

Daniel's Visions, Accuracy of his Prophecies

How accurate is Daniel?

The accuracy of Daniel's prophecies is one of the reasons so many skeptics advance the theory that the Book of Daniel was written (around 162 B.C.), by a Hellenist Jew named Judas Maccabaeus. The skeptic cannot reconcile Daniel's precision in any other way short of the obvious acceptance of God's inspiration, an apparently unacceptable choice. But the following aspect of the prophecy cannot be explained away by late dating.

Daniel's vision, particularly that part dealing with the first 69 weeks, intrigued Sir Robert Anderson, a retired Scotland Yard Inspector of the late 19th Century. Daniel 9:25 predicts: "Know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty two weeks" Go to Articles and read Daniel's 70 weeks).

In other words, using the issuance of the only decree that authorized the rebuilding of both the city of Jerusalem and the Temple as a starting point (given by Artaxerxes Longimanus of Persia), 483 years later should bring us to the time of Jesus (see Daniel 9:25-27 and read the notes there).

Sir Robert calculated these 7 weeks, plus 62 weeks or 483 years ($69 \times 7 = 483$). Virtually every fair authority has confirmed them since and has confirmed his calculations. Others, like Hoehner's Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ, have carried Anderson's calculations even further.

Most agree that the only decree that fits the prophecy was the decree issued by King Artaxerxes (**Nehemiah 2:1**), or the 20th year of his reign on the first day of the month of Nisan. The Greenwich Observatory confirmed the date as (March 5, 444 B.C.). Anderson's calculations were among the first to recognize the Hebrew lunar calendar; it has a 360 day year, 12 months of 30 days each.

Anderson used a simple conversion process. The length of a year varied by calendar, but a day was still a day. By dividing 483 years by 360 days, we find the 69 weeks equal exactly 173,880 days.

From 444 BC to AD 33 is 477 years (according to our calendar). But (A.D. 1 and 1 B.C.), were the same year, so the actual length of time was 476 years. Multiplying 476 years by 365.242198179 (allowing for leap years, etc.), comes to 173,855 days, 6 hours, 52 minutes, 44 seconds, or to round it off, 173,885 days. But 69 weeks, 483 years is 173,880 days.

The figure is 25 days short. Jesus rode into Jerusalem (on March 30, 33 A.D.). The starting point, Artaxerxes Longimanus' decree was issued March 5.

Artaxerxes Longimanus decree; (read Ezra 7:11-28 for this decree). Add the missing 25 days and we come up with 173,880 days.

So, the prophecy predicted the event to the exact day! This destroys the basis for the skeptic's argument, unless the forger was also divinely inspired. The point becomes moot. God was precise then, and He is equally accurate today!