

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 5A)

The Duration of Time between the Destruction of the Temple and Cyrus' Decree

Understanding Daniel 9:1, 23-25 in accordance with Isaiah 44-45, 2 Chronicles 36, Ezra 1, and Jeremiah 25 and 29 allows us to identify the decree in Cyrus' first year as the decree mentioned in Daniel 9:23-25. Adopting this understanding enables us to use Cyrus' decree as both the starting point for the next segment of history (the period of Daniel's 7 and 62 weeks) as well as to mark the conclusion of the 70 years prophesied by Jeremiah. With this information in mind we will review the details regarding Jeremiah's prophecy.

As both Jeremiah 25 and 29 explain, the 70-year prophecy had been issued through Jeremiah in the 4th year of King Jehoiakim.

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, **3** From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened. **4** And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear. **5** They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever: **6** And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt. **7** Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt. **8** Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Because ye have not heard my words,** **9** 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. **10** 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. 11 **And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.** 12 **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.** 13 And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.

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; 2 (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;) 3 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, 4 **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;** 5 Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; 6 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. 7 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. 8 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. 9 For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD. 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.

This prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the 70 years was given the very year the Nebuchadnezzar was besieging Jerusalem. In fact, Jeremiah 25:1 states that the fourth year of Jehoiakim is the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. According to Daniel 1:1 Nebuchadnezzar came and began his siege of Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim. At some point after Nebuchadnezzar's arrival, he succeeded in subduing the city and took the nobles of Judah (including Daniel) away captive to Babylon.

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;**

Within that very same year, Jeremiah prophesied that the desolation of Jerusalem and the servitude to Babylon would last 70 years. And according to Daniel 9, Daniel was mindful of Jeremiah's 70-year prophecy and was praying about God's fulfillment of the accompanying promise (recorded in Jeremiah 29:10) to bring his people back to Jerusalem after the 70 years were finished.

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.

The only question that remains is how many years elapsed between the Babylonian destruction of the Temple and the first year of Cyrus when he took over the Babylonian Empire and issued his decree freeing the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem.

There are two answers which have most often been offered by scholars and each is based on when Jeremiah's 70-year prophecy began. One option places the start of Jeremiah's 70-year prophecy at the 4th year of Jehoiakim almost 20 years before Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed.

Most chronologists, including Ussher, count the 70 years from the first deportation of captives to Babylon (Dan. 1:1), which took place about 20 years before Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.— Tim Warner, Introduction to a Standard Biblical Chronology, www.120jubilees.org

The second option places the start of Jeremiah's 70-year prophecy at the destruction of the Temple at the end of Zedekiah's 11th year. In his previous study, Warner references Ezekiel 40:1 and places the start of Jeremiah's 70 years 11 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. (Ezekiel 40:1 differentiates between Ezekiel's captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem by a duration of 11 years.)

In Ezek. 40:1, we observe that the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity began 25 years before Ezekiel saw his vision. – The Coming Millennial Sabbath – Part II, Tim Warner, Copyright © July, 2009, answersinrevelation.org

Ezekiel 40:1 In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth *day* of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me thither.

But, in his current chronology study, Warner adopts the option of starting Jeremiah's 70 years with the destruction of the Temple at the end of Zedekiah's 11th year.

It is important to notice from this passage that the 70 years captivity is to be counted from the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and not from the

first deportation of Nebuchadnezzar 11 years earlier, as most chronologists wrongly assume. Daniel also confirmed that Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years was concerning the "desolations" of Jerusalem. (Dan. 9:2) – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God's Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

We learn in the early part of the book that Daniel adopted a diet reflective of his state of mourning immediately from the beginning of his transport to Babylon. And Daniel was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar the same year that Jeremiah prophesied that the exile would last 70 years.¹⁹ Daniel began his diet of mourning when he reached Babylon. , Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.²⁰ So Daniel's diet of mourning began when Jeremiah prophesied of **the upcoming destruction of Jerusalem and seventy 70 years of exile that would follow**, and it ended with Daniel's prayer recorded in Daniel 9, at the time of Cyrus' decree. Why would Daniel stop his diet of mourning in the first year of Cyrus, unless the order had been given to restore Jerusalem (the subject of his prayer), and the countdown had begun to the coming of the Messiah, both for which Daniel longed? – Tim Warner, Introduction to a Standard Biblical Chronology, www.120jubilees.org

Our previous section ended on a Jubilee year, the year God appeared to Solomon the second time, warning him of both the ultimate destruction of the Temple, and also promising the restoration of Israel if they repent. That was the year 3,000AM, the 60th Jubilee year from creation. This was Solomon's 23rd year.² We now add the remaining 17 years³ of Solomon's reign to the 413 years for the period of the kings, and we have 430 years from God's threat to Solomon that He would destroy **the Temple** if Solomon did not obey, until it **was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Add to this the 70 years of captivity prophesied by Jeremiah**,⁴ and we have a total of 500 years from God's warning to destroy the Temple and His promise to restore it given to Solomon until the decree of Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple.⁵ – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God's Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

The 40 years begins with the prophecy of Jeremiah, the prophet sent exclusively to Judah. Jeremiah prophesied 40 years exactly from the end of the 13th year of Josiah until **the year before Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem, when the 70 years of desolation began.** – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God's Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

The question that we need to answer is when did the 70 years prophesied by Jeremiah begin? Did they begin with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar at the end of Zedekiah's 11th year as Warner currently concludes? Or, did these 70 years begin in Jehoiakim's 4th year, as his previous studied affirmed in reference to Ezekiel 40:1?

What we are looking for are scriptural indicators that inform us when the biblical authors began to count Jeremiah's 70 years. Our search for such indicators is helped by first reviewing the words of Jeremiah's prophecy itself. A look at Jeremiah 25 shows that the prophecy spoke of a 70-year period that would be

defined by two elements. These two elements were the desolation of the land and servitude to the king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 25:11 And this whole land shall be a desolation (02723), and an astonishment (08-47); and these nations shall serve (05647) the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 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.

The Hebrew word for “desolation” that is used in Jeremiah 25:11 (and Daniel 9:2) means “a place laid waste, ruin, waste, desolation” (Strong’s number 02723.) The interpretations and usage of this word indicate that it often has the idea of uninhabited places in mind.

02723 **chorbah**

from 02721; n f; {See TWOT on 731 @@ "731d"}

AV-waste 18, desolation 8, desolate places 4, waste places 4, desert 3, desolate 3, decayed places 1, destructions 1; 42

1) a place laid waste, ruin, waste, desolation

According to Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, the English word “desolate” means “devoid of inhabitants” and “showing the effects of abandonment and neglect.” It is synonymous with the concept of being deserted. Similarly, the first definition for the noun “desolation” is “the action of desolating.”

Desolate – 1: devoid of inhabitants and visitors: deserted – Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Desolation – 1: the action of desolating – Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Leviticus 26 discusses this kind of punishment that God would send on his people if they didn’t faithfully keep his commandments. In verse 33 of that passage, God uses the same Hebrew word for “desolation” that he uses in Jeremiah 25. Here in Leviticus 26:33, the Hebrew word “chorbah” (02723) is translated as “waste.”

Leviticus 26:33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate (08047), and your cities waste (02723).

In both passages, Jeremiah 25:11 and Leviticus 26:33, “chorbah” is used alongside the Hebrew word “shammah,” (08047). In Jeremiah “shammah” is translated as “astonishment.” In Leviticus 26:33 it is translated as “desolate.” We can see then that both Leviticus 26:33 and Jeremiah 25:11 are discussing the same concept. It is important to notice then that Leviticus defines “chorbah” and “shammah” (desolation and waste) through the idea of God removing his people

from the land and scattering them among the heathen. This is exactly what God did to Judah during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

We should also point out that the desolation Jeremiah is describing pertains to the whole land of Judah. Jeremiah doesn't actually mention the city of Jerusalem or the Temple specifically in this 70-year prophecy.

The second defining aspect of the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy concerns servitude to the king of Babylon. The word translated as "serve" in Jeremiah 25:11 is the Hebrew verb "abad" (05647).

05647 **abad**

a primitive root; v; {See TWOT on 1553}

AV-serve 227, do 15, till 9, servant 5, work 5, worshippers 5, service 4, dress 2, labour 2, ear 2, misc 14; 290

1) to work, serve

1a) (Qal)

1a1) to labour, work, do work

1a2) **to work for another**, serve another by labour

1a3) **to serve as subjects**

1a4) to serve (God)

1a5) to serve (with Levitical service)

1b) (Niphal)

1b1) to be worked, be tilled (of land)

1b2) to make oneself a servant

1c) (Pual) to be worked

1d) (Hiphil)

1d1) to compel to labour or work, cause to labour, cause to serve

1d2) **to cause to serve as subjects**

1e) (Hophal) to be led or enticed to serve

Again we find linguistic and conceptual parallels back to Leviticus 25 where this same Hebrew word for "serve" is used to describe Jews who are sold into service to one another.

Leviticus 25:39 And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel (05647) him to serve as a bondservant: 40 But as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve (05647) thee unto the year of jubile:

Furthermore, this same word for "serve" is used in 2 Kings 25:24. We should recognize that it is being used to refer to the people who remained in the land of Judah after Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. Notice the 2 Kings 25:24 parallels Jeremiah 25:11 very closely.

2 Kings 25:22 And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler.²³ And when all the

captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that **the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor**, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.²⁴ **And Gedaliah swore to them**, and to their men, and said unto them, **Fear not to be the servants (05650) of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve (05647) the king of Babylon;** and it shall be well with you.

In 2 Kings 25:24 uses the Hebrew noun “ebed” (05650) which is derived from the verb “abad” (05647).

05650 ‘ebed

from 05647; n m; {See TWOT on 1553 @@ "1553a"}

AV-servant 744, manservant 23, bondman 21, bondage 10, bondservant 1, on all sides 1; 800

1) slave, servant

1a) slave, servant, man-servant

1b) subjects

1c) servants, worshippers (of God)

1d) servant (in special sense as prophets, Levites etc)

1e) servant (of Israel)

1f) servant (as form of address between equals)

05647 ‘abad

a primitive root; v; {See TWOT on 1553}

AV-serve 227, do 15, till 9, servant 5, work 5, worshippers 5, service 4, dress 2, labour 2, ear 2, misc 14; 290

1) to work, serve

1a) (Qal)

1a1) to labour, work, do work

1a2) to work for another, serve another by labour

1a3) to serve as subjects

1a4) to serve (God)

1a5) to serve (with Levitical service)

1b) (Niphal)

1b1) to be worked, be tilled (of land)

1b2) to make oneself a servant

1c) (Pual) to be worked

1d) (Hiphil)

1d1) to compel to labour or work, cause to labour, cause to serve

1d2) to cause to serve as subjects

1e) (Hophal) to be led or enticed to serve

The Hebrew verb “abad” is used in 2 Kings 24:1 to state that Jehoiakim, the king of Judah was the servant of Nebuchadnezzar.

2 Kings 24:1 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant (05647) three years: then he turned and

rebelled against him. 2 And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them **against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets.** 3 Surely at the commandment of the LORD came *this* upon Judah, to remove *them* out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did;

As Jeremiah 25:1 explains, the fourth year of Jehoiakim is also designated as the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, which implies that the years after the 4th year of Jehoiakim's reign were counted as being under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar.

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 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon;

The reason that Nebuchadnezzar's rule of Judah was counted from Jehoiakim's 4th year is because in that year Nebuchadnezzar defeated king Neco of Egypt in battle.

Jeremiah 46:1 The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles; 2 Against Egypt, against **the army of Pharaohnecho 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.**

As 2 Kings 23:35 explains, prior to Jehoiakim's 4th year, Judah was under the dominion of Pharaohnecho of Egypt.

2 Kings 23:31 Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 32 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. 33 **And Pharaohnechoh put him in bands** at Riblah in the land of Hamath, **that he might not reign in Jerusalem;** and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold. 34 **And Pharaohnechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away:** and he came to Egypt, and died there. 35 **And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh;** but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaohnechoh. 36 **Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.** And his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. 37 **And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.** 24:1 **In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years:** then he turned and rebelled against him.

As the text describes, the final three years of Pharaohnecho's dominion over Judah were marked by Nebuchadnezzar encroaching on his territory including Jerusalem. Apparently, when Jehoiakim attempted to rebel at the end of those three years, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and also "smote" Pharaohnecho, officially ending Judah's subjugation to Egypt. After Pharaohnecho was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, Judah formally fell under the dominion of Nebuchadnezzar. According to Daniel 1:1, Nebuchadnezzar came up to Jerusalem in Jehoiakim's 3rd year and laid siege to the city. After the siege, Nebuchadnezzar took many of the nobles of Judah including Daniel away to Babylon.

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;

We can see then that from the 4th year of Jehoiakim and afterward, the people of Judah were considered to be the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

2 Chronicles 36:20 also uses the same word for "servants" as 2 Kings 24:1. 2 Chronicles 36 states that the Jewish captives (who had been taken to Babylon) served the king of Babylon until the reign of the Persians which began with Cyrus.

2 Chronicles 36:11 Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem... 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 (05650) 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.

Verse 20 from 2 Chronicles 36 is helpful in understanding the meaning of Jeremiah 25:11. 2 Chronicles 36:20-21 indicates that Jeremiah 25:11's prophecy was fulfilled by the exile of the people to Babylon and their servitude to the king of Babylon. These are the two elements that Jeremiah 25:11 uses to define the 70-year period of prophecy.

2 Chronicles 36:20 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants (05650) 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.

Jeremiah 25:11 And this whole land shall be a desolation (02723), and an astonishment (08-47); and these nations shall serve (05647) the king of Babylon seventy years.

A look at these passages side-by-side shows clear parallels regarding the content of Jeremiah's prophecy. Both passages mention servitude to the Babylonian king. However, 2 Chronicles couples this servitude with the removal of the people while Jeremiah 25:11 simply refers to the desolation and astonishment of the land. In this way, we can see that, like Leviticus 26:33, 2 Chronicles 36 is informing us that Jeremiah 25:11's "desolation of the land" is a reference to the removal of the people.

In addition, Jeremiah 27, which follows Jeremiah's prophecy of the 70 years by just two chapters, uses this same Hebrew verb for "serve" (05647) to state that the nations would serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon as well as his son and his son's son until the time of the Babylonians had ended.

Jeremiah 27:1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,...6 And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. 7 And all nations shall serve (05647) him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve (05647) themselves of him.

It is interesting then that Daniel chronicles the end of the Babylonian authority and the passing of dominion to the Persian king Cyrus and his general and coregent Darius. According to Daniel 5, these events occurred in the time of Belshazzar who is thought to be the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 5:24-31).

Belshazzar - Though he is referred to in the Book of Daniel as the son of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian inscriptions indicate that he was in fact **the eldest son of Nabonidus**, who was king of Babylon from 555 to 539, **and of**

Nitocris, who was perhaps a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. – Encyclopedia Britannica

Belshazzar - Herodotus refers to the last king of Babylon as Labynetos and claims that this was also the name of his father. Herodotus says that the mother of the younger Labynetos was the queen Nitocris whom he portrays as the dominant ruler. She is commonly thought to have been the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. Labynetos is generally understood to be a garbled form of the name Nabonidus and the younger Labynetos is often identified with Belshazzar. – wikipedia.org

Nabonidus - After a popular rising led by the priests of Marduk, chief god of the city, Nabonidus, who favoured the moon god Sin, made his son Belshazzar coregent and spent much of his reign in Arabia." – Encyclopedia Britannica

Nabonidus - He was not of Nebuchadnezzar's family, and it is possible that he usurped the throne...Cuneiform records indicate that Belshazzar was Nabonidus' son and his coregent during the last years of Babylon." - The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. 2001.

Belshazzar - When Nabonidus went into exile (550), he entrusted Belshazzar with the throne and the major part of his army." – Encyclopedia Britannica

We can see that in accordance with Jeremiah 27 Daniel indeed witnessed the fulfillment of Jeremiah's 70 year prophecy: the end of Babylonian authority, the transference of power to the Persians under Cyrus and his general and viceroy Darius, the decree God prophesied Cyrus would give that would end the 70 years (Isaiah 44-45), and the release of the Jewish captives back to the land to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple.

More importantly, we can see that Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years was defined by the desolation of the land of Judah and the subjugation of the kingdom of Judah to the Babylonian kings. According to Jeremiah 27:1, 6-7, this subjugation would continue under the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, his son, and his son's son. Daniel himself confirms and chronicles these facts.

In relation to the critical question of when Jeremiah's prophesied 70 years began we have the following biblical factors. We can see that Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years involved the desolating of the land of Judah and the subjugation of the Jewish people to Nebuchadnezzar. The desolating and subjugation began in the 4th year of Jehoiakim.

Jeremiah 25:1 which is the same passage that provides the 70-year prophecy states that Jehoiakim's 4th year was counted as Nebuchadnezzar's first year.

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 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon;** 2 The which Jeremiah

the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying,

Daniel likewise informed us that there was a deportation of “certain of the children of Israel” including “of the king’s seed, and of the princes” after Nebuchadnezzar’s siege of Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim’s reign. This deportation coincides with the fourth year of Jehoiakim’s reign, which Jeremiah 25 refers to as the first year of Nebuchadnezzar.

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;

2 Kings 24 similarly reports that after Jehoiachin (Jehoiakim’s successor) had reigned only three months, he was taken captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar and replaced by Zedekiah. According to verse 12, this took place in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign.

2 Kings 24:8 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. 9 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done. 10 **At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. 12 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.** 13 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. 14 **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. 15 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.** 16 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. 17 **And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father’s brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah. 18 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. 19 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 20 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.

Notice also how this passage says that Nebuchadnezzar took all of Jerusalem away to Babylon except the very poorest (v. 14). This gives us an idea of the extent of this second deportation which took place 11 years before the city and the Temple were destroyed. Certainly, the desolating of both Judah and Jerusalem was well underway at this point.

Lastly, and more importantly, both 2 Kings 25 and Jeremiah 52 both explicitly declare that the year Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed was the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar.

2 Kings 25:8 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: **9 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. 10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. 11 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.**

Jeremiah 52:12 Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, **13 And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire: 14 And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about. 15 Then** Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard **carried away captive certain of the poor of the people,** and the residue of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude.

These biblical passages give us very good reason to conclude that the biblical authors intended for us to understand that the 70 years prophesied by Jeremiah began at the 4th year of Jehoiakim. First, the desolating of the land of Judah began at that point as Daniel testifies. Second, the servitude to the king of Babylon began at that point, particularly with Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of Pharaohnecho who previously had dominion over Judah. And third, the biblical authors (including Jeremiah himself) began counting the years of Babylonian rule at the 4th year of Jehoiakim.

In his current chronology study, Warner similarly explains that the bible reckons the years of Cyrus' reign to begin when he conquered the Babylonians and thereby inherited their dominion over the Jewish nation.

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. – Tim Warner, Introduction to a Standard Biblical Chronology, www.120jubilees.org

Similarly, the biblical authors began counting the years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign after his defeat of Pharaohnecho of Egypt and his subsequent conquest of Judah in the 4th year of Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 25:1, Jeremiah 46:2, Daniel 1:1-3, 2 Kings 23:31-24:1). Warner recognizes this biblical method of counting the reigns of foreign powers that held authority over the Jewish people in the case of Cyrus. Consequently, the recognition of this method in turn affirms the conclusion that the 70 years of servitude to the Babylonian kings began at Jehoiakim's 4th year, when the biblical authors repeatedly began reckoning the years according to the dominion of the Babylonians.

It is also important to recognize that we have documented 3 deportations in the text of scripture. Daniel 1 recounts a deportation after the siege of Jerusalem in Jehoiakim's third year, most likely with the onset of Nebuchadnezzar's first year which coincided with Jehoiakim's fourth year. 2 Kings 24 recounts a second deportation that included Jehoiachin (Jehoiakim's successor) after only 3 months of rule at the beginning of Zedekiah's reign in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar. And 2 Kings 25:9 and Jeremiah 52 recount a third deportation that occurred in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar and the eleventh year of Zedekiah, at which time Jerusalem and the Temple were also destroyed. By simple mathematics, the second deportation occurred eleven years before the destruction of the Temple. This is important because it explains some potential confusion that could arise from Ezekiel 40.

Ezekiel 40:1 In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth *day* of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me thither.

Here Ezekiel marks the current date in relation to 2 events. The first event is his own captivity, by which he clearly means to refer to deportation to Babylon. Ezekiel places this event 25 years before the current date. And the second event is the destruction of Jerusalem, which he places 14 years before the current date. There is noticeably 11 years between the year Ezekiel went into captivity and the year Jerusalem was destroyed. This tells us plainly that Ezekiel was taken captive along with Jehoiachin (2 Kings 24:15-17) before Zedekiah's 11 years of rule at the end of which Jerusalem was destroyed. If we read Ezekiel in isolation, we might think that his use of the phrase "our captivity" is meant to refer to the captivity of all the Jews beginning 25 years earlier, as if there were no deportations prior to that point. However, this would be in conflict with Daniel 1:1, which places a deportation 8 years earlier. The best interpretation of Ezekiel 40 is to reconcile it with Daniel 1 in which case Ezekiel 40 would not be a denial of previous deportations. Consequently, the phrase "our captivity" is be Ezekiel's way of noting when he was deported, not when all Jewish deportation started.

Ultimately, Ezekiel 40 does not provide a conflicting starting date for the deportation of the Jewish people, nor does it undermine the starting point of the 70 years serving Babylon at Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of Pharaohnecho.

All of these biblical factors weigh in favor of adopting the conclusion that Jeremiah's 70 years began in the 4th year of Jehoiakim, which was Nebuchadnezzar's first year and which was 19 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

Both biblical chronology and secular chronology support this conclusion as well. Though it is less relevant to the purposes of this study, secular chronology dates the start of Jehoiakim's servitude to Nebuchadnezzar at around 605 BC.

Jehoiakim – However, when the Egyptians were defeated by the Babylonians at Carchemish in 605 BC, Jehoiakim changed allegiances, paying tribute to Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon. – wikipedia.org

Jehoiakim – From 605 BC, after the Babylonians defeated Egypt, Jehoiakim became a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar...He died in 598 just as Nebuchadnezzar was besieging Jerusalem. – Columbia Encyclopedia

Similarly, secular chronologies date Cyrus' conquest of Babylon and release of the Jewish exiles to the year 538 BC.

Cyrus the Great - The Chaldean empire of Babylonia fell to Cyrus in 538 BC. - Columbia Encyclopedia

Babylonian Captivity - 538 - "Decree of Cyrus" allows Judahites to return to Jerusalem. - wikipedia.org

Biblical Literature - In any event, it was from this community that the leadership and the cadres for the resurrection of the Judahite nation and faith were to come when **Cyrus the Great** (labelled "the Lord's anointed" in Deutero-Isaiah) conquered Babylon and **made it possible for them to return (538)**. A contingent of about 50,000 persons, including about 4,000 priests and 7,000 slaves, returned under Sheshbazzar, a prince of Judah. - Encyclopedia Britannica

Babylonian Captivity - also called Babylonian Captivity, the forced detention of **Jews in Babylonia** following the latter's **conquest of the kingdom of Judah in 598/7 and 587/6 BC**. **The exile formally ended in 538 BC, when the Persian conqueror of Babylonia, Cyrus the Great, gave the Jews permission to return to Palestine.** - Encyclopedia Britannica

Belshazzar - According to the accounts in the Bible and Xenophon, Belshazzar held a last great feast...**Belshazzar died after Babylon fell to the Persian general Gobyras without resistance on Oct. 12, 539, and probably before the Persian king Cyrus II entered the city 17 days later.** - Encyclopedia Britannica

We should note that 538 BC is 67 years after Nebuchadnezzar is credited with subjugating the kingdom of Judah (in 605 BC.) Ezra 1:1-3:1 places the return of the Jewish exiles to Jerusalem and their cities the following fall after Cyrus' decree. Given that the secular dates may be at least somewhat accurate, this secular figure of approximately 68 years conforms surprisingly well to the biblical assertion that there were 70 years between Jehoiakim's 4th year and Cyrus' 1st year.

More important is the biblical chronology that is derived from identifying Jehoiakim's 4th year as the first year of Jeremiah's 70 year prophecy. As we have seen, Jehoiachin only reigned for 11 years. The beginning of his 4th year marked the onset of the final 8 years of his reign. To these 8 years we may add the 11 years of Zedekiah's reign. This is a total of 19 years. At the end of Zedekiah's 11th year Nebuchadnezzar came and destroyed the Temple.

Both 2 Kings and Jeremiah confirm this count. 2 Kings 25:2-3 states that in fourth month of the 11th year of Zedekiah's reign the city of Jerusalem was under the siege of the Babylonians. Just after this point, Zedekiah was taken captive as he attempted to flee the city (v. 4-7).

2 Kings 24:20 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. **25:1** 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. **2** And **the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.** **3** 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. **4** 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.** **5** 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. **6** So they **took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon** to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. **7** 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.**

As 2 Kings 25 continues, we see that it was in the fifth month that Nebuchadnezzar had the Temple and all the city destroyed by fire (v. 8-10). (Verse 10 reports on another large deportation of the population which had remained from the previous deportations.)

2 Kings 25:8 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: **9** 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. 10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. 11 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.

Jeremiah 52 provides the same account of these events. Jeremiah explains that the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem began in the tenth month of the 9th year of Zedekiah's reign and continued to the 11th year (v.4-5). According to verse 6, the city fell in the fourth month of the 11th year of Zedekiah's reign after which Zedekiah was captured and taken to Babylon (v. 9-11). Verse 12 explains that it was during the fifth month that Nebuchadnezzar had the Temple burned.

Jeremiah 52:1 Zedekiah was one and twenty 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. **2** And he did that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. **3** For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, till he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. **4** **And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about.** **5** So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. **6** **And in the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month,** the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. **7** **Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city** by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden; **(now the Chaldeans were by the city round about:)** and they went by the way of the plain. **8** **But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah** in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. **9** **Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon** to Riblah in the land of Hamath; where he gave judgment upon him. **10** And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew also all the princes of Judah in Riblah. **11** **Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.** **12** **Now in the fifth month,** in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem,

Both 2 Kings and Jeremiah 52 fit with what we saw in Jeremiah 1:3. Jeremiah 1:3 reports that at "the end" of Zedekiah's 11th year the city was taken captive.

Jeremiah 1:3 It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah king of Judah, unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.

It is worth pointing out the way both Jeremiah and 2 Kings are counting the months in relation to the reigns of the kings. Earlier we discussed that the books of Kings and Chronicles numbered the months beginning in Spring with Nisan the month of Passover. However, Rosh Hashanah (the head of the year) took place during the Fall in what was counted as the seventh month (starting from Nisan in Spring).

2 Kings and Jeremiah continue to number the Hebrew months from Spring even though each year of a king's reign began in Fall. Note that Jeremiah 1:3 states that the fifth month of the year was at "the end of Zedekiah's eleventh year" of reign. The Hebrew word translated as "end" is "taman" (08552) which means "completed, finished, be at an end." This makes sense if the years of the kings were counted from Rosh Hashanah at the beginning of the seventh month starting from Passover in Spring. Since each year of a king's reign began at Rosh Hashanah in the seventh month, the sixth month of the year would mark the final month of any given year in a king's reign. And the fifth month then would be very near the end of the year as far as the reigns of kings were counted. Therefore, Jeremiah and 2 Kings can report that the Temple was destroyed by fire in the fifth month of Zedekiah's 11th year as king, which was at the end of Zedekiah's 11th year.

As we have seen both 2 Kings 25:8-11 and Jeremiah 52:12-15 also report that the destruction of the Temple occurred in the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar. The counting of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar began with his subjugation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem in the 4th year of the reign of King Jehoiakim after Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of Pharaohnecho of Egypt, who formerly had official dominion over Israel. Jeremiah plainly explains this correlation in chapter 25 of his book (Jeremiah 25:1).

These biblical details confirm that there were almost 19 full years from the first deportation of the inhabitants of Jerusalem during Jehoiakim's 4th year to the destruction of the Temple at the end of Zedekiah's 11th year. Both Jeremiah and 2 Kings count this amount of time to the fifth month which was at "the end" of the 19th year since Nebuchadnezzar first subjugated and began desolating (i.e. removing the population of) Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoiakim. At the start of the 20th year, both Jerusalem and the Temple lay in ruins.

At this point, it is important to return to a critical issue from earlier in this study in order to pull the larger picture together.

The first thing to note as we begin is that according to Warner's model, the Jewish people were released by a decree from Cyrus that took place not only in a jubilee year but that this jubilee year is the 70th year of exile prophesied by Jeremiah. As the two quotes below demonstrate, Warner asserts that all 70 years in Jeremiah's prophecy come after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Most modern Christian chronologists do not begin the seventy year Babylonian captivity with the destruction of Jerusalem, but with either the

end of Josiah's reign or Nebuchadnezzar's first deportation of Jews to Babylon, when Daniel and Ezekiel were taken captive. This is not done because Scripture requires it, but to align their chronologies with secular chronologies. However, 2 Chronicles 36:15-21 makes it very plain that **the seventy years are to be calculated from the destruction of Jerusalem.** – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God's Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

The 40 years begins with the prophecy of Jeremiah, the prophet sent exclusively to Judah. Jeremiah prophesied 40 years exactly from the end of the 13th year of Josiah until **the year before Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem, when the 70 years of desolation began.** – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God's Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

But perhaps more importantly, Warner is equally clear that the 70 years prophesied by Jeremiah end with Cyrus' decree.

We learn in the early part of the book that Daniel adopted a diet reflective of his state of mourning immediately from the beginning of his transport to Babylon. And Daniel was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar the same year that Jeremiah prophesied that the exile would last 70 years.¹⁹ Daniel began his diet of mourning when he reached Babylon. Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.²⁰ So Daniel's diet of mourning began when Jeremiah prophesied of **the upcoming destruction of Jerusalem and seventy 70 years of exile that would follow, and it ended with Daniel's prayer recorded in Daniel 9, at the time of Cyrus' decree.** Why would Daniel stop his diet of mourning in the first year of Cyrus, unless the order had been given to restore Jerusalem (the subject of his prayer), and the countdown had begun to the coming of the Messiah, both for which Daniel longed? – Tim Warner, Introduction to a Standard Biblical Chronology, www.120jubilees.org

And finally, as the quote below asserts, Warner's model specifically asserts not only that Cyrus' decree occurred in the 70th year of Jeremiah's prophecy but that the 70th year was a jubilee year.

We now add the remaining 17 years³ of Solomon's reign to the 413 years for the period of the kings, and we have 430 years from God's threat to Solomon that He would destroy the Temple if Solomon did not obey, until it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. **Add to this the 70 years of captivity prophesied by Jeremiah, 4 and we have a total of 500 years from God's warning to destroy the Temple and His promise to restore it given to Solomon until the decree of Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. 5...The end of the captivity and the decree of Cyrus the Great to restore Jerusalem and the Temple was in the 70th Jubilee year, 3,500AM.** – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God's Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

The relevant point that we want to highlight here is that Warner's model places the release of the Jewish exiles during the 70th year rather than after the 70 years are complete. In other words, the Jews don't serve Babylon for 70 complete years.

Rather, they serve Babylon for 69 complete years and the 70th year is a jubilee year during which Babylon is defeated by Cyrus and Cyrus releases the Jews from their servitude.

With that said, we now return to our own assessment of the timing cues we have collected so far regarding this period of history.

As stated above, the biblical details we have examined reveal that there were almost 19 full years from the first deportation of the inhabitants of Jerusalem during Jehoiakim's 4th year to the destruction of the Temple at the end of Zedekiah's 11th year. Both Jeremiah and 2 Kings count this amount of time to the fifth month which was at "the end" of the 19th year since Nebuchadnezzar first subjugated and began desolating (i.e. removing the population of) Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoiakim. At the start of the 20th year, both Jerusalem and the Temple lay in ruins.

We can relate this period of time to the timing of Jeremiah's 70-year prophecy. If we place the beginning of Jeremiah's 70-year prophecy at the 4th year of Jehoiachin then there were 19 completed years to the destruction of the Temple. (The Temple would be destroyed with just under two months left until the completion of 19 full years.) At the end of the 19th year, there would be 51 years left in the 70-year prophecy of Jeremiah.

In a previous segment, we examined Jeremiah 34 in detail. From that analysis we concluded that there was a sabbatical year in either the tenth or eleventh year of Zedekiah. We also concluded based on the evidence in Jeremiah 34 that this sabbatical year was followed by a jubilee year. If the 10th year of Zedekiah was a sabbatical year, then the jubilee year was Zedekiah's 11th year, which was also Nebuchadnezzar's 19th year and the year Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. If the 11th year of Zedekiah was the sabbatical year, then the jubilee year would have been Nebuchadnezzar's 20th year, the year after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. At that time, we noted that these considerations would be important when calculating the timing of the release of the Jews from exile in Babylon. We can now consider the implications for the prophetic timetable depending on whether the sabbatical year is in the 10th or the 11th year of Zedekiah.

If the sabbatical year of Jeremiah 34 is in Zedekiah's 10th year, then we end up short of the total time needed to satisfy Jeremiah's prophecy. If the sabbatical year is in Zedekiah's 11th year, then the jubilee year occurs in Zedekiah's 12th year, which is also Nebuchadnezzar's 20th year. Of course, the next jubilee year would be 50 years later. If we simply add 50 to 19, we end up with a jubilee year at 69 years. And consequently, either the Babylonians are defeated by Cyrus and Cyrus issues the decree releasing the Jews in the 69th year of servitude and exile or the Babylonians are defeated and Cyrus issues his decree in the 70th year, the year after a jubilee cycle. Neither of these options seems preferable.

On the other hand, if the sabbatical year of Jeremiah 34 is in Zedekiah's 11th year, then we end up with a competing model that is on par with Warner's in this particular regard. This scenario would have Zedekiah and the people fail to keep their promise to release the poor in accordance with the sabbatical year in the 11th year of his reign. And consequently, God corrects this behavior by destroying Jerusalem and removing all but the poorest of the poor that very same year. The next year, the year after Jerusalem's destruction, is a jubilee year in which God himself has ensured freedom for the poor in Judah right from the very start of the year, just as he promised in Jeremiah 34. With the sabbatical year in Zedekiah's 11th year and Nebuchadnezzar's 19th year, the jubilee would be in Nebuchadnezzar's 20th year. After that jubilee year, there would be only 50 years remaining in Jeremiah's prophecy. And therefore, the prophecy would end on the next jubilee year, 70 years after Nebuchadnezzar's rule began to be counted. And just like Warner's model, in this model the Jews don't serve Babylon for 70 complete years. Rather, they serve Babylon for 69 complete years and the 70th year is a jubilee year during which the Babylon is defeated by Cyrus and Cyrus releases the Jews from their servitude.

In this light, the conclusion of Jeremiah's prophecy affirms the identification of a sabbatical year in Zedekiah's 11th year, not his 10th, which as we have seen is perfectly acceptable given the timing cues in Jeremiah 32-39. It should be noted that this requires selecting between 2 scripturally viable options in order to line up the release of the Jews from exile on a jubilee year. However, it should be pointed out that lining up the release from exile with a jubilee year is neither controversial, nor is it tantamount to aligning all jubilee years with major events in biblical history as Warner's model insists. In addition, aligning the release of the Jews from exile with a jubilee model in this particular way actually demonstrates that it is not necessary to add 20 theoretical years that are not mentioned or numbered in the straightforward counts of the reigns of the kings in the books of Kings and Chronicles. Ultimately, any model that makes multiple assumptions in order to line up all jubilee years to major events cannot object to making one exegetical decision to line up a single, non-controversial jubilee year to the release of the Jews from exile as plainly necessitated by Jeremiah's prophecies.

The Book of Ezra continues the account of these important events, picking up at the end of the exile. According to Ezra, it was in the seventh month of the year that the Jewish exiles who'd left Babylon were again living in their cities (in Judah) and in Jerusalem. At that same time they reconstructed the altar of the Temple and were using it again for regular sacrifices. (See Ezra 2:1 and 3:1-4.) As Ezra 3:1 and 4 show, this all occurred in the Fall of the year just after Rosh Hashanah. The narrative also shows that this was the Fall after the year in which Cyrus issued his decree. In this scenario, Cyrus' decree was given in 70th year of Jeremiah's 70 years and Rosh Hashanah marked the start of a new year. Consequently, the 70th year of Jeremiah's prophecy would have been completed by the time of these events in early Ezra. And the Jewish people would have returned to Judah and Jerusalem and reestablished Temple worship ending their Babylonian exile at the onset of the 71st year since the 4th year of Jehoiakim.

This would be precisely in accordance with the completion of 70 full years just as Jeremiah had prophesied and as Ezra 1:1 records.

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. 5 Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem. 6 And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was willingly offered. 7 Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; 8 Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. 9 And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives, 10 Thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand. 11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem. 2:1 Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city...3:1 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. 2 Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God. 3 And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, even burnt offerings morning and evening. 4 They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required;

Ultimately, these observations show that the chronology wherein Jeremiah's 70 years begin at Jehoiakim's 4th year is a valid understanding of this period. Under this scenario, there would be only 50 full years between the destruction of the Temple and Cyrus' decree and Cyrus' decree was itself given in the 51st year

after the destruction of the Temple. These 51 years are added to the 19 years that Nebuchadnezzar reigned from Jehoiakim's 4th year to the destruction of the Temple and the result is 70 years in service to the Babylonians consisting also of various desolations (or depopulations of Judah and Jerusalem).

We should also mention the confirming nature of the relationship Jeremiah 34 has to both Daniel 9:25 and this chronology. As we discussed Jeremiah 34 earlier in our study we noted that there was good reason to conclude that Jeremiah was identifying the 11th year of Zedekiah as a sabbatical year. However, when Zedekiah and his nobles refused to honor the sabbatical year, God instead proclaimed liberty to them. By the end of that year, Zedekiah and all but the poorest of the people were taken captive to Babylon and both Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. As we observed previously, the language of this declaration indicates that the next year (the year after Zedekiah's 11th year) was a jubilee year.

Similarly, Daniel 9:25 informs us that the decree to rebuild Jerusalem would be followed by 7 weeks and 62 weeks. As Warner explains in his chronology study Daniel 9:25's reference to weeks of years is derived from Leviticus 25. Leviticus 25 requires Israel to keep a sabbatical year in every 7th year just as they kept a Sabbath day on every 7th day of the week. Furthermore, as we've seen, Leviticus 25 requires that after every 7 weeks of years a jubilee year should be held. Therefore, as Warner observes, Daniel 9:25's reference to a period of 7 weeks of years is a reference to the jubilee cycle as established in Leviticus 25.

Chronologists and commentators have also been unable to adequately explain **why the countdown to Messiah is not given as merely "69 weeks," but is instead given as 7 weeks plus 62 weeks. Why divide the period of 69 weeks without any explanation? Once again, the problem is the failure to consider the Sabbatical year agricultural calendar. Leviticus 25 goes on to prescribe a long cycle of 7 of these Sabbatical weeks plus one year – the Jubilee Year...The reason the prophecy is given in "weeks" is to inform us that it is using the Sabbatical Week calendar. The reason the 69 week period is divided into 7 weeks plus 62 weeks is to mark off the first Jubilee cycle, so that we know the prophecy is being given on the Sabbatical – Jubilee calendar,** reminding us to include the intercalated Jubilee years, one for every 7 weeks. – Tim Warner, Daniel's 70 Weeks On Second Thought, www.answersinrevelation.org

As we have seen, observations (which Warner presents in his study) give us good reason to conclude that Daniel 9:25 is stating that the decree to rebuild Jerusalem would be followed by a jubilee cycle. Warner has therefore provided exegetical support for the conclusion that not only is Cyrus' decree the decree of Daniel 9:25, but that the year of Cyrus' decree was itself a jubilee year. And, as we have seen, in his study Warner does indeed identify the year of Cyrus' decree as a jubilee year. Likewise, as we have seen Warner argues in favor of the biblically and historically sound conclusion that Cyrus' decree brought an end to the 70 years prophesied in Jeremiah 25:11.

Warner's own observations coupled with the scriptural details they are based upon provide us with very good reason to conclude that both Jeremiah 34 and Daniel 9:25 identify jubilee years. Daniel 9:25's indication that the year of Cyrus' decree was a jubilee year provides reasonable confirmation for the conclusion that Jeremiah 34 likewise identifies a jubilee year in the year after Zedekiah's 11th year. We have good biblical reason to conclude that God is using these two prophets to provide historical chronologies for this otherwise exceptional, obscure duration of time and connecting them to one another for us through the use of prophesied amounts of time involving sabbatical and jubilee years. And, if Jeremiah 34 is in fact indicating that the year after Zedekiah's 11th year was a jubilee year, then the year after the Temple's destruction and the year of Cyrus' decree were jubilee years. This then would constitute good support for the conclusion that there were only 50 years after the destruction of Jerusalem and Temple before the year of Cyrus' decree. The city and Temple were destroyed in Nebuchadnezzar's 19th year, followed by 50 more years in servitude and exile, and with Cyrus' decree in the 51st year for a total of 70 years. The first of these events took place in the year before a jubilee so that the poor would be free from the start of the jubilee year and the second of these events took place on a jubilee year so that the Jews would be set free. The thematic parallel between these events itself at least requires that we consider this possibility.

Additionally, since sabbatical years and jubilee years both began in Tishri and the start of these years was heralded by trumpets, Ezekiel 40:1 could possibly be understood to indicate the occurrence of a sabbatical year in the 14th year after Jerusalem was destroyed. However, this would potentially conflict with our model given that our model identifies the first year after the destruction of Jerusalem as a jubilee year. Counting 13 years later for a total of 14 years since the destruction of the city (as noted in Ezekiel 40) would result in the year before a sabbatical year. With a jubilee in the year after the destruction of the city, in order for Ezekiel 40 to occur in a sabbatical year, Ezekiel would have needed to state that it was the 15th year since the destruction of the city.

However, a survey of the Book of Ezekiel reveals that we probably shouldn't make too much of the reference to the "fourteenth year." While two sabbatical cycles do take up fourteen years, not every fourteen year period concluded a sabbatical cycle. In addition, Ezekiel has other significant visions which could not have taken place in sabbatical years.

According to 2 Chronicles 36:9-11, 17-20 and 2 Kings 24:8-18, Jehoiachin reigned for 3 months before he was deported to Babylon along with his family, his servants, his court, and all but the poor at which time his brother Zedekiah was made king and reigned for 11 years before Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. In Ezekiel 40:1, Ezekiel identifies that he received the vision recorded in that chapter 14 years after the destruction of Jerusalem and 25 years after he himself was taken to Babylon. This means Ezekiel was taken to Babylon 11 years before the destruction of the city, which tells us Ezekiel was taken captive to Babylon along with Jehoiachin at the start of Zedekiah's 11-year reign.

According to the text of Ezekiel, we find that he has visions in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity (Ezekiel 1:2), in the sixth year of Jehoiachin's captivity (Ezekiel 8:1), the seventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity (Ezekiel 20:1), in the ninth year of Jehoiachin's captivity (Ezekiel 24:1), and in the eleventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity (Ezekiel 26:1), and so on. For our purposes here, it is not necessary to identify any of these particular years as sabbatical or jubilee years. Nor is it necessary to identify how the years in these chapters relate to or line up with the vision of Ezekiel 40. The point is that Ezekiel is having visions every year or every other year in many cases and, above all, clearly not all of these visions or years can be sabbatical or jubilee year. Consequently, we should not expect that it is a special event such as a sabbatical or jubilee year that occasions Ezekiel's vision in the 25th year of Jehoiachin's captivity, which also happens to be fourteen years after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Given these observations what reason would we have for rejecting the conclusion that Jeremiah 34 is identifying the occurrence of a jubilee year and the resulting 50-year chronology between the destruction of the Temple and Cyrus' decree in the 51st year? A desire to avoid a contradiction with Warner's overall chronological model cannot be the basis for rejecting these otherwise exegetically viable conclusions. To do so would seem contrary to the need to let exegetical data take the lead in deriving our chronological models rather than letting our chronological models drive our exegesis.

These scriptural considerations lead us to conclude that placing the start of Jeremiah's 70 years at Jehoiakim's 4th year is valid both biblically and chronologically and without necessitating the addition of 20 otherwise unrecorded years into the biblical count. However, we will also analyze the alternative scenario proposed by Warner's most recent chronology study in which Warner asserts that Jeremiah's 70 years don't begin until the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.