

What does the Bible say?

As you read this study, I encourage you to study the corresponding scriptures for yourself to develop a personal, confident understanding of biblical truth. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Study like the Bereans, who listened to Paul but did not take his word for it. They studied the scriptures for themselves so they would know for sure.

Acts 17:11 “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” I ask that you do the same with this study. Please pray before you begin.

The Bible’s Most Important Prophecy (Daniel 9)

Today, we are going to study the most important prophecy in the Bible, which confirms that Jesus is the Messiah. Let’s begin today by turning to...Dan. 8:27. In our previous study, we examined Daniel’s vision in chapter 8, which included the ram, the goat, and the little horn. He says he fainted at the end of the vision and, upon waking, still did not understand what he had seen. This is notable because God sent His angel Gabriel to interpret the vision.

Turn to Dan. 8:16 – Did Gabriel clarify the vision? Yes, he did. He explained to Daniel that the ram symbolized Media-Persia, the goat represented Greece, and the small horn signified the next kingdom. However, Gabriel did not clarify what the 2300 days were. First, let’s look at the prophecy and then examine Gabriel’s explanation.

Read Dan. 8:13, 14, 26. Gabriel does not explain the 2300 days in detail. Instead, he confirms that the 2300 days are genuine and part of the prophecy, but since their fulfillment lies in the distant future, he instructs Daniel to seal them up until that time. So, the only part of the prophecy Daniel didn’t understand was the 2300 days.

This brings us to Daniel chapter 9, about 13 years later. See Dan. 9: 1, 2. Isn’t it interesting that chapter 8 ends with Daniel not understanding a time prophecy, and chapter 9 begins with him studying to understand one? Why is this? Daniel wants to understand the 2300 days and how they relate to his people.

The 2300 days mentioned refer to the period during which the sanctuary would remain desolate, as outlined in Dan. 8:13, 14. Daniel struggles to understand how this period

connects to the sanctuary in Jerusalem, which Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed years earlier. By examining Jeremiah's prophecies, he learns that God predicted the Jewish people's stay in Babylon would last 70 years. With Daniel 9 approaching, they are close to the end of this period. Daniel is trying to piece everything together and considers the possibility that God might be indicating they will remain in Babylon beyond the 70 years, perhaps extending the captivity by 2,300 days.

Let me show you how we know this. See Dan. 9: 17-19. Notice that Daniel is praying for the desolate sanctuary. This relates to the 2300-day prophecy discussed in Dan. 8:13-14. The latter part of his prayer, especially in verse 19, reveals the concern of his heart as he pleads with God not to "defer." To defer means not to delay. What he does not want delayed is their return from Babylon to Israel to rebuild the sanctuary.

What could lead him to believe that God was contemplating delaying their return? Hadn't God already said they would be in Babylon for 70 years? (Jer. 29:10.) Yes, but now Daniel had this 2,300-day prophecy suggesting their captivity might be extended. Since the angel hadn't explained it, Daniel was trying to understand its meaning and was praying about it.

It is at this very point that Gabriel returns. We read about it in...Dan. 9:20-22. Daniel mentions Gabriel as "THE angel he saw in THE vision at the start." Which vision was that? It was in Chapter 8. Gabriel states, "I am NOW come forth to give you skill to understand." Do you notice the link between these chapters? Gabriel is indicating, "I have returned to clarify the part of the prophecy I didn't explain earlier."

We would anticipate his explanation to start with a focus on time. Let's examine it. Read Dan. 9:24 "Seventy weeks are determined upon your people." His opening words address time: "seventy weeks." This prophecy involves Gabriel explaining to Daniel how the 2300 days connect to the Jewish people and the sanctuary.

What does it mean that 70 weeks are "determined upon" the Jews? The term "determined" is significant here. In the original language, it is "chathak," which means "cut off." This indicates that 70 weeks are set apart for Daniel's people, the Jews. Daniel was praying to understand how the 2300 days related to his people and the temple. Gabriel explains that 70 weeks, or 490 days (since 7 days equal one week, so $7 \times 70 = 490$ days), pertain to your people and the sanctuary.

Let's find out how the 70 weeks were fulfilled with Daniel's people. Dan. 9:25 states that the time prophecy starts with the decree to rebuild and restore Jerusalem. The Bible mentions when this decree was issued. (See) Ezra 7:7, 11-13. In 457 B.C., during the seventh year of King Artaxerxes (Ar-ta-zerx-zees), a decree was issued allowing the Jews

to return to Israel and authorized them to rebuild the temple and restore its worship services. (Note: Ezra 6:14 considers three decrees, with the last one being from Artaxerxes, as a single decree for the rebuilding effort.)

We now have our starting point for counting the 70 weeks (490 days). What was supposed to happen during this period? Let's refer back to Daniel 9:25. This verse predicts two events occurring over two time spans: "To restore and build Jerusalem" and "until the Messiah the Prince." The two periods are seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. Gabriel explains that it will take seven weeks to rebuild Jerusalem, followed by sixty-two more weeks until the Messiah's arrival.

We should now revisit a concept from an earlier lesson. In symbolic prophecy, what does a day represent? (Answer: One day stands for one literal year. Refer to Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6. Thus, the 490 symbolic days correspond to 490 literal years.

Because this prophecy begins in 457 B.C., the 7 weeks (49 years) needed to rebuild Jerusalem extend until 408 B.C. Then, the 62 weeks (434 years) lead to A.D. 27, marking the arrival of the Messiah, the Prince. (Note: There is no "zero" year between B.C. and A.D., so an additional year must be added during calculations.)

Let's examine how Jesus fulfilled this prophecy in A.D. 27. The Hebrew term "Messiah" means "anointed," while the Greek equivalent is "Christ." Both words convey the same meaning. Thus, the prophecy foretells Jesus' anointing as the deliverer of God's people.

So, the obvious question is, "How was Jesus anointed?" Turn to...Acts 10:37 (See) He was anointed with the Holy Spirit. When was He anointed with the Spirit? See Luke 3:21 at His baptism. Listen to what Jesus said right after His baptism. (See) Luke 4:18, 19. He states that He was anointed with the Spirit.

Now, let me share something truly amazing. The only date given to us in the life of Jesus is the date of His baptism—the date He was anointed. This is because it confirms the prophecies of Daniel 8 and 9. It proves Jesus was baptized exactly on time. Let's read it...See Luke 3:1-3. The 15th year of Tiberius (Ti-ber-e-us) was A.D. 27.

After His baptism, Jesus started preaching that He had fulfilled the specific prophecy of His time. This is shown in... (See) Mark 1:14, 15, where Jesus declares, "The time is fulfilled." This was more than a casual remark; it signaled the completion of the 70-week prophecy. Notably, Jesus knew precisely when to commence His public ministry in accordance with the prophecy in Daniel 9.

By age 12, He was aware of His mission (Luke 2:49-52), yet He waited until A.D. 27 to leave home and begin His public work. Starting earlier or later by even a year would have meant missing the fulfillment of this prophecy. This relates to the 69 weeks of the prophecy.

How long was Jesus' ministry? It lasted three and a half years. Daniel 9's prophecy not only predicted the beginning of His ministry but also its conclusion. Jesus was aware that His death was part of God's divine plan. Let's examine how the prophecy foretold Jesus' death. (See) Dan. 9:26 states that the Messiah would be 'cut off,' meaning killed, but not for Himself. (See Isa. 53:8, where Jesus is predicted to be "cut off from the land of the living" for our sins.)

Dan. 9:27 indicates that, in the middle of the week, sacrifices and offerings will cease. The midpoint of a week, lasting 3 ½ days, aligns with Jesus' exact 3 ½-year ministry. This also explains why He did not allow Himself to be killed before His designated time.

Let's examine how Jesus chose not to expose Himself to premature death. See John 7:1-9. This event occurs in the autumn of A.D. 30, after three years of public ministry. Jesus knows that accepting His brother's challenge to enter Jerusalem publicly and demonstrate that He is the Messiah would lead to His death at the hands of the Jewish leaders. Doing so in 30 A.D. would mean dying six months too early to fulfill the prophecy. Therefore, He overcomes this temptation.

Observe what Jesus does exactly 3½ years after His baptism "in the midst of the week" (see John 13:1). Jesus knew His time had come. How did He know? He relied on the prophecy in Daniel 9, which signaled not only when to begin His ministry but also when to end it.

Even Jesus' last words on the Cross are significant in light of this prophecy. In John 19:28-30. He cried, "It is finished." He completed His mission. Matthew 27:50-51 recounts that at Jesus' death, God tore the temple veil separating the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place. This act symbolized the end of the sacrificial system, since it was no longer necessary, as Jesus had become the ultimate sacrifice for sins.

The tearing of the veil signified that access to God's presence was now open to all. Isn't this wonderful news?! Jesus died in A.D. 31 in the midst of the last week of this prophecy. The last 3 ½ years were fulfilled through the apostles, offering Israel a chance to repent and follow Jesus. Let's examine what transpired at the end of the 70 weeks.

See Acts 7:59, 60, and Acts 8:1-5. It was only after Stephen was put to death by the highest Jewish court, the Sanhedrin, that God allowed the apostles to spread the gospel everywhere. When Israel stoned Stephen, they were essentially saying, “We don’t want this Jesus.” In response, God essentially declared, “I will leave you here; I will send others to carry my gospel message to the world.”

Stephen was stoned in 34 A.D. at the end of 70 weeks. God gave Israel every opportunity to accept Him as their Lord, but they refused. Now He moved to the Gentiles. Israel could still be saved as individuals, but as a nation, they were no longer designated as His chosen people. (Matt. 21:42-45, especially vss. 42, 45 compared with 1 Peter 2:7-10.)

The remarkable thing about this prophecy, to me, is the precision with which God foretold Jesus’ life and death. Even more amazing is that Jesus obeyed the vision and willingly offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins. I find encouragement in this. There are times in our lives when God calls us or allows us to go through things we wouldn’t naturally choose. We have the assurance that if we are faithful, trust, and obey God, He will bless us with the ability to glorify Him with our lives. Let’s pray and ask God for the power to overcome temptation and glorify Him.

So far, we have studied the first 70 weeks, equivalent to 490 years, of the 2,300-day prophecy. This leaves 1,810 years that still need to be explained. In our next study, we will explore the prophecy's end date.

As you prayerfully consider this topic, please remember we're here to help with any questions. Please contact us at <https://freechristianbooks.us/questions>