

Chronology 316: Timeline of Biblical World History



biblestudying.net

Brian K. McPherson and Scott McPherson
Copyright 2012

Period Four: From the Beginning of Solomon's Reign to the Destruction of the Temple (Part 3B)

Evaluating Biblical Evidence Relevant to Calculating the Period of the Kings of Judah

8. Another passage Warner points to as confirmation of his method of adding 20 years to the counts provided in the books of Kings and Chronicles and as confirmation of his 120 jubilee chronology of history is Jeremiah 34.

Fourth, **Jeremiah indicated that the year Nebuchadnezzar had Jerusalem under siege, the year before He destroyed it and burned the Temple, 10 was a Sabbatical year...In our chronology, the year of Nebuchadnezzar's siege was a Sabbatical year.** – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God's Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

It is important to notice Warner's comment that the year of the siege was a sabbatical year according to Jeremiah 34 and that this was "the year before" Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. The year Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed was the end of the 11th year of Zedekiah.

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.**

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,

2 Kings 25:2 And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah...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.**

And although Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed in Zedekiah's 11th year, the question arises as to which year Jeremiah 34 is discussing. Is the setting for this prophecy the 10th or 11th year of Zedekiah? The timing cues for this segment of Jeremiah can be found in chapters 32 and 39.

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

Jeremiah 39:2 And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth day of the month, the city was broken up.

Jeremiah 32:1 denotes that the tenth year of Zedekiah had begun. However, it only denotes the year, not the month. So we do not know how far into the tenth year this is. It could be early or it could be late. In addition, this is two chapters before Jeremiah 34. How much time had expired over the course of the intervening chapter? And by the time the eleventh year of Zedekiah is mentioned in Jeremiah 39:1, it is already the fourth month. For reasons that will be discussed later, we can conclude that Jeremiah is counting months starting from Passover in Nisan in the Spring, which was designated the first month of the year. Rosh Hoshanah, which marked the beginning of each new year of a king's reign, was in autumn at the beginning of the seventh month after Nisan. Consequently, when Jeremiah 39 says that it is the fourth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, it is likely that he is denoting that there were just two months remaining before the next Rosh Hoshanah at the beginning of the seventh month, at which point the twelfth year of Zedekiah would have begun. In short, since the tenth year of

Zedekiah is already underway two chapters earlier and since the eleventh year of Zedekiah is very near to completion in chapter 39, there is plenty of room to suspect that it is already early in the eleventh year of Zedekiah when the prophecy of Jeremiah 34 is given. This will become important later as we consider the timing of the Jewish release from exile.

Setting aside the exact year of Jeremiah 34, we turn to the next important item from Jeremiah. Jeremiah 34:1 and 34:8-17 do provide a good indication of the occurrence of a sabbatical year. The passage explains that Zedekiah and all the people made a covenant to proclaim liberty to all of their male and female servants. But, afterwards they changed their minds and instead made these servants return to their servitude (v. 8-11). In response to this, God invokes the sabbatical commands which required the proclamation of liberty to servants every seventh year, and God declares that because Zedekiah and the people did not obey God's sabbatical commands, God would destroy Jerusalem and the Temple (v. 1, 12-16).

Jeremiah 34:1 The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities thereof, saying... **8 This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which were at Jerusalem, to proclaim (07121) liberty (01865) unto them; 9 That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, being an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, to wit, of a Jew his brother. 10** Now when all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his manservant, and every one his maidservant, go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let them go. **11 But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids. 12 Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 13 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen, saying, 14 At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear. 15 And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming (07121) liberty (01865) every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name: 16 But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom ye had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids. 17 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming (07121) liberty (01865), every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim (07121) a liberty (01865) for**

you, saith the LORD, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

Yet despite the evidence of a sabbatical year in Jeremiah 34, there are several potential obstacles to Warner's conclusion that Jeremiah 34 confirms option three and its corollary of inserting 20 years into the history of the kings to maintain correspondence with a proposed jubilee chronology. As we recall from Leviticus, there were seven cycles of sabbatical years for a total of 49 years before reaching the 50th year, which was a jubilee year. The first obstacle involves the question of which sabbatical year this was in the set of seven sabbatical years that preceded each jubilee year.

As both Warner and Jeremiah 34:8 and 17 indicate, sabbatical years, like jubilee years, involved the proclamation of liberty. In fact, Isaiah 61:1 also makes reference to the proclamation of liberty to the captives. Notice also the immediate reference in verse 2 to the proclamation of "the acceptable year of the Lord." In the immediate context of liberty to the captives, such phrasing singling out a peculiar year is very plausibly a reference to either a sabbatical or a jubilee year. However, the term "acceptable year" is not specific enough to identify which of those two options the text has in mind.

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim (07121) liberty (01865) to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn...

In his current studies, Warner interprets Isaiah 61:1 to be a jubilee year, not a sabbatical year.

The second coming of Christ will occur on a Jubilee year, when "liberty" is proclaimed, as Isaiah proves. Isaiah 61:1-7... Compare this passage with the following instructions for the Jubilee year: Lev. 25:8-11... – Tim Warner, The 120 Jubilee Year Calendar, www.120jubilees.org

In Leviticus 25, we learn of God's Jubilee calendar of 50-year cycles which God commanded Israel to observe. The 50th year is called the "year of release" or "year of liberty" because all land reverted back to its original owner and all debts were cancelled. – Tim Warner, The 120 Jubilee Year Calendar, www.120jubilees.org

Ultimately, Warner's identification of Isaiah 61:1 as a reference to a jubilee year is supported by the biblical use of the Hebrew phrasing itself. The Hebrew phrase "proclaim liberty" is found in only three places in the Old Testament. It is used in Isaiah 61:1. It is used in Jeremiah 34:8, 15, and 17. And, it is first used in Leviticus 25:10 where it is a clear reference to the jubilee year.

Leviticus 25:10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim (07121) liberty (01865) throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.

The origin and unique association of the Hebrew phrase “proclaim liberty” with the jubilee year in Leviticus 25:10 substantiates Warner’s conclusion that Isaiah is referring to a jubilee year on the basis of Isaiah’s use of the same Hebrew phrase “proclaim liberty.” Likewise, although the releasing of captives in Jeremiah 34:8-10 is equally indicative of sabbatical years, we cannot disregard the fact that the phrase “proclaim liberty” itself, as it originates in Leviticus 25:10, refers to jubilee years, not sabbatical years.

However, we should also note that God is not quoting Leviticus 25 in Jeremiah 34:13-14. While Leviticus 25 repeatedly mentions letting the land lie fallow every seventh year, in Leviticus 25 the concept of restoring land to the rightful owner and releasing captives pertains to the jubilee year (Leviticus 25:8-10, 39-41). Yet in verses 13-14 of Jeremiah 34, God specifically describes how “in the day” that he brought Israel “out of the land of Egypt” he commanded them, “At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years.” Notice that God’s quotation here in verses 13-14 does not mention the 50th year or the jubilee. Instead, God refers to a command to release servants every seventh year after six years of service. This command comes explicitly from God in Deuteronomy 15.

Deuteronomy 15:1 At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. 2 And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD’S release. **3 Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again: but that which is thine with thy brother thine hand shall release;** 4 Save when there shall be no poor among you; for **the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it....12 And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee.**

Notice that like Jeremiah 34:9, here in Deuteronomy God focuses specifically on the release of Israelites from servitude in contradistinction from foreigners. Notice also that this release in Deuteronomy must be made every seven years. While Deuteronomy does not mention servitude, we already know from Leviticus 25 that debt was thought to be the primary means of entering a life of servitude. So, by requiring the release from debts, Deuteronomy 15 is very much mandating the release of servants. And notice lastly that here in Deuteronomy 15:4, God ties the practice of this release every seven years to his blessing and keeping the Israelites in the land. Likewise, it is the Israelites failure to keep their pledge to uphold the release in the 7th year that God cites as his reason for removing the Israelites from the land in Jeremiah 34:17. But most importantly, there is no mention of the jubilee anywhere in Deuteronomy 15. So, by quoting Deuteronomy 15 and not

Leviticus 25 in Jeremiah 34:13-14, it is clear that God must be referring at least initially to a sabbatical year.

Note our use of the word “initially.” By this, we mean to suggest that the first thing God refers to in Jeremiah 34 is a sabbatical year. But, as both we and Warner have already pointed out, the use of the phrase “proclaim liberty” in Jeremiah 34:8-10 originates in Leviticus 25:10 and is indicative of jubilee years, not sabbatical years. One strong probability that cannot be overlooked is that Jeremiah 34 may be referring to both a sabbatical year and a jubilee year. Jeremiah 34 provides good evidence for a sabbatical year since in verses 10 and 13-14 God himself invokes the sabbatical protocols in reference to Zedekiah’s pledge to free his servants. Then, in Jeremiah 34:15, God states that is was initially pleased with the pledge made by Zedekiah and the people because this pledge fulfilled this sabbatical release commanded in Leviticus. In verse 15, God explains, “And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming (07121) liberty (01865) every man to his neighbour.” But, Zedekiah and the people did not keep this pledge and so in verse 16, God rebukes them saying, “But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom ye had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection.” Consequently, God declares in verse 17 that because of their evil actions, “behold, I proclaim a liberty” which he would accomplish by making sure that Zedekiah and the people were “removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.”

The textual indications from Jeremiah 34, Isaiah 61, and Leviticus 25 make it entirely possible that not only was there a sabbatical year underway in Jeremiah 34, but also that it may, in fact, have been the seventh sabbatical year which was to be followed by a jubilee year. When Zedekiah and the people refused to obey the sabbatical commandment to proclaim liberty to the people their judgment was sealed and God instead proclaimed that the next year, the jubilee year, would contain a proclamation of liberty in which people were exiled and the Temple was destroyed.

(Regardless of whether we date this to the tenth or eleventh year of Zedekiah) if we take Jeremiah 34 as a report of the neglect of a seventh sabbatical year followed by God’s proclamation of the destruction of the Temple the following year, then this passage does not fit with Warner’s chronological model. In Warner’s model, Solomon’s 23rd year is identified as a jubilee year.

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 – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God’s Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

Warner’s calculation regarding the reigns of the kings of Judah after Solomon’s 23rd year contains a period of 430 years which ends at Zedekiah’s 11th 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.** – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God's Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

So, in Warner's chronology there is a 430-year period between the jubilee at Solomon's 23rd year and Zedekiah's 11th year. Likewise, Warner's chronology includes a 70-year period after Zedekiah's 11th year until the end of the Babylonian exile. (We will discuss the amount of time between the Temple's destruction and the end of the Babylonian captivity further in our next segment.) Warner identifies the year in which the Babylonian exile ended as 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

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

Warner's location of jubilee years at Solomon's 23rd year and at the end of the 70-year Babylonian exile is possible because, in Warner's chronology, those two events are separated by 500 years. This works since 500 is divisible by 50 and since jubilee years took place every 50 years. However, identifying Zedekiah's 10th or 11th year as a sabbatical year and the next year as a jubilee year would not work with Warner's model because in his model Zedekiah's 11th year takes place 430 years after Solomon's 23rd year and 70 years before the end of the Babylonian exile, both of which are jubilee years according to Warner. Since neither 430 nor 70 are divisible by 50, Warner's model does not allow for the year after Zedekiah's 10th or 11th year to be a jubilee year.

To be clear, we should state that it is also possible that Jeremiah 34 is declaring that Zedekiah's 10th year or 11th year was a sabbatical and that it was not followed by a jubilee year. If that is the case then, Jeremiah 34 would not necessarily conflict

with Warner's model and would easily work with Warner's calculations. However, Jeremiah 34 can just as reasonably be understood to indicate the occurrence of a sabbatical year in Zedekiah's 10th or 11th year followed by the occurrence of a jubilee the next year, which would conflict with Warner's model. The apparent basis for interpreting Jeremiah 34 to refer to Zedekiah's 10th or 11th year as a sabbatical year not followed by a jubilee year may be because it would support Warner's larger chronology. However, since both options seem just at least equally plausible exegetically, Jeremiah 34 cannot be used as confirmation of Warner's chronological method (option three) or his model and timetable over the alternatives.

Here again we see a familiar difficulty with taking Jeremiah 34 as confirmation of Warner's method for calculating the reigns of the kings of Judah. Simply put, other methods exist which do not insert an additional 20 years into this period and there remains is no clear exegetical grounds for dismissing these other options as incompatible with the occurrence of a sabbatical year in Zedekiah's 10th or 11th year of reign. While Jeremiah 34 may work with Warner's model, it may also work just as well with other models which don't add 20 years to this period. Therefore, Jeremiah 34 doesn't necessitate Warner's methodology nor confirm its superiority to other timekeeping approaches. And, as long as other timelines remain reasonably plausible on exegetical grounds, it remains a looming question as to whether there is any exegetical warrant for inserting some 20 unlisted years into the biblical chronology.

9. In his current chronology study, Warner offers Isaiah 37 as further confirmation for his methodology of inserting 20 additional years into the history of the kings of Judah and for his chronological model entailing 120 Jubilee cycles. Our examination of the issues surrounding Jeremiah 34 will help us understand this point as well.

Below Warner explains why he feels Isaiah 37 indicates that the 15th year of King Hezekiah was a sabbatical year that was followed by a jubilee year.

Third, Isaiah informs us that the 14th year of Hezekiah fell on a Sabbatical year followed immediately by a Jubilee year in Hezekiah's 15th year. The story is told in Isaiah 36-37 of the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, threatening Hezekiah and the kingdom of Judah in Hezekiah's 14th year. Hezekiah took the threatening letter to the Temple, and spread it before the Lord, praying earnestly for deliverance. Isaiah was sent to Hezekiah with the promise of God's protection, and a sign. The wording here was borrowed from Leviticus 25, which contains the commandments for observing the Sabbatical year and the Jubilee year. In a normal Sabbatical year they did not farm the land, but crops would spring up on their own. But, when a Jubilee year followed the 7th Sabbatical year, there were two consecutive years when the land was not farmed. The above passage indicates that "this year" (which was Hezekiah's 14th year) 9 was a Sabbatical year, and the following year (which was Hezekiah's 15th year) was a Jubilee year. In Hezekiah's 16th year the land would return again to normal farming. The chronology presented here agrees.

Hezekiah's 14th year falls on the year 3299AM, which was a Sabbatical year. His 15th year falls on the year 3300AM, the 66th Jubilee year. – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God's Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

Warner is correct in pointing out that Isaiah 37:30 does speak of two consecutive years wherein the people would eat what was produced by the land without the land being cultivated by the people during those years. And, he is correct to point out that these two years begin in Hezekiah's 14th year.

Isaiah 36:1 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them...37:30 And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.

The relevance of Isaiah 37 in regard to Warner's overall methodology can be summarized in two points. First, if Hezekiah's 15th year was a jubilee and if we could identify another sabbatical year or jubilee with an event or king later or earlier in this period, then it would be possible to determine if option three is necessary. We would simply count the number of years assigned in the biblical record to each king between Hezekiah's 15th year and the other hypothetical sabbatical or jubilee year. If the total number of years between them evenly divides into a combination of 50-year jubilee cycles plus 7-year sabbatical cycles, then there is clearly no need to regard the biblical record as missing years. On the other hand, if the total number of years between Hezekiah's 15th year and the other hypothetical sabbatical or jubilee year cannot be divided into a combination of 50-year jubilee cycles and 7-year sabbatical cycles, then perhaps we would have some confirmation that the reigns of the kings as recorded in the bible do not actually account for all the years of this period. In this case, perhaps inserting additional years for transitions from one king to the next might bring the total number of years to a number that would evenly divide into a combination of 50-year jubilee cycles and 7-year sabbatical cycles. Second, and perhaps far simpler, the two years without cultivating the land in Isaiah 37 are a reference to a sabbatical cycle followed by a jubilee cycle as first prescribed by Moses in Leviticus 25.

Regarding the first point, we have seen evidence in Jeremiah 34 that either Zedekiah's 10th or 11th year was a sabbatical year. In Jeremiah 34, God himself quotes Deuteronomy 15, a passage that only pertains to sabbatical years, not jubilee years. In the quote below Warner expresses that the 10th year was a sabbatical year. (We know that Warner intends to identify the 10th year of Zedekiah because he refers to it as "the year before" Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, which scripture plainly declares occurred in Zedekiah's 11th year – 2 Kings 25:2-9, 2 Chronicles 36:11-21.)

Fourth, Jeremiah indicated that the year Nebuchadnezzar had Jerusalem under siege, the year before He destroyed it and burned the Temple, 10 was a

Sabbatical year...In our chronology, the year of Nebuchadnezzar's siege was a Sabbatical year. – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God's Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

In addition, we have already done a detailed analysis of Jeremiah 34 in comparison to Leviticus 25 and Deuteronomy 15 and found evidence suggesting that not only was Zedekiah's 10th or 11th year a sabbatical year but that the following year was a jubilee year. Support for this notion includes the use of the unique phrase "proclaim liberty" in Jeremiah 34, which is a phrase only found in three places in the Old Testament: Jeremiah 34, Isaiah 61, and Leviticus 25 where it is used specifically concerning the jubilee year. Moreover, it is clear from the text of Jeremiah that the time designated for freeing the servants during a sabbatical year had already come and gone without fulfilling the promise of their release. Such a release would have to occur at the start of the jubilee year. And it is equally clear that when God remedies this failure by Himself proclaiming liberty for the Hebrew servants, it is after the start of that disregarded sabbatical year.

Counting backward from this jubilee year in Zedekiah's 10th or 11th year until we reach Hezekiah's 15th year gives us a very specific number if we use only the years recorded in Kings and Chronicles. Hezekiah reigns a total of 29 years and we would need to include in our count the 14 years after the jubilee year in his 15th year (2 Chronicles 28:27, 2 Chronicles 29:1). For the numbers regarding the rest of the kings, here again is the relevant portion of our list of the kings' reigns.

Hezekiah's son, **Manasseh reigned** over Judah **for 55 years** (2 Chronicles 32:33, 2 Chronicles 32:1).

Manasseh's son, **Amon reigned** over Judah **for 2 years** (2 Chronicles 33:20-21).

Amon's son, **Josiah reigned** over Judah **for 31 years** (2 Chronicles 33:25, 2 Chronicles 34:1).

Josiah's son, **Jehoahaz reigned** over Judah **for 3 months** (2 Chronicles 36:1-2).

Jehoahaz' brother, **Eliakim (or Jehoiakim) reigned** over Judah **for 11 years** until Nebuchadnezzar came and took him away to Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:5.)

Jehoiakim's son, **Jehoiachin reigned** over Judah **for 3 months** and was then taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 36:9).

Jehoiachin's brother, **Zedekiah reigned** over Judah **for 11 years** at which time Nebuchadnezzar came and exiled the remaining residents of Judah and burned Jerusalem, its walls, its houses, and the Temple. (2 Chronicles 26 and 2 Kings 23:36-25:18-21.)

If we total these numbers up, the result is 124 years between Hezekiah's 15th year and Zedekiah's 11th year. 124 years is enough time for 2 more jubilee years followed by 3 sabbatical years and 3 additional years of the next sabbatical cycle. If we are counting to Zedekiah's 10th year, then there are only 123 years between these two dates. 123 years is enough time for 2 more jubilee years followed by 3 sabbatical years and 2 additional years of the next sabbatical cycle. Consequently, the amount of years listed in Kings and Chronicles is not enough time to reach another sabbatical year by Zedekiah's 10th or 11th year. There would need to be

another 4 or 5 years missing from the biblical record in order to reach 128 years of total time after Hezekiah's 15th year and end up with a sabbatical year in Zedekiah's 10th or 11th year. At this point, the following question emerges. Does the fact that the number of years provided in Kings and Chronicles do not end up precisely with another sabbatical year in the 10th or 11th years of Zedekiah's reign confirm that years are missing from the records of the kings' reigns provided in Kings and Chronicles, as Warner's model suggests?

First, we should take note that there are 20 kings and 1 queen of Judah and adding 1 year to the timeline for each transitional year between them would result in the addition of 20 years. You wouldn't have to add a 21st year for the last king Zedekiah because his year ends at the exile without a transition to another king. But, since the potential discrepancy arose between the reigns of Hezekiah and Zedekiah, we should note that there are only eight kings in this portion of the succession, which means adding 7 transitional years. Adding 7 transitional years would result in 130 years between Hezekiah's 15th year and Zedekiah's 10th year, instead of the 123 years derived simply from using the years counted in Kings and Chronicles. Warner's model asserts that Zedekiah's 10th year was a sabbatical year, which would require 128 years. Consequently, adopting option three and its corollary of adding one year for each traditional year does not, resolve the hypothetical discrepancy.

Second, at this point it might seem sensible to reduce the number from 130 to 128 by simply not including a transitional year for Jehoahaz or Jehoiachin who each reigned for only 3 months. It should be noted that this scenario requires no longer applying option three straightforwardly but modifying it. And although plausible, such modification isn't substantiated by the biblical record. Excluding the addition of a transitional year for Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin only makes sense if their predecessors and successors each reigned within the same calendar year, creating a scenario in which three kings reigned during the same calendar year. In that case, there would be only one calendar year for the transition of these kings. But even though we know that Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin only reigned for 3 months each, the texts of scripture do not tell us whether those three months fell within a single calendar year. If those three months fell at the end of a calendar year so that one or two months were on either side of Rosh Hashanah and their predecessors or successors each reigned for the majority of a single, calendar year before and after their 3-month reign, then we would again need to include a transitional year for Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin. So, excluding them requires modifying option three based on an assumption that is not substantiated in the text. And without that assumption, even assuming the need to add one year for each transitional year will not result in the required duration of years between Hezekiah's 15th year and Zedekiah's 10th year, which Warner identifies as a sabbatical year. Since option three doesn't really resolve this seeming discrepancy without modification and additional unsubstantiated assumptions, it is difficult to regard the issue raised by Isaiah 37 as confirmation of option three and its corollary of adding a full year for each transitional year between the kings.

(Moreover, if the sabbatical year of Jeremiah 34 is in Zedekiah's 11th year rather than his 10th as Warner asserts, then adding 7 transitional years would result in 131 years between Hezekiah's 15th year and Zedekiah's 11th year, instead of the 124 years derived simply from using the years counted in Kings and Chronicles. In this case, simply not including a transitional year for Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin, would result in 129 years, which is one year too many and would be 1 year after a sabbatical year. Since the text of Jeremiah 34 makes it entirely possible that the sabbatical year is in Zedekiah's 11th year, we have to tack on one more assumption and presume it is the 10th year in order to maintain Warner's model and its precise identification of exact jubilee years.)

Third, in contrast it is noteworthy that a straightforward count of the numbers in Kings and Chronicles produces a total of 123 or 124 years, which is only 2-3 years more than a round number that would land directly on a sabbatical year. It seems somewhat remarkable that even under this interpretation of Isaiah 37, the data in Kings and Chronicles results in such a high degree of accuracy as to be only 2-3 years off. If we regard the data in Kings and Chronicles as though it were intended as merely a rough estimate based on rounding up partial years, it seems that even this interpretation of Isaiah 37 confirms having a high degree of confidence in such a straightforward count without assuming or adding any hypothetical, missing years. This puts us in a position where we must weigh two options which both require subtracting roughly 2-3 years from their total count, one based on regarding the data in scripture as a straightforward estimate and the other based on a possible, but scripturally unsubstantiated, insertion of 20 transitional years not mentioned in the scriptural record. In this light, when viewed side by side, neither option seems to be heads and shoulders above the other. And consequently, this consideration also makes it difficult to regard the issue raised by Isaiah 37 as confirmation of option three and its corollary of adding a full year for each transitional year between the kings.

Fourth, it is important to notice that whether we regard Kings and Chronicles as an estimate or whether we exclude Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin, neither of these two proposed scenarios will result in a jubilee year in Zedekiah's 11th year or the year after. Warner regards Zedekiah's 10th year as a sabbatical year but he does not regard Zedekiah's 11th year as a jubilee despite the strong evidence for a jubilee year presented in the text of Jeremiah 34, as we examined in depth in the previous segment. Indeed, despite the evidence in Jeremiah 34, Warner's model cannot acknowledge a jubilee in Zedekiah's 11th year because Warner himself places as jubilee year at the end of the exile, 70 years later.

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

Since jubilee years occurred every 50 years, there is not enough time to have a jubilee in Zedekiah's 11th year (or the year after) and another jubilee 70 years later at the end of the exile. For Warner, the end of the exile marks the completion

of a 500 year period and 50 jubilee cycles. The point here is that even if Warner is correct when he suggest that Isaiah 37 identifies a jubilee year in Hezekiah's 15th year, option three would not create a timeline that accounts for the necessary jubilee year in either Zedekiah's 11th year or the year after. Consequently, for this reason also it is difficult to regard Isaiah 37 as a confirmation of option three.

But beyond this, we must consider the strength of any model that insists Isaiah 37 contains cues of a jubilee year but simultaneously dismisses the cues of a jubilee year found in Jeremiah 34 in Zedekiah's 11th year or the year after. After all, Jeremiah 34 specifically identifies a sabbatical year that was not honored by the king followed by a year which God describes using unique jubilee language in the phrase "proclaim liberty." If this is not conclusive evidence that Zedekiah's 10th or 11th year was the last sabbatical year before the 50th year, a year of jubilee, then the bar is raised significantly concerning the evidence for a jubilee year in Isaiah 37. Since Warner's model dismisses the evidence for a jubilee year in Jeremiah 34, the text of Isaiah 37 must not provide any reasonable or plausible way to dismiss the evidence for a jubilee in that Isaiah 37. Otherwise, option three will again appear to rely on assumption and unsubstantiated selectivity.

This brings us to the second way in which Isaiah 37 is relevant to Warner's overall chronology and methodology. And it brings us to a direct examination of the evidence for a jubilee year in Isaiah 37. As noted earlier, the central evidence here is the assertion that the two years without cultivating the land in Isaiah 37 are a reference to a sabbatical cycle followed by a jubilee cycle as first prescribed by Moses in Leviticus 25. We will start by considering the language of Leviticus 25 in comparison to Isaiah 37.

Leviticus 25:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. 3 Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; 4 But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. 5 That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. 6 And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, 7 And for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat. 8 And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. 9 Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. 10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. 10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye

shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. 11 **A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed.** 12 For it is the jubile; it shall be holy unto you: **ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.**

Leviticus 25 clearly declares that in the seventh sabbatical cycle, there will be 2 back-to-back years in which the Israelites would eat whatever the land produced even though they would not cultivate it during those years. The first of these two years would be the sabbatical year and the second would be the jubilee year. We see this plainly in verses 4-7 and verses 10-12, which state that the Israelites will not reap or gather but they will eat what the land produces on its own.

We must also consider verses 20-25.

Leviticus 25:20 And if ye shall say, **What shall we eat the seventh year?** behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: 21 **Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year,** and it shall bring forth fruit **for three years.** 22 **And ye shall sow the eighth year,** and eat yet of **old fruit until the ninth year;** until her fruits come in ye shall eat of the old store. 23 The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. 24 And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. 25 If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.

Notice that these verses declare that the land was to lie uncultivated during the seventh and eighth year and would be sown again in the ninth year. It might be tempting at first to think that this reference to two, consecutive years without cultivating the land only refers to the 49th and 50th years when a sabbatical year is followed by the jubilee year. And there are perhaps two arguments that might be made to infer these verses pertain only to the 49th and 50th years, in which there would be a combination of a sabbatical year followed by a jubilee year.

First, verses 23-24 do indeed pertain to a jubilee year because these verses once again refer to the restoration of the land to the original ownership. This has only been associated with the jubilee year throughout Leviticus 25, not the sabbatical years. The immediate discussion of the jubilee year in verses 23-24 could suggest that verses 20-22 are meant only in regard to the seventh sabbatical cycle and the subsequent jubilee year.

Second, it might be tempting to suggest that the reason the Israelites have no food in the eighth year is because the eighth year is a jubilee year.

But, there are four problems with these two arguments.

Number one, there is the question “What shall we eat in the seventh year?” Likewise, verse 21 speaks of the “sixth year” and verse 22 speaks of the “eight

year” and “ninth year.” The most natural interpretation is that these designations refer to the literal sixth, seventh, and eighth years in a 50-year sequence, not to the 48th, 49th, and 50th years.

Number two, the text does not say, “What shall we eat in the 49th year?” or even “in the 50th year?” Use of the designations 49th or 50th would have relegated this instruction only to the end of the jubilee cycle. And the author clearly could have used such designations if he intended that meaning. After all, the author does use the designation “50th” in verses 10-11.

Number three, if the “sixth, seventh, and eighth years” refer to the 48th, 49th (sabbatical), and 50th (jubilee) years respectively, then what are we to make of the “ninth year” in verse 22? If these verses refer to the final sabbatical year and the jubilee year, then the “ninth year” is the first year in the next jubilee cycle. Yet here it is clearly being counted as part of the sequence of the preceding three years. It would be odd to have the author include the first year in the next jubilee cycle with the final years of the preceding jubilee cycle.

Number four, and most importantly, it might be tempting to suggest that the reason the Israelites have no food in the eighth year is because the eighth year is a jubilee year. However, in verse 22, God commands the Israelites to sow again in the eighth year, which strongly suggests the eighth year is not the jubilee year because in verse 11 God specifically prohibits the Israelites from sowing in the jubilee year.

Therefore, since the text cannot demand that the designations “sixth,” “seventh,” and “eighth” refer to 48th, 49th (sabbatical), and 50th (jubilee) years, it becomes evident that the author of Leviticus intended these designations to refer to any normal sabbatical cycle within the 50-year jubilee sequence. While all this may seem like an obscure point at first, it has an important impact on the discussion. These considerations mean that in any normal sabbatical cycle (i.e. not followed immediately by a jubilee year) the disruption of the pattern of sowing and reaping was understood to take up to three years before a full restoration of the cultivated food supply. In any normal sabbatical cycle, the Israelites would stop sowing and reaping after the sixth year and would recommence sowing in the eighth year. But most importantly, God explicitly says in verse 21-22 that the fallow land would produce food for three years and that the Israelites would eat that food into the ninth year. We might want to think of a sabbatical year followed by a jubilee year as two years without food cultivation resulting in two years without a harvest. But verses 20-21 is actually commanding one year without sowing (the seventh year) and, although sowing resumes in the eighth year, there is a need for God to provide enough food for three years, not two. As we have repeatedly by comparing Leviticus 25:11 and 22, the return to cultivation in the eighth year means this is not a jubilee cycle. And this means, in turn, that with just one year of disruption in cultivation to accommodate a normal sabbatical year, there would typically be three years of disruption in the cultivated food supply.

This is quite significant to the text of Isaiah 37. Since the designations “sixth year,” “seventh year,” and “eighth year” can refer to any normal sabbatical cycle (i.e. not a jubilee year), then two or even three consecutive years eating uncultivated food from fallow land is not unique to the combination of a sabbatical year and a jubilee year. As we have seen, Warner’s evidence for a jubilee year in the 15th year of Hezekiah’s reign stems from Isaiah 37’s description of two years without cultivation of the soil.

Third, Isaiah informs us that the 14th year of Hezekiah fell on a Sabbatical year followed immediately by a Jubilee year in Hezekiah’s 15th year. The story is told in Isaiah 36-37 of the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, threatening Hezekiah and the kingdom of Judah in Hezekiah’s 14th year. Hezekiah took the threatening letter to the Temple, and spread it before the Lord, praying earnestly for deliverance. **Isaiah was sent to Hezekiah with the promise of God’s protection, and a sign. The wording here was borrowed from Leviticus 25, which contains the commandments for observing the Sabbatical year and the Jubilee year. In a normal Sabbatical year they did not farm the land, but crops would spring up on their own. But, when a Jubilee year followed the 7th Sabbatical year, there were two consecutive years when the land was not farmed. The above passage indicates that “this year” (which was Hezekiah’s 14th year) 9 was a Sabbatical year, and the following year (which was Hezekiah’s 15th year) was a Jubilee year. In Hezekiah’s 16th year the land would return again to normal farming.** The chronology presented here agrees. Hezekiah’s 14th year falls on the year 3299AM, which was a Sabbatical year. His 15th year falls on the year 3300AM, the 66th Jubilee year. – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God’s Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

In fact, what we have seen from Leviticus is that even in normal sabbatical years (i.e. not followed by a jubilee year) God specified that the Israelites would be eating the fruit of the uncultivated land for three years. Consequently, the crucial piece of evidence in Isaiah 37, the two years without cultivation, turns out not to relate to the jubilee cycle at all. Consequently, we end up with rather strong evidence for a jubilee year in Zedekiah’s 11th year based on Jeremiah 34 and relatively no evidence for a jubilee year in Hezekiah’s 15th year based on Isaiah 36. And the first issue worth noting in light of this evidence is that the absence of a jubilee year in Hezekiah’s 15th year and the presence of a jubilee year in Zedekiah’s 11th year results in a displacing Warner’s 50-year jubilee cycles by more than 20 years, making it exceedingly difficult to adopt his overall chronology, which already adds 20 years beyond the years recorded in the scriptures for the reigns of the kings.

Another issue is worth noting regarding the evidence for a jubilee year in Isaiah 37. In the previous segment, we cited the two quotes below from Warner in which he discusses indicative language from Isaiah 61 concerning the year of jubilee.

The second coming of Christ will occur on a Jubilee year, when “liberty” is proclaimed, as Isaiah proves. Isaiah 61:1-7...Compare this passage with the

following instructions for the Jubilee year: Lev. 25:8-11... – Tim Warner, The 120 Jubilee Year Calendar, www.120jubilees.org

In Leviticus 25, we learn of God’s Jubilee calendar of 50-year cycles which God commanded Israel to observe. The 50th year is called the “year of release” or “year of liberty” because all land reverted back to its original owner and all debts were cancelled. – Tim Warner, The 120 Jubilee Year Calendar, www.120jubilees.org

In these comments, Warner expresses that language pertaining to the proclamation of liberty relates to the original instructions concerning the jubilee year from Leviticus 25. In addition, he asserts that Isaiah 61 can be identified as a description of a jubilee year based upon the inclusion of such phrases phrase “proclaim liberty to the captives” in Isaiah 61:1-7, which Warner notes is similar to Leviticus 25:8-11.

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, **to proclaim (07121) liberty (01865) to the captives**, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;
2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn...

When we turn to Isaiah 37, however, we find no reference to such hallmark phrases as “year of release,” “year of liberty,” or most importantly “proclaim liberty,” although we certainly found explicit references to such phrasing in Jeremiah 34’s description of either Zedekiah’s 11th year or the year after, which Warner does not regard as a jubilee year. So, on the one hand, Isaiah 37’s description of the land lying fallow for 2 years is perfectly fitting to any normal sabbatical year and not at all indicative of a jubilee year in particular. And on the other hand, we find none of the other hallmark language associated with jubilee years in Isaiah 37. At this point, evidence for a jubilee year in Hezekiah’s 15th year seems to be ebbing away, particularly in contrast to the evidence for a jubilee year in either Zedekiah’s 11th year or the year after, which as we have said would shift Warner’s central timetable by 20 years or more.

Nevertheless, if Isaiah 37 is describing a sabbatical year in Hezekiah’s 14th year, are we still left with a scenario in which the number of years recorded for the reigns of the kings in the books of Chronicles and Kings falls short of the 128 years that would be necessary? After all, there are only 125 years between Hezekiah’s 14th year and Zedekiah’s 11th year and only 126 years if we count to the year after Zedekiah’s 11th year, one of which we have identified as a jubilee year. This would be 2-3 years too few to accommodate both a sabbatical year at the beginning and a jubilee year at the end. Or, since Warner has identified Hezekiah’s 15th year a jubilee year according to Isaiah 37 and Zedekiah’s 10th year as a sabbatical year, we would have 123 years. But this is still 5 years too few. Does this prove that the number of years recorded in Kings and Chronicles is

incomplete and certain years, such as transitional years, are missing from the count, even if the rest of Warner's timetable seems increasingly precarious?

With this question, we arrive at the final aspect of Isaiah 37 that needs to be examined. A close look at the text of the passage has revealed no necessity to infer a jubilee year at all. At this point we might consider the question, how strong is the evidence necessitating a sabbatical year? Throughout this exploratory study, we have consistently argued that amending of the total count of years (by adding 20 years that are theoretically missing) fundamentally suggests that the text was not intended and is not sufficiently suited for producing an accurate total chronology for this period of biblical history. In which case, trying to tease a precise count of years out of the text would run contrary to the intent of its authors and in the end, any chronology derived from such a method would ultimately undermine the sufficiency of the very data it depends upon. So, as we assess the necessity for placing a sabbatical year in Isaiah 37 and Hezekiah's 14th (or even 15th year), we must keep in mind that the caliber of the evidence should be of such a quality as to warrant characterizing the biblical record of the years of the kings as incomplete and in need of amendment by the insertion of some twenty missing years.

At this point, we should also take a moment to briefly review an issue that was discussed under Point Number 7 above. As we have seen, Ezekiel 40:1 refers to the twenty-fifth year of captivity fourteen years after Jerusalem was destroyed with the phrase "in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month." This phrase bears remarkable similarity to phrasing used with regard to the jubilee year in Leviticus 25:9, which states, "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth *day* of the seventh month." When commenting on this similarity in 2009, Warner concluded that this similarity tells us that the twenty-fifth year after the start of the captivity, which was also the 14th year since the destruction of Jerusalem, was a jubilee year.

Beginning in Ezekiel 40:1, Ezekiel received his final vision. It was of Christ's coming Kingdom and Temple. **Ezekiel wrote that his vision occurred the 14th year from the destruction of the Temple.** Adding these 14 years to the year of the destruction of the Temple, 3405AM, places Ezekiel's final vision in the year 3419AM. **In the same verse, Ezekiel wrote that his vision occurred on the 10th day of the month, on "rosh hashana" (new year). The only time "rosh hashanna" falls on the 10th day of the month is the commencement of the Jubilee year. 6 Ezekiel has therefore informed us that his final vision began on the first day of a Jubilee year.** – The Coming Millennial Sabbath – Part II, Tim Warner, Copyright © July, 2009, answersinrevelation.org

Warner also explains when Ezekiel's vision in chapter 40 takes place in comparison to the end of the exile.

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

According to Warner, Ezekiel's vision took place 25 years after the 70 years of exile began. Since Ezekiel's vision took place 25 years after the exile began and the exile lasted 70 years, there would be only 45 years remaining between Ezekiel's vision and the end of the exile. Although Warner does not comment on it here, the fact that jubilee years are 50 years apart means that the next jubilee year would occur 5 years after the exile ended. However, in his current analysis regarding jubilee years, Warner writes the following.

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

As we can see, Warner currently concludes that the end of the exile was a jubilee year. But this would be 5 years too early if Ezekiel's vision in chapter 40 occurs in a jubilee year that is 25 years after the start of the exile and only 45 years from the end of the exile. Contrarily, Warner's assertion that the exile ends with a jubilee year suggests that he no longer views Ezekiel's vision 45 years earlier as a jubilee year. What this examination shows is that even within Warner's analysis, sometimes similarities between phrasing in Leviticus 25 and the prophets is not sufficient to conclude with certainty that the prophet is denoting a jubilee year. And this provides additional motivation to make sure that any apparent or initial similarity between Isaiah 37 and Leviticus 25 actually necessitates a jubilee year in Isaiah 37. Like Ezekiel 40, ultimately the similarity may not be enough to conclude with certainty that the author meant to denote a jubilee.

When we come to the text of Isaiah, the critical question can be asked more specifically. Without any references in the passage to phrases like "proclaiming liberty" or "year of release" that would be indicative of a jubilee year, the entire question of whether there is a sabbatical year hangs on the description of the land lying uncultivated. We have already seen from Leviticus 25 that sabbatical years were characterized by the land lying uncultivated and the Israelites living for three years off of food from the previous cultivation. So, that must be considered a viable possibility. However, the text provides two pieces of evidence that something else entirely might be occurring and causing the interruption in cultivation, not a sabbatical year.

The immediately preceding chapter, Isaiah 36, describes how in the 14th year of Hezekiah, King Sennacherib of Assyria sent his commanding officer Rabshakeh along with his army to encamp outside Jerusalem to besiege it.

Isaiah 36:1 Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them. **2** And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field...**10** And am I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? the LORD said unto

me, Go up against this land, and destroy it. 11 Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall. 12 **But Rabshakeh said,** Hath my master sent me to thy master and to thee to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall, that **they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?** 13 **Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language,** and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. 14 Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you. 15 Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us: this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. 16 Hearken not to Hezekiah: **for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me: and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern;** 17 **Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.**

Notice from the passage that Rabshekah, commander of the Assyrian army, makes a speech to the Jewish people listening on the city wall. In his speech, he specifically makes an appeal to them, offering to let them come out of the city and "eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree" if they surrender and agree to submit. He finishes the speech by letting them know that when they surrender, eventually they will be taken away to eat corn, wine, and bread and drink wine in a foreign land, rather than from their own crops and vineyards in Israel.

Isaiah 37 begins with King Hezekiah's response when he hears the news of Rabshekah's words to the people. He tears his clothes, puts on sackcloth, and goes to the Temple to petition God for mercy and deliverance from this specific threat.

Isaiah 37:1 And it came to pass, **when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.**

After Hezekiah concludes his prayer, beginning in verse 21 Isaiah the prophet gives him a message from God conveying the Lord's reply to his prayer. It is near the middle of Isaiah's message in verse 30 that we find God's promise to Hezekiah concerning the land lying uncultivated and yet the food supply remaining sufficient for three years.

Isaiah 37:21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, **Thus saith the LORD God of Israel,** Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria: 22 This is the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee...30 **And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself;**

and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.

The first piece of evidence indicating that verse 30 is not meant to identify a sabbatical year stems from the fact that the content of verse 30 is already fully explained by the immediate textual and historical context. The city is besieged. The Assyrian army is encamped in a field outside Jerusalem's walls. Rabshekah, the commander of the army, has specifically offered the people the ability to tend and eat from their own crops if they surrender. And he has informed them of his intent to take away to eat and drink from crops in a foreign land. We simply do not need to look all the way back to Leviticus 25 or to the sabbatical year in a chapter that has no mention of releasing debts or servants in order to explain the disruption in the cultivation of the soil or God's promise that the food supply will be sufficient despite this lack of cultivation. In this textual and historical context, the lack of cultivation and the need for a supernaturally sustained food supply all result directly from the siege. There is simply no need for and no mention of any other characteristics of a sabbatical year.

The second piece of evidence indicating that verse 30 is not meant to identify a sabbatical year stems from the fact that verse 30 begins by stating that this will be a "sign" to Hezekiah. On this point, it would be helpful to take a brief detour. Chapter 38 of Isaiah provides a parallel account of an event that is also recorded in 2 Kings 20 in which God promises Hezekiah that he will recover from his failing health and live 15 more years. In 2 Kings 20:8, Hezekiah asks for a sign confirming that this word is true. In response in verse 9, God agrees to provide a sign and gives Hezekiah 2 options. God would either make the shadow on the sundial go forward 10 degrees or backward 10 degrees. In verse 10, Hezekiah replies, "It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees." So the Lord does as Hezekiah asks and verse 11 records that God caused the shadow to move backward.

Here Hezekiah's point is straightforward. The sun normally moved the shadow forward on the sundial as the day proceeds. Consequently, Hezekiah did not think the normal, expected course of events satisfied as a sufficient sign. For Hezekiah, a sign was something that broke significantly from the normal occurrence. In fact, the Hebrew word for sign in both 2 Kings 20:8 and in Isaiah 37:30 is the word "owth" (Strong's No. 0226), which reflects the idea of "a distinguishing mark" in the sense of something abnormal or uncommon.

The relevant point here is that letting the land lie uncultivated and yet having supernatural preservation of the food supply for 3 years was the usual occurrence during sabbatical years. In fact, it was the prescribed norm that Israelites were instructed by God to expect every seventh year. Consequently, in a sabbatical year, it would not necessarily have been unexpected or abnormal for the Israelites, particularly under a faithful king like Hezekiah, to let the land lie fallow and yet have food for 3 years. That last point is worth reemphasizing. 2 Chronicles 29:2 characterizes him, saying, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done." 2 Chronicles 31:20 and

32:32 testify that Hezekiah “wrought that which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God.” 2 Chronicles 31:2-3 describes how Hezekiah kept the ritual practices for the sabbaths, new moons, and set feasts. In fact, 2 Chronicles 31:10 describes how during his reign, God blessed the people who had enough to eat and had plenty in the storehouse. Such descriptions are highly suggestive that Hezekiah probably would have kept the sabbatical commandments from Leviticus and that God was keeping his promise to provide food for them, even as God had promised during sabbatical years. There is something potentially very telling about God’s choice to characterize 3 years’ worth of food from uncultivated land as a “sign” to a faithful king who likely kept sabbatical laws, who already enjoyed divine provision of crops, and who defined “signs” as something contrary to the usual course of events. These cultural and historical facts suggest that on this particular occasion, God’s provision of 3 years’ of food while the land remained uncultivated was not according to the normal, prescription of sabbatical years. It was outside the normal course and its occurrence outside the sabbatical cycle, outside the normal pattern, was precisely what made it function as a sign to Hezekiah. And in any case, it is difficult to insist that the uncultivated land and the sustained food supply was a sabbatical year when the text of the passage describes it as a sign, which infers it was outside the normal order established by God.

Does the historical context of the siege, Rabshekah’s particular promise concerning crops and food, and God’s characterization of the 3 year supply of food as a “sign” prove conclusively that Isaiah 37 cannot be describing a sabbatical year? Perhaps not conclusively. But it does show that there are plausible, even reasonable indications in the text that Isaiah 37:30 does not need to refer to a sabbatical year. And if the immediate textual and historical context of Isaiah 37 provides reasonable alternatives to the idea of a sabbatical year, we must again ask what detail in Isaiah 37 is such strong proof for a sabbatical year that it demands characterizing the account of years in Kings and Chronicles as missing decades of unrecorded years and necessitates inserting otherwise unrecorded years into the biblical accounts? Essentially, the text of Isaiah provides us with two options. One requires that biblical chronologists left out some 20 years (one for each transitional year) and the other requires taking the available explanation from the passage itself that Isaiah 37 is about the siege and an unusual supernatural provision, not a sabbatical year, in which case the the data in Kings and Chronicles remains entirely sufficient.

Ultimately, these biblical considerations make it difficult to conclude that Isaiah 37 is indicating that Hezekiah’s 14th and 15th years were a sabbatical year followed by a jubilee year. Therefore, it is hard to accept these passages as confirmation of Warner’s insertion of 20 years into the history of the kings of Judah as it is provided by the biblical authors or as confirmation of the 120 jubilee calendar chronology that this added 20 years maintains.

10. Brief mention should be made of two historical sources that Warner feels also confirm his methodology and chronological model. They are Clement of Alexandria and Josephus.

We have also two extra-biblical sources which confirm our chronology of the kings. Clement of Alexandria calculated from the end of David's reign to the destruction of Jerusalem, from the reign of David to the captivity by the Chaldeans, four hundred and fifty-two years and six months.'¹¹ **Our chronology agrees,** calculated as follows: Solomon's reign until God appeared to Him threatening the destruction of the Temple – 23 years; from God's threat until the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar – 430 years. This gives a total of 453 years, only six months more than Clement's calculation. [11 Endnote 11 : Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, Bk. I, ch. Xxi] **Josephus calculated the entire period of the kings, from Saul until the Babylonian captivity, as follows:** ,... for before their captivity, and the dissolution of their polity, they at first had kingly government from Saul and David for **five hundred and thirty-two years, six months, and ten days;** but before those kings, such rulers governed them as were called judges and monarchs.'¹² Our calculations are: Saul – 40 years¹³; David 40 years; Solomon – 23 years from the beginning of his reign until God appeared to him threatening the Temple's destruction; Solomon's remaining years plus all the kings of Judah – 430 years. **This gives a total of 533 years, only 6 months more than Josephus' calculation.** [12 Endnote 12: Josephus, Antiquities, Book XI, ch. IV, 8] – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God's Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

There are several points that should be mentioned as we consider whether these historical sources confirm Warner's chronological method and model.

As Warner states, these are “extra-biblical sources.” Our purpose (and Warner's purpose) is to derive a calculation of world history using biblical sources alone. Therefore, the findings of other, non-biblical sources have a secondary value to what can be determined from the scriptural data itself. The value of extra-biblical sources is to confirm our biblically derived calculations. To be clear, Warner is not using these extra-biblical sources to calculate the biblical data itself. He is merely using them to confirm the accuracy of his results.

We must remember that other chronologists and historians are not biblical authors. Likewise, we must remember that while some chronologists may agree with our calculations, there are others who may not. Presenting those sources which agree with our calculations doesn't prove the soundness of our model any more than presenting sources that disagree with our conclusions shows our model to be unsound. We must be leery that citing extra-biblical sources can, therefore, be a selective exercise in which we only present findings that agree with our results or which share our methodology. The bottom line is that correspondence between our calculations and the calculations of another non-biblical chronologist only demonstrates that two non-biblical, uninspired chronologists (ourselves and the other source) arrived at the same results. This correspondence only necessarily shows that both sources may have employed similar methodologies and interpretational choices when making their calculations. The correspondence doesn't necessitate that those choices or the results they produce are biblically sound or that they are the only sound options. Warner's characterizes these as

“independent witnesses testifying that our calculations and underlying assumptions are correct” (JUBILEE CALENDAR, God’s Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.oasischristianchurch.org/jubilee/Cyrus.pdf). But, in reality, these witnesses can’t testify that our calculations and underlying assumptions are actually correct. Instead, they can only testify that they agree with our calculations and underlying assumptions.

An example of the kinds of deficiency which can be involved in citing extra-biblical sources as confirmation of our calculations is readily available. As we have seen Warner cites Josephus as confirmation of his calculation and underlying assumptions about the chronology of the period of the kings. Here, Warner points out that Josephus calculates the period from Saul until the Babylonian captivity as a total of 532 years and six months. This is just six months off of Warner’s own results which would place 533 years between these two events.

Josephus calculated the entire period of the kings, from Saul until the Babylonian captivity, as follows: ,... for before their captivity, and the dissolution of their polity, they at first had kingly government from Saul and David for **five hundred and thirty-two years, six months, and ten days**; but before those kings, such rulers governed them as were called judges and monarchs.¹² Our calculations are: Saul – 40 years¹³; David 40 years; Solomon – 23 years from the beginning of his reign until God appeared to him threatening the Temple’s destruction; Solomon’s remaining years plus all the kings of Judah – 430 years. **This gives a total of 533 years, only 6 months more than Josephus’ calculation.** [12 Endnote 12: Josephus, Antiquities, Book XI, ch. IV, 8] – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, God’s Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

In this way, we can see the clear correspondence between Warner’s results and Josephus. Here the two seem to confirm each other’s calculations. But we do not know why Warner and Josephus arrive at the same total count. Contrasted to this, however, are the results Warner and Josephus derive for the period from the Exodus to Solomon’s 4th year as king. In his chronology study, Warner dates the Exodus to the year 2500 AM and Solomon’s 4th year as 2980 AM. Therefore, Warner calculates the period from the Exodus to Solomon’s 4th year as 480 years.

Since Abraham was in his 70th year when God first appeared to Him (2070AM), adding the 430 years **puts the exodus in the year 2500AM**. Or, since Isaac was born in the year 2100 AM, adding the 400 years also **puts the exodus in the year 2500AM**. – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, Birth of Abraham to the Exodus, www.120jubilees.org

This passage is very straight forward, **dating the beginning of the construction of Solomon’s Temple 480 years after the exodus**. We must use exclusive reckoning here, because the word “after” means we cannot include the year of the exodus. **That brings us to the year 2980AM...** Thus, Solomon’s reign began in the year 2978AM... **Solomon began to build the Temple in the year 2980AM.**

Temple construction took 7 years, after which Solomon built his palace, taking 13 more years, for a total of 20 years. 9 We now arrive at the year 3,000AM, the 60th Jubilee year from creation. – Tim Warner, Jubilee Calendar, Exodus to God's Promise and Threat to Solomon to the Decree of Cyrus, www.120jubilees.org

In contrast to Warner's 480-year total from the Exodus to Solomon's fourth year, Josephus concludes that this same period instead took 592 years.

1. SOLOMON began to build the temple in the fourth year of his reign, on the second month, which the Macedonians call *Artemisius*, and the Hebrews *Jur*, five hundred and ninety-two years after the Exodus out of Egypt; but one thousand and twenty years from Abraham's coming out of Mesopotamia into Canaan, and after the deluge one thousand four hundred and forty years; **and from Adam, the first man who was created, until Solomon built the temple, there had passed in all three thousand one hundred and two years.** Now that year on which the temple began to be built was already the eleventh year of the reign of Hiram; but from the building of Tyre to the building of the temple, there had passed two hundred and forty years. – Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 8, Chapter 3

Notice that Josephus inflates the total number of years for this period by more than 100 years beyond Warner's total number. Warner arrived at 480 years from Exodus to Solomon's 4th year. Josephus arrived at 592 years. Likewise, while Warner concludes that the year in which Solomon's palace was completed is 3,000 years from creation. If we subtract 13 years, we arrive at the completion of the Temple at the year 2,987 years from creation. But, Josephus' calculations again inflate this number and Josephus asserts that the Temple was completed by Solomon 3,102 years after creation. Not only does Josephus' count differ by more than 100 years from Warner's, but none of Josephus' dates fall in round, 50-year jubilee increments in the way that Warner's do. We are left to ponder in what sense Josephus confirms Warner's calculations when Warner himself disagrees with Josephus' totals by more than 100 years. This at least raises the question of whether those occasions in which Warner and Josephus do agree, could perhaps denote times when Warner is simply matching Josephus' inaccurate inflating of the numbers.

Ultimately, details such as these reveal that there is difficulty in accepting sources like Josephus as confirmation of the correctness of Warner's calculations due to the fact that in some places the two authors clearly disagree with one another's calculations even concerning the same time periods. It seems selective to cite Josephus as proof of the correctness of our own calculations while at the same time we would have to discredit Josephus' competency as a biblical chronologist where his calculations do not agree with our own. These considerations help us to give the proper weight to potential correspondence with the work of other uninspired, extra-biblical chronologists. As such, we still seem to be without sound confirmation of the particular exegetical choices that would necessitate adopting Warner's model and excluding other alternatives for calculating the reigns of the kings.