

and related details

§373 Earlier in this book I used the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 as a confirmation the chronology described in this book (cf. §102). It is necessary to go back to several other passages for background relating to the prophecy. The first of these is in Jeremiah 25:

§374 "[It] was the first year of Nebudcadnezzar king of Babylon when Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the People of Judea, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem saying, ... And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are **about to be** accomplished, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith Yahweh for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations" (KJV with corrections).

§375 Note the "**about to be** accomplished." The Persians overthrew the Chaldean nation in 539 b.c.e, which was before the end of the exile. The Hebrew is: כַּמְלֵאוֹת = about full. The meaning of the preposition כֹּ is important: "as, like, as if; at, about [a time], according to, after; before an *inf.* = as, when, if, after" (Langenscheidt Pocket Hebrew Dictionary).

§376 So, the nations served (were slaves to) the king of Babylon for 70 years, i.e. From the first year of Nebudchadnezzar (604 b.c.e) till the first year of Cyrus the Great as sole king (534 b.c.e). Note that 604-534 = 70 years. Cyrus the Great repatriated the nations, including Israel in first year (535/534); see Ezra 1. Now the Chaldean nation was punished in 539 and made an everlasting desolation, at the hands of the Persians fulfilling that part of the prophecy. However, the nations continued to serve the new "king of Babylon" out to the end of the seventy years fulfilling that part of the prophecy.

604	1st Year of Nebudchadnezzar
539	Chaldeans overthrown
534	Repatriation of nations

§377 Now, a few comments. Cyrus was coregent with Darius the Mede from 539-535, that is one accession year and three regnal years, but after the death of Darius (535), Daniel numbers the years of Cyrus starting with year 1 all over again. Cyrus ruled six more years till 529 for a total of nine years, including the first three which Daniel did not count since Darius was the principal ruler. Profane

history does not recognize the existence of Darius the Mede.

§378 Question: why does it seem that the Chaldeans subjugated Israel less than 70 years, i.e. (604-539)? Answer: That is the case. However, the prophecy does not say that Israel would serve the Chaldeans 70 years. It says they would serve the king of Babylon 70 years. And the first two Persian rulers (Darius & Cyrus) were kings of Babylon also.

§379 Question: why are the Chaldeans overthrown before the end of 70 years? See the answer above. In short, the prophecy says that it would be "about" 70 years until they were desolated.

§380 Question: why did Babylon continue as a great city so many years after the 70 years if God predicted their desolation. Answer: the prophecy says that that "nation" (i.e. the Chaldeans) would be desolated. The Persians were another people, or nation that ruled over Babylon.

Why Seventy Years?

§381 Daniel discovered by reading Jeremiah 25 that the desolations of Israel would last 70 years (Daniel 9:2). But why was it 70 years? For the answer to this question, turn to II Chronicles 36:20-21:

§382 "And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: to fulfil the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years" (KJV, with corrections).

§383 Now we already know that the 70 years did not end with the kingdom of the Chaldeans. The text does not say that they were servants to the first two kings of Persia (Darius and Cyrus), but neither does it explicitly rule it out. We must only gain from the text that which it clearly states, not what it might imply. That's the type of thing that leads interpreters astray. The implications of a given text are valid only if they match the historical facts.

§384 "Threescore and ten years" equals seventy years. A "score" is twenty. The land was thus keeping a rest, i.e. "Shabat", for 70 years. This takes us back to an even earlier prophecy, Leviticus 26:43:

§385 "The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her Sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them" (KJV with corrections). So the punishment of Israel for 70 years was based upon the fact that Israel failed to follow God's commands. Could it be that God endured with Israel through the desecration of seventy sabbatical years, and that the number 70 is based upon the fact that Israel did not keep seventy Sabbatical years?

§386 The answer to this question is yes. For by counting the possible sabbatical years when Israel was ruled by foreign powers or in rebellion under wicked kings, or was in rebellion under a righteous king, the sum of 70 Sabbatical years is obtained. The details of the Biblical Chronology are planned for a future volume, but here is a summary:

King/nation			cumulative total
Cushan	8 years	2 Sabbath years	2
Eglon	18 years	3 Sabbath years	5
Jabin	20 years	3 Sabbath years	8
Midian	7 years	1 Sabbath year	9
Abimelech	3 years	0 Sabbath years	9
Ammon	18 years	3 Sabbath years	12
Philistines	40 years	6 Sabbath years	18
Philistines	21 years ¹	4 Sabbath years	22
Israel	255 years ²	42 Sabbath years	64
Mannassah	55 years	3 Sabbath years	67
Amon	2 years	1 Sabbath year	68
Josiah	31 years ³	1 Sabbath year	69
Jehoakhaz	3 months	0 Sabbath years	69
Jehoiakim	11 years	1 Sabbath year	70

Total 70 Sabbath years

1. This second Philistine servitude began when Israel was defeated in battle and the ark was captured.

2. From Jereboam (982) to Hoshea (724).

3. From 12th year on Josiah made reforms.

§387 Thus, it does appear that the 70 years of exile were based upon so many broken sabbatical years. When Daniel had understood that the exile would be 70 years, the angel came to him and said "seventy sevens are cut out ..." meaning seventy more Sabbatical years, because a "seven" is a Sabbatical year (cf. §103, 119).

Now that we are getting toward the end of this volume, it would be well to mention that overall Biblical Chronology supports the Sabbath Resurrection by establishing the Sabbatical Year, and the beginning and end of Daniel's Prophecy. Most of this Chronology is planned for additional volumes. Indeed, it has already been written, and it only awaits final editing. However, there are a few more details that I would like to attend to here.

The Discontinuous Nature of the Prophecy

Now we must notice the natural breaks in the time sequences of the Prophecy. These are "seven sevens," "sixty two sevens," and

"one period of seven." Pre-Millennial Scholars have correctly explained the 70th seven as applying to the end of the age, for which they are accused of being "gap theorists." However, the gap is clearly taught by the prophecy:

- (1) A command goes forth [445 b.c.e.]
- (2) Seven sevens pass [445 b.c.e. to 397 b.c.e.]
- (3) Sixty two more sevens pass [397 b.c.e. to 34 c.e.]
- (4) Messiah is cut off [34 c.e.]
- (5) The people of a prince destroy the city and temple [70 c.e.]
- (6) It will strengthen a covenant for one sabbatic period [future]
- (7) The sacrificial system will be stopped [about 3 1/2 years later]
- (8) The desolator will be destroyed [after more 42 months].

The gap is taught in four ways. First, the last seven years is treated separately by the prophecy. Second, a major historical event is placed between the cutting off of Messiah and the last sabbatic period, namely the destruction of the city and temple by the Romans in 70 c.e. Evidently, the sabbatical years in this time frame are not counted, but are skipped over. For God has stopped his prophetic clock. Third, the calculation of Israel's rebellion was not continuous in the first place. Broken sabbatical years fall in sequence, but it is punctuated by periods of righteousness.

Fourth, all the prophesied events in the prophecy must take place in the seventy sevens or at the immediate end of the period. Since these events have not yet all come to pass, it is clear that we are not finished with the last sabbatic period. Indeed it has not even begun yet [as of 1997 c.e.]. The "transgression" must be "ended." [Israel will accept the true Messiah]. "Sin is shut up" [The devil is bound]. "Iniquity is atoned for" [Messiah's death become applicable to all Israel]. "Everlasting righteousness" is brought to Israel. The vision and prophet are sealed. [Daniel's Prophecies are completed.] "The holy of holies is anointed" [The defiled Temple is restored].

The Seven Sevens

This leaves the period of the "seven sevens" to be explained. There is no sabbatical year gap between the seven sevens and the sixty two sevens, however, there is an event to be noted in space between the seventh sabbatical year and the eighth sabbatical year (the first of the sixty two sevens). The seven sevens is the time prophesied for the rebuilding and reformation. The walls were built. The Temple is built. And then Ezra comes and re-establishes the proper observance of the Law completing the reformation.

Ezra Comes After Nehemiah

Now, some will object that Ezra comes before Nehemiah. Of course, this leaves the Catholic, Protestant, and Evangelical Christian World without an explanation for the seven sevens. No doubt, the Rabbis should be implicated in the confusion also, because they do not want anyone to really understand Daniel's Prophecy. The mistake of putting Ezra before Nehemiah is explained in *The Companion Bible*, by E.W. Bullinger (cf. Appendix 58, and notes on those books), as well as by various scholars around the world.

Originally, Ezra-Nehemiah was one book in the Hebrew Canon. First Ezra tells his story, and then Nehemiah tells his. Ezra goes first because he covers the whole of the history in his book, and Nehemiah comes second because he only covers a relatively small section of the history. However, Ezra does not introduce himself until the seventh chapter of his book in which he puts down his coming to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes. The only problem is that there is more than one Artaxerxes. Also "Cyrus"¹ is a throne name, not the personal name of one king. And there is also more than one "Darius":

<u>King</u>	<u>reign</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Darius the Mede	539-536/535	Cyrus the Great corex
Cyrus the Persian	535/4-530	sole rule
Cambyses ¹	529-522	Subjugated Egypt
Pseudo-Smerdis	522	7 month usurper
Darius I	522-486	
Xerxes	486-465	Married Esther
Artaxerxes I	465-423	20th Year = 445/444
Darius II	423-404	6th Year = 418/17
Artaxerxes II	404-359	7th Year = 398/97

1. Called "Cyrus" in Isaiah 45:1, 14, which is the surname (throne name) of the Persian Dynasty (Isaiah 45:4). The Prophecy does not speak of just one king, but of the whole dynasty. For Egypt was not conquered by Cyrus the Great. That was left to his son [Cyrus] Cambyses to do in 525 b.c.e. "כּוֹרֶשׁ" : n.m.; κυρος, **Cyrus**: elamitische Thron-name *elamitic name of reigning prince, Kuras = Hirt shepherd*" (Koehler/Baumgartner: *Lexicon In Veteris Testamenti Libros*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985).

When all the pieces are put together, it is evident that Ezra went to Jerusalem in the 7th year of Artaxerxes II. This would be the spring of 398 b.c.e. For the reign of Artaxerxes II was 404-359. This would place his reading of the Law and the repentance of the nation just after seven sabbatical years.

The Chronology of Ezra

In 423 b.c.e. Cyrus (Darius II; cf. note 1 above) lets Sheshbazzar (prob. the pagan name of Zerubbabel), a prince of Judah return with the Temple treasures (Ezra 1:1-11). In 423 b.c.e. Zerubbabel and

the group of exiles with him went up to Jerusalem from Babylon (Ezra 2:1-70). Ezra 2:2, "which came with Zerubbabel" allows for other returnees at different times. The name of Nehemiah is also in the list. He is one and the same with the famed wall builder (Ezra 2:2). In Ezra 2:63, the "Tirshatha" is Nehemiah, who was the ex-governor of Judea. Nehemiah had built the walls years earlier and then had returned to Babylon until 423 when he joined up with Zerubbabel.

In Ezra 3:1-3:7 the altar is built (in the 7th month of 423). In 421 the new foundation was laid (Ezra 3:8ff). Ezra 3:8-13 relates how those who remembered the first foundation and structure had wept. This refers to the structure built by Solomon, which was burned in 486, but not raised. It was left as a ruin. Nebudcadnezzar, however, did raise the walls of the city. The temple remembered by those who wept was the ruin, which stood for many years after 586. The ruin was raised between 465 and 445, but the site was still called the Temple.

In Ezra 4:1-3, the same opposition that had defeated the first attempt to build the walls was renewed against Zerubbabel in 421. Starting in 4:4, Ezra gives us a review on all the opposition from the very beginning. The KJV's "Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the People of Judah" is incorrect. It should be, "And they [were] (people of the land) letting drop the hands of the people of Judah" For what happened to Zerubbabel was a renewal of opposition, not the start of it.

In Ezra 4:5a we hear of opposition under Cyrus, and in 4:5b under Darius I, and in 4:6 under Xerxes (Ahasuerus). In Ezra 4:7-22 the walls are almost finished, but Artaxerxes I acts (before his 20th year) and the order is issued to cease building. In Ezra 4:23, overzealous adversaries destroy the walls and raise the Temple ruin completely based upon their "interpretation" of Artaxerxes will. (This action is referred to in Nehemiah 1:1-4, and is the cause of the grief inducing disaster report from Nehemiah's brother, which motivated Nehemiah to petition the king. So Nehemiah went and built the walls.)

Ezra 5:1 (421 b.c.e.) mentions the prophets who encouraged the new work on the Temple (this is about 24 years after Nehemiah's wall building). Ezra 5:2-6:13 (421 b.c.e.) returns us to the present opposition in Ezra's narrative. In Ezra 6:14-22, The temple is finished in the 6th year of Darius II (418). In Ezra 7:1-28, Ezra returns in the 7th year of Artaxerxes II (in 398). Ezra 8 gives the details of his journey to Jerusalem. Ezra 9-10 details the first steps in restoring the Torah observance of the nation.

Note the sequence of kings mentioned by Ezra: Cyrus, Darius, Ahasuerus (Greek: Xerxes), Artaxerxes, Darius II, and Artaxerxes II. He mentions them in the exact order given to us by history

through Ptolemy. To place Ezra's return in 457 b.c.e. under Artaxerxes I requires a massive discontinuity in the narrative: For then we would have the sequence of Cyrus, Darius I, Xerxes, Artaxerxes ?, Darius ?, Artaxerxes I, leaving two kings unaccounted for by history.

The Chronology of Nehemiah

In Neh. 1:1-2:8 we learn of the destruction caused by Artaxerxes decree from Nehemiah's brother. Nehemiah petitions the king, and receives a command to rebuild the city. This is the first command to rebuild the city since Daniel's Prophecy. This is in 445 b.c.e.

In 2:9 he travels to Jerusalem and builds the walls completing them in 4:16-6:15. In 7:1-4 he appoints his brother governor and returns to Persia until 423 b.c.e., when he returns with Zerubbabel (7:5-73). Neh. 7:5 should read, "And God had given it into my heart, and I had gathered the nobles and the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogy, and I found the book of the genealogy of those going up at first, and I found written in it" Here, Nehemiah is referring to the return of 423, and that he had caused the people to be enrolled, but from his language it is evident that he himself did not actually write the genealogy. He had only directed that it be made. That is why he is called the "Tirshatha" in it (cf. Neh. 10:1, 8:9, 7:65).

The Ezra-Nehemiah Synchronism

445	Nehemiah builds the walls
433	Nehemiah returns to Babylon (Neh. 5:14).
423	Zerubbabel & Nehemiah return to Jerusalem
421	The building of the Temple is begun.
418	The Temple is complete
398	Ezra returns to Jerusalem
398	Ezra's reforms & dedication of the wall.

The learned E.W. Bullinger writes (before he recanted of the Sabbath Afternoon Resurrection) in the introduction to Ezra of the *Companion Bible*:

The Chronological order of events, with the structure based thereon, revolutionises the traditional view, which treats this one book as two books; places Ezra historically as preceding Nehemiah; and inserts the book of Esther between Ezra, chapters 6 and 7, instead of before Ezra-Nehemiah. (See date, Est. 1.3)

Those who thus dislocate the two divisions of this book proceed to speak of certain portions as being "misplaced", and "not original", and as having "false connections". These so-called "discrepancies",

after having thus been first made by the commentators, are charged home on the inspired writers themselves.

That the "difficulties" exists only on the minds of the critics will be seen if we note the following facts: --

1. The fixed points, common to the two parts of the book, determine for us the true position of all the other parts, and result in giving us the Chronological Structure of the whole on page 617.

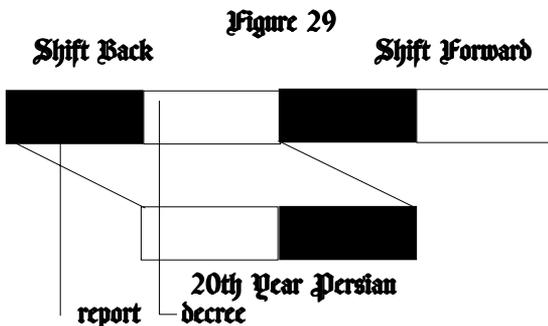
2. The traditional view places the building of the temple by Ezra as coming many years before Nehemiah 1. But this is inconceivable in view of the report brought by Hanani to Nehemiah concerning the desolations (Neh. 1.3) and repeated to the king (Neh. 2.3).

3. Nehemiah would surely have inquired about the welfare of the 42,360 exiles who are supposed to have returned to Jerusalem, and not about "the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity" (Neh. 1.2).

4. When the wall was finished, "the houses were not yet builded" (Neh. 7:1-4).

5. When the feast of the seventh month was kept (Neh. 8), "the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid" (Ezra 3:1-6).

6. When the people dwelt in their "cieled houses", the house of the LORD still lay waste (Hag. 1:1-4). These facts are more certain than all chronology, and are more important and conclusive than all



reasoning.

The Twentieth Year

Now it is stated that it was the 20th year of Artaxerxes that the

decree went out to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. I have treated the Nisan date according to the normal Persian Calendar, since Nehemiah was in Persia. The Persian Calendar is one and the same as the Babylonian. Nisan of the 20th year was the spring of 445 b.c.e., not 444 b.c.e. as maintained by many. For Nisan of 444 b.c.e. would be the 21st year of Artaxerxes.

Based on the report of Hanani in Kislev of the 20th year, it is maintained by many scholars that Nehemiah is converting Artaxerxes 20th year to a Tishri basis by shifting it either backward six months or forward six months. If this were the only evidence we had, then we would have evidence of at least one year conversion here. If so, then the dating would have to be by the non-accession method used by Israel, and the shift would put the 20th year back to Tishri of 446 b.c.e., so that Kislev of the 20th year lies between that point and Tishri of 445, when the 21st converted year would begin.

In figure 29 each year is represented by a black and white rectangle together. The white rectangles represent the months Nisan to Tishri, and the black rectangles Tishri to Nisan, i.e. the first sixth months are the white rectangle and the last sixth months the black one. The Persian regnal year, like the Babylonian begins in the spring with the first six months. Hence, in the 20th Persian year of Artaxerxes, the white rectangle comes first. In the two possible conversion years in the Jewish mode of reckoning regnal years, the black rectangle comes first, because the regnal year starts with Tishri. Neither conversion would destroy the sabbatical fulfilment of Daniel's Prophecy. If there must be a conversion, I would favor the "shift back" because a "forward shift" would falsify the Neh. 2:1 statement in the Persian context.

However, in Nehemiah 1:1, it does not say that it was the 20th year of the king. I think the reason for this is obvious. Nehemiah did not want to write that it was the 20th year of the king, so he simply wrote that it was the 20th year. In Nehemiah 2:1, we have the true Persian date of the decree, which is not converted, but in 1:1 he will not write "of the king" because he, the cup-bearer, knows that that would not be his 20th year. So, one option is that he converts the date, but does not call it the 20th year "of the king."

On the other hand, it was the 20th year of the Jubilee cycle in the month of Kislev of 446 b.c.e., as well as the 20th year of the king from the Egyptian standpoint for the last few days of Kislev. Since, there is a Biblical command to count 50 years for the Jubilee year, it could be possible that by "20th year" in Neh. 1:1, he means the 20th year of the Jubilee cycle.

END NOTES

§387.3 Zechariah 1:12 might be brought up as an objection to placing Zerubbabel's return in 423 b.c.e., "these seventy years" in reference to the seventy year exile. But the translation should be "those seventy years." Likewise, Zech. 7:4 should be, "Even those seventy

years that you all fasted for me, was it for me?" (586-516). That the Darius mentioned in Zech. 1:1 "the second year" and Zech. 7:1, "the fourth year" is not Darius the Mede (539/538-535) is clear because the second year of that Darius was not yet seventy years into the exile. Hence the translation is "those seventy years," and the words were spoken long afterward.

They had been fasting for seventy years by the 4th year of Darius I (522-486), i.e. 516 b.c.e., but the prophesied restoration did not take place then, so they continued fasting down to the fourth year of Darius II (423-404), i.e. 419 b.c.e. These years (516-419) are called, "these for what years" [זֵה כַּמָּוֶה], or these "how many years?" The count of years is not mentioned (it was $70 + 97 = 167$) because the purpose of the additional years was not known. The divine reply is that even the first seventy years of fasting was for no good purpose.

It cannot be supposed that Zechariah and Haggai prophesied in the reign of Darius I (522-486), because Ezra places them after the reign of Artaxerxes I (465-423) (cf. Ezra 4:23-24, 5:1). The letter of Artaxerxes I (4:23) results in a work stoppage until the reign of Darius (4:24), which can only be Darius II (423-404), which is when Ezra introduces us to the prophets (cf. 5:1).

Another objection might be that Nehemiah is tempted to hide in the Temple and close the doors (Neh. 6:10), but the "Temple" was then an enclosure, and the doors were merely the gates of the fortified enclosure around the site to keep the gentiles and unclean from treading the site. For there was no altar within (cf. Neh. 4:2) upon which sacrifices were offered.