



## THE COMING PRINCE

### Course 3, *The People of Destiny*, Lesson 12

The Problem: How do we know that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah? How can we be sure that Jesus was the promised Messiah and the manifestation of God in human form, sent to overcome evil and die for our sins? This question has been debated for centuries. Many people do not believe that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament. Some Jewish communities still await the coming of the Messiah. Others view Jesus as a great prophet—on par with figures like Mohammed—but deny His divine nature. And then there are those who dismiss Him altogether, rejecting the Bible and its message entirely. They ask: "What does Jesus have to offer me? How can I know He wasn't just another religious leader making exaggerated claims? Haven't there been many who called themselves 'Christ' throughout history? How do I know which one to believe?"

For Christians, these are important questions that must be taken seriously. Faith plays a crucial role in coming to know Jesus as Lord. As Scripture says, *"He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself"* 1 John 5:10. The Holy Spirit provides an inner certainty that affirms the truth of Jesus' identity and the Bible's divine inspiration. Hebrews 11:6 reinforces this, saying, *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."* This divinely given conviction transcends scientific or historical reasoning—it is a spiritual assurance imparted by God.

The Bible presents a wide range of evidence to support the claim that Jesus is the Messiah. While "proof" in the scientific sense often relies on observable and repeatable experiments, biblical evidence is built on historical records, fulfilled prophecy, eyewitness accounts, and spiritual revelation.

The Apostle Peter, who lived and walked with Jesus, recognized the importance of prophecy as evidence. He wrote: *"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts"* 2 Peter 1:16, 19. Peter asserts that Jesus' life and death fulfilled Old Testament prophecies, and that this prophetic evidence is even more compelling than the firsthand experiences of His disciples.

This is a bold claim! If prophecy truly confirms Jesus as the Messiah, we must examine Old Testament scriptures carefully, seeking divine guidance as we study. By comparing New Testament affirmations with the prophecies of old, the evidence becomes overwhelming. Jesus is the Christ—the Savior who offers eternal life to all who believe.

#### Objectives:

- I. We consider the New Testament claim that Jesus was the Messiah.
- II. We ask, "When did Jesus become the Anointed One?"
- III. We examine Daniel's prophecy of the 2,300 days.
- IV. We give special attention to the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9.
- V. We consider the meaning of the final week of Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy

#### I. THE NEW TESTAMENT CLAIM THAT JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH

For centuries, the Jewish people longed for the arrival of the Messiah—a deliverer who would free them from oppression and fulfill God's promises. The first prophecy of Scripture (Genesis 3:15) foretold that the Seed of the woman

would ultimately triumph over Satan and his followers, offering salvation to all who believed. Throughout Israel's history, this promise was echoed in various forms by prophets who pointed toward the coming of God's anointed one.

When Jesus of Nazareth arrived, His disciples boldly proclaimed that He was the long-awaited Messiah. They documented His teachings, His miraculous works, and His own declarations about His identity. Jesus claimed not only to be the promised one but also the supreme Deity made manifest in human form. His life, death, and resurrection fulfilled prophetic expectations, affirming His divine role in the salvation of humankind.

The Word:

1. What did Andrew announce to Peter after he had first met Jesus? John 1:40-41
2. How did Philip identify Jesus? John 1:45
3. Who did Nathanael recognize Jesus to be? John 1:49
4. How did Jesus identify Himself to the woman of Samaria? John 4:25-26
5. Why did the Jews want to stone Jesus? John 5:18; 8:58-59; compare Exodus 3:14

Explanation: John 1 clearly establishes that Jesus' disciples recognized Him as the long-awaited Messiah foretold by the prophets. Their understanding was clear: the Messiah and the Son of God were one and the same. This belief became a point of fierce opposition from unbelieving Jews, who sought to kill Jesus because they viewed His claim of equality with God as blasphemous (John 5:18). In their perspective, to declare oneself as the Son of God was to equate oneself with God—a claim they could not accept.

Jesus reinforced His divine identity when He referred to Himself as "I AM" (John 8:58), a direct reference to the sacred name *Yahweh*, which God revealed to Moses (Exodus 3:14). This profound declaration, along with numerous other scriptural affirmations, establishes the New Testament's testimony that Jesus was not merely a great prophet, but the supreme God of the universe—miraculously born of a virgin and sent to redeem humanity from sin.

Consider Colossians 2:9: *"For in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."* Jesus was not simply one-third of the divine nature—He embodied the entirety of the Godhead. He was fully God, sharing authority and power with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The mystery of the Trinity reveals that our one God (Deuteronomy 6:4–6; Malachi 2:10) exists in three distinct persons, each fully and completely divine.

Relevance: Accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord means recognizing that you are following and worshiping the supreme God of the universe—not merely an exalted human figure, but the eternal God who took on flesh to rescue the world. *"For God so loved the world"* (John 3:16) that He chose to live among us and give His life for our sins (Romans 5:10). His divinity is the foundation of our faith, and His sacrifice is the ultimate expression of God's love for humanity.

## II. WHEN DID JESUS BECOME THE ANOINTED ONE?

The English word "Messiah" originates from the Hebrew word *"Mashiach,"* meaning "anointed one." Its Greek equivalent is *"Christos,"* which gives us the English word "Christ." Therefore, when we call Jesus "Christ," we are acknowledging Him as the Anointed One.

This raises an important question: When did Jesus officially become the Anointed One? At what moment did His ministry as the Christ begin?

The Word:

6. How did the Father anoint His Son Jesus? Acts 10:38
7. On what occasion was Jesus anointed? Matthew 3:16-17
8. In what year was Jesus baptized? Luke 3:1-3, 21

Explanation: Jesus' ministry officially began when He was anointed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism, an event recorded in Luke 3:1, which places it *"in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar."*

Tiberius assumed rule over the Roman Empire upon the death of his father, Augustus, on August 19, A.D. 14. That same year, the Jewish civil New Year fell in October, marking the beginning of the Tishri-to-Tishri calendar cycle that Luke followed. The reigns of non-Jewish rulers were measured according to the Jewish New Year (Tishri 1, also known as Rosh Hashanah).

Since Augustus passed away in August, the remaining months leading up to October were considered "the first year of Tiberius' reign" under the Jewish antedating system, where the new ruler's first year began immediately upon the predecessor's death and ended on the next New Year's Day.

By this method, October A.D. 14 – October A.D. 15 was counted as Year 2 of Tiberius' reign. His 15th year spanned autumn A.D. 27 – autumn A.D. 28.

Given that Jesus' baptism preceded His first Passover of His public ministry in spring A.D. 28 (John 2:13), it is historically sound to conclude that His baptism took place sometime in autumn A.D. 27—the moment He became the Anointed One and began His public ministry as the Messiah.

Relevance: Jesus' baptism in A.D. 27 marked the beginning of His mission as the Christ, fulfilling centuries of prophetic expectation. But why does this timing matter? The astonishing truth is that the exact date was foretold hundreds of years earlier—a prophecy recorded by Daniel, revealing God's divine timeline for the arrival of the Messiah.

### III. DANIEL'S PROPHECY OF THE 2,300 DAYS

Daniel's prophetic timelines offer compelling evidence that his messages must have originated from God. When examined alongside his other predictions, these time prophecies provide striking confirmation that specific events were destined to unfold in precise years. They reveal an astonishingly accurate account of history—both fulfilled and yet to come.

As we study Daniel's prophecies, we recognize that we are living in a time just before the climactic final event in human history: the second coming of Jesus Christ. However, before we consider His return, our focus in this lesson is to explore how Daniel accurately foretold the first coming of Jesus Christ—a prophecy fulfilled with precision centuries after it was written.

The Word:

9. What special time period did Daniel predict in connection with the attack on God's sanctuary? Daniel 8:14
10. How do we know that this time period was nearing the end of human history? Daniel 8:17, 19, 25-26
11. What did Daniel mean by the cleansing of the sanctuary? Leviticus 16:29-30, 33-34
12. Is there a sanctuary in heaven to which Daniel could have been referring? Hebrews 8:1-2; 9:11; Revelation 11:19; 15:5

Explanation: Daniel 8:14, when translated directly from Hebrew, states: "For evenings-mornings two thousand and three hundred; then the sanctuary will be justified (or cleansed)." This phrase \*\*\*"evenings-mornings" refers to 2,300 full days, following the Old Testament pattern where a complete 24-hour period is expressed as "evening-morning"—never "morning-evening." Genesis 1 provides the clearest example of this usage: "And the evening and the morning were the day" (Genesis 1:5, also repeated in verses 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31). Here, "evening" represents the dark portion, and "morning" the light portion of a full day.

However, in Daniel 8:14, these 2,300 days symbolize a much longer time frame. The prophecy's focus is on "*the time of the end*" (Daniel 8:17), making it clear that the sanctuary's cleansing was foretold to occur in the last days. If these were literal days, the period would only span about six years and four months—far too short to extend from the ancient world to the time near the end of history.

Daniel's prophecy, like many others in his book, relies heavily on symbolic representations:

- The ram and goat (Daniel 8) symbolize earthly nations.
- The horns on these animals represent political and spiritual powers.
- The little horn (Daniel 8:9–12) symbolizes the great antichristian power, which opposes God and substitutes human institutions for Christ's heavenly ministry.

Likewise, the 2,300 days function as a prophetic symbol for 2,300 years—a time period during which truth and Christ's heavenly ministry would be obscured. The Bible supports this day-for-a-year principle in symbolic prophecy (see Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34). Applying this principle is the only way to make sense of Daniel's time prophecies in chapters 7–9, as will become more evident in our study.

*The Sanctuary Connection:* Daniel's prophecy extends near the end of time, long after the Israelite sanctuary or temple ceased to exist. However, the New Testament reveals that Jesus Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary took the place of the earthly one (see Matthew 27:51; Hebrews 8:1–2).

Relevance: Daniel 8:14 foretells that the great antitypical Day of Atonement would begin at the conclusion of the 2,300-year period. At that time, awareness of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary would be revived, and the final pre-advent judgment would take place (see Daniel 7:9–14). During this phase, the heavenly sanctuary would be cleansed of its record of pardoned sins, and God's people on earth would undergo spiritual purification in preparation for the second coming of Jesus.

But this leads to a crucial question: When did the 2,300 years begin—and when do they end?

#### IV. THE SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY OF DANIEL CHAPTER 9

This is the remarkable prophecy that foretold when the Messiah would come and when He would be put to death for human sin. Daniel could not understand the 2,300-year prophecy given in his previous vision, so he prayed earnestly, and the angel Gabriel, who had appeared to him before (Daniel 8:16), came again to explain more of what would happen during the 2,300 days.

The Word:

13. How can we be quite sure that Gabriel came to explain the Daniel 8 vision? Daniel 9:20-23
14. What period of time did Gabriel say would be "cut off" ("determined," "decreed") from the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14? Daniel 9:24
15. At what point would both the 70 weeks and the 2,300 days (years) begin? Daniel 9:25
16. Who would arise at the end of 69 of the 70 weeks? Daniel 9:25

Explanation: Gabriel's explanation in Daniel 9:24 introduces a defined period of time—seventy weeks—that is said to be “cut off.” In the original Hebrew, the text reads: “*Sevens seventy are cut off for your people and for your holy city.*” These seventy periods of seven (weeks) total 490. Given that they extend to the time of the Messiah, they must represent 490 years, as literal days or months would not span such a long period.

*But where are these 490 years cut from?* The answer lies in Daniel 8:14. The 2,300 years spoken of in that prophecy are the larger timeframe from which these 490 years are “cut off.” The Hebrew verb *Hathak*—used here—means “to cut,” “to divide,” or “to separate” (see William Gesenius, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon to the Old Testament*). Since Gabriel was clarifying the previous vision, it is reasonable to conclude that the 490 years are directly cut from the 2,300-year timeline found in Daniel 8:14.

This further confirms that the 2,300 days in Daniel 8:14 must represent years—not literal days—since cutting 490 years from a mere six years and four months (2,300 literal days) would be illogical.

*Why were these 490 years cut off?* Daniel 9:24 reveals that these years were set aside as a period of probation for Israel and as the timeframe in which the atoning sacrifice would be made. The Messiah Himself would bring an end to sin and provide atonement for iniquity. His sacrifice would open the way for believers to receive everlasting righteousness (Romans 8:9-10).

The Beginning of the 2,300 & 490 Years: Daniel 9:25 gives the answer: “From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.” So when did that commandment go forth? Ezra 6:14 provides clarity: “*And they built, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.*”

This restoration decree came in three parts:

1. Cyrus – 538/537 B.C. (Ezra 1)
2. Darius I Hystaspes – 519 B.C. (Ezra 6:6-12)
3. Artaxerxes I Longimanus – Autumn 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:11-26)

The third decree, issued in 457 B.C., was the most significant as it restored Israel's civil, political, and religious structure. This date is well established by scholars (See S. H. Horn & L. H. Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7*, 1953).

*When would the Messiah come?* Daniel 9:25 provides a precise timeline: “*Seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks.*”

- Threescore and two weeks = 62 weeks\*\*
- Seven weeks = 7 weeks
- Total: 69 weeks
- $69 \times 7 = 483$  years

During the first 49 years (7 weeks), Jerusalem's streets and walls would be rebuilt. After 434 more years (62 weeks), the Messiah would be put to death (Daniel 9:26).

From the autumn of 457 B.C., 483 years lead directly to autumn A.D. 27—the exact year of Jesus' baptism when He was anointed by the Holy Spirit, officially beginning His ministry.

Since there was no year 0, 1 B.C. was immediately followed by A.D. 1, making the math precise.

*Fulfilled Prophecy—Objective Evidence.* Luke 3 confirms that Jesus was baptized in A.D. 27, perfectly aligning with Daniel's prophecy. This stunning accuracy reveals God's ability to foretell events centuries in advance (Isaiah 46:9-10).

The fulfillment of Daniel 9's prophecy stands as one of the strongest pieces of objective evidence supporting Jesus' claim to be the Messiah.

Relevance: No other person claiming to be the Christ has fulfilled prophecy as precisely as Jesus did! Daniel 9's prophecy is one of the greatest proofs that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

## V. THE FINAL WEEK OF DANIEL'S PROPHECY

Of the 70 weeks (490 years) prophesied in Daniel 9:24–27, the first 69 weeks (483 years) extend from 457 B.C. to A.D. 27, the year when Jesus Christ was baptized and anointed as the Messiah. The final week (the last seven years) was fulfilled in the years following His baptism, marking significant events in His ministry, death, and the confirmation of God's covenant.

The Word:

17. For how long would the Messiah confirm the covenant with many? Daniel 9:27
18. What would happen in the middle of the final week of 70? Daniel 9:27; compare the first part of verse 26
19. What would a destructive prince do after the death of the Messiah? Daniel 9:26 (last part), 27 (last part)

Explanation: The final week of Daniel's 70-week prophecy represents the seven-year period from autumn A.D. 27 to autumn A.D. 34. The middle of this seven-year timeframe falls 3½ years after its beginning, which brings us to spring A.D. 31. Daniel foretold that during this time, the Messiah would "*cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*" (Daniel 9:27).

It is crucial to recognize that Daniel 9:26 and the first part of Daniel 9:27 are parallel in meaning. The Messiah was "*cut off*" (Daniel 9:26), and this event brought an end to the sacrificial system of the earthly sanctuary (Daniel 9:27). The moment Christ died, the temple veil was torn—symbolizing the end of the old covenant sacrificial system (see Matthew 27:51; Hebrews 9:11–14; 10:1–10).

If Daniel's prophecy was accurate, Jesus would have participated in four Passovers during His 3½-year ministry:

- A.D. 28: John 2:13
- A.D. 29: John 5:1 (likely a Passover)
- A.D. 30: John 6:4
- A.D. 31: John 13:1 (Passover of the crucifixion weekend)

*How did Jesus confirm the Covenant for seven years?* The prophecy states that the Messiah would confirm the everlasting covenant for one week (seven years), yet He was crucified in the middle of that timeframe. How was this fulfilled?

During the first 3½ years, Jesus' ministry focused exclusively on the chosen people of Israel (Luke 1:68–76; Isaiah 42:6). Though His message applied to all, His mission centered on re-establishing Israel's covenant with God so that they might spread the Gospel to the world.

After Jesus' crucifixion in A.D. 31, His disciples continued this mission exclusively within Israel—until A.D. 34, when Stephen's martyrdom marked a turning point. Following this persecution, the Gospel was extended to the Gentiles (Acts 1:8; 3:25–26; Hebrews 2:3; Acts 7:58–8:5). Thousands of Jews accepted Christ during this period (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4, 32–33; 5:14; 6:1), fulfilling the final portion of the prophetic week.

*The Destructive Prince and the Roman Empire.* The latter parts of Daniel 9:26–27 describe a destructive power, fulfilled by Rome and its successor in the Middle Ages. These powers attacked Christ's truth, His sanctuary, and His people, aligning with the prophecy of the little horn (Daniel 8:9–14, 23–25).

- Pagan Rome's responsibility in Christ's crucifixion
- The Roman army's destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and again in A.D. 135
- The persecution of early Christians until Constantine's Edict of Milan in A.D. 313

- The rise of a medieval religious system that replaced Christ's heavenly ministry with an earthly priesthood

The "little horn" will ultimately be destroyed at Christ's second coming.

Relevance: Daniel's prophecies in chapters 8 and 9 regarding the Messiah's coming and work were fulfilled with astonishing accuracy:

- ✓ Jesus was anointed as the Messiah in A.D. 27 (His baptism).
- ✓ Jesus was crucified in A.D. 31, precisely 3½ years later.
- ✓ Stephen's stoning in A.D. 34 marked the shift of the Gospel to the Gentiles.

Thus, Daniel's 70-week prophecy confirms:

1. Jesus is the true Messiah who died for our sins and now ministers for us in the heavenly sanctuary.
2. The little horn power (Daniel 8:9–14) would temporarily reign before its final destruction at Christ's second coming.
3. Israel ceased to be God's chosen nation in A.D. 34, as the Gospel was extended to all people.
4. At the conclusion of the 2,300-year prophecy (Daniel 8:14), Christ's heavenly ministry entered its final phase—the antitypical Day of Atonement.

*A Personal Call:* The fulfillment of Daniel 9:24–27 provides undeniable evidence that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. But this is more than historical truth—it is an invitation. The question now is: Will you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

There is peace in knowing that He died for your sins, and today, He offers forgiveness to all who seek Him (1 John 1:9). His Spirit transforms hearts, but only if you respond in faith. You can pray now:

"Yes, Lord, I believe. You are my Savior and my God!"

#### *Review Questions*

1. True or False
  - a. Jesus personally never claimed to be the Messiah
  - b. Jesus began His ministry as the Messiah when He was baptized.
  - c. A day in symbolic prophecy often represents a year.
  - d. Jesus was crucified in the autumn of A.D. 31.
2. Discuss: Despite the strong evidence that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies, why do many people still choose not to believe in Him? What factors—historical, cultural, personal, or intellectual—might contribute to skepticism or disbelief? How do different perspectives shape people's responses to this evidence?