

Daniel 8:14



Theology Matters

The Advent Faith

Men will arise with interpretations of Scripture which are to them truth, but which are not truth. **The truth for this time** God has given us as a foundation for our faith. **He Himself** has taught us what is truth. One will arise, and still another with new light, which contradicts the light that God has given under the demonstration of His Holy Spirit. A few are still alive who passed through the experience gained in the establishment of this truth. God has graciously spared their lives to repeat and repeat, till the close of their lives, the experience through which they passed, even as did John the apostle till the very close of his life. And the standard-bearers who have fallen in death are to speak through the reprinting of their writings. **I am instructed that thus their voices are to be heard.** They are to bear their testimony as to what constitutes **the truth for this time.** (*20LtMs*, Lt 329, 1905, par. 18)

The scripture which above all others had been both **the foundation and the central pillar** of the advent faith was the declaration: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” Daniel 8:14. These had been familiar words to all believers in the Lord’s soon coming. By the lips of thousands was this prophecy repeated as the watchword of their faith. All felt that upon the events therein foretold depended their brightest expectations and most cherished hopes. These prophetic days had been shown to terminate in the autumn of 1844. In common with the rest of the Christian world, Adventists then held that the earth, or some portion of it, was the sanctuary. They understood that the cleansing of the sanctuary was the purification of the earth by the fires of the last great day, and that this would take place at the second advent. Hence the conclusion that Christ would return to the earth in 1844. (*GC* 409.1)

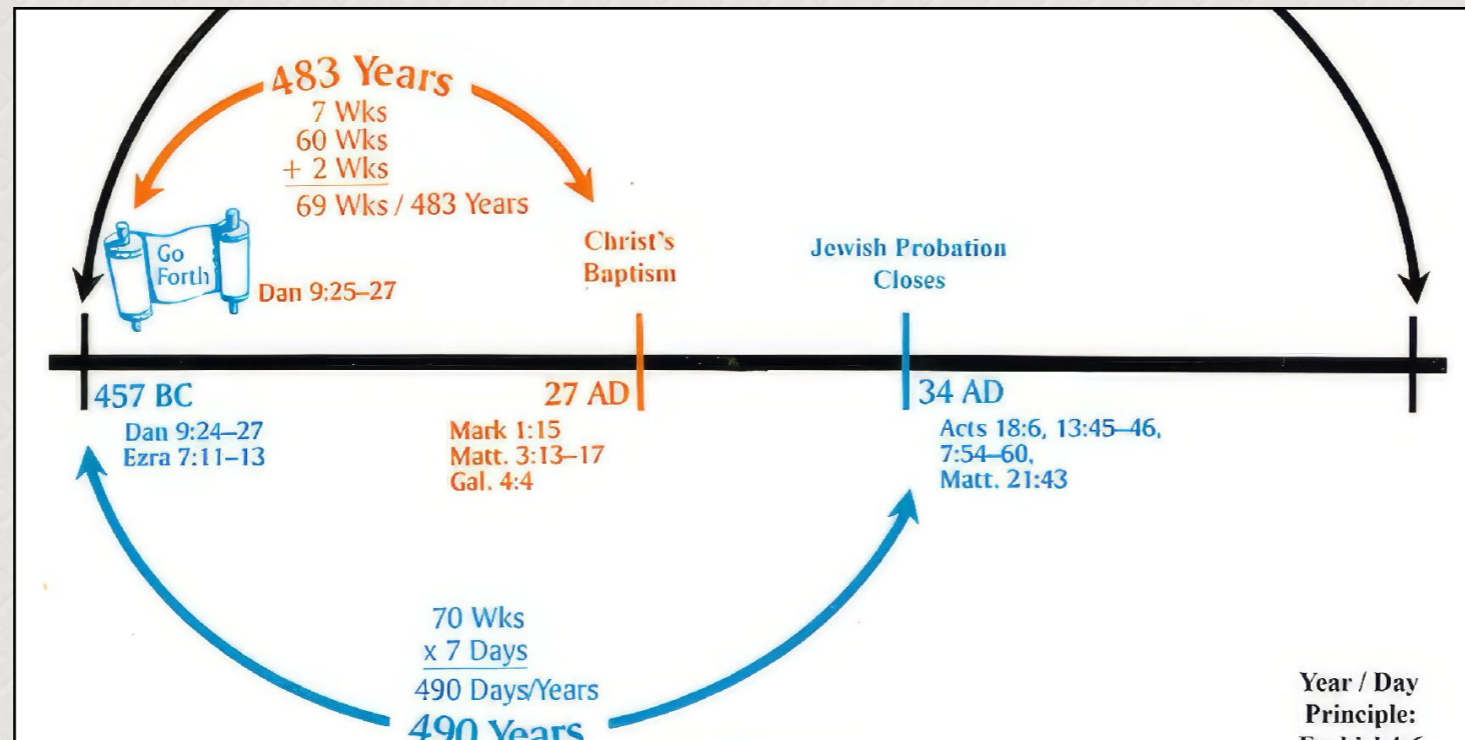
Both the prophecy of **Daniel 8:14**, “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed,” and the **first angel’s message**, “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come,” pointed to **Christ’s ministration in the most holy place**, to **the investigative judgment**, and not to the coming of Christ for the redemption of His people and the destruction of the wicked. The mistake had not been in the reckoning of the prophetic periods, but in the event to take place at the end of the 2300 days. Through this error the believers had suffered disappointment, yet all that was foretold by the prophecy, and all that they had any Scripture warrant to expect, had been accomplished. At the very time when they were lamenting the failure of their hopes, the event had taken place which was foretold by the message, and which must be fulfilled before the Lord could appear to give reward to His servants. (*GC 424.1*)

Christ had come, not to the earth, as they expected, but, as foreshadowed in the type, to the most holy place of the temple of God in heaven. He is represented by the prophet Daniel as coming at this time to the Ancient of Days: “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came”—not to the earth, but—“to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.”

Daniel 7:13. (GC 424.2)

This coming is foretold also by the prophet Malachi: “The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.” **Malachi 3:1**. The coming of the Lord to His temple was sudden, unexpected, to His people. They were not looking for Him there. They expected Him to come to earth, “in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel.” 2 Thessalonians 1:8. (*GC 424.3*)

The 2300 days had been found **to begin when the commandment of Artaxerxes** for the restoration and building of Jerusalem went into effect, in the autumn of 457 B.C. Taking this as the starting point, there was perfect harmony in the application of all the events foretold in the explanation of that period in Daniel 9:25–27. Sixty-nine weeks, the first 483 of the 2300 years, were to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One; and Christ's baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit, A.D. 27, exactly fulfilled the specification. In the midst of the seventieth week, Messiah was to be cut off. Three and a half years after His baptism, Christ was crucified, in the spring of A.D. 31. The seventy weeks, or 490 years, were to pertain especially to the Jews. At the expiration of this period the nation sealed its rejection of Christ by the persecution of His disciples, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles, A.D. 34. The first 490 years of the 2300 having then ended, 1810 years would remain. From A.D. 34, 1810 years extend to 1844. "Then," said the angel, "shall the sanctuary be cleansed." All the preceding specifications of the prophecy had been unquestionably fulfilled at the time appointed. (GC 410.1)



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WHAT time is fixed by the prophecy for the opening of the judgment hour that is to precede the coming of Christ?

We know that the 2300 days are years; for that is the rule in symbolic prophecy. (See Eze. 4:5, 6.) Doubly sure are we of it in this case, because the angel indicated that the long prophetic period would reach to "the time of the end." Dan. 8:17.

The prophecy declared: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Verse 14.

What year is marked by this longest of time prophecies?

The angel Gabriel was commanded, "Make this man to understand the vision." Verse 16. But before the angel Gabriel explained the vision of the 2300 years, Daniel had fainted.

The angel's commission to "make this man to understand the vision" was left unfulfilled so far as the time prophecy was concerned. Daniel said, "I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it." Verse 27.

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But in the next chapter we learn that the angel Gabriel came to complete the explanation. The angel in his former interview had broken off his explanation with the assurance that the vision of the 2300 years was "true." He now resumes his commission to make Daniel understand, beginning where he left off, with the vision of the time period, saying, "O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. . . . Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision." Dan. 9:22, 23.

First of all, the angel dealt with the events of the first portion of the 2300 years, this shorter period being “determined,” or “cut off,” as the word signifies,—cut off, necessarily, from the long period which the angel had come to explain. The angel Gabriel said:

“Understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks [490 days; literally, 490 years] are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.” Dan. 9:23, 24.

Thus the first portion—490 years—of the long prophetic period was to reach to the time of Christ’s ministry on earth at His first advent, when He came as the great Sacrifice “to make reconciliation for iniquity.”

But first it was essential to give the starting point for reckoning the time. “Know therefore and understand,” said Gabriel to the prophet, thus showing that he is now actually to fulfill the divine charge, “Make this man to understand the vision.” We listen with all ears; for what we too must understand is where the long measuring line begins.

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.” Verse 25.

When did this commandment to restore and build go forth? The vision had been given in the days of the captivity. The Jewish people were scattered over Babylonia and Persia. Jerusalem lay desolate. Three kings of Persia issued decrees concerning the return from captivity. In what year of history did “the commandment” of the prophecy go forth? Holy Scripture, with its handmaid, History, gives the answer.

The Decree of 457 B. C.

In a single passage, Inspiration notes the decrees of Cyrus and Darius touching the return of the Jews from captivity, and includes both with the decisive decree of Artaxerxes to

Ezra, as constituting “the commandment” to restore and build Jerusalem :

“They builded, and finished it [the temple], according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.” Ezra 6:14.

Thus “the commandment” is spoken of as one threefold commandment, completed in the sweeping and inclusive commission given to Ezra by Artaxerxes. Here, then, was the “going forth of the commandment to restore and to build.” And this decree to Ezra “went forth” in the seventh year of Artaxerxes. Ezra 7:7-9. And the seventh year of Artaxerxes was the year 457 B. C. That is the date with which the long prophetic period begins.

It fills one’s heart with awe to follow the great measuring line of prophecy from that established date of history, 457 B. C.

The first sixty-nine weeks (483 years) of the seventy weeks, —were to reach “unto the Messiah the Prince.” Counting 483 full years from the decree of 457 B. C., we arrive in the year 27 A. D.

Messiah means the “anointed.” As Jesus appeared to John by Jordan and was baptized of him, lo, the heavens opened, and in the form of a dove the Holy Spirit was visibly revealed, anointing the Saviour for His ministry on earth. Thus He was proclaimed the Messiah, the Anointed One. (See Acts 10:38.) The time of the prophecy was fulfilled, and from that time He went forth preaching: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Mark 1:15.

The time had come, and the work foretold had begun at the end of the sixty-nine weeks.

The Year of Christ's Baptism

Now, what is the historical evidence as to the time of Christ's baptism?

The key to the solution of this question is found in Luke's Gospel:

“Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, . . . the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” Luke 3:1-3.

It was (1) the fifteenth year of Tiberius, and (2) Pilate was governor.

1. The fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar. The death of Augustus was in 14 A. D. But Tiberius was associated with him as colleague shortly before Augustus’s death. Some modern histories give the time of this appointment as probably 13 A. D.; others say 12 A. D. Dion Cassius (Roman senator, born in the second century) wrote a great “History of Rome,” most of which is lost. But in the history of the events of 12 A. D. he says:

“Augustus, because he was growing old, wrote a letter commending Germanicus to the senate and the latter to Tiberius.”—*Book 56, chap. 26, translation by Herbert Baldwin Foster.*

The less is commended to the greater—Germanicus to the senate, but the senate to Tiberius, indicating that in 12 A. D. Tiberius was recognized as having the imperial dignity.

Again, in a footnote in his “History of the Christian Church,” Dr. Philip Schaff says:

“There are coins from Antioch in Syria of the date A. U. 765 [12 A. D.], with the head of Tiberius and the inscription, *Kaisar Sebastos* [Augustus].”—*Vol. I, p. 120.*

And as the first year of Tiberius would be from the latter part of 12 A. D. to 13 A. D., the fifteenth year would be from 26 A. D. to the latter part of 27 A. D.

2. “Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea.” Was Pilate governor in 27 A. D.? Josephus says that Pilate so exasperated the Jews that at last Vitellius, president of Syria, took action to remove him:

“So Vitellius sent Marcellus, a friend of his, to take care of the affairs of Judea, and ordered Pilate to go to Rome, to answer before the emperor to the accusations of the Jews. So Pilate, when he had tarried ten years in Judea, made haste to Rome, and this in obedience to the orders of Vitellius, which he durst not contradict; but before

he could get to Rome, Tiberius was dead.”—“*Antiquities*,” book 18, chap. 4.

Tiberius died March 16, 37 A. D., while Pilate was “making haste” to Rome to save his position, and possibly his life. Pilate, then, must have left Jerusalem early in 37 or in the end of 36 A. D. But he left after “ten years in Judea.” Ten years reckoned back from the end of 36 A. D., would bring the first year of his governorship from the end of 26 A. D. to the end of 27 A. D.

The time prophecy of Daniel 9 declared that 483 years from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, the Messiah, the Anointed, would appear. That index finger of divine prophecy pointed through all the centuries to the date 27 A. D.

When that year of the prophecy came, “in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, . . . the word of God came unto John,” who bore witness, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

The exact month of the baptism and anointing of Christ is not fixed by the 483-year period, reaching from 457 B. C. to 27 A. D. In these prophetic measuring lines, made up of years, the year is the unit; into greater detail the time prophecies do not ordinarily lead us, and it is fully confirmed that the event demanded by the prophecy fell within the year 27 A. D.

Yet, in this case, there is evidence by which to determine the time of the year with considerable accuracy. We know that the crucifixion was at the Passover, which came in the spring. As the spring of the year, therefore, was "in the midst" of the seven years ($3\frac{1}{2}$ years from the beginning of Christ's ministry), we may naturally conclude that the beginning of this seven-year period was in the autumn. And this agrees with the time of Ezra's arrival in Judea to restore Jerusalem and the delivery of his commission to the king's

officers, in the end of summer, or autumn of 457 B. C. Ezra 7:8. From the autumn of 457 B. C. to the autumn of 27 A. D., is exactly the 483-year period, which was to reach to the anointing, the manifestation of the Lord Jesus at His baptism.

“In the Midst of the Week”

Three and one-half years after the autumn of 27 A. D., then, —“in the midst of the week,”—the Messiah was to be cut off. This would bring the crucifixion in the spring of 31 A. D. And the facts of the Gospel narrative fit exactly into the schedule. It should be noted, however, that any controversy as to the exact date of the crucifixion does not affect the reckoning of the prophetic period, only so the event came well within this “week” of seven years. The phrase “in the midst” may not necessarily designate the exact middle point in every case; but as we shall see, the evidence in this case points to the time exactly midway of the seven years, as the date of the crucifixion, as the phrase “in the midst” naturally suggests.

After His baptism, in the autumn of 27 A. D., the first Passover attended by Jesus would be that of the next spring, 28 A. D., and the fourth Passover would be that of the crucifixion.

The Gospel of John supplies the list of these four feasts:

1. John 2:13: "The Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." (28 A. D.*)

2. John 5:1: "After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." True, the text does not say that this was a Passover, and authorities guess variously.

*It was at this Passover of 28 A. D. that the Jews said to Christ: "Forty and six years was this temple in building" (John 2:20), and even then it was not completed. Josephus says:

"Now Herod, in the eighteenth year of his reign, . . . undertook a very great work, that is, to build of himself the temple of God and make it larger."
—*"Antiquities,"* book 15, chap. 11.

The eighteenth year of his reign, from his conquest of Jerusalem and the death of its former king, Antigonus, was the year 735 A. U. (year of Rome). (See Schaff's "History of the Christian Church," Vol. I, page 126.) Forty-six years added brings us to 781 A. U., or 28 A. D. Just the method of the Jews in reckoning their forty-six years of work on the temple may not be agreed upon; but Farrar says: "As the temple was begun in [the month] Kisleu, the exact date is probably 28 A. D."—*"Life of Christ,"* chap. 13, note.

But the prophetic period is a guide that establishes the probability of four Passovers between the baptism and the cross. And the Passover was essentially the feast on which the Jewish believers were instructed to go “up to Jerusalem.” (29 A. D.)

3. John 6:4: “The Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.” (30 A. D.)

4. John 13:1: “Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come.” (31 A. D.*)

The “midst of the week” had come; and the Messiah was to be “cut off, but not for Himself.” Dan. 9:26. He was cut off for all men, “for us.” “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” Isa. 53:5.

"He Shall Confirm the Covenant With Many for One Week"

The death of Christ for us, when the fullness of time had come, is too great a theme even to approach in this outline study of great eras in the fulfillment of time prophecies. The theme of that infinite sacrifice will be the study through the ages of eternity. Human philosophies of the atoning work and ministry seem only to obscure the sacred truth. "He died for me," is the sum of it all. And all the height and depth and length and breadth of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" are in the laying hold by faith of that glorious truth, "He died for me." Let your heart say it over, reader, every day: "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

*It is sometimes alleged as an objection to 31 A. D. as the date of the crucifixion, that astronomical calculation shows that the Passover could not have fallen on Friday in that year. Aside from disagreement of authorities in working out the Passover dates, it is to be remembered that the new moon from which the Passover was reckoned, was not the astronomical new moon, mathematically exact, but the new moon of ordinary observation by watchers on the hilltops. The state of the weather and the vision of the watchers were factors making it sure that often the new moon of observation must have been in disagreement with that of exact mathematical calculation. A German writer, Kelm, in his "Jesus of Nazareth," tells how several students demonstrated this matter by actual observation. He says:

"Indeed, a careful experimental investigation concerning the actual time of the first visibility of the new moon afforded to Wurm, and after him to Auger and Wieseler, the result that it could occur on the first, second, third, nay even fourth day after the astronomical new moon."—*Vol. VI, p. 242.*

There, in the “midst of the week,” at the middle point of the last seven-year period of the prophecy, was set up the cross, “towering o’er the wrecks of time.”

“I, if I be lifted up from the earth,” said Christ, “will draw all men unto Me.” John 12:32. This is why there is a divine power pleading with every heart to yield to God. “That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” John 1:9. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

It was to tell this “good news” to all men that Christ commissioned His disciples to go forth. The full period of seventy weeks—490 years from the commission to Ezra, 457 B. C.—had been allotted to the Jewish people. They had been given a special place in the working out of God’s plan. It was not because God had not all along loved all men, but because, as children of Abraham of old, that people were called to bless all nations by their witness to the living God.

Three and one-half years of His ministry had been given among them. Then He was crucified, rose again, and ascended to heaven. Three and one-half years yet remained of that last prophetic week. The Messiah was to “confirm the covenant with many for one week.” In the person of His apostles and witnesses the gospel was still pressed especially upon that people of Jerusalem, “to the Jew first,” “beginning at Jerusalem.” The covenant was confirmed with “many,” “and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.” Acts 5:14.

The three and one-half years of special ministry to that people would end in 34 A. D. And that was about the year

of Stephen's martyrdom, when the whole Jewish council had again rejected the appeal of the Holy Ghost. The great body of Christian believers in Jerusalem was driven out by persecution, and "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." Acts 8:4. The Gentiles responded in Samaria; the Ethiopian treasurer received the gospel on the road to Gaza. The gospel message had fairly passed the boundaries of Jerusalem, and was on its course toward all nations—"unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Though every Jew, as every other man, still had the gospel invitation pressed upon him, the time of that people as God's special witnesses had passed. They had failed to keep the trust, and Christ's word to the Jews was fulfilled: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. 21:43. This "nation" is the nation "of them which are saved," the children of Abraham by faith, "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." Col. 3:11. The seventy weeks, or 490 years, allotted to the Jewish nation ended.

Thus with His own life and the ministry of His disciples He set His seal to “the vision and prophecy,” according to the angel’s word to Daniel:

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.” Dan. 9:24.

In 1844 the Judgment Hour Began

The events of Christ’s ministry had set the seal of accuracy to the date 457 B. C. as the beginning of the time prophecy. Measuring onward from 457 B. C., when the prophetic period began, the 2300 years ended in the year 1844.

In that year, therefore, the time came for the opening of the judgment scene in heaven, described in Daniel 7:9, 10. From that year onward until that solemn service is finished,

the gospel message is due the world, "The hour of His judgment is come." In a later prophecy, in the Revelation, this judgment hour message is made very clear.

The prophecy was given in order that we in this generation may know that the judgment hour has come in heaven above. This great tribunal first passes upon the cases of the dead from the days of Adam down. It is "the time of the dead, that they should be judged." Rev. 11:18. Some day that solemn review of the record books of heaven will come to the living. Then may we be found ready.

(W. A. Spicer, *Beacon Lights of Prophecy*, pp. 94, 97, 98-107)

Where do we find a prophecy concerning “the cleansing of the sanctuary”?

In prophecy, symbols are used. Where do we find prophetic symbol of time of a day for a year?

2300 days, or years, would take us beyond the time of Christ, as this prophecy was given to Daniel about 600 years before Christ. Since there is no sanctuary on earth today, it must refer to the sanctuary in heaven. What text tells us there is a sanctuary in heaven?

In order to establish the beginning date of the 2300-year prophecy, we need to go back into the history of the city of Jerusalem.

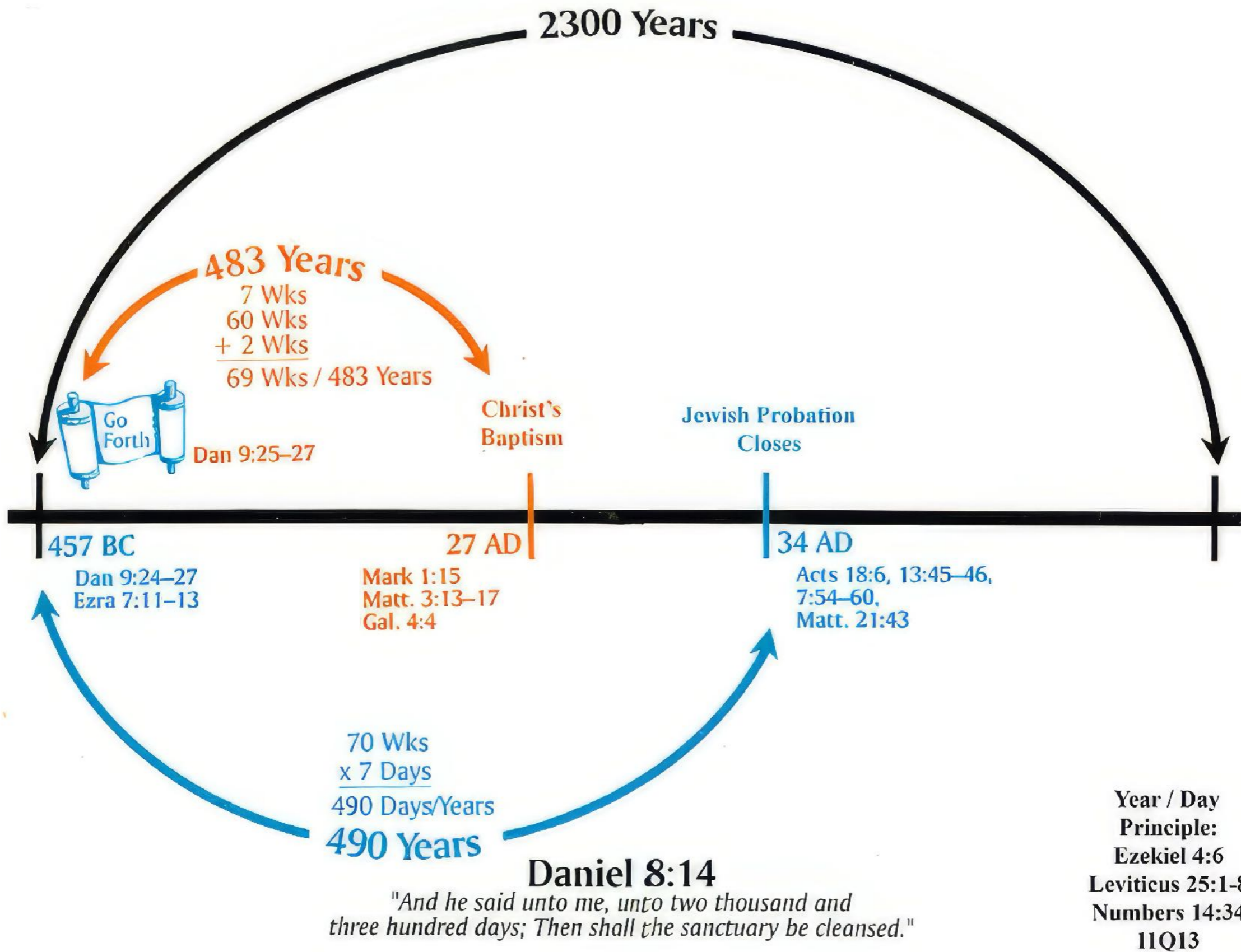
What warning was given the Israelites through the prophet Jeremiah concerning Jerusalem? (Jeremiah 17:27). Cities were built with walls for protection. The gates of the walls into the cities were the business districts where all city business and trading was carried on. Strangers would come to the gates and trade with the inhabitants of the city. The Jews were supposed to close the gates before sundown on the sixth day of the week in preparation for the Sabbath and were not to open them before the Sabbath was over the next evening. Evidently they were not obeying this command, and God warned them that if they continued to break the Sabbath, he would destroy their city.

This was fulfilled (2 Chron. 36:14-21). Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city of Jerusalem and took the Jews into captivity to Babylon for 70 years. The first king to help return their freedom was Cyrus, King of Persia (Isa. 44:28; 45:13). Under what three kings was the city rebuilt (Ezra 6:14)? Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes. What was the last decree? By whom was it given and when? Ezra 7:11-26

The final decree giving the Jews their full freedom to set up their own government once again was given by Artaxerxes in 457 BC. Whatever Daniel saw in the eighth chapter of the book of Daniel, it made a strong man faint, and he was sick for a while (Dan. 8:27). He did not understand the vision. The first part of the ninth chapter is his prayer in behalf of his people, during which an angel was sent to help him understand the vision.

What was the interpretation? (Dan. 9:24-27) Check your chart as you go. How much time was allotted to the Jews? 70 weeks or 490 years. We have to remember that the Jews had the gospel and were to take it to the world, but they had failed. God had punished them severely, and now they had their freedom once more. He told them he would give them 490 more years, and that would be all. This 490 years is cut off from the 2300 years.

When was the commandment given to restore and to build Jerusalem? (Ezra 7:11-26)--457 BC. C. When was the Messiah announced to the world? At his baptism in AD 27. It took the Jews seven weeks or 49 years to finish rebuilding the wall. They finished it in the year 408 BC. How long was it until the baptism of Jesus? 62 more weeks, or 434 years. What was to take place after the 62 weeks or 434 years? The Messiah was to be cut off. Three and one-half years after the baptism of Jesus, he was crucified. How many weeks are left of the 70 up to the baptism of Jesus? One week is left. What was to happen in the midst of this final week? The sacrificial system was to end. Dan. 9:27, first part. The whole sacrificial service ended when Jesus died on the cross.



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