

Question, do we know what decree to calculate Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy which may give us the time of the start of Jesus' ministry?

The idea is that centuries before Jesus a prophet predicted when he would come.

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 70×7 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.

FROM WHAT DECREE DO WE START COUNTING?

"From the time that the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem is issued"...

If there had been no decree the Christians would be saying it was a future one that was meant for they say Bible prophecy mixes up past and present and future tenses.

Cyrus Decree 536 BC

The decree of Cyrus may be a candidate. Only the Bible tells us about it. Isaiah 44:28 claims that Cyrus who is God's shepherd will be so godly that he will even say to Jerusalem that it shall be built and order the foundation of the Temple to be laid. Our year for this is 536 BC.

The Christian may reply, "It is not the decree of Cyrus for that is only concerned about rebuilding the temple. It is not the decree of Tattenai who commanded the same thing in 519 BC for he only reissued the decree of Cyrus which relates only to the rebuilding of the temple" (page 71, *The Case for Jesus the Messiah*). The decree of Artaxerxes did likewise in 457 BC (Ezra 7). Some years later, he gave out another decree, one which commanded the city to be rebuilt. This was in 444 BC. Add on 483 assuming years of 360 days and we come to 33 AD the year in which Jesus may have been crucified." This is a synopsis of the argument in the book *The Case for Jesus the Messiah*.

Even if it were true that Cyrus according to the Bible decreed the rebuilding of the temple it remains true that we might just have been given incomplete information. Cyrus could have decreed both the rebuilding of the temple and the city though the records only single out the temple for mention.

Amazing but true, the elimination of Cyrus in that book and every fundamentalist book is a bare-faced lie no better than the ones they tell to make it seem as if the Bible never contradicts itself because we read in Isaiah 44:28 that Cyrus expressly decreed that both temple and city would be rebuilt. The Cyrus decree must have been made about 536 BC. $536 - 483$ gives 53 BC. The Christians have to lie because there is something badly amiss if Daniel predicted the end of an anointed one we know nothing about and ignored Jesus. It would count as strong prophetic scriptural evidence that Jesus was a fraud.

The Dead Sea Scrolls imply that we should count from the Cyrus decree of 538 BC (page 81, *Jesus Hypotheses*). The first testimony is stronger than any others. This is the earliest testimony outside the Bible. The Christian testimonies that it was a different decree cannot hold a candle to it for they were not testifying before the Dead Sea Scrolls.

A decree to have the temple rebuilt would necessarily also be a decree to rebuild the city. You can't have an isolated temple full of treasures in the middle of nowhere. Christians only focus on the 444 BC decree and shove the Cyrus one in the bin because it is more specific and concerned about rebuilding the city which is bad logic.

Artaxerxes 444 BC Decree

The Cyrus date does not work so the likes of Gleason Archer argue that Daniel counts not from the time of Cyrus's decree but from the time Artaxerxes got the decree rolling. So Cyrus did the paperwork and Artaxerxes started the job by confirming and launching the work. Against that we can not that Daniel is not talking about when the decree was executed but when it was issued.

And also, Artaxerxes would have had to issue Cyrus' decree again in the sense that a decree that is not acted on needs to be

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re-issued as part of the execution process. After all Cyrus was dead and it was Artaxerxes's decision if he was going to follow it. The issue that was Cyrus's work was now his.

Archer sneaks in Artaxerxes for he has to rig things to make the date you count from bring you to the time of Jesus. No Bible authority supports Artaxerxes. You would assume Daniel is speaking to Bible readers and the only decree they knew of from it was that of Cyrus.

The prophecy says that the Christ or anointed one will come after the decree that Jerusalem is to be rebuilt. Religionists who count 483 years from 444BC when Artaxerxes decreed that the city be rebuilt get 33 AD. They have in mind the decree to Nehemiah by the king of Babylon (Nehemiah 2:5-8 which supposedly decrees the rebuilding of the city itself. The destruction mentioned in the prophecy that happens after the anointed one is cut off is thought to refer to 70 AD when Jerusalem was razed to the ground. But the prophecy says the anointed dies at the end of the sixty ninth week and so that leaves only a week or seven years for the destruction of Jerusalem. But Jerusalem was destroyed long after the death of Christ. The prophecy is not about Jesus at all.

The 444 BC decree is supposed to be spelled out in Nehemiah 2:3-8. But although Nehemiah asks the king to let him go back and rebuild the city the only decree the king gives him is permission to leave for a while and a decree to write a letter giving him safe passage through the terrain and a request to get timber from Asaph for doing a bit of restoration work in Jerusalem. The purpose of the letter must have been to let Asaph know that the bill was chargeable to the king. But there is nothing in what the king said to indicate the king made a decree to rebuild the city despite the lies of the book The Case for Jesus the Messiah which says there was a decree to build up the city made by this man and manipulates the Bible to prove it (page 71).

The Isaiah Decree

The decree is most likely to be one that is mentioned in the Bible for Daniel was meant to be an addition to it. You don't talk about a decree that nobody may know about either in the present or in future generations or risk leaving people not knowing which decree is the one meant.

In the Book of Isaiah, God decrees that Jerusalem and its Temple will be built again and play an important part in the salvation of the people. The Third Isaiah, the last ten chapters, is believed to have been written between 537 and 520 BC. The theme in this forged section is that Jerusalem and the Temple will be restored. The decree mentioned then in Daniel is most likely to have been God's decree. When Daniel is about God and there are other decrees then it is most likely that he meant God's decree.

483 years later would be between 54 and 37 BC. That Isaiah was meant is accepted by scholars like Dennis Mc Kinsey who has an excellent website that answers Christian apologetics. He has seen that the Christians rig the year they want to start counting from. What they do is ignore the fact that Daniel is counting from the time the decree was ISSUED and not from the time it was GRANTED. The difference is that you make a decree but you have to legally grant the go-ahead for the decree for deciding to decree is not the same as making the decree. Mc Kinsey also noticed that it was arbitrary for some to say that Daniel gave the year of the start of Jesus' ministry when what Daniel said was when the Messiah ben Prince would come on the scene meaning when he would be born. He has in mind the likes of Gleason Archer who count from 457 BC to come up with 27 AD and who then concludes that Jesus started his ministry and became the anointed Christ in that year. This is contrary to the scholarly consensus and there is no biblical justification for this choice.

You would expect the Bible to want you to start counting from a God decree rather than a human one. If there had been more decrees after Cyrus it would get very confusing unless you resolve to leave human decrees out.

The Jeremiah Decree

But there is something that is more likely than any of the others.

Daniel 9:2 gives the most likely candidate, God's decree through Jeremiah that Jerusalem would be in ruins for 70 years. This implicitly is a commandment or decree for the restoration of the city after the time is up. God is most explicit in Jeremiah 29:14 where the kidnapped Israelites are told that they will return to Jerusalem.

Daniel is most likely to have meant God's decree through Jeremiah when he was after mentioning it. Daniel tells us he read the prophets and that gives a vital clue to what decree he meant because he was setting up a puzzle and so the clues would have to be in his book.

The relevant Jeremiah portion was written about 587 BC. That means that Jesus could not have been Daniel's Messiah for he came 97 years too late.

The Ezra Decree 457BC

Archer's *The Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* says that 457 BC is the year indicated by the 483 years and it is the year that the decree to rebuild the holy city was given to Ezra. So 483 years minus 457 brings us to 27 AD when Jesus allegedly started his ministry which he says fulfils his interpretation of Daniel which says what year the Messiah will appear (page 289-292). But Archer merely infers the existence of this decree from Nehemiah 1:1-4 and he admits it (page 290). But the reverse only says that Nehemiah thought Jerusalem's walls were rebuilt in some time following 457 BC and was disappointed to find that they were not. It does not say why he thought so – maybe he just got the wrong information? Then Ezra 7:6 says that Ezra got all he wanted from the king in Babylon. But this does not tell us if he got a decree or needed one for Ezra after behaves like he has authority over the Jews so if there was a decree we do not know when it was issued. Archer hopes that we don't notice that Ezra only wanted to rebuild the walls and the Temple. Archer only assumes that Ezra made the decree in 457 BC and tries to cover this up. Others say that the letter of the king in Ezra 7 made in 457 BC which decrees that Ezra and others must investigate the state of Judah and Jerusalem and take riches with them to offer sacrifices to God is the decree. But the letter nowhere gives any indication of decreeing to rebuild Jerusalem. Telling somebody to rebuild the city if they want to is not the same as a legal decree or a decree of any kind. The king only decrees that Nehemiah must please himself despite the lies told in the devious *Evidence that Demands a Verdict Vol 1* (page 172). The king could have decreed that the city may be rebuilt years before but that is hardly the same as decreeing that it must be built which is the kind of decree we would need for Daniel's prediction which counts from the time the rebuilding of Jerusalem was decreed.

SO? Why is no prophecy ever clear? Because its trickery that is why.

The Isaiah or Jeremiah Decree is the best candidate. They destroy the claim made for the prophecy altogether.

The only reason the 444 BC decree is accepted by Christians is because it gives them the year they want, 30 AD, so they can say it was a prophecy about Jesus.

Daniel claims to have hailed from the 530 BCs but much of it really seems to have been forged in 167-164 BC, its predictions often fit that period. Anyway, the 70 weeks ends up forecasting a Christ at large seventy or more years before the death of Jesus. Christians argue that it cannot be forged because the rest of the Bible is accurate. But who was it that said in Deuteronomy 18 that that logic was bad? There God said that a prophet making one blunder has to be ignored and put to death for God is not the one behind him even if everything else the prophet says is remarkable and supernaturally right.