



Is the Seventy Weeks prophecy of Daniel accurate?

Critics and skeptics of the Bible claim that Daniel’s prophecy of the seventy weeks (**Daniel 9:24-27**) was written during the 160’s BCE, rather than the Biblically historically accurate date of **“the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede” (Daniel 9:1 NLT)** [539-538 BCE], and assert that the prophecy does not predict anything about the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The oldest extant manuscript of anything in **Daniel 9:24-27** is the *Dead Sea Scrolls* manuscript **11Q13**, dated to circa 100 BCE, which partially quotes **Daniel 9:25**, **“until an anointed one, a prince”**. This fact alone that that manuscript predates Jesus’ baptism by about 125 years, is powerful evidence of its prophetic accuracy. (For more facts and information about dating the entire book of Daniel, please see the article, “When Was the Book of Daniel Written?”, on this website). In the meantime, however, this present article investigates the Biblical and historical facts relating to the prophecy of the seventy weeks in **Daniel 9:24-27**, and its fulfillment.

OVERVIEW of the SEVENTY WEEKS of **DANIEL 9:24-27**

“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish transgression, to make an end to sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in

everlasting righteousness, to seal up the visioning prophecy and to anoint the most holy place”—Daniel 9:24 NASB

“Seventy times seven years have been marked out for your people and your holy city”, (Heb., *Seventy weeks [of years]*) (Daniel 9:24 REB, and footnote). “The weeks are ‘weeks of years’” (Daniel 9:24 NJB footnote). “Seventy weeks” [Viz., of years, footnote] (Daniel 9:24 Tanakh)

The angel **“Gabriel” (Daniel 9:21)** brought Daniel the prophecy of the ‘seventy weeks of years’. As we understand from the Hebrew, the **“seventy weeks”** is 490 years (70 x 7 = 490). The main result of this will be “the sacrifice of atonement” by the Messiah, Jesus Christ (Romans 3:25), which is the ‘making atonement for iniquity,’ because ‘transgression and sin will be ended.’ Yes, ‘Jesus appeared once for all,’ **“at the end of the ages to take away sin by his sacrifice” (Hebrews 9:26 NAB).**

The “seventy weeks” of years is foretold to ‘finish transgression, end sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness.’ How? “The righteousness of God [is] through the faith of Jesus Christ to all, and on those believing . . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God — being declared righteous freely by His grace through the redemption that [is] in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth [as] a propitiatory covering through faith in his blood . . . declaring him righteous who [is] of the faith of Jesus” (Romans 3:22-26 LSV). Even though believing Christians still sin by mistake (Romans 5:12), they are “declared righteous’ by God’s “free unpurchased grace” (Romans 3:24 Weymouth) on the basis of their faith Jesus’ sacrifice.

“To confirm the prophetic vision” (Daniel 9:24 NLT). ‘The prophetic vision is confirmed’ by its actual fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

“A holy of holies will be anointed” (Daniel 9:24 NAB). “For anointing the holy of holies” (Daniel 9:24 NJB). “And the holy of Holies anointed” (Daniel 9:24 Tanakh)

“The Sovereign Lord” “anointed” his “holy servant Jesus” (Acts 4:26,27) “with the holy Spirit” (Acts 10:38) at his baptism (Matthew 3:16; Luke 3:22), which was the ‘anointing of the holy of holies.’ A number of translations render it as “to anoint the Most Holy Place,” as the NASB does, above. However, the Hebrew for “to anoint” never refers to a place anywhere else in the scriptures. Aaron was anointed as high priest (Exodus 40:13). This event is also described as, “Aaron was set apart to sanctify him as most holy” (1 Chronicles 23:13 NASB). Combining these last two scriptures, we could rightfully say that ‘Aaron was anointed as most holy.’

Daniel 9:24 predicted, not a place, but Jesus himself, would be anointed as **“holy of holies.”**

“So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people, and the people of a prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined”—Daniel 9:25-26 NASB

“And he will make a covenant prevail with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will make sacrifice and grain offering cease”—Daniel 9:27 LSB margin

Let’s now examine the time periods, namely, the “seventy weeks” for the total period, also, the “seven weeks”, the “sixty-two weeks”, and the “one week,” time periods. We’ve already seen that these time periods are “weeks of years”. Thus, the entire period of “seventy weeks” is 490 years ($70 \times 7 = 490$). The “seven weeks” is 49 years ($7 \times 7 = 49$). The “sixty-two” weeks” is 434 years ($62 \times 7 = 434$). The “one week” is 7 years ($1 \times 7 = 7$).

The ‘seventy week’ period was to start from “the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem”. When was this “decree” issued? First, we need to take note that the first ‘sixty-

nine weeks', or 483 years ($62 + 7 = 69$; $69 \times 7 = 483$), would last until "the coming of the Messiah the king" (Daniel 9:25 Lamsa). If the start of this period was Cyrus' decree in about 538 BCE (2 Chronicles 36:22,23; Ezra 1:1-4), the '69 weeks' would end about 55 BCE, which is far too early to fit the Messiah, Jesus', coming. If the '69 weeks' started with Artaxerxes giving Nehemiah permission, supplies and protection to rebuild Jerusalem and its' wall, in Artaxerxes' 20th year, 445 BCE, the 69 weeks would end in 38 CE, which is too late to fit Jesus' coming.

THE 69 (7 + 62) WEEKS OF YEARS

" . . . until Messiah the Prince"—Daniel 9:25 LSB

However, if the 69 weeks period starts with the decree **"in the seventh year of Artaxerxes"**, 'to carry out the work according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus and Darius, and of Artaxerxes, kings of Persia' (**Ezra 6:14; Ezra 7:7, 12-24 NIV**), the 69 week period (483 years) would start with the decree in 458 BCE, and end with Jesus' baptism in 26 CE. This works out perfectly when harmonized with the historical facts, as we shall see further, below. **"Ezra came up from Babylon . . . the king gave him everything that he asked for, since the hand of Yahweh his God was over him. A number of Israelites . . . went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month, in the seventh year of the king's reign; for he had ordered the departure from Babylon on the first day of the fifth month"** (**Ezra 7:6-9 NJB**).

John the Baptist was about six months older than Jesus, based on Luke 1:25-43, After John the Baptist started preaching in the spring of 26 CE, **"in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar"** (**Luke 3:1,2**) [counted from his co-regency with Augustus in 11 CE], it is reported that, **"Everyone was expecting the Messiah to come soon, and they were eager to know whether John might be the Messiah"** (**Luke 3:15 NLT**). John was from a priestly family (Luke 1:5-9), and priests began their service at age 30 (Numbers 4:34-47).

Based on this, and what we know from Luke chapter 3 about the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry and also the beginning of Jesus' ministry, it appears likely that John began his ministry around age 30. The Jews at that general time period were expecting the Messiah, apparently because they were aware of Daniel's prophecy of the "seventy weeks", and more specifically, the 69 weeks of years that would end with the arrival of the Messiah. And, sure enough, about six months later, in the fall of 26 CE, we learn that, **"Jesus himself was baptized . . . Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his public ministry" (Luke 3:21,23 NLT)**. External confirmation of the date 26 CE is found in Tertullian, that the "Lord has been revealed since the twelfth year of Tiberius Caesar" (*Against Marcion I.xv*) [counting from the time of Tiberius' confirmation by the Roman senate as emperor on 17 September 14 CE]. Jesus was "revealed" publicly to the people from the time of his baptism and public ministry.

During the first **"seven weeks"** of years (49 years) apparently **"Jerusalem [was] rebuilt" (Daniel 9:25 NAB)**. The culmination of the next **"sixty-two weeks"** of years resulted in the arrival and anointing of **"Messiah the Prince" (Daniel 9:25 LSB)**.

THE SEVENTIETH WEEK OF YEARS

"After the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off, and have nothing"—Daniel 9:26 LSB

"And after sixty and two weeks The Messiah will be killed"—Daniel 9:25 Peshitta Holy Bible Translated

The Messiah was foretold to be "cut off" in death, "and have nothing", that is, no life left on earth, after "the sixty-two weeks." "Cut off" is an expression used in scripture to denote a judicial sentence, and a violent death. Isaiah gives an exact comment on both of these expressions: **"He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due" (Isaiah 53:8 NASB)**. **"Christ died for our sins"**

(1 Corinthians 15:3). When did he die? We shall see.

“He will make a covenant prevail with the many for one week”—Daniel 9:27 LSB margin

Which covenant does Christ confirm for the seventieth week? Who are the many that he confirms it with? Since the last week of years started with Christ’s baptism in 26 CE, this 70th week cannot be the new covenant with Christians, because that didn’t start until Jesus’ execution in 30 CE, Jesus said it was “sealed by my blood” (Luke 22:20 ISV). The covenant the Messiah confirms also cannot be the Mosaic Law covenant, because that covenant was canceled by God. “He cancels the first covenant (the Mosaic Law Covenant) in order to put the second (the new covenant) into effect” (Hebrews 10:9 NLT). “He did this by erasing the charges that were brought against us by the written laws God had established (the Mosaic Law Covenant). He took the charges away by nailing them to the cross” (Colossians 2:14 GWT), at the death of Jesus Christ.

This only leaves the Abrahamic covenant. “God made a covenant with Abraham and promised to keep it. The Law, which was given four hundred and thirty years later, cannot break that covenant and cancel God’s promise” (Galatians 3:17 (GNB). The Mosaic Law Covenant operated under the Abrahamic Covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant was not canceled by the inauguration of the Mosaic Law Covenant, nor by the cancellation of the Mosaic Law, but continued in force. **“God . . . foretold the good news to Abraham, saying, ‘Through you shall all the nations be blessed.’ consequently, those who have faith are blessed along with faithful Abraham who had faith” (Galatians 3:8,9 NAB).**

But, how did Jesus the Messiah “make a covenant prevail with many for one week” of years, or seven years? “The many” were the circumcised **“descendants . . . Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Exodus 33:1; Deuteronomy 34:1)**, namely, the natural Jews, Jewish proselytes, and Samaritans. Jesus spoke of this when he said, “You will receive power when

the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8 NAB). When speaking to his “fellow Israelites”, the apostle Peter mentioned, “the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, ‘Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed. When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you” (Acts 3:17,25,26). So, the holy Spirit at first directed the disciples exclusively to be **“spreading the word only among Jews” (Acts 11:19 NIV)**. Then, the holy Spirit directed Philip to witness to the Samaritans, and many believed (Acts 8:4-17). Thus, through witnessing to Jews and believing Samaritans the Abrahamic Covenant was ‘confirmed with the many for one week,’ that is, for seven years, starting with Jesus’ baptism in the fall of 26 CE.

Seven years later, about the fall of 33 CE, what ended the seventieth week of years? As we have seen, the gospel was offered exclusively to Jews and Samaritans. Jesus said, **“I was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24 NRSV)**. “Those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose because of Stephen went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, **preaching the word to no one but Jews” (Acts 11:19 NAB)**. The seven years of special favor toward Jews and Samaritans ended, when the holy Spirit directed Peter do the unthinkable for a Jew. It was go to the house of the uncircumcised Gentile Cornelius, to witness to him, his family and friends, and that resulted in their acceptance of Christ, and their baptism (Acts 10:1-48). Beginning with the conversion Cornelius and his household, about the fall of 33 CE, uncircumcised Gentiles could now receive God’s favor through the **“covenant with Abraham” (Exodus 2:24)**, and its subordinate **“new covenant”**, which **“replaced . . . the old covenant” (2 Corinthians 3:6,11,14 NLT)**.

Some assert that the seventieth week was not fulfilled during the 3 1/2 years of Christ’s ministry and the 3 1/2 years after his death, but instead, the fulfillment of the seventieth week skips ahead to the end times, claiming it predicts, “The Antichrist”. However, there is nothing in Daniel 9:24-27, or its context, that says anything about “Antichrist”. “Antichrist” is only found in the Bible books of 1 John and 2 John, and there is not just one “antichrist”, but

“many antichrists”. In fact, the apostle John reported that back then, late in the first century, there had already appeared “many antichrists” (1 John 2:18 LSB; NASB). For more information, please see the article on this website, “Who Is The Antichrist According to the Bible?”.

“THE MIDDLE OF THE WEEK AND CHRIST’S SACRIFICE

“In the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering”—Daniel 9:27 NASB

How does “he”, that is, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, do this? At his death, “The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45 NIV), indicating their temple “house is abandoned and desolate” (Matthew 23:38 NLT). Since animal sacrifices could not permanently deal with sin, (Hebrews 10:1-10). Jesus “Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many” (Hebrews 9:28 NIV). He had “offered for all time one sacrifice for sins” (Hebrews 10:12 NIV). At this point, the animal sacrifices offered at the temple in Jerusalem no longer had any validity with God. This is how, “in the middle of the week [3 1/2 years after his baptism] he . . . put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering,” in the spring of 30 CE, at the end of his 3 1/2 year ministry.

Further evidence for Jesus’ 3 1/2 year ministry is found in the gospel of John, which specifically mentions three passover festivals after Jesus’ baptism (John 2:13 [27 CE]; 6:4 [29 CE]; 13:1 [30 CE]). Between the Passovers of 27 and 29 CE, John 5:1 mentions “Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals” (NIV). Since, in John 4:35 Jesus says, “In four months the harvest will be here” (NAB), the next major festival is the Passover at the start of the harvest. In fact, in the important *Codex Sinaiticus* manuscript of the 4th century, and the *Codex Ephremai rescriptus* of the 5th century, **John 5:1** reads, **“the festival of the Jews” (Anderson New Testament; Godbey New Testament; Mace New Testament)**. “The festival of the Jews” would be the most important festival under the Mosaic Law Covenant, which is the Passover.

The parable of *The Barren Fig Tree* (Luke 13:6-9) also implies that Jesus had a ministry of 3 1/2 years. Jesus mentions that, “For three years now I have come in search of fruit on this fig tree (Israel) but have found none (symbolic of the very few disciples)”. Then, the parable refers to “this year also” (Luke 13:7,8 NAB), that is, the growing season of the 4th year. This would make a total of 3 1/2 years, representing Jesus’ 3 1/2 year ministry.

AFTER THE SEVENTIETH WEEK OF YEARS

“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 . . . 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” —Daniel 9:26b,27b NKJV).

“The people of the prince who is to come [to] destroy the city and the sanctuary” are the Roman legions under general Titus in the year 70 CE. ‘The end by flood’ is the overwhelming force of the massive Roman army against Jerusalem. The Jewish uprising “war” against the occupying Romans in the late 60’s CE is what brought the “desolations.”

Jesus, in his parable of *The Wedding Feast*, predictively implied the coming destruction, with the words, **“The king [God] was enraged and sent his troops [the Roman army], destroyed those murderers and burned their city” (Matthew 22:7 NAB).** Also, see Matthew 21:33-41; 22:6; 23:37,38. Jerusalem and the temple were left utterly destroyed, and well over a million Jews died or taken into exile.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE of THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF YEARS (DANIEL 9:24-27)

We’ve examined how the various details of the prophecy of the seventy weeks of years were fulfilled. Now let’s look many of the details from the perspective of the historical timeline in connection with these events.

539 or 538 BCE — The “seventy weeks” prophecy is given to the prophet Daniel in **“the first year [of] Darius . . . of the Medes” (Daniel 9:1,24-27 NKJV)**.

458 BCE — The first **“seven weeks”** (49 years) of the “seventy weeks” prophecy start with the **“decree” “in the seventh year of Artaxerxes” (Ezra 7:13,7)** .

409 BCE — The first “seven weeks” end. During this time, **Jerusalem [was] rebuilt with streets and strong defenses, despite the perilous times” (Daniel 9:25b NLT)**. The “sixty-two” weeks of years (434 years) begin to run.

26 CE, fall — **“Messiah the Leader” (Daniel 9:25 LSV)** appears at the end of the 69 weeks of years, when Jesus Christ is baptized by John the Baptist, and is ‘anointed’ with the holy Spirit **(Daniel 9:24; Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21,22; Acts 4:27; 10:38)**. The last **“one week”** of years (7 years) of the **“seventy weeks”** begins, which includes the exclusive offer of the gospel to **“the many”**, that is, those in the Abrahamic “covenant”.

30 CE, spring — The **“middle of the week” (Daniel 9:27 NKJV)** occurs with **“the Messiah”**, Jesus, being **“cut off”** in death **(Daniel 9:25; Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30)**. The temple curtain is torn in two, which, in effect, **“put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering”** at the Jerusalem temple from having any further effectiveness with Almighty God **(Daniel 9:27 NASB)**.

33 CE, fall — The last **“one week”** (7 years) of the “seventy weeks” of years ends with the conversion to Christianity of the first Gentiles **(Acts 10:1-47)**.

HOW OTHER HISTORICAL DATES FIT INTO THE SEVENTY WEEKS TIMELINE

The striking fulfillment of how the details of the various aspects of the “seventy weeks” fit into the historical timeline is amazing. Now let’s see how other Biblical and historical events

fit into the fulfilled prophecy of the seventy weeks of years and the historical timeline.

5 BCE, spring — John the Baptist, six months older than Jesus, is born (**Luke 1:24-45, 57**).

5 BCE, early fall — Jesus is born during the reign of Roman emperor “Caesar Augustus” (**Luke 2:1-7**), who ruled from 27 BCE to 14 CE, **“in the days of King Herod” (Matthew 2:1 NAB)**, who reigned from 37 BCE to 4 BCE.

early 4 BCE — A few months after Jesus is born, **“Herod . . . ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under” (Matthew 2:16 NAB)**. But, before long, **“Herod died” (Matthew 2:19 NIV)**, on April 4, 4 BCE. He ruled from 37 BCE to 4 BCE. Then, **“Archelaus [began] ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod” (Matthew 2:22 NAB)**. He ruled from 4 BCE to 6 CE.

26 CE, spring — **Luke 3:1,2 — “In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar”**, John the Baptist began to preach, being about 30 years old at the time. Tiberius began to co-rule with his stepfather Caesar Augustus in 11 CE, so his 15th year could be viewed as running from 25 CE to the fall of 26 CE, as Luke apparently did.. His solitary official rulership was from 14 CE, when the Roman senate confirmed him as Emperor, until his death in 37 CE. Luke, however, is using the de facto position of Tiberius as the starting point of his reign. John the Baptist’s beginning to preach in the spring of 26 CE certainly falls within this 15th year. **“ . . . when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea.”** Pilate was prefect of Judea from 26 CE to 36 CE. **“ . . . and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee.”** This was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who ruled over Galilee and Perea from 4 BCE to 39 BCE. **“ . . . and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis.”** He was another son of Herod the Great, and ruled over Galilee and Perea from 4 BCE to 39 CE. **“ . . . during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.”** Anna had been the high priest from 6 CE to 15 CE, when he was deposed by the Roman authorities. Caiaphas was high priest from 18 CE to 36 CE. Annas, however, continued to function as a de facto co-high priest with Caiaphas (**John 18:13**). Luke, as in the case of Tiberius, is using the de facto

position of Annas as co-high priest, rather the official situation.

27 CE, spring — **“The Jews said, ‘This temple has been under construction for forty-six years’” (John 2:20 NAB)**. The piecemeal rebuilding and expansion of the temple began in 20 BCE and was not completed until 64 CE. So, in 27 CE, it had been going on for 46 years. The often used 30 CE date for Jesus’ first Passover after his baptism does not harmonize with this time period.

circa 31-32 CE — Murder of Stephen ([Acts 7](#))

circa 32 CE — Conversion of Saul, who later became the apostle Paul ([Acts 9:1-18](#)). Saul (Paul) spends **“some time” “in Damascus” (Acts 9:22,23 NRSV)**.

circa 32-35 CE — Saul (Paul) spends about **“three years” in “Arabia,”** returns **“to Damascus”**, then goes **“to Jerusalem . . . for fifteen days”**, then goes to **“Syria and Cilicia” (Galatians 1:17-21)**.

circa 49 CE — **“After fourteen years,”** Paul goes **“to Jerusalem”** again ([Galatians 2:1](#)), for the important council meeting ([Acts 15:1-4](#)).

Thus, according to the scriptures, there was approximately a 17 year period between Saul’s (Paul’s) conversion and his second trip to Jerusalem. The often used execution date of Jesus of 33 CE does not allow for this 17 year time period.

CONCLUSION

Jesus died the day before the sabbath ([John 19:31](#)), which means he died on the day we now call Friday. Of all the plausible dates for Jesus’ death on the Passover Festival, which falls on **“the fourteenth day of the first month,” (Leviticus 23:5)**, and also when, **“the next day . . . was the Sabbath” (John 19:31 NLT)**, or Saturday, as we call it today — there are only two years this occurred, namely 30 CE and 33 CE. As we can see from a

number of facts above, the 33 CE date does not work out, leaving only 30 CE as the date of Christ's execution.

There are many other amazing historical details that fit Daniel's inspired prophecy of the "seventy years", that were documented above. All these, and more, provide evidence that, **"Only ["God"] can tell you what will happen in the future before it even happens. Everything ["God"] plan(s) will come to pass" (Isaiah 46:9,10 NLT).**