

An Excerpt from Chapter 7 of

**Discovering the Jewish Messiah**  
*Within the Prophecy of Daniel 9*

by W. Glenn Moore

## 7. When Was the Decree to Rebuild Jerusalem Given?

As we all know, the seventy years of desolation that Yahweh imposed upon Jerusalem eventually came to an end with Cyrus' decree in 537 BCE (Ezra 1:1; 5:13 and 6:3), which allowed the Jews to return to their homeland and begin to rebuild their temple (Ezra 1:1-4). Imagine the excitement this must have brought to Yahweh's chosen people! Having been raised in a land not their own, Jerusalem could only have been a dream to most of the Jews. To put this in perspective, I am told that my ancestors came to America from Scotland. I have often wondered what life was like in Scotland for my forebearers, so I naturally long to visit that country. However, visiting Scotland is only a dream for me. Unless circumstances change, I do not expect to ever make it there. I can only imagine what it would be like if I had been told of what a magnificent country Scotland is, but that my ancestors had been forcibly removed in the distant past. What if I were told that I could now return and start a new life in the very place once inhabited by my great-great-great grandparents? In the same way, imagine the stories that Jewish children, growing up in Babylon, were told of what had once been their homeland, and especially the stories about the temple and the feasts that were celebrated there! Finally, their dreams were about to become reality!

Once they arrived, however, life was not so easy. We have read of how the Samaritans stirred up trouble (Ezra 4:1-6), causing work on the beloved temple to cease. It wasn't until some sixteen years later, in Persian King Darius' second year (Ezra 4:24), that construction of the temple was allowed to resume (520 BCE). We can only imagine the excitement that flooded the hearts of those Jews, when, in Darius' sixth year of reigning (Ezra 6:15), the temple was finally completed!

We now fast-forward to the reign of King Artaxerxes, the Persian king who reigned from 464 to 424 BCE. It was during his reign that the decree of his seventh year was issued (Ezra 7), the decree that reestablished Jewish law as the basis of local government, making possible the restoration of Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel.

Now some Bible scholars prefer to place the decree of Artaxerxes in the spring of the year 458, instead of 457 BCE, as we here maintain. How do we know when to place this decree in our timeline? Before we answer this question, it might be beneficial to get some background information on how major events

were typically dated in ancient times—and cross-checked for accuracy in modern times. For a detailed explanation of that, please go to [Appendix III: Dating Events in Ancient Times](#).

Having read Appendix III, it is hoped that the reader has a better understanding of how we are able to sometimes determine precise dates in ancient history. So, should we place the decree of Artaxerxes in the spring of the year 458, or in the spring of 457 BCE? The main reason for the difference in dating this event is based upon whether Ezra was using the Persian/Babylonian calendar or the Jewish calendar. The Persians and Babylonians followed a spring-to-spring civil calendar, whereas the Jews are known to have followed a fall-to-fall civil calendar. The question is, “Did Ezra use the Persian calendar or the Jewish calendar to date that event?” The answer will decide for us the year in which the decree was actually issued and put into force.

Thankfully, we have a direct answer from Scripture on this issue. Ezra and Nehemiah were contemporaries, and at some point in time they began to work closely together. If Nehemiah used a certain dating system, then we can rightfully show that Ezra did the same.

We can determine which calendar Ezra used based upon the dates found in Nehemiah 1:1 and 2:1. The first chapter of Nehemiah gives us a specific month and year—“Chisleu, in the twentieth year.” In the second chapter (which describes events only a few months later) it gives the month of “Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes.” It is impossible for Nisan to still be in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes *if* he is using spring-to-spring calculations—for Nisan is in the spring, and therefore it should have been the 21<sup>st</sup> year (in a spring-to-spring calendar). Using a fall-to-fall calendar, however, we can solve the problem easily—since Chisleu<sup>1</sup> and Nisan<sup>2</sup> could both be represented (in that order) as part of the same year. Based on this, it is clear that Ezra (who was a contemporary of Nehemiah) was using the Jewish civil fall-to-fall calendar to determine dates.<sup>3</sup> Thus, at least during the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, the

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<sup>1</sup>Chisleu is also called *Kislimu* and *Kislev*, and represents the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the Babylonian civil calendar, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of the Jewish civil calendar. It corresponds roughly to December-January. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew\\_calendar#Modern\\_calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_calendar#Modern_calendar)

<sup>2</sup>Nisan is the Babylonian equivalent of the Hebrew month of “Abib,” declared the first month of the year by Moses himself at the exodus (Exodus 12:1-2). It corresponds roughly to March-April. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nisan>

<sup>3</sup>It is true that ancient Israel was also given a spring-to-spring calendar at the time of the Exodus (Exodus 12:1-2), but this calendar was given to them for religious purposes. It does not say in Exodus 12 that it would be wrong to also use a fall-to-fall calendar in conjunction with the other one, and two texts in Exodus clearly state that the year can also end in the fall (see Exodus 23:16 and Exodus 34:22). The fact that they were given this spring-to-spring calendar does not prove that this was the original calendar or that they could not have also made use of a fall-to-fall calendar, and several texts in Scripture clearly point to the fact that they used the fall-to-fall calendar for civil matters (as related to the conclusion of the harvest) and for the

first day of Tishri<sup>4</sup> (the 7<sup>th</sup> month) was the time to start counting the years for “foreign kings.” We also have confirmation of this from the Talmud, as explained by Ziegfried Horn:

That the fifth century Jews actually counted the regnal year of the Persian kings according to their own fall-to-fall calendar is attested not only by Nehemiah.... later on (it is) traditionally by the Talmud. ‘According to the explanation of Rosh Hashanah ... the first of Tishri (the seventh month) is the new year for foreign kings.’<sup>5</sup>

More directly, the Talmud, in commenting on Rosh Hashannah in the Gemara, confirms the statement of Ziegfried Horn.<sup>6</sup> Not only does this commentary

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purpose of introducing the year of Jubilee. One of the best ways to show conclusively that the year was originally started in the fall (outside of Jewish sources), is through a study of the flood as it relates to ancient societies. The memory of the flood is deeply ingrained into many of man’s ancient legends, and is memorialized through the celebration of the “day of the dead” (better known as Halloween). According to Genesis 7:11, “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.” By using a fall to fall calendar, we can determine from this that the beginning of the year was sometime around mid September. The second month would start in mid October, and then the 17<sup>th</sup> day of that month would, therefore, be sometime around the end of October or the start of November. (Based upon my *Jubilee Calendar*, the start of the flood may be more precisely fixed as the year 2320 BCE, October 24, on a Sabbath, i.e., Saturday.) The lunar cycles for that month and year can be found at *Moon Calendar*, by Paul Carlisle, <http://paulcarlisle.net/mooncalendar/>. This “mooncalendar” reveals that the 7<sup>th</sup> day of October was the first visible sighting of the new moon, and 10 days later (the 17<sup>th</sup>) the people and animals began to enter the ark on a full moon. Finally, on October 24 the flood began. While it may seem arbitrary to assign an exact date to this event, the only reason I can even venture to suggest such an exact date is because Scripture actually gives a date to the event and we have the technology to accurately trace lunar cycles back several thousand years.. While there is general uncertainty among scholars regarding the exact date, yet it is generally recognized that this event happened in late October or early November. In ancient societies, this day was celebrated in remembrance of the Great Universal Flood of Noah, as revealed by Frederick Filby: "Thus the old world perished in November and a year later a new era commenced in the same month. Both of these facts are indelibly enshrined in the memory of the human race. To many people around the world November brings the Day of the Dead. In a number of ancient and primitive calendars November also brings a New Year at a time which has neither solstice nor equinox nor astronomical event to justify it." (Frederick A. Filby, B.Sc., M.Sc., Ph.D. (University College, London): *The Flood Reconsidered*, Zondervan, 1977, Fifth Printing, p.106): By this evidence we can determine that even as far back as the days of Noah the beginning of the year was in the fall, and was not changed to the spring until the time of Moses—when Yahweh sought to change the focus of his children from the celebration of “death” to the celebration of “life.” Please see the article by Frank Humphrey McGill, Ph.D., Senior Pastor, Peoples Church of Montreal, [The Great Flood and Halloween](#) (*the Hallowed Eve*), A Christian response to Halloween, revised October 27, 1997. See also [Flood Legends](#) for more references to ancient legends of the flood. Since the fall-to-fall calendar appears to be more commonly used in Jewish history (as we know it was for certain after the Babylonian captivity, cf. Nehemiah 1:2), and because the year of Jubilee was *always* announced on the Day of Atonement in the fall (see Leviticus 25:9-10) I believe that the fall-to-fall calendar is the true basis for establishing the Jubilee cycles. Since the prophecy of Daniel 9 is clearly connected with the Jubilee cycles, then its fulfillment would also be linked with a fall-to-fall calendar.

<sup>4</sup>Tishri is the seventh month of the Jewish religious calendar, and the first month of their civil calendar. It roughly corresponds to the months of September-October. “Tishrei . . . the first month of the civil year and the seventh month of the ecclesiastical year in the Hebrew calendar.” . <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tishri>

<sup>5</sup>*The Chronology of Ezra 7*, by Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood, p. 73.

<sup>6</sup>In presenting occasional quotes from the *Talmud* and *Mishnah*, let it be understood that these are *not* presented as inspired texts, but instead as valuable historical references revealing the well accepted beliefs of ancient Jews (extending from the

indicate a fall-to-fall calendar for *foreign kings*, not only does it indicate a spring-to-spring calendar for the kings of Judah, but it also shows accession year reckoning for both:

The rabbis taught: If a king die in Adar, and his successor ascend the throne in Adar, (documents may be dated either) the (last) year of the (dead) king or the (first) year of the new king. If a king die in Nissan<sup>7</sup>, and his successor ascend the throne in Nissan, the same is the case. But if a king die in Adar, and his successor does not ascend the throne until Nisan, then the year ending with Adar should be referred to as the year of the dead king, and from Nissan it should be referred to as that of his successor. Is this not self-evident? The case here mentioned refers to an instance where the new king was a son of the deceased, and, while ascending the throne in Nissan, had been elected in the month of Adar, and being the king's son, it might be assumed that he was king immediately after his election, and thus the following first of Nissan would inaugurate the second year of his reign. He comes to teach us that such is not the case. . . . .

R. Hisda says: The rule of the Mishna—that the year of the kings begins with Nissan—refers to the kings of Israel only, but for the kings of other nations it commences from Tishri.<sup>8</sup>

To add to this evidence, the *Mishnah* plainly reveals that there were four ways of counting years, according to Jewish tradition. We can confirm, with Scripture, that at least two of those four methods of counting years have historically been used. One of those ways of determining a year was based upon a spring-to-spring calendar, used to determine a Jewish kings reign and festivals. The second way of determining years was by a fall-to-fall calendar. Sabbatical years were typically determined by this calendar. Since the *Mishnah* deals almost exclusively with regulations which affect the nation of Israel, Nisan (the first month) would have naturally been considered the time to begin counting the years for kings of Israel and the feasts, while Tishri (the seventh month) would be the time to begin counting Sabbatical and Jubilee years (and foreign kings, according to the Talmud):

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first century CE to the fourth century CE, when these writings were finally compiled). It is for this reason that their testimony can be relied upon in many areas.

<sup>7</sup>“Nissan” is a variant spelling of “Nisan,” the seventh month of the Jewish fall-to-fall calendar.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nissan\\_%28disambiguation%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nissan_%28disambiguation%29)

<sup>8</sup>The Jewish Virtual Library, *Talmud*, tractate Rosh Hashana, Chapter 1

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Talmud/rh1.html>

- 1:1
- A. There are four new years:
  - B. (1) the first day of Nisan *is the new year for kings* and festivals;
  - C. (2) the first day of Elul<sup>9</sup> is the new year for tithing cattle.
  - D. R. Eleasar and R. Simeon say, "It is on the first day of Tishre."
  - E. (3) The first day of Tishre<sup>10</sup> is the new year for the reckoning of years, for Sabbatical years, and for Jubilees,
  - F. for planting [trees] and for vegetables.
  - G. (4) The first day of Shebat is the New Year for trees, . . .<sup>11</sup>

Having established that the years of foreign kings began in the fall, we need to address other issues. One issue is the fact that some Bible scholars believe Ezra and Nehemiah were not contemporaries. In connection with that, therefore, they believe that the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes was in reference to Artaxerxes II who reigned over 50 years *after* 457 BCE. Here is an example of that teaching, as shown in the *Interpreters Bible Commentary*:

One of the most perplexing and controversial problems of Ezra-Nehemiah is that of the date of Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem. Traditionally Artaxerxes is identified with Artaxerxes 1 (464-424 B.C.) whose seventh year was 458 B.C. Since Ezra followed Nehemiah into Palestine and was not his contemporary, the Artaxerxes must have been Artaxerxes II (404-359 B.C.), whose seventh year was 398 B.C.<sup>12</sup>

Is this true? Amazingly, many believe that Ezra and Nehemiah were not living at the same time (even though they are plainly shown together in Nehemiah 8:1-9), and that they can therefore question the relevance of Scripture in this regard. Please note the profound statement of another concerning this:

The chronological problems connected with the era of Ezra-Nehemiah remain unsolved, though there is a growing scholarly consensus in favour of reversing the traditional order (which place Ezra in the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, i.e. 458, and Nehemiah in the 20th year, or 445). Van Hoonacker was the chief exponent of the view that Ezra followed Nehemiah and was therefore to be dated in the reign of Artaxerxes II (seventh year-398).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Elul is the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the Jewish Calendar, approximately August-September.

<sup>10</sup>"Tishre" is a variant spelling for "Tishri," the seventh month of the Jewish Calendar. Please see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tishri>

<sup>11</sup>*The Mishnah, A New Translation*. Edited by Jacob Neusner. Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1988. ROSH HASHSHANAH 1.1, p. 299.

<sup>12</sup>*Interpreters Bible Commentary, Commentary on Ezra, Volume 3*, p. 624.

<sup>13</sup>*The Bible and the Ancient Near East*; G. Ernest Wright, editor, p. 213.

Do the chronological issues regarding the era of Ezra and Nehemiah “remain unsolved,” as the author above states? A common assumption from some is that Nehemiah and Ezra were not contemporaries, which therefore (supposedly) proves that the Artaxerxes mentioned in Ezra 7 could not have been Artaxerxes I but instead Artaxerxes II of a later generation. However, there is ample historical evidence that proves this to be in error. In the *Chronology of Ezra 7*, Siegfried Horn demonstrates from reliable historical documents how this idea of Artaxerxes II being the one referred to in Ezra 7 is *simply wrong*. He states the following:

In the Elephantine papyri AP 30 and 31 we learn that Johanan was high priest in Jerusalem in 407 B.C. This was during the reign of Artaxerxes the second. He [Johanan] is mentioned in Nehemiah 12:22:23 [also in Ezra 10:6) as a son of a high priest Eliashib. Eliashib held this office under Nehemiah!! (Neh. 3:1)<sup>14</sup>

Basically, what these Elephantine documents prove is that Eliashib lived in the generation *prior* to the reign of Artaxerxes II, and was a contemporary of *both* Ezra and Nehemiah. In addition to this, we have the testimony of Nehemiah 8:1-9, which plainly states that Ezra and Nehemiah were both alive, functioning, and working together *at the same time*. This means Ezra and Nehemiah were definitely contemporaries, that they lived during the reign of Artaxerxes I, *and* therefore the decree of Artaxerxes *really did* take place in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Artaxerxes I (what I will soon demonstrate can be more precisely established as the late spring of 457 BCE).

Now we need to establish *more precisely* when the reign of Artaxerxes I began and when this decree was issued. According to a papyrus document found at Elephantine Island and the cuneiform tablets of Ur, in late December of 465 BCE it was still considered the 21<sup>st</sup> year of Xerxes and the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes. Xerxes himself was assassinated sometime in the fall or winter of 465 BCE. Evidently, based upon that evidence, there was a delay of a few months before he was replaced by his son Artaxerxes as the new king of the Chaldeans. We know this because chronologists have already determined that the 21<sup>st</sup> year of Xerxes is still ongoing by December of 465 BCE and the first year of Artaxerxes is not declared until sometime in 464 BCE. How did they know all of this?

First, they know from historical accounts that the full length of Xerxes reign was 21 years. This can be determined by the simple fact that the 21<sup>st</sup> year of Xerxes (and therefore 465 BCE) is plainly declared in historical documents to

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<sup>14</sup>The *Chronology of Ezra 7*, by Siegfried H. and Lynn H. Wood, p. 90.

be *his last year of life!* The historical documents I am referring to are called *saros tablets*. One of those tablets is named *BM 32234* and it is dated by astronomical events to the 21<sup>st</sup> year of Xerxes, part of which says:

Month V, 14 [?], Xerxes was murdered by his son.<sup>15</sup>

Xerxes was clearly assassinated in his 21<sup>st</sup> year (sometime in the fall of 465 BCE), as attested to by this and several other cuneiform tablets. But what was the first year of Artaxerxes? Did his reign begin immediately?

Evidently, his reign did not begin in the fall of 465 BCE. For example, we have historical confirmation of the exact timing of the 11<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes. One document which confirms this is a diary of astronomical information (called *VAT 5047*) which lists the 11<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes as the year of two peculiar lunar alignments with Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn. Based upon astronomical data from that general time, that particular year *could only have been* the year 454 BCE.<sup>16</sup> Since 454 BCE would be part of Artaxerxes' 11<sup>th</sup> year, ten years prior to this would give us the first year of Artaxerxes—464 BCE.

<b>Backtracking From the 11<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes (Based upon VAT 5047)</b>	
11 <sup>th</sup> year	454/453 <sup>17</sup>
10 <sup>th</sup> year	455/454
9 <sup>th</sup> year	456/455
8 <sup>th</sup> year	457/456
7 <sup>th</sup> year	458/457
6 <sup>th</sup> year	459/458
5 <sup>th</sup> year	460/459
4 <sup>th</sup> year	461/460
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	462/461
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	463/462
1 <sup>st</sup> year	464/463

<sup>15</sup>The Saros tablets are studied in detail in these publications: *Zur Chronologie der Seleuciden*, ZA 8 (1893): 106-113 and J. N. Strassmaier, *Einige chronologische Daten aus astronomischen Rechnungen*, ZA 7 (1892): 197-204.

<sup>16</sup>A. J. Sachs and H. Hunger, *Astronomical Diaries and Related Texts from Babylonia*, Vol. I: Diaries from 652 to 262 B.C. (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988), pp. 56-59.

<sup>17</sup>Today our calendars start from January 1. However, in ancient times historical dates are given in connection with calendars which either start in the spring, the summer, or the fall. Therefore, in the interest of accuracy, we will often give double dates in this presentation.

Please notice that this also establishes the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes as 458/457 BCE. There are other ways we can determine the first year of Artaxerxes. For example, we know that Xerxes died in his 21<sup>st</sup> year about fall or winter. In addition to this, we know that even as late as December of 465 BCE it was still considered the 21<sup>st</sup> year of Xerxes! There are several papyri which give us evidence of this. Before I present these documents I wish to remind the reader that the month of Kisleu and the month of Kislimu are actually variant names of the same month (Kislev, in the Hebrew calendar—December-January). The first document precisely establishes the *exact* date of the ascension of Artaxerxes to the throne. Here is what this Aramaic papyrus (AP 6) says:

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of Kisleu which is the (17<sup>th</sup>) day of Thoth<sup>18</sup>, in year 21, the beginning of the reign when King Artaxerxes sat on his throne<sup>19</sup>

The “day of Thoth” is in reference to an Egyptian month which (at that time) begins *almost* the same time as the Hebrew month Kisleu, and it is the Egyptian New Year. The 18<sup>th</sup> day of Kisleu would also be the 17<sup>th</sup> day of Thoth in the Hebrew calendar, at that time in history. Based upon other chronological data, we can more specifically identify the *beginning* of this month Thoth as December 17, 465 BCE.<sup>20</sup> Kisleu 18 would therefore be January 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> in the year 464 BCE.

*How do we know this, even to within a day or two of the event?* We know this because of the great Egyptian *Sothic Cycle*. Using this great cycle, we are able to coordinate *exactly* the 18<sup>th</sup> day of Kisleu (from a calendar which is based on lunar cycles) with the 17<sup>th</sup> day of Thoth (from a calendar which is based upon the Egyptian *Sothic Cycle*). In ancient times, the Egyptian calendar was composed of 360 days (30 days to each month) with 5 added days to allow it to approximate the actual solar year.<sup>21</sup> However, the Egyptian calendar was out of sync with the actual solar year by about one-fourth of a day for every year. We know that the Sothic cycle began at a certain date in history at the rising of Sirius in Egypt, and the date of the start of this grand cycle is confirmed by Censorinus, a Roman grammarian and writer on a great variety of subjects:

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<sup>18</sup>Thoth is the name of one of the chief Egyptian deities. It is here equated with the Hebrew month of Kisleu, the ninth month (Kislev) of the Hebrew calendar (December-January). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew\\_calendar#Modern\\_calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_calendar#Modern_calendar)

<sup>19</sup>*The Chronology of Ezra 7*, by Siegfried H. Horn and Lynn H. Wood, p. 101-103. See also A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1923). AP 6 papyrus is on page 15-18.

<sup>20</sup>This date can be accurately determined because these months were based upon a repeatable and predictable astronomical event (the phases of the moon), which can be calculated backward thousands of years into the past (with an accuracy of within a few hours time). Please search the *Nasa Eclipse Home Page* for specific lunar dates for certain centuries, found at: <http://sunearth.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse/phase/phasecat.html>

<sup>21</sup>*Wikipedia*, the Egyptian Calendar, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian\\_calendar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_calendar)

According to Roman writer Censorinus, the Egyptian New Year's Day fell on July 20 in the Julian Calendar in 139 CE, which was a heliacal rising of Sirius in Egypt. From this it is possible to calculate that the previous occasion on which this occurred was 1322 BCE, and the one before that was 2782 BCE.<sup>22</sup>

Based upon this, let's do some mathematical calculations to determine what day the Egyptian New Year began in 466, 465, and 464 BCE (the three possible dates for Xerxes final year and the start of Artaxerxes regnal year).

Calculating the Last Year of Xerxes and the First of Artaxerxes Using the Egyptian Sothic Cycle			
Possible Dates for Artaxerxes First Year	466 BCE	465 BCE	464 BCE
Subtract the date in question from the year the Egyptians are <i>known</i> to have been in perfect alignment with the true solar calendar.	$\begin{array}{r} 1322 \\ -466 \\ \hline 856 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 1322 \\ -465 \\ \hline 857 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 1322 \\ -464 \\ \hline 858 \end{array}$
Divide the number of years elapsed by four to determine the approximate number of days the Egyptian calendar is out of sync with the true solar calendar.	$\begin{array}{r} 856 \\ / 4 \\ \hline 214 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 857 \\ / 4 \\ \hline 214.25 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 858 \\ / 4 \\ \hline 214.5 \end{array}$

<sup>22</sup>*ibid.*

<p>Subtract the total number of days from July 20 (round up one day for partial days) to establish the <i>exact date</i> of the first day of Thoth.</p>	<p>July 20 Minus 214 = <b>December 18</b></p>	<p>July 20 Minus 215 = <b>December 17</b></p>	<p>July 20 Minus 215 = <b>December 17</b></p>
<p>Days and Months to Subtract from July 20:</p>	<p>July = 20 days June = 30 days May = 31 days April = 30 days March = 31 days Feb. = 28 days Jan. = 31 days <b>Dec. = 13 days</b></p>	<p>July = 20 days June = 30 days May = 31 days April = 30 days March = 31 days Feb. = 28 days Jan. = 31 days <b>Dec. = 14 days</b></p>	<p>July = 20 days June = 30 days May = 31 days April = 30 days March = 31 days Feb. = 28 days Jan. = 31 days <b>Dec. = 14 days</b></p>
<p>Worksheet:</p>	<p><b>214 Days Out of Sync with Solar Year</b></p> <p>20+30+31+ 30+31+28+ 31+13= <b>214</b></p> <p>13 days before the end of December equals <b>December 18</b></p>	<p><b>215 Days Out of Sync with Solar Year</b></p> <p>20+30+31+ 30+31+28+ 31+14= <b>215</b></p> <p>14 days before the end of December equals <b>December 17</b></p>	<p><b>215 Days Out of Sync with Solar Year</b></p> <p>20+30+31+ 30+31+28+ 31+14= <b>215</b></p> <p>14 days before the end of December equals <b>December 17</b></p>

We now know that the first day of Thoth of the Egyptian calendar was December 18 in 466, December 17 in 465, and December 17 in 464 BCE. How does this information positively confirm for us the exact date? Well, it is actually simple. We have another date which is linked to the 17<sup>th</sup> day of Thoth, and that date is Kislimu 18. Kislimu is also called Kislev, the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the Hebrew calendar. The Hebrew calendar was based upon the repeatedly observable first sighting of the crescent moon over Israel. By using known lunar calculations, we can accurately calculate (to within only a couple of hours margin of error) the exact date upon which Kislev 1 fell for the years 466, 465, and 464 BCE. Here is what the evidence will show:

Using Moon Calculation programs, lunar cycles and their corresponding Julian dates can be determined even going back several thousand years. Generally, such dates *can* accurately be calculated to within a few hours. There is an online calculation program which proves useful to those who do not have such programs available to them. The lunar calendar dates given here are based upon an online Moon Calendar which is able to calculate lunar cycles from 3999 BCE to 3999 CE, and align them with the Julian calendar.<sup>23</sup> Based upon the evidence shown for the dates in question, the new visible crescent moon for 465 BCE is in nearly exact alignment with the Egyptian Sothic cycle (which explains why *AP 6* mentions them as being in almost perfect synchrony). The 1460-year Sothic Cycles have also been determined (as shown earlier), and the dates for those years are given here. Here is what we will find:

Dates Based Upon Lunar Cycles (Visual Sighting)			
	466 BCE	465 BCE	464 BCE
Kislev 1	December 28	December 17	December 7
Kislev 18	January 14	<b>JANUARY 4</b>	December 24

Dates Based Upon Egyptian 1460 year Sothic Cycles			
	466 BCE	465 BCE	464 BCE
Thoth 1	December 18	December 17	December 17
Thoth 17	January 4	<b>JANUARY 3</b>	January 3

The only year which is in close alignment between the Hebrew month Kislev (which follows a lunar cycle) and the Egyptian month of Thoth (which follows the Sothic cycle) is the year 465 BCE. The year 466 shows Kislev 18 being 10 days late, and the year 464 BCE shows Kislev 18 being 11 days early. 465 BCE shows Kislev 18 in near perfect alignment with the Egyptian Sothic cycle, with a possible variance of + / - one day.<sup>24</sup> The Sothic cycle dates are based upon the previously mentioned reference from Censorinus giving us 139 BCE as the last historically known alignment of the Sothic cycle with the true solar year. We therefore use the prior Sothic alignment of 1322 BCE as our starting

<sup>23</sup>*Moon Calendar*, by Paul Carlisle, <http://paulcarlisle.net/mooncalendar/>

<sup>24</sup>Reasons for the one-day discrepancy in our calculations could be due to one of two factors: First, the Julian year of 365.25 days is also slightly out of sync with a true solar year and could explain the one-day discrepancy. Another factor that could explain this discrepancy is the fact that in ancient times the Egyptians may have been using a conjunction moon to determine dates, as opposed to the visual sighting of the crescent. The difference between a conjunction moon and a first sighted crescent is usually about one day. If either one of these factors comes into play, Kislev 1 would be December 16, Thoth 1 would be December 17, and the 18<sup>th</sup> of Kislev would therefore have been in perfect alignment with the 17<sup>th</sup> of Thoth. That date would correspond exactly with the evening of January 2 to the evening of January 3, 464 BCE.

point, subtract the number of years from that date, and divide by four to discover how many days the Sothic cycle is out of sync from the true solar year. The near perfect alignment of these dates is astounding, especially when we consider that we are going back in time nearly 2500 years! Since these are the only three possible years which Xerxes reign could have ended, the evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of the winter of 465 BCE still being considered Xerxes 21<sup>st</sup> year and the beginning of the accession year (zero year) of Artaxerxes.

Now there are those who would question this particular papyri (*AP 6*), mainly because it appears to establish (above all other forms of evidence) that the 21<sup>st</sup> year of Xerxes was also the year in which Artaxerxes began to reign. I believe it would be a mistake to simply assume that the author of this papyri made an error. The fact that his 2 dates (Egyptian and Hebrew) are historically confirmed is a major proof that it is not an error. In addition, another cuneiform tablet found in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century *confirms* what this papyri says regarding Artaxerxes—that he ascended to the throne in the 21<sup>st</sup> year of Xerxes:

A cuneiform tablet found in the excavation campaign of 1930-31 in Ur, [regarding] an agreement dated in the thirteenth year of Artaxerxes the first, but states that the original arrangement was signed in the month Kislimu in the twenty-first year of Xerxes.<sup>25</sup>

Along with showing the year of Artaxerxes ascent to the throne, it also appears to demonstrate that Xerxes (even though he was killed in the fall) was still considered in his 21<sup>st</sup> year as late as the month of Kislimu (which is the same as “Kislue” or “Kislev,” i.e., sometime around December of 465 or January of 464 BCE). The year 21, based upon this cuneiform tablet, is clearly the last year of the reign of Xerxes. That year 21 is still in progress as late as December of 465 BCE. It is at this time (based upon *AP 6*) that Artaxerxes begins his accession year. If the Jewish chroniclers are using a fall-to-fall calendar, along with accession year reckoning, then that would mean Artaxerxes actual first full year would begin in the fall of 464 BCE.

The evidences presented here also demonstrate for us that they were dating this based upon accession year reckoning. Using the non-accession year reckoning Artaxerxes first year would have been from late December of 465 to the fall of 464 BCE. As previously noted in one of the cuneiform tablets of the time, King Xerxes was still alive at this time, and that year was considered the 21<sup>st</sup> year of Xerxes. Since it is dated according to Xerxes 21<sup>st</sup> year, it certainly

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<sup>25</sup>*ibid.*, p. 101.

cannot also be considered the first full year of Artaxerxes. Artaxerxes first year had to have been calculated as the following year. This is just another confirmation of the popular use (at that time) of accession years to date historical events.

According to the *Talmud*, the Jews were generally using accession year dating methods. Accession year reckoning does not include the year in which the king ascends to the throne in calculating his length of reign.<sup>26</sup> Instead, the remaining portion of the year is reckoned as belonging to the previous ruler.<sup>27</sup> Since we have already determined that the Jews at that time calculated the reigns of foreign kings according to a fall-to-fall calendar (which Nehemiah, a contemporary of Ezra, confirms for us in Nehemiah 1-2), then we are left with no other option but to calculate the first year of Artaxerxes reign starting from the fall of 464 BCE. The seventh year, therefore, would have been from the fall of 458 to the fall of 457.

<b><i>The Reign of Artaxerxes Based on Accession Years for Kings</i></b>	
Accession of Artaxerxes (Year 0)	December, 465 BCE to Fall of 464 BCE
Year 1	Fall of 464 to Fall of 463 CE
Year 2	Fall of 463 to Fall of 462 CE
Year 3	Fall of 462 to Fall of 461 CE
Year 4	Fall of 461 to Fall of 460 CE
Year 5	Fall of 460 to Fall of 459 CE
Year 6	Fall of 459 to Fall of 458 CE
Year 7	Fall of 458 to Fall of 457 CE

Let's look again at the decree of Artaxerxes. This decree is listed in Ezra 7:

Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah, The son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, The son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, The son of Zerariah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, The son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest: This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which

<sup>26</sup>Wikipedia, Regnal Year, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regnal\\_year](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regnal_year)

<sup>27</sup>*The Chronology of Ancient Western Asia and Egypt*, by Van Der Meer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Revised Edition, Leiden, EJ Brill, 1955, p. 7. See also *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, by Jack Finegan, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1964, pp. 85.

Yahweh Almighty of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of Yahweh his Almighty upon him. And there went up some of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, ***in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king. And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king.*** For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his Almighty upon him. For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of Yahweh, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments. Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, even a scribe of the words of the commandments of Yahweh, and of his statutes to Israel. Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the Almighty of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time. I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee. Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors, to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy Mighty One which is in thine hand; And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the Almighty of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem, And all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their Almighty which is in Jerusalem: That thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat offerings and their drink offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your Almighty which is in Jerusalem. And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do after the will of your Almighty. The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy Mighty One, those deliver thou before the Almighty of Jerusalem. And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy Almighty, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the king's treasure house. And I, even I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the Almighty of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily, Unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much. Whatsoever is commanded by the Almighty of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the

Almighty of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of the Almighty, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them. And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy Mighty One, that is in thine hand, ***set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy Mighty One; and teach ye them that know them not. And whosoever will not do the law of thy Mighty One, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.*** Blessed be Yahweh Almighty of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of Yahweh which is in Jerusalem: And hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened as the hand of Yahweh my Almighty was upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me. (Ezra 7:1-28)

All of the evidence presented in this chapter shows conclusively that the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes would extend from the fall of 458 to the fall of 457 BCE. The language of the decree also shows that Ezra was given authority to establish Jewish courts of law, so that the people could be ruled according to the Torah of Yahweh—not the laws of other nations. Therefore, this decree (above all other decrees) is the one which best fulfills the language and intent of the prophecy of Daniel 9—and it clearly came in the late spring of 457 BCE. Ezra carried out the dictates of this decree in the fall of that same year, when he arrived to oversee the rebuilding efforts.

Sixty-nine weeks would transpire from the fall of 457 BCE until the start of the final week of the 70 weeks prophecy. That is equal to 483 years which (counting from 457 BCE) extends to the year 27 CE. Did the Messiah come in 27 CE?

