

# It Is “Decreed”: Jesus Is About to Return

By T.W. Tramm

HOW CAN I STATE the above so assuredly when the Bible says, “No man knows the day or hour?”

My surety stems from a prophetic decree found in Daniel 9:

“Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince will be seven weeks [or forty-nine years] ...” (Dan. 9:25 HCSB).

Notice Daniel says a “decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem” will be issued. It’s important to understand that the Hebrew word translated “restore” in this verse means “*to return, or come back.*”<sup>1</sup> Thus, the prophecy is telling us that from the time a decree related to the Jewish return to Jerusalem is issued, there will be forty-nine years until Messiah the Prince.

With Daniel’s prophetic decree in mind, consider the following reference to a *decree* in a letter from Israel’s Prime Minister to US President Jimmy Carter in 1978:

*Dear Mr. President:*

*I have the honor to inform you, Mr. President, that on 28 June 1967 - Israel's parliament (The Knesset) promulgated and adopted a law to the effect: “the Government is empowered by a **decree** to apply the law, the jurisdiction and administration of the State to any part of Eretz Israel (Land of Israel - Palestine), as stated in that **decree.**”*

*On the basis of this law, the government of Israel **decreed** in July 1967 that Jerusalem is one city indivisible, the capital of the State of Israel.*

*Sincerely,*

*Menachem Begin*<sup>2</sup>

It was during the Six Day War of 1967 that Israeli forces recaptured East Jerusalem, bringing the Holy City back under Jewish control for the first time in nearly two millennia. According to the above letter, it was three weeks after the recapture, on June 28<sup>th</sup>, that a law “empowered by a decree” was passed, granting the Jewish government jurisdiction over the newly reclaimed city. In the following month, the government “decreed” that Jerusalem is one city indivisible, the capital of the State of Israel.

The question begged by the above: Could the '67 decree be the one Daniel's prophecy refers to—the one from which we are to count the forty-nine years to Messiah?

I believe it is.

My simple reasoning is that there has been only *one* Jewish return to Jerusalem and, therefore, *one related decree* issued in the past 2,500 years.

With this understanding—that the '67 decree is the one from which we are to count forty-nine years—here is a timely fact to consider. As of present (early July 2016), it has been exactly *forty-nine years* since the above-mentioned decree was issued. Additionally, one year from now, it will have been *fifty years* since the decree was issued. Why is the fifty-year milestone important? Because in order to fulfill Daniel's prophecy by appearing *forty-nine years* "from the issuing of the decree," Messiah must come BEFORE *the fifty-year milestone is reached*. Since this milestone will, again, be reached one year from now, we can assume the Lord will appear sometime within the next twelve months!

If you find that news shocking or even a little unsettling, you'll want to make sure you're sitting down for this next part.

According to Bible scholars, the "weeks" in Daniel's prophecy are to be calculated in *biblical* "prophetic" years, which are 360 days in length. Using the 360-day calculation, if we begin at the June '67 decree date and add exactly forty-nine years (17,640 days), we arrive at Oct 14, 2015, the beginning of the current Hebrew year 5776. According to this way of reckoning—and this is the part you may want to be sitting down for—the forty-nine year milepost was reached *nine months ago*. This means there are only *three months left* before we must say it has been *fifty* prophetic years since the issuing of the 1967 decree.

Again, this is critical because once the fifty-year milestone is reached, it becomes mathematically impossible, barring some misapprehension on our part, for the Messiah to fulfill the "seven sevens" of Daniel 9:25.

*This* is why I'm so confident the Lord is about to return. A straightforward reading of Daniel 9:25, assuming a June '67 decree and a prophetic-year calculation, points to Messiah the Prince returning ANY DAY NOW *and presumably no later than the beginning of October 2016*. The only way it's mathematically feasible for the Messiah to come beyond this time (assuming a correct reading of Daniel) is if one counts the forty-nine years using a 365-day calculation, which, as mentioned earlier, results in a June/July 2017 *terminus ad quem*, or latest possible date. Having acknowledged this latter possibility, we should note that the October 2016 scenario seems more likely as it's based on the prophetic year and corresponds to the ending of the current Jubilee.

Some will call this "date setting." But is it date-setting when Scripture provides a clear milestone (decree of return) from which to count forty-nine years, and we simply *count the years* as instructed? Most would agree it's reckless to propose timeframes based on assumptions and inference, but when the

Bible *explicitly* states there are “seven sevens until Messiah,” there is no inference involved: it is the word of God speaking plainly and clearly.

Having said that, we must acknowledge there is always the possibility of a scriptural misunderstanding on our part. Due to this possibility, I would never make the claim that “the Bible says” Jesus is coming within the above timeframe. What I *am* comfortable saying, however, is that *if* Daniel 9:25 is truly a prophecy for the last days, as Isaac Newton proposed,<sup>3</sup> and the ‘67 recapture of Jerusalem is indeed the prophetic watershed we believe it to be, there are only two ways to do the math: Counting forty-nine prophetic years from the issuing of the ‘67 decree, the potential “window of return” closes in *three months* (October 2016). If one counts in regular Gregorian years, the window closes in twelve months. As for what—or whom—to expect before this window closes, Daniel is crystal clear: “Messiah the Prince” (v. 25).

For those who have difficulty with the notion that we could know, to within a year, Jesus’ timing, understand that the Bible says we are “not in darkness” concerning the general timeframe, or season; it is only the “day and hour” that we cannot know (1 Thess. 5:1-10; Matt. 24:36).

For those who dismiss the above timeframes, particularly the earlier (October) one, based on their understanding of how the feasts are supposed to be fulfilled, keep in mind that Scripture is not explicit with regard to how the remaining feasts are to be fulfilled—nor is it explicit as to whether the “mystery” event we call the Rapture will occur on a feast day at all. All we are told in the Bible is that the Rapture will happen on a day no one is expecting and at a time when things are “business as usual”<sup>4</sup> (Matt. 24:36-39, 44).

What the Bible *is* explicit about is the fact that “from the issuing of the decree to return to and rebuild Jerusalem there will be forty-nine years until Messiah.” While prophecy buffs continue to debate things like the jubilee cycle and the length of a biblical generation vis-à-vis Israel’s 1948 rebirth, the reality is that *Scripture* does not provide enough information about these things to definitively pin them to a particular calendar year, e.g., 2016, 2017, etc. The only *explicit and specific* declaration in all of Scripture concerning the year of Jesus’ coming is found in Daniel 9:25 where we are given a *dateable event* (the issuing of a decree) from which to count a set number of years until Messiah. This straightforward declaration, found in the *only* prophecy with a track record of predicting the *year* of Jesus’ coming, should override all other supposition concerning the Lord’s timing and schedule, including whether the Rapture is pre-trib or post-trib.

With all that we’ve noted in this article in mind, I’ll say it once more and with gusto:

Jesus is about to return!

While we cannot know the day, whether it will be tomorrow or months from now, we can assume with a high degree of certainty, owing to Daniel’s “decree,” that it will be soon—very, very soon.

## NOTES:

1. Strong's H7725.

2. <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/d.../campdavid/letters.phtml> (Scroll down to the sixth letter in the series.)

3. The reason many do not appreciate that the “seven sevens” (forty-nine years) in Daniel 9:25 are a countdown to Messiah’s return is because most interpreters *add them* to the “sixty-two sevens” in the same verse to arrive at the year(s) of events related to Jesus’ *first* coming. This interpretation proposes that the “seven sevens” are separated from the “sixty two sevens” for the purpose of highlighting the time it would take to rebuild Jerusalem following the return from Babylonian captivity. It’s noteworthy, however, that commentators acknowledge this is merely an *assumption*, as there is no way to know how long it actually took to rebuild Jerusalem. Notice what the *Pulpit Commentary* says about the seven sevens: “The city walls and internal buildings of Jerusalem *may* have taken fifty years to erect—we simply cannot tell” (emphases added). Famed scientist and Bible scholar Isaac Newton had a different take on the “seven sevens.” Newton, who was well-versed in ancient calendars and studied and translated the Scriptures from the original Hebrew, understood that God separated the “seven sevens” and the “sixty-two sevens” for a more significant reason, which was to cryptically encode the timing of *both* Jesus’ *first and second comings* into a single prophecy. Referring to Daniel 9:24-27, Newton writes: “Thus we have in this short prophecy, a prediction of all the main periods related to the coming of the Messiah: the time of his birth, that of his death...and *the time of his second coming*: and so the interpretation here given is more full and complete and adequate to the design, than if we should restrain it to his first coming only, as interpreters usually do. We avoid also doing violence to the language of Daniel by taking the seven weeks and sixty two weeks for one number. Had that been Daniel’s meaning, he would have said sixty and nine weeks, and not seven weeks and sixty two weeks, a way of numbering used by no nation. In our way, the years are Jewish *Luni-solar* [360-day] years, as they ought to be; and the seventy weeks of years are Jewish weeks [sabbatical cycles].” Isaac Newton, *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John*, Echo Library, 2007, p.55. To read Newton’s commentary in its entirety, click on the following link (see pages 227-234):

<http://publicdomainreview.org/collections/sir-isaac-newtons-daniel-and-the-apocalypse-1733/>

4. Matthew 24 seems to imply that even *believers* will be surprised: “You *also* [servant/watchman/believer] must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (v. 44). With this in mind, it’s interesting to note that, today, most are *expecting* the Rapture to occur on a feast. The Feast of Trumpets, with its “trumpets” theme, is the most popular theory. In pointing this out, I am not implying that the Rapture cannot happen on the Feast of Trumpets merely because many *expect* it to. However, in the interest of being a good “Berean” with respect to potential end-times scenarios, I submit the following as food for thought: It is common knowledge that some Jews view Tishrei as the month of Israel’s future redemption and *Rosh Hashanah* (Trumpets) as a likely time for the “resurrection.”\* Many messianic teachers, in their eagerness to adopt the Hebrew mindset, have embraced these views and projected them onto the Christian end-times scenario of a pre-trib rapture: they reason that since Trumpets is fulfilled via the resurrection, which in their understanding occurs *before* the Tribulation (pre-trib rapture), *Trumpets must be fulfilled before the Tribulation*. What Christians need to keep in mind, however, is that *Israel’s* national redemption and what Jews would term the “resurrection” (the bringing to life of those who died during the Tribulation and also the Old Testament saints) occurs at the END of the

Tribulation, not before, as does the Rapture of the Church (Rev. 20:4-6; Dan. 12:1-2). Remember, God is dealing with the Church and Israel separately in this respect. With this in mind, is it possible that the fall feasts are more about Israel and the *end* of the Tribulation (fulfilled in rapid succession in a single season, as were the spring feasts) and the Rapture is more about a day of which “no man knows” prior to the Tribulation?\*

\*Rabbi Eliezer says...“in Nisan they [our ancestors] were redeemed and in Tishrei they will be redeemed in the time to come” (*Rosh Hashana* 10b-11a). Some rabbis associate the resurrection with the Feast of Trumpets because the Hebrew name for Trumpets, *Yom Turah*, refers to an awakening blast from the shofar, the type that would signal an army to wake up and prepare for the day’s battle. *Turah* is also translated “shout.” Some rabbis took this to mean that the trumpet blasts are a wake-up call for the dead, at the resurrection. (Source: Ken Johnson, *Ancient Messianic Festivals*, 2012, pp. 70, 71.)

\*\*Some point to the Scriptures indicating the summer/Pentecost/wheat-harvest season, which is, significantly, parenthetical to the spring and fall seasons, as a potential time for the harvest of the Church (see the Book of Ruth).