

WHY THERE IS NOT A PERIOD OF 2520 YEARS OF CONTINUAL PUNISHMENT FOR LITERAL ISRAEL FOUND IN LEVITICUS 26

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INTRODUCTION

If one searches on the internet for the “2520 year prophecy”, it does not take long to find that there are dozens of interpretations of this prophecy, from the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ application to 1914 to various connexions between events of ancient Israel to the events of modern Israel’s restoration. Also, it does not take long to find that Seventh-day Adventists once taught the 2520 year prophecy but abandoned it in 1863.

Also, further examination will reveal that some Adventists want to revive this prophecy among Adventism. This is based upon an interpretation of the “seven times” in Leviticus 26 that sees “seven times” as seven years applied in a day-for-a-year fashion to make 2520 years. Based upon this prophecy being on the, so-called, 1843 chart that was used by the Millerites to proclaim Christ’s return in that year, they see this prophecy as ending in 1844. The 2520 years is also seen on the 1850 chart that was put together after the great disappointment by the early Adventists.

Further, it will also not take long, if one ends up on a forum where the 2520 is being discussed, to find that there is great opposition to this “2520 movement”.

The author has studied this prophecy for over four years and has come to the conclusion that there is much rhetoric on both sides of the issue. In seeking to defend a position or to attack what we see as error, we can often miss the bigger picture and pass over truths that have been hidden from our sight by tradition and presupposition. In the evaluation of the merits of both sides, it is hoped that some sort of understanding can be drawn from this issue and that truth will not be the casualty to our personal pride and prejudice.

If a brother differs with you on some points of truth, do not stoop to ridicule, do not place him in a false light or misconstrue his words, making sport of them; do not misinterpret his words and wrest them of their true meaning. This is not conscientious argument. Do not present him before others as a heretic, when you have not with him investigated his positions, taking the Scriptures text-by-text in the spirit of Christ to show him what is truth. You do not yourself really know the evidence he has for his faith, and you cannot clearly define your own position. Take your Bible, and in a kindly spirit weigh every argument that he presents, and show him by the Scriptures if he is in error. When you do this without unkind feelings, you will do only that which is your duty and the duty of every minister of Jesus Christ. *12 Manuscript Releases*, 376.

LEVITICUS 26: BLESSINGS AND CURSES

Miller derived the 2520 years for the “bondage of the children of God” from an interpretation of the “seven times” of Leviticus 26 as being “exactly 2520 years, or the seven prophetic years”.¹ Is this interpretation justified? Obviously, Leviticus 26 is fulfilled by the captivity of literal Israel, how then did he account for this period to extend to 1843?

First, we must understand the fulfilment of Leviticus 26 as it occurred historically. Sister White says of the scattering of literal Israel, the topic of Leviticus 26, “This prophecy, fulfilled in part in the time of the judges, met a more complete and literal fulfillment in the captivity of Israel in Assyria and of Judah in Babylon.”² We can see that this is indeed true. The prophecy of Leviticus 26 is conditional and consists of a series of four if/then statements.

1. “[I]f ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins....
2. if ye walk contrary unto me...[then] I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins...

¹ William Miller, *A Lecture on the Typical Sabbaths and the Great Jubilee*, 20.

² *Prophets and Kings*, 296

3. if ye will not be reformed by me by these things... Then will I ... punish you yet seven times for your sins....
4. if ye will not for all this hearken unto me... Then I will... chastise you seven times for your sins.” Leviticus 26:18, 21, 24 and 28.

The first part of Leviticus 26 describes the blessing for obedience to the sabbatical rest of the land, as laid out in chapter 25. It then outlines the consequences of disobedience. Leviticus 26 finds its parallel in Deuteronomy 28, where we see the blessings and curses in more detail. We will see that there are differences between Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 that are important. These chapters are parallel but Leviticus 26 refers to the events at the beginning of the captivity of literal Israel while Deuteronomy refers to events at the close.

The blessings promised to Israel for obedience are,

1. Blessings of the land:
 - i. rain in due season
 - ii. the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit
 - iii. your threshing shall reach unto the vintage and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time
 - iv. ye shall eat your bread to the full
2. Divine protection:
 - i. [Ye shall] dwell in your land safely
 - ii. I will give peace in the land
 - iii. ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid
 - iv. I will rid evil beasts out of the land
3. Military prowess:
 - i. neither shall the sword go through your land
 - ii. ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword
 - iii. five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight:
 - iv. your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.
4. A reiteration of the covenant blessings:
 - i. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.
 - ii. ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new
 - iii. I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.
 - iv. I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

(Leviticus 26:4-12)

These blessings are sealed with God’s promise that serves as a preamble to the ten commandments, “I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright. (Leviticus 26:13)

The curses, then, are the direct result of failure to keep the covenant. The character of this disobedience is outlined below.

“But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant” (Leviticus 26:14-15)

The curses represent a reversal of the promised blessings and are the natural result of disobedience, which is characterized as an act of divine retribution.

“I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague [fever], that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.” (Leviticus 26:14-17)

At this point of Leviticus 26, no period of probation is introduced, other than that that is set out in the covenant promise, ‘If you keep my covenant, you will receive these blessings; if not, my blessings will be removed and curses are the result’. The curses, then, are the natural result of disobedience. We are reminded of the words of Balaam, “How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed?” He could not curse God’s people while they were obedient.

FOUR STEPS IN THE CAPTIVITY OF ANCIENT ISRAEL

We are now introduced to the four steps that led to the captivity of ancient Israel in Babylon. If the natural results of disobedience are insufficient to restore God’s people, then special measures must be taken. These four if/then statements can be found to be fulfilled in the captivity of literal Israel and are conditional as to their length. These parallel the promised blessings. These are,

First If/Then Chastisement (vv. 18-20)

- a. Chastisement Prolonged for “Seven” (v. 18)
- b. Breaking of the Pride of Power (v. 19a)
- c. Heaven Iron / Earth Brass (v. 19b)
- d. Curse of Land and Trees (v. 20)

Second If/Then Chastisement (vv. 21-22)

- a. Chastisement Prolonged for “Seven” (v. 21)
- b. Wild Beasts (Gentile Nations) (v. 22a)
- c. Begin Depopulation of Israel (v. 22b)
- d. Civil Disorder (v. 22c)

Third If/Then Chastisement (vv. 23-26)

- a. Chastisement of “Yet Seven” (vv. 23, 24)
- b. Sword to Avenge Quarrel of Covenant (v. 25a)
- c. Siege and Pestilence (v. 25b)
- d. Captivity (v. 25c)
- e. Famine for the Word of God (v. 26)

Fourth If/Then Chastisement (vv. 27-38)

- a. Final Chastisement for “Seven” (vv. 27-28)
- b. Siege of Jerusalem (v. 29)
- c. Sanctuaries Destroyed (vv. 30-31)
 - (1) False Worship Ended (v. 30)
 - (2) Solomon’s Temple Destroyed (v. 31)
- d. Dispersion - Exile (v. 32, 33)
 - (1) Land Desolate
 - (2) People Removed
- e. Desertion of the Land (vv. 34-38)
 - (1) Forced Sabbatical Rest for the Land (vv. 34-35)
 - (2) The Stricken Remnant (vv. 36-38)

The question is, 'how do we match this prophecy with what happened historically?' Was this prophecy fulfilled by literal Israel? The answer, of course, is yes. As mentioned earlier, Sister White saw these as partially fulfilled in the period of the judges with a more complete fulfilment in the captivities of Israel and Judah. That is, if the conditions for repentance were met, as in the time of the judges, the chastisements were reversed. Also, Leviticus 26 receives a different fulfilment in regards to Israel than with Judah. These differences will be dealt with in more detail later. What we need to consider next, in regards to the answer to the question, 'when did these things occur?' is an examination of the meaning of the word *sheba* translated as *seven times* in the KJV.

SHEBA: INTENSITY OR DURATION?

The word that is translated as "seven times" is the Hebrew word *sheba* [seven]. The understanding of the meaning of this word and how it is applied in Leviticus 26 is critical to the argument around whether or not we can find a 2520 year period in Leviticus 26.

Almost all are agreed that the language in Leviticus 26, in regard to the use of the word *sheba*, is unusual. The word could simply be translated as the number *seven* and should be so translated, based upon its form and the fact that there are no nouns for it to modify. For *seven* is usually an adjective modifying a noun as to number (e.g. seven cows, seven years, seven times, etc.). The word *times* is merely an added word in the sense of *sevenfold* and it could have been so translated. James White, in his January 26th 1864 article in the Review and Herald, entered into the fray regarding the use of this word.

"[W]hat is meant by this repeated expression of seven times? We reply, It denotes, not the duration of the punishment, but its intensity and severity. It is well expressed in the language of verse 21, thus: "I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins." The number seven denoting perfection, we are undoubtedly to understand by this expression, the fullness of their punishment; that the measure of their national sins, would in every case be fully equaled by the measure of their national calamities."

"[W]e learn from the Hebrew Concordance that the expression, seven times, in Leviticus 26, comes from *sheba*; and this word is expressly set down by Gesenius, in those texts, as an adverb, also in Psalms. 119:164 and Proverbs 24:16. In Daniel 4:16, 25, the expression, seven times, twice occurs, where beyond question it means duration. Nebuchadnezzar was to be driven from men, and make his dwelling with the beasts of the field, until seven times should pass over him. There can be no mistaking that here the expression means a certain space of time; but here we find, not the adverb as in Leviticus 26, but the noun, *'iddan*, defined by Gesenius, "Time, in prophetic language, for a year." In Dan. 7:25, where a prophetic period is brought to view in the expression, "a time and times and the dividing of time," the same word is used. In Dan. 12:7, where the same period is again brought to view, and in about the same language, we have another word, *mo'ed*, defined by Gesenius, "Appointment of time, spoken of as a space of time, appointed and definite, in the prophetic style for a year." It will be seen by this definition, that this word is synonymous with the one used in Daniel 7:25, as above referred to. Now if a period of time is meant by the expression, seven times, in Leviticus 26, one of these words should and would most assuredly have been used. And the fact that neither of these words is there used, but another word, and that an adverb, places it beyond question that no such period is there intended.

"The Greek is equally definite. The Septuagint has in Leviticus 26, *heptakis*, which is an adverb, signifying seven times. In Daniel 4:16, 25, for Nebuchadnezzar's seven times we have not *heptakis*, the adverb, but *heptakairoi*, a noun and its adjective. And in all cases where the word time occurs, denoting a prophetic period, as in Daniel 7:25, 12:7 and Revelation 12:14, it is from the noun *kairos*. Such a thing as a prophetic period based

on an adverb is not to be found.

“So then, there is no prophetic period in Leviticus 26 and those who imagine that such a thing exists, and are puzzling themselves over the adjustment of its several dates, are simply beating the air. To ignore, or treat with neglect, a prophetic period where one is plainly given, is censurable in the extreme. It is an equally futile, though not so heinous, a course, to endeavor to create one where none exist.”

His reasoning here is unfortunate, in that it is in error. Further, it has obscured and buried the discussion. His words are presented/accepted uncritically as the final word upon this subject. Light could have come from an understanding of Leviticus 26 but White’s words closed the door for further investigation.

In answering James’ White’s linguistic arguments it does not take much work to see how faulty they are. It does not appear that he has checked his references very well. We agree with him that seven denotes perfection but this says nothing in regard to whether this perfection refers to the length or intensity of the chastisement. Obviously, God’s corrective means are perfect in either case. Concerning the rest of his argument, let us tackle each point separately.

1. Regarding the word *sheba* [H7651 meaning *seven*], White makes the case that according to Gesenius’ lexicon it is an adverb. This, of course, is merely the opinion of Gesenius based upon the interpretation of the text itself. There is nothing in the form of the word that tells him that. Many lexicons say that *sheba* in this verse is a *noun*, in that it is merely the number seven. This is most likely, since there is already an adverb present, *yasaph* [H3254 translated as *more* in the KJV and meaning to add, augment, prolong], applied to the modification of the infinitive verb *yasar*’ [to punish]. In this sense then the Hebrew would be translated into English as, “I will prolong to punish you, even seven, for your sins”.
2. Also, a comparison of the verses given where *sheba* is also reputed to be an adverb we find some interesting results. “Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.” (Psalms 119:164) “For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief.” (Proverbs 24:16) There is no indication here that there is an intensity indicated. We see merely that as an adverb *sheba* modifies the number of times an action is repeated. Thus, his claim that it is an intensity, **because** it is an adverb, is unfounded. A place where intensity can be found is Daniel 3:19, “Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.” Here we have a syntactical relationship of the word seven that indicates an intensity. The words “more than” are needed to make a comparative of intensity, as well as a unit with which to compare it. “One seven times more than” is an intensity but “prolong to punish you, even seven,” is not.
3. Further, we have other examples of intensity using the plural form of *sheba*. *Shib’athayim* is used in Genesis 4:15 “And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold [shib’athayim]. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.” Also, Genesis 4:24 “If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold [shib’athayim], truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold [*shib’ayim sheba*, a phrase that either means ‘seventy seven’ or ‘seventy times seven’].” Again, in Isaiah 30:26 “Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold [shib’athayim], as the light of seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.” Psalms 12:6, 79:12 and Proverbs 6:31 also contain the word *sevenfold* (shib’athayim) but it is merely *sevenfold in number*. That the plural form of *sheba* was not used in Leviticus 26, if intensity of punishment was meant, seems rather odd.

4. White then claims that *sheba* cannot be a period of prophetic time because it does not have either the word *'iddan* (year) or *mo'ed* (season or appointed time) for the *seven* to modify. All he can claim here is that *sheba* is not representing seven years, something with which we agree. There is no indication from Leviticus 26 that the *seven times* refers to a period of *seven years*. This, of course, was not the argument made by Miller. He merely interpreted the meaning of *seven times* in the context of Leviticus 26. Leviticus 26 is a prophecy dealing with the transgression of the sabbatical cycle, as presented in Leviticus 25 preceding it. He saw the 2520 as an expression of the cycle of seven (both the seven year cycle of the resting of the land and the 49/50 year Jubilee cycle of the forgiveness of debts, etc.) and derived the 2520 years as being one sabbatical cycle of punishment. He also derived the great Jubilee from Leviticus 25 and 26. He saw the restoration of the land (heavenly Canaan) that would occur at the end of 2450 years from the commencement of the Babylonian captivity in 607 BC to the 10th day of the 7th month in 1844.³ He was correct as to the time but, like the 2300 days, was mistaken in regard to the event to occur at its termination.
5. Further, it is astutely observed by many scholars that the Hebrew of Leviticus 26 is odd. That is, the phrase, "I will prolong to punish you seven for your sins", is just not good Hebrew. *Seven* rarely stands on its own as a noun, as it appears to here (thus Gesenius' suggestion it is an adverb). If it is referring to a duration, the fact that it is written in such an unusual manner can be an indication that it is to be understood symbolically. For support for this position we quote from William Shea's article on the Year Day Principle.

"Not only do apocalyptic time periods appear in symbolic contexts, but they are expressed on occasion in unusual time units. The "evening-mornings" of Daniel 8:14 presents an example of this. That composite unit does not appear elsewhere in the OT as a unit by which time was commonly quantified numerically. It probably was selected for this prophecy because it was particularly appropriate for the sanctuary activity and the symbolism involved with it. Again, the 3 ½ *'iddan* or "times" of Daniel 7:25 are not the normal expressions of the Bible writers to denote time units. Although some commentators hold that this term is simply another word for "years," there is no lexical evidence from either biblical or extra-biblical sources to support such a contention. The point is that a time unit was used here which was intentionally symbolic, and those symbolic units must be interpreted to determine the actual time period intended by the writer. The use of unusual time units that were not ordinarily employed for the computation of time, such as "evening-mornings," "times," and to some extent, even "weeks," lends support to the idea that something more than just literal time is involved here. Unusual units like these fit better with symbolic time and probably were chosen to emphasise that point." William H. Shea, Year-day Principle page 74.

6. It is our suggestion that the fact *seven* stands on its own without a unit to modify is a strong indication that *seven* here must be understood symbolically. Where we depart from Miller is in the interpretation that *seven* represents various periods of time depending upon the context. It is not that one sabbatical cycle is here meant but that this refers to periods that can be 7 years, 70 years, 49 years, 140 years, 490 years, 1260 years, 2254 years, 2450 years and various other permutations of 7. Specifically, however, we see the *seven* of Leviticus 26 as fulfilled by literal Israel during the period of the captivity from 677 to 457 BC, as noted above, in four periods of seventy years.⁴ The

³ The ending date was discovered during the tarrying time from April 19th 1844 to the giving of the true midnight cry on August 15th 1844.

⁴ Interestingly, this period of 220 years, if divided by 70 years, produces the nearest equivalent to *pi* that can be derived from the dividing of two numbers - 3.142857.

main point here is that James White fails to provide solid answers on how Leviticus 26 is fulfilled in history.⁵

7. In James White's appeal to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament as evidence that the seven times is an intensity, we find the contrary. It is true that they translate the word *seven* as an adverb but they do not translate the word *yasaph* as *more*. Instead it is translated as the Greek word *protheso* meaning *to add* from which we get the English word *prosthetic*. There is no evidence of *seven* referring to *intensity* there.

It must then be concluded that the basis of rejecting *sheba* as referring to a duration is unfounded. It does not, however, follow that it then refers to 2520 years. There is nothing in Leviticus 26 from which this conclusion can be drawn. If it is a period, to how long a period does it refer?

THE 70 YEARS CAPTIVITY

If one just thought about it for a minute, they would realise that if God is seeking to reform His people through a series of chastisements, there must be periods of time allotted for these chastisements to occur. Since the transgression that the chastisement is meant to correct is, in part, the transgression of the sabbatical rest of the land, it seems obvious that the chastisement could be a period relating to the cycle of Sabbaths. In fact, this is made plain in the final *seven* starting at verse 28. In that case, *seven* represents a period of 70 years.

Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcases upon the carcases of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. (Leviticus 26:28-35)

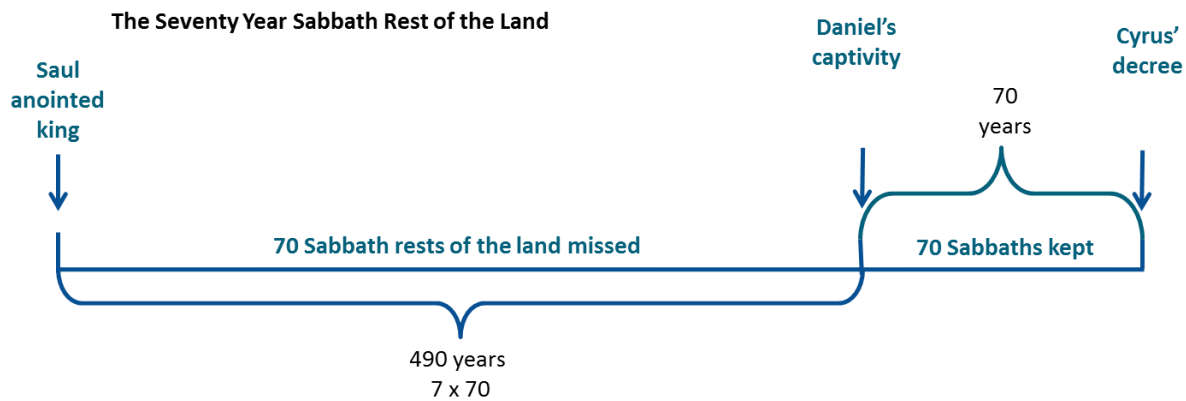
This is seen even more clearly when compared to 2 Chronicles 36.

To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years. (2 Chronicles 36:21)

The final *seven* mentioned in Leviticus 26 is 70 years long. There is a period of 10 jubilees of transgression of the sabbatical cycle (490 years) followed by 10 sabbatical cycles of rest (70 years). That is, for every 49 years of the jubilee cycle, seven sabbatical rests of the land occurred but were not observed from the time that Saul was anointed king until the Babylonian captivity. So for 490 years the land did not observe Sabbath 70 times. That is why the captivity was 70 years.⁶

⁵ It has recently come to my attention that J. N. Loughborough attempted to interpret Leviticus 26 as 28 different apostasies fulfilled from the period of the judges to Zedekiah. This can be found in *The Bible Training School*, June 1915, p. 3 at adventistarchives.org.

⁶ This is also why the actual time of desolation is 49 years, from 586 to 537 BC



Further, it seems reasonable that these periods of seventy years also apply to the first three *sevens*. We will see that this can be confirmed by comparing the fulfillment of each *seven times* historically.

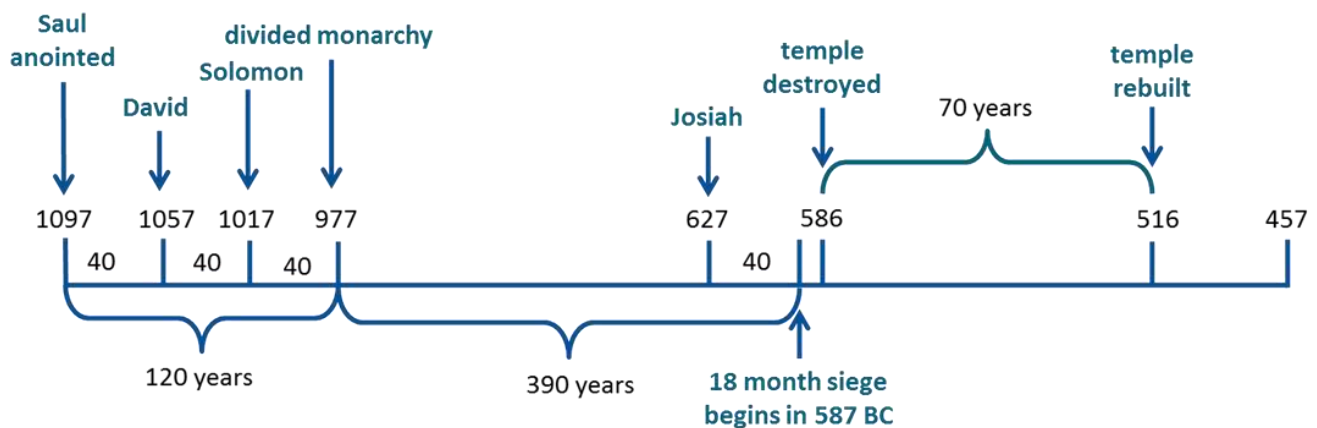
THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE CAPTIVITY

The chronology of the captivity of literal Israel in Babylon is clearly marked out in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, though it is not generally understood and has been obscured by modern scholarship. We have seen that there is of necessity 490 years that precede the commencement of the 70 years' captivity. This places the point at which the land ceased to rest as 1097 BC. That this is the beginning of the reign of King Saul can be confirmed by Ezekiel 4:4-6.

Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.

This prophecy marks the beginning of 390 years at the dividing of the kingdom in 977 BC and ending at the siege of Jerusalem in 587 BC. Saul, David and Solomon each reigned 40 years making the united kingdom last a period of 120 years.⁷

The Period of the Kings (390 and 40 years of Ezekiel 4:4-6)



⁷ For an in-depth study on Ezekiel 4:4-6 We suggest reading Floyd Nolen Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament: A Return to the Basics*. 138-141. We differ with Jones in some areas but he gives a solid overall argument. His non-dogmatic approach and a rejection of an absolute chronology, while maintaining a strict adherence to biblical chronology, are refreshing.

Also, a quick comparison of the prophecy laid out in chapters 4 to 6 of Ezekiel yields a striking similarity to Leviticus 26. We account for this upon the basis that the final siege and captivity of Jerusalem, which results in the destruction of the temple, is a fulfilment of the fourth *seven*. Ezekiel 4 to 6 deals specifically with that event and uses language from all four of the *sevens* in Leviticus 26. This is what is known as a 3-1 combination. This is paralleled in the three angels' messages plus the fourth, the three decrees plus the fourth and the three kings plus the fourth, etc.

| Leviticus 26 | Ezekiel 4 – 6 |
|--|--|
| v.22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children... | 5:17 So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee... |
| v.25 I will bring a sword upon you... I will send the pestilence among you. | 5:12 A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence... and I will draw out a sword after them. |
| v.26 And when I have broken the staff of your bread... and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight. | 4:16; 5:16 I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight. I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread. |
| v.29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. | 5:10 Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers. |
| v.30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcases upon the carcases of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. | 6:3, 5 Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places. And I will lay the dead carcases of the children of Israel before their idols. |
| v.31 And I will... bring your sanctuaries unto desolation | 6:4 And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken |
| v.32 And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. | 5:14, 15 Moreover I will make ... a reproach among the nations that are round about thee... So it shall be a reproach ... and an astonishment unto the nations that are round about thee |
| v.33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. | 5:14; 6:6 Moreover I will make thee waste... In all your dwelling places the cities shall be laid waste. |

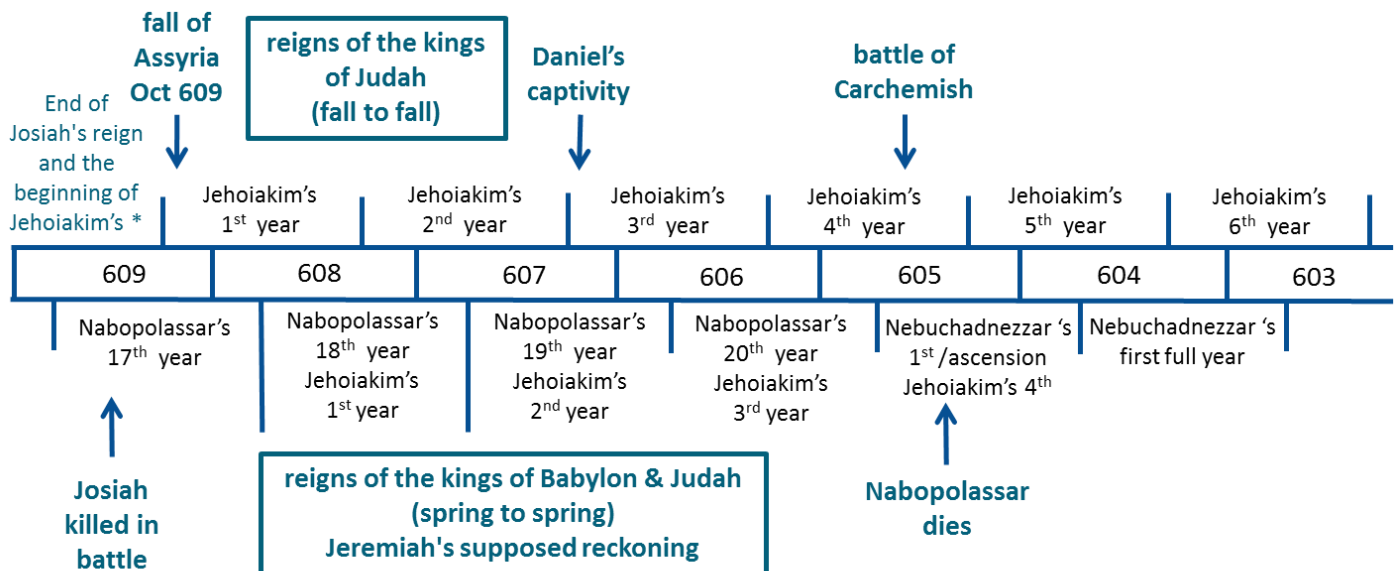
We can also see the end of the period of the seventy years clearly marked out in the Spirit of Prophecy.

Daniel's prayer had been offered "in the first year of Darius" (verse 1), the Median monarch whose general, Cyrus, had wrested from Babylonia the scepter of universal rule. The reign of Darius was honored of God. To him was sent the angel Gabriel, "to confirm and to strengthen him." Daniel 11:1. **Upon his death, within about two years of the fall of Babylon, Cyrus succeeded to the throne, and the beginning of his reign marked the completion of the seventy years since the first company of Hebrews had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar from their Judean home to Babylon.** *Prophets and Kings*, 556.

This same universal sway was exercised by Nebuchadnezzar's descendants until, nearly seventy years later, in the days of Belshazzar, because of the wickedness of the nation, the kingdom was "divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." Thus arose the second universal monarchy, Medo-Persia.

It was only about two years afterward that Cyrus, king of Medo-Persia, issued the remarkable decree providing for the restoration of all the Israelites, "the children of the captivity," to their home in the land of Canaan." *Review and Herald*, January 23, 1908.

Since we know exactly when Babylon fell and when Cyrus came to the throne of Media-Persia, we can mark exactly when the 70 years captivity began. That is, the Babylonian captivity began when “the first company of Hebrews had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar from their Judean home to Babylon” in 607 BC. Some object to 607 BC, since this is the date that Jehovah’s Witnesses use as the fall of Jerusalem in calculating 2520 years ending in 1914. They suppose we adopt this date using similar reasoning, when, in fact, the only similarity that exists between these two views is that 607 BC exists as a date. All of the other reasoning around it differs. Jerusalem was first destroyed in 597 BC and finally in 586 BC (when the temple also was destroyed). According to Daniel 1:1-2 “In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.” It is generally accepted that the third year of Jehoiakim’s reign is 607/606 BC, if we use accession year dating. Nebuchadnezzar became king in the fourth year of Jehoiakim’s reign, according to Jeremiah 25:1. We know that this was the late summer of 605 BC. This would place the siege, and the taking of the first Hebrew captives, late in 607 BC shortly after the commencement of Jehoiakim’s third year.⁸ The fact that no extra-biblical accounts exist of this siege and captivity does not preclude its existence historically.



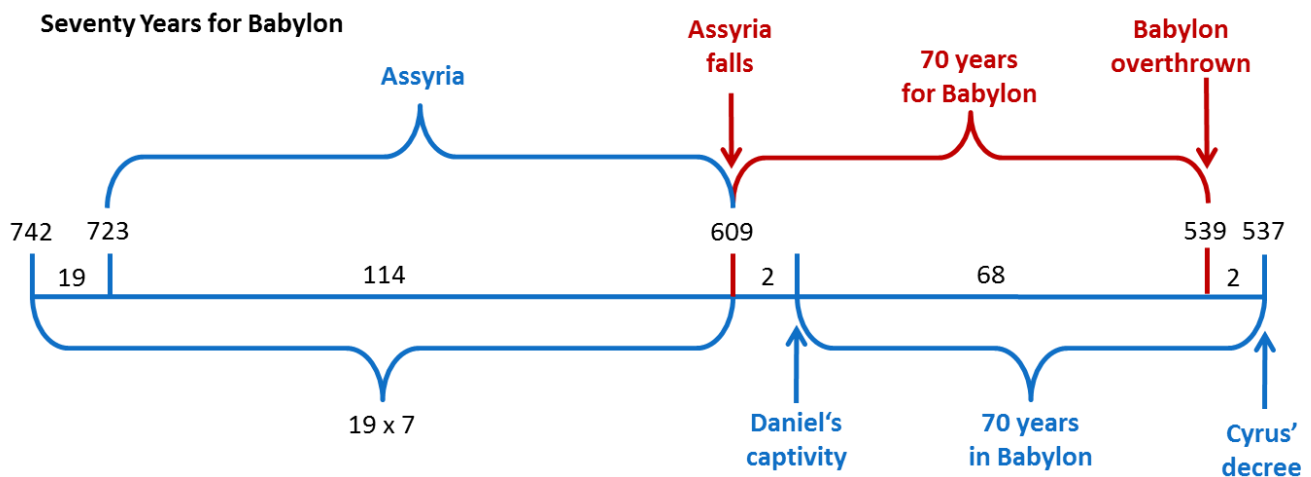
*Jehoahaz reigned for three months from June to September 609 BC

Some try to locate Daniel 1:1 after Nebuchadnezzar became king. They reason that Nebuchadnezzar could not have been referred to as the “king”, describing an event before he became king. Of course, this practise of referring to the titles of monarchs proleptically is common in every culture and language and is seen in other places in scripture. Countering this, they try to connect Daniel’s captivity to events that occurred when Nebuchadnezzar became king after the Battle of Carchemish in 605 BC. This is problematic on several accounts. First, there is nothing that ties Daniel’s captivity to the battle of Carchemish. This is merely conjecture. Second, this would make the Babylonian captivity less than 70 years. As well, this directly contradicts the Spirit of Prophecy statements, as noted above.

There are some who try to place the seventy years from October of 609 BC to October of 539 BC. This is based upon Jeremiah 25:11-12. “And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment;

⁸ The events of the siege and the removal of the vessels are conflated, as it is understood that these vessels were taken in 606 BC and returned in 536, exactly 70 years later (see Ezra 1:7-11).

and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.” We agree with this interpretation of the seventy years for Babylon but do not see this as the fulfillment of the seventy years, as mentioned other places. This is marking a period of probation **for** Babylon and not a period of captivity **in** Babylon. This is just another period of seventy years, demonstrating that God chooses to use cycles of seven in marking out probationary periods. The context of these seventy years is that Babylon will dominate “all these nations round about” (and not Judah only). This period of dominance begins when Assyria ends and can be clearly marked out historically from non-biblical sources. We note, for interest’s sake, that God refers to Nebuchadnezzar as, “my servant”. This parallels the work of Cyrus who ends Babylon’s 70-year rule as “my shepherd”, creating a prophetic mirror, as illustrated below.



After the fall of the Assyrian empire in October 609 BCE, Babylonian domination lasted exactly 70 years until its fall in October 539 BCE, according to Jeremiah 25:11,12. (Gerard Gertoux; Dating the Biblical Chronology p. 8)

ISAIAH 7 – 12: THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CHAIN OF TRUTH

The Prophecy of Isaiah 7 - 12 is known more for its Messianic prophecy than for providing the commencement for the captivities of Judah and Israel, though they are not unconnected. We, of course, will be focusing upon the chronological information that this prophecy provides, most notably the 65 year prophecy in 7:8-9. For one, it is this prophecy that the Millerites and the modern advocates of 2520 year prophecy use for establishing the commencement of both the captivities of Judah and of northern Israel.

Isaiah is sent to Ahaz, the king of Judah, to encourage him to trust in God for deliverance from the ongoing confederacy of Syria and Ephraim in their attempts to overthrow Judah. This civil war Ahaz inherited from his father Jotham and it is in this context that the 65 year prophecy is given.

Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub [a remnant will return] thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah [Pekah]. Because Syria, Ephraim [northern Israel], and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal [pleasing to God]: Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. For the head [capital] of Syria is Damascus, and the

head [king] of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. And the head [capital] of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head [king] of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established. (Isaiah 7:3-9)

On the surface, the dating of this prophecy appears problematic. Isaiah merely places it “in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham” (v.1) If we consider further contextual data from 2 Kings 15:37 to 16:5 and 2 Chronicles 28, we can place it prior to the events therein described (in that, Isaiah is warning Ahaz about those coming events). Most 2520 advocates date this prophecy as being given in the first year of Ahaz in 742 BC, as this is the supposed first year of his reign. Most evidence however places Ahaz’ first year as 741 BC, though there is also evidence that supports 742. It is our suggestion that this prophecy is given prior to Ahaz’ first year placing it in the context of 2 Kings 15:37 at the end of Jotham’s reign and the beginning of the confederacy. The prophecy is for this reason given to Ahaz, in that he is soon to be king. This also could explain the otherwise enigmatic choice for a place of meeting between Isaiah and Ahaz (at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller’s field). If Ahaz was king, it seems to be a rather odd place to meet. Why would Ahaz be there? How was this meeting arranged? These details inspiration has seen fit not to give us.⁹ Either way, the prophecy was given in 742 BC, if it is to end with the captivity of Manasseh.

Why would we mark its end with the captivity of Manasseh and why would we place Manasseh’s captivity in 677 BC? Opponents of the 2520 try to bring all the weight they can to bear upon rejecting this as the date for Manasseh’s captivity. Sister White plainly states that Manasseh was “captured by a band of Assyrian soldiers, who “bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon,” their temporary capital.”¹⁰ The only time that Babylon was the temporary capital of Assyria, during the reign of Manasseh, was between 681 and 669 BC, when Esarhaddon rebuilt it and made it such. More importantly, Esarhaddon lists Manasseh as one of the 22 kings that were involved in forced labour in rebuilding projects in Assyria in 677/676 BC.¹¹ This means that Manasseh was compelled (*adkema*, Assyrian for mustered, gathered by force, conscripted, etc.) by 677. If the 65 year prophecy is true and has its fulfilment, this places Manasseh’s captivity in the correct time and fulfills the conditions of the prophecy. If Manasseh’s captivity does not fulfill the 65 year prophecy, what event does?

Since we are looking at Leviticus 26 as being fulfilled by literal Israel, Manasseh’s captivity also provides the necessary fulfilment of the first part of verse 19, “I will break the pride of your power”. It also gives meaning to the first *seven*, in that 677 BC is exactly 70 years prior to the captivity of Daniel. If *seven* refers to a period of 70 years in verse 28, it is sensible that it does so in verse 18. The second part of verse 19, “I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass,” can refer to drought but symbolically to the removal of communion with God. In the context of pride, we see in Nebuchadnezzar’s *seven times* a band of iron and brass upon the stump of the tree. In fact there are many linguistic parallels between Daniel 4 and Leviticus 26.¹² We see then in the first *seven* of Leviticus

⁹ This conclusion, regarding the placing of Isaiah 7 as just prior to Ahaz’ first year, I, personally, came to understand from my own study, prior to reading it from other sources. Since then, I have found numerous commentators that have drawn the same conclusion by comparing biblical and historical sources. In addition, this is another example where a prince is denoted as king proleptically.

¹⁰ *Prophets and Kings*, 384.

¹¹ I compelled the kings of the country Hatti and (of the region) on the other side of the riser (Euphrates) (to wit): Ba’lu. king of Tyre, Manasseh (Me-na-si-i), king of Judah (Ia-u-di) Qaushgabri, king of Edom, Musuri, king of Moab, Sil-Bel, king of Gaza, Metinti, king of Ashekelon, Ikausu, king of Ekron, Milkiashapa, king of Byblos. Matanba’al, king of Arvad. Abiba’al, king of Samsimuruna, Puduil, king of Beth-Ammon, Ahimilki, king of Ashdod - 12 kings from the seacoast...10 kings from Cyprus (Iadnana) amidst the sea. together 22 kings of Hatti, the seashore and the islands; all these I sent out [from Babylon] and made them transport under terrible difficulties, to Nineveh. the town (where I exercise) my rulership, as building material for my palace: big logs, long beams (and) thin hoards from cedar and pine trees_ products of the Sirara and Lebanon (Lab-na-na) mountains, which had grown for a long time into tall and strong timber, (also) from their quarries (lit.: place of creation) in the mountains, statues of protective deities (lit.: of Lamassu and Shedû)... *Prism B v* (ANET 291)

¹² see Appendix

26 a period of probation given that begins with the captivity of Manasseh in 677 and ends with the captivity of Daniel in 607. Even though Manasseh himself repented and a reform was enacted under Josiah in 627 BC, they “came too late to save the kingdom from the corrupting influence of years of idolatrous practices. Many had stumbled and fallen, never again to rise.”¹³

We see then that the second *seven* of Leviticus 26, as found in verse 22, was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar bringing Judah into captivity in 607 BC. This is the “wild beasts... which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate.” This is depicted in Daniel 7 where we see the four kingdoms that arise represented as four beasts, the first of which is a lion with wings representing Babylon. This commences the 70 years Babylonian captivity but its duration is still conditional. We will see that it is not until the final *seven* that the conditionality is removed.

Here, of course, it makes sense to mention the third *seven*. This is marked by the first siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar that occurred ten years after Daniel’s captivity in 597 BC when Jehoiachin is deposed, taken to Babylon for 36 years and replaced by Zedekiah.

And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied. (Leviticus 26:25-26)

Besides the obvious reference to the siege, we see that there is also a famine for the Word of God. The ten women have a symbolism that we cannot here elaborate upon, other than to say that ten means universal (worldwide) and a woman represents a Church. That this *seven* commences prior to the end of the previous *seven* is found in the language of Leviticus 26:24, “I... will punish you yet [*gam*, also - through the idea of a gathering of objects or ideas] seven times for your sins. God see fits to continue the correction of Judah by means of another punishment of *seven* due to the obvious lack of effect that the previous punishment has had in correcting Judah in its apostasy. That is, they “are not reformed by these things”.

The final *seven* seals up the second *seven*. This occurs in 586 BC when Nebuchadnezzar enacts his final destruction of Jerusalem destroying the temple of Solomon along with it.

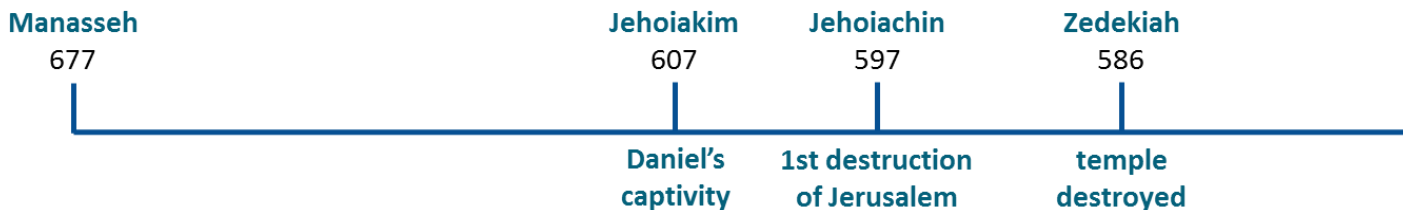
Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcases upon the carcases of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies’ land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. (Leviticus 26:28-35)

All of the aspects of the first three *sevens* are repeated. This final *seven* verifies the length of the first three *sevens*, as periods of seventy years. All conditionality is removed. God walks contrary to them

¹³ Prophets and Kings, 384.

in fury. The siege and the destruction of the city and sanctuary, with the scattering of Israel among the nations, are all listed, as well as the Sabbath rest of the land.

In summary, we see that there are four *sevens* commencing in 677, 607, 597 and 586 BC. Of a more fundamental nature are the events marking their termination. In our next section, we will see that the terminations of the four periods of *seven* are a necessary part of understanding the commencement of the 70 week prophecy of Daniel 9.



THE 70 WEEKS

The seventy week prophecy is well-known to Adventists, at least, in name but not many can present it to others. Also, even among those who can tell you the starting and end dates, there are few who can defend them. We have left this task to the professional theologians and chronologists. Of course, we know that the starting date is the fall of 457 BC in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes. The decree that marks the beginning of the 70 weeks is found in Ezra 7:11-26. As well,, there are three decrees involved in the fulfilment of Daniel 9:24. Let us have Sister White sum it all up for us.

The seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety days, represent four hundred and ninety years. A starting point for this period is given: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks," sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years. Daniel 9:25. The commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, as **completed** by the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus (see Ezra 6:14; 7:1, 9, margin), went into effect in the autumn of B. C. 457. From this time four hundred and eighty-three years extend to the autumn of A. D. 27. According to the prophecy, this period was to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One. In A. D. 27, Jesus at His baptism received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and soon afterward began His ministry. Then the message was proclaimed. "The time is fulfilled."

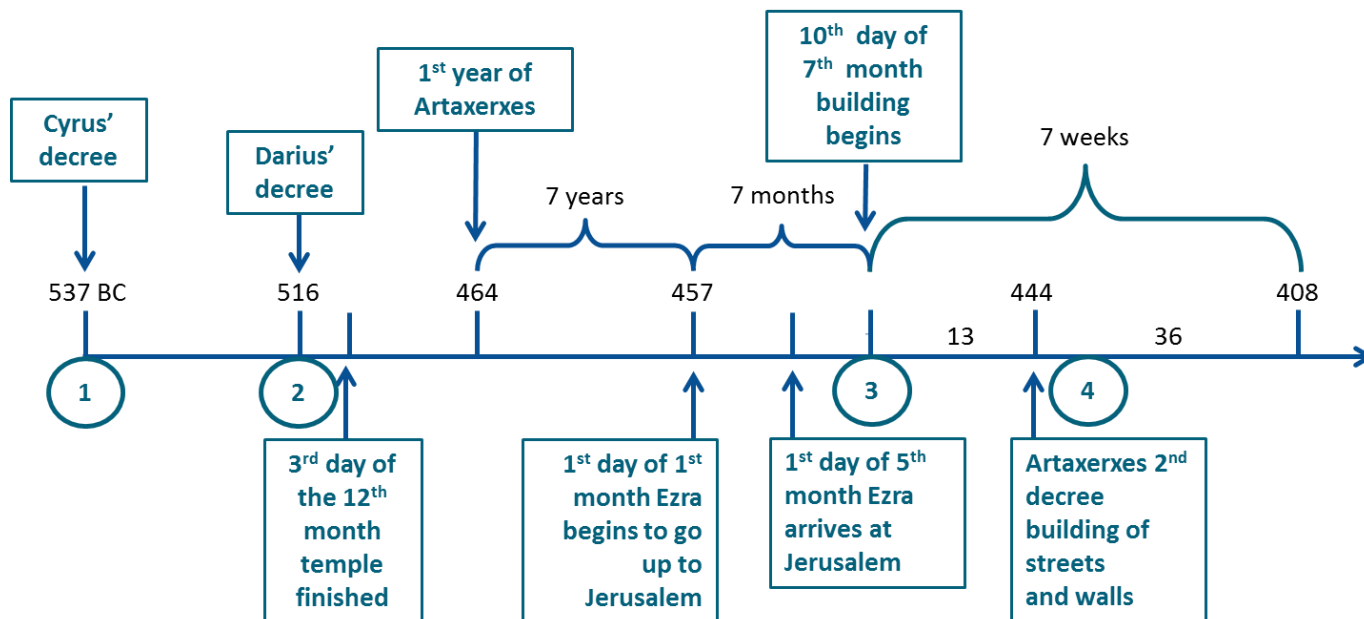
Then, said the angel, "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week [seven years]." For seven years after the Saviour entered on His ministry, the gospel was to be preached especially to the Jews; for three and a half years by Christ Himself; and afterward by the apostles. "In the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." Daniel 9:27. In the spring of A. D. 31, Christ the true sacrifice was offered on Calvary. Then the veil of the temple was rent in twain, showing that the sacredness and significance of the sacrificial service had departed. The time had come for the earthly sacrifice and oblation to cease.

The one week--seven years--ended in A. D. 34. Then by the stoning of Stephen the Jews finally sealed their rejection of the gospel; the disciples who were scattered abroad by persecution "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4); and shortly after, Saul the persecutor was converted, and became Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles." *Desire of Ages*, 232.

In the seventh chapter of Ezra the decree is found. [Ezra 7:12-26.] In its completest form it was issued by Artaxerxes, king of Persia, B. C. 457. But in Ezra 6:14 the house of the Lord at Jerusalem is said to have been built "according to the commandment

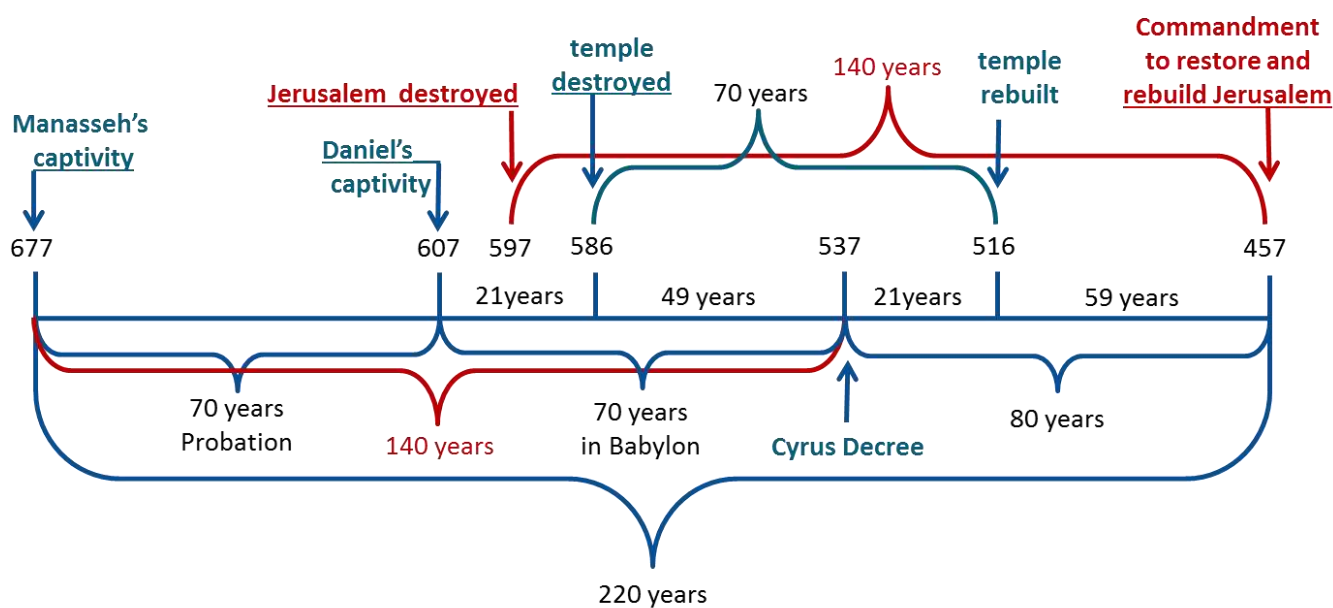
[margin, decree] of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.” **These three kings, in originating, re-affirming, and completing the decree, brought it to the perfection required by the prophecy to mark the beginning of the 2300 years.** Taking B. C. 457, the time when the decree was completed, as the date of the commandment, every specification of the prophecy concerning the seventy weeks was seen to have been fulfilled. *The Great Controversy*, 326.

Four Decrees



To repeat, this means that all three decrees are needed to commence the seventy weeks – not just one. More importantly, each of these decrees ends one of the *sevens* of Leviticus 26. Of course, we have already seen how Cyrus' decree ends the 70 year captivity. Darius' decree ends the desolation of the sanctuary, a period of seventy years. And, quite obviously, Artaxerxes' commandment ends the whole period. In fact, his decree comes exactly 140 years after Babylon's first destruction of Jerusalem. If we look at the timing of these three decrees, we find that they are not arbitrary.

The Fulfillments of Seventy Years for Judah



If we look carefully at the timeline above, we see that the first two seventy year periods make a combined period of 140 years commencing in 677 and ending in 537. Cyrus' decree ends this period. This mirrors the 140 years from the destruction of Jerusalem in 597 to Artaxerxes decree to restore and build Jerusalem in 457 BC. This period for the city is ended by the decree of Artaxerxes. Within this prophetic mirror there also exists a smaller mirror. The 21 years from the end of the captivity in 537 to the rebuilding of the temple in 516 mirrors the 21 years from the commencement of the captivity in 607 to the destruction of the temple in 586, with one Jubilee cycle of 49 years in the middle. This whole 220 year period for Judah that precedes the seventy weeks, is inextricably connected to it by the prayer of Daniel 9. It is while Daniel is praying for the end of the 70 year captivity that God gives him the prophecy of the seventy sevens. Daniel even appeals to the promises that are in the "oath" (Heb. seven) that is in the "law of Moses", clarifying that the 70 years are based upon, not just Jeremiah but Moses as well. In fact, each of Daniel's prophecies, with their attendant narratives, are connected to the four *sevens* of Leviticus 26 in symbolism, language and structure. This of course makes logical sense, since Daniel's prophecies are prophecies relating to the undoing of the captivity prophesied in Leviticus 26.

The purpose of the 70 weeks, also, cannot be ignored. This marks out another period of probation for literal Israel to "be reformed". Central to this prophecy is the Messiah and His "week". It is in the midst of this week that he confirms the covenant with "many", this being an allusion to the fact that this is not just a covenant with the Jews but with all mankind. Despite the confirmation of the covenant with literal Israel, the promises and blessings that were once their sole privilege and responsibility, in being a light to lighten the nations, passes from their hands to the newly established Christian church in 34 AD. With the promised covenant blessings, the church also receives the responsibility and results of disobedience. Of course, the blessings of the new covenant are greater, based upon better promises, ratified by the blood of Christ and dispensed by His Holy Spirit. Christ is now the minister of a tabernacle not made with hands. We are in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Yet, the consequences of rejecting these promises are greater, in that they are eternal. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Hebrews 10:28-29)

THE 2300 DAYS

The commandment to restore and build Jerusalem commences not just the 70 weeks but, also, the 2300 days. Both of these prophecies begin with literal Israel but end with spiritual Israel. The 70 weeks provides the transition from literal to spiritual, from earthly to heavenly and transfers the work of reform from the Jewish people to the Christian Church. In 34 AD, God has a Church but not a denominated people. The work that began with the captivity of literal Israel has not been completed. The persecution of God's people, now spiritual Israel, continues. Pagan Rome continues its relentless domination of Judea and in 70 AD destroys Jerusalem and the earthly sanctuary. The persecution of Christians continues under pagan Rome. This is prophesied in Daniel 8. The question is asked by an angel to Christ, "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily [paganism], and the transgression of desolation [papalism], to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" (v. 13) The answer is given, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days [*evening morning*] then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (v. 14)¹⁴ We can see that this period encompasses not just the scattering of paganism but the trampling down of papalism. It is only at the end of the 2300 days, in 1844 AD, that the work of cleansing the sanctuary begins. The work of the little horn, a symbol of pagan and papal Rome, is introduced in Daniel 8:9. Its work is described in the later part of Daniel 8. The work of pagan Rome is mirrored by papal Rome. In this passage, it is hard to distinguish to which is being referred, as this aptly describes the work of both.

¹⁴ For further study on these verses, we suggest reading, *Have We Followed Cunningly Devised fables?* by Robert Weiland

And in the latter time of their kingdom [divided Greece], when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up [pagan Rome]. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand. (Daniel 8:23-25)

What is clear is that there is a direct allusion in this passage to the prophecy of Deuteronomy 28. This means that its application must primarily apply to the work of pagan Rome and secondarily to that of the papacy.

Moreover **all these curses shall come upon thee**, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever. Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and **he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck**, until he have destroyed thee. The LORD shall **bring a nation against thee** from far, from the end of the earth, **as swift as the eagle flieth**; a nation whose **tongue thou shalt not understand** [understanding dark sentences]; A nation of **fierce countenance** [king of fierce countenance], which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young: (Deuteronomy 28:45-50)

Just as Leviticus 26 describes the siege of Jerusalem by Babylon in 597 BC, so does Deuteronomy 28 describe the siege of Jerusalem by Rome in 70 AD.

And **he shall besiege thee in all thy gates**, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the LORD thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, **in the siege, and in the straitness**, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee: So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave: So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat: because **he hath nothing left him in the siege**, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear: for **she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness**, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates. (Deuteronomy 28:52-57)

For Seventh-day Adventists, our emphasis is upon the ending of the 2300 days in 1844 and the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary that begins at that time. Sometimes this causes us to become a little

myopic and we miss out on the details that a view of the bigger picture would show us. In order to understand better the events that happen under the third angel's message, we need to understand the events in the history of literal Israel. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4) "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Corinthians 10:11)

PROPHETIC PARALLELS

The parallels that exist between the histories that commence and end the prophetic periods are not superficial. These follow a pattern that is well marked out in Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy. As Seventh-day Adventists, we are most familiar with the idea of the three angels' messages.

The proclamation of the first, second, and third angel's messages has been located by the Word of Inspiration. Not a peg or pin is to be removed. No human authority has any more right to change the location of these messages than to substitute the New Testament for the Old. The Old Testament is the gospel in figures and symbols. The New Testament is the substance. One is as essential as the other. The Old Testament presents lessons from the lips of Christ, and these lessons have not lost their force in any particular.

The first and second messages were given in 1843 and 1844, and we are now under the proclamation of the third; but all three of the messages are still to be proclaimed. It is just as essential now as ever before that they shall be repeated to those who are seeking for the truth. By pen and voice we are to sound the proclamation, showing their order, and the application of the prophecies that bring us to the third angel's message. There cannot be a third without the first and second. These messages we are to give to the world in publications, in discourses, showing in the line of prophetic history the things that have been, and the things that will be. *1 Manuscript Releases*, 43.

We cannot deal with these parallels in detail here. What we can see is that the 2300 days begins and ends with a parallel history.

The first decree (Cyrus') was preceded by a period of captivity (in the various parallels in Scripture it is characterized by darkness). Under its proclamation the foundation for the restoration of the earthly temple was laid, hindered by the work of the enemies. So also, in the parallel history, the first angel's message commences the work of laying the foundation for the restoration of the sanctuary truth. This work is also opposed.

In the history of the decrees the work of rebuilding the temple ceases under the counterfeit decree of the false Smerdis by 522 BC and commences under the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah in 520 BC. This work is completed in 516 BC with the decree of Darius. The work of Zerubbabel (a name meaning "out of Babylon") and Joshua the high priest are instrumental in bringing about the completion of the temple and a revival that follows its dedication, leading to an exodus out of Babylon and a major step in the restoration of Jerusalem. This work is paralleled under the work of the midnight cry of the Millerite time period. The greatest work of revival occurred from August 15th 1844 to October 22nd 1844. The call, "Babylon in fallen, is fallen!" swelled with the proclamation, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh. Go ye out to me Him!"

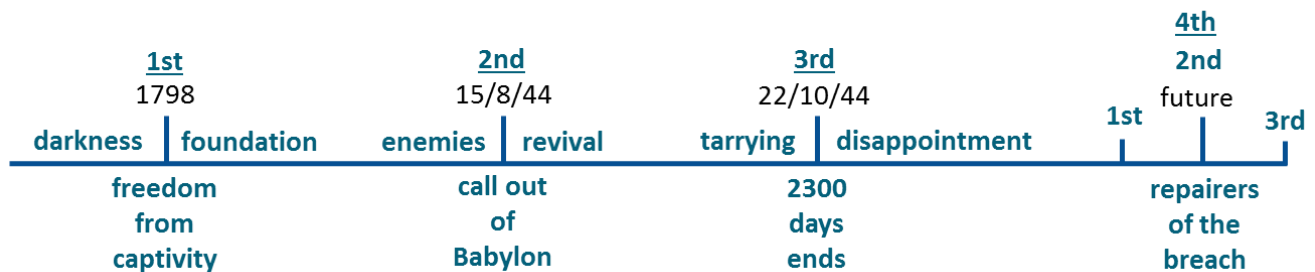
The third decree, of course, commences the 2300 days, while the third angel's message marks it close. This is an important confirmation for the commencement and termination of the 2300 days. The decree of Artaxerxes has attached with it a miniature of the work that happened under the year 1844. That is, 457 BC and 1844 AD contain many parallels. These parallels need to be studied and understood, if we are to ably defend our position against the critics both within and outside Adventism, in regard to the historical support for the chronology of the 2300 days. .

This history is rich.¹⁵ Its depths may be plumbed but we may never reach its fathomless bottom. It is our suggestion that Sister White's writings and the Bible be studied to gain clearer understanding of this history. It is this history that we are repeating. In understanding this history, including that of the Millerites and the other great reformatory movements, such as those experienced by Ezra and Nehemiah, we can hopefully avoid the pitfalls in preparing for the time ahead. The chart below gives just a brief outline of these parallels.

Three decrees (plus one) – commencement of the 2300 days



Three angels' messages (plus one) – end of the 2300 days



THE PROPHETIC MIRROR

We have already dealt with, to some degree, the idea of a prophetic mirror, better known in theological circles as a chiasm. The chiastic structure of biblical prophecy has been noted by others (most notably William H. Shea in regards to the book of Daniel)¹⁶ and is a common feature of the Hebrew Scriptures. In a prophetic mirror, the beginning illustrates the end (captivity/deliverance, destruction/restoration, etc.). We have noted that the events in the progression of the captivity of Judah, as a fulfilment of the four *sevens* of Leviticus 26, is mirrored by the events taking place under the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes. As noted, we have seen that the time elements themselves are also mirrored. This is remarkable. This means that the events of history, (the setting up of kings, etc.) are not arbitrary. History is structured, even the timing of events are ordered by God.

If we go back to the earlier part of our study, where we were looking at the commencement of the chain of truth (the 65 year prophecy of Isaiah 7:8-9), we will find that this prophecy sets up the prophetic mirror that exists in the captivity and deliverance of literal Israel. Let us look at this verse again.

For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and **within**

¹⁵ We could suggest many places where these reform lines can be studied. Some of the best places are found at <http://www.remnant-prophecy.com/Rem-Pro-Sem/Mod-05/005-All.pdf> and <http://www.prophecyhelps101.com/Prophetic%20Time%20Lines.pdf>. Charts can be found at <http://futureforamerica.org/media/charts/fullsize/reformlines.png> and http://futureforamerica.org/media/charts/fullsize/Millerite_parallel_en_web-3.png.

¹⁶ Shea, William H. (1986). "The Prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27". In Holbrook, Frank. The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy. Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 3. Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

[be'vod]¹⁷ **threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.** And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established. (Isaiah 7:8-9)

The idea expressed by the word *within* is an *iteration* (do a second time) where the end undoes (or mirrors) events at the beginning. This is just what we observed in the captivity and deliverance of literal Israel. Of course, we have also seen that the prophecies of the 70 weeks and the 2300 days extend and transfer the work of chastisement from literal to spiritual Israel. There is an end to the captivity of literal Israel but not an end to the work of reform that God set in motion. We know that literal Babylon has its counterpart in spiritual Babylon, etc.

Also, our focus has been upon the captivity and deliverance of Judah. The prophecy in Isaiah 7:8-9 first uses the captivity of Ephraim (northern Israel) as an example of what will happen to Judah.

"One deportation of Israel happened within one or two years [741-740 BC] from this time [742BC], under Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings 15:29). Another in the reign of Hoshea, under Shalmaneser [V] (2 Kings 17:1-6), was about twenty years after [722 BC]. But the final one which utterly "broke" up Israel so as to be "not a people," accompanied by a colonization of Samaria with foreigners, was under Esar-haddon, who carried away Manasseh, king of Judah, also, in the twenty-second year of his reign [677 BC], sixty-five years from the utterance of this prophecy (compare Ezra 4:2, Ezra 4:3, Ezra 4:10, with 2 Kings 17:24; 2 Chronicles 33:11)." *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments, Volume 1 By Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, David Brown, 437.*

This commentary, published in 1871, recognises what many other commentators have recognised, the 65 years is fulfilled by the captivity of Manasseh. It also recognises that Israel went into captivity "about twenty years later". This was when Shalmaneser V took Hoshea captive and destroyed Samaria. The focus of the prophecy, though, is not upon the taking captives, or the destruction of the capital cities, but upon the heads (or kings) who rule over these cities. The prophecy is dealing with the captivity of the kings of Ephraim and Judah not the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem. It is this that "breaks" Israel and Judah. It is likely Sargon II who ultimately destroyed Samaria but it was Shalmaneser V who took Hoshea captive and thus broke the "pride of power" of Ephraim and Esarhaddon who did the same for Judah. The point is, Hoshea was taken captive in 723 BC, just prior to the death of Shalmaneser V (this is why Sargon II finished the job). Since Israel's captivity began in 723 BC, when did it end?¹⁸

Northern Israel, the ten tribes, were never gathered after they were scattered, at least, not the literal ten tribes. Yet, they have a spiritual counterpart at the end of the world. Northern Israel, with its Baal worship, counterfeit cites of worship (Dan and Bethel) and its false prophets, is a fitting representation of apostate Protestantism at the end of the world. The rise of the United States in 1798 is represented by the two horned beast of Revelation.

¹⁷ The word translated as "within" is the Hebrew word 'od [H5750]. It means an iteration or repetition leading to a goal. It is an adverb and has the *beth* prefix (which means *in*). It is transliterated as *be'vod* and is confused in some lexicons with the word *be'ad* [H1157] which means *on behalf of* (if taken in a metaphorical sense). Be that as it may, the KJV (in trying to stick to a word for word translation of Hebrew into English) does not give all of the significance of the meaning of the word *within*. The passage should be translated, "and Ephraim will be broken and again in 65 years [so will Judah]". Also of note, this repetition suggests and supports the idea of a prophetic mirror, in that the end and the beginning of an iteration are often mirrored. A clear example of this is seen in Jeremiah 28:3, "Within [*be'vod* or *again in*] two full years will I bring again [*shoob*] into this place all the vessels of the LORD'S house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon" The taking away of the vessels is mirrored by the bringing again of the vessels (even though this is a false prophecy).

¹⁸ see Appendix on 723 BC

What nation of the New World was in 1798 rising into power, giving promise of strength and greatness, and attracting the attention of the world? The application of the symbol admits of no question. One nation, and only one, meets the specifications of this prophecy; it points unmistakably to the United States of America....

"And he had two horns like a lamb." The lamb-like horns indicate youth, innocence, and gentleness, fitly representing the character of the United States when presented to the prophet as "coming up" in 1798.... Republicanism and Protestantism became the fundamental principles of the nation. These principles are the secret of its power and prosperity....

But the beast with lamb-like horns "spake as a dragon".... The lamb-like horns and dragon voice of the symbol point to a striking contradiction between the professions and the practice of the nation thus represented. The "speaking" of the nation is the action of its legislative and judicial authorities. By such action it will give the lie to those liberal and peaceful principles which it has put forth as the foundation of its policy. The prediction that it will speak "as a dragon," and exercise "all the power of the first beast," plainly foretells a development of the spirit of intolerance and persecution that was manifested by the nations represented by the dragon and the leopard-like beast. And the statement that the beast with two horns "causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast," indicates that the authority of this nation is to be exercised in enforcing some observance which shall be an act of homage to the papacy. *The Great Controversy*, 440-442.

The next step in our analysis may seem like a jump but, if considered, it will be seen that it is both biblical, and logical, and helps shed light upon well-established truths. The players in the events of 742 - 677 BC have their counterparts in the events of the Millerite time period. We have the kingdoms of this world (Assyria/Babylon), Northern Israel (the false prophet/people of God) Judah (God's true Church). In 1798, as God's people came out of captivity, the progressive light of the three angel's messages began to lighten the earth. The proclamation of these messages led to the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as God's denominated people or spiritual Judah. The Protestant Churches experienced a moral fall. They do not constitute God's denominated people, though many true Christians will come out from the false churches under the loud cry. The Catholic Church rides upon the kingdoms of this world and constitutes spiritual Babylon, the Mother of Harlots. Again, this is well-established Adventist understanding.

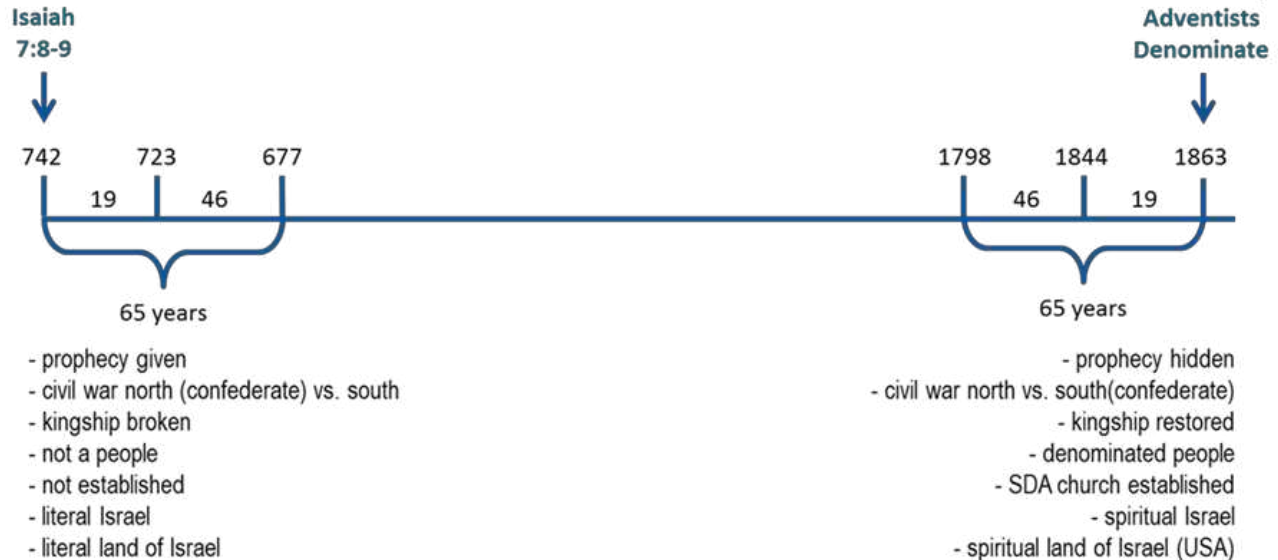
Earlier, we had paralleled the three decrees that end the captivity of literal Israel with the three angels' messages that end the captivity of spiritual Israel. The next step is to simply connect the captivity of literal Israel with the restoration of spiritual Israel.

It is quite easy to see that the events of 742 BC mirror the events of 1863 AD. This prophecy clearly establishes that the Seventh-day Adventist Church is God's denominated people. We also see the time elements mirrored, as well. Of course, the picture is not yet complete. There are 2520 years from the end of the literal false prophet to the beginning of the spiritual false prophet. There are also 2520 years from the captivity of Manasseh to the restoration of God's people in 1844. We realise that we are leaving out much detail but there should be enough to see that the periods of 2520 years exist and are an artifact of all of the time prophecies put together. Though there is no direct prophecy telling us that there are to be 2520 years from the beginning of the captivities of literal Israel and Judah to the restoration of their spiritual counterparts, there is. Moreover, we see that the entire span from 742 BC (when the prophecy is given) to 1863 (when the 2520 year prophecy is rejected by James White and removed from the 1863 chart) is 2604 years. Why is this significant?

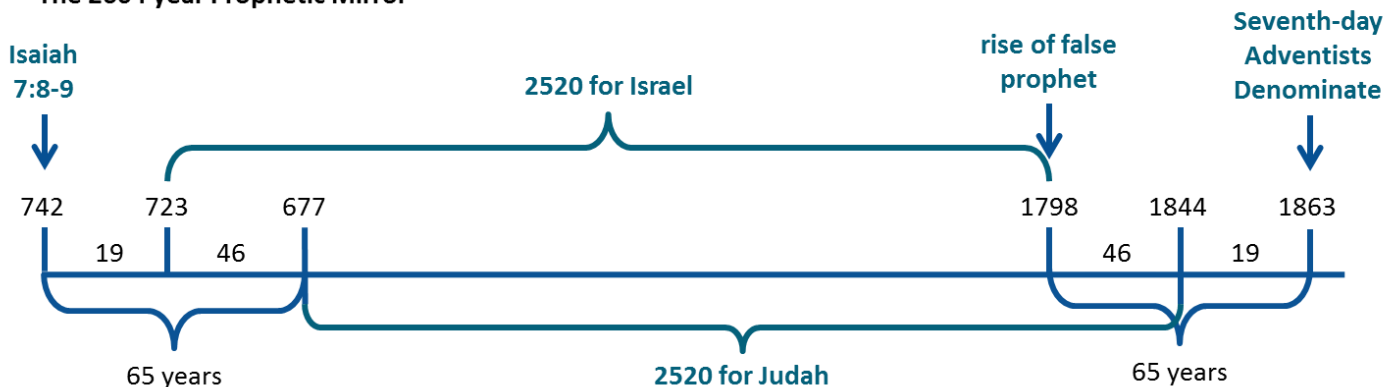
What is the longest time prophecy in the Bible? Probably it is the 7000 years. There is a great deal of debate about this. Somehow, people imagine that longer prophecies are more important than shorter prophecies. Of course, we recognise that the 2520 year prophecy was the longest prophetic period that

was proclaimed by those who gave the judgment hour cry. They did not proclaim both 2520's (Judah's and Israel's) as being connected in a prophetic mirror. It can now be seen that the two 2520 year periods create a prophetic mirror of 2604 years, beginning in 742 BC, when the prophecy is revealed, and ending in 1863, when the prophecy is rejected by James White and hidden on the 1863 chart.

The Prophetic Mirror

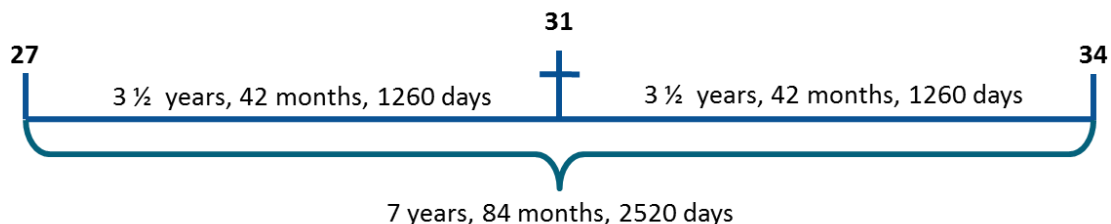


The 2604 year Prophetic Mirror



It was noticed, in the study of the 1863 chart, that the 70th week is prominent. It is presented for the first time on any of the prophetic charts like this, 27| $3\frac{1}{2}$ + $3\frac{1}{2}$ | 31.

Christ's 70th Week



What we see represented is Christ's 2520, one week of 2520 literal days, represented as two $3\frac{1}{2}$ year periods, equally divided with the "curse" ("for he that is hanged is accursed of God" Deuteronomy 21:23 and "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" Galatians 3:13). The author puzzled over the

prophetic mirror, trying to understand why there were 65 years at the beginning and 19 years at the end of the 2520 for Judah and 19 years at the beginning and 65 years at the end of the 2520 for Israel. The 1863 chart finally gave the answer. The two $3\frac{1}{2}$ year periods are 42 months each. That is, there are 84 months in 7 years. 19 plus 65 equals 84. Also, Christ was crucified in 31 AD. By simply multiplying 84 months by 31(AD) we come up with the number 2604, the number of years from the giving of the prophecy in 742 BC to the rejection and hiding of the prophecy in 1863. Another way this was seen was by recognising the numerical significance of the prophecy of Daniel 9:27. The Messiah was to "confirm the covenant with many for one week". The number of the covenant (12) times the number of the week (7) multiplied by the year of the crucifixion (31) equals the entire period of the prophetic mirror (2604).

A SUMMARY

Though Leviticus 26 does not contain a 2520 year prophecy, as proposed by William Miller and taught by the pioneers of Adventism, there is still a 2520 year prophetic period drawn from Leviticus 26, in its connexion to the prophecies of Daniel. In this sense, the 2520 years is a valid prophetic period. The Church's rejection of the 2520, as taught by Miller, was based upon a partial understanding of this prophecy. In some ways its rejection was valid. James White could not see that his rejection of the 2520 was a fulfilment of the 2520 itself. The strongest argument in favour of the prophetic mirror, and both 2520's, is its rejection in 1863. That the 2520 is now being studied and light is coming from its study that affirms truths already accepted by Adventism, is providential. Even the opposition that exists is understandable, though unnecessary.

The 2520 is merely the result of adding the 220 year preamble (the captivity and deliverance of literal Israel) to the 2300 days. No new dates are being set. The biblical chronology upon which the 2300 days are based is affirmed.

That there are those in Adventism who take truth, remove it from its context and bring it to an extreme, to create fanatical ideas and theories to use against the Church, should be no surprise, especially considering that Satan is seeking every means to keep light from God's Church. New light should be considered, but only if it is in agreement with established truths.

In every age there is a new development of truth, a message of God to the people of that generation. The old truths are all essential; new truth is not independent of the old, but an unfolding of it. It is only as the old truths are understood that we can comprehend the new. When Christ desired to open to His disciples the truth of His resurrection, He began "at Moses and all the prophets" and "expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:27. But it is the light which shines in the fresh unfolding of truth that glorifies the old. He who rejects or neglects the new does not really possess the old. For him it loses its vital power and becomes but a lifeless form. *Christ's Object Lessons*, 127.

APPENDIX

A LINGUISTIC COMPARISON OF LEVITICUS 26 AND DANIEL 4

| LEVITICUS 26 | DANIEL 4 |
|---|---|
| 'SEVEN TIMES' IS MENTIONED FOUR TIMES. | 'SEVEN TIMES' IS MENTIONED FOUR TIMES. |
| PRIDE OF YOUR POWER | IS NOT THIS GREAT BABYLON THAT I HAVE BUILT FOR THE HOUSE OF THE KINGDOM BY THE MIGHT OF MY POWER AND FOR THE HONOUR OF MY MAJESTY? |
| HEAVEN AS IRON, AND YOUR EARTH AS BRASS | A BAND OF IRON AND BRASS, IN THE TENDER GRASS OF THE FIELD; AND LET IT BE WET WITH THE DEW OF HEAVEN, AND LET HIS PORTION BE WITH THE BEASTS IN THE GRASS OF THE EARTH: |
| FOR YOUR LAND SHALL NOT YIELD HER INCREASE, NEITHER SHALL THE TREES OF THE LAND YIELD THEIR FRUITS. | THE TREE GREW, AND WAS STRONG, AND THE HEIGHT THEREOF REACHED UNTO HEAVEN, AND THE SIGHT THEREOF TO THE END OF ALL THE EARTH: THE LEAVES THEREOF WERE FAIR, AND THE FRUIT THEREOF MUCH, |
| I WILL ALSO SEND WILD BEASTS AMONG YOU | LET HIS PORTION BE WITH THE BEASTS |
| I WILL SCATTER YOU AMONG THE HEATHEN | SCATTER HIS FRUIT |
| "CUT DOWN" | "HEW DOWN" |
| BANDS | BAND |
| BEASTS (2) | BEAST, S (8) |
| BRASS | BRASS (2) |
| EARTH | EARTH (8) |
| ENEMY, IES (6) | ENEMIES |
| FIELD | FIELD (4) |
| FRUIT, FUL, S) (3) | FRUIT (3) |
| HEAVEN | HEAVEN, S (14) |
| IRON | IRON (2) |
| PRIDE | PRIDE |
| SCATTER | SCATTER |
| TREES (2) | TREE (6) |

723 BC AND THE END OF NORTHERN ISRAEL

One of the most controversial dates (or, at least, most difficult to pin down) is the date for the captivity of Hoshea the last king of northern Israel. In establishing any date of the Bible there are variables, which cannot be known. In this case, those variables are many. The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy say almost nothing about the events around the captivity. Kenneth Bergland lays out some of the difficulties that must be overcome, if we are to establish the date for the destruction of Samaria, the captivity, and death, of Hoshea and that which it is the ends the reigns of the kings of northern Israel and the commencement of the 2520 years. These are, "(1) The apparent conflict in the biblical synchronisms, claiming that Hoshea came to power both in the 20th year of Jotham and the 12th year of Ahaz, and that the end of his reign and the fall of Samaria coincided with the 6th year of Hezekiah. (2) The apparent conflict between the biblical material and the Babylonian Chronicle saying that Shalmaneser V was the conqueror of Samaria, and the Assyrian sources claiming it was Sargon II. (3) The claim in the Assyrian sources that Sargon II defeated Samaria both in his accession year and in his second year. (4) The lack of information on the reign of Shalmaneser V in the Assyrian sources. (5) The

number and date of Samaritan rebellions and Assyrian campaigns against Samaria. (6) The date of Hoshea's imprisonment; prior to or at the end of his nine year reign, before, during or after the three year siege of Samaria."¹⁹

This list is incomplete. Even in just dating the reign of the kings of Judah and Israel, we have an extremely large number of variables. Further points which must be considered are, (1) the reckoning system used by both the king of Israel (Hoshea) and the king of Judah (Hezekiah) as spring to spring or fall to fall; (2) establishing the commencement of Hoshea's reign (how long was the interregnum between Pekah and Hoshea? That is, is the commencement of the reign of Hoshea that is described as commencing in the 12th year of Ahaz counted as Hoshea's accession year, or his first year?); (3) establishing whether it is the captivity, or death, of Hoshea that marks the ninth year or, even, the destruction of the city of Samaria itself; (4) interpreting the Assyrian records and their relation to biblical events (that is, was it Shalmaneser V and/or Sargon II who destroyed Samaria and/or took Israel into captivity); (5) and ultimately determining whether or not this event can be connected prophetically to the rise of the United States 2520 years later in 1798.

In taking into account all the variables, there is not one solution, especially when we consider this date in isolation. However, any treatment of the many variables must be consistent with our treatment of the same or similar variables that exist in determining other dates for the events recorded in Scripture. That is, no date exists in isolation. Consistency demands that Israel's reign is still fall-to-fall and Judah's reign is still spring-to-spring. We have assumed that the reigns of the kings of Judah have been recorded in the books of 1 and 2 Kings in such a way as to give a running total.²⁰ We know when Josiah's reign ended. It seems it would be easy to count back from there to the 6th year of Hezekiah (in which the Bible says Samaria was taken) and determine the year for the fall of Samaria. However, somewhere between Hezekiah and Josiah, Judah changed the reckoning of their kings from spring-to-spring to fall-to-fall. We have placed this change at the beginning of Manasseh's reign, assuming this was done as an act of rebellion in adopting the pagan practises of the now defunct northern kingdom. It can be assumed that there were many who fled from northern Israel at the time of Samaria's destruction and that it was their influence that led to the change. How the Bible writers account for this, in relationship to the running total, is unknown. We can either add or subtract a year from the running total but it is only a guess. The other option is that Judah continues spring to spring until the end of the last king. This creates other problems but is not impossible.

The chronological data that we have from the biblical record is scanty.

In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. (2 Kings 17:1, 5-6)

And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. (2 Kings

¹⁹ Kenneth Bergland, *Analysis and Assessment of Chronological Explanations of the Fall of Samaria*, p 64-65

²⁰ We are not convinced that the reigns are totalled based upon the regnal year. That is, it is possible that when the Bible says, for instance, that a king reigned 9 years in Jerusalem, it does not always mean that he died, or was replaced, in the 9th year of his reign. These two will mostly coincide but not always. We find this with the reign of Jehoiakim. The Bible says he reigned for 11 years, yet he died two months into his 12th year. His total reign was 11 years and 3 months. Zedekiah also has a reign that is characterised as 11 years. His total reign was 11 years and 5 months. Their reigns are separated by Jehoiachin's short 3 months and 10 days reign. The short accession year (maybe as little as two weeks) and the two months of his 12th year allow for a running total of 11 but not 12. Few chronologists take this possibility into account.

18:9-10)

An apparent discrepancy occurs in the plain reading of the text. We must align the 9th year of Hoshea with the 6th year of Hezekiah. Where exactly do they overlap? We could have Hezekiah's 6th year begin in the spring of 721 BC with Hoshea's 9th year beginning in the fall of 722. This would still have Hoshea's reign commencing in the 12th of Ahaz. This would place the destruction of Samaria somewhere between the spring and fall of 721 BC.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------|---------|-----|-----|-----|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|--|
| fall to fall | | | | | | | | | | | | | fall of Samaria | |
| | Hoshea | access. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | | | |
| 732 | 731 | 730 | 729 | 728 | 727 | 726 | 725 | 724 | 723 | 722 | 721 | 720 | | |
| Ahaz | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | |
| spring to spring | | | | | | Hezekiah | | | | | | | | |

This is probably the most common solution. This would mean that it was Sargon II who destroyed Samaria and carried Israel away captive. If Hoshea's captivity commenced in 723 BC, it would have had to occur at the beginning of the siege. This would mean that it was Shalmaneser V who took Hoshea captive, breaking the pride of power of Israel and thus marking the commencement of the 2520 years for northern Israel. This would make these verses understandable.

And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. (2 Kings 17:4-5)

The series of events would be these, (1) Hoshea's captivity in the fourth year of Hezekiah (Nisan) in March or April of 723 BC; (2) the siege beginning immediately afterward; (3) the death of Shalmaneser V in January of 721; (4) and the destruction of Samaria in the spring of 721. (This is not the only option and it is not my first choice. I am not sure it is the correct one, but it does agree with all of the data.)