

Apostles Persecuted

Acts 6, 7

Now all these things happened unto them for
ensamples: and they are written for our
admonition, upon whom the ends of the world
are come. (1 Corinthians 10:11)

- ❑ Acts 5:18—Peter & John in prison—*EW* 194.3
- ❑ By the power of Jesus the disciples continued to heal the afflicted and the sick who were brought to them. Hundreds enlisted daily under the banner of a crucified, risen, and ascended Saviour. The priests and elders, and those particularly engaged with them, were alarmed. **Again** they put the apostles in prison, hoping that the excitement would subside. (*EW* 194.3)

They were planning how to do this, when **an angel from God was sent to Gamaliel to move upon his heart to counsel the chief priest and rulers.** Said Gamaliel, Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. The evil angels were moving upon the priests and elders to put the apostles to death; but God sent his angel to prevent it, by raising up a voice in favor of the disciples in their own ranks. (1SG 85.1)

Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:29)

- ❑ Hebrew midwives were instructed to kill newborn baby boys (Exodus 1:15–17)
- ❑ Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego—fiery furnace (Daniel 3:18)
- ❑ Daniel—prayed and ended up in lions' den (Daniel 6:10)
- ❑ The Magi—did not report back to Herod (Matthew 2:8,12)
- ❑ Peter & John (Acts 4:18; 5:28)
- ❑ End time—we will have a choice to make too—Revelation 13:15; 14:9, 10

The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity. “They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” **Malachi 3:17**. (GC 634.1)

Says the psalmist: "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me."

Psalm 27:5. Christ has spoken: "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity." **Isaiah 26:20, 21.**

Glorious will be the deliverance of those who have patiently waited for His coming and whose names are written in the book of life. (GC 634.1)

When for the truth's sake the believer stands at the bar of earthly tribunals, Christ stands by his side. When he is confined within prison walls, Christ manifests Himself to him and cheers his heart with His love. When he suffers death for Christ's sake, the Saviour says to him, They may kill the body, but they cannot hurt the soul. "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness." **John 16:33; Isaiah 41:10.** (AA 85.1)

“They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even forever.” “He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in His sight.” **Psalms 125:1–3; 72:14.**

“The Lord of hosts shall defend them; ... the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of His people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon His land.” **Zechariah 9:15, 16.** (AA 86.1, .2)

Shortly before His crucifixion Christ had bequeathed to His disciples a legacy of peace. "Peace I leave with you," He said, "My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." **John 14:27**. This peace is not the peace that comes through conformity to the world. Christ never purchased peace by compromise with evil. The peace that Christ left His disciples is internal rather than external and was ever to remain with His witnesses through strife and contention. (AA 84.1)

Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *Whose mind is stayed on thee*: Because he trusteth in thee. (**Isaiah 26:3**)

In the hour of peril and distress “the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them.” **Psalms 34:7**. (GC 632.1)

Stephen

Acts 6, 7

He perceived the resistance that met his words, which were spoken at the dictation of the Holy Ghost. He knew that he was giving his last testimony. **Few who read this address of Stephen properly appreciate it.** The occasion, the time and place should be borne in mind to make his words convey their full significance. (3SP 297.2)

Stephen was questioned as to the truth of the charges against him, and took up his defense in a **clear, thrilling voice** that rang through the council hall. He proceeded to rehearse the history of the chosen people of God, in words that held the assembly **spell-bound**. He showed a thorough knowledge of the Jewish economy, and the spiritual interpretation of it now made manifest through Christ. He began with Abraham, and traced down through history from generation to generation, going through all the national records of Israel to Solomon, taking up the most impressive points to vindicate his cause. (3SP 296.2)

At that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, everyone that shall be found written in the book. (Daniel 12:1)

Jacob's experience during that night of wrestling and anguish **represents the trial** through which the people of God must pass just before Christ's second coming. The prophet Jeremiah, in holy vision looking down to this time, said, "We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.... All faces are turned into paleness. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."

Jeremiah 30:5–7. (*PP* 201.1)

When Christ shall cease His work as mediator in man's behalf, then this time of trouble will begin. Then the case of every soul will have been decided, and there will be no atoning blood to cleanse from sin. When Jesus leaves His position as man's intercessor before God, the solemn announcement is made, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11. Then the restraining Spirit of God is withdrawn from the earth. As Jacob was threatened with death by his angry brother, so the people of God will be in peril from the wicked who are seeking to destroy them. And as the patriarch wrestled all night for deliverance from the hand of Esau, so the righteous will cry to God day and night for deliverance from the enemies that surround them. (*PP* 201.2)

Fearful is the issue to which the world is to be brought.

The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that “all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond” (Revelation 13:16), shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath. **All who refuse compliance will be visited with civil penalties, and it will finally be declared that they are deserving of death.** On the other hand, the law of God enjoining the Creator’s rest day demands obedience and threatens wrath against all who transgress its precepts. (GC 604.2)

As the controversy extends into new fields and the minds of the people are called to God's downtrodden law, Satan is astir. The power attending the message will only madden those who oppose it. The clergy will put forth almost superhuman efforts to shut away the light lest it should shine upon their flocks. By every means at their command they will endeavor to suppress the discussion of these vital questions. The church appeals to the strong arm of civil power, and, in this work, papists and Protestants unite. As the movement for Sunday enforcement becomes more bold and decided, the law will be invoked against commandment keepers. They will be threatened with fines and imprisonment, and some will be offered positions of influence, and other rewards and advantages, as inducements to renounce their faith. But their steadfast answer is: "Show us from the word of God our error" — the same plea that was made by Luther under similar circumstances. Those who are arraigned before the courts make a strong **vindication of the truth**, and **some who hear them are led to take their stand to keep all the commandments of God**. Thus light will be brought before thousands who otherwise would know nothing of these truths. (GC 607.1)

Conscientious obedience to the word of God will be treated as rebellion. (GC 608.1)

As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. . . . They become **the most bitter enemies of their former brethren.**

When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them. (GC 608.2)

But so long as Jesus remains man's intercessor in the sanctuary above, the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit is felt by rulers and people. It still controls to some extent the laws of the land. Were it not for these laws, the condition of the world would be much worse than it now is. **While many of our rulers are active agents of Satan, God also has His agents among the leading men of the nation.** The enemy moves upon his servants to propose measures that would greatly impede the work of God; but statesmen who fear the Lord are influenced by holy angels to oppose such propositions with unanswerable arguments. Thus a few men will hold in check a powerful current of evil. The opposition of the enemies of truth will be restrained that the third angel's message may do its work. When the final warning shall be given, it will arrest the attention of these leading men through whom the Lord is now working, and some of them will accept it, and will stand with the people of God through the time of trouble. (GC 610.3)

Though the rulers of this world know it not, yet often in their councils angels have been spokesmen. Human eyes have looked upon them; human ears have listened to their appeals; human lips have opposed their suggestions and ridiculed their counsels; human hands have met them with insult and abuse. In the council hall and the court of justice these heavenly messengers have shown an intimate acquaintance with human history; they have proved themselves better able to plead the cause of the oppressed than were their ablest and most eloquent defenders. They have defeated purposes and arrested evils that would have greatly retarded the work of God and would have caused great suffering to His people. (GC 632.1)

When He leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God **without an intercessor**. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. . . . Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old. (GC 614.1)

When he connected Jesus Christ with the prophecies, and spoke of the temple as he did, the priest, affecting to be horror-stricken, rent his robe. This act was to Stephen a signal that his voice would soon be silenced forever.

Although he was just in the midst of his sermon, he abruptly concluded it by suddenly **breaking away** from the chain of history, and, turning upon his infuriated judges, said, “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.”

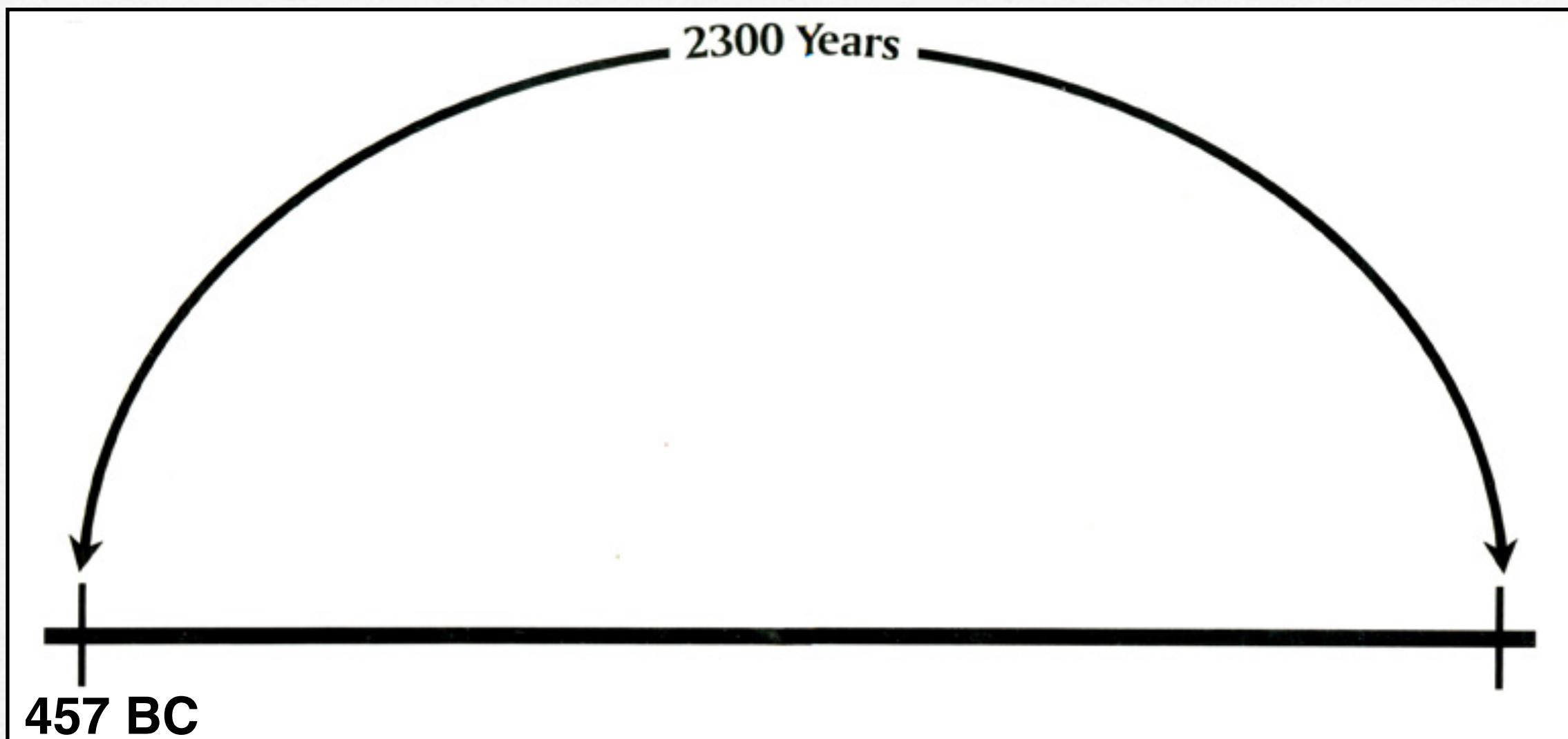
(3SP 298.1)

At this the priests and rulers were beside themselves with anger. They were more like wild beasts of prey than like human beings. They rushed upon Stephen, gnashing their teeth. But he was not intimidated; he had expected this. His face was calm, and shone with an angelic light. The infuriated priests and the excited mob had no terrors for him. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into Heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." (3SP 298.2)

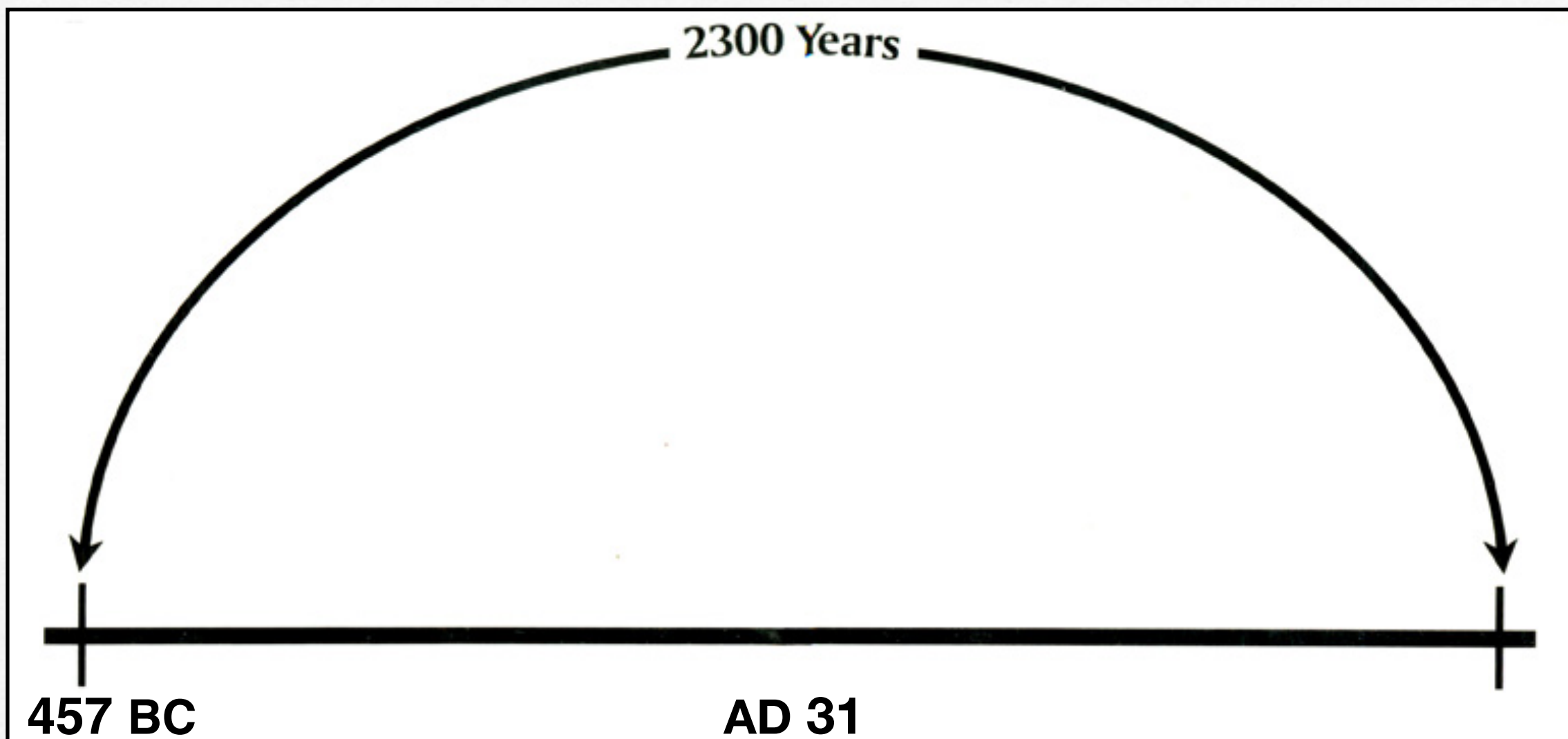
The scene about him faded from his vision; the gates of Heaven were ajar, and Stephen, looking in, saw the glory of the courts of God, and Christ, as if just risen from his throne, standing ready to sustain his servant, who was about to suffer martyrdom for his name. When Stephen proclaimed the glorious scene opened before him, it was more than his persecutors could endure. They stopped their ears, that they might not hear his words, and uttering loud cries ran furiously upon him with one accord. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this he fell asleep." (3SP 298.3)

The martyrdom of Stephen made a deep impression upon all who witnessed it. It was a sore trial to the church, but **resulted in the conversion of Saul**. The faith, constancy, and glorification of the martyr could not be effaced from his memory. The signet of God upon his face, his words, that reached to the very soul of all who heard them, except those who were hardened by resisting the light, remained in the memory of the beholders, and testified to the truth of that which he had proclaimed. (3SP 299.2)

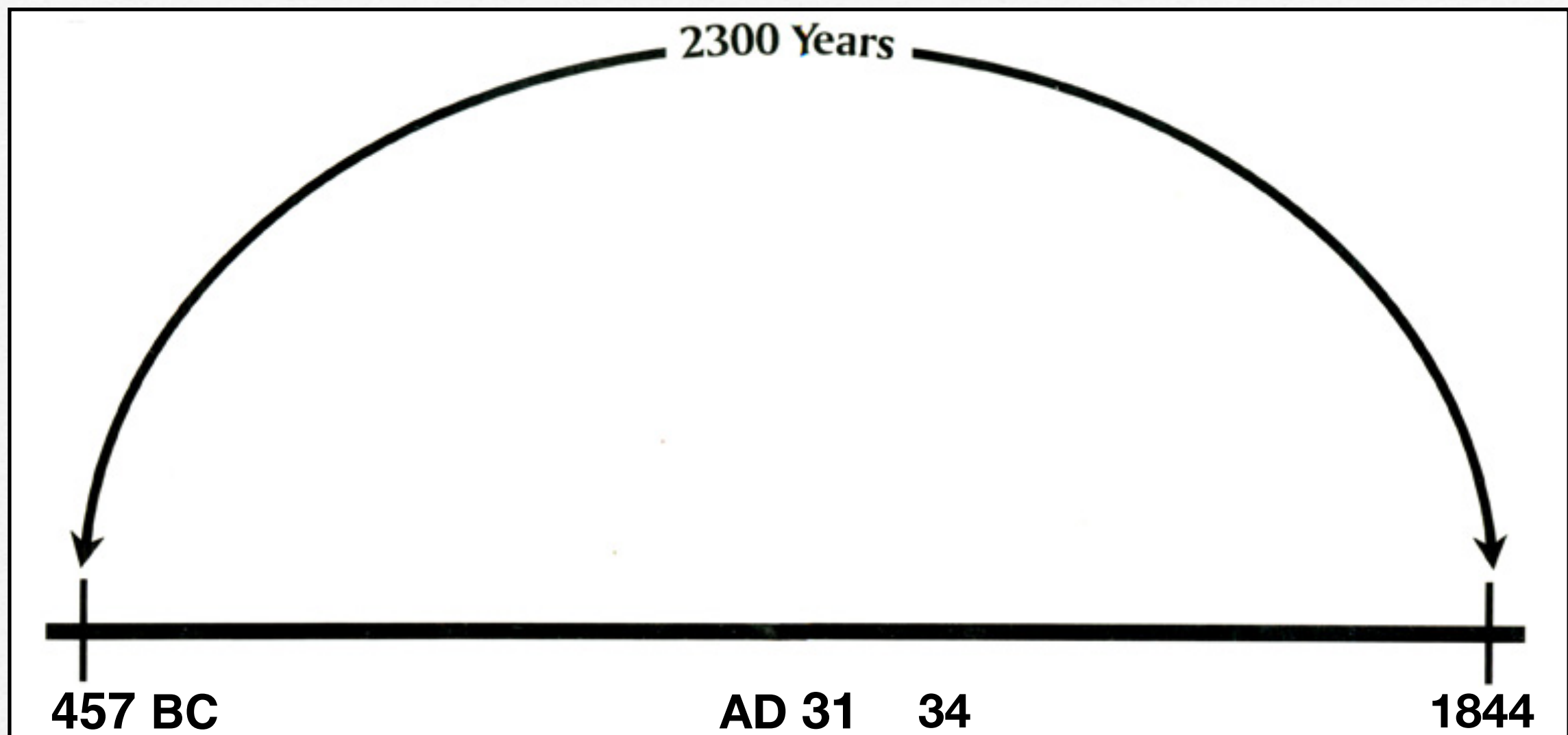
The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration:
“Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”
Daniel 8:14. (*GC 409.1*)



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 BC. 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. (*GC* 410.1)

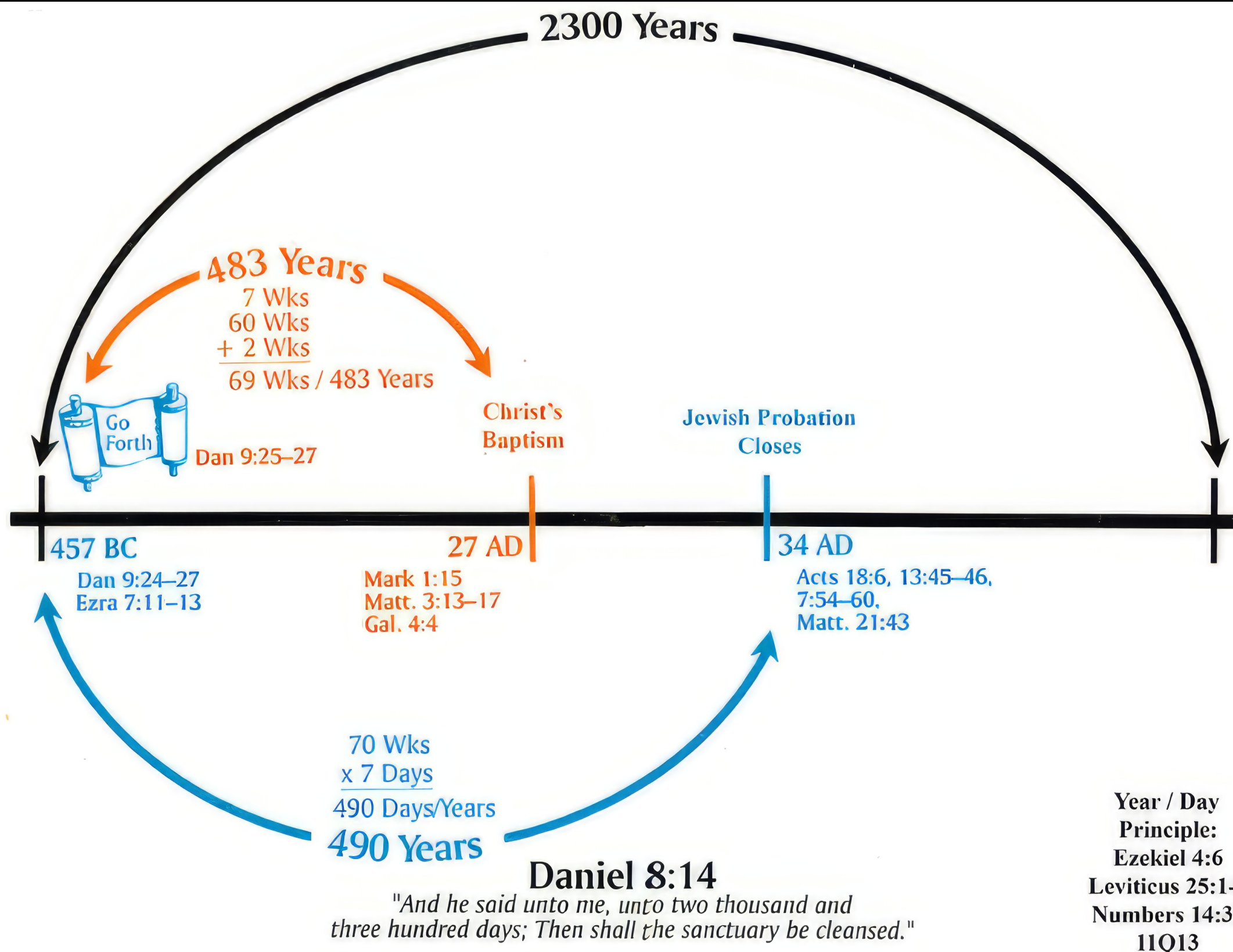


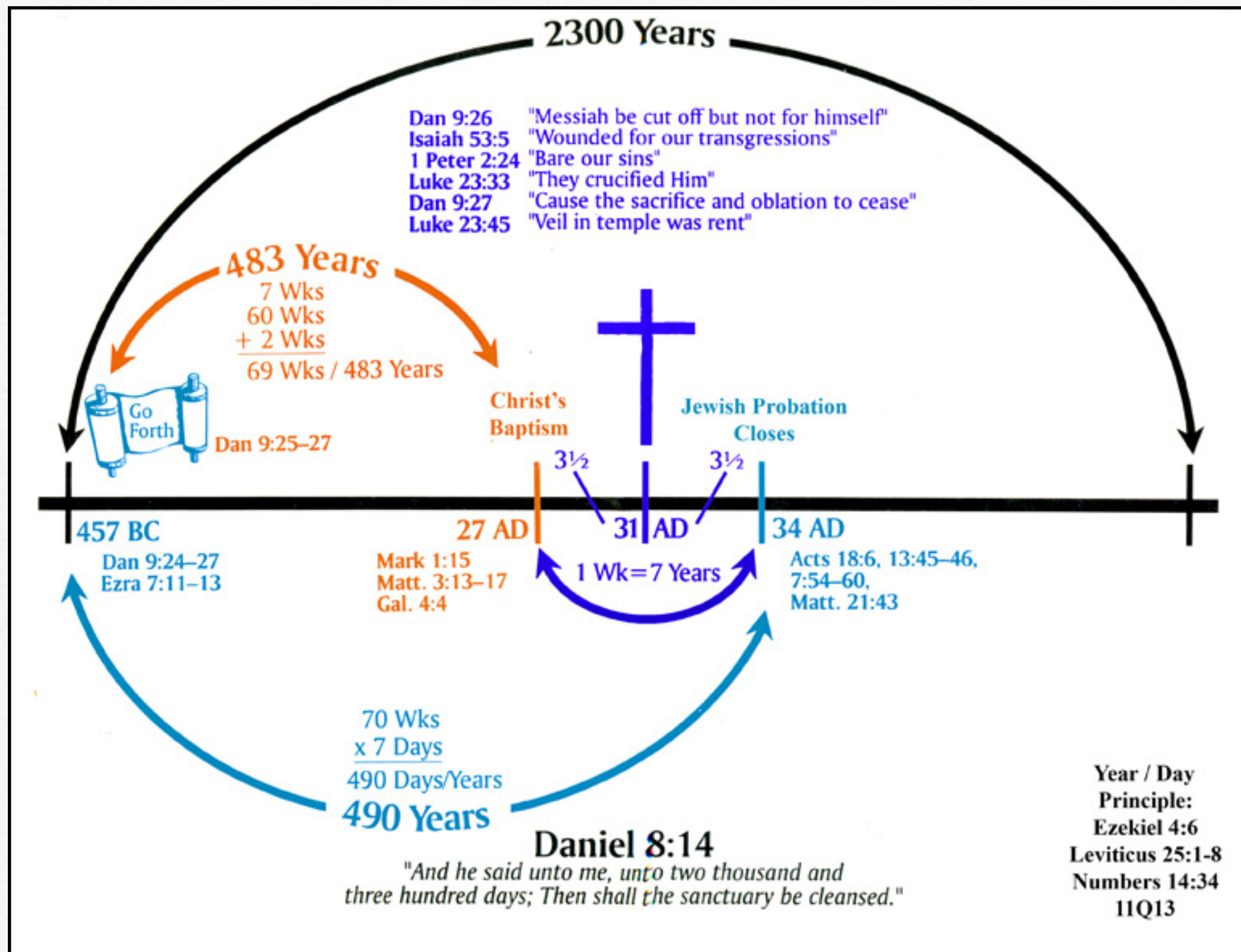
Sixty-nine weeks, the first 483 of the 2300 years, were to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One; and Christ's baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit, AD 27, exactly fulfilled the specification. In the midst of the seventieth week, Messiah was to be cut off. Three and a half years after His baptism, Christ was crucified, in the spring of AD 31. (*GC 410.1*)



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, AD 34.

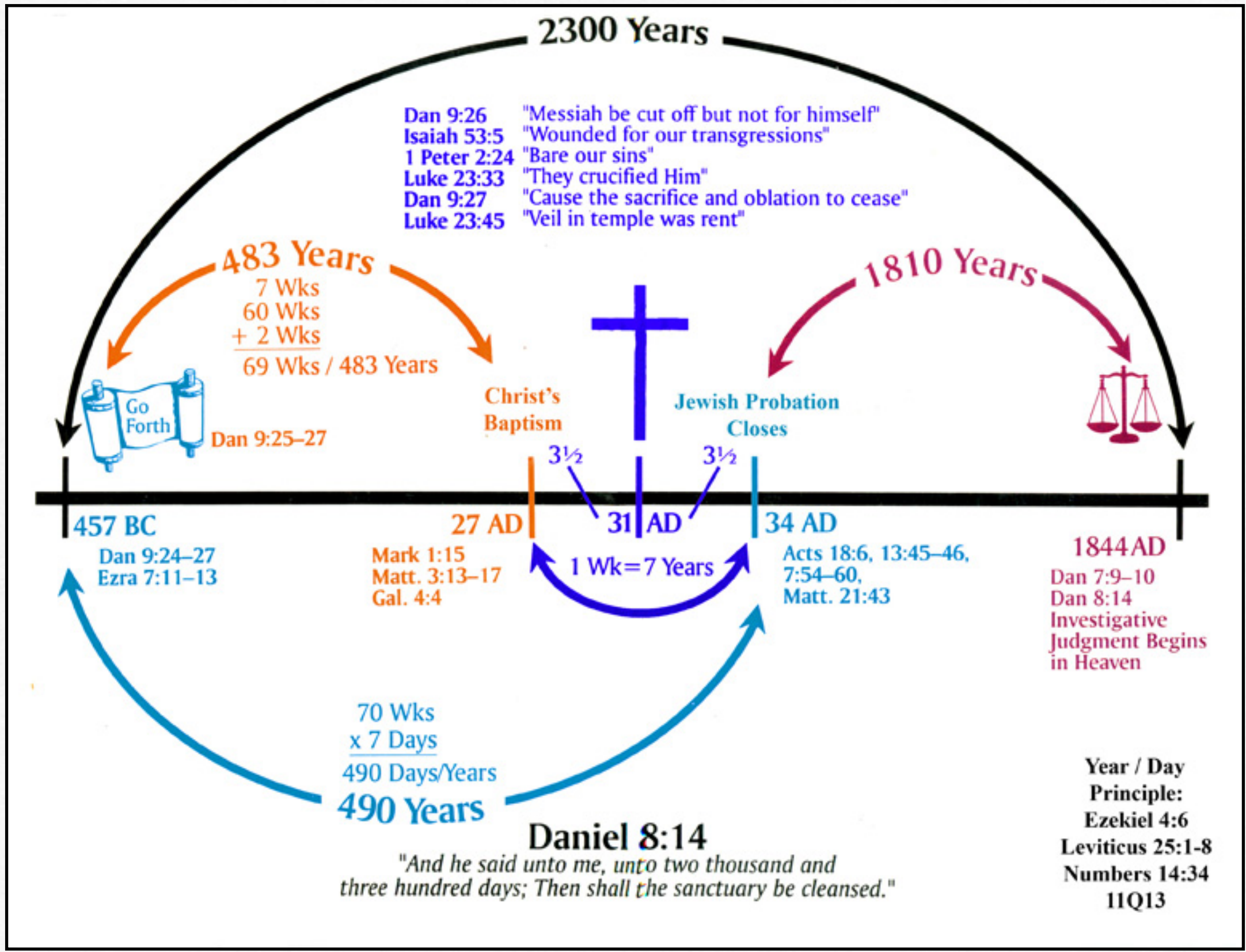
The first 490 years of the 2300 having then ended, 1810 years would remain. From AD 34, 1810 years extend to 1844. "Then," said the angel, "shall the sanctuary be cleansed."(*GC* 410.1)

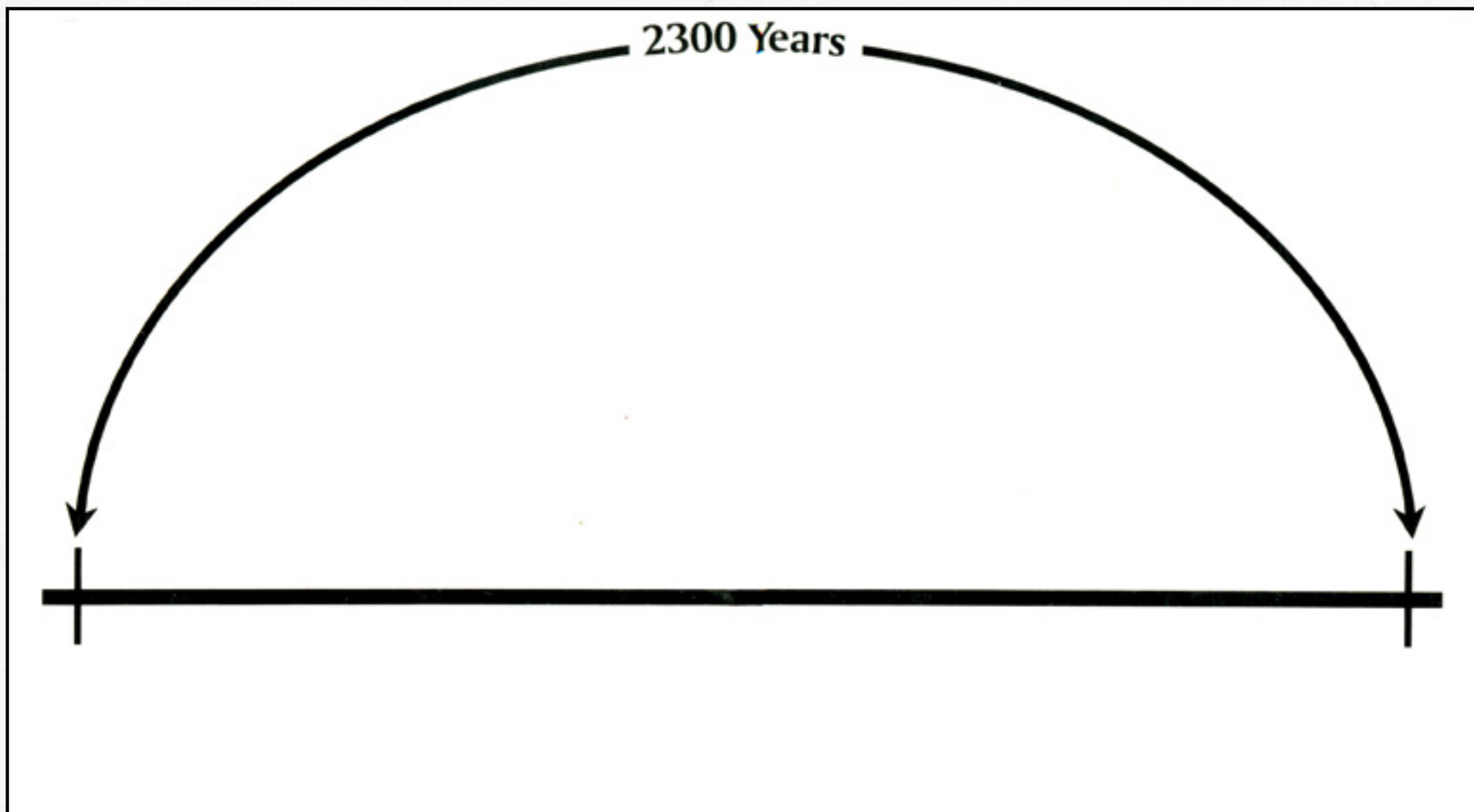




2300
-490
1810

34
+1810
1844





Daniel 8:___

- ❑ Daniel
- ❑ Isaiah, Psalms, Jeremiah
- ❑ Revelation 12, 13, 14

- . . . he was also a student of the prophecies and learned in all matters of the law. He ably defended the truths he advocated, and utterly defeated his opponents. (*SR 262*)

But Saul met in Stephen one as highly educated as himself, and one who had a full understanding of the purpose of God in the spreading of the gospel to other nations. He believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and was fully established in regard to the privileges of the Jews; but his faith was broad, and he knew the time had come when the true believers should worship not alone in temples made with hands; but, throughout the world, men might worship God in **Spirit and in truth**. The veil had dropped from the eyes of Stephen, and he **discerned to the end of that which was abolished by the death of Christ**.

(SR 263.1)

They were slow to discern to the end of that which had been abolished by the death of Christ, and to perceive that all their **sacrificial offerings** had but prefigured the death of the Son of God, in which type had met its antitype rendering valueless the divinely appointed **ceremonies and sacrifices** of the Jewish religion. (*LP* 64.2)

After the meeting of Jesus with the brethren, at Galilee, the disciples returned to Jerusalem; and while the eleven were gathered together in the city **Jesus met with them**, and again led their minds out into the prophecies concerning himself. **He deeply impressed upon their understanding** the necessity of thoroughly studying the ancient prophecies regarding Messiah, and of comparing them with the facts of his life, death, and resurrection, in order to establish their fulfillment in himself. They were to diligently trace link after link of sacred truth revealed by the prophets, in types and figures representing the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. **He lifted the veil from their understanding**, concerning the typical system of the Jews, and they now saw clearly the meaning of the forms and symbols which were **virtually abolished by the death of Christ.** (3SP 249.1)

When Stephen had reached this point there was a tumult among the people. The prisoner read his fate in the countenances before him. He perceived the resistance that met his words, which were spoken at the dictation of the Holy Ghost. He knew that he was giving his last testimony. **Few who read this address of Stephen properly appreciate it.** The occasion, the time and place should be borne in mind to make his words convey their full significance. (3SP 297.2)

Treasure in Earthen Vessels

2 Corinthians 4:2, 6–9, 17–18