

Daniel's 69 Weeks Prophecy About the Death of Christ

Our study is a fabulous one about an unbelievable Old Testament prophecy. Sir Isaac Newton once said, “We can stake the truth of Christianity on this prophecy alone, made five centuries before Christ.” He used the numbers found in the prophecy at which we are going to be looking. He concluded that it pointed to the date after which the Messiah would arrive here on earth and then after which He would die. It pointed to Christ. It truly is a fabulous prophecy as you are going to see. Since it is a detailed prophecy, I am going to try to slow down so that you can understand what is being said.

Before we get into our study, I need to establish an important biblical principle on how to interpret Scripture. All too often, we just read Scripture and do not apply principles that will help us understand

Scripture. Sometimes we listen to a teacher or preacher who makes a comment and then say, “Oh, that is such a wonderful insight into Scripture?!” In fact, it may not be at all.

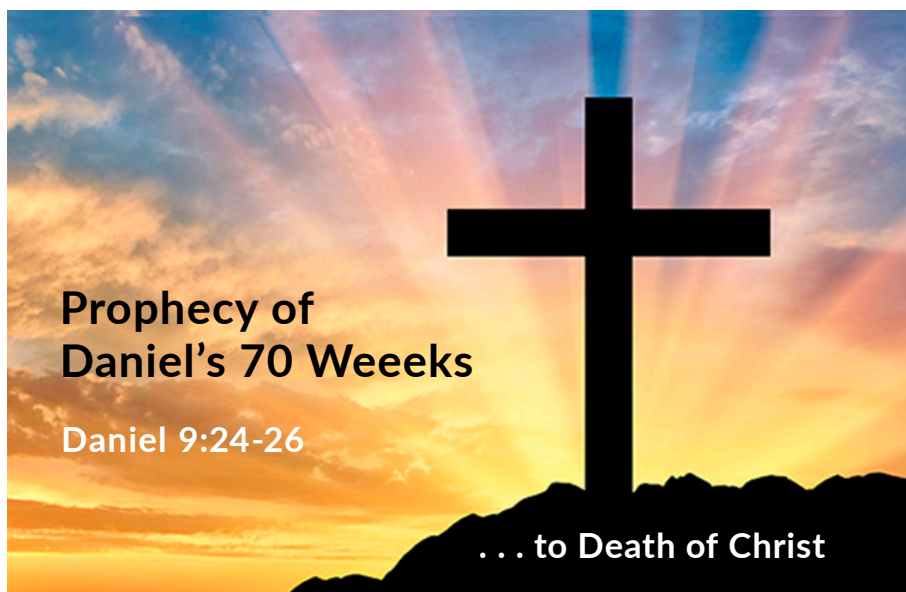
Principles to Understanding Scripture. So I want to establish an important biblical principle to help us understand this prophecy. The principle I want to explore is the literal interpretation of Scripture. That is, we need to understand it in its plain, literal sense. All too often, that is not done. On one occasion I accompanied a seminary

student to a church in Philadelphia. The seminary student had just graduated from seminary and was looking for his first pastorate. He wanted to be the pastor of a church. So I accompanied him to Philadelphia. We had communicated with the leadership team there—the elders at that church—and we told them that we wanted to have a series of meetings with them. We did that because we needed to learn about and to understand the church and its leaders so that this pulpit candidate could make an intelligent decision whether or not he should become the pastor. Sometime during

the visit, one of the leaders asked me a question. He said, “Why is it that so many different teachers and preachers have so many different viewpoints on a particular passage of Scripture? At times, there are so many different ideas about what a particular verse means. One

teacher says this, another teacher says that. How does one know what to believe? I explained to him that when the apostle Paul, for example, wrote Ephesians, he did not intend for what he wrote to have different meanings to different people. The Emergent Church says when you read a passage of Scripture, God’s Spirit will just illuminate your mind and whatever it means to you, that is what it means. That is not the truth!!

So I explained that when Paul tried to write a passage of Scripture, he was not trying to say that it had multiple



meanings. It was not supposed to mean different things to different people. Unfortunately, when you hear different people teaching Scripture, there are important principles to remember.

First, the apostle Peter at the end of 2 Peter makes the point that some people are untaught. That means the people he referred to were untaught people who were teaching Scripture. There are some people who do not study before they teach. I remember one of the first times I ever taught, I taught the book of Revelation. I was untaught, but yet I taught the book of Revelation. I had no idea what I was doing. I read someone's commentary and I said, "That is what it means."

A second problem is that many pastors do not prepare for Sunday morning until Saturday. Then they may only spend one or two hours getting ready. Let me ask you a question. What kind of biblical teaching do you think they are providing? The answer is: shallow or fluff. They are going to tell you what is obvious, something you might be able to discover from the page yourself. There is nothing deep about what they are saying because their message is very shallow. They have not spent the time required to dig into the passage to discover what it really means.

A third problem is that he or she may not be dealing with sin in his life. How often have we heard about pastors and teachers who are having a sexual affair? Or they are stealing. I have a website, NeverThirsty.org, and I have frequently received e-mails from people asking about what to do about their pastor who is committing the sin of pornography, homosexuality, or adultery, for example. I have a question for you. Do you think the Holy Spirit is empowering them to speak? Do you think they are really spirit-filled and giving you spirit-filled messages? The answer is no.

Fourth, sometimes they are unbelievers. I will never forget visiting a church in Berkeley, California, with a group of Bible institute students. After the pastor preached that morning, we had a side session with him. During that meeting, the pastor denied the virgin birth of Christ, denied that Jesus was God, and stated he believed that Genesis was a myth. It was unbelievable what he did not believe that is taught in Scripture. He was not a Christian.

Fifth, there are some men who use a non-literal approach to understanding Scripture. They treat it symbolically or allegorically. If you do that, then you can make a passage of Scripture say anything you want it to mean. The Pharisees did that. The Pharisees understood Scripture allegorically. When someone understands Scripture allegorically, then Scripture is just squishy. How creative are you? You can make it mean anything that you want it to mean. I will give you an example.

Some years ago there was a pastor in California teaching his congregation about Jericho. Remember the Israelites walked around the city. They wanted to defeat the city. God told them to around it seven times. They then blew the trumpets and the walls of the city fell down. The pastor taught about Jericho and then made his application. He said that the walls of the city are like the walls of a person's heart. So if a man wanted to marry a woman, all he had to do was walk around her seven times. Then the walls of her heart would fall down, and she would be willing to marry him. Then two young people thought this was spirit-filled teaching. They thought he was teaching the truth. So the young man walked around the woman seven times, and she felt that she needed to agree to get married. So they got married. It is a true story. We found out about this when they came for counseling. That was an example of allegorical teaching. It was stupid!

So we want to understand Scripture literally, and not allegorically, or symbolically. We want to understand Scripture in its literal sense. What did the author mean at the time he was writing it? When Scripture talks about Jerusalem, we want to understand that it is Jerusalem, and not something else. Unless it is obvious that it is poetry, a parable, a simile or a metaphor.

So with the idea of understanding Scripture literally, there are some issues that we still we need to think about. Let me give you one example. Turn to Psalm 17:8. it says,

Keep me as the apple of the eye;
Hide me in the shadow of Your wings.
Psalms 17:8 (NASB)

God is speaking. When it says “Keep me as the apple of your eye,” it is obviously figurative language. That is a figurative expression that we are supposed to understand. The last part of the verse says, “Hide me in the shadow of your wings.” When it says that, it does not mean that God has wings. That is a figurative expression. It is a reminder that birds protect their young by wrapping their wings around them. The idea is that God protects His righteous ones. Sometimes figures of speech are very clear. Sometimes they are implied.

An example of the use of symbols is given in Daniel 8. Daniel saw a vision of a ram and a goat. We found in that passage of Scripture that the ram represented Medo-Persia, and the goat represented Greece. Then we were told that four little horns appeared and they divided up this kingdom. We know that Alexander the Great had four generals. The four little horns symbolize Alexander the Great’s generals. This is an example of the proper interpretation of symbols.

Most of Scripture is not figurative. Most of Scripture is not symbolic. Most of Scripture is literal. For example, think of Micah 5:2. In Micah 5:2 we are told that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Where was Jesus born? He was born in Bethlehem; He was the fulfillment. We are also told in that passage that He was from long ago, ancient days. This tells us that Jesus is God. Micah is very literal.

In Isaiah 7:14 we are told that the Messiah would be virgin born. Then Matthew 1 quotes Isaiah 7:14 and makes the point that Mary was a virgin. Some distort the meaning of the Hebrew word for virgin in Isaiah 7:14 and claim it just means young woman. But Matthew quotes it and uses a Greek word that means virgin. That means Jesus was virgin born.

Now watch this: Isaiah 7:14 said that He would be virgin born, and what happened? He was virgin born! Isaiah 9:6 says, “a child will be born unto us.” We are told that He is the Father and the Prince of Peace. He is the Christ. Isaiah 40:3 tells us that there would be a forerunner who would announce the coming of Christ. Then Mark 1:3-4 says the forerunner was John the Baptist. What is the point? The point is this, that Isaiah 40:3 said a forerunner would come,

and the forerunner was John the Baptist. Old Testament prophecy was literal. It literally predicts something is going to happen, and the prophecies are literally fulfilled—not figuratively, and not symbolically. Scripture is literal.

We also discovered when we looked at Daniel 9:2 that Daniel is reading the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah is talking about seventy years of captivity for the nation of Israel. How did Daniel understand Jeremiah’s prophecy? He took it literally—seventy literal years!

So then how are we to understand Scripture? We understand it literally. That is an important principle. Otherwise we will believe the pastor who talks about walking around some woman like the Israelites walked around Jericho. The result is tragedy.

Introduction to the Seventy Weeks. So with that, let us go to Daniel 9:24. That was a long introduction to our passage. Daniel 9:24 introduces us to a prophecy of seventy weeks. It is a very important passage of Scripture. When we are finished, the prize is unbelievable.

Here is verse 24.

Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. Daniel 9:24 (NASB)

This is not a dream nor a vision. If you recall from our last study, the angel Gabriel gave us some information. We do not know if he is an archangel. But Gabriel is the angel in this passage and the information is from him. Verse 24 is a summary of the details given in verses 25, 26, and 27.

Meaning of the Seventy Weeks. When it says seventy weeks, you might think it refers to a literal seventy weeks—just a little bit more than a year. But if you look at the Hebrew word that is translated here as “weeks,” it is a heptad. That is, it refers to periods of time. So the seventy weeks refers to seventy periods of time. It is important to understand this in order to understand what this prophecy is about.

Now we will go to Genesis 29:27. This passage is about Laban and his two daughters. If you recall, Jacob wanted to marry Rachel. He was not given Rachel in marriage at the wedding. The bride was Leah! Now look at verse 26.

But Laban said, “It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years.” Genesis 29:26-27 (NASB)

What did Laban tell Jacob in this passage? He said, “complete the week for this one.” It is interesting that he said “week” because how long did Jacob have to work before he was to be given Rachel as his wife—but instead he received Leah? The last part of verse 27 says seven years. He said, “you serve me another seven years.” Then verse 28 explains that he was able to marry Rachel. So, a week referred to seven years. Most Bible scholars and even Jewish rabbis understand a heptad as being seven years.

Therefore if we do the math, we multiple the 70 times 7 years, and obtain 490 years. I do not know of any biblical scholar, including the Jewish rabbis, who understands it differently.

Seventy Weeks Have Been Decreed. Next notice that verse 24 says “Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people.” That means 490 years out of human history are for the Jews. How do we know it is about the Jews? It says. “For your people, and for your holy city.” Daniel is a Jewish prophet. In the earlier part of the chapter Daniel has been talking about the nation of Israel and the Jewish city. Daniel 9:19 says,

“O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.” Daniel 9:19 (NASB)

About what city has he been speaking? The city of Jerusalem. It is important to understand the passage has been about Jewish history.

Now there are two things I want you to see next in verse 24. First there are three negative statements and three positive statements. I call them wonderful statements. Three negative wonderful statements, and three positive wonderful statements. The negative ones are very clear. Watch this: To finish the transgression—that is one. To make an end of sin—that is two. Then to make atonement for iniquity—that is three. Those are the three negative statements, but they will all prove to be really wonderful!

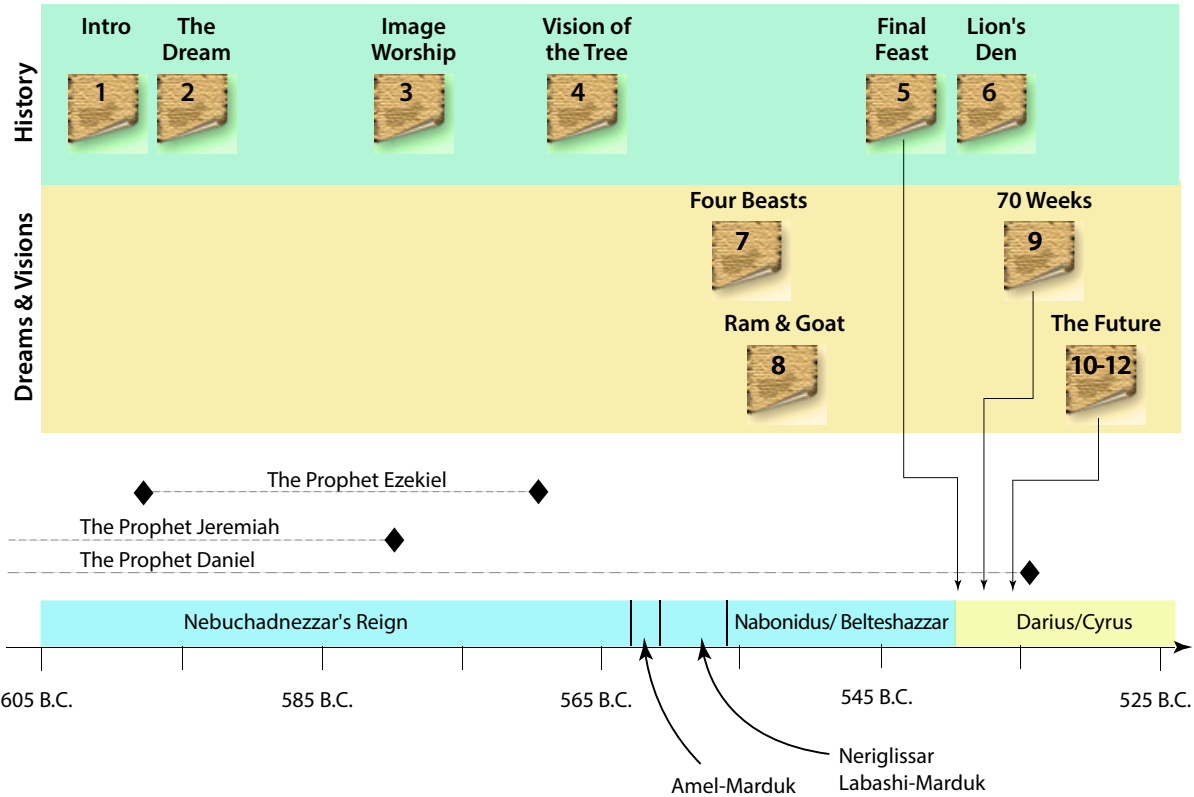
The First Advent of Christ. The word “finish” actually means to stop. That is the literal Hebrew meaning of the word. Next, it says to make an end of sin. It is interesting that the Hebrew word for sin is in the plural, so it is talking about making the end of sins. Then when it says to make atonement for iniquity, the word “atonement” means “to pardon.” The word for atonement means “to cover.” When Jesus died on a cross for our sins, do you realize what He did? He did not take sin out of your life; He covered your sin. So Daniel 9:24—at least the first part of this—is referring to the first advent of Christ because it is referring to His death on a cross.

The Second Advent of Christ. Now the next three statements are what I also refer to as positively wonderful statements. The three statements are “to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place.” They are pointing to the end of time. This includes the second coming of Christ and the millennial kingdom, the time when Christ will reign here on earth for a thousand years. It will be a literal, physical kingdom here on earth. The verse says “to bring in everlasting righteousness.” The Jews understood this to refer to the epic of the messianic king. They understood it to refer to the Messiah.

When the Scripture says “to seal up vision and prophecy”, the word that is used for “seal” is used to refer to a seal that was put on a scroll. Consider for example, Daniel reading the prophet Jeremiah. The book of Jeremiah was a scroll. The idea is that you would take a seal and put it on the scroll to close it up. What is the meaning? There will be no more visions, no more prophecies.

Then notice it says “to anoint the most holy place.” The

Outline of Daniel



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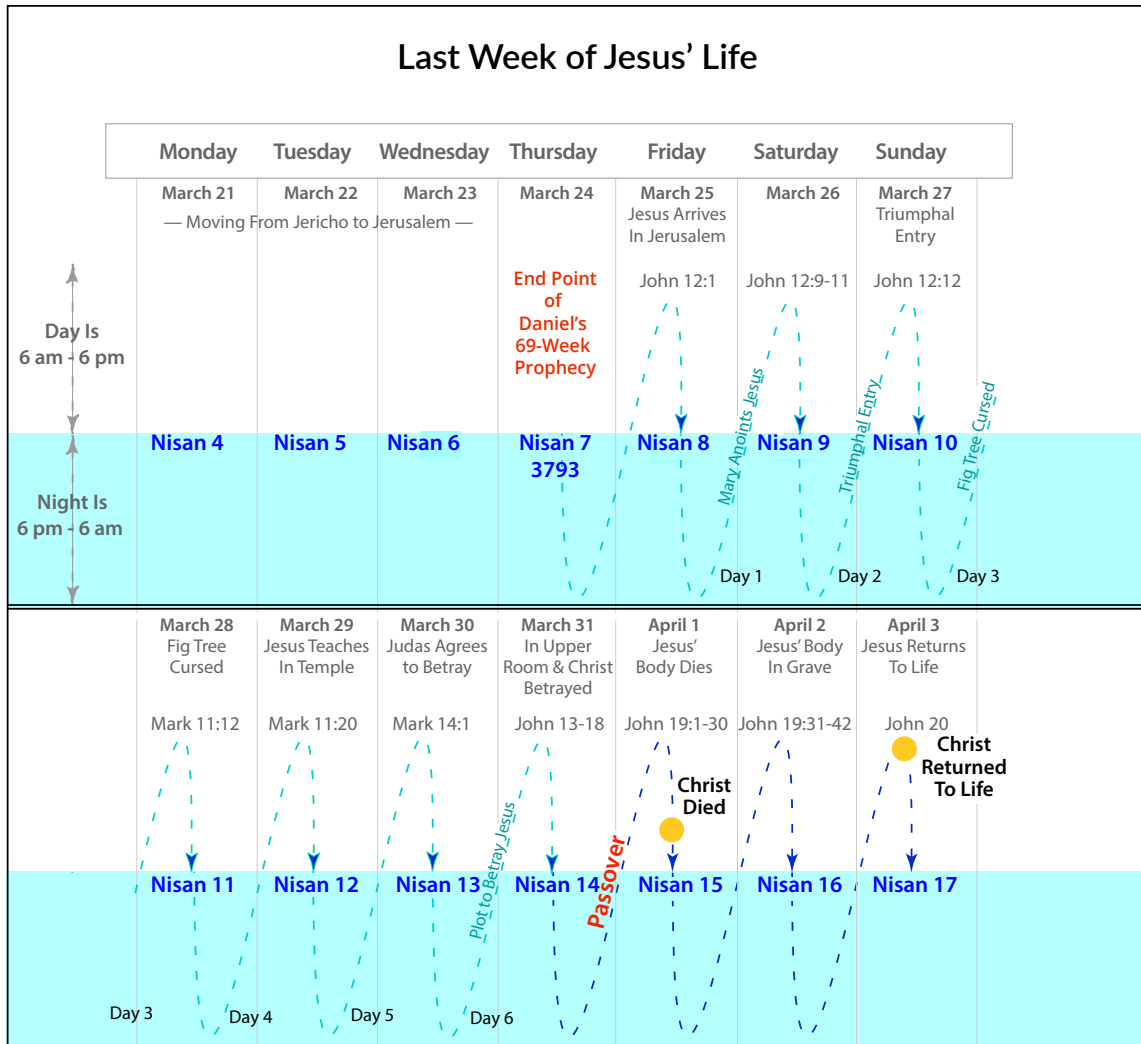
actual Hebrew is the Holy of Holies. That means there will be a temple. Now, some people say, “This is referring to Jesus.” But the literal words are referring to the Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies was in the temple. This means there will be a temple in the future. In Matthew 24:15, Jesus said there would be a temple in the tribulation period. We know from Ezekiel 40 through 48 that there will be a temple in the millennial kingdom, the 1,000-year kingdom here on earth.

So the last part of this verse is not talking about Christ. It is talking about the end times. It is about the tribulation period and the millennial kingdom. Verse 24 spans or summarizes verses 25, 26, and 27. So with that, let us consider verse 25.

Messiah Will Be Cut Off. Verses 25-26 say this:

So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. “Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing . . .”
Daniel 9:25-26a (NASB)

The prophecy says from the decree to rebuild the city to the death of the Messiah, there will be sixty-nine weeks. That is when Jesus Christ is crucified on a cross. This is one of the most fabulous prophecies there is in the Old Testament. When we finish this study, this should be exciting for you. The first thing I want to do is explore when the decree to rebuild the city was made. There are two major views. One view says the decree to rebuild the city was given in 538 B.C.



and that Cyrus the Great gave the decree. Another view says the decree was issued in 445 B.C. by Artaxerxes I. That is the decree that directed the city to be rebuilt.

In Ezra 1:2, Cyrus did make a decree. But the decree was only to build the temple, not the city. The view says, "The decree was about the temple, but it included the city." Since the decree does not say that, why should we include the city? It only mentions the temple. I will tell you why some do that. They are trying to make Scripture conform to their a priori theological system. Rather than change their theology, they bend Scripture. They take a non-literal approach in order to make their theological system work. I would rather change my theology to bring it into accurate agreement with Scripture.

The other view says the decree is Artaxerxes' decree that

was made on Nisan 444 B.C. mentioned in Nehemiah 2:1. We are told that Artaxerxes made the decree in the twentieth year of his reign. It was to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Scripture is very explicit, very accurate. That is a literal approach. If you recall, the Babylonians calculated the first year that a man became king as his ascension year. The second year actually began his reign. So when Nehemiah says the decree was given in the twentieth year of his reign, that means the date is not 445 B.C. It is really 444 B.C. So the date of the decree is Nisan 444 B.C. This is the marker month and year.

Remember that from the decree to rebuild the city to the Messiah's death is sixty-nine weeks. We know the beginning date is Nisan 444 B.C. Now all I need now to do is count sixty-nine weeks. So how long is sixty-nine weeks? We already know that "weeks" does not mean weeks, it means

seven years. So it is 69 times 7 years or 483 years. But these are biblical years. Our calendar is a Gregorian calendar. There is a Julian, a Gregorian, a Hebrew, and a biblical calendar. In order to understand what a biblical year is, I have to discover the length of a biblical month. In Genesis 7:11 and chapter 8:4, we discover the flood lasted for five months upon the earth. In other words, the flood started in Genesis 7:11 and ended in 8:4. What is fascinating about Genesis, it actually gives us the month, the day, and the year. I do not have to invent or create anything. All we have to do is read it.

Then if I look at Genesis 7:24, we are told that the flood lasted for 150 days. So how many days are there to a biblical month and in a biblical year? It is very simple. We divide 150 days by 5 months, and we obtain 30 days per month. You can also go to Revelation and discover the same answer. Genesis is the first book of the Bible. The last book of the Bible is Revelation.

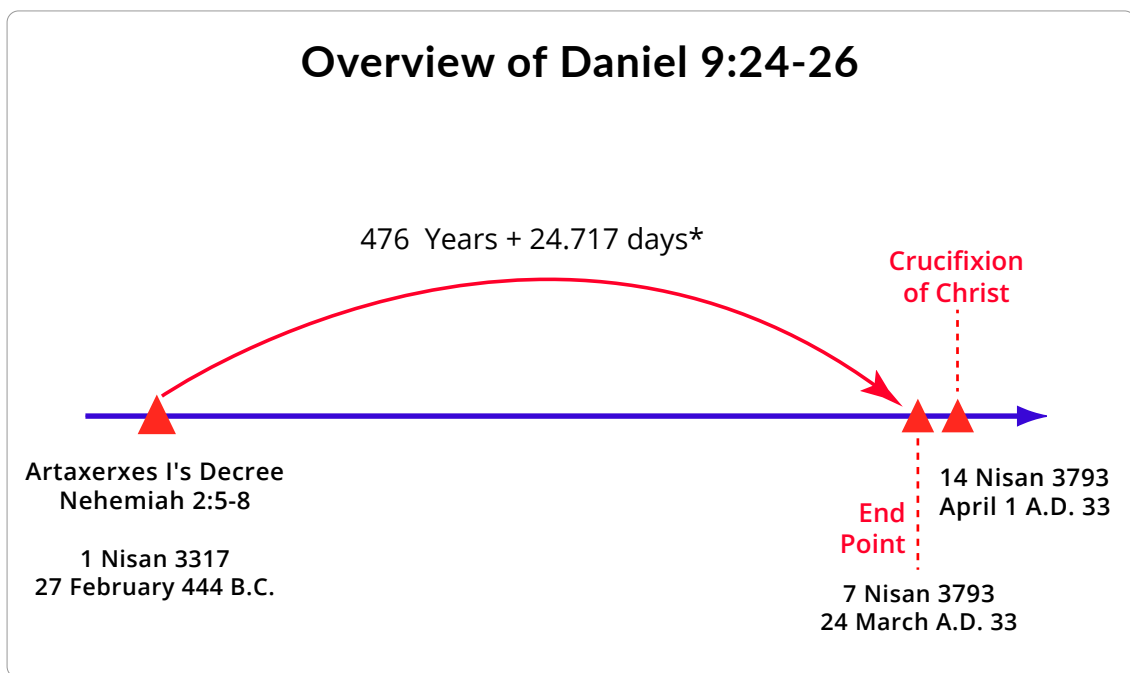
If we look at Revelation 12:6, there is a period of time referred to as 1,260 days. In chapter 13:5 it is referred to as 42 months. If you take 1,260 days and divide by 42 months, we get 30 days per month. The biblical calendar is the same in Genesis and in Revelation—all through biblical history.

Now we need to convert the 483 years to days in order to convert it into our Gregorian calendar. We are converting

from the biblical calendar to the Gregorian calendar. We end up with 173,800 days. Next we convert those days into our calendar, the Gregorian calendar, and we get 476 years and 25 days. Now we take that length of time to the start date of the prophecy which is Nisan 444 B.C., Nisan 14, 33 A.D. It points to March 24, A.D. 33. That is the end date of the prophecy. Nisan 14, 33 A.D.

Do you know what that date is? It is the Thursday before Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. John 12:1 says that the next day Jesus returned to Jerusalem; six days later He was crucified. Those six days were His final days of ministry in Jerusalem before He was crucified. He died on Passover! Passover occurs during the full moon on 14 Nisan. If we examine the years A.D. 30 and A.D. 32, we would discover that Nisan 14 did not occur on a Friday. In A.D. 30, Nisan 14 occurred on a Wednesday. Remember Jesus and His disciples celebrated Passover the night before He was crucified. In 32 A.D. Passover occurred on a Monday, and not on a Friday. This means that Jesus could not have died on Friday, on Nisan 14 in the years A.D. 30 or A.D.32. He died on Passover, 33 A.D., Nisan 14. Daniel's prophecy points to that date.

Early Church fathers believed that Daniel's prophecy pointed to Christ. Jerome, in his commentary on Daniel, cites a number of early Church fathers who believed that



Daniel's prophecy pointed to Christ. Julius Africanus employed the biblical month or 30 days per month, and performed the calculation. He did a fabulous job. He left out a few things in his calculations, unfortunately.

The Jewish rabbis agreed that Daniel's prophecy predicted the coming of the Messiah. After the time of Christ, they changed the date. Why? It is rather obvious. They did not believe Jesus was and is the Messiah.

The importance of the prophecy is that it points to the Messiah. Anybody who died before March 24, A.D. 33 could not have been the Messiah because he did not satisfy Daniel's prophecy. Anyone who died too many days after March 24, A.D. 33., would not have qualified either. The Messiah had to die just shortly after the March 24, A.D. 33. Did you notice what verse 26 says?

[Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing. Daniel 9:26a \(NASB\)](#)

Jesus said in John 5:39,

[You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me. John 5:39 \(NASB\)](#)

Jesus is our God, our Messiah, our Savior, our Lord, and He died on Nisan 14 in 33 A.D. Daniel's prophecy pinpoints the date of His death. This is an unbelievable prophecy. We should have no doubt as to who Jesus Christ is at this point. Let us pray.