

## *A New Look –*

# **Daniel’s 70 Weeks, the Rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Messiah**

A much misunderstood prophecy in the book of Daniel lays bare the amazing future of the Middle East and foretold the TWO comings of the Messiah! The first coming was as the “Lamb of God” to take away the sins of the world; and the second coming will be to save Israel, and the entire earth, from total destruction, cosmocide and human annihilation. For the first time ever, this subject is laid out in full and awesome revelation – proving beyond any doubt WHO the Messiah and coming King of Israel is! The first coming was fulfilled to the very year. What about the second coming? Could it happen within the next seven years?

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One of the most amazing and intriguing prophecies of all the Bible is found in Daniel 9:24-27. Throughout the ages men and women have puzzled over the meaning of this cryptic passage. It has stumped theologians, baffled scholars, and puzzled Christians and Jews alike for thousands of years. Very few understand just HOW this passage in the book of Daniel, written in about 500-600 B.C., relates to the coming of the Messiah, AND the prospects of “peace” in our generation!

Let us carefully review this entire prophecy, and see how powerful and awesome it is, deserving to be studied by ALL people – Christian, Jew, Muslim, and unbelievers as well!

First of all, let’s read the passage in the King James Version:

“SEVENTY WEEKS are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish [margin, to restrain] the transgression, and to make an end [margin, to seal up] 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.

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem [margin, to build again Jerusalem] *unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks*: the street shall be built again, and the wall [margin, breach, or ditch], in troublous times.

“*And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be CUT OFF, but not for himself [margin, and shall have nothing]*: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined [margin, it shall be cut off by desolations].

“*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for ONE WEEK*: and in the midst of the WEEK he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of *abominations* [margin, and upon the battlements shall be the idols of the desolater], he shall make it *desolate, even until the consumation*, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate [margin, desolater]” (Dan.9:24-27).

What a strange prophecy! It outlines strange events to occur in and around Jerusalem, till the coming of the Messiah and the end of the age. What are these mysterious “seventy weeks”?

In Numbers 14:34 God told the Israelites, “After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, *each day of a year*, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years . . .” Each day of the prophetic 70 weeks, then, is a year in being fulfilled!

Ezekiel confirms this same principle. God told Ezekiel concerning the punishment and siege of Israel, “This shall be a *sign* to the house of Israel. Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: according to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the *years* of their iniquity, *according to the number of the days*, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou has accomplished them, lie on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee *each day for a year*” (Ezek.4:3-6).

To understand the 70 weeks prophecy, one must realize each *day* of the prophecy equals a *year* being fulfilled. Since there are seven days in a week – or a total of 490 days in 70 weeks – this prophecy involves 490 years. At the end of this time period, the “Most Holy” – the Messiah – will bring in everlasting righteousness – He will become King of the whole earth and put a complete end to all man’s rebellion. All nations will finally be reconciled to Him.

However, this prophecy does not say that this period of years is consecutive, from beginning to end. It is divided up into three distinct periods – 7 weeks, 62 weeks, and a final week.

But how are these 490 years to be understood? *When* do they commence? And what do the three periods of time mean? And when do they end?

Notice carefully.

“Know therefore,” Gabriel told Daniel, “and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince [the Messianic king] shall be seven weeks, *and* threescore and two weeks [a total of 69 weeks or 483 prophetic years]: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times” (Dan. 9:25).

### ***Which Decree?***

What commandment or decree was this? Daniel recorded this prophecy in 538-537 B.C. History records that Cyrus reigned from 538-537 until 530-529. Cambyses followed Cyrus on the throne and reigned for eight years, until 522-521. He was followed by Darius I who reigned 36 years, until December 23, 486, when Xerxes took the throne. Xerxes was the Ahasuerus of the Bible (see Finegan, *Light From the Ancient Past*, p.238). Xerxes reigned from 486 to 465-464 when he was followed by his son Artaxerxes. Artaxerxes then reigned nearly 41 years, until 424 B.C.

The kings of Persia, for the record, were as follows:

Darius the Mede	539-538 B.C.
Cyrus the Great	537-529
Cambyses	528-525 (followed by brief civil war)
Darius I	521-486
Xerxes	485-464
Artaxerxes I	464-424
Artaxerxes II	424-359
Artaxerxes III	359-338

Which of these men made a decree to “restore and to build Jerusalem”? Cyrus made a decree in 536-535 regarding the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem (see Ezra 1: 1-2). This particular decree was specifically to build the Temple – the city is not mentioned. This decree, therefore, is not the one spoken of by Daniel in chapter 9:25. The Jews had opposition in building the Temple throughout the days of Cyrus, “even until the reign of Darius king of Persia” (Ezra 4:4-5). Local Samaritans frustrated their purpose and attempted to overthrow the project. Work on the Temple *ceased* until the second year of Darius (521-486 B.C.) (see Ezra 4:24).

Darius also made a decree and ordered the construction of the temple to continue (Ezra 6:11-12). But, again, this decree was to build the house of God – not the city of Jerusalem. The Temple, except for the finishing touches, was completed by the sixth year of the reign of Darius (Ezra 6:14-15). Therefore, the evidence is that neither of these two decrees was the one spoken of by Daniel the prophet.

Two decrees, however, were made by king Artaxerxes I (464-424 B.C.). Since the Temple was already built, Artaxerxes' decree concerned *another* matter. His first decree was in the seventh year of Artaxerxes. The Jewish scribe Ezra came to Jerusalem, carrying a copy of a letter containing the decree of king Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:1, 6, 12). We read in the book of Ezra: "Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time. *I make a decree*, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill *to go up to Jerusalem . . .* Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king . . . to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of thy God which is in thine hand: and to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem, and all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon . . ." (see Ezra 7:11-16).

After this epochal decree, Ezra prayed to God, saying: "Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day. And now for a little space grace hath been shewed from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape . . . *to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem*" (Ezra 9:7-9).

Mark carefully – this decree gave Ezra authority not only to rebuild and beautify the house of God, but also to repopulate Jerusalem, to set government in operation, and to rebuild the city and the wall! The Jews had never been given authority from the Persian kings to rebuild Jerusalem and the city wall. However, early in the reign of Artaxerxes, the Samaritans had accused the Jews of building the city once again (Ezra 4:7, 11-12). The king issued an order for the Jews to stop all such activity until further notice (vs.17-21). After a thorough investigation, Artaxerxes issued another decree – the decree mentioned in Ezra 7. This must be the decree Daniel had reference to since it was the first one that clearly involved the city of Jerusalem as well as the temple.

When, then, was the "seventh year" of king Artaxerxes? To understand when the seventh year of Artaxerxes occurred, we must find the year he ascended to the throne.

### *Artaxerxes' Seventh Year*

Ctesias, a Greek physician at the court of Artaxerxes II, and who undoubtedly had access to the Persian archives, relates that Artaxerxes learned that Artabanus had killed his father. Artabanus was slain, and Artaxerxes assumed the throne without fear of a rival.

But when was Xerxes murdered?

Discoveries in Mesopotamia and Egypt have thoroughly established the chronologies of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian empires. The evidence of Ptolemy's

Canon, the Saros Tablets, and papyri dated with two calendar systems, reveal that Xerxes' reign ended in his 21st year. His 21st year then was counted from spring of 465 B.C. to spring of 464. (The Persian civil year was reckoned from spring to spring). Artaxerxes' first year thus began in the spring of 464 B.C. Artaxerxes must have ascended to the throne sometime in the year 465/64 B.C.

A document that was written during the accession year of Artaxerxes has been found. It is listed as Aramaic papyrus (AP 6) and was written from the Jewish colony of Elephantine in Egypt. The document was dated the 18th of Kislev or the 17th of Thoth, 'in the year 21, the beginning of reign when King Artaxerxes sat on his throne.' Artaxerxes I took the throne in the 21st year of Xerxes. He must be the Artaxerxes in question, since neither Artaxerxes II or III came to the throne in a year 21.

The 18th of Kislev or 17th of Thoth dates the document as having been written the evening of January 2 or daytime January 3, 464 B.C., since the Hebrews reckon a day from sunset to sunset. Therefore, by January 3, 464 B.C., Jews in Egypt obviously knew that Artaxerxes had ascended the Persian throne. The document speaks of 'the beginning of the reign' of Artaxerxes, or his accession year. What does this mean?

As January 2/3, 464, is dated in the accession year of Artaxerxes, his first regnal year – according to the Hebrew reckoning – could not officially begin until Tishri 1, in the autumn of 464 B.C.! The Hebrew civil calendar began each year in the autumn with Tishri.

Since the first year of Artaxerxes, according to the Hebrew civil year, did not begin until autumn of 464 B.C., seven years later would bring us to autumn of 458 B.C. The seventh year of Artaxerxes, therefore, was from the autumn of 458 to the autumn of 457 B.C.

Says the *Critical-Experimental Commentary* by Jamieson, Faucett and Brown, "The starting point of the seventy weeks dated from eighty-one years after Daniel received the prophecy" (volume 2, page 435, on Dan.9). Daniel received the prophecy in 538 B.C., the first year of king Darius (Dan.9:1). Eighty one years later would be 457 B.C.

The *Adam Clarke Commentary* states: "Verse 24. *Seventy weeks are determined.* This is a most important prophecy, and has given rise to a variety of opinions relative to the proper mode of explanation." Clarke goes on, "Verse 25. *From the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem. . . . Four hundred and ninety years* reckoned back [from the time of Christ] leads us directly to the month Nisan in the four thousand seven hundred and forty sixth year of the same period; the very month and year in which Ezra had his commission from *Artaxerxes Longanimus*, king of Persia, (see Ezra 7:9,) to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" (vol.2, page 602, Dan.9:24-25).

### ***Fall-to-Fall Reckoning***

But do we have proof that the Hebrews still used the fall-to-fall reckoning for their civil year after they returned from Babylonian captivity? Or did they adopt the Babylonian custom of dating each civil year from spring to spring?

There is conclusive evidence that during Nehemiah's time the Hebrew civil calendar was still in use. Consider: in Nehemiah 1:1, Nehemiah said he received bad news of Jerusalem in the month Chisleu, (November-December) in the *twentieth* year of Artaxerxes. He later mentioned that in Nisan (March-April), in *the twentieth* year of the king, he gave wine to Artaxerxes (2:1). Thus Nehemiah said Chisleu or Kislev preceded Nisan in the 20th regnal year of Artaxerxes, showing he used a fall to fall reckoning.

Today, the Jews still reckon the year from fall to fall, beginning the new year in the autumn. They celebrate Rosh Hoshana, or New Year's day, in the autumn, on Tishri 1. They have clung tenaciously to this practice.

According to the Hebrew calendar used by Nehemiah, then, the seventh year of Artaxerxes fell from the fall of 458 to the fall of 457 B.C. Ezra's journey from Babylon to Jerusalem took place from about late March to about early August (Ezra 7:8-9), 457 B.C. He carried the decree of king Artaxerxes with him. Therefore, the famous decree for the restoration of Jerusalem was signed, sealed, delivered to Ezra, and went into effect as soon as he reached Jerusalem – in the late summer or early fall of 457 B.C.

Now we have dated the decree. Notice again Daniel was told that from the issuance of the decree till the coming of the Messiah was to be “seven weeks, threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times” (Daniel 9:25).

The re-settling and rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem made rapid strides from the 20th year to the 32nd year of Artaxerxes (Neh.5:14-16). The building program continued into the reign of Darius II who succeeded Artaxerxes. During his reign the wall around Jerusalem was finished (Neh.12:22, 27-30, 43). But even after the wall was complete, many buildings within the city had yet to be built (Neh.7:1, 4; 11:1-2). These were “troublous times,” as Daniel foretold and as Ezra 4:5 summarized. Persecution and hindrances slowed progress. But after the first seven of the prophetic weeks of the prophecy – a period of 49 years – the city was rebuilt and the temple restored.

Then Daniel mentioned “sixty two weeks” were to follow – or 434 *more* years were to pass – until the appearance of the Messiah. Thus a total of sixty nine prophetic weeks – or 483 literal years –a were to exist from the commandment of Artaxerxes in 457 B.C. till the appearance of the Messiah.

457 B.C.	-- year-date of the decree
<u>-483 years</u>	-- time to pass till Messiah would come
26 A.D.	
<u>+1</u>	-- since there is no year “zero”
27 A.D.	-- year the prophecy would be fulfilled!

Counting 483 years from 457 B.C., then, brings you to 27 A.D. According to this schematic, 27 A.D. was the year the Messiah was prophesied to appear on the scene.

### *Jesus' Ministry and Death*

The interesting fact is that Jesus Christ was born in 4 B.C., shortly before the death of king Herod (Matt.2:1-16). Jesus began His ministry when He was 30 years old (Luke 3:21-23). Subtracting 30 from 4 B.C., we come to 26 A.D. But since there was no year "zero", we must add a year in going from B.C. to A.D. Thus the year 27 A.D. was the very year Jesus Christ began his ministry, and commenced preaching the Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God (Matt. 3:13-17; 4:1-23; 9:35).

This represents the FULFILLMENT of the 69 "weeks" of years of Daniel's 70 week prophecy!

However, when He came, instead of taking His crown and ruling as a great King, He was persecuted, afflicted, abused, beaten, scourged, and CRUCIFIED by His enemies, the state, and the jealous religious leaders of His day. In this, too, He fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel 9! For we read: "*And AFTER threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be CUT OFF, but not for Himself. . .*" (Daniel 9:26).

The fact that the Messiah was to DIE was not understood by the Jews and the religious leaders of that time. Yet Isaiah the prophet also foretold of this tragic yet awesome truth. He wrote, about 700 years before Christ, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for OUR transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: and the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5).

Isaiah makes it plain that He was not only to suffer greatly, but also to be killed as a "sacrifice" for our sins – even as the nation of Israel in ancient times sacrificed sheep, bulls and goats at the Temple of God to "atone" for their sins. The Messiah became our "Passover lamb" (I Cor..5:7). He became a "sin offering" for us (II Cor.5:21).

Isaiah puts it this way: "He is brought as a LAMB to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment [He was judged, condemned, and imprisoned]: and who shall declare His generation? For He was *cut off out of the land of the living*" – that means He, the Messiah being depicted here, was KILLED! "For the transgression of My people," God says, "was He stricken" (Isaiah 53:7-8).

"And He made His grave with the wicked" (verse 9). Together with Him others who were real criminals were also crucified. "And with the rich in His DEATH" (same verse). He was buried in the grave of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea (Matt.27:57-60).

*Jesus fulfilled these ancient Biblical prophecies!*

No one else has even come close to fulfilling this amazing divine prophecy!

### *Artaxerxes Second Decree*

This prophecy (Daniel **9:25**) does not say that this period of years is consecutive, from beginning to end. It is divided up into three distinct periods – 7 weeks, 62 weeks, and a final week.

Why? What is the significance of the three parts?

Let's understand this enigma. Bible prophecy is often DUAL in fulfillment – there was a historical fulfillment, and a latter days, end-times, fulfillment! The Jewish people were sent into exile by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 607 B.C., and by the Romans in 70 A.D. The first exile lasted for 70 years, till 537 B.C., when Cyrus the Persian allowed the Jews to return to their homeland. The second exile has lasted for almost 2,000 years, and half the Jews of the world are still scattered among the nations of the world!

There were TWO diasporas (disbursements or exiles of Jews) – and TWO returns and rebuildings of the CITY of Jerusalem!

So let's examine this prophecy more carefully.

In the book of Ezra we read that in 535 B.C. the city of Jerusalem was not yet rebuilt after the Jews returned to the land. Surrounding nations warned the Persian government that Jerusalem was “a rebellious” and “bad city” (Ezra 4:12). They claimed, “If this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom” (v.13). If the city was to be rebuilt, they warned, “you shall have no portion on this side of the river” (v.16).

By the year 515 B.C., the temple was finished, but the city was not yet rebuilt and surrounded by protective walls (Ezra 6:15). In 457 B.C., the seventh year of Artaxerxes, Ezra went to Jerusalem, and set magistrates and judges in the land and did major work on the temple (Ezra 7:23-25).

However, in the book of Nehemiah, we read that in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Nehemiah was sent by the king to rebuild Jerusalem – and this was in the year 445 B.C. Nehemiah was given an official letter from the king to enable him to obtain “timber to make beams for the gates of the palace . . . and for the wall of the city, and for the house . . . And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me” (Neh.2:8).

Upon inspecting the city, Nehemiah told the Jews, “You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and

let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach” (v.17). The city was rebuilt and the wall repaired in 445 B.C.

How does this tie into the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah?

“From the going forth of the commandment . . .” The commandment went forth in 445 B.C. From that date there was to be “seven weeks [one segment of time], and threescore and two weeks [another segment of time].” This leaves one week, to total the 70 weeks of the prophecy. So let’s divide this up.

7 weeks equals 49 years. We will discuss this later.

62 weeks equals 62 x 7 or 434 days, or years being fulfilled. So let’s count!

$$\begin{array}{r} 445 \text{ B.C.} \\ -434 \text{ years} \\ \hline 11 \text{ B.C.} \end{array}$$

Now we add in the last segment of the prophecy, one week or seven days (years).

$$\begin{array}{r} 11 \text{ B.C.} \\ -7 \text{ years} \\ \hline 4 \text{ B.C.} \end{array}$$

This brings us to 4 B.C. What happened in 4 B.C.?

### ***The Year Christ was BORN***

The Scriptures show us that Jesus Christ was born “in the days of *Herod the king*” (Matt.2:1). Herod was so fixated on the fact that wise men from the East queried him about a child born to be “King of the Jews,” that he pretended that he, too, desired to worship him (Matt.2:7-8). The wise men were warned not to return to Herod, and departed into their own country, and Joseph and Mary took Jesus and fled to Egypt.

When the wise men did not inform Herod of where the prophesied King was, Herod “was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men” (verse 16).

Jesus, then, had to be born before the death of Herod the Great. The gospel of Luke confirms this fact. Luke recorded, “There was *in the days of Herod*, king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zecharias” (Luke 1:5). During this time, the gospel continues, John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ were born.

Thus Jesus was already born when Herod was still alive. But when did Herod die? Says the *Critical-Experimental Commentary*:

“As Herod is known to have died in the year of Rome 750, in the *fourth*

*year before the commencement of our Christian era, the BIRTH OF CHRIST MUST BE DATED FOUR YEARS BEFORE THE DATE USUALLY ASSIGNED TO IT, even if He were born within the year of Herod's death, as it is next to certain that he was" (Commentary on Matt.2:1-12).*

*Hastings Bible Dictionary* also points out "Herod called the great . . . He died B.C. 4" ("Herod," vol.2, p.353). Says *The New Bible Dictionary*, "Herod the Great, king of the Jews 40-4 BC: ("Herod," p.521).

The year Herod died there was an eclipse. Josephus records, during Herod's final year, that at the time he slew the high priest Matthias, "that very night there was an eclipse of the moon" (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVII, VI, 4). Says the editor, William Whiston, in a footnote:

"This eclipse of the moon (which is the only eclipse mentioned by Josephus) is of the greatest consequence for the determination of the time for the death of Herod and Antipater, and for the birth and entire chronology of Jesus Christ. It happened March 13th, in the year of the Julian period 4710, and the 4th year before the Christian era" (*ibid.*, p.365).

Thus Jesus was at least born before the spring of 4 B.C. But what time of year was He born? There is much conjecture on this subject, but there are enough clues in the gospel accounts and history to give us a very good idea.

### ***Zacharias and the "Course of Abijah"***

The actual day of the birth of Christ is not known for certain, but we can know the approximate time of year when He was born. In the book of Luke we read that the father of John the Baptist was Zacharias, and he was a priest who served at the temple in Jerusalem. He was "of the course of Abia" (Luke 1:5). While serving at the temple, he was informed by an angel that his wife was to have a son, who was to be named John. After this, Zacharias finished the days of his ministrations, and departed to his own house (v.23). "And after those days, his wife Elizabeth conceived . . ." (v.24).

The names of the different courses of priests that served at the Temple are given in I Chronicles 24:1-19. "Abia" or "Abijah" was the EIGHTH course. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, each one of these courses served at the Temple for *one week*, the first course serving the first week of Nisan, in the spring (compare I Chron.27:1-2), and then each course in its own order. All the priests served during the annual festivals (Passover in spring, Pentecost, and then Tabernacles in the fall). After six months, the order would be repeated, thus each course would serve two weeks during a year.

The course of Abijah, then, would have served the eighth week in the rotation. The eighth week from Nisan 1, leaving out the week of Passover, when all the priests served, would have been IYAR 27 TO SIVAN 5, the day just before Pentecost, which generally fell on Sivan 6. His service would have fallen about late May or early June. After serving a week in the Temple, Zacharias would have remained another week in

Jerusalem, because of the Feast of Shavuot or Pentecost that week. That is one possibility.

However, the courses of the priesthood served two times during the year. The second round of serving began Tishri 1, the beginning of the second six months. The second period of service for the course of Abijah, therefore, would have been approximately the first week of Kislev, corresponding to our November-December.

Zecharias would have returned home shortly after one of these two periods of service, and his wife then conceived. This would have been either about the middle of June or early December. If we add nine months to this date, the normal time for the gestation of a human baby in the womb, John the Baptist would have been born either about the middle of March, in the spring, shortly before the Passover – or about the first of September.

Jesus was conceived about six months after John (Luke 1:24-31, especially verse 26). This would suggest that Jesus Christ was born six months after John. So Christ would have been born about the middle of September – OR the end of February-first of March.

Can we know which possibility is the likely one?

There is a strong hint. Luke tells us Christ was “about thirty years of age” when He was baptized (Luke 3:23; John 1:29-32). Right after His baptism, He was led into the desert fasting for 40 days (Luke 4:1-4). Shortly after this, the Passover arrived (John 2:13).

These facts imply that He was baptized not long before Passover, 27 A.D. The expression “about thirty” actually implies He was at least thirty, or over thirty – in His thirtieth year – when He was baptized. Irenaeus says, of this passage, “Being thirty years old when He came to be baptized” (*Against Heresies*, 2, xxii, 4).

If He was born about 60 days before Passover, then that would place His birth in the latter part of the month of February. This is very likely for the following reasons.

First, He had to be born before Herod died, and Herod died before Passover, just a few days after the beginning of Abib (which begins at the New Moon nearest to the spring equinox). Yet after Christ was born, several things happened. Eight days later He was circumcised (Luke 2:21), and Mary fulfilled her *forty days* of purification (Luke 2:21-22), and He was as a young firstborn male dedicated to the Lord (Lk.2:23-24). During this time, probably, the wise men visited him, while living in a house, when he was “a young child” (Matt.2:9-11). Immediately after this, Joseph and his family fled to Egypt (Matt.2:13-15). Herod, at this time, killed all the young children in Jerusalem (vs.16-18). After this Herod died, before Passover. This period of at least 40-60 days could not have begun *during* the spring of 4 B.C., because March 21 is the first day of spring, and His birth had to occur before March arrived to allow for all the events that

transpired before Herod's death.

It is impossible to fit all these events into the short time of spring in 4 B.C., just before Herod died. Shepherds were abiding in the fields at night, when Christ was born (Luke 2:8). These were the shepherds who guarded the temple flocks near Bethlehem. They did abide in the fields before spring. Spring begins March 21st, with the equinox. Christ's birth had to occur at least 40 days before the death of Herod, which was just before Passover, and Herod had to have time to kill the innocents in Bethlehem after Joseph's family fled to Egypt! All this probably took some 50-60 days, pushing the birth of Christ to about a month before spring! This would push the birth of Christ to sometime in February.

### *The Sign of the Messiah*

In the book of Numbers we read of the coming Messiah of Israel, the Redeemer and Saviour of the world, this mysterious prophecy:

“I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not  
nigh: there shall come a *star out of Jacob*, and a *sceptre*  
shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab,  
and destroy all the children of Sheth” (Num.24:17).

All commentators see this as a prophecy of the coming Messiah figure of Israel. But few have noted that it seems to be speaking of a Messiah who comes *twice* – the first time, as a star out of Jacob, and a second time as a scepter – that is, as a ruling king, who will subdue His enemies, smiting the Moabites, and destroying all who oppose Him.

This prophecy is clearly Messianic. Isaiah speaks of this Messiah who comes as a conquering king: “And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. . . But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them” (Isa.11:12-14).

But why is the Messiah associated with a “star”? Why does the prophecy say a star shall come “out of Jacob”? This certainly means that the Messiah would be descended from Jacob. But why is He connected with a star? Why is He referred to in the prophecy as a star?

How was this famous prophecy fulfilled? According to the writers of the New Testament, there was a "star" that was distinctly associated with the birth of Jesus Christ - that acted as a herald, and a beacon, of His impending birth. Matthew tells us the story:

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have *seen his star in the east*, and have come to worship him” (Matthew 2:1-2).

The expression “in the east” in the King James Version is not precisely correct. The literal term in the Greek language is *anatole* and means “a rising of light,” “dawn,” “dayspring,” “rising,” or by implication, “east.” Literally, they saw his “star *rising*.” The root word means to “cause to arise,” “rise up.” They had seen this unique star at its “rising,” a sidereal appearance, which they regarded as betokening the birth of the Messianic King of the Jews.

### ***The Fulfillment of Prophecy***

The word star in this verse has been abundantly proved to mean not only a literal star, but is also used of constellations, comets, meteors – in short, it has the widest possible application to the heavenly bodies.

The wise men were clearly distinguished men, “magi,” who were learned and scholarly, especially in astronomy, mathematics, the sciences and history. They were familiar with the Hebrew prophets. They may have been descendants of the wise men of Babylon, during the time of Daniel. On the other hand, they may have been wise men from the dispersed northern ten tribes of Israel, who had been taken into captivity toward the east and northeast, and whose descendants comprised many of the inhabitants of the Parthian empire.

Notice the fact that the sudden appearance in Jerusalem of these impressive visitors from the east – possibly Babylon, or Persia, or the Parthian empire – had a powerful effect on the residents of Jerusalem, and especially on king Herod. The king himself was greatly disturbed to learn that there was another king whose birth had been predicted, who was to rule over the Jews.

“When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

“And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

“Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the *star appeared*. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child: and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him.

“When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, *the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was*. When they saw the *star*, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy” (Matt.2:3-10).

The wise men found the boy Jesus, in a house, and presented gifts to Him, gold, frankincense, and myrrh, and then departed into their own country, being warned in a dream not to return to Herod (v.11-12). Joseph, the supposed father of the child, was also warned in a dream to flee into Egypt, for Herod would attempt to kill the infant (v.13).

He did so, and remained there until after the death of Herod, which occurred in the spring of 4 B.C., just before Passover that year.

Herod, furious when he saw that the wise men had not returned to him, was exceedingly angry, and Matthew informs us of his rage and conduct:

“Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, *from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men*” (Matt.2:16).

Notice that originally Herod inquired as to the *time* when the wise men first saw the “new star” in the heavens – when it first *appeared* in the night sky (Matt.2:7). Apparently, they first saw it “two years” previously (verse 16).

Was this celestial phenomenon the fulfillment of the prophecy of Balaam in Numbers 24:17, the “star of Jacob”?

What was the star of Jacob supposed to be?

### ***Rabbinical Sages***

Throughout the ages, rabbinical sages and scholars have written about a certain type of “star” – a tri-planetary conjunction – that they said would appear in the constellation of Pisces near the time of the birth of the Messiah – just before the time of His coming.

Dr. Alfred Edersheim, a famous Bible scholar of the nineteenth century, points out that there is one illustrative Jewish statement which, “though not astrological, is of the greatest importance, although it seems to have been overlooked.” In his book *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Edersheim mentions the well known Jewish commentator Abarbanel, or Abrabanel, who writes of the importance of the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces, in his Commentary on the book of Daniel.

Says Edersheim:

“In his Commentary on Daniel, that Rabbi laid it down, that the conjunction of *Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation of Pisces* betokened not only the most important events, but referred especially to Israel (for which he gives five mystic reasons). He further argues that, as that conjunction had taken place *three years before the birth of Moses, which* heralded the first deliverance of Israel, *so it would also precede the birth of the Messiah, and the final deliverance of Israel*” (p.211).

Edersheim points out that one of the smaller *Midrashim*, called the “Messiah Haggadah” (*Aggadoth Mashiach*) begins as follows:

“*A star shall come out of Jacob.* There is a Boraita in the name of the Rabbis: The heptad in which the Son of David cometh -- in the *first year* there shall

not be sufficient nourishment; in the *second year* the arrows of famine are launched; in the *third*, a great famine; in the *fourth*, neither famine nor plenty; in the *fifth*, great abundance, and *the Star shall rise forth from the East, and this is the Star of the Messiah*. And it will shine from the East for fifteen days, and if it be prolonged, it will be for the good of Israel; in the *sixth*, sayings (voices), and announcements (hearings); in the *seventh* wars, and at the close of the seventh Messiah is to be expected” (quoted by Edersheim, p.211-212).

This “heptad,” or period of “seven,” undoubtedly refers to the final ‘WEEK’ of Daniel 9:24-27 – the final seven years leading up to the coming of the Messiah – the final seven years of this present age of misrule and misconduct. Notice that at the end of this “week” of seven years, the Messiah is to be “expected.”

Notice that the star of the Messiah is predicted to rise in the East, in the fifth year – that is, two or three years before His final coming!

Edersheim goes on to discuss three other ancient Jewish *Midrashim*, which are entitled “The Book of Elijah,” “Chapters about the Messiah,” and “The Mysteries of R. Simon, the son of Jochai” –

“-- where we read that a Star in the East was to appear *two years before the birth of the Messiah*. The statement is almost equally remarkable, whether it represents a tradition previous to the birth of Jesus, or originated after that event. But *two years* before the birth of Christ, which, as we have calculated, took place in . . . [year] 5 before the Christian era, brings us to the year 747 A.U.C., or 7 [years] before Christ [B.C.], in which such a Star should appear in the East.

“Did such a Star, then, really appear in the East seven years before the Christian era? **Astronomically speaking, and without any reference to controversy, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THE MOST REMARKABLE CONJUNCTION OF PLANETS -- THAT OF JUPITER AND SATURN in the constellation of Pisces, which occurs ONCE IN 800 YEARS – DID TAKE PLACE NO LESS THAN THREE TIMES in the year 747 A.U.C., or TWO YEARS BEFORE THE BIRTH OF CHRIST (in May, October, and December). This conjunction is admitted by all astronomers. It was not only extraordinary, but presented the most brilliant spectacle in the night sky**, such as could not but attract the attention of all who watched the sidereal heavens. . . . In the year following, that is, in 748 A.U.C., another planet, Mars, joined this conjunction. The merit of first discovering these facts – of which it is unnecessary here to present the literary history – belongs to the great Kepler . . .” (p.212-213).

### “Signs and Seasons”

In the book of Genesis, chapter one, God gives us a profound insight, if we are willing to believe it, as to the purpose behind His creation of the sun, moon, and stars. We read: "And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for *SIGNS, and for seasons, and for days and years*" (Gen.1:14).

What is the significance of a conjunction of the planets of Saturn and Jupiter in the constellation of Pisces?

The Hebrew name for the constellation of Pisces is *Dagim*, "the Fishes," and is connected with "multitudes," as in Genesis 48:16 where Jacob blesses Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, saying, "Let them grow into a multitude, in the midst of the earth." The margin says, "Let them grow *as fishes do increase*."

Says Bullinger of this marginal notation, "It refers to the fulfillment of Genesis 1:28, 'Be fruitful and multiply.' The *multitude* of Abraham's seed is prominent in the pronouncement of the blessings, where God compares his future posterity to the *stars of the sky*, and the sand upon the seashore. 'A very great multitude of fish,' as in Ezek.47:9" (Bullinger, *The Witness of the Stars*, p.93). Thus the constellation of Pisces is connected with Israel, and the seed of Abraham. It also, therefore, is connected to that special "seed," who was to be the Messiah.

As Paul wrote in the book of Galatians, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal.3:16). Therefore, Paul went on, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (v.29). Thus the constellation Pisces is directly connected, in every way, with the prophecy of the coming of the "seed of Abraham" – the Anointed One, the Messiah – Jesus Christ!

Jupiter is the royal planet, and is connected with the tribe of Judah, from which the royal Messiah was to descend. In the prophecy in Genesis, we read: "The sceptre [symbol of royal power and authority] shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him [Shiloh – the Messiah] shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes" (Gen.49:9-11). Isaiah confirms that this Messianic king was to descend from David, of the tribe of Judah (Isaiah 11:1-10). Thus Jupiter is the Messianic planet.

Saturn, also, is a royal planet. Its very name means, however, "the hidden one." And who is the true hidden one? The Messiah Himself! He was prophesied to be hidden from the purview of this world's leaders (I Cor.2:7-8). During His ministry, Jesus "departed, and *hid himself* from them" (John 12:36). When Israel sins, God says, "I will *hide* my face from them" (Deut.31:17). He adds, "And I will surely *hide my face* in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods" (Deut.31:18). Isaiah says, "I will wait upon the LORD, that *hideth his face* from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him" (Isaiah 8:17). The prophet speaks of the Messiah, saying, "Verily thou art a God that *hideth thyself*, O God of Israel, the *Saviour*" (Isa.45:15).

The pagans apply these terms to their own pantheon of gods, notably Nimrod, the arch apostate, the first human this side of the flood to be deified as the Father of the gods (see Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, p.32). Nimrod, the great hunter, rebelled against God, and became known variously as Bel, Khronos, Bacchus, Baal, Neptune, Osiris, as well as Amoun, the counterfeit "hidden god" of the Egyptians, and Saturn, the "hidden one,"

called such by the Romans, on account of his having “lain hid in its coasts” (*ibid.*, p.41).

Nevertheless, it should be apparent that when Jupiter, a Messianic planet, goes into conjunction with Saturn, a Messianic planet, in the sign of Pisces, a Messianic constellation, we have *three signs of the Messiah meeting together in the heavens* — and the number *three* is the number of *decision*, “*the signature of God*,” and “*finality*.” Furthermore, the incredible fact that this sign appeared in the heavens *three times in one year* in 7 B.C. is even more testimony that something very *established, certain, and with finality, was shortly to occur with vast Messianic implications!*

No wonder the three wise men, who were students of astronomy, as well as ancient Hebrew prophecy, were startled, thrilled, excited, and decided to take a long, expensive, arduous journey, to Jerusalem, to inquire further about this expected Messianic king, whose portent they had seen in the heavens!

### ***Heavenly Portent of the Messiah***

Edersheim continues discussing the discovery of this conjunction by the great astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571-1630 A.D.). Kepler discovered the three laws of planetary motion, which later formed an indispensable part of Sir Isaac Newton's discovery of the law of universal gravitation. Edersheim writes of Kepler, saying:

“Kepler, who was led to the discovery by observing a similar conjunction in 1603-4, also noticed, that when the three planets came into conjunction, *A NEW, EXTRA-ORDINARY, BRILLIANT, and peculiarly coloured evanescent STAR was visible between Jupiter and Saturn*, and he suggested that a similar star had appeared under the same circumstances in the conjunction preceding the Nativity” (*Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, p.213).

The fact that there was such a conjunction or “evanescent star” at that time, is born witness to by the astronomical tables of the ancient Chinese. Says Edersheim on this subject, “. . . February 750 A.U.C. . . . is just about the time the Magi would have left Jerusalem for Bethlehem, since this must have preceded the death of Herod, which took place in March 750.” At that time, there was noted an evanescent star. Some have called it a comet, but it could have been the result of a conjunction. Declares Edersheim of this event:

“Moreover, it has been astronomically ascertained, that such a sidereal apparition would be visible to those who left Jerusalem, and that it would point --almost seem to go before -- in the direction of, and stand over, Bethlehem. Such, impartially stated, are the facts of the case-- and here the subject must, in the present state of our information, be left” (p.213).

### ***The Messiah Conspiracy***

Philip N. Moore, in his mammoth new book *The End of History: The Messiah Conspiracy*, published in 1996, Atlanta Georgia, relates that while he was studying the handwritten theological manuscripts of the great scientist, Sir Isaac Newton, at Hebrew University, in Jerusalem, he made the acquaintance of a prominent professor who

translated the passage he was studying. It was the work of Rabbi Abarbanel. It read as follows in English:

“ . . . because since the beginning of Creation until now, there have been only two conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn in Pisces [where Jupiter and Saturn both line up in the sign of Pisces]. The first occurred in the year 2365 [A.M., or from the time of Creation, or Adam] when Israel was in Egypt, 3 years before the birth of Moses, that is, 83 years before his prophecy and miracles, the Exodus of Israel from Egypt and the giving of the Torah. . . Since both of them are conjunctions of the same type, namely grand conjunctions in the sign of Pisces, the second one will be like the first -- the one that accompanied the Exodus from Egypt -- in every way. Therefore, since the first conjunction indicated Israel's Exodus from exile to freedom, from slavery to redemption, and from lowliness to greatness and kingdom, and also wonders and miracles, the birth of Moses, and revenge from enemies -- ***so also the second Israelite conjunction indicates for Israel PROPHECY, RELIEF, SALVATION, AND REDEMPTION, and there can be no doubt, the time of the birth of the man of God, our righteous Messiah, exalted from Abraham and higher than Moses and all according to its ways requires the conjunction to RENEW***” (*The Messiah Conspiracy*, Moore, p.97-98)

Franklyn M. Brantley, in his book *The Christmas Sky*, commented on Moses, the Exodus, the constellation Pisces, and the planets Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Brantley writes:”

"Records of the planets tell us that there were three planets in the evening skies of the fall . . . and that these planets moved closer together as the months went by. The three planets were Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Saturn, in the constellation of Pisces, the fish . . . The magi knew about the planets. They were astrologers, the astronomers of that time and place. They studied the planets, and they knew of their positions and their motions. They also knew that these three planets were in a constellation where centuries earlier, according to Jewish scholars, planets had appeared around the time of the birth of Moses. Moses was the prophet who led the Israelites out of Egypt to the eastern borders of the Promised Land. *Pisces was therefore considered the constellation of the Jews. The appearance of the planets in Pisces may have been a SIGN to the Magi that an event of great importance was occurring in the land of the Jews. The Star of Bethlehem might have been these THREE PLANETS that had moved close together. . .*' (Franklyn M. Brantley and Stephen Foster, *The Christmas Sky*, New York: Harper Collins, 1960, 1996, p.43-44).

Moses himself was a figure or “TYPE” of the Messiah promised in the Scriptures. He delivered Israel out of Egypt, and brought them to the Promised Land. God led and inspired him to prophesy, “And the LORD said unto me . . . I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words into his mouth: and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him” (Deut.18:17-19).

A conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, in the sign of Pisces, introduced the birth of Moses, Israel's first messiah and deliverer. And, similarly, a conjunction of the same planets, in the same sign of Pisces, also introduced the ***BIRTH OF YESHUA HA MASHIAH – JESUS CHRIST!***

Such a conjunction has *not* introduced the birth of *any other* supposed Jewish

Messiah -- not Simon Bar Kochba, not any of the false messiahs that appeared during the Middle Ages, and not the recently deceased Rabbi Schneerson, whom many Orthodox Jews regarded as the "Messiah," although he never claimed such a title for himself!

### *The End-Time Fulfillment*

We have seen how the birth of Christ in 4 B.C. fulfills a major portion of the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel, chapter 9. But what about the duality? And the remainder of the prophecy – the “seven weeks”?

Historically, we see vital fulfillments counting from the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 B.C. and also his decree in 445 B.C.

But in this END TIME GENERATION, we have also seen another decree relating to the rebuilding of Jerusalem in OUR TIME! In Nehemiah’s time, the wall of Jerusalem was built in “TROUBLOUS TIMES” (Dan.9:25; see also Nehemiah 4:21-23). Nehemiah declared, “For the builders, everyone had his sword girded by his side, and so builded”(Neh.4:18). It was a dangerous time.

What about in our day, today?

Israel once again became a nation on May 6, 1948. The Jews had to fight the surrounding Arab nations to regain their inheritance. Then, in 1967, once again they had to fight for their very existence, in the Six Day War, in which they annihilated invading Arab armies and forces.

Says the *Worldbook Encyclopedia* in regard to this marvelous event:

“UN troops prevented raids across the Israeli-Egyptian border after the 1956 war. But Arab raids continued from Syria and Jordan into Israel, and Israeli forces raided those countries in return. Border clashes increased greatly in the mid-1960's.

“In May 1967, Israel and the three Arab countries all alerted their armed forces for possible war. At Egypt's demand, the UN troops left the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula. The Egyptians then again closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli ships.

“On June 5, 1967, Israeli planes attacked airfields in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. The Israelis destroyed the Arab air forces almost completely. Then they defeated the Arab armies. By June 8, Israeli troops occupied the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, and Jordanian territory west of the River Jordan, including Jordan's half of Jerusalem. On June 10, Israel captured Syria's Golan Heights. The war was over in six days.

“When the brief war ended, the Israelis controlled Arab territory totaling more than three times the area of Israel itself. In June 1967, Israel officially made Jordan's half of Jerusalem a part of Israel” (“Israel,” p.393).

Wrote Winston and Randolph Churchill:

“Jerusalem was finally reduced to rubble and the harrow drawn across its former glories. In the new Roman city of Jerusalem no Jew was allowed to set foot more than once a year. The practice of Judaism was forbidden and even circumcision proscribed. Although the Jews remained in Palestine, there could be no further hope of a Jewish Kingdom” (*The Six Day War*, Churchill, p.2-3).

But now, incredibly, in 1967, for the first time since those ancient days, the Jews once again established Jewish CONTROL and sovereignty and authority over the TEMPLE MOUNT AREA OF JERUSALEM! Gentiles had ruled the region for almost two thousand years. Now, once again, it was under Jewish control – and the way was once again *prepared* for the rebuilding of the ancient Jewish Temple.

When the Jews conquered the Old City of Jerusalem, wresting it from the hands of the Jordanians, feelings were at an incredible level. Winston S. and Randolph S. Churchill wrote:

“The Wailing Wall is supposedly the last remains of the Temple, destroyed by the Roman Emperor Titus in the year 70 A.D. As he stood beside it Dayan affirmed: 'We have returned to our holiest of holy places, never to be parted from it again.' Ben-Gurion, too, when he visited the wall declared, in a voice charged with emotion: 'This is the greatest day of my life'” (*ibid.*, p.141).

Winston and Randolph Churchill conclude:

“Thus, by nightfall on Wednesday June 7, the Israelis had in their hands Jerusalem, the city of King David, Hebron, the city of Abraham, and all the Holy Land. Just a couple of weeks before, there were few Jews who would have believed they would see any of these places in their lifetime. For Jews the world over but particularly for those who had come to make their homes in Israel, *this was the fulfillment of a hope of centuries*” (p.147).

Is this astonishing victory for Israel in 1967 significant? A nation of 2 1/2 million put to rout the armies and military forces of Arab nations with a combined population of over 140 million. This was “a staggering achievement,” in the words of Winston S. and Randolph S. Churchill. Colin Legum in *The Observer* called the Israeli victory “a *miracle of arms*” (*ibid.*, p.194-195). He added that one of Israel's leading soldier-politicians remarked:

“The only analogy I can think of is if Britain had found herself in occupation of Berlin just three days after Dunkirk. The suddenness of the transformation from a situation of acute danger to unparalleled victory is too much for any people to absorb. It will take time to get over it” (*ibid.*).

On June 27 three laws were passed through the Knesset annexing the Old City of Jerusalem and reuniting it with the New City on the next day. Was this amazing Six Day War significant in relation to Biblical prophecy? *Of course it was!*

### *The Seven Weeks or 49 Years*

"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city until the measure of transgression is filled and that of sin is complete, until iniquity is expiated and eternal righteousness ushered in; and prophetic vision ratified, and the Holy of Holies anointed. You must know and understand: From the issuance of the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the [time of the] *anointed leader* is seven weeks . . ."

Let's figure it out!

In Daniel 9:25 the FIRST period mentioned (seven 7's) is **not** the first to HAPPEN. It is not in the era of the end of the 70 years of exile until we get to the SIXTY TWO weeks. The SEVEN 7's is **yet to happen!**

"Know and understand from the going forth of the word *to (future tense) return and to (future tense) rebuild Jerusalem* [in our time] to the coming of an Anointed One, a . . . shall be seven weeks" – that is, 7 weeks x 7 days or a total of 49 years.

$$7 \times 7 = 49 \text{ years!}$$

My Bible (Revised Standard Version/Nelson...translated from the original Greek and Hebrew) states there is a conjunction "then/and" before the scripture continues to the "62 weeks."

If we count 62 weeks or shavuah in the Hebrew, or 62 years, from 1948 and the founding of the state of Israel, we come to –

$$\begin{array}{r} 1948 \text{ A.D.} \\ +62 \\ \hline 2010 \text{ A.D.} \end{array}$$

During this time period, as in the days of Nehemiah, Israel has suffered "troubled times," the Palestinian intifada, suicide bombings, rocket attacks from Hamas and Hezbollah, the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, and intermittent wars with Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, and the surrounding Arab/Muslim nations!

"Then/and, for sixty two weeks Jerusalem (*present tense*, the era of the 70 years of exile) is built, again . . . but in troubled times. And AFTER THE 62 weeks (it is plain it is NOT 69 weeks because it says 62) the Anointed One shall be cut off and have nothing." Christ was crucified. "And the PEOPLE of the prince to come will destroy the CITY and its TEMPLE. . ." (this was the soldiers of Titus in 70 A.D.)

To recap, Artaxerxes Longamanus sent Nehemiah back to rebuild Jerusalem in 445 B.C. This edict began the *first* rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Then 62 weeks of years later, plus one week, brought us to 4 B.C. – when Christ was born in Bethlehem! Then, in 30 A.D., Christ was crucified, cut off, just as the prophesy states. 40 years later Jerusalem was destroyed again, this time by the Romans under Titus and Vespasian, in 70 A.D.

Fast forward to the year 1967. In 1967 there was another war of Jewish defense against its Arab neighbors. And another decree was issued concerning the city of Jerusalem!

The SECOND diaspora and return and rebuilding of Jerusalem started in Daniel 9:26 when the soldiers of Titus destroyed Jerusalem and disbursed all the Jews (eventually) to the four corners of the world. But *this* SECOND diaspora didn't last 70 years like the one of Daniel where the Jews did not let the land have her Sabbaths for 70 years (see II Chronicles 36:21 and Lev. 26:34). At that time God destroyed the land and it lay waste for 70 years so the land could enjoy its Sabbath rests.

This second diaspora began in 70 A.D. and has lasted almost 2000 years, till our day, today! Why? BECAUSE the Jews did NOT recognize their Messiah when He was born in 4 B.C. and began His ministry in 27 A.D., and then died on the cross for all our sins in 30 A.D., as the “lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world” (John 1:29; 3:16; see also Luke 19:43-44).

In 1948 Israel became a country again, but they did not possess the Old City of Jerusalem or the Temple Mount. Rather, the Jordanians and Palestinians possessed them. The Jews were given only the tiny sliver of land that was a small part of old Israel.

In the 1967 Six-Day war, Israel regained control of Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, all of the Sinai, Samaria, the Golan Heights, and Gaza. At this time another decree was issued to rebuild Jerusalem!

Jerusalem was rubble, but starting in 1967 it began to be rebuilt and is now a shining, resplendent NEW city on a hill.

### *The End-Time Decree*

Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel sent a letter to President Jimmy Carter of the United States, at Camp David, Thurmont, Maryland, , saying:

17 September 1978

Dear Mr. President,

I have the honor to inform you, Mr. President, that on 28 June, 1967—Israel’s Parliament (The Knesset) promulgated and adopted a law to the effect: ‘the Government is empowered by a decree to apply the law, the jurisdiction and

administration of the State to any part of Eretz Israel (land of Israel—Palestine as stated in that decree.

“On the basis of this law, the Government of Israel decreed in July 1967 that Jerusalem is one city indivisible, the Capital of the State of Israel. Sincerely, (signed) Menachem Begin.”

The decree went forth in July 1967. What does the prophecy say? “From the decree going forth to rebuild Jerusalem, shall be seven weeks . . .”

$$\begin{array}{r} 1967 \text{ A.D.} \\ \underline{49 \text{ years}} \\ 2016 \text{ A.D.} \end{array}$$

2014-2015 was a time of four blood red moons – lunar eclipses occurring God’s annual holy days of Passover in the spring and Sukkot in the fall. A similar pattern of eclipses, called a “tetrad” occurred in 1967-68 and 1949-50.

This is prophetically significant!

There have been only 4 times in the last 500 years that blood moons occurred on Jewish feast days...these were 1493-4, the Spanish Inquisition, when the Catholic Church slaughtered thousands of Jews; 1949-1950, just after Israel fought for its independence and became a state; and 1967-68 when Israel fought the Six-Day War and liberated Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. Israel won back Jerusalem, and started the 2nd rebuilding of the city.

The tetrad of 2014-15 of this century was also significant. What does it mean? Could it be the year when the way is paved for the rebuilding of the temple of God? Could it be the final countdown of the last 7 years to the end of the age and the coming of the Messiah?

### ***The Final Week of Daniel’s Prophecy***

These things will culminate in the final “week” of years of Daniel’s prophecy. The last seven days or final week of Daniel’s 70 weeks prophecy refer to the final *seven years* of this present age, which culminate in the return of the Messiah. This final week would extend from 2016 another seven years or one prophetic “week” – inclusive counting from 2016 to 2022.

In the end of this amazing prophecy of Daniel, we read that a wicked leader arises, and he will “confirm the covenant with many for *one week; and in the MIDST of the week* he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (v.27).

What is this strange-sounding “covenant”? The Hebrew word *berith* literally means “a cutting,” or a “compact, league, confederacy, treaty.” Could that refer to the notorious Iran nuclear agreement between the United States, the European Union, Russia

and the United Nations with the rogue nation of Iran?

Notice carefully! The word “confirm” in this passage is Strong’s #1396, the Hebrew word *gabar*, a primitive root meaning “to be strong,” that is, “by implication, to prevail, act insolently: -- exceed, confirm, be great, be mighty, prevail, put to more (strength), strengthen, be stronger, be valiant.”

***“And in the MIDST of the Week”***

Daniel goes on to say, “And in the *midst of the week* he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate . . .” The “midst” of the final week would evidently be the year 2018-2019.

In the passage just quoted, the subject of the entire passage, from Daniel 9:24 to verse 27, is the whole period of 70 WEEKS. The final week, then, must refer to the seven years (last week of days) leading up to the climax of the SECOND coming of the Messiah to inaugurate the Millennial rule of God upon the earth!

Therefore, when the passage states, “In the MIDST OF THE WEEK he shall cause sacrifice and oblation to cease,” this would be a clear reference to the FINAL WEEK OF THE PROPHECY!

***Prophecy of the Chofetz Chaim***

A leading Jewish rabbi known as the Chofetz Chaim foretold the Second and Third World Wars. On one occasion, Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstein said he heard the Chofetz Chaim say that there will be a second war which will cause the First World War to appear like child's play. There will then be a third war, which will make the second war appear like child's play.

A sense of dread and gloom fell over those listening, and Rav Shalom Schwadron found the courage to ask the Mashgiach why it was necessary to utter such harsh words. Wouldn't it be preferable to simply daven (pray) to be saved from future harsh decrees?

The Mashgiach Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstein, became very agitated and said, “You completely misunderstood what the Chofetz Chaim intended with these words! The Chofetz Chaim's main intention was that there will be a dearth of emunah [faith, truth]! The dearth in emunah [faith, truth] during WWI was child's play compared to the dearth of emunah [faith, truth] during WWII, and the darkening of emunah [faith and truth] that will be during the third war will make everything previous seem like child's play.”

Says Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz, “Great Torah sage Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, known as the Chofetz Chaim, predicted almost 100 years ago that a Third World War will begin 75 years after the beginning of World War II.

The great sages of Israel are known for their exegesis and study of Torah law. Their intense devotion to God with every waking breath frequently transcends the material world. As such, divine messages are given over to them to pass on to the nation.

The author of the monumental work known as the Mishana Berurah, the Chofetz Chaim outlined the basis of laws Ashkenazic Jews still observe to this day. What is not generally known about the Torah sage is that he was occasionally the recipient of divine messages.

According to the Hebrew language website Sod Hachashmal, in one such case, the Chofetz Chaim predicted the war preceding the messianic age.

According to the prediction, the Chofetz Chaim said, “I received from the holy spirit that we are on the verge of a horrific war, that will end in 1945 (ה'ש"ה), but after that will come 10 sabbaticals to prepare for the messiah, and at the end of 10 sabbaticals which will end in the year 2015 (ה'ע"ה), this is the time the messiah must come.”

1945
<u>70 years (10 Sabbaticals)</u>
2015

Declares Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz, “These were the words said by Rabbi Yosef Ben Porat, in the name of the Chofetz Chaim, who said during the First World War, that 25 years after it, another war will break out which will make the first one seem like a child’s game, and 75 years after that will come a third war, greater than the rest, making the second world war seem like a child’s game, and then the messiah will come. And just like the Second World War broke out 25 years after the beginning of the First World War, *the third one will begin 75 years after the beginning of the Second world War*” (September 9, 2015).

Has the Third World War now broken out? The war of Islamic jihad against the Western world?

Clearly, the final “countdown” to the coming of the Messiah has begun. The clock is now ticking.

Jesus Christ explained, “And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars; and upon the earth distress among nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring. Men’s hearts will fail them for fear and for looking upon those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:25-28).

“And He spoke to them a parable: ‘Behold the fig tree and all the trees. When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at

hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away” (vs.29-33).

Christ declared, “And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that Day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man” (v.34-36).

The Amplified Bible has it, “There will be signs (attesting miracles) in the sun and moon and stars; and on the earth [there will be] distress *and* anguish among nations, in perplexity at the roaring *and* tossing of the sea and the waves, people fainting from fear and expectation of the [dreadful] things coming on the world; for the [very] powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with [transcendent, overwhelming] power [subduing the nations] and with great glory. Now when these things begin to occur, stand tall and lift up your heads [in joy], because [suffering ends as] your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:25-28).

“Then He told them a parable: ‘Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they put out leaves, you see it and know for yourselves that summer is near. So you too, when you see these things happening, know [without any doubt] that the kingdom of God is near. I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, this generation [those living at that definite period of time preceding the second coming] will not pass away until <sup>[a]</sup>everything takes place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away” (vs.29-33).

“But be on guard, so that your hearts are not weighed down *and* depressed with the giddiness of debauchery and the nausea of self-indulgence and the worldly worries of life, and then that day [when the Messiah returns] will not come on you suddenly like a trap; for it will come upon all those who live on the face of all the earth. But keep alert at all times [be attentive and ready], praying that you may have the strength *and* ability [to be found worthy and] to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand in the presence of the Son of Man [at His coming]” (Luke 21:34-36).

*Other Articles on Daniel’s Prophecies*

Daniel 7 and the New World Order

The Panorama of Prophecy

Daniel’s 2300 Days Prophecy

Daniel 8 and the End of Days

Daniel 9 and the Nuclear Agreement with Iran

Daniel’s Image, the Four Beasts and the End-Time King of Assyria

Daniel 11 – Urgent Warning!