

Was Jerusalem Destroyed in 601 B.C.?

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John P. Pratt's chronology of the Book of Mormon relied on the claim that the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem twice in Lehi's lifetime, first in 601 B.C. and about fourteen years later in 587 B.C.¹ Part 1 of this appendix removed Pratt's misunderstood Book of Mormon support for his claim (1 Nephi 1:13; 17:43). Lehi and Nephi prophesied a single destruction for the city and kingdom of Judah, which occurred late in Zedekiah's eleven-year reign. Part 3 of this appendix will analyze Pratt's related claim that Judah's king Jehoiakim was known to Nephi as Zedekiah.² In this part 2, my examination focuses on historical evidence indicating the virtual impossibility of Jerusalem's destruction late in 601 B.C.

When did Babylonia invade Syria and Palestine? Citing three sources, Pratt identified the leading event that changed the balance of power in Syria and Palestine in 605 B.C. That event was Babylonia's victory over Egypt in the battle of Carchemish.³ Pratt referred to Jeremiah 46:2, which placed the battle in the "fourth year" of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah. The time when Jehoiakim's reign began is uncertain. His coronation as an Egyptian vassal might have occurred before 1 Tishri, 609, but more likely it occurred after that date.⁴ Some have assumed that the initial period of his reign (until the next Jewish New Year) was an "accession year" and, thus, it was not counted as his "first" year;⁵ however, the Egyptian pharaohs counted the partial year as a "first"

¹ John P. Pratt, "Lehi's 600-year Prophecy of the Birth of Christ," *Meridian Magazine*, an online publication accessed at www.meridianmagazine.com/sci_rel/000331sixhundred.html, sections entitled "The First Destruction of Jerusalem" and "The Second Destruction of Jerusalem;" idem, "The Nephite Calendar," *Meridian Magazine*, accessed at www.meridianmagazine.com/sci_rel/040114nephite.html, section entitled "Proposed Solution."

² In adopting this claim, Pratt expressly relied on the speculation of Joseph L. Allen. Pratt, "Lehi's 600-year Prophecy," sections entitled "Nephi's Account" and "Jehoiakim as Nephi's 'Zedekiah'." See also Joseph L. Allen, Ph.D., *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon* (Orem, Utah: S.A. Publishers, 1989), 22-25.

³ Pratt, "Lehi's 600-year Prophecy," section entitled "The Reign of Jehoiakim," with citations to Jeremiah 46:2; Albert Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, Texts from Cuneiform Sources, A. Leo Oppenheim, ed., vol. 5 (Locust Valley, New York: J.J. Augustin Publishers, 1975), 99; and Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.-A.D. 75*, Brown University Studies, vol. 19 (Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Press, 1956), 25.

⁴ See, e.g., Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1964), 200-01; idem, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, Rev. ed. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998), 253-54; Siegfried H. Horn, "The Babylonian Chronicle and the Ancient Calendar of the Kingdom of Judah," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 5 (1967): 18-21; Abraham Malamat, "The Last Kings of Judah and the Fall of Jerusalem," *Israel Exploration Journal* 18/3 (1968): 140-41; and Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 165.

⁵ Referring to the phrase translated *in the beginning of the reign* in Jeremiah 26:1, J. Arthur Thompson wrote: "The first expression in [the Masoretic text], *rēšît maml'kūt*, corresponds to [Akkadian] *rēš šarrūti*, a technical term for the period between the king's accession and the beginning of the next full year (the New Year)." J. Arthur Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, R.K. Harrison, ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 524. Babylonians did not count the partial year. Finegan, *Handbook* (Rev. ed.), 74-75; idem, *Handbook*, 201-02; Donald J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956), 27-28. "There is a general consensus that at this time Judah, like Babylonia, adhered to the postdating and accession-year system, i.e. official reckoning commenced with the regnal 'new

year⁶ and it might be that Jehoiakim's scribes followed the Egyptian system.⁷ Some scholars have assumed that the Jewish New Year occurred on 1 Tishri (in the autumn); others have assumed it occurred on 1 Nisan (in the spring).⁸ Hence, Jehoiakim's "fourth year" may have been Tishri 606/605, Tishri 605/604, Nisan 606/605 or Nisan 605/604 B.C.

Pratt also referred to A.K. Grayson's 1975 translation of the ancient Babylonian chronicle and to *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.-A.D. 75*, by Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein, who coordinated Babylonian lunar years with the proleptic Julian calendar.⁹ However, since the 1956 publication of Donald J. Wiseman's original English translation of the Babylonian chronicle, the year of the battle has been known as the 21st year of the Babylonian emperor, Nabopolassar,¹⁰ and it has been understood (based on the work by Parker and Dubberstein) as a year that began on 1 Nisanu (the Babylonian term for the month of their New Year), Monday/Tuesday, 11/12 April (J), 4/5 April (G), 605 B.C. JDN 1500549.¹¹

On the obverse side of a clay tablet (British Museum No. 21946)¹² dated to the Neo-Babylonian period,¹³ three military actions were recorded in Nabopolassar's 21st year. The first was the sacking of Carchemish (now a ruin near modern Kargamis on the Turkish side of the border with Syria). Grayson's 1975 translation is as follows:

year', the lapse between accession and 'new year' ... not being taken into the sum of regnal years." Malamet, "The Last Kings of Judah and the Fall of Jerusalem," 146.

⁶ K.S. Freedy and Donald B. Redford, "The Dates in Ezekiel in Relation to Biblical, Babylonian and Egyptian Sources," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 90/3 (1970): 464; Gershon Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah*, Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East, B. Halpern and M.H.E. Weippert, eds., vol. 9 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 108 n2.

⁷ Freedy and Redford, "The Dates in Ezekiel," 465 n20 and the accompanying text.

⁸ For autumn years, see, e.g., Finegan, *Handbook* (Rev. ed.), 251-261; Freedy and Redford, "The Dates in Ezekiel," 464-67; Alberto R. Green, "The Chronology of the Last Days of Judah: Two Apparent Discrepancies," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101/1 (1982): 57-62; Horn, "The Babylonian Chronicle and the Ancient Calendar of the Kingdom of Judah," 15-16; Malamet, "The Last Kings of Judah and the Fall of Jerusalem," 146-50; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Rev. ed.), 168; for spring years, see, e.g., John Bright, *The Anchor Bible: Jeremiah* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1965), 242; Finegan, *Handbook*, 205; Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah*, 117; J. Philip Hyatt, "New Light on Nebuchadrezzar and Judean History," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 75 (1956): 278; Hayim Tadmor, "Chronology of the Last Kings of Judah," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 15/4 (1956): 226-227; Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 620; and Donald J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1985), 33.

⁹ See footnote 3 above and Pratt, "Lehi's 600-year Prophecy," footnote 6.

¹⁰ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 23-27, 66-67. See also Hyatt, "New Light on Nebuchadrezzar and Judean History," 279-80; Tadmor, "Chronology of the Last Kings of Judah," 226-27; Finegan, *Handbook*, 200-01; idem, *Handbook* (Rev. ed.), 252-53; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Rev. ed.), 165-66; Horn, "The Babylonian Chronicle and the Ancient Calendar of the Kingdom of Judah," 20.

¹¹ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 23, 66-67; Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 99; Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, Benjamin R. Foster, ed. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 226-27; Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27.

¹² What remains of the tablet "is 59 mms. [2.44 inches] wide and 81 mms. [3.25 inches] long. It is in rather poor condition due to several breaks on the surface and the complete loss of the bottom part of the tablet." Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 99. See also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, Note and Plate V; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 226 ("very poorly preserved").

¹³ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 8-10; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 226.

- 1 [The twenty-first year]: The king of Akkad stayed home (while) Nebuchadnezzar (II), his eldest son (and) the crown prince,
- 2 mustered [the army of Akkad]. He took his army's lead and marched to Carchemish which is on the bank of the Euphrates.
- 3 He crossed the river [to encounter the army of Egypt] which was encamped at Carchemish.
- 4 [...] They did battle together. The army of Egypt retreated before him.
- 5 He inflicted a [defeat] upon them (and) finished them off completely.¹⁴

Nebuchadnezzar, the crown prince, led the Babylonian army to Carchemish and crossed the Euphrates River. The assault on the Egyptians was overwhelming. Some defenders were able to retreat. Those who stayed to fight were "finished ... off completely."¹⁵ From archaeological investigation, it is clear the city was destroyed and burned.¹⁶

Lines 9 and 10 of the tablet inform us that Nabopolassar died on 8 Abu (August 15/16), in the fifth lunar month or moon of his 21st year.¹⁷ Lines 10 and 11 state that when Nebuchadnezzar received news of his father's death, he rushed home from Syria, arriving at Babylon and ascending to the throne on the same day, 1 Ululu, 6/7 September, 605.¹⁸ The battle of Carchemish has been assumed to have occurred sometime in the first three months (April/May, May/June or June/July) of Nabopolassar's 21st year¹⁹ because two more military actions were recorded in lines 6 through 8 of the tablet and a week or more was needed at the end of the period for the crown prince to rush back to Babylon.

The second military operation appears to have been undertaken immediately after the victory at Carchemish. The Babylonians overtook and destroyed the retreating Egyptians.

- 6 In the district of Hamath
- 7 the army of Akkad overtook
- 5 the remainder of the army of [Egypt
- 6 which] managed to escape [from] the defeat and which was not overcome.
- 7 They (the army of Akkad) inflicted a defeat upon them (so that) a single (Egyptian) man [did not return] home.²⁰

¹⁴ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 99, italics in the original. Apparently, between the square brackets are Grayson's proposed restorations (where possible) of broken, erased or otherwise damaged text. The words in curved brackets are Grayson's editorial additions. See also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 23-25, 66-67; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 227.

¹⁵ Egypt's forces in northern and central Syria were "completely annihilated." Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 227.

¹⁶ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 23-24.

¹⁷ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 26, 68-69; Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 99; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-29; Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27.

¹⁸ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 26-27, 68-69; Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 99-100; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-29; Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27.

¹⁹ See, e.g., Bright, *Jeremiah*, 181 ("late spring or early summer"); Finegan, *Handbook*, 200 ("May/June"); idem, *Handbook* (Rev. ed.), 253 ("late May to early June"); Horn, "The Babylonian Chronicle and the Ancient Calendar of the Kingdom of Judah," 20 ("early in the Babylonian year, perhaps before the end of April—most probably not later than in May"); Malamat, "The Last Kings of Judah and the Fall of Jerusalem," 141 ("spring or summer"); Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 16 ("June-July 605 B.C. therefore remains the most likely date unless the capture of Carchemish represents a sudden Blitzkrieg response to the [Babylonians'] defeat and retreat of the previous ... January").

²⁰ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 99.

This second action led the Babylonian army south-southwest from Carchemish into the district associated with the city of Hamath (modern Hamah in central Syria) where the fugitive Egyptians were slaughtered; indeed, “not a man escaped to his own country.”²¹

Jeremiah’s poetic oracle about the battle seems to refer to the Egyptian fugitives’ unsuccessful attempt to escape the Babylonian onslaught (Jeremiah 46:5-6):

- 5 But what do I see?
 Their courage gives way,
 They break and turn tail;
Their mighty ranks shattered,
 They flee pell-mell,
 Without looking back.
Everywhere panic
 —Word of Yahweh.
- 6 No flight for the swift,
 Nor escape for the strong;
Up north by the banks of Euphrates
 They stagger, go down.²²

Having annihilated the Egyptian army in northern and central Syria, the Babylonians then began their third military operation. Line 8 on the obverse side of the tablet, according to Grayson’s translation, recorded that: “At that time Nebuchadnezzar (II) conquered all of Ha[ma]th.”²³ Abraham Malamat believed that the “conquest of the city of Riblah [further south than Hamath] in the ‘land of Hamath’ is undoubtedly meant, for Riblah, it seems, had been the headquarters of Pharaoh’s army then encamped in Syria. ... We may [in the light of 2 Kings 23:33; 25:6-7, 20-21; Jeremiah 39:5-6; 52: 9-11, 27] ... assume that Nebuchadnezzar likewise made his headquarters at Riblah following its conquest, and from there directed the war in Syria and Palestine as Wiseman has emphasized.”²⁴

The foregoing interpretation of line 8 appears to be logistically reasonable. However, the word *Hamath* was not the translation originally given in Wiseman’s influential translation of the Babylonian chronicle. Line 8, as Wiseman translated it, stated: “At that time Nebuchadnezzar conquered the whole area of Hatti-country.”²⁵ Because the term *Hatti-country* encompassed “the whole of Syria and Palestine,”²⁶ Wiseman’s translation sided with another ancient account which described a geographically vast military triumph that occurred over a period of a few months following the battle of Carchemish. This other account appeared as a quotation in *Antiquities of the Jews*, a book written by Flavius Josephus, a first century A.D. Jewish historian.²⁷ The quotation was attributed to Berosus, a Babylonian priest who wrote a three-volume history of

²¹ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 24, 68-69.

²² Bright, *Jeremiah*, 301-02.

²³ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 99.

²⁴ Abraham Malamat, “A New Record of Nebuchadnezzar’s Palestinian Campaigns,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 6/4 (1956): 249-50; citing Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 26. See also Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 22 (Nebuchadnezzar established a forward headquarters at “a suitable centre, such as Riblah”).

²⁵ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 68-69.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁷ *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, William Whiston, trans., A.M., two vols. (Philadelphia: Jas. B. Smith & Co., 1854), I: 322.

Babylonia in the third century B.C.²⁸ Berossus described the battle of Carchemish as a military clash pitting a Babylonian prince (Nebuchadnezzar) against a rebel Babylonian governor who administered the empire's province that included Egypt, Syria and Palestine.

When his father [Nabopolassar] ... heard that the governor whom he had set over Egypt, and the places about Celesyria and Phoenicia, had revolted from him, while he was not himself able any longer to undergo the hardships [of war], he committed to his son Nebuchadnezzar, who was still but a youth, some parts of his army, and sent them against him [the rebel governor]. So when Nebuchadnezzar had given battle, and fought with the rebel, he beat him, and reduced the country from under his [the rebel governor's] subjection, and made it a branch of his own kingdom; but about that time it happened that his father [Nabopolassar] ... fell ill, and ended his life in the city of Babylon, when he had reigned twenty-one years; and when he [Nebuchadnezzar] was made sensible, as he was in a little time, that his father ... was dead, and having settled the affairs of Egypt, and the other countries, as also those that concerned the captive Jews, and Phoenicians, and Syrians, and those of the Egyptian nations, and having committed the conveyance of them to Babylon to certain of his friends, together with the gross of his army, and the rest of their ammunition and provisions, he went himself hastily, accompanied by a few others, over the desert, and came to Babylon.²⁹

Berosus' report of an immediate conquest of Egypt, Syria and Palestine seemed to support Wiseman's reconstruction of the Babylonian chronicle. However, his reconstruction was questionable, solely from a textual point of view. The term that Wiseman translated as *Hatticountry* was *ḥa[x]-tú*. The syllable between the square brackets was not clear on the tablet. Wiseman assumed it was an [-at] syllable and then assumed further that the restored word, *ḥa[-at]-tú*, meant the same thing as the usual word for this land, *ḥa-tú*. Grayson rejected both assumptions and restored the word as *ḥa-[ma-a]-tú*, meaning Hamath.³⁰ According to Grayson's single-assumption restoration, after sacking Carchemish and annihilating the Egyptian army in the district of Hamath, the invading army established Babylonian supremacy throughout the district of Hamath, which (according to Jeremiah 52:27) extended at least as far south as Riblah. North of Hamath, at communities which lay between Carchemish and Hamath and which may have been bypassed during the Babylonians' race to overtake and destroy the retreating Egyptians, Babylonian rule likely would also have been imposed—although not necessarily before Nebuchadnezzar received word of his father's death. The Babylonian army remained in the field while the prince rushed home and shortly after he assumed the throne in Babylon, the new emperor "returned to Hattu. Until the month Shebat [1/2 February through 1/2 March, 604 B.C.] he marched about victoriously in Hattu." Nebuchadnezzar's victorious army then returned to Babylon with a "vast booty" from the region.³¹

²⁸ *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica North America, 1995), 2:157 (Berosus).

²⁹ *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, Whiston, trans., I: 322.

³⁰ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 99 (obverse line 8); see also Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-29. Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 17 n113, acknowledged the correctness of this restoration. Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah*, 116 n35, referenced Bustemy Oded, "When did the Kingdom of Judah become subject to Babylonian Rule?" *Tarbiz* 35 (1966): 103-107 (Hebrew), as having first identified the word as Hamath.

³¹ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 100 (obverse lines 12-13); see also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 27, 68-69; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-29; Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27.

The Babylonian chronicle does not mention any military operations during the new emperor's accession year that might have placed Nebuchadnezzar's army in great peril, such as besieging the cities of Damascus, Tyre, Sidon, Ashkelon or Jerusalem. Instead, his army "marched about victoriously." The phrase read as *šal-ṭa-niš ittallak* and translated as "marched about victoriously" by Grayson³² or "marched unopposed" by Wiseman,³³ appears to be a general term for actions related to the exercise of a conqueror's "justice,"³⁴ such as killing or enslaving the defeated and emptying their treasuries. The imposition of this so-called "justice" came as a consequence of military defeat or subjugation. "Nebuchadnezzar would have located himself at a suitable centre, such as Riblah, from which he directed operations as the supreme overlord both for the collection of tribute and dispensation of justice as he did for example later against the rebel Zedekiah (Jer. 52:10-11)."³⁵ Hence, Nebuchadnezzar apparently used his forces to gather a heavy tribute from the communities of the fertile plain then under Babylonian control (apparently stretching nearly two hundred miles from Carchemish to Riblah). To end his highly acquisitive accession year and begin his officially counted years, Nebuchadnezzar celebrated the New Year festival in Babylon during the month of Nisanu (1/2 April through 29/30 April, 604 B.C.).³⁶

When did Jehoiakim submit to Babylonian rule? Pratt either overlooked or ignored the information from the Babylonian chronicle about the aftermath of the battle of Carchemish. Instead, he cited Berosus' account and stated: "Nebuchadnezzar [1] immediately went to each of the countries which had been under Egyptian rule and [2] took a few captives from among their princes, [3] apparently without further battle."³⁷ Based on these erroneous claims, Pratt also claimed that [4] Judah's king Jehoiakim became subservient to Nebuchadnezzar in 605 B.C. Since 2 Kings 24:1 recorded that Jehoiakim rebelled after three years of servitude, Pratt further claimed that [5] Judah rebelled against Babylonia in 601 B.C. Based on those five claims, Pratt concluded: "The destruction ... [that Nebuchadnezzar's "vassal kingdoms of Syro-Palestine"] inflicted upon Judah in Nov.-Dec. 601 B.C. was severe enough that, as stated in ... [2 Kings 24:1-2] it was said to have fulfilled the words of the prophets that Jerusalem would be destroyed. This was the first destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. This destruction has generally been entirely overlooked in the histories of this period...."³⁸ The following examination focuses on the rational implausibility of Pratt's five historical claims and the virtual impossibility of his conclusion that 2 Kings 24:1-2 describes the destruction of Jerusalem in 601 B.C.

After the battle of Carchemish, did Nebuchadnezzar's army "immediately ... [go] to each of the countries that had been under Egyptian rule," including Judah? The portion of the Babylonian chronicle examined above indicates that the most likely answer is no. The Babylonian army immediately followed the retreating Egyptian troops into the district of Hamath, where the Egyptians were destroyed. The Babylonians then conquered all of Hamath. When the new emperor returned from being crowned in Babylon, he and his army established Babylonian "justice" and collected an immense treasure from the area under Babylonian control. The chronicle refers

³² Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 100. Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-29, read the phrase as *šal-ṭa-niš gin*, but similarly translated it as "traveled ... victoriously."

³³ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 68-69.

³⁴ Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 21-22.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

³⁶ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 100 (obverse line 14); Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27. See also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 27-28, 68-69; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-29.

³⁷ Pratt, "Lehi's 600-year Prophecy," section entitled "The Reign of Jehoiakim," footnote 7 and accompanying text.

³⁸ Pratt, "Lehi's 600-year Prophecy," section entitled "The First Destruction of Jerusalem."

to such area as Hattu, but not all of Hattu was then under Babylonian control, as the subsequent lines of the chronicle make clear. Contrary to the rational principle of thoroughness, Pratt relied on the account of Berosus and either ignored or overlooked the quite different account in the Babylonian chronicle.³⁹ Thus, the claim that served as the foundation for Pratt's historical account appears to be inaccurate.

Did Nebuchadrezzar's army in the summer of 605 B.C. take "a few captives" from among the "princes" of Judah? According to the narrative from Berosus, the answer may be yes. Pratt supported that narrative by referring to Daniel 1:1-6,⁴⁰ which placed the commencement of Nebuchadrezzar's attack on Jerusalem in the "third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah." According to some chronological assumptions, the battle of Carchemish could have occurred during Jehoiakim's third year; however, scholarly opinion about the accuracy of the date in Daniel 1:1 is not settled. For scholars whose assumptions place Judah's New Year in the autumn (the month of Tishri) and Jehoiakim's enthronement after 1 Tishri 609 B.C., the date may be considered accurate.⁴¹ Those scholars who assume Jehoiakim was enthroned earlier in 609 B.C. or who assume that Judah's New Year occurred in the spring (the month of Nisan) conclude (or imply by ignoring it) that the Daniel 1:1 date is incorrect or irrelevant.⁴²

Mark K. Mercer argued that "even at a slow rate of march, the Babylonians could have arrived at Jerusalem in less than a month."⁴³ Hence, during the summer months after the battles in Carchemish and Hamath, Nebuchadrezzar may have had enough time to march on Jerusalem. Mercer's argument, however, ignored or overlooked contrary evidence (discussed below) concerning the resistance faced by the Babylonian army in Syria and Palestine. John J. Collins argued that Daniel's chronological statement "cannot be reconciled with any plausible reconstruction of the course of events. ... Nebuchadrezzar could not have laid siege to a city as far south as Jerusalem in the few months between ... [the battle at Carchemish] and his coronation

³⁹ Pratt expressly referred to the Babylonian chronicle for other matters. Pratt, "Lehi's 600-year Prophecy," footnotes 6, 9-12 and 17.

⁴⁰ Pratt, "Lehi's 600-year Prophecy," section entitled "The Reign of Jehoiakim," footnote 8.

⁴¹ See, e.g., the following sources and the sources cited therein: Finegan, *Handbook* (Rev. ed.), 253-54, who changed his original assumptions about Jehoiakim's accession year, as set forth in Finegan, *Handbook*, 201-03; Malamat, "The Last Kings of Judah and the Fall of Jerusalem," 140-42; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Rev. ed.), 165-66. Malamat, "A New Record of Nebuchadrezzar's Palestinian Campaigns," 250, took the additional step of declaring that it was "impossible to sustain the date in Jeremiah [46:] 2 which places the battle of Carchemish in the fourth year of Jehoiakim." For a similar conclusion, see Freedy and Redford, "The Dates in Ezekiel," 464-66. However, Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Rev. ed.), 166, assumed that Daniel 1:1 (third year) and Jeremiah 46:2 (fourth year) were compatible because Daniel used an autumn (Tishri) New Year for chronological reckoning, while Jeremiah used a spring (Nisan) New Year.

⁴² See, e.g., the following sources and the sources cited therein: Jeremy Hughes, *Secrets of the Times: Myth and History in Biblical Chronology*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series 66 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 226-27; John H. Hayes and Paul K. Hooker, *A New Chronology for the Kings of Israel and Judah* (Atlanta, Georgia: John Knox Press, 1988), 86-92; Robert A. Anderson, *Signs and Wonders: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), 1-2; Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. DiLella, *The Anchor Bible: The Book of Daniel* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1978), 128-29; Tadmor, "Chronology of the Last Kings of Judah," 229.

⁴³ Mark K. Mercer, "Daniel 1:1 and Jehoiakim's Three Years of Servitude," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 27/3 (1989): 187. Mercer seems to have assumed that the Babylonians faced no resistance between Carchemish and Jerusalem (a distance of several hundred miles), but the Babylonian chronicle discussed below suggests otherwise.

later in 605.⁴⁴ Collins' position is similar to that of Josephus, that is, that Judah did not submit immediately,⁴⁵ and is consistent with additional information in the Babylonian chronicle about the resistance faced by Nebuchadrezzar's forces.

J. Philip Hyatt assumed that Daniel 1:1 probably represented a "confusion" between Jehoiakim's initial surrender to the Babylonian army and the surrender of his son, Jehoiachin, after the siege in Nebuchadrezzar's seventh regnal year.⁴⁶ John E. Goldingay assumed that "the date [in Daniel 1:1] is not intended as a precise one" and "perhaps [the author's intention was to] affirm God's Lordship at key transition points in history." Referring to J. B. Segal's interpretive work, Goldingay assumed that the terms "'first' or 'third' can be merely concrete ways of saying 'at the beginning' or 'not long after the beginning'," and thus, "the date probably makes a more than merely historical point."⁴⁷ In 1996, Gershon Galil summed up the unsettled opinions about Daniel 1:1, concluding that "no historical or chronological reconstruction should be based on the date."⁴⁸

Pratt's second claim—that "princes" from Judah were taken into captivity during the summer of 605 B.C. and, thus, that Jehoiakim submitted to Nebuchadrezzar at that time—appears to be based only on Berosus' questionable account and a date in Daniel 1:1 that has received no settled scholarly interpretation. Pratt's historical claim is problematic and in light of additional lines of the Babylonian chronicle to be examined below, appears to be improbable.

Did Babylonia's conquest of Syria, Palestine and Egypt occur "apparently without further battle"? Again, according to the questionable account from Berosus, the answer would be yes. However, the Babylonian chronicle indicates that an immediate capitulation of Syria and Palestine did not occur. To understand more about the chronology of the Babylonian conquest of that area and the Babylonian attempt to conquer Egypt, each of Nebuchadrezzar's years listed by the Babylonian chronicler must be considered. His accession year began with his assumption of the throne in September, 605 B.C., after which the new emperor returned to his army, gathered a vast treasure and returned to Babylon. In Nebuchadrezzar's "first" year, in the month of Simanu (29/30

⁴⁴ John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1993), 131.

⁴⁵ Before his quotation from Berosus, Josephus gave his own account concerning the battle of Carchemish and its aftermath. "Now in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, one whose name was Nebuchadnezzar took the government over the Babylonians, who at the same time went up with a great army to the city Carchemish, which was at Euphrates, upon a resolution he had taken to fight with Neco, king of Egypt, under whom all Syria then was. And when Neco understood the intention of the king of Babylon, and that this expedition was made against him, he did not despise his attempt, but made haste with a great band of men to Euphrates to defend himself from Nebuchadnezzar; and when they had joined battle, he was beaten, and lost many ten thousands [of his soldiers] in the battle. So the king of Babylon passed over Euphrates, and took all Syria, as far as Pelusium, excepting Judea. But when Nebuchadnezzar had already reigned four years, which was the eighth of Jehoiakim's government over the Hebrews, the king of Babylon made an expedition with mighty forces against the Jews, and required tribute of Jehoiakim, and threatened, on his refusal, to make war against him. He was affrighted at his threatening, and bought his peace with money, and brought the tribute he was ordered to bring for three years." *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, Whiston, trans., I: 311.

⁴⁶ Hyatt, "New Light on Nebuchadrezzar and Judean History," 279. See also W. Sibley Towner, *Daniel: Interpretation; A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), 22.

⁴⁷ John E. Goldingay, *Word Biblical Commentary: Daniel*, vol. 30 (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1989), 14-15.

⁴⁸ Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah*, 111 n18. See also Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *The Anchor Bible: II Kings* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1988), 308 n 6: "The item in Dan 1:1-2 ... cannot be used for historical purposes; the book of Daniel is not on a par with 2 Kings and the Babylonian Chronicle."

May through 28/29 June, 604 B.C.), the emperor and his army marched back to Syria and Palestine.

- 15 The first year Nebuchadnezzar (II): In the month Sivan he mustered his army
and
16 marched to Hattu. Until the month Kislev he marched about victoriously in Hattu.
17 All the kings of Hattu came into his presence and he received their vast tribute.⁴⁹

Despite the universality of the chronicler's claim that "all the kings" brought tribute, several appear to have showed resistance. The chronicler also recorded that Nebuchadnezzar "marched to *Ashkelon* and in the month Kislev [Babylonian Kislimu; 23/24 November through 22/23 December, 604 B.C.] captured it, seized the king, plundered [and sac]ked it. He turned the city into a ruin heap."⁵⁰ The name of the conquered city, *x-x(x)-il-lu-nu*, cannot be read with certainty because of an erasure in the text.⁵¹ Wiseman restored the name as *Ashkelon*⁵² and noted that captive noblemen and sailors from that city were "mentioned in a list of prisoners held in Babylon in 592 B.C."⁵³ In addition, the poetic oracle of Jeremiah 47:2-5 and the (feigned?) lament of 47:6-7⁵⁴ appears to reflect circumstances in which the Babylonian army marched south near the seacoast, cutting off help to Tyre and Sidon (which would not have been seeking help, unless they were resisting Nebuchadnezzar), capturing Gaza and destroying *Ashkelon*.⁵⁵ Perhaps, the ruin of *Ashkelon* would have convinced the kingdom of Judah to accept Babylonian sovereignty by the end of 604 B.C., if Jehoiakim had not submitted previously with "all" the other kings.

The question may be asked whether Jehoiakim was so fearful about the outcome of the resistance mounted by Tyre, Sidon, *Ashkelon* and perhaps other kingdoms in Hattu (and about the weakness of Egypt) that he rebelled against Egypt and threw open the gates of Jerusalem in the summer or autumn of 604 B.C. That scenario seems unlikely in light of Jeremiah 36 and the Babylonian chronicle. The Babylonian invasion plan appears to have focused on the seacoast and in December, on the seaside city of *Ashkelon*. Would Jehoiakim not have waited to open his treasury until the Babylonians turned their attention to the hill country of Judah? Would he not have waited until he judged that he had to submit; that is, only after Tyre and Sidon were isolated and *Ashkelon* was destroyed? Would Jehoiakim have submitted if *Ashkelon* had held out?

⁴⁹ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 100 (obverse lines 15-17); Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27. See also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 28, 68-69; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-29.

⁵⁰ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 100 (obverse lines 18-20; italics in the original); Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27. See also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 28, 68-69, 85; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-29.

⁵¹ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 100; see also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 28, 68-69, 85; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-29.

⁵² The restoration "was based on a comparison with *iš-qil-lu-na-a*." Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 23 n158. Compare Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 85.

⁵³ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 28.

⁵⁴ Bright, *Jeremiah*, 311; Robert P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 774-75; Jack R. Lundbom, *The Anchor Bible: Jeremiah 37-52* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1964), 230, 233-34; Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 696.

⁵⁵ Bright, *Jeremiah*, 309-12; Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary*, 775-77; William L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 26-52* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 336-39; Lundbom, *Jeremiah 37-52*, 235-42; Thompson, *The Book of Jeremiah*, 697-98. See Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 309, for a map indicating the likely routes taken by Egyptian and Babylonian armies during their campaigns in 609 and 605-604 B.C.

Jehoiakim might have been able to keep the gates and treasury at Jerusalem closed to the Babylonians at least until after Ashkelon fell in November/December 604 B.C. The Babylonian army remained in the field until the month of Shabatu (22/23 January through 19/20 February, 603 B.C.), when it returned to Babylonia with another huge treasure.⁵⁶

Additional perspective on Jehoiakim's submission to Nebuchadnezzar may be gained from Jeremiah 36. Sometime in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (the year when Carchemish was destroyed according to Jeremiah 46:2), "this word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day" (Jeremiah 36:1-2). For some time after that command, Jeremiah dictated and his scribe, Baruch, prepared a scroll of Jeremiah's prophecies (Jeremiah 36:4). Then, in the ninth month of Jehoiakim's fifth year (approximately December, 604 B.C., when Ashkelon was destroyed), a special fast was called in Judah (Jeremiah 36:9). Jeremiah, who was then barred from entering the temple, sent Baruch to read the scroll in the temple (Jeremiah 36:5-13).

The purpose of the fast is not known. According to some scholars, the destruction of Ashkelon "placed before the kingdom of Judah, still at least nominally a vassal-state of Egypt, a fearful decision and undoubtedly evoked the greatest consternation there; it was in all probability the occasion for the day of national fasting upon which the scroll was read. Apparently it was not long after this that Jehoiakim transferred his allegiance to the Babylonians."⁵⁷ There are, of course, other assumptive possibilities. When the scroll, which included a warning about an impending Babylonian destruction (Jeremiah 36:28-29), was read to Jehoiakim, he cut it into pieces, burned it (Jeremiah 36:14-23) and ordered the arrest of Baruch and Jeremiah, who had gone into hiding (Jeremiah 36:19, 24-26). These actions indicate that Jehoiakim was not ready to submit to Babylonian rule. They suggest that the purpose of the fast may have been to petition the Lord for success in resisting the Babylonians. When the Babylonians immediately withdrew to protect and transport to Babylonia their Philistine captives and treasure from Hattu, Jehoiakim's decision to resist may have seemed (at least temporarily) wise.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 100 (obverse line 20); Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27. See also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 68-69; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-29.

⁵⁷ Bright, *Jeremiah*, 182. Compare Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 28; idem, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 22-23; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 307-08; Finegan, *Handbook*, 202-04; idem, *Handbook* (Rev. ed.), 255; Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah*, 116; Hughes, *Secrets of the Times*, 226-27; Tadmor, "Chronology of the Last Kings of Judah," 229.

⁵⁸ The Masoretic text for Jeremiah 36:9 specified that the events occurred in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, but the Septuagint text (at Jeremiah 43:9) specified the eighth year. William L. Holladay argued in favor of the eighth year on two principal grounds. First, he thought that "a scroll that included words of warning [about a Babylonian destruction] ... would hardly have been burned even by so insensitive a king as Jehoiakim." That argument assumes that a king who would murder the prophet Urijah (Jeremiah 26:20-23) would treat a scroll of prophecies from a similarly critical prophet with more concern and respect. More to the point, the Babylonians, having spent most of 604 B.C. battling the cities of the seacoast and gathering captives and tribute, probably were in no condition to attack the fortified cities of Judah in December/January 604/603 B.C. By mid-January, the Babylonians were preparing to leave Hattu with their booty. Jehoiakim clearly wanted to silence Jeremiah's and Baruch's "pro-Babylonian" voices at once, and he may have killed them if he had caught them. Holladay's second argument for the eighth year was that a scribe might "consciously or unconsciously" have changed eighth to fifth, "thus assuming a gap of only one year from the 'fourth year' mentioned in [Jeremiah 36:1] ... but one cannot imagine a motive for the reverse change." Perhaps Holladay overlooked the mathematics of Jehoiakim's eleven-year reign and three-year vassalage to Nebuchadnezzar, which would suggest that a scribe might have assumed that the fast and subsequent submission to Babylonia occurred in Jehoiakim's eighth year—to be followed by three years of tribute, rebellion and an immediate response by Nebuchadnezzar about the time of Jehoiakim's death. See William

During Nebuchadrezzar's second regnal year (21/22 March, 603, through 8/9 April, 602 B.C.), Nebuchadrezzar returned to Hattu with a larger army, indicating again that significant resistance was expected in Hattu. The text is badly broken.

- 21 The sec[ond year]: In the month Iyyar the king of Akkad strengthened his large army and [*marched to Hattu*].
22 He encamped [...] ... large siege towers he moved acr[oss] ...
23 ... from the month] Iyyar until the month [... *he marched about victoriously in Hattu*].⁵⁹

The name of the city that might have been threatened with a siege or actually besieged that year has been lost. Tyre and Sidon were possible targets.⁶⁰ Jerusalem might have been another. Josephus reported that when the Babylonians focused their attention on Jerusalem, "the king of Babylon made an expedition with mighty forces against the Jews, and required tribute of Jehoiakim, and threatened, on his refusal, to make war against him. He [Jehoiakim] was affrighted at his threatening, and bought his peace with money, and brought the tribute he was ordered to bring for three years."⁶¹ Hence, the Babylonian forces may have gathered captives and booty from the destruction of Ashkelon in December/ January, 604/603 B.C., realized they were unprepared at that point to endure a siege of Jerusalem (and the other fortified cities of Judah) and returned to Babylon, taking captives and tribute from their conquered territory. With a strengthened army and large siege towers, the Babylonians may have marched on Jerusalem in the spring of 603 B.C.⁶² Jehoiakim may have resisted Babylonian subservience until that time (and that resistance might be behind the account in 2 Chronicles 36:6-7, which notes that Jehoiakim was bound in fetters and at least threatened with deportation to Babylon).⁶³

To conclude on this point, Pratt's claim that the Babylonians reasserted control over their province "apparently without further battle" would appear to be contradicted by two ancient sources. The Babylonian chronicle refers to military actions being involved during the first and second years of Nebuchadrezzar, including the siege of Ashkelon and the threatened or actual siege of a city whose name has been lost. Jeremiah 47:2-7 confirms that military resistance along the seacoast could have involved Tyre, Sidon, Gaza and Ashkelon.

Did Judah's king Jehoiakim become subservient to Nebuchadrezzar in 605 B.C.? The foregoing analysis suggests that Jehoiakim resisted the Babylonians (and resisted Jeremiah's warnings) until Judah was actually forced to submit, something that would have been improbable in

L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1-25* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 4; idem, *Jeremiah 2*, 255-56. The mathematics of a 4+4+3 division of Jehoiakim's eleven-year reign also would be consistent with the chronology presented by Josephus. See footnote 45 above.

⁵⁹ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 100-01 (obverse lines 21-23, italics in the original). See also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 28-29, 70-71; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-29.

⁶⁰ Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 26-29.

⁶¹ Josephus placed this event in Nebuchadrezzar's fourth year, but that is too late. *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, Whiston, trans., I: 311. See also John Gray, *I & II Kings: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 687-89.

⁶² Nebuchadrezzar and his army returned to Hattu in the Babylonian month of Aiaru (20/21 April through 18/19 May, 603 B.C.). Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 100-01 (obverse lines 21-23); Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27.

⁶³ R.J. Coggins, *The First and Second Books of the Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 304; Jacob M. Myers, *The Anchor Bible: II Chronicles* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1965), 218.

605. The Babylonians were busy enforcing their “justice” in the district of Hamath (and probably northward between Hamath and Carchemish) in that year. Jehoiakim submitted sometime later, perhaps in 604 (with “all the kings” who did not resist) or perhaps as late as the spring of 603 (after the destruction of Ashkelon and the return of a strengthened Babylonian army). In the light of 2 Kings 24:1, it seems most likely that the tribute of 603/602 B.C. was paid by Judah. The text referring to Nebuchadrezzar’s third year (9/10 April, 602, through 28/29 March, 601 B.C.) also is badly broken, but does mention that Nebuchadrezzar again “mustered his army and [marched] to Hattu” and that “He brought the vast [booty] of Hattu into Akkad.”⁶⁴ Again, I think it likely that Judah paid its tribute to Babylonia during 602/601 B.C.

Did Judah revolt against Babylonia in 601 B.C.? In Nebuchadrezzar’s fourth year (29/30 March, 601, through 17/18 March, 600 B.C.),⁶⁵ his army again returned to Hattu to govern the conquered kingdoms and collect tribute. The text in line 5 on the reverse side of the tablet is partially broken or difficult to read, but Wiseman and Grayson restored it as *šal-ṭ[a-niš ittallak]*.⁶⁶ Thus, the chronicler reported that the Babylonians “marched unopposed” or “marched about victoriously.” This statement appears to contradict Pratt’s assumed revolt by Jehoiakim in 601. If Jehoiakim refused to pay the 601/600 tribute, he would have directly opposed Babylonia’s army, which was in the region to exact “justice” and likely would have punished such an unwise choice immediately. Instead, the Babylonian army appears to have spent the latter part of 601, not punishing a rebellion in Jerusalem, but preparing for the invasion of Egypt. Nebuchadrezzar led the invasion. The crucial events began in the Babylonian month known as Kislimu (20/21 November through 18/19 December, 601).⁶⁷

- 6 In the month Kislev he took his army’s lead and marched to Egypt. (When) the king of Egypt heard (the news) he *m[ustered]* his army.
- 7 They fought one another in the battlefield and both sides suffered severe losses (lit. they inflicted a major defeat upon one another). The king of Akkad and his army turned and [went back] to Babylon.
- 8 The fifth year: The king of Akkad stayed home (and) refitted his numerous horses and chariotry.⁶⁸

The fact that in late December, 601 (or perhaps January, 600), the two great powers clashed in all-out battle near the borders of Egypt indicates that some significant part of 601 was spent by the Babylonians preparing for their dangerous invasion of Egypt (in addition to gathering tribute throughout Hattu from vassal-kingdoms such as Judah). It is improbable that the great army of Nebuchadrezzar would have invaded the northern coastal region of Sinai (the battle may have been near Pelusium)⁶⁹ to meet Necho and his great army if the kingdom of Judah had indicated even a hint of rebellion or unrest. Nebuchadrezzar and his generals reasonably would have

⁶⁴ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 101 (reverse lines 2-4, italics in the original); Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27. See also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 29, 70-71; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-29.

⁶⁵ Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27.

⁶⁶ Glassner restored the phrase in line 5 (and read it elsewhere in the text) as *šal-ṭ[a-niš gin]*, which he interpreted as “traveled ... victoriously.” Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-229. See also footnotes 32 through 35 above and the accompanying text.

⁶⁷ Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27.

⁶⁸ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 101 (reverse lines 6-8, italics in the original). See also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 29-31, 70-71; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 228-29.

⁶⁹ “Since Josephus summarises the Babylonian early conquests in the west as ‘as far as Pelusium’ it may be assumed that the contestants met in this region, possibly at Magdalu [near the Nile River delta].” Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 29.

postponed the invasion of Egypt if Judah had already rebelled and might be able to attack the rear guard of the Babylonian army to create a two-front war.

The silence of the Babylonian chronicle concerning a Jewish rebellion suggests that Jehoiakim and his advisors were not foolish enough to rebel with Nebuchadnezzar's large invasion army in their vicinity. More likely, having paid the tribute for 601/600 (Jehoiakim's third year of tribute; 2 Kings 24:1), they would have waited for the outcome of the battle. I must note that in each of Nebuchadnezzar's first and second years, the Babylonian army besieged or threatened to besiege a city in Hattu (Ashkelon and the city whose name has been lost). When Nebuchadnezzar did besiege Jerusalem in his seventh year (598/597 B.C.), the Babylonian chronicler recorded the event, including the exact date of the city's surrender.⁷⁰ Given those textual facts—and the other conflicts between the Babylonian chronicle and Berosus' account—can I reasonably assume that Judah did not submit its tribute in 601 B.C., that the Babylonian army did not immediately punish such a rebellion, and that the invasion of Egypt was carried out with the army of Judah capable of attacking the Babylonian rear guard? To me, this part of Pratt's scenario is highly unlikely.

Was Jerusalem destroyed in November/December 601 B.C.? Pratt concluded that the "destruction ... inflicted upon Judah in Nov.-Dec. 601 B.C. was severe enough that, as stated in ... [2 Kings 24:1-2] it was said to have fulfilled the words of the prophets that Jerusalem would be destroyed." The first two verses of 2 Kings 24 actually state the following:

- 1 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.
- 2 And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets.

According to Pratt's scenario, just as Nebuchadnezzar's great army was poised to invade Egypt with all the force that could be mustered (presumably including troops supplied by subservient kingdoms in Syria and Palestine), Nebuchadnezzar split his army and sent part of it (Babylonians accompanied by Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites) into Judah to punish Jehoiakim's rebellion. Since the rebellious Jews would not have supplied troops for the invasion of Egypt, the army of Judah was available to defend the kingdom against the bands of marauders. Nonetheless, according to Pratt's scenario, the marauders attacked Jerusalem directly and destroyed it almost immediately. Indeed, they were so successful, so quickly, that Pratt claimed "it was said to have fulfilled the words of the prophets that Jerusalem would be destroyed."

Unfortunately for Pratt's reliance on 2 Kings 24:1-2, those verses say nothing about the destruction of Jerusalem or any of the other fortified cities of Judah. Rather, bands of marauders attacked Judah, probably in its least protected areas. It also must be noted that about fourteen years later during the reign of Zedekiah, the great siege army of Babylonia required more than a year (more than two years according to some chronological scenarios) to breach the walls of Jerusalem and destroy the city.⁷¹ However, to maintain consistency with his *a priori* assumption about a Nephite 365-day calendar, Pratt was forced to assume that the army of Judah collapsed, the walls of Jerusalem were breached and the city was destroyed, all at the hands of bands of raiders over a period of a few weeks. Such assumptions create not just an unlikely, but an impossible, scenario. In fact, Jehoiakim would have been utterly foolish to rebel in 601 B.C. and if

⁷⁰ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 102 (reverse lines 11-13); See also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 32-35, 72-73; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 230-31.

⁷¹ See part 11 of this chapter on the chronology of Lehi's escape from the city.

he and his nobles were that foolish, the army of Judah and the walls of Jerusalem could not have been destroyed by bands of raiders during a few weeks in November/December 601 B.C.

How did the Babylonians fare in Egypt? Wiseman read the entry for Nebuchadrezzar's fifth regnal year as proof "that the outcome of the battle was a severe set-back to the Babylonians."⁷² Since the Babylonian army remained at home during Nebuchadrezzar's fifth year (600/599 B.C.) and for most of his sixth year (599/598), the army was not "marching about victoriously" in Hattu for nearly two years. Apparently, Jehoiakim chose not to send the tribute in those years, but realigned his kingdom with Egypt.⁷³ This conclusion is consistent with 2 Kings 24:1. Thus, after Jehoiakim submitted to Nebuchadrezzar (late in December, 604, or sometime in the first half of 603), the kingdom of Judah delivered tribute to Nebuchadrezzar in the years 603, 602 and 601. With the Babylonian army at home from early 600 to late 599, Jehoiakim rebelled.

How did Nebuchadrezzar respond to Jehoiakim's rebellion? The chronicler recorded that in the month of Kislimu (28/29 November through 26/27 December, 599 B.C.),⁷⁴ the ninth month of Nebuchadrezzar's sixth year and about two years following his attempted invasion of Egypt, the emperor again "mustered his army and marched to Hattu. He despatched [sic] his army from Hattu and they went off to the desert. They plundered extensively the possessions, animals, and gods of the numerous Arabs. In the month Adar [Babylonian Adarru; 24/25 February through 25/26 March, 598 B.C.] the king went home."⁷⁵ Wiseman thought this operation against the Arabs had two purposes. First, Babylonia took control of, and began obtaining booty from, the western Syrian desert that had once been part of the Assyrian empire. Second, Nebuchadrezzar may have been providing wider protection for areas such as Hamath and Riblah that he held securely and from which he could attack rebellious kingdoms such as Judah.⁷⁶ Wiseman also suggested that the tribe of Qedar and others east of Hazor were objects of Nebuchadrezzar's attack (citing Jeremiah 49:28-33) and that other tribesmen "may have been induced to co-operate with Babylonian garrison troops in raids on those districts, including Judah, which were not loyal to Nebuchadrezzar."⁷⁷

Accordingly, garrison troops or perhaps regular Babylonian detachments left in Hattu at the end of Nebuchadrezzar's sixth year (with troops from Syria, Moab and Ammon, according to 2 Kings 24:2) began to punish Judah's rebellion.⁷⁸ These raiding forces also may have begun taking captives (3,023 were deported in Nebuchadrezzar's seventh year, according to Jeremiah 52:28,

⁷² Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 29. See also John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 4th edition (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 327; Hughes, *Secrets of the Times*, 227; Hyatt, "New Light on Nebuchadrezzar and Judean History," 281; Malamat, "A New Record of Nebuchadrezzar's Palestinian Campaigns," 250-51; idem, "The Last Kings of Judah and the Fall of Jerusalem," 143; Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 29-31.

⁷³ See, e.g., the sources listed in footnote 72.

⁷⁴ Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27.

⁷⁵ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 101 (reverse lines 9-10); Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27. See also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 31-32, 70-71; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 230-31.

⁷⁶ Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 32.

⁷⁷ Ibid.; 2 Kings 24:2. "The destruction [in Judah] could not have been thorough; [Jeremiah 9:10-11, 17-22; 12:7-13] may reflect some devastation in Judah at this time." Hyatt, "New Light on Nebuchadrezzar and Judean History," 281.

⁷⁸ Gray, *I & II Kings*, 689. The Hebrew phrase translated "to destroy it" appears "[o]nly here in Kings. The verb appears again in this sense in the maledictions in Deut. 28:51, 63, in conjunction with the threat of exile." Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 306.

but some of those captives could have been captured and deported after the Babylonian siege army arrived in Judah). The raiders also would have destroyed property and taken booty in retaliation for Jehoiakim's failure to pay tribute in Nebuchadrezzar's fifth, sixth and seventh regnal years.⁷⁹ The Rechabites may have been obliged to take refuge in Jerusalem at this time (Jeremiah 35:11). The Babylonian chronicle then recorded Nebuchadrezzar's initiation of a final punishment intended for Jehoiakim.

- 11 The seventh year: In the month Kislev the king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to Hattu.
- 12 He encamped against the city of Judah and on the second day of the month Adar he captured the city (and) seized (its) king.
- 13 A king of his own choice he appointed in the city (and) taking the vast tribute he brought it into Babylon.⁸⁰

By the time Jerusalem was besieged (in Nebuchadrezzar's seventh year), Jehoiakim was reportedly dead and his eighteen-year old son, Jehoiachin, had "reigned in his stead" since the time the Babylonian army was mustered (2 Kings 23:6, 8) or before (2 Chronicles 36:9).⁸¹ This siege is circumstantial evidence that Jerusalem was not destroyed a few years earlier in 601 B.C. The outcome of this siege also indicates that the Babylonians were not intent on destroying the city, unless absolutely necessary to punish Jehoiakim. Despite the Babylonian chronicler's reference to the city's capture, the text also implies that the city capitulated before it was destroyed because a new king was "appointed in the city" (Grayson), "appointed there" (Wiseman) or "installed there" (Glassner).⁸² Jehoiachin surrendered the city, according to 2 Kings 24:11-12.

When the city was besieged, how did Jehoiachin prove his rebellious father's death and preserve the city from destruction? One possibility is suggested by Josephus, whose confused story of the city's surrender is contradicted by information in the Babylonian chronicle and Hebrew scriptures. According to Josephus, the Babylonians were permitted to enter the city, where they killed Jehoiakim (and others) and had his dead body "thrown before the walls, without any burial."⁸³ Perhaps more likely (and consistent with the chronology in the Babylonian record and Hebrew scriptures), Jehoiakim's buried body (2 Kings 24:6) may have been exhumed and displayed in some manner "before the walls," so that the Babylonians could examine it and a negotiated surrender of the new king and the preservation of the city could occur. This possibility also would be consistent with Jeremiah's scathing attack on Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 22:13-19), which ended with a prophecy that his dead body would be "cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem."

Once the negotiated preservation of the city had been secured, Jehoiachin surrendered himself, his mother, servants, princes and officers (2 Kings 24:12) and opened the gates of the city

⁷⁹ Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 31-32.

⁸⁰ Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 102 (reverse lines 11-13). See also Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 32-35, 72-73; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 230-31.

⁸¹ "Since Jehoiakim's death took place three months and ten days before the city's fall, that is, on the twenty-second of Marcheswan [the Babylonian month of Arahsamnu] (6/7th December 598 B.C.) he must have died and have been succeeded by Jehoiachin before [Nebuchadrezzar's] ... main forces had left Babylonia." Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 33. See also Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 26-27.

⁸² Grayson, *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*, 102; Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 72-73, 86; Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 231.

⁸³ *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, Whiston, trans., I: 312.

to Nebuchadrezzar on 2 Addaru, 15/16 March, 597 B.C.⁸⁴ At that point, Judah's next king occupied the royal quarters of Jerusalem and began to reign as the chosen vassal of Nebuchadrezzar,⁸⁵ under the name Zedekiah (2 Kings 24:17). This name (and Pratt's adopted position that Judah's king Jehoiakim was known to Nephi as Zedekiah)⁸⁶ will be considered in the third and final part of this appendix.

To conclude part 2 of this appendix, the foregoing analysis has shown that after the battle of Carchemish: (1) Nebuchadrezzar's forces did not accomplish the geographically extensive and battle-free conquest of Syria, Palestine and Egypt perhaps suggested by Berosus; (2) Judah's king Jehoiakim most likely became subservient to Nebuchadrezzar in late 604 or early 603 B.C.; (3) Jehoiakim most likely rebelled against Babylonia in 600 B.C., after Nebuchadrezzar's damaging battle with Egypt and retreat from Hattu; (4) the city of Jerusalem was not destroyed by bands of marauders in a few weeks in November/December, 601 B.C.; and (5) the city was standing and strong, and Nebuchadrezzar brought a powerful army to besiege it and punish Jehoiakim, just a few years later in 598/597 B.C.

⁸⁴ Parker and Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology*, 27. The surrender of Jerusalem has been treated in part 2 of this chapter on the chronology of Lehi's escape from the city.

⁸⁵ Mattaniah, a son of the late king Josiah (2 Kings 24:17), was "a king of [Nebuchadrezzar's] own choice (lit. heart)." Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldean Kings*, 33, 73.

⁸⁶ See footnote 2 above and the accompanying text.