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Appendix: Date of the Crucifixion

Daniel 9:1

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans–

"In the first year of Darius the son of Ahaseurus" **– 539 B.C. The specific dates found in this and other passages in the Bible are evidence of the fact that they are authentic – the original written documents, copied faithfully and accurately as they were passed on from one generation to another.**

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Daniel 9:2

in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.



Leaving Jerusalem during the Babylonian Invasion

Daniel was studying *"the books"* – the scrolls – in particular Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10, prophetic messages about the length of Jerusalem's desolation and Captivity of the Jewish people in Babylon. The *"desolations of Jerusalem"* had started with the siege of Jerusalem in the year 606/605 B.C., which was also the time of Daniel's capture when he was hauled off to Babylon and ended up living in king Nebuchadnezzar's palace. (Daniel 1:1-6) Then seventy years later, just as Jeremiah had foretold, Babylon fell, at which time the Persian conqueror Cyrus made a proclamation allowing the Jews to return to their land – which just happened to be in the year following Daniel's fervent prayer.

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation… saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: … the LORD God of heaven… has

> ***commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem."*** **(Ezra 1:1-3)**

At some point after this proclamation made in 538 BC, Jewish people started migrating from Babylon to Jerusalem, and this marked the end of Jerusalem's 70-year period of *"desolations"*.

> **The 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy were measured as lunar years of 360 days each. (More on this will be explained later.) So the *"70 years"* would shorten to 69 years as measured in what we now use – the 365¼ day year. If the *"desolations of Jerusalem"* began in 606 B.C., then 69 years later would be 537 B.C., the year following Cyrus' proclamation in 538 B.C. which was probably when Jewish people started emigrating from Babylon back to their homeland.**

But prior to this marvelous release from Captivity, Daniel, after reading *"the word of the Lord"* from Jeremiah, was moved to pray one of the most heartfelt prayers found in the Bible, confessing and asking the Lord to forgive both his own and his people's iniquities in the following verses 3-19.

Before this time Babylon was the ruling power, and Daniel had fallen out of favor with its king. There seemed no glimmer of hope on the horizon that the Jews might ever return to their homeland.

Daniel was, we might say, checking in with the Lord to find out what was going on and to show before Him their repentance. Perhaps there was the expectation that this would help to expedite the fulfillment of the promise which he had just been studying from the *Book of Jeremiah*.

And sure enough, within a very short period of time, Cyrus made his proclamation, granting to the Jewish captives permission to return to Jerusalem and Judea. Furthermore, Daniel's enemies (and would-be opponents to the Jews' exodus) were taken out of the way – by getting thrown into the lions' den, the account of which may be found in Daniel chapter 6.

Although it is not recorded, it is possible that Daniel read certain prophecies to Cyrus, those that called him by name some 150 years before the Persian king was born. (Isaiah 44:28-45:1) This could very well be what convinced Cyrus to show favor to the Jews and permit them to return to Palestine.

And so it was that the opening of this chapter Daniel 9, with this 70-year time prophecy from Jeremiah, was a natural springboard to a new time prophecy, also involving the number 70, but dwelling on more distant future events. This new time prediction, on a much wider scale, focuses on the "return from captivity" of all of God's people (not just the Jewish people) from the "foreign" lands of *"this present evil age"* into their Promised Land, the Kingdom of God on Earth – mankind's return to the Garden of Eden, his original home. (Galatians 1:4)

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<u>Daniel 9:3-11</u>

Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,

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, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land.

O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day–to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.

O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.

We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets.

Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.

Obedience was required, not only to God's law (*"Your precepts and… judgments"*), but also to God's *"servants the prophets"* through whom came the *"voice of the LORD our God"*.

The *"curse"* mentioned here in verse 11 refers to the warnings of Deuteronomy 28:15-68 concerning what would befall the Israelites if they turned their backs on God and failed to keep His precepts and statutes.

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Daniel 9:12-16

And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth.

Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice.

And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day–we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us.

The people's failure to follow closely stood out in sharp contrast to the *"mighty hand"* and the great *"name"* of the God whom they claimed to be serving. Not only that, their disobedience had become *"a reproach to all those around us".* Perhaps this was the main area of concern as far as God was concerned. For Him the priority was for His people to be a light to the

nations around them.

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Daniel 9:17-19

Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate.

O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies.

O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

Daniel prays for the restoration of Jerusalem and the sanctuary. These were the physical things, which he and the Jewish people of his day felt were absolutely necessary to have in order to continue the true worship of God.

Centuries later, however, Jesus shifted the focus away from this kind of earthly outlook: *"you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father… But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such to worship Him."* (John 4:21,23) But in Daniel's time that realization had not come, and as a result the soon-coming reply to Daniel's prayer contains some reference to the city of Jerusalem and the temple.

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Daniel 9:20-23

Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God,

yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.

At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:



Archangel Gabriel Appears before Daniel

The angel Gabriel appears, the angel of the Lord's passion, the same one who, a few centuries later, appeared to Zacharias the father of John the Baptist and to Mary the mother of Jesus. (Luke 1:19, 26) As a matter of interest, the angel Gabriel hasn't stopped trying to influence humankind.

In a prophetic message, received in March 1997 from Gabriel, he is alleged to have imparted the following message about himself: "I am the keeper of the reservoir, the Word of God."

That seems to be Gabriel's responsibility – to see to it that the Word of God gets "downloaded", we might say, into the earthly realm. Much of the Book of Daniel, in fact, is simply the angel Gabriel himself speaking directly to the prophet Daniel.

For Daniel, it must have been an awesome experience to see Gabriel *"fly swiftly"* and then to start talking with him. Gabriel probably appeared human-like enough to Daniel; otherwise, the experience might have been

too overwhelming. Yet Daniel knew that he was talking to the angel Gabriel, the same one who had visited him 12 years earlier in 551 B.C. and revealed to him the meaning of the ram/he-goat vision. (See Daniel 8:16.)

No doubt, this previous encounter with Gabriel made it easier to interact with him this second time. It seems that the angels, on those rare occasions when they interact with us human beings, try to make the experience easier by becoming more human-like in appearance. (Read an interesting example of how Daniel was comforted along these lines in chapter 10, verses 10-12, 15-19.)

Regarding the hoped-for return from Captivity, that event was only about a year away, and the answer Daniel received to his desperate prayer touched on that to some extent. But the message Gabriel gave him also stretched far into the future, covering the time periods that would pass before the dawn of the Millenium, the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. His message also contains some amazing, exact predictions about Jesus' first coming and then the final seven years of world history before His Second Coming.

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Continue to Part 3: Overview – Daniel 9:24