

Prophecies concerning the Messiah

After the fall of Adam and Eve, God spoke of how He would restore mankind back to Himself. He would do this through the *seed of the woman* as stated in Genesis 3:15. From this first glimmer of light, the Bible builds up a large and specific range of prophecies regarding this One (Messiah) who was to come and restore the close and intimate relationship that God had with mankind before Adam had sinned. He, the Messiah, would accomplish this by becoming the only sacrifice acceptable to the Father for the forgiveness of sin, because He was, and is, without sin. One scholar has suggested that there are 300 prophecies recorded in the Old Testament concerning the coming Messiah. All of these prophecies were completely fulfilled in the birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, However, we will look at just 60.

- J. E. Hunter, *Let Us Go On To Maturity*, Zondervan Books, 14th Printing, 1978, page 13.

God chose for Himself a certain people

Genesis 12:1-3

*1 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto **a land** that I will shew thee:*

*2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will **bless thee**, and make thy **name great**; and thou shalt be a **blessing**:*

*3 And I will bless them that **bless thee**, and **curse** him that curseth thee: and in thee shall **all families of the earth be blessed**.*

Genesis 12:7

*And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, **Unto thy seed will I give this land:** and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.*

Genesis 13:14-15, 17

14 And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

*15 For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed **for ever**.*

17 Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

Genesis 26:2-5

*2 And the Lord appeared unto him (**Isaac**), and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:*

3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;

4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

Genesis 28:13-15

*13 And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee (**Jacob**) will I give it, and to thy seed;*

14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.

Prophecies by God

See Deuteronomy chapter 28 for the blessings
(verses 1-14) and curses (verses 15-68)

Micah 4:10 (about 700 BC)

Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to **Babylon**; there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.

Isaiah 39:7 (about 700 BC)

And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the **king of Babylon.**

70 Years captivity in Babylon

Jeremiah 29:10

*For thus saith the LORD, That after **seventy years** be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to **return to this place**.*

It will Cyrus who will allow the Jews
to return

Isaiah 44:28

*That saith of **Cyrus**, He is my shepherd, and
shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to
Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the
temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*

Isaiah wrote this about 150 years before Cyrus
was born

Daniel reads Jeremiah while he is in exile

Daniel 9:2-3

*In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish **seventy years** in the desolations of Jerusalem.*

³ And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

The Babylonians attacked Judah in three waves:

The first was **606-607 BC**. Daniel was among those taken to Babylon

The second was **597 BC** (Ezekiel 40:1) Ezekiel was among those taken to Babylon and he wrote his prophecies regarding the complete destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple before it happened. Ezekiel gives exact dates.

The third was **586 BC**. The remaining people were taken to Babylon, except peasant farmers, some soldiers and Jeremiah. They all went to Egypt.

Cyrus allows the Jews to return to Jerusalem

2 Chronicle 36:22-23

*²² Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the **mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished**, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,*

²³ Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.

Jews Return to Judah

Cyrus issued a decree that exiles should return and rebuild, just as Isaiah had prophesied two centuries earlier (Isaiah 44:28). The three main leaders of this time were Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

- Zerubbabel led the people during the reigns of the Persian kings Cyrus and Darius.
- Ezra and Nehemiah were leaders during the reign of Artaxerxes.

The return of the exiles to Judah, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem, was accomplished in three main stages.

- The first and main party returns with Zerubbabel **538 BC**. (Ezra 1:1 gives the date as “The first year of Cyrus king of Persia”)
They rebuild the temple.
- A second party returns with Ezra about **60 - 80 years later**.
They make spiritual and religious restoration and reform.
- A third wave returns with Nehemiah in **445 BC**. (Nehemiah 1:1-2)
They rebuild the city walls and gates but not many houses.

The seventy years of captivity is taken from the time of the first attack by the Babylonians of **606-7 BC** in which some people were taken in exile to Babylon including Daniel. To **538 BC** when the first lot of people returned under Zerubbabel (Ezra mentions Sheshbazzar but it is thought that they are one and the same person with the latter being his Babylonian name).

Prophecies Concerning God's Chosen People

Their scattering

Deuteronomy 28:64-65 (blessings and curses)

*64 Then the Lord will **scatter you among all peoples**, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone.*

*65 And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; **but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul.***

Leviticus 26:33

*And I will **scatter** you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.*

Prophecies Concerning God's Chosen People

Their return

Isaiah 11:11-12

*And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the **second time** to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.*

*12 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.***

Ezekiel 11:17

*Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God; I will even **gather** you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been **scattered**, and I will give you the land of Israel.*

Jeremiah 23:3

*And I will **gather** the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.*

Ezekiel 37:21-22

*21 And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will **gather** them on every side, and bring them into their own land:*

*22 And I will make them **one nation** in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more **two nations**, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all.*

Jeremiah 31:8

*Behold, I will **bring** them from the north country, and **gather** them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.*

Prophecies concerning **their name**

1 Kings 9:7

*Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a **proverb** and a **byword** among all people:*

Deuteronomy 28:37

And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.

The Jews back in the land about 4,000 years after God
gave it to them

Isaiah 66:7-8

7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child.

*8 Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? **Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once?** for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.*

14th of May 1948 the UN declares Israel a state



Amos 9:14-15

*14 And I will bring **again** the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall **plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.***

Israeli agriculture



These prophecies are very clear and specific. God, speaking through Isaiah, says that He will bring them back a second time; the first being from exile in Babylon. The second time could well refer to their return of 1948. **And through Amos, God says that they will not be pulled out of their land any more.**

Although many Jews returned to Israel after 1948, there have been obstacles preventing some Jews from emigrating. Two significant ones were the refusal of the Soviet Union to allow Russian Jews to return to their homeland and escape from the persecution they were experiencing. The fall of communism overcame this problem and by the mid 1990s, approximately one million Russian Jews had settled in Israel.

The breaking down of the Berlin Wall



Further, a large group of Ethiopian Jews cohabitated harmoniously with their fellow countrymen, until Emperor Salassie's regime was replaced in 1974 by a committee within the military. From here Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam rose to power and imposed a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship on the people. In the ensuing weeks, an estimated 2,500 Jews were killed and another 7,000 were made homeless. His policy of 'villagization' increased anti-Semitism greatly and by the early 1980s the practice and teaching of Hebrew was forbidden.

Pressure to allow Ethiopian Jews to emigrate to Israel was brought to bear on Mariam by both Israel and the United States, and between 1977 and 1984, **8,000** Jews came to Israel. Under the code name ***Operation Moses***, the Israeli air force transferred some 8,000 Jews to Israel between November 21, 1984 and January 5, 1985. But still many more remained and another **800** people were air-lifted under the code name ***Operation Joshua***. With the prospect of Eritrean and Tigrean rebels overthrowing the Mariam government and amid fears that of Ethiopian Jews maybe held hostage, Israel mounted a massive air-lift involving **34** aircraft flying non-stop for **36 hours**, as a result of which **14,324** people were relocated to Israel.

Operation **Solomon**, as it was called, transported more than twice the number of people as **Operations Moses** and **Joshua** combined.

During the relocation, a world record for a single-flight passenger load was set on May 24, 1991, when an El Al 747 carried **1,122** passengers to Israel.



The Israeli population grew from **806,000** in May 15, 1948

At their 70th anniversary, (May 15, 2018) Israel's population is 8.842 million, 43% of world Jewry

The Jewish population stands at approximately 6.589 million, while Arabs number some 1.849 million, 20.9% of the population. There are approximately 404,000 citizens, 4.6%, who are non-Arab Christians or members of other ethnic groups.

Attempts to remove the people from the land

Amos 9:15

15 And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, sayeth the Lord thy God.

1948

On the day that Israel declared its independence, the Arab League Secretary, General Azzam Pasha, declared 'jihad,' a holy war. He said:

This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacres and the Crusades.

The Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin Al Husseini, stated:

*I declare a holy war, my Moslem brothers!
Murder the Jews! Murder them all!*

The armies of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq invaded the tiny new country with the declared intent of destroying it. However, the new Jewish state survived. In 1949 Israel signed armistice agreements with several Arab states, including Jordan, which annexed the area of Judea and Samaria, now known as the West Bank. From there they were to launch many attacks against the very vulnerable Jewish people.

The raising of the
flag on Israel's most
southern border in
1949



1967

On May 15, 1967, Egyptian forces moved into the Sinai. On May 18, Egypt expelled the UN Peacekeeping forces from Israel's borders. On the 22nd, Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping. On the 25th, encouraged by Egypt; Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia moved their troops to Israel's borders.

Just after this, on May 26, President Nasser of Egypt declared:

Our basic goal is the destruction of Israel. The Arab people want to fight ... The mining of Sharm El Sheik is a confrontation with Israel.

Pacts were signed by Egypt with Jordan and Iraq on May 30 and June 4, thereby completing the encirclement of Israel.

Nasser, backed by Arab states, kicks Israel into the Gulf of Aqaba. Pre-1967 War cartoon. Al-Jarida newspaper, Lebanon



On June 5, Israel launched a pre-emptive attack on Egypt and destroyed her air force in two hours. Israel issued an appeal to Jordan to stay out of the war. Jordan refused and opened a heavy artillery barrage on both west Jerusalem and the Tel-Aviv area that forced Israel to counterattack. By June 8, the Israel Defence Forces had defeated the Jordanian forces and captured the whole of the West Bank. On the morning of June 9, Israel attacked the Syrians on the Golan Heights and captured this strategic area.

In just six days, despite having been attacked from all sides and facing overwhelming odds against them, Israel had captured the entire Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza strip, the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

But this was not to be the end of Arab attempts to destroy the nation of Israel.

An abandoned Syrian tank on the Golan Heights



1973

On October 6, 1973—Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, Egypt and Syria opened a coordinated surprise attack against Israel. On the Golan Heights approximately 180 Israeli tanks faced an onslaught of 1,400 Syrian tanks. Along the Suez Canal, fewer than 500 Israeli defenders were attacked by 80,000 Egyptians.

At least nine Arab states, including four non-Middle Eastern nations, actively aided the Egyptian–Syrian war effort. A few months before the Yom Kippur War, Iraq transferred a squadron of Hunter jets to Egypt. During the war, an Iraqi division of some 18,000 men and several hundred tanks was deployed in the central Golan and participated in the October 16 attack against Israeli positions. Iraqi MiGs began operating over the Golan Heights as early as October 8, the third day of the war.

Besides serving as financial underwriters, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait committed men to battle. A Saudi brigade of approximately 3,000 troops was dispatched to Syria, where it participated in fighting along the approaches to Damascus. Also, violating Paris's ban on the transfer of French-made weapons, Libya sent Mirage fighters to Egypt (from 1971 to 1973, President Muammar Qaddafi gave Cairo more than \$1 billion in aid to rearm Egypt and to pay the Soviets for weapons delivered).

Other North African countries responded to Arab and Soviet calls to aid the front-line states. Algeria sent three aircraft squadrons of fighters and bombers, an armored brigade and 150 tanks. Approximately 1,000–2,000 Tunisian soldiers were positioned in the Nile Delta. Sudan stationed 3,500 troops in southern Egypt, and Morocco sent three brigades to the front lines, including 2,500 men to Syria.

Thrown onto the defensive during the first two days of fighting, Israel mobilised its reserves and eventually repulsed the invaders and carried the war deep into Syria and Egypt. The Arab states were swiftly resupplied by sea and air from the Soviet Union, which rejected U.S. efforts to work toward an immediate cease-fire. As a result of a pleading telephone call from Israel's Prime Minister Golda Meir at 3am, President Nixon of the United States ordered an air lift of 22,000 tons of equipment, involving 566 flights. To pay for this infusion of weapons, Nixon asked congress for and received 2.2 billion dollars in emergency aid for Israel.

What makes Meir's telephone call more interesting is that, according to Grant McKay's *Against All Odds: Israel Survives*, as Nixon sat on the side of his bed listening to Golda Meir, her words promoted him to recall his own mother's voice:

...as a young boy growing up, his mother had told him that one day he would be in a powerful position, and a situation would arise where Israel and the Jews needed his help. When it did, he was to help them.

Two weeks later, Egypt was saved from a disastrous defeat by the UN Security Council, which had failed to act while the tide was in the Arabs' favour.

Can anyone doubt that the hand of God is on Israel?

In order to complete this section on Prophecies Concerning God's Chosen People and the Land, it is necessary to briefly mention that many Bible scholars interpret the prophecies of Ezekiel, Joel and Revelation as foretelling an attack on Israel known as the Battle of Armageddon. This is prophesied to take place at the end of the Great Tribulation, by an overwhelming force coming predominantly from the north, and is still future to us. Some have suggested that this army could comprise a confederation of Russian and Muslim nations. The prophecy also states that when His people cry out to Him, God will step in, destroy these armies and save His people;

... then the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.

- Ezekiel 38, 39.
- Joel 2:30-32.
- Revelation 16:16.
- Ezekiel 39:7.
- A thorough discussion on this topic is contained in many books, including: John Ecob, *The Bible Prophecy Handbook*, Herald of Hope, 2003 (Available from Herald of Hope magazine, PO Box 4216, Marayong, NSW, 2148, Australia); Randall Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, Harvest House Publishers, 1999; Michael A. Redick, *Ready for His Return, How to live in the Light of Eternity*, Nosnuma Singapore, 2010.

Prophecies that did not come true

*In 100 years from my
day there will not be a
Bible in the earth,
except the one that is
looked upon by an
antiquarian curiosity
seeker.*

Voltaire (1694-1778)



Quarterly Papers of the American and Foreign Bible Society, No 11, New York, July 1837, page 21-22 (Digitized by Google under the heading Bible Society at Ferney).

A Bible Society was some years since established at Ferney, once the residence of Voltaire—the prince of infidels. This noble enterprise for the propagation of the Christian religion is said to have commenced by Baron de Stael, and a few zealous Christians in that place. In the history of Bible Societies, this is truly a memorial event. That the antidote should issue from the very spot where the poison of infidelity for so many years disseminated; and the advocates of Christianity should in that very place print and circulate the sacred volume, as a sufficient shield against misrepresentations sophistry which he (Voltaire) had there assailed divine revelation, are the events which the brilliant Frenchman would have pronounced impossible.

“There” said a friend to Rev. A. Acworth, when in France, “this is the room where Voltaire’s plays were acted, for the amusement of himself and his friends, but now converted into a repository for Bibles. Oh! That, that gifted infidel could have been there, to witness the result and repent of his ratiocinations respecting the downfall of Christianity. But, there is a point beyond which divine forbearance does not extend.”

Ferney, Voltaire's residence



John Lennon of The Beatles fame made the following statement which was reported in the London Evening Standard:

Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. Jesus was alright, but His disciples were thick and ordinary.

Geoffrey Blainey, *A Short History of Christianity*, Penguin Group, Australia, 2011, page 547. Quoting Lennon's interview in 1966; Bob Spitz, *The beetles: The Biography*, New York, 2005, page 615.

It has been shown that time and time again; biblical prophecies have been fulfilled, demonstrating that the Bible can indeed be trusted.

Matthew 24:35:

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will by no means pass away

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Daniel's Prophecy of 70 weeks

Daniel 9:20-27

In chapter nine of his book, Daniel foretells a number of events. One of these is the exact date, precise to the day, when ‘Messiah the Prince’ shall come. The point in Jesus’ ministry when He presented Himself as the Messiah was when He accepted the worship of the people as He entered Jerusalem, four days before He was crucified. This occasion was foretold by Zechariah and has become known as ‘Palm Sunday.’

- Daniel 9:24–27.
- Zechariah 9:9.

So what day was this in relation to our calendar? Much has been written regarding the time of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. What is presented below is a view which is supported by historical data and harmonises Daniel's prophecy with Christ as the Passover Lamb.

The time of this event can be calculated by working back from the time of Christ's crucifixion, for which more information has been given. Although many dates have been proposed, April 3, AD 33, is the one favored by most scholars.

The reasons they give for this date are as follows: all gospels agree that Jesus died on the day before the Sabbath. Some scholars claim there may have been two Sabbaths in that week because the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is a Sabbath and that Christ may have been crucified on a day other than Friday. However, there can be no doubt that Jesus rose on the first day of the week, a Sunday, and that it was the third day, inclusive, since His crucifixion. By the time of Tertullian (AD 160–220), the Greek word ‘paraskeue,’ was used in the gospels as the day of Christ’s crucifixion and it was used to denote Friday. The third Bishop of Antioch, Ignatius, writing in the first century to the Trallians, makes it clear that Christ was crucified on the day of Preparation (Friday), was in the ground during the Sabbath and rose on the Lord’s Day (Sunday).

- For a thorough analysis of the days of Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection, the reader is directed to bible.ca/d-3-days-and-3-nights.htm.

This fixed the crucifixion date as Nisan 14 (post-Exilic name; formerly Abib, Exodus 13:4, approximately our March/April), with the Passover commencing at moonrise that evening which signaled the start of a new day; Nisan 15. There appears to be a discrepancy in the gospels with Matthew, Mark and Luke stating that Jesus ate the Passover meal and John stating that Jesus, knowing that Judas was about to betray Him, told him to leave the table and do what he had intended. Since Judas kept the money, some of the disciples thought that Jesus had sent him to buy what was needed for the feast, that is, the Passover.

Matthew 26:17-29; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:7-20.

John 13: 1–29.

This apparent contradiction has been successfully resolved by Sir Colin Humphreys in his book *The Mystery of the Last Supper*. Humphreys after establishing that the crucifixion took place on April 3, AD 33, provides convincing evidence that two calendars were operating at the time. Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples using the pre-exilic calendar of Moses on the Wednesday evening (Nissan 14) of April 1, AD 33 and John refers to the official Jewish calendar where Nissan 14 occurred Friday April 3, AD 33 with the Passover meal being eaten that evening on Nissan 15 which commenced at moonrise.

- Colin J Humphreys, *The Mystery of the Last Supper*, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

The crucifixion took place under the administration of Pontius Pilate, who held the position from AD 26–36. The only years that Nisan 14 occurs on a Friday during that period are the years 27, 33, 36 and maybe 30. Luke states that John the Baptist commenced his ministry in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, thereby dating John's appearance to AD 29. As well, the Passover was celebrated on the first full moon of the spring. Only the dates of April 7, AD 30 and April 3, AD 33 satisfy these criteria for the time of Christ's crucifixion. Since John records three separate Passovers during Jesus' ministry, the early date of AD 30 must be excluded, thereby leaving April 3, AD 33 as the time of Christ's crucifixion.

- Luke 3:1–2.
- John 2:23, 6:4, 13:1.
- C. J. Humphreys and G. Waddington, *The American Scientific Affiliation*, 1985, 37, pages 2–10; H. W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1977.

However, there has been a problem with this later date—namely; Herod the Great was alive when Jesus was born. This is referenced by the fact that following a visit from the Maji, he ordered all babies under the age of two to be killed. This implies that Jesus must have been born during the years of 6 or 5 BC, because the commonly accepted date for Herod's death is 4 BC. And Luke states that:

Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age.

This would be in keeping with what was required for a Levitical Priest. Since Jesus' ministry lasted about three-and-a-half years, He could not have been born in 6–5 BC, commenced His ministry at the age of 30, ministered for three-and-one-half years and have been crucified as late as AD 33.

- Matthew 2:16.
- Luke 3:23.
- Numbers 4:3.

The evidence for believing Herod died in 4 BC mainly comes from the writings of Josephus (AD 37–103), a first century Jewish historian. However, Josephus was not always accurate or consistent and his chronologies should always be cross-checked. Josephus states that Herod commenced his reign in 37 BC and that he reigned 34 years; elsewhere he states that Herod reigned 37 years and that there was a lunar eclipse just before he died. Tradition has this event assigned to the eclipse of March 13, 4 BC. Further evidence for the 4 BC date of Herod's death comes from coins of the period, which show that his successors began their reign in 4–3 BC.

- M. Broshi, The Credibility of Josephus, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33, Spring/Autum, 1982.
- J. P. Pratt, *The Planetarium*, 1990, 19 (4), pages 8–14.

The argument of 4 BC for Herod's death is not as straightforward as it seems. John P Pratt, in a well researched and referenced paper, discusses the many problems associated with that year and claims the year of AD 1 to be much more in keeping with historical records and astronomical observations and this has the support of an increasing number of scholars. For example, Josephus, who wrote almost 100 years after the event, mentions only one lunar eclipse. Furthermore, the eclipse of 4 BC happened in the middle of the night and would not have been observed by many. In contrast, the eclipse of December 29, 1 BC was clearly visible at sunset. As well, Pratt proposes that Herod's successors antedated their reigns, presumably to extend their lengths. This, Pratt suggests, is a factor of which Josephus was not aware.

Ibid.

The later date for Herod's death means that the sixth century scholar Dionysius Exiguus, who set the Christian era of AD (Anno Domini; 'In the year of the Lord') and who had access to more records than are available today, was correct after all in calculating from 1 BC. The Dionysius Exiguus dating system is used to number the years of both the Gregorian and Julian Calendars (note, AD 1 follows 1 BC; there was no zero year).

Therefore, if Jesus was crucified on April 3, AD33, then his triumphant ride into Jerusalem would have taken place on March 30 of that year, which was five days before the Passover if we count both Nisan 10 and 14 as was the Jewish practice of counting part of a day as one day. The day, being a Monday, has become *incorrectly* known as ‘Palm Sunday’. In complete harmony with the events of the Passover that require the lambs to be selected on Nisan 10, and then slaughtered four days (five Jewish days) later on Nisan 14 between the hours of 12 noon and 3 pm, Christ presented Himself as Messiah, the Passover Lamb on Nisan 10 (Monday March 30, AD 33) and was slaughtered (crucified) on Nisan 14 (Friday, April 3, AD 33). He then died at 3 pm.

- In the year AD 33, Nisan 10 falls on Monday, March 30. cgsf.org/dbeattie/calendar/?roman=33.
- John 12:1-12.
- Colin J Humphreys, *The Mystery of the Last Supper*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, page 23.
- 1 Corinthians 5:7; John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:17.

Before Daniel's prophecy is examined, it is of value to go back in time to when Jeremiah was warning Judah of their impending exile and that it would be Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who would bring this about. In the same chapter, Jeremiah goes on to say that they will serve the king of Babylon 70 years and he later repeats this warning with the added information that He, the Lord, will bring them back to this place after 70 years. Although Jeremiah was severely criticised and thrown in a pit for his prophecy, he lived to see the first part of its fulfillment. At the time, Daniel would have been in his very early teens as he was taken to Babylon with the first wave of captives in 605 BC.

- Jeremiah 25:9.
- Jeremiah 25:11.
- Jeremiah 29:10.

If we fast-forward about 69 years, Daniel is no longer a captive but a government official. Nebuchadnezzar has had a period of mental illness, thinking he was an ox and eating grass. He then recovered, gave praises to God, died and was followed by a succession of kings who only reigned for a short period before being assassinated. Finally Belshazzar comes to the throne, mocks God, Daniel reads the writing on the wall and it's all over for Belshazzar. The Medes and the Persians are the world-power. Daniel writes in verse 1 of chapter 9 that Darius is in his first year as king, and at this time he reads from the prophet Jeremiah that the time of exile will be 70 years, and that this time is almost up. But God said through His prophet that He would bring them back when the people seek Him with all their hearts. So what does Daniel do? Verse 3 tells us:

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

Daniel prays from verse 3 to verse 19 and his answer comes in verse 20 when he is visited by the angel Gabriel, who tells him in a vision what is going to happen to his people.

Verse 24: Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy.

Verse 25: Therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.

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

Verse 27: Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.

The prophecy is contained in verse 24 and detailed in verses 25–27. The Hebrew word for ‘week’ means a period of seven; it can be seven days, seven weeks, seven months or seven years. There are four good reasons for believing the period, in this context, refers to years:

1. Daniel is talking about years in verses 1 and 2.
2. It is impossible to fit the events of verses 24 to 27 into days, weeks or months.
3. The only other place Daniel uses the word week where he does not mean years, he qualifies it by adding the word days (10:2–3).
4. The fact that verse 27 speaks of a covenant being broken at the halfway point of the seventieth seven agrees well with Daniel 7:25, 12:7 and Revelation 12:14.

Using 'year' for the word 'week', verse 24 tells us that six events are going to happen in 490 years and verses 25–27 state that these 70 lots of 7 years are in three parts: one of 7 x 7 years; one of 62 x 7 years and one 1 x 7 years. The six events are:

- To finish the transgression.
- To make an end of sins.
- To make reconciliation for iniquity.
- To bring in everlasting righteousness.
- To seal up the vision and prophecy.
- To anoint the Most Holy.

Therefore, after 70 weeks God will have dealt with sin and brought in a period of everlasting righteousness.

Verse 25 reveals when the Messiah will come. This is in two lots of time; one of seven weeks, followed by sixty two weeks, making a total of 69 weeks. This gives a total of 483 years.

The number of days in the Jewish year was 360. That is, twelve months of thirty days. This 360-day year is confirmed in Genesis chapter seven, where it states that the flood lasted 5 months; verse 11 states that it commenced on the 17th day of the second month and chapter 8, verse 4, says it finished on the 17th day of the seventh month, a total of exactly 5 months. And verse 24 of chapter seven states it lasted 150 days. Five months of thirty days equals 150 days. And again in Revelation 12:6, we read that the woman (Israel) will seek refuge for 1,260 days, with verse 14 stating it will last three-and-one-half years.

Again, 360 days per year for three-and-one-half years equals 1,260 days. Therefore, multiplying 483 years by the number of days in each year, we obtain a **total of 173,880 days**.

The time of the commencement of the 70 weeks of Daniel's prophecy is 'from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.' Four decrees are mentioned in scripture concerning the return of the people to Jerusalem. These are:

- The decree of Cyrus in 539 BC
 - The decree of Darius 1 in 519/518 BC
 - The decree of Artaxerxes 1 to Ezra in 457 BC
 - The decree of Artaxerxes 1 to Nehemiah in 444 BC
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- 2 Chronicles 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1–4.
 - Ezra 6:1, 6–12.
 - Ezra 7:11–26.
 - Nehemiah 2:1–8.

Only the last decree could fulfill the statement, since it was the only one of the four concerned specifically with rebuilding the city. This decree was given in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes in the month of Nisan, but exactly what day and year has been the source of discussion. Sir Robert Anderson (1841–1918) appears to have been the first person to have published a serious and scholarly analysis of this time in particular and Daniel's prophecy in general with his book *The Coming Prince*. Anderson posited the 483-year countdown commencing March 14, 445 BC (Nisan 1, 445 BC) and culminating with Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem on April 6, AD 32 (Nisan 10, AD 32). Anderson's date for the crucifixion of AD 32 is untenable, for it would mean Christ was executed on either a Sunday or Monday. Even though other errors have been found as well, Anderson did show the likelihood of the extreme accuracy of Daniel's prophecy and set the stage for others to refine his work.

- Nehemiah 2:1.
- Available in many reprinted editions.

One such man was Dr Harold Hoehner, Chairman of the New Testament Department at Dallas Theological Seminary, USA. In his book *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, he builds on the foundation that Anderson laid and corrects some of his errors. For example, it is clear that Nehemiah uses the Jewish Trishri-to-Trishri (March to April) calendar, because he records that he heard of Jerusalem's desolation in the Jewish month of Chislew (November/ December), which by the Julian calendar was the year 445 BC. Later, he reports that permission was granted to restore the city.

H. W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1977.

- Nehemiah 1:1.
- S. H. Horn and L. H. Wood, The Fifth Century Jewish Calendar at Elephantine, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, XIII, January 1954, page 9; R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 BC –AD 75*, Second Edition, Providence, 1956, page 32; H. H. Goldstein, *New and Full Moons, 1001 BC to AD 1651*, Philadelphia, 1973, page 47.
- Nehemiah 2:1.

This was in the Jewish month of Nisan (March/April), still in Artaxerxes' twentieth year, but the Gregorian calendar had clicked over to 444 BC. Nehemiah states that the decree was given in the month of Nisan. Since he does not include the day of the month, it is assumed that it is the first day. That first day of the month is signified by the first appearance of the new moon. The first occurrence of crescent visibility would have appeared at 10 pm, March 4, late enough to be missed. However, on March 5, 444 BC it would have been clearly visible to all.

To summarise, Daniel's prophecy states that Messiah the Prince shall come 173,880 days from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. We have shown that this decree was given on March 5, 444 BC. Jesus, Messiah the Prince, entered Jerusalem on March 30, AD 33.

In order to find the number of days between March 5, 444 BC and March 30, AD 33, it is necessary to take the number of years between these dates ($444 + 33 = 477$) and subtract 1 year, since only one year elapsed from 1 BC to AD 1, which gives a total of 476 years. To find the number of days in the Gregorian calendar, which is in use now, it is necessary to multiply 476 years by 365.2422 (number of Gregorian days in a year). The product of this, to the nearest day, is 173,855; this is the number of days from March 5, 444 BC to March 5, AD 33. An additional 25 days is added, bringing the number of days to March 30, AD 33. **This gives exactly 173,880 days, which reveals the extreme accuracy of Daniel's prophecy and the reliability of scripture.**

After the completion of the sixty-nine weeks and before the commencement of the seventieth week, two events were predicted to take place in the following order:

- The “cutting off” of the Messiah.
- The destruction of the city and the temple.

In line with Daniel’s prophecy, Christ was crucified before the Roman general Titus destroyed the temple and the city in AD 70.

The prophecy of Daniel 9:27 concerning the seventieth week and the six events listed is still future to us.

The prophecies given in the Bible have been shown to have been fulfilled with complete accuracy.

There are other prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled.