

# DANIEL'S MESSIAH IN THE CRITIC'S DEN

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Definition of terms-

Poor, remarkable, extraordinary- Quantitative definitions of these terms are described in section 2.2.5 of Ref. 17.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Daniel 9:24-27, an Old Testament passage, there is a prophecy for the coming of the Messiah. Daniel says from the time when a decree is issued to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, there will be 7+62 weeks until the Messiah will come. This article explains a straightforward approach to interpreting this prophecy that at least remarkably points to the best-known candidate for the Messiah, Jesus of the Gospels.

Ref.17 presents a rational method for identifying the intervention of the supernatural. This rational method involves using proof by elimination to make the case that the supernatural has intervened. This is accomplished by showing there is no plausible natural explanation for a certain event implying that the cause of that event involved the supernatural. To make this case, Ref. 17 explains that it must be shown that the event cannot be plausibly explained by deterministic or indeterministic natural principles or natural intelligence. This article applies this objective methodology explained in Ref. 17 to this Daniel 9:24-27 messianic prophecy.

Section 2 explains the reasoning for eliminating all natural explanations except chance. Section 3 presents the justification for different interpretations of the prophecy based on the Ref. 17 method. A probability calculation is presented in Section 4. Section 5 presents an analogy to the prophecy fulfillment. Section 6 responds to the best criticisms that the critics have published. Section 7 presents the conclusion.

## 2. ELIMINATING ALL NATURAL EXPLANATIONS EXCEPT CHANCE

Basic matter and energy predictably follow governing principles; however, basic matter and energy themselves do not have the ability to think, predict or publish prophecies. Thus, there is no natural deterministic phenomenon that publishes prophecy of the Daniel 9:25 type nonetheless have them fulfilled; thus, the two natural possibilities for prophecy fulfillment remaining are by natural intelligence or by chance (indeterministic natural principle).

### 2.1 Dating the Authorship of Daniel

Because of the astonishing prophecies that are in the book of Daniel, critics typically assign the authorship to some unknown Jew around 164 BC rather than the traditional date of approximately 540BC. 164 BC is the time when most of the detailed prophecies are fulfilled. However, two prophecies in the book of Daniel were fulfilled past the 164BC date: the coming of the Roman Empire to Jerusalem and the coming of the Messiah as described in this article. Even though there is no non-Biblical reference to Daniel during the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, because of detail historical accuracy that is not expected from an author from the late date (2<sup>nd</sup> century BC) of the book of Daniel there are legitimate reasons (Ref. 1 & Ref. 16) to consider the traditional date for Daniel as accurate. Ref. 1 explains the different arguments for the traditional and critical dating of the authorship of the book of Daniel.

### 2.2 Independent of Natural Intelligence

Both the traditional and critical authorship dates are far enough away from the time of Jesus to justify the claim that the author of Daniel would not have any natural intelligence to suspect that the best candidate for the Messiah would live at the time of Jesus.

Since the Daniel 9:25 prophecy is the most impressive of all messianic prophecies, if the Gospel writers were using this Daniel 9:25 prophecy to promote the early Christian Church, then it would be the most likely of all the alleged prophecies of Jesus to be included in the Gospels. The Gospels did mention many other much less impressive prophecies; however, they did not mention the most impressive messianic prophecy in Daniel 9:25. Therefore, most likely the Daniel 9:25 prophecy was not used or known by the early Christian Church which wrote the Gospels. This indicates that natural intelligence of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy did not influence the early Christian Church which wrote the Gospels at the time period of Jesus.

If Jesus thought he was the Messiah because as an ordinary human he understood the Daniel 9:25 passage, then it is highly probable he would of publicly stated quite often that this passage pointed to him as the Messiah, because it would have helped to give him credibility which he would have needed because the miracles mentioned in the Gospel would not have been real. Even much of critical modern scholarship of the historical Jesus such as the Jesus Seminar propose that significant portions of Jesus' sayings were passed onto the Early Christian Church which wrote the Gospels [19]. Of all Jesus' sayings, mentioning the Daniel 9:25 prophecy would have been the most remarkable; thus, the one most likely to remembered and passed onto the early Christian Church which wrote the Gospels. Thus, it appears that this information would have been passed onto the early Christian Church which wrote the Gospels, if Jesus thought he was the Messiah because as an ordinary human he understood the Daniel 9:25 passage. Also, if Jesus was an ordinary human, then I suspect he would not have been able to determine the date for the prophecy starting point when the decree was issued for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

The Qumran community stored the Dead Sea scrolls and was intensively interested in the Messiah. Ref. 20 chapter "Messianic and Visionary Recitals" lists many sections of the Dead Sea Scrolls which show the Qumran community had an intense interest in a coming Messiah. Ref. 20 chapter "Prophets and Pseudo-Prophets" lists many sections of the Dead Sea Scrolls with parallels and references the book of Daniel which shows the Qumran scribes studied the book of Daniel and had a copy of it. This indicates the Qumran scribes had an intense interest in looking for signs of Messiah and did look in the book of Daniel, but there is no mention of Daniel 9:25 prophecy of the coming time of the Messiah. This supports the position that ordinary humans reading Daniel 9:25 at the time of Jesus would not be aware that it pointed to their time period.

Because of the intense focus on OT prophecy in the Gospels, the Gospel critics claim that the early Christian church intensely searched the OT to concoct up messianic prophecies for Jesus. To claim the Early Christian Church intensely searched for OT prophecy but obviously did not find Daniel 9:25 and then claim Jesus found it would not be consistent. These points support the idea that typically ordinary humans at the time of Jesus would not have been aware that the Daniel 9:25 passage would have pointed to their time as the time of the coming of the messiah. Thus, since the Daniel 9:25 passage was not mentioned in the Gospels, it appears that Jesus did not mention it, which appears to imply he was not aware of it, if he was just an ordinary human.

Below are the above arguments summarized in their logical form according to Ref. 21. "~" means "not", "/" is a separator. The arguments for substantiating the premises as true or false involve probabilities so the argument would be considered as inductive not deductive.

Premise A: Jesus mentioned Daniel 9:25 prophecy

Premise B: Gospels writers include Daniel 9:25 prophesy in Gospels

Premise C: D & E

Premise D: No supernatural intelligence intended Jesus to fulfill the Daniel 9:25 prophecy

Premise E: Jesus aware of Daniel 9:25 prophecy

Modus Tollens: If A then B / ~B then ~A      Modus Tollens: If C then A / ~A then ~C

The conclusion ~C is equivalent to ~( D & E ) which implies that either ~D or ~E is true.

This reasoning implies the total probability for all the other natural hypothesis is small; thus, no significant adjustment by bayes equation which is explained in Ref. 22.

If Jesus was God, a supernatural being, then he would have been aware of the significance of the Daniel 9:25 passage and knew if he mentioned it, it would most likely be put in the Gospels, which would of made it look like he was just an ordinary human that was motivated to be the Messiah because he was aware of the Daniel 9:25 passage. Thus, it would fit with a purpose of Jesus if He was God, not to mention the Daniel 9:25 passage.

The Dead Sea scrolls for Daniel physically date back to a time prior to Jesus so it is not possible through some conspiracy for Christians to have inserted the Daniel 9:25 prophecy into the book of Daniel. Also, the Daniel 9:25 prophecy is found in all Jewish texts of Daniel and the Septuagint which are traced back to the time period before Jesus. This indicates that it would not have been possible to concoct up this prophecy fulfillment after the time period of Jesus.

This section has covered all possible time periods when the prophecy fulfillment could have been caused, the time period before Jesus, the time period of Jesus and the time period after Jesus. Reasons have been given that support the position that all of the possible natural intelligence explanations within each of these time periods are not plausible. Thus, there is a basis for claiming that the natural intelligence (including Jesus' natural intelligence if he was an ordinary human) of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy did not intentionally cause the Daniel 9:25 prophecy fulfillment. If no natural deterministic phenomenon or natural intelligence caused the Daniel 9:25 prophecy fulfillment, then the only natural explanation left is by chance. If no supernatural intelligence intended Jesus to fulfill the Daniel 9:25 prophecy, then it would be just by chance that Jesus fulfilled it. Therefore, the smaller the chance, the stronger the evidence for rejecting that ~E is true.

According to the Section 4 probability formula, a conservative estimate for the number of possible outcomes that would qualify for Daniel 9:25 prophecy fulfillment and the total number of possible outcomes needs to be determined. These

numbers depend upon how straightforward are the interpretations used in determining the start date, the duration and the end date. The number of possible outcomes that would qualify for Daniel 9:25 prophecy fulfillment depends upon how close the prophetic date is to the date it predicted. The interpretations are explained in Section 3. The conservative probability calculation is presented in Section 4.

### 3. INTERPETATION AND JUSTIFICATION

There is often different plausible ways of interpreting what someone has said. The more probable the interpretation was intended by the author, the more straightforward the interpretation is considered. The probability is determined by considering the style of the author, common usage of the language and the context of the passage.

#### 3.1 Daniel Prophetic Passage

Daniel 9:24-26 says:

*"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. "*

The Messiah is considered a special person chosen (anointed) to be a King or deliverer. So the success criterion is the person has evidence for being chosen by God to achieve an important purpose of God. Thus, the more a person appears to be chosen by God to be a King or deliverer the better they match the description of the Messiah. Thus, the more a person has sign of powers from God of authority from God and a message from God the better they match the description of the Messiah.

#### 3.2 Daniel 9:25 "weeks" designates seven years

The Hebrew word "shabua" used for "week" in Daniel 9:25 does literally mean "seven" (6). Daniel uses a different Hebrew word in Daniel 10:2 where he obviously is referring to normal weeks (6). Considering what is to be accomplished during this total 70 "week" period described in Daniel 9:24-27, rebuilding and destroying of Jerusalem, building plaza and moats, making a covenant, breaking a covenant, years is more reasonable than weeks. Therefore, it is most straightforward to consider that Daniel actually meant 483 "prophetic years" by the 69 weeks he mentioned in 9:25.

#### 3.3 Number of days for Daniel's "prophetic years"

There are three different plausible concepts that Daniel could have meant by "years".

##### 3.3.1 Solar Years (365.242 days)

The standard solar year (365.242 days) is naturally one of them. The author of Daniel would have been aware that a year began and ended with certain seasons that followed the solar year; thus, a solar year is considered the most straightforward interpretation of a prophetic year. However, since people at that time were not precisely aware of how long a solar year was, the number of days considered for a year during the time the book of Daniel was written was not necessarily intended to be the exact amount of 365.242. Present knowledge of the Jewish calendar in use before the period of the Babylonian Exile is both limited and uncertain (10); however, the information that is known on the subject indicates two other known concepts as plausible candidates, the lunar year and the year based upon 30-day months. Since there isn't any definite indication of which type of year Daniel was thinking of, use of either one of these two types of years as his "prophetic year" is considered as straightforward as the other.

##### 3.3.2 Lunar year (354 days)

The Gezer calendar from late 10th century BC seems to indicate a lunar calendar was being used for agriculture tasks and the Babylonian calendar at the time of the traditional Daniel was a lunar year (10).

##### 3.3.3 360 days (12 30 day months)

The one OT passage that actually assigns the number of days to a month assigns 30 days. The number of days between the seventeenth day of the second month (Genesis 7:11) and the seventeenth day of the seventh month (Genesis 8:4) is 150 days (Genesis 8:3); thus, an average of 30 days for these 5 months. The author of the book of Daniel whether written at the date set by the critics or the traditional date would have been aware of this passage.

The one NT passage that actually assigns the number of days to a year assigns 360 days. 2) Revelations 11 & 12 refer to the same persecution era as the last week of these seventy weeks (5). Rev. 11:2-3 gives 1260 days for 42 months; thus, average of 30 days for these months. Rev. 12:14 implies that this period is 3 and 1/2 years; thus, these years are 360 days.

There are historical records that indicate the 360-day year was previously used in the Babylonian region. The Sumerians which are from ancient Babylon used a 360 day calendar. "This fluctuating and discontinuous year was not precise enough for the meticulous accounting of Sumerian scribes, who by 2400 BC already used the schematic year of 30

12 = 360 days.” (10) Since a lunar month is approximately 29 and 1/2 days it is not surprising that some folks (quite possibly including the author of Daniel) rounded a month to 30 days.

The assertion that the author Daniel in 9:25 was thinking of constant 30-day months does not require the official calendar to be 360 days long. It was during the Babylonian captivity when the names of the Jewish months were first determined so the concept of the calendar was not necessarily a fixed concept in the minds of the people during the time of the traditional Daniel. Thus, Daniel thinking of a 360-day concept is quite plausible. The critics assign the Genesis 7:11&8:3,4 passage to “P” which according to the critics was written between 570BC and 450BC. So according to the critics some hypothetical scribe thinking of a constant 30-day month is plausible during the time of the traditional Daniel. This is just as applicable for the author of Daniel. If Moses wrote Genesis in 1400BC, then it is also quite plausible that Daniel was a student of Genesis; thus, had in mind the concept of a constant 30-day month. Granted, Daniel’s period of time covers many years rather than seven months, but still the proposed interpretation of Daniel 9:25 is just an extension of constant 30 day months.

### **3.4 Decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Starting date)**

Daniel 9:25 says that a decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem will mark the starting date for the 483 “prophetic years”. The two best candidates are listed in this section. The Nehemiah decree is considered the most straight forward and the Ezra decree is considered the 2<sup>nd</sup> best.

#### **3.4.1 Nehemiah 2:1-8 (About which is Nisan 1 of Artaxerxes I 20th year)**

Nehemiah 2:1-8 is the only OT passage that explicitly records a decree of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Nehemiah 2:1-8 says the decree was issued in the month of Nisan in the 20th year of Artaxerxes reign. Ref. 7 substantiates that Nehemiah was using Tishri as the first month (reckoning used by Kings of Judah) rather than Nisan (reckoning used by Persians).

Artaxerxes reign began when his father Xerxes died. Xerxes death can be precisely determined (11). The date of the death of Xerxes may be accurately fixed by reference to eclipses. On a tablet that lists lunar eclipses at 18-year intervals occurs the following brief announcement between two eclipse records: "Month V, day 14 [?], Xerxes was murdered by his son." Unfortunately, the cuneiform sign for the day of the month is damaged, and a viable reading could be anything from 14 to 18. The year is missing, but it can be deduced from the 18-year sequence as 465 BC. This identification is confirmed by calculating the dates of the two eclipses stated to have occurred in the same year that Xerxes died. The first of these happened when the Moon was in the constellation of Sagittarius, while the second took place on the 14th day of the 8th lunar month. For many years both before and after 465 BC, no such combination of eclipses can be found; it occurs only in 465 BC itself. The dates deduced for the two eclipses are June 5 and November 30 of that year. Mention of an intercalary sixth month on the same tablet enables the date of the death of Xerxes to be fixed as some time between August 4 and 8 in 465 BC.

The day that begins the first Persian calendar year for Artaxerxes 1st Regnal year is April 13, 464 BC (12). This puts the date of the decree in the period of March 5 - April 3 444BC. Since we do not know exactly prior to 900AD how the Jewish calendar accounted for leap months, there is an additional unknown of one month in exactly determining when Nehemiah’s Nisan month occurred.

#### **3.4.2 Ezra 7 decree**

There actually is no mention of a decree for rebuilding Jerusalem in Ezra 7. Thus, the Ezra 7 decree is not considered as straight forward an interpretation for the starting date as the Nehemiah decree. However, Ezra 9:9 may be an implication that there was such a decree given in Ezra 7. Ezra 7:8 says that the decree was given in the fifth month (Av, or the July-August time period) of the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Arterexes.

### **3.5 Coming of the Messiah (ending date)**

Daniel 9:25 says that the coming of the Messiah marks the ending date for the prophecy. Jesus is the best known candidate for qualifying as the Messiah; thus, it is most straight forward to consider Jesus as the fulfillment of this prophecy. The specific day that stands out the most as marking the coming of Jesus is the “triumphal entry”. The “triumphal entry” or “Palm Sunday #1” is the first day of the passion week in Jerusalem where Jesus comes to Jerusalem. The day that Jesus starts his ministry could also mark the coming of the Messiah, but does not stand out as much so is not considered as straight forward as the “triumphal entry”. The day that Jesus was born could also mark the coming of the Messiah, but does not stand out as much so is not considered as straight forward as the start of his ministry. The ending date falling within the life of Jesus (at most 37 years) or his ministry (3 years) would still qualify as pointing to Jesus.

#### **3.5.1 Dating Jesus' Birth, Ministry and Death**

The Julian calendar, also called OLD STYLE CALENDAR, dating system was established by Julius Caesar as a reform of the Roman republican calendar (q.v.). Caesar, advised by the Alexandrian astronomer Sosigenes, made the new calendar solar, not lunar, and he took the length of the solar year as 365 1/4 days. The year was divided into 12 months, all of which had either 30 or 31 days except February, which contained 28 days in common (365-day) years and 29 in every fourth year (a leap year, of 366 days). Because of misunderstandings, the calendar was not established in smooth

operation until AD 8. Sosigenes had overestimated the length of the year by 11 minutes 14 seconds, and by the mid-1500s, the cumulative effect of this error had shifted the dates of the seasons by about 10 days from Caesar's time. Pope Gregory XIII's reform (see Gregorian calendar), proclaimed in 1582, restored the calendar to the seasonal dates of AD 325, an adjustment of 10 days. Thus, after 8 AD the Roman (Julian) calendar has been precisely known as explained below by Ref. 11 allowing in some cases to determine exactly what day a certain event occurred on.

Ref. 7 explains why the winter of 5 or 4 BC is most probable date that the Gospels refer to as when Jesus was born. According to Ref. 11, Tiberius Caesar became Caesar in 14 AD. According to Luke 3:1 Jesus began His ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar which makes it 29AD. However, there are scholars (14) who think that Luke was using a Syrian calendar which would then mean Jesus's ministry started in 26AD. Since the Crucifixion is set in the Passover week, scholars have determined that Jesus crucifixion occurred in either 30 or 33 AD as explained in Ref. 7. Since three Passover's are recorded in the Gospel of John, it is assumed that Jesus ministry covered 3 years. A ministry start of 29 AD places the triumphal entry of Jesus to Jerusalem on Nisan 10 (March 30) AD 33. An 26 AD start places the end of Jesus ministry in 30 AD. In this case the triumphal entry would have occurred on Sunday, April 2, AD 30. Ref. 7 claims that the AD 33 date fits best.

#### 4. CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE OF PROBABILITY OF SUCCESS

As explained in Ref. 17, to do an objective probability calculation an independent success criterion that the prophecy satisfies needs to be evaluated. The following lists characteristics for an objective success criterion which includes the Daniel 9:25 prophecy. A most fundamental goal for a supernatural intelligence would be to communicate to humans that there is a purposeful plan for them. Humans of all known creatures have the strongest interest in purpose. Religions are the main organizations in society that claim there is a supernatural intelligence with a purposeful plan for humans. Thus, it is most fundamental to consider religions for evidence for a supernatural intelligence with a purposeful plan for humans. Christianity is the largest religion and according to Christianity their leader, Jesus, did make supernatural claims. Thus, it is most fundamental to consider if there is supernatural evidence for Jesus. The most specific Biblical prophecy for the Messiah is in Daniel 9:25; thus, it is most fundamental to consider the Daniel 9:25 passage. These characteristics directly relate to a fundamental potential purpose for a supernatural intelligence and of all known events, the Daniel 9:25 prophecy fulfills them the best; thus, is most fundamental. So consideration of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy fulfillment is not by just arbitrary selection, but by an appropriate and objective selection process that is so limiting it reduces the candidate events to just one; therefore, no other events aside from the Daniel 9:25 prophecy fulfillment needs to be considered in determining the number of possible outcomes that satisfy the success criterion determined by these characteristics. So the "N" term in the probability calculation listed below should be 1.00. These characteristics are not in any way derived from some natural knowledge of the prophecy fulfilling event, the time of the coming of Jesus; therefore, this success criterion is independent.

For the time period predicted by this prophecy, Jesus, is clearly the best candidate for having signs of powers from God of authority from God and a message from God.

Ref. 17 explains that the intervention of the super-natural can be identified by violations of indeterministic natural principle, which basically means that the event in question has a low probability of occurring naturally. The estimate is to be calculated conservatively in order to ensure the actual is at least equal or higher than the estimate. The formula for making the conservative estimate is listed below. The  $P = N * PA$  is accurate for the correct formula of  $1 - (1 - PA)^N$  as long as  $P < 0.10$ .

$$P = N * PA, PA = S / A$$

P: Conservative estimate of probability

N: Conservative estimate of number of attempts

PA: Conservative estimate of probability for one attempt

S: Conservative estimate of possible successful outcomes

A: Conservative estimate of all possible outcomes

Determining how straight forward each of the interpretations is a requirement for determining a conservative estimate so the order of straight forwardness is listed in the Table 1.

If the predicted date falls within the life of Jesus it is considered successful. This means that a prediction for the birth or death of Jesus has to come from one side where the prediction for the start of Jesus ministry could come from either side. Thus, the start of Jesus' ministry as the predicted date requires an additional factor of 2 because it doubles the successful outcomes because succes can come from either side. The conservative estimate of possible successful outcomes is determined by multiplying the number of days the prediction date is away from the actual date by all the factors for the starting date, prophetic year and ending date used in Table 2 and Table 3. Table 1 determines the values for these factors.

If the prophet would have no knowledge that would constrain the time for the event the prophet is trying to predict. Then the time period is really unlimited. To limit the amount of possible outcomes twice the time period to the event predicted is used. This is unbiased because it put an equal range of time on either side of the event. Thus, the estimate of all possible

outcomes is considered twice total duration between the time the prophecy was made and when the predicted event occurred. Therefore, the possible outcomes is  $570 \times 2 = 1140$  years or 416385 days. This duration used assumes the traditional date for writing of Daniel, rather than the critical date of 164 BC. Use of the critical date would increase the calculated probabilities by a factor of 2.94.

**Table 1 Straight forwardness order for Prophecy**

Straight Forwardness Order	Factor	Description	Date* or Duration in Solar Days	Section
<b>Starting date:</b>				
1	1	Nehemiah decree	3/4/-444	3.4.1
2	2	Ezra decree	7/5/-458	3.4.2
<b>Prophetic year:</b>				
1	1	Solar year	365.242	3.3.1
3a	3	12 30 solar day months	360	3.3.3
3b	3	Lunar year	354	3.3.2
<b>Ending date:</b>				
1	1	Triumphal entry	3/30/33,4/2/30	3.5.1
2	$2 \times 2 = 4$	Start of Jesus ministry	1/1/29,1/1/26	3.5.1
3	3	Birth of Jesus	9/1/-5	3.5.1

\* The first and second dates separated by commas assume respectively a 33 or 30 AD crucifixion.

To make the probability calculation an assumption has to be made for when Jesus died. As discussed previously it is assumed to occur during either 30 or 33AD. According to Ref. 7, 33AD is more supported by the data; however, the calculation is made for either case. Within each case it is appropriate to take the lowest calculated probability because each probability is conservative.

Table 2 and Table 3 list the values used in the probability calculation. The possible successful outcomes, "S", is calculated by multiplying all the factors in the fifth column by the days. The total possible outcomes, "A", is considered 416385. The probability for a single attempt is  $PA = S/A$ .

The end date is determined by adding to the start date the multiplication of the numbers of days listed for a prophetic year by  $483 = 7(7+62)$ .

#### 4.1 AD 30 Crucifixion

An AD 30 crucifixion puts the triumphal entry at 4/2/30 and the start of Jesus' ministry in 26 AD. The ministry start date of 1/1/26 is used for the start of Jesus' ministry because of all days within 26AD, it gives the highest probability making it conservative. According to Table 2, the estimated conservative probability is 0.00356. This actual start date of Jesus ministry may have actually occurred closer to or even on the date of 7/5/26 which would further decrease this probability.

**Table 2 Probability Calculation for AD 30 Crucifixion**

Prophecy start	Prophetic year	Prophecy end	Actual end	Factors	Days away	Probability
3/4/-444	354	4/23/25	1/1/26	1,3,2	253	0.00365
3/4/-444	360	3/30/33	4/2/30	1,3,1	-1093	NS
3/4/-444	365.242	3/5/40	4/2/30	1,1,1	-3625	NS
7/5/-458	354	8/23/11	4/2/30	2,3,1	6796	0.0979
7/5/-458	360	7/30/19	1/1/26	2,2,3	2346	0.0676
7/5/-458	365.242	7/5/26	1/1/26	2,1,4	-186	0.00356

\*Factors are for; start date, prophetic year, end date

NS: Not successful

The following shows how the Table 2 0.00356 value is calculated.

Factor of  $N = 2 \times 1 \times 4 = 8$  for freedom in finding match. 2 for using Ezra decree. 1 for using solar years.  $4 = 2 \times 2$ , 2 for using the start of Jesus ministry as the end date for the prophecy and the other 2 because success can come from either side when using the start of Jesus ministry as the end date for the prophecy

$PA = S / A = 186 / 416385$ .  $S = 186$  for 186 days off.  $A$  the possible outcomes is  $570 \times 2 = 1140$  years or 416385 days

$$P = N * PA = 8 * (186 / 416385) = 1 - (1 - 186 / 416385)^8 = 0.00356$$

## 4.2 AD 33 Crucifixion

An AD 33 crucifixion puts the triumphal entry at 3/30/33 and the start of Jesus ministry in 29 AD. The date of 1/1/29 is used for the start of Jesus' ministry because of all days within 29AD, it gives the highest probability making it conservative. According to Table 3, the estimated conservative probability is 0.0000072. Since there actually is an unknown of two months in the prophecy start for this value, the conservative estimate is 60 times higher.

**Table 3 Probability Calculation for AD 33 Crucifixion**

Prophecy start	Prophetic Year	Prophecy End	Actual end	Factors	Days away	Probability
<b>3/4/-444</b>	354	4/23/25	1/1/29	1,3,2	1349	0.0194
<b>3/4/-444</b>	360	3/30/33	3/30/33	1,3,1	<1	0.0000072
<b>3/4/-444</b>	365.242	3/5/40	3/30/33	1,1,1	-2532	NS
<b>7/5/-458</b>	354	8/23/11	3/30/33	2,3,1	7889	0.114
<b>7/5/-458</b>	360	7/30/19	3/30/33	2,3,1	4991	0.0719
<b>7/5/-458</b>	365.242	7/5/26	3/30/33	2,1,1	2459	0.0118

\*Factors are for; start date, prophetic year, end date

NS: Not successful

## 4.3 Summary

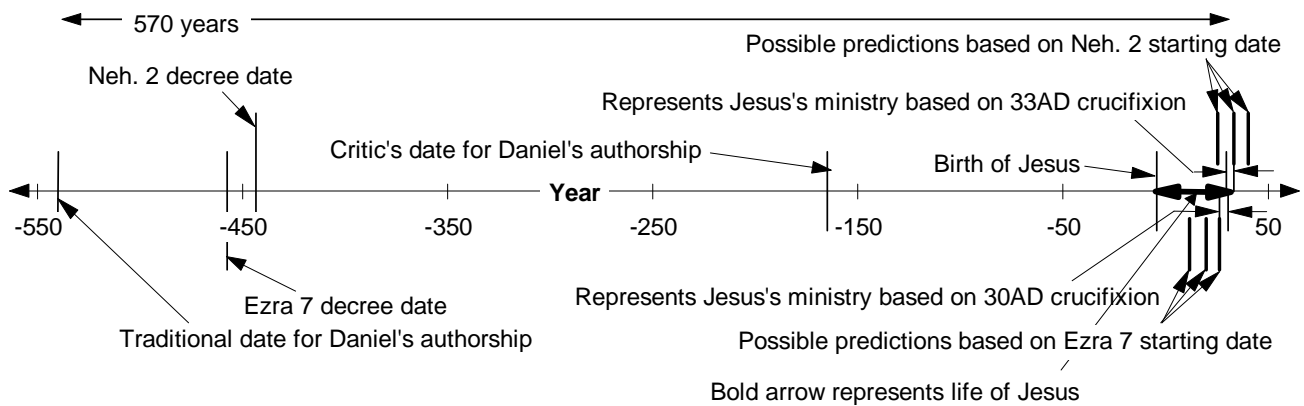
There are several reasonable interpretations of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy that are successful predictions for pointing to Jesus as the Messiah. Since it is not known whether the crucifixion of Jesus occurred in 30AD or 33 AD, in order to be conservative, the highest probability reported by Section 4.1 or 4.2 which is 0.00356 will be considered as the conservative estimate for the probability of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy occurring. Within these unknowns is the possibility that the prediction was essentially exact because one comparison matches to the day.

## 5. ANALOGY

The probability of this prophecy fulfillment occurring can be visually understood by relating the odds to the timeline shown in Figure 1. If the author Daniel was just an ordinary human, then essentially the placement of the set of three bold vertical lines (representing Daniel's prediction) would be as if a blind folded man was confined to mark these lines within the 570 year period. These 3 lines represent a 3 line marker. In this analogy it would not be known which of the three lines the man is considering, but at least it is known that he is thinking of one of the three. Visually one can see that most likely (probability 0.061) he would not hit the target of Jesus lifetime. Hitting the bullseye by one of the lines falling directly on the birth, start or end of Jesus ministry is even more unlikely.

Considering that God may have influenced the author of Daniel is like considering that the man may have peeked through his blind fold. When an unbiased person would observe such a target with the bold lines located as shown in Figures 1, it would be natural for them to think that the man had peeked through the blind fold. Considering Neh. 2 date is the best candidate for the starting date and 33AD is the best candidate for the crucifixion (ref. 7) makes a strong case to an unbiased observer that the blind folded man must have peeked and intended to place the center line exactly on the center (probability 0.000014) of the bullseye. This is analogous to concluding that Daniel 9:25 indicates that God must have influenced the author of Daniel and intended to point to Jesus as the Messiah.

It should be pointed out that it is not as if a bunch of blind folded children are playing pin the tail on the donkey. In this case with enough players eventually one non-peeking blind folded child would hit the bullseye. There is only one OT prediction of the coming time of the Messiah and a straight forward analysis indicates it points directly to Jesus, the best known candidate.



**Figure 1 Timeline for Predicting Coming Time of Messiah**

## 6. CRITICISM AND REBUTTALS

### 6.1 Common Criticism from Academia and Hinrichs Rebuttal

The common approach by academia to this remarkable prophecy is to avoid it all together. Typically, the critics claim (12,13) that Daniel is just presenting a modification of Jeremiah's prophecy (Ref. Jeremiah 25:11) which Daniel mentions at the beginning of Chapter 9 in verse 2. However, verse 2 just states Daniel was thinking of Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years for the captivity for Israel. Daniel's prophecy in 9:25 is quite clear, it specifically says the starting point is the issuing of a decree and the ending point is the Messiah which are completely different designations than the captivity that Jeremiah's prophecy was referring to. Thus, this approach from academia is avoiding the obvious and straight forward interpretation of Daniel 9:25 and proposes an interpretation that has no objective basis. It is used so that the secular universities can altogether avoid this remarkable prophecy; thus, achieve their goal of appearing to completely explain the origin of the Bible without the intervention of the super-natural. However, the students do not even get a chance to evaluate the data for themselves. All this approach objectively indicates is that the critics who propose this idea think that there is something in this passage worth hiding.

### 6.2 Lippard Criticism:

The Lippard Criticism, which comes from internet Ref. 11, acknowledges the obvious interpretation and attempts to dismiss it based upon alleged problems which are presented in the following discussion. Rebuttals are given so that the reader can evaluate the data and the best arguments from the two opposing positions. This criticism is edited by Jeffrey Lowder, authored by Rod Berry who relied on work from Jim Lippard (15).

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### 6.3 Beginning of Lippard Criticism

A prophecy relating to the time of the Messiah which many evangelical Christians find extremely convincing is found in the book of Daniel. It is probably no exaggeration to say that this prophecy, more than any other, convinces Christians that Jesus was the Messiah.

#### Hinrichs objection:

The critics complain the Messianic prophecies are too vague which is the case for much of them; however, the Daniel 9:25 prophecy is a definite specification of the time when the Messiah would come. Instead of observing the obvious, they look the other way to starting dates that do not even fit the requirement specified by Daniel. In addition, the critics dismiss the messianic prophecies of the New Testament by claiming they could have been concocted up by the Early Christian Church. This is true for most messianic prophecies of the New Testament; however, this Daniel prophecy could not have been concocted up and is an accurate prediction as explained in Section 4.

On the other hand application of the technique used in Section 4 may estimate probabilities of essentially 1.0 for many of the OT messianic prophecies mention in the Gospels because many of these prophecies require quite symbolic or loose interpretations in order to make the events of Jesus described in the Gospel qualify as fulfillment of the corresponding OT passage. In addition, many of these other prophecies could of been concocted which would invalidate the probability calculation because independence of natural intelligence could not be established for these prophecies.

### 6.4 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:

The word translated in these verses as "weeks" is a form of the Hebrew word for "sevens," and is interpreted by Christians to mean seven years rather than seven days. Thus "seventy weeks" in verse 24 is interpreted to mean seventy

periods of seven years, or 490 years, "seven weeks" in verse 25 is interpreted to mean 49 years, "sixty-two weeks" in verses 25 and 26 is interpreted to mean 434 years, and "one week" in verse 27 is interpreted to mean seven years. The starting point of the prophecy is the "issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem."

**Hinrichs objection:**

This translation in Section 3.2 is straightforward. 9:2 show Daniel is thinking of years and the Hebrew word "shabua" interpreted here as "weeks" does literally mean "seven".

**6.5 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

A decree described in the Bible to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem is found in:

**Hinrichs objection:**

The decree in Daniel 9 refers to the rebuilding of Jerusalem not the temple or house of God.

**6.6 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

2 Chronicles 36:22-23 and Ezra 1:1-4. These verses describe the decree issued by Cyrus, king of Persia and contemporary of Daniel, in 538 B.C.E.

**Hinrichs objection:**

These passages refer to rebuilding the temple not Jerusalem.

**6.7 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

"Seven weeks and sixty-two weeks," or 483 years, after this decree would be 55 B.C.E., many years too soon for Jesus. So Christians must reject the equation of the decree in verse 25 with that of Cyrus, and they do. What other decrees are available? Josh McDowell (1972, p. 180) offers three alternatives: a decree of Darius described in the book of Ezra, a decree of Artaxerxes described in Ezra, and a decree of Artaxerxes described in Nehemiah. The decree of Darius, described in Ezra 6:1-9, was to conduct a search of the archives to find the text of the decree of Cyrus, and then to resume the construction of the temple at Jerusalem using tax money.

**Hinrichs objection:**

Ezra 6:1-9 refers to rebuilding the temple not Jerusalem.

**6.8 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

This occurred around 522 B.C.E. (see Ezra 4:24), which would put the coming of the Messiah at 39 B.C.E.--still too early for Jesus. The decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra described in Ezra 7:11-28 allows for the people of Israel to return to Jerusalem, taking with them various support from the royal treasury. This decree was issued in 458 B.C.E. (see Ezra 7:7), which would put the coming of the Messiah at 26 C.E. This works fairly well if you take the end of the "sixty-two weeks" to be the beginning of Jesus' ministry, though most Christians take the end point to be the crucifixion due to the reference in verse 26 of the Daniel prophecy to the Messiah being "cut off." Most Christians reject this decree, as well as those of Cyrus and Darius, as being the appropriate starting point for the prophecy. One exception is Gleason Archer. Archer (1982, pp. 290-291) argues that Ezra 9:9 implies that Ezra was given permission by Artaxerxes to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, despite the fact that they were not rebuilt until the time of Nehemiah (see Nehemiah 1:3). Ezra 9:9 states that God has not forsaken the Jews but has given them a chance "to raise up the house of our God, to restore its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem."

**Hinrichs objection:**

Ezra 9:9 is just a prayer, not a decree but it does say that "the kings of Persia ... gave us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem". Thus, this passage implies that there may have been a decree given by Artaxerxes to Ezra in 458 BCE. It just may have not been mentioned in Ezra 7.

**6.9 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

In defense of the end point of the "sixty-two weeks" being the beginning of Jesus' ministry rather than his crucifixion, Archer points out that verse 26 of the prophecy says only that the Messiah's being "cut off" occurs after that time period, not necessarily immediately after it. The decree of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah described in Nehemiah 2:1-6 is really no decree at all. Rather, Artaxerxes gives Nehemiah letters of safe conduct for travel to Judah and to obtain timber to rebuild the gates of the temple and the walls of Jerusalem.

**Hinrichs objection:**

Since paper were issued this event should be considered a decree. The critic only includes the V.8 information and leaves out the V.5 information which shows that part of the request is for rebuilding Jerusalem which is the starting point for the prophecy. There is no other decree in the OT for rebuilding Jerusalem so it is straight forward to use Neh. 2 to define the starting point. In addition, the rest of Neh. shows that he did go onto rebuild Jerusalem. Also, Ref. 7 points out that the Hebrew of Daniel 9:25, though not requiring a decree, does require at least command.

### **6.10 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

This occurred in 445 B.C.E., putting the time of the Messiah at 39 C.E., too late for Jesus, who is believed to have been crucified some time between 29 and 33 C.E. Despite these flaws, most evangelical Christians adopt this as the appropriate decree because Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. In order to make the 445 B.C.E. starting point result in an ending point 483 years later that is either at the beginning of Jesus' ministry or at the time of the crucifixion, something other than a 365-day year must be used. The most popular such calculation, due to Sir Robert Anderson and promoted by Josh McDowell, is to adopt a "360- day prophetic year"--an invention of Anderson based on his reading of Revelation 11:23, where he equates 42 months with 1260 days, giving 30 days per month. Using "prophetic years" puts the end of the 483-year period at 32 C.E., believed by many to be the year of the crucifixion. Robert Newman (1990, pp. 112-114) points out several flaws in this calculation scheme which together are fatal to it: (1) Revelation 11:23 does not justify the invention of the "prophetic year," because there is no indication that 1260 days is said to be exactly 42 months (it could be 41.5 rounded up),

#### **Hinrichs objection:**

Rev. 11:2 does say 42 months. Granted it does not say 42.00000 etc... but expecting so is not realistic. Also, in Section 3.3 as pointed out in Section 3.3.3, the only place where the OT designates days to months, 30 days are assigned.

### **6.11 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

(2) a 360-day year would get out of synch with the seasons, and the Jews added an extra lunar month every two or three years to their 354- day lunar year, giving them an average year length of about 365 days, and

#### **Hinrichs objection:**

Section 3.3.3 shows that even according to rationale critical scholars use, the position that Daniel may have been thinking of a constant 30 day month is acceptable.

It is not necessarily appropriate to fix some intercalation process (technique for keeping year in synch with seasons) into Daniel's thinking. He very well may not have been aware of a consistent systematic one. In this case, it would be a straight forward conclusion that he was thinking of a constant year which may have very well been 360 days. To insist upon including intercalated periods that Daniel may not have even been aware of is like insisting upon that he was thinking of some calendar system that he was not aware of like the Julian calendar.

### **6.12 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

(3) the present consensus on the date of the crucifixion is 30 C.E. rather than 32 C.E.

#### **Hinrichs objection:**

The 30CE date is conservatively used in the estimate for the probability.

### **6.13 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

Newman offers his own alternative: the use of sabbatical years, which do have biblical justification ( Exodus 23:10-11 and Leviticus 25:3-7, 18-22). Every seventh year is a sabbatical year. Newman uses information from the first book of Maccabees, which has reference to an observance of a sabbatical year, to calculate that 163-162 B.C.E. was a sabbatical year and therefore 445 B.C.E., the starting point of the Daniel prophecy, falls in the seven-year sabbatical cycle 449-442 B.C.E. If this is the first sabbatical cycle in the count, the sixty-ninth is 28-35 C.E., a time period that the crucifixion falls in.

#### **Hinrichs objection:**

There is no reference to special sabbatical years mentioned in the immediate context. Use of sabbatical years is not as straight forward as any of the prophetic years used in Section 4 because it (7 years) is a more awkward and uncommon time unit.

### **6.14 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

In response to the criticism that the prophecy says that the Messiah will be "cut off" after sixty-two weeks, Newman says that in conventional Jewish idiom "after" means "after the beginning of." There are further problems for all of the above interpretations, which Gerald Sigal (1981, pp. 109-122) points out. Foremost among Sigal's criticisms is that the Masoretic punctuation of the Hebrew Bible places a division between the "seven weeks and sixty-two weeks," meaning that rather than stating that the Messiah will come after the combined time periods, he will come after the "seven weeks" alone.

#### **Hinrichs objection:**

The "athnac" (major disjunctive punctuation mark) was a massoretic addition and would not have been part of the original text; thus, it only shows the interpretation of certain men (whether in the ninth or first century), without furnishing any guarantee for it's correctness. The Septuagint which was developed 250-150 BC does translate the seven weeks and sixty two weeks as continuous making a total of sixty nine weeks between the decree to restore Jerusalem and Messiah the Prince. In addition, to place a brake between the seven weeks and the sixty two weeks is foreign to the context and make no sense. This would mean it would take 434 years to build the plaza and moat. Also, it means that the anointed one would have lived for 434 years which does not make sense. Thus, the most straight forward interpretation of the Hebrew is

to translate the seven weeks and sixty two weeks as continuous and it is the only interpretation that makes sense. It is not unusual for the Massorettes to place a major disjunctive punctuation mark such as an "athnac" where normally one would not expect it. Several example of this phenomenon are Gen. 7:13; 25:20; Exod. 35:23; Lev. 16:2; Isa. 49:21; 66:19; Num. 28:19 (7).

#### **6.15 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

Another criticism Sigal makes is that the Hebrew text does not put a definite article in front of the word "Messiah" (or "anointed one"). The Revised Standard Version of the Bible is translated with these facts in mind, and it gives the Daniel 9:24-27 as follows:

*Seventy weeks of years are decreed concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war; desolations are decreed. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week; and for half of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.*

##### **Hinrichs objection:**

The Hebrew text says "anointed prince" which is as good as the Hebrew gets for pointing to the Messiah. Daniel 9 is the only place in the Old Testament where the KJV uses the term Messiah.

#### **6.16 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

Using the Masoretic punctuation, the "sixty-two weeks" goes with the rebuilding of the city rather than with the coming of the Messiah. This interpretation explains why "seven weeks and sixty- two weeks" are given separately, rather than simply stating "sixty-nine weeks." Most apologists are either unaware of or ignore the Masoretic punctuation, but Robert Newman (1990, p. 116) rejects it on the grounds that "such punctuation may not date back before the ninth or tenth century AD" and that the structure of the verses as a whole favor his interpretation.

##### **Hinrichs objection:**

As mentioned in the previous objection the most straight interpretation of the Hebrew is to translate the seven weeks and sixty two weeks as continuous and it is the only interpretation that makes sense. Thus, for the Messiah or the rebuilding of Jerusalem the time span is sixty nine "weeks".

#### **6.17 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

The result of all this? The Daniel prophecy is not nearly so convincing as it might initially appear to someone presented only with one of the interpretations that "works." It is not surprising that with four choices for beginning points (the decrees of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, plus the letters of Artaxerxes for Nehemiah),

##### **Hinrichs objection:**

Only one states a decree to rebuild Jerusalem. The other that implies a decree (Ezra 9:9) still works as a prophecy predicting Christ as the Messiah. This critic obviously is aware by his other comments that the starting point is the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem rather than the temple, but the critic continues to refer to the decrees for the rebuilding of the temple.

#### **6.18 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

several possible choices for end points (the birth, ministry, and crucifixion of Jesus),

##### **Hinrichs objection:**

The effect of these options making more successful outcomes is conservatively accounted for the in the probability calculation.

#### **6.19 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

and at least three ways of counting (ordinary years, "prophetic years," and sabbatical cycles) calculations have been found for which Jesus fits the prophecy.

**Hinrichs objection:**

The effect of these options making more successful outcomes is conservatively accounted for in the Section 4 probability calculation.

**6.20 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

There are good reasons to reject each of these interpretations. The first two choices for beginning points don't work for any offered interpretations.

**Hinrichs objection:**

Only one is an explicit decree to rebuild Jerusalem. The first two choices of the critic were accomplished by avoiding choices that were more straight forward.

**6.21 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

The Artaxerxes decree works for ordinary years with the ministry of Jesus as the end point, but says nothing about rebuilding Jerusalem. The Artaxerxes letters work for sabbatical cycles with the crucifixion as an end point, but they are not a decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Rather, they gave Nehemiah safe conduct to Judah and permission to use lumber from the royal forests.

**Hinrichs objection:**

Misrepresentation, the critic is ignoring the request in Neh. 2:5 which the King agreed to. The lumber was obviously for the walls of Jerusalem. In addition, the rest of Nehemiah shows that he did go on to rebuild Jerusalem.

**6.22 Continuation of Lippard Criticism:**

Finally, none of them take into consideration the Masoretic punctuation, which, if not itself in error, eliminates all of them as possible interpretations of the text."

**Hinrichs objection:**

The Masoretic punctuation is an addition to the original text. A straight forward interpretation of the original text is to translate the seven weeks and sixty two weeks as continuous and it is the only interpretation that makes sense.

**6.23 Summary of Response to Criticisms**

Each of the critics points have been directly addressed in a straight forward manner. The common presentation by secular academia mentioned in Section 6.1 completely ignores the straight forward interpretation of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy. Such an approach can deny any truly fulfilled prophecy; thus, is not falsifiable; therefore, of no value for objective critic of prophecies.

In attempting to dismiss this prophecy, the Lippard Criticism proposes alternative starting dates that do not fit as well with the starting dates proposed by this article. This criticism is not successful because it avoids the more straight forward interpretation. The Lippard Criticism also complains about the legitimate unknowns involved with this prophecy such as the definition of a prophetic year and the starting and ending dates. All successful scientific predictions involve legitimate unknowns, but this does not render them illegitimate. The effects of the unknown have been conservatively accounted for in the estimated probability; thus, are properly considered.

**7. CONCLUSION**

Each of the critics points have been directly addressed. The criticism addressed is the best known that the extensive organization of critical biblical scholars have to offer. Section 2 eliminated all the natural causes except an indeterministic natural explanation. The effects of the unknowns have been conservatively considered in determining the estimated probability of 0.00356 for an indeterministic natural explanation. Such a low probability supports eliminating an indeterministic natural explanation. According to the Ref. 17 description assigned to probability ranges, this maximum conservative probability calculation is not compelling but is remarkable. Thus, there is remarkable evidence for rejecting ~E as true which implies ~D is true which means there is remarkable evidence that a supernatural intelligence intended Jesus to fulfill the Daniel 9:25 messianic prophecy. Thus, the Daniel 9:25 prophecy fulfillment is remarkable evidence that points to Jesus as the Messiah. Within the unknowns there is clearly the possibility that this prediction was essentially exact. As far as I am aware (see Section 4.1 of Ref. 17), this probability is the lowest associated with any major claims that there is a super natural intelligence that has intervened with a purpose for humans. Thus, as far as I am aware, this evidence qualifies as extraordinary evidence for an extraordinary claim. Daniel's Messiah in a remarkable way has survived a visit with the lions in the critic's den.

Essentially, on just the basis of the presumption that precise and detail prophecy fulfillment is not possible, critics give the book of Daniel a date of 164BC rather than 540BC. However, the one prophecy that specifically points to a time is fulfilled in a remarkable way well after 164BC. The remarkable fulfillment of this prophecy shows that the critic's approach that the super natural was not involved with the production of the Bible is a poor approach for completely explaining the origin of the Bible.

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