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Introduction

Bible prophecy is an incredible thing, a True foretelling of future events. And while most of the Bible's prophecies have already been fulfilled, there are still some extremely critical events whose fulfillment is in process, even now. After all, if *all* Bible prophecies were now fulfilled, you wouldn't be reading this !

From Amos 3:7, "Surely the Lord God does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets."

Why does God do this - give certain messages to selected prophets of His to speak to the people ? By Mercy, He does it to give ample information, including warnings, to those who would be Saved. He tells them what they are to watch for. And as it comes to pass, the people have proof the prophecy is from God, and not a false prophet.

God's Faithful prophets are enabled to hear God by the Holy Spirit's presence within them. Jesus tells us about this in John 16:13: "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; *and He will tell you things to come.*" 2 Peter 1:21 has more. Also, besides the Holy Spirit, God can even send Angels to His prophets, as seen below.

Fulfillment of prophecy causes amazement, yes, but more importantly, establishes Faith in people when a prophecy that is hundreds, even thousands of years old comes to pass. The fulfillment of prophecy not only shows us that God can see the future in advance, but out of Love and concern for human beings, He lets us know about it too !

And when we see that the Bible contains not a little prophecy but a lot, it becomes clear: God sees all things.

One realm of prophecy involves the foretelling of Jesus' First Appearance on the Earth. The Old Testament has many prophecies about this, including who Jesus would be, what He would do, and what would happen to Him here. One prophecy actually pinpoints *the exact year* of Jesus' First Appearance, as well as His Crucifixion. It is one of the Most Awesome Bible Prophecies known to man ! And if we read the Gospels closely, we cannot help but come to the conclusion that Jesus Himself expected the people of His day, most especially the religious leaders, to be able to know the time of their Visitation. After all, the Jewish leadership of the day was familiar with many Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. Plus, this particular prophecy existed for over 500 years before the Christ's arrival. Jesus knew there was plenty of time, and clues, for it to come to light for men.

Let's review how it was fulfilled exactly. This review will be done in a relatively simple and straightforward way, also leaving room for interested seekers to further investigate, discern, and verify things for themselves.

Jesus' First Appearance - Daniel 9

NOTE: Our method will be to list the related Scripture, and add notes <in brackets like this> for clarification. After this, discussion will be added to see how this prophecy was fulfilled.

Please keep in mind that in the figurative language of Bible prophecy, a "day" usually equates to a year.

The Seventy-Weeks Prophecy

20 Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God, 21 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. 23 At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

24 "Seventy weeks are determined <70 weeks x 7 days in a week x 1 year for a day = 490 years>
 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, <the Jewish people will have 490 years to get themselves right with God>
 And to anoint the Most Holy. <including accepting Jesus as the Messiah as that time comes to a close>

25 "Know therefore and understand,
 That from the going forth of the command <from 458 B.C. - the seventh year of Artaxerxes, who gave the
 To restore and build Jerusalem command to Ezra to go and help Spiritually restore Jerusalem>
 Until Messiah the Prince, <until Jesus begins his earthly Ministry>
 There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; <69 weeks (x 7 = 483 years) shall pass (up through 26 A.D.)>
 The street shall be built again, and the wall, <Jerusalem will also physically be rebuilt over that time>
 Even in troublesome times. <even though they will sometimes be hassled by outsiders>

26 "And after the sixty-two weeks <in the 70th and final "week" from 27 A.D. to 33 A.D.>
 Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; <Jesus will be cut off, abandoning all earthly comforts (of a
 well-regarded carpenter living among family) to accomplish
 His Mission as Savior of the World, terminating with His
 death, being cut off (killed) as a "ransom for many">

*** continued on the next page ***

*** the next 4 lines are an aside, temporarily parting
*** from chronological order, and reveal the tragic
*** results of continually resisting the Holy Spirit

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.

<"the prince" here is the devil, and "the people" of
that prince are the Romans in this case>
<they'll destroy Jerusalem and the Temple (in 70 A.D.)>
<the Jews will be overrun>
<and will be separated from their God because they
refused their Messiah>

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."

<from 27 A.D. on, "he" (the devil) will work
with many to destroy the Messiah>
<and about halfway between 27 A.D. to 33 A.D.>
<Jesus Christ will be crucified>
<the devil will be behind it all, now also
having this Earth to himself to...>
<...separate people from God until the End
Time (which will be a necessary event)>
<when the wicked are consumed>

Discussion

Let's see how this prophecy was fulfilled. Please note as we go through this, whenever we must count years going from B.C. into A.D., there is no year zero, so we go right from 1 B.C. to 1 A.D.

With that, let's first consider that we are given a starting point that can be historically known, and also two numbers of time to be added together to help us arrive at the year of Christ's First Appearance, like so:

458 B.C. + 7 weeks (49 years) + 62 weeks (434 years) = 26 A.D. The prophecy then tells us that "after the sixty-two weeks", therefore in the last "week" (or 7-year period) of the prophecy, Jesus is cut off from men. His life of blending in, even in His own community, is now no more, and with no looking back, His destiny as Savior is set, from His earthly Ministry in which few received Him, all the way to His Sacrifice on the Cross.

So, to begin with, where do we get the 458 B.C. ? We need some hindsight for this one, because there was more than one decree given to the Jews to go and restore the various physical and Spiritual aspects of Jerusalem. (The decrees were given by certain kings from the East who were over the Jews after their Babylonian captivity.) But even the Pharisees in Jesus' day would have known from their own Scriptures that if the earliest couple of decrees were not the ones that brought the fulfillment of the Messiah by this prophecy, the next decree should be watched for the same. We find the information regarding the proper decree in Chapter 7 of the Book of Ezra. Add to that a little research, and one finds that 458 B.C. was the seventh year of the reign of King Artaxerxes.

Okay. Now how do we locate the beginning of Jesus' earthly Ministry ? There are a few puzzle pieces to put together, all of which God has given to men, and these reveal the picture.

Let's start with this: from the Gospels, we learn that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist at the beginning of His earthly Ministry. In Luke Chapter 3, Luke tells us Jesus began His Ministry at about the age of thirty. So Jesus would have been about thirty years old when He was baptized by John.

Luke Chapter 3 also tells us that John started baptizing in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. With a little research, one can find that Tiberius Caesar began his reign by co-reigning with Augustus Caesar prior to Augustus' death in 14 A.D. Many historians place this beginning of Tiberius' co-reign in 13 A.D., and Luke seems to agree, notably by the use of "inclusive time reckoning", where a *portion* of a year would count as a year, similar to how Jesus Himself used inclusive time reckoning regarding His Resurrection on "the third day" (*part of* Friday when the Crucifixion took place, all of Saturday when Jesus rested in the tomb on the Sabbath, and *part of* Sunday when Jesus was Resurrected). This method of counting time is used frequently in the Bible.

Therefore, beginning with 13 A.D. as year 1, 14 A.D. as year 2, etc., we end up with the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar being 27 A.D., which matches the prophecy of Daniel 9 which tells us Jesus' earthly Ministry would begin after the "sixty-two" weeks, that is, during the "last week" of 27 A.D. to 33 A.D.

So if Jesus was baptized by John sometime in 27 A.D., and was about thirty years old at the time, when might Jesus have been born ? As one possibility, if Jesus was baptized in the late spring or even summer of 27 A.D., He could have had His thirtieth birthday in the autumn of 26 A.D., and still have been thirty years old at the beginning of His Ministry. Have we been given any more information regarding Jesus' birth ? Yes we have.

With a little research, one can find that Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. From the Gospels, Matthew testifies that it was this Herod who sought to kill Jesus soon after He was born, and thus ordered the murder of all male children two years old and younger in Bethlehem and its surrounding districts. Matthew further tells us how Joseph escaped at that time with Mary and Jesus, taking the family to Egypt until Herod was dead.

So we know Jesus was born before Herod died, and that some time passed for these events to occur prior to the death of Herod, including the stay in Egypt for however long it was. While it's possible that Jesus might have been born in 4 B.C., the timing does seem a bit tight for all of this to happen in such a short timespan. It seems more likely perhaps that Jesus would have instead been born sometime in 5 B.C.

In addition, Luke speaks of the time immediately preceding Jesus' birth, and that a census was being taken which caused Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem, the city of Joseph's lineage. Luke 2:1-2 says, "And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria." And so, with a little research, one can find that Augustus Caesar was indeed in power in 5 B.C., and that Quirinius, while not the governor of Syria at the time, had certain trusted and assigned governing powers in Syria for Rome, such as those necessary to be in charge of a census, as Luke describes.

Let's remember that Luke was an intelligent, meticulous, and discerning researcher who lived in the Roman Empire very close to the time of the events. An upright man, Luke had absolutely zero motive to disgrace Jesus Christ.

So, whether one believes Jesus was born sometime in earlier 4 B.C. or perhaps more likely during the latter half of 5 B.C., Jesus would still have been about thirty years old at the beginning of His Ministry when baptized by John in 27 A.D. As we will see shortly, it also seems likely that Jesus was baptized *post-Passover* in 27 A.D., based on the Passovers that occurred during Jesus' earthly Ministry, as recorded in the Book of John.

The Apostle John records for us three Passovers during Jesus' Ministry. We can be sure he skipped none, having given details for two, but still mentioning the middle one to help us trace the progression of Jesus' Ministry. At the first Passover mentioned, John records the Jews telling Jesus, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple...", referring to the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem by Herod the Great beginning in 19 B.C., and continuing with updates and adornments for decades after that. To note, the construction was still going on, as shown by the "has taken" present-tense language of the Jewish leaders (as opposed to the word "took").

Now, if Jesus' Ministry started sometime post-Passover in 27 A.D., a year the prophecy from Daniel 9 points to, then this first Passover mentioned in John would have occurred in the spring of 28 A.D. At the time, the Jewish leadership surely would have known rightly that from 19 B.C. to 28 A.D. is forty-six years (no year zero), which is exactly what they told to Jesus. To add perspective, on the day the Jews said "forty-six years" to Jesus, it probably was not forty-six years to the day, but was rounded to the closest number of years. Research does show 19 B.C. to be the start of the rebuilding of the Temple, but if it was later in 20 B.C. for example, the Jewish leaders would have known, and would have given the same rounded "forty-six" as the time in years to Jesus during Passover in 28 A.D. As it is, the witness of history and the Bible together regarding the Temple leaves us an indelible time-marker for when the Jews' witness to Jesus took place, pointing to fulfillment of this prophecy.

So to review, the prophecy in Daniel 9 tells us that the last "week" of the seventy, from 27 A.D. to 33 A.D., would be the time period not only of Jesus' earthly Ministry, but also of His Crucifixion. At this point, we have seen this placement in time of His Ministry, but what about His Crucifixion?

According to the prophecy, Jesus' death on the Cross, which would put an end to the prior sacrificial system, was to occur in the "middle of" the last week. Well, the middle year of the final seven-year period was 30 A.D. Is there any information to help substantiate when Jesus' death on the Cross occurred? Yes there is.

First, Jesus Himself clearly refers to His last meal with His disciples as the Passover meal (see Matthew 26:18; Mark 14:14; Luke 22:8, 22:11, 22:15), so there is no question our Passover Lamb was killed on Passover (later in the day, according to Biblical days which run from evening (at sunset) to evening). This also matches perfectly with the record of the third Passover during Jesus' earthly Ministry as recorded in John, Jesus knowing it would be His last (John 13). So if the first Passover during Jesus' Ministry was in 28 A.D., the third Passover would have been in 30 A.D. This Passover in 30 A.D. was the day on which our Lord was crucified.

Does this qualify as "the middle of the week" of 27 A.D. to 33 A.D.? Yes it does, upholding Daniel 9 again.

But is there even *more* information regarding this? Yes. The Gospels witness extensively regarding the days of Jesus' death on Passover (Friday), His rest in the tomb on the Sabbath, and His Resurrection on the first day of the week (Sunday). We will look at just one of these pieces of evidence, for it is enough to cover all of them. From John 19:31 we have, "Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day)..."

So, we know that Jesus was crucified on Passover. By John's testimony, this was also the Preparation Day, or Friday, when people make preparations for the weekly (seventh-day) Sabbath rest which occurs the next day.

Also, beginning each year on the day *after* Passover was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which, as Leviticus 23 tells us, was a seven-day feast. On the first and seventh days of the Feast, there was to be a Holy convocation and a day of rest in which no customary work shall be done. These two special days were also referred to as "sabbaths", in this case annual sabbaths, because they were special rest days in addition to the weekly Sabbath.

So in summary, John is telling us that in the year Jesus was crucified on the Cross, the day of His Crucifixion was both Passover and Preparation Day, and the next day, the weekly Sabbath, was the first day (annual sabbath) of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, thus the weekly Sabbath was also a "high day".

Does history validate this? Did Passover indeed occur on a Friday in 30 A.D., therefore making the next day, the weekly Sabbath, also a "high day" as the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread? The answer is yes.

Instead of attempting a repeat of the details here, there is a study regarding this, done by Colin J. Humphreys and Graeme Waddington, called "The Date of the Crucifixion" (the Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation Volume 37, March 1985). Their other Scriptural discernments notwithstanding, we can hold fast to what is good, and see that Table 1 shows the day of the week when Passover occurred in 30 A.D. It was a Friday, the 14th day of the first month of the Jewish calendar (Nisan), as Exodus 12:1-6, Leviticus 23:5, and Numbers 28:16 specify. Should we be surprised when men discover that history agrees with our witnesses from the Bible? Of course not.

Let's now consider the final piece of the Seventy-Weeks Prophecy of Daniel 9. This involved the time period after the Crucifixion until the end of the last "week", meaning the end of 33 A.D., when time finally ran out for the Jewish people to end their defiance and reconcile themselves to God by accepting Jesus as their King.

Was God saying that *no* Jewish people could or would accept Jesus as their Savior after that time? No. There is no doubt that a number of Jews became believers in Christ after that time. So what then? God could simply foresee that if the majority of the Jewish people over the centuries of the prophecy, including their religious leadership, did not give up their sin and self-righteousness for God's Way of True Righteousness, including the final acceptance of His Kingdom through His Son, Jesus Christ, then the embedded, cultural inertia of their sin would become too great for them to collectively overcome on their own as a nation, and too unacceptable for God to bear any longer. God could also foresee the choice the vast majority of the Jewish nation would make.

Did the devil want the Jewish people to go past their "point of no return"? The prophecy is clear that Satan would "make a covenant with many for one week", all the way to the end of 33 A.D. The devil's desire is always to cause "desolations", that is, separation from God. Satan knew if he could get the majority of the Jews to continue to refuse Christ long enough after the Lord passed off the earthly stage, they would remain separated.

(Yes, Satan could also see in hindsight how, in his zeal to kill Christ, he unwittingly helped God and Jesus in Their plan of Salvation for those who would accept Christ and Walk according to God's Word and His Commandments. Of course the devil was angered by this defeat, and moved on with continuous effort to adulterate Christianity.)

Similar to the Jewish nation, God can foresee when any one of us might cross the line to certain destruction, and does all He can to prevent us from being separated from Him eternally. But the choice is always ours, as individuals or nations. We grieve the Holy Spirit by our continued resistance to Him, as shown in a life of continued willful sin. Refusal to repent is married to blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, and always ends terribly.

For any of us, what victory can be had by fighting God's Righteousness? In the attempt, we destroy ourselves. And if an individual or nation goes too far, to the point where the corruption reaches "critical mass", should we be surprised if the ingrained cancerous chain reaction finally becomes too prevalent, collapsing the house?

Well, God surely did not want Jerusalem or its inhabitants to be destroyed. But He knew their inclinations were against Him. Even so, by Love, He made sure to provide them what He knew to be plenty of Scripture and prophecy for them to make a good choice, including sending His Son, Jesus, directly to them to share even more teaching, prophecy, signs, and warnings, so that they might Live and not die. But if we close our ears and shut our eyes to all proof, and refuse to acknowledge the Parables of the wicked vinedressers, the invited guests who refused the Feast, the misuse of the given talent, the well-fed rich man and the beggar at his gate, the fig tree that was not bearing fruit, the son who did and the son who didn't, and on and on, not to mention countless miracles and acts of Mercy, *including* a death on a Cross, then how will we ever believe, though One rise from the dead?

But *even after* all of this - hundreds of years and an initial refusal of the Kingdom through Christ - we see from the Daniel 9 prophecy that God knew the Jews still had about three-and-a-half years to put all the pieces together and repent before their collective heart was too hardened to prevent the destruction of their nation. By their leadership's continued persecution of Christ's disciples, their choice was made, and destruction came.

What happened after that to the Jewish people is admonition for all of us. From front to back in the Bible, we are all called to good and warned against evil. Every one of us is called to surrender "our way" for God's Way. Surely, Moses' sermon in Deuteronomy 28 is still a valuable lesson for all of us, as it was then for the Jews. And every single one of Jesus' teachings is as critical now as it was when first given, by which each one of us still has the exact same choice - to either crucify Jesus or crown Him King.

History reveals the results of those choices. And so does God's Word, many years ahead of time. But who will listen when God speaks, and who will hear? Only when we learn to listen to God will we give His evidence the chance it deserves, by which God will amaze our hearts with many wonders from His Word, not the least of which is The Seventy-Weeks Prophecy of Daniel 9. Did we tell you that God gave Daniel this prophecy over 500 years before Jesus was born on the Earth? As we live in our day, doesn't He also have something to say to us?

Keep reading God's Word, my friend !

*** Notes ***

- (1) A note regarding the study of the date of Christ's Crucifixion by Colin J. Humphreys and Graeme Waddington: While not unreasonable to consider, any human-based requirement that there needs to have been an eclipse on the day of the Crucifixion is not a requirement for God. Faith dictates that if God didn't need a scissor to tear the Temple Veil in two, then He could have easily made it dark in the daytime for a few hours "like mourning for an only son" (see Amos 8:9-10). The God we worship is supernatural after all, in many things.
- (2) A search of the words "Passover" and "Unleavened Bread" in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John reveals that, even though the Passover is literally one day before the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:5-6, Numbers 28:16-17), by the time of Christ, they were often spoken of in combination, and using either term (Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:1, 14:12; Luke 2:41, 22:1, 22:7; John 2:13, 2:23, 6:4, 11:55-56, 13:1, 18:28, 19:14). John simply uses "Passover" to refer to the Feast, but his meaning is clear, as it is in the other Gospels, which testify to the first day of Unleavened Bread as being the literal Passover, with the Feast following.
- (3) If you are reading *this* note, you are one of the few who are willing to dig to get to the bottom of things. For you, here is the key to unlock the next document for the Prophecy Study of Jesus' Return: Truth "For to everyone who has, more will be given." - Jesus in Matthew 25:29