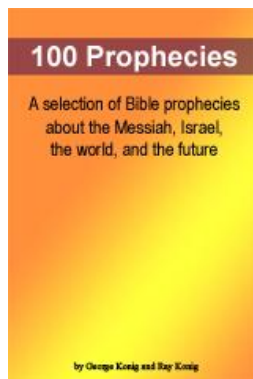


Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy: **A detailed look at Daniel 9:24-27**

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. ²⁵⁾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. ²⁶⁾And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. ²⁷⁾And he 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, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. (Daniel 9:24-27).

Much of our commentary below is based on Josh McDowell's book, "The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict", pages 197-201:



[100 Prophecies, explains how Bible prophecies have been fulfilled in history. Click for more information.](#)

PART ONE:

A chronological summary of Daniel 9:24-26

1. There would be a decree to rebuild Jerusalem.
2. Jerusalem and the Temple would be rebuilt.
3. Then an anointed one (messiah) would be "cut off" (an idiom for "rejected" or "killed").
4. Then Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed again.

I came up with this summary after reading various renderings of this verse in various translations of the Christian Bible and of the Jewish Tanakh. (The Tanakh is the Jewish Bible; it contains the writings of what we Christians refer to as the Old Testament). I believe that this chronology fits most of the renderings that I have seen, whether they are translations by Christians or by Judaists. My summary is in no way original—many Christians, such as Josh McDowell, have come up with the same chronology long before I did.

PART TWO

A summary of how Daniel 9:24-26 was fulfilled:

All of these events later happened, in the same order in which they are described in Daniel 9:24-26:

After the Medo-Persians had conquered the Babylonian empire about 2540 years ago, they ruled a vast empire that included the land of Israel. About 2446 years ago (about 445 BC), Persian king Artaxerxes gave permission to the Jews to rebuild Jerusalem, which was still in ruins after having been destroyed earlier by the Babylonians.

The Jews rebuilt the Temple and the city of Jerusalem.

Then, in about 33 AD, Jesus entered Jerusalem as the Messiah who had been promised by Old Testament prophets. But, many people rejected Jesus as the Messiah and He was crucified by the Romans. About 40 years after Jesus was crucified, the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. (The Temple has not been rebuilt since then).

PART THREE

How Daniel 9:24-26 was "Fulfilled to the day" according to scholars such as Josh McDowell:

First, McDowell, and other scholars, separate the prophecy into three parts:

1. The "7 sevens" in Daniel 9:25.
2. The "62 sevens" in Daniel 9:25.
3. And the 70th "seven" in Daniel 9:27.

Then, they combine the first two periods for a total of 69 "sevens." They combined the first two periods because it is at after the completion of those two periods that the anointed one appears, and that's what we are trying to calculate - when the anointed one was supposed to appear.

Next, they interpret the "sevens" as "seven years" or periods of seven years, rather than a period of seven days or seven weeks or seven months. Part of the reason that this is interpreted as "years" is because of the reference to "years" in Daniel 9:2. (Daniel 9:2 refers to the "seventy years" prophecy that Jeremiah spoke of in Jeremiah 25).

PART FOUR

The math of calculating Daniel 9:24-26 and the issue of the 360-day "prophetic" calendar: At this point, we're adding the 7 "sevens" and the 62 "sevens" for a total of 69 "sevens". And we are interpreting the 69 "sevens" to mean 69 periods of seven years, for a total of 483 years. So, we are saying that there would be a period of 483 years from the time that a decree is given to rebuild Jerusalem to the time that a Messiah is to appear.

Some Christian scholars say that the period of 483 years should not be thought of in terms of our modern solar calendar which is based on a 365.25 days to a year. Instead, we are to use a "prophetic" calendar which has 360 days to a year. Many ancient calendars, including the Jewish calendar, were based on a lunar year of 12 months, with each month lasting 30 days each. Many ancient peoples, including the ancient Jews, did realize that there actually were more than 360 days to a year and so they would tack on an extra five days at some point during the year.

Another reason some scholars say that we should apply a 360-day calendar to Daniel's prophecy is because of various Bible references that allude to a fixed 30-day month view of time. For example, in Genesis 7:24, it says that the flood lasted 150 days. And, in Genesis 7:11, it says the flood began in the 17th day of the second month. And in Genesis 8:4, it says that the flood subsided on the 17th day of the seventh month, when the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. So, these passages present us a 5-month period of time that is described as being 150 days in length. And that of course is five 30-day months.

There are other Bible passages that indicate that time is being measured in fixed 30-day month periods. Revelation 12:6 mentions a 1,260 day period which, in my view, clearly relates to the three-and-a-half-year period mentioned in Revelation 12:13-14 and in Daniel 9:27. For three-

and-a-half years to equal 1,260 days, one would have to measure years in 360-day increments. That of course doesn't mean that the earth's orbit of the sun is going to speed up or change, it just simply means that the prophetic year is a measure of time in which a "year" has 360 days, nothing more, nothing less. It's no different than weighing a bag of groceries using the metric system of kilograms and then using the old English system of pounds and ounces. It is not that one system causes the groceries to weigh more or less, but rather the two systems describe the weight in different units. So too does the prophetic year in comparison to our solar calendar - it uses a different system to measure time.

So, we take the 483 years that we had calculated earlier and we multiply the 483 by 360. In other words, we are viewing the 483 year period described in Daniel 9:25 as "prophetic years" of 360 days each. And, 483 times 360 equals 173,880. And that gives us a total of 173,880 days.

Now, we want to apply these 173,880 days to our calendar, which has 365.25 days to a year. Why? So that we can use *our* calendar in trying to figure out the year that this part of Daniel's prophecy was to begin its fulfillment and when this part of Daniel's prophecy was to be completed. So, we divide the 173,880 days into years of 365.25 days. And, that equals 476 (solar) years. Now, we need to figure out when this 476 year period was supposed to begin.

PART FIVE

When was Daniel's "69 weeks of years" supposed to begin?

At this point we are trying to figure out when the 476-year period begins. The prophecy in Daniel 9:24-26 begins with a decree to rebuild Jerusalem. Many people have proposed different years for different decrees. And I won't pretend to have the "only correct answer," because I don't know if I have that or not. In any event, here are four decrees that are often discussed in relation to Daniel 9:24-26:

1. The decree from Cyrus in 539 BC. (see Ezra 1:1-4)
2. The decree from Darius in 519 BC. (see Ezra 5:3-7)
3. The decree from Artaxerxes to Ezra in 457 BC. (see Ezra 7:11-16)
4. The decree from Artaxerxes to Nehemiah in 444 BC. (see Nehemiah 2:1-8)

As cited in McDowell's book, a Christian scholar named J.D. Wilson contends that only the decree from Artaxerxes to Nehemiah applies to this prophecy. As cited in McDowell's book,

Wilson explains:

"The words of the decree are not given, but its subject matter can easily be determined. Nehemiah hears of the desolate condition of Jerusalem. He is deeply grieved. The King asks the reason. Nehemiah replies, 'the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire.' The King bids him make request. He does so promptly, asking for an order from the King that 'I be sent to the city that I may build it.' And, as we read, he was sent, and he rebuilt Jerusalem."

And so, that is J.D. Wilson's reason for using the Artaxerxes to Nehemiah. The next issue is finding a date for that decree. McDowell, page 199 of his "The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict," reads:

"The decree was given in 444 B.C., based on the following:

1. 'In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' (Nehemiah 2:1).
2. Artaxerxes' accession was in 465 B.C.
3. There is no day-of-month specified, so according to the Jewish custom the date is understood as the first day of the month, which would be Nisan 1, 444 BC.
4. March 5, 444 B.C. is our corresponding calendar date."

Many scholars use the March 5 date, but not all use the 444 BC year. Some use 445 BC as the twentieth year of Artaxerxes. I myself haven't done enough research to decide which year is most likely to be the correct year. Regardless of whether you accept the date as being March 5, 444 BC or March 5, 445 BC, we now have a starting point for Daniel's prophecy.

PART SIX:

When was Daniel's "69 weeks of years" supposed to end?

We are now at the point where we can try to pinpoint when the Messiah was supposed to make his appearance. If we agree on the points that have been made earlier, then we simply calculate 476 years into the future, using 444 BC as the starting point. To do that, if I am not mistaken, we count 443 BC as the first of the 476 years. Why? Because the first began in 444 BC and it ended in 443 BC. So we start counting from 443 BC. So, we have 443 years on the BC side of measuring time and that leaves us with 33 years on the AD side to account for the full 476 years.

Using this formula, we arrive at 33 AD the year in time in which the Messiah was to appear. And that would correspond to the time that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. The reason the donkey is important is that in Zechariah 9:9, the prophet Zechariah speaks of a King riding a donkey and presenting himself as the King to Jerusalem.

Alfred Edersheim, a Christian Jew who lived during the 1800s, studied ancient Rabbinical writings, and said that Zechariah 9:9 was often interpreted as being about a Messiah. In the book, "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," Edersheim wrote: "The Messianic application of this verse in all its parts has already been repeatedly indicated. We may here add that there are many traditions about this donkey on which the Messiah is to ride; and so firm was the belief in it, that, according to the Talmud, 'if anyone saw a donkey in his dreams, he will see salvation' (Ber 56 b)."

So then, what better way for a Messiah to announce himself in Jerusalem than to enter the great city on the back of a humble donkey?

There are theories that pinpoint the exact date of the exact year that Jesus rode into Jerusalem. The dates that I have seen in my review of other people's research is April 6, either April 6, 32 AD, or April 6, 33 AD. (And, again, the difference in the year depends on whether the 20th year of Artaxerxes was in 444 BC or 445 BC). And, some scholars have claimed that there are exactly 173,880 days from March 5, 444 BC to April 6, 33 AD (and, 173,880 days from March 5, 445 BC to April 6, 32 AD).

PART SEVEN

What ancient Rabbis thought of Daniel 9:24-26

I found a Web site that pulls together various ancient writings from Rabbis, commenting on Daniel, chapter 9. That Web site's address is: (<http://www.inerrancy.org/dan.htm>). According to that Web site, at least a handful of ancient Rabbis agree that it is correct to view Daniel 9 as providing a timeline for the arrival of a Messiah. Below are a few examples that I copied verbatim from that Web site:

"1a. Maimonides (Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon): "Daniel has elucidated to us the knowledge of the end times. However, since they are secret, the wise [rabbis] have barred the calculation of the days of Messiah's coming so that the untutored populace will not be led astray when they see that the End Times have already come but there is no sign of the Messiah" (Igeret Teiman, Chap 3 p.24.)"

"1b. Rabbi Moses Abraham Levi: "I have examined and searched all the Holy Scriptures and have not found the time for the coming of Messiah clearly fixed, except in the words of Gabriel to the prophet Daniel, which are written in the 9th chapter of the prophecy of Daniel (The Messiah of the Targums, Talmuds and Rabbinical Writers, 1971) p.141-142 (These two quotes were taken from The Creator Beyond Time and Space by Mark Eastman, M.D. and Chuck Missler (The Word for Today, 1996)."

Assuming that these citations are accurate renderings of what the Rabbis had said, it seems clear that these Rabbis believed that Daniel 9:24-26 referred to a Messiah, a very important Messiah, and that the Bible passage provided the information needed to calculate the Messiah's arrival. As for the first example, Maimonides of course was a Judaist, not a Christian, and so from his point of view, the prophecy had not yet been fulfilled. And that would account for his comments about calculating the Messiah's arrival.

PART EIGHT

My conclusions about Daniel's "69 weeks of years"

Perhaps we can't all agree, at this time, on every specific detail involved in calculating a starting point for Daniel's prophecy about the 69 weeks of years. But, eventually, we might have point for additional information from archaeologists and historians to help pinpoint that starting point. But at this present time, it seems to me that there is widespread agreement among Christian scholars on the following issues:

1. That there is evidence in the Bible to support the concept of the "prophetic calendar" which measures time in terms of 360-day years.
2. That there is evidence in the Bible to support the view that the decree of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah is, or at least could be, the starting point of Daniel's prophecy.
3. That there is strong evidence from historians and archaeologists to pinpoint "twentieth year of Artaxerxes" as being either 444 BC or 445 BC.
4. That the events described in Daniel's prophecy do line up as follows:
 - That there would be a decree to rebuild Jerusalem.
 - Then Jerusalem and the Temple would be rebuilt.
 - Then an anointed one (messiah) would make his appearance and then be "cut off."
 - Then Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed again.

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