

DANIEL NINE PROVES Jesus Is the Christ

In the book of Daniel is an amazing prophecy revealing precisely WHEN the Messiah was to appear — as well as exactly WHAT He was to accomplish! Study this article carefully.

by William F. Dankenbring

DO YOU KNOW Jesus is the Christ? Can you PROVE it — from Bible prophecy?

Fundamentalists believe Jesus is the Christ. But many cannot prove it! They believe the Bible is God's inspired Word — but, again, they are hard put to produce any evidence. They have faith that God exists — but they cannot PROVE it! They accept these things on sheer faith.

Such a "belief" — such a "faith" — is weak, wishy-washy and utterly worthless, in God's sight! Empty faith — DEAD faith, the kind held by most people, today — will not save anyone. There is no need to assume that Jesus is the Christ.

You can know!

The Prophecy of Daniel

The Old Testament is FULL of detailed, plain prophecies referring to the coming of the "Messiah" or Christ, the "Anointed One." From Genesis to Malachi, prophecies reveal many facets of both the first and second comings of Jesus Christ. But, no Old Testament prophecy pinpoints the EXACT TIME of the coming of Christ, and what would occur, as specifically as the book of Daniel.

Turn in your Bible to Daniel 9, and read the prophecy for yourself.

The prophet Daniel lived during the days of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and on into the reign of Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Persian. "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes" (Dan. 9:1-2), Daniel set his face to seek God, seeking Him through prayer and fasting (verses 3-4). Daniel confessed his sins,

and the sins of the people, and besought God for His forgiveness.

While Daniel was praying, God sent the archangel Gabriel, who told Daniel, "O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding . . . therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision" (Dan. 9:21-23).

What was this vision — this prophecy?

Seventy Weeks Prophecy

Beginning in verse 24, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

"Seventy weeks" — how are they to be understood? The day-for-a-year principle of Bible prophecy is understood by many students of the Bible. In Numbers 14:34 God told the Israelites, "After the number of the DAYS in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day FOR A YEAR, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years . . ." Thus, a day in Bible prophecy is often a YEAR BEING FULFILLED!

This same prophetic principle is found in Ezekiel 4. Prophesying about the punishment and siege of Israel, God told Ezekiel, "This shall be a sign to the house of Israel. Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number

of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee EACH DAY FOR A YEAR" (Ezek. 4:3-6).

Therefore, the seventy weeks in Daniel 9 represent 70 times 7 or 490 days — that is, since days stand for prophetic YEARS, a total of 490 YEARS. What was to happen at the end of these years?

Let us continue the prophecy.

The Decree of Artaxerxes

Daniel 9:25 explains, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem UNTO the MESSIAH the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

What decree was this? When was it given?

In the seventh year of Artaxerxes, king of Persia, Ezra came to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:1, 7-9). With him he had a letter containing the DECREE of Artaxerxes, permitting the rebuilding and restoration of Jerusalem!

"Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest . . . Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time. I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee. Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king,

and of his seven counsellors, to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem. . .” (verses 11-14).

In this decree Ezra was given authority to take with him all the Jews wishing to return to Jerusalem and to REBUILD THE CITY, and beautify the house of God, and to do whatever else God commanded (verses 15-26).

What year was this decree given? What year was the “seventh year of Artaxerxes”?

In recent years an abundance of documents, business records, and astronomical tablets, from the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, have been translated, and help us determine when the decree of Artaxerxes was written. These records reveal that Xerxes died late in December, 465 B.C. His death could not have occurred earlier or later, because documents dated in the last month of his reign, and in the first month of his successors have been found. Thus, his son, Artaxerxes, came to the throne in December, 465 B.C. (Langer, *Encyclopedia of World History*, p. 53).

Since the Persians reckoned the years of their kings from spring to spring, Artaxerxes' first year was from April, 464 B.C. to April, 463 B.C. The preceding months of his reign are simply called his “accession year.”

The Jews in Palestine in Ezra and Nehemiah's day, however, counted civil years from FALL TO FALL. They always postdated the reigns of Gentile rulers — that is, counted from the fall after the first year officially began. Therefore, according to Jewish reckoning, the first “year” of the reign of Artaxerxes would have been September, 464 to September, 463 B.C. This information may be corroborated in *The Chronology of Ezra 7* by Siegfried Horn and Lynn H. Wood, as well as other thorough books on archaeology dealing with this period.

The SEVENTH YEAR of Artaxerxes, therefore, was September, 458 to September, 457 B.C., according to Jewish reckoning. Ezra left Babylon and came to Jerusalem in Artaxerxes' seventh year — the year of the decree — his journey lasting four months (Ezra 7:8-9), and occurring during the first five months of the year — from Nisan in 457, corresponding to our April, to the month Ab, corresponding to our August.

Now notice! The prophecy was that FROM the year of the issuance of Artaxerxes' decree there would be “seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks” — till the appearance of the Messiah!

Why this particular breakdown, “seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks”? This is explained as we read on: “The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times” (Dan. 9:25). It took seven prophetic weeks, or 49 years (a year for a day) to complete this rebuilding. The troublous times are described in Nehemiah 4. This carries us from 457 to 408 B.C.

After 62 more weeks, or 434 years (from 408 B.C.), the Messiah is on the scene (verse 26).

In other words, from 457 B.C., in the fall, till CHRIST appeared on the scene, there were to be SIXTY-NINE PROPHETIC WEEKS (7+62) — a total of 69 times 7 or 483 years!

To what year does this bring us?

The Year Christ Appeared

Figure it out yourself! Just 483 years after 457 B.C. brings us to exactly A.D. 27!

Halley, for example, claimed, in his *Handbook*, the date the Messiah was to appear was 26 A.D. However, there is no year zero. Therefore, in crossing from B.C. to A.D. or vice versa, a year must be added to the total to arrive at the correct date!

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Notice carefully — there is no year zero — simply a year 1 B.C. and a year 1 A.D. Supposedly, between these two years the birth of Christ occurred! This, however, is not true. The monk who gave us our present dating system made a slight miscalculation in his figures. But, notice — for example — if you want to count 30 years from 4 B.C., the year Jesus was born, simply by counting the number of elapsed years, you come to 27 A.D. However, if you subtract from the number 30, 4 B.C. the result would, at first glance, seem to be 26

A.D. Obviously, this is wrong, as simple counting shows. Therefore, you must ADD ONE YEAR to arrive at the correct answer when subtracting — bringing you to 27 A.D.!

Therefore, the year the Messiah was to appear was 27 A.D.! What happened in 27 A.D.?

This was the historical year when Jesus Christ BEGAN HIS MINISTRY! This was the very year He was baptized, was tempted by Satan the devil in the wilderness, and BEGAN to call His disciples! Bible chronology and history prove Christ began His ministry in 27 A.D.

In 27 A.D. the MESSIAH appeared — JESUS CHRIST!

No one else came upon the scene in Palestine that year doing God's Work.

Jesus Christ began His ministry PRECISELY on schedule — exactly 483 years after the decree of Artaxerxes! But that is not all. Now, notice the REST of the prophecy!

Messiah to Be CUT OFF

Verse 26, Daniel 9, “And AFTER threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be CUT OFF, but not for himself. . .”

From the decree of Artaxerxes until the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, a total of sixty-nine prophetic weeks were to pass. That is, 483 years. This explains the first sixty-nine weeks of Daniel's prophecy, but the mysterious seventieth week still remains to be explained.

Let's continue the thread of the prophecy. In Daniel 9:26 we read that AFTER 483 years the Messiah was to be “cut off.” What does this enigmatic statement mean?

Turn to Isaiah 53 for the answer. Prophesying about the Messiah, Isaiah declared, “Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . But he was wounded for OUR transgressions, he was bruised for OUR iniquities. . .” (Isa. 53:4-5).

Further, Isaiah records, “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was CUT OFF out of the land of the living: for the TRANSGRESSION OF MY PEOPLE WAS HE STRICKEN” (verse 8).

Christ, the Messiah, was “cut off” —

KILLED — CRUCIFIED — not for Himself, but for *our* sins!

But *how long* "after" the sixty-nine weeks? The last part of Daniel 9:26 shows that after Christ's crucifixion, "the people of the prince" — that is, the Roman armies under Titus and Vespasian — "that shall come shall DESTROY THE CITY and the sanctuary." This was fulfilled in 70 A.D. when the Roman armies besieged Jerusalem, destroyed the inhabitants, burned the temple, and razed the city to the ground! "And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the WAR desolations are determined," Daniel concludes (verse 26, last part). The Romans DESOLATED the city and the surrounding area!

But — again, HOW LONG "after" the sixty-nine weeks was the Messiah to be "cut off"?

Length of Christ's Ministry

Now read verse 27 of Daniel 9. "And he [Christ] shall CONFIRM THE COVENANT with many for *one week*: and in the MIDST OF THE WEEK he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease . . ."

Here the SEVENTIETH WEEK is mentioned! It represents seven years! But, in the midst of this week Christ was to cause sacrifices to cease. How? Turn to Hebrews for the answer.

"So Christ was ONCE OFFERED to bear the sins of many" — remember? (Heb. 9:28.) He took our sins upon Himself, Isaiah prophesied; He was to "make reconciliation for iniquity," and to "make an end of sins," Daniel wrote. "But this man, after he had offered ONE SACRIFICE for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12).

How clear! Christ caused the sacrifices to cease because they were NO LONGER NECESSARY! "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb. 10:4). However, the blood of Christ covers all sins!

When? When did Christ — the Messiah — accomplish this? "IN THE MIDST OF THE WEEK"! That is dual — 1) after fulfilling one half of the seventieth week — after preaching the Gospel for THREE AND ONE-HALF YEARS — Christ died for the sins of the world,

after doing the Work of God for three and one-half years, from autumn 27 A.D. until spring 31 A.D.

And 2) — it also indicates that Christ died for our sins in the middle of a literal week — *on a Wednesday!* And He was resurrected three days and three nights later — near sunset on the weekly Sabbath (Matt. 12:40), so that He HAD ARISEN already by sunrise Sunday morning (Matt. 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:6). This is more fully explained in our free booklet, *The Crucifixion Was Not on Friday*. It is available upon your request.

Since Jesus died for the sins of mankind in the MIDST of the week, the prophecy, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week," has NOT YET been completely fulfilled. For three and one-half years, during His ministry, He CONFIRMED THE COVENANT with His disciples. By dying for our sins, He put the final stamp on the covenant. Through Him, ALL PEOPLE can now enter into the covenant which God made with Abraham (Gal. 3:29), and become heirs "according to the promise."

But — as Daniel 9:26-27 reveals — there yet remains three and one-half years of Christ's ministry to be FULFILLED! When will Christ fulfill it? When will He once again CONFIRM the covenant?

When Christ Returns!

When Jesus Christ returns to this earth, He will CONFIRM the covenant He made with His people. He will confirm the covenant He made with Abraham, promising that his seed would inherit the entire WORLD (see Gen. 17:4-8; 22:16-18). Abraham and his spiritual seed through Christ will inherit "THE WORLD" (Rom. 4:13).

When Christ returns, Abraham and the saints will RISE to meet Him in the air (I Thess. 4:13-17). They will then REIGN with Him, over the nations of the earth (Rev. 2:26-27; 5:10).

And, at that time, Christ will make a NEW covenant with His people Israel, and write His laws in their hearts and upon their minds (Heb. 8:6-10). For *three and one-half years*, Christ will complete His ministry to ISRAEL, teaching them His ways. Rebels will be purged out from among His people, but

the others, who repent of their sins and loathe themselves for their evil deeds, will be forgiven and will come to KNOW GOD (Ezek. 20:35-38, 43-44).

Seventy Weeks — Soon Fulfilled

Daniel 9, the "seventy weeks prophecy," has already — for the most part — been fulfilled. History proves that Jesus Christ — and NONE OTHER — was the One who fulfilled the prophecies of Daniel 9:24-27. He is the Messiah! No one else appeared at the *time mentioned*, or did the *things mentioned*, DIED in the midst of the week, and caused the sacrifices and offerings in the temple to CEASE!

Truly, Jesus is the Christ! Bible PROPHECY *proves* this fact beyond the faintest shadow of a doubt. There is no need to vaguely "assume" or "think" that Jesus was FOR REAL. The PROOF is incontestable — irrefutable!

And soon, now, that very same Jesus Christ is going to RETURN to this earth and complete the fulfillment of Daniel 9 — finish confirming the covenant with His people — and usher in "EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS" when He returns, "to seal up the vision and prophecy" (verse 24).

The prophecy given in Daniel 9:24-27 is truly one of the most amazing, startling prophecies in the entire Word of God! It gives a pinpointed, detailed explanation of the FIRST coming of Jesus Christ — even giving us the EXACT DATE HE WAS TO BEGIN HIS MINISTRY! It shows that after three and one-half YEARS, He was to be "CUT OFF" — crucified for our sins — giving His life for us, thereby causing the need for other sacrifices, given as a picture of our need for forgiveness, to CEASE.

Soon, now, Christ will RETURN to complete this amazing prophecy and finish the LAST three and one-half years. He will finish confirming the covenant of God with many — all those who accept Him and obey Him!

The truth is overwhelming! How thankful we should be that God is revealing the real meaning of Bible prophecy! How thankful, that our faith is NOT merely empty superstition or "belief," but is based on the proven and tested, SURE WORD OF GOD!

Will *you* be ready when Christ returns to COMPLETE His ministry? □