THE BOOK OF DANIEL: EVIDENCES RELATING TO PERSONS AND CHRONOLOGY

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The book of Daniel contains many features of historical content that are absolutely unique. The book's interest in history is acknowledged by all, but evaluated differently. In some scholarly circles it has become common to speak of, and to point to, historical "errors" in this book.[1] However, a revolution has occurred on the basis of archaeological and linguistic studies, and it is therefore appropriate to review our present state of knowledge regarding (1) persons (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius the Mede), (2) dates (Dan 1:1; 7:1; 8:1; 9:1), (3) foreign names and words (Babylon, Persian, and Greek), and (4) the usage of the type of Aramaic language present in the book of Daniel. The last two items will be treated in a sequel article in the next issue of this journal. In both articles, attention will be directed to major new discoveries, but for the sake of completeness some of the more pertinent older discoveries will also be mentioned.

1. *Historical Evidences Relating to Persons*

We will deal first with three important historical figures in the book of Daniel: namely, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius the Mede.

Nebuchadnezzar's Building Achievement

The city of Babylon has a history reaching far back into time. However, in the book of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar is quoted as claiming to be the one who built Babylon as a royal residence for himself: "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?"

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[1]O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (New York, 1965), pp. 521-522, provides a convenient list of them.

(Dan 4:30). Nebuchadnezzar thus considers himself the proud builder of the new Babylon.

Although frequent reference to Babylon is made in the writings of Herodotus, Ctesias, Strabo, and Pliny,[2] these writers are not known to refer to Nebuchadnezzar as the builder of the new Babylon. It has, therefore, been suggested that the book of Daniel presents an erroneous quotation. However, contemporary records discovered by archaeologists now provide information that confirms the reliability of the statement in the book of Daniel. For example, the Grotefend Cylinder states, "Then built I [Nebuchadnezzar] the palace the seat of my royalty, the bond of the race of men, the dwelling of joy and rejoicing."[3] J. A. Montgomery concludes that "the very language of the story [of Daniel] is reminiscent of the Akkadian" in this striking instance.[4] The depiction of the king's self-glorification is remarkably true to history.

Nebuchadnezzar's building activity is evident almost everywhere in Babylon. In the words of H. W. F. Saggs, this indicates "that he could with considerable justification have uttered the words attributed to him in Dan 4:27, RV 30."[5] This historical accuracy is puzzling to those who suggest that Daniel was written in the second century B.C., as R. H. Pfeiffer of Harvard University had to admit: "We shall presumably never know how our author learned that the new Babylon was the creation of Nebuchadnezzar (4:30 [H. 4:27]), as the excavations have proved. . . ."[6] Considering that later ancient historians had no knowledge of Nebuchadnezzar's building achievements, the contemporary cuneiform evidence is of first-rate importance.

Nebuchadnezzar's Madness

The narrative of Nebuchadnezzar's madness in Dan 4 has been a point of controversy for some time. Pfeiffer has called it an

[2]C. F. Pfeiffer, *The Biblical World* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1966), p. 126.

[3]Written on the Grotefend Cylinder, *KB* iii, 2, p. 39, as cited in J. A. Montgomery, *The Book of Daniel*, ICC [23], p. 243.

[4]Montgomery, p. 244.

[5]H. W. F. Saggs, "Babylon," *Archaeology and Old Testament Study*, ed. D. W. Thomas (Oxford, 1967), p. 42.

[6]R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York, 1948), pp. 758-759.

"unhistorical tale" which is "a confused reminiscence of the years which Nabonidus spent at Teima [Tema] in Arabia."[7] This claim has received support from other scholars through a discovery in 1955 of four fragments of an unknown text from Cave 4 of Qumran (4QPrNab), published the following year under the title "The Prayer of Nabonidus."[8] The fragments purport to be the prayer of Nabonidus, "the *great* king, *when he was smitten* with malignant boils by the ordinance of *God Most High* in *the city* of Teman."[9] Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, is said to have been smitten "for seven years,"[10] until "a diviner [or exorcist],[11] who was a Jewish *man*,"[12] came. The king gains forgiveness for his sins and is healed by the diviner/exorcist.

Several scholars have argued that the narrative of Nebuchadnezzar's madness is dependent on the "Prayer of Nabonidus,"[13] which was "written at the beginning of the Christian era, but the writing itself might be some centuries older."[14] The author of Dan 4 is said to have confused the names Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidus and/or reworked earlier traditions of Nabonidus. This position is built on a tenuous hypothesis with the following assumptions: (1) The book of Daniel is written late; (2) the content of the "Prayer

[7]Ibid., p. 758. Cf. O. Kaiser, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Gütersloh, 1969), p. 240.

[8]J. T. Milik, "'Prière de Nabonide' et autres écrits d'un cycle de Daniel. Fragments araméens de Qumran 4," *RB* 63 (1956): 407-415. Translations are provided, among others, in French by J. Carmignac in *Les textes de Qumrân traduits et annotés* II (Paris, 1963), pp. 289-294; in German by W. Dommershausen, *Nabonid im Buche Daniel* (Mainz, 1964), p. 70, and A. Mertens, *Das Buch Daniel im Lichte der Texte vom Toten Meer* (Stuttgart, 1971), pp. 34-42; in English by G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Baltimore, 1962), pp. 229-230, and B. Jongeling, C. J. Labuschagne, and A. S. van der Woude, *Aramaic Texts from Qumran I* (Leiden, 1976; hereafter cited as *ATQ*), pp. 126-131. The restorations differ significantly and caution is due in reading the various translations.

[9]*ATQ*, p. 127. Italics indicate restored text.

[10]Ibid.

[11]So translated by the majority of scholars.

[12]*ATQ*, p. 129.

[13]Milik, p. 411; W. H. Brownlee, *The Meaning of the Scrolls for the Bible* (London, 1964), p. 37; R. Meyer, *Das Gebet des Nabonid* (Berlin, 1962); F. Dexinger, *Das Buch Daniel und seine Probleme* (Stuttgart, 1969), p. 20; etc.

[14]*ATQ*, p. 123.

of Nabonidus" is essentially historical. It is also assumed that Nabonidus resided for seven years in the Arabian city of Tema, an assumption which is believed to be confirmed by the "seven years" of sickness in Tema mentioned in the Qumran fragments.

New discoveries have altered the picture in such a way that the hypothesis has to be abandoned. Contemporary cuneiform evidence from the Harran stelae, first published in 1958, informs us that Nabonidus stayed in Tema for "ten years," not for seven, and that he moved there for political reasons.[15] These facts throw some doubt upon the historicity of the information in the "Prayer of Nabonidus." Thus, historical evidence from contemporary records goes counter to the information presented in the "Prayer of Nabonidus" and to the hypothesis built on that erroneous information.

Furthermore, there are significant differences between Dan 4 and the "Prayer of Nabonidus" that cannot be overlooked: (1) Nebuchadnezzar was inflicted with an illness in Babylon, but Nabonidus was in Tema. (2) The illness of Nabonidus is described as "malignant boils,"[16] "severe rash,"[17] or "severe inflammation,"[18] whereas Nebuchadnezzar was befallen with a rare mental disorder, seemingly a variety of monomania.[19] (3) The illness of Nebuchadnezzar was a punishment for *hybris,* whereas that of Nabonidus was apparently a punishment for idolatry. (4) "Nebuchadnezzar was cured by God Himself when he recognized His sovereignty, whereas a Jewish exorcist healed Nabonidus. . . ."[20]

It is certainly correct that the "Prayer of Nabonidus" in its present form is later than Dan 4. On the basis of comparison it is also correct that "we cannot speak of direct literary dependence"[21] between Dan 4 and the "Prayer of Nabonidus." The essential differences between the two militate against the assumption that in

[15]*ANET Supplement,* pp. 560-563.

[16]*ATQ,* p. 127.

[17]Dommershausen, p. 71.

[18]Brownlee, p. 37.

[19]See the helpful explanation in R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1969), pp. 1115-1117.

[20]Vermes, p. 229.

[21]D. N. Freedman, "The Prayer of Nabonidus," *BASOR* 145 (1957), p. 31.

Dan 4 an original Nabonidus tradition was transferred to king Nebuchadnezzar. The well-known British Assyriologist D. J. Wiseman notes, "Nothing so far known of the retreat of Nabonidus to Teima supports the view that this episode is a confused account of events in the latter's [Nebuchadnezzar's] reign."[22] Likewise the story of Nabonidus' adventures in Tema is not dependent upon the narrative of Daniel.[23]

The accuracy of the biblical record of Nebuchadnezzar's insanity has been questioned on the basis that extrabiblical data reveal that Nebuchadnezzar "did not give up his throne" and that the substitution of the name of Nebuchadnezzar for that of Nabonidus is most suggestive for Dan 4.[24] A recent discovery, however, now provides historical information which appears to have direct bearing on Nebuchadnezzar's mental derangement. In 1975 the Assyriologist A. K. Grayson published a fragmentary cuneiform text (BM 34113=sp 213) from the British Museum which mentions Nebuchadnezzar and Evil-Merodach, Nebuchadnezzar's son and successor on the throne of Babylon.[25]

The Babylonian tablet is so fragmentary that only the contents of one side (obverse) are translatable, and even then many uncertainties are left. In lines 2-4 Nebuchadnezzar is mentioned, and it is stated that "his life appeared of no value to [him, . . .]" and that "[h]e stood and [*took*] the good road *to* [. . .]."[26] In lines 5-8 the following is reported: "*And* (the) Babylon(ian) speaks *bad counsel* to Evil-Merodach [. . .] Then he gives an entirely different order but [. . .] He does not heed the word from his lips, the cour[tier(s) . . .] He changed but did not block [. . .]."[27] Unfortunately, no indisputable identification of the subject in lines 5-8 can be made. It is possible that the subject refers to Nebuchadnezzar, who gives

[22]D. J. Wiseman, "Nebuchadnezzar," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, ed. M. C. Tenney (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1977), 4: 398.

[23]Harrison, pp. 1117-1120.

[24]F. M. Cross, Jr., *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, 2d ed. (New York, 1961), p. 167.

[25]A. K. Grayson, *Babylonian Historical-Literary Texts* (Toronto/Buffalo, 1975), pp. 87-92.

[26]Ibid., p. 89.

[27]Ibid.

to his son Evil-Merodach orders which the latter does not heed
because of the former's erratic behavior. If Nebuchadnezzar is the
main actor in this text, then the phrases in some later lines, such as
"he does not show love to son or daughter [. . .] . . . family and
clan does not exist [. . .] . . . his attention was not directed towards
promoting the welfare of Esagil [and Babylon],"[28] can easily be
seen to refer to the strange behavior of Nebuchadnezzar during his
time of mental incapacity when he neglected his own family, clan,
the worship associated with the temple complex Esagila, and the
interest of Babylon in general. We may hypothesize that the crown
prince Evil-Merodach was forced to take over the government from
his father Nebuchadnezzar during the time of the latter's incapacity
to reign. Dan 4 informs us that Nebuchadnezzar later was reinstated
into full royal rulership (vs. 33). If our interpretation of this new
cuneiform text is correct, we have for the first time extrabiblical
contemporary historical evidence that corroborates and supports
the account in Dan 4.[29]

Belshazzar

The book of Daniel describes Belshazzar as the ruler of Babylon
who was killed when the city fell in 539 B.C. (Dan 5). He was the
son of king Nabonidus (556-539 B.C.) and Nabonidus' co-ruler at
the time of the capture of Babylon. It has been asserted that there is
no historical evidence supporting the view that Belshazzar was
"king." Likewise, the book of Daniel (5:1; 8:1) has been said to
contain here a "grave historical error."[30]

The recovery of Babylonian texts demonstrates beyond the
shadow of a doubt that Belshazzar existed and was the son of
Nabonidus, Babylon's last king.[31] It is quite correct that no text has
yet been found which calls Belshazzar "king," but information has
been discovered which explains explicitly that Nabonidus entrusted

[28]Ibid., p. 89, lines 11-14.

[29]Attention should be drawn to the story of Nebuchadnezzar's possession by
Abydenus (2d cent. B.C.) as preserved in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* ix.41.

[30]H. H. Rowley, "The Historicity of the Fifth Chapter of Daniel," *JTS* 32
(1930): 12.

[31]The cuneiform evidence is conveniently collected by R. P. Dougherty, *Naboni-
dus and Belshazzar*, Yale Oriental Series, 15 (New Haven, Conn., 1929).

Belshazzar with "kingship" (*šarrûtim*). The "Verse Account of Nabonidus"[32] states, "He [Nabonidus] entrusted the 'Camp' to his oldest (son), the firstborn, the troops everywhere in the country he ordered under his (command). He let (everything) go, entrusted kingship to him. . . . He turned towards Tema (deep) in the west."[33]

Although Belshazzar is not called "king" as such—because Nabonidus still was king—, Nabonidus "entrusted kingship to him." This "kingship" included a taking over of the nation's military command and thus implies a "regal position."[34] The "kingship" function with its regal power included, according to other Babylonian texts, the upkeep of the Babylonian places of worship (which was the task of the king), the invoking of his and his father's name in the taking of oaths, and the receiving of tribute in the name of both.[35] E. J. Young has noted correctly that "Belshazzar's *regal* power is further shown by his granting of leases, his issuing of commands, his performance of an administrative act concerning the temple at Erech."[36] In short, on the basis of the various Babylonian texts, Belshazzar had in effect the prerogatives of a monarch and thus could be called "king," although his position was subordinate to that of his father Nabonidus. Belshazzar functioned as king, and the handing over of "kingship" to him caused Belshazzar to manage the affairs of state like a king.

Commentators in the past found it most difficult to date the first and third years of Belshazzar (Dan 7:1; 8:1) with any degree of accuracy. On the basis of the certainty that Nabonidus stayed in Tema for ten years, as the Harran stelae (published in 1958) indicate,[37] and that Belshazzar received "kingship" at the time when Nabonidus left for Tema, i.e., in the latter's sixth regnal year (550/549 B.C.), as other historical evidence from cuneiform records

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[32]For complete text, see A. L. Oppenheim in *ANET*[2], pp. 312-315.

[33]*ANET*[2], p. 313b.

[34]T. G. Pinches, *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 38 (1916): 30.

[35]A. R. Millard, "Daniel 1-6 and History," *EvQ* 49 (1977): 71-72.

[36]E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1949), p. 117 (italics his).

[37]C. J. Gadd, "The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus," *Anatolian Studies* 8 (1958): 60-61; *ANET Supplement*, pp. 560-563.

indicates,[38] the dates for Belshazzar can for the first time be calculated accurately. The first year of Belshazzar as "King of Babylon" (Dan 7:1) was the year 550/549 B.C., and correspondingly the third year of Belshazzar (Dan 8:1) was 548/547 B.C. Thus, only a relatively short period elapsed between the dates provided for Dan 8 and Dan 9, namely nine years, if Dan 9 is dated in the year of the fall of Babylon (539 B.C.). On the other hand, the period between Dan 2 and Dan 7 is relatively long, if "the second year" of Nebuchadnezzar is his second regnal year of 603 B.C. The chronological data in Dan 7:1, 8:1, and 9:1 correspond with, and are in harmony with, the best historical information presently known from contemporary Babylonian sources.

Babylonian texts plainly name Nabonidus as the father of Belshazzar. However, Dan 5:11, 18 attribute that place to Nebuchadnezzar. The fact of the situation is, of course, that the word "father" in Semitic languages, including Hebrew, also can stand for grandfather, a more remote physical ancestor, or even for a predecessor in office. Wiseman points out that the naming of Nebuchadnezzar as "father" actually "does not contradict the Babylonian texts which refer to Belshazzar as the son of Nabonidus, since the latter was a descendant in the line of Nebuchadnezzar and may well have been related to him through his wife."[39] Nabonidus was a usurper taking the throne of Babylon in 556 B.C. from Labashi-Marduk, whose father, Neriglissar, himself had usurped the throne from Nebuchadnezzar's son Amel-Marduk in 560 B.C. Neriglissar, however, had married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar,[40] and it has been speculated that Nabonidus was also a son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar.[41] In this case Nebuchadnezzar was Belshazzar's grandfather on his mother's side. Thus, in the usage of the words "father" and "son" in Semitic languages, Nebuchadnezzar was the father of Belshazzar, and Belshazzar was Nebuchadnezzar's son in

[38]For a detailed study, see G. F. Hasel, "The First and Third Years of Belshazzar (Dan 7:1; 8:1)," *AUSS* 15 (1977): 153-168.

[39]D. J. Wiseman, "Belshazzar," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1975), 1: 515.

[40]D. Weisberg in P. Garelli, ed., *Le palais et la royauté. Compte rendu de la XIXe rencontre assyriologique internationale* (Paris, 1974), pp. 447-454.

[41]Millard, p. 72.

the grandfather-grandson relationship. Historical evidence from ancient records fits perfectly with the information provided in the book of Daniel.

Darius the Mede

Immediately following the death of "Belshazzar the Chaldean king" in October, 539 B.C., it is stated in Dan 5:31 that Darius the Mede "received the kingdom." This may mean that he was made "king over the realm of the Chaldeans" (Dan 9:1). This Darius the Mede must not be confused with the later Persian king, Darius I Hystaspes (522-486 B.C.), for Darius the Mede was "of the seed of the Medes" (Dan 9:1) and thus not of Persian extraction.

A major alleged error assumed by some scholars is that the book of Daniel was mistaken in depicting Darius the Mede's rulership to follow that of the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C., whereas actually Cyrus the Great of Persia was the ruler of Babylon following its fall. E.g., H. H. Rowley stated in 1935 that "the most serious historical problem in the book [of Daniel]" is that Darius the Mede "occupied the throne of Babylon between the death of Belshazzar and the reign of Cyrus. . . . For it is known with certainty that the overthrower of the Neo-Babylonian empire was Cyrus, . . . "[42] This opinion is still held by some, although the records from the ancient world now throw entirely new light on this matter.

W. H. Shea, in investigating the known cuneiform tablets relating to the time under discussion, has discovered that for a period of about nine months after the capture of Babylon in 539 by the combined forces of Medo-Persia, Cyrus the Great did not bear the title "King of Babylon." The title which Cyrus carried during those nine months is "King of Lands," and he carried that title only.[43] "Toward the end of his 1st year, 'King of Babylon' was added to his former title in these [Babylonian cuneiform] texts, producing the titulary 'King of Babylon, King of Lands' that

[42]H. H. Rowley, *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel: A Historical Study of Contemporary Theories* (Cardiff, 1935; reprint, 1964), p. 9.

[43]The evidence comes from the royal titles in economic texts that date to the first two years of Cyrus' rule over Babylonia.

became the standard title used for him throughout the rest of his reign."[44] Thus, for the first time we have confirmed contemporary evidence that Cyrus the Great, whose forces under the leadership of the governor of Gutium overthrew Babylon, did not at once take the title "King of Babylon." Whoever bore the title of "King of Babylon" was a vassal king under Cyrus, not Cyrus himself, for the better part of the first year after the fall of Babylon.

It should not be a surprise, either, that Darius the Mede is called "king" (Dan 6:6, 9, 25), for one of the Nabonidus tablets from Harran, written during the reign of Cyrus, refers to the "king of the Medes" in the tenth year of the reign of Nabonidus (546 B.C.). This indicates "that the title was in existence after Cyrus had conquered Media" about 550 B.C.[45]

On the basis of current historical evidence, we know that Ugbaru, governor of Gutium and general under Cyrus, conquered Babylon.[46] Also, as noted above, it is now known that for most of the first year after the fall of Babylon Cyrus did not claim the title "King of Babylon," indicating that someone else was functioning as king under vassalage to Cyrus. This historical evidence corroborates the book of Daniel perfectly with regard to Darius the Mede.

While we still lack cuneiform evidence that clearly identifies Darius the Mede with an historical personage, subsequent cuneiform discoveries may well throw full light also on this detail. Until such information is forthcoming, we are still not entirely certain regarding the identity of Darius the Mede with a personage known from ancient records. In recent decades it has been thought that Darius the Mede is to be identified with Cyrus himself,[47] or with

[44]W. H. Shea, "An Unrecognized Vassal King of Babylon in the Early Achaemenid Period IV," *AUSS* 10 (1972): 176.

[45]R. K. Harrison, "Book of Daniel," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1977), 2: 17.

[46]The famous "Nabonidus Chronicle" mentions this historical fact; see *ANET*^{2}, p. 306.

[47]D. J. Wiseman, et al., *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel* (London, 1965), pp. 9-16; idem, "Darius," *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1967), p. 293; J. M. Bulman, "The Identification of Darius the Mede," *WTJ* 35 (1973): 247-267.

Gubaru, governor of Babylon,[48] or with Ugbaru, the governor of Gutium.[49] The most common identification is with Cyaxares II, an identification which fits admirably well with Darius' age (62 years in 539 B.C., Dan 5:31), parentage (Dan 9:1), and nationality (a Mede).[50]

While it is true that the identification of Darius the Mede is not absolutely certain, there is too much evidence of him as a person in history to continue to suggest that he did not exist. He can no longer be dismissed as fiction. Also, it will no longer do to build upon this alleged fiction the theory that the author of Daniel believed in the existence of a separate Median empire.

2. *Historical Evidences Relating to Chronology*

In the preceding section, our discussion of certain personages has led to some treatment of chronology, and we have noted Dan 7:1, 8:1, and 9:1. It remains here to notice one further chronological item—the datum given in Dan 1:1. Many scholars long held the view (and some hold it still), that the dating of Nebuchadnezzar's coming to Jerusalem "in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah" (Dan 1:1) is in contradiction with the information provided in Jer 25:1, 9. The latter refers to the "fourth year of Jehoiakim," which is the "first year of Nebuchadnezzar." The "fourth year of Jehoiakim" is the year 605 B.C., and his "third year" is also 605 B.C. The discerning reader will ask, But how can the "fourth" and the "third" year of a king both be the same year? This is a valid and crucial question. The answer lies in the system of reckoning involved. A world-renowned authority on Hebrew

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[48] J. C. Whitcomb, *Darius the Mede: A Study in Historical Identification* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1959); Harrison, p. 17.

[49] Shea, p. 177.

[50] E. W. Hengstenberg, *Dissertations on the Genuineness of Daniel and the Integrity of Zechariah* (Edinburgh, 1847), pp. 40-43; T. Kliefoth, *Das Buch Daniels* (Schwerin, 1868), pp. 155-166; C. F. Keil, *The Book of the Prophet Daniel* (New York, 1877), pp. 192-200; O. Zöckler, *The Book of the Prophet Daniel* (London, 1876), pp. 30, 35; W. S. Auchincloss, "Darius the Median," *BSac* 66 (1909): 536-538; "Daniel," *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, D.C., 1955), 5: 814-817.

chronology, Edwin R. Thiele, informs us that "two systems of reckoning were employed for the Hebrew kings, accession-year reckoning (postdating), and nonaccession-year reckoning (antedating)."[51] The accession-year reckoning, or postdating, is a method of counting the years of a king's reign with the year that began *following* the new year's day of his coming to the throne. The accession year in which he came to the throne was not counted. The nonaccession-year reckoning, or antedating, is a method of counting the years of a king's reign with his accession year. The following diagram illustrates these methods of counting and shows how both the "third year" and the "fourth year" of Jehoiakim are the same:

Accession-year method:	Accession year	1st yr	2d yr	3d yr	Dan 1:1
Nonaccession-year method:	1st yr	2d yr	3d yr	4th yr	Jer 25:1, 9; 46:2

In 1956 Wiseman published the famous Babylonian Chronicle of Chaldean Kings, which indicates that in Babylon the accession-year method was employed,[52] whereas Jeremiah appears to have followed the usual Palestinian-Jewish nonaccession-year method.[53] Thus, there is no historical or chronological error here. It is quite contrary to the facts now known to claim, as has quite recently been done, that the author of Daniel "was not concerned with such historical details that meant nothing for his spiritual message."[54] As a matter of fact, Daniel, who resided in Babylon, employed here the Babylonian system of dating; and Jeremiah, residing in Palestine, used that of Palestine.[55] In addition, there is now indisputable

[51]E. R. Thiele, *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings* (Grand Rapids, 1977), p. 79.

[52]D. J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London, 1956).

[53]Wiseman, "Some Historical Problems in the Book of Daniel," p. 17.

[54]L. F. Hartman, "Daniel," *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds. R. E. Brown, et al. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968), 1: 449.

[55]Thiele (p. 68, n. 3) suggests that Daniel employed Tishri (Fall-calendar) years, whereas Jeremiah used Nisan (Spring-calendar) years: "Thus, according to Daniel 1:1, Nebuchadnezzar's attack on Jerusalem was made in the third year of Jehoiakim, but according to Jeremiah 25:1 and 46:2, this campaign took place in Jehoiakim's

astronomical evidence from eclipses that the third-fourth year of Jehoiakim, which was also the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, was indeed the year 605 B.C., and not the year 606 B.C.[56] or 604 B.C.[57] The historicity of the date is now firmly established.[58]

Editor's Note: The Autumn issue will carry a further study on Daniel by Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Book of Daniel and Matters of Language: Evidences Relating to Names, Words, and the Aramaic Language."

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fourth year." However, Jer 46:2 does not speak of a campaign against Jerusalem, and it is possible that Daniel and Jeremiah both employed the same calendar reckoning (cf. S. H. Horn in *AUSS* 5 [1967]: 12-27).

[56]Hartman, p. 449.

[57]H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1969), p. 50.

[58]Against the earlier opinion voiced by Rawlinson, Meyer, Winckler, Rogers, Montgomery, and others.