

YEAR/DAY PRINCIPLE

THE YEAR/DAY PRINCIPLE OF BIBLE PROPHECY AND THE APPEARANCE OF THE MESSIAH

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In the Seventy Week prophecy of Daniel the angel Gabriel tells Daniel that the ruins of the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt. A decree will go forth to rebuild Jerusalem and then 69 weeks or 483 days after the giving of the decree the Messiah or the Christ would appear.

Daniel 9:25 “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;...”

Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Babylonian army and lay in ruins. Now Daniel is told that it will be rebuilt and that the Messiah will appear at a definite predetermined time after the decree goes forth. A period of 69 weeks, that is 483 days, from the going forth of the command to rebuild Jerusalem to the appearance of the Messiah.

In the 5th month of the 7th year of Artaxerxes I Longimanus (October 457 BC) a decree went forth to rebuild Jerusalem. According to prophecy the Messiah was to appear 483 days after this. But there is no record of the Messiah appearing 483 literal days after the giving of the decree.

But in the New Testament, Luke gives the exact time of the appearance of the Messiah.

Luke 3:1-3 “Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Phillip being tetrarch of Idurea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene. While Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,...”

- (1) In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar,
- (2) Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea,
- (3) Phillip being tetrarch of Idurea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene.
- (4) While Annas and Caiaphas were high priests,

The Physician Luke certainly didn't want his readers to be left in any doubt as to the exact time of the appearance of Jesus.

Luke 3:21-22 “When all the people were being baptised, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptised; and while He prayed the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said “You are My beloved Son; In you I am well pleased.”

The fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar occurred in September or October 27 AD. The time of the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist is 27AD. If we go back 483 literal days from the appearance of the Messiah we find that Jerusalem was not in ruins and there was definitely no decree to rebuild it. But if we understand that in Daniel and Revelation prophetic days mean literal years then the prophecy makes sense.

From the decree to rebuild Jerusalem in October 457 BC until the appearance of the Messiah in October 27 AD there is a period of exactly 483 full years. *So important is this year/day principle that the identity of Jesus as the Messiah rests upon it.* $457 + 27 = 484$. Subtract one year because there was no year 0 and you get 483 years.

483 days (69 weeks)

457 BC

27 AD

The decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the Baptism of Jesus.

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This year/day principle is nothing new. Bible scholars have understood it for centuries.

The famous Scottish mathematician Lord John Napier (1550-1617), the inventor of Logarithms, was also a keen Bible student. After an extensive 5 year study of Daniel and Revelation had this to say regarding the prophetic days :-

“In the seventy weeks of Daniel, a day to be taken for a year, extending in the whole to 490 years; otherwise, that prophecy of the Messiah’s coming, would not fall upon the just time of Christ’s coming, as necessarily it ought to do. So then, a prophetic day is a year, then a week seven years, a month thirty years (because a Hebrew and Grecian month has thirty days) and consequently the prophetic year is 360 years.”
John Napier, “A Plain Discovery of the Whole of Revelation of Saint John” p.2. Quoted in “The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers” Ed. E. L. Froom. vol2 p457, Review and Herald, Washington 1948.

The Anglican preacher and clergyman Howard Grattan Guinness said the 1260 days were 1260 years.

“It is “time, times, and a half” or “1,260 days”. This is a miniature symbol of the true period... Scripture elsewhere gives us the scale on which it is to be enlarged, “a year for a day.” It means therefore 1260 years.” *“Romanism and the Reformation” H. Gratten, Guinness 1891, p 39*

The Methodist Bible commentator Adam Clarke said the 1260 days of Daniel were 1260 years. Clement of Alexandria applied the year/day principle to the Seventy week prophecy. 490 days=490 years. Rashi (a Hebrew scholar 1105 AD.) Translated the 2300 days in Daniel 8:14 as 2300 years. Nahawendi (a Hebrew scholar 9th century) Translated the 2300 days in Daniel 8:14 as 2300 years.

These are only a few of many scholars through the centuries who have recognised this important principle of Apocalyptic Biblical interpretation.

In the Prophecies of Daniel and Revelation the Antichrist is to reign and persecute God’s people for :-

Dan 7:25 “...a time and times and a half a time.”

Rev 13:5 “...for forty-two months.” ie 1260 days (30 days per Jewish month).

By comparing Revelation 12:6 and 12:14 the expression *time, times and half a time* are found to be 1260 days.

Rev 12:6 “...They should feed her there 1260 days.”

Rev 12:14 “...where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time...”

In these two verses the same event is described and the same time period is mentioned. The church is to flee into the wilderness away from the dragon for certain time. The Bible tells us that the time, times and half a time equals 1260 days. But because in Daniel and Revelation a day represents a year then this time period is 1260 years.

Joachim, abbot of Calabria, one of the great ecclesiastical figures of the twelfth century, applied the year/day principle to the 1260 year period. “The woman, clothed with the sun, who signifies the church, remained hidden in the wilderness from the face of the serpent, a day without doubt being accepted for a year and a 1260 days for the same number of years.

The Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2:7-8 describes the reign of Antichrist in terms of centuries. It began to appear in his day and will be destroyed by the brightness of Christ’s return. Paul’s description is consistent with the length of the time prophecies of Daniel and Revelation.