And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert,

And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes,

And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach (Babylon) shall drink after them.

Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.”

-Jeremiah 25:15-27

So, Jeremiah was told to prophecy coming judgment on all of these nations. In fact, as we see in Verse 26, God goes as far as to say “all the kingdoms of the world,” which some would describe as hyperbolic language, and others would say extends prophetically as a double-reference prophecy to the end-times. Without getting off track on that subject here, let’s just recognize that many of Jeremiah’s prophecies are near-term prophecies that concern fulfillments during and soon after his lifetime. But many of his prophecies are far-term, looking forward in time to the end around the Second Coming of Christ. But let’s get back to our subject here...

So, we are told clearly that the king of Babylon would rise in power and would execute God’s judgment on the entire region by conquering the land. He would make the whole land a desolation, and Judah and these other nations would serve the king of Babylon for 70 years. Then, when 70 years are accomplished, God would punish Babylon for their iniquity. So, again, this first of the three passages (Jeremiah 25) makes it clear that one dimension in which the 70-year duration can be understood is relating to 70 years of Babylonian domination. Let’s now look into what we know from ancient history and see how closely this 70-year timespan correlates to the rise and fall of the neo-Babylonian Empire.

Before Babylon became the dominant world power in the Middle East, the neo-Assyrian Empire ruled the region, led by infamous rulers such as Shalmaneser, Sargon, Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal, and Sennacherib. It was only after the downfall of Assyria that it could be

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said that “these nations would serve Babylon.” So then, when did the neo-Assyrian Empire fall to the neo-Babylonian Empire?

This is all recorded on an ancient Babylonian cuneiform tablet called the *Fall of Nineveh Chronicle*. The neo-Assyrian Empire, from the year 639 B.C., had been suffering a decline in their power, leading to Babylonian and Median invasions of their lands. The city of Arrapha fell in 615 B.C., followed by their capital city Assur in 614 B.C., and finally the notorious city of Nineveh, (made capital after the fall of Assur), fell in 612 B.C. Despite the brutal massacres that followed, the Assyrians survived as a political entity and escaped to Harran under their new king, Ashur-uballit II. Establishing Harran as their new capital, the Assyrians would again catch the attention of the Babylonian King Nabopolassar (the father of Nebuchadnezzar) and his ally the Median King Cyaxares, who were determined to forever destroy the threat of Assyrian resurgence. Together, they besieged and defeated the city around 610 B.C. In 609 B.C., the Assyrian king Ashur-uballit II and a large army from Egypt tried to reconquer Harran, but were defeated by August/September of that year. At this time, Ashur-uballit II disappeared from history, and this event in 609 B.C. was the final end of the neo-Assyrian Empire. Babylon was now the dominant power.<sup>1 2 3 4</sup>

The only other date that can be considered as the “rise of Babylon” occurred several years later in 605 B.C. with Babylon’s victory at the Battle of Carchemish. Although Babylon was already the regional power at this time, Egypt still controlled holdings in Palestine, including Judah, which was a vassal state. In 605 B.C., after the Babylonian victory at Carchemish, Babylon pushed the Egyptians back to their borders and subjugated Judah and the surrounding nations that formerly were under Egyptian control. This is recorded in another ancient Babylonian cuneiform tablet known as the *Jerusalem Chronicle*.<sup>5 6 7</sup>

We will discuss this event in greater detail further ahead in our study, as this date is also extremely significant for another of the three dimensions of fulfillment for the 70 years. But it seems clear that when looking for the end of Assyrian dominance and the beginning of

Babylonian dominance, the final defeat of the Assyrian king Ashur-uballit II at Harran in August/September 609 B.C. appears to be our date. Assyria is not relevant as a military force after this time.

- August/September of 609 B.C. then, is a reasonable start date to the 70 years of Babylonian dominance.

Next, we need to identify the end-date for the neo-Babylonian Empire. This date is actually one of the most well-known dates of all of ancient history, recorded in another ancient cuneiform tablet called the *Nabonidus Chronicle* and also detailed for us in *Ptolemy's Canon* (an ancient king list used by Ptolemy of Alexandria to date astronomical phenomena). From these ancient sources, we know that Cyrus, king of the Medo-Persian Empire conquered the city of Babylon on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 539 B.C.<sup>8 9 10 11</sup>

- October 12<sup>th</sup>, 539 B.C. then, should be our end-date for the 70 years of Babylonian dominance.

### **-Calculating The 70 Years Of Babylonian Domination:**

Now that we have a beginning and ending point for this period of Babylonian domination, let's perform our calculation and see how accurate it is. Will this period actually turn out to be 70 years, as the Bible foretold? Let's begin...

We determined that the best estimate we can put forward for a beginning point is August/September of 609 B.C. following the Battle of Harran, in which Babylon replaced Assyria as the dominant power in the region. And like we just mentioned, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 539 B.C. – the date of the fall of Babylon – is our ending point for the Babylonian Empire. In order to determine the duration between these two points, we simply subtract...

$$609 - 539 = 70$$

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So, we do see that from the information we have available in our knowledge of ancient history, this period does has a duration of exactly 70 solar years!

Why do we mention “solar” years specifically here? Because as we will see in the study ahead, we find it more appropriate to use what we will call prophetic years (or 360-day years) to calculate most Bible prophecies. The rationale for this will be given further ahead in our study when it becomes more relevant to our calculations.

What is the difference between a solar year and what we will term a prophetic year? A solar year is what we use to calculate years in modern times using our Gregorian calendar. With modern astronomy, one can reckon a solar year very precisely as being on average, 365.24219 days.<sup>12</sup>

So, using these solar years, as we do on our modern calendar, we can see that the duration of the Babylonian Empire does in fact equal 70 years, exactly as Scripture says. However, if we used the prophetic year, our calculation would seem to be a bit less accurate. 70 prophetic years is equivalent to 69 solar years, almost to the day. To perform this calculation (converting 70 prophetic years to solar years), we would do the following...

First, we need to convert the 70 prophetic years to days...

$$70 \text{ years} \times 360 \text{ days/yr.} = 25,200 \text{ days}$$

In other words, 70 years made up of 360-day years is equal to 25,200 days. Now we can convert to solar years by dividing by the average number of days in a solar year...

$$25,200 \text{ days} / 365.24219 \text{ (average \# of days in a solar year)} = 69 \text{ solar years}$$

So, after performing this conversion calculation, we can see that 70 prophetic years is equivalent to 69 solar years. Meaning if we apply prophetic years to our duration of 609 – 539 B.C., we can see how it's slightly less exact than using solar years (a one-year difference).

And so, although this prophecy of the duration of Babylonian domination does come out to exactly 70 solar years, you will have to decide for yourself if this is an adequate potential dimension of fulfillment to the 70 years!

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## CHAPTER 4

### 70 YEARS OF CAPTIVITY FOR THE NATION

**T**he second possible dimension of fulfillment for the 70 years that we will discuss is 70 years of captivity for the nation. As you may recall, we noticed that in the second of our three key passages relating to the 70 weeks (Jer. 29:10), that the focus seems to be the captivity of the people of Judah in Babylon. It is a letter Jeremiah wrote to the exiles in Babylon, basically telling them to accept this judgment of the Lord, to build homes and raise families in Babylon, but to also expect that at the completion of seventy years, to expect to return home. Let's reread this passage (Jer. 29:10), but this time, also include the surrounding verses in order to gain more understanding of the context...

“Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon;

(After that Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the carpenters, and the smiths, were departed from Jerusalem;)

By the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, (whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent unto Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon) saying,

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon;

Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them;

Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished.

And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.

For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.

For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord.

For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place."

–Jeremiah 29:1-10

The context here is a letter Jeremiah sent to those who had been carried off into Babylonian captivity during Nebuchadnezzar's second invasion around 597 B.C. 2 Kings 24:11-16 records this second invasion. We will discuss it in more detail shortly. But the main point here in this prophecy seems to clearly be that Jeremiah is telling the deported captives in Babylon that after a total of 70 years in exile (or "after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon"), God would begin to bring them back to Jerusalem and begin to restore the nation. So, this passage appears to describe a second dimension of fulfillment related to the 70 years – a 70-year duration of captivity in Babylon for

the Judean exiles. Let's now look into what we know from ancient history and see how closely this 70-year timespan correlates to the original deportation and the eventual return of the Jews from Babylon.

The first thing we need to examine of course, is the beginning point. When were the Jews first deported to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar? Like we mentioned earlier in this study, there were three different invasions of Nebuchadnezzar that are relevant to our purposes here, which may correspond to the beginning point of this 70-year captivity. We will undertake a short examination of each of these three deportation events in order to better understand the history of the exile. This should help us recognize which of these three events should be identified as the beginning point of this prophesied period of captivity. Let's begin...

### **-The 1<sup>st</sup> Deportation, In 605 B.C.**

The first deportation is the least recognized of the three events we will discuss. This event is recorded in Daniel Chapter 1...

"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;

Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:"

-Daniel 1:1-6

This first deportation took place in the year King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to power (605 B.C.). In this passage in Daniel, it calls it the third year of Jehoiakim, while in other places such as Jeremiah 46:2 (which speaks of the same year), it calls it the fourth year of Jehoiakim. This discrepancy is only apparent. It disappears when you account for the differences in the calendar reckonings of ancient kingdoms and the ways they reckoned the beginning of a king's reign.<sup>1</sup>

For instance, let's pause to understand the difference between accession year reckoning and non-accession year reckoning. If you do not factor this difference in, it will result in a one-year discrepancy for the way you are understanding the duration of a king's reign.

Ancient kingdoms generally used one of two methods to count the duration of a king's reign: the accession year system or the non-accession year system.

- In the accession year system (also called "postdating"), the year in which a king comes to the throne was termed his accession year, and his first official year is that which begins with the New Year's Day after his accession.<sup>2</sup>
- In the non-accession year system (also called "antedating"), a king's first official year was the year in which he came to the throne, and his second official year begins with the New Year's Day following his accession.<sup>3</sup>

This will probably seem confusing at first, so let's go over a few examples (using our modern calendar of January to December):

Accession Year Dating – If a king began to reign in February of a given year, then February to December (the remainder of that year) would be considered his "accession year" ...

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...and the first official year of his reign would not begin until the next New Year's Day.



Non-Accession Year Dating – If a king began to reign in November of a given year, then November to December (the remainder of that year) would be considered the first official year of his reign (even though it was only two months).



His second official year would begin the next New Year's Day. And so, even though he had only been on the throne for a total of three months, he would already be considered to be in the second official year of his reign.



We hope this gives you a basic understanding of the differences between these two dating methods. This will come in handy further ahead in this study, or if you begin to dig into the different historical sources that record these dates. If you are not aware of this difference, you will believe there’s a discrepancy when it’s really just a difference in calculation. In fact, even within the Bible, certain authors use different reckoning methods than others, causing some observers to mistakenly see Biblical contradictions.

So, with this understanding in mind, we can see that there is no contradiction between Daniel 1:1 and Jeremiah 46:2. Daniel 1:1 says...

“In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand...”

-Daniel 1:1

Jeremiah 46:2, speaking of this same year, says...

“Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah.”

-Jeremiah 46:2

This passage speaks of the events of that same year – 605 B.C. – which is universally recognized by historians as being the year in which Nebuchadnezzar came to the throne and conquered the Near

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East. We will discuss this further shortly, but for now, just understand that there is no contradiction between these two accounts of Daniel and Jeremiah. Daniel, being in Babylon, would have used the accession-year system of reckoning a king's regnal years – calling it Jehoiakim's 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Meanwhile, Jeremiah, being in Judah, would have used the non-accession-year system – calling it Jehoiakim's 4<sup>th</sup> year. The point is, these two passages both refer to the same year – 605 B.C.

Before moving on to further discuss these events of 605 B.C., we need to examine one more important concept to be aware of when dealing with these ancient dates. The Jews, Babylonians, Persians, et al., did not follow a January-to-January year. The Babylonians and then the Persians, who adopted the Babylonian calendar, had a year that began in Nisannu (our March/April). After the Babylonian captivity, the Jews adopted the names of these months as well, calling this month Nisan.

The Jews however, had two calendars – a religious calendar and a civil calendar. It is important to know which one is being used at any given time. The religious calendar began in Nisan (again, our March/April) and the civil calendar began in Tishri (our Sept./Oct.). In other words, Tishri is the seventh month on the religious calendar, but the first month on the civil calendar.

The Two Hebrew Calendars			
Modern Months:	Hebrew Months:	Civil Calendar: (before Exodus 12)	Religious Calendar: (after Exodus 12)
Sept./Oct.	Tishri	1 <sup>st</sup> Month	7 <sup>th</sup> Month
Oct./Nov.	Marcheshvan (Cheshvan)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Month	8 <sup>th</sup> Month
Nov./Dec.	Kislev	3 <sup>rd</sup> Month	9 <sup>th</sup> Month
Dec./Jan.	Tevet	4 <sup>th</sup> Month	10 <sup>th</sup> Month
Jan./Feb.	Shevat	5 <sup>th</sup> Month	11 <sup>th</sup> Month
Feb./Mar.	Adar (+ Adar 2 – leap years)	6 <sup>th</sup> Month	12 <sup>th</sup> Month
Mar./Apr.	Aviv (Nisan)	7 <sup>th</sup> Month	1 <sup>st</sup> Month
Apr./May	Iyar	8 <sup>th</sup> Month	2 <sup>nd</sup> Month
May/June	Sivan	9 <sup>th</sup> Month	3 <sup>rd</sup> Month
June/July	Tammuz	10 <sup>th</sup> Month	4 <sup>th</sup> Month
July/Aug.	Av	11 <sup>th</sup> Month	5 <sup>th</sup> Month
Aug./Sept.	Elul	12 <sup>th</sup> Month	6 <sup>th</sup> Month

This will be relevant at certain points later in our study. Now that we understand this, let's continue...

Before undertaking this detour to understand these ancient calendar reckonings, we were examining the first chapter of Daniel, in which Daniel and his friends were deported to Babylon in what would be the year 605 B.C. It was during this same year of 605 B.C. (apparently just prior to this deportation) that Jeremiah's first "70-year prophecy" was given – the prophecy we discussed, found in Jeremiah 25, in which God declares that Judah and the surrounding nations would be subject to Babylonian domination for 70 years. In Verse 1 of that chapter, we are told when this prophecy was given...

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“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 Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon;

The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying,”

-Jeremiah 25:1

This prophecy was apparently delivered just prior to this initial invasion and deportation that happened that same year. This passage refers to it as the first year of Nebuchadnezzar – but keep in mind that this is according to the non-accession-year reckoning. By the Babylonian accession-year system, 605 would be Nebuchadnezzar’s accession year. But let’s explore some of the history of this time period, which is actually quite well-known to us, thanks to the Babylonian clay tablets that record the year-by-year exploits of the kings.

As we discussed earlier, Assyria fell to Babylon in 609 B.C., at their defeat at Harran. The next several years were a constant conflict between Babylon and Egypt. Egypt still controlled much of Palestine, including Judah, which was a vassal state paying them tribute. But Egyptian control of Palestine would not last long, as Babylon was at this time making a strong drive to control the Mediterranean coastlands. This conflict would reach a climax in 605 B.C., as the Babylonian forces met the Egyptians and some remnants of the Assyrian army at Carchemish in what is today, the border of Turkey and northern Syria.

Nabopolassar, who was still the king of Babylon in early 605 B.C. (his 21<sup>st</sup> year) sent his son, the crown prince Nebuchadnezzar with his army to Carchemish, an Egyptian controlled stronghold. There, a disastrous defeat was inflicted upon the Egyptians, ultimately resulting in Babylon’s control over all of the territory of Syria and Palestine (called the Hatti-land in the Babylonian Chronicles) all the way south to the borders of Egypt (including Judah). Babylon rather than Egypt was now the ruler of Palestine. This was the attack mentioned in Daniel 1:1 that took place during the third year of

Jehoiakim in which Daniel and his friends were among the first Judean exiles to be taken to Babylon.<sup>4 5 6</sup>

While Nebuchadnezzar was engaged in his conquest of the Hattiland, the death of his father Nabopolassar took place on August 16<sup>th</sup> of that same year. On hearing the news, Nebuchadnezzar immediately returned home to Babylon, apparently by taking a hasty ride across the desert, and upon his arrival, took the throne on September 7<sup>th</sup>.<sup>7 8 9</sup>

The account of Nebuchadnezzar's victorious Palestinian campaign in the year in which his father died and his speedy return to Babylon to take the crown is recorded by the Chaldean priest and historian Berosus, who wrote around 290 B.C. The 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus preserved this account of Berosus, and it even provides an interesting corroboration of Daniel's account, which claims that Nebuchadnezzar took Judean captives during this first invasion and subjugation in 605 B.C. His account says the following...

"Meanwhile, as it happened, his father Nabopolassar sickened and died in the city of Babylon, after a reign of twenty-one years. Being informed ere long of his father's death, Nabuchodonosor settled the affairs of Egypt and the other countries. The prisoners – Jews, Phoenicians, Syrians, and those of Egyptian nationality – were consigned to some of his friends, with orders to conduct them to Babylonia, along with the heavy troops and the rest of the spoils; while he himself, with a small escort, pushed across the desert to Babylon. There he found the administration in the hands of the Chaldeans and the throne reserved for him by their chief nobleman. Being now master of his father's entire realm, he gave orders to allot the captives, on their arrival, settlements in the most suitable districts of Babylonia."<sup>10</sup>

So, here we have an ancient historical account that agrees with what we see in Daniel Chapter 1. During the year 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar conquered the whole land, settled the affairs of the countries he conquered (in other words, placed them under tribute), and took Jewish prisoners (among others). He rushed back to Babylon ahead of the army and the prisoners (which would have included

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Daniel and his friends), and ascended the throne. It says he then placed the captives in different areas of his realm – all of this in perfect agreement with the testimony from Daniel.

And so, the first option that may act as the beginning point to the 70 years of captivity for the nation is the year 605 B.C. when Judah first fell under Babylonian control and Nebuchadnezzar first deported Judeans to Babylon.

### **-The 2<sup>nd</sup> Deportation, In 597 B.C.**

The second deportation is a very well-recognized event in both Biblical and secular history. This incident is recorded in 2 Kings 24:6-17...

“So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt.

Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done.

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

And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it.

And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.

And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said.

And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the

mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.

And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah."

-2 Kings 24:6-17

The historical backdrop of this second invasion includes the fact that in 601 B.C., during the fourth year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar, after successfully subjugating all of Syria and Palestine, then unsuccessfully attempted to invade Egypt, but was rebuffed, sustaining heavy losses. This failure led to numerous rebellions among the states of the Near East which had just been conquered by Babylon – including Judah, where King Jehoiakim stopped paying tribute to Nebuchadnezzar and took a pro-Egyptian position. Nebuchadnezzar soon dealt with these rebellions, among them of course, Jehoiakim of Judah, and his son Jehoiachin who ruled for about 3 months after Jehoiakim's death.

This historical backdrop and second invasion of Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem is also recorded in the Babylonian tablet known as the *Jerusalem Chronicle*. This tablet states that Nebuchadnezzar, in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of his reign, made an expedition to the Hatti-land in December of 598 B.C. He besieged and captured the city of Jerusalem in March of 597 B.C., capturing the king, installing his own puppet king, and placing them under a heavy tribute. As 2 Kings told us, we know this was Jehoiachin who was taken prisoner and Zedekiah who was placed as the new king. Nebuchadnezzar also extracted a heavy tribute from Jerusalem at this time, which 2 Kings seems to detail as being large quantities of gold and treasure from the king's house as

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well as from the Temple build by Solomon. A large number of captives were also taken to Babylon at this time (around 10,000), including some of the king's family, royal officials, mighty men of war, and those capable of producing weapons of war. The prophet Ezekiel was among the exiles taken to Babylon during this second deportation.<sup>11 12 13</sup>

Let's keep in mind again, that the difference between 2 Kings calling it the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Nebuchadnezzar vs. the *Jerusalem Chronicle* calling it the 7<sup>th</sup> year is only a difference between the calendars being used and the counting of regnal years, and is not a real discrepancy.

And so, the second option that may act as the beginning point to the 70 years of captivity for the nation is the year 597 B.C. when Judah was again invaded and Nebuchadnezzar deported a second group of Judeans to Babylon.

### **-The 3<sup>rd</sup> Deportation, In 586 B.C.**

The third deportation is the most well-known of the three invasions by Nebuchadnezzar that we're investigating. This invasion was unlike the first two, in which Jerusalem was subjugated, placed under tribute, and had segments of the population deported. This third invasion went much further than that, resulting in the destruction of the city and the Temple, and the largest number of captives being deported. This third event is recorded in 2 Kings 24:18-20 and 25:1-21. Let's read through this lengthy passage...

"Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of

Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.

And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.

And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain.

And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him.

So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.

And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem:

And he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire.

And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carry away.

But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vine-dressers and husbandmen.

And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the Lord, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the Lord, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon.

And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away.

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And the firepans, and the bowls, and such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away.

The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the Lord; the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work.

And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door:

And out of the city he took an officer that was set over the men of war, and five men of them that were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land that were found in the city:

And Nebuzaradan captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah:

And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land.”

-2 Kings 24:18-20 and 25:1-21

Although the Babylonian tablet that would be the sequel to the Jerusalem Chronicle (which would have recorded this event) is lost to us, these events are recorded also in 2 Chronicles 36 and in Jeremiah. In January of 588 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar laid siege against Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> <sup>15</sup> In the months that followed, the Jews began to suffer the effects of the siege. As famine set in, morale among the Jews sank. Due to their weakened condition, plagues of one kind or another began to afflict the people (Jer. 14:12; 27:8,13). Eventually the food supply was depleted and misery soared as many were reduced to cannibalism (Jer. 19:9; La. 2:20; 4:10; Ezek. 5:10).

The siege went on for slightly more than two-and-a-half years until finally a breach was made and the Babylonians broke through the walls. The probable date that the city fell was July 18<sup>th</sup>, 586 B.C.<sup>16</sup>

Shortly after this, Nebuzaradan, Nebuchadnezzar's captain came to Jerusalem and burned the Temple, the king's house, and all of the houses of the city. His army broke down the city's walls, carried away the city's treasures, and those who were not killed were taken captive to Babylon, leaving behind some of the peasantry. All that was left of Jerusalem was ash and rubble. From the accounts recorded in 2 Kings 25:8 and Jeremiah 52:12, we can conclude that this final destruction after the city's fall would have taken place sometime around August 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> of 586 B.C.<sup>18 19</sup>

And so, the third option that may act as the beginning point to the 70 years of captivity for the nation is the year 586 B.C. when Jerusalem was destroyed and Nebuchadnezzar deported a third group of Judeans to Babylon.

Note: Jeremiah 52:30 then records a fourth deportation of less than 1,000 Jews later on in the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of Nebuchadnezzar, but we will not consider this as a possible starting point.

So, we have now discussed the three major deportation events that could be considered as the starting point for the 70 years of the captivity of the nation. The first option was the year 605 B.C., the second option was the year 597 B.C., and the third option was the year 586 B.C. In order to determine which option is the best fit for the starting point, we need to first investigate the ending point. The three date options for the beginning point are quite well-accepted historical dates. But the end-date for the captivity is a bit less straightforward. We will have to use the information we have in order to arrive at a reasonable approximation. Let's begin...

### **-Determining The Ending Point Of The Babylonian Captivity:**

Our most solid anchoring-point for determining the probable end-date of the captivity is based upon the fall of Babylon, which we can confidently date to October 12<sup>th</sup>, 539 B.C. (as mentioned earlier in this

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study). The Persians under Cyrus defeated the city on this date, and then several weeks later, on October 29<sup>th</sup>, Cyrus entered the city. Then, during Cyrus' first year, he issued a decree allowing the captives of Babylon to return home. Cyrus' first year would have been 538 B.C., according to Persian accession-year reckoning. In other words, Cyrus began to rule all of his newly conquered lands in 539 – the year he conquered them – but that would have been considered his accession year. His first official year of reign would have started on the next New Year's Day, which would be 538 B.C., as recorded in the *Nabonidus Chronicle* and in *Ptolemy's Canon*.<sup>20 21 22 23</sup>

So, in his first year of reign (538 B.C.), Cyrus issued his proclamation allowing the captives to return to their homelands. A famous archeological artifact called the *Cyrus Cylinder* also records how Cyrus returned the previously deported peoples to their original lands.<sup>24</sup>

Among those peoples, of course, were the Jews. The Bible records this in several places, one of them being 2 Chronicles 36:22-23...

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up."

-2 Chronicles 36:22-23

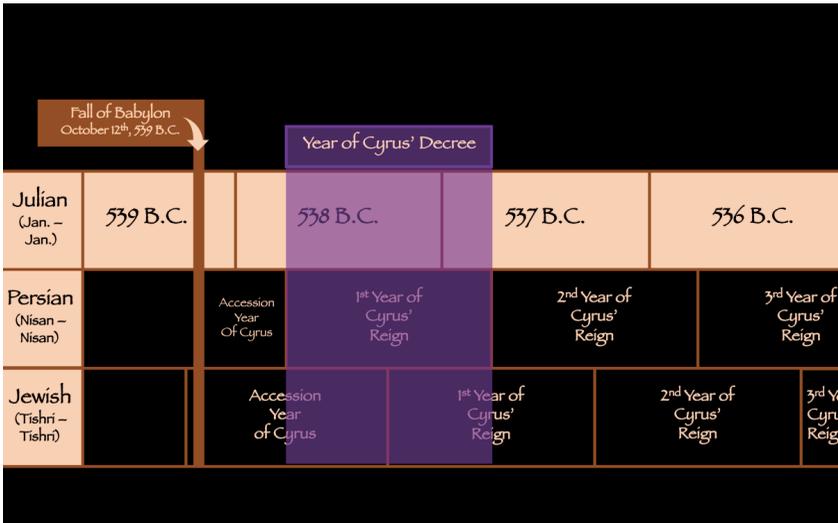
Isaiah 44:28 and 45:13 prophesy of this decree around 150 years beforehand, even calling Cyrus by name! Josephus actually records that when Cyrus entered Babylon, the Jews presented him with these prophecies written in the scroll of Isaiah – and that they served as a significant factor motivating him to allow their return.<sup>25</sup>

So, we can quite confidently say that Cyrus, in 538 B.C., allowed

the Jewish captives to return home and rebuild the Temple of God in Jerusalem. But here’s where it gets a bit tricky...

Should we consider 538 B.C. (the date of the giving of this decree) as being the ending point for the 70-years captivity? Since the beginning point was the date that captives were first deported out of Judah, it seems more sensible to consider the ending point to be when the captives first actually returned to Judah. Although this exact date is not provided to us in any known historical source, let’s investigate whether we have sufficient information to closely determine a dating for this.

According to Parker and Dubberstein in their handbook entitled *Babylonian Chronology*, Cyrus’ first year of reign (according to the Babylonian or Persian calendar, which began with the month of Nisan, roughly equivalent to our March/April), lasted from what would be March 24<sup>th</sup> of 338 B.C. to March 11<sup>th</sup> of 337 B.C. on our calendars.<sup>26</sup>



So, Cyrus’ decree would have been given sometime during this year. The next helpful date that the Bible provides for us is found in Ezra 3:1 – but even this date is vague, as it doesn’t clearly identify the year being referenced. This passage reads as follows...

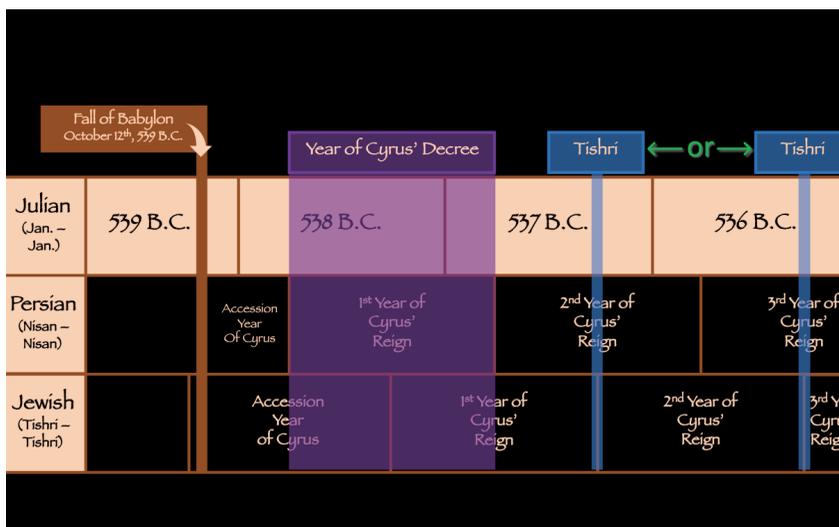
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“And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem.”

-Ezra 3:1

We are told that soon after the captives first returned to Judah, they gathered together during the seventh month, and as Verse 4 tells us, they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles, which took place during the month of Tishri (the seventh month on the Jewish religious calendar, or what would be September/October on our calendars). In other words, they probably arrived sometime that summer, got situated in their cities (as the passage says), and then gathered during the seventh month. But again, it doesn't tell us what year this took place. We basically have two choices...

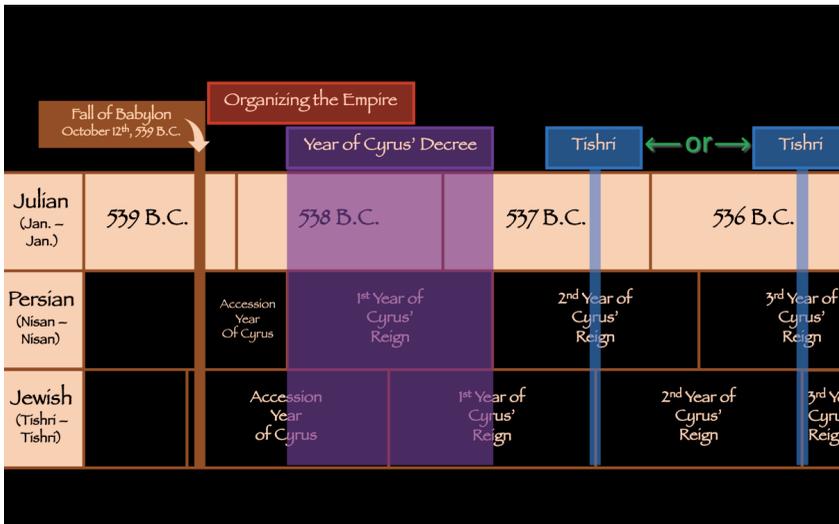
- Is it describing the seventh month of the following year – 537 B.C.?
- Or, is it describing the year after that – 536 B.C.?



Since we're not told, we will need to use critical thinking in order

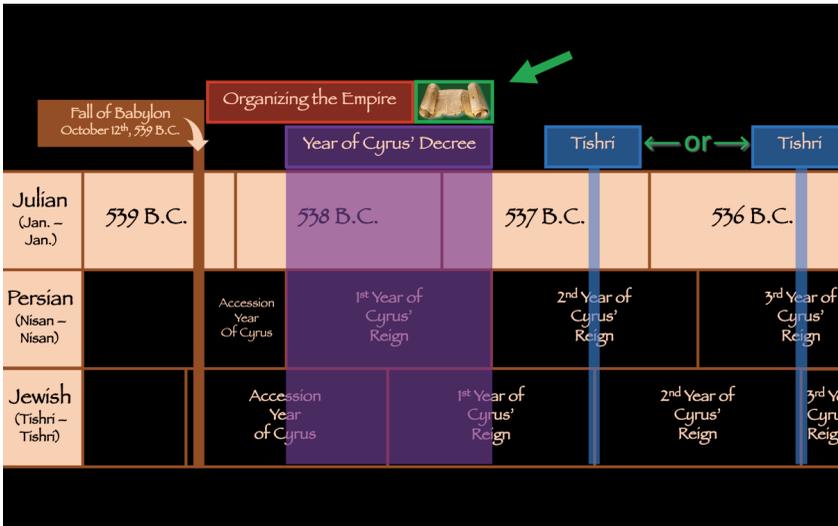
to determine reasonably what is the earliest year and the most probable year this could be referring to.

The first question we need to consider is: when is the most likely time during Cyrus' first year that his decree would have gone forth? Cyrus' first order of business would have been dealing with the organization of his new empire. This would be no simple task. Word would have to go out to the far reaches of this empire and the re-administration of government under the Persians would have to be accomplished. It seems conservative to suggest that this would take at least a solid year from the date the Persians defeated Babylon.



When we depict this year (for organizing the empire) on a chart and overlay it on top of Cyrus' first year, we can see that it would take up most of that year. This leaves the most likely time period for the issuing of Cyrus' decree to be in the window of remaining time during his first year of reign (from what would be very late 538 B.C. to March of 537 B.C. according to our modern reckoning).

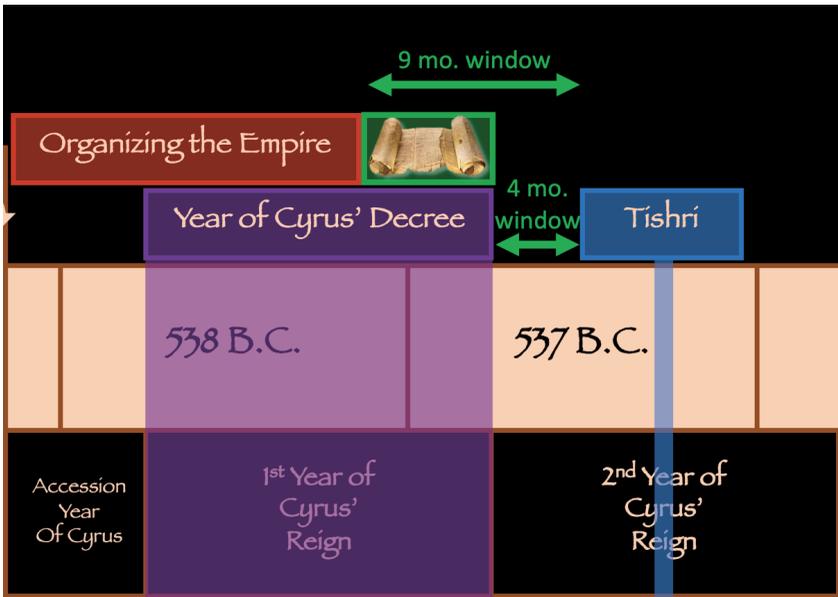
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Since this is the best and most reasonable conclusion we can draw given the evidence, let's see how this would line up with our two date options for the seventh month that Ezra 3:1 is describing.

Let's consider the first option of Tishri, 537 B.C. as being the seventh month that Ezra is referring to in this passage...

If we're assuming the first wave of returnees arrived in the summer (let's say July/August) sometime prior to the seventh month of Tishri (our Sept./Oct.), then that would leave only about a four-to-nine-month window from the time of Cyrus' decree until they were actually back in Judah.



Now, let's just think about this logically for a moment. Once the decree came forth, people could not just get up and go immediately. Those who decided to return would first need to settle their affairs in Babylon before leaving. This could include dealing with legal issues, property issues, business issues, debt issues, family issues, etc., before they could even begin thinking about preparing for a journey. Once these were completed, you would then need to pack your personal belongings and prepare food, water, clothing, equipment, and animals for a journey of this scale. This was no trivial journey.

As the crow flies, the distance from Babylon to Jerusalem is over 500 miles. But that would have required the travelers to venture across the desert and would certainly not have been the route they would've taken. The road most likely taken would have included a long detour northwest along the Euphrates River toward Carchemish and then south toward Jerusalem. This route would have been about 1,000 miles long, and would have been conducted mostly on foot with only the help of pack animals like donkeys and camels.

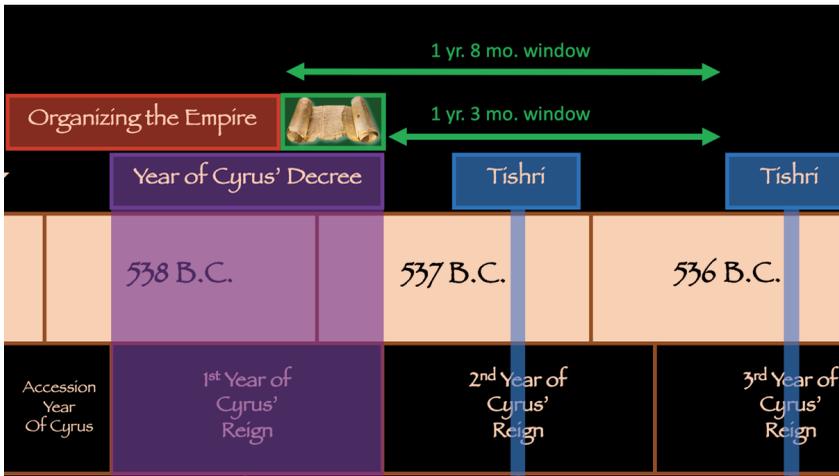
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Furthermore, Ezra details the massive amount of gold and silver items that Cyrus gave them to bring back to Jerusalem for use on the Temple – items that had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar during the invasions. So, aside from their food, water, animals, and personal belongings, they also had to transport a massive amount of heavy precious metal items. Case in point, this would not have been a light and fast-moving caravan.

Ezra Chapter 7 gives us some idea of how long a journey like this would take for even a smaller group that returned later. This chapter tells us that it took Ezra and the Jews that returned with him about four months of travel time to complete this journey from Babylon to Jerusalem.

So, the idea that the returnees could have settled their affairs in Babylon, prepared for a journey of this magnitude, left Babylon, and then arrived and been settled in their cities in Judah within a four-to-nine-month window from the time the decree was issued seems unrealistic. The journey itself would seem to take a minimum of four months. It would seem clear then that the far more reasonable possibility is our second option of Tishri, 536 B.C. (the following year) as being the seventh month being referring to in Ezra 3:1.



This would give the returnees a far more realistic window of about one year and three months to one year and eight months' time to arrive back in Judah in time to be settled in their cities and then gather to celebrate Tabernacles in the seventh month of Tishri.

- Sometime prior to Tishri (our Sept./Oct) of 536 B.C. then, should be our expected end-date for the 70 years period of captivity for the nation.

### **-Calculating The 70 Years Of Captivity For The Nation:**

Now that we have an expected end date as well as three different options for a starting date, let's determine whether any of them actually produce a 70-year duration for the captivity of the nation.

As we begin, there is a very important adjustment we need to make in order to ensure that our calculations will be accurate, as intended by Scripture. This adjustment involves the recognition of using a 360-day year (or what we might call a "prophetic year") rather than a 365.25-day solar year. We have found that this is an important key to unlocking Biblical prophecy in an accurate and consistent way. It was Sir Robert Anderson, a Bible scholar and former high-ranking official of Scotland Yard who first uncovered this key and used it to

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help unlock the mystery of Daniel's 70 Weeks prophecy found in Daniel 9:24-27.<sup>27</sup>

If you would like to learn more about this, please consult the companion study entitled, "The Daniel 9:25 Prophecy: An Exact Timeline For The Arrival Of The Messiah". In that study, we show that the only Biblically sound way to calculate the duration of Daniels 70 weeks of years is by utilizing this key of the 360-day prophetic year. A quick summary of our rationale is that the Bible clearly describes the final week – Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week, what many refer to as the Tribulation – as consisting of 360-day years. We find that the Bible refers to this final 7-year "week" as consisting of two halves each comprised of periods of 42 months or 1260 days. When you do the math, this requires that this final seven-year period is comprised of 30-day months and 360-day years...

$$42 \text{ months} \times 30 \text{ days per month} = 1,260 \text{ days}$$

...or...

$$1,260 \text{ days} / 3.5 \text{ years} = 360 \text{ days per year}$$

Another example of the Biblical use of 360-day years is in Genesis with the Flood of Noah. During the time of the Flood, Noah tells us that a period of 150 days began on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month, and ended on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month (Gen. 7:11, 24 and 8:3-4). This is an exactly 5-month period. When we break this down, we find that each month had exactly 30 days...

$$150 \text{ days} / 5 \text{ months} = 30 \text{ days per month}$$

This means that the duration was being calculated using what would amount to 360-day years...

$$30 \text{ days} \times 12 \text{ months} = 360 \text{ days per year}$$

So, we find that the prophetic year is often used in Biblical occurrences that concern a time duration, especially prophecies. It should be clear

from the examples we just provided that we are not imposing this interpretation onto the text. Rather, we're deriving this interpretation from the text. And so, we conclude that it appears to be Biblically required to utilize a 360-day prophetic year in order to perform our calculations accurately as the Bible intends. With this understanding in mind, let's continue...

In an earlier chapter of our study, we discussed the exact difference between a solar year and what we are calling a prophetic year. We said that a solar year is what we use to calculate years in modern times using our Gregorian calendar. With modern astronomy, one can reckon a solar year very precisely as being on average, 365.24219 days.<sup>28</sup>

We also mentioned that 70 prophetic years is equivalent to 69 solar years, almost to the day. To perform this calculation, we would do the following...

$$70 \text{ years} \times 360 \text{ days/yr.} = 25,200 \text{ days}$$

70 years made up of 360/day years is equal to 25,200 days. We can now convert to solar years by dividing by the average number of days in a solar year.

$$25,200 \text{ days} / 365.24219 \text{ (average \# of days in a solar year)} = 69 \text{ solar years}$$

So, after performing this conversion calculation, we can see that 70 prophetic years is equivalent to 69 solar years.

Let's now apply this to our proposed dates and see if this prophecy could have been fulfilled – and if so, how accurately?

We determined that either of the following three deportation dates (all being very well-accepted historical dates) could act as the potential starting point to the 70 years...

- 605 B.C.
- 597 B.C.

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- 586 B.C.

We then determined that the most reasonable estimate for the ending point, based on the information we have, would be...

- Sometime prior to Tishri (our Sept./Oct) of 536 B.C.

Right off the bat, we can eliminate the 586 and 597 B.C. date options, as these are clearly not even close to fitting. But what about 605 B.C.?

$$605 - 536 = 69 \text{ years!}$$

Remember, 70 prophetic years = 69 solar years. So, from 605 to 536 is exactly 70 prophetic years – an exact fit! And this time, it's an exact fit using prophetic years!

So, we can confidently state that the captivity of the nation (from the first deportation until the return of the people to the land) had a duration of exactly 69 solar years (or what's equivalent to 70 prophetic years on our calendars) ... exactly as Jeremiah foretold!

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  2. -Ibid., pp. 43-45, 231.
  3. -Ibid.
  4. -Ibid., pp. 182-186.
  5. -"ABC 5 (Jerusalem Chronicle)," Sept. 24, 2020, *Livius.org*. (<https://www.livius.org/sources/content/mesopotamian-chronicles-content/abc-5-jerusalem-chronicle/> - Retrieved 2/28/21)
  6. -Parker and Dubberstein, pp. 12, 27.
  7. -Thiele., pp. 182-186.
  8. -"ABC 5 (Jerusalem Chronicle)," Sept. 24, 2020, *Livius.org*. (<https://www.livius.org/sources/content/mesopotamian-chronicles-content/abc-5-jerusalem-chronicle/> - Retrieved 2/28/21)
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  10. -Qtd. in Thiele, pp. 185-186.
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13. -Parker and Dubberstein, pp. 12, 27.
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15. -Finegan, p. 259.
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21. -Jona Lendering, "Ptolemy's Canon," Oct. 12, 2020, *Livius.org*. (<https://www.livius.org/articles/concept/ptolemys-canon/> - Retrieved 2/29/21)
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23. -Finegan, p. 266.
24. -"The Cyrus Cylinder," *The British Museum*. ([https://www.britishmuseum.org/collect/objects/W\\_1880-0617-1941](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collect/objects/W_1880-0617-1941) - Retrieved 2/29/21)
25. -Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, in *Josephus, The Complete Works*, trans. William Whiston, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998, XI, 1.2, p. 343.
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## CHAPTER 5

### 70 YEARS OF DESOLATION FOR THE LAND

**T**he third possible dimension of fulfillment for the 70 years that we will discuss is 70 years of desolation for the land. As you may recall, we noticed that in the third of our three key passages relating to the 70 years (2 Chronicles 36:17-21), that the focus seems to be the desolation of the land of Judah. The context of this passage clearly has in mind the 3<sup>rd</sup> invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, in which Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed, and for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time, Jews were taken into Babylonian exile. The passage seems to imply that God sent this judgment in order for the desolation of the land to occur, allowing the land to then fulfill a 70-year sabbath rest. We will discuss exactly what this means in this chapter. Let's start by rereading this passage...

“Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees (the Babylonians), who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.

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.

And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:

To fulfil 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 fulfil threescore and ten years.”

-2 Chronicles 36:17-21

As we mentioned earlier in our study, this passage, unlike the first two 70-years passages, is not a prophecy. Instead this is a historical recording (or Chronicle, hence the name of the book) of what happened. It of course, was recorded after the events happened. But this important passage sheds light on the third potential dimension of fulfillment related to the concept of “70 years”.

Like we mentioned, the backdrop of this passage concerns the 3<sup>rd</sup> invasion by Nebuchadnezzar in which the Babylonians sieged and then ultimately destroyed Jerusalem, taking more of its people into captivity – with these events climaxing in 586 B.C. This passage in 2 Chronicles, although it also mentions the captivity, seems to primarily focus on 70 years (or threescore and ten years) concerning a period of desolation of the land itself, during which it “rested” in order to fulfill a sabbath rest. So, although the contextual backdrop in the passage is the siege of Jerusalem that climaxed in 586 B.C., that event seems to be portrayed as simply a catalyst intended to bring about a more ultimate purpose – a 70-year period of rest for the land itself.

As we go through the Scriptural evidence, it will become clear that this final interpretation (of 70 years as being a period of desolation for the land) will turn out to be the strongest of our three options. However, that doesn’t necessarily mean that the first two are illegitimate interpretations. Like we said at the outset, Bible prophecy often has multiple layers of application or fulfillment. But as we will demonstrate, this third option seems to be not only the most accurate from a

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duration perspective, but also the most Biblically sound. In fact, we will find that Scripture actually provides us with what clearly seem to be the beginning and ending points – and they definitely are linked to 70 years of desolation for the land!

The first task at hand is to better understand what this sabbath rest for the land means and where this idea originates from. As eluded to earlier in our study, this concept is first detailed in Leviticus Chapter 25. Sabbath (one of the few Hebrew words that have made it into the English language) literally means “to rest” or “to cease” (shabbath – Strong’s #H7673).<sup>1</sup>

The usage of the word in our present context is very similar to the commonly-understood meaning of a day of rest from labor every seventh day. But here, instead of a day, it refers to a year-long period of rest for the land from planting and harvesting, which was to be observed every seventh year in Israel. The instruction for this law was given to the children of Israel before they crossed over into Canaan after their exodus from Egypt. Let’s see this in Leviticus 25...

“And the Lord spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying,

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the Lord.

Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;

But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.

That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land.”

-Leviticus 25:1-5

Once you understand this commandment for Israel, given all the way back at the beginning of their formation as a nation, you can

immediately understand the words of our present passage in 2 Chronicles 36...

“And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:

To fulfil 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 fulfil threescore and ten years.”

-2 Chronicles 36:20-21

The Chronicler was implying that Israel apparently had not observed this sabbath rest for the land over a period of about 490 years, and God in effect, was saying, “you owe me 70!” God forced these years of rest upon the land by removing the people from the land and exiling them to a foreign land.

But this whole idea of an agricultural rest for the land is an essential clue for determining the true Biblical beginning and ending points related to the 70 years. It helps us understand that we’re first searching for the point in Israel’s history in which they were forced to cease their agricultural labors on the land, just prior to their exile into Babylon. Secondly, we are then looking for a time after their return from Babylon when God begins to bless the land again to yield its crops. So then, can we confidently identify these beginning and ending points in the Biblical record? The answer is yes!

Let’s start by identifying the beginning point. Like we said, it’s obvious that the rest for the land had a connection with the removal of the people from the land (in the Babylonian captivity). Obviously, with the people deported, the cessation of agricultural cultivation would result in the land being able to begin it’s sabbath rest.

But when we look closer at the events surrounding their removal, it would seem clear that this cessation actually begins just prior to the final deportation that culminated with Jerusalem’s destruction in 586 B.C. Specifically, it would seem to start with the beginning of this final siege by Nebuchadnezzar. The purpose of a siege, of course, is to

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surround an enemy city with your army to prevent them from being able to bring in supplies such as food and water – ultimately forcing them to either leave their fortifications to come and fight out in the open, or be starved to the point of death or surrender. In other words, a siege implies that the Jews who were barricaded within the walls of Jerusalem would certainly not be able to plant or harvest the land while this siege was ongoing. Cultivation would cease immediately once the siege began.

This interpretation is supported by Biblical precedent. In 701 B.C., when Assyria laid siege against Judah, the prophet Isaiah basically prophesied that there would be a forced Sabbath on the land (2 Kings 19:29-30). That is, he foretold that God was going to force the land to lie fallow by allowing the Assyrians to lay siege against the city, preventing the Israelites from cultivating crops.

Further support for the siege of Jerusalem being the beginning point of the 70 years of rest for the land concerns a prophecy given by Ezekiel – one that is intimately tied to Jeremiah's 70 years. Ezekiel is told to lie on his side and face a tile depicting Jerusalem for 390 and then 40 days. As odd as this scene may have been to the Jews, Ezekiel was told it was symbolic of the coming siege and the destruction of Jerusalem. Ezekiel is then told that the number of days represented the years of iniquity of both Israel and Judah respectively. But we are also given an important clue that offers support for our interpretation. We are told that during the siege, God would “break the staff of bread in Jerusalem,” a clear reference to the inability of Israel to cultivate food from the land during the time of the siege.

“Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment:

That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity.”

-Ezekiel 4:16-16

So, the siege we're looking at as being the beginning point of the

desolation/rest for the land seems to find support in this prophecy by Ezekiel, in which God basically promises that the land would begin to rest from cultivation while under this siege. But this interpretation is even further anchored by the fact that God actually told Ezekiel to record the very day that Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians began the siege! This is recorded in Ezekiel Chapter 24...

“Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,

Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day.”

-Ezekiel 24:1-2

It’s obvious that this was a very significant day according to God – a day that should be recorded and remembered. It’s not often in the Bible that God does this – and so when He does, we need to take notice. He is giving us a strong clue that this day is initiating a significant period – in this case, the 70-year period of judgment in which God would enforce the sabbaths of the land that were owed to Him.

Now that we’ve identified our expected beginning point for the 70 years, how accurately can we date it? It turns out that we can date this event with a high degree of accuracy! In the passage we just read (in Ezekiel 24), it makes reference to “the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month.” We’re told that this is the day Nebuchadnezzar’s siege began. This “ninth year” refers to the ninth year of the reign of Zedekiah, the final king of Judah. We find this information even more clearly recorded in 2 Kings Chapters 24-25...

“Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem and

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Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.

And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.”

-2 Kings 24:18-20 and 25:1-2

So, in Zedekiah's ninth regnal year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar came against Judah with his army and laid siege against the city of Jerusalem. This beginning date of the siege equates to January 15<sup>th</sup>, of the year 588 B.C. on our modern calendar.<sup>2 3</sup>

As the passage said, the siege continued until the 11<sup>th</sup> year of Zedekiah, until at last, the famine became unbearable and a breach was made into the city. Zedekiah and a group of his men fled the city by night but were captured in the plains of Jericho. Zedekiah's sons were slain in front of him and he was then blinded and taken to Babylon until the day of his death (2 Kings 25:3-7, Jeremiah 52:5-11).

Like we mentioned earlier, this final fall of Jerusalem was probably July 18<sup>th</sup>, 586 B.C. on our calendars. Shortly after that, Nebuzaradan, Nebuchadnezzar's captain, came to Jerusalem, burned the Temple, and finished the demolition of the city, carrying away captives and treasures.

But again, the date we are concerned with for the beginning point of the 70-years of rest for the land is the date this siege began, forcing the Jews to neglect their crops and let their land lie fallow. As we just said, this date is January 15<sup>th</sup>, 588 B.C.

- So, the beginning point for the 70 years of desolation for the land is January 15<sup>th</sup>, 588 B.C.

Let's now begin to discuss the ending point...

Like we mentioned earlier, if the desolation of the land began with the cessation of agricultural cultivation, then in order to identify the ending point of this duration, we should look for a time after their return from Babylon when God begins to bless the land again to yield its fruit. Incredibly, just as the beginning point was clearly identified by God as a significant day to the prophet Ezekiel, the ending point was also identified by God to the prophet Haggai!

Keep in mind, our context has now jumped forward to the return of the Jews to the land following the captivity in Babylon. They had been back in the land for a number of years now, but as we will see, the land is still undergoing its period of desolation/rest. First, God (through the inspiration of Haggai) encourages the people to continue the rebuilding of the Temple which had begun some years earlier. Shortly after, He then informs the people (again through Haggai) that He will once again begin to bless the land – whereas in the past, He had hindered the agricultural work of their hands. We see this recorded in Haggai Chapter 2...

“In the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,

...

I smote you with blasting and with mildew and with hail in all the labours of your hands; yet ye turned not to me, saith the Lord.

Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord’s temple was laid, consider it.

Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you.”

-Haggai 2:10, 17-19

So, this date recorded in Haggai (like the one recorded in Ezekiel), seems to be extremely significant, for the Lord tells the prophet to pay special attention to it (“consider now from this day and upward”). It is here that God informs the people that He will once again begin to

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bless the land (specifically related to agriculture), whereas in the past, He had hindered the it (compare Verses 17 and 19). In Verse 17, God talks about hindering their cultivation of crops through harsh climate and weather conditions. In other words, it seems that God not only removed the people from the land, but even during their exile and then even for a number of years after their return, the land's productivity was thwarted... until now! In Verse 19, we see that God promises to reverse this pattern of hindrance and begin to bless the fruit of the land once again. God mentions seed being in the barn. He says that grapes, figs, pomegranates, and olives (the main crops the land of Israel is known for) will again begin to be blessed.

And so, it is clear that God was hindering the agriculture of the land during this period of time, forcing it to lie desolate in order to fulfill the sabbaths of rest that Israel had ignored for so long. Now, at the end of this period, God began to reverse that desolation, allowing the land to once again be blessed. The fact that God Himself points out both of these dates is what makes this final interpretation all the more compelling. But can we confidently assign a historical date to this ending point? Again, the answer is yes!

In Verse 10 of Haggai 2, we were told the date...“in the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius.” What does this equate to, then, on our modern calendar? The 2<sup>nd</sup> regnal year of Darius I was 520 B.C., and the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month (the 24<sup>th</sup> of Kislev) would equate to December 18<sup>th</sup> of 520 B.C. on our modern calendar.<sup>4 5</sup>

- So, the ending point for the 70 years of desolation for the land is December 18<sup>th</sup>, 520 B.C.

Then, almost two months later, the next-to-last reference to Jeremiah's 70 years is given. This time, it's through the prophet Zechariah that God issues His message. An angel of the Lord visits Zechariah and questions the Lord as to how long before He will once again show mercy on Jerusalem and Judah on whom He had shown indignation over the past 70 years! Let's read this passage...

“Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet, saying,

I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white.

Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will shew thee what these be.

And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.

And they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.

Then the angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?”

-Zechariah 1:7-12

The dating of this would be February 15<sup>th</sup>, 519 B.C. – only two months after the word of the Lord marking the ending point had come to Haggai.<sup>6</sup>

So, this prophecy provides a unique “book-end” and corroboration that the ending point described in Haggai is the correct date. This passage records the angel referring back to a recently completed 70-year period (“against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten – or 70 – years”).

Following this, the final reference to the termination of Jeremiah’s 70 years is found again in the prophecies of Zechariah, this time almost two years later. Here, the prophet again refers to the 70 years as a past event – a period that was no longer in effect.

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“And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, that the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chisleu;

...

Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?”

-Zechariah 7:1 and 5

So, we have in this passage, a final corroboration that the ending point of Jeremiah's 70 years must have occurred before this date. This again supports our identification of the ending point as being Haggai's prophecy that God will once again begin to bless the land.

### **-Calculating The 70 Years Of Desolation For The Land:**

Now that we've identified our beginning and ending points, let's determine the accuracy of this period of the desolation of the land.

As we begin, let's again keep in mind the important key we've discussed throughout this study. This essential key is the recognition of using a 360-day year (or what we might call a “prophetic year”) rather than a 365.25-day solar year. We have found that this is an important key to unlocking Biblical prophecy in an accurate and consistent way.

In an earlier chapter of our study, we discussed the exact difference between a solar year and what we are calling a prophetic year. We said that a solar year is what we use to calculate years in modern times using our Gregorian calendar. With modern astronomy, one can reckon a solar year very precisely as being on average, 365.24219 days.<sup>7</sup>

We also mentioned that 70 prophetic years is equivalent to 69 solar years, almost to the day.

-Review:

Step #1:

$$70 \text{ years} \times 360 \text{ days/yr.} = 25,200 \text{ days}$$

Step #2:

$$25,200 \text{ days} / 365.24219 \text{ (the average \# of days in a solar yr.)} = 69 \text{ solar yrs.}$$

So, our expected number of days in this 70-prophetic-year duration is 25,200 (or 69 solar years almost to-the-day on our calendar). With this necessary key in mind, let's now apply this to our proposed beginning and ending dates and see just how accurately this prophecy was fulfilled! Although there is no reason to expect that this prophecy should be fulfilled to the exact day (as the prophecy was not given in days, but rather years), we will do a calculation exercise that will not only provide us with an easy way of determining this duration, but will also provide with us a great degree of precision. This exercise will involve subtracting Julian days.

What are Julian days? Astronomers often need to know the difference between two dates, or to be able to calculate the next date of a periodic event. For events that are quite far from one another, such as comet appearances, the regular calendar is not well suited, due to the different number of days in months and leap years, as well as calendar reforms (Julian/Gregorian) and so on.

Thus, Joseph Justus Scaliger, a French astronomer (1540 - 1609) invented Julian dates or Julian days, named after his father, Julius Scaliger. And, just in case the thought occurred to you, it's not about the Julian calendar at all. Julian days each have an incremental number assigned to them, with each day being incremented by one. So, if you know the Julian day number for one date and the Julian day number for another, you can simply subtract one from another and find the difference.

The start of Julian days, called the start of the Julian era, is defined as noon of January, 1<sup>st</sup>, 4713 B.C. in the Julian calendar. With this date, all known historical astronomical observations have positive

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Julian day numbers, so all calculations are simple additions and subtractions.<sup>8</sup> You will see what we mean as we go along...

So, we said that our beginning point was the day the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem began, forcing the land to rest from cultivation. This day – which God specifically told Ezekiel to record – was probably January 15<sup>th</sup>, 588 B.C. This is Julian day 1506671.<sup>9</sup>

And we said that our ending point was the day God issued a prophecy through Haggai, declaring that beginning on that day, He would once again begin to bless the fruit of the land. This day – which God specifically told Haggai to record – was probably December 18<sup>th</sup>, 520 B.C. This is Julian day 1531845.<sup>10</sup>

So, this calculation only requires simple subtraction!

$$1,531,845 - 1,506,671 = \underline{25,174}$$

## Julian Day and Civil Date Calculator

Jan	15	588	B.C.	is a	Saturday
whose Julian Day Number is					1506671
Calendar: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Auto (Julian/Gregorian) <input type="radio"/> Julian Only					
(Edit the following field for interval calculations.)					
is followed					25174
days later by					
Dec	18	520	B.C.	is a	Monday
whose Julian Day Number is					1531845
Calendar: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Auto (Julian/Gregorian) <input type="radio"/> Julian Only					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You must have JavaScript enabled in your browser for this calculator to work. Requires Netscape 3.0 or Internet Explorer 3.0 or later for correct operation.</li> <li>2. All fields are editable. Change civil date to calculate Julian Day Number and day-of-week, or vice versa.</li> <li>3. After changing a text box, click outside of the calculator, or press tab, to update all other data. (Don't press return.)</li> <li>4. In Auto mode, civil calendar changes from Julian to Gregorian between October 5/16, 1582. For Julian civil dates after that date, as in England and colonies until 1753, select Julian Only.</li> </ol>					

*-<https://core2.gsfc.nasa.gov/time/julian.html> Copyright (C) 1998 by Numerical Recipes Software. Used with permission.*

Like we've said, 70 prophetic years is equivalent to 25,200 days. And as we've just demonstrated, the duration of time that the desolation of the land lasted, was 25,174 days – almost exactly to-the-day! The difference is only about a month, and so if any of the historical dates we used are off by even a month, this prophecy could actually be found to be fulfilled to the exact day! But we don't need that to be the case. As you can see, this 70 prophetic-year period was fulfilled with incredible accuracy. The fulfillment not only fell within the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic year from the starting point, but we can calculate it almost to-the-day using just our knowledge of ancient history!

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And so, we can confidently state that the desolation of the land (beginning with the cessation of agricultural activity when the final siege of Jerusalem began and ending with the return of God's blessing upon the land) had a duration of exactly 70 prophetic years (or what's equivalent to 69 solar years on our calendars) ... exactly as Jeremiah foretold!

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1. -*Strong's Concordance*, entry "7673, shabath," *BibleHub.com*. (<https://biblehub.com/hebrew/7673.htm> - Retrieved 3/10/21)
  2. -Thiele, p. 189.
  3. -Finegan, p. 259.
  4. -Andrew Steinmann, "From Abraham To Paul: A Biblical Chronology," Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011, p. 192.
  5. -Parker and Dubberstein, p. 30.
  6. -Steinmann, p. 192.
  7. -Hocken, Vigdis, "How Long Is a Tropical Year / Solar Year?" *TimeAndDate.com*. (<https://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/tropical-year.html> - Retrieved 8/10/18)
  8. -Wikipedia contributors, "Julian day," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian\\_day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_day) - Retrieved 3/05/21)
  9. -"Julian Day and Civil Date Calculator," *NASA.gov*. (<https://core2.gsfc.nasa.gov/time/julian.html> - Retrieved 3/05/21)
  10. -Ibid.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

**A**s we bring our study of Jeremiah's 70 years prophecy to a close, let's recognize the incredible implications that this prophecy brings to light. As we showed, this 70-years prophecy may be understood in three possible dimensions of fulfillment:

- 70 years of Babylonian domination
- 70 years of captivity for the nation
- 70 years of desolation for the land

We demonstrated that with slightly varying levels of exactness, all three of these appear to provably act as fulfillments for the 70-years prophecy given to Jeremiah. However, it seems clear that the most Biblically sound and most accurate of the three is the third and final fulfillment option we discussed – the 70 years of desolation for the land. This option allowed for our calculation to use prophetic years, which we believe is the Biblically correct method to determine the duration we should expect to see on our modern calendars. Scripture also provided clearly delineated beginning and ending points – both being dates specified by God Himself to the prophets.

But the second of the three fulfillment options was also very accu-

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rate, also allowing our calculation to be performed using prophetic years. But because we don't have sufficient information to pinpoint the beginning and ending points to the exact month or day, our calculation was a bit less precise than the third option. Of course, these prophecies were given by God using the measure of years – not months or days or nanoseconds. And so, we should not necessarily expect nor require the fulfillments to be more precise than the parameters the Bibles issued in the original prophecy. We should only expect that the ending point fall somewhere within the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic year from the beginning point. The second option certainly seems to do that, and the third option absolutely does – with the third one actually being 70 prophetic years almost to-the-day.

The first option was a bit less precise when using the prophetic year, but was exactly 70-years if using solar years. Of course, it's always possible that some of our modern understandings of ancient dates are not exact, which could potentially allow for precise 70-prophetic-year fulfillments for all three of these. However, they are all close enough that the evidence demands we see them as a pattern and not as accidental or random chance. At any rate, we trust that you'll come to your own conclusions about this in light of the information we provided!

But whether you consider all three to be different dimensions of fulfillment with different levels of accuracy, or if you just accept one or two of them as being the true fulfillments, what we can be sure of is that this 70-years prophecy was absolutely fulfilled with tremendous precision! It is this level of precision that forces us to recognize the divine nature of the true Author behind Scripture. It demonstrates to us that the Bible could not have been inspired by man.

In order to anticipate history in advance, this Author, of logical necessity, must exist outside of our time domain. Anticipating history in advance is a characteristic unique to God, as He dwells outside of time itself, allowing Him to see the end from the beginning. But further yet, it is clear from our study that He not only knows the future, but that He holds the future in His hand. In other words, God is not just a passive observer, but is actively involved in the events of

history, bringing all things to pass according to His masterplan for the ages.

The unfortunate thing about this prophecy is that the multi-dimensional fulfillments discussed are largely unknown to most Christians. Despite the precision with which they fulfill the words of the Lord to Jeremiah, this is a subject rarely discussed or taught in most churches. When it is mentioned, there is normally very little effort given to actually identifying the beginning and ending points as well as the corresponding dates from ancient history. This is especially true of the third fulfillment option. It is rare that you come across a Christian who is aware that the beginning and ending points of the 70 years of the desolation of the land are actually recorded in the Bible and are actually identified by God to the prophets!

So, when we do dig deeply into this, we're able to appreciate the amazingly precise fulfillments hidden just below the surface. There are many of these incredible prophecies in the Bible just waiting to be appreciated by us – the readers!

And so, our hope is that the exploration of Scripture and ancient history that we undertook in this study will help galvanize your understanding of who God is and just how astonishing and accurate His Word is. It is evidence that demonstrates His reality as the true Author from outside time, and conveys to us just how involved He is in the lives of men and the history of mankind!

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