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## Evaluation of the Prophecies in Daniel 9:25-26 in Order to Confirm the Origin of the Bible

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## **Introduction**

In the search for truth, there is one question that transcends above all others both intriguing and consuming human thought. The question leads men and women on lifelong quests seeking to verify and substantiate the determination of their conclusion regarding it. This same question has divided humanity for millennia and results in both times of peace and with war often as a direct result of one's own interpretation and later conviction regarding their conclusion. This question is simple and yet internally claims to have a direct impact not just on this current life, but for every person for all of eternity. Did God disclose the ultimate truth to humanity giving the Bible through revelation? Intertwined within and resulting from the answer to this question stems all of the significant concerns man has regarding truth, life, and purpose. As the Bible internally lays claim as the single source of any documented authority on the person of God and the absolute truth regarding reality, history, and the future to come it is imperative for an individual to have the right conclusion on the question of the nature of the Bible. The Bible unwaveringly asserts that all other inferences on reality and truth that are contradictory to it are false, while proclaiming that as the Word of God, all information included within it are absolute truth. This means that all facts, dates, events, people, promises, and prophecies recorded in the original text are accurate and verifiable. As the Bible documents many historical figures and events, there is amassing a plethora of evidence including secular historical

records and the recovery of ancient artifacts to support its historical authenticity. However, the Bible does not claim just to be a perfect history book, it also declares to disclose future information not yet observed by humanity in the form of prophecy. The Bible records God declaring this unique ability stating “I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come” (Isaiah 46:10 [*New International Version*]). “The claims are supernatural, and therefore, they can apply to none other than God Himself. Here He declares Himself to be the self-existent, eternal, sovereign, uncreated One.”<sup>1</sup> Unlike any other verifiable information that is accessible to humanity either through observation or the scientific method of investigation, prophecy is the access to information and declaration of truth about something before it happens. Consequently, a predictive prophecy that is verifiable regarding both the date given and the ultimate fulfillment is, therefore, a candidate to prove the divine nature of the Bible.

The men and women seeking to verify their conclusion regarding the nature of the Bible become linguists, scholars, historians, theologians, and archeologists. The work that they produce is their effort to demonstrate to the world the authenticity of the Bible. Through a scholarly research process of Biblical exegesis and the examination amidst the results of all these investigation

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<sup>1</sup> Lehman Strauss, “Bible Prophecy,” Bible.org, May 25, 2004, accessed November 30, 2017, <https://bible.org/article/bible-prophecy>.

disciplines, together it is possible to appropriately examine prophecies to determine their legitimacy for revealing the nature of the Bible. Corroborating results of this effort would conclusively be evidence to prove the prophecies truth claims originate outside of human origin. An examination of Daniel 9:25-26 reveals how the specific prophecies can be used as evidence to substantiate the theological conclusion of Divine Revelation as the origin of the Bible.

### **Examination of the Biblical Text**

Examination of the historical context to discover evidence regarding  
authorship

In order to properly evaluate the historical prophecies recorded in Daniel 9, it is essential to uncover all the historical evidence that can provide confirmation to the integrity of the original dates of the predictions. It is imperative to conclude the prophecies were documented before the fulfilling events take place. The book of Daniel is documented to be written by a Jewish man named Daniel from the city of Babylon during the time period of the Jewish exile also known as the Babylonian captivity. History records that Jerusalem, the center of the Jewish nation was attacked by Nebuchadnezzar in August of 605 BC just prior to his ascension as the king.<sup>2</sup> The 70-year Jewish exile is well documented in historical

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<sup>2</sup> Ed Hindson and Gary Yates, *The Essence of the Old Testament: A Survey* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012), ebook.

records and identified starting in 605 BC and lasted until 535 BC.<sup>3</sup> This period of time is well supported by secular history as the Babylonian empire was the reigning world power that was ultimately defeated by the Medes and the Persians in 539 BC led by Cyrus the Great.

Following the defeat, much of the Babylon history was lost to obscurity for millennia, but recent archeological discoverers have been able to support some specific Biblical accounts contained in the Book of Daniel. Following the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, it is recorded that Nebuchadnezzar took captives, such as Daniel, from the Jewish royal family back to Babylon. The Bible records in Daniel 1 that these captives were trained in the king's court for a period three years with training focused on Babylonian language, literature, and customs in order to serve in the royal palace as a servant to the king. The internal evidence supported by the proficiency of these specific languages spoken during the precise timeframe identified and access to the Babylonian king and palace endorses the historical records with this authorship of the book. Through the examination of the most ancient copies of the Book of Daniel that have been recovered, including specific texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls, the original language supports the proposed dates of original authorship. Included in the recovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls were eight copies of Daniel and other writings that related to the traditions

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., ebook.

of Daniel all written in Aramaic, the language of the Babylonians.<sup>4</sup> Archeologist and linguists research supports that the text of Daniel is “the same as the Aramaic of the sixth-fifth centuries as we know it from contemporary evidence.”<sup>5</sup> This specific language is unique in the Bible to the Book of Daniel and the Aramaic texts contained within it language is reported to contain translations from “classical Biblical Hebrew [that] flourished during the Babylonian Exile in the 6<sup>th</sup> cent. BC” and was no longer used in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. <sup>6</sup> The documentation of Nebuchadnezzar’s decree in Aramaic in Daniel 4 logically reflects an accurate recording of an official proclamation that was intended to be read and understood by the entire Babylonian empire.<sup>7</sup> The physical copies of Daniel recovered in the Qumran Dead Sea Scrolls are reported to have been tested with scientific research methods including carbon-14 dating, and many are recognized to be produced over 2000 years ago.<sup>8</sup> The internal evidence also supports a conclusion for specific knowledge associated with the king and kingdom of Babylon. Detailed accounts recorded in Daniel 5:5 identify a unique and verifiable record of the

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<sup>4</sup> Craig A. Evans Holman, *QuickSource Guide to the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 298-299.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen B. Miller, *Daniel: The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994), ebook.

<sup>6</sup> David E. Graves, *Biblical Archaeology. Volume 1: An Introduction with Recent Discoveries that Support the Reliability of the Bible* (Moncton: David E. Graves, 2014), 87.

<sup>7</sup> Miller, *Daniel*, ebook.

<sup>8</sup> Evans, *QuickSource*, 59-61.

Babylonian palace's construction technique including plaster on the wall in the palace in the king's room. Excavations of the Babylonian royal residence in March of 1899 identified that the throne room was covered with white gypsum unlike both the rest of the palace and many other Babylonian constructions that are finished with glazed brick.<sup>9</sup> The abundance of evidence supports both the historical accounts regarding the author and date of original publication and correlate with known and accepted historical records.

Although there are no copies of Daniel 9 discovered within the Dead Sea Scrolls the many abundant transcripts of the other chapters of Daniel recovered in Qumran, have the ability to validate the integrity of the preservation of the original text compared to the Masoretic and Canonical text which includes in the current publishing of the Bible. It is recognized through extensive studies that the Bible has very minimal inconsistencies due to transcribing errors. Any revelation of God that is not recorded accurately would put into questions the revelation of God.<sup>10</sup> There is more documentation to investigate this textual criticism than any other ancient literary work and the Dead Sea Scrolls are recognized as one of the most significant evidence to support this conclusion. Textual criticism uses a technique that translates the oldest copies of the text and evaluates them against

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<sup>9</sup> Miller, *Daniel*, ebook.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014), 163.

modern reproductions to identify any discrepancies regarding the modern copies. Gerhard Hasel summarizes the textual criticism of the Daniel Scrolls contained in the Dead Sea Scrolls against the Masoretic Text stating “Based on the overwhelming conformity of these Qumran Daniel manuscripts with each other and with the MT [Masoretic Text], despite the few insignificant variants that agree with the Septuagint, it is evident that the MT is the well-preserved key text for the book of Daniel.”<sup>11</sup> This examination validates that the current Biblical transcriptions translated from both the Hebrew and Aramaic text of Daniel are reliable copies the original writings published in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Examination of the Bible Text and Exegesis of Daniel 9:25-26

It is critical to conduct proper Biblical exegesis to understand the appropriate context within the Biblical and historical accounts from which the Daniel chapter 9 is emerging. The Bible documents a prophetic warning declared by the prophet Jeremiah to the nation of Israel during the same generation that Israel was taken into captivity, revealing that the Babylonian captivity is due to the nation not following the commandments of God.<sup>12</sup> Jeremiah 25:11 predicted that “this whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of

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<sup>11</sup> Gerhard Hasel, “New Light on the Book of Daniel from the Dead Sea Scrolls,” *Archaeology and Biblical Research*, 5 (Spring 1992), 45-53. Accessed November 30, 2017. <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2012/07/31/New-Light-on-the-Book-of-Daniel-from-the-Dead-Sea-Scrolls.aspx#Article>

<sup>12</sup> Michael Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham, *The Moody Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1303.



Babylon seventy years.” The Book of Daniel was written during this very troubling time for the Jewish nation, and the specific prophecies recorded in Daniel 9 are a direct result of Daniel’s recognition and response to this earlier prophecy. Daniel 9:2 states that “I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.” Following Daniel’s recognition of this prophecy and the calculation of the nation’s time in exile, he concluded that Israel was going to be released from captivity soon.<sup>13</sup> It is recorded that Daniel began to fast and pray in intercession for the nation. Following the prayers recorded in Daniel 9:1-19, Daniel writes that he received a prophetic vision from an angel named Gabriel. Gabriel declared to him precise and predictive prophecies of things that were to come. Daniel 9:25-26 states, “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, 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” (Daniel 9:25-26 [*New King James Version*]).

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 1303.

Biblical prophecy is recognized as the phenomenon of inspiration given by and speaking on behalf of God.<sup>14</sup> In the prophecy of Daniel 9, the angel Gabriel is quoted revealing a vision that unfolds the future history of Israel and announcing the coming Messiah.<sup>15</sup> According to *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, this is the only other time recorded in the Bible that Gabriel is written about outside of the revelation given to Mary the mother of Jesus documented in Luke 1 regarding the conception.<sup>16</sup> Both of these accounts are extremely precise revelations that are recognized as predictive prophecy.

Included in the two prophetic verses from Daniel 9:25-26 there are four particular components which will be investigated to determine their credibility as evidence regarding the fulfillment of predictive prophecy. The first item that will be examined is the command. The text identifies that the specific time period Gabriel was prophesying about was to be initiated by a specific command being issued. The word translated for 'command' in Daniel 9:25 is the Hebrew word 'dabar' and is recognized a word or matter spoken through a declaration.<sup>17</sup> This communication is the announcement of the second component for the prophecy

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<sup>14</sup> Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 960.

<sup>15</sup> John F. Walvoord, "Revival of Rome," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, BSAC 126:504 (Oct 1969), ebook, Accessed November 20, 2017, <https://bible.org/article/revival-rome>.

<sup>16</sup> James Strong, *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2010), 293.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 410-411.

which is the restoration of Jerusalem. During the time Daniel writes this, the Jewish people are living dispersed in Babylon and among the nations with the city of Jerusalem is laying in ruins. Further, the declaration is predicted to be a command to rebuild Jerusalem's streets and walls during a troublesome time. The translation rendered for the word 'wall' in this text comes from the Hebrew word 'charuts' and also has a translation meaning a trench which brings into the interpretation the connotation of a military stronghold as protection from harm or against attack.<sup>18</sup> Following the command to rebuild, there is a period of time identified in the prophecy as 69 weeks followed by the arrival of the Messiah the Prince. The figure of the Messiah is identified through the description as the anointed one which comes from the original Hebrew text 'mashiach'.<sup>19</sup> The association of the Messiah and the anointed one is recognized to be linked with Peter's declaration in Matthew 16:16 identifying Jesus as the 'Christos,' which is the Greek word for the anointed one.<sup>20</sup> Next, the specific timeframe starting with the decree ends with the Messiah being cut off, which is recognized as a "common reference for death" however, not accounted for Himself.<sup>21</sup> *The Moody*

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 487.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 639.

<sup>20</sup> Dean R. Ulrich, "Jesus and the Six Objectives of Daniel 9:24," *In Dire Skriflig* 49, no.1 (2015), 2. Accessed November 20, 2017. <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1757282165?accountid=12085>.

<sup>21</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 962.

*Bible Commentary* identifies that “ancient Judaism understood this passage as messianic.”<sup>22</sup> The last component extracted from Daniel 9:26 is the reference to the destruction of the future rebuilt city of Jerusalem and the sanctuary. The sanctuary is recognized as a reference to the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and is translated from the Hebrew word ‘qoedsh’ meaning consecrated, sacred, and holy. The prophecy brings first hope by declaring the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s streets and walls, a restoration of the city and the temple, and the arrival of the Messiah, but ends with despair by proclaiming the death of the Messiah and destruction of the rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple.

### **The Interpretation of Daniel 9:25-26**

#### Examination of prophecies

To accurately establish that a prophecy is fulfilled remains dependent on the prophecies ability to predict future events with a perfect accuracy.<sup>23</sup> Duvall and Hays write in *Journey into God’s Word* that “while the specifics of a particular passage may only apply to a particular situation of the biblical audience, the theological principals revealed in that text are applicable to all of God’s people at all times.”<sup>24</sup> The theological significance under evaluation through the analysis of

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<sup>22</sup> Rydelnik and Vanlaningham, *The Moody Bible Commentary*, 1306.

<sup>23</sup> Tim Lahaye and Ed Hindson, *The Popular Encyclopedia of Bible Prophecy* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 2004), 297.

<sup>24</sup> J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Journey into God’s Word* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 14.

the Daniel prophecies concerns the nature of the entire Bible and will, therefore, make a determination over a theological principle that will affect the interpretation of entire Bible. Therefore, the prophecies must be recognized to be fulfilled with the Divine inspired precision.

Applying the examination technique to prophecies identified  
in Daniel 9:25-26

The first component of the prophecy, the command, is found to be fulfilled with that exact precision. The Bible records in the book written by Nehemiah a discussion between Nehemiah and some men about the Jewish remnant in Jerusalem that had survived the exile from Babylon and specifically addresses concerns over their security due to the lack of the protective wall surrounding Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:1-3). The command documented in Nehemiah 2:1 is pronounced from the King of Persia, King Artaxerxes to Nehemiah giving approval in the form of an oral command and through a written royal letter promising support with construction material and military protection for Nehemiah and the Israelites to return to Jerusalem and enable the rebuild project.<sup>25</sup> The command also identifies with precision three portions of the second component of the prophecy including the specific instructions intended for the city of Jerusalem, the promise of materials to construct the wall, and the

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<sup>25</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing LLC, 2008), 499.

construction taking place during a troublesome time which is recognized both by sending the military guards and later the opposition that occurred during the rebuild. The fulfilled components for both these prophecies are validated through historical records and timelines associated with the return of the Babylonian captives and rule of the Persian king. Further, the prophecy predicts a period of time that equals 69 weeks between the command issued to rebuild the wall until the death of the Messiah. The calculations for this date are determined to be 69 ‘weeks’ of years and are recognized as 360-day lunar years.<sup>26</sup> According to *The Popular Encyclopedia of Bible Prophecy*, this period time perfectly matches the proposed historical timeline starting with Artaxerxes’ decree to Nehemiah in 444 BC and culminating with the death of Christ in AD 33.<sup>27</sup> When the dates are calculated out, they precisely fit the Bible account of the command being issued in the month of Nissan, as identified in Nehemiah 2:1, with the timeline ending at Christ’s triumphal entry and crucifixion in Jerusalem.<sup>28</sup> The announcement of the Messiah correlates exactly to the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem at the historically recognized timeframe and is perfect fulfillment of the third component. The final component which is the destruction of the second temple is documented in many

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<sup>26</sup> Lahaye and Hindson, *The Popular Encyclopedia of Bible Prophecy*, 357.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

historical records as occurring in the year AD 70.<sup>29</sup> The prophecy properly documented the destruction timeframe of the second temple relating it after the death of the Messiah before the temple had even been constructed. The Daniel 9:25-26 prophecy was written approximately 2 years before the conclusion of the seventy years of Israel's captivity in 535 BC and was fulfilled partially in 444 BC with the command issued, then exactly 483 lunar years later in AD 33 by the death of the Messiah, and then came to a complete fulfillment in AD 70 with the destruction of the second temple. In this "we have the most remarkable prophecy delivered above 500 years before the event, which, besides what it declares of the Messiah's salvation, as finishing transgressions, and introducing an everlasting righteousness, contains a variety of most important circumstances, all future at the time when Daniel wrote."<sup>30</sup>

#### Conclusion of the prophetic evaluation

This research paper has been composed to validate the claim of prophecy recorded in the Daniel text by first determining the date of authorship, then examining the integrity of text's preservation, contextualizing the original meaning, and finally identifying the precise fulfillment all while validating its historical accuracies by correlating supporting historical records and archeological

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<sup>29</sup> MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*, 962.

<sup>30</sup> Robert Haldane, *The Evidence and Authority of Divine Revelation: Being a View of the Testimony of the Law and the Prophets to the Messiah, with the Subsequent Testimonies* Volume 1 (Edinburg: Merchant Court, 1816), 314.

evidence. The evaluation concludes that the prophecies are both accurate and true. It is accepted that man's knowledge of events are constrained by observation and limited by time so that consequently Daniel could not know the future events on his own. Where then does the information that Daniel wrote about originate? God's knowledge is not constrained by time and therefore He does know and can reveal things that will happen in the future. "As no imposture can possibly assume the prerogative of omniscience, the unquestionable existence of prophecy in any system of religion is the strongest evidence that can be given of its having proceeded from God."<sup>31</sup> The logical conclusion is summarized that when man has information about the future and is proved to be complex enough not to be assumed and later fulfilled with precise accuracy that the information must have originated from God.

### **Conclusion**

Bible prophecy is understood to be "particularly profitable to those who can look back on its fulfillment."<sup>32</sup> When a prophecy can be properly examined and then proven to be an authentic revelation of God, it reveals His qualities, abilities, and intentions. It is profitable as "proof of the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of God's Word."<sup>33</sup> Prophecy is one of the most significant tools that God has

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<sup>31</sup> Daniel Dewar, *Divine Revelation: Its Evidences, External, Internal, and Collateral* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1854), 369.

<sup>32</sup> Bob Deffinbaugh, "The Purpose of Prophecy," Bible.org, August 13, 2004, 3.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.



provided to authenticate the nature and origin of the Bible. When the research efforts of linguists, scholars, historians, theologians, and archeologists converge together to accurately establish that a prophecy was documented beforehand and then later fulfilled with precision veracity it validates access to unknowable information. When the Bible is proven to contain information that was unknowable by human origin it validates the theological conclusion that the origin of the Bible is through Divine Revelation. The Bible itself proclaims this truth stating that “you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20-21 [*New International Version*]). One of the captivating qualities of the Bible is that the story it reveals through all 66 books is in perfect harmony and that never contradict itself. It is “grounded in human history and provides a universal vision of God and his purposes, a vision that is for all people of all times and in all places.”<sup>34</sup> God communicates “His word and His will through human messengers.”<sup>35</sup> The prophecies that are recorded in the Book of Daniel are sufficient evidence that God revealed His Word through human messengers and that the nature of the Bible in its entirety is by Divine Revelation.

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<sup>34</sup> Akin, Daniel, *A Theology for the Church* (Nashville: B&H publishing Group, 2014), 5.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

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