

THE JEWISH REGNAL YEAR
(Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods)

In the preface to The Chronology of Ancient Nations, Edward Sachau makes an ~~unquestionable~~ ^{unquestionable} assertion. He says: No number in any chronological table can be considered correct, as long as it is not proved by computation to be so.¹

In the face of this ~~significant~~ challenge one cannot but wonder what will become of all the indiscriminate dates appearing in twentieth century monographs, and what impression they will make upon students who succeed to our generation. Many ~~dates~~ ^{of ancient times} are based upon no proof whatsoever, and have in fact been continually on the change. They may therefore belong to an unattested outline, or else to no outline at all. The trend of modern research ~~appears to accept at~~ face value the inscriptional dates, but the question at once arises whether today's evaluation of the ~~Assyrian~~ ^{ancient} records will hold unless given more proof than has as yet been applied. It is not enough to submit an historical epoch to a trial and error computation whose resultant figures merely conform to unproved initial postulates, ~~and also involve an amount of~~ ^{and also involve an amount of} ~~guesswork~~ ^{guesswork}.

The modern rabbinical calendar can be extended back to ancient times; but its fictitious moeds, which do not allow the fifteenth of Nisan to occur on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday, could not conform to the OT days of the week, or to the OT dates, which are definitely tied to the perturbations and inequalities of the moon. We know this because every calendar, ~~that~~ ^{or every} that is based upon observation of the moon must necessarily take into account the moon's anomaly and irregular motion. Observation of the moon means all of that. However, the Bible does not mention in detail the complex principles of lunar motion. Hence we just set them aside, and in our biblical reckoning are tempted to employ a calendar that also sets them aside!² It is said that any calendar is correct if one knows how to use it. If the student therefore understands that a table is not based upon the moon's anomaly and inequalities, then no confusion will result in the use of it, for the user will know that he could not thereby check the exactness of any synchronism in the Bible.

Similarly, intercalation as such is not described anywhere in the Scriptures; yet this indispensable lunar principle is fully ^{and} presented in the Bible by the simple expedient of tying the paschal full moon to the ^{first} full moon of barley harvest. At passover time a sheaf of ripe barley was waved in the temple on the sixteenth of Nisan, ^{(Lev. 23: 10, 11).} In this manner an ancient lunar date was made to coincide with the sun-ripened harvest--a solar event. The invention is very old, and reaches back very early in both Jewish and Babylonian history.³ It has now been replaced in the rabbinical tables by a nineteen year cycle, which is pure calculation and no longer conforms to the cycle of an ancient agricultural calendar.

We repeat: no lunar table whose computation sets aside the anomaly and inequalities of the moon, and also the ancient method of intercalation, can possibly conform to a ^{true} biblical outline in chronology. The number of dates in the Bible may be small, but every one belongs to a specific calendaric period, and is as important to chronology as an eclipse. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the working of the Jewish year in the Neo-Babylonian and early Persian eras. We have chosen this era as one that particularly illustrates a period when the Jews for a time still had kings of their own to account for, and when at the same time and later ^{also}, their writings had to record the regnal years of foreign kings. Many cities fell in this period-- Tyre (573), Nineveh (612), Carchemish (604), Jerusalem (586), ^{and} Babylon (539), Thebes (525), and the Jewish reckoning of foreign events nicely ^{corresponds to} represents the chief forms of calendar in use. ^{Moreover, in this period there are about 100 biblical dates which are lunar.}

Outline of the Sixth-Seventh Centuries B.C.

The period outlined on the accompanying chart and the regnal years introduced are based upon many inscriptional documents.⁴ The Babylonian year began in the spring,⁵ and it is so represented on the chart. The king list includes four Assyrian kings, six Babylonian kings, and three Persian, who together

nearly parallel the XXVIth dynasty of Egypt (666-525 B.C.) Also the first half of this era covers forty years of the last five kings of Judah--from the thirteenth of Josiah to the eleventh of Zedekiah. And in addition, there are the thirty-seven years of Jehoiachin's captivity in Babylon, which extend from the eighth of Nebuchadnezzar to the first of Amel-Marduk, as described by the writer of ² II Kings and the scribe who completed the record of Jeremiah. The major part of Jehoiachin's captivity period is featured by Ezekiel's prophecy, which includes more lunar dates than any other single book in the Bible, ~~fourteen altogether~~. The dated chapters, with three exceptions, represent a chronological sequence, and the prophecies are indicated in the outline by the series of small dots in the years from 592 to 567. The early dates are a year or so apart; but the messages at the time Jerusalem fell were close together--only a few weeks apart. The purport of these final communications is obvious. For the most part they relate to the fall of Egypt, and hence were ~~probably~~ ^{doubtless} given as a warning to the Jewish captives against looking to Egypt for support. ~~We shall shortly analyze the Ezekiel year and its important relation to the chronology here outlined.~~ ^{highly}

There are four forms of calendar represented in this outline: (1) Julian, (2) Egyptian, (3) Babylonian and Persian, and (4) Jewish. The Julian year is the chronologer's year. It is a calendar measurement which has been adopted for the interpretation of ancient records. Its new year was on January 1, which marks the earliest year beginning in the outline until the year 521 B.C., during which the Egyptian new year occurred twice in the year--January 1 and December 31. The Egyptian year was employed for the Ptolemaic kings and eclipses. In 626 B.C., 1 Thoth occurred on January 27, and in 515 B.C., on December 30. As time advanced, the Thoth new year receded at the rate of one day every four years. Certain inscriptions and documents equate the Egyptian year with the Persian, as in the Cambyses 400 Tablet⁵ and the Assuan papyri.⁶

Three eclipses occur in this Babylonian-Persian period, and each one is

tied to the regnal year of some king. They therefore not only fix the Julian years in the outline, but they also ⁽¹⁾ point out the relation of the Julian year ~~(#)~~ (621 B.C.) ^{and to the Jewish year,} to the Egyptian year of the Ptolemaic canon, ⁽²⁾ to the Babylonian regnal year (568 B.C.),⁷ and (3) to the Persian regnal year (523 B.C.). In other words, these eclipses show that the Julian new year on January 1 began first; second, ^{that} there next followed the Egyptian new year, a January event ^{that} at least up to 521 B.C.; and third, ^{that} there then began the Babylonian New Year on 1 Nisan--a March-April event. The season of the Jewish new year remains to ^{further} be demonstrated.

The Ancient Jewish New Year

The earliest known year, both in Israel and Babylonia was autumn-beginning.⁸ The months were even numbered from the autumn.⁹ The ancient calendar was agricultural, probably similar to the Nile calendar of the Egyptians,¹⁰ and the months were given agricultural names, as the old Canaanite names of the Bible indicate.¹¹ With the Palestinian farmer, the end of the summer was the end of the year, and the coming of the early rain was the beginning of a new year.¹² Just so the "end of the year" (going out of the year), as in Ex. 23:16, is an expression based upon culture of the land. The word ^{ap-} appears to be characteristic of the sun's revolution (Ps. 19:6), as if beginning from the fall of the year (Ex. 34:22). ^{In addition} ~~On the contrary,~~ the word ^{when} used with ^{is} is still more specific of the sun's motion. The phrase is commonly translated "turn of the year," and probably relates to the time when the sun crosses the equator. There are only a few instances of ⁱⁿ in the Bible, and the context ^{usually} implies which season is meant--vernal or autumnal. ^{At} ~~From~~ the time of the exodus, Jehovah commanded that the passover month Abib should be counted as the first month of the year (Ex. 12:2), and ever since, this has been good Jewish practice. However, the fact that the numbering of the year was ever changed--even though by divine order--has supplied a rule of procedure with some who otherwise would fail to make the outline of

biblical chronology conform to ^{these} dates and figures. Begrich is one such. He proposes a change of year from autumn to spring in the time of Hezekiah.¹³ But Welhausen is equally certain that in the time of Josiah a king's reign ^{began} ~~changed~~ in the autumn.¹⁴ On the contrary, from almost the same texts, Kugler concludes that the Jewish year changed in the spring.¹⁵ Levy has a similar conclusion.¹⁶ Others insist that the Jewish people adopted a spring-beginning year in Babylon, and returned to Palestine with the same calendar. And ^{biblical} all the ^{dates} of these various computers are colored by their arguments with reference to the beginning of the Jewish year.

It is impossible to connect the reigns of Jewish kings with an outline of Babylonian and Persian kings unless we know exactly when the Jewish regnal year began. Furthermore, the chronologer must also know what calendar the Jewish writers used when mentioning the reigns of foreign kings--whether spring or autumn beginning. Biblical practice varies with regard to this. The whole pattern is also biased by the possibility that the chronologic trend of a prophet or chronicler may be interjected with dates from a foreign calendar--interpolated by some editor or scribe. And in addition, the Jewish accession year must be understood, and any Hebrew expression defining it. Then there is also the very significant but much garbled Ezekiel chronology which belongs ~~to this period--altogether fourteen consecutive dates,~~ ^{which offer a precise proof of the period to which they belong.} Obviously, it is an inconsistent conclusion that one simple rule could govern all this important history, and we are faced with the problem of ascertaining the method of computation which each biblical writer employed, ^{and what calendar he used.} We now present several arguments showing ⁽¹⁾ that the Jewish year began in the autumn, and ⁽²⁾ that this kind of year was common among the Jews in Babylon, and ^{(3) also} after the return from the captivity.

1. Josiah. This young king's work of reform began when he was twenty years old: for "in the twelfth year [of his reign] he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the graves, and the carved images, and the molten images" (2 Chron. 34:3). The work of cleansing proceeded throughout the

"cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali" (verses 5, 6). The eighteenth year of Josiah's reign had come before his reform had been completed, and the temple was still to be cleansed (verse 8). Sometime within this eighteenth year--in the eighth month, according to the LXX--Josiah began to repair the house of God, and for this purpose the people were bringing an offering of silver to the temple (2 Kings 22:4; 2 Chron. 34:9).

This silver collection was the traditional offering for building and repairing the house of God. The actual silver in the original collection was used to make the hooks and sockets of the tabernacle (Ex. 38:26-31). This offering was taken up in the autumn, about six months after the exodus, and became traditional under the monarchy (2 Kings 12:4,5). And so David without doubt took up his magnificent offering for the new temple in the autumn after the harvest returns were in. On this occasion, Solomon was anointed king the second time (1 Chron. 29:22).

It is important to take note that the addition by the LXX to the MT date in 2 Kings 22:3--
--is consistently supported by Lucian,¹⁷ and that this silver collection in the time of Josiah is consequently in harmony with the ancient half shekel tax of autumn origin. Therefore, since the silver tax for the repair of the temple was in operation in the eighth month in the eighteenth year of Josiah, and since the subsequent passover was observed in the same eighteenth year of the king, ~~it is consistent to~~ ^{we must therefore} conclude that the king's reign did not change in the spring of this year, and hence must have changed on the ensuing first of Tishri.

Consequently Josiah's notable and much discussed passover in his eighteenth year was coincident with the Ptolemaic eclipse on April 22, 621 B.C. The eclipse occurred early in the morning of 13 Nisan (April 22), and the moon rose full at sunset on that day in _____ when the paschal lambs were being slain. The eclipse doubtless had a profound effect upon the people. We know that this dating is correct, for if we shift the calendar backward one year, then the eleventh of Jehoiakim ends on the seventh of Nebuchadnezzar, contrary to 2 Kings (24:6,12). And if we advance Josiah's eighteenth one year, ^{have} then the siege of Jerusalem would ^{instead of the ninth,} begin on the eighth of Zedekiah, [^] contrary

to 2 Kings 25:1; Jer. 39:1; 52:4; Ezek. 24:1. Thus this Ptolemaic eclipse ties together four calendars.

Jehoiakim. The Josiah dating just outlined makes the fourth of Jehoiakim coincide with Nebuchadnezzar's accession year and his first year--the latter part of one and the first part of the other. Jeremiah also equates the fourth of Jehoiakim with the first of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 25:1).¹⁸ It is quite obvious that the prophet is using the Babylonian calendar for his Babylonian date. On the other hand, Josephus equates the eighth of Jehoiakim with the fourth of Nebuchadnezzar, and thereby employs his own native calendar.¹⁹ The interesting feature in this synchronism lies in the fact that if one date is moved, then the other is disturbed. These two dates therefore lock in position two calendars--Jewish and Babylonian.

On the date--fourth of Jehoiakim = the first of Nebuchadnezzar--Jeremiah offered his wine cup of fury to all the nations (Jer. 25:15ff). The prophet was not yet shut up in prison. In this same fourth year, as soon as Necho reached Carchemish on the Euphrates (Jer. 46:2), Jeremiah gives a realistic description of the battle! A little later, we find him shut up in prison, and mentioned in Jer. 36:5. probably as described in chapters 19 and 20, He ~~then~~ calls Baruch and dictates to him all his prophecies, and then asks that the roll be read to the people on the fast day. These incidents occurred in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, and during the spring and summer months. When Baruch read the roll on the fast day in the ninth month, the context shows that the ~~king's~~ year had changed to the fifth of ^{Jehoiachin's} ~~his~~ reign. (Jer. 36:9). The regnal year must therefore have changed on the first of Tishri.

Zedekiah. Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah king, and took Jehoiachin captive to Babylon at one and the same time (2 Chron. 36:10). In this connection, the writer of Kings (2 Kings 24:12) and the chronicler (2 Chron. 36:10) equate the the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign with the "turn of the year." This coincidence could have occurred only in the autumn, for if we locate these in-

cidents in the spring, then we discover that the "turn of the year" at the time of the spring equinox occurred in the seventh of Nebuchadnezzar, contrary to 2 Kings 24:12.

From the foregoing episodes, it should be clear that the Jewish year began in the autumn, and that its new year came after that of the Babylonian spring new year. It therefore happened that during the spring and summer season, the Babylonian regnal year was counted one higher than by corresponding Jewish reckoning. For example, consider the eclipse in 523 B.C.--the seventh of Cambyses. This eclipse occurred on July 16--an event between Nisan and Tishri. The Julian, Egyptian and Persian calendars each record this astronomical event in the seventh year of the Persian king. On the Jewish calendar, however, it was ^{necessarily} counted as the sixth year of the Persian king. ¶ Another interesting instance of such reckoning is found in Daniel 10, where, in the "third year of Cyrus," Daniel is seen fasting and praying during the paschal period in behalf of the temple project in Jerusalem. He had been keeping such vigils for a long time it appears (Dan.9:3,17). His date--the third of Cyrus--is obviously Persian; for when we pick up another record of the same period, we find the writer of Ezra stating that the corner stone was laid "in the second year of their coming" (Ezra 3:8). ^{Josephus calls it the second year of Cyrus} Ezra's "second year" in Jewish time ²⁰ was exactly the same as Daniel's "third year" in Persian time, for the incident happened in the spring. The prophet fasted and prayed for three weeks in Nisan, and within a week the corner stone was laid in Jerusalem and his prayer was answered (1 Esdras 5:57).

Still further examples of these staggered regnal years are found in the equations of the Assuan papyri. Papyri J and K are good illustrations. In this period, the Thoth new year came in December, and in Egypt, the Persian king's year was then changed, ²¹ while in Babylon, the same regnal year did not change until the following spring. The equated dates in Papyri J and K are as follows:

J 12th of Thoth, year 9 of Darius [in Egypt] = 3rd of Chisleu, year 8 [in Persia]
 K 9th of Athyr, year 14 of Darius [Egypt] = 24th Shebat, year 13 (Persia)²²

2. Jewish Regnal Year in Babylon

The prophecy of Ezekiel shows how some Jews at least marked time in Babylon. There are several dated texts in Ezekiel that answer the question with respect to Jewish time during the captivity. In Ezek. 24:1 we read:

Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, the word of the Lord came unto me saying,
 Son of man, write thee the name of the day, even of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day.

The foregoing text is also recorded by the writer of 2 Kings (2 Kings 25: 1), by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 39:1), and by the scribe who completed Jeremiah's record (Jer. 52:4). The siege began in the winter on January 17, according to Passover reckoning.²³ In this season between Tishri and Nisan, a Jewish date in Babylon would necessarily be exactly the same as its corresponding Jewish date in Palestine. This same day, the divine pronouncement stated, the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem. This text identifies the chronology of Ezekiel with that in Palestine. We thereby know that the ninth year of the de jure year of Jehoiachin was the same as the ninth year of the de facto reign of Zedekiah. If we advance Ezekiel's outline six months to a spring-beginning year, then in the winter an "eighth" of Jehoiachin would match Zedekiah's "ninth." On the contrary, if we retard the Ezekiel outline six months, then Jehoiachin's captivity began in the seventh of Nebuchadnezzar.²⁴

In Ezek. 40:1, we have a hapax legomenon-- This phrase is translated "in the beginning of the year," without doubt because the word is used a number of times in the OT to signify beginning. But literally, this Ezekiel phrase means "head of the year." The same expression is not found elsewhere in the OT, and from it the modern rabbinical calendar has apparently derived its name Rosh Hashana, which has been applied only to the first day of Tishri. In Ex. 12:2 Abib is described as the "head of the months."

But in Ezek. 40:1, the head of the year, as in our modern Jewish calendar, is the first day of the seventh month! On the tenth day of this month, otherwise known today as Yom Kippur, Ezekiel was given his wonderful vision of the new temple. Thus we have Ezekiel's personal witness to the autumn-beginning of the Jehoiachin captivity year.

Ezek. 26:1 is also a text that ^{clearly} ties itself into an autumn-beginning calendar. This text first informs the prophet that Jerusalem had fallen--an event which occurred on the tenth day of the fifth month. Tyre, Edom, Moab and Ammon were all clapping their hands over the fall of the city (Ezek. 25:6; Lam. 2:15). Edom stood in the crossway to cut off those who had escaped. Divine reaction was immediate, and "in the first day of the month"--Elul, the only month left before the new year would begin--the prophet is told that Tyre should be destroyed. Nebuchadnezzar began his siege of Tyre in 586 B.C., almost immediately after the fall of Jerusalem. He besieged the city for thirteen years, and Tyre finally fell in ^{probably in} 573 B.C. (Ezek. 29:17).

3. The Jewish Year After the Captivity

JEWISH REGNAL YEAR

(SIXTH AND SEVENTH CENTURIES B.C.)

January 1 1 Thoth = Jan 27

April 22

Julian	626	* 625	624	623	* 622	621	620	* 619	618	617	* 616	615	* 614	613
Ptolemy		1	2	3	4	5	Nabopolassar		8	9	10	11	12	13
Assyria	Assur-banipal													
Babylon	Nis 42	1	2	3	4	5	Nabopolassar		8	9	10	11	12	13
Jeremiah	13 Tis	14	15	16	17	18	Josiah	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

1st year of Jeremiah

Julian	612	* 611	610	609	* 608	607	* 606	605	604	* 603	602	601	* 600	599
Ptolemy	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	1	2	3	Nebuchadnezzar		6
Assyria	Assur-uballit II													
Babylon	Nis 14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	1	2	Nebuchadnezzar		5	6
Jeremiah	27 Tis	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	Jehoiakim		7	8	9

Ant.X.XI.1 23rd year of Jeremiah

Ant.X.VI.1

Julian	598	* 597	596	* 595	594	593	* 592	591	590	* 589	588	* 587	586	585
Ptolemy	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	10 Tebet S i e g e				20
Babylon	Nis 7	8	9	10	11	12	Nebuchadnezzar		15	16	17	18	19	20
Jewish	10 Tis	11	1	2	3	4	Zedekiah (vassal king) 8				9	10	11	12
Ezekiel	Tis 1		2	3	4	Jehoiachin's Captivity Year				9	10	11	12	

10 Ab

Messenger

Julian	* 584	583	582	* 581	580	579	* 578	577	* 576	575	574	* 573	572	571
Ptolemy	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
Babylon	Nis 21	22	23	24	25	Nebuchadnezzar		28	29	30	31	32	33	34
Ezekiel	13 Tis	14	15	16	17	18	Jehoiachin		21	22	23	24	25	26

1 Thoth = Jan 12

July 4

Release of Jehoiachin

Julian	* 570	569	* 568	567	566	* 565	564	563	* 562	561	560	* 559	558	* 557
Ptolemy	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	1	2	1	2	3
Babylon	Nis 35	36	37	38	Nebuchadnezzar		41	42	43	1	2	1	2	3
Ezekiel	27 Tis	28	29	30	(31)	(32)	(33)	(34)	(35)	(36)	(37)			

Amel-Marduk

Nergal-Sarusur

Julian	556	555	* 554	553	552	* 551	550	* 549	548	547	* 546	545	544	* 543
Ptolemy	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Babylon	4	1	Nis 2	3	4	5	Belshazzar Nabonidus		8	9	10	11	12	13
Daniel														
Jewish														

70

Julian	542	541	* 540	539	* 538	537	536	* 535	534	533	* 532	531	* 530	529
Ptolemy	14	15	16	17	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1
Persia	Nis 14	15	16	17	1 Darius the Mede		1	2	3	Cyrus		5	6	7
Daniel														
Jewish	Messianic prophecy †						Tis 1	2	3	Cyrus		5	6	7

1 Thoth = Jan 2

July 16

Daniel - Ezra date

Julian	528	* 527	526	525	* 524	523	522	* 521	520	* 519	518	517	* 516	515
Ptolemy	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Persia	Nis 2	3	4	Cambyses		7	8	1	2	Darius I		5	6	7
Daniel														
Jewish	1 Tis	2	3	4	Cambyses		7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6

Haggai Zechariah

Ezra 6:15

* The asterisk indicates an embolismic spring
Accession years are shaded

ANALYSIS OF OUTLINE

1. The Ptolemaic year, based upon the Egyptian year, is tied to the Julian series of years by two eclipses--April 21, 621 B.C. and July 16, 523 B.C.

2. The Babylonian year is Nisan-beginning in this table. It is linked to the Ptolemaic year by the same eclipses, and by one full moon date--July 4, 568 B.C. The Babylonian king lists are confirmed by many inscriptions.

3. The Jewish ^{as usual} years are ^{some} many of them double calendar dated--Jewish and Babylonian. This was common practise in that period. It was also common for each nation or ^{vs. ad.} province to have its own calendar. The relationship between the Jewish and Babylonian regnal years is established by the following simple equations at the hands of four different writers:

- a. 11th Zedekiah in Ab = 19th Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:2,8; Jer.52:5,12).
- b. 10th Zedekiah = 18th Nebuchadnezzar (Jer.32:1).
- c. 4th Jehoiakim = 1st Nebuchadnezzar (Jer.25:1). Probably a summer date, for Jeremiah counts the subsequent 9th month as the 5th of Jehoiakim (Jer.36:9).
- d. 9th Zedekiah on 10 Tebet = beginning of siege (2 Kings 25:1; Jer.39:1; 52:4; Ezek.24:1).

If Zedekiah's calendar is advanced six months, it is moved out of range of the siege date. If retarded six months, his 10th and 11th years are dislodged from their connection with Nebuchadnezzar's 18th and 19th years. Also Jehoiakim's 4th year would thereby be disconnected from Nebuchadnezzar's 1st year. From these four synchronisms we therefore conclude that the Jewish year in this period was fall-beginning, as represented in the table, and that it was frequently equated with the spring-beginning Babylonian year. On the contrary, Josephus uses the Jewish calendar for both Jewish and Babylonian kings, and there appear to be a few similar dates interpolated in the closing paragraphs of Jeremiah.

4. In this table the Ezekiel outline is ^{also} linked to the Jewish fall-beginning calendar. There are two locks--one at the beginning and one at the end of the 37-year period. Jehoiachin's three months' reign and surrender to Nebuchadnezzar are tied to the 8th year of the Babylonian king (2 Kings 24:12). At the "return of the year"--probably at the autumn equinox--Jehoiachin was taken captive to Babylon, and Zedekiah was made king. If the Ezekiel series is moved back six months to a spring-beginning year, the foregoing incidents check with the 7th instead of with the 8th of Nebuchadnezzar. If it be advanced six months, it will be moved out of range with the month Adar in Amel-Marduk's 1st year.

In Ezek.40:1, the prophet introduces the term "head of the year," or Rosh Hashana. The expression is not used elsewhere in the OT, and his vision on the tenth day of this seventh month was apparently given in recognition of this solemn Jewish festival--the only festival day among Ezekiel's 14 dates. The prophet thereby would bear witness that in Babylon he was counting the seventh month as the beginning of the Jewish year.

5. After the captivity we find (a) Haggai and Zechariah using the Persian calendar, (b) Daniel also using the same, and (c) the record of Ezra tied to the Jewish calendar. These calendars can easily be demonstrated:

a. There are 9 dates in Haggai and Zechariah, ranging from the 6th to the 11th months without any change of regnal year. These prophets must therefore have employed a spring-beginning calendar.

b. In the "third year of Cyrus," Daniel is fasting and praying during the

He had been doing this for several years.

paschal season--ostensibly in behalf of the sanctuary at Jerusalem, whose corner stone had not yet been laid. However, "in the second year of their coming," the stone was laid. Esdras and Josephus call it the "second year of Cyrus." It was a summer event, when the third of Cyrus on the Persian calendar was ~~the same as~~ ^{the same as} the second of Cyrus on the Jewish calendar. This incident is therefore witness to the Jewish reckoning of Ezra.

and within a week after which might be seen in the

c. Nehemiah is a second witness to Ezra's ^{Jewish} Jewish calendar. Nehemiah presents the Jewish date "20th of Artaxerxes," for he has no change of year between Kisleu and Nisan inclusive. If in Nisan the Jewish date was 20 Artaxerxes, then the corresponding Persian year must have been 21 Artaxerxes in that time of year. But 21 Artaxerxes Persian = 444 B.C. Hence 20 Artaxerxes must equal the same Julian date. Therefore 7 Artaxerxes = 457 B.C. Jewish. However, in Persian time, 457 B.C. = 8 Artaxerxes. Consequently 7 Artaxerxes was Jewish and 8 Artaxerxes was Persian at one and the same time. Hence Ezra was obviously using the Jewish calendar the same as Nehemiah.

First step in biblical chronology is to discover the calendar employed. No number in any chronological table can be considered correct unless proved by confutation to be so. It is not enough to side with the majority. The true date may be in the minority.