

Daniel's prophecy, the Messiah would appear in A.D. 27. The word "messiah" means "the anointed one." In exactly A.D. 27, the Messiah Jesus Christ was baptized, as prophecy predicted hundreds of years in advance.

The Crucifixion Predicted

There is much more to come in this amazing prophecy. "And after the sixty-two weeks / Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself" (Daniel 9:26). In other words, Jesus would be crucified—for us. The text also says, "And the people of the prince who is to come / Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" (Daniel 9:26). This refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and the earthly sanctuary by Titus in A.D. 70.

Gabriel's message continues in Daniel 9:27: "Then he"—that is, Jesus—"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." By A.D. 27, 69 of those 70 prophetic weeks—or 483 years—would be used up. There would be one week left. One prophetic week—or seven years—beyond A.D. 27 takes us to A.D. 34. The Bible says that sometime in the middle of this last prophetic week the Messiah would be crucified. The middle point of seven is three-and-a-half years. Gabriel tells Daniel that the Messiah would be crucified three-and-a-half years after A.D. 27, or in the spring of A.D. 31. In the middle of seventieth week, Christ confirmed the covenant with His blood by dying on the cross on the day the Passover lamb was offered—in the spring of A.D. 31. Jesus is the fulfillment of these prophecies.

The book of Daniel reveals another prophecy: God's covenant with the Jews would cease in A.D.34. At the end of 490 years, in A.D. 34, the gospel would be proclaimed to the entire world by the early Christian converts.

Time of the End

The final portion of the 2300 years, or 1810 years, has to do with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, the judgment, and the second coming of Christ.

Let's read Daniel 8:14 again: "And he said to me, 'For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.'" Since one prophetic day equals one literal year, the 2300 years must take us to the time of the end, just as the angel Gabriel revealed. Subtracting 490 years from 2300 years leaves us with 1810 years. If we begin at A.D. 34, and we add 1810 years, we come to A.D. 1844. To explain it another way, if we start at 457 B.C. and go forward 2300 years, it takes us to 1844.

At the end of the 2300 prophetic days (literal years), the truth about Jesus as our dying Lamb and living High Priest would be restored. In the light of heaven's end-time judgment, God would make His final appeal to all humanity everywhere to respond to His love, to accept His grace, and to live godly, obedient lives.

Since the year 1844, God has been restoring the truth of Scripture to the world—truth that had been lost sight of through the centuries and that had been obscured by human tradition. Time is running out. Is there anything in your life that's not in harmony with His will—anything in your life that separates you from Him? Why not surrender it to Him right now?

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STUDY GUIDE 5

THREE COSMIC MESSAGES

EARTH'S FINAL CONFLICT

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Lesson 5: GOD'S PROPHETIC TIMETABLE

A BAND OF WEARY SETTLERS MADE THEIR WAY ACROSS THE CENTRAL PLAINS in the hopes of homesteading out west. One day they were horrified to see a long line of smoke and flames to the west, stretching for miles across the prairie. They soon realized the wind was blowing the fire directly at them.

Their guide knew what must be done. He gave the command to set a controlled burn in the grass behind them. When the space was burned over and the fire burned out, the whole company moved back into it.

A little girl cried out in terror, “Are you sure we won’t all be burned up?” The leader replied, “My child, the flames can’t reach us here, for we’re standing where the fire has already been!”

Nothing To Fear

Revelation’s end-time judgment does not terrify us. Its message has delivered us from condemnation.

Revelation 14:7 declares, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come.” As we learned in a previous lesson, there must be a judgment before Christ comes. Daniel, the companion book to Revelation, describes precisely when this last-day judgment began.

An Angel’s Explanation

In Daniel 8 and 9, we discover the divine timetable for the beginning of this heavenly judgment.

1. What event would occur at the end of the 2300 days? *(Daniel 8:14)*

Each Jew clearly understood the significance of the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary. It occurred at the end of the Jewish year and was a day of judgment. Although Daniel understood the concept of the cleansing of the sanctuary and the judgment, he was confused about the 2300 days. At the end of chapter 8, he exclaims, “I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it” (Daniel 8:27). Daniel 9 records his earnest prayer to understand the vision. The angel Gabriel appears to him in answer to his prayer.

2. What does the angel Gabriel explain to Daniel? *(Daniel 9:21)*

Gabriel reveals the truth about the coming Messiah. He then reveals the opening of God’s judgment centuries later.

3. What time period does the 2300 day prophecy refer to? *(Daniel 8:19)*

In Daniel 8, Gabriel begins explaining the 2300-day prophecy. He reveals that the ram represents Media-Persia and the male goat represents Greece. He also goes on to explain the role of papal Rome. When he turns to the cleansing of the sanctuary, Daniel faints. He is overwhelmed by what Gabriel is showing him. He does not fully understand the vision and needs divine guidance.

The Vision Explained

In Daniel 9:23, Gabriel says, “Consider the matter, and understand the vision.” What matter—and what vision? The matter is the one in chapter 8 that he was addressing when Daniel fainted—the cleansing of the sanctuary. The vision is the one of the 2300 days.

Gabriel continues in verse 24, recorded and translated in poetic form: “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.”

A Divine Timetable

He continues explaining this remarkable timetable of prophecy in verse 25: “Know therefore and understand, / That from the going forth of the command / To restore and build Jerusalem / Until Messiah the Prince, / There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.” With divine insight, prophecy reveals specific dates on the Messianic timeline. The first portion of this prophecy relates to God’s people, the Jews. “Seventy weeks are determined / For your people” (v. 24).

In Bible prophecy, one prophetic day equals one literal year (see Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34). Now, please don’t misunderstand. In the Bible, when a day is spoken of, it’s generally a literal day, but Daniel and Revelation contain symbolic imagery representative of symbolic time prophecies. Seventy weeks are composed of 490 days. Since one prophetic day equals one literal year, 490 prophetic days are 490 literal years.

The 490 years pertain specifically to the Jewish nation and the coming of the Messiah. They are determined for Daniel’s people, the Jews. A literal translation of the word “determined” means “to cut off or separate from.” Gabriel tells Daniel that 490 years are cut off, or separated from, the 2300 years. Gabriel continues to explain the prophecy to Daniel by showing him when this period starts.

4. When would this entire prophecy begin? *(Daniel 9:25)*

The prophecy begins with the decree to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. According to Daniel 9:25–26, there would be 69 prophetic weeks or 483 literal years from the decree to restore Jerusalem until the Messiah.

According to Ezra 7, the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was issued by Artaxerxes. History reveals this occurred in the autumn of 457 B.C. Four hundred and eighty-three years in the future takes us to exactly to A.D. 27. According to