

Faithbuilders Fellowship

Proclaiming Christ's Parousia
and the coming Millennial Kingdom
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Divine Healing

"The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2).

There will come a time — only a generation future as it now appears from the chronology of the Bible — that the Thousand Year Reign of Christ will be introduced upon this earth. Already Christ has returned as prophecy predicted he would, and Michael, our Lord Jesus, has "stood" up to take authority (Daniel 12:1). "The seventh trumpet sounded, and there were great voices in the [ecclesiastical] heavens, saying, The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord [Jehovah] and of his Christ [Jesus]; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

Presently we are in a period of transition between two ages, the Gospel Age closing, the Millennial Age approaching. Christ is present with regal authority and power. The signs predicted to attend his presence have already appeared — an increase of knowledge about the Scriptures (the Divine Plan of the Ages), the return of Israel as a nation, and a time of trouble which has already seen two World Wars, with Armageddon impending.

The saints who died in ages past have been raised from death to life, and as God's jewels pass into the sleep of death now, they are raised to be with Christ immediately and share his throne.

But we have not yet come to the time when Christ and his completed Bride class serve as "priests of God and of Christ" for "a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6). **That** will be the time for God to heal the nations, through Christ and his saints. The world will be recovered morally, physically, and even the dead will be raised to life to participate in the opportunities of that age. Of course the raising of the dead will not be in a moment, but orderly, as the world is ready to receive them.

Divine Healing Future

Thus the healing of the world is for the future. When Jesus was present during his ministry of 3½ years, though he healed many people, he never mounted a campaign for healing the world. That would wait.

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The Millennium is the time for that work. Jesus will not walk the earth and heal by a touch of his hand, as before — he would be inadequate to the task, as a human being. Instead he is now a glorious and powerful spirit being, and all of his associates, the Church class, will be also. They will rule the world as the unseen regents of the new age, for the blessing of all — all the teeming billions of the human race.

When Jesus Healed

When Jesus healed, it was for three purposes. Firstly, it was a method of expressing his compassion for the suffering people. Jesus represented his heavenly Father, and "God is Love," so it was appropriate for Jesus to show these examples of the kindness and compassion which moves in the heart of God. How better to express it than through tending to the relief of so many sufferers. "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people ... when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them" (Matthew 9:35, 36).

Secondly, by this healing of the crowds he exhibited the power of the holy Spirit of God working through him, as a testimony that he was indeed the Christ, the son of God, who had authority from God. And as sure as he had power from God to heal, so surely the words he spoke were also from God, and true. Thus the miracles performed by Christ "manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him" (John 2:11).

Thirdly, the healings done by Jesus foreshadowed the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, when he will heal not just a few — not merely hundreds, or thousands — but millions, and billions, the whole of humanity, from sin, sickness, and disability of every kind.

The Apostles and Disciples

Jesus gave his disciples, who preached about him and represented him to others, similar powers to heal the sick and cast out demons. “Heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you ... and the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name” (Luke 10:9, 17).

After Jesus was raised, and ascended from the Mount of Olives, the power to heal the sick was still retained by the Apostles, as evident by the works of Peter, and John, and later by Paul.

But Not Today

When the Apostles died, who were given the ability to heal, this gift would pass away. Today the gift of healing is not among us — any more than the apostles of Christ are among us. The testimony of those gifts we have still, in the record of the New Testament. That record is sufficient testimony for us who walk by faith, even if we do not personally see that gift operate before us today.

That the gift itself passed away from the Church is simple observation. Even the reformers, stalwart men of faith, did not claim such a gift. Nor have the best leaders of the Church from those days to the present claimed such a gift.

However, there are claims made from time to time, by people ostensibly preaching the “Gospel,” that they have the gift of healing. This stirs excitement among the crowd, it attracts people to come and see the claims — it is a draw to get people to hear the preacher. But it is a false claim. Where, today, is the one who can heal the lame, restore sight to one blind from birth, or revive a person dead for days?

From time to time some amazing claims are made, and some engaging stories are repeated. But pause to remember that our Lord’s healings were not exceptional cases among a host of failures, as it is today. When our Lord moved to heal a person, they were healed. When Peter and John fastened their attention on a man lame from his mother’s womb, and said “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk,” they did not fail. They did not need to accuse the poor beggar of a lack of faith (Acts 3:2-6).

No, the gift of healing exhibited by our Lord and his apostles is not among us today. The testimony sealed by these examples of the power and authority of Christ remains for us in the written record of those deeds. The assurance that the world will be healed in the Millennium is written in the same record. And it is you and I who

commit our lives to Christ in the present, and prove “faithful unto death,” who will have the privilege of healing the world when the promised Kingdom of Christ is established in the earth.

Make No False Claims

So for the present, let us not make claims which misrepresent the facts, or arrogate to ourselves abilities which the Lord has not given us. We have the “ministry of reconciliation” now — we are still ambassadors of God. But the power to cure disease is with God. The time He plans for this is the Millennium.

If a loved one despairs of any ill, we can take it to the throne of Grace, and then accept the will of God in the situation. If it pleases God to hear the prayer of the afflicted, and arrange a release, then we may glory in giving praise and thanks.

But God has not promised to relieve us of the afflictions common to the world. Our trials are mostly “such as is common to man.” And God, who cares for our best interests, “will not suffer you to be tested above that ye are able.” Thus with each trial, God “will so direct the issue, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Corinthians 10:13, supplemented with the Diaglott rendering).

Here is the text, all together, from the Wilson Diaglott. “No trial has assailed you except what belongs to man; and God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tried beyond your ability; but with the trial, will also direct the issue, that you may be able to bear it.”

Notice — no promise to take away the burden through a miracle. But there is a promise that what we endure, we may sustain by His grace. The remainder, which would be too great, he will remove according to his wisdom.

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Why such trials? So that we may be developed in character, for trial and endurance and patience develops character in a person. The character that we by God's grace develop here, will be the enduring substance of "gold, silver, and precious stones" that we carry into the heavenly reward, if we are consecrated now and live accordingly.

Jesus experienced trials for the same purpose, and he also was not relieved of them. "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from [out of, Greek *ek*] death," was heard for his piety (Hebrews 5:7). "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made complete, he became the author of eternal salvation" to us who follow after (verses 8, 9).

Divine Healing for the Millennium

Divine Healing? Yes, this is God's plan for the entire world, during the Millennium. For the present, our healing is of a spiritual kind — healing broken hearts, wounded spirits, and injured feelings. We can attend to that kind of work by thoughtfulness and kindness. As to healing of the physical injuries of our friends and families — we can attend to that through tending their needs as best we are able with medicines, advice, love, care and attention.

At last the weakness of the flesh will claim us all. For the saints of God, their reward comes in a heavenly resurrection. They will no longer be fleshly beings, but glorious spirit beings, in company with our Lord Jesus.

The remainder of the world will be raised to life here, on Earth, as human beings. Then they will be healed of disease. Even more, they will gradually return to perfection, as they progress up the "highway of holiness" then open to everyone.

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing ... And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness ... the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any

ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35: 5, 6, 8, 10).



"A little child shall lead them."

Can We Know?

"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the father hath put into his own power" (Acts 1:7).

We understand that 6000 years from Adam will close with the year 2043. In that case, the seventh millennium, the thousand years of the priestly reign of Christ and his Church, is due to begin then. The evidence seems clear — we discuss it at length in this journal. What, then, of the opening text? Is this against knowing such things?

It is not. The all important difference between then, and now, is the long time span between. Had the apostles known that 2000 years would intervene before the blessed kingdom, would it have been encouraging? At the beginning of the Harvest in 1874, had the saints known their hopes would be delayed more than a century and a half, would it have been encouraging?

The answer is clear — and for this reason, God wisely veiled the information. But now that we are on the cusp of the fulfillment of the promise cherished for centuries, it is indeed encouraging to know that the wonderful time is so near, just at hand, only a generation future. For this reason God allows the information to congeal in our day, and not before.

No Man Knoweth

In Matthew 24:36, Jesus said "of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Mark 13:32 adds, "neither the son." But do we suppose that after Jesus was raised from the dead, and ascended on high, that still he did not know?

These statements do not say no one will ever know. They mean only that no one then knew, and they imply that we would not know far in advance. (In any case, this text refers to the time of Christ's *parousia*, which commenced in 1874, so we are already beyond that date.)

The book of Daniel contains half a dozen time prophecies. But they were so cryptic in nature, it was hopeless for Daniel to understand them — and it was not due time for anyone to understand them then. "I heard, but I understood not ... And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end ... but the wise [then] shall understand" (Daniel 12:8-10).

Dear friends, we are now at the "time of the end" — and well into it. The time prophecies of Daniel have been open to the brethren of the Truth Movement for more than a century, and some of them for nearly two centuries — save for a few details. If now, so near to the Kingdom, it pleases God to bring further evidence to our attention, let us receive it with thanks.

Not Possible Before

No man can know something respecting God's Plan — or its times features — until it is God's due time for that

information to be disclosed. “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us” (Deuteronomy 29:29).

In former times, even within the Truth Movement, some things were not due for understanding. This is the case with the timing of the Millennium. Bro. Russell, the seventh messenger to the Church, thought 6000 years had ended in his day, and thus the seventh millennium had commenced. But he was unable to reconcile this with his express view that the thousand year reign of Revelation 20:4 could not begin until the Church was complete. “The Scripture declaration respecting the saints, the ‘overcomers’ is, ‘They lived and reigned a thousand years.’ The reign of the saints cannot be properly said to begin before all the ‘jewels’ have been gathered.” (Zion’s Watch Tower, Reprint page 2739).

“An Open Question”

Because of this uncertainty, when questioned specifically about the beginning of the thousand years, Bro. Russell said honestly — “what his [God’s] purposes are he has not been pleased to inform us; and since this extends into the future we may reasonably suppose that it is not now ‘meat in due season for the household of faith’ ... a certain amount of faith is required and expected from those who have so many evidences of the Lord’s wisdom and exactness in the features of his plan already accomplished ... apparently this matter of when the thousand-year period should be reckoned as fully beginning ... will be an open question ...” (Reprint page 2739).

These words are refused by some even who claim to honor the service of Bro. Russell. Thus, without any resolution of the issues raised by him, they are nevertheless dogmatic that the Millennium commenced at the beginning of the harvest. We say dogmatic, because it is a view insisted upon — even as a dividing point among brethren and ecclesias. Thus good brethren are led to unfortunate extremes.

“We May See Some Day ...”

The resolution of Bible Chronology now resolves all the issues. However, this could not be attained until the history of the divided kingdom of Israel was settled, and this came some decades following the work of Bro. Russell. Speaking of the scriptures on this subject, he acknowledged “we may see some day just how they can be harmonized, but at present we do not” (Question Book, *What Pastor Russell Said*, page 42). It was a true and humble statement.

In the year 1916, before Pastor Russell finished his life and passed into glory, having lived two years beyond the time he once supposed would see all the saints in glory, he noticed something about the date 1918. This appears on Reprint page 5950, in an article titled “The Harvest is Not Ended.” He could not know what 1918 might mean — but saw that it stood in parallel to the date

73 AD, the end of the Jewish Revolt, which had seen Jerusalem fall to the Romans in 70 AD. Might 1918 be the date of the completion of the Church?

No, it did not prove to be so. That year, 1918, was the year ending the Great War — it does indeed stand in parallel to the end of the Jewish Revolt in 73 AD (1845 years earlier). It also stands in parallel to the Babylonian Conquest completed by the year 603 BC (2520 years earlier). Indeed, 603 BC was the very year Daniel the prophet declared Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, the “head of Gold” of Gentile Empires (Daniel 2:38).

But no — not the completion of the Church — despite the fact that this was later used as the very predicate for closing the door of the heavenly calling, by the group which later came to be known as the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

“A Year, or Two, or Three”

Also in 1916, before Bro. Russell passed away, he authored forewords to his series “Studies in the Scriptures.” In the foreword to Volume 3 he says, “we anticipate that before a very long time — perhaps a year or two or three — the full number of the Elect will be completed, and all will have gone beyond the Veil [into glory] and the door [of the heavenly calling] will be shut.”

He could not then see, what is now apparent to all — that the harvest would continue for a century to come, and then some. He could not then see that 6000 years of human history close with the year 2043. But now, standing on the broad shoulders of his work, we can peer a little more precisely into these things of God’s Plan. For now, it is timely. “The path of the just” is a little brighter (Proverbs 4:18).

Antiochus Magnus

Daniel chapter eleven, part two. “And one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress” (Daniel 11:10).

We closed last issue after discussing the first half of verse 10. Verse nine described an abortive campaign by Seleucus Callinicus of Syria against Ptolemy Eugertes of Egypt. Subsequently Callinicus would die and power would pass to his son **Seleucus Ceraunus**. Computing from the list of rulers (next page), his first year began in 226 BC, four years before the passing of Ptolemy Eugertes of Egypt in 222 BC.



Seleucus Ceraunus, together with his younger brother Antiochus Magnus, planned for war, continuing the hostilities of the

Six Generations of Kings

Egypt (Start 323 BC)	Syria (Start 312 BC)
38 Ptolemy Soter	32 Seleucus Nicator
38 Ptolemy Philadelphus	19 Antiochus Soter
25 Ptolemy Eugertes	15 Antiochus Theus
17 Ptolemy Philopator	20 Seleucus Callinicus
24 Ptolemy Epiphanes	3 Seleucus Ceraunus / 36 Antiochus Magnus
35 Ptolemy Philometor	11 Seleucus Philopator / 12 Antiochus Epiphanes

previous generation. There were still Egyptian forces occupying parts of their kingdom, giving these sons an impetus for war. Thus “sons [plural] shall be stirred up [for war], and shall assemble a multitude of great forces.” But about this time the king was assassinated by his generals after a reign of three years, thus in 223 BC, leaving the younger Antiochus Magnus, still in his teens, to execute the campaign.

The first step was to recover parts of the empire which were in revolt both to the west and east. This effort was successful. He “recovered almost all Asia Minor, Media, Persia, and Babylonia” (William Hales, *A New Analysis of Chronology and Geography, History and Prophecy*, 1830, page 541).

Then it was time to determine his next efforts. He would “be stirred up again” to war (margin, Daniel 11:10). He wished to reclaim Coele Syria (southern Syria) — but his advisors pointed out that their city Seleucia,¹ near the Mediterranean Sea, was still occupied by Egyptian forces. It had been since the days of Ptolemy Eugertes. (Evidently this is the “fortress” of Daniel 10:7, taken by Egypt.) They should first retake that city, before pushing further south.

This they did. Ptolemy Philopator had recently come to the throne in Egypt, and as a result of unjust charges had deeply offended one of his chief officers, Theodotus. In light of the success of Antiochus Magnus against Seleucia, this disgruntled officer of Philopator was induced to offer him also the cities of Ptolemais and Tyre. He did, and Antiochus Magnus accepted. After successfully overcoming resistance enroute by other troops from Philopator, he took those two cities and their abundance of war supplies and ships. Now all of the south seemed open to him. “He then invaded Palestine, and the neighbouring parts of Arabia” (Hales, 541). Philopator feared even the loss of his border town Pelusium — against which, however, Antiochus did not advance, hearing of its preparations for defense.²

Verse 10 refers to this second phase of the offensive of Magnus, by saying “then shall he be stirred up again [rendering from the margin], even to his fortress.” That

is, after retaking rebellious portions of his empire to the west and east, then he would launch a second wave of conquest, during which he would retake the fortress Seleucia which had been lost a generation earlier.³

Magnus and Philopator

Antiochus Magnus is the subject of the prophecy from the second half of verse 10 through verse 19 — a good number of verses. His 36

year reign covered many significant events. He would suffer some setbacks, specially to Rome at the close of his years (verse 18), but his victories expanding his empire, even to the near taking of Egypt, would earn him the name “Magnus” — Great.

He came to the throne in 223 BC, a year before the accession of Ptolemy Philopator in Egypt, according to the list above.⁴

Perhaps that accession persuaded **Antiochus Magnus** it was timely to push southward against Egypt’s new king.

In Egypt, Ptolemy Eugertes was now gone. Some historians say he was the last ruler of Egypt who retained some integrity. He was replaced by **Ptolemy Philopator**, his son. Some historians believe Eugertes was poisoned by his son, and that the name Philopator (love of father) was attributed to the new king as sarcastic commentary. Not long after his accession, Philopator disposed of his mother, brother, and uncle, so this would be in character for him. On another occasion, Philopator ordered a fallen enemy’s wife, children, and all their women attendants, executed.

This period in history was a time of transition, from Greek to Roman dominance. “Within a short time of each other the three Macedonian kingdoms came all into the hands of young men. Antiochus III [Magnus] succeeded to the Seleucid realm in 223, aged eighteen; Ptolemy IV succeeded to the Egyptian throne in 221 [perhaps more precisely 222], aged about twenty-three; Philip V succeeded to the kingdom of Macdeonia in 220, aged seventeen. From the various characters and ambitions of these three young men, a new distribution of power in the Mediterranean world could not fail to result. Their reigns mark an epoch in another way. The world in which their reigns began was the Graeco-Macedonian world as it had been contracted by the conquests of Alexander the



Great; the world in which they ended was a new world over which was flung the shadow of Rome” (*The House of Ptolemy*, ER Bevan, Chapter VII, “Ptolemy IV, Philopator,” London 1927, page 218).

Response by Egypt

Daniel 11:11. “And the king of the south [Philopator] shall be moved to choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north: and he [Magnus] shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand.”

Ptolemy Philopator was highly motivated. To lose his occupied territory northward in Syria was one thing. But he had even lost Gaza and Israel, considered his proper subject areas. His agents (Sosibius and Agathocles) stalled for time through diplomacy, while they regrouped, reorganized, and subsequently reinvaded northward. Antiochus Magnus in turn set forth a larger army than before, but to no avail. He lost to the invading Ptolemy Philopator at the battle of Raphia in Gaza (22 June, 217 BC, Wikipedia).

The conflict was between two very large armies, about equally matched. Ptolemy Philopator had 70,000 infantry, 5000 cavalry, and 73 war elephants. Antiochus Magnus met him with 62,000 infantry, 6000 cavalry, and 102 war elephants. The right wing of each army overpowered the opposing left wing of the other army. But in the end, the phalanx of Ptolemy was able to turn into the midsection of the Seleucid infantry and proceed to victory. Thus “he [Magnus, of the north] shall set forth a great multitude; but [that] multitude shall be given into his [Philopator’s] hand.”

The southern lands came back into Egyptian control, reversing the former gains of Antiochus. Egypt retained control over Israel for the remaining years of Philopator. However, historians seem agreed that had the dissolute Philopator followed up his victory northward, he could have achieved remarkable results. Perhaps he thought of the pleasures back home. Perhaps he feared a prolonged absence from home, lest his citizens revolt against his ignoble rule. Perhaps he was merely glad for what success he had. In any case, his lack of follow up in this victory is referred to in verse 12.

Daniel 11:12. “And when he hath taken away the multitude [in victory over Magnus], his heart shall be lifted up [in pride]; and he shall cast down many ten thousands [in that battle]: but he shall not be strengthened by it.”

The last clause, in the American Standard Version, is “shall not prevail.” Rotherham says “shall not conquer.” The meaning appears to be that he would not gain the follow through victory he might have had. This allowed Antiochus to come back strongly some years later.⁵

The third book of Maccabees recounts an episode which also speaks to the pride of Philopator. In the aftermath of his victory he received congratulations from the

Jews at Jerusalem. He then came to Jerusalem, was received graciously, and offered sacrifice to God. But then he audaciously assayed to enter the Temple, against the protests of the priests. The city joined in agonized prayer to prevent the sacrilege. The king was smitten from above, and removed from the scene by his friends. He recovered and withdrew to Egypt, but was so enraged, rather than humbled, that he brought much misery to the Jews there before relenting.

Daniel 11:13. “For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of times, even years [margin rendering], with a great army and with much riches.”

The opening word “for” is not used in most renderings. Nevertheless, this verse is connected to the previous one. Following the victory of Philopator at Raphia, peace continued for 12 years until Philopator’s passing in 205 BC. His successor Ptolemy Epiphanes was but a young boy of perhaps five years at the time,⁶ which induced Antiochus Magnus and Philip of Macedonia to conspire against Egypt, planning to divide the realm between them. Perhaps 14 years after his defeat at the Battle of Raphia, Magnus assembled a great force to attack Egypt.

Daniel 11:14. “And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers [breakers] of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.”

Antiochus Magnus and Philip of Macedonia were the conspirators. But young Epiphanes had other enemies as well. The former minister of his father, Agathocles, failed in a plot to take the kingdom. Scopas, General of Egyptian forces, also failed in a similar plot. However, the “many” that would stand up against the young king probably refers to the coalition of military forces. The ignoble rule of his father Philopator had not induced much loyalty to Egypt among their subject peoples in Palestine.

During this time also, the power of Rome came into play. It was in the interest of Rome for Egypt to retain their independence from Phillip and Anitochus (Macedonia and Syria). The Roman Senate entrusted the education of young Epiphanes to Emilius Lepidus, who appointed Aristomenes as his guardian. Aristomenes dispatched General Scopas northward to meet the military threat. After initial successes, he was defeated by forces from Magnus and fled to Sidon, where he submitted to a disgraceful surrender.

This is the first intrusion of the Roman power into the chain of events narrated in the prophecy, and it was unsuccessful — “the breakers [literal rendering] of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall” (verse 14). The crushers of Daniel’s people would be Rome, and Rome would play a dominant role in this vision, but not yet. In this first appearance, Rome’s endeavors would prove abortive.

Daniel 11:15. “So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities [“a well-fortified city,” NASB]: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand.”

Magnus and his coalition took Coele Syria, Phoenicia, and Judea in 203 BC, the Jews submitting willingly. “Scopas, the Egyptian general, recovered them in BC 199, who was odious for his rapacity. Next year, BC 198, Antiochus fought and routed Scopas near the fountains of Jordan, besieged him in Sidon [the city mentioned in verse 15], took the city, and easily recovered Syria and all Palestine from Egypt” (Hales, 543). Thus he again controlled the territories he had lost 19 years earlier at the Battle of Raphia.

Daniel 11:16. “But he [Magnus] that cometh against him [Epiphanes] shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land [Israel], which by his hand shall be consumed.”

Neither Scopas, nor any sent from Egypt for his relief, would succeed. The “glorious land,” like the “glorious holy mountain” (Daniel 11:45), and the “pleasant land” (Zechariah 7:14), is an endearing term for Israel. “Shall be consumed” — Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary says “Literally, perfected, i.e., completely brought under his sway.” Magnus treated the Jews and their holy things with respect, and thus secured their favor. He did not pillage or abuse them. By this means, all the more the land was brought under his control.

Daniel 11:17. “He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones [Jewish soldiers, the Hebrew word #3477 is similar to Jeshurun #3484, see Isaiah 44:2] with him. Thus shall he do.”

But as Magnus approached Egypt, he came upon a plan calculated to claim the kingdom by subtlety rather than force. By this means he could avoid a costly military clash, and avoid stirring the concerns of Rome over his growing empire. Instead of invading Egypt, he married his daughter to Ptolemy Epiphanes, hoping to work through her to effect his influence. “And he [Magnus] shall give him [Epiphanes] the daughter of women, to corrupt her: but she shall not stand on his side, neither for him.” Instead, the daughter of Magnus took the part of her new husband, Epiphanes. (Like many others, this young lady had the name Cleopatra — but she was not the famous one.)

Daniel 11:18. “After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many.” Magnus “brought into subjection nearly all the maritime ports on the coast of Asia, Thrace and Greece” (R. E. Streeter, Daniel the Beloved of Jehovah, 1998 edition, page 190) — a sweeping triumph. But conflict with Rome was inevitable. He was repulsed at sea by Livius and Aemilius, and subsequently was defeated near Magnesia in Asia Minor by the Roman

general Scipio. Thus “a commander will put an end to his insolence and will turn his insolence back upon him” (NIV).

Daniel 11:19. “After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country but will stumble and fall, to be seen no more” (NIV).

Magnus never recovered from the blow, and the tribute he agreed to render Rome under the terms of “peace” was onerous. He was obliged to plunder territories in his own empire. As he was plundering the Temple of Jupiter in Elymias, eastward in his realm, he and his attendants were killed by the locals.

So ends the account of Antiochus Magnus. His successor is treated in but one verse, namely verse 20, and then we proceed to the vile persecutor of the Jews, Antiochus Epiphanes, in verse 21 and forward.

(1) There was more than one “Seleucia.” The Roman historian Procopius mentions one on the Euphrates (5.42.9), one on the Tigris (5.47.15), and one on the Mediterranean — so three at least. The one on the Mediterranean is at issue here — “Seleucia ... lies on the sea between Cilicia and Phoenicia” (5.59.3,4).

Here is what Procopius says of this city, as it relates to Daniel 11:10. “The king ... at the same time devoted his whole attention to preparing for the war against Ptolemy ... he summoned a council of his friends to advise as to the invasion of Coele-Syria ... Apollonophanes, a native of Seleucia ... cut short all these expressions of opinion. For, as he said, it was foolish to covet Coele-Syria and invade that country while permitting the occupation by Ptolemy of **Seleucia** which was the capital seat and, one might almost say, the sacred hearth of their empire. Apart from the disgrace inflicted on the kingdom by this city being garrisoned by the kings of Egypt, it was of first-class importance. ‘While held by the enemy’ he said, ‘it is the greatest possible hindrance to all our enterprises; for in whatever direction we decide to advance, the precautions we have to take to protect our own country from the menace of this place give us just as much trouble as our preparations for attacking the enemy. Once, however, it is in our hands, not only will it securely protect our own country, but owing to its advantageous situation it will be of the greatest possible service for all our projects and undertakings by land and sea alike.’ All were convinced by these arguments, and it was decided to capture this city in the first place. For **Seleucia had been garrisoned by the kings of Egypt ever since the time of Ptolemy Euergetes**, when that prince, owing to his indignation at the murder of Berenice, invaded Syria and seized on this town” (Procopius 5.58).

(2) “On news reaching him that Ptolemy had come out to Memphis and that all his forces were collected at Pelusium, where they were opening the sluices and filling up the wells of drinking water, he abandoned his project of attacking Pelusium, and visiting one city after another attempted to gain them either by force or by persuasion. The minor cities were alarmed by his approach and went over to him, but those which relied on their defensive resources and natural strength held out, and he was compelled to waste his time in sitting down before them and besieging them” (Procopius 5.62.4,5,6).

(3) Another opinion is that this “fortress” refers to some southern stronghold of Philopator taken by Magnus. Possibly. But no particular location stands out to us from the records of history. Perhaps Pelusium? But Magnus did not actually go that far. Raphia in Gaza? But was that a notable fortress?

The pronouns seem to be used tightly in this prophecy. The end of verse 10 says “then shall he ... even to his fortress.” If “he” and “his” refer to the same person — no other person intervenes between them — then it is the fortress of the king of the North. Because the history of Procopius mentions the retaking of the fortress Seleucia so distinctly as to indicate its importance, we suspect that is the city intended in the prophecy.

This is evidently the same “Seleucia” as referred to in Acts 13:4 — the city from which Saul and Barnabas crossed to Cyprus beginning their first missionary journey, in which this pair would introduce the Gospel to many Gentiles. As the “hearth” of the Greek Seleucid empire, the strongest fragment of the empire left by Alexander, it was an appropriate place to represent Gentile authority. Naming this city as the jumping off point for Paul and Barnabas seems appropriate to Paul’s labors as “a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the **Gentiles**” (Acts 9:15).

(4) In our article of last issue, footnote seven said “By the time Antiochus Magnus came to the throne, Ptolemy Eugertes had passed away about a year earlier.” Some histories give information a little different than others, which is part of the challenge addressing this detailed prophecy of Daniel. But it seems that Ptolemy Eugertes actually passed away a year after Antiochus Magnus came to the throne, rather than a year before. (This is supported also by the Roman historian Polybius, 5.34.2, “Philopator ... considered ... that chance had freed him from danger abroad, Antigonus [of Macedonia] and Seleucus [of Syria] having just died and their successors, Antiochus [Magnus] and Philip [of Macedon], being quite young, in fact almost boys.”)

(Our spelling “Eugertes,” represented in some histories, more often appears as “Euergetes.” If one searches the internet for information, the latter spelling will be more productive. But having begun one spelling, we will retain it for consistency.)

(5) Some sources apply the ten thousands to Jews killed in Alexandria by Philopator after his return from Judea following the Battle of Raphia. Bro. R. E. Streeter’s “Daniel, the Beloved of Jehovah,” is among them, and we have followed this thought in past times. But we now doubt that such an episode occurred. Streeter’s comments on this verse appear on page 184 of the 1998 Pastoral Bible Society edition. He introduces the subject by saying “Again the historian relates that ...” and then cites a lengthy paragraph which includes the following —

“At his [Philopator’s] return therefore to Alexandria, he began a cruel persecution upon the Jewish inhabitants of that city, who had resided there from the time of Alexander ... it appears from Eusebius that about this time forty thousand Jews were slain, or sixty thousand ... in Jerome’s Latin interpretation.”

However, the record in the third book of Maccabees, which speaks of a persecution of Jews in Egypt on this occasion, does not specify the city of Alexandria. Additionally, it says that the plans of the king were thwarted by divine intervention.

Bro. Streeter does not here specify which historian he is citing. However, the lengthy paragraph he cites is word for word from a footnote on pages 114 and 115 of the book *Illustrations of Prophecy: Particularly the Evening and Morning Visions of Daniel, and the Apocalyptic Visions of John*, by David Cambell, Boston, 1840. Likely this was the source for Bro. Streeter. (We found it on Google Books.)

A footnote in this book cites in turn “Newton on the Prophecies, p. 335” (also on Google Books). The title page is “Dissertations on the Prophecies, Which have remarkably been fulfilled, and at this time are fulfilling in the world, by Thomas Newton, D.D., Now Lord Bishop of Bristol, in Three Volumes.” This is from Volume Two, Third Edition, London, 1766. The pertinent passage appears on pages 108 to 109 — word for word (with old spelling). This seems to be the ultimate source for this view.

Likely it is from this work also that Hales says “At his return, therefore, to Alexandria, he began a cruel and impolitic persecution against the Jewish inhabitants, BC 216, in which, according to Eusebius, 40,000 Jews were slain, or 60,000 according to Jerom” (Hales, 542) — not a verbatim quote, but it is thought for thought.

Thomas Newton cites for his information some Greek text from Eusebius, and some Latin text presumably from Jerome. But, coincidentally, 40,000 is the number of Jews slain a generation later by Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Maccabees 5:14). It seems to us likely that Thomas Newton’s comments may have misapplied this 40,000 in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, to the supposed slaughter a generation earlier, in the days of Ptolemy Philopator and his contemporary Antiochus Magnus.

(6) There is some uncertainty about his age. Bevan puts the birth of Epiphanes at October 9, 209 BC, “a date fixed by the Rosetta Stone” (Bevan, page 236). He also suggests the death of Philopator was “November 28, 203 BC” (page 250), citing the German scholar Ernst Meyer, but acknowledges that this would mean “The statement of the Canon that the first year of Epiphanes was 205-204” would thus be erroneous (Bevan, footnote 65). If 203 is the year, and the birth year of Ptolemy Epiphanes was 209, then the child was six at the time, otherwise he may have been four at the time. Other references say five at the time. In any case he was a young child.

343 Years

In the previous issue appeared part two of “The Period of the Kings,” which discussed the duration of the Kingdom of Judah, from the divided kingdom forward. That period lasted for 343 years. This is the sum of the reign lengths reported in the scriptures for all the rulers of Judah, from Rehoboam through Zedekiah — less the years of overlap. That is 394 years, less 51 of overlap, so 343 years net.¹

This period of years is engaging and easy to remember, for it is the cube of seven — $7 \times 7 \times 7 = 343$. There may be more here than a mere coincidence, for the numbers expressed in God’s Plan of the Ages frequently carry symbolic meaning, in addition to representing the simple facts of history.

Those who ruled the united kingdom of Israel were three in number — Saul, David, Solomon — and conspicuously, each of these reigned for 40 years. In keeping with the fact that 40 in scripture represents a period of trial, development, testing, these reigns represent three ages of trial and development in the Plan of the Ages — namely the Jewish Age, Gospel Age, and Millennial Age.

These three ages all have something to do with the Kingdom of God. The Jewish Age was for God’s typical kingdom, the Gospel Age for God’s spiritual kingdom, and the Millennial Age for God’s glorious Kingdom established throughout the world for the blessing of all nations. So it is appropriate that these ages are represented in the reigns of the first three kings of Israel.

Less well known is that the reigns of the kings in the divided kingdom also constitute pictures about these three periods — the Jewish, Gospel, and Millennial ages.

We may consider some of these pictures in coming issues. But rather than equal periods of 40, as before the division, the many reigns of the divided kingdom show a numerical connection to the three ages in a different way. Namely, by the length of the whole to be a form of triple seven — $7 \times 7 \times 7 = 343$ years.

The number seven is appropriate for this purpose because each of these ages are sometimes represented in scriptural types, or pictures, by periods of seven years. For example, the two periods of seven years Jacob worked for his wives represent the Jewish and Gospel Ages. Two periods of seven years in the days of Joseph, the seven years of plenty and seven years of famine, represent the Gospel Age and Millennial Age, respectively. We will not elaborate on these points here — they are mentioned now and then in Bible Student discourses and fellowship. Here we merely observe the sevenfold division of each of these ages.

Therefore, as the three opening periods of 40 represent these ages as periods of testing, the remainder of the period of kings — $7 \times 7 \times 7$ years — show these ages as represented by periods of seven.

Why Seven?

But why seven? It has to do with the oath bound covenant — God’s covenant made to Father Abraham so long ago. The Jewish, Gospel, and Millennial Ages are those by which God develops his promise to Abraham of a promised seed to bless “all the families of the earth.” This covenant with Abraham was an “oath-bound” covenant, because God bound himself by an oath to perform it (Genesis 22:16, Hebrews 6:17) — and herein lies the connection with “seven.”

In Hebrew the word “swear” is closely related to the word “seven,” so that for one to bind himself with an oath was to “seven” oneself. Perhaps this meaning derives from the sense of the number seven to represent something complete, whole, blessed, assured. Seven is the “perfect” number of Scripture, and seems associated with everything pertaining to God’s Plan of the Ages, including Jesus (Revelation 1:20, 5:6), who is the promised seed to confirm the blessings God promised for the world.

The word “swear” in our common English Bibles comes from the Hebrew word *shaba*, listed in Strong’s Concordance as word number 7650. Here is his definition. “A primitive root; properly to be complete, but used only as a denominative from 7651 [which means the number seven], to seven oneself, i.e. swear (as if by repeating a declaration seven times).”

Thus it is appropriate that following the patriarchs, to whom God gave his covenant and repeated it, the three ages through which God’s covenant is developed and accomplished, are represented by the number seven. Those three ages — the Jewish, Gospel, and Millennial Ages — are illustrated in the experiences of the divided

Kings of Judah

17	Rehoboam	
3	Abijah	
41	Asa	
25	Jehoshaphat	(-4 coregency with Asa)
8	Jehoram	(-1 non-acc. year reckoning)
1	Ahaziah	(-1 non-acc. year reckoning)
7	Athaliah	(-1 non-acc. year reckoning)
40	Joash	(-1 non-acc. year reckoning)
29	Amaziah	
52	Uzziah	(-24 coreg. with Amaziah)
16	Jotham	(-8 coreg. 12, extension 4)
16	Ahaz	
29	Hezekiah	
55	Manasseh	(-11 coreg. with Hezekiah)
2	Amon	
31	Josiah	
—	Jehoahaz (3 months)	
11	Jehoiakim	
—	Jehoiachin (3 months)	
11	Zedekiah	
—		
394		
- 51	Overlap years	
—		
343	= $7 \times 7 \times 7$ years	

kingdom from Rehoboam forward. So the length of that period, 343 years, reflects this in its duration as $7 \times 7 \times 7$ years.

The End of Zedekiah’s Kingdom

The period of the kings closed in the year 587 BC, near the close of year 11 of the reign of Zedekiah. The article following this explains how this date is determined. Here, we note that adding 343 years backward from 587 BC, we arrive at the year 930 BC marking “year one” of Solomon’s successor, Rehoboam, the king of Judah from which 10 tribes rebelled.

If we add backward from there the 40 years of Solomon, we come to 970 BC for beginning “year one” of Solomon’s rule. As the reigns of the Judean kings ran from Tishri to Tishri (autumn to autumn), that “year one” commenced with Tishri of 970 BC. (His accession year ran from 971 BC to 970 BC, Tishri to Tishri, the same year that King David died.)

Thus year “two” of Solomon began with Tishri of 969 BC, year “three” with Tishri of 968 BC, and year “four” with Tishri of 967 BC. The following spring, when

Solomon commenced the building of the Temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem, thus fell in the year 966 BC.

From that date, 1 Kings 6:1 takes us 479 years back further in time to the Exodus, thus at 1445 BC. Galatians 3:17 says the covenant with Abraham was 430 years earlier, so 1875 BC. This followed the death of Abraham's father Terah, which from the record in Genesis chapters 10 and 11 was 427 years from the close of the Flood, thus 2302 BC. According to the record in Genesis chapter 5, and Genesis 8:13, this was 1656 years after the creation of Adam, thus 3958 BC.

And, finally, 6000 years from 3958 BC forward takes us to 2043 AD — the opening of the Seventh Millennium, the Thousand Years of emancipation for the world in the Kingdom of Christ described in Revelation chapter 20.

(1) This counts seven years for Athaliah, and a year of overlap for the non-accession reckoning of her length of rule. Some report six years for her rule, in which case we would not deduct a year for non-accession reckoning for her. In this case the numbers would be 393 less 50, which still results in 353 years.

587 BC

The date of the fall of Judah's last king, Zedekiah, part of our continuing series on Bible Chronology.

As explained in the article just preceding this, by establishing the year in which the Kingdom of Judah came to a close, we can compute back from this date to the beginning of the divided kingdom. That would be 587 bc + 343 years, or 930 BC. The first regnal year of Rehoboam began in Tishri of that year.

Forty years back from there take us to year one of Solomon, three years forward to year four of Solomon and the founding of the temple, backward 479 years to the Exodus, 430 more to the Covenant with Abraham, 427 more to the end of the Flood, and 1656 more to the creation of Adam. So it is important to establish the year 587 BC as the final year of Zedekiah.¹

Through Nebuchadnezzar

The scriptures provide the necessary information for dating the final year of Zedekiah, by telling us that Zedekiah lost his kingdom during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, the famous King of the Babylonian Empire. 2 Kings 25:8 says that was in year 19 of Nebuchadnezzar. The same information is repeated in Jeremiah 52:12.

However, in Jeremiah 52:29 the same event is placed in year 18 of Nebuchadnezzar. That record was appended many years later by a scribe in Babylon — naturally, using the counting system customary in Babylon.

The difference is that in Judah, the years of Zedekiah's reign were counted using the non-accession year system — and the Judean scribe used this system also when

Non-Accession Year System (2 Kings 25:8)

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫ ⑬ ⑭ ⑮ ⑯ ⑰ ⑱ ⑲

Accession Year System (Jeremiah 52:29)

Ⓐ ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫ ⑬ ⑭ ⑮ ⑯ ⑰ ⑱ ⑲

recording the count of the years of Nebuchadnezzar. Whereas in Babylon, where the accession-year system was used, the fall of Judah was recorded by that system.

Thus the year of Zedekiah's fall was year 19 of Nebuchadnezzar as the Judean scribes counted it, but year 18 of Nebuchadnezzar as the Babylonians counted it. This may seem confusing, but actually it is of great value. Having the same event recorded by two different systems allows us to unambiguously fix the proper date. Each system gives the same date for the fall of Zedekiah — 587 BC.²

Had we but a single record, or even two records in the same system, there might be ambiguity about the proper date. As it is, with records in each of two different systems, the testimony is explicit. Thus, at this important point, the Scriptures provide the necessary information with such specificity that we can have great confidence in the information.

587 BC, or 586 BC?

If one checks a variety of contemporary sources, one will sometimes find the fall of Zedekiah dated to 587 BC, and sometimes to 586 BC. At issue is simply a misunderstanding as to how the years of Nebuchadnezzar are referred to in the three texts of scripture mentioned above. When their meaning is understood, there is no ambiguity. The proper date was late summer in 587 BC. Sometimes writers focus on "year 19" of Nebuchadnezzar, and incorrectly suppose this means year 19 by Babylonian reckoning (which would be 586 BC). In fact this "year 19" is the Judean reckoning, which is the same as "year 18" by Babylonian reckoning (which is 587 BC).

Regnal Dates of Nebuchadnezzar

As we mentioned, the regnal years of Nebuchadnezzar are unambiguously established in history. Among scholars and historians today there is consensus. But both among Bible Students and Jehovah's Witnesses, this date is sometimes disputed. Therefore it is appropriate to ask — how are dates for the years of Nebuchadnezzar established? What is the evidence?

One can find a discussion of this question in Appendix A, *The Stream of Time*, "Dating Nebuchadnezzar," and also pages 6 and 7 of that work. Following is some of the essential information included in that discussion.

From the Seleucid era, we have records of lunar eclipses from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar for his years 1, 12, 13, 14, 15, 30, 31, 32, 41 and 42 (he reigned 43 years in all). These eclipse records are presently kept in a museum in Berlin, Germany. They give sufficient detail to date these eclipses. By this means, the years listed above can be assigned the dates 604, 593, 592, 591, 590, 575, 564 and 563 BC.

Actually this evidence, cited in *The Stream of Time*, was understated. In fact there are eclipse records for each year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, except for years 18-23, 33-40, and 43. So not 10, but rather 28 years of his long reign, are documented with eclipse records which establish dates for each of those years. To borrow a metaphor, it is like fixing a picture to a wall — one good nail would do the job, but in this case we have 28 nails — such an abundance, it is really overkill. All of this evidence means the 18th year of his reign began in 587 BC.

Eclipse Records, Nebuchadnezzar

Bullets mark the 28 years of datable lunar eclipse records

1	•	16	•	31	•
2	•	17	•	32	•
3	•	18	(587 BC)	33	
4	•	19		34	
5	•	20		35	
6	•	21		36	
7	•	22		37	
8	•	23		38	
9	•	24	•	39	
10	•	25	•	40	
11	•	26	•	41	•
12	•	27	•	42	•
13	•	28	•	43	
14	•	29	•		
15	•	30	•		

We could add to this — as though it were necessary — the testimony of an astronomical diary from the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar which reports about 30 positions of the moon, stars, and five visible planets, which uniquely locate that Nisan year as commencing in 568 BC. This also puts year 18 of Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC. In addition, there are astronomical records which fix the reigns of his predecessors and successors — and links to his contemporary in Egypt.

So in addition to the 28 “pins” (eclipses) fixing the absolute dates of his reign, his reign also is fixed by the placement of predecessors, successors, and contemporaries. If the nature and force of this evidence is appreciated, the matter is settled.

For the serious student who wishes to plumb the depths of this evidence, you will find it documented in the work of Carl Olof Jonsson, *The Gentile Times Reconsidered*, third edition, 1998, Chapter Four, “The Absolute Chronology of the Neo-Babylonian Era.” (One can also google LBART 1419, or 1418, 1420, 1421, or VAT 4956 on the internet for a discussion of the records involved.)

For the student of Scripture who wishes to know, there is no reason for uncertainty. There is no ruler of the ancient middle east, from the empires of Assyria through Persia, for which we have dates more firmly fixed, than for the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

Why Would Anyone Wish Not to Know?

Of course not everyone is interested in such subjects, so a good number will not wish to investigate. But among those who are concerned, some prefer not to know. Why would this be?

The reason is not historical, but theological. It has to do with a particular view of the “Gentile Times” of 2520 years, drawn from chapter four of Daniel, and chapter 26 of Leviticus. Bible Students have long held that this period began with the fall of Zedekiah in 606 BC, and ended in 1914 AD. Jehovah’s Witnesses have a similar view, because they have a common background. However they have adjusted the date to 607 BC, in order to calculate properly across the BC / AD divide. Some Bible Students make this adjustment also — others seem insensitive to the issue.

Because of the importance to both Jehovah’s Witnesses and Bible Students of the date 1914, many are simply apprehensive about changing anything about the calculation which brings us to that date.³ In addition, to make the necessary adjustment means the count of years from there back to Adam would be affected, and this would disrupt some long held opinions about when 6000 years from Adam come to a close.

All of this is understandable. We are all human beings, and sometimes preference, rather than fact or evidence or scripture, sways the mind. Specially is this so when strong minded individuals speak sternly on the matter, without themselves apprehending the subject. Add to this peer pressure, and a tendency not to make the truth our own through study — all human concerns — and the observed results follow.

Yes, understandable. But not proper. The proper course is to reverently establish the facts from the evidence at hand — as Luther expressed it, from “scripture or evident reason.” God knows what actually happened, and when it happened, and as we learn to see things in this way, we are better prepared to know how God has interwoven His plan of the ages through the fabric of history. The information available on these subjects today is greater than at any time before. The harmony of the divine word on these subjects also is greater today than at any time before.

The Resolution

The fall of Zedekiah occurred in the late summer of 587 BC. However, Israel's national punishment began some years earlier. God subjected Israel to the rule of Babylon for their punishment, and if the kings of Israel would accept it, they could remain in their land, with some autonomy as a vassal kingdom (Jeremiah 27:8-13).

But they would not. King Jehoiakim rebelled after only three years of service. When Nebuchadnezzar returned a few years later, he took the successor of Jehoiakim, young Jehoiachin, captive with many thousands of Israelites, and placed young Zedekiah on the throne with oaths of obedience. But Zedekiah also would not accept his vassal status. He also violated his oaths and rebelled. So Nebuchadnezzar returned, took Jerusalem, burned the temple, and left but a few remnants of the poor of the land. The nation was broken.

But the start of Israel's punishment was earlier. The conquest of the holy land by Babylon occurred during the four years from 607 BC — when the Babylonian army first crossed the Euphrates into the promised land — until 603 BC when Nebuchadnezzar was declared to be the "head of gold" by the prophet Daniel (Daniel 2:38).

The seven times (seven x 360 years, or 2520 years) of national punishment closed in a similar period of four years — the four years of World War I, from 1914 to 1918. As a consequence, the Ottoman Empire lost control of Palestine, which was taken by England, who declared their intention to make it a national homeland for the Jewish people. This intention was expressed in the famous "Balfour Declaration" of 1917.

After many years, in the spring of 1948, the national independence of Israel was established again for the first time since the Babylonian invasion.

Sum of the Years

From the end of Zedekiah's reign, backward through time to Adam

587	BC date of Zedekiah's demise
343	years to Rehoboam
36	years to Solomon's Temple
479	years to the Exodus
430	years to the covenant with Abraham
427	years to the end of the flood
1656	years to the creation of Adam
<hr/>	
3958	BC date of Adam's Creation

Summation

The testimony is clear. By citing the year of Nebuchadnezzar when the kingdom of Zedekiah fell — recording that year in both the Judean system and in the Babylonian system — the Scriptures give a clear method to date the close of the kingdom of Israel. The year was 587 BC. To this date, counting back through time, we add the years in the list preceding.

This yields the date 3958 BC. Six thousand years forward brings us to 2043 AD — the beginning of the Seventh Millennium, the Millennium of Christ's Kingdom. This cannot help but stir a longing for the blessed Kingdom so near at hand.

(1) It is important. But it is not as vital as one might suppose. For as we saw in our previous issue, there is an eclipse of the sun in the records of Assyria, which occurred on June 15, 763 BC, that establishes the dates of the kings of Assyria during the last years of the kingdom of Israel. By this means we can date the five year reign of Shalmaneser V of Assyria to the years 726 to 722 BC.

The Scriptures tell us Hoshea, the last king of Israel, lost his kingdom to Shalmaneser after a three year siege. The Assyrian records tell us such a three year siege occupied years 2, 3, 4 of Shalmaneser. By this means we know that the 10 tribe kingdom of Israel came to a close in 723 BC. That was the fourth year of Shalmaneser, and the ninth and last year of Hoshea, king of Israel.

Thus one could count through the history of the divided kingdom backward from Hoshea to the reign of King Solomon, and so on. By this means also one secures the date 3958 BC for the creation of Adam. This approach achieves the same result as computing backward from the later days of Zedekiah and Nebuchadnezzar.

(2) This same double-reckoning of years occurs in two other cases also. Jeremiah 46:2 (year four) and Daniel 1:1 (year three) both refer to the same year. And 2 Kings 24:12 (year eight) and Jeremiah 52:28 (year seven) both refer to the same year. These are not errors, but accurate records in two different systems.

(3) Naturally those disposed against the interpretation of the 2520 years as seven times of national punishment for Israel, suppose that the incorrect date for the fall of Zedekiah is evidence against the whole concept. This further presses those who support the concept to cling to the old dates. Neither approach is proper.

When this period of 2520 years was proposed long ago by John Aquila Brown in his 1823 work *The Eventide*, he used dates for Nebuchadnezzar that were about correct, and correctly began the 2520 years long before the fall of Zedekiah. He reckoned the period from 604 BC, the year he supposed Jerusalem fell the first time (Daniel 1:1), until 1917. This first published treatment of the subject was not far from the truth.

Bro. Russell received his application of the period, from 606 BC to 1914 BC, from a meeting in Philadelphia in 1876 with Bro. Nelson Barbour, who had published his conclusions in his magazine *Herald of the Morning*. Bro. Barbour, in turn, apparently received his view through a work by EB Elliott, *Horae Apocalypticae*. In that work also, the beginning date of the 2520 years was not applied to the fall of Zedekiah's kingdom (though a chart of chronology in the same edition did apply the date to Zedekiah's fall).

These early views of the Gentile Times did not suppose that the 2520 years began with the fall of Zedekiah. Now that all the issues are clarified, we find that they were correct in this. It is not as though we are putting a strain upon the interpretation, for this approach was the one supposed from the beginning.