

Dear Brother Marco:

In 1842, they did not have the same information that we have today. In choosing 538, there was no way they could really place the fall of Babylon in such a precise manner. Most of the chronology of Ussher is only accurate within a +/- 2 years.

My first argument would be that, since 538 is not tied to a time prophecy, I do not see that it matters if it is off by a year. There was no intent in the makers of the chart that this date was definitive. . . .

Secondly, we know that 1843 on the chart represented the spring of 1843 to the spring of 1844. . . . Miller taught that Christ could come any time between the March 21 1843 and March 21 1844. He believed that the 70 weeks were completely ending in the spring of 33 AD. He also believed that this meant the 2300 days were ended in the spring of 1843. He believed that Jesus could return anytime within the 2301st year. I mention this detail only to say that since 1843 included part of 1844, I see no reason that 538 cannot include part of 539. More specifically, since Babylon fell sixteen days after **the civil year 538** had commenced, there is nothing inaccurate about saying that Babylon fell in 538. It is simply not precise.

“In the month of Tašrītu [Tishri], when Cyrus attacked the army of Akkad in Opis on the Tigris, the inhabitants of Akkad revolted, but he [Cyrus] massacred the inhabitants. The fifteenth day [October 12th], Sippar was seized without battle. Nabonidus fled. The sixteenth day [October 13th], Gobryas [litt:Ugbaru], the governor of Gutium, and the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without battle. Afterwards, Nabonidus was arrested in Babylon when he returned there. Till the end of the month, the shield carrying Gutians were staying within Esagila but nobody carried arms in Esagila and its buildings. The correct time for a ceremony was not missed.” *Nabonidus Chronicle*.

One thing we see in this contemporary account is that there is no conflict with the Scriptures. There is no reason to doubt the date. If someone was to try to make the case that this was in 538 and not 539, we would not be able to reconcile this with several SOP statements regarding the “within about two years” between this event and the accession of Cyrus and the “score and more” years between Cyrus’ decree and Darius’.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF DANIEL

The Babylonian year is spring to spring. Thus, Nebuchadnezzar’s reign is counted spring to spring. However, Jehoiakim’s reign is **fall to fall**, beginning with the seventh Hebrew month known as Tishri. The first Babylonian month does not always align with the first Hebrew month, since the Babylonians inserted leap months as needed in either the spring or fall, whereas the Jews only added the leap month in the spring. The **Babylonian years can start one month earlier than the Hebrew year**.

Daniel’s captivity

1:1 3rd year of Jehoiakim – September 28, 607 to October 27, 606 BC.

End of three year test[1]

1:18 2nd year of Nebuchadnezzar, begins March 22, 603 BC.[2]

End of Daniel’s ministry

1:21 1st year of Cyrus, 1st month, 1st day – March 30, 536 BC.

Nebuchadnezzar's first dream

2:1 2nd year of Nebuchadnezzar – from March 22, 603 to April 10 602 BC.

Nebuchadnezzar's second dream

4:4ff 36th year of Nebuchadnezzar – beginning April 5, 569 BC.

Belshazzar's feast

5:1ff Babylon fell on the 16th day of the 7th month Tashritu^[3] – Tuesday, October 13, 539 BC.

Vision of the beasts

7:1 1st year of Belshazzar – begins March 16, 559 BC.^[4]

Vision of the Ram and He goat

8:1 3rd year Belshazzar – begins March 24, 557 BC.

The seventy week prophecy

9:1 1st year of Darius the Mede – begins March 24, 538 BC.^[5]

Vision by the River Hiddekel

10:1 3rd year of Cyrus (from the fall of Babylon) – begins April 1, 536 BC.

Vision by the River Hiddekel

10:4 3rd year of Cyrus, 1st month, 24th day – Tuesday, April 24, 536 BC.

^[1] This assumes that the three years are counted as full years ending with the Babylonian year

^[2] The second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign began on the 1st day of the 12th month Adar, according to the Hebrew calendar. The leap month (Ululu II) on the Babylonian calendar did not occur until September 16, 603, thus aligning Tashritu and Tishri on October 15, 603 BC.

^[3] “In the month of Taşritu, when Cyrus attacked the army of Akkad in Opis on the Tigris, the inhabitants of Akkad revolted, but he [*Cyrus*] massacred the inhabitants. The fifteenth day [*October 12th*], Sippar was seized without battle. Nabonidus fled. The sixteenth day [*October 13th*], Gobryas [*lit: Ugbaru*], the governor of Gutium, and the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without battle. Afterwards, Nabonidus was arrested in Babylon when he returned there. Till the end of the month, the shield carrying Gutians were staying within Esagila but nobody carried arms in Esagila and its buildings. The correct time for a ceremony was not missed.” *Nabonidus Chronicle*

^[4] This date is according to the Babylonian calendar. The Babylonian year began one month earlier than the Hebrew year in 559 BC. This is true for 557 and 538 BC, as well.

^[5] Here we are assuming that this is a reference to the first regnal year of Darius the Mede and not to his accession, which began the previous fall. However, this vision could have occurred shortly after the fall of Babylon and still be called the “first” year.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF EZRA 1–6

Sometimes the reigns of the Persian kings are considered spring to spring and sometimes fall to fall. In the case of Cyrus, it is spring to spring. In the case of Artaxerxes, it is fall to fall.

Cyrus' decree

1:1 1st year of Cyrus – March 31, 536 to April 18, 535 BC.

Rebuilding of the altar in Jerusalem

3:1, 6 1st year of Cyrus, 7th month, 1st day – Tuesday, September 4, 536 BC.

Commencement of the work of building the temple

3:8 2nd year of Cyrus, 2nd month, May 18, 535 B.C.

Period of opposition

4:5 from the reign Cyrus to Darius - 536 to September 522 B.C.

Reign of False Smerdis (Ahasuerus)

4:7 False Smerdis' reign of 7 months – March 11 to September 29, 522 B.C.

The dedication of the temple completed less than twenty years from the laying of the foundation

6:15 6th year of Darius, 12th month (Adar), 3rd day – Sabbath, March 12, 515 B.C.

First Passover kept in the second temple

6:19 6th year of Darius, 1st month, 14th day – Thursday, April 21, 515 B.C.

THE CHRONOLOGY OF EZRA 7–10

Ezra leaves Babylon

7:7, 9 7th year of reign of Artaxerxes, 1st month, 1st day – Friday, April 26, 457 B.C.

Ezra arrives at Jerusalem

7:7-9 7th year of reign of Artaxerxes, 5th month, 1st day – Thursday, August 22, 457 B.C.

Ezra departs from the river of Ahava

8:31 7th year of reign of Artaxerxes, 1st month, 12th day – Tuesday, May 7, 457 B.C.

Silver, gold and vessels weighed in the temple

8:33 7th year of reign of Artaxerxes, 5th month, 4th day – Sunday, August 25, 457 B.C.

Ezra's confession

10:9 8th year of reign of Artaxerxes, 9th month, 20th day – Monday, January 6, 456 B.C.

Examination for marriage reform commences

10:16 8th year of reign of Artaxerxes, 10th month, 1st day – Friday, January 17, 456 B.C.

Examination for marriage reform ends

10:17 8th year of reign of Artaxerxes, 1st month, 1st day – Tuesday, April 15, 456 B.C.

The main point being, all of this chronology is tied together. We cannot simply move the overthrow of Babylon to the fall of 538. As we become more precise, we have to mark the fall of Babylon on October 13, 539. We can simply recognize that this is within the Hebrew civil year 538. I hope this is helpful. I have included several papers that related to these issues. Theodore

