

Have you ever questioned the validity of the Bible? Growing up in the Hutterite culture we are introduced to this book at a very young age and at first we take it for granted. Eventually, as we grow older, perhaps there are times where we actually question its validity. In my opinion, this is not a bad thing. It is good to ask questions and its especially good to question something that is said to be an important part of eternity. So my friend, if you have ever questioned or perhaps have a friend who is questioning the validity of scripture, this study is for you!

In this study we will be looking at a prophecy in Daniel chapter 9 that proves without a doubt that the Bible is indeed inspired. There are specific events predicted in this chapter that happened almost 500 years later with absolute and perfect precision. It is a good idea, and I would strongly suggest that you read through Daniel chapter 8 and 9 to get a general overview first. Also please take a moment to pray for wisdom before we begin.

Quick review. In Daniel 8 you can read that Daniel had a very troubling and confusing vision containing "2300 days". (Daniel 8:14) Immediately after, he heard a voice ordering the angel Gabriel to come and make him understand the troubling vision he had. (Daniel 8:16) The angel Gabriel then tried to explain the different parts of the vision but before he got to the part of the 2300 days Daniel passed out. We then go to Daniel chapter 9. According to recorded history, this is now 13 years later. 13 years have passed and Gabriel still hasn't finished helping Daniel understand the vision. So as Daniel is praying for the people in captivity the angel Gabriel appears to him again and shares with him what is now recorded in Daniel 9:22-27. It reads...

"And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill TO UNDERSTAND. [23] At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision: [24] "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make RECONCILIATION FOR INIQUITY, To bring in EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy. [25] "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until MESSIAH THE PRINCE, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. [26] "And after the sixty-two weeks MESSIAH shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. [27] Then he will CONFIRM A COVENANT WITH MANY for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an END TO SACRIFICE AND OFFERING. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

For starters, let's look at some of the highlights from this passage in CAPS.

Who is it that makes "reconciliation for iniquity (sin)" and brings "everlasting righteousness"?

Who is known as the "Messiah"?

Who "confirmed a covenant with many"?

Who brought an end to the sacrificial system?

If you guessed Jesus Christ, then I'd tell you that it's a pretty good guess. The great part about all this is that we don't have to guess. This prophecy actually foretells the exact year and season of the baptism (anointing) of Jesus Christ, the exact year and season of His crucifixion, and also when the gospel officially was to go to the Gentiles. How so? Let's begin to dig in!

To start, we have to understand that in Bible prophecy we can use the day/year principle. For every day in Bible Prophecy we can input a full year. This principle is not something dreamed up but is actually Biblical as well. For reference look at Numbers 13:34 and also Ezekiel 4:6.

So Gabriel told Daniel that 70 weeks are "determined" upon thy people and for his holy city. (Jerusalem) The Hebrew word for "determined" is "nehtak" and literally means "cut off" or "decreed".

70 weeks equals 490 days (70x7) or in this case 490 years. So we will be looking at some events that take place in a period of 490 years. When does this period start? Look at verse 25.

Daniel 9:25

"Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the COMMAND TO RESTORE AND REBUILD JERUSALEM until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times."

So here we have our starting point..the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. After the captivity there was more than one group of people who started the journey back to inhabit and rebuild Jerusalem. But only one of those groups had official and full legal permission and funding to specifically go and rebuild the walls and temple of Jerusalem. The Bible tells us exactly when that was.

Ezra 7:7 "Some of the children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim came up to Jerusalem in the SEVENTH YEAR OF KING ARTAXERXES.\*

Ezra 7:11-13 "This is a copy of the letter that KING ARTAXERXES gave Ezra the priest, the scribe, expert in the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of His statutes to Israel: [12] Artaxerxes, king of kings, To Ezra the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven: Perfect peace, and so forth. [13] I ISSUE A DECREE that all those of the people of Israel and the priests and Levites in my realm, who volunteer to GO UP TO JERUSALEM, may go with you."

History tells us that King Artaxerxes came on the throne at 464 BC. So in the seventh year of his reign would bring us up to 457 BC. This decree was issued in the fall of 457 BC. Here's our starting point. The total time period we are looking at is 490 years. So if we add 490 years to the fall of 457 BC that takes us to the fall of 34 AD. Remember to add one year when crossing from BC to AD because there is no year 0. So now we have a starting point to this Prophecy and an endpoint. Let's look next at what happens in between.

When I first was introduced to this Bible prophecy I had many questions as we went. One of the questions was as to why the angel said "Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be SEVEN weeks and SIXTY-TWO weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. Why didn't the angel simply say sixty-nine weeks? And what was it talking about streets and walls being rebuilt?

Using the day/year principle that would be a period of 49 years. If you have ever read the books of Nehemiah and Ezra then you will immediately know what the angel was talking about. The main thing on the agenda of the people who headed back to Jerusalem after the captivity in Babylon was to rebuild the walls of the city and the temple. It was for that purpose that king Artaxerxes granted funding and assistance.

So was the wall and temple rebuilt within that 49 year period? Yes!! The wall was actually rebuilt in record timing. Nehemiah 6:15-16 "So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in FIFTY-TWO DAYS. [16] And it happened, when all our enemies heard of it, and all the nations around us saw these things, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this WORK WAS DONE BY OUR GOD."

Was it done during troubling times? Yes! The builders under the direction of Nehemiah were constantly on the lookout and expecting attack. In fact the workers were instructed to always have a sword by their side in case of attack. You can read all about this in Nehemiah chapter 4.

So if the wall was rebuilt in 52 days why did the angel say 7 weeks (49 years)? Although the walls were quickly rebuilt, the temple was another story. The enemies of Israel were relentless and at one point even managed to legally block the construction of the temple by convincing the Persian king at that time that Jerusalem was responsible for being very rebellious in the past. (Ezra 4:11-17) The plan worked, construction on the temple was immediately ordered to be stopped and remained dormant until a new king was on the Persian throne.

How long did it take to complete the temple? We read the answer in John 2:19-21 "Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." [20] Then the Jews said, "It has taken FORTY-SIX YEARS to build this temple, and will You raise it in three days?" [21] But He was speaking of the temple of His body."

Isn't it absolutely incredible how accurate this has been so far and we're only getting started? Let's move on to the next part of this incredible prophecy.

Daniel 9:25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the COMMAND TO RESTORE AND REBUILD JERUSALEM UNTIL MESSIAH THE PRINCE, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times."

The text says that from the date of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks, which is a total of sixty-nine weeks. If we use the day/year principle that is a total of  $(69 \times 7 = 483)$  years. Now if we add 483 years to our starting point which is the fall of 457 BC (remember to add a year when crossing from BC to AD) it brings us to the fall of AD 27.

So according to this Prophecy the Messiah would appear in AD 27. Is that what happened? Yes! The word "Messiah" means "the Anointed one". In the fall of AD 27 Jesus Christ was baptized in the Jordan River and was anointed by the Holy Spirit which then began His public ministry as the Messiah.

Acts 10:37-38 "that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: [38] how GOD ANOINTED JESUS of Nazareth WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."

How can we be absolutely certain this date is correct? We can read one of the accounts of Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan River in Luke 3. That chapter starts out saying... "Now in the FIFTEENTH YEAR of the REIGN OF TIBERIUS CAESAR, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene," (Luke 3:1)

History confirms that Tiberius began his reign as co-ruler with his grandfather Augustus Caesar in 12 AD., if we add 15 years to that it would land us in 27 AD.

If we read the account of the baptism of Jesus in the gospel of Mark, notice what Jesus proclaims after His forty day trial in the wilderness.

Mark 1:12-15 "Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. [13] And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him. [14] Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, [15] and saying, "THE TIME IS FULFILLED, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

When Jesus declared that "the time is fulfilled" He was talking about the time Prophecy in Daniel that was stated and recorded almost 500 years prior. He was declaring that He, Jesus, was "Messiah the Prince".

Ok friends, so far we have made it up to AD 27 where we saw the anointing, or baptism of Jesus which began His ministry. The prophecy started out by saying that 70 weeks (490 years) are determined upon the Jewish people (Dan. 9:24) from our starting date of 457 BC. (Dan. 9:25)

The first 7 weeks (49 years) were determined to rebuild the walls and temple of Jerusalem. It then went on to say until Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. (total of 69 weeks or 483 years) This leaves 1 week (7 years) left to get to the end of the Prophecy which is in AD 34. Please look at the included pic for visuals. So what is going to happen in this last week? We will see two very significant events that were right on time.

Daniel 9:26 "And AFTER the sixty-two weeks MESSIAH SHALL BE CUT OFF, but NOT FOR HIMSELF; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

It says that the Messiah shall be cut off, but NOT FOR HIMSELF. Is this what happened? Absolutely! Jesus Christ was killed by crucifixion, NOT for Himself but for you and me and all of us. This prophecy showed Daniel that Jesus was not only going to come, but also that He was going to die for the sins of the world. We see this also in this very popular passage of Isaiah 53:7-8 \*He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. [8] He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was CUT OFF FROM THE LAND OF THE LIVING; FOR THE TRANSGRESSIONS OF MY PEOPLE HE WAS STRICKEN."

I want to also show you how precise this Prophecy was in stating exactly WHEN Jesus was to die.

Daniel 9:27 "Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the MIDDLE OF THE WEEK He shall BRING AN END TO SACRIFICE and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

It is saying that Jesus will confirm the covenant with many for one week, the last week (7 years) of this prophecy...then it goes on to say in the middle of the week He will bring an end to sacrifice. Half of 7 is 3.5. Stay with me now! Jesus was anointed or baptized in the fall of AD 27. He was crucified exactly 3.5 years later in the spring of 31 AD, right on time!!

What happened at the moment of His death?

Matthew 27:50-51 "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. [51] Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split"

The veil separating the Holy place from the Most Holy place was torn in two. The sacrificial system was over.

Now at this point it leaves us with 3.5 more years left in the prophecy. So if Jesus died halfway through the last 7 years of the prophecy, how could He "confirm the covenant with many" for the full 7 years like it says in Daniel 9:27?

After Jesus' ministry of 3.5 years ended, Jesus confirmed the covenant THROUGH HIS DISCIPLES. It is written in Hebrews 2:3 "how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the FIRST began to be SPOKEN BY THE LORD, and WAS CONFIRMED to us BY THOSE WHO HEARD HIM,"

For 3.5 years after His death the gospel was preached by the apostles to the Jewish nation. It was in AD 34 where this very familiar story took place.

Acts 7:54,57-60 "When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. [57] Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; [58] and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. [59] And THEY STONED STEPHEN as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." [60] Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

As a nation, they had rejected the Messiah. They had rejected His message and were no longer God's chosen people or nation. Later on after the conversion of the Apostle Paul He made this statement to the Jews.

Acts 13:46 "Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to YOU FIRST; but SINCE YOU REJECT IT, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES."

Step by step every time the details of this prophecy were fulfilled accurately and on time. My friends, we CAN trust the Bible. If the first part of this prophecy was so accurately fulfilled, how exciting is it to know we can count on the last part of the full 2300 days as well. That is a part of another study though.

Bonus content:

This last part that we covered, the 7 year period in which Jesus was anointed, ministered to the Jewish nation for 3.5 years, was crucified, and then gave the Jewish nation 3.5 more years to accept Him through the ministry of the apostles before taking the gospel to the gentiles, there are some people who teach that this "last week" of the Prophecy has not happened yet and that it is talking about the Antichrist of the future. In fact there are some Study Bibles that will actually tell you that. I want you to remember that the commentary in a Bible is not inspired. The Scriptures are. So if we are relying on the commentary of a study Bible then we are at the mercy of the person who wrote that commentary. The same goes for what you are reading right now. We must all individually search, study, and discern truth for ourselves if a controversy or disagreement arises. To me personally it is this last part of the Prophecy that proves beyond any doubt that Jesus was the Messiah. I do see also why some may be confused about it though. This all being said, let's continue...

Daniel 9:26-27 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the PEOPLE OF THE PRINCE who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. [27] Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

It says that the city and the sanctuary are destroyed by the people of the Prince who was to come. The key question is, who is the PRINCE and who are the PEOPLE of the prince?

Let's start by looking at what happened during the first destruction of Jerusalem. First off, we read in Daniel 9:14 that this destruction was brought about by God.

Daniel 9:14 "Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and BROUGHT IT UPON US; for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice."

In 2 Chronicles we read that it was King Nebuchadnezzar that destroyed Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 36:17-20 "Therefore He brought against them the KING OF THE CHALDEANS, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand. [18] And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all these he took to Babylon. [19] Then they BURNED THE HOUSE OF GOD, BROKE DOWN THE WALL OF JERUSALEM, BURNED all its PALACES with fire, and DESTROYED all its precious possessions. [20] And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia,"

If we read in Jeremiah, he says that ISRAEL would CAUSE the city to be burned with fire.

Jeremiah 38:23 "'So they shall surrender all your wives and children to the Chaldeans. You shall not escape from their hand, but shall be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon. And YOU SHALL CAUSE THIS CITY TO BE BURNED WITH FIRE.'"

Do you see what happened here? Because of ISRAEL'S sins, GOD employed His servant NEBUCHADNEZZAR to destroy Jerusalem. If it had not been for the sins of Israel, Jerusalem would never have been destroyed.

One thing is crystal clear in Daniel 9, The cutting off of the Messiah (crucifixion of Jesus) leads to the destruction of Jerusalem.

At this point please go read the parable of the Vineyard that Jesus shared in Matthew 21:33-42. You will notice 5 stages.

#1. God sent His servants to gather fruit but they were rejected by the vine dressers.

#2. God sent more servants but they also were mistreated and rejected.

#3. The owner of the vineyard sent His own Son and He was killed.

#4. The wicked men who killed the Son were destroyed.

#5. The kingdom was taken away from the original vinedressers and given to a nation that produces fruit.

The history of Israel also had these five stages. After their officially becoming a nation after leaving Egypt Israel was sent many messengers but the messages were rejected so God allowed Israel to go captive to Babylon. (2 Chron. 35:15,16) After the Babylonian captivity, God sent them more messengers and they did the same with them. Finally, God sent His own Son Jesus and they cut Him off. As a result Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 70 AD and the kingdom was removed from literal Israel and given to the gentiles.

If you go to the book of John, I believe it's in chapter 2 or 3, at the beginning of His ministry, you will find the story of Jesus driving the money changers out of the TEMPLE and calling it "My Father's house" In Matthew chapter 23, immediately after being rejected by the Jewish leaders in the temple, Jesus left the temple and said "YOUR HOUSE is left unto you DESOLATE" (Matthew 23:38) Right after that in Matthew 24 Jesus spoke of the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

In Luke 19:41-44 Jesus explained to the Jews that their city would be destroyed because they did not know the hour of their visitation. In other words, they rejected the Messiah and this led to the destruction of their city and nation.

I want to show you one more. In the Parable of the Wedding Feast in Matthew 22, when the Jews slew the Son and the messengers that were sent to them, the king (God the Father) sent His armies (The Romans) to destroy those murderers (the Jewish nation)

So what does all this have to do with our original question on who the prince is to come and the people are? I promise you will see as we continue.

Daniel 9:26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the PRINCE WHO IS TO COME Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined."

Ok friends, let's clarify who this "prince who is to come" is. I'll tell you the answer and then explain why. It is Jesus Christ.

The very first verse of the prophecy (Dan. 9:24) talks about bringing in everlasting righteousness and anointing the Most Holy..who fulfilled that? Jesus.

The very next verse gives a date of the coming of "MESSIAH THE PRINCE" (Dan. 9:25) Who is that? Jesus.

Verse 27 continues the thought of how the "prince" would cause "sacrifice and offering to cease" Who died once and for all and put an end to the sacrificial system? Jesus. This whole prophecy is about Jesus Christ. Ok now let's start comparing some Scriptures to fully understand verse 26 where it talks about destroying the city.

First stop..the book of Psalms where we look at a prophecy of Jesus.

Psalms 118:22,26 "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. [26] Blessed is HE WHO COMES in the NAME of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD."

This was fulfilled when Jesus was making His triumphant ride into Jerusalem on a donkey and the crowds were shouting "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (Luke 19:38)

The Pharisees told Jesus to tell His followers to quit praising Him and Jesus told them that if they stayed quiet then the stones would cry out praises.

IMMEDIATELY after that we see it written in Luke what Jesus said as he neared the city of Jerusalem.

Luke 19:41-44 "Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, [42] saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. [43] For DAYS WILL COME upon you when your ENEMIES will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, [44] and LEVEL YOU, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because YOU DID NOT KNOW THE TIME OF YOUR VISITATION ."

This account in Luke 19:39-44 follows the exact same basic order we read in Daniel 9:26. First there is a prince who comes in the name of the LORD, Jesus then speaks of His rejection by the Jewish nation, then Jesus spoke about the destruction of Jerusalem.

Let's look at Daniel 9:26 one last time.

Daniel 9:26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the PEOPLE of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined."

Who were God's chosen PEOPLE? It was the Jewish nation.

Who is the PRINCE WHO IS TO COME? Verse 25 tells us it was Jesus (MESSIAH THE PRINCE)

How did the people destroy their own city?

But they reject Jesus as the Messiah; they are responsible for their own destruction. Yes. It was the Romans under the leadership of Titus who destroyed it but the Jews as a nation, brought that destruction upon themselves just like they were responsible (Jer. 38:23) for the destruction of Jerusalem so many hundreds of years before when God sent King Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chron. 36:17-20) to destroyed it because they refused to turn from their sin.

The reason I'm stressing this is because some Study Bibles will tell you that it is talking about an Antichrist who will come in the last days. They take the last week of this 70 week Prophecy we have been looking at and cut it off and place it into the future.

Question. If I have a 7 foot ruler laying on the floor, and cut the last foot off and lay it 100 feet away, is it still a 7 foot ruler? No. It doesn't work that way. I hope and pray that this study has been a blessing to you.