

HISTORICAL BASIS, INVOLVEMENTS, AND VALIDITY OF THE OCTOBER 22, 1844, POSITION

PART IV--DATE OF ARTAXERXES' DECREE TO RESTORE AND BUILD JERUSALEM

In the consideration of so important a line of prophecy as that of the twenty-three hundred days, it is most essential that the date of its beginning be determined with as much certainty as possible. It is beyond the province of this Committee to deal with the theological evidence that the seventy weeks and the twenty-three hundred days have the same point of origin, but the sole object of Part IV will be to determine, if possible, the exact year in which Artaxerxes' decree to build and restore Jerusalem was given.

From Ezra 7:7-26, it is quite plain that the decree of Artaxerxes was given in the seventh year of his reign, and that Ezra, acting upon this decree, left Babylon on the first day of Nisan and arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of Ab. (Ezra 7:9) In order to determine this year accurately, in terms of our calendrical system, it is necessary to know (a) how the chronological years of a king were named and reckoned, (b) at what point in the year the new year came--whether spring or fall--and (c) how to interpret the date thus found in terms of our calendrical system. The problem has been studied according to the following outline:

- A. The determination of chronological method.
- B. The location of well-authenticated eclipses as anchors.
- C. The application of proper chronological methods to the reigns of kings, checking the same by the Canon of Ptolemy and with various clay tablets found in excavations of the sites in question and dated with definite years in the king's reign.
- D. Final application of the various principles in the working out of the definite date.

A. Chronological Method Verified by Biblical Synchronisms

Scholars are not united in applying the term "accession year," used in connection with the rulers of ancient kingdoms. It is spoken of as "accession year" on the dated tablets, but in Scripture it is usually referred to by the statement, "-----began to reign in the ----- year of -----." (1 Kings 22:41; 2 Kings

13:10; etc.) Many refer to this system by the term "antedating."¹

Upon the proper interpretation of this term "accession year", depends the correct reckoning of any chronological period, for otherwise the length of a king's rule may be an entire year out. Over a period covering the reign of several kings it is easily seen that this error would rapidly mount up, making any accurate determination impossible. The problem is vastly greater than taking some special king list and adding together the lengths of reigns. If possible the method used in recording the number of years of a king's rule must first be determined.

In Scripture, however, there are given a series of references where certain years of a Jewish ruler are equated with certain years of a corresponding Babylonian ruler during the reigns of Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar, and Amel-Marduk that show clearly how this accession year is considered. By study of Table I, pp. 5, 6,² one will notice eight of these so-called synchronisms marked "S" as follows:

Synchronism No. 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 which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: 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." Jer. 25:1-3.

¹ Albright, W.F., "The Seal of Eliakim," Journal of Biblical Literature, LI (1932), 96. See also Mowinckel, "Die Chronologie der israelitischen und jüdischen Könige," in Acta Orientalia, X (1932), 200-204.

² The Egyptian chronology followed here is according to J.H. Breasted's "History of Egypt," 1912 edition. Psamtik reigned 54 years, giving way to Necho in 609 B. C., pp. 581, 582. Thus he began his reign in 663 B. C., with which date A.T. Olmstead, "History of Assyria", p. 417, agrees. Ashurbaniapal reigned 22 years and died in 626 B. C., (p. 627.) Nabopolassar revolted and ordered his subjects to date their business records by his year as king of Babylon. (p. 634.) The earliest dated tablet in Nabopolassar's reign is for 2 yr./--mo./9 da. (Strassmaier, "Zeitschrift für Assyriologie," Vol. IV. 136). Necho began to reign in 609 B. C. (Breasted, "History of Egypt," p. 582.) Necho killed Josiah; the people appointed Jehoahaz king. Necho deposed him and appointed Jehoiakim king. (2 Chron. 35:20-36:4; 2 Kings 23:29-35). Josiah reigned 31 years. (2 Kings 22:1).

The same formula is used for recording the "accession year" of Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23:31), and also that of Jehoiakim (verse 36), as was used in recording that of Josiah (2 Chron. 34:1). "----- was ----- years old when he began to reign," showing that his age is reckoned to his accession year, and not to his first year. Twenty-three years cover the time from the 13th of Josiah through the accession and three months of Jehoahaz, and the accession of Jehoiakim, up to and including the latter's 4th year.³ Only by so doing can one make these 23 years span the period required, for Jewish reckoning is always "inclusive reckoning,"⁴ taking account of both the opening and closing years in any given period.

Synchronism No. 2

"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." Jer. 25:1.

Here the 4th year of Jehoiakim equals the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar.

³ This year was the date of the battle of Carchemish where Nebuchadnezzar defeated Necho. (Jer. 46:2). Breasted, ("History of Egypt," p. 583,) makes the battle of Carchemish 605, but Olmstead, ("History of Palestine and Syria," p. 510,) puts this campaign correctly in 604. G. Cameron, ("History of Early Iran," p. 219,) infers the same date by making Nebuchadnezzar's reign 604-562.

⁴ A clear example of "inclusive reckoning" is seen in the fact that Jehoiakim rebelled after serving Nebuchadnezzar three years. 2 Kings 24:1. Because of the conditions spoken of in the next few verses, a fast was proclaimed (Jer. 36:9). Jeremiah wrote a message which is read to Jehoiakim, who in anger cut the roll and burned it. Jer. 36:22. It is during this same year that Nebuchadnezzar had the dream of the great image (Dan. 2), and Daniel interpreted it for the king.

Note.--The idea of counting the entire death year of a king as an integral part of his reign, and beginning the first year of the succeeding king with the beginning of the next calendar year, is an ordinary procedure in Biblical chronological reckoning. Notice how it is followed in the chronology of the patriarchs. Adam was 130 years old when he begat Seth.

According to Gen. 7:6, 11, Noah was 600 years old in his 600th year--not in his 601st year, as is reckoned in modern times. Therefore Seth was born in Noah's 600th year, and at the beginning of his 601st year Seth was counted as one year old. So the record in Gen. 5:3-5 checks. Adam lived 800 years after he begat Seth and all his years were 930 (800 plus 130). In this way no fractions of years are counted, and yet the chronology is accurately maintained. This method may be checked by figuring the years of Methuselah's life. By any other method he survives the flood year.

Coupling the recognized length of Nabopolassar's reign (21 years)⁵ with the fact that the eclipse of the moon, taking place in 621, occurred in the fifth year of his reign,⁶ gives no alternative but to make the "death year" of Nabopolassar the "accession year" of Nebuchadnezzar as shown in the table. Thus the statement in 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"--is in perfect harmony with Jeremiah 25:1. Nebuchadnezzar was king--it was his

⁵ The latest dated tablet for Nabopolassar's reign is for 21st year/ 2mo./ 19 da. (Strassmaier, "Zeitschrift für Assyriologie," Vol. IV, 145.) This was also the accession year for Nebuchadnezzar, as well as the 3rd year of Jehoiakim, thus accounting for the statement in Daniel 1:1, and 2 Kings 24:1. Nebuchadnezzar at this time took Daniel and his companions captive and this year was the first year of the 70 years' captivity, as prophesied by Jeremiah the following year. (Jer. 25:1-11). Ptolemy's Canon agrees (Wachsmuth, Curt, "Studien der Alten Geschichte" (1895), pp. 305, 306) in giving Nabopolassar 21 years. Cameron, ("History of Early Iran," p. 219) places Nebuchadnezzar's reign as 604-562, forgetting his accession year in 605. He has Nabopolassar's reign as 626-604 (p. 232), but tablets and scholars agree in giving him 21 years. If 626 is his accession year, 625 is his first year, and 605 would be his 21st and the accession year of Nebuchadnezzar.

⁶ "In the fifth year of Nabopolassar, which is Egyptian-127th year of Nabonassar--close to the eleventh hour--27th or 28th of the Egyptian month Athyr, some one noticed the moon at Babylon commence her eclipse. Formed in the greatest phase of this eclipse a quarter of the diameter of the meridional part of the luminary. Since the eclipse commenced at five hours after midnight, and reached the center about six hours, which made in that case at Babylon, 5 1/2 to 1/3 hours, the sun was exactly in the 27th d. 3' of the ram--it is clear that the time of the middle of the eclipse was for Babylon, 5 1/2-1/3 hours equinoxial, and for Alexandria, 5 hours only after midnight. Or the time since the epoch is 126 Egyptian years, 86 days, 17 hours equinoxial." (M. Halma, Translator, "Composition Mathématique de Claude Ptolemae," (2 vols.), Paris, 1813, Vol. II, 340 f.) This corresponds to April 21, 621 B. C., the year in which the Scroll is found, the 18th of Josiah. (2 Kings 22:3-14; 2 Chron. 34:8-22).

Note.--Caludius Ptolemy (A. D. 70-151) was a native Egyptian mathematician and astronomer. According to his own personal testimony, he observed the heavens at least from 127 A. D.--151 A. D., doing most of his work at Alexandria. He compiled a list of kings, starting with the reign of the Babylonian ruler, Nabonassar, beginning his "era" with the first of the month Thoth of the year 747 B. C., the Egyptian New Year. He used a yearly "yard-stick" of exactly 365 days, thus making the New Year wander back through the months at the rate of one day every four years. This list of kings from Nabonassar down to his own time is known as the "Canon of Ptolemy." In his "Almagest," the latest translation of which is in French by M. Halma, entitled, "Composition Mathématique de Claude Ptolemae" (2 Vols., Paris; 1813-1816), he records eclipses of sun and moon falling in certain years of various reigns, thus securely anchoring his king-lists. Many of these eclipses have been carefully checked with other sources (see Pinches, T. G., "Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology," Vol. II, pp. 193-204), and according to S. R. Driver, "the recently-discovered contemporary monuments have fully established the accuracy of the Canon." ("Encyclopaedia Britannica," 11th ed. Vol. III, p. 941, note 2.)

COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGIES OF NEOBABYLONIA, PERSIA,
EGYPT, AND ISRAEL, 627 B. C. - 443 B. C.

B. C.	Egypt	Judah	70 years	Jehoiachin's Captivity	Prophet	Assyria Babylonia	Persia	Reference
627	Pharaoh 37	Josiah 12				Ashurbanipal 21		1 p. 2
626	38	13			Jeremiah 1	Nabopolassar A 22		1 p. 2
625	39	14			2	1		
624	40	15			3	2		1 p. 2
623	41	16			4	3		
622	42	17			5	4		
621	43	18			6	⊗ 5		5 p. 4
620	44	19			7	6		
619	45	20			8	7		
618	46	21			9	8		
617	47	22			10	S' 9		
616	48	23			11	Jer. 25:1-3 10		
615	49	24			12	11		
614	50	25			13	12		
613	51	26			14	13		
612	52	27			15	14		
611	53	28			16	15		
610	54	29			17	16		
609	Necho 1	30			18	17		1 p. 2
608	2	Jehoaiah 31 Jehoiakim A			19	18		1 p. 2
607	3	1			20	19		
606	4	2			21	20		
605	5	3	1		22	Neb'-zar A 21		4 p. 4
604	6	4	2		23	1		Jer. 25:1 4 p. 4
603	7	5	3		24	2		3 p. 3
602	8	6	4		25	3		
601	9	7	5		26	4		
600	10	8	6		27	5		
599	11	9	7		28	6		
598	12	10	8		29	7		
597	13	Jehoiachin 11 Zedekiah A	9		30	8		2Ch. 36:5-10 2Kg. 24:10-19 p. 7
596	14	1	10	2	31	9		
595	15	2	11	3	32	10		
594	16	3	12	4	Call of Ezekiel	11		
593	Psamtic II 1	4	13	5	1	12		6 p. 7
592	2	5	14	6	2	13		
591	3	6	15	7	3	14		

B. C.	Egypt	Judah	70 years Captivity	Jehoiachin's Captivity	Prophet		Babylonia	Persia	Reference
590	Psamtik II	Zedekiah 7	16	8	Ezekiel 4		Neb'-zar 15		
589		8	17	9	5		16		
588	Hophra (Aries)	9	18	10	S ⁴ 6		17		7 p. 8
587		10	19	11	7	Smiting of	18		Jer. 32:1
586		11	20	12	S ⁵ 8	the City 1	19		Eze. 33:21 Jer. 32 p. 8
585		Gedaliah (Governor)	21	13	S ⁶ 9		20		2 Kings 25:8
584			22	14	10		21		
583			23	15	11		22		
582			24	16	12		23		
581			25	17	13		24		
580			26	18	14		25		
579			27	19	15		26		
578			28	20	16		27		
577			29	21	17		28		
576			30	22	18		29		
575			31	23	19		30		
574			32	24	20		31		
573			33	25	S ⁷ 21		32		p. 9
572			34	26	22		33		
571			35	27	23		34		
570			36	28			35		
569	Ahmose II		37	29			36		8 p. 9
568			38	30			37		
567			39	31			38		
566			40	32			39		
565			41	33			40		
564			42	34			41		
563			43	35			42		
562			44	36			Amel Marduk 43		
561			45	37	S ⁸		1		8 p. 9
560			46	38			Nergal Sarusur 2		p. 9
559			47	39			1	Cyrus	
558			48	40			2		1
557			49	41			3		2
556			50	42			Nabunaid 4		3 11 p. 12
555			51	43			1		4
554			52	44			2		5

accession year. The next year was counted his first year. Thus the twenty-three years of Jeremiah reach back to the "death year" of Ashurbanipal and the "accession year" of Nabopolassar.

Synchronism No. 3

"Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God. Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of the Lord to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the Lord, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem." 2 Chron. 36:5-10.

"At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign." 2 Kings 24:10-12.

Jehoiakim reigned 11 years (2 Kings 23:36), Jehoiachin reigned three months and then was taken prisoner to Babylon in the same year, which also became the accession year of Zedekiah, as well as the first year of Jehoiachin's captivity. Inasmuch as the king is not dead, he is counted as ruler, and Zedekiah is thought of as a regent ruling for him. Therefore the period of his captivity is an important one.⁷ The discovery of stamped jar handles in Palestine with Jehoiachin's name on them, verifies this hypothesis. (See Albright, *op. cit.* pp. 77-84, 102, 103). Thus the 11th year of Jehoiakim's reign, the accession year of Zedekiah, and the first year of Jehoiachin's captivity are equated with the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonians had been before Jerusalem for nearly a year. (Jer. 39:1; 2 Kings 25:1).

⁷ The fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity is the year of Ezekiel's call. Eze. 1:1. It is also the first year of the reign of Psamtik II. (Olmstead, "History of Palestine and Syria," p. 523; Breasted, "History of Egypt," p. 601).

Synchronism No. 4

"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."
Jer. 32:1.

That the accession year of Zedekiah was properly equated with the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar is shown by the above synchronism. This would be the only way the 10th year of Zedekiah could synchronize with the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar.⁸

Synchronism No. 5

"And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten." Eze. 33:21.

Here the 12th year of Jehoiachin's captivity is synchronized with the 1st year of the "smiting of the city." Ezekiel received word on the fifth day of the tenth month, and the temple was burned the tenth day of the fifth month; so it took practically five months for the news to reach him.

Synchronism No. 6

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

"Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem."
Jer. 52:12

"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, the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem."
2 Kings 25:8.

Here the eleventh year of Zedekiah is synchronized with the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. This is the date of the third and final campaign against Jerusalem.

⁸ It was in the year 588--the 17th year of Nebuchadnezzar and the 9th year of Zedekiah that Hophra (Apries), began his reign in Egypt. (Olmstead, "History of Palestine and Syria," p. 525; Breasted, "History of Egypt," p. 601.)

Synchronism No. 7

"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." Eze. 40:1.

The twenty-fifth year of Jehoichin's captivity is synchronized with the fourteenth year of the smiting of the city.

Synchronism No. 8

"And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth day of the month, and Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison." Jer. 52:31.

The thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoichin is synchronized with the first year of Evil-merodach (Amel Marduk). This limits Nebuchadnezzar's reign to 43 years, as shown in Table I, page 6.⁹

By a comparison of these eight synchronisms with the details of the Table I (pp. 5, 6), and with Chart A (p. 11), it will be noted that they cover the entire period of Nebopolassar's and Nebuchadnezzar's reigns.

If one will take the pains to follow these various synchronisms through point by point, he will find that the transition made between the sacred and secular chronology is so firmly anchored that it is impossible to move a peg one way or the other. This is all the more remarkable as it is the first and only place in Biblical history when this is done. These synchronisms extend, therefore, from the accession year of Nebopolassar through the accession years

⁹ The latest dated tablet for Nebuchadnezzar's reign is 43 yr./ 5 mo./ 9 da. Ungnad, "Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler," Heft III, 36). Ptolmey's Canon agrees. (Curt Wachsmuth, "Studien der Alten Geschichte," p. 305). The latest tablet for Amel Marduk is dated 2 yr./ 5 mo./ 17 da. (Clay, "Babylonian Expedition," Vol. VIII, p. 34.) This year is also the accession year for Nergal Sharusur. The earliest tablet found for him is dated Acc. yr./ 3 mo./ 20 da. (Ungnad, "Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler," Heft IV, 32). Ahmose began his reign in 569. (Olmstead, "History of Palestine and Syria," p. 536; Breasted, "History of Egypt," p. 601). The latest tablet for Nergal Sharusur is dated 4 yr./ 1 mo./ 2 da. (Evetts, "Nergal Sharusur," p. 69). The earliest tablet found for Nabunaid is dated Acc. yr./ 2 mo./ 15 da. (Clay, "Babylonian Expedition," Vol. VIII, p. 39). Much archaeological evidence has been found indicating that Belshazzar is a historical character, the son of Nabunaid (Nabonidus), and co-regent with him on the throne of Babylon. (Dougherty, R. P., "Nabonidus and Belshazzar," pp. 137, 192).

of both Nebuchadnezzar and Amel Marduck (Evil-merodach), giving three instances of the use of the "accession year" idea.

From a careful study of these data, the following important method of chronological reckoning is demonstrated; namely, For purposes of chronology, the entire last calendar year of a king's reign is given to that monarch, and is also called the accession year of the following ruler, the next year being called the first year of the new king.

B. Location of Well-Authenticated Eclipses as Anchors

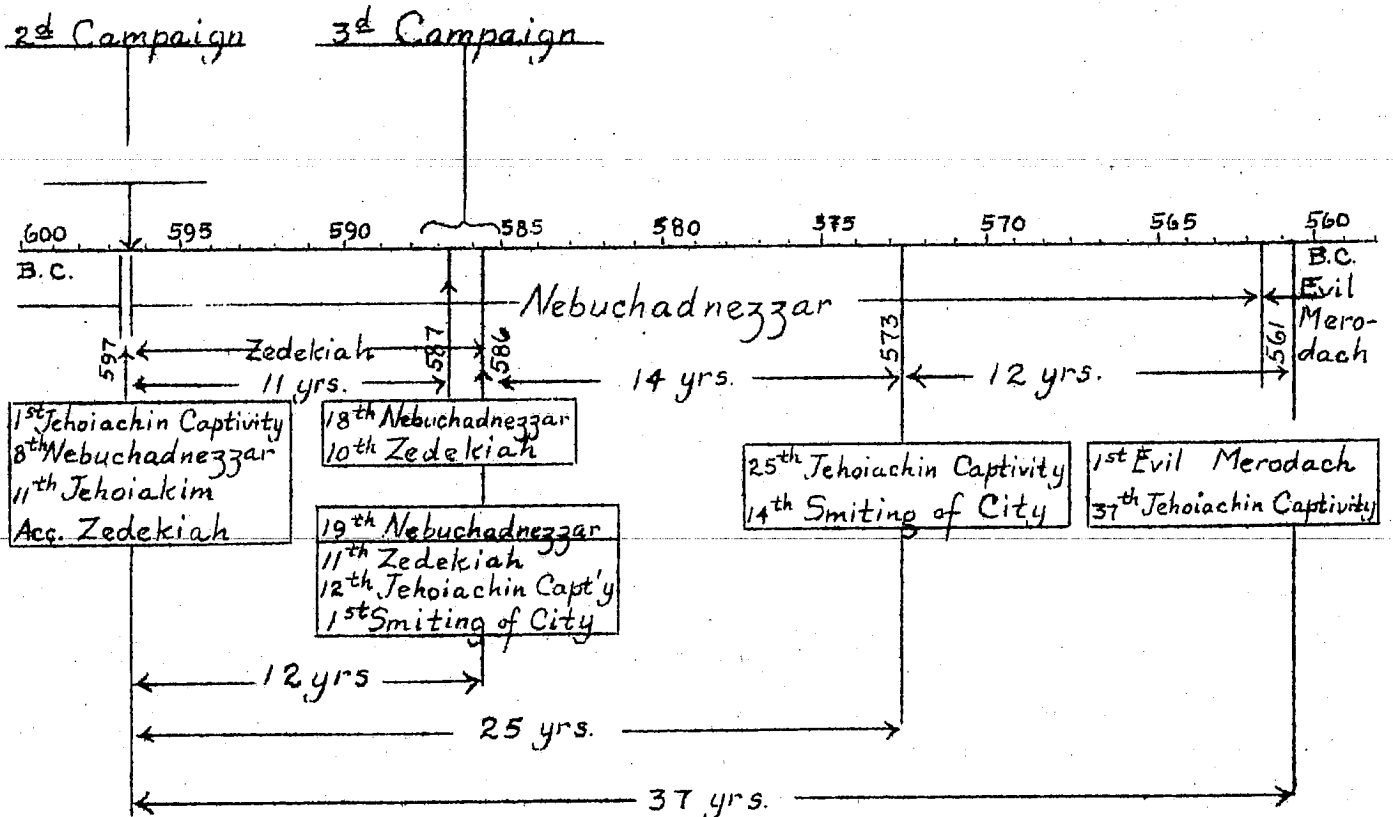
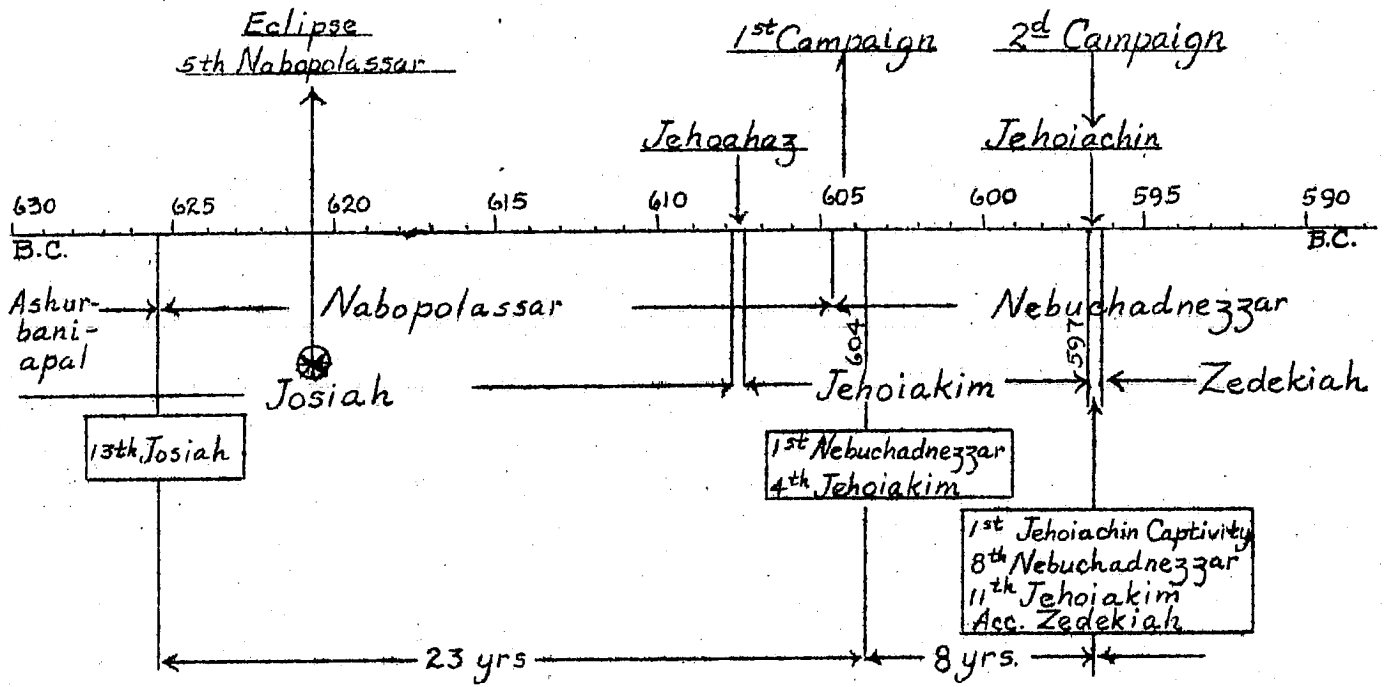
All of the above data may be verified without the use of any definite anchor in the way of harmonizing the dates of these ancient kingdoms with our modern calendrical system. That is, the synchronisms between Biblical and profane history do not rest upon the astronomical determination of any of these lines. So far as the synchronisms go, they would be true regardless of where the whole block of years was placed in the space of time, but in order to interpret any of these dates in terms of modern reckoning, recourse is had to definite events that are linked up with astronomical phenomena.

During this period from the reign of Nabopolassar to the reign of Artaxerxes, there are recorded two events happening in the time of eclipses of the moon, both in Egypt and in Babylon; one taking place in the fifth year of Nabopolassar¹⁰ (621 B. C.), and the second in the seventh year of Cambyses (523, B. C.).¹¹

¹⁰ See Note 6, p. 4.

¹¹ The eclipse of the moon in the 7th year of Cambyses has been attested by two witnesses, Ptolmey's Canon and the Cambyse (400) Tablet. "In another eclipse arriving in the 7th year of Cambyses--which is the 225th year of Nabonasser 1 hour before midnight on the 17th or 18th of the Egyptian month Phamenoth--one saw in Babylon the eclipse of the moon of the part of its diameter in the northern part. . . . which corresponds to 224 Egyptian years, 196 days." (Halma, M., "Composition Mathematique de Claude Ptolemae," I, 341, 343). The Cambyse Tablet as translated by Strassmaier says, "On the 7th of Cambyses, in the night of the 15th Dazu, 1-1/2 kasbu (3 hours) after the nightfall, the eclipse of the moon was entirely visible. It covered the northern half of the disk of the moon." (Sidersky, "Etude sur la chronologie Assyro-Babylonienne," Paris, 1916, p. 41; Kugler, "Zeitschrift für Assyriologie," Vol. XVII (1903), 238).

CHART A

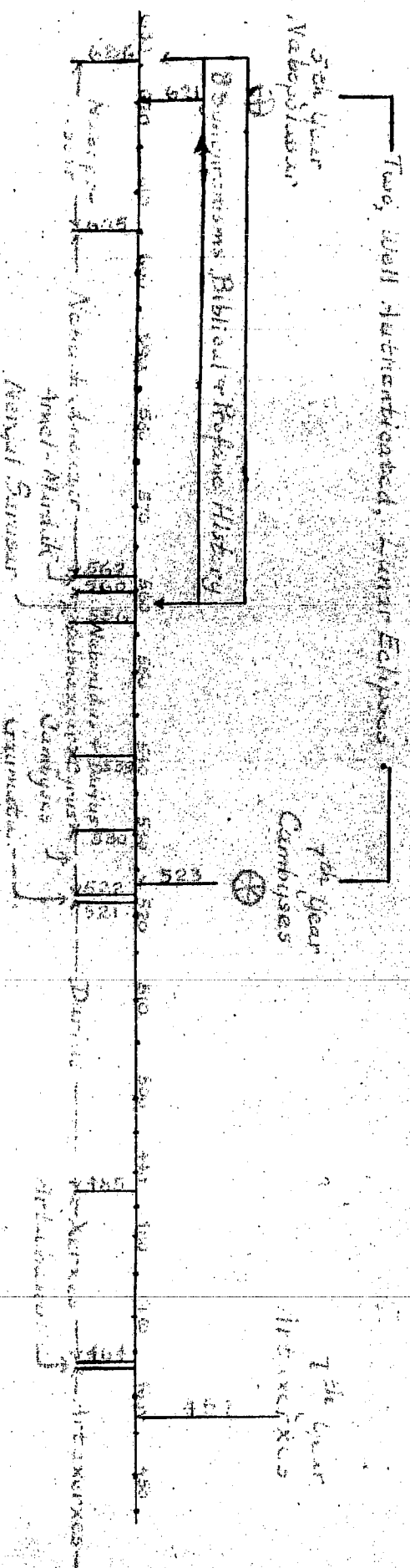


By the use of the principle before stated, whereby the death year of the king is called the accession year of the succeeding ruler, by use of the information obtained from the Canon of Ptolemy, and from the dated tablets found in the excavations, the reigns of the various kings between Nabopolassar and Cambyses are seen to fit exactly into the interval necessary from the fifth year of Nabopolassar to the seventh year of Cambyses,¹² as shown in Chart B (p. 13) and a continuation of chronological Table II (p. 14).

¹² The latest tablet for Nabunaid is dated 17 yr./ 9 mo./ ? da. (Strassmaier, "Zeitschrift für Assyriologie, IV, Nabunaid, 1055). Almose reigned for 45 years, and died in 525. Psamtik III ruled but a few months when the country fell into the hands of the Persians, and became one of the provinces of that nation until Alexander's time. (Breasted, "History of Egypt," p. 595).


CHART B

APPLICATION OF ACCESSION-YEAR PLAN TO REIGN OF BABYLONIAN + PERSIAN KINGS



All dates begin with the "accession-year" of the king which is the same as the "death-year" of the previous ruler (See Table for details)

Table II (Continued from Table I)

B.C.	Egypt	70 years	Jehoiachin's Captivity	Prophet	Babylonia	Persia	Reference
553	Ahmos ¹⁷ II	53	45		Nabunaidz	Cyrus	6
552	18	54	46		B	4	7
551	19	55	47		E L	5	8
550	20	56	48		S H	6	9
549	21	57	49		A	7	10
548	22	58	50		Z	8	11
547	23	59	51		Z	9	12
546	24	60	52		A R	10	13
545	25	61	53		C	11	14
544	26	62	54		O- R	12	15
543	27	63	55		E	13	16
542	28	64	56		G	14	17
541	29	65	57		E N	15	18
540	30	66	58		T	16	19
539	31	67	59			17	Cyrus + 20
538	32	68	60				Darius 1
537	33	69	61				2
536	34	70	62				Cyrus(1) 3
535	35						(2) 4
534	36						(3) 5
533	37						(4) 6
532	38						(5) 7
531	39						(6) 8
530	40						(7) 9 Cambyses A
529	41						1
528	42						2
527	43						3
526	44						4
525	Psamtic III ⁴⁵ A						5 7 p. 8
524	E						6
523	G Y						7 22 p. 9
522	P T					Gaumata, A	8
521	A					Darius, A	
520	P						1
519	E R						2
518	S I						3
517	A						4

C. Application of Chronological Methodology to the Reigns of Persian Kings

Having discovered the chronological method used in recording the reigns of Babylonian rulers, it is not difficult to apply it in continuing the dates for the reigns of the various kings from the time of Cambyses down to the time of Artaxerxes. This has been done in the continuation of the main table, (III), pp. 16, 17, giving a line for each year.

Thus, Darius' accession year is found to be 521, with 520 as his first year, and 519 as his second year, when the decree for the restoration of Jerusalem was made. (Ezra 4:23, 24; 6:8-12).

Tablets have been found which harmonize with the Canon of Ptolemy and which show that Darius reigned for thirty-six years.¹³ This makes 485 both the last year of Darius and the accession year of Xerxes.¹⁴ At this time Artabanus usurped the throne for a few months, but still this same year can be counted as the accession year of Artaxerxes. Thus the year 464 is at once the death year of Xerxes, the accession and death year of Artabanus, and the accession year of Artaxerxes. (See continuation of Table III, pp. 16, 17.)

D. Final Application in Working Out of Definite Date for 7th Year of Artaxerxes

It is a recognized fact among the scholars dealing with the problem, that the Babylonians dated the commencement of their year in the spring about the time of the vernal equinox.¹⁵ That the Jews had a system of double reckoning

¹³ The latest tablet found for the reign of Darius is dated 36 yr./ 6 mo./ 22 da. (Peiser, "Keilschriftliche Acten Stücke," XIX). This would make Xerxes accession year 485 and his first year 484. Olmstead, "History of Palestine and Syria," p. 560, places 485 as the last year of Darius, but counts the 21 years of Xerxes as beginning that year, not giving any room for Xerxes accession year.

¹⁴ The latest record found for the reign of Xerxes is an Aramaic papyrus from a community of Jewish mercenaries located at Yeb, later Elephantine, dated in the 21st year of Xerxes. Sayce, A. H., and Cowley, A., "Aramaic Papyri Discovered at Assuan," Plate B). According to Diodorus, Xerxes was murdered by Artabanus, who took the throne and reigned some seven months. Thus the year 464 would be the accession year of Artaxerxes. That he came to the throne some time in the fall of the year is evidenced by a comparison of Nehemiah 1:1; 2:1; and Ezra 7:7-9.

¹⁵ Kugler, F. X., Sternkunde und Sterndienst in Babel, Buch II, Teil 1, p. 26.

Table III (Continued from Table I #11)

B.C.	Egypt					Persia	Reference
516	E					Darius 5	
515	G						6
514	Y						7
513	P						8
512	T						9
511							10
510	A						11
509							12
508	P						13
507	E						14
506	R						15
505	S						16
504	I						17
503	A						18
502	N						19
501							20
500	P						21
499	R						22
498	O						23
497	V						24
496	I						25
495	N						26
494	C						27
493	E						28
492							29
491	5						30
490	2						31
489	5						32
488							33
487							34
486							35
485	3					Xerxes A 36	12 p. 15
484							1
483	3						2
482							3
481	2						4
480							5

may be seen from the fact that their sacred year began in the spring with the first new moon following the vernal equinox, and the fact that the civil year began in the fall at the first of Tisri which was the first new moon following the autumnal equinox. That this was true may be shown from a comparison of Nehemiah 1:1, 2:1, and Ezra 7:7-9.

In Nehemiah 1:1 the prophet is speaking of a visit to Shushan the palace, in the month Chisleu in the twentieth year. After the events of Chapter 1, in the first verse of Chapter 2, the prophet goes on to relate succeeding events that happened in the month of Nisan in the same twentieth year of the king. This shows that in the twentieth year of the king, the month Nisan, which was in the spring, came after the month Chisleu, or the ninth month, which was in the fall. If this sequence happened in the twentieth year, it would happen in any year, therefore in the first year.

In Ezra 7:7-9, the prophet speaks of leaving Babylon on the first day of the first month, and arriving in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month in the seventh year of the king. If the fifth month of the year followed the first month of the year in the seventh year, it would have the same order in the twentieth year, or in the first year. Therefore, the reckoning of the regnal years by the Jews began sometime between the fifth month and the ninth month, all of which is in harmony with their two systems of calendrical reckoning at the present time, their civil year beginning in the fall and their sacred year in the spring. (See Chart C, p. 20.)

Chart D (p. 21) is spread out over the years 465 to 456, and shows graphically--whether one accepts the Babylonian reckoning of time or the Jewish reckoning--that the seventh year of Artaxerxes would fall in the year 457. Anyone taking the time to go through the data submitted herewith must be convinced that any other year than 457 for the beginning of the 2300 years, in the 7th year of Artaxerxes, could be named only through a lack of taking under consideration the various factors involved, such as the method of applying

the term "accession year," the synchronisms given by Biblical and profane history, and the anchors given by astronomical observation.

There seems to be no other date in history that has been more firmly established both from Biblical and history standpoints, than this seventh year of Artaxerxes. When one realizes that 457 B. C. is the starting point of the great twenty-three hundred day prophecy, reaching from that time down past the crucifixion to the time of the great judgment hour, one is deeply impressed with the infinite care taken by the Lord in preserving such an important record as this.

Lynn Harper Wood

CHART C

THE JEWISH CIVIL YEAR

Tishri	Marchesvan	Kisleu	Tebet	Shebet	Adar	Nisan	Iyyar	Sivan	Tammuz	Ab	Ellul
Sept-Oct	Oct-Nov	Nov-Dec	Dec-Jan	Jan-Feb	Feb-Mar	Mar-Apr	Apr-May	May-Jun	Jun-Jul	Jul-Aug	Aug-Sept

Sequence of years in Mesopotamia
of the 20th year

Sequence of years
of the 7th year

Therefore in any year this must be the sequence of the months

Therefore the 19th year is looked according to the 19th year

and not according to

THE JEWISH SACRED YEAR

Nisan	Iyyar	Sivan	Tammuz	Ab	Ellul	Tishri	Marchesvan	Kisleu	Tebet	Shebet	Adar
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CHART D

Araxos

Araxos

Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos	Araxos
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
465	464	463	462	461	460	459	458	457	456							

Araxos & Persian Years Beginning in the Spring

Table showing 451 to be the 7th year of Artaxares, whether according to the Babylonian method of beginning the year in the spring, or according to the method of beginning the year in the fall. (See Table A.)

