

## EGF-11: Is Jesus of Nazareth an Imposter?

EGF Group Bible Study 12-24-11

How do we know that Jesus was who He said He was? How do we know that Jesus of Nazareth was not a false Messiah? The Bible has a few hundred prophecies that foretell the coming of "The Messiah." We are going to take a look at a few of these prophecies right now in this study!

1. **What did Jesus show was the theme of the Old Testament prophecies? *Luke 24:25-27; Luke 24:44, John 5:39***
2. **Concerning the birth of the Messiah, Isaiah 7:14 says—"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Was Jesus of Nazareth born of a virgin? *Luke 1:26-33***
3. **In what city does the Old Testament say the Messiah was to be born and was Jesus of Nazareth born there? *Micah 5:2; Luke 2:15-17; Isaiah 9:6***
4. **Was there also a specific time the Messiah was to appear? *Galatians 4:4***
5. **When was 'the Messiah the Prince' to begin His earthly ministry? *Daniel 9:24-25***

**ANSWER:** *Sixty-nine weeks after the command to restore and build Jerusalem. See Ezra 6:14; 7:7-11.*

6. **In symbolic prophecy, what does a "day" represent? *Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34***

We need to realize that the day-for-a-year principle isn't meant to be used everywhere in the Bible. There are two main types of prophecy in Scripture. They've been called "*classical*" prophecy, and "*apocalyptic*" prophecy.

Classic prophecy includes many of the Messianic prophecies, such as that of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, His being born of a virgin and living a "suffering servant" role (*Isaiah 53*), etc. Classic prophecy includes the 120 years preceding the flood in Noah's day, and so on. Classic prophecies occur in *literal* settings and are meant to be understood *literally*. So the 120 years before the flood is not 120 years x 365 days per year, which would have meant that God promised to send a flood in 43,800 years! No. It was a literal 120 years because *no* symbolism was used.

In Daniel, Revelation, and portions of a few other Bible books, we find what is called *apocalyptic* prophecies. Such prophecies appear in *highly figurative* settings, rich with symbols. When such time periods are given in richly figurative apocalyptic sections, they are meant to be interpreted by means of the day-for-a-year principle. The day-for-a-year equation is evident in classic prophecy (such as the two samples we've given, *Ezekiel 4:6*; *Numbers 14:34*), but is used in apocalyptic prophecy for the expression of longer time-frames.

Let us now consider the 70 week prophecy that we just read about in Daniel 9:24-25. The answer of question #5 gave us the beginning point of this prophecy. **"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. . ."** Here we are given something very important: a plain means of determining *when* this prophecy was to begin.

The 70 weeks and the 2300 days found in Daniel 8:14 from which it is cut off, begin at **"the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem."** This fits with the decree of Artaxerxes I found in *Ezra 7:1-26*. We know that Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in answer to Artaxerxes' decree at a certain time. *Ezra 7:8* says, **"And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king."** The question is, when was the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes I?

Historical documents such as the *Kraaling 6* manuscript discovered in 1956 confirm the accounts of Nehemiah and Ezra by giving us the correct dates for the reign of Artaxerxes I. We know that the first year of Artaxerxes reign aligns with fall of 464 B. C. Ezra arrived "...**in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king.**" We must subtract seven years from the year the King began to reign. The year 464 minus seven years takes us to 457 B. C. Thus we can firmly date **"the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem"** to the fall of **457 B. C.** This is the starting date of the prophecy!

Now we can just do some simple math using the 'day for a year' principle to determine the year of **'the Messiah the Prince.'** Starting from 457 B.C., the first period given in the prophecy is **"seven weeks"** which equals 49 literal years (7 weeks x 7 days per week = 49 *prophetical* days or 49 *literal* years). 457 B.C. minus 49 years brings us to the year 408 B.C. History records that this is the year that Jerusalem was completed! (See Humphrey Prideaux, *The Old and New Testament Connect in the History of the Jews*, Vol. I, p. 322.)

The second period given in the 70 week prophecy is **"threescore and two weeks."** A 'score' is equal to twenty, so **"threescore and two weeks"** would be *sixty* plus two weeks or 62 weeks. 62 weeks x 7 days per week = 434 *prophetical* days which is 434 *literal* years! Thus the prophecy begins with a period of 49 years, and then a longer period of 434 years follows. The first time period brought us to 408 B. C. and the completion of Jerusalem. From 408 B. C. we must subtract the 434 years segment (since there is no year "zero" between 1 B. C. and 1 A. D., we must add one) which brings us to the year 27 A.D. According to the Scripture in Daniel, **"the Messiah the prince"** would come at the close of the 434 years segment, which we now know to be the year 27 A.D. It happens that the year 27 A.D. was the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar.

**7. The 69 weeks ended in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar's reign. What happened during that year? Luke 3:21, 22**

**8. IF Jesus was the Messiah, HOW was He anointed, and WHEN did that happen? Acts 10:37-38; Luke 3:21-22; 4:18; John 1:41**

*Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism in 27 A.D., fulfilling the prophecy concerning the Messiah!*

**9. Did Jesus recognize the fulfillment of this prophetic time? Mark 1:15**

*The Greek word here is "pleroo," meaning "fulfilled," or "completed," as translated in the KJV. The time that had just been fulfilled was the 69 weeks prophesied in Daniel 9:24-27. See also Matthew 4:17. By fulfilling this major time prophecy we must declare Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah!*

**10. Although the Jewish people wanted a conqueror, what would happen to the Messiah sometime after 27 A.D.? Daniel 9:26**

*He would be "cut off." See Isaiah 53:8-9. The baptism of Jesus marked the end of the 69 weeks and the beginning of the 70th week of probationary time allotted to the Jewish nation. Let's look at Daniel 9:26 again: **"And after the three score 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; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."***

We have already learned that the period of Jesus' death cannot come before the year 27 A.D. That period is located "after" the 434 years segment of the prophecy. But we can be even more precise by looking at Daniel 9:27: **"And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease . . ."**

So we see that 69 of the 70 weeks of the prophecy of *Daniel 9:24-27* takes us from 457 B.C. to 27 A.D. From A. D. 27 to A. D. 34 is the time-frame of the last week of the 70 week prophecy (483 to 490 years is a difference of 7 literal years or one prophetic week). **"In the midst of the week He shall cause sacrifice and oblation to cease,"** carries us to the spring of A. D. 31, a period of 3.5 years which puts us in **"the midst of the week"** from the fall of A. D. 27.

What is this causing of sacrifice and oblation to cease? It can be nothing less than Jesus dying upon the cross. All the sacrifices in the Jewish system were figurative representations ultimately of Christ's death. The Passover was celebrated in the Spring time and Jesus Himself was our Passover Lamb in the Spring of 31 A.D.

Jesus came at the last week of the 490 year period to be received by the Jewish nation as the Messiah. But they refused to accept Him as the Messiah. Jesus, who made the covenant, would put an end to animal sacrifices by Himself being "cut off" and becoming our sacrifice on the cross. See *Isaiah 53:8; Hebrews 10:6, 9-14, 18; Matthew 23:38; 27:51.*

**11. Did Jesus understand the prophetic time period pointing forward to His being “cut off” and doing away with sacrifices? Luke 9:51; Matthew 26:18; John 7:6-8**

**12. Since after Jesus’ death there were still 3 1/2 years of the final (70th) week for special ministry to the Jewish people, where did Jesus tell His disciples to begin their witness? Acts 1:8**

*Jesus confirmed the covenant of 490 years with the Jewish people (Romans 15:8), first through His own ministry (Matthew 24:47), and then through His disciples. Luke 24:47.*

**13. When did the Gospel begin to go to the Gentiles? Acts 7:59; 8:1,4.**

*In the stoning of Stephen, the Jewish nation once more rejected the covenant of mercy. This final rejection brought the 70 week prophecy to an end and probation closed on the Jewish nation. (Acts 10:9-17, 28, 29).*

**14. Was the Jewish nation still God’s chosen people after 34 A.D.? Romans 2:28,29; Jer. 18:9,10; Deut. 28:45, 46, 63; Mat. 21:43; 1 Peter 2:9, 10**

**15. Under the New Covenant, who is the TRUE Israel? Galatians 3:26-29; Genesis 17:4-7; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 3:7; 6:15, 16; Ephesians 2:11-22**

*Jesus of Nazareth alone fulfills the prophecies of the Messiah. Through Him we can each become a part of God’s true people—spiritual Israel.*

*“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, **that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: **for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**” Acts 4:10-12.*

*Jesus says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30.*

**Is it your desire to be a part of God’s true Israel today? Accept the invitation of Jesus and you will be a part of His family forever!**