

DANIEL'S

AMAZING VISIONS

*Predictive prophecies that reveal what
God said about things to come!*



DAN BRUCE

THE PROPHECY SOCIETY

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Questions and comments can be sent to:
danbruce.usa@hotmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Secrets Were Revealed

Prophecies in the Bible that claim to show the future are not vague generalizations, as some suppose, but the declaration of specific events accurately foretold long before their occurrence in history. Each fulfillment can be tested and verified as true or false. For that reason, predictive prophecy occupies a unique place in the sacred text.

The purpose of predictive prophecy is to show that God is the author of history. The prophet Isaiah says that God has declared “*the end from the beginning*” (Isaiah 46:9–10). Thus, prophecy that correctly predicts the future is evidence of omnipotence and omniscience—two attributes that distinguish the God of the Bible from all others.

Such a claim leads to an unavoidable conclusion. If knowledge of future events exceeding all human ability to know beforehand can be demonstrated, then its source must lie beyond human ability as well. In this way, predictive prophecy, when rigorously tested for alignment with history and verified as true, constitutes compelling evidence.

The apostle Peter echoed this point when he wrote that the Bible’s prophetic word is proven true through its fulfillment: “*And so we have the confirmed prophetic word, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*” (2 Peter 1:19). Peter is pointing to something objective. Fulfilled prophecy anchors belief not in subjective experience, but in what can be checked against reality and verified.

What Isaiah declares and Peter affirms, the prophet Daniel illustrates in detail. Speaking of the visions recorded in his book, Daniel makes the source of the predictions explicit: “*There is a God in heaven who reveals secrets*” (Daniel 2:28). He also indicates that the

visions were not meant to be fully understood at the time they were given. God commanded that they be sealed from understanding until the “*time of the end*,” when “*knowledge shall be increased*” (Daniel 12:4, 9). This meant that their final meaning would become clear only when the events they describe align with history.

In this book, two of the most profound prophecies recorded by Daniel will be examined in that light. They will be approached, not as speculative puzzles, but as testable declarations. Each contains specific elements that anchor it in history, with outcomes that can be compared directly with documented events. If those elements align exactly with real-time history, then their authority follows as a matter of logic.

The first is found in Daniel, chapter 8. It presents a vision tied to identifiable historical events and includes a defined span of “*two thousand three hundred evening-mornings*.” When that time span is properly understood and projected forward from its starting point in ancient history, it leads to an event in modern Jewish history.

The second is found in Daniel, chapter 9. This prophecy is structured around a sequence of time and events that lead to the appearance of an Anointed One. Its internal arrangement provides a framework that, when correctly understood, aligns with real events recorded in Jewish history in a uniquely coherent, messianic way.

Taken together, these prophecies form a unified and unambiguous testimony. One reaches forward across centuries to a recent event that testifies to God acting providentially in modern history. The other focuses on ancient events that culminate in the coming of an Anointed One, an individual who meets the criteria specifying the time of the promised Messiah’s appearance and the nature of his mission.

We begin our quest to understand the “secrets” revealed by God to the prophet Daniel—and eventually to us—by examining how his visions were temporarily sealed from understanding, and why.

CHAPTER ONE

Prophecies Were Sealed

The prophet Daniel was commanded by God to “*shut up the words, and seal the book [of Daniel]... even to the time of the end*” (Daniel 12:4a). This sealing did not mean that the words were to be hidden. The text of Daniel has been available for centuries. Rather, the command indicated that the meaning of the prophecies would not be fully understood when they were first revealed. They were preserved in a form that could be read, studied, and transmitted, yet their significance would remain inaccessible until God unsealed them.

Thus, a prophecy sealed by God’s command can still be read but cannot be immediately understood. However, that “hidden” status is temporary. A promise was given that understanding would come when “*knowledge shall be increased*” (Daniel 12:4b), but it does not say that the increase in knowledge comes through new revelation given to an end-time prophet. Instead, it becomes clear as the prophesied events occur in real time. Until those events appear in history, the prophecies remain sealed and understanding remains incomplete.

This explains why the prophecies in Daniel have produced so many diverse interpretations. When exposition is attempted before the fulfillment events have happened, the expositor is forced to supply what is not yet available. Approximation and conjecture inevitably fill the gap. In more recent times, when exact correspondence could not be achieved, expositors have projected fulfillment events into an unverifiable future. Such approaches have gained acceptance through repetition, but repetition alone does not establish accuracy.

A predictive prophecy that claims to correspond to real events must be measured against those events after they have taken place,

and the correspondence must be precise. Until exact alignment can be demonstrated, interpretation remains provisional. Only when what was written is directly matched with what has occurred in documented history can the interpretation be said to rest on firm ground.

Many past expositors who have attempted to interpret the visions of Daniel were careful students of Scripture, yet they were working without the historical data required for full understanding. Since the prophecies were sealed “*until the time of the end,*” any earlier effort—no matter how sincere—could not reach final conclusions because the fulfillment events had not yet occurred.

Daniel sealed his prophecies by the use of veiled language. He did so by expressing time units in language drawn from Israel’s sacred calendar. To understand this method of encryption, it is necessary to recall how time was marked in ancient Israel. God commanded the people to observe sacred festivals each year, the highlight being the three major pilgrimage feasts (Passover/Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks, Tabernacles/Hoshana Rabbah). These appointed times formed a repeating annual calendar. During the Babylonian captivity, Temple worship in Jerusalem was impossible, but a longing for the festival observances remained central to the life of the captive Jewish people. The festivals were not just incidental to life; they provided a divinely ordered framework for measuring and marking time.

The veiled time markers associated with Israel’s sacred calendar appear within the prophetic descriptions of Daniel’s visions. In ancient times, these expressions would have been familiar as part of ordinary religious tradition. However, their function within the prophetic text as references to time units would not have been immediately recognized, and certainly not by the Babylonian captives. This use of festival terminology to prevent premature understanding allowed the timing of the predictive elements to be hidden in plain sight. Their role as a time unit for calculating a time duration would not have been

apparent, especially since the Israelites were not only exiled but still under God's judgment of spiritual blindness (Isaiah 6:9–10). Today, recognition that these festival expressions function as shorthand for a Jewish time period—each festival occurring only once per year—allows the time spans to be calculated and understood. (See Appendix One, “Festivals in Daniel,” on page 47.)

As a result, interpretation of the prophecies in Daniel cannot rest on a “plain text” reading alone. Festival-based references embedded in the prophetic text must be recognized as well. Each such reference can then be used as a once-a-year time unit, with the total number of festivals between the starting and ending events of the prophecy determining the time span to be exactly matched with the time duration specified in the prophecy. Until this is done, the prophecy's accuracy with respect to history remains unverified.

The sealing of Daniel's visions was a God-ordained way to prevent premature understanding. Their prophetic elements were described in such a way that their meaning would remain inaccessible until the prophesied events occurred in history at the appointed time, thus fulfilling the promise that full understanding would come with an increase in knowledge at the time of the end. It is important to re-emphasize that this did not mean that new revelation would be given through a future prophet. Rather, it meant that what had already been revealed would become clear through fulfillment.

The prophecy recorded in the eighth chapter of Daniel can now be examined to determine whether it has been unsealed by events. By identifying its festival-based time units and correlating its starting and ending events with documented history, the prophecy can be tested to see whether its predictions have been fulfilled exactly. If they are found to be accurate, then knowledge has been increased, just as God promised. If Daniel 8 has been unsealed for understanding, then it follows that other prophecies in Daniel may be unsealed as well.



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Prophecy being fulfilled for the whole world to see?

The above photo was taken on the morning of June 7, 1967, as an Israel Defense Forces half-track carrying soldiers from the 55th Paratroopers Brigade sped toward the Dome of the Rock atop the Temple Mount in Jerusalem during the Six-Day War. To relive the event, read the transcript of IDF radio transmissions recorded as it was happening; see Appendix Two on page 49.

CHAPTER TWO

Knowledge Was Increased

We begin our examination of the prophecy in Daniel, chapter 8, by focusing on the chronology specified in verses 13–14, which gives the time span that defines the duration of the vision:

THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION: 13 Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, “How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?” 14 And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.

Verse 14 in the Jewish Publication Society’s 1917 version of the *Tanakh*, which is the English translation of the same Masoretic Text used as the base Old Testament manuscript for translating the NKJV verses shown above, renders the final phrase more literally: “*And he said unto me: ‘Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be victorious.’*”

Note that verse 13 asks about the length of the entire vision—the time span that covers all of its events from start to finish, not merely the portion concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation mentioned by name. That duration is stipulated in verse 14. Taken together, the two verses show that the prophecy contains three chronological elements: a starting event in real time, an ending event in real time, and a 2,300-unit time span in between. All three elements must be identified before the prophecy can be tested against documented history to determine its accuracy.

The easiest part of the exposition of Daniel 8 is the identification of the starting event that the prophet saw in his vision and described in verses 5–7: *“And as I [Daniel] was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.”*

The ram and goat symbolism is explained in verses 20–21, where we are told, *“The ram which you saw, having the two horns—they are the kings of Media and Persia. And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king.”* We know that Alexander the Great was the first king of the Greek Empire, and the ancient historical record shows that he moved *“with furious power”* against Darius III, king of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, in a battle at the Granicus River, *“beside the river”* just as verse 6 predicted.

We have now identified with certainty the vision’s starting point as the Battle of Granicus, which took place in 334 BCE. As for the ending event, verse 14 states that it will occur after *“two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings.”* Unlike the starting point, however, the ending event is not explicitly identified in the text. It must be discovered by locating an event in history involving the sanctuary that occurs exactly 2,300 “evening-mornings” after the Battle of Granicus. So, determining the meaning of the phrase “2,300 evening-mornings” is the next order of business.

Various interpretations have been proposed. Some expositions have suggested that the expression refers to the morning and evening Temple sacrifices, two each day, reducing the span to 1,150 ordinary

days. Others have understood it to mean 2,300 ordinary overnights without elaboration. Still others connect those nights with the cessation of the daily sacrifices and desecration of the Temple altar under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, events later commemorated in the festival of Hanukkah. However, all such interpretations present the same difficulty: no one has been able to identify a pair of documented Jewish historical events separated by exactly the number of time units required by the prophecy. A claim of God-given, time-specific prophecy requires exact fulfillment, not approximation.

The meaning of the “*evening and morning*” phrase in verse 14 is therefore the key to interpreting the prophecy. The expression commonly translated as “days” in English versions of that verse is an imprecise rendering of the two Hebrew words עֶרֶב בֹּקֶר (*`erev boqer*) as recorded in the Masoretic Text. In all of Scripture that exact two-word construction appears in only one other place, in Exodus 27:21, where it prescribes that the Tabernacle lamps were to be kept burning “*from evening until morning.*” Based on the principle that Scripture interprets Scripture, that unique precedent says the phrase “evening and morning” means an overnight period.

The prophecy requires that a span of 2,300 overnight periods extend forward from the Battle of Granicus to a later event involving the sanctuary. Since the Jewish historical record identifies no sanctuary related event occurring exactly 2,300 nights (about six years) after the Battle of Granicus, the phrase cannot refer to ordinary nights without rendering the prophecy historically unverifiable. Instead, it most likely refers to an overnight observance that recurs over a much longer span of time. Thus, the meaning of “evening and morning” should be sought among recurring observances on Israel’s sacred calendar that begin in the evening and continue until morning.

Scripture identifies that recurring ritual in Exodus 12:6–10, 14: “*And ye shall keep [the Paschal lamb separated away from the flock]*

*until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it **in the evening**. ... And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. ... And ye shall let nothing of it remain **until the morning**; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire ... And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread ... And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it as [an annual] feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.”*

That passage defines the Passover as an evening-until-morning observance that was commanded by God to be kept as a memorial forever. Thus, “evening-morning” (the conjunction “and” is not in the original text) does not represent a 24-hour day, nor does it refer to daily sacrifices. Instead, it refers to the Passover night, the annual memorial of God’s redemption of Israel from Egypt. Therefore, 2,300 “evening-mornings” in the prophecy represents 2,300 Passover nights, one observed each year, that must fit between the starting event—Alexander the Great moving against Persia at the Granicus River—and the ending event described as *“the sanctuary shall be victorious.”*

Since we now know the Battle of Granicus is the starting event, and that the annual Passover is the unit that defines the time span, all that remains is to count forward 2,300 Passovers to discover the date of the ending event. While no exact date is preserved for the Battle of Granicus, the Greek biographer Plutarch records that it took place in 334 BCE in the Macedonian month of Daesius, corresponding to late May or early June. Since Passover had already occurred earlier that year, the next Passover—the one celebrated in 333 BCE—is the one that qualifies as the first Passover in the count.

The table displayed on the facing page lists all 2,300 Passovers and shows how they are to be counted. Each Passover in the table is labeled “P-#” (where “#” represents its number in the count sequence),

How to Count the 2,300 Passovers

P - PASSOVER (FOLLOWED BY ITS NUMBER IN THE COUNT)

P-1 333 BCE	P-2 332 BCE	P-3 331 BCE	P-4 329 BCE	P-5 329 BCE	P-6 328 BCE	P-7 327 BCE	P-8 326 BCE	P-9 325 BCE	P-10 324 BCE
P-10 see above	P-20 314 BCE	P-30 304 BCE	P-40 294 BCE	P-50 284 BCE	P-60 274 BCE	P-70 264 BCE	P-80 254 BCE	P-90 244 BCE	P-100 234 BCE
P-110 224 BCE	P-120 214 BCE	P-130 204 BCE	P-140 194 BCE	P-150 184 BCE	P-160 174 BCE	P-170 164 BCE	P-180 154 BCE	P-190 144 BCE	P-200 134 BCE
P-210 124 BCE	P-220 114 BCE	P-230 104 BCE	P-240 94 BCE	P-250 84 BCE	P-260 74 BCE	P-270 64 BCE	P-280 54 BCE	P-290 44 BCE	P-300 34 BCE
P-310 24 BCE	P-320 14 BCE	P-330 4 BCE *	P-340 7 CE *	P-350 17 CE	P-360 27 CE	P-370 37 CE	P-380 47 CE	P-390 57 CE	P-400 67 CE
P-410 77 CE	P-420 87 CE	P-430 97 CE	P-440 107 CE	P-450 117 CE	P-460 127 CE	P-470 137 CE	P-480 147 CE	P-490 157 CE	P-500 167 CE
P-510 177 CE	P-520 187 CE	P-530 197 CE	P-540 207 CE	P-550 217 CE	P-560 227 CE	P-570 237 CE	P-580 247 CE	P-590 257 CE	P-600 267 CE
P-610 277 CE	P-620 287 CE	P-630 297 CE	P-640 307 CE	P-650 317 CE	P-660 327 CE	P-670 337 CE	P-680 347 CE	P-690 357 CE	P-700 367 CE
P-710 377 CE	P-720 387 CE	P-730 397 CE	P-740 407 CE	P-750 417 CE	P-760 427 CE	P-770 437 CE	P-780 447 CE	P-790 457 CE	P-800 467 CE
P-810 477 CE	P-820 487 CE	P-830 497 CE	P-840 507 CE	P-850 517 CE	P-860 527 CE	P-870 537 CE	P-880 547 CE	P-890 557 CE	P-900 567 CE
P-910 577 CE	P-920 587 CE	P-930 597 CE	P-940 607 CE	P-950 617 CE	P-960 627 CE	P-970 637 CE	P-980 647 CE	P-990 657 CE	P-1000 667 CE
P-1010 677 CE	P-1020 687 CE	P-1030 697 CE	P-1040 707 CE	P-1050 717 CE	P-1060 727 CE	P-1070 737 CE	P-1080 747 CE	P-1090 757 CE	P-1100 767 CE
P-1110 777 CE	P-1120 787 CE	P-1130 797 CE	P-1140 807 CE	P-1150 817 CE	P-1160 827 CE	P-1170 837 CE	P-1180 847 CE	P-1190 857 CE	P-1200 867 CE
P-1210 877 CE	P-1220 887 CE	P-1230 897 CE	P-1240 907 CE	P-1250 917 CE	P-1260 927 CE	P-1270 937 CE	P-1280 947 CE	P-1290 957 CE	P-1300 967 CE
P-1310 977 CE	P-1320 987 CE	P-1330 997 CE	P-1340 1007 CE	P-1350 1017 CE	P-1360 1027 CE	P-1370 1037 CE	P-1380 1047 CE	P-1390 1057 CE	P-1400 1067 CE
P-1410 1077 CE	P-1420 1087 CE	P-1430 1097 CE	P-1440 1107 CE	P-1450 1117 CE	P-1460 1127 CE	P-1470 1137 CE	P-1480 1147 CE	P-1490 1157 CE	P-1500 1167 CE
P-1510 1177 CE	P-1520 1187 CE	P-1530 1197 CE	P-1540 1207 CE	P-1550 1217 CE	P-1560 1227 CE	P-1570 1237 CE	P-1580 1247 CE	P-1590 1257 CE	P-1600 1267 CE
P-1610 1277 CE	P-1620 1287 CE	P-1630 1297 CE	P-1640 1307 CE	P-1650 1317 CE	P-1660 1327 CE	P-1670 1337 CE	P-1680 1347 CE	P-1690 1357 CE	P-1700 1367 CE
P-1710 1377 CE	P-1720 1387 CE	P-1730 1397 CE	P-1740 1407 CE	P-1750 1417 CE	P-1760 1427 CE	P-1770 1437 CE	P-1780 1447 CE	P-1790 1457 CE	P-1800 1467 CE
P-1810 1477 CE	P-1820 1487 CE	P-1830 1497 CE	P-1840 1507 CE	P-1850 1517 CE	P-1860 1527 CE	P-1870 1537 CE	P-1880 1547 CE	P-1890 1557 CE	P-1900 1567 CE
P-1910 1577 CE	P-1920 1587 CE	P-1930 1597 CE	P-1940 1607 CE	P-1950 1617 CE	P-1960 1627 CE	P-1970 1637 CE	P-1980 1647 CE	P-1990 1657 CE	P-2000 1667 CE
P-2010 1677 CE	P-2020 1687 CE	P-2030 1697 CE	P-2040 1707 CE	P-2050 1717 CE	P-2060 1727 CE	P-2070 1737 CE	P-2080 1747 CE	P-2090 1757 CE	P-2100 1767 CE
P-2110 1777 CE	P-2120 1787 CE	P-2130 1797 CE	P-2140 1807 CE	P-2150 1817 CE	P-2160 1827 CE	P-2170 1837 CE	P-2180 1847 CE	P-2190 1857 CE	P-2200 1867 CE
P-2210 1877 CE	P-2220 1887 CE	P-2230 1897 CE	P-2240 1907 CE	P-2250 1917 CE	P-2260 1927 CE	P-2270 1937 CE	P-2280 1947 CE	P-2290 1957 CE	P-2300 1967 CE

* Note that there was no year "0" (zero) when going from BCE to CE, so the count in the transition decade from 4 BCE to 7 CE is determined as follows: Passover number 330 in the count (P-330 above) occurred in the year 4 BCE, P-331 in 3 BCE, P-332 in 2 BCE, P-333 in 1 BCE, P-334 in 1 CE, P-335 in 2 CE, P-336 in 3 CE, P-337 in 4 CE, P-338 in 5 CE, P-339 in 6 CE, P-340 in 7 CE

followed by its corresponding Gregorian year. The first ten Passovers (P-1 through P-10) are shown on the top line; subsequent entries appear in ten-year increments so manual verification can be done by counting on one's fingers. Readers are encouraged to verify the total for themselves.

The 2,300th Passover in the count occurred on April 25, 1967. Weeks after that Passover had occurred, the Six-Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbors in the Middle East broke out on June 5. Then, in the early morning hours of June 7, soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces 55th Paratroopers Brigade were poised on the Mount of Olives, ready to fight their way through the Lion's Gate into the Old City. Their commander, Colonel Mordechai "Motta" Gur, exhorted them with these words: "Soon we will enter the city, the Old City of Jerusalem, about which countless generations of Jews have dreamed, to which all living Jews aspire. To our brigade has been granted the privilege of being the first to enter it ... Now, on, on to the gate!" (Mordechai Gur, *The Battle for Jerusalem*, New York, New York: Popular Library, 1974, p. 354).

Within the hour, IDF soldiers had captured the walled Old City of Jerusalem and taken possession of the Temple Mount and the Western Wall (see photo of the liberation event on page 6). Five days later, on June 12, the men of Brigade 55 assembled in parade formation atop the Temple Mount platform to commemorate their victory and honor their fallen comrades. They were again addressed by Colonel Gur, who told them: "You have been privileged to restore to the people of Israel their capital and their sanctuary." (Amos Alon, *Jerusalem: City of Mirrors*, London, England: Flamingo, 1996, p. 91.)

And there you have it. The count confirms that exactly 2,300 Passovers occurred between the vision's starting event in verse 6 and its concluding event in verse 14, thus meeting the required exactitude for being a valid predictive prophecy. The prophecy in Daniel 8—recorded *circa* 550 BCE and preserved in the Book of Daniel whose text has

been shown by carbon-14 dating of the Daniel manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls to be at least 2,200 years old—was fulfilled more than two millennia later on that remarkable day in 1967. And, as the math used in this exposition shows, there is no approximation needed: it was fulfilled precisely where and when Daniel’s vision had prophesied that the fulfillment would occur.

So, now that the prophecy in Daniel chapter 8 has been shown to have been fulfilled by the return of the Temple Mount (the “sanctuary” stipulated in verse 14) to Jewish sovereignty during the Six-Day War in 1967, what does the return of the sanctuary signify today?

Verse 14 uses the Hebrew word קָדְשׁוֹ *tsadaq* to describe the ending event of the prophecy: “*then shall the sanctuary be victorious.*” Admittedly, the word *tsadaq* has been interpreted in a variety of ways, reflecting differing theological views on the meaning of the sanctuary’s restoration. The 1917 Jewish Publication Society edition of the *Tanakh* translates it as “*shall be victorious.*” The King James Version renders the word as “*shall be cleansed,*” a choice followed by the ASV, though the latter includes a footnote clarifying that the Hebrew word *tsadaq* carries the idea of being “*justified.*” Modern English translations are equally diverse: “*Properly restored*” (NASB), “*Restored to its rightful state*” (ESV, CJB, RSV), “*Reconsecrated*” (NIV), “*Have its rights restored*” (NJB), “*The sanctuary will be justified.*” (*United Bible Society Handbook*).

Taking all of the above interpretations into account, and viewing them in light of the 1967 fulfillment specified in the prophecy, it is reasonable to conclude that the Hebrew word *tsadaq* refers, at the very least, to the return of the Temple Mount to Jewish possession in a legal sense, and allows for an even stronger theological interpretation.

Some critics object to applying any religious connotation, pointing out that the Temple Mount has not been fully restored because no new Temple has been built and because Jewish prayer on the site remains restricted. That observation is accurate. However, the text of

Daniel, chapter 8, does not predict that a new Temple will be built or that Temple worship will resume. It simply states that the sanctuary will be “victorious or justified”—that is, restored to the rightful stewardship of the Jewish people, and that is precisely what occurred in 1967. Following Israel’s capture of the Temple Mount, the Israeli government declared sovereignty over the site as part of unified Jerusalem. To prevent a holy war, the day-to-day administration of the Muslim religious sites on the Mount was eventually entrusted to the Waqf, a kind of Islamic trust, but the underlying political authority has remained with the State of Israel ever since. The government determines who has access to the Mount, and when.

Ultimately, the future status of the Temple Mount remains in the hands of the Jewish people and the State of Israel. In that sense, and in full harmony with both the prophetic text and the historical record, the prediction that the sanctuary would be restored, justified, and victorious has been fulfilled. Furthermore, the prophecy that God ordered to be sealed in Babylon has now been unsealed by the increase in knowledge that was promised to occur at the time of the end. In this case, that increase in knowledge was made manifest by the very events foretold in the prophecy taking place before our eyes, thereby confirming the accuracy of God’s prophetic word.

Now that the events of 1967 have unsealed Daniel, chapter 8, for understanding by this generation, we can see how the Bible’s predictive prophecy provides evidence not only of God’s continuing participation in history, but also of his authorship of it. That realization raises a natural question: If chapter 8 has been unsealed, what new understanding of the remaining prophecies in Daniel might also be revealed? That question will be addressed in the next chapter through a detailed exposition of Daniel, chapter 9.

CHAPTER THREE

A Savior Was Promised

Daniel, chapter 9, is often called the Messiah Prophecy, since it provides the most detailed messianic description in the Hebrew Bible. It builds on Daniel, chapter 8, which demonstrated the reality of God through fulfilled prophecy. But before we examine how the prophecy in chapter 9 revealed the time of the Messiah's appearance to Israel and the signs that identified him as the Anointed One to those who knew the prophecies, we must first understand why a Savior was needed.

The Bible's story of salvation begins in Genesis, in the Garden of Eden, before there was ever a need for it. It starts by declaring that man was created by God in his own image (Genesis 1:26–27). Unlike the animals, mankind was endowed with the ability to reason, know, and love God. Adam and Eve were placed in a world without pain, suffering, or death, and they were given fellowship with their Creator. God walked with them in the garden and enjoyed their love, not as the response of machines compelled to obey, but as the willing affection of children who freely chose to trust him (Genesis 2:8–17).

The Bible reveals that God's purpose in creating man was to establish a reciprocal bond of love—to love and to be loved. Because genuine love cannot be coerced, God gave mankind the gift of free will. From the beginning, Adam and Eve were given a choice. They could trust the goodness of God and live in harmony with his word, or they could reject his will and go their own way (Genesis 2:16–17). Their decision would determine whether they remained in fellowship with God or became separated from his loving presence.

That same choice confronts every person. One path leads to eternal life in the presence of God; the other leads to eternal separation

from him. Moses later placed the matter before Israel in simple terms: *“I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life”* (Deuteronomy 30:19). The Bible teaches that eternal life is found in fellowship with the God of love, while separation from him is the essence of judgment and death (2 Thessalonians 1:8–9).

A loving relationship with God is founded on faith. Biblical faith is more than mere intellectual agreement. It is confidence in the absolute goodness and faithfulness of God, even when circumstances do not yet provide visible proof. *“Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1). Abraham believed God’s promise that his descendants would become a great nation before he could see its fulfillment, and *“he believed in the Lord, and he accounted it to [Abraham] for righteousness”* (Genesis 15:6). Years later, when told to sacrifice Isaac, Abraham trusted that promise.

Yet from the beginning, an all-knowing God understood that free will would make doubt and disobedience possible and pure faith difficult. The serpent tempted Eve by questioning the intentions of God: *“Has God indeed said...?”* (Genesis 3:1), then Adam and Eve chose to believe a lie rather than the word of God. In that way, sin entered their perfect world. Their rebellion and disobedience broke the bond of fellowship with God and brought death upon the human race (Genesis 3:6–19; Romans 5:12). Thereafter, every descendant of Adam was subject to sin, having inherited a spiritual “sin gene,” so to speak.

The problem is universal. Scripture declares, *“There is none righteous, no, not one”* (Romans 3:10), and again, *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23). Sin is not merely the wrongdoing that people commit; it is the inward condition of a heart choosing estrangement from God and burdened by guilt. Because God is perfectly holy, no sinner can justify himself before him. Only God can forgive sin. *“By the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight”* (Romans 3:20). Good works or human effort cannot erase guilt

or restore the broken relationship. Therefore, once sin had corrupted the heart and mind, humanity stood in need of a Savior who could remove the stain of rebellion and restore fellowship with God.

Even apart from formal religion, mankind seems to sense that the sustaining of life requires death. Something must die so that something else may live. At every meal, we are reminded of this truth. The Bible first introduces the principle of substitution immediately after the fall in the Garden. When Adam and Eve realized their disobedience, they covered themselves with fig leaves (Genesis 3:7). God clothed them instead with garments of skin from animals that had died to provide the covering (Genesis 3:21). The substitutionary death of an animal became the first portrayal of the means of salvation: another dies so that the guilty may appear before God without being condemned.

That pattern continued throughout the remainder of Scripture. Abel offered to God the firstborn of his flock (Genesis 4:4). At the Passover, an innocent lamb died so that the firstborn of Israel might live (Exodus 12:3–13). Later, under the Law of Moses, animal sacrifices were offered continually in the Tabernacle and then the Temple. Yet those sacrifices could never permanently remove sin. They were shadows of a greater sacrifice still to come (Hebrews 10:1–4).

The clearest Old Testament preview of that greater sacrifice appears in the account of Abraham and Isaac, where God commanded the patriarch to sacrifice Isaac, the son of promise, on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:1–2). Abraham obeyed in faith, believing that God would raise him from the dead (Hebrews 11:17–19). When Isaac asked, “*Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?*” Abraham replied, “*God will provide for Himself the lamb*” (Genesis 22:7–8). Then God stopped Abraham and provided a ram in Isaac’s place (Genesis 22:13). The father did not have to sacrifice his beloved son, because God had something else in mind. Through Abraham and Isaac, he was portraying what he himself would one day do. The greater Son promised through the line

of Abraham would become, not a ram, but the Lamb whose sacrifice would be sufficient to bring complete forgiveness of mankind's sins.

The prophet Isaiah revealed how the promise of future blessing given to Abraham would be fulfilled. Speaking of a coming individual he identifies as the Servant of the Lord, he wrote: *“He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities,”* and *“the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”* (Isaiah 53:5–6). Thus, the promised Savior would suffer not for his own sins, but for ours—the perfect substitution and propitiation through which a new covenant would be confirmed and sins forgiven (Jeremiah 31:31–34). Under the terms of that new covenant, the promised blessing that would come through Abraham would not be limited to Israel but would be extended to all peoples: *“I will also make you [the Savior] a light of the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth”* (Isaiah 49:6).

Thus, long before the Messiah appeared, the Hebrew Scriptures had already established the need for a Savior, because no person, through his own effort while still infected with sin, could approach God, whose radiant holiness and goodness cannot tolerate the presence of sin. For that reason, God promised a Redeemer with divine power. Through sacrifices, covenants, and prophecy, he prepared the world to anticipate and recognize the Anointed One who would come to bear the sins of many and bring sinners back into fellowship with God.

Now that we know why a Savior was necessary, we are prepared to examine the prophecy in Daniel 9. We shall see how a prophecy revealed centuries in advance specifies exactly when the Servant-Messiah would appear to Israel to begin his mission of redemption.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Messiah Entered Time

Chapter Three showed why mankind needed a Savior. Because the sin of disbelief had separated man from God, the Hebrew Scriptures promised a Redeemer-Messiah who would establish a new covenant of forgiveness and reconciliation, bringing glory to Israel and the blessing of salvation to the world.

The Jewish people—and Daniel, exiled in Babylon—yearned for that coming Messiah, one foretold to descend from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, offering forgiveness of transgressions and sins. For ancient Israel, the question naturally followed: When would he come? God’s answer was not a vague promise; Daniel, chapter 9, revealed the exact time in history when his appearance would occur.

This remarkable prophecy, given nearly six centuries before its fulfillment, is time-specific and historically anchored. Unlike Daniel 8, which concerns what happens to Jerusalem and the Temple at the time of the end, chapter 9 focuses on the imminent advent and mission of the Anointed One. For that reason, Daniel 9 has often been called the Messiah Prophecy: it provides not only the timing of his arrival but also a means of recognizing him, with profound implications if those details correspond to a single historical figure.

Both Jewish and Christian interpreters have approached the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks in Daniel 9:24–27 with the same basic assumption. They assume, without an exact biblical precedent, that the “weeks” mentioned in the prophecy must refer to weeks of years, so that seventy weeks becomes 490 years. Once that assumption is made, the interpreter is forced to search through history for two events exactly 490 years apart that are specified in the biblical text.

That *a priori* approach has produced a bewildering variety of explanations. Some have claimed that the prophecy extends from the destruction of Solomon's Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE to the destruction of Herod's Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. Others begin the count with one of the decrees issued by a Persian king and end it with some event in the life of Jesus. Still others stretch the prophecy far beyond the first century and project it into a future Antichrist scenario, a rebuilt Temple, and events that have not yet happened.

The problem with all of those interpretations is not merely that they disagree with one another. The real problem is that they all begin with an assumption that cannot be demonstrated from the text itself. Once the assumption is made that seventy weeks means 490 years, history must then be manipulated to make the interpretation fit: Dates are adjusted. Chronology is compressed. Years are counted according to an imaginary 360-day "prophetic calendar" that no mainstream ancient Jewish group ever used. Unexplained time gaps are inserted into the prophecy. Historical difficulties are overlooked. The result of these compromises is that the prophecy becomes something vague and uncertain, open to endless speculation.

Yet Daniel was not writing vague prophecy. The visions given to him through the angel of God were time-specific. As we saw in Daniel chapter 8, God did not speak in approximations. He gave a starting point in history, a specified period of time, and an ending event that could be verified after the fact. The same must also be true of Daniel chapter 9. If God intended the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks to identify the time of the Messiah, then the prophecy must be capable of being tested against documented history.

The prophecy itself directs our attention to verse 25. That verse is the chronological key for unlocking the historical details of the prophetic text. It identifies a starting point, divides sacred time into two separate time periods, and describes the events that occur at each

stage. Here is how that verse reads in the New King James Version: *“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: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.”*

The Jewish Publication Society 1917 translation is more literal, saying: *“Know therefore and discern, that from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto one anointed, a prince, shall be seven weeks; and for threescore and two weeks, it shall be built again, with broad place and moat, but in troublous times.”*

Most traditional interpretations expound verse 25 as though it were speaking about one long period of sixty-nine weeks, followed by a seventieth week. But that is not what the text says. It deliberately divides the time into two periods: seven weeks and then sixty-two weeks. Daniel did not divide the time span into seven weeks and sixty-two weeks arbitrarily. The seven-week division must therefore have special significance. And, if the seven-week division is not explained, then the interpretation is incomplete, because the seven weeks point to something definite in history. That definite meaning of the seven-week division will be fully explained later in this discussion.

For now, the first step toward understanding the prophecy is to identify the three action events described in verse 25. The first is *“the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.”* The second is the appearance of an anointed one, a prince. The third is the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s street and wall during troublous times. Associated with those three events are the two time periods: seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.

For the interpretation to be valid, all three elements in the text must align with a single historical decree. Traditional expositors have assumed that the commandment mentioned in the prophecy must be one of the decrees issued by Persian kings. Cyrus the Great issued a

decree permitting the Jews to return from Babylon and rebuild the Temple. Darius later confirmed that decree. Artaxerxes issued one decree to Ezra and another to Nehemiah. Because those decrees are recorded in the Bible, interpreters naturally focus upon them to the exclusion of all others.

Yet there is a serious difficulty with that assumption. None of the Persian decrees, as described in the text, accommodate all of the details specified in verse 25. The decree of Cyrus authorized the rebuilding of the Temple, not the rebuilding of Jerusalem as a fortified city. The decree to Ezra concerned worship and the teaching of the Law. The decree to Nehemiah permitted the rebuilding of the wall, but that work cannot be associated with a documented date. Those who use one of the Persian decrees are therefore forced to combine the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks into one block of sixty-nine weeks and then count forward until they arrive somewhere near the time of Jesus, and that approach disregards the structure of the text.

One of the most well-known examples of that approach was proposed by the influential Christian expositor Sir Robert Anderson in the nineteenth century. Anderson began the prophecy in 445 BCE, with the decree given to Nehemiah, and then counted forward 69 weeks (483 years) to the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. However, to make the numbers work, he did not use ordinary calendar years. Instead, he employed what he called a “prophetic year” of 360 days. His solution was ingenious, but it is not factual.

Ancient Jews did not ever use a 360-day year. Their lunar-solar calendar consisted of months having twenty-nine or thirty days, with leap months added when necessary so that feast days occurred in their proper seasons. The Bible itself defines years according to the lights in the heavens that God established “*for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years*” (Genesis 1:14). A biblical year was therefore tied to the actual movement of the Earth around the Sun, or 365 days, not to an

artificial year shortened by five days. Without the use of Anderson's 360-day calendar, his interpretation collapses. Counting 483 normal years from 445 BCE does not end with Jesus' triumphal entry. It ends *circa* 38 CE, at least eight or nine years too late. Thus, his chronology only works if one adopts a calendar system not known in the Bible.

Another popular Christian interpretation begins with the earlier decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra in 458 or 457 BCE. Yet it also suffers from a fatal weakness. It cannot explain the separate period of seven weeks. Forty-nine years after the decree to Ezra brings the count to approximately 409 BCE. But what important event happened then? No one knows, because an event occurring at that exact time is not documented in Jewish history. Those who favor this interpretation simply admit that the seven weeks remain unexplained. Some suggest that perhaps the rebuilding of Jerusalem was finally completed that year, although there is no evidence in any historical document for such a claim. Others merely pass over the problem in silence.

All of the other expositions using a Persian decree fail to satisfy the chronological specifics of the Daniel 9 prophecy. For the expositor looking for exactitude, that suggests that perhaps the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem is not to be found in the Persian period at all. Perhaps it is hidden elsewhere in the historical record relating to the affairs of ancient Israel. When the historical evidence is examined with that possibility in mind, another decree emerges—one that fits the details of verse 25 with remarkable precision. It was issued, not by a Persian king, but by Julius Caesar.

In the year 44 BCE, shortly before his assassination, Julius Caesar issued a decree concerning the Jews and Jerusalem. The decree was later ratified by the Roman Senate and preserved by Josephus. In it, Caesar granted rule of Jerusalem to his ally Hyrcanus II, confirming him as high priest and ethnarch of the Jews. He also authorized the Jews to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The decree reads:

“Gaius Caesar, consul the fifth time, hath decreed, That the Jews shall possess Jerusalem, and may encompass that city with walls; and that Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, the high priest and ethnarch of the Jews, retain it in the manner he himself pleases; and that the Jews be allowed to deduct out of their tribute, every second year the land is let [the year after a Sabbath year], a corus of that tribute; and that the tribute they pay be not let to farm, nor that they pay always the same tribute” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 14.10.5; Whiston).

Even a quick glance shows that the details of verse 25 begin to fall into place. The prophecy speaks of a commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. Caesar’s decree did exactly that. It restored Jerusalem to Jewish control under Hyrcanus II and gave permission for the city to be fortified once again. Since the prophecy also speaks of “*an anointed one, a prince,*” many expositors assume this refers directly to the Messiah, but the text itself indicates a ruler present at the time of the commandment. Hyrcanus II fits that description perfectly. As high priest, he was literally an anointed one. As ethnarch, he was the prince or ruler of the Jews.

Finally, the prophecy says that “*the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*” Caesar’s decree specifically authorized the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s defensive structures that had been destroyed by Pompey in 63 BCE. When Pompey captured Jerusalem, he breached the northern wall of the city. Josephus records that his forces filled in the trench or moat beneath the northern wall so that Roman siege engines could be brought against it. The wall itself and its great tower gates were then torn down. Those were the very features that had to be rebuilt after Caesar’s decree.

The word “street” is the Hebrew word רחב (*rěchob*). It is better translated in the JPS 1917 version as “broad place,” a reference to the space inside the wall of the city directly behind a tower gate, where troops were assembled to defend the city, as revealed by use of the

same term in 2 Chronicles 32:6: “And he [King Hezekiah] set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city.” Similarly, the word rendered “moat” is literally the word for “cut” and refers to a trench cut into the rock on the exterior wall of a city in order to make it a more difficult obstacle for those who would attempt to attack from the outside.

According to Josephus in his *Wars of the Jews* 1.7.3, Pompey had filled in the trench in front of the northern wall to make a platform for his siege engines and his troops had then destroyed the northern wall of Jerusalem. The work of rebuilding the city was carried out by Antipater, adviser to Hyrcanus and father of Herod the Great. Before Antipater’s death in 43 BCE, the northern wall, the trench beneath it, and the tower gates with their broad places had been restored. Only then could the count of the weeks begin.

That brings us to the central question necessary for correct interpretation: What does Daniel mean by “weeks”? The Hebrew word can carry more than one meaning, including a “week of years” (seven years), as seen in Genesis 29. But before assigning that meaning to Daniel 9, we must first consider how Daniel himself had already used symbolic festival terminology in chapter 8. There, the phrase “evening-morning” did not denote ordinary calendrical time units. Instead, it referred to the annually recurring Passover observance, in that way using a Jewish feast as a prophetic marker for measuring time.

The same principle is used in Daniel 9. The Hebrew word translated “weeks” in verse 25 is the Hebrew word שבוע (shabuwa’), a term associated in the Old Testament with the Feast of Weeks, later called Pentecost. Jeremiah 5:24 uses the same word in connection with the harvest observances: “the appointed weeks of the harvest” תועבֹת רִצְקֹת תוֹקֶה (chuuqoth qatsir shavu’oth), literally, “the appointed statutory weeks of harvest.” Significantly, Daniel states at the beginning of chapter 9 that he had been reading the prophecies of Jeremiah. So,

Jeremiah provides the contextual precedent for understanding “weeks” in a festal sense rather than as “weeks of years.” The “weeks” in Daniel 9 therefore denote a Feast of Weeks observance—the annual festival whose concluding celebration was known as the Day of Pentecost. Thus, the seventy weeks in Jewish history are a span of years containing seventy Pentecosts, one per year, divided into groups of seven weeks (seven Pentecosts) and sixty-two weeks (sixty-two Pentecosts), followed by a single week (one Pentecost). These three divisions appear sequentially in history as shown in the chart on the facing page.

Now we return to explain the reason for the seven-week division. Those seven weeks are the Pentecosts observed in the first seven-year sabbath-year cycle following the decree of Caesar. The Jews observed their years corresponding to a cycle of sabbath years. Every seventh year was a sabbath year in which the land rested. The year following that sabbath year became the first year in a new cycle. The rebuilding of Jerusalem’s street and wall was completed early in 43 BCE, which was itself a sabbath year. Therefore, the next year, 42 BCE, began the first year of a new sabbath cycle. The Feast of Weeks ending with Pentecost that was observed in 42 BCE located the start of the seven weeks. The Pentecost in 36 BCE was the seventh year in that seven-week division.

During that time period a remarkable event occurred. In 40 BCE, Jerusalem was captured by Antigonus, nephew of Hyrcanus II, with the help of the Parthians. Hyrcanus was mutilated so that he could no longer serve as high priest and was carried into exile. The procurator Herod fled to Rome, where he appealed to the Senate for help. The Romans declared him King of the Jews and sent him back with an army, whereupon Herod retook Jerusalem. Then, fearing that the Parthians might use Hyrcanus as a rival claimant to the throne, he invited the aged high priest to return from exile in Babylon to Jerusalem. Hyrcanus accepted Herod’s offer and returned in the summer of 36 BCE—the year of the seventh Pentecost ending the seven-year division.

The Seventy Weeks (Pentecosts)						
<i>From ancient Jewish records, primarily the Seder Olam Rabbah and the Talmud, we know that the destruction of Herod's Temple in 70 CE occurred in a sabbath year. By counting backward in seven-year increments, the year 43 BCE is identified as a sabbath year.</i>					44 BCE Julius Caesar's Decree to Hyrcanus II	43 BCE Sabbath Year, street and wall rebuilt
The 7 weeks						
<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Year 3</i>	<i>Year 4</i>	<i>Year 5</i>	<i>Year 6</i>	<i>Sabbath Year</i>
42 BCE 1st of 7 Pentecosts	41 BCE 2nd of 7 Pentecosts	40 BCE 3rd of 7 Pentecosts	39 BCE 4th of 7 Pentecosts	38 BCE 5th of 7 Pentecosts	37 BCE 6th of 7 Pentecosts	36 BCE 7th of 7 Pentecosts
The 62 weeks						
35 BCE 1st of 62 Pentecosts	34 BCE 2nd of 62 Pentecosts	33 BCE 3rd of 62 Pentecosts	32 BCE 4th of 62 Pentecosts	31 BCE 5th of 62 Pentecosts	30 BCE 6th of 62 Pentecosts	29 BCE 7th of 62 Pentecosts
28 BCE 8th of 62 Pentecosts	27 BCE 9th of 62 Pentecosts	26 BCE 10th of 62 Pentecosts	25 BCE 11th of 62 Pentecosts	24 BCE 12th of 62 Pentecosts	23 BCE 13th of 62 Pentecosts	22 BCE 14th of 62 Pent. JUBILEE YEAR
21 BCE 15th of 62 Pentecosts	20 BCE 16th of 62 Pentecosts	19 BCE 17th of 62 Pentecosts	18 BCE 18th of 62 Pentecosts	17 BCE 19th of 62 Pentecosts	16 BCE 20th of 62 Pentecosts	15 BCE 21st of 62 Pentecosts
14 BCE 22nd of 62 Pentecosts	13 BCE 23rd of 62 Pentecosts	12 BCE 24th of 62 Pentecosts	11 BCE 25th of 62 Pentecosts	10 BCE 26th of 62 Pentecosts	9 BCE 27th of 62 Pentecosts	8 BCE 28th of 62 Pentecosts
7 BCE 29th of 62 Pentecosts	6 BCE 30th of 62 Pentecosts	5 BCE 31st of 62 Pentecosts	4 BCE 32nd of 62 Pentecosts	3 BCE 33rd of 62 Pentecosts	2 BCE 34th of 62 Pentecosts	1 BCE 35th of 62 Pentecosts
1 CE 36th of 62 Pentecosts	2 CE 37th of 62 Pentecosts	3 CE 38th of 62 Pentecosts	4 CE 39th of 62 Pentecosts	5 CE 40th of 62 Pentecosts	6 CE 41st of 62 Pentecosts	7 CE 42nd of 62 Pentecosts
8 CE 43rd of 62 Pentecosts	9 CE 44th of 62 Pentecosts	10 CE 45th of 62 Pentecosts	11 CE 46th of 62 Pentecosts	12 CE 47th of 62 Pentecosts	13 CE 48th of 62 Pentecosts	14 CE 49th of 62 Pentecosts
15 CE 50th of 62 Pentecosts	16 CE 51st of 62 Pentecosts	17 CE 52nd of 62 Pentecosts	18 CE 53rd of 62 Pentecosts	19 CE 54th of 62 Pentecosts	20 CE 55th of 62 Pentecosts	21 CE 56th of 62 Pentecosts
22 CE 57th of 62 Pentecosts	23 CE 58th of 62 Pentecosts	24 CE 59th of 62 Pentecosts	25 CE 60th of 62 Pentecosts	26 CE 61st of 62 Pentecosts	27 CE 62nd of 62 Pentecosts	70th of 70 Pentecosts (see below)
The 70th week						
<i>The prophecy of the Seventy Weeks ended on Pentecost in 28 CE. During the year between the Pentecost of 27 CE and the Pentecost of 28 CE, John the Baptist began his ministry of introducing the New Covenant to Israel, Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John, recognized by God as the Anointed One, tempted for forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, and began his public ministry.</i>						28 CE 70th Pentecost JUBILEE YEAR

The seven-week division is now fully explained. It is no longer a mystery. The seven weeks are the seven Pentecosts observed from 42 BCE to 36 BCE, culminating in the return of the former anointed one-prince Hyrcanus to Jerusalem. After the seven Pentecosts came sixty-two Pentecosts. The first of them occurred in 35 BCE. The sixty-second occurred in 27 CE. The final or seventieth week—the seventieth Pentecost—was the year that extended from the Pentecost of 27 CE to Pentecost of 28 CE. The prophecy therefore identified the precise period of history in which the Messiah had to appear. He had to make his entrance into Jewish history during the seventy Pentecosts that stretched from 42 BCE to 28 CE. He could not come earlier. He could not come later.

Notice how different this is from the traditional interpretations of Daniel, chapter 9. Instead of speculation without documentation in the records of ancient Jewish history, the meaning of the prophecy now becomes clear and exact. Every part of the biblical text is accounted for. The commandment to restore and build Jerusalem is identified. The anointed one-prince is identified. The rebuilding of the street and wall is identified. The seven-week division is identified. The sixty-two weeks are identified. And all of the chronological details align with known historical events.

Most important for our purposes, the exact time when the Messiah must appear was revealed. The prophecy does not identify him by name, but it does establish the time frame. He had to appear during the seventy Pentecosts between 42 BCE and 28 CE. No other period satisfies the prophecy. Thus, before we even ask who the Messiah was, we already know when he had to come. The time was foretold with exactness. With the time of his advent foretold with such precision, the next question naturally follows: Who was the one who appeared within that time frame and was described by the six signs in verse 24 that Daniel said would identify the Anointed One?

CHAPTER FIVE

Six Signs Were Fulfilled

Having established in the previous chapter that the seventy weeks of Daniel 9 extend from 42 BCE to 28 CE, and that the Messiah therefore had to appear within that span of years, we are now prepared to examine the six signs that Daniel said would identify him by their fulfillment. Those signs are given in verse 24, which is not merely a statement about chronology, but also a description of what the Messiah would accomplish during the seventy weeks. The six events specified in that verse had to occur before the seventy weeks came to their end. Together they reveal the mission of the Messiah and provide the evidence by which his identity can be verified in history.

Daniel wrote in verse 24, as translated in the New King James Version: *“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, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.”*

The Jewish Publication Society 1917 translation reads almost identically: *“Seventy weeks are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sin, and to forgive iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal vision and prophet, and to anoint the most holy place.”*

Those six signs were not random. The first locates the seventy weeks in history. The next two point to the introduction of a new covenant. The final three identify events in the life of the Anointed One, the Savior promised by God, in that way identifying him. Thus, by the time the seventy weeks would end in 28 CE, all six signs would need to be satisfied as confirmation of the prophecy’s accuracy.

The first sign was “*to finish the transgression.*” The Hebrew word פֶּשַׁע (*pesha`*), translated “transgression” in verse 24, does not refer to personal sin. It refers to a national and religious revolt. Daniel was therefore pointing to a specific rebellion that would happen during the seventy weeks. That event can be identified by examining Jewish history within the time span specified by the prophecy.

A struggle for power engulfed Judea after the 44 BCE decree of Julius Caesar, who had restored Hyrcanus II to Jerusalem as high priest and ethnarch. An old conflict between the house of Hyrcanus and the descendants of his brother Aristobulus intensified. For decades the two families had battled for control of Judea. Hyrcanus had the support of the Pharisees. Aristobulus had the support of the Sadducees. Pompey’s capture of Jerusalem in 63 BCE did not end the rivalry. It came to a head in 40 BCE, when Antigonus, nephew of Hyrcanus and heir to the house of Aristobulus, allied himself with the Parthians and launched a revolt. Antigonus captured Jerusalem and the Temple, then proclaimed himself both king and high priest. Hyrcanus was seized and mutilated so that he could never again serve as high priest. Then he was carried away in chains to exile in Babylon.

The rebellion of Antigonus was short-lived. Herod, who had succeeded his father Antipater as procurator of Judea, fled to Rome. The Senate declared him King of the Jews and sent him back to Judea with several Roman legions to put down the revolt. After a prolonged struggle, Herod recaptured Jerusalem in early 36 BCE. Antigonus was defeated, the Parthians were driven out, and the revolt came to an end. The rebellion that had threatened Judea and Jerusalem was crushed. Thus, the prophesied “transgression” was finished. Significantly, this occurred at the end of the seven-week division of the prophecy. Later that same year, Herod brought Hyrcanus back from Babylon and restored him to a place of honor in Jerusalem. The seven Pentecosts that began in 42 BCE now came to their completion in 36 BCE.

After that first sign had been fulfilled, sixty-two additional Pentecosts passed as Jerusalem was rebuilt. Then the next two signs appeared. Daniel had said that during the seventy weeks there would come a time “*to make an end of sins*” and “*to make reconciliation for iniquity.*” Those expressions closely echo the language of Jeremiah’s prophecy of the new covenant. Jeremiah had written that God would one day establish a new covenant with Israel, unlike the covenant made at Sinai, because under that future new covenant God would “*forgive their iniquity*” and “*remember their sin no more*” (Jeremiah 31:34).

Daniel had been reading Jeremiah when he wrote chapter 9. He says so explicitly at the beginning of the chapter. Therefore, when he used the same language in verse 24, he was directing the reader back to Jeremiah’s covenant promise. Daniel was revealing that the new covenant promised by Jeremiah would be introduced within the seventy weeks to replace the covenant God had given through Moses. After the return from Babylon, however, the people of Israel continued to live under the old covenant. Priests continued to offer sacrifices in the Temple. The Day of Atonement came and went each year. At that point in Jewish history, *circa* 536 BCE, a new covenant was not introduced. The Jews had returned to the land, rebuilt the Temple, and resumed offering animal sacrifices, which means they had not yet entered into the covenant that Jeremiah had foretold. For the next five-hundred years, no new prophetic voice was heard in Israel.

Then, after Pentecost in 27 CE, a new voice was heard in the wilderness of Judea. John the Baptist appeared, preaching repentance and calling the people to prepare for the coming kingdom of God. Great crowds went out to hear him. They came from Jerusalem, from Judea, and from the region around the Jordan. John called them to repent and be baptized in the Jordan River. That was something entirely new. John did not direct the people to the Temple and its sacrifices for atonement. Instead, he called them to repentance and offered them baptism as a

sign of cleansing and forgiveness. His message pointed beyond the Mosaic covenant to Jeremiah's prophesied new covenant.

John's use of the Jordan River for baptism, mirroring the traditional Jewish practice of *mikvah*, was itself deeply symbolic. To the Jews, freely flowing water was "living water," especially suitable for purification. The people who came to John were being called to prepare for a new work of God. The old system of sacrifice could not ultimately remove sin. Something greater was at hand.

The Jewish religious authorities sensed the significance of what John was doing. Priests and Levites were sent from Jerusalem to ask him who he was. Was he the Messiah? Was he Elijah? Was he the prophet like Moses? John denied all of those titles. He identified himself only as "*the voice of one crying in the wilderness*," sent to prepare the way of the Lord. Then John made a startling statement. He declared that the one who would fulfill the promise to Abraham was already present among the people. "*There stands One among you whom you do not know*," he said. John was not the Messiah. He was the forerunner. His task was to announce that the time of the new covenant had come.

The Gospel of Luke helps to locate John's ministry within history. Luke says that John began preaching "*in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar*." The exact year depends on the calendar used, on whether one counts the first year of Tiberius' reign as an accession year followed by numbered years or counts numbered years with no accession year, on whether the count begins with the year of his coreign with Augustus over the provinces that began in 12 CE or with the year of his sole reign after Augustus died in 14 CE, and on the type of calendar used, either Roman, Syro-Macedonian, or Jewish. If Jewish, there is the added uncertainty about whether the start of the Jewish year was observed in the first month Nisan or the seventh month Tishri, as Rosh Hashanah is today. Using those variables, sixteen different time periods have been identified as a possibility for Luke's fifteenth year

of Tiberius. Five of the sixteen show some portion of his fifteenth year as occurring during the seventieth week of the prophecy, *i.e.*, between the Pentecosts in 27 CE and 28 CE.

That is precisely where Daniel's chronology requires it to fall. The sixty-two weeks ended with Pentecost in 27 CE. The time period represented by the seventieth week is the span that begins with the Pentecost in 27 CE and ends with the Pentecost in 28 CE. It was during that final "week" that John appeared and announced the coming of the Messiah. The introduction of the new covenant was proclaimed. A way was opened by which sins would be brought to an end and iniquity forgiven. Thus, the second and third signs of Daniel 9:24 were fulfilled.

The fourth sign was "*to bring in everlasting righteousness.*" That event had to occur before the end of the seventy weeks on the Day of Pentecost in 28 CE according to the chronological constraints spelled out in the Messiah Prophecy. It was fulfilled at the baptism of Jesus. The documentation for the year of Jesus' baptism that is most pertinent to verse 24, in that it pointedly identifies that event with the bringing in of everlasting righteousness required by the prophecy, is given in Matthew 3:13–17: "*Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then John baptized him*" ... and in that manner the fourth sign was fulfilled.

It should be noted that the baptism of Jesus did not signify that he was a sinner in need of repentance. Rather, it marked the beginning of his public ministry and his consecration to the work he had come to perform. In that moment, everlasting righteousness entered history in visible form through him. The timing also fits the prophecy exactly. Luke says that Jesus was "*about thirty years of age*" when he began his ministry. The following table demonstrates how to verify that the time

of Jesus' baptism was in early 28 CE prior to Passover that year, assuming that he was born *circa* 4 BCE, shortly before the death of Herod.

Calculating the Year of Jesus' Baptism (when He was "about 30 years old")				
1 y.o. in 3 BCE	2 y.o. in 2 BCE	3 y.o. in 1 BCE	4 y.o. in 1 CE	5 y.o. in 2 CE
6 y.o. in 3 CE	7 y.o. in 4 CE	8 y.o. in 5 CE	9 y.o. in 6 CE	10 y.o. in 7 CE
11 y.o. in 8 CE	12 y.o. in 9 CE	13 y.o. in 10 CE	14 y.o. in 11 CE	15 y.o. in 12 CE
16 y.o. in 13 CE	17 y.o. in 14 CE	18 y.o. in 15 CE	19 y.o. in 16 CE	20 y.o. in 17 CE
21 y.o. in 18 CE	22 y.o. in 19 CE	23 y.o. in 20 CE	24 y.o. in 21 CE	25 y.o. in 22 CE
26 y.o. in 23 CE	27 y.o. in 24 CE	28 y.o. in 25 CE	29 y.o. in 26 CE	30 y.o. in 27 CE

The year of Jesus' baptism can also be verified from a statement about the construction of Herod's Temple made at the start of Jesus' public ministry. According to Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews* 15:354 and 15:380), construction on the Temple began in the same year that Augustus Caesar visited Syria, an event for which the exact year has been identified from a work by the historian Cassius Dio from his lists of consuls and their years in office. Augustus visited in the springtime of the year 20 BCE. Josephus also records that the Temple itself took one year and six months to complete, but that additional construction on the Temple complex continued for many decades.

The *B'rit Hadashah* (New Testament) contains a reference to a Temple event that occurred in the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, about fifty days after his baptism. That event can be cross-referenced to the chronology of the Temple construction dates recorded by Josephus. At the start of his public ministry, Jesus was teaching in the Temple. That event is recorded in John 2:13–21: "*Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out*

the changers' money and overturned the tables. ... So the Jews answered and said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' Then the Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body."

The table below shows that the above exchange happened just before Passover night in 28 CE, the year being revealed by counting forward forty-six Passovers from the start of construction of the Temple after Passover in 20 BCE.

How to Count the 46 Years of Temple Construction					
P = PASSOVER (followed by the passover number)					
AFTER PASSOVER in 20 BCE	P1 in 19 BCE	P2 in 18 BCE	P3 in 17 BCE	P4 in 16 BCE	P5 in 15 BCE
P6 in 14 BCE	P7 in 13 BCE	P8 in 12 BCE	P9 in 11 BCE	P10 in 10 BCE	P11 in 9 BCE
P12 in 8 BCE	P13 in 7 BCE	P14 in 6 BCE	P15 in 5 BCE	P16 in 4 BCE	P17 in 3 BCE
P18 in 2 BCE	P19 in 1 BCE	P20 in 1 CE	P21 in 2 CE	P22 in 3 CE	P23 in 4 CE
P24 in 5 CE	P25 in 6 CE	P26 in 7 CE	P27 in 8 CE	P28 in 9 CE	P29 in 10 CE
P30 in 11 CE	P31 in 12 CE	P32 in 13 CE	P33 in 14 CE	P34 in 15 CE	P35 in 16 CE
P36 in 17 CE	P37 in 18 CE	P38 in 19 CE	P39 in 20 CE	P40 in 21 CE	P41 in 22 CE
P42 in 23 CE	P43 in 24 CE	P44 in 25 CE	P45 in 26 CE	P46 in 27 CE	BEFORE PASSOVER in 28 CE

The fifth sign was *“to seal up the vision and prophecy,”* or more literally, *“to seal vision and prophet.”* That sign was also fulfilled at the baptism of Jesus. Later in his ministry, Jesus said, *“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”* By that statement, Jesus declared that God had already publicly identified him as the Anointed One. At his baptism, the Spirit of God descended in the form of a dove and remained upon Jesus, and John the Baptist heard a voice from heaven declaring, *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*

In that moment, the visions and prophecies concerning the Messiah were sealed—not hidden from understanding by those who believed the prophecies, but confirmed and fulfilled. God himself placed his seal upon Jesus. Yet there was another side to that sealing. The Messiah was revealed to some, but concealed from others.

The prophets had foretold that Israel would experience spiritual blindness. Isaiah in particular had written, *“Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not,”* adding, *“And the vision of all is become unto you [the Jewish leaders] as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned”* (Isaiah 29:11).

Jesus himself referred to that passage when his disciples asked why he spoke to the people in parables. He answered that the nation was under God’s judgment, and had been since the time of Isaiah. The people could see but could not perceive what they were seeing, hear but could not understand what he was saying. The religious leaders of Israel were unable to recognize what was unfolding before their eyes because the meaning of the prophecies remained sealed to them.

The sixth and final sign was *“to anoint the most Holy.”* This too was fulfilled at the baptism of Jesus, as indicated by the terminology used to describe it. The Hebrew word מַשַּׁח (*maw-shakh*) means “to consecrate to religious service.” The phrase “most Holy” is a translation of the Hebrew word קֹדֶשׁ (*qodesh*), which can mean “things and persons ceremonially cleansed, and so separated as sacred,” and, as used in verse 24, means exactly that when applied to Jesus’ baptism. Daniel was therefore foretelling that during the seventy weeks there would be the consecration to mission of an Anointed One who had been chosen to fulfill God’s plan of redemption. That is exactly what occurred when the Spirit descended upon Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan River.

Isaiah had foretold the same event centuries earlier. Speaking of the coming servant of the Lord, he wrote, “*I have put my spirit upon him.*” He also said that this servant would be given “*for a covenant of the people.*” Thus, the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus identified him as the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah and the Anointed One in Daniel.

John the Baptist understood the prophecies. After Jesus’ baptism, he declared to his disciples, “*Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.*” John explained that God had told him that the one upon whom the Spirit descended and remained would be the one who would baptize believers with the Holy Spirit. By being immersed in the waters of the Jordan, Jesus symbolically portrayed the work he had come to accomplish. His going down into the water pointed forward to his death and burial, his rising again from the water pointed forward to his resurrection. The beginning of his ministry already contained within it the gospel (“good news”) of his messianic mission.

Thus, before the seventy weeks ended, all six signs were fulfilled. The rebellion of Antigonus had been brought to an end. The new covenant had been introduced by John the Baptist and proclaimed to Israel by both John and Jesus. Repentance and permanent forgiveness of sins had been announced, replacing the Temple system that operated under the Mosaic covenant. In the person of Jesus, everlasting righteousness had entered history. The vision and the prophet were sealed by the testimony of God. The Most Holy had been anointed by the visible descent of the Spirit on Jesus. And every part of Daniel’s prophecy was aligned with history as recorded in the *B’rit Hadashah* by faithful first-hand witnesses.

That is what makes the prophecy so remarkable. Daniel did not merely say that a Messiah would one day come. He specified when he would appear and what would happen when he did. The prophecy identified the exact period of history, described the six events that would accompany his coming, and pointed to the one person

who fulfilled those signs. The exact fulfillment of the seventy-weeks prophecy therefore leaves only one possible conclusion. The one who appeared during that appointed time—identified by John the Baptist, baptized in the Jordan, sealed by the Father, and anointed by the Spirit—was the Messiah promised to Israel. His name is Jesus.

Verses 26-27 carry the story of Messiah's advent to its completion. They explain what the Messiah would do after his baptism at the Jordan River. They speak of the proclamation and confirmation of the New Covenant, the cutting off of the Anointed One to confirm the covenant with his blood, and the future destruction and desolation of the Jerusalem Temple. Having now identified Jesus as the Messiah specified by the time of his appearing and the six messianic signs that he fulfilled, we conclude our examination of Daniel, chapter 9.

CONCLUSION

The Evidence Stands

In the modern world, it has become almost fashionable to doubt that the God of the Bible is real, and that the Bible means what it says. Skepticism is often presented as intellectual maturity, while belief is quietly pushed aside as something belonging to an older age. Yet the question itself has never changed. Is God real? And if he is, has he spoken in a way that can be known, tested, and trusted?

The Bible does not ask that question only to answer it by resorting to blind acceptance. It answers it with evidence—specifically, with predictive prophecy. This is not a peripheral feature of Scripture. It is central to its claim of divine authority. As the apostle Peter wrote, “*we have the prophetic word confirmed*” (2 Peter 1:19). The idea is straightforward: God declares what will happen before it happens, and when it occurs exactly as he has foretold, his authority over the affairs of mankind is unambiguously demonstrated.

Predictive prophecy, if it is to serve that purpose, cannot be approximate, a matter of guesswork, or clever manipulation of the facts. A vague forecast proves nothing. Generalities can be made to fit almost anything. But a true predictive prophecy—one that originates from an omniscient and omnipotent God—must align precisely with the events of history. Starting points must be identifiable. Time spans must be defined. Fulfillment events must be verifiable. Only then can it be tested. Only then can it be confirmed.

That is the standard that has been applied throughout this study. We have not asked the reader to assume anything. We have not relied on tradition or speculation. Instead, we have examined the text itself, identified its prophetic and chronological elements, and tested those

elements against documented history. In the search for exactitude, two of the most profound predictive prophecies in the Bible have been placed under that scrutiny.

The first, recorded in Daniel chapter 8, presented a prophecy with a clearly defined starting event, a specified time span, and an ending event to be located in history. When those elements were identified and the time span applied from start to finish, the result was not an approximation, nor a range of possibilities, but a fulfillment of an ancient prophecy precisely fulfilled in the modern era. The events surrounding Jerusalem in 1967 aligned exactly with what had been foretold more than two thousand years earlier. That alignment does not rest on assumption. It rests on verifiable historical fact.

What does that mean? It demonstrates knowledge that originates from beyond ordinary human capability. And that means the source of that knowledge, the God who revealed that prophecy, is supernatural and discernable by his deeds. He is most certainly not a mythical remnant left over from an ancient primitive world. He is active across history, even in what we call the modern age. The fulfillment of Daniel 8 stands as evidence that an omnipotent and omniscient God is directing the course of events according to his purposes. It is not merely a theological claim. It is a demonstrated reality.

The second prophecy we examined, found in Daniel, chapter 9, moved us from the broad scope of history to something more personal. While Daniel 8 reveals God's authority over the rise and fall of nations and the course of human events, Daniel 9 reveals his compassion and love for individuals, with the ultimate expression of that love coming in the form of the Anointed One—the Messiah—his appearance in history defined by a prophecy with remarkable precision. When that prophecy is understood in its proper order and tested against history, it identifies a single individual whose life and mission aligned exactly with its terms, and that individual is the Anointed One of God.

It is with that revelation that the purpose of predictive prophecy becomes even clearer. It is not only to prove that God exists. It is to reveal who he is. The fulfillment of Daniel 9 shows that God is not only powerful and all-knowing, but also loving and compassionate. He did not leave humanity in its fallen condition. He provided a Savior.

The Bible is unambiguous about the human condition. It tells us that all have sinned, and that the consequence of sin is death—a body diminishing daily in this life and exhibiting permanent spiritual separation from God in this life and in the life to come. That is not a comfortable truth, but it is a necessary one. Without understanding the problem, the solution has no meaning. And the problem is not one we can solve ourselves. We do not have the power to make ourselves without sin so that a holy God can tolerate our presence. We cannot stand before a just and holy God and declare ourselves acceptable on the basis of our own efforts. No amount of good intentions or moral striving can bridge that gap.

That is why the message of Daniel 9 is so important. It points to the coming of the Anointed One who can do what we humans cannot do for ourselves. Jesus did not come merely as a teacher or an example of moral living, although he did both. Ultimately, he came as a Savior. In the court of cosmic justice, the penalty for our sin was paid by his death on the cross. Through his resurrection to life, his authority over death was confirmed. In him, forgiveness is not partial or uncertain. It is complete. God's memory of our sin is forever removed, not by being ignored, but because it was dealt with fully and finally in the one way that our Creator said it must be dealt with, a sacrifice.

This is the heart of the gospel. The same God who demonstrates his authority through the precise fulfillment of prophecy has also provided the means by which we can be reconciled to him. The Bible describes Jesus as the morning star—the light that rises to dispel the darkness in the soul of sinners. That is not simply poetic language. It

is a picture of what he does in the life of a believer. Where there was uncertainty, there is clarity. Where there was separation from God, there is fellowship. Where there was death, there is life.

But this is not just religious theory. It is transcendent truth that requires a response based on the evidence that has been provided. Eternal life is offered, but it must be voluntarily received. Thus, each person must choose whether to accept the salvation God has provided before their days on earth come to an end. *“It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”* (Hebrews 9:27).

The evidence has been laid out. The question now is whether it will be accepted in faith. If you are ready to take that step, you can begin your walk with God right now. There is no ritual required, no special setting, no intermediary. You can go directly to him in prayer, speaking honestly from your heart in words such as these:

Heavenly Father, I confess that I have rebelled against your perfect ways and need your forgiveness for my sin. I believe that Jesus is your beloved Son, that he died for the forgiveness of my sin, and that you raised him to life everlasting to confirm his authority over death. Today I turn from my old ways and accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Fill me with your Holy Spirit. Help me understand your words of life and teach me to walk daily in faith and trust in your promises. Thank you for the gift of eternal life. Amen.

If you prayed that prayer with sincerity, with all of your heart and soul and mind, keeping nothing unconfessed from God, then something real and eternal has taken place. Quietly, God has done what he promised. *“For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved”* (Romans 10:13). Your sins are forgiven. You have been brought into the family of believers as a child of God, chosen to have communion with him forever. And you have begun the most important journey of your life—a life lived in fellowship and obedience to God.

As you take your first steps, there are a few simple truths that will guide you in living the rest of your life as a follower of Christ.

- Make the Bible your constant companion and your ultimate authority. Everything you need for living in fellowship with God is found in its pages. As you read, prayer will follow naturally—especially prayer for understanding. God has promised to reward those who seek him, and he never fails to keep his promises.
- Remember that following Jesus is not complicated. It is not measured by the performance of rituals or the keeping of a checklist. It is measured by a growing willingness to become the person God intends you to be. That transformation unfolds as you spend time in his Word and respond to what he reveals.
- Be assured that you do not need a religious authority or specialized training to understand God’s Word. The Holy Spirit will guide you to understanding. Also, reliable study tools are available. But none of them replace the simple act of opening the Bible for yourself. If you want to hear the voice of God, you must read his Word.

Don’t complicate things. At its core, the Christian life is built on a relationship. It is dependent on a continuous, two-way conversation. You speak to God in prayer. He speaks to you through the Bible. Over time, that conversation will shape your thoughts, your decisions, and your understanding of the world around you.

And so we return to where we began. In a world where doubt is common, God has not left himself without a witness. He has spoken in advance through predictive prophecy. He has acted in history with precision. And he has revealed himself not only as the One who directs the course of nations, but as the One who calls individuals into a personal relationship with him. The question is no longer whether the evidence of the God of the Bible is trustworthy. The question is: what you will do with it now that you know it is?

Appendices

APPENDIX ONE

Festivals in Daniel

In ancient Israel, all males were commanded to appear before God three times a year (Exodus 23:14–17; Deuteronomy 16:16). For most of Israel’s history, these appearances took place at the Temple in Jerusalem. Once Solomon’s Temple was dedicated, the observances became national pilgrimages. Men from throughout the land journeyed to Jerusalem to worship, offer sacrifices, and participate in the sacred assemblies connected with each festival. The three annual observances were not merely rituals. They ordered Israel’s religious calendar and reminded the people through the year of God’s providential care.

During the years of Exile in Babylon, observing the festivals as commanded was no longer possible. Jerusalem and its Temple lay in ruins, and the exiles could not make the required pilgrimages. Yet the sacred calendar was not forgotten. The memory of the annual festivals continued to define the rhythm of Jewish life and thought. Daniel, captive in Babylon, did not forget the significance of the festival observances. In his prophecies the three pilgrimage festivals appear to function as time units, each represented by a cryptic phrase drawn from the festival’s most significant chronological feature. He used this method to sequester his prophecies away from full interpretation until the proper time, accurately preserving the text while ensuring that the message would not be prematurely understood, as follows:

FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD, also called *THE PASSOVER* (Chag HaMatzot/Pesach)—A festival period beginning on 14 Nisan, when the Passover lamb was slain late in the day and the meal eaten after sunset at the start of 15 Nisan. It commemorates the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, when the destroying angel “passed over” the houses marked by

the blood of the lamb. The Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on 15 Nisan immediately following the Passover meal (Leviticus 23:5–6). Because the Passover observance began in the evening and continued until morning, it could naturally be represented by the phrase “evening-morning.” In Daniel, chapter 8, Passover is represented by that expression. Rather than denoting ordinary days or sacrifices, the phrase points to the annual overnight observance of Passover itself.

FEAST OF WEEKS (Shavuot/Pentecost)—Observed for fifty days with the count beginning on the day after the Sabbath within the Feast of Unleavened Bread, culminating on the Day of Pentecost. It celebrates the wheat harvest and, in Jewish tradition, the giving of the Torah at Sinai (Leviticus 23:15–21). The distinctive feature of this festival is the counting process. Seven complete weeks were to be counted from Passover until the concluding festival day, also known as The Pentecost, arrived. For that reason, in Daniel, chapter 9, the entire annual seven-week period is represented simply by the term “weeks.” The prophecy is therefore framed in the language of the festival itself.

FEAST OF TABERNACLES (Sukkot)—Beginning on the 15th day of the seventh month, Tishri, it was observed for seven days, concluding with the seventh day, a solemn assembly known as the Great Day (Hoshana Rabbah). During the feast the people lived in temporary booths to remember Israel’s wilderness journey after the Exodus. It was a season of rejoicing, thanksgiving, and hope for future deliverance. Prayers for salvation reflecting messianic expectation became associated with the climactic final day. In Daniel, chapter 12, this concluding Great Day appears to be represented by the simple word “day.” The singular term draws attention, not to an ordinary day in general, but to the special climactic day of the festival.

In these ways, Daniel used veiled festival expressions to preserve and, at the same time, seal away important chronological information later needed for full understanding of his prophetic visions.

APPENDIX TWO

Jerusalem Restored

The following Hebrew-to-English transcript of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) radio traffic and sounds on the morning of June 7, 1967, was recorded live as the 55th Paratroopers Brigade restored the Temple Mount and Western Wall to Jewish sovereignty. The following people are featured: Col. Motta Gur commanded the 55th Paratroopers Brigade, the primary military unit deployed for the liberation of the Temple Mount and Western Wall; Gen. Uzi Narkiss commanded the IDF central Region, which included Jerusalem, charged with defending against Jordanian aggression; Commander 89 was unidentified by name; Yossi Ronen was an IDF radio reporter; Rabbi Gen. Shlomo Goren was the Orthodox Zionist (Ashkenazi) Chief Rabbi of the Israeli army ...

Colonel Motta Gur : *[on loudspeaker]* All company commanders, we're sitting right now on the ridge [Mount of Olives] and we're seeing the Old City. Shortly we're going to go in to the Old City of Jerusalem, that all generations have dreamed about. We will be the first to enter the Old City. Eitan's tanks will advance on the left and will enter the Lion's Gate. The final rendezvous will be on the open square [of the Temple Mount] above ...

Sound of applause by the soldiers ...

Yossi Ronen: We are now walking on one of the main streets of Jerusalem towards the Old City. The head of the force is about to enter the Old City ...

Gunfire ...

Yossi Ronen: There is still shooting from all directions; we're advancing towards the entrance of the Old City ...

Gunfire and sound of running soldiers' footsteps ...

Yelling of commands to soldiers ...

More running soldiers' footsteps ...

Yossi Ronen: The soldiers are keeping a distance of approximately five meters between them ... It's still dangerous to walk around here; there is still sniper shooting here and there ...

Gunfire ...

Yossi Ronen: We're all told to stop ... we're advancing towards the mountainside ... on our left is the Mount of Olives ... we're now in the Old City opposite the Russian church ... I'm right now lowering my head, we're running next to the mountainside ... We can see the stone walls ... They're still shooting at us ...

Gunfire ...

Yossi Ronen: Israeli tanks are at the entrance to the Old City, and we're going ahead, through the Lion's Gate. I'm with the first unit to break through into the Old City ... There is a Jordanian bus next to me, totally burnt; it is very hot here ... We're about to enter the Old City itself. We're standing below the Lion's Gate, the Gate is about to come crashing down, probably because of the previous shelling. Soldiers are taking cover next to the palm trees ...

Gunfire ...

Yossi Ronen: I'm also staying close to one of the trees ... We're getting further and further into the City ...

Gunfire ...

Colonel Motta Gur [*on the army wireless*]: The Temple Mount is in our hands! I repeat, the Temple Mount is in our hands! ... [*see photo on page 6*]

Gunfire ...

Colonel Motta Gur [*on the army wireless*]: All forces, stop firing! This is the David Operations Room. I repeat, all forces, stop firing! Over ...

Commander 89: Commander eight-nine here, is this Motta (Gur) talking? Over ...

Inaudible response on the army wireless by Motta Gur ...

Gen. Uzi Narkiss: Motta, there isn't anybody like you. You're next to the Mosque of Omar ...

Yossi Ronen: I'm driving fast through the Lion's Gate all the way inside the Old City ...

Command [*on the army wireless*]: Comb the area, discover the source of the firing. Protect every building, in every way. Do not touch anything, especially in the holy places ...

Lt.-Col. Uzi Eilam blows the Shofar ...

Soldiers are singing 'Jerusalem of Gold' [a patriotic song written by Naomi Shemer in 1967 and introduced at the Israel Song Festival just a few days before the war] ...

Gen. Narkiss: Tell me, where is the Western Wall? How do we get there? ...

Yossi Ronen: I'm walking right now down the steps towards the Western Wall. I'm not a religious man, I never have been, but this is the Western Wall and I'm touching the stones of the Western Wall ...

Soldiers [overcome with emotion, *reciting the 'Shehechianu' blessing*]: Baruch ata Hashem, elokein u melech haolam, she-hechianu ve-kiemanu ve-hegianu a-zman ha-zeh. [Translation: BLESSED ART THOU LORD GOD KING OF THE UNIVERSE WHO HAS SUSTAINED US AND KEPT US AND HAS BROUGHT US TO THIS DAY] ...

Rabbi Shlomo Goren: Baruch ata Hashem, menachem tsion u-voneh Yerushalayim. [Translation: BLESSED ARE THOU, WHO COMFORTS ZION AND BUILDS JERUSALEM] ...

Soldiers: Amen! ...

Soldiers sing "HaTiqvah" next to the Western Wall ...

Rabbi Goren: We're now going to recite the prayer for the fallen soldiers of this war against all of the enemies of Israel ...

Soldiers weeping ...

Rabbi Goren: El male rahamim, shohen ba-meromim. Hamtse menuha nahona al kanfei hashina, be-maalot kedoshim, giborim ve-

tehorim, kezohar harakiya meirim u-mazhirim. Ve-nishmot halalei tsava hagana le-yisrael, she-naflu be-maaraha zot, neged oievei yisrael, ve-shnaflu al kedushat Hashem ha-am ve-ha'arets, ve-shichrur Beit Hamikdash, Har Habayit, Hakotel ha-ma'aravi veyerushalayim ir ha-elokim. Be-gan eden tehe menuhatam. Lahen ba'al ha-rahamim, yastirem beseter knafav le-olamim. Ve-yitsror be-tsror ha-hayim et nishmatam adoshem hu nahlatam, ve-yanuhu be-shalom al mishkavam ve-ya'andu le-goram le-kets ha-yamim ve-nomar amen! [Translation: MERCIFUL GOD IN HEAVEN, MAY THE HEROES AND THE PURE BE UNDER THY DIVINE WINGS, AMONG THE HOLY AND THE PURE WHO SHINE BRIGHT AS THE SKY, AND THE SOULS OF SOLDIERS OF THE ISRAELI ARMY WHO FELL IN THIS WAR AGAINST THE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL, WHO FELL FOR THEIR LOYALTY TO GOD AND THE LAND OF ISRAEL, WHO FELL FOR THE LIBERATION OF THE TEMPLE, THE TEMPLE MOUNT, THE WESTERN WALL AND JERUSALEM THE CITY OF THE LORD. MAY THEIR PLACE OF REST BE IN PARADISE. MERCIFUL ONE, O KEEP THEIR SOULS FOREVER ALIVE UNDER THY PROTECTIVE WINGS. THE LORD BEING THEIR HERITAGE, MAY THEY REST IN PEACE, FOR THEY SHALT REST AND STAND UP FOR THEIR ALLOTTED PORTION AT THE END OF THE DAYS, AND LET US SAY, AMEN!] ...

Soldiers weeping ...

Rabbi Goren sounds the shofar ...

Sound of gunfire in the background ...

Rabbi Goren: *[holding Torah scroll]* Le-shana HA-ZOT be-Yerushalayim ha-b'nuya, be-yerushalayim ha-atika! [Translation: THIS YEAR IN A REBUILT JERUSALEM! IN THE JERUSALEM OF OLD!]

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Scripture

Daniel 8:1-27

1 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared to me--to me, Daniel--after the one that appeared to me the first time.

2 I saw in the vision, and it so happened while I was looking, that I was in Shushan, the citadel, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai.

3 Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher one came up last.

4 I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could withstand him; nor was there any that could deliver from his hand, but he did according to his will and became great.

5 And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes.

6 Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power.

7 And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.

8 Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven.

9 And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land.

10 And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them.

11 He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.

12 Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices; and he cast truth down to the ground. He did all this and prospered.

13 Then I heard a holy one speaking; and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, "How long will the vision be, concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?"

14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

15 Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man.

16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this man understand the vision."

17 So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end."

18 Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright.

19 And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.

20 The ram which you saw, having the two horns--they are the kings of Media and Persia.

21 And the male goat is the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king.

22 As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.

23 “And in the latter time of their kingdom, When the transgressors have reached their fullness, A king shall arise, Having fierce features, Who understands sinister schemes.

24 His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; He shall destroy fearfully, And shall prosper and thrive; He shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people.

25 “Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; And he shall exalt himself in his heart. He shall destroy many in their prosperity. He shall even rise against the Prince of princes; But he shall be broken without human means.

26 “And the vision of the evenings and mornings Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For it refers to many days in the future.”

27 And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king’s business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.

Daniel 9:1-27

1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans.

2 In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

4 And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,

5 we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and judgments.

6 Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land.

7 O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day--to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.

8 O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.

10 We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets.

11 Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.

12 And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

13 As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth.

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.

15 And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day--we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

16 "O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us.

17 Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate.

18 O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies.

19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

20 Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God,

21 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

22 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 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.”

Author's Invitation

If you have questions about anything presented in this book, or if you believe I have made a mistake in calculating the timeline for Bible history or have misinterpreted its prophecies, please feel free to contact me to share your comments. I interact best by telephone, so, if possible, call me at 770-922-1889 (10 a.m.–8 p.m., Eastern Time).

To begin our conversation, confirm that you have read this book in its entirety. Then ask a question if you need clarification. If you disagree with any of the conclusions presented here, focus on the single most critical point at which you believe my exegesis fails, and explain why. To keep our discussion productive, raise only one issue at a time rather than presenting multiple objections at once.

Infallibility is not claimed. However, to persuade me that I have erred, you must demonstrate—using only the biblical text and documented history—where my exposition breaks down. The question for discussion is not whether an alternative interpretation is better, but whether mine fails when tested against those standards. General disagreement, unsupported assertions, or appeals to other authorities are not useful for addressing the arguments presented in this book. And meaningful discussion always depends on a shared willingness to treat the biblical text as accurate in its details. Where that common ground exists, I welcome a thoughtful and focused exchange of ideas.

Keep in mind that my chronological research reaches no further back in time than the birth of Abraham. Thus, I do not calculate a date for Creation, nor do I speculate about dates for future events. Scripture teaches that while we can sense eternity—the reality that time reaches into the past and flows into the future—yet in this life we cannot fully know the beginning or the end of God's work (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

Finally, if you have questions about matters that go beyond the discussion presented here—particularly regarding what the Bible says

about faith, forgiveness, salvation, life after death, and eternity—I will be glad to discuss those topics as well. The purpose of this book has been to examine the Bible’s claims and to test them against history. If that examination has raised deeper questions about what the answers mean for your own life, I welcome that conversation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Prophecy Society offers many of its books on prophecy and chronology for download in PDF format at no charge.

www.prophecysociety.org

We also recommend these websites ...

BIBLE GATEWAY

www.biblegateway.com

BLUE LETTER BIBLE

www.blueletterbible.org