

## COMMENTARY BY DOUG MASON ON

### **“WHEN WAS ANCIENT JERUSALEM DESTROYED?”<sup>1</sup>**

#### **PART ONE: WHY IT MATTERS; WHAT THE EVIDENCE SHOWS”<sup>2</sup>**

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*According to historians and archaeologists, 586 or 587 B.C.E. is generally accepted as the year of Jerusalem’s destruction. ... Jehovah’s Witnesses say that it was 607 B.C.E. (Watchtower, page 26)*

The October 1 2011 (Public) edition of *The Watchtower* magazine provided an article that explains its reasons for their date of 607 BCE for the Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. The following Commentary considers the major points addressed.

#### **“Serve the king of Babylon seventy years”**

*“Seventy Years” for Whom? ... [Jeremiah warned:] “This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” (Jeremiah 25:1, 2, 11, New International Version) (Watchtower, page 26)*

As Jeremiah 25:11 states, Judah was to become a desolated wasteland while “these nations” would serve Babylon for 70 years. **At Jeremiah 25:4 to 10, the people of Judah are reminded they would be destroyed because they had for centuries refused to heed the warnings by the Lord’s prophets.** As early as in Deuteronomy, the people had been warned that if they were disobedient to his prophets, the Lord would destroy his people and remove them from the land. That message was constantly repeated by numerous prophets down the ages.

**Verses 17 to 26 record Jeremiah passing the cup of the Lord’s wrath to the each of the listed nations,** saying that the Lord would definitely punish them. As proof, they only need look at what he was already doing to his own people.

#### **Do not listen to the false prophets**

*[Jeremiah] later added: ... “In accord with the fulfilling of seventy years at Babylon.” (Jeremiah 29:10) (Watchtower, page 27)*

This is part of a letter written by Jeremiah to people held at Babylon. It was written after Nebuchadnezzar had removed Jehoiachin from the throne at Jerusalem, replacing him with Zedekiah.

Jeremiah was countering false prophets at Jerusalem (see chapter 28) and at Babylon who were predicting a swift end to their current state, along with a return of Jehoiachin to the throne. Jeremiah advised them that the end of their exile would not be swift, and to settle down, get involved with real estate, marry and raise families; the 70 years was decreed and would continue until it had to run its course.

Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Watchtower* October 1, 2011, pages 26-31

<sup>2</sup> This is the first of two articles in consecutive issues of *The Watchtower*.

Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”

Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,” declares the LORD.

This is what the LORD says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. (Jeremiah 29:5-10, NIV)

### **“70 years for Babylon”**

*Instead of saying 70 years “at Babylon,” many translations read “for Babylon.” (NIV) (Watchtower, page 27)*

The 1993 Danish edition of the Watchtower’s NWT Bible writes “for Babylon”:

[http://www.jwstudies.com/Jer\\_29-10\\_Danish\\_1993\\_NWT.pdf](http://www.jwstudies.com/Jer_29-10_Danish_1993_NWT.pdf)

The 2003 Swedish edition of the Watchtower’s NWT Bible writes “for Babylon”.

[http://www.jwstudies.com/Jer\\_29-10\\_Swedish\\_2003\\_NWT.pdf](http://www.jwstudies.com/Jer_29-10_Swedish_2003_NWT.pdf)

### **A false use of Leviticus**

*While nearby nations would also suffer Babylon’s wrath, the **destruction of Jerusalem and the 70-year exile to follow** were called by Jeremiah “the punishment of my people,” for Jerusalem had “sinned greatly.”—Lamentations 1:8; 3:42; 4:6, NIV. (Watchtower, page 27)*

*Nowhere* do these verses in the NIV state that a 70-year exile **followed** the destruction of Jerusalem.

### **“Seventy Years” until Persia came to power: Sabbath rest continued until the “Seventy Years” were completed**

*When Did “the Seventy Years” Start? ... [Ezra wrote: “Nebuchadnezzar] carried into exile to Babylon the remnant ... and they became servants to [Babylon] until the kingdom of Persia came to power.*

*The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.”—2 Chronicles 36:20, 21, NIV. (Watchtower, page 27)*

The passage says that the **servitude to Babylon ended when Persia came to power**. There is nothing unusual about that; since Babylon had been defeated (539 BCE), Judah and the surrounding nations no longer served Babylon.

The second part says that **the land rested until the seventy years came to its end**. The passage does not say that it rested for seventy years.

There is no statement in these verses as to the length of the servitude or the length of the period that the land enjoyed its sabbath rests.

## The threat at Leviticus

*Thus, the 70 years were to be a period when ... the land would not be cultivated. ... unworked and deserted for 70 years.—Leviticus 26:27, 32-35, 42, 43. (Watchtower, page 27)*

Leviticus 26 is certainly one of several places where the Lord continued to threaten total and utter destruction. But it is dishonest to say these verses, or any of the similar utterances by Joel, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, speak of the period lasting 70 years.

### Land was without men or animals before Jerusalem destroyed

*When did the land of Judah become desolated and unworked? ... When did the 70 years commence? Certainly not following the first time that Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. (Watchtower, page 27)*

**Speaking before Jerusalem fell**, the people were saying that the land was *already* desolate and “without men” (*mē`ēyn `ādām*), **because Babylon controlled the country**.

This is what the LORD says: ... “Once more fields will be bought in this land **of which you say**, ‘It is a **desolate waste, without men** (*מְעַיִן אֲדָמָה* *mē`ēyn `ādām*) or animals, **for it has been handed over to the Babylonians.**” (Jeremiah 32:43)

Even **before Jerusalem fell**, the people said that the place was already without “men”: (They never said it was without “people”.)

This is what the LORD says: “You say about this place, ‘It is a **desolate waste, without men** (*מְעַיִן אֲדָמָה* *mē`ēyn `ādām*) or animals.’ Yet in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are deserted, inhabited by neither men (*מְעַיִן אֲדָמָה* *mē`ēyn `ādām*) nor animals, there will be heard once more the sounds of joy and gladness.” ...

This is what the LORD Almighty says: “In this place, **desolate and without men** (*מְעַיִן אֲדָמָה* *mē`ēyn-`ādām*) or animals—in all its towns there will again be pastures for shepherds to rest their flocks.” (Jeremiah 33:10 – 12)

After the people said this, further deportations were made, while people were left by the Babylonians to work the vineyards and to tend the land.

For a thorough explanation, read pages 67 to 71 of my study at:

[http://www.jwstudies.com/They\\_would\\_not\\_listen\\_Version\\_1.pdf](http://www.jwstudies.com/They_would_not_listen_Version_1.pdf)

### Survivors from Mizpah entered Egypt

*Within two months, “all the people [who had been left behind in the land] from the least to the greatest, together with the army officers, fled to Egypt for fear of the Babylonians.” (2 Kings 25:25, 26, NIV) (Watchtower, page 27)*

The words “**who had been left behind in the land**” is little more than wishful thinking, and an attempt to force a prejudiced idea onto the Scripture. Any added words should have been “of Mizpah”, since they were concerned at the probable retribution for the murder of the Governor installed by Babylon:

Then Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him **led away all the survivors from Mizpah** ... after he had

assassinated Gedaliah son of Ahikam: the soldiers, women, children and court officials he had brought from Gibeon. ... And they went on ... to escape the Babylonians. They were afraid of them because Ishmael son of Nethaniah had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had appointed as governor over the land. (Jeremiah 41:16-18, NIV)

The normal Babylonian strategy was to remove the people of authority, and to leave behind those who worked the land. The Babylonians needed the food they produced. Thus the Babylonians focused on removing the military, regal and religious leaders.

Nebuchadnezzar returned to Judah and removed people from the land **four years** after Jerusalem had been destroyed.

This is the number of the people Nebuchadnezzar carried into exile:  
in the **seventh** year, 3,023 Jews;  
in Nebuchadnezzar's **eighteenth** year, 832 people from Jerusalem;  
in his **twenty-third year**, 745 Jews taken into exile by Nebuzaradan the commander of the imperial guard. (Jeremiah 52:30, NIV)

### **Jeremiah pleads with Zedekiah to stop Jerusalem being destroyed**

The following statements simply continue the WTS' incorrect assumption that the Seventy Years required the land to be "unworked"

*Only then, in the seventh Jewish month, Tishri (September/October), of that year could it be said that the land, now desolate and unworked, began to enjoy its Sabbath rest. (Watchtower, page 27)*

*"This day they are a desolation, and no one dwells in them." (Jeremiah 44:1, 2, English Standard Version) So this event **evidently** marked the starting point of the 70 years. (Watchtower, page 28)*

Jeremiah had declared there would be a 70 year period. He had told the exiles at Babylon that the decreed 70 years would run its full course. He had also said that Jerusalem was threatened with destruction (he was repeating centuries of warnings).

When Jerusalem was under dire threat from Babylon, Jeremiah pleaded with Zedekiah to willingly serve Babylon, and thus prevent Jerusalem being destroyed. This shows that the "70 years" did not need the destruction of the city or the depopulation of the land. Zedekiah failed this final test of obedience to the Lord's prophet and the city was unnecessarily destroyed.

Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "This is what the LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: '**If you surrender** to the officers of the king of Babylon, ... this **city will not be burned** down. ...

But **if you will not surrender** to the officers of the king of Babylon, this city will be handed over to the Babylonians **and they will burn it down.**'" ...

But if you refuse to surrender, this is what the LORD has revealed to me: ... this city will be burned down." (Jer. 38:17-18, 21, 23, NIV)

**Serve** ( *'abad*) the king of Babylon, and you will live (*hāyâ*). **Why should this city become a ruin** (*h'rbâ*)? (Jeremiah 27:17, NIV)

### **Daniel said Jeremiah is the source of information**

*When Did “the Seventy Years” End? ... Daniel ... calculated when the 70 years were due to end. He wrote: “I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that ... must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.”—Daniel 9:1, 2, ESV. (Watchtower, page 28)*

The ESV states that Daniel 9 is set in the “*first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—in the first year of his reign*”. The WTS used to insist that this “Darius” had a first year of sole reign over Babylon before Cyrus took the reign; Cyrus then had to wait until he could start his own “first year”. No mention is made of Darius in this *Watchtower* article; his existence makes it impossible for Jews to have returned in 537 BCE.

The words omitted by the *Watchtower* from the ESV citation from Daniel are: “*according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet*”. The primary source of information thus comes from Jeremiah.

### **Cyrus’ decree issued on an unknown date**

*Ezra ... linked the end of “the seventy years” to the time when “the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation.” (2 Chronicles 36:21, 22, NIV) (Watchtower, page 28)*

*When were the Jews released? The decree ending their exile was issued in “the first year of Cyrus the king of Persia.” (Watchtower, page 28)*

Babylon fell to the Persians after the start of the month of Tishri (September/October) 539 BCE. The book of Daniel suggests Cyrus’ rule might have been preceded by the sole rule of a king Darius, but this is not acknowledged by the *Watchtower* article and is not considered in this Study.

Depending on the method of reckoning, Cyrus’ first year might have started as soon as he defeated Babylon; or on Nisan 1 (March 24) 538 BCE; or on Tishri 1 (September 17) 538.

It is not known in which part of his first year that Cyrus issued his decree. He could have issued it at any time from October 539 BCE to October 537 BCE. If a Darius did rule for a year, that would make Cyrus’ rule much later.

### **No idea in which year the first Returnees met at the temple site**

Without any evidence or proof, and relying solely on dates provided by secular sources, the article boldly and baldly claims to know the year that the first Returnees were at the temple site in Jerusalem.

*Thus, by the fall of 537 B.C.E., the Jews had returned to Jerusalem to restore true worship.—Ezra 1:1-5; 2:1; 3:1-5. (Watchtower, page 28)*

The *Watchtower* article claims that “539 BCE when Cyrus II conquered Babylon” is a “pivotal date in history”. However, the article’s real “pivotal date” is 537 BCE for the return of the Jews to the site of the temple at Jerusalem. From that date, the article leaps backwards to arrive at 607 BCE for the destruction of Jerusalem.

But the article is incapable of proving whether Jews returned to the site of the destroyed temple in 537 BCE, or whether it happened in a different year.

Nor can the *Watchtower* article provide any statement from Scripture that this particular meeting at the temple site marked the end of the “70 years”.

### **Watchtower’s inconsistencies on the start and finish of the “Seventy Years”**

The *Watchtower* article says the “seventy year” period could not commence until the land was emptied of all people. However, the article does not end the period when people return to the land. Instead, it waits until each Returnee had settled into their home in their respective village, and then waits until they trek through the land to arrive at Jerusalem.

The article says the start of the 70 years related to the exodus of people into Egypt, not to events associated with the temple. Yet it ends the 70 years with events associated with the temple.

### **“Watchtower chronology” relies on ancient historical sources and cuneiform tablets**

*According to Bible chronology, then, the 70 years was a literal period of time that ended in 537 B.C.E. Counting back 70 years, the start date of the period would be 607 B.C.E. (Watchtower, pages 28-29)*

The article uses the expression *Bible chronology* when in reality it means *Watchtower chronology*.

At the box on page 28, the article admits that the date of 539 BCE for the fall of Babylon is “calculated”. It is a derived date. The sources used to arrive at that date are explicitly stated to be:

*Ancient historical sources and cuneiform tablets. (Watchtower, page 28)*

The box states that “confirmation” is provided by:

*A Babylonian astronomical clay tablet (BM 33066). (Watchtower, page 28)*

Secular sources compute the lunar eclipse information on this “astronomical tablet”, which the article accepts:

*It contains the descriptions of two lunar eclipses that the tablet says occurred in the seventh year of Cambyses II, the son and successor of Cyrus.*

*These are identified with lunar eclipses visible at Babylon on July 16, 523 B.C.E., and on January 10, 522 B.C.E. (Watchtower, page 28)*

### **The astronomical tablet that the article completely depends on**

The code “BM 33066” shows that this tablet is held at the British Museum. It is one of a number held there.

The British Museum holds at least 98 per cent of the extant Babylonian tablets devoted to astronomy.

*(Historical Eclipses and Earth’s Rotation, F. Richard Stephenson, page 107, Cambridge University Press, 1997, 2008)*

**The Watchtower article clearly depends on the dates computed by scholars from a lunar eclipse tablets held in the British Museum. The dates computed by these scholars from other astronomical tablets confirm a significant range of dates for this period.**

All of the surviving observations (and predictions) of lunar eclipses from earliest times (731 BC) to 609 BC - as well as many later observations down to 317 BC - are recorded on a series of five British Museum tablets. Their reference numbers are: BM 32238 (= LBAT 1414), BM 45640 + 35115 + 35789 (= LBAT 1415 + 1416 + 1417: three joining pieces) and BM 32234 (= LBAT 1419). ...

**BM 32238** cites eclipses from **731 to 659 BC** (obverse) and from **389 to 317 BC** (reverse). Tablets **BM 45640 + 35115 + 35789** contain data from **703 to 632 BC** (obverse) and from **415 to 360 BC** (reverse), while **BM 32234** extends from **609 to 537 BC** (obverse) and from 519 to 447 BC (reverse).

**Many names of rulers are preserved on these tablets:** e.g. Nabu mukin-zeri (who reigned from 731 to 726 BC), Bel-ibni (702-699 BC), Samassum-ukin (667-647 BC), Kandalanu (647-625 BC), **Nebuchadrezzar II (604-562 BC)**, Xerxes I (485-465 BC) and Philip (323-316 BC).

From the well-defined chronological sequence on this series of texts, **virtually all eclipse dates can be confidently restored.**

**BM 38462** (= LBAT 1420) reports lunar eclipses for **almost every year from the beginning of the reign of Nebuchadrezzar II (604/3 BC) to his 29th year (576/5 BC)**. The damaged (but still recognisable) name of **Nebuchadrezzar** is given on the first line of the tablet. (Stephenson, page 149)

Beginning with Nabonassar, Babylonian chronology is securely established. (Stephenson, page 95)

### **Watchtower article denigrates its classical sources and the cuneiform tablets**

*Many authorities hold to the date 587 B.C.E. They lean on two sources of information—the writings of classical historians and the canon of Ptolemy. (Watchtower, page 29)*

It would be more accurate to write that “all” authorities hold to the 587 BCE date. It would be interesting to see the article provide recognized authorities which agree with their date.

**Having just written that it accepts dates provided by *Ancient historical sources and cuneiform tablets* (page 28, information box), it is amazing that the article is prepared to reject them.**

*Classical Historians—How Accurate? Historians who lived close to the time when Jerusalem was destroyed give mixed information about the Neo-Babylonian kings. ... The time line based on their chronological information disagrees with that of the Bible. ... How reliable are their writings? ... Was Berossus really an accurate historian? Consider one example. ... The other classical historians who, for the most part, based their chronology on the writings of Berossus. Can their historical conclusions really be called reliable? (Watchtower, page 29)*

*The Canon of Ptolemy. The Royal Canon of Claudius Ptolemy, a second-century C.E. astronomer, is also used to support the traditional date 587 B.C.E. (Watchtower, page 30)*

*In general, Ptolemy’s canon is regarded as accurate. But in view of its omissions, should it really be used to provide a definite historical chronology? (Watchtower, page 31)*

For the sake of this Commentary, it does not matter whether Berossus or Ptolemy is correct or not. **The date of Jerusalem’s destruction is of concern only to the WTS. They are the ones with the problem. It is up to the WTS to prove their date; whether others are correct or not just does not matter. They are the only ones with the problem; only they need to provide the absolute, unquestioning proof that their date is rolled gold correct.**

**Whether others are wrong does not prove they are correct.**

**The problem for the WTS is that the Bible does not – and cannot – provide a single date in terms of the BCE calendars. The WTS has to accept computations and dates from the secular sources, the chronologists, the clay tablets, it rejects as reliable.**

## Misrepresentation related to Ptolemy's Canon

The *Watchtower* article quotes Christopher Walker concerning Ptolemy's Canon in the following manner:

Christopher Walker of the British Museum says that Ptolemy's canon was "an artificial scheme designed to provide astronomers with a consistent chronology" and was "not to provide historians with a precise record of the accession and death of kings." (*Mesopotamia and Iran in the Persian Period*, pages 17-18) (*Watchtower*, page 30)

Here is what Christopher Walker actually wrote:

Ptolemy's *Canon* was **an artificial scheme designed to provide astronomers with a consistent chronology** into which astronomical observations might be fitted, **not to provide historians with a precise record of the accession and death of kings**. Nevertheless it has served as the backbone of the chronology of the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods, and served reliably. Re-adjusted to the Julian calendar, allowing for Ptolemy's assumptions, and taking account of two short periods of confusion which Ptolemy describes as ['having no king'] and of the inclusion in Babylonian king-lists of certain short-lived usurpers, **there is no difficulty in correlating Ptolemy's chronology with the vast accumulation of data now available from cuneiform sources**. (page 18, *Mesopotamia and Iran in the Persian period, conquest and imperialism, 539-331 BC*)

The *Watchtower* writer completely omits the sentence following the one from which they used.

There is no difficulty in correlating Ptolemy's chronology with the vast accumulation of data now available from cuneiform sources.

The *Watchtower* researchers obviously must have read this, but the article that the *Watchtower* eventually published claims the exact opposite!<sup>3</sup>

### Omissions by Ptolemy

*Why did Ptolemy omit some rulers? Evidently, he did not consider them to be legitimate rulers of Babylon. For example, he excluded Labashi-Marduk, a Neo-Babylonian king. But according to cuneiform documents, the kings whom Ptolemy omitted actually ruled over Babylonia.* (*Watchtower*, pages 30-31)

Ptolemy's objective was astronomical, not historical. Since Labashi-Marduk ruled for only two months, the length of his reign did not impact on his cosmological model and calculations. So Ptolemy omitted Labashi-Marduk. Many of the kings mentioned in the *Watchtower* article ruled before the neo-Babylonian period and are hence not relevant.

Shin-sharra-ishkun ruled parts of Babylonia over a period of seven years. The Assyrian empire was in its death throes and there were power struggles between the Assyrian empire and the rising neo-Babylonian one with cities being won and lost, lost and won.

The WT article fails to make clear (deliberately, no doubt) that *these kings Ptolemy omits shared the same regnal 'time space' with Nabopolassar*. Ptolemy needed to assign one king to a particular year to be able to count and make his astronomical calculations. The

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.jehovahs-witness.net/watchtower/bible/213808/9/When-Was-Ancient-Jerusalem-Destroyed-Why-It-Matters-What-the-Evidence-Shows>, Post by VM44, 8 August 2011



inclusion of these competing Assyrian kings (who lost in the end) would have been superfluous to his purposes.<sup>4</sup>

### Pure hypocrisy

The *Watchtower* article states

“There is also strong evidence from cuneiform documents that prior to the reign of Nabopolassar (the first king of the Neo-Babylonian period), another king (Ashuretel-ilani) ruled for four years in Babylonia. Also, for more than a year, there was no king in the land.[9] Yet, **all of this is left out** of Ptolemy’s canon.” (*Watchtower*, October 1, 2011, page 31)

When the *Watchtower* paragraph indignantly complains “all of this is left out”, it refers to endnote number 9, which includes this statement:

The **Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus**, (H1B), I, line 30, has [Ashur-etelilani] listed just before Nabopolassar. (*Anatolian Studies*, Vol. VIII, 1958, pages 35, 47)

Pages 35 and 36 of *Anatolian Studies* list “four monuments of the reign of Nabonidus ... found at (or near) Harran”.

Page 46 to 53 of *Anatolian Studies* provide a transliteration and an English translation of that Babylonian document. It is an undamaged record by “the lady Adda-guppi, mother of Nabium-na’id, king of Babylon” (lines 1 – 2, page 47).

The *Watchtower* refers to line 30 at page 47 of *Anatolian Studies* but it “leaves out” exactly what that line states, it “leaves out” undamaged line 29, and it “leaves out” undamaged lines 31 to 33. The following are lines 29 to 33 that are “left out” by the *Watchtower*:

29. From the 20th year of Aššurbanipal, king of Assyria, that I was born (in)  
30. until the 42nd year of Aššurbanipal, the 3rd year of Aššur-etillu-ili,  
31. his son, the 21st year of Nabopolassar, the 43rd year of Nebuchadrezzar,  
  
32. the 2nd year of Awēl-Marduk, the 4th year of Neriglissar,  
33. in 95 years of the god Sin, king of the gods of heaven and earth,

*Anatolian Studies*, Vol. VIII, 1958, page 47

Additionally, column II, lines 26 to 28 of *Anatolian Studies* state:

26. From the time of Aššurbanipal, king of Assyria, until the 9th year  
27. of Nabu-na’id king of Babylon, the son, offspring of my womb  
28. 104 years of happiness, with the reverence which Sin, king of the gods,

*Anatolian Studies*, Vol. VIII, 1958, page 49

Further, lines 40 to 43 of column II state:

40. endure not, (but) let him worship thy great godhead. In the 21 years  
41. of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, in the 43 years of Nebuchadrezzar,  
  
42. son of Nabopolassar, and 4 years of Neriglissar, king of Babylon,  
  
43. (when) they exercised the kingship, for 68 years  
44. with all my heart I revered them, I kept watch over them,

*Anatolian Studies*, Vol. VIII, 1958, page 51

<sup>4</sup> Post by “Ann OMaly” at <http://www.jehovahs-witness.net/watchtower/bible/214069/1/Something-the-Watchtower-left-out>

*Anatolian Studies* provides the following summary of these lines:

**CHRONOLOGY AND HISTORY**

(1) *The Last Kings of Assyria*

The inscription H 1 (of the royal Mother) gives, in its present more complete form (B),<sup>1</sup> no less than three arithmetical summaries covering the end of Assyrian rule and almost the whole of the Chaldaean dynasty in Babylonia :

Col. I, 29–35.

The narrator was born in the 20th year of Assurbanipal.  
She survived the 42nd year of Aššurbanipal,  
3rd „ „ Aššur-etillu-ili, his son,  
21st „ „ Nabopolassar,  
43rd „ „ Nebuchadrezzar •  
2nd „ „ Evil-Merodach,  
4th „ „ Neriglissar.  
A total of 95 years.

Col. II, 26–8.

She lived from the time <sup>2</sup> of Aššurbanipal to the 9th year of Nabonidus her son, 104 years.

Col. II, 40–3.

She served the kings of Babylon during  
21 years of Nabopolassar,  
43 „ „ Nebuchadrezzar,  
4 „ „ Neriglissar.  
A total of 68 years, before her son's accession.

*Anatolian Studies*, Vol. VIII, 1958, page 69

It is pure hypocrisy for the *Watchtower* article to complain about information being left out when it does the same thing, leaving out directly relevant information.

### **The article's false conclusion**

*The Conclusion Based on the Evidence. ... There was an exile of 70 years. (Watchtower, page 31)*

But there was no need for the destruction of Jerusalem or the removal of all humanity from Judah.

*There is strong evidence—and most scholars agree—that the Jewish exiles were back in their homeland by 537 B.C.E. (Watchtower, page 31)*

**The article provided no “evidence”.** At least the article states that the views of scholars on the date of the Return are **not unanimous**.

### **The raising of questions**

*Though the classical historians and the canon of Ptolemy disagree with this date, valid questions can be raised about the accuracy of their writings. (Watchtower, page 31)*

To arrive at 539 BCE from 523/522 BCE the *Watchtower* article accepts classical historians, astronomical clay tablets, and it has to accept the secular chronology. Otherwise it cannot travel from 523/522 BCE back to 539 BCE.

Further, the WTS's interpretation of Scripture is not proven even if the classical historians, astronomical computations and Ptolemy's Canon were wrong. The WTS has to prove, and that means PROVE that its interpretations of Scripture are correct, and it has to explain how it can accept secular sources for its dates and then declare such sources as unreliable.