

## Daniel 9

Four verses of this chapter (often called "the prophecy of the seventy weeks") have caused as much discussion as any other four verses of prophecy in the entire Bible.

Many interpreters have adopted as a starting point the idea that these verses must necessarily point to the exact time of the first advent of Christ. It would certainly not be impossible for God to predict the exact year of a future event several centuries before it occurred. Yet such a prediction would be quite unique in Scripture. There is only one other biblical prediction that contains actual figures about the time when an event would occur in later centuries. That unique prediction is quoted in Genesis 15:13-16, where God tells Abraham that his descendants will be enslaved and mistreated 400 years but that in the fourth generation they will return to the land of Canaan. It is obvious that these figures are far from precise.

The idea that Daniel 9:24-27 pointed to the exact time when Christ would appear might conceivably be reached as a conclusion from careful study, but it is wrong to take it as a starting point. Proper method requires that we fully examine the pertinent words in the passage and see what can be definitely said about them. Then we should proceed carefully to interpret the parts of the prediction and to decide on their implications.

The four verses of prediction are preceded by 23 very interesting verses that show the occasion for giving the prophecy. Shortly after the conquest of Babylon Daniel