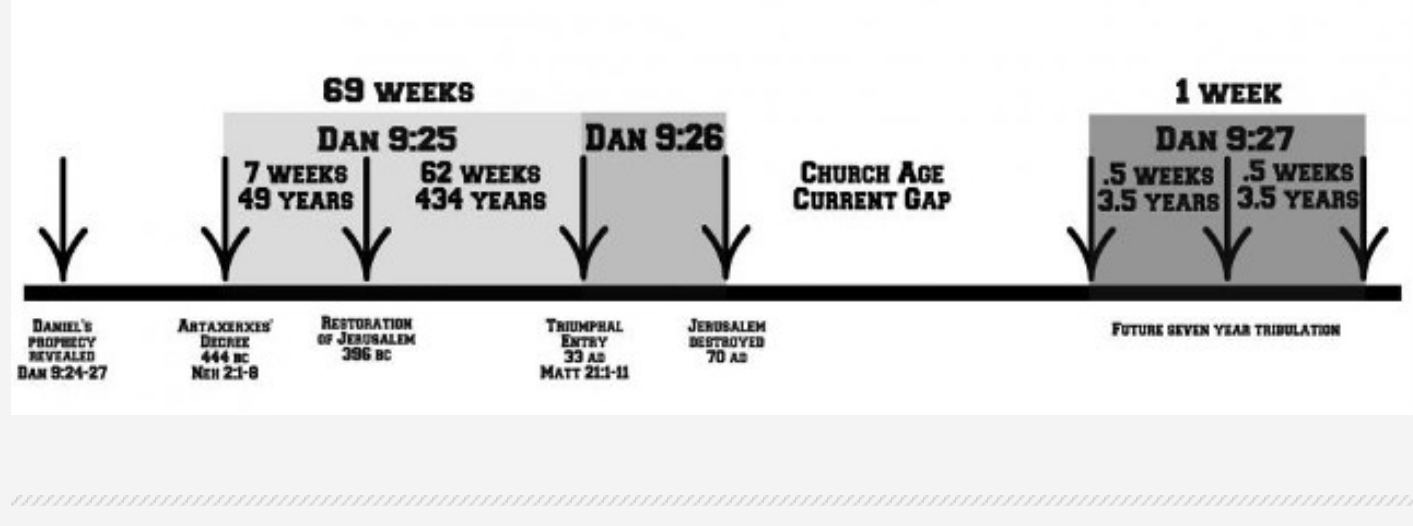




DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS



By Paul Miles

Among proofs that the Bible is authoritative is the startling accuracy of the prophecy revealed to Daniel, which he records in Daniel 9:24-27. This prophecy, known as *Daniel's Seventy Weeks*, was revealed during the Babylonian exile "in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus" (Dan 9:1). Daniel knew that the exile would last 70 years (Dan 9:2) as Jeremiah had written (Jer 25:1-14) and he confessed that he and Israel had sinned. God responded by sending Gabriel to deliver a message:

**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.**

It is interesting that Daniel's 70 weeks are fulfilled after Jeremiah's 70 years. The term, *seventy weeks*, here is more literally *seventy sevens*, or *seventy periods of seven*, which does not necessarily mean seven *days*. Daniel had just been counting the *years* of the exile when an angel delivered another prophecy that measured time using a unit of seven *periods* of seven. It would make sense in the context for these periods to be periods of seven years. So, instead of dealing with a 70 seven-day-weeks, Daniel is receiving news about 70 seven-year-weeks. By the way, a year on the Jewish calendar is not 365 days like the calendar in current use. The Jewish calendar was a lunisolar calendar with its own system of leap years and sabbatic years.

These 70 weeks have been "determined for your people [Israel] and for your holy city [Jerusalem]" in anticipation of "everlasting righteousness" which has yet to be completed. Verse 25 is where we start to see history that has already been completed since Daniel's prophecy:

**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.**

This part of the prophecy predicts three events: the command to rebuild Jerusalem, the actual restoration of Jerusalem, and then "Messiah the Prince." The time gaps are 7 weeks (49 lunar years) and 62 weeks (434 lunar years) between them. Well, the command to rebuild Jerusalem took place in 444 B.C. when King Artaxerxes sent Nehemiah to make the repairs (Neh 2:1-8), which were finished 49 Jewish years later in 396 B.C. There were then another 434 Jewish years "until Messiah the Prince" which was fulfilled when Jesus Christ came to Jerusalem in 33 A.D. (Matt 21:1-11). *Christ* is from a Greek word meaning *Messiah*, which is Hebrew for *anointed*. Israel had been anticipating Jesus Christ's entrance into Jerusalem for 483 years since Artaxerxes' decree. Another prophet, Zechariah, also gave some details about this day hundreds of years in advance:

**Zech 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your King is coming to you;
He is just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.**

When Jesus came into Jerusalem on the day that Daniel predicted, he rode a donkey as Zechariah said He would. He did this to tell everyone that He was the Messiah that they had been waiting for and many people who knew what this meant rejoiced. In fact, we call Jesus' ride into Jerusalem on a donkey *The Triumphal Entry* because people were laying their coats and tree branches on the road for Him and shouting in excitement for He had finally come! Not everyone was happy about this, though. Some corrupt religious leaders were threatened by Christ fulfilling this ministry so they paid one of Jesus' students to betray Him. Daniel continues the prophecy:

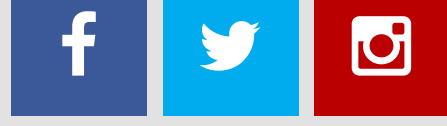
**26 And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.**

Daniel's prophecy is like a stopwatch. The stop watch started in 444 B.C. and ran for 7 weeks, then for another 62 weeks, which totals 69 of the 70 weeks. After the 62 weeks, at the triumphal entry, the stopwatch stops. There are still another seven years on the timer, but first there are some other prophecies that must be fulfilled. We see the fulfillment of "Messiah shall be cut off" when Jesus is crucified a few days after his triumphal entry. And then, some people come to destroy the city and sanctuary. This took place in 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman emperor, Titus. All of this has been fulfilled already and is recorded in the history books. There is still more in the prophecy that has not been fulfilled yet:

**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.**

We see here that the future week will start with "a covenant with many" and is divided into two halves, the second half will be pretty ugly until the consummation. There are more details about this in Daniel and other Old Testament prophets as well as New Testament prophecies. For now it is sufficient to say that the prophets of the Bible have predicted literal events with extreme accuracy, which testifies to their reliability. This is only a consideration of a few verses, but the Bible is loaded with prophecies that have come to pass. This is one of several reasons that we can know that the Bible is God's Word, and that we can trust it not only as a record of the past, but as a record of the future as well.

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