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# The 6th century BCE neo-Babylonian Chronology explained

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(NOTE: See also “6th century neo-Babylonian Chronology: the Reason it Matters”, available from the web site given below.)

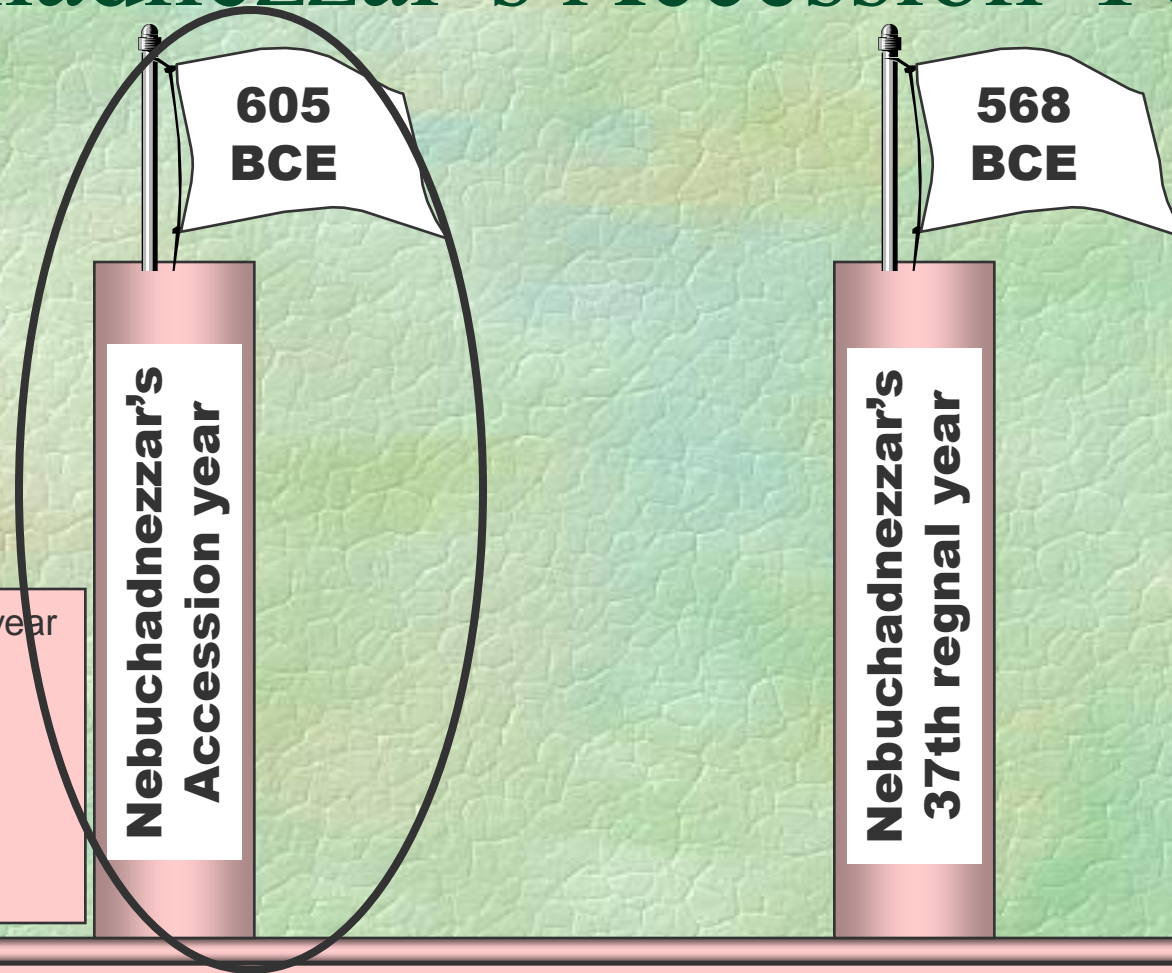
# The “Absolute Date” for Nebuchadnezzar’s reign



22 April 568 BCE -  
12 April 567 BCE.

An **ABSOLUTE DATE** is a definitely known, fixed date for an historical event. For this period, one Absolute Date is 568 BCE for Nebuchadnezzar’s 37th year. An Absolute Date provides a pivotal point for moving backward and forward in time, enabling calendar dates to be assigned to other events.

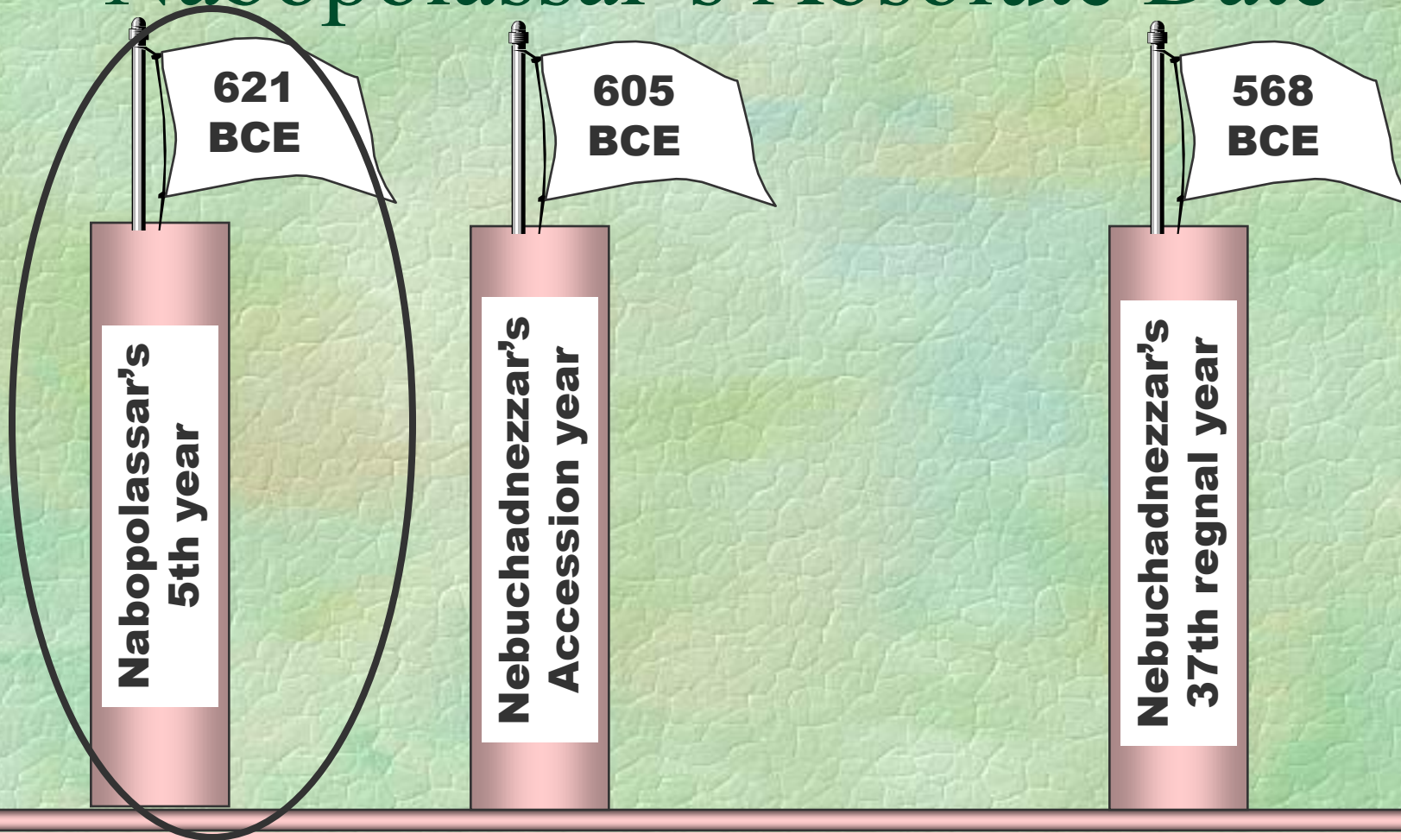
# Nebuchadnezzar's Accession Year



605 - April 604 = Accession year  
April 604 - 603 = Year 1  
April 603 - 602 = Year 2  
April 602 - 601 = Year 3  
April 601 - 600 = Year 4  
April 600 - 599 = Year 5  
April 568 - 567 = Year 37

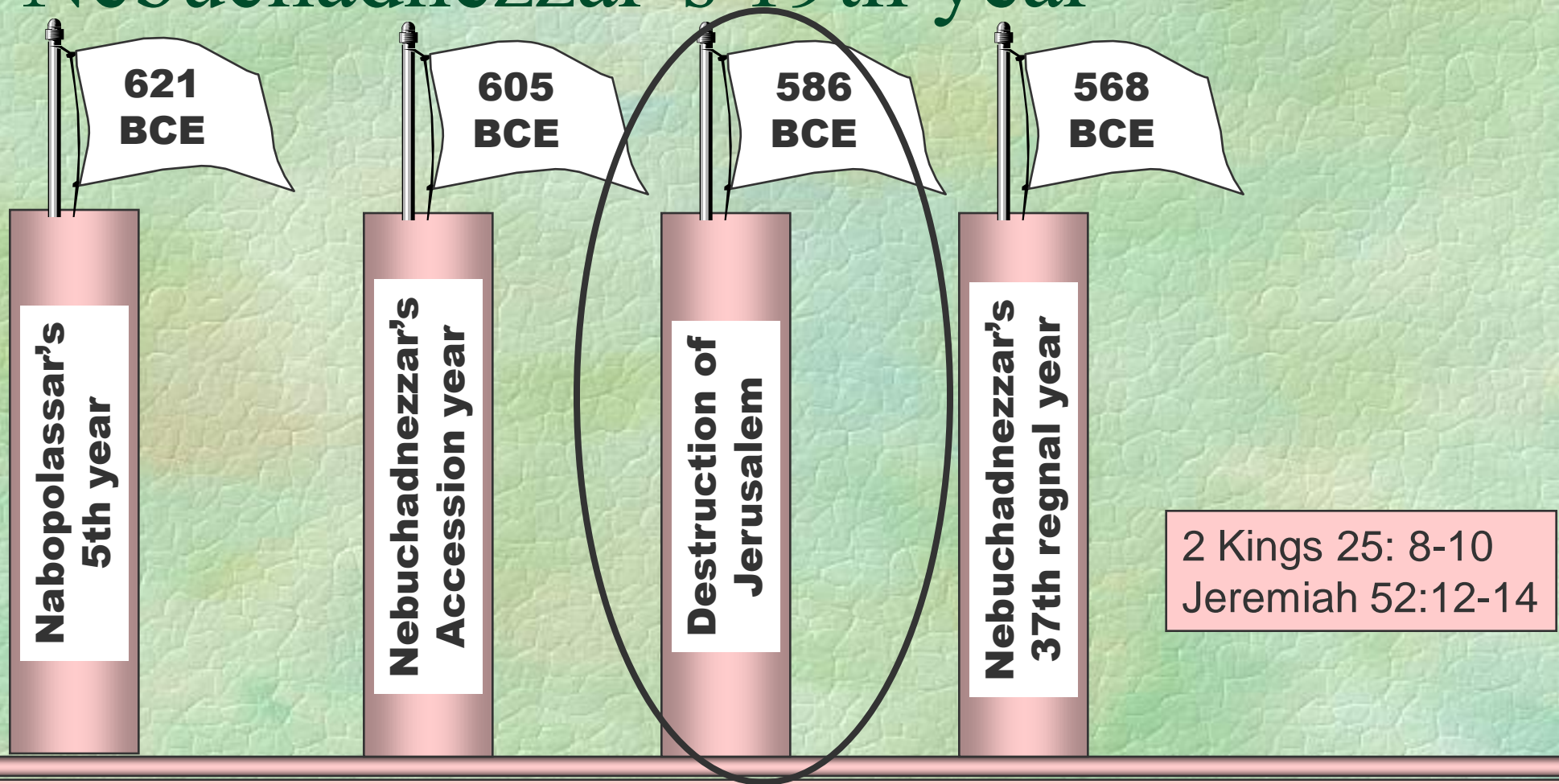
**Accession-year system:** The Babylonians used the Accession-year system when reckoning a king's reign. When a king died, his successor completed the remainder of that year until the day of the New Year (April). This period is his "Accession Year". Since Nebuchadnezzar's 37th regnal year ran from April 568 BCE, his Accession Year ran until April 604 BCE.

# Nabopolassar's Absolute Date



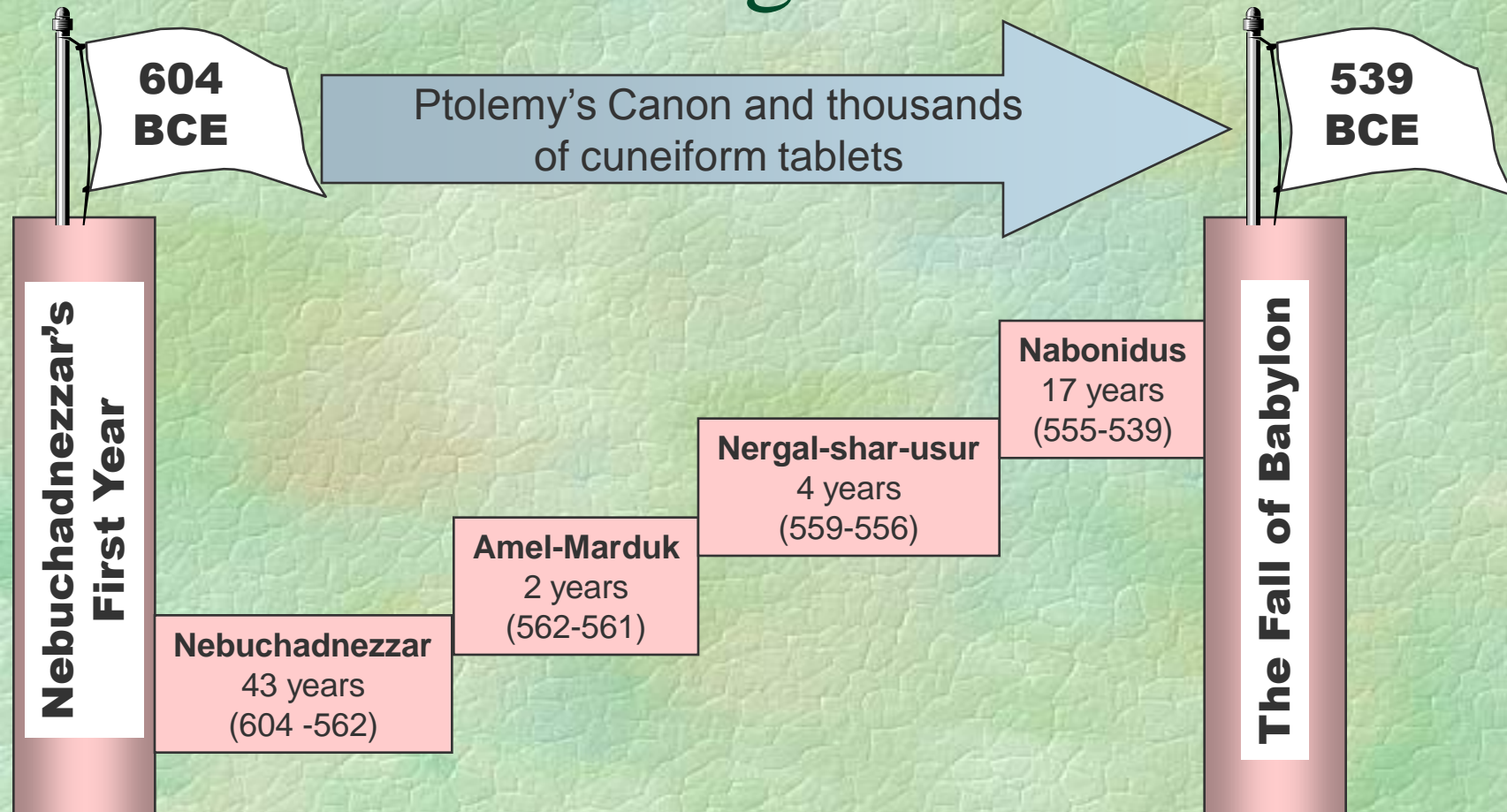
Another Absolute Date for the period is 621 BCE for Nabopolassar's 5th year. He ruled for 21 years, so he died in 605 BCE. This therefore fixes Nebuchadnezzar's Accession year at 605 BCE. Thus two Absolute Dates provide double verification of 605 BCE for Nebuchadnezzar's Accession Year.

# Jerusalem's destruction in Nebuchadnezzar's 19th year



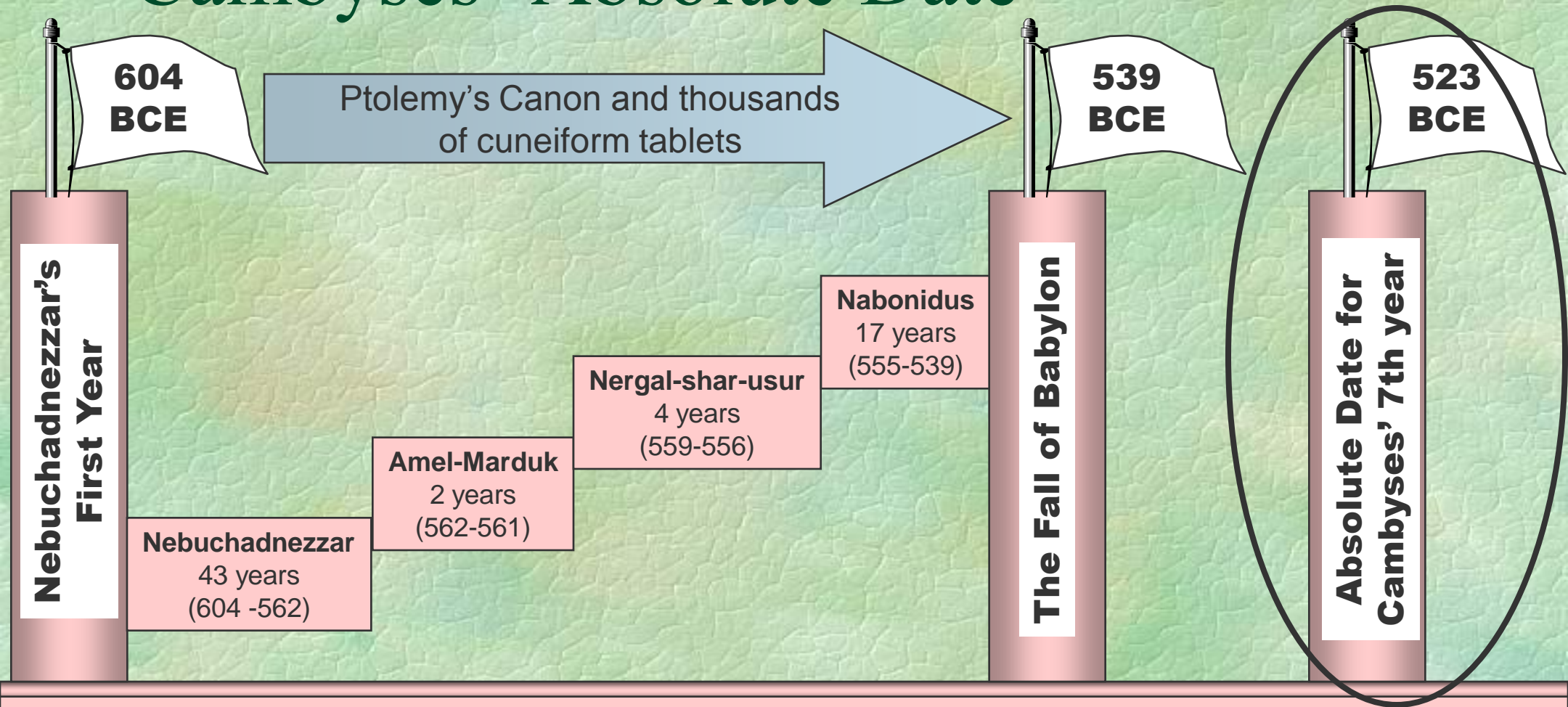
Jerusalem was destroyed during Nebuchadnezzar's 19th year. The dates of 605 BCE for Nebuchadnezzar's Accession year and 568 BCE for his 37th year confirm that Jerusalem was destroyed by him in 586 BCE.

# The list of kings



With the help of the **Canon of Ptolemy** and **thousands of dated cuneiform documents** written on clay tablets which agree as to the total of regnal years for each king, it is possible to arrive at exact dates for each king reigning in the period. (Note the use of “inclusive reckoning” when calculating the length of a reign.)

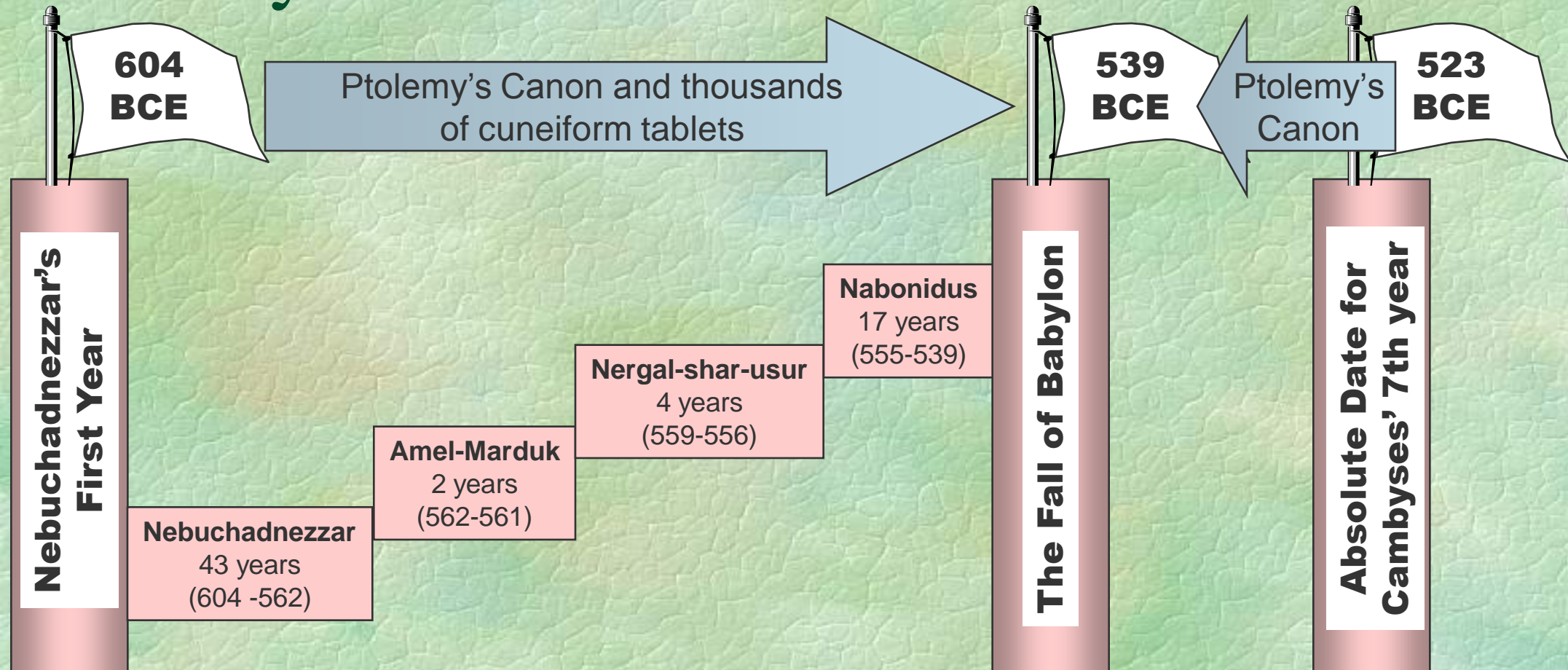
# Cambyses' Absolute Date



Another astronomical tablet has established that the 7th year of Cambyses lasted from April 523 BCE to March 522 BCE.



# The calculated date for the Fall of Babylon confirmed



The Canon of Ptolemy and dated clay tablets show that the dates of the neo-Babylonian kings lock in with this Absolute Date for Cambyses.

# The Watchtower's problems



- It is critical for the Watchtower that when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in his 19th year, that it took place in 607 BCE.
- But Nebuchadnezzar began his reign later, in 605 BCE.
- Jerusalem was actually destroyed in 586 BCE

- The Watchtower says Ptolemy's Canon (list of kings) cannot be relied on.
- The date of 539 BCE for the Fall of Babylon is crucial for the Watchtower, and this date is calculated using the chronology of kings provided by Ptolemy and confirmed by the thousands of clay tablets.

The Watchtower claims incorrectly that the date of 539 BCE for the Fall of Babylon is an Absolute Date.

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