



A STUDY RESOURCE
from Gary Ray

THE PRECISION OF BIBLE PROPHECY

Many believe the Bible is a good book; others call it an important historical work that embodies positive messages and practical counsel. Some go so far as to call it unique—a few refer to it as absolutely true and accurate. However, the Bible is more than just true and accurate. I have several history and biographical study books in my library that are true and accurate. What gives the Bible its singular distinction is the fact that it is divinely inspired. It is God's Word.

Historical records and archaeological finds verify the Biblical record is true, the study of ancient manuscripts (manuscript attestation) shows the Bible to be accurate and unique, but perhaps more than any other single field of study, it is the study of Bible Prophecy that demonstrates that the Bible is divinely inspired. No other book is so filled with prophecy—and no other writing comes close to the Bible's prophetic accuracy rate – 100%.

THE PRECISION OF BIBLE PROPHECY

Most psychics today speak in very general terms and offer what I call 'Fortune cookie-type counsel.' It is important to note that Bible prophecies are specific and measurable. And though many have tried, no one has been able to prove a Bible prophecy to be in error. There are approximately 1000 general prophecies in the Bible; about 900 have come to pass, and 895 have been verified to be true. Five are unverifiable at this time, but as they are unverifiable, they cannot be used to prove the Bible to be in error.

Jesus fulfilled more than 120 specific prophecies. Scholars note the probability of Jesus fulfilling just eight prophecies picked at random is approximately 1 in 10^{17} . These odds approximate the likelihood of blindly picking the one marked silver dollar mixed in with coins two feet deep in an area the size of Texas. Scholars have noted that the probability of Jesus fulfilling just 48 prophecies approximates the probability of randomly selecting the one marked atom in all of the observable universe.

It is not difficult to illustrate the precision of Bible prophecy. Ezekiel 4 provides one example. The prophet Ezekiel wrote at a time in history when his nation, Israel, had fallen

to invaders. Many were forced to serve as slaves in Babylon. Ezekiel chapter 4 notes how long it would be before Israel would again be a sovereign and independent nation. Let's take a look at this prophecy.

Ezekiel chapter 4 records that the prophet was bound on his left and right sides for a certain number of days. The number of days (430) prophetically points to the number of years it would take before Israel would be restored as a nation (Ezek. 4:4-6). Jeremiah prophesied that the period of captivity would last exactly 70 years. Historians note that Babylon captured Israel (and took inhabitants away as slaves) in the spring of 606 B.C. and that exiles returned to Israel precisely 70 years later (as foretold) in the spring of 536 B.C.

In fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy, exiles returned to Jerusalem after 70 years (536 B.C.). However, that still left 360 years of judgment to be served ($430 - 70 \text{ years} = 360 \text{ years}$) before Israel would be an independent nation again. One might ask: What happened 360 years after Israel returned from exile? Did Israel become an independent nation at that time (176 B.C.)? The answer is no. In fact, when Jesus ministered on the earth, Israel still had not been re-established as a nation. At the turn of the 20th century, Israel still had not become an independent nation, and this is why.

Leviticus 26:18 indicates that in the face of stubborn rebellion, the Lord "will punish you seven times more for your sins." Many Hebrews returned to Israel, but most quickly fell away from true faith. Therefore, the 360 years noted were to be multiplied by seven, equaling a total of 2520 biblical years [360-day years]. To convert the 2,520 prophetic years into solar [365.25 days] years, one must multiply 2,520 by the 360 days in the prophetic/biblical year (907,200 days). The next step is to divide 907,200 days by 365.25 (the length of a solar year). The answer is 2,483 calendar years, 9 months, 21 days.

Therefore, Ezekiel's prophecy indicates that the end of Israel's displacement/judgment would occur 2,483 calendar years, 9 months, 21 days after the Babylonian exile (which took place on July 23, 537 B.C.). When one adds 2,483 calendar years, 9 months, 21 days to July 23, 537 BC (the year in which the Babylonian captivity ended), they arrive at May 14, 1948 (the precise day Israel regained their independence under UN Charter).

Similarly, the 69-week prophecy in Daniel 9:25-27 notes the precision of Bible prophecy.

Chapter 9 begins with Daniel asking God for wisdom and insight. The prophet was uneasy. His people had been in captivity for 68 years and Daniel was mindful that Jeremiah, about 80 years before, had prophesied the duration of the captivity would be 70 years.¹ He knew their freedom was just around the corner—he also knew that Jeremiah wrote of a coming King—the Messiah.² Daniel wondered if the Messiah’s arrival would correlate with their coming freedom, and so he sought the Lord in prayer.

It took some time for Daniel to receive an answer from the Lord, but that does not indicate that God did not begin to answer as soon as Daniel asked. Verse 23 indicates that God is quick to hear and respond to the prayers of the faithful.

Verse 24 introduces a brief passage of Scripture that has been hotly debated and sorely misunderstood over the years. The verse begins with this phrase:

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity...”

The phrase, *to finish the transgression*, may sound like a reference to Ezekiel’s prophecy concerning the exile, and God’s punishment pertaining to how long it would be before Israel reestablishes as a sovereign and independent nation. However, the focus of Daniel 9:24 is revealed in the next section of the verse:

“and to make an end of sins”

The phrase indicates the reference is to the mission of the Messiah, and a direct response to Daniel’s prayer: ***When will the Messiah come?*** The answer to Daniel’s question is revealed in Daniel 9:24-27:

¹ Jeremiah 25:8-12

² See Jeremiah 11:19, 23:5-6, 30:9, 31:31-33, 33:15-16

Seventy weeks,³ and “seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks”⁴ or **69 weeks**]. That is, the Messiah will present himself twice. First, 69 weeks after a proclamation is made⁵ (this correlates with the Triumphal Entry), and then after the 70th week (which correlates to the “Glorious Appearing”⁶ or second coming of Christ at the end of the Tribulation period.

Expounding on the text

The word seven is *sugrue* in Hebrew—it indicates a week or a set of sevens, so Daniel is referencing 70 weeks of **years**, or 70×7 years, or 490 years for **the complete fulfillment of his prophecy. However, the first part of the prophecy (69 weeks or 69 x 7 years = 483 years) pertains to the presentation and cutting off** ⁷ (the Triumphal Entry and crucifixion) of the Messiah.

Daniel’s prophecy⁸ indicated the Messiah *would come* [to Jerusalem], 69 weeks or 483 years after a particular decree is made.⁹ The Messiah would then be *cut off* [crucified]¹⁰ and according to verse 24, put an end to the *[the power of] sin*, make a provision for the *atonement of guilt*, and impart *everlasting righteousness*.

These are the things for which the Hebrew people longed for and prayed. God assured Daniel He heard the prayers of the weary and His plan was in motion. His vision pointed to the fulfillment of God’s plan

Verse 25 provides insight regarding when the 69-week (483-year) prophetic countdown would begin:

³ Daniel 9:24a

⁴ Daniel 9:25

⁵ Daniel 9:25

⁶ Titus 2:13

⁷ Daniel 9:26a

⁸ Several disputed timing issues are addressed by this ministry site: <https://beroeans.net/2020/05/27/the-messianic-prophecy-of-daniel-924-27-part-1/>

⁹ Daniel 9:25b; Nehemiah 2:1; Haggai 1:1,15; Zechariah 1:1

¹⁰ Several disputed timing issues are addressed by this ministry site: <https://beroeans.net/2020/05/27/the-messianic-prophecy-of-daniel-924-27-part-1/>

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks...”

Here the Lord notes:

- **A proclamation regarding the restoration of Jerusalem** will initiate the prophetic clock that counts down to a special working of the Messiah. Historians note that several similar and notable declarations were made.

The Persian Emperor Cyrus made a decree regarding the rebuilding of Jerusalem in 538 B.C.—this is noted in Ezra 1 and 5. Darius, the leader of the Mede-Persian Empire made a similar decree in 517 B.C. However, these decrees did not satisfy the prophecy because they specified rebuilding *part* of Jerusalem, and neither decree addressed the rebuilding of the Temple.

In 458 B.C., the Persian Emperor Artaxerxes issued a decree that noted the provision of building supplies and permission to rebuild—close but not quite. In 445 B.C. Artaxerxes issued a decree that addressed 1) rebuilding of the Temple 2) providing supplies 3) rebuilding the walls about the city and 4) restoring Jerusalem. That proclamation is referenced in Nehemiah 2 and put in motion the prophetic clock noted in Daniel 9.

Secular scholars note that according to our calendar, Artaxerxes’ proclamation was made on Mar. 14, 445 B.C.

- **The Messiah will come.** Note: Verse 26 indicates the prophecy does not correlate with the Messiah’s birth, but rather, to his death (*The Messiah will be cut off...*).
- **The interval between the *proclamation* and the special working of the Messiah is “seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks.”** This is 7 + 60 + 2 weeks of years or, 69 weeks of years, or 69 x 7 years, which is **483** years.

There may appear to be an error or inconsistency here as verse 24 indicated the timeline regarding the redeeming work of Messiah was associated with **490 years**. However, let the reader remember that an apparent contradiction is not evidence of error. Proper study resolves the matter.

The unique phrasing regarding the timeline indicates the Lord's prophetic promise regarding the work of the Messiah will unfold in **several phases**:

- **“Seven weeks” (V.25b)**. This equates to 7×7 weeks of years, or **49 years**. Historians note that the city of Jerusalem was rebuilt, the Temple was restored, and the walls were reconstructed exactly **49 years** after Artaxerxes made his notable proclamation.
- **“Threescore and two weeks” (V.25c)**. This equates to 3 times 20 weeks + 2 weeks, or $60 + 2$ weeks, or 62 weeks of years, or 62×7 years = **434 years**. Therefore, $49 + 434$ (483) years after the proclamation, the Messiah would accomplish a special work.

What happened?

We know that in the first phase of the prophecy, 49 years after the proclamation, the city, wall, and Temple projects were concluded. These events are profiled in the books of Nehemiah and Ezra.

Regarding the total 483 ($62 + 7 \times 7$) years: Scholars note this indicates 483 **biblical** (360-day) years. 483 biblical years equals 173,880 days. If one adds 173,800 days to the day Artaxerxes made his proclamation, one arrives at the day of the Triumphal Entry. Note how this ties into verse 26:

“Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people.”

The prophecy notes that the Messiah would die—He will be “cut off,” not because of *His* sin—He would die for His people. The reason for the Messiah’s death is further detailed in verse 24:

*“[The Messiah would come to]...make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness...”*¹¹

The Messiah’s perfect sacrifice would “make an end” to the power of death and sin.¹² By His death and resurrection we are reconciled to God,¹³ and consequently, now have the hope of eternal life.¹⁴

Daniel’s 69 (weeks of years) prophecy has proven perfect, but remember, the prophecy concerning the coming and saving work of the Messiah has two primary components:

- 1) The Messiah come to save humanity from the power of sin and...
- 2) The Messiah come to save from the “abomination of desolation”¹⁵

It is clear the 69-week (weeks of years) prophecy pertains to the first coming of the Messiah—specifically, to his saving work on the cross. At that point the prophetic clock paused.

In accordance with verse 24 (“**70** weeks are determined...”), the 70th *week of years* (7 years) begins when the Antichrist arises and establishes a peace treaty or covenant, which likely will encompass the Middle East and focus on Israel. The treaty will stop or prevent war (for a season) and will be hailed as a great triumph by the masses, thus further elevating the new charismatic world leader. This new world leader will appear to be

¹¹ Daniel 9:24

¹² 1 John 3:8

¹³ Colossians 1:19-20

¹⁴ John 3:16

¹⁵ Daniel 9:27

benevolent but will usher in the most severe season of sorrow, hardship, death, and destruction the world has ever known. Daniel notes:

“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.”¹⁶

Daniel’s 70th week references the Tribulation period noted in Revelation 6-19. It will be an unprecedented season of wrath, yet Scripture notes that believers will not share in a season of wrath. Consider these verses:

- *“...it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, **but he shall be saved out of it**.”¹⁷*
- *For God **did not appoint us to wrath**, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus...”¹⁸*
- *Because you have kept My command to persevere, **I also will keep you from the hour of trial** which shall come upon the whole world...”¹⁹*

As the 70th week is associated with *wrath*, and Scripture notes that faithful believers will be saved from wrath, and Daniel’s 69 + 1 (70) week prophecy pertains to the saving work of the Messiah, many scholars conclude the Messiah will return *before* the onset of Daniel’s 70th week to save (rapture) faithful believers from the coming wrath and horrors of the Antichrist.

2000 years ago (in accordance with Daniel’s 69-week prophecy), Jesus saved people from the power of sin. Dispensationalists believe that Jesus will come again, “in the clouds,”²⁰ in accordance with Daniel’s 70th-week prophecy and Paul’s writing on the

¹⁶ Daniel 9:27

¹⁷ Jeremiah 30:7

¹⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5:9

¹⁹ Revelation 3:10

²⁰ See 1 Thessalonians 4:17

subject.²¹ Via the Rapture, Jesus will save believers from the wrath that will befall humanity during the Tribulation period.

Most dispensationalists believe the return of Christ and the establishment of the Millennial kingdom concludes the 7-year Tribulation and Daniel's 70-week prophecy. Those who hold this view conclude:

- There cannot be everlasting righteousness on earth until the Millennium Kingdom of Christ is established.
- The Millennial Kingdom cannot be established until the transgression of Israel comes to an end (Daniel 9:24-27).
- After the tribulation period, God will make a new covenant with the children of Israel.
- Speaking of this covenant, Jeremiah wrote:
*"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."*²²

The Jews have rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Thus, it is ordained that Jews will pass through the fires of the Tribulation period in the hope that all will be drawn to repentance and revival. Supporting this goal will be the 2 powerful witnesses, the 144,000 sealed Jews, and the "Gospel Angel" inviting all to come to faith in Christ.

Summary

Almost 100 years after Daniel received his prophecy, a pagan king made a particular proclamation, and, per the prophecy, 173,880 days after that, the

²¹ 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

²² Jeremiah 31:34

Messiah entered Jerusalem and was “cut off.” By this act of supreme sacrifice, Jesus made it possible for humanity to be reconciled with God.

It is the specific nature of Bible prophecy that sets it apart from all other attempts at forecasting the future. The Farmer’s Almanac is good, sports experts can make educated guesses about the outcome of games, but Bible prophecy has proved itself 100% accurate. There are no errors and no parallels in other forecasting methods or “sacred writings.” Bible prophecy should be interpreted through a literal lens, and though sometimes improbable, Christians should believe that every prophecy will be fulfilled as indicated in Scripture.