

THE PROOF OF THE BIBLE

What is the Bible? Is it truly the inspired Word of God? How can we know? Does it have any characteristics that make it different from and superior to, all of the other “holy books?” Does it have a uniqueness, which sets it apart from any other works of literature or other religious or ethical writings? Actually, it does and in a number of very surprising ways.

This investigation regarding a number of unique aspects of the Bible is quite detailed and in-depth. It explores scientific laws and discoveries as well as historical prophecies and their fulfillments. In order to help the reader see a bird’s eye view of the matters covered herein, an outline has been prepared. There is also an appendix at the end of the document with a timeline of the historical fulfillment of some of the key prophecies presented here. We hope this outline will help the reader get a clearer view of the structure of this investigation regarding the Bible being God’s Word to man. We have also prepared a shorter version of this document, which is available for those readers who would prefer a more concise presentation of the material included in this document.

The Bible—Conceived Out of Time

The crucial point of this document is: to demonstrate that the Bible is a book whose source is outside of the dimension of time; it was inspired by God.

I. Proof Based on Time

A. Time Had a Beginning

Astronomy and physics support the biblical revelation that time, space, and matter had a beginning.

B. Time is Relative to the Observer

This fact supports the biblical revelation that time varies between observers, e.g., between God and man.

C. Space and Time are Fundamentally Linked

Physics supports the biblical revelation that space and time are one interwoven fabric.

D. Space-time is Expanding

Physics supports the biblical revelation that space-time is expanding or being stretched out.

E. There Are Multiple Dimensions of Space-time

Supports the biblical revelation that this universe as we know it, is not all that exists; there are more dimensions than just this one.

II. God Authenticates His Word

A. Proof Based on the Bible's Heptatic Structure

Shows a mathematical structure in the Bible that could not have been produced by the writers.

B. Proof Based on Predictive Prophecy

1. The Babylonian Empire

- a. Prophecy of the conquering of Judah by Babylon and the captivity of the Jews in Babylon for 70 years.
- b. Prophecy of the release of the Jews from Babylon and their return to Jerusalem after their 70 years of captivity in Babylon were fulfilled.

2. Cyrus the Great

Shows the fulfillment of the prophecy that the Medes, led by Cyrus, would conquer the Babylonians, and set the Jews free to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple.

3. The Messiah

Shows that Daniel's prophecy pinpointed the time when the Messiah [the Christ] would appear and be killed.

4. The Temple

Shows the history of the destruction of the Second Temple as prophesied by Daniel and by Jesus Himself.

III. Conclusion:

- The heptatic structure of the Bible exists in the text of both the Hebrew and the Greek manuscripts. It exists in the language of the text itself (7 days, 7 weeks, etc.), which could have been written purposely under the influence of the writers. However, the heptatic structure also exists in a *hidden* way, which was undoubtedly far beyond the awareness of the writers. This structure shows an underlying uniformity of authorship. So amazing is this structure that it can even be considered as God's very own signature. The Bible is not man's thought; it was written through prophets who wrote under divine inspiration (2 Pet. 1:20-21).
- When the Bible was written, the various writers included descriptions of phenomena that men of science would not discover for thousands of years. They had no way to discover these things on their own, nor were they known by anyone at their time. They claimed that God Himself was the source of the revelations. What we can say is that we have no other explanation.
- These prophecies were detailed, specific, and fulfilled by empires and kings exactly as foretold by those who said they spoke from God. This shows that the Author had knowledge of the future, and perhaps even guided the events of history.

The Bible – Conceived Outside the Dimension of Time

What is the Bible? Is it truly the inspired Word of God? How can we know? Does it have any characteristics that make it different from and superior to, all of the other “holy books?” Does it have a uniqueness, which sets it apart from any other works of literature or other religious or ethical writings? Actually, it does and in a number of very surprising ways. One way we can see this uniqueness is through the Bible’s treatment of the dimension we call *time*.

I. Proof of the Bible Based on Time

Let us now consider what scientists have discovered over the years concerning the dimension of time and how these things show that the source of the authorship of the Bible is from outside of time.

The Bible, written thousands of years ago, displays knowledge of modern astronomy and physics that the writers had no environmental way to acquire. Their claim is that it came from God. This knowledge was not only, *not* shared by other religions, but until recently, was also disputed by scientists. It was not until the 20th century A.D. that the Bible’s pronouncements could even be tested. Through such testing, scientists such as Canadian astrophysicist Hugh Ross¹ came to believe in the veracity of the Bible and had to overturn their own previous understanding.

A. Time Had a Beginning

In 1929, astronomer Edwin Hubble discovered that the universe *was expanding*². If the expansion were run backward, like re-winding a movie, eventually, the universe would shrink back to a point known as the initial singularity, an infinitely dense, infinitely small point of high energy and matter. It is widely accepted by scientists that the universe, including time and space, arose out of this singularity in a process known as the Big Bang³. This indicates that the universe had a beginning.

This is not a surprise to those who know the Bible, because the first verse, Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

This denotes that the dimension of time, the three dimensions of space, and matter were created at a discrete point in time. In the footnotes for this verse in the Holy Bible Recovery Version⁴, it says that “beginning” refers to the beginning of time, which began at the creation of the universe. Other scholarly commentaries referring to this verse also point this out.

So right at the beginning of the Bible, in the first verse, we see how this book is telling us something marvelous and mysterious concerning the source of the Bible; that is, that its source is outside the dimension of time.

B. Time Is Relative to the Observer

In 1905, Albert Einstein shocked the scientific community by introducing his Special Theory of Relativity⁵. He postulated that space and time would be different - space would contract (shrink) and time would dilate (slow down) - depending on the velocity and reference frame of the observer. As the observer approached very high speeds, space would contract and time itself would slow down. At the speed of light, the observer would not be able to perceive the passage of time.

If this proved to be true, it would mean that time would pass differently for two different observers depending upon their speed! Time is relative! It would also mean that theoretically speaking, a place of “no time” – eternity – is possible.

Mathematically we can see the contraction of space and the dilation of time through the Lorentz transformations, named after the Dutch physicist Hendrik Lorentz. These transformations are a dictionary relating space and time coordinates in the frame of one observer to the space and time coordinates of another observer that is moving at constant speed with respect to the first observer. The Lorentz transformations lead to the Lorentz factor, which quantifies the amount of space contraction and time dilation. Interestingly, Lorentz began to develop these mathematical transformations since 1895, before Einstein began to work on his Special Theory of Relativity. It took decades for this theory to be tested experimentally with respect to the time dilation effect that it predicts.

In 1971, Joseph Hafele (a physicist) and Richard Keating (an astronomer) placed four identical super-accurate cesium atomic clocks in separate commercial airplanes⁶⁻⁷. One traveled eastward and the other flew westward. Initially, these atomic clocks were synchronized to one another and to the two atomic clocks that remained on earth at the US Naval Observatory in Washington D.C. These atomic clocks are based on the natural resonance of cesium and are accurate to less than one second in a million years. They were at that moment the most accurate time keeping devices we knew how to construct.

Relative to the atomic clocks on earth, the clocks on the eastbound flight lost 0.059 micro seconds while the westbound clocks gained 0.273 micro seconds. Not a lot, but exactly what was predicted based on the theory. Indeed, most physicists agree that the Hafele-Keating experiment supports special relativity and the experiment is taught in introductory physics textbooks today. That is to say that today most physicists agree that time passes by at different rates relative to the observer.

Once again, this fact was revealed in the Bible long before the physicists discovered it. There is an important distinction in the Bible between what is temporal, that is to say, what is confined to the dimension of time, and what is eternal, that which is not confined by time – not having a beginning or an end.

In 2 Corinthians 4:17 the apostle Paul says: “our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory.” He goes on to say that the things that are seen are temporary, yet the things that are unseen are eternal (2 Cor. 4:18).

Many verses in the Bible say that God is eternal, such as Isaiah 40:28 (“Do you not know, or have you not heard, that the eternal God, Jehovah, the Creator ...”). Psalm 90 tells us that God exists “from eternity to eternity” (v. 2) but that man, on the other hand, is limited by time (v. 10).

Second Peter 3:8 says, “... with the Lord one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day.” This verse shows that time is relative to the observer, as Einstein postulated in his theory and which later scientists have shown to be true.

In Exodus 3:6, the Bible shows us that God operates within time, and outside of time simultaneously. He says to Moses, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Abraham was born around 2001 B.C. His son Isaac was born 100 years later, and Isaac’s son, Jacob, was born around 1841 B.C. However, Moses was born around 1576 B.C., almost 300 years later. Then, when Moses asks how to identify God to the children of Israel to whom he had been sent, God told him to say, “I AM WHO I AM ... , Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you (v. 14).” And in Revelation 1:8 God says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega ... He who is, and who was, and who is coming, the Almighty.”

These verses show that the Bible agrees with the idea that time is relative to the observer, and that God operates both within time and outside of time simultaneously.

C. Space and Time Are Fundamentally Linked

Thanks to Einstein’s theory we now know that space and time are fundamentally linked; that is, they affect one another. Mathematically, this has been defined as the space-time continuum, which is constituted by the three dimensions of space and the dimension of time interwoven into a unified “fabric.”

This “fabric” can even be distorted by bodies with gravitational mass, such as the Earth and the Sun. The distortion is like when a ball is placed on a sheet that is stretched taut.

In 1915, exactly ten years after postulating his Special Theory of Relativity, Einstein incorporated his Special Theory into his now famous General Theory of Relativity⁸ in which gravitational forces would cause warps (distortions) in the space-time continuum. This theory predicted, among other things, that light would be bent around massive celestial bodies due to the warping of the space-time continuum around them.

In 1917, Sir Frank Watson Dyson, England’s Astronomer Royal and director of the Royal Greenwich Observatory, conceived of an experiment to test Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity. He noted that a total solar eclipse was going to occur in May 29th, 1919, at the very time when the sun would cross the path of a group of bright stars known as the Hyades star cluster. Dyson realized that during the

eclipse the light emitted by the bright stars would have to pass through the Sun's gravitational field on its way to the Earth, and that it would be visible because of the darkness of the eclipse, thus allowing for a perfect opportunity to test the predictions of Einstein's General Relativity Theory. He asked: Would the light emitted from the stars be bent during the eclipse? And, could they measure this phenomenon if indeed it happened?

In May of 1919, Sir Arthur Eddington, a prominent English astrophysicist of the 20th century, together with Dyson, set out to observe the total solar eclipse with two expeditions, one in West Africa and the other in South America, and test this theory.

During the eclipse, which occurred during sunrise, they captured the images of the Hyades star cluster, which would normally not be visible due to the brightness of the sun, but that could be seen during the eclipse. These images were captured on photographic plates, and when the location of the stars was plotted, their apparent location on the plates was different from their actual location in the sky, as seen on images captured during the night at a different time of that year⁹. The Sun's gravity had warped, or bent, the space-time continuum causing the light of the stars to appear in a different location.

The deviation was exactly what Einstein's equations predicted. Thus, the unified fabric of the space-time continuum was confirmed. This is in agreement with the Bible. Psalm 104:2 says that God "stretches out the heavens like a tent." And Isaiah 40:22 says that Jehovah "stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent."

D. Space-time Is Expanding

As mentioned above, in 1929, astronomer Edwin Hubble discovered that the universe is expanding. Before this, it was universally believed, by pagans and scientists alike, that the universe was static and eternal.

There are several references in the Bible that state that the heavens are being stretched out. Besides those mentioned already, Job 26:7, says that Jehovah "stretches out the north [the heavens] over the void." The word "stretches" is an active participle, indicating that action is ongoing. There are eight verses that state that the heavens are *being* stretched out (Job 9:8; 26:7; Psa. 104:2; Isa. 40:22; 42:5; 44:24; 51:13; Zech. 12:1).

E. Multiple Dimensions of Space-time

Quantum mechanics is the science dealing with the behavior of matter and light on the atomic and subatomic scale. We know our universe is four-dimensional, but from the field of quantum mechanics, physicists have found that there may actually be more than four dimensions, ten to be exact. Some scientists have even postulated parallel universes.

But what does the Bible reveal about multiple dimensions? Is there anything in the Bible that suggests that God exists in another dimension, different than ours?

The Bible records instances where messengers, translated as “angels,” appeared to and spoke with men, and then disappeared. For example, in chapter six of Judges in the Old Testament, the Messenger, or Angel of Jehovah, appeared to, spoke with, and then disappeared from the sight of Gideon, who would go on to become one of the judges of Israel (Judg. 6:11-22).

In Luke 24:4, two angels appeared to the women who returned to Jesus’ tomb on the day of the resurrection (see also Lk. 24:22-23). Even Jesus, in Luke 24:13-31 appeared apparently out of nowhere to two disciples after His crucifixion and resurrection. Even though He spoke with them, they couldn’t recognize Him until He reclined at table with them, took the loaf of bread, blessed it, broke the bread, and began handing the pieces to them. At that very moment, they recognized Him and then He disappeared from their midst.

And on the night in which Jesus resurrected, He appeared in a room in which the disciples had the doors shut because of fear of the Jews (Jn. 20:19). He did not walk through the door; He just appeared in their midst.

Also, in Luke 24:36-49, Jesus appeared again to the disciples while they were gathered together in Jerusalem and spoke to them many comforting words concerning how all the things written about Him in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled. His disciples claimed He had risen from the dead, and neither the Roman authorities nor the Jewish leaders could ever produce His crucified and dead body.

Indeed, God and His angelic beings exist in another dimension, a dimension from which they can enter into ours. We, however, cannot physically leave our space-time dimension and enter into the one in which God and His angels dwell.

I wanted to explain the concept of an additional dimension to my wife and son because of my consideration that this concept helps one understand something about God, His relationship with us, and His Authorship of the Bible. I tried to explain such a notion to them one night in a coffee shop. It wasn’t going well.

On our table, I noticed a small container for the sugar packets. It was square, with an open top, and made of clear plastic. I dumped out the packets and turned the clear cube over. For the sake of the illustration I was making, I said, “The inside of this cube is our universe, but we are outside of it, in another dimension,” just as God is in another dimension. Putting my fingers on either side of the small cube I showed them how we could be more intimate with each person inside the universe than they could be with each other. They might be separated by thousands of miles on earth, but we could see and interact with them all, just as God can see and interact with all of us. They got it immediately. I was so glad for that simple sugar packet holder.

Another analogy might be likened to a parade. On the ground, you are in the dimension of the parade and can see the parade passing by you as a series of floats and marching bands, one after another. However, an observer in a helicopter above the parade can see things very differently. He can see the staging area where the participants are waiting for their turn. He can also see the parade itself on the street. And he can see the area where the ones who have already gone are disbanding. In that additional dimension, he can see the whole parade at once.

The advantage of an additional dimension is enormous, and not just as it relates to space. Being outside of the cube is also being outside of time. Is God subject to the laws of gravity, or velocity? I think not. The Bible reveals that God is not subject to the effects of time either since He is outside of time.

II. God Authenticates His Word

A. Proof of the Bible Based on its Heptatic Structure

In the subsequent section, we will look at the prophecy in Daniel 9, which refers to seventy weeks of years that are grouped into sevens. These are not random numbers; they have a significance of their own. Ivan Panin, after being exiled from Russia, immigrated to the United States of America and obtained his doctorate in mathematics from Harvard University. He later discovered in 1890 that the entire Bible, including the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament, has what is called a “heptatic structure” or as many would say a “heptatic signature”¹⁰. Heptatic refers to something related to the number seven, through the Greek root “hept,” which means seven, just as heptagon refers to a polygon of seven sides.

In the Bible, time after time things are grouped into sevens or multiples of seven. There are seven days in a week, seven feasts of Moses, the Sabbath day is the seventh day, the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine in Egypt, a year of Sabbath for the land after six years of farming it (this is what gave rise to crop rotation clear into modern times), the seven priests with the seven trumpets marching around Jericho (including the seven days they marched around the city and the seven times they marched on the seventh day before they attacked the city), Solomon building the Temple in seven years, the seventy years of captivity in Babylon (7×10), the seven churches in the book of Revelation and many other examples, including the seventy week prophesy in Daniel 9:24-26, with the weeks of years, in which each week encompasses seven years, as we will discuss below.

There are innumerable cases throughout the Bible that show the astounding intricacy of this heptatic structure, which is sometimes overt, sometimes structural and sometimes hidden. One example is in Psalm 110. Dr. Panin discovered that the number of Hebrew words in this Psalm is sixty-three, which is nine multiplied by seven, or nine sevens. He discovered thirteen other heptatic structures in this short psalm of only seven verses, for a total of fourteen features (seven plus seven, or seven multiplied by two).

He went on to calculate the probability that fourteen such heptatic features could have occurred accidentally and came up with a probability of 1 in 7^{14} , that is, one in 678,223,072,849 or less than one chance in approximately two-thirds of a million millions. Considering this, it seems difficult to imagine that King David was not divinely inspired while he was composing such an important portion of the Scriptures.

Another example can be found in the first 17 verses of the New Testament, detailing the genealogy of Jesus Christ in the book of Matthew. This portion of the Scriptures, in Greek, the language in which it was written, has multiple heptatic features: the number of generations, the number of male names, the number of words that are nouns are all divisible by seven (Matt. 1:1-17).

In addition, this passage is divided into two sections: verses 1-11 and 12-17. In the first section, in the original Greek, the number of words, letters, vowels, consonants, words beginning with a vowel, words beginning with a consonant are all divisible by seven. Other striking examples of heptatic structure are present in this portion of the Scriptures and throughout the entire Bible. For any person to come up with a genealogy with such precision in its writing using heptatic structures seems unimaginable. Thus, it is not surprising that many consider the heptatic structure of the Bible as proof that it is divinely inspired.

B. Proof of the Bible Based on Predictive Prophecy

If God is outside of time and He wishes to authenticate the Bible, He can use an attribute that is unique to Him; He can predict future events. Isaiah 46:9-10 says, "Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else; I am God and there is no one like Me, who declares the end from the beginning, and things which have not been from ancient times ..." We call these kinds of declarations "predictive prophecies," which are the strongest proof that the Bible is really the Word of God, and the Bible is filled with them. In fact, there are over a thousand prophecies in the whole Bible.

But, what is a predictive prophecy? A valid predictive prophecy should have the following characteristics¹¹:

- It should be announced or written before the events that it predicts occur.
- It should predict something that goes beyond what someone would have expected or even guessed by logic, and it should be detailed (not vague).
- In addition, for a predictive prophecy to be valid there must be a long time period between the moment when it is declared or written and when it is fulfilled, long enough so that a person with the intent of falsely fulfilling the prophecy cannot artificially create an event that leads to what appears to be a fulfillment.
- Finally, it should be clearly evident that the prophecy has been fulfilled once the predicted event occurs.

The fact that so many of the Bible's predictive prophecies have been fulfilled with so much accuracy and detail is a strong proof that 1) God exists; 2) He exists outside the dimension of time; and 3) the Bible is indeed the Word of God.

The following discussion highlights four groups of predictive prophecies of the Bible to illustrate this point:

1. The prophecies in Jeremiah 25:9-12 and 29:10 concerning the seventy years of captivity of the Jews in Babylon.
2. The prophecies concerning the conquest of Babylon through the Medo-Persian Empire led by Cyrus the Great in Isaiah 13:1, 17; 44:27-28; 45:1-4, and Jeremiah 51:11-12, 28-29; the release of the Jews and their return to Jerusalem after their seventy years of captivity (Jer. 29:10, 14), that is, after Cyrus' conquest of Babylon (Ezra 1:2-4; see also 2 Chron. 36:23).
3. The prophecy in Daniel 9:25-26 concerning the timing of the coming of the Messiah (the Christ).
4. The prophecy in Daniel 9:26 concerning the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem.

I chose just these four among literally hundreds, not only because of their historical accuracy but also because of the amazing precision contained therein.

1. Prophecies by Jeremiah concerning the seventy-year captivity of the Jews in Babylon.

The first group of predictive prophecies I will use to illustrate my point have to do with the seventy years of captivity of the Jews in Babylon.

All of Judah rebelled against God and were exceedingly wicked, so from about 760 B.C., God said to Jerusalem through His prophet Isaiah, "I will turn My hand against you. I will thoroughly purge away your dross as with lye, and I will remove all your alloy. And I will restore your judges as at the first and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you will be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city" (Isa. 1:25-26). According to this prophecy, God was going to thoroughly discipline Jerusalem and then restore it.

The instrument God chose to discipline Judah was the empire of Babylon described by Isaiah as "the beauty of Kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' majesty" (Isa. 13:19). Approximately in the year 700 B.C., Isaiah told King Hezekiah of Judah, that everything in his house, including his descendants, would "be carried away to Babylon" and that "nothing would be left" in Jerusalem (Isa. 39:5-8).

However, Isaiah's prophecies also describe the destruction that Jehovah would eventually bring on Babylon itself because of its excessive, cruel treatment of many nations, including Judah (Ch. 13). He said through Isaiah that Babylon would be conquered by the Medes and the Persians (Isa. 13:17; 44:27-28; 45:1-4; see also Jer. 51:11-12, 28), and would become a *perpetual desolation* (Isa. 13:19-22,

14:22-23; Ch. 47; see also Jer. 25:12). At the time Isaiah wrote this, the Medes were not unified, were weak, and were ruled by other nations, and it was Assyria that was the dominant empire in the Middle East, including ruling over Babylon.

It seemed impossible that Isaiah's prophecy could be fulfilled when Sennacherib, Assyria's king, totally destroyed Babylon in 689 B.C. How could the Medes destroy a city that no longer existed? The prophecy came back on track when Sennacherib's son, Esarhaddon, rebuilt Babylon.

God gave His people many years to repent. He warned them over the years, sending various prophets. The last of the great prophets of Judah used by God to warn Jerusalem about the destruction that would come through Babylon was *Jeremiah*, who prophesied from 628 B.C., before Assyria was conquered by Babylon, until sometime after 586 B.C. (after the third deportation of the Jews from Jerusalem to Babylon).

In chapter 25 of the book of Jeremiah in the Old Testament, he prophesied that the Jews would be taken into captivity and serve Babylon for seventy years. He had announced this very specific and detailed prophecy since the times of Jehoiakim's reign (see below), in 609 B.C., saying to the people of Judah,

“And this whole land will become a desolation and a waste, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then after the seventy years have been fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation for their iniquity, declares Jehovah, as well as the land of the Chaldeans, and I will make it an eternal desolation” (Jer. 25:11-12).

From Daniel 9:2, we know that “this whole land” in Jeremiah 25:11 refers to the land of Jerusalem. The verse says,

“... I Daniel, understood by means of the Scriptures the number of years, which came as the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah the prophet, for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, that is, seventy years.”

Jeremiah lived through the events of the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of his people to Babylon that he prophesied, but he was believed to have been killed about 570 B.C., at a time when Babylon was in its full glory. Jeremiah did not live to see the destruction of Babylon by the Medes about which he had prophesied (Jer. 25:12; 51:11-12) and which came to pass in **539 B.C.**, nor the return of the people of Judah to Jerusalem in about **536 B.C.**, after seventy years of captivity in Babylon.

In order for Isaiah's and Jeremiah's prophecies to be fulfilled, Babylon first had to overthrow Assyria's dominance, (which occurred in 626 B.C.) and become the major power (which occurred in 609 B.C., with the capitulation of the Assyrian army to Babylon). This ended the Assyrian empire, and brought in a new empire, the Babylonian Empire.

The Babylonian power was secured in 605 B.C. after the famous battle of Carchemish under the leadership of a brilliant general named Nebuchadnezzar, the crown prince of Babylon. At that time, Nebuchadnezzar was also co-king of Babylon, together with his father¹², and became king in his own right that year, succeeding his father, Nabopolassar.

The year before that, in **606 B.C.**¹³, Nebuchadnezzar came up to Jerusalem and Jehoiakim, the king of Judah at the time, became his servant for three years (2 Kgs. 24:1). At this time, “some of the sons of Israel, including some from royal seed and from the nobility” were taken back to Babylon (Dan. 1:1-6). This represented the first wave of the deportation of the people of Jerusalem to Babylon, although it was in a small scale.

After three years of subjugation to Babylon, Jehoiakim rebelled (2 Kgs. 24:1). Nebuchadnezzar sent his army together with troops from Chaldea, Syria, Moab and Ammon to the border regions of Judah (2 Kgs. 24:2). In spite of this harassment, Judah was able to continue its rebellion during this period. Eventually, Jehoiakim was killed and his son Jehoiachin (also called Jeconiah) became the new king of Judah (2 Kgs. 24:6).

Just three months later, because Jehoiachin continued to rebel, King Nebuchadnezzar laid siege against the city of Jerusalem and conquered it in **597 B.C.** (2 Kgs. 24:10-16). His army killed thousands upon thousands, and took thousands more as prisoners, including Jehoiachin, deporting them to Babylon. He also raided the treasures of Solomon’s Temple, destroying the golden treasures used in worship (2 Kgs. 24:13). This event is historically considered the first siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the second wave of the deportation of the people of Judah to Babylon.

Importantly, one of the Babylonian Chronicles, which are archeological tablets recording major events in Babylonian history, presents a reference to this siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. The tablet, specifically ABC 5, states that the king “besieged Jerusalem (literally: the city of Judah) and seized it on the second day of the month of Adar [**March 15/16, 597 B.C.**]. He then captured its king and appointed a king of his own choice, having received heavy tribute from the city, which he sent back to Babylon.”¹⁴

The Babylonian Chronicles make it possible to assign this siege of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar to the second day of Adar (March 16) in **597 B.C.** with complete accuracy, which confirms the biblical account of the Babylonian attack.

Even in distress, God was merciful and “had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place” (2 Chron. 36:15). The first siege resulted in Judah’s continued subjugation to Babylon, but not their entire destruction. It was not until they continued to rebel that the full destruction of Jerusalem came about in **586 B.C.**

As referenced in the Babylonian Chronicle, Nebuchadnezzar appointed a new king of Judah, Zedekiah, and “made a covenant with him and put him under an oath” (2 Kgs. 24:17; Ezek. 17:12-14). In the covenant, King Zedekiah agreed to surrender peacefully and become humble and subject to the new empire. However, Zedekiah later rebelled. It was a terrible decision with tragic consequences.

In Jeremiah’s prophecies, God had referred to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, as His “servant” (Jer. 25:9; 27:6). Because of the lack of repentance from His people, God announced through Jeremiah that He would send for Nebuchadnezzar and would bring his armies against the land of Judah and its surrounding nations (Jer. 25:9). He said that He had given all the lands into Nebuchadnezzar’s hands (Jer. 27:6). Jeremiah 27:7 says that the nations would serve Babylon for three of Nebuchadnezzar’s generations.

So, in rebelling against Babylon, Zedekiah, as well as Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin before him, were rebelling against God Himself. Jeremiah had told King Zedekiah that if he rebelled against Babylon, Babylon was going to destroy Jerusalem and “burn it with fire” (Jer. 38:18).

However, King Zedekiah foolishly paid no attention to these prophecies. Exactly as was prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer. 25:11; 27:6-10; 38:17-18), and while Zedekiah was ruling over Judah in Jerusalem as king, the city once again came under siege by Nebuchadnezzar’s army (2 Kgs. 25:1-17; 2 Chron. 36:17-20). Many bronze treasures used for worship in the Temple were destroyed, while other bronze, silver and golden treasures were taken to Babylon. King Zedekiah and his family were captured, carried away to Babylon and punished severely. His house was burned, as was Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem and the city itself. Even the walls around the city of Jerusalem were broken down. The rest of the people remaining in Jerusalem were taken in exile to Babylon. This fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy to Hezekiah announced a little over 100 years earlier, that his descendants would be taken to Babylon in captivity, along with Jeremiah’s prophecy above, that Jerusalem would be burned (Isa. 39:5-7; Jer. 38:18).

This event represented the second siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in **586 B.C.** and the third wave of deportation of the people of Judah to Babylon.

However, God was merciful to His people. He had announced through Jeremiah that the captivity of Judah in Babylon would not last forever; that is, it would last only seventy years (Jer. 25:11-12). In chapter 29, Jeremiah said that after the seventy years of captivity in Babylon, the children of Israel would be released and returned to Jerusalem.

“For thus says Jehovah, when seventy years are fulfilled for Babylon, I will visit you and establish My good word to you, to bring you back to this place (v. 10) ... And I will turn your captivity and gather you from all the nations

and from all the places where I have driven you, declares Jehovah, and bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile (v. 14b).”

These words must have been of so much comfort and shepherding to Jeremiah and to those who heard or read and received them!

Jeremiah also said that after the “seventy years” were fulfilled, God would “punish the king of Babylon and that nation for their iniquity” and Babylon would become a “perpetual desolation” (Jer. 25:12; see also Isa. 13:19-22).

According to Isaiah’s and Jeremiah’s prophecies, Babylon would be conquered by the Medes and the Persians (Isa. 13:1, 17; 44:27-28; 45:1-4; Jer. 51:11-12, 28). The fulfillment of the prophecies related to the conquering of Babylon and the release and return of God’s people to their land after seventy years of captivity came to pass through Cyrus the Great, so for the second group of predictive prophecies we must now turn our attention to him.

2. Prophecy concerning Cyrus the Great.

In **539 B.C.**, Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, did what everyone thought impossible. He conquered the massive, fortified city of Babylon, the pride of the Chaldean Empire. Everyone was stunned, but no one more than Cyrus himself. This victory had been predicted a century and a half before he accomplished it, and in amazing detail. Jehovah had said that the Medes (Isa. 13:17; Jer. 51:11) and His anointed shepherd Cyrus would conquer Babylon (Isa. 44:27-28; 45:1-4), and even predicted *how* it would be done.

As described in chapters 178-181 of Book 1 of *The History* written by the Greek historian Herodotus¹⁵, the city of Babylon straddled the Euphrates River making it virtually siege proof. There was also a broad and deep moat, full of water, surrounding the city. The moat was aligned with the inner walls of the square city, which were fourteen miles on each side of the river, and hundreds of feet high and so thick that chariots could race four abreast on the top. These walls were considered impregnable. There were also hundreds of gates of brass (bronze) fortified with iron bars throughout the walls and also across the entrances to the city from the Euphrates River. Along the river and between the two sides of the city were several bridges that could be raised and closed to protect the city in the case of a siege attempt. Thus, an attack by troops seemed impossible.

Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson, Belshazzar, was ruling over Babylon. On the night Babylon fell, he decided to throw a lavish banquet for his subordinate princes of the realm. During the feast, he instructed his servants to get the golden vessels that had been taken from the Temple in Jerusalem, and he used them in his drunken revelry (Dan. 5:1-3).

God would not tolerate this desecration. A hand appeared out of nowhere and began writing on the wall next to him (v. 5). Not a body or even an arm was seen. Just a disembodied hand! He was terrified.

Daniel 5:6 says, “Then the king’s countenance changed and his thoughts alarmed him; and the joints of his hips loosened, and his knees began to knock together.” In other words, he was so terrified that his knees began knocking and he soiled himself.

He immediately summoned all the magicians and soothsayers he had to interpret the writing, but none could tell what the writing said. The queen mother, however, remembered that a Jewish captive named Daniel had interpreted dreams for Nebuchadnezzar (Belshazzar’s grandfather) and told the young ruler (Dan. 5:10-12). She described Daniel as having “an excellent spirit and knowledge and insight” and that “the interpretation of dreams, the declaring of riddles, and the resolving of problems” were found in him.

Daniel, who was one of the Jewish captives taken during the first wave of deportation from Judah to Babylon in **606 B.C.** (Dan. 1:1-6)¹³, was summoned and was promised an immense fortune if he could interpret the writing. Daniel told Belshazzar to keep his wealth, but that he would read and make known to him the writing on the wall. What was written was not good news. Daniel said, “... God has numbered your kingdom and brought it to an end; ... You have been weighed in the scales and found to be lacking ... Your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians” (Dan. 5:26-28). In other words, your time is up.

Meanwhile, unknown to anyone in Babylon, Cyrus’ army had been very busy miles up the river. Over months, they had dug a large number of enormous canals right next to the banks of the Euphrates River. Then, part of the army went south to Babylon at night. At the appointed time, the northern half of Cyrus’ army breached the banks of the river filling up the adjacent canals, thus diverting the river, as prophesied in Isaiah 44:27.

The fact that the water level had dropped to such an extent that Cyrus’ army could march in it, and also that the reckless Babylonians left the gates of the city open while they were feasting and celebrating a pagan festival, allowed Cyrus to easily take the city during the very night that Daniel had interpreted the writing on the wall (Dan. 5:30). Also, that very night Belshazzar was killed by Cyrus’ army which took the city without a fight (Dan. 5:30). Cyrus’ conquest was so stealthy that many inhabitants didn’t even know they had been conquered for two or three days. This marked the end of the Babylonian Empire and the fulfillment of the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah.

This also fulfilled Jeremiah’s prophecy spoken during the time of King Zedekiah, declaring that all the nations would serve Nebuchadnezzar up to three generations (Jer. 27:6-7).

In the British Museum is a clay cylinder known as “The Cylinder of Cyrus.” On it, Cyrus’ reporter brags how Cyrus conquered the city of Babylon without even a skirmish. Now, for the most amazing and important part of the story.

In October of **539 B.C.**, after Cyrus made his triumphal entry into the city of Babylon, he proclaimed himself king of Babylon and he left his maternal uncle, Darius the Mede, to rule as co-king in Babylon in his place while he went forth to other campaigns to conquer other territories (Dan. 5:31)^{13, 16}. It was during the first year of the reign of Darius that Daniel “understood by means of the Scriptures” that the seventy years of captivity of Judah in Babylon prophesied by Jeremiah were coming to an end (Dan. 9:1-2).

Darius died of natural causes two years after the fall of Babylon and Cyrus then took over to reign with full supremacy in the year **536 B.C.**^{13, 16}. Importantly, the Jewish historian Josephus, who wrote for the Roman Empire in the first century, states in his writings in *The Antiquities of the Jews*¹⁷, that the first year of the reign of Cyrus “was the seventieth from the day that our people were removed out of their own land into Babylon.” Josephus goes on to say that Cyrus read Isaiah’s scroll and came to understand the prophecies concerning himself.

Isaiah wrote approximately between 760 to 696 B.C., which was over a century before Cyrus was even born. Here is the astounding quote from Isaiah 45:1-4, which Cyrus read:

“Thus says Jehovah to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him; and I will loosen the loins of kings; to open before him the double doors so that the gates shall not be shut: I will go before you, and make level the rough places; I will shatter in pieces the doors of bronze, and cut through the bars of iron: And give to you the treasures of darkness, and the hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I am Jehovah, who calls you by your name, the God of Israel. For the sake of My servant, Jacob, and Israel, My chosen one, I have also called you by your name; I have surnamed you, although you have not known Me.”

God even prophesied through Isaiah (v. 44:27) that He would “dry up the rivers,” interpreted by Bible scholars as a predictive prophesy of the drying up of the Euphrates River as a result of Cyrus’ strategical operation prior to attacking Babylon.

How astonishing it is that over a century before Cyrus was born, Isaiah prophesied with so much detail concerning him, speaking forth the words of God, detailing his success in conquering the Babylonian Empire, and even mentioning him by name! A hundred and fifty years before Cyrus conquered Babylon, God, through Isaiah, outlined Cyrus’ career in such detail that Cyrus was overwhelmed.

Also, significantly, God called Cyrus “My shepherd” in Isaiah 44:28.

“Who says to Cyrus, He is My shepherd, and he will fulfill all My desire, even by saying of Jerusalem, she will be built, and of the temple, her foundations will be laid.”

Cyrus is referred to here, as God’s “shepherd.” The Greek historian, Herodotus, records Cyrus’ miraculous preservation at birth¹⁵. Although born to be a king, his

jealous grandfather delivered him up to be killed at birth, but he was hidden and fostered by a herdsman. Cyrus was literally raised to be a shepherd.

Concerning Cyrus, God said through Isaiah (Isa. 45:13) that he would “send away My captives, neither for a price nor for a reward.” It is a matter of record that after he became sole king of Babylon, Cyrus freed all of the captive Jewish people, gave them letters of safe passage throughout his empire, returned to them all of the Temple treasures, which were worth a small fortune, and even gave them financial incentives to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple.

The Cylinder of Cyrus records that Cyrus had a policy of returning captives to their homeland. He says, “I (also) gathered all their (former) inhabitants and returned to them their habitations.”

However, 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 and Ezra 1:1-3 state that what impelled him to this action in the first year of his reign, was that “Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus” so that he would issue his decree releasing the Jewish captives that the “word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished.” Even the historian Josephus recorded that when Cyrus read Isaiah’s prophecy (Isa. 45:1-4), he “admired the divine power,” and “an earnest desire and an ambition seized upon him, to fulfill what was so written.”¹⁷ (Note that Cyrus did not read Jeremiah’s prophecies predicting that the captivity of Judah would last seventy years.)

Cyrus’ decree and proclamation concerning this, as recorded in the book of Ezra in the Old Testament, is quite outstanding:

“Thus says Cyrus the king of Persia, all the kingdoms of the earth has Jehovah the God of heaven given to me; and He has charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may God be with him; and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and let him build the house of Jehovah the God of Israel – He is God – who is in Jerusalem ...” (Ezra 1:2-4, see also 2 Chron. 36:23).

Josephus also records a similar quote from Cyrus saying,

“Thus saith Cyrus the King: since God Almighty hath appointed me to be King of the habitable earth, I believe that He is that God, which the nation of the Israelites worship. For indeed he foretold my name by the Prophets, and that I should build him an house at Jerusalem, in the country of Judea.”¹⁷

As we see in the decree in Ezra 1:2-4 (see also 2 Chron. 36:23), Cyrus recognized that Jehovah is God, that the Jewish captives were God’s people, that God had given him all the kingdoms of the earth, that God charged him to build Him a house in Jerusalem and that such house would be built directly by the Jewish captives released by him. Even the non-religious archeologists can’t explain why Cyrus released the Jewish captives. The more honest ones simply scratch their heads and admit they have no idea how such an accurate foretelling of future events could happen. The less honest, contrary to the evidence, try to post-date both the

books of Daniel and Isaiah because the only other possible explanation is that the Author of these biblical prophecies had to be outside of time!

Remarkably, Cyrus' decree in the first year of his reign fulfilled Jeremiah's prophecies that after seventy years of captivity in Babylon, God would bring the Jews back to their land (Jer. 29:10). Specifically, the seventy years are counted from **606 B.C.**, when Nebuchadnezzar first took captives from Jerusalem to Babylon in the first wave of deportation (Dan. 1:1-6), until **536 B.C.**, when Cyrus made his decree allowing the captive Jews to return to Jerusalem and to rebuild the Temple in that city¹⁸⁻¹⁹.

As a postscript, both Isaiah's and Jeremiah's prophecies said that Babylon would be destroyed and become a perpetual desolation. So whatever happened to Babylon?

The Babylonians were not happy being ruled by the Medes, so in about 482 B.C. they rebelled. Xerxes I, king of the Medes and Persians captured the city of Babylon and destroyed the temples. [Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, 7.17.2; Herodotus 1.183].

After this, the city declined in importance. The Greek geographer and historian Strabo, who wrote in the Roman Empire, said in his writings, "... the greater part of Babylon is so deserted that one would not hesitate to say ... 'the Great City is a desert'" (Geography, 16, 1, 5, Loeb Classical Library²⁰).

Today, Babylon is an empty city. The ruins of Babylon have remained empty for more than 2,000 years, just as Isaiah predicted, "It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation ..." (Isa. 13:20).

3. Daniel's prophecy regarding the timing of the coming of the Messiah [the Christ].

The third predictive prophecy that I would like to highlight was given to one of the Jewish captives, named Daniel, who had been deported to Babylon.

As mentioned above, while Daniel was in Babylon, during the first year of the reign of Darius, he realized at one point that the seventy years of captivity foretold by the prophet Jeremiah were almost up (Dan. 9:1-2).

He then engaged in one of the most passionate, heartfelt prayers for himself and his people that you will ever read. It can be found in the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel, in the Old Testament (Dan. 9:3-19).

While he was in such earnest prayer he was interrupted by a being who introduced himself as Gabriel, an archangel sent by God as His messenger, to give Daniel "insight and understanding" (Dan. 9:21-22).

Gabriel gave him one of the most important prophecies in the Bible:

“Know therefore and comprehend: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, until the time of Messiah the Prince will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with the street and trench, even in distressful times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah will be cut off and will have nothing; the people of the prince who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary ...” (Dan. 9:25-26).

This is a crucial prophecy because it is the only one in the Bible that predicts *when* the Messiah (the Christ) would come. It also predicts that after Messiah is cut off, the city and the Temple that had been rebuilt would *again* be destroyed. Note that at the time this prophecy was announced, the city and Temple were already destroyed, and apart from the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, there was no hope that they would ever be rebuilt. So for the fulfillment of this prophecy, the city and Temple had to be *rebuilt*, so that they could be *re-destroyed* after the Messiah’s death.

Scholars had studied this passage for centuries and tried to decipher and interpret its meaning, but failed. It wasn’t until Sir Robert Anderson, head of Scotland Yard, figured out the math involved in these verses that it finally became clear. He was a devoted evangelical Christian who earnestly studied the Holy Scriptures. He published his book, *The Coming Prince*²¹, concerning his interpretation of the prophecy in Daniel 9 in Great Britain in 1894.

Verse 9:24 tells us that the prophecy encompasses a period of seventy weeks, but for the purposes of our discussion here I will focus on a particular period within the seventy weeks that is mentioned in verses 25-26, the first sixty-nine weeks.

Most Bible scholars and commentators agree that the weeks in the prophecy of Daniel 9 should be interpreted as weeks of years (with one “week” equal to seven years). The term “weeks of years” was a common Jewish term meaning literally seven years. It originates from God’s commandment in Leviticus 25:3-4 concerning the year of Sabbath for the land after six years of farming, that is, a period of seven years (since the land was to be left uncultivated on the seventh year).

Notably, the verses in Daniel 9:25-26 are structured in a way that they specify several *periods of time* and present five important predictive prophecies:

- Daniel 9:25 predicts the issuing of a decree “to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.”
- Daniel 9:25 predicts that from the issuing of the decree, the city of Jerusalem would be restored and rebuilt in a time period of seven weeks (i.e., seven weeks of years or 49 years).
- Daniel 9:25 predicts the appearance of “Messiah the Prince” sometime after the sixty-two weeks of years (i.e., 434 years) that follow the restoring and rebuilding of Jerusalem.
- Daniel 9:26 predicts that after this last 434-year time period, Messiah (the Christ) will be “cut off.” Thus, seven weeks (i.e., 49 years) and sixty-two

- weeks (i.e., 434 years), equaling sixty-nine weeks (i.e., 483 years), after the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, Messiah (the Christ) would be “cut off” according to the prophecy in Daniel 9:25-26.
- Daniel 9:26 also goes on to predict the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple sometime after the Messiah is cut off. (This last aspect of the prophecy will be discussed in the next section.)

Now, let us proceed with the historical events that are relevant to this multifaceted prophecy. King Cyrus gave the Jewish captives the freedom to go back to Jerusalem and to rebuild their Temple, but not the city itself. That is, there is no mention of permission being granted to rebuild the walls and gates of the fortified city of Jerusalem. Either he simply forgot to include this, or more likely, he did not completely trust the Jewish people who had a long history of rebellion and warfare.

Either way, the book of Ezra details the struggle the Jews had trying to rebuild the Temple, while their defenses were in ruins. They were continually harassed by their enemies and made little progress. But eventually, they completed the rebuilding of the Temple during the reign of Darius the Great, who was the king of Persia at the time.

In **445 B.C.**, Artaxerxes I, the new king of Persia at the time (mentioned in Nehemiah 2-13 and Ezra 7-10), finally issued a decree allowing the Jews to rebuild the walls and gates of Jerusalem. This is recorded in the book of Nehemiah of the Old Testament, in the conversation of Nehemiah with King Artaxerxes I in chapter 2 (see also Josephus’ *Antiquities of the Jews*¹⁷).

The king asked Nehemiah, his faithful cupbearer, why there was sadness in his face. Verses 3-6 say,

“... Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ graves, lies in waste and its gates are consumed with fire? And the king said to me, what do you request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, if it please the king and if your servant has found favor before you, that you would send me to Judah to the city of my fathers’ graves that I may rebuild it ... So it pleased the king to send me, and I gave him a date.”

So Artaxerxes I issued the decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. He even gave Nehemiah letters of passage so that he could travel throughout his empire and arrive safely to the city. *This is the decree mentioned in Daniel’s prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah (Dan. 9:25-26).* The decree of Artaxerxes I marks the starting of the “clock” for the “cutting off” of the Messiah, which Gabriel revealed to Daniel.

After the issuing of Artaxerxes I’s decree, the walls and the city itself “with street and trench” (street referring to the wide-open plaza of the city) were finally rebuilt under the leadership of Nehemiah¹⁷. According to Bible scholars, the first seven weeks (49 years) mentioned in Daniel 9:25 correspond to the time it took to rebuild

Jerusalem “with street and trench, even in distressful times,” exactly as was prophesied^{17, 22-24}.

The date when Artaxerxes I issued the decree is very accurately known from the historical and Scriptural writings. According to Nehemiah 2:1, he issued this decree in the Jewish month of Nisan, Nisan corresponding to March-April of the modern calendar. More specifically, it is thought that Artaxerxes I issued this decree on March 14, 445 B.C.

Daniel 9:25-26 predicted that sixty-nine weeks (of years), or 483 years (according to the ancient Jewish calendar) after the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, Messiah would be “cut off.” Because there is a difference between the ancient Jewish calendar and our present modern calendar, (the calendars differ in the number of days in a year, leap year calculations, etc.), it is necessary to convert the number of 483 years according to the ancient Jewish calendar into the period of time to which it corresponds when adjusted to our modern calendar, which is 476 years. Was this prophecy fulfilled precisely? Bible scholars agree that it was.

By doing the simple math, it can be easily seen that the end of this 483-year time period (or 476 years by adjusting to our modern calendar) corresponds to **32 A.D.**¹, a pivotal point in all human history. It was around this time that *Jesus of Nazareth was walking the earth*. And note that the prophecy says that it is *after* the sixty-nine “weeks” time period from the issuing of Artaxerxes I’s decree that Messiah would be “cut off.” Thus, if the prophecy was to be fulfilled, then the Messiah should be walking on the earth at the completion of the sixty-nine weeks.

How could Daniel, writing in the sixth century B.C., have predicted these events with such accuracy? How could anyone within our space-time dimension have contrived such a prediction documented many centuries before its fulfillment? Again, the only possible explanation is that the Author of the prophecy given to Daniel by Gabriel (Dan. 9:25-26) is outside of time!

Now let’s continue with the rest of the prophecy. It reads that the “Messiah will be cut off and will have nothing ...” Even the words “cut off” are intriguing. In Hebrew, the word used and translated as “cut off,” also means to be executed, usually for a capital crime.

Josephus tells us in his writings¹⁷ that at this time there was a man named Jesus of Nazareth, who was accused of sedition by the Jews and executed by the Roman Magistrate. Josephus testified in his writing,

“About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher to such people as accept the truth gladly ... He was the Messiah. And when, upon the accusation of the principal men among us, Pilate had

¹ Subtracting 445 B.C. from 476, we come up with 31 A.D., to which we have to add 1 because there is no zero year between the B.C. and A.D. timeline. Thus, the date prophesied would be 32 A.D.

condemned him to a cross, those who had come to love him did not cease ...”

Historical Roman writings of the time also refer to the crucifixion of one named as the Christ by those who believed in Him. Thus, historically, there was actually a Jesus of Nazareth, who walked the earth at that time, and this person was executed. Whether he was the promised Messiah (and even Josephus declared it so in his writing), and the Son of God, I will leave to the reader to decide. But the historical fact of His existence is undeniable.

And He was “cut off”: executed by crucifixion according to historians, as also stated in the Bible (crucifixion being the main form of execution by the Romans during that time). Yet another precise fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel 9:25-26!

4. Prophecy regarding the second destruction of the Temple.

The next part of the prophecy highlighted here relates a very tragic outcome for the participants. It tells about “the people of the prince who will come [and] destroy the city and the sanctuary” (Dan. 9:26). Here we have the benefit of historical hindsight. We know who destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the Temple after these had been rebuilt centuries earlier. It was the fifth, tenth, twelfth and fifteenth Roman Legions under Titus Vespasian, the prince of the Roman Empire.

But, before we look into this matter, let’s pause for a minute and look at an interesting statement made by Jesus before his death on the cross. The Gospel of Matthew, which was written and circulated around 40 A.D., records the event in the 24th chapter. Jesus was departing from the Temple when His disciples came to show Him the magnificent buildings of the Temple. He remarked to them,

“Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, there shall by no means be left here a stone upon a stone, which shall not be thrown down (v. 2).”

At that time, approximately **32 A.D.**, it was unbelievable that Herod’s magnificent Temple would be utterly destroyed, even to the point that one stone would not be left upon another as Jesus prophesied. It had taken 46 years to build it!

Also, verses 41-44 of Luke 19 say,

“And as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, if you knew in this day, even you, the things that are for your peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a rampart and encircle you, and will press you in every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave a stone upon a stone in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.”

These are prophecies declared by Jesus Himself. We will see that these predictive prophecies were indeed fulfilled decades after Jesus' death and resurrection. We should ask, is there a relationship between these prophecies announced by Jesus and the one in Daniel 9:26 spoken by Gabriel five centuries earlier? Yes, there is. Jesus knew that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple were events that would occur in the future, that is, after He prophesied concerning them. Consider that in the portion in Luke 19:44 stating, "... because you did not know the *time* of your visitation," Jesus declared that the Jews did not know the *time* of their visitation, which was spoken to them in Daniel 9:26.

It is evident, based on his prophecies detailed in the Gospels, that Jesus *did* know the time of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel 9:26 regarding when the city and the Temple would be destroyed. The time period between the writing of the prophecy in Daniel 9:26 and the fulfillment of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple is over five centuries. How did Jesus know when the prophecy would be fulfilled? I leave this to your own consideration. Now, let's continue.

In **70 A.D.** the Roman army under the command of Titus captured the city of Jerusalem after a long and bloody siege. The carnage, described by Josephus in his text, *The Wars of the Jews*²⁵, recounts the details of the battle in gruesome detail. It is not for the faint of heart. Titus, however, is said to have been of a reasonable nature. He only wanted to capture and punish those who rebelled against the Roman Empire, restore peace, and once again subjugate the city to Roman rule. He had no desire to damage, let alone destroy, the Jews' religious Temple.

Josephus says about Titus in *The Wars of the Jews* that "... he was very desirous to preserve the city for his own sake, and the Temple for the sake of the city." But God knew that this event would have a different ending; the prophecies in Daniel 9:26 and Matthew 24:2 had to be fulfilled.

Toward the end of the furious battle, the last hold-outs took refuge in the Temple, assuming that they were safe. However, some Roman soldiers shot flaming arrows directly into the Temple and set it on fire. They disobeyed the direct orders of Titus to preserve the Temple. The Temple was built of finished stones and its walls, its floor, and some of its furnishings were made of cedar, cypress and olive wood, all overlaid with pure gold (1 Kgs. 6:7, 15, 22, 23, 28, 31-33). The blaze caused by the Roman soldiers was so intense that it not only incinerated the last of the rebels, but melted all of the gold inside.

Finally, the siege was over and peace restored, but there was a fortune in melted gold to be had. It had even seeped into the spaces between the stones of the walls of the Temple. Since the Temple was already lost, Titus ordered his men to dismantle the stones one by one and retrieve the gold. During the plundering of the Temple, the soldiers broke up these gigantic stones so that they could obtain the gold.

Jerusalem was destroyed and not one stone of the Temple was left standing upon another, precisely fulfilling Jesus' prophecies (concerning the city of Jerusalem and the Temple, as is recorded in Matthew 24 and Luke 19). Remember also verse 26 of Daniel 9 that says, "... the people of the prince who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary ..." Bible scholars agree that this part of the prophecy was fulfilled during the above-described destruction of the Second Temple by the soldiers of Titus, the prince of the Roman Empire at that time.

According to Philostratus, a Greek teacher in the Roman Empire, Titus declined the victor's Wreath of Honor upon his return to Rome, declaring that he did not win the victory on his own but was just the instrument of God's wrath against His people²⁶. He was the prince that came (after Messiah was cut off) and whose people (his soldiers) destroyed the city and the sanctuary of God, just as the prophecy in Daniel 9:26 says.

III. Conclusion

At the time the Bible was written, thousands of years ago, how could the writers know scientific facts that even scientists had not discovered until recently? Whoever inspired the Bible had to have known that the universe with time, space and matter had a beginning. He had to know that time is relative to the observer, and that space and time are one unified continuum that is expanding. The author had to know that there are more dimensions than our own local universe. Also, the author had to be able to embed mathematical patterns into the very structure of the text of the Bible.

How can the telling of future events in the Bible be so accurate, so detailed and so precise? How can anyone explain these four highlighted prophecies, let alone hundreds of others, unless the prophets that foretold these historical accounts were influenced by something or someone who is outside of time? God being outside the dimension of time means that He can see events in the past, present and future simultaneously. God can thus inspire His prophets to announce the prediction of future events.

Consider that the events presented here documented in the Bible concerning Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Artaxerxes I and Titus, of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Roman Empires, respectively, are also recorded in secular history.

Consider Isaiah speaking forth the word of God recorded in Isaiah 45:1-4 detailing with such accuracy the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus and mentioning him by name a century and a half before he was born and before the actual events were fulfilled.

Consider Jeremiah's prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, foretelling the burning of the Temple and the city, the exile of the Jewish people to Babylon, and their release after seventy years of captivity in Babylon. All of these prophecies were accurately fulfilled years later, some *after* Jeremiah's death.

Consider also the prophecy given to Daniel by Gabriel, God's messenger, recorded in Daniel 9:25-26. This is an intricate prophecy that includes in it the notion of very specific time periods that had to be completed for the particular set of events predicted in the prophecy to be fulfilled. As we have seen, the events foretold in the prophecy were fulfilled with remarkable accuracy, even accounting for the number of years in which they were foretold to occur.

Who is the ultimate author of the prophecies I have mentioned here? We would have to say, that the author is someone outside our space-time dimension who could communicate with the prophets in their present time and simultaneously give them words concerning future events, events that the Author alone knew would occur. I would submit that the Author is God Himself, who is outside of time.

God is eternal. He exists from eternity past to eternity future. He is not bound by time, as we are. God is outside of time. The beginning of God's creation also marked the beginning of time, which means that God exists outside the dimension of time, in eternity past, before He created the heavens and the earth.

However, as a Christian believer, I would say that there was one particular moment and period of time in human history when God took a step to enter into time. He was incarnated in the man Jesus. The Word, who is God, became flesh (Jn. 1:1, 14).

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed in his famous prophecy concerning the Messiah (Christ) recorded in Isaiah 9:6, "For a child is born to us, A Son is given to us; and the government is upon His shoulder; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."

As the Gospels tell us, Jesus lived as a man for thirty-three and a half years and was then crucified, "cut off." While He was living as a man He was limited by the same constraints of space and time that we are. He could not be in two places at the same time and He had to wait for the appointed time. He said in John 7:6, "... My time has not yet come ..." The footnote for that verse in the Holy Bible Recovery Version⁴ states that although the Lord is eternal, while He lived on earth as a man, he was limited by time just as we are.

The Gospels go on to say that He was crucified and then resurrected. As we have seen, after His resurrection He appeared to the disciples many times. After His resurrection, He appeared to them coming from another space-time dimension, the dimension in which He as God dwells.

In writing this document, delving into just a few of these predictive prophecies, my sincere hope and prayer are that you have found this reading helpful in understanding how to answer the fundamental question of whether the Bible is the inspired Word of God. I would say that the Bible was conceived in another dimension. God conceived the Bible outside of time.

Written by SSB - a former proponent of evolution and scoffer of creation and the Bible, who came to know God's mercy and saving grace, and am now one who defends the faith that I once did my best to discredit and mock.

Elaborated by Dr. SPO – retired Professor of Neurobiology from the Department of Biology, University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus.

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(See timeline of historical events below.)

Appendix Timeline of Events of the History of the Jews

