

Secrets of God



Do you like to share secrets? It's fun to share secrets with our friends. Did you know that God has secrets?

- 1 What did Daniel say about God's secrets?
Daniel 2:28 "There is a God in heaven who _____ secrets."

God reveals His secrets to His prophets, who then share them with us. (Amos 3:7.) God is kind and merciful. He does not want anyone to be lost. He tells us His secrets—what will happen in the future—so we can be ready.

Did God want His own people, the Israelites, to know when His Son Jesus was coming as a baby and what work He would do? Yes! But sadly, God's people weren't carefully studying their Bibles and the prophecies in them. They missed the special secret. But there were some other people who studied the prophecies and learned when Jesus was coming.

- 2 **Matthew 2:1, 2** "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, _____ from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.'"


The wise men were not Israelites, but they were **wise** because they had been studying the Bible prophecies and looking for Jesus to come. These men had read the prophecies of Balaam and Daniel. Remember, Daniel was a wise man who lived in the East, first in Babylon and then in Medo-Persia. One of Daniel's visions told exactly when the Messiah would come. Since these wise men were carefully studying the prophetic writings, they knew when to expect the Messiah and what sign in the night sky would show that He had come.



Daniel's prophecy told several important things:

- 1.) The exact year Jesus the Messiah would be baptized and begin His ministry.
- 2.) The exact year the Messiah would die.
- 3.) The exact year probation would end for Israel as God's special missionary nation.



 **Probation: a specified period of time for the testing or trial of an individual's conduct, character, qualifications, or the like.**

This last date was very important to the Israelites. This was the date by which they, as a nation, must make their final choice between God and Satan.

God had been very kind to them. Even though they had frequently disobeyed Him, He continued to help them and call them His people. For hundreds of years, He begged them to repent, and He sent many prophets to warn them of their danger. But sadly, the Israelites had a bad habit of doing whatever they wanted to do and "following their own heart."

- 3 Was it dangerous for the Israelites to keep disobeying God? **Yes / No**



If you go to a game park in Africa, you can see lions roaming free. To stay safe, you must remain in your car or within a fenced area in the park. If you do not, you are in danger of getting hurt by the lions.

The Bible says that Satan is like a roaring lion, looking for people he can destroy with sin. (1 Peter 5:8.) By rejecting God, Israel would be leaving the safety of God's protection—like the safely fenced area of a game park. They would have nothing to protect them from Satan.

God tried everything He could to save them from choosing to obey Satan. He sent prophet after prophet to warn them, but they persecuted and killed these special messengers. So, finally, God sent His own, dear Son.

- 4 What did they do to Jesus?
Mark 15:25 "They _____ Him."

After the Israelites killed Jesus, God's Son, God still loved them. How amazing! He even gave them another chance when He sent Jesus' followers to invite them to accept His forgiveness and salvation. But what did they do to His beloved disciples? They persecuted and killed them, too.

God was merciful to His people, but He could not force them to love Him. In fact, He loved them enough to let them make their own decision about loving Him. At the end of their probation, *they rejected Jesus even though they knew how good and kind He is.*



- 5 What did they know about Jesus? (Circle yes or no.)
- Yes / No** Shepherds visited by angels announced Jesus' birth.
- Yes / No** Wise men visited Jerusalem to find Jesus.
- Yes / No** Simeon and Anna said that Jesus was the Messiah.
- Yes / No** John the Baptist identified Jesus as the Lamb of God.
- Yes / No** Jesus worked miracles and even raised the dead to life.

- 6 When Jesus began His ministry, what did He preach?
Mark 1:15 "The _____ is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand."

To what "time" was Jesus referring? It was a "time" that all of Israel should have known. This "time" was the time of His coming prophesied by Daniel. This special prophecy not only predicted the time of Jesus' coming, but also what His mission would be—to save His people from their sins. Israel should have been studying this prophecy so they could be ready to welcome Jesus, the Messiah.



Let's study this prophecy ourselves.

- 7 **Daniel 9:24-27** "_____ weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most _____. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until _____ the Prince, there shall be _____ weeks and _____ weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be _____, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for _____ week; but in the _____ of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."

God was telling His people that they had 70 weeks (7+ 62 + 1) to decide for or against Him. If they would repent and accept Jesus, He would set up His kingdom in their hearts. *With Jesus in their hearts they would want to do what God wanted them to do instead of what their wicked hearts wanted.*



Have you ever been excited about getting a toy, but then felt disappointed when it broke right away?

That's like the "happiness" Satan offers us. It is only temporary. But Jesus offers us immense joy now and the hope of being in His heavenly kingdom, which will last forever.



- 8 What does the Bible say God's kingdom will be like?
1 Corinthians 2:9 "_____ has not seen, nor _____ heard, nor have entered into the _____ of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

God wanted the Israelites to know exactly when to expect the Messiah, and He wanted them to tell the world.

He told the prophet Daniel the exact year that Jesus would come.

- 9 How many weeks does the prophecy say there would be "until Messiah the prince?"
Daniel 9:25 "There shall be _____ weeks and _____ weeks."
7 weeks
+62 weeks
= _____ weeks



- 10 When did these 69 weeks start?
Daniel 9:25 "From the going forth of the _____ to restore and build Jerusalem."



Now we just need to know when the king of Persia made the decree. Then we will know the starting date for this timeline.

The decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was made by King Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign, which was 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:8; The Canon of Ptolemy.)

- 11 In symbolic Bible prophecy, one day equals how much literal time?
Ezekiel 4:6 "I have laid on you a _____ for each _____." (See also Numbers 14:34.)
So one prophetic day = one literal _____

- 12 Let's do some more math. Use a calculator if needed.
69 weeks
x 7 days in a week
= _____ prophetic days, or literal years

So from the time the decree was made, in 457 B.C., there would be 483 literal years until the Messiah came. What year is that? If you look at the chart, you'll see that is the year A.D. 27. Is that really when Jesus came? Yes. Luke tells us when Jesus was baptized.

- 13 **Luke 3:1** "Now in the _____ year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar...."

History tells us that Tiberius Caesar's fifteenth year was A.D. 27. Exactly when Daniel's prophecy predicted, Jesus was baptized and anointed with the Holy Spirit as He came up out of the water.

Daniel also said that something important would happen to the Messiah in the middle of the week. What was that?

- 14 **Daniel 9:26, 27** "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be _____, but not for Himself.... But in the middle of the week He shall bring an _____ to sacrifice and offering."

What does it mean that the Messiah would be cut off? Was Jesus cut off from His Father at the cross?

- 15 **Matthew 27:46** "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying ... 'My God, My God, why have You _____ Me?'"



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Jesus was cut off from His Father because He took our sins upon Himself. Sin separates from God. (Isaiah 59:2.) Jesus endured that separation so that we wouldn't have to experience it. Because of His sacrifice, we can talk directly to God the Father through Jesus.

What does "in the middle of the week" mean?

Remember, Daniel had been told that the nation of Israel had 70 weeks to decide for or against God. He also said that the Messiah would come after 69 weeks and help them for that last week, or seven years. Jesus began His public work as the Messiah in A.D. 27. From A.D. 27 to A.D. 34 is seven prophetic days, or seven literal years. In the middle of the seven years Jesus was to die.

- 16 What is $7 \div 2$? _____

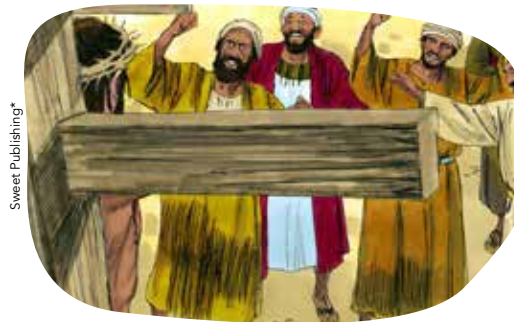
Half of seven years is three and a half years. Jesus was to be cut off and die at the time of the Passover feast just three and a half years after He began His ministry. Jesus was baptized in the fall of A.D. 27; and three and a half years later was the spring of A.D. 31. Look at the chart to see these dates on the timeline.

- 17 What did Daniel say would happen when Jesus died?
Daniel 9:27 "In the middle of the week He shall bring an end to _____ and offering."

- 18 When Jesus died, the priest in the temple was ready to sacrifice the Passover lamb. Something happened that kept the lamb from dying. What was it?
Mark 15:38 "Then the veil of the temple was _____ in two from top to bottom."



No more lamb sacrifices were needed, because Jesus, the true Lamb of God, had just died for us.

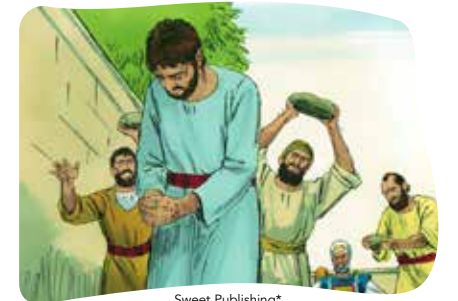


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At Jesus' trial the Israelites rejected Jesus and asked that He be killed. They asked that Barabbas, a robber, be freed instead. In doing this, they really chose Satan, whom Barabbas was choosing to follow. But even after the Israelite nation rejected Jesus, God still gave them time to repent. He sent Jesus' disciples to help them. But the leaders of the nation rejected those offers of mercy and began to persecute

the disciples. They eventually stoned Stephen, one of Jesus' faithful followers, to death.

The stoning of Stephen happened at the end of the 70-week prophecy, in A.D. 34. (69 weeks to the Messiah + 1 more week of probation = 70 weeks). At that time, probation closed for the Israelites. Israel, as a nation, ceased to be the special people of God. No longer was God able to protect the Israelite nation from Satan's attacks. History tells of the trials and sad things that have happened to their nation since then.

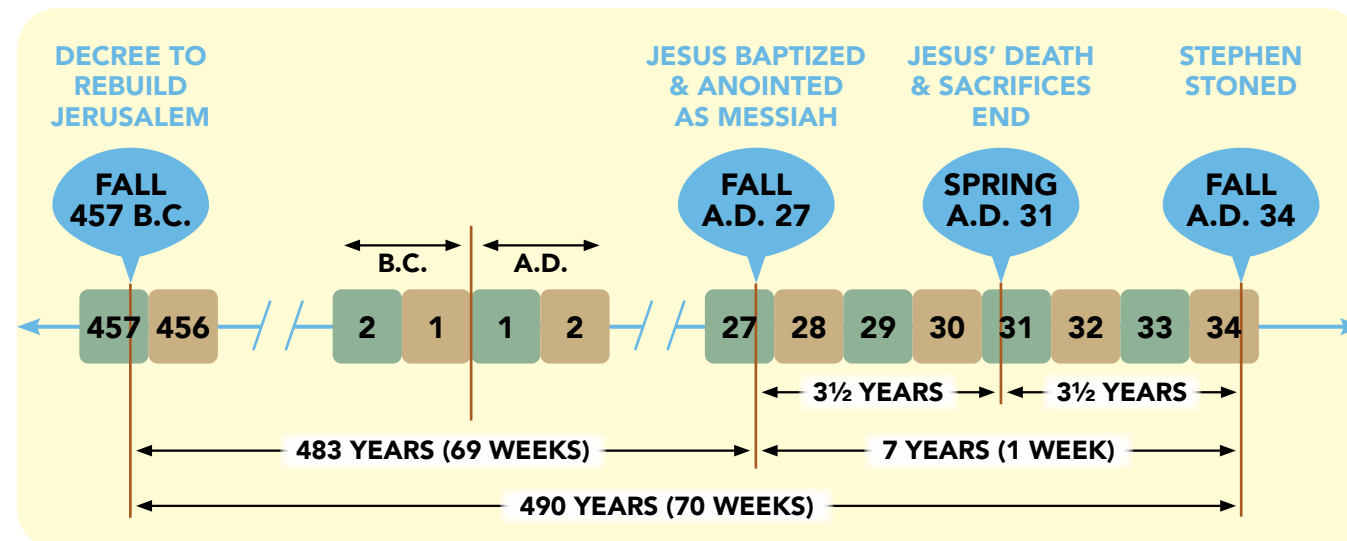


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God's new plan was to use the new Christian church to tell others about Him, and the church would be made of people from every nation.

The good news is that everyone in the whole world can choose to love Jesus and accept Him as a personal Savior whether they are Israelites (Jews) or Gentiles. God loves everyone, and His gift of salvation is for all who will accept Him as a personal Savior.

- 19 Will you accept Jesus' gift of salvation for you and receive Him as your personal Savior? _____



Answers

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. reveals | 6. time | 9. seven / sixty-two / 69 | 14. cut off / end |
| 2. wise men | 7. seventy / Holy / Messiah / seven / sixty two / cut off / one / middle | 10. command | 15. forsaken |
| 3. yes | | 11. day / year / year | 16. 3½ |
| 4. crucified | | 12. 483 | 17. sacrifice |
| 5. yes / yes / yes / yes / yes | 8. Eye / ear / heart | 13. fifteenth | 18. torn |

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