

**“The Appointed Times Of The Nations”
(607 B.C.E. – 1914 C.E.)**

**A Critical Analysis of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society's
Doctrine of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ in the Year AD1914**

Much has been written and discussed about various Jehovah's Witnesses'¹ doctrinal peculiarities including the denial of the deity of Christ, the affirmation of the annihilation of the wicked, and some far less significant teachings such as their unscriptural (not “anti-scriptural”) concern about blood transfusions. However, less attention has been focused on their teaching that the year AD1914 was the year that Jesus Christ came in his “second coming.” For example, Walter R. Martin in his widely acclaimed book *The Kingdom Of The Cults* (an analysis of the major cult systems) makes a number of references to the date and the many problems with it, but states: “How they arrive at this arbitrary date no one can reasonably or chronologically ascertain.”² Although the date is not arrived at reasonably or consistently (with regard to chronology), I maintain that one can ascertain how the *Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society*³ arrives at the date, and in so doing demonstrate there is no scriptural support whatever.⁴

The Bible gives no dates specifically, but rather relatively (*i.e.*, by various reigns of kings, *etc.*), and certainly not relative to our present

¹Henceforth, abbreviated JW.

²p 97. See my follow-up to this paper entitled “Apocalyptic Disappointments and the ‘Appointed Times of the Nations.’”

³Henceforth, abbreviated WS.

⁴I also maintain that the average member of the JW knows little more than the date itself, with no idea as to how it is arrived at, and could certainly not support it with Scripture, even if they could explain its origin. They simply must (and do) acquiesce to the decrees of the WS which they are taught to believe—by the WS itself—is God's channel of truth (or modern day revelation). This society is supposedly composed of those from the 144,000 (RV 7; 14) who began to be “anointed” in the first century and will continue to be so until their number is literally fulfilled by the beginning of the thousand year reign of Rv 20:4. These are those addressed in the NT as “saints, priests, kings, firstborn, ambassadors, the church, the bride,” *etc.*, terms generally understood to refer to EVERY Christian by most students of Scripture. All of the other “Jehovah's Witnesses” are a part of what the WS calls “the great multitude” (Rv 7:9ff) or “the other sheep” (Jn 10:16), and they have no hope of the bulk of New Testament promises offered to all who believe (promises reserved by the WS for the “144,000”). They look forward to eternal life on a regenerated earth beginning with the thousand year reign.

This distinction between the “144,000” and the “other sheep” is very important. For it is here, and here alone, that the “other sheep” can find support for their acceptance of the AD1914 date; *i.e.*, they must accept the WS decrees, believing them to be inspired of God, for such a date cannot be seriously supported from the scriptures. Thus, this is simply another form of latter-day prophecy as found in varying degrees in Mormonism, Seventh Day Adventism, Roman Catholicism, *et. al.*

system of dating. EVERY system of dating events in the Bible fails to a certain degree in that it must go OUTSIDE the Bible to arrive at specific dates (thus, depending on human means of measuring time—no matter how accurate, still fallible). The best that can be expected are approximations. No specific date is inspired of God. It might be added that if such dates were significant, God could have revealed them in a far less ambiguous way (as in apocalyptic language). Preoccupation with date setting (common among latter-day prophet groups and premillennialists) diverts one's attention from the focus of the Word—the cross of Jesus Christ (1Cor 2:2).

The AD1914 date for the establishment of God's kingdom (Christ's second coming) is based upon (1) inaccurate, arbitrary, and inconsistent methods of date setting, and (2) faulty exegesis of the scriptures. If these two points can be demonstrated (in fact, only one of the two would be necessary), then confidence in the WS as spokesmen for God should be greatly diminished. If the WS is wrong about (or at least cannot support) a major doctrine of their belief system, what else are they in error about?

How accurate has the WS been predicting dates? Consider the following “missed” dates:

1874 (Oct.) – the second coming of Christ (“The Finished Mystery” pub. 1917). This was later “revised” to the 1914 date examined in this paper. (“Light” pub. 1930).

NOTE: if Christ returned in 1914 (visible only to the “eye of faith”), why in 1917 did the “eye of faith” publish a book stating he came in 1874?

1918 – “Christendom” destroyed as a system and replaced by “revolutionary republics” (“The Finished Mystery”)

1920 – these same “republics” destroyed in world embracing anarchy (“The Finished Mystery”)

1925 – LITERAL resurrection of the Old Testament faithful (Heb 11), for whom the WS built a house in San Diego (“Millions Now Living Will Never Die” pub. 1920)

NOTE: the author of “Millions...,” J. F. Rutherford, DIED 1/8/42 after claiming that those who learned of the “ransom sacrifice” and accepted the “Ransomer” would not die!!!

1975 (early Autumn) – beginning of the thousand year reign of Christ (Rv 20), which follows Armageddon; resurrection of ALL (save the 144,000 whose resurrection began in 1918); “new heavens and new earth;” cessation of death; *etc.* (“Life Everlasting” pub. 1966, 29–35; “Babylon The Great Has Fallen” pub. 1963, 634–635, 682)

Incredibly, many still put their trust in an organization making such predictions and failing so convincingly. There has never been an iota of

proof offered by the WS to demonstrate that ONE of their predictions were fulfilled and yet millions trust in them!

In the following presentation only the American Standard Version of the Old Testament scriptures (pub. in 1901, and distributed by the WS) and The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures (pub. 1969 by the WS) will be quoted. Only WS publications will be used as sources for their doctrine.⁵

References to the doctrine considered will always be attributed to the WS as opposed to the Jehovah Witnesses in general. Likewise, no individual WS member will be singled out (such as C. T. Russell or J. F. Rutherford); indeed, most WS “scholars” remain anonymous. The WS as a whole is responsible for this (and all other) JW doctrines, and the “other sheep” are merely responsible for their acceptance of the doctrine and their submission to the WS rather than the Bible alone.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF “THE APPOINTED TIMES OF THE NATIONS” AS DEFINED BY WS

A glance at the historical period under consideration is in order to put things into perspective. The dates given in the first column are those accepted by the majority of Bible and secular historians, those in second column are those put forward by the WS (highlighted area is the primary period for this discussion):

Division of Israel	931BC	997
Samaria falls to Assyria	722	740
Nebuchadnezzar rules in Babylon	605	625
Jehoiakim subjugated by Nebuchadnezzar	605/6	620
Jehoiachin subjugated by Nebuchadnezzar	597	617
Jerusalem destroyed by Babylon	586	607
Minor deportation	582	603
Babylon falls to Medo-Persia	539	539
Cyrus' decree to rebuild Temple	537/9	538
1st return of Israelites	536/8	537
Temple rebuilt	516	516
2nd return of Israelites	458	468
Walls of Jerusalem rebuilt & 3 rd return of Israelites	444	455
Medo-Persia falls to Greece	331	332
Greece (Seleucids) falls to Rome	63	63
Birth of Christ	4/6BC	2
Crucifixion; church inaugurated	AD30/3	33
Jerusalem destroyed by Rome	AD70	70

⁵The following abbreviations will be used: BGF (*Babylon The Great Has Fallen*, 1963), TFM (*Then Is Finished The Mystery Of God*, 1969), LE (*Life Everlasting*, 1966), WG (*Our Incoming World Government*, 1977), MS (*Make Sure Of All Things*, 1965)

According to the WS, “the appointed times of the nations” or the “Gentile times” is that period of time in history from the fall of Jerusalem (607_{BC}) to the second coming of Christ (AD1914) when Jesus sat upon David's throne as king and began to rule in his Messianic kingdom. Unlike other forms of premillennialism, this doctrine does not equate the 1,000 year reign with the kingdom of God, in-so-far as the time periods are simultaneous. During this time, when Christ was not king, God gave over the authority to rule to world powers, *viz.*, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome (to include The Holy Roman Empire) and the United States-United Kingdom (TFM 41-42).

Following is a brief summary of how the WS arrives at the AD1914 date for the conclusion of “the appointed times of the nations” (no scriptures/explanation are given at this point in the paper):⁶

- In the year 539_{BC} Cyrus the Persian captured Babylon, thus ending the Babylonian empire created by Nebuchadnezzar in 625_{BC}. One year later, Cyrus issued a decree for the Jews (taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar) to return to their homeland and in 537_{BC} they did return thus ending the 70 years of “desolation.” BGF 364-371
- Add 70 years to this date (537_{BC}) to arrive at the beginning of the desolation of the land of Judah (which is also the beginning of “the appointed times of the nations”). This desolation began with the fall of Jerusalem. Thus, 537 + 70 = 607_{BC}. BGF 371-373
- The appointed times of the nations ran from 607_{BC} to AD1914 as determined from Daniel 4.

BGF 174-181; WG 71-89; MS 89-91

- 1) The “seven times” represents the length of the appointed times of the nations.
- 2) A “time” represents one year.
- 3) A Bible year is lunar (not solar) or 360 days.
- 4) $7 \times 360 = 2,520$ days.
- 5) A Bible “day” is symbolic for a year.
- 6) 2,520 days = 2,520 years
- 7) $607_{BC} + 2,520 \text{ years} = AD1914$

INACCURACY, ARBITRARINESS, AND INCONSISTENCY

There is no physical evidence offered by WS for Christ's presence, which is said to be “invisible” (MS 451) and understood only by the eye of

⁶I do not intend to discuss the WS misuse of the word *parousia* (“coming” or “presence”) to support their claim of the “invisible” return of Christ in AD1914, nor have I addressed the nature of the kingdom as they mistakenly view it.

faith. Thus their confidence in the date has to be based strictly on their interpretation of Scripture. Their claims for various accompanying “signs” could be, and have been, made by numerous other date setters, and still these “signs” do not determine, but only help to support (in their view), their interpretation of the scriptures used in arriving at the date. In other words, with no concrete evidence to offer, their interpretation of the texts had better be very clear and accurate.

In the first place, the WS methods are *inaccurate*. Of great importance is the fact that the WS does not talk in generalities. For example, most historians (secular and Biblical) admit to room for error in setting of dates. However, the WS is very precise in all the dates they set, and *there is no room for error*. In establishing the date as “around Tishri 15 (October 4/5) in the year 1914 C.E.” (TFM, 30), the WS commits itself to very precise scripture interpretation in conjunction with equally as precise application of their interpretation to periods of history (which likewise must be exact)! Therefore, there is no room for miscalculation and their figures must be based upon flawless dating procedures. However, is this the case, or is this even possible?

The Bible fixes no dates relative to our system of dating, *i.e.*, concerning the Christian era (or Common Era, C.E.). It reckons dates relative to the reigns of various kings, *etc.* (*cf.* 2K 17:1; 18:1; Ezra 1:1; *etc.*). Therefore, one must depend on secular chronologists to establish dates. But how accurate are they? Do they, in fact, claim the accuracy that would be required to meet the needs of the WS in establishing the 1914 date? For example, from BGF 366–367 the WS states: “We accept from secular historians the year 539BC as a fixed date marking the downfall of Babylon, the Third World Power.” From this they reason to the year 537BC as the year Cyrus the Persian gave his decree for the Jews to return from Babylonian captivity. They continue, “It is important to fix this date, for by means of it we are able to fix the date for the beginning of the desolation of the land of Judah and the beginning of the 'times of the Gentiles,' or, 'the appointed times of the nations.'” (Luke 21:24, AV; NW) From this date they take the 70 years of desolation and arrive at 607BC, to which they add 2,520 years to get to AD1914 (see above and what follows). It is important to note, the 537BC date must be EXACT to arrive at AD1914. But it is impossible to determine 537BC as the date of the Jews actual return into the land of Judah. Accepting, for the sake of discussion, the 539BC date as exact (as most agree) there are still other questions.

First, exactly who is Darius the Mede of Dn 5:30–31? Secular history knows nothing of him. Did he reign independently BEFORE Cyrus, as the WS holds and thus has Cyrus' first year of reign as 538BC with the decree coming a year later, giving the Jews a little time to get ready before

their journey home? Secular history denies that Darius reigned before Cyrus, and in fact, the Bible never teaches it. It might be argued that they reigned concurrently (as Dn 6:28 might imply), which the WS agrees is a possibility (BGF 367 ft. nt.). Note also that Darius “received the kingdom” (Dn 5:31) and “was made king” (Dn 9:1); he did not TAKE it! Who gave it to him? God (Dn 4:17)? Or did Cyrus? Both options are possible. Both secular history and the Bible support Cyrus as the first king of the Medo-Persian empire (*cf.* 2Chron 36:22–23; Ezra 1; 4:3; 5:13–17; Is 44:28–45:1; Dn 1:21). Yet the Bible (alone) presents the problem of Darius the Mede.

Second, if Darius reigned for one year (which no secular historian and few biblical historians accept), as the WS claims (BGF 366), then Cyrus began reigning in 538/7BC (Note BGF 365, *et. al.* acknowledge Cyrus overthrew Babylon, yet they give no explanation as to how or why Darius the Mede would reign as king all alone). Cyrus' decree went out in his first year (Ezra 1), and giving a little time for the Jews to get ready and return to the land, the WS claims they arrived in the land in 537BC. This is possible, but what if Cyrus and Darius did reign concurrently (as the WS views as possible, see above), and Cyrus issued his decree in 539BC? Given (by the WS) the same amount of time to prepare and return, the Jews would have arrived home in 539/8BC! However, the 537BC date must be EXACT to arrive at AD1914. Yet the WS demonstrates that the 537 date is arrived at by speculation—they are not even certain when Cyrus began to reign, issued his decree, or in how long it took the Jews to prepare and return. They have no biblical date or even approximations for these events. And yet they must establish the 537BC date EXACTLY.

Obviously these questions demonstrate the lack of absolute accuracy with which to set the return of the Jews to the land—even if the fall of Babylon in 539BC can be set with absolute accuracy (which is questionable)! A careful examination of the WS fixing of the 537BC date shows that it is not accurate, nor can it be with absolute certainty, which it must be (least to the month) to arrive at the Oct. AD1914 date. Both secular and biblical historians place the date of the return to the land of Judah anywhere from 538–536BC. The WS offers no proof that their dates are anymore accurate than those who vary slightly from them.

In the second place, not only is the WS date setting method inaccurate, it is *arbitrary*. BGF (366) states: “We accept from secular historians the year 539BC as a fixed date, marking the downfall of Babylon.” However, WS rejects the date for the fall of Jerusalem given by secular historians, who, with almost unanimity, fix that date at 586BC. In fact, all dates preceding 539BC WS rejects as inaccurate. Their reason is that the land was to lay desolate for 70 years as per the word of God, and if secular dating is accepted, there are only about 50 years of desolation

(586–536). See below under **FAULTY EXEGESIS**. Thus, secular history must be wrong because it does not agree with the Bible (*i.e.*, according to the WS understanding of the 70 years desolation).

However, all of this assumes their understanding of the 70 years desolation is correct (*e.g.*, as to what it actually is, and when it was to begin and end). These points are discussed at length under **FAULTY EXEGESIS**. At this point, it only needs to be asked why the WS does not accept the 586^{BC} date, subtracting 70 years, and conclude that the desolation of Judah ended in 516^{BC}, making secular history wrong in the 539^{BC} date. Secular historians are as committed to the 586 date as they are to the 539 date.⁷ If the WS followed this line of chronology, the end of the times of the nations would then end in AD1935 (according to their system and interpretations).

It appears the decision by the WS to accept the 539^{BC} date and reject the 586^{BC} date from secular historians is arbitrary and prejudiced by their preconceived idea about the year AD1914. I could find only two references in their literature (in my possession) as to their rationale for this decision. First, BGF 138 implies the canon of Claudius Ptolemy “has long since been exploded.” Yet *Britannica* (which they are given to quote when they are in agreement with it) states: “Proof of the fundamental correctness of Ptolemy's canon has come from the ancient cuneiform tablets excavated in Mesopotamia...” (5:724, 1968). Apparently their “explosion” theory is not agreed upon by all. Ptolemy's canon covers the period from 747^{BC} to the second century AD. Some of what Ptolemy held as truth (*e.g.*, the earth as the center of the universe, and it's distance from the sun) has been proven false, but this does not mean his entire canon has “exploded.” Thus, the WS arbitrarily rejects Ptolemy's dates prior to 539^{BC}.

A second rationale is stated in LE (28–29):

In this twentieth century an independent study has been carried on that does not blindly follow some traditional chronological calculations of Christendom, and the published timetable resulting from this independent study gives the date of man's creation as 4026 B.C.E. According to this trustworthy Bible chronology six thousand years from man's creation will end in 1975, and the seventh period of human history will begin in the fall of 1975 C.E.

⁷*Britannica*, 12:1060–1061, 1968; *Archaeology and Bible History*, Joseph P. Free, chs. 20–21; *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, Merrill F. Unger, chs. 24–26; et. al. Some authorities accept 588/7^{BC} as the date for Jerusalem's fall, yet I know of none who accept 607^{BC} as offered by the WS. Also, there are no biblical or secular historians of note who separate the fall of Jerusalem and the first return from exile by seventy years.

This, of course, is the WS own anonymous study. The seventh period of the thousand years (*i.e.*, the thousand years of Rev. 20, BGF, 634–635) did NOT begin in the fall of 1975! This “trustworthy” study is proven WRONG!

Hence, no proof whatever is offered by the WS as to why they accept the 539^{BC} date from secular historians and reject the 586^{BC} date from the same sources!

The WS methods of date setting are also *inconsistent*. Under FAULTY EXEGESIS I will argue against the validity of the so-called “day/year theory” which (also arbitrarily) claims that in some contexts (mainly prophetic) a biblical day is actually a lunar year. Here, however, I only intend to show that the WS application of this theory is not applied consistently, and it is as arbitrarily applied as their acceptance/rejection of dates from secular historians.

To arrive at the AD1914 date the “seven times” of Dn 4 is converted from “time” to “year” to “360 days” to “2,520 years,” by the “day/year theory.” Although there is absolutely no warrant for this theory, we will accept it as valid (for the sake of this point), and demonstrate that the WS is inconsistent in their application of it. Their decisions as to when to apply the “theory” are arbitrary and based on preconceived ideas which have not been proven.

Following are examples of figurative passages using time periods and the WS interpretations:

Dn 7:25; 12:7 – “a time and times and half a time” = 3.5 years (12-28-1914 to 6-21-1918), period of persecution against the WS for preaching against world powers and Christendom.

Dn 12:11 – “1290 days” (1-18-1919 to 9-9-1922), period from the peace conference which paved the way for the League of Nations to a WS convention (9-8 to 13-1922)

Dn 12:12 – “1335 days” (9-14-1922 to 5-19-1926), day after a WS convention to the day of preparation for the following WS convention to be held May 25-31, 1926.

[The Dn interpretations taken from WG 125-147. There is absolutely NOTHING in the Dn passages that permits these interpretations. For any person to believe that those are the fulfillments, he would have to believe the WS to be inspired of God, for no where else are these interpretations even alluded to!!!]

Rv 2:10 – “ten days” is symbolic of all the days of the congregation on earth

Rv 9:5, 10 – “five months” is symbolic of all the days of the locusts (*i.e.*, the 144,000). Therefore, that is at least 1900 – 2000 years (their number began to be filled in the first century and continues until today).

Rv 11:2-3 – “forty two months...1,260 days,” 3.5 years (10-4/5-1914 to 3-26/27-1918), period of persecution against WS for preaching against world powers and Christendom. cf. Rv 13:5

NOTE: TFM 261 states: “This calculation would correspond with another way of measuring the SAME TIME PERIOD [my emphasis – SS] as given in Daniel 7:25.” (see notes above). Note that the time periods are 2 – 3 months different! MORE INCONSISTENCY!!!

Rv 11:9. 11 – “three days and a half,” symbolic of a short period of time (6-1918 to 3-1919) (about 9-10 months) when the WS members were jailed.

Rv 12:6. 14 – “1 260 days...a time, and times, and a half a time,” 3.5 years (4-13/14-1919 to 10-4/5-1922). Time of spiritual feeding through the international conventions and WS publications.

[The above Rv interpretations are taken from TFM and the notes on the various verses.]

Rv 20:3-5, 7 – “the thousand years,” 1,000 years (1975 to 2975) of the “Sabbath millennium,” seventh thousand year period of mankind (BGF 634-635).

It is curious that not once does the WS apply the “day/year theory,” but rather arbitrarily make the passages either symbolic or literal. There is no evidence that the time periods referred to are suggested by the contexts of the passages. It is also curious that in the very passages the WS refers to define “time” as “one year” for Dan 4, they interpret as one year and do not convert the one year to 360 day/years as they do in Dn 4 (cf. Rv 12:6, 14, BGF 179). There is no consistency, or an explanation for the inconsistency from the WS (or reason). Note also that in Dn 7:25; 12:7 “time” is “one year,” but in Dn 4 “time” actually is 360 years! There is not even consistency within the same book!

The first basic problem with the WS doctrine concerning the second coming of Christ in the year AD1914 is that their methods of date setting are *inaccurate*, *arbitrary*, and *inconsistent*. The second basic problem is that this doctrine is based on the faulty exegesis of scripture.

FAULTY EXEGESIS

Primarily two periods of time are involved: (1) “the seventy years” of desolation and (2) “the seven times” of Daniel (a.k.a. “the appointed times of the nations”). By establishing the dates of the first, the WS proceeds to determine the dates for the second.

“Seventy Years of Desolation”

Above I demonstrated that the dates the WS uses to arrive at 607BC for the fall of Jerusalem, and thus the beginning of the 70 years of desolation, are determined inaccurately and arbitrarily. The primary

concern of the WS is that the widely accepted date for the fall of Jerusalem (586^{BC}) to the return from Babylonian captivity of the Jewish exiles (537^{BC}) is not 70 years, which leads them to conclude that one of the dates must be wrong (BGF 372). This however is based upon a misunderstanding of what the 70 years was to involve and when they were to begin and end. It is possible to literally apply the 70 years to secular dating and arrive at an acceptable solution. The 70 years will not be viewed as figurative (although they well could be), for this writer does not believe them to be figurative nor does he see any reason to doubt that the 70 years can be literally applied to secular dates as we have them. Therefore, the dates used throughout this section will be those as accepted by the majority of biblical and secular scholars.

The passages which speak of 70 years in respect to our discussion are 2Chron 36:20–21; Jer 25:11–12; 29:10; Dn 9:1–2; Zech 1:12; 7:5. From the following sections of scripture we can construct a sequence of events in Judah's history (WS date variations are indicated): 2Chron 36:1–23; 2K 23:26–25:30; Jer 25–39 *cf.* Ezra; Neh.; Hag.; Zech.

605/6^{BC} (WS 620) – King Jehoiakim of Judah is subjugated by king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Vessels of the Temple are removed and apparently some captives are taken *cf.* Dn 1:1–7

602^{BC} – Jehoiakim rebels against Nebuchadnezzar but God sends Babylon against Judah to destroy it “according to the word of Jehovah which he spake by his servants the prophets...to remove them out of his sight” (2K 24:2–3 *cf.* Jer 25:1–11; 26:1ff). Thus, the 70 years could have begun with the first subjugation. Nothing in the Jer. text denies the beginning of the 70 years when the words were spoken (or shortly thereafter), see Ezek 1:1–2; 40:1 who prophesied BEFORE Jerusalem fell but DURING exile. In other words, the beginning of the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy could have occurred with Jehoiakim and Jeremiah's prophecy could be what 2K 24:2–3 is at least in part referring to.

597^{BC} (WS 617) – King Jehoiachin of Judah is subjugated by Nebuchadnezzar; the Temple is sacked; most taken captive (save the poorest) Ezek 40:1

586^{BC} (WS 607) – In the fifth month King Zedekiah of Judah is subjugated by Nebuchadnezzar; Jerusalem falls; more captives are taken, the poorest left (2K 25:120–22; Jer 40:1–6)

586^{BC} (WS 607) – In the seventh month the Jews left behind flee to Egypt against Jeremiah's preaching (2 K 25:4.P5–26; Jer 41:1–43:8)

582^{BC} – a minor deportation Jer 52:28–30

539^{BC} – Babylon falls to Cyrus; Cyrus' decree for the Jews to return and build their Temple Ezra 1; 3:7; 4:3; 5:13–17; 6:3–5, 14–15; Is 44:28–45:1

536/8^{BC} (WS 537) – 1st return of Jews under Zerubbabel Ezra 1–2

534/6–22^{BC} – Temple work begins and is stalled Ezra 3–4

516^{BC} Temple completed Ezra 5 – 6; Hag; Zech

458^{BC} (WS 468) – 2nd return of Jews to homeland under Ezra 7–10

444/5^{BC} (WS 455) – 3rd return of Jews to homeland under Nehemiah Neh.

As to the sequence of events the WS pretty much agrees. As to the dating they agree in part, especially with 539^{BC} and 516^{BC} (BGF 366,

380). Above I explained why they do not accept the dates prior to 539BC. They insist the 70 years could not have begun with Kings Jehoiakim or Jehoiachin (BGF 137), although this denies clear scripture (2K 24:2–3).

A consideration of the passages concerning the 70 years will help us understand what was to occur during that time period. What is “desolation?” The word occurs in the following texts that speak directly of the 70 years: 2Chron 36:21 Heb. *shamem* (LXX ἐρημώσεως cf. Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14; Lk 21:20 only in NT); Jer 25:11 Heb. *chorbah* (LXX ἀφανισμόν cf. Heb. 8:13 only in NT); Jer 25:12 Heb. *shemamah* (LXX ἀφανισμόν); and Dn 9:2 Heb. *chorbah* (LXX ἐρημώσεως).

The WS holds (BGF 371–373) that this desolation required that the land lay untilled and TOTALLY uninhabited for 70 full years. They appeal to 2K 25:26; Jer 41:1–43:8 to support the fact that those Jews who had not been deported fled to Egypt, thus leaving the land TOTALLY uninhabited, enabling the 70 years desolation to begin in that same ear (607BC, WS). This was the seventh month of Nebuchadnezzar’s 19th year (2K 25:8–12, 25–26), the PRECISE beginning (according to the WS) of the 70 years desolation. BUT Jer 52:30 states that in the 23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar (602BC, WS; 582BC, all other chronologists) more captives were taken! The WS claims however (BGF 167) that these were those who fled to Egypt in 607BC, and were later taken captive to Babylon!

There are a number of problems with the WS interpretation. First, absolutely NOTHING in the Jeremiah text lends credence to this. The context implies they were taken out of Judah, this is the most natural reading of the text. Second, there is no biblical evidence (including Jer 25:17–29 as used by the WS, BGF 197) that supports the idea that the Jews were taken from Egypt into Babylonian captivity. The primary purpose of taking people captive from their homeland was to unsettle them so much as to hinder any acts of organized rebellion. This was realized by taking the people to Egypt—they went there out of fear of the Babylonians in the first place (2K 25:26). Third, Josephus (Antiquities X, 9, 7) is quoted for *secular* support (BGF 165) of the 70 year period lasting from the fall of the city (586BC; 607BC, WS) to the first return of Jews to the land. Yet this same source, in a later letter (Against Apion I, 21) states that the Temple laid desolate for 50 years! See also Dissertation V, 23 of Whiston's edition. So which are we to accept?

Also from Ant. X, 99, 7 Josephus makes reference to the expedition of Nebuchadnezzar in his 23rd year against Coelesyria, AFTER which he took Ammon and Moab, AFTER which he overthrew Egypt and took away the Jews who fled there. Perhaps Josephus did not misunderstand Jer 52:30 (like the WS), or he was not even considering that passage, but had other evidence that Nebuchadnezzar took the Jews from Egypt. Regardless, it is possible that Nebuchadnezzar himself did both of these

in his 23rd year (*i.e.*, take captives from both Egypt and Judah), or while he was in Egypt his captain, Nebuzardan, could have been in Judah taking more captives there (Jer 52:30). But all this assumes he took Coelesyria, Ammon, Moab, and Egypt in his 23rd year! Josephus does not say how long AFTER these other conquests Nebuchadnezzar took Egypt. Most likely it took him more than one year to accomplish all this! Ezek 29–32 gives the account of Egypt's overthrow by Nebuchadnezzar. Ezek 29:17–20 states it was “in the 27th year” (*i.e.*, from Jehoiachin's and Ezekiel's exile *cf.* 1:2; 40:1) or 570^{BC} (590^{BC}, WS) this overthrow had NOT YET OCCURRED, and it was to FOLLOW Nebuchadnezzar's overthrow of Tyre (Ezek 26–28) which occurred AFTER his overthrow of Jerusalem (Ezek 26:1–7; prophecy uttered 586^{BC} or 607^{BC}, WS)! That Nebuchadnezzar's army was “to serve a great service against Tyre” (Ezek 29:18 – “labor hard” RSV) is supported by the facts of history (*e.g.*, see *Josephus Against Apion* I, 21) which record Nebuchadnezzar's siege of the city as lasting 13 years FOLLOWING Jerusalem's overthrow (thus ending no earlier than 573^{BC}; 594^{BC}, WS).

Therefore, both biblical and secular accounts of Nebuchadnezzar's overthrow of Egypt (under Pharaoh Hophra) occurred AT LEAST 13 years AFTER the fall of Jerusalem! The Bible makes no reference to the Jewish refugees in Egypt being taken captive by Babylon—Jer 52:30 cannot refer to such for it would seem to disagree with Ezek 26–32. We can only conclude the Jer 52:30 speaks of a deportation from Judah (as the context implies), and not a deportation from Egypt which probably would have occurred at least 8 years later. The WS NEEDS Jer 52:30 to refer to a deportation from Egypt (or some place other than Judah) to support their theory that the land was TOTALLY depopulated in the seventh month of the year—Jerusalem fell (607^{BC}, WS) so that the “desolation” could begin.

BGF 182–184 recognizes Nebuchadnezzar's siege on Tyre (“12 years”) as preceding his assault on Egypt, which they say occurred in 588^{BC} (*i.e.*, 567^{BC} by other chronologists). Thus, when it was most likely for Nebuchadnezzar to take Judean captives from Egypt (if that is what Jer 52:30 was speaking of), the WS makes no such correlation between the Jer 52:30 passage and when they recognize history and have Nebuchadnezzar in Egypt. They are probably correct in not tying Nebuchadnezzar's historical invasion of Egypt and Jer 52:30, but that leaves them in a dilemma; they must put Nebuchadnezzar (or his army under Nebuzardan) in Egypt in his 23rd year (Jer 52:30) which neither biblical nor secular accounts support—at least the WS no such support.

If the 70 years is taken as literal (as this writer does), then we must define what was to occur during this period (*i.e.*, what is the “desolation?”) in order to determine when it occurred, if we are to accept secular and biblical chronologists in their dating of the fall of Jerusalem (586^{BC}) and

the first return of the Jews to Judah (536/8BC), for this is only a period of about 50 years.

Before directly considering the passages mentioning the 70 years and “desolation” (see above), there are some related passages that should be considered which use the Hebrew words (in one form or another) found in those passages.

Lev 26:14–46 (like Dt 28–30) sets forth curses and blessings (conditions) of God's covenant with Israel. How is the “desolation” described?

17 “enemies...shall rule over you”

18 “chastise you seven times more” (*i.e.*, complete and sufficient punishment as indicated by the symbolic number “seven” *cf.* 21., 24, 28)

19 “break the pride of your power” *cf.* 17

20 “land shall not yield” 11

22 “ways shall become desolate”

23–26 unreformed Jews BEFORE given over to enemy but AFTER their “ways” became “desolate”

27–33 “sanctuaries unto desolation...you I will scatter among the nations...and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste”

34–39, 43 land to enjoy Sabbath rests, (1) while it lay desolate, and (2) while Jews in exile

40–46 Jews remembered by Jehovah even while they were in exile

Thus, the land was to lay desolate as it enjoyed its Sabbaths (*i.e.*, land unused *cf.* Lv 25:1–12) and the Jews were in exile (the enemy's land). This passage does NOT say that ALL the people had to be out of the land nor that the Temple had to be destroyed in order for the land to enjoy its Sabbaths. Obviously this was not a condition for the land to enjoy its Sabbath, for it was to occur every seventh year according to Lv 25. Were the Jews to destroy the Temple and depopulate the land every seven years? Of course not! Therefore, at least according to this passage, for the land to enjoy its Sabbaths some Jews could be in the land and the Temple could be standing.

Other passages include Is 62:4–5 (desolation relates to Jehovah's absence from Israel *cf.* Ezek 10; 40–48); Jer 32:42–44 (land is “desolate, without man or beast”); Ezek 33:21–29 (desolation came upon the remnant INHABITING the “waste places” [*i.e.*, desolations – *chorbah*]); Ezek 36:33–36 (desolation described as untilled land and destroyed cities); Dn 8:13; 9:26–27; 11:31; 12:11 refer to the destruction of the Temple (*cf.* Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14 and Jerusalem *cf.* Lk 21:20), however, none of these references refer to the fall of Jerusalem in 586BC, but rather AD70 (nevertheless, the principle is the same).

From the above passages it can be seen that “desolation” need not mean the land is TOTALLY uninhabited (Ezek 33), but in a practical sense

the land is “without man or beast” (*i.e.*, the area is as if it were not civilized). The primary concern is the destruction that is to take place because Jehovah is no longer there to protect his people. Ezekiel saw this in his visions of chapter 10 when Jehovah left the Temple preparing the way for its destruction. But he returns after the Temple is symbolically rebuilt in chapters 40–48. It seems clear that Jehovah was gone for all practical purposes when he allowed (or in fact initiated) the subjugation of the Judean kings (beginning with Jehoiakim).

The passages which contain both the terms “seventy years” and “desolation” define what was to occur. In 2Chron 36:21 (*cf.* 17–21) “Therefore he [God] brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans [Nebuchadnezzar]” does not relate to JUST what Zedekiah had done (Note vs. 13, “and he [Zedekiah] ALSO rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar” *cf.* 36:5–10 with 2K 24:1 referring to the rebellion of Jehoiakim), or that Nebuchadnezzar came only upon Zedekiah. That this plundering began 20 years before Jerusalem's fall (and Zedekiah) is described in 2Chron 36; 2K 23–25; Jer 25–39.

Note especially that the mocking of the messengers (2Chron 36:16) had occurred for years (Jer 25:3–4; *etc.*). It was this very thing that the Jews were being punished for (*i.e.*, rejecting God's word through his prophets), and that it (punishment) began during king Jehoiakim's reign is evident from 2K 24:1–3. The punishment was fully extended in 582^{BC} with the final deportation (Jer 52:30) and completed in 536/8^{BC} with the Jews return to the land—yet the Temple wasn't completed until 516^{BC} (*cf.* Ezek 10; 40–48, see notes below). Thus, the word is fulfilled that Jeremiah uttered (2Chron 36:21, see below), and the desolation can be said to have BEGUN with Jehoiakim, when the land began to be emptied out. This is a PRACTICAL truth! The land could have then begun to enjoy its Sabbaths (through no choice of the Jews), *cf.* Ezek 33:24, 27 which refers to the “desolate places” as being inhabited.

Jer 25:11–12 (1–38) supports this understanding. Verses 1–11 demonstrate that the punishment was going to come upon the people for rejecting God's word through his prophets. This statement came during Jehoiakim's 4th year (Nebuchadnezzar's first), the year Nebuchadnezzar first besieged Jerusalem (*cf.* Dn 1:1–7; 3rd year of Dn 1:1 may be Babylonian way of reckoning time as opposed to Jeremiah's Palestinian reckoning, or see K & D V.9). The punishment was to be Nebuchadnezzar's assault on the land and its inhabitants (9), the joy gone from the land (10), and service to Babylon for 70 years (11). None of this can be denied to have begun with the first assault upon Jerusalem in 605/6^{BC} during Jehoiakim's reign, as demonstrated above. K & D V.8, 374–375 determines the 70 years as 606–536^{BC} from both biblical and secular accounts in great detail. In vs. 12–14 Babylon will become a

desolation thus ending the 70 years. This practically occurred in 539BC when Babylon fell to Cyrus and the Persians. The WS does not deny this fact. But does it hold that desolation in THIS case means that Babylon was to be TOTALLY depopulated? Certainly not! They know better, for it was years before such was the case. Commenting on Is 14 concerning the desolation of Babylon when it fell in 539BC, BGF (318) states: "It took centuries of time to do this with literal Babylon." This is inconsistent! Finally, in vss. 15 – 38 the *nations* were to be a desolation. Are we to conclude they too were TOTALLY depopulated?

Daniel (9:2 *cf.* 1–27) possibly reading in 539BC, saw in Jeremiah the number of years (70) which should pass before the end of the desolations. Verse 11 refers to Lv 26 (Dt 28–30). In vs. 12 "he hath confirmed" could mean fulfilled the 70 years. In vss. 17–19 Daniel's prayer is that the desolation end. He probably would not have prayed so had not the 70 years been near an end (for he believed they had to be fulfilled). In vss. 20–27 the "seventy years" desolation is used to introduce the "seventy weeks" which would end with the fall of Jerusalem in AD70 (*cf.* vs. 25 Cyrus' decree which ends the "seventy years" also begins the "seventy weeks").

In addition to the above references consider that in Jer 29:10–14 the "seventy years" was to be fulfilled with Babylon's fall and the return of the Jews. Zech 7:5 points not only to the literalness of the seventy years, but to the possibility that they were still continuing as Zechariah wrote (520BC *cf.* 1:1 Darius ruled the Persians 522–486BC). See especially Zech 1:12. This could mean that the 70 years in this context refers to the destroyed Temple (586–70 = 516BC when it was rebuilt). Maybe there are two seventy year periods (as some believe): (1) a period of exile (606 – 70 = 536BC), (2) a period of the destroyed Temple (586 – 70 = 516BC) (see below). In Ezra 1:1–11 Cyrus (in 539BC) fulfilled Jer 25:11–12 (*cf.* Is 44:24–45:1, 13).

Cyrus' decree was "to build him (Jehovah) a house (Temple) at Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:3, 5; 4:3; 5:13–17; 6:3–5, 14–15; Is 44:28). Of course it was necessary for the Jews to return in order for this to take place. Would then the "desolation" end when the Temple was finished ("desolation" and a destroyed Temple were often synonymous, see above passages)? Zech 1:12–17 (*esp.* 12) allows the inference that the 70 years were continuing during the second year of Darius (1:1 *cf.* Ezra 4:24; Hag 1:1, see above). Also Ezekiel lays great emphasis on the reconstruction of the Temple (40–48).

Of the previously discussed scriptures 2Chron 36:20–21 permits the rebuilding of the Temple (516BC) as the termination point of the 70 year period. The immediate context discusses the destruction of Jerusalem—"servants...until the reign of the kingdom of Persia" need not

parallel “until the land had enjoyed it's Sabbaths” (in THIS context). Admittedly, they most naturally do parallel one another, but they do not have to! Even when the Jews first returned to the land, they only partially inhabited it as in the period 606–586BC. The land could have continued to enjoy it's Sabbaths until the Temple was completed (516BC). Of course this raises the question as to how the people would obtain food other than from animals (but they too would have to eat). Logic would seem to dictate that although this passage might be used to support the building of the Temple as the end of the 70 years, it seems best not to.

Jer 25:11–12; 29:10 militate against the building of the Temple as the termination point of the 70 years for they speak of the Jews serving the king of Babylon for 70 years, which ended in 539BC. This is another argument against the exactness of the WS dating. For they accept Babylon's fall in 539BC (BGF, 366), and if you add 70 years to that (for the period of service to the king of Babylon) then you arrive at 609BC and NOT 607BC as the WS doctrine demands in order to get to AD1914 (as will be demonstrated under the following discussion on Dn 4).

Lv 26:34, which speaks of the desolation lasting while the Jews were in the enemies' land, also militates against the desolation ending with the rebuilt Temple. However, it could mean that while they were in their enemies' land there would be desolation, as seems obvious, but nothing demands that the desolation stop as soon as they return from their enemies' land. But this too seems strained.

Although not without difficulty, because of the inexactness in biblical and secular dating as well as the possible interpretations of the above scriptures, two literal periods can be set forth as to the possible fulfillment of the 70 year desolation of Judah and Jerusalem:

- 606 – 536BC – from the first deportation under Jehoiakim to the first return under Zerubbabel.
- 586 – 516BC from the fall of the Temple to the rebuilding of the Temple

This writer prefers the first, although either can be lived with. It is quite possible that both thoughts are in mind depending upon which passage is considered. However, the position taken by the WS cannot be accepted for three simple reasons: (1) it contradicts all known facts of history (relative to dating), (2) it requires an interpretation concerning the 70 year period not demanded by Scripture, and (3) it requires an exactness of dating Scripture does not provide. Whatever the 70 year period is, and whenever it occurred, one thing is clear: the preciseness demanded by the WS to arrive at their Oct. AD1914 date for the coming of Christ and the end of the “appointed times of the nations” cannot be achieved. Furthermore, the above suggested understandings of the 70 year period

do no harm to the scriptures and demonstrates that they do in fact harmonize with secular history, which (contrary to the position the WS takes) is even more evidence that they are the words of God.

“The Appointed Times of the Nations”

The second period of time involved in the WS doctrine of AD1914 is “the appointed times of the nations” (a.k.a. “the Gentile times”) (Lk 21:24 see MS 89–90; BGF 367–372). According to the WS this is the period in history when the kingdom of God did not rule, and power was given over to Gentile or world kingdoms. This cessation of rule occurred in 607BC with the fall of Jerusalem (WG, 49). God's kingdom ruled through the nation of Israel until that time. The 607BC date will henceforth be used to demonstrate how the WS arrives at the AD1914 date. It is the claim of the WS that Dn 4 provides the EXACT time the world kingdoms would rule. Thus it becomes simple arithmetic to determine the very month and year God would begin ruling again in the Messiah, the year AD1914.

First, it is necessary to take a brief look at Lk 21:24, for it is here that the WS gets the name of this period of time.⁸ Lk 21:24 literally says “times of nations” (καίροὶ ἐθνῶν cf. Rv 11:2). It is difficult to determine for certain what this phrase means, but we need not know what it does mean to know what it does not mean. What do we know to be true of the times of the nations? It relates to the destruction of the city of Jerusalem in the year AD70 (cf. Mt 24; Mk 13; Lk 17). Therefore, Jerusalem's destruction in AD70 somehow helps define it.

Either of two ideas are possible by the grammar and context. First, the times were fulfilled by Jerusalem's fall in AD70, thus ending the “trampling” (from πατέω – “to tread under foot,” used metaphorically of *subjugation* cf. Lk 10:19–20; *persecution* cf. Rv 11:2, see 13:5–7; *judgment* cf. Rv 14:20; 19:15, see Is 25:10LXX; Joel 3:13; Zech 10:5). Lk 21:22 speaks of the “days of meting out justice,” *i.e.* judgment on Jerusalem, “that all...be fulfilled” (*i.e.*, Dn 9:24–27; 12:5–13 with Mt 24:15).

The second option suggests the times will be fulfilled when the “trampling” viewed as *subjugation*, ends because Jerusalem regains its independence of Gentile domination. Many argue this historically occurred in AD1948 (NOT, AD1914)! If carried out even further (as most dispensationalists do) the Temple would be rebuilt. This option must be rejected for Yahweh stopped dealing with the Jewish nation as the elect in AD70, for all time, contrary to the expectations of premillennialists.

⁸The primary sources used to detail the Gentile times are BGF chapter 10 and WG chapter 5.

Neither time nor space permits a discussion of this matter, however, it is not relevant to the subject at hand. The only way around this conclusion is to spiritualize Jerusalem at the end of the appointed times of the nations. Doing this (spiritualizing) can bring one to any conclusion one desires. Whatever one believes “the appointed times of the nations” to be, Lk 21:24 provides no support for the WS in establishing the AD1914 date.

Dn 4 is the only scripture the WS offers to establish the length of the “appointed times of the nations.” Ironically, it is here that the entire doctrine unravels. The WS exercises the poorest exegetical approach that can be imagined. They violate all known principles of hermeneutics and logic to establish one of their fundamental doctrines from a highly figurative passage. What is even more incredible is the fact that the interpretation of this section of scripture is provided by God himself and yet the WS virtually ignores its immediate application and applies its own interpretation which has no correspondence to the one given in the text.

First the interpretation Daniel gives to this section of scripture (*i.e.*, Nebuchadnezzar’s dream) is considered, and then the WS interpretation with a critique.

The first nine verses set the scene. Nebuchadnezzar has a fearful dream and calls for an interpretation from his own people, but they are unable to deliver. Daniel is then told the dream. The dream is *described* in 10–18, *interpreted* in 19–27, and *fulfilled* in 28–37. DANIEL’S interpretation of the dream declares that the dream concerned *Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom* vss. 22–24. His kingdom would stand while he (Nebuchadnezzar) was “driven from men...to eat grass as oxen, and...be wet with the dew of heaven” (vss. 25–26). His ouster was to last “seven times” (vss. 16, 23, 25, 32). This time period was long enough to teach “the living...that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the lowest of men” (17). It was long enough for *Nebuchadnezzar* to learn the same lesson: “and seven times shall pass over thee [Nebuchadnezzar]; till thou [Nebuchadnezzar] know that the Most High ruleth” (vs. 25). The “seven times” would end *during the reign* of Nebuchadnezzar (vs. 26), “after that (*i.e.*, seven times) thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule” (vs. 32, “until thou know”). This is history (vs. 34, “at the end of the days,” *i.e.*, the end of the “seven times”)—“At the same time mine understanding returned to me” (vs. 36). This verse also shows that his kingdom (“stump”) returned to him. Verses 34–36 show that, at least for a time, Nebuchadnezzar learned the lesson that God rules the nations.

Exactly when this was fulfilled cannot be determined, BUT we do know it applied to Nebuchadnezzar and therefore it occurred somewhere between 605/6 – 562BC, the “seven times” had to be less than 44 years (obviously far less, for Nebuchadnezzar’s activities while sane were many),

and the “seven times” is probably symbolic representing a complete period of time sufficiently long to teach Nebuchadnezzar the lesson. Even if the “seven times” is somehow literal (see below under the critique) it had to be fulfilled during Nebuchadnezzar’s reign.

Daniel’s interpretation also clearly declares that GOD RULES THE NATIONS!!! This was uttered DURING the so-called “appointed times of the nations” when, according to the WS, the kingdom of God did NOT rule! God has never given up his rule (*cf.* Ps 14.5:10–13; *et. al.*). It is eternal!!

The WS interpretation (BGF ch. 10; WG ch. 5) is radically different than Daniel’s. The dream does refer to Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom, and was fulfilled during his reign. BUT,

Both the dream and its direct fulfillment upon Nebuchadnezzar were prophetic. That is why this experience of his is recorded in the Bible (BGF 176). [Is everything recorded in the Bible prophetic, i.e., predictive to a distant future? SS] What was really meant was the world sovereignty or dominion exercised by the kingdom of God” (BGF 177)...The heaven-high, life sustaining tree of the dream symbolized the UNIVERSAL SOVEREIGNTY of the Most High (WG 84). [This sovereignty was represented on earth by the kings of Israel. Thus,] Jerusalem was what was pictured by the immense tree seen in Nebuchadnezzar's dream...Jerusalem was chopped down in 607B.C.E., when Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon brought destruction...Jehovah himself had the symbolic tree of sovereignty chopped down (WG 85–86). So the world dominion as symbolized by God's typical kingdom, the kingdom of Judah, was cut down like the immense tree of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Jehovah even used king Nebuchadnezzar as his instrument of chopping it down. In this way world domination as typically symbolized in the kingdom of Judah was transferred from the king of 'Jehovah's throne' in Zion to the victorious Gentile world power (BGF 177).

Having arrived at the above conclusion, the WS proceeds to determine the “seven times” in it's “prophetic” fulfillment.

ABSOLUTELY NOTHING in the Dan 4 context permits such assumptions! DANIEL interprets the dream and gives no hint that his interpretation needs yet another fulfillment. The book of Daniel is quite clear when further fulfillment is required (*cf.* Dn 2; 7–12). The “seven times” is a period of HUMILIATION for the Gentile ruler rather than one of GLORY, as is demanded by the WS. To admit this, as the WS does by accepting the fulfillment in Nebuchadnezzar’s reign and then making a “double application” of the prophecy, is just not sensible in light of the fact that the second application of the WS is completely opposite in meaning to the first application. In other words, they have the HUMBLING of the Gentile power as typical of the HUMBLING of God's kingdom which in turn EXALTS the Gentile powers.

Not only is the WS interpretation not sensible or consistent but they have the same symbol performing two opposing functions: (1) the tree (Nebuchadnezzar) serving as the one being chopped down and (2) then

the one doing the chopping down. Thus, the tree chops down the tree! Additionally, as mentioned above, the WS interpretation contradicts the very interpretation that Daniel gives the dream. The whole purpose of the dream was to demonstrate that God does indeed rule as does his kingdom. The WS has God abdicating to world powers which is in total opposition to the intent of the chapter (in fact, the entire book of Daniel).

The WS determines the length of the “appointed times of the nations” by the “seven times” in vss. 16, 23, 25, 32 (WG 86–89; BGF 179–181). A “time” is a lunar year (avg. 360 days), *cf.* Rv 12:6, 14 (11:2–3) where “a time, and times and a half time” is equal to 1260 days or 3.5 lunar years or 42 lunar months (avg. 30 days). Thus, “a year, and years (2) and a half year.” See also Gen 7:11–12, 24; 8:3–4 which support the lunar year concept. With this we can agree, in principle. It may or may not be applicable to Daniel 4.

Thus, “seven times” is “seven years.” Again, we could live with this: it could happen during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and many do regard it to mean seven literal years. For example, Josephus (*Ant.* X. 10, 6) regards the “seven times” as “seven years” in Dn 4, and New American Bible translates Dn 4 as “seven years.” See also Moffatt's and the Good News Bible translations. Concluding the “times” to be “years,” the WS naturally converts the years to days. Thus, seven x 360 days/year is 2520 days.

Thus far, we have no real argument against what the WS claims concerning the meaning of “seven times,” for what has been said could literally be realized DURING Nebuchadnezzar's reign. However, at this point the WS needs to apply three insupportable facts to arrive at the year AD1914:

- the 607BC date for the fall of Jerusalem (previously discussed)
- the “prophetic” application of Dn 4 (previously discussed)
- the so-called “day/year theory” applied to the “seven times”

The WS concludes that the “seven times” cannot be a literal seven year period because the dominion of world powers which (according to their theory) began in 607BC did not end seven years later (600BC): “So each of these 2,520 days must be treated according to the Bible rule: 'A day for a year' (Ezek 4:6 *cf.* Nu 14:34)” (WG 88). Thus, 607BC plus 2520 years = AD1914.

However, there is much against the so-called “Bible rule”—“a day for a year.” First, the “proof” texts offered (Ezek 4:5–6; Nu 14:33–34) do nothing to establish any such “Bible rule” to be incorporated anywhere else in the Bible. Each of the “proof” texts are to be taken literally in their

contexts. Was Ezekiel actually on his side 390 YEARS? Were the spies in the land 40 days or 40 YEARS?

Second, if these passages do establish such a “Bible rule,” how are we to know when to apply it? What exactly is the criterion? At best, such an application would be arbitrary and inconsistent, just as the WS application is (see earlier discussion). It is curious, for example, that the passage the WS uses to establish that a “time” equals 360 YEARS (for Dn 4) they interpret as literally days (Rv 12:6, 14 where they leave “time” as equal to 360 days)!⁹ This inconsistency is glaring.

Third, apparently Peter (2P 3:8) knew nothing of the “day/year theory.” He said: “one day is with Jehovah as a THOUSAND years and a thousand years as one day.” I realize this is but a straw man, for Peter was addressing the eternity of God, but it does demonstrate how one can wrench a scripture from its context.

Fourth, should this rule or theory be applied to the following passages? Gn 7:4; 15:13; Is 7:8; 16:4; Jer 25:11–12; Jonah 3:4; Rv 20:2–7? If not, why not?

Fifth, if the WS offers as proof that the “appointed times of the nations” did not end 7 literal years after 607BC, the fact that the world empires were still reigning, how do they support the fact that the world empires ceased to reign in AD1914? There is not one shred of evidence! If they say the scriptures teach such, then they cannot argue against the literal seven years ending in 600BC on the basis that world conditions remained the same. For such is the case in AD1914, *i.e.*, the “Gentiles” continued (and do to this date) rule. Where is any external evidence that God's kingdom began to rule in AD1914? One who holds to a literal application of the seven years could argue that the kingdom of God did come in 600BC, but only “the eye of faith” could see it. In essence, the only difference between the two positions would be the “day/year” theory.

Sixth, if the Bible prophetically measures in average *lunar* years, as the WS claims, why does the WS apply their results to the *solar* year system of the modern calendar when establishing the AD1914 date? The years 607BC and AD1914 are measurements of time based on solar years (*ca.* 365.25 days/year as opposed to 360 days/year for lunar time). Converting the present system of solar years to lunar years would require a reduction of *ca.* 4.25 days/year for 2520 years, 10710 days or 29.75 lunar years (10710 ÷ 360). Thus, AD1914 – 29.75 years = AD1884. In other words, if Jerusalem fell in the year 607BC (using WS dating), Christ's return would occur 2520 *lunar* years from that year, or 907,200 days (2520 years × 360 days/year) later, in the solar year AD1884. The solar year AD1914 is actually 917,910 days from 607BC (2520 years × 364.25

⁹See BGF 179 with TFM 315–316

days/year). Thus, when the WS applied their lunar year calculations they failed to convert them to solar years to adapt to the solar calendar. This is a subtle error that has gone unnoticed, and undoubtedly was overlooked by the WS.

CONCLUSION

After considering the preceding material it seems incredible that the WS still maintains that the “appointed times of the nations” began in Oct., 607^{BC} with the fall of Jerusalem and ended Oct., AD1914 with the second coming of Christ and the establishment of his Messianic kingdom (MS 90). Even more incredible, and perhaps more important, is the fact that the so-called “other sheep” blindly follow such inaccurate, arbitrary, and inconsistent methods, as well as flagrantly faulty exegesis, without examining the scriptures for themselves to find the truth.