



# ANCHOR POINTS

**ADVENTISTS TELL WHY THEY HOLD  
FAST TO OUR FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS.**

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

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# 1844

## *A People of Prophecy*

**E**ven with the choicest timber, finest brick, and best workers, if the foundation isn't steady, the house will fall. And even if the foundation's firm, if it doesn't sit on solid ground, the structure will crumble anyway.

The same with the house that Adventism has built. If the sanctuary message with its 1844 dating, the foundation of the house, is not solid, the house isn't either. Fortunately, not only is that foundation set in cement; it sits on the Rock, Jesus Christ.

### **Resting on Jesus**

The 1844 date for the beginning of the pre-Advent judgment rests squarely on Jesus Christ. The ninth chapter of the book of Daniel centers on the 70-week prophecy, which is by far the most important and convincing Messianic prediction in the Bible. Yet this crucial 70-week prophecy is only part of the larger 2300-day prophecy of the investigative judgment. If the 1844 investigative judgment were not crucial, why would the Lord have so inextricably linked it to such an important prophecy as the 70 weeks? The answer, of course, is that He wouldn't have.

Are Seventh-day Adventists hung up on dates? No. However, the Bible clearly ties Christ's work for us with specific dates. More than 500 years before Christ, Daniel 9:24-27 gave the exact years when Jesus would begin His ministry and when He would be crucified. That prediction is like someone in 1492 (the year Columbus took off for India and found America instead) predicting

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that George Bush would be elected president of the United States in 1988.

The prophecy begins with a time period, 70 weeks that were “cut off” upon Daniel’s people and their holy city, Jerusalem (verse 24).<sup>1</sup> The second verse of this prophecy (verse 25) gives the starting point of those 70 weeks: “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 [or 69 weeks]” (NKJV).

When did this word go forth “to restore and build Jerusalem”? There are only four possibilities:

<u>Text</u>	<u>King</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Subject</u>
Ezra 1	Cyrus	538 B.C.	Return of the people; rebuilding the Temple
Ezra 6	Darius	520 B.C.	Reaffirms Cyrus’ decree to rebuild the Temple
Ezra 7	Artaxerxes I	457 B.C.	Return with Ezra; authority to Ezra
Nehemiah 2	Artaxerxes I	444 B.C.	Authority to Nehemiah as governor of Judea

The first two of these decrees resulted only in the reconstruction of the Temple, which was completed in 516/515 B.C. (Ezra 6:15-18). They, therefore, don’t meet the requirements of the prophecy.

In the third choice, found in Ezra 7, Ezra was given permission to reconstruct the city. How do we know? Because people living in the area of Jerusalem wrote to Artaxerxes, saying: “The Jews who came up to us *from you* have gone to Jerusalem and are *rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city*. They are restoring the walls and repairing the foundations” (Ezra 4:12, NIV).

Obviously, the Jews who came up “from you,” meaning Artaxerxes, were rebuilding “that rebellious and wicked city.” The only decree the Bible mentions as coming from Artaxerxes that fits is the one in Ezra 7 (the chapters in Ezra are not in chronological order), which was given in Artaxerxes’ seventh year. (The decree

for Nehemiah dealt only with continuing what Ezra had already started, and thus is ruled out as well.)

From a variety of ancient sources, including an eclipse text, we know that Artaxerxes' father, Xerxes, was murdered in 465 B.C. The new king's first full and official year did not begin until the next new year, in the spring of 464 B.C., which means—in terms of the Jewish calendar used then—that the seventh year of Artaxerxes extended from the fall (about September-October) of 458 B.C. to the fall of 457 B.C. Thus, the starting date of the 70 weeks is 457 B.C.

Therefore, from the command “to restore and build Jerusalem [457 B.C.] until Messiah the Prince [Jesus]” would be 69 weeks. Because a *literal* 69 weeks is only about a year and four months, the prophecy would have the Messiah coming in 455 B.C. if literal time were used. Obviously, the day-year principle must be applied.<sup>2</sup> Because 69 weeks equals 483 days ( $69 \times 7$ ), a day for a year comes to 483 years. Thus, the command “to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince” would be 483 years, which comes to A.D. 27 (remember to delete the zero year on the calendar). Amazingly enough, this is the time that Jesus did begin His earthly ministry.

The final “week,” or seven years, of the prophecy, dealt with the death of Jesus (“in the midst of the week,” three and a half years later, He would be cut off) and the covenant relationship between Israel and the Lord. The seventy weeks, then, end in A.D. 34 (see chart).

