

Chronology 316: Timeline of Biblical World History



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Period Five: The Destruction of the Temple to the Decree of Daniel 9 (Part 4)

A Purely Biblical Calculation: Identifying the Decree of Daniel 9:25 with the Decree of Cyrus

This section of our study will offer something that neither our previous study nor Warner's previous study included. In those studies, we ended up concluding that conventional chronologies should not be used as the final arbiter of the history of this period. However, scriptural statements that directly informed us about the time span between the destruction of the Babylonian Temple and the decree of Daniel 9:25 eluded us. As a result, both our previous study and Warner's previous study attempted to calculate the duration of this period through less direct means.

In his study, Warner pointed out that Daniel's prophetic timetable contained an apparent reference to the sabbatical and jubilee cycles of Leviticus 25. Likewise, Warner previously pointed toward Ezekiel 40:1 which he took to indicate the occurrence of a jubilee year in the 14th year after the Temple's destruction. In our previous chronology studies these considerations were used alongside discussions of the lifespan and ages of important biblical figures (like Ezra) who lived during this period in order to help us indirectly calculate the amount of time contained in this period.

However, in his current chronology series Warner offers an insightful biblical observation that allows us to calculate the timeframe of this period much more directly using only scriptural data. That observation involves the identification of Daniel 9:25's decree. To understand the remarkable insight Warner has discovered we will revisit Daniel 9:24-25.

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. **25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.** **26** And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. **27** And he shall confirm the covenant

with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

We have already seen that Daniel 9:25 specifies a prophetic timetable that spans from the issuing of a command to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah. Earlier in our study we discussed three possible options for identifying that decree. The first was the decree given to Ezra by Artaxerxes I in his 7th year. The second option was the letter of authorization given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes I in his 20th year. And the third option was the decree issued by Cyrus the Great when he first took control of the Babylonian Empire.

In our previous study we identified the decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra as the decree mentioned in Daniel 9:25. In his previous study, Warner alternatively used Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah in his 20th year as the decree mentioned in Daniel 9:25.

The command to rebuild Jerusalem, which begins the 69 Sabbatical cycles until Christ, was in the 20th year of Artaxerxes. 10 There must be at least 2 Jubilee cycles (98 years) to account for the remainder of the Babylonian captivity (45 years), the reigns of Cyrus, Darius, Ahasuerus, and the first 20 years of Artaxerxes. Adding two Jubilee cycles (98 years) to the date of Ezekiel's vision in the 18th Jubilee (3419AM), places the 20th Jubilee in the year 3517AM. **This is the year Nehemiah was given the command to rebuild the city and walls of Jerusalem, and is therefore the beginning of Daniel's 70 Sabbatical cycles' prophecy.** – The Coming Millennial Sabbath – Part II, Tim Warner, Copyright © July, 2009, answersinrevelation.org

Below, in his current study, Warner explains his insight which simply involves identifying the decree of Cyrus with the decree of Daniel 9:25.

As stated above, **the Bible does not give definite chronological data for the period from the decree of Cyrus ending the Babylonian captivity until the reign of Artaxerxes.** It does give the prophecy of Daniel's 70 weeks, which can only be used to determine the year of the crucifixion if one knows the exact year the 70 weeks prophecy begins. **This author is convinced that since God took the trouble to record and preserve in His Word complete chronologies from creation until the end of the Babylonian captivity, and He provided a precise prophetic chronology of "weeks" of years until the cutting off of the Messiah,** He did not fail to provide absolutely everything we need for a complete biblical chronology, without the need to supplement the data with unreliable secular sources. In other words, **there is no gap between these two events. The end of the Babylonian exile and the beginning of the 70 weeks of Daniel 9 coincide. The problem of missing data from Cyrus to Artaxerxes, which has plagued virtually all previous attempts to arrive at a purely biblical chronology, is the result of linking the start of Daniel's weeks to the wrong decree of the wrong Persian king. The problem of missing data only exists if we attach the start of**

Daniel's weeks to any decree recorded in Ezra – Nehemiah apart from the very first one, that of Cyrus the Great. If we use this decree, there is no missing data to fill, because Scripture states plainly that Cyrus' decree occurred at the end of the 70 years captivity, as recorded by Jeremiah! If our underlying assumption that God gave us all the data we need to construct a complete chronology is correct, **then this decree of Cyrus must be the start of the 70 weeks of Daniel, because it is the only decree that fits the criteria and can be absolutely dated from the Biblical data alone.** – Tim Warner, Introduction to a Standard Biblical Chronology, www.120jubilees.org

The insight Warner offers in his current chronology study points not to Artaxerxes at all, but instead toward Cyrus' decree as the decree mentioned in Daniel 9:25. The exegetical basis Warner offers for this conclusion is remarkably strong. As Warner explains in the audio file of this current chronology study, the key to identifying the decree of Daniel 9:25 is found just two verses earlier in Daniel 9:23. Below is the text of Daniel 9:23-25 followed by Warner's explanation of the relevance of verse 23.

Daniel 9:23 At the beginning of thy supplications **the commandment (01697) came forth (03318)**, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. 24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, *that* from **the going forth (04161) of the commandment (01697)** to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Gabriel appeared after Daniel began to fast and pray. Note carefully Gabriel's announcement to Daniel... Virtually all commentators assume that **“the word” which was “issued” at the beginning of Daniel's fasting and prayer** referred to some command given to the angel to visit Daniel. Yet, **the same words are used in reference to the issuing of the “word” to rebuild Jerusalem.** In other words, Gabriel was dispatched to inform Daniel that Cyrus had issued the decree already, and that Daniel could start counting down the 70 weeks from the first day of his fast! – Tim Warner, Introduction to a Standard Biblical Chronology, www.120jubilees.org

As Warner explains above, an exegesis of Daniel 9:23-25 supports the conclusion that the commandment (01697) that went forth in verse 23 is the same as the commandment (01697) that had gone forth in verse 25. It makes more sense textually to have Gabriel identify for Daniel the decree that began the 70 weeks than for Gabriel to simply inform Daniel that God told him to go to Daniel as soon as Daniel started praying and fasting. After all, the immediacy of Gabriel's appearance would have been apparent to Daniel who reports in verse 21 that Gabriel showed up while he was still praying. Furthermore, it would seem redundant for verse 23 to iterate that Gabriel was immediately sent to Daniel

when Daniel first began to pray when verse 21 has already stated this fact adequately enough.

Daniel 9:21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

For these reasons, newer translations of the bible commonly word Daniel 9:23 so as to detach Gabriel's coming to Daniel from "the command" going out.

Daniel 9:23 At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell [you], for you [are] greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: - NKJV

Daniel 9:23 At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision. – NASB

Even English translations demonstrate the correspondence between the commands mentioned in verses 23 and 25. Both verses mention a "commandment." Verse 23 discusses a commandment that came forth. And verse 25 mentions a commandment "going forth."

In the Hebrew, the language is likewise just as similar. The same Hebrew word, translated as "commandment," is used in both verse 23 and verse 25.

01697 abar

from 01696; n m; {See TWOT on 399 @@ "399a"}

AV- **word 807**, thing 231, matter 63, acts 51, chronicles 38, saying 25, **commandment 20**, misc 204; 1439

1) **speech, word**, speaking, thing

1a) speech

1b) saying, utterance

1c) word, words

1d) business, occupation, acts, matter, case, something, manner (by extension)

Furthermore, the Hebrew words used in these two verses both mean "going out" or "going forth."

03318 yatsa'

a primitive root; v; {See TWOT on 893}

AV- out 518, forth 411, bring 24, come 24, proceed 16, go 13, depart 10, misc 53; 1069

1) **to go out, come out**, exit, **go forth**

1a) (Qal)

1a1) **to go or come out or forth**, depart

1a2) **to go forth** (to a place)

1a3) to go forward, proceed to (to or toward something)

1a4) to come or go forth (with purpose or for result)

1a5) to come out of

1b) (Hiphil)

1b1) to cause to go or come out, bring out, lead out

1b2) to bring out of

1b3) to lead out

1b4) to deliver

1c) (Hophal) to be brought out or forth

04161 **mowtsa'** or **motsa'**

from 03318; n m; {See TWOT on 893 @@ "893c"}

AV-**go out 7, go forth 5**, spring 3, brought 2, watersprings + 04325 2, bud 1, east 1, outgoings 1, proceeded 1, proceedeth 1, vein 1, come out 1, watercourse 1; 27

1) **act or place of going out or forth, issue**, export, source, spring

1a) **a going forth**

1a1) rising (sun), going forth of a command

1a2) goings forth, those going forth

1a3) way out, exit

1b) that which goes forth

1b1) utterance

1b2) export

1c) place of going forth

1c1) source or spring (of water)

1c2) place of departure

1c3) east (of sun)

1c4) mine (of silver)

Verse 23 uses the verb “yatsa” (03318) meaning “to go out” or “go forth” while verse 25 uses the noun “motsa” (04161) which means “a going forth” or “a going out.” This means that the text is not necessitating a second commandment going forth so that in verse 23 one commandment goes forth and in verse 25 another commandment goes forth. Rather verse 23 informs us that a commandment went forth as Daniel began his supplications. And verse 25 explains that from the going forth of the commandment would be 69 weeks.

The language and the clear parallels between verse 23 and verse 25 give us good reason to consider the conclusion that both verses are discussing the same commandment. In verse 23, Gabriel informs Daniel that at the beginning of Daniel’s supplications the commandment went forth. And in verse 25, Gabriel explains to Daniel that from the going forth of that commandment would be 69 weeks.

If this is the case and verse 25’s commandment is the same commandment that went forth in verse 23 at the beginning of Daniel’s supplications, then we simply need to determine when Daniel’s supplications began in order to identify the starting point of the prophetic timetable. Daniel 9:1-4 informs us that Daniel’s supplications began in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans.

Daniel 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. 3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: 4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

Daniel provides informative details to help us understand how Darius the Mede relates to the reign of Cyrus. First, Daniel 1 which recounts Daniel's coming to Babylon ends in the third year of Jehoiakim when Nebuchadnezzar exiled the nobles of Judah.

Daniel 1:1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. 2 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. 3 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;

Daniel 1 ends in verse 21 with the statement that Daniel continued from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar until the first year of Cyrus.

Daniel 1:18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. 20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm. 21 And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus.

In this way we see that the Book of Daniel is concerned with Daniel's life and prophetic work from the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian to the reign of Cyrus. Daniel 5 records the conquest of the Babylonian Empire by the Persians.

Daniel 5:28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. 30 **In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. 31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.**

According to Daniel 5, Darius the Mede is the man who actually conducted the conquest of the city of Babylon for the Persians. Daniel 6 immediately recounts the story of Daniel and the lion's den which took place after Darius took over the city of Babylon. Daniel 6 ends with the statement that Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Daniel 6:28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

This biblical statement fits very well with information we looked at during our study of the chronology of this period and non-biblical historical sources. When Cyrus the Great took over the Babylonian Empire, he himself was not present when the city of Babylon was taken. As was the custom of Babylonian and Persian rulers, vice-regents or co-rulers were often appointed to remain in various important or capital cities and rule over them on behalf of the king. In this case, Cyrus is the king of the Persians and he appoints Darius the Mede to remain in the city of Babylon and rule it. Therefore, Daniel 6:28 seems to report that the reign of Darius the Mede and the reign of Cyrus the Persian were contemporaneous with one another. The same conclusion would fit well with historical and scriptural data regarding Cyrus' age at the time of the conquest of Babylon as well as linguistic occurrences in the Septuagint which could indicate that Darius and Cyrus were two different names or titles for the same person.

The conclusion that the first year of Darius is equivalent to the first year of Cyrus is further supported by Daniel 9:1 and Daniel 10:1. As we have seen Daniel 9:1 reports on events which took place in the first year of Darius the Mede.

Daniel 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

Notice that Daniel does not credit Darius the Mede as the king of the Medes or as king of the Persians. Rather, Darius the Mede is king over the realm of the Chaldeans. This language would support the idea that Darius was appointed by Cyrus to rule the city of Babylon itself while Cyrus was ruler of the entire Medo-Persian Empire with Darius acting as his designated officer over the newly conquered realm of the Chaldeans.

Daniel 10:1 begins with events that took place in the third year of Cyrus.

Daniel 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

Notice that the vision of Daniel 10 continues uninterrupted into Daniel 11. Both Daniel 10:21 and 11:2 are discussing the transition of dominion from the Persians to the Greeks. In Daniel 10:20-21, Gabriel discusses his struggle with the prince of Persia and how Michael alone assisted him. The verse which immediately

follows is verse 1 of chapter 11 where Gabriel seems to indicate that he (Gabriel) likewise assisted Michael.

Daniel 10:20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. 21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince. 11:1 Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. 2 And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

The significance of these passages, however, is seen in the interchangeability of the reigns of Darius and Cyrus. Chapter 6:28 refers to the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus side by side one another. Chapter 9:1 refers to the first year of Darius. Chapter 10:1 refers to the third year of Cyrus. And Chapter 11:1 refers again to the first year of Darius.

When we consider the timing of Gabriel's struggles with these opposing angelic princes we find further corroboration of the theory that the reign of Darius the Medes corresponded with that of Cyrus. Daniel 10:1-12 recount how during the third year of Cyrus, Daniel fasted and prayed for three weeks and was then visited by Gabriel who came to inform Daniel about future events. When Gabriel arrives he strengthens Daniel and then proceeds to give Daniel understanding of future events (v. 10-12).

Daniel 10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision. 2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. 3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. 4 And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; 5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: 6 His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. 7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. 9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. 10 And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands. 11 And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had

spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. 12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

We find the same descriptions in Daniel 9. In Daniel 9, Daniel begins fasting and praying. As a result Gabriel comes to Daniel, strengthens him, and gives him understanding of future events.

Daniel 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. **3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: 4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;...20 And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; 21 Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.**

There are several parallels between these two passages. First, Daniel is praying and fasting. Second, Gabriel comes to Daniel to give him understanding about future events.

One difference is that in Daniel 9 Gabriel arrives as soon as Daniel starts his prayer while in Daniel 10 Gabriel is delayed three weeks due to opposition from the angelic prince of Persia. It is apparent from chapter 10 that Gabriel feels the need to explain to Daniel the reason why this time it took him three weeks to arrive with the prophetic message when the last time (in chapter 9) he arrived immediately. Included in Gabriel's explanation is the fact that Michael assisted him in overcoming the prince of Persia which had prevented Gabriel from coming to Daniel with the message (v. 21). Gabriel's declaration of the prophetic message begins in Daniel 11:2. Daniel 11:1 is the conclusion of Gabriel's discussion of why he was delayed.

Gabriel's concluding remark is intended to point toward the first year of Darius the Mede when Gabriel (still speaking in the first person) states that he (Gabriel) stood to confirm and strengthen him (Michael). Both Daniel 11:1 and Daniel 10:21 use the same Hebrew verb "chazaq." In Daniel 10:21 Gabriel states that Michael alone held with ("chazaq" 02388) him in his struggles against the angelic princes of Persia. In Daniel 11:1 Gabriel states that he (Gabriel) likewise confirmed ("chazaq" 02388) him (Michael). The implication is that in the third

year of Cyrus (Daniel 10:21) Michael helped Gabriel and in the first year of Darius, Gabriel helped Michael. These similarities point to the same chronological relationship between Darius and Cyrus. If Darius and Cyrus ruled contemporaneously with one another, then Daniel 9:1, 10:1, and 11:1 are speaking of events in the first year of Darius and Cyrus in which Gabriel first came to Daniel followed by events in the third year of Darius and Cyrus in which Gabriel again came to Daniel with a prophetic message. In other words, it is not the case that these chapters are bouncing backward and forward in time and breaking up the chronological sequence so that chapter 9:1 begins in the first year of Darius, chapter 10:1 begins in the third year of Cyrus, and chapter 11:1 begins suddenly and unexpectedly back again in the first year of Darius. Rather, in chapter 11 is set in the same time as chapter 10, the third year of Cyrus. And at that time Gabriel is remarking to Daniel about something that happened earlier during the first year of Darius.

All of these chronological details in Daniel work together to indicate that Darius first year was the same as the first year of Cyrus. In that year the Persians and Medes took control over the Babylonian Empire by conquering the city of Babylon itself.

This would mean the decree of Daniel 9:23 took place in the first year of Darius the Mede, which was the same as the first year of Cyrus. Therefore, we have good reason to conclude that Daniel 9:25 would likewise be referring to the “going forth” of a decree that took place in the first year of Cyrus.

These are the conclusions Warner offers in his current chronology study.

Daniel 9 actually confirms our interpretation that the 70 weeks are to be counted from Cyrus’ first year. Daniel’s visitation by Gabriel to reveal the 70 weeks was in the first year of Darius the Mede. 11 It was Cyrus the Persian who defeated the Babylonians, and immediately began to rule over the entire kingdom. Yet, Cyrus granted Darius the Mede, father of his wife, immediate local jurisdiction over the newly acquired territory of Babylon. 12 Cyrus’ years in Scripture are reckoned from his conquering of the Babylonians, when he first absorbed the Jewish nation in Babylonian exile into his newly expanded kingdom. It was Cyrus who defeated the Babylonians, not Darius the Mede. Hence, the first year of Darius, when Cyrus gave him local jurisdiction over Babylon, was also the first year of Cyrus’ reign over the Jews, Darius being a local ruler while Cyrus ruled over the entire Persian Empire. And since the decree of Cyrus ending the Babylonian exile was in his first year, 13 it is evident that Daniel’s 70 week prophecy was delivered to him at the time Cyrus made the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. In other words, Gabriel was dispatched to inform Daniel that the captivity had just ended. Cyrus had just issued the decree from the first day Daniel began praying, 14 which was precisely the end of 70 years from the complete destruction of Jerusalem. 15 – Tim Warner, Introduction to a Standard Biblical Chronology, www.120jubilees.org

(It should be noted that we do not necessarily agree with the last line of the quote above that the 70 years began with the complete destruction of Jerusalem.)

This exegetically sound understanding of Daniel 9 supports the conclusion that the decree mentioned in Daniel 9:25 went forth in the first year of Cyrus when the Persians took control of the city of Babylon and annexed the Babylonian Empire and its dominion (which included Judah and Jerusalem). That year, the first year of Cyrus, the bible informs us that Cyrus did, in fact, issue a very important decree. After all 2 Chronicles 36:20-22 does indicate that the decree Cyrus made in his first year fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah 25:11.

2 Chronicles 36:11 Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. 12 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD. 13 And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel. 14 Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. 15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: 16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy. 17 **Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees,** 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. 18 And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. 19 **And they 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. 20 **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:** 21 **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.** 22 **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, 23 **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.**

Ezra 1:1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his

kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

Cyrus' decree was an important decree that Daniel would have been waiting for during the entirety of his captivity in Babylon. It was a decree that would end Jeremiah's 70-year prophecy. According to Jeremiah's prophecy, after 70 years the Jewish servitude to the Babylonian kings would end and the people of Israel would be allowed to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple. These events would end the desolation of the land.

Jeremiah 25:1 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; 2 The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying,... 11 And **this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.**

Jeremiah 29:1 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;... 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's prophecy of 70 years of servitude to the Babylonian kings and desolation of the land is the subject that Daniel was studying and praying about in Daniel 9 in the first year of Darius and Cyrus.

Daniel 9:2 In the first year of his reign **I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.**

It makes sense for Daniel to be contemplating and petitioning God in regard to Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years during the first year of Cyrus. For, Isaiah prophesied that it would be Cyrus who would rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple and release the Jewish captives to return to their land.

Isaiah 44:24 **Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer,** and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens

alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; 25 That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; 26 That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: 27 That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: 28 **That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. 45:1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;...13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.**

Despite these biblical connections between the decree of Cyrus and Jeremiah's prophecy, it is more common to identify a subsequent decree from one of Cyrus' successors as the decree of Daniel 9:25 rather than the decree of Cyrus itself. Warner discusses this in his current chronology study. He explains that many believe that Cyrus decree doesn't fit the description provided in Daniel 9:25. This hesitation is based on the idea that Daniel 9:25's decree would include the building of the walls of the city, while Cyrus' decree is generally not thought to include such a provision.

Second, many claim that it does not meet the commencement criteria in Daniel 9:25, 'from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem.' The claim is made that Cyrus only ordered the rebuilding of the Temple, not the city or its walls. Also, since specific mention is made of the construction of the "wall" in Daniel's prophecy, these chronologists look to Artaxerxes' command to Nehemiah as the only one which qualifies because it mentions the rebuilding of the wall. – Tim Warner, Introduction to a Standard Biblical Chronology, www.120jubilees.org

In his study, Warner addresses these potential objections to identifying Cyrus' decree as the decree of Daniel 9:25. His first point is that Daniel 9:25 doesn't actually state that the decree will include a specific provision to rebuild the wall and streets of the city. Daniel 9:25 only mentions the decree and states that it will authorize the rebuilding of the city and be followed by a period of 7 and 62 weeks which will be a troublesome time during which the wall and street are rebuilt. Below is the text of Daniel 9:25 and Warner's refutation of the particular reason for rejecting Cyrus' decree as a fulfillment of this prophecy.

Daniel 9:25 Know therefore and understand, *that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*

Yet, a careful look at Daniel's prophecy reveals that the "wall" statement does not refer to the command itself, but only states that the wall would be

constructed at some point “in troublesome times” afterwards. Note carefully the wording of Daniel’s prophecy. ‘Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.’ **The command itself does not mention the wall. The comments about the wall’s construction are editorial, describing what will ultimately follow the command. The only criterion is that the specified command includes the rebuilding of Jerusalem. If the wall’s construction must be a part of this decree, then so also must the last clause, ,even in troublesome times.’** No one would suggest that the Persian king decreed “troublesome times” for his construction project! **Therefore, the “wall” comment is only an editorial description of what would follow, and not the decree itself. Regardless of which decree we attach the fulfillment of this prophecy to, the latter statement about the wall’s construction would still be true.** – Tim Warner, Introduction to a Standard Biblical Chronology, www.120jubilees.org

Warner also addresses the issue of whether Cyrus’ decree did contain the essential prophetic requirement of authorizing the rebuilding of the city, but only authorized the rebuilding of the Temple. It is true that the recounting of Cyrus’ decree in 2 Chronicles 36 and Ezra 2 doesn’t mention authorization to rebuild the city itself.

Ezra 1:1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, **that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.**

2 Chronicles 26:22 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, 23 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.**

In his study, Warner explains exegetical details which indicate that neither of these texts are full restatements of the entire decree. His first point is that Ezra’s account of Cyrus’ decree is actually longer than the account provided in 2 Chronicles. Ezra 1:4 indicates that Cyrus’ decree included provisions for

materials to be given to the Jews in order to facilitate their rebuilding of the Temple. This portion of Cyrus' decree is not mentioned in 2 Chronicles 36.

The objection that **the command of Cyrus** only concerned the rebuilding of the Temple and not the city of Jerusalem is simply false. While it is true that **the wording of the decree as given in the first chapter of Ezra and the last chapter of 2 Chronicles mentions only the rebuilding of the Temple, these quotations from Cyrus' decree are clearly selective, not exhaustive treatments of his entire decree... That this is not the entire decree is plain because Ezra gives a longer version of it... That even Ezra's version is only an excerpt, and not the entire decree given by Cyrus, is proven by Isaiah's prophecy about Cyrus some 200 years earlier.** – Tim Warner, Introduction to a Standard Biblical Chronology, www.120jubilees.org

Again, as Warner insightfully points out for us, the key indicator of the content of Cyrus' decree is provided in the prophetic word given to Isaiah. In Isaiah 44 and 45, God tells Isaiah that besides authorizing the release of the Jews from Babylon and the rebuilding of the Temple, Cyrus would decree the rebuilding of Jerusalem itself.

Isaiah 44:24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; 25 That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; 26 That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof: 27 That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: 28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. 45:1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;... 13 I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.

Below, Warner aptly states the exegetical soundness for concluding that Cyrus' decree included an authorization for not only releasing the Jewish exiles from Babylon and rebuilding the Temple, but also to rebuild the city itself.

If Cyrus did not decree both the rebuilding of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, then Isaiah was a false prophet. Clearly, Isaiah's prophecy was true, and the decree of Cyrus included the rebuilding of Jerusalem, whether or not this was included in Ezra excerpted quotation. – Tim Warner, Introduction to a Standard Biblical Chronology, www.120jubilees.org

Warner also quotes Josephus as historical support for the conclusion that Cyrus' full decree did include provisions to rebuild Jerusalem.

Furthermore, **Josephus wrote that Cyrus' decree was in response to his being shown Isaiah's prophecy. He was greatly impressed with the God of Israel who called him by name two centuries before he was born. Cyrus immediately decreed both the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple.** – Tim Warner, Introduction to a Standard Biblical Chronology, www.120jubilees.org

In Antiquities of the Jews, Josephus states that Cyrus decreed the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

2. This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision: "My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple." This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the Divine power, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was so written; so he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem, and the temple of God, for that he would be their assistant, and that he would write to the rulers and governors that were in the neighborhood of their country of Judea, that they should contribute to them gold and silver for the building of the temple, and besides that, beasts for their sacrifices. – Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book XI, Chapter 1

As Warner points out, Josephus provides us with a record of Cyrus' instructions to the local governors in the area of Judah. Cyrus' letter of instruction specifically declares that his decree authorized not only the release of the Jewish exiles and the rebuilding of the Temple, but also the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem itself.

3. ... Cyrus also sent an epistle to the governors that were in Syria, the contents whereof here follow: "King Cyrus to Sisinnes and Sathrabuzanes Sendeth Greeting. I have given leave to as many of the Jews that dwell in my country as please to return to their own country, and to rebuild their city, and to build the temple of God at Jerusalem on the same place where it was before. – Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book XI, Chapter 1

As Warner also explains, in the next chapter of his writings, Josephus provided the text of a letter written by the local governors to Cyrus' son Cambyses. These local rulers were concerned about the rebuilding of Jerusalem that was currently underway.

1. But when Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, had taken the kingdom, the governors in Syria, and Phoenicia, and in the countries of Amlnon, and Moab, and Samaria, wrote an epistle to Calnbyses; whose contents were as follow: "To our lord Cambyses. We thy servants, Rathumus the historiographer, and

Semellius the scribe, and the rest that are thy judges in Syria and Phoenicia, send greeting. **It is fit, O king, that thou shouldst know that those Jews which were carried to Babylon are come into our country, and are building that rebellious and wicked city, and its market-places, and setting up its walls, and raising up the temple;** know therefore, that when these things are finished, they will not be willing to pay tribute, nor will they submit to thy commands, but will resist kings, and will choose rather to rule over others than be ruled over themselves. We therefore thought it proper to write to thee, O king, while the works about the temple are going on so fast, and not to overlook this matter, that thou mayst search into the books of thy fathers, for thou wilt find in them that the Jews have been rebels, and enemies to kings, as hath their city been also, which, for that reason, hath been till now laid waste. We thought proper also to inform thee of this matter, because thou mayst otherwise perhaps be ignorant of it, **that if this city be once inhabited and be entirely encompassed with walls,** thou wilt be excluded from thy passage to Celesyria and Phoenicia." – Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book XI, Chapter 2

As Warner shows, Josephus also provided Cambyses' response in which he rescinded the permission for the Jews to rebuild the city and the Temple.

2. When Cambyses had read the epistle, being naturally wicked, he was irritated at what they told him, and **wrote back to them as follows:** "Cambyses the king, to Rathumus the historiographer, to Beeltethmus, to Semellius the scribe, and the rest that are in commission, and dwelling in Samaria and Phoenicia, after this manner: **I have read the epistle that was sent from you; and I gave order that the books of my forefathers should be searched into,** and it is there found that this city hath always been an enemy to kings, and its inhabitants have raised seditions and wars. We also are sensible that their kings have been powerful and tyrannical, and have exacted tribute of Celesyria and Phoenicia. **Wherefore I gave order, that the Jews shall not be permitted to build that city,** lest such mischief as they used to bring upon kings be greatly augmented." When this epistle was read, Rathumus, and Semellius the scribe, and their associates, got suddenly on horseback, and made haste to Jerusalem; they also brought a great company with them, **and forbade the Jews to build the city and the temple. Accordingly, these works were hindered from going on till the second year of the reign of Darius,** for nine years more; for Cambyses reigned six years, and within that time overthrew Egypt, and when he was come back, he died at Damascus.

In his study, Warner notes that Ezra recounts how this interruption in the reconstruction of the city and the Temple continued during the early years of Artaxerxes due to letters of opposition sent by local authorities to the Persian kings.

Ezra recorded another similar disruption of the building of Jerusalem in the early years of Artaxerxes, again caused by a similar letter sent to the Persian king...It is quite clear that **Artaxerxes decree in his twentieth year,** giving leave to Nehemiah, **was the resumption of what had been stalled by the opposition**

of Israel's enemies, and was not the initial decree to rebuild Jerusalem and its walls after the Babylonian captivity. Several years before Artaxerxes' permission to Nehemiah to complete the rebuilding of the walls, Ezra thanked God for giving Israel mercy in the sight of kings of Persia, to rebuild the Temple, the city, and the walls...Therefore, the decree of Artaxerxes cannot be the initial decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls. The decree of Cyrus in his first year is the only possible start for the 70 weeks prophecy, since it is the only decree for which we have a definite date in Scripture, and because it is the first decree to meet all the criteria in Daniel's prophecy. – Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book XI, Chapter 2

The events Warner is referring to are recorded in Ezra 7-9. Ezra 7:7-8 provide the time setting of Ezra's statements in chapter 9. This occurred in the 7th year of Artaxerxes at which time Artaxerxes issued a decree to Ezra.

Ezra 7:1 Now after these things, **in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra** the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, **6 This Ezra went up from Babylon;** and he *was* a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given: **and the king granted him all his request,** according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. **7** And there went up *some* of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, **unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king. 8 And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. 9** For upon the first *day* of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first *day* of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him... **12 Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest,** a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect *peace*, and at such a time. **13 I make a decree (02942),** that all they of the people of Israel, and *of* his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee... **18 And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do after the will of your God...21** And I, *even I* Artaxerxes the king, **do make a decree (02942),** to all the treasurers which *are* beyond the river, **that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily...**

As we recounted earlier when we discussed these events from the Book of Ezra, after he arrived in Jerusalem, Ezra assembled the leadership and people of the Jerusalem (Ezra 9:1-4.) And, as Warner notes in his study, in Ezra 9:9, Ezra's words clearly show that Ezra understood that the Persian kings (not just Artaxerxes) had authorized the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its walls.

Ezra 9:9 For we *were* bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of **the kings of Persia,** to give us a reviving, **to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.**

At the time of Nehemiah, Jerusalem's gates and walls were still not restored. Nehemiah therefore petitions Artaxerxes for permission to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the city and its gates. Permission is then granted Nehemiah and he is given letters from Artaxerxes for this purpose. These letters are given to Nehemiah in Artaxerxes' 20th year.

Nehemiah 1:1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, **in the twentieth year**, as I was in Shushan the palace, 2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and *certain* men of Judah; and **I asked them** concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and **concerning Jerusalem**. 3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province *are* in great affliction and reproach: **the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.**

Nehemiah 2:1 And it came to pass in the month Nisan, **in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king**, *that wine was* before him: and I took up the wine, and gave *it* unto the king. Now I had not been *beforetime* sad in his presence. 2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why *is* thy countenance sad, seeing thou *art* not sick? this *is* nothing *else* but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, 3 **And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?** 4 Then the king said unto me, **For what dost thou make request?** So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5 And I said unto the king, **If it please the king**, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest **send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.** 6 **And the king said unto me**, (the queen also sitting by him,) **For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.** 7 **Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king**, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;.. 9 Then I came to the governors beyond the river, **and gave them the king's letters.** Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me... 11 **So I came to Jerusalem**, and was there three days... 17 **Then said I unto them**, Ye see the distress that we *are* in, how **Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem**, that we be no more a reproach.

These biblical and historical texts provide good support for the conclusion that Cyrus' decree was the initial decree authorizing the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple. After Cyrus' death, the work of reconstruction was hampered due to local opposition. Subsequent Persian kings searched the records of the kings of Persia and ultimately reinstated the authorization that Isaiah and Josephus inform us was originally granted by Cyrus. Therefore, we have good biblical and historical reason to conclude that Daniel 9:25 is referring to this decree which was given by Cyrus in his first year.