

THE BEAST STRUCTURE
THE FIRST PROPHETIC TIME PERIOD IN THE BEAST STRUCTURE
THE SEVENTY YEARS PROPHECY

By Marie Casale
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WHEN DID THE SEVENTY YEARS BEGIN AND END?

THEORY 1: THE SEVENTY YEARS BEGAN WITH THE FIRST DEPORTATION IN 605 BC AND ENDED IN 539 BC WITH THE FIRST YEAR OF CYRUS OR 538 BC WHEN ZERUBBABEL RETURNED WITH 42,360 PEOPLE

Most scholars see 605 BC with the captivity of Daniel as the beginning year and the return under Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel as the ending year.

SCRIPTURES SUPPORTING THIS THEORY:

Here it is verified that Cyrus made proclamation to return in the first year of his reign

Ezr 1:1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and [put it] also in writing, saying,

Ezr 1:2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah.

Ezr 1:3 Who [is there] among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (he [is] the God,) which [is] in Jerusalem.

Verse 20 here seems to indicate that the seventy years ends with the coming of the Kingdom of Persia that occurred in 539 BC.

2Ch 36:20 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:

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

2Ch 36:22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord [spoken] by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and [put it] also in writing, saying,

2Ch 36:23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which [is] in Judah. Who [is there] among you of all his people? The Lord his God [be] with him, and let him go up.

This chapter shows how in the first year of Darius the Mede (who was made king of Babylon having been conquered by him and his nephew, or grandson, Cyrus), Daniel perceived that the seventy years was drawing to a close, so he prayed and fasted for the sins of his people

Dan 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

Dan 9:2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the 'desolations of Jerusalem'.

PROBLEM WITH THIS THEORY

A problem with this theory is that 605 BC minus 70 years does not equal 539 BC, the first year of Cyrus. It equals 535 BC. This is four years into the reign of Cyrus.

THEORY 2: THE SEVENTY YEARS BEGAN WITH THE THIRD DEPORTATION IN 586 BC AND ENDED IN 516 BC, THE DEDICATION OF THE NEW TEMPLE

Many scholars see 586 BC, the date of Jerusalem's fall and destruction of Solomon's temple as the beginning year and 516 BC when construction of the temple in Jerusalem by Israel's returning exiles was completed as the ending year. 586 BC minus 70 years does equal 516 BC.

SCRIPTURES SUPPORTING THIS THEORY

Notice that the first of these two scriptures seems to indicate that the seventy years ended with the rise of the Kingdom of Persia. But the second says that the seventy years coincided with all the years that the land lay desolate enjoying her Sabbaths. This desolation did not begin until the final destruction of Jerusalem with the third deportation in 586 BC.

2Ch 36:20 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:

2Ch 36:21 To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: [for] as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

Daniel saw in the first year of Darius the Mede (539 BC), that the Lord would accomplish seventy years. Here again the first verse seems to indicate that the seventy years ended with the rise of the Persian kingdom. But the second verse says that the Lord would accomplish seventy years in the 'desolations of Jerusalem' indicating that the seventy years began when Jerusalem became completely desolate after the third deportation in 586 BC.

Dan 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

Dan 9:2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the 'desolations of Jerusalem'.

PROBLEM WITH THIS THEORY

This theory did accomplish seventy years from the destruction of Jerusalem to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, but the rebuilding of Jerusalem itself did not begin until much later.

Dan 9:25 shows that the seventy-weeks prophecy began with the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.

Dan 9:25 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: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

The rebuilding of Jerusalem did not occur with the first decree of Cyrus 539 BC. Ezc 1:1-4 shows that his decree was for the rebuilding of the temple. It did not occur with the second decree of Darius I 519-518 BC. Ezc 6:1, 6-12 shows that his decree was for the rebuilding of the temple. The third decree of Artaxerxes I to Ezra in 457 BC (Ezc 7:11-26) was mostly about restoring the temple, but also began to restore the government of God in Jerusalem. (See verses 25-26) This decree was not seventy but 129 years after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC. The fourth decree of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah in 444 BC Neh 2:1-9 was completely devoted to rebuilding Jerusalem. This also was not seventy, but 142 years from the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

THEORY 3: THE SEVENTY YEARS BEGAN WITH THE INITIAL RISE OF BABYLON 609 BC AND ENDED WITH THE BEGINNING OF THE PERSIAN KINGDOM 539 BC

When the Assyrian capital Nineveh was conquered by the Babylonians in 612 BC, the Assyrians moved their capital to Harran. Harran was considered the last stronghold of the Assyrian Kingdom and was captured by the Babylonians in 609 BC. The capital was finally moved, to Carchemish on the Euphrates river. In 605 BC the Babylonians besieged Carchemish, but this battle was mainly against Egypt and remnants of the Assyrian army. So we can consider 609 BC when Harran was defeated as the initial rise of the Babylonian kingdom. The Persian kingdom conquered Babylon exactly seventy years later in 539 BC.

SCRIPTURES SUPPORTING THIS THEORY

We see in these scriptures that Israel was not the only nation affected by the seventy years prophecy. Jeremiah 25:11 says that THESE NATIONS shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. These nations were all nations that Babylon conquered including Israel. From the conquering of Harran in Assyria, Babylon ruled all nations until the rise of the Kingdom of Persia.

Jer 25:11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, [and] an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Jer 25:12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, [that] I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

PROBLEM WITH THIS THEORY

In the same chapter, verse 1, Jeremiah spoke these words not in 609 BC when Harran was conquered, but in the fourth year of Jehoiakim which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar – 604 BC.

Jer 25:1 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that [was] the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon;

CONCLUSION

Because there are scriptures that support and also pose problems for each of these theories, I cannot conclude at this time which of them is the best explanation for the seventy years. This study has at least given us greater understanding of the theories involved. May God give us his own wisdom as we seek with a sincere heart to understand his word.