

## DID DANIEL PREDICT YEAR WHEN CHRIST WOULD BE CRUCIFIED?

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### THE PROPHECY

Christians often claim that the person who wrote the Old Testament Book of Daniel, accurately predicted the time Jesus would be on earth and his death. They say he even gave the year! Not surprisingly, those who teach that he did cannot agree among themselves about how to calculate this or what event in Jesus' life it points to. This tells the tale that they are forcing their interpretation on Daniel. Some say it is the start of the ministry or the baptism. Others say that it is the entry into Jerusalem. Others say it is the cross.

Here it is, "Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish with breaking the law, to finish with sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in righteousness and holiness without end, to seal up and finish vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. Know this, understand this: from the time that the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem is issued, there will be seven weeks and then sixty-two weeks until the Anointed One, the ruler comes. Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets and a trench but in times of distress. After the sixty-two weeks the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing at all. And the people of a ruler who is yet to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary" (Daniel 9:24-26).

This is the famous prophecy of the Seventy Weeks.

What we want to know is: Can the numbers in the prophecy give us the same year as the year Jesus supposedly died?

Short answer: Daniel 9:24-27 is riddled with poorly chosen and poorly constructed Hebrew which leaves it terribly unclear. That is why it is best not to impose an interpretation that forecasts Jesus claiming to be Messiah here. Let us pretend though that the text above has been rendered satisfactorily.

### WHAT ARE THE WEEKS?

Daniel seems to say that Jerusalem has got 70 weeks in which a day stands for a year from the time of the decree to rebuild it. So 70 weeks is  $70 \times 7$  which is 490. Seven weeks pass and then sixty two weeks making sixty nine weeks which stands for 483 years after which the anointed, anointed or anointed one is the same word as Christ or Messiah, will be cut off or killed. Seven years are left and Jerusalem will be destroyed.

Christians say that when the 69 weeks from the decree to re-build Jerusalem are up, the Christ will be at large. The prophecy says that the anointed one will be cut off after 69 weeks that is 483 years.

The Christians work this out by saying that year represents a year shorter than our year of 365 days. According to them Daniel is using a year of 360 days (The Case for Jesus the Messiah, page 127). They say the 360 calculation was employed at the time of Noah in Genesis. They think Genesis has 12 months of 30 days each (ibid, 127). But where is the evidence that they did not add on the days they were short unto the last month? And what has Genesis and its time have to do with Daniel who lived centuries later? The next thing they do is to argue that since the Book of Revelation used the 360 years to refer to the same period Daniel once prophesied about that Daniel must have used the same method of reckoning.

Revelation 12:6 seems to say that the three and a half years indicated in Daniel 7:25 is 1,260 days meaning the year was 360 days. But it seems to only in their imagination for if you read Revelation the 1,260 days is spent nourishing the symbolic woman with the stars round her head. She could have been doing something different if Daniel was on about her for the rest of the three and a half years reckoning the days by our 365 a year. The prophecy is being rigged to make it refer to the year Jesus was nailed to the cross. Evidence that Demands a Verdict Vol 1 (page 172) does that too.

Christians say that the time to start counting is from the decree of Artaxerxes in 444 BC and counting with the fact in mind that a year for a Jew then was 360 days we come up with the year Jesus died 33 AD. So that is 483 years.

The trouble is there is no evidence of such a decree. Daniel speaks of a decree that stood out to his readers. The decree is actually in the book Daniel refers to, Jeremiah. It does not give any year that fits Jesus.

Daniel 9:2 says that Daniel read in Jeremiah the number of years. It forecast a 70 years exile for Israel. It was actually 48 years. God sends the Angel Gabriel to Daniel to rationalise Jeremiah's error. Jeremiah meant 70 weeks using week as a symbol for year. So Jeremiah is not telling us that. An angel is saying it out of thin air.

It accuses Jeremiah of being a dodgy prophet who uses symbolism as a cover for inability to really see the future. And

Gabriel makes himself a bad! Now the angel says he meant 70 units of 7 years in its absurdity. Gabriel must have been more than reliable though when God told him to tell Mary she was going to have the Messiah!!

That the days are years and that weeks are seven years is just an assumption.

What use is all this symbolism to Daniel? What if Gabriel comes today and changes the meaning again? We cannot use such nonsense to work out the time of Jesus' ministry.

[www.mindspring.com/~bab5/BIB/lessons.htm](http://www.mindspring.com/~bab5/BIB/lessons.htm) Daniel 9:17-27 Seventy Weeks of Years is a webpage that argues regarding Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy that since the author of Daniel knew Jeremiah pretty well and how Jeremiah's prophecy that Israel would be exiled for 70 years proved false for it was 48 years that he probably assumed that the 70 years were not literal and so he might have not meant his 70 weeks to give a specific time span. It also points out how the conservatives often add the before the word anointed in verse 25 to make it seem that Jesus is being referred to and even go as far as to pretend that the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks add up to sixty nine weeks when they could be running concurrently and indeed must be for the writer could have written 69 weeks instead of 7 and 62 weeks. It shows that the Jewish year was not 360 days long for they had reason to add on a month every three years which means that Jesus would have died about 38 AD which Christians cannot accept for Pilate was axed in 37 AD.

Why did Daniel say 70 weeks instead of 490 years? Even though the word he used for week means a week of seven years it must mean something different. He is not using the word literally. Daniel complained that he did not understand what years stood for in Jeremiah (9:2). The angel Gabriel gives him the 70 weeks vision but does not say what the weeks mean or if we can take a strict reckoning of time from them – they might be only poetic and highly symbolic. Verse 23 indicates that what Daniel sees in the vision gives him understanding of what years and weeks symbolise. The angel didn't make it plain to him. Consequently, Daniel's vision does not justify Christian attempts to prove that he knew the year in which Jesus would die. The Jews had a word for weeks in which days represented years. Shabua was that word. And Daniel used it. Had he taken the word literally he would not have been confused or have needed to be informed by an angel. Nor would he have written 70 weeks instead of 490 years.

There is evidence that Daniel did not mean sets of seven years by a week at all. In Daniel 12 during and after chatter about a year and a half year and two years and days Daniel is told that nobody will understand what all this is about until the end time and then only the wise will understand. The meaning is that there is a code that nobody can break for the book is sealed by God until the end of time. The key to understanding the prophecy would be working out what is meant by weeks and days and years in the chapter to see who is meant. But this is what is being kept secret (v4). When these times are secret it is the vital clue that the seventy weeks are not 490 years at all. What would be the point of writing seventy weeks when you could write 490 years and others can figure it out that it is 490 years? It only makes sense if you want to throw people off the scent.

FROM A FOOTNOTE BY TOP BIBLE SCHOLAR

Source: Has God Spoken? Proof of the Bible's Divine Inspiration by Hank Hanegraaff (2011)

Some readers may have noticed a proverbial elephant in the room. Namely, I have not used Daniel's "seventy weeks" prophecy to prove that Jesus is the Christ (Daniel 9:24–27). This despite the fact that many apologists view this prophecy as predicting the exact year, even the very day, of Christ's presentation of himself as Israel's Messiah, and therefore consider it to be among the strongest proofs of Christ's identity we have in our apologetic arsenal. The problem here, however, is that there is little agreement among biblical exegetes concerning the seventy-weeks prophecy. To begin with, the Hebrew of these four verses is among the most difficult of the entire Old Testament to translate—note the extensive footnotes containing alternative renderings associated with this passage in most modern translations, and compare and contrast, say, the Revised Standard Version's rendering with that of the New International Version. Other points of contention among interpreters include determining which of the plethora of starting and ending dates for the seventy weeks best fit the data; whether the weeks of "years" should be 365-day solar years, 360-day lunar years, or some other time configuration; and the identity of the figure who "confirm[s] a covenant with many for one week" (Daniel 9:27 NKJV). Moreover, though the New Testament voluminously cites Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in Jesus as evidence that he is indeed the Christ, as F. W. Farrar observes, "Neither our Lord, nor His Apostles, nor any of the earliest Christian writers once appealed to the evidence of this prophecy, which . . . would have been so decisive! If such a proof lay ready to their hand—a proof definite and chronological—why should they have deliberately passed it over, while they referred to other prophecies so much more general, and so much less precise in dates?" (F. W. Farrar, *The Book of Daniel* [London: Hodder and Stroughton, 1895], 287). With this in mind, recall the discussion (and notes) in chapter 14 under the subsection, "The Abomination That Causes Desolation Spoken of Through Daniel," pages 153–62. To gain an appreciation for how difficult the seventy-weeks prophecy is to interpret, especially in light of the book of Daniel as a whole, compare and contrast the relevant expositions found in the following: C. Marvin Pate and Calvin B. Haines Jr., *Doomsday Delusions: What's Wrong with Predictions About the End of the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995); F. W. Farrar, *The Book of Daniel* (London:

Hodder and Stoughton, 1895); Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1998, originally published 1949); Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Apocalypics: A Study of the Most Notable Revelations of God and of Christ in the Canonical Scriptures* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001); Gary DeMar, *Last Days Madness: Obsession of the Modern Church*, 4th ed. (Atlanta: American Vision, 1999); Robert J. M. Gurney, *God in Control: An Exposition of the Prophecies of Daniel* (Worthing, West Sussex, England: H. E. Walter Ltd, 1980, revised 2006); the 2006 revised version is available online at [http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/book\\_god-in-control\\_gurney.html](http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/book_god-in-control_gurney.html) (accessed February 14, 2011); Richard L. Pratt Jr., "Hyper-Preterism and Unfolding Biblical Eschatology," in Keith A. Mathison, ed., *When Shall These Things Be? A Reformed Response to Hyper-Preterism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2004); J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958).

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[www.infidels.org/library/modern/steven\\_carr/non-messianic.html](http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/steven_carr/non-messianic.html), Steven Carr, Critique of Josh McDowell's Non-Messianic Prophecies This Site cannot be overly recommended. It is superb.