

# Focus on Prophecy GUIDE 6



# God Steps In

- **When Mrs. Murphy took over the fifth grade at a suburban elementary school, all the other teachers warned her about Jimmy. He was a real troublemaker, always causing problems. She had better keep an eye on him if she didn't want her class constantly disrupted.**
- **So during recess period on the first day of school, Mrs. Murphy asked Jimmy to stay inside; she wanted to have a little talk. Jimmy slumped into a chair with a downcast look. He knew what was coming.**
- **Mrs. Murphy sat down beside him and began, "Jimmy, I've heard all kinds of things about you. But you know what? I don't believe a word of it! You and I are going to get along just fine."**

# God Steps In

- **Jimmy stared back wide-eyed. No one had ever expressed faith in him before. No one had expected the best.**
- **And something about the look in Mrs. Murphy's kind eyes made him want to be a good kid more than anything in the world.**
- **Jimmy skipped all the way out to the playground. That year he became the model student in the fifth grade.**
- **The message of Daniel 9 is that we have Someone who stands up for us in this life.**
- **No matter what other people are saying about us, no matter how we might be attacked, there is Someone who always believes in us. And that Someone is Jesus Christ. It's wonderful to have Him on our side.**

# Daniel Ponders Jeremiah's Vision

- **At the close of Daniel 8, we left the prophet in distress. His vision of the “little horn” trampling God’s sanctuary made him sick for several days. Daniel tells us he “was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it” (Daniel 8:27). After awhile, he went back to his government duties in the capital.**
- **Thirteen years pass, and Daniel is still haunted by this vision he can’t quite understand. He begins studying the writings of the prophet Jeremiah concerning Jerusalem.**
- **Jerusalem has been destroyed; it’s been lying in ruins for almost seventy years. Daniel knows all about that because he was a young man when this occurred. Daniel reads these words in Jeremiah 25:10-14:**

# Daniel Ponders Jeremiah's Vision

- **‘Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.**
- **Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,’ says the LORD; ‘and I will make it a perpetual desolation.**
- **So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations.**
- **(For many nations and great kings shall be served by them also; and I will repay them according to their deeds and according to the works of their own hands.)’**

# Daniel Ponders Jeremiah's Vision

- **Daniel realizes that the seventy years have almost passed, and yet there are no signs that God is turning things around. There are no indications that the Hebrews will ever restore Jerusalem or rebuild the temple.**
- **Daniel thinks about his vision described in chapter 8.**
- **There he was told that after 2,300 days the sanctuary would be restored.**
- **What did that mean? It's likely that Daniel was familiar with the principle, spelled out in Ezekiel, that in long-term, symbolic Bible prophecies a day stands for a year (Ezekiel 4:6).**

# Daniel Ponders Jeremiah's Vision

- **What, then, was he to make of Jeremiah's prediction? Could the sanctuary really be restored after seventy years?**
- **Or would it lie in ruins for 2,300 years? Daniel couldn't come up with a clear answer, so he decided to respond to a divine invitation given through the prophet Jeremiah: "Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.**
- **And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity" (Jeremiah 29:12-14).**
- **What Daniel did in his time of anxiety is an excellent pattern for us to follow.**
- **He didn't just give up when he ran into a perplexity in Scripture; he didn't just give in to his distress.**
- **He prayed for help; he asked God for answers. Most of Daniel 9 consists of his prayer. And what a prayer it is!**

# Daniel's Prayer

- **“Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes” (Daniel 9:3).**
- **Sackcloth was a coarse fabric made from the hair of goats or camels. Individuals put on sackcloth and spread ashes over their heads as a way of expressing intense grief.**
- **Fasting, or eating sparingly, for short periods is a way to clear the mind for better communication with God. It demonstrates an earnest desire for spiritual growth and guidance.**



# Daniel's Prayer

- **Daniel began his prayer by confessing his sins. “I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, ‘O Lord, great and awesome God, . . . we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets’ ” (vss. 4-6).**
- **Daniel identifies the reason behind the disaster that overwhelmed Jerusalem—Israel’s stubborn refusal to repent. God used the misfortune that befell Jerusalem to try to wake up His people and make them realize their need to follow Him (vss. 12-14). Daniel acknowledges God’s sovereignty over human affairs.**

# Daniel's Prayer

- **He remembers how God had delivered His people in the past when they were faithful to Him. “O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, . . . we have sinned” (vs. 15).**
- **Daniel states that Israel’s rebellion has allowed others to laugh at God and deride His power (vs. 16).**
- **Daniel asks God to be favourable to his request and not turn away from him. He also asks God to remember His sanctuary (vs. 17).**
- **Daniel asks God to look on him with favour and listen to his request, not because Daniel or the Israelites deserve this in some way, but simply because God is full of love and mercy (vs. 18).**
- **Daniel ends by saying, “God, hear, forgive, listen, act, do not delay!”**

# Daniel's Prayer

- **Daniel has given us an excellent example to follow. In his hour of distress he shows us the way to peace of mind—prayer. Prayer is an antidote to worry and anxiety. Through prayer we gain the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Through prayer we can improve our relationships. So pray. Pray alone and pray with others.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: In his prayer, Daniel held up his righteous life and strict obedience to God's commandments as reasons why God should answer his prayer. (False or True)**
- **When Daniel couldn't understand the vision of Daniel 8 and wondered what God's plan was for His people, he prayed to God for help and answers. (False or True)**

# Darlene's Prayer

- **Kampili, a notorious Japanese prison camp on the Celebes Islands during World War II, wore down the spirits of the American and European civilians confined there. But one woman, Darlene Deibler Rose, responded to the harsh conditions by going on a prayer offensive. She petitioned God on behalf of Mr. Yamaji, the brutal camp commander who often beat prisoners unmercifully.**
- **One day, standing in his office, she had an opportunity to share a few words about the almighty Creator who had died for all—even the camp commander. Tears began running down the man's cheeks. After that, he tried to improve camp conditions.**
- **While working in the hospital, Darlene prayed for Rachel, a Jewish internee who was gasping for breath, trying to fight off a serious asthma attack. She knelt by the bed and asked God to touch Rachel's body. Immediately, Rachel's breathing eased, and she was able to return to the barracks the next morning.**

# Darlene's Prayer

- **Darlene could easily have given in to the despair around her. God could have seemed terribly distant. But she found Him in the here and now because that's where she looked. In her effort to stay close to God she continually ran into His small favors.**
- **This was a woman who could look up at the stars from a bomb-blackened shelter and rejoice that the Creator of the heavens had entered into a relationship with her: "Oh the wonder of His love for me and His personal concern for me, as an individual, was overwhelming."**
- **Perhaps the example of Darlene and the earnest prayer of Daniel in chapter 9, have inspired a desire in you to seek God in a new way in prayer. What would you like to say to Jesus right now?**

## Gabriel Interprets the Vision

- **Something remarkable happens as Daniel continues his prayer.**
- **“While I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me. . . . And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, ‘O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. . . . I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision’ ” (vss. 21-23).**

# Gabriel Interprets the Vision

- **Daniel recognizes the angel Gabriel as the same being who had earlier given him the message about the sanctuary being restored in 2,300 days (Daniel 8). Daniel had not understood this vision. He had been so upset and stressed that he was sick many days (Daniel 8:27).**
- **Now Gabriel has come to help him understand the vision God had given him earlier. Daniel must have been quite excited. He is troubled concerning the future of the Jews and that 2,300-day time period—and now an angel has come from heaven as his private tutor! Gabriel's mission is to explain the meaning of the 2,300 days since that is what Daniel didn't understand in his earlier vision (Daniel 8:13, 14, 26).**

## Gabriel Interprets the Vision

- **Gabriel begins his explanation of the 2,300-day prophecy with a statement about time and the future of the Jews and the city of Jerusalem.**
- **He told Daniel, “Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city” (vs. 24).**
- **We can break down the seventy weeks as follows:**
  - ***1 week = 7 days***
  - ***70 weeks x 7 days = 490 days***

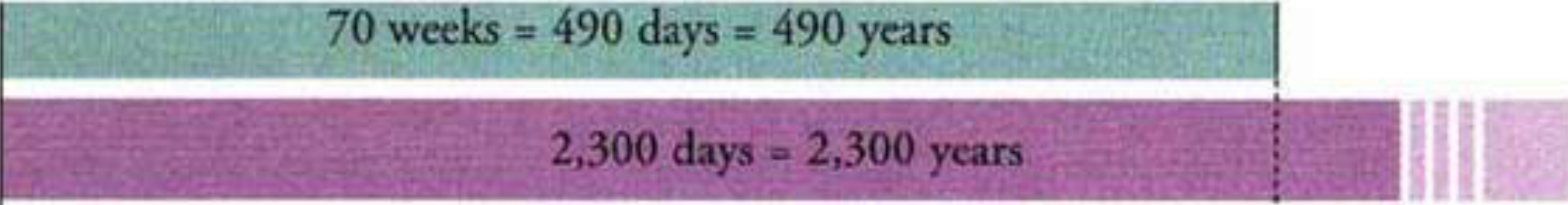


# Gabriel Interprets the Vision

- **As previously mentioned, in symbolic Bible prophecy one day equals one year (Numbers 14:34, Ezekiel 4:6). If one prophetic day equals one literal year, 490 days would equal 490 years.**
- **In Hebrew, the word “determined” literally means “to cut,” “to divide” or “to amputate.” Thus 490 years, which is the probationary time for Israel, was to be “cut off.” But “cut off” from what? The answer comes from Gabriel’s explanation in Daniel 9. Remember he’d told Daniel that he was sent to explain the part of the vision of Daniel 8 that Daniel did not understand—the explanation of the 2,300 days. Gabriel begins his explanation by saying that 490 years were to be “cut off” or removed, from the 2,300 days.**

## Gabriel Interprets the Vision

- **Here is the answer to one of Daniel's questions about the length of the 2,300 days.**
- **It is impossible to cut 490 years from 2,300 literal days since 2,300 literal days add up to only about six years.**
- **The solution is clear—the 2,300 days must represent 2,300 years.**
- **In diagram form, the prophecy would look like this:**



70 weeks = 490 days = 490 years

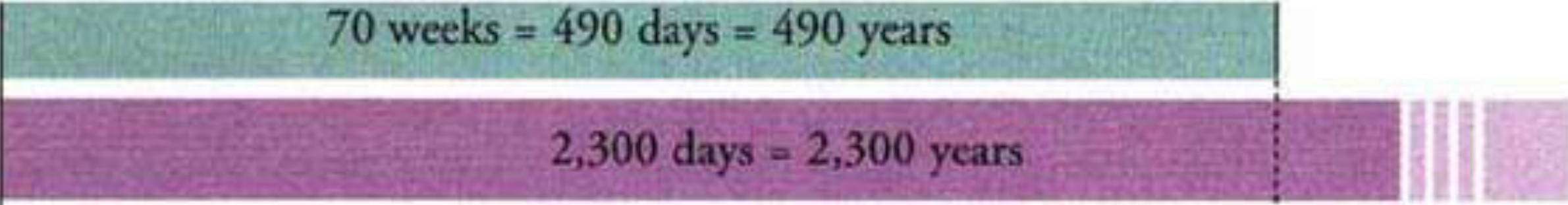
2,300 days = 2,300 years

- **Gabriel tells Daniel when the seventy weeks were to begin.**
- **“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks” (vs. 25).**
- **Daniel must have been excited. Jerusalem was going to be restored after all! He learns about the future of his beloved city.**
- **And he also learns the beginning date for the 2,300-day/year prophecy. It starts when the decree is given to rebuild Jerusalem. As it turns out, three decrees are recorded by Ezra the prophet.**

70 weeks = 490 days = 490 years

2,300 days = 2,300 years

- **The first decree** was issued in 537/538 B.C. by Cyrus the Great. This decree permitted a resettlement of the Jews in Jerusalem and gave them permission to rebuild the sanctuary (Ezra 1:1-11).
- **The second decree** was issued in 519 B.C. by Darius I Hystaspes. His proclamation simply confirmed the first decree (Ezra 6:6-12).
- **The third decree** was issued in 457 B.C. by Artaxerxes I Longimanus. This decree commissioned Ezra with full political and religious authority to rebuild Jerusalem.
- This decree is the one that actually authorized the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Ezra 7:11-26). This decree is regarded as the one which fulfilled prophecy, the one which serves as the starting date for the 2,300-day/year period.

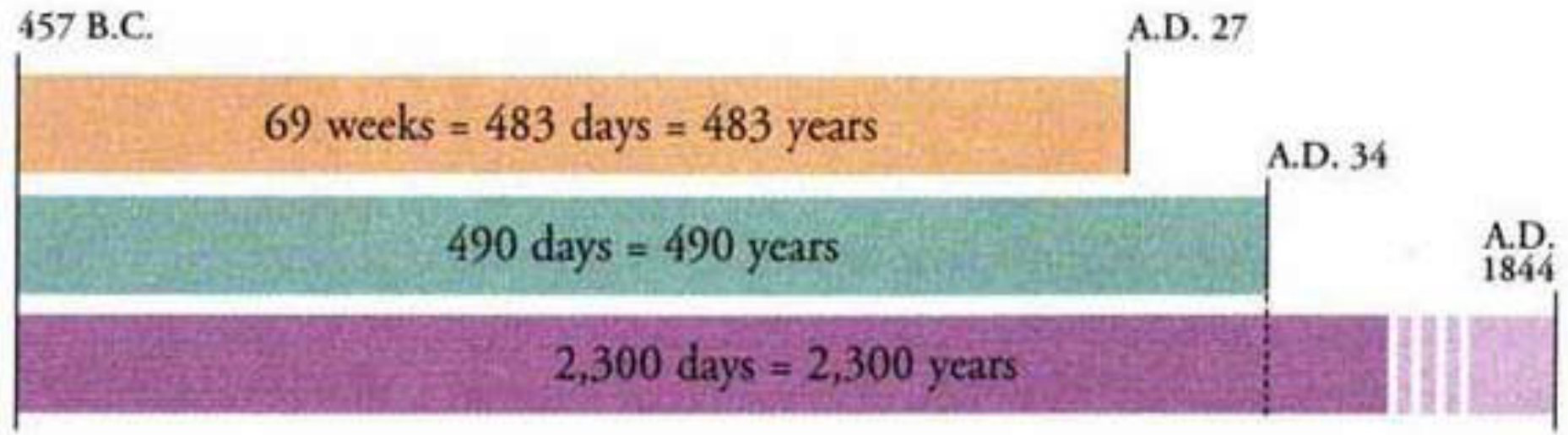


70 weeks = 490 days = 490 years

2,300 days = 2,300 years

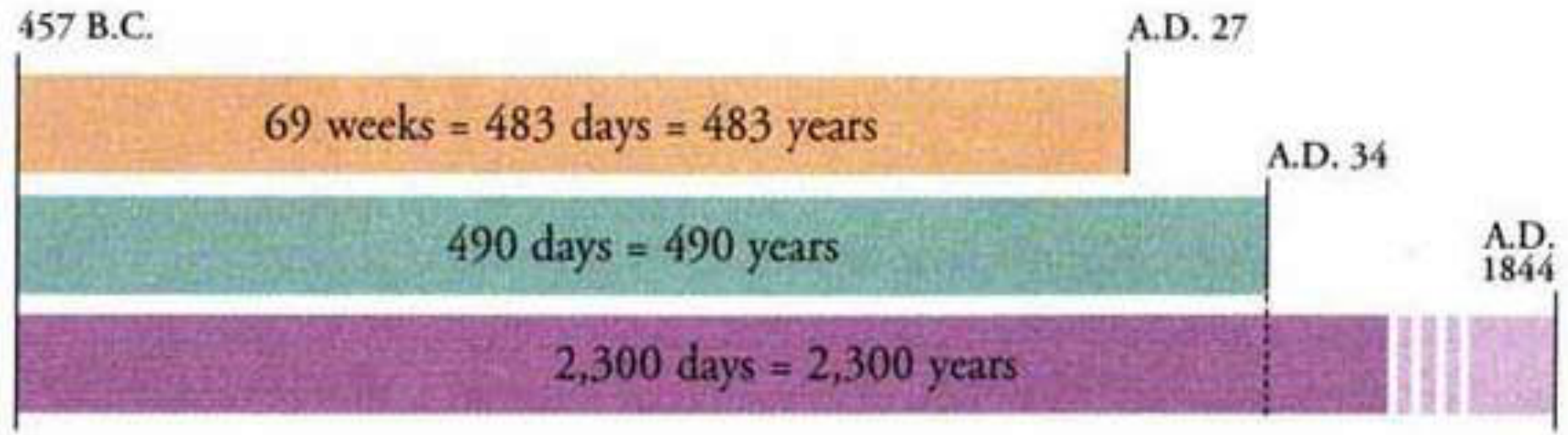
- **THOUGHT QUESTION:** The angel Gabriel told Daniel that 70 weeks were to be “cut off” from the 2,300 days and devoted to Daniel’s people, the Jews. (False or True)
- In some symbolic Bible prophecies one “day” equals a year of literal time. (False or True)

# Christ in This Prophecy



- **READ DANIEL 9:25-27.: The Messiah the Prince (Jesus) is the central figure in these verses and in the remainder of the discussion concerning the 490 years. Let's look carefully at the evidence given.**
- **According to the prophecy, how many prophetic "weeks" would pass between the beginning of the time allotted to the Jews and the appearance of the Messiah? "From the going forth of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks" (vs. 25).**

# Christ in This Prophecy



- ***7 weeks + 62 weeks = 69 weeks***
- ***69 weeks, or 483 days (69 x 7 days in a week) = 483 years***
- **In other words, if the Autumn of 457 B.C. is our starting date for the prophecy, adding 483 years to it would take us to A.D. 27.**
- **The New Testament reveals that Jesus began His earthly ministry by being baptized by John the Baptist in A.D. 27 (Matthew 3:13-17).**
- **Adding this information to our diagram, it would look like this:**

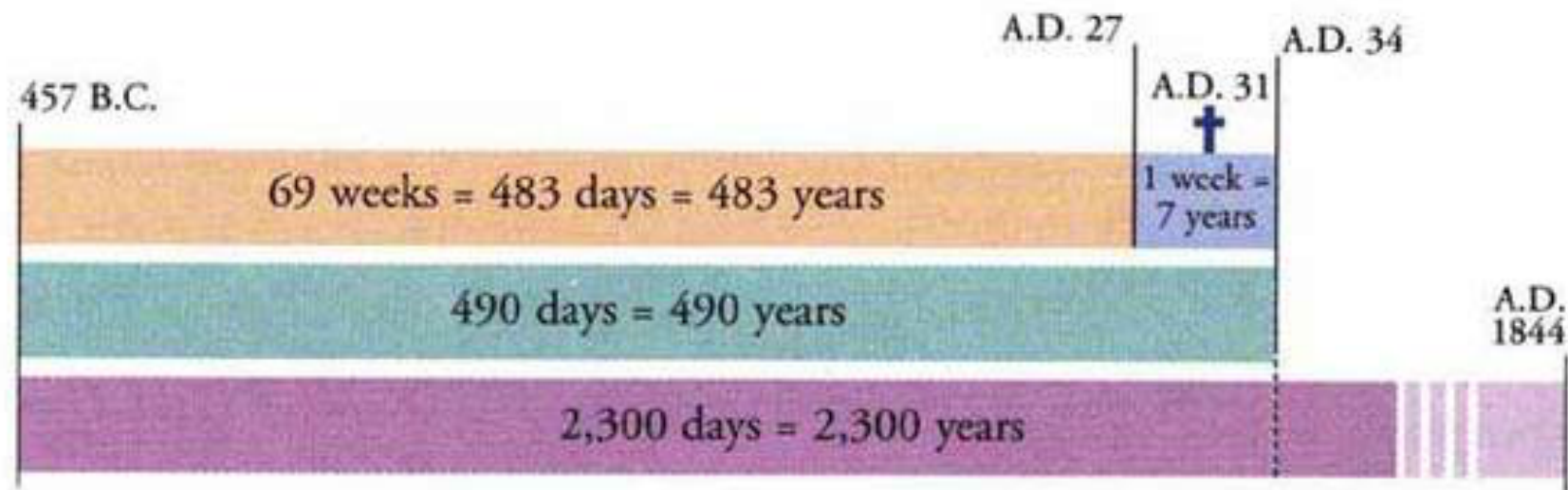
- **What event does the prophecy say will happen after the sixty-two weeks? Gabriel continues to explain the prophecy to Daniel.**
- **“After the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself” (vs. 26).**
- **The Messiah, Jesus, was “cut off” or crucified. He died “not for himself” but for us. “He [Messiah] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering” (vs. 27).**



- **Jesus was to be crucified in the middle of the last prophetic week.**
- **The last prophetic week would equal seven years. If the beginning date of the last week is A.D. 27, then adding seven years would take us to A.D. 34.**
- **Jesus was crucified in the middle of the week—this would be A.D. 31. Verse 27 states that Jesus' crucifixion in the middle of the week would bring an end to the sacrifices and offerings in the temple.**
- **Why? Because Jesus is the Lamb of God, the One whom the earthly sacrifices represented.**
- **Once Jesus died as the supreme sacrifice there was no need for the ceremonial sacrifices which had pointed forward to His death.**

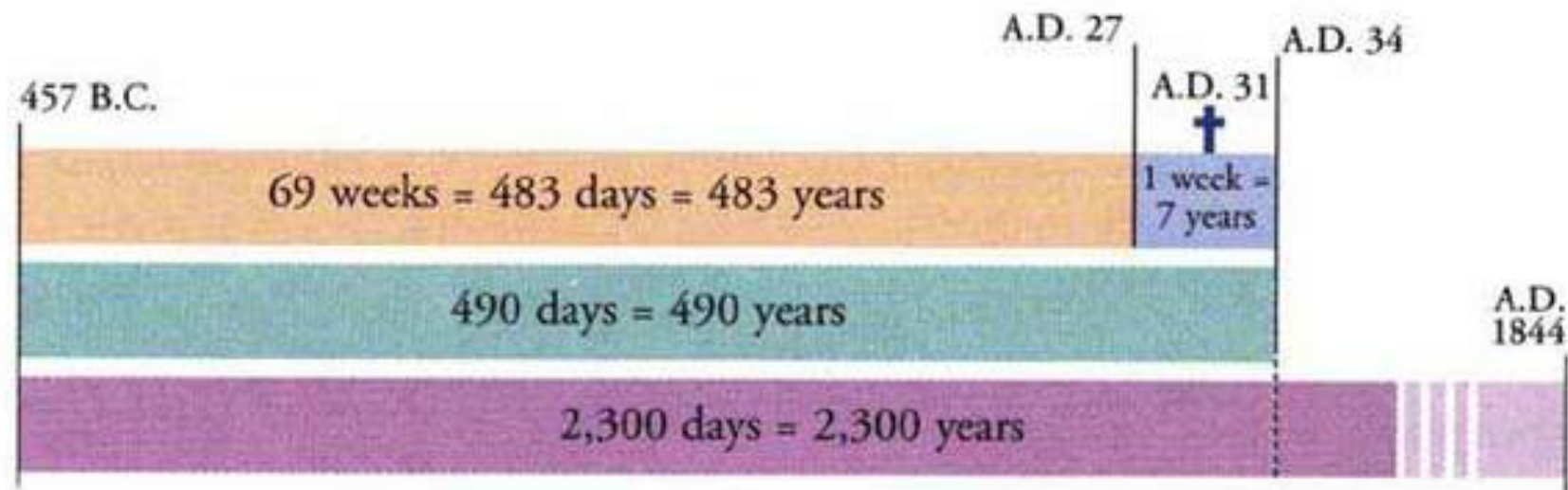
# The Early Church in This Prophecy

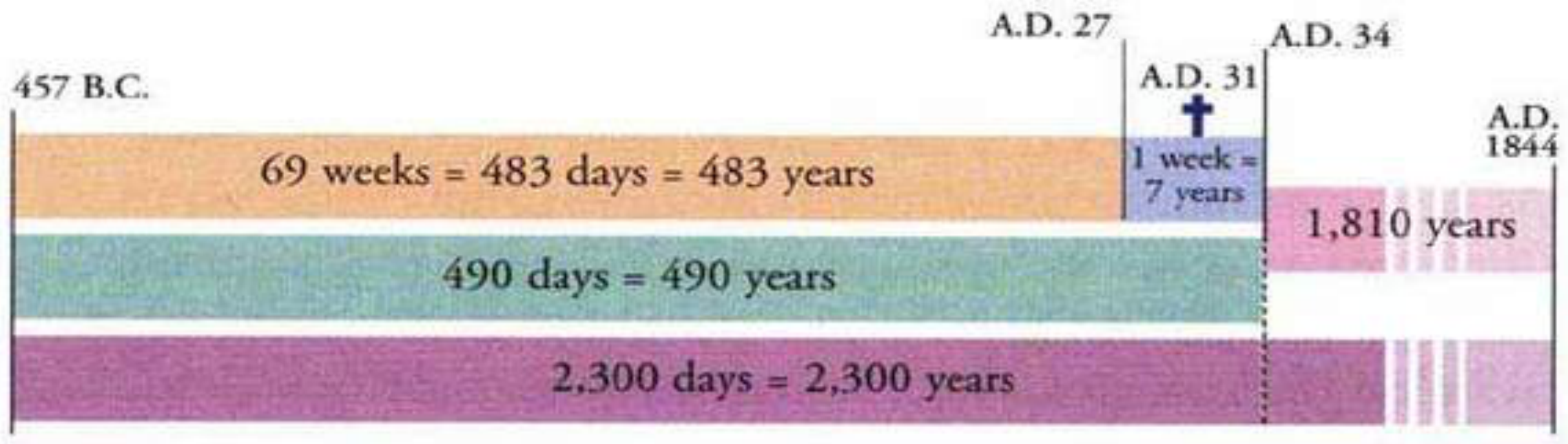
- If Jesus died in A.D. 31, then the remaining three and a half years of the prophetic week would take us to A.D. 34.
- According to the prophecy, this date marks the end of the 490-year period.
- When that period ended, it was the end of probationary time for Israel as a nation. As it turns out, in that year, A.D. 34, Stephen made a moving appeal to the leaders of the Jewish Sanhedrin to turn back to God.
- The book of Acts tells us that the Jewish leaders rejected Stephen's appeal and then stoned him to death (Acts 7:54-60).



# The Early Church in This Prophecy

- After the martyrdom of Stephen, the gospel was proclaimed to the Gentiles, but Israel's role in God's plan of salvation changed.
- The Christian church came to the forefront in taking the gospel to the world. The New Testament calls the church "new Israel" or "spiritual Israel."
- A diagrammed look at the additional prophetic information about the ministry of Jesus would look like this:





- The first portion of the 2,300-day/year prophecy covers the 490 years relating to Israel's fate and the birth and death of Jesus. However, we still have 1,810 years left to equal the 2,300 days/years that Daniel first asked about. Adding 1,810 years to A.D. 34 brings us to the year A.D. 1844. (In other words, the 2,300-year period that began in 457 B.C. ends in A.D. 1844).
- Our diagram is now complete:

# The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

- **WHAT HAPPENED IN 1844?**
- **According to the prophecy in Daniel 8:14, the sanctuary would be cleansed at that time.**
- **We know that when Jesus died in A.D. 31, the sacrificial system and sanctuary services ceased to have a divine purpose on earth.**
- **God expressed that fact very dramatically when, at the moment of Jesus' death on the cross, the curtain inside the temple was miraculously torn in half (Matthew 27:51).**
- **A few years later, in A.D. 70, the Romans destroyed the temple in Jerusalem.**

# The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

- **THEN WHAT SANCTUARY WAS LEFT TO BE CLEANSED IN 1844 AT THE CLOSE OF THE 2,300 YEARS?**
- **The only sanctuary left is the sanctuary in heaven.**
- **The Hebrew temple on earth was a model of the one in heaven.**
- **The heavenly sanctuary is the sanctuary where Jesus went to minister after His resurrection.**
- **This is where Jesus functions today as our High Priest.**

# The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

- **WHAT DOES THE CLEANSING OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY MEAN FOR US?**
- **In the Old Testament sanctuary service, cleansing the sanctuary meant that all the sins forgiven during the year and taken into the sanctuary by the High Priest were blotted out.**
- **The people regarded this Day of Atonement as a time of divine judgment.**
- **God was making it possible to declare the people blameless before Him—forgiven, pardoned, and accepted.**

# The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

- **We can conclude, then, that in A.D. 1844 a similar event began—a cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary.**
- **God immediately forgives all the sins which we confess to Him.**
- **But in this work of cleansing, He does something more to give us assurance. He blots out the record of sin in heaven forever.**
- **When your name comes up in this time of investigation (judgment), Jesus states that you are safe to save for eternity because you belong to Him and your sins are forgiven.**



# The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

- **The watching heavenly universe agrees that you belong to Jesus and that your sins should be cleansed from the sanctuary.**
- **This is a time when Christ declares who has chosen Him and eternal life and who has chosen Satan and eternal death.**
- **When Christ returns to earth at His second coming, He has already determined who He is going to take back to heaven with Him.**
- **He has already made sure that not a single person who has trusted in Him as Savior and Lord will be left behind.**
- **If there is any chance to save a human being, without violating his or her will, then our Lord will find a way to do it.**

# The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

- **The work of the investigative judgment began in 1844. When this work of investigation is over Jesus will take us home!**
- **The apostle Peter looked forward to this final blotting out of human sin.**
- **He wrote, “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).**
- **Jesus longs to banish our sins as far away as “the east is from the west” (Psalm 103:12).**

# The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

- **Many people become nervous when they hear about the great Judgment Day.**
- **We instinctively fear it. Who can stand before a holy God and feel blameless?**
- **That's one reason God gives us this assurance about the cleansing of the sanctuary.**
- **He wants to make sure that we understand that the judgment takes place in a sanctuary setting where Jesus is our High Priest.**

# The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

- **In the judgment Jesus stands up as our great Advocate. All the record of our wrongs, no matter how ugly, no matter how lengthy, doesn't count when Jesus says, "My blood has been shed for this repentant believer."**
- **If you have accepted Christ as your Savior and choose to follow Him, His perfect life covers your imperfect life. His blood washes away every trace of your sin.**
- **You can count on Him. He's never lost a case yet. And because of the work of Jesus, our wonderful High Priest in heaven, when the whole universe looks at you, they see only the perfect life of Jesus. When God the Father looks at you, He sees His beloved Son.**
- **You are accepted in the beloved Son. You are a child of God who belongs in heaven. This is how God lavishes His grace upon us. This is the good news of the gospel.**

# The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

- **Because Jesus is confident that believers will never sin again after they enter heaven, He clears their record of every trace of sin—it is blotted out forever.**
- **Then, His work of investigative judgment complete, He returns to earth to bring believers their reward.**
- **“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.**
- **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.**
- **Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:12-14).**

# The Cleansing of the Sanctuary

- **Jesus is prepared to give each person his or her reward when He comes back to this earth. We are living in the period of this investigation.**
- **We are living between the time Jesus began His ministry as our High Priest and the time He comes to take us home. It is exciting to think about God working out His final plans for us right now.**
- **It's a wonderful time to be alive. We are living in the last hours of earth's history.**
- **I hope that you will make sure that these last hours are spent building a friendship with your Advocate, your Intercessor, your Saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord.**
- **THOUGHT QUESTION: At the end of the 2,300 days the sanctuary was to be cleansed. This refers to removing the record of sin from the heavenly sanctuary. (False or True)**

# Conclusion

- **Many years ago a talented young musician named William Herschel played in the royal band of Hanover. He loved to strike up his martial music at the head of the troops. But when war came and William huddled in a trench listening to cannons roar all night, he was overwhelmed with terror. One night he just couldn't take it anymore and fled the battlefield. Knowing that deserters were executed, William kept right on fleeing—all the way to England.**
- **There William became a great organist and began to study astronomy. Eventually he built a telescope and even managed to discover a new planet. This drew the attention of learned folk around Europe, and the King of England sent for him.**

# Conclusion

- **William was highly honored, but as he approached Windsor Castle for his royal appointment he was overcome by feelings of dread. The King of England was none other than George of Hanover, the man in whose army he'd once served. Surely King George would recognize the name of his infamous deserter.**
- **As he sat in a chamber, waiting for his audience with the king, a servant handed him an envelope. William opened it with trembling hands. Would this be the long-awaited condemnation, the sentence of death? William found inside, instead, a complete pardon for his act of desertion.**
- **Overjoyed, William was ushered into the presence of the king. George told him, "Now that you are pardoned we can talk freely, and you shall come and live at Windsor and become Sir William Herschel."**



# Conclusion

- **You can receive the gracious pardon of the Sovereign of the universe.**
- **He longs to blot out all your sins so that you can have free and open communion with Him and live forever as His honored son or daughter.**
- **You can decide to place yourself in His gracious hands right now—no matter what you've done in the past. It's not too late.**
- **Listen: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).**

# Conclusion

- **Confession simply means that we admit to God that we are weak and sinful. That we're honest with Him about our mistakes.**
- **That we admit we are a sinner, and that we tell Him we accept His forgiveness and acknowledge our need of His power and grace.**
- **Listen to this fantastic promise in Ezekiel 36:26, 27. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.**
- **I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."**
- **God longs to write His commandments, His law of love, on your heart. Have you let Him? Why not do it now?**