

# When Will Messiah Come?

## Three Messianic Prophecies from the Tanakh

Peter Stoner, the late Chairman of the Departments of Mathematics and Astronomy at Pasadena City College, had his students calculate the odds of one man making eight predictions that would come true. His students calculated the odds were one in  $10^{21}$  (one in sextillion), and yet the Tanakh records multiple prophecies concerning the coming of Messiah with infallible precision.

1 in 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000

Three of these prophecies prove the validity of the Tanakh and place Messiah's coming within a certain period of time, before which He cannot come, and after which He cannot come.



### Messiah Will Be Born After The Second Temple is Built

"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts" (Haggai 2:9).

This prophecy was given about 520 B.C. after Judah had returned from Babylonian captivity. Haggai encouraged the Jews to finish rebuilding the Temple. The foundation had been laid about 16 years earlier but never finished. Under the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah, it was completed five years later.

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Remember the First Temple was Solomon's Temple, and this Second Temple was not going to be as physically glorious, yet God encouraged them by prophesying that the Second Temple would have far greater glory than the first.

The Scriptures are very clear about the nature of the glory of the First Temple: The supernatural presence of God was there! The divine fire was there. The Shekinah glory was present in the First Temple in the Holy of Holies.

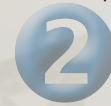
The Talmud and the later Rabbis all noted that some of the most important elements of the First Temple were not found in the Second Temple, including the Ark of the Covenant and the divine fire. Now the obvious question is, "How can the glory of the Second Temple surpass that of the first when the Second Temple was devoid of the very manifest presence of God that defined the First Temple's glory?"

The answer cannot be in the architecture or adornment of the Second Temple, nor in how long it stood. It can only be that something or someone greater than the cloud of glory would be manifest there. The fulfillment could only be that Messiah Himself would come to the Second Temple.

This is in line with what Malachi prophesied about the forerunner of Messiah. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold,

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he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 3:1). This means Messiah had to be born after the Second Temple was completed in 520 B.C.



### Messiah Will Be Born Before The Second Temple is Destroyed

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city.... Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks.... And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary..." (Daniel 9: 24-26).

A closer inspection of this prophecy shows how precise the Tanakh is regarding the coming of Messiah. This is probably the most time-specific prophecy in the Bible. Three basic facts are clear in this passage:

- ☛ **Messiah the Prince will come (Daniel 9:25).**
- ☛ **He will die (Daniel 9:26).**
- ☛ **Sometime after His death, Jerusalem and the Temple will be destroyed (Daniel 9:26).**

The key to understanding this prophecy is to understand the word translated, weeks. In Hebrew, the word for a week, *shavua*, is the same as the word for seven. The way to find out if these weeks are weeks of days, weeks of months, or weeks of years, is by counting from the date which is

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given in verse 25. "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times" (Daniel 9:25).

We know the date this command was given from the book of Nehemiah. In 444 B.C., Artaxerxes gave the decree to rebuild, not the Temple, but the city itself with its walls. Sixty-nine times seven is 483. If we take this to be 69 sets of seven years, something very interesting happens.

The Jewish year is 360 days, so when we multiply 483 by 360 days a year, we come to 173,880 days. When you add that to 444 B.C., you arrive at the year A.D. 33, and the 69th week is over.

Then Daniel describes the events that happen after the 69 weeks of years. Messiah will be "cut off," and sometime later the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.

The Romans, under Titus, utterly destroyed the city and the Temple in A.D. 70; therefore, Messiah had to be born, presented to Israel, and "cut off" before Jerusalem and the sanctuary were destroyed. After the year 70, it was too late for Messiah to be born. Messiah must have been alive sometime between 520 B.C. and A.D. 70, according to the Tanakh.

A third prophecy narrows the date even more.

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## Messiah Will Be Born Before Judah Loses Autonomy

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49:10).

Judah was the ruling tribe that did not lose its identity nor its power to observe God's laws all through the centuries. The scepter or right to rule remained with Judah from the time of David even through the Babylonian captivity. Zerubbabel, who comes back as the governor, is from Judah. Through Persian, then Greek, then Roman rule, Judah still maintained a level of self-governance over Israel, but a very significant event took place in the year A.D. 6.

Herod Agrippa had already died somewhere around 4 B.C. Herod Archelaus, the next ruler of Judea, was so wicked that the Jews appealed to Caesar to have him removed. Caesar removed him but then did a surprising thing. Instead of appointing another ruler from among the Jews, he replaced Herod with a Roman procurator, Coponius, and in a few years, Judea was a Roman province.

This event is significant because it meant that the Jews had now lost the right of capital punishment, and so the scepter had departed from Judah. The Sanhedrin met for an emergency meeting, and Rabbi Rachmon describes what happened: "When the members of the Sanhedrin found themselves deprived of their right over life and death, a general consternation took possession of them;

they covered their heads with ashes and their bodies with sackcloth, exclaiming, 'Woe unto us, for the scepter has departed from Judah and the Messiah has not come.'" The Rabbis themselves understood that a remarkable deadline had been reached that year.

We now have four dates specifically related to Messiah's coming:

1. **Messiah must have been born after 520 B.C.**
2. **He must have been alive before A.D. 70.**
3. **He must have been born by A.D. 6.**
4. **He must have been an adult by A.D. 33.**

### Think About What You Now Know

Considering these four dates, who but Jesus fulfills these prophecies? Who else can be a serious candidate for Messiah?

When the Sanhedrin lamented the loss of their right to govern, what they did not know is that 100 kilometers north, in the little town of Nazareth, Messiah (probably between eight and eleven years old) was helping in His father's carpentry shop.

About a year later, He would appear before some of them in the Temple, asking them questions. The prophecy was fulfilled, exactly as Jacob had seen it (Genesis 49:10). Shiloh had come. He had not been presented to the nation, but He had already arrived.

If they had been willing to listen to some simple shepherds just a few years earlier, they would have known that.

Jesus was in the Temple eight days after His birth. We read of Him in the Temple at age twelve. We read of Him cleansing the Temple twice in His ministry. On Palm Sunday, He rode straight up to the Temple and presented Himself to Israel for three days of questions and answers. Jesus said, "But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple" (Matthew 12:6). Truly, the Second Temple had a greater glory!

Jesus presented himself to the city of Jerusalem as their Messiah on Palm Sunday, at the exact time that Daniel had prophesied around 500 years earlier. Five days later, Jesus was "cut off, but not for himself" (Daniel 9:26). Thirty-seven years after Messiah had been cut off, the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Second Temple.

Messiah had to be born after 520 B.C., and He needed to be alive in A.D. 33 and put to death soon after. He had to be born before the Second Temple was destroyed in A.D. 70. After A.D. 70, you cannot look for another Messiah. Any messiah after A.D. 70 is a false messiah. Jesus Christ is the only one who fulfills these three prophecies in exact detail. Have you accepted Him as your Messiah?

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