

Hope for Today

The 490 year Countdown to Christ (Dan 9)

As we begin to look at Daniel chapter 9, we will immediately notice the links between chapter 8 and 9. Below are listed 6 links that show that Daniel 9 is an answer to Daniel's problem of "not understanding" in chapter 8.

Notice the 6 links between chapter 8 & chapter 9

1. **Vs. 21 "Gabriel whom I had seen"** So it is the same Gabriel whom he had seen in the vision of Chapter 8.
2. **Vs. 21 "in the vision"** There are 2 words for "visions" in Daniel 8 & 9. One refers to the Total vision, the other to the audition in Daniel 8:13-14. The one where 2 angels are speaking.
3. **Vs. 22 "skill to understand"** This was in answer to his statement at the end of chapter 8 vs.27 that said, "I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it."
4. **Vs. 23 "Understand the vision"** This time the word being used is the "audition" section of Daniel 8:13-14, the part about 2,300 days.
5. **Vs. 25 "Cut off (decreed) Daniel 9:24** "Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city." "Determined" – "Cut off". The question would naturally be, "Cut off from where?"
6. **Both began in the Persian Empire**

Look at Daniel's amazing prayer, as he realises that the 70 years that Jeremiah had predicted regarding their exile was almost over. He prays that God will help them go back home.

Daniel 9:2-5 "in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolation of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps the covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments...we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled"

Daniel 9:19 ".... Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name"

Daniel effectively says, "Lord even if you don't do it because we deserve it, do it for your glory, your honour" He prays just like Moses in the Exodus. His concern is for God's name. How do we pray?

Daniel 9:21-25 "while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice...he made me understand, speaking with me saying, O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding... for you are greatly loved. Therefore, consider the word and understand the vision. Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, to anoint a most holy place. Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks."

It's amazing! Daniel is praying about 70 years of exile, but God tells him about 70 x 7 years. A period of His extended grace to Israel, and the coming of the Messiah, who was the reason for the temple. Without Him, the temple has no meaning!

Daniel was told that 70 weeks are cut off, starting with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. So we have to look for the decree, which will tell us from when to begin counting the 490 years.

When was this decree issued? And which decree do we use?

While there are a few to choose from, the decree of Artaxerxes in Ezra is clearly the right one for a number of reasons. It was the most far-reaching and powerful of all the decrees. And if we work backward from the coming of Messiah, we come to that exact date. Let's read it and check.

Ezra 7:12-13 "Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of God of heaven, Peace. And now I make a decree that anyone of the people of Israel or their priests or Levites in my kingdom, who freely offers to go to Jerusalem, may go with you."

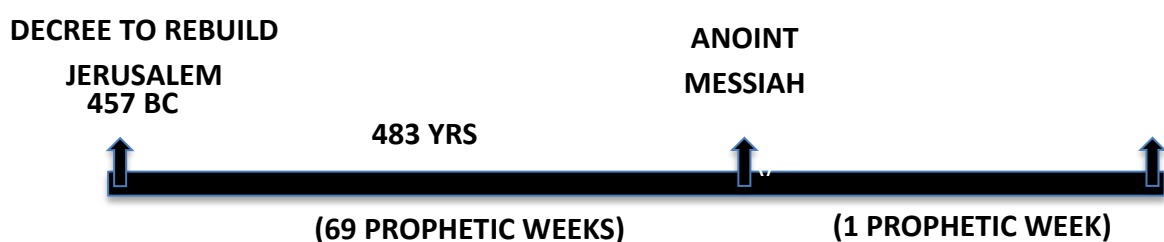
Ezra 7:21 "And I, Artaxerxes the king, make a decree to all the treasurers in the province beyond the River: Whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, requires of you, let it be done with all diligence."

According to Ezra 7:13, there was a decree by Artaxerxes 1 (a Medo-Persian king) to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. And this decree was issued in 457 BC.

Sir Isaac Newton reminded us of a principle of prophetic interpretation of time prophecies.

In Bible prophecy, one prophetic day equals one literal year. We find evidence for this in Ezekiel 4:6, "..... I have laid on you a day for each year."

So starting from 457 BC the first section would take us to the Messiah and His anointing.



Daniel 9:25 "...until Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and sixty two weeks." A total of 69 weeks.

Acts 10:37-38 "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power."

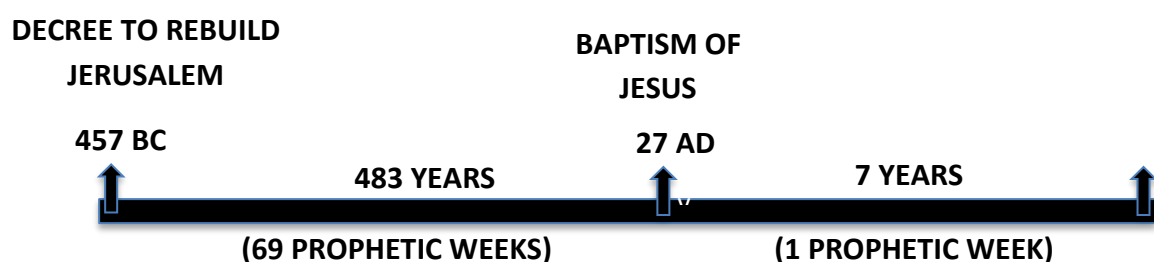
The word Messiah means the "Anointed One". So according to Acts and most Christians, Jesus is the Anointed or Messiah.

When was Jesus anointed or baptised?

Luke 3:4 "In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea."

Luke 3:21 "Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened."

History shows us that the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar was exactly AD27. If you add 69 weeks (69 x 7 = 483 years) to 457 BC you arrive at 27 AD. Jesus was baptised on time. See chart below.

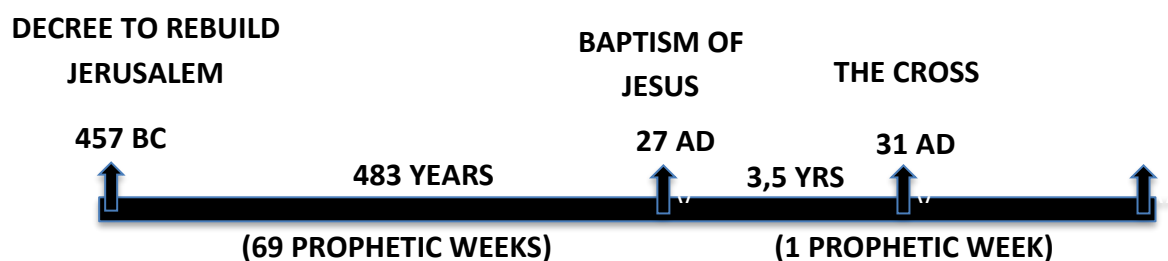


Daniel 9:26-27 “And after sixty two weeks (which includes the 7 weeks), Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself. And he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week. And in the middle of the week He shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease.”

Daniel was told that after the 69 weeks (483 years) taking us up to the Messiah, there would be another week (7 years), where certain things would happen.

In the midst of the week, Christ, the Messiah, would cause the sacrifice to cease

Daniel 9:27 “And in the middle of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and offering to cease.” That is why **Mark 15:38** says, “Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” Torn by a divine hand, for God’s business with this temple was over. No longer would men need to bring sacrifices, for the Lamb of God had just been slain!



Is this a prophecy of Christ or the Anti-Christ? Some have sadly used this prophecy to refer to a future Anti-Christ and 7 years of tribulation. Apart from what we have learnt above, a basic understanding of Hebrew poetry will help us avoid such distortion of a beautiful prophecy referring to our precious Saviour. **DANIEL 9:24-27** is written in Hebrew poetry

Chiasm in Daniel 9

- A1 – COMING OF THE MESSIAH AFTER 69 WEEKS VS. 25a
- B1 – CONSTRUCTION OF THE CITY VS. 25b**
- A2 – DEATH OF THE MESSIAH IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WEEK VS. 26a
- B2 – DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY VS. 26b**
- A3 – COVENANT WITH THE MESSIAH FOR 1 WEEK VS. 27a
- B3 – DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY VS. 27b**

Notice, whenever time is mentioned it is related to the Messiah, and when the city is mentioned it is either Construction or Destruction.

Daniel 9:27 “And he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.” Here is an amazing thought, that even though they had crucified Him, Jesus still gave them 3,5 years of grace, to accept Him and become His messengers of grace to the world!

According to prophecies of Daniel, God’s covenant with the Jews would cease in AD 34.

The 70 Weeks End. Look at what happened at the end of the 70 weeks

1. Stephen, the first Christian Martyr
2. Jewish leaders reject the gospel

3. Gospel goes to the gentiles

Daniel 9:24 "Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city."

"Determined" – "Cut off" We had been told that the 70 weeks are cut off. The question has to then be cut off from where?

This 490 year period is "cut off" from the longer period of 2,300 days/years.

Daniel 8:14 ".... for 2,300 evenings and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state."

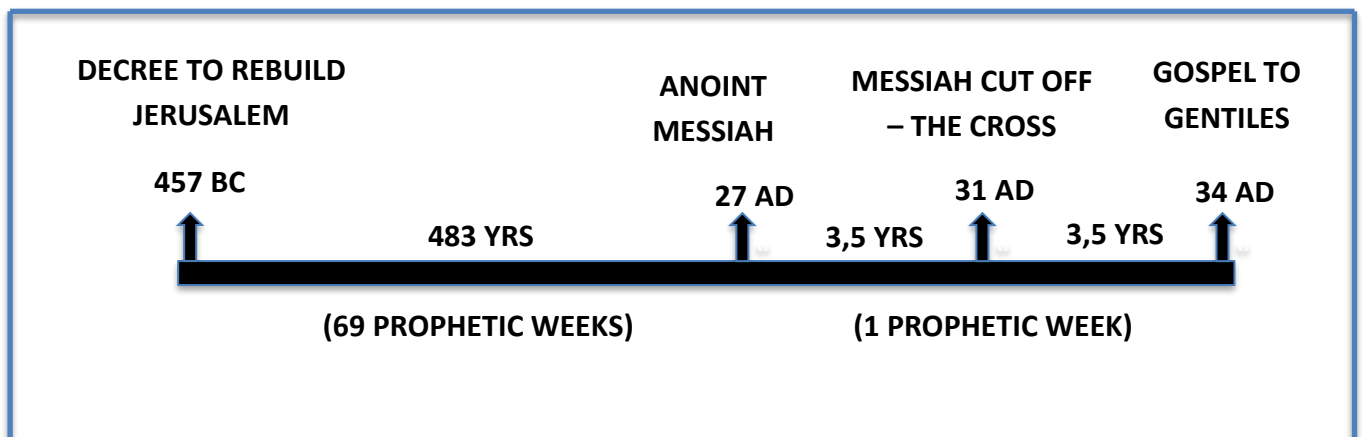
The prophecy of the 2300 days had not given a starting point or starting date. Praise God Gabriel came to fill in the missing information. With chapter 9 we now have a starting date for the 2300 years.

Jesus our Messiah was baptised & died on time!

The chart below shows an outline of the 70 weeks.

Daniel 9:22 "He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, O Daniel, I have come out to give you insight and understanding." And verse 23 ends by saying, "therefore consider the matter and understand the vision" So Gabriel says he has come to help Daniel understand the vision. Aspects that had troubled him in Chapter 8 needed clearing up.

If the term "determined" is more accurately translated "cut off" then where is this cut off from? This 490 year period is "cut off" from the longer period of 2,300 days. So the 490 years shown below are a part of a much longer period. 2 300 years



Daniel 8:14 ".... for 2,300 evening and mornings. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state (cleansed/restored)"

2,300 days = 2,300 years The starting point for both time prophecies is the decree to rebuild Jerusalem! And we can see how the chart below shows God's plan.



Using 457 BC as our start and applying to the 2 300 year prophecy, we discover the following:



Since the year 1844 we have been living in what the Bible calls, “God’s judgment hour.”

What was amazing was how that in the late 1700’s and early 1800’s men and women began to study Daniel and Revelation’s prophecies, and an amazing awakening took place. God was preparing the world for awesome events. We will mention just a few:

1. **Father Mauel Lacunza, a Jesuit priest in South America.** He began to study the prophecies and even wrote articles under the name Juan Ben-Ezra, identifying the priesthood and the Papacy with the terrible errors that would be carried out by the Little Horn, the beast of Revelation and the Antichrist. His books not only stirred Catholic scholars, but were translated by the financial help of a leading South American politician, and eventually had a huge impact on British Protestants, among them Edward Irving, a brilliant Scottish Presbyterian minister. All of this was in the early 1800’s.
2. **Joseph Wolff was another to herald the prophecies of Daniel.** Born in Bavaria and raised in Prussia to a Jewish family (His father was an orthodox Jewish Rabbi), he came to be fascinated with Isaiah 53 at a young age, and soon accepted Jesus. Accomplished in 14 languages, although he wrote no books, no other individual travelled as widely as him in the 1800’s, preaching on the prophecies and the soon coming of Jesus. He had a passion for the Jewish people, and even addressed the US House of Congress. He was convinced from his studies that Jesus would come in 1847!
3. **Edward Irving, an eloquent Scottish Presbyterian minister.** Impressed by the works of Father Lacunza, began to preach about the soon coming of Jesus in the early 1800’s
4. **The child preachers of Sweden.** Some as young as 7-8, began preaching in a country, where the official church refused to allow preaching on the 2nd Advent. These children began preaching on the prophecies and warning Swedes of a coming judgment. Many distillers and taverns were forced to shut their doors.
5. **Lastly in the USA, men like William Miller studied the prophecies and concluded that Christ was coming in 1843!**

I am here to remind you that regardless of this deception, since the year 1844 we have been living in what the Bible calls, “God’s judgment hour.” That is why Rev 22:12 tells us that He has decided the destiny of all men by the time He comes.

Revelation 22:12 “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done.”

O my friend each of us need to remember the responsibility and privilege of being judgment-bound. Look at these verses that leave no shadow of a doubt. Christians need not fear, as we are “In Christ”,

and He defends our right to be saved. That is why Daniel 7 told us that “Judgment would be passed in favour of the saints” **Judgment is for us! But for those who have rejected, or ignored a friendship with Christ the following warnings are sad indeed.**

Revelation 20:12 “And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.”

2 Corinthians 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ”

Romans 14:12 “So then each one of us will give account concerning himself to God.”

But here is an interesting verse. John 5:22 “For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son.” It shows that Christ is also judge.

1 John 2:1 “....And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Can you believe this, both Judge and defence attorney!

1 Timothy 2:5 “... there is one Mediator of God and of men, the Man Christ Jesus.”

While we think of the judgment in terms of us, we forget a verse like the following that shows that **God goes on trial in the examination of His children!**

Romans 3:4 “By no means! Let God be true though everyone were a liar, as it is written, That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.” Did you catch those amazing words? “When you (God) is judged! God goes into open court, like we saw in Daniel 7, and takes the witness stand as the accused. He answers the Devils original accusation that God has lied, that He is not trustworthy.

Revelations 14:7 “Fear God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come,” This verse can mean that He is about to judge, or that He is about to be judged.

In a sense God goes on trial before the Universe. And we have the privilege, like Job, of defending His name! As one theologian, Dr. Jirri Maskala has said, “God is judged by how He judges”

The Cross was God’s Crowning evidence! Praise God, Jesus in life and death came to show us the truth about God. That He is loving and kind, that He loves sinners, and can be trusted to always tell the truth. HE IS TRUTH!!!

As a result of the Cross, and our witness to His truthfulness by our lives, **Rev 16:7** says that the universe finally declares, “Just and true are your judgments” Why? **Verse 5** says it is because of the way in which He has judged, and I believe been judged.

Revelation 3:20 “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.” **So, today do not harden your hearts**