

# SECRETS *of the* FUTURE

The Mystery Man of Prophecy | Part 8



# THE MYSTERY MAN OF PROPHECY

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Every day people in Jerusalem go down to the Western Wall, praying for the coming of the Messiah. Earnestly and with deep respect they rock their bodies back and forward humbly pleading to their God. The people of Israel hope and pray that soon the Messiah will come, and return their treasured temple to its former glory. The political and spiritual hope of the Jew is a Messiah who will bring freedom to the people of Israel and peace to the world.

Throughout the last 2,000 years, there were many Messiah hopefuls. Simon Bar Kokhba (135AD), Moses of Crete (450AD), Serene (720AD), David Alroi (1160AD), Abraham Abulafia (1240AD), Shabettai Zevi (1626AD) and more recently, Rabbi Schneerson, a New York based Rabbi who created much excitement – until he died.

Where is the Messiah? Why has He taken so long? What has happened to all the promises for the Jews? When will this “mystery man of prophecy” finally arrive?

In what may be the greatest of all prophecies, the ancient prophet Daniel predicted important events in the history of the Jews. This included the exact date for the coming of the Messiah.



In 539BC, as Jerusalem lay in ruins, the prophet Daniel predicted:

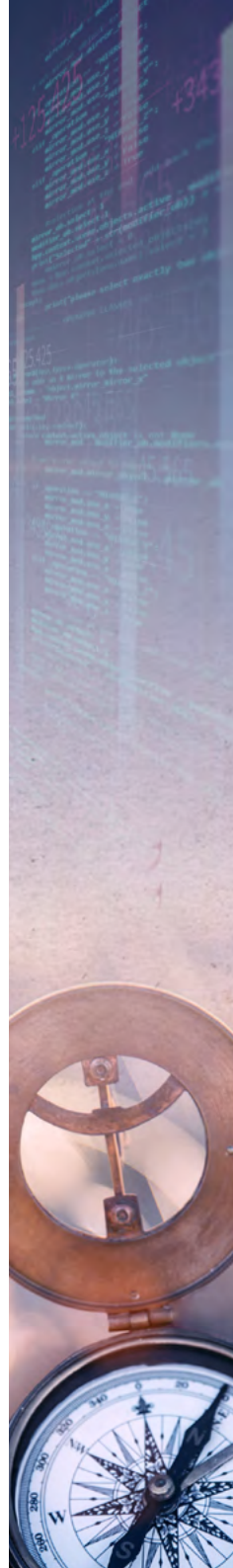
- Jerusalem would be rebuilt
- The specific year for the coming of the Messiah
- The Messiah would die
- The unique purpose of the Messiah's death
- The specific year for the death of the Messiah
- A cut off date for the Jewish people as a "chosen race"
- The city of Jerusalem would be destroyed again

Clearly this prophecy has major ramifications for the Jews. Do the Jews know about this prophecy? What do they think about it? Should their search for a Messiah be over?

In a bizarre twist, not only is this prophecy known to Jewish scholars, but a rabbinical curse has been placed on any Jew who reads it to discover the timing of the coming Messiah.

One Jewish Sage said, "May the Spirits of those who attempt to calculate the final time (of Mashiach's coming) expire!" (Sanhedrin 97b, quoted in Chapter 12 of Hilchos Melachim from the *Mishneh Torah of Rambam*). (Note: "Mashiach" is Hebrew for "Messiah")

With that warning in mind, let us investigate one of the most intriguing prophecies in the ancient Scriptures. Please read the full chapter of Daniel 9 and notice especially verses 24-27.



Q1.

## WHAT DID JESUS SAY WAS THE THEME OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES?

**Luke 24:27** - *And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning \_\_\_\_\_*

.....

Both the Old and New Testament Scriptures have Jesus Christ as the central theme. The New Testament writers highlight Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies more than 130 times. Some scholars have estimated that the Old Testament contains over 300 specific prophecies, describing who the Messiah is and what He will do. At the very least, more than 50 major prophecies can clearly be identified and tested against a prospective Messiah. What would be the chance of all 50 prophecies being fulfilled in one person?

Astronomer and mathematician, Peter Stoner, calculated that the chances of fulfilling just eight of these prophecies is one in one hundred thousand trillion. The chances of fulfilling nearly 50 of them would be one in one followed by 157 zeros! (*Science Speaks*, 1963, pp100-109).

By comparing the life of Jesus with the predictions from the Old Testament it is clear that Jesus Christ perfectly fulfilled all the Messianic prophecies. This study guide demonstrates the evidence from just a few of these prophetic passages.





Q2.

## HOW DO WE KNOW JESUS WAS A HISTORICAL CHARACTER?

Besides the Bible, there are independent historical sources which verify the existence of Jesus Christ. At least 17 non-Christian sources mention Jesus, all within 150 years of His life. These include Roman historians, Greek writers, Jewish religious leaders and Jewish historians.

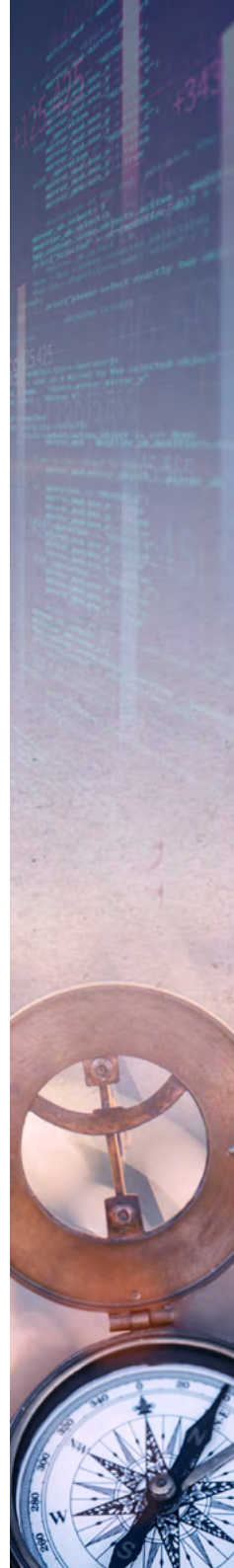
The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (b.AD37) wrote,

“Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man ... He was the Christ, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians so named from him are not extinct at this day” (*Antiquities*, xviii, 33).

Q3.

## WHERE DOES BIBLE PROPHECY PREDICT JESUS WOULD BE BORN?

**Micah 5:2** - But you, \_\_\_\_\_ Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting



.....

Seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the prophet Micah knew the birthplace of the Messiah. There were two Bethlehems in the days of Jesus, one in the North of Palestine and the other, Ephrathah, a small town in Judea. The prophecy is specific. The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judea. New Testament writers recorded the history of this birthplace exactly as the Bible predicted (Matthew 2:1).



Although Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He did not originate from there. According to the prophet Micah, Jesus is from “everlasting”. In other words, prior to coming to earth, He never had a beginning. That is part of the mystery of God. Jesus was not just a prophet or a good man – He was God.

Q4.

## WAS THERE A SPECIFIC TIME WHEN JESUS WOULD APPEAR AND DIE FOR HIS PEOPLE?

**Galatians 4:4** - *But when the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ had come, God sent forth His Son ...*

**Romans 5:6** - *For when we were still without strength, in \_\_\_\_\_ Christ died for the ungodly*

.....

One of the key aspects of the Messianic prophecies revolves around time. Jesus came to this earth “in the fullness of time” and died in “due time”. Jesus Himself knew the prophecies and on more than one occasion He avoided conflict with the Jews because “His hour had not yet come” (John 7:30).

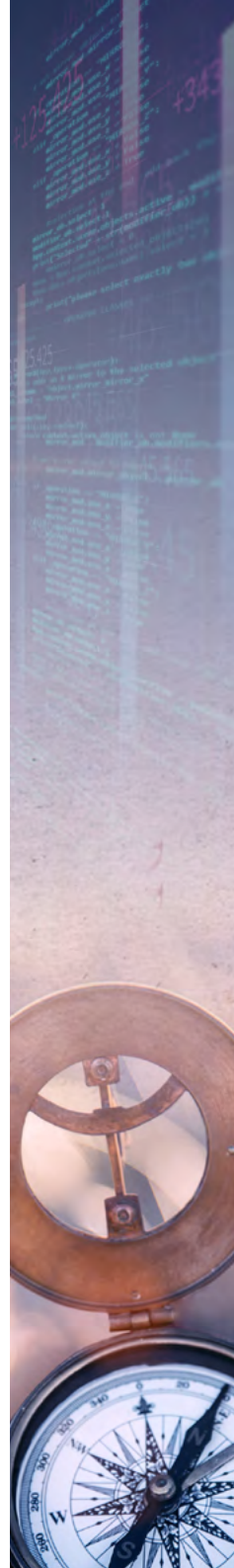
### The Prophecy of Daniel 9

The Context:

Jerusalem had been captured by Babylon, the superpower of the day, and Daniel was taken back as a prisoner of war. While in captivity, Daniel received visions from God, outlining global empires that would succeed the might of Babylon (Daniel 2,7 and 8).

Daniel saw nations such as Medo-Persia, the Greeks and then another empire (the Romans) ruling over the Jews. He literally became sick with anxiety (Daniel 8:27). Where was the Messiah who would bring freedom from persecution and hatred? Why weren't the Jews ruling the world?

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As Daniel realised the gravity of the situation he prayed earnestly for his city and his people. He knew the Jews had rebelled against God on many occasions. Now he was concerned that they may have gone too far. God answered Daniel's prayer by sending down the angel Gabriel with a prophecy that we find documented in Daniel chapter nine.



Q5.

## WHAT WAS THE IDENTIFIED TIME PERIOD ALLOCATED TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE?

**Daniel 9:24** - \_\_\_\_\_ weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy

.....

This prophecy deals specifically with the future of the Jews. We know this because Gabriel pinpoints to Daniel “your people and your holy city”. At the start of this prophecy, Daniel is given a time code. The Jewish people would



have 70 weeks (490 days) to “make an end of sins” and “bring in everlasting righteousness”. This meant God would give the Jews another opportunity to stop their false worship and become a holy nation.

**The Messiah – Fact 1:** The Jews were given 70 weeks (490 days) to repent

Q6.

## IN PROPHETIC SYMBOLISM WHAT DOES A DAY REPRESENT?

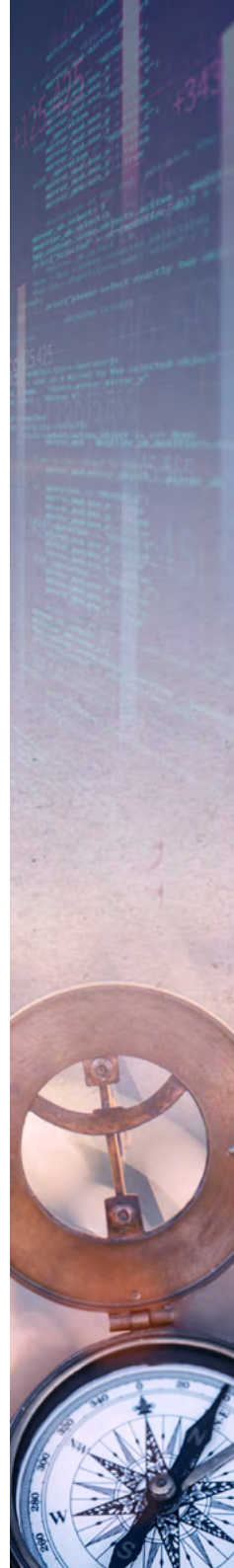
Ezekiel 4:6 - ... *I have laid on you a day for each* \_\_\_\_\_

.....

In Bible prophecy a day represents a literal year. This principle, found in the prophetic book of Ezekiel, is also found throughout the Bible (Numbers 14:34). This approach was followed by Jewish scholars prior to Jesus Christ and is still followed today.

The “day for a year” principle is also the only possible answer to the prophecy of Daniel 9. It would be impossible for all the events of Daniel 9 to apply to a literal 490 days. Jerusalem was not even rebuilt by then. As a result, the 490 day time period allocated to the Jews represents a literal 490 years. Clearly, God is very patient.

**The Messiah – Fact 2:** 70 weeks (490 days) represents 490 literal years



Q7.

## WHAT WAS THE STARTING POINT FOR THIS TIME PERIOD FOR THE JEWS?

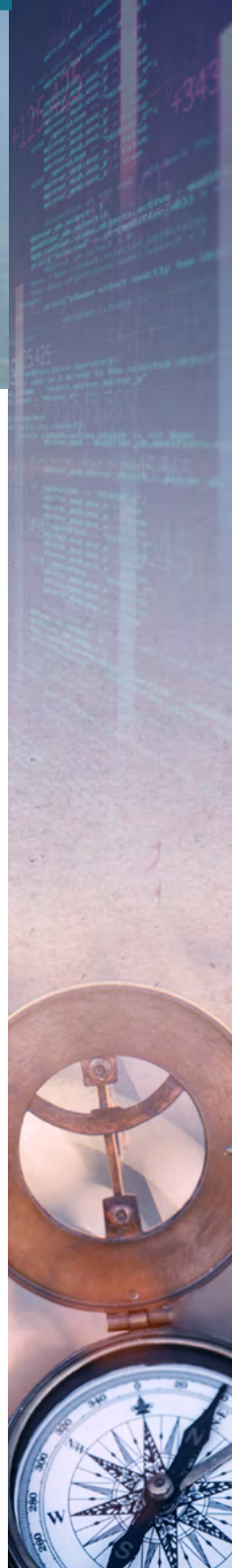
**Daniel 9:25** - *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the \_\_\_\_\_ to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times*

.....

The starting point of this prophecy was a command allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their city. This decree, found in Ezra 7, was made by King Artaxerxes in the seventh year of his reign, in 457BC. This starting date of 457BC is verified in history through the writings of the Greek historian Herodotus, through Babylonian records and through the Alexandrian astronomer Ptolemy (Canon of Ptolemy). Sir Isaac Newton, one of the greatest scientists ever, documented this starting date as "among the most easily established dates in history" (*Observations upon the prophecies of the Bible*, pp154-157).

**The Messiah – Fact 3:** Jerusalem would be rebuilt and the starting date for the prophecy is 457BC





Q8.

## WHAT WOULD HAPPEN AT THE END OF THE FIRST 69 WEEKS?

**Daniel 9:25** - ...Until \_\_\_\_\_ the Prince

.....

Daniel was told the Messiah would come 69 weeks after the command to rebuild Jerusalem. If that command was made in 457BC, then 69 weeks (483 literal years) brings us to a date of 27AD (remember there is no year zero). According to this prophecy, the Messiah would arrive in 27AD.

This is one of the most exciting aspects of this prophecy. "Messiah" means "the Anointed One". Up until 27AD Jesus was a tradesman, working each day as a carpenter. In 27AD His life completely changed. Jesus was baptised in the Jordan river and anointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:37,38). He left His job as a tradesman and began His public ministry as the Messiah for the Jews.

The date of Jesus' baptism (27AD) is determined by a comparison of the biblical account and Roman historical records (Luke 3:1 says the baptism took place in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar. History places this year as 27AD).

**The Messiah - Fact 4:** The Messiah, Jesus Christ, came right on time in 27AD

**Q9. WHAT WAS THE FIRST THING JESUS SAID FOLLOWING HIS BAPTISM?**

**Mark 1:14,15** - ...*The time is \_\_\_\_\_ (v15)*

.....

Jesus knew the prophecies of Daniel well. He even said “whoever reads, let him understand” (Matthew 24:15). Jesus understood His role in life and He knew that His baptism was the start of His public life and teaching as the Messiah.

**The Messiah – Fact 5:** Jesus recognised the time He became the Messiah

**Q10. WHAT WAS PREDICTED TO HAPPEN TO THE MESSIAH?**

**Daniel 9:26** - *And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be \_\_\_\_\_, but not for Himself*

.....



In an amazing twist, we find the Messiah being cut off (or killed). Instead of a King to deliver the Jews from slavery, we find a King who suffers and dies. The prophecy tells us that this Messiah King did not die for Himself. Jesus did not deserve to die – He never sinned. Jesus died for you. His perfect life was offered to save you from your sins and give you a hope for the future.

**The Messiah – Fact 6:** The Messiah would be killed

Q11.

## WHAT WOULD THE MESSIAH DO IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LAST WEEK OF THIS PROPHECY?

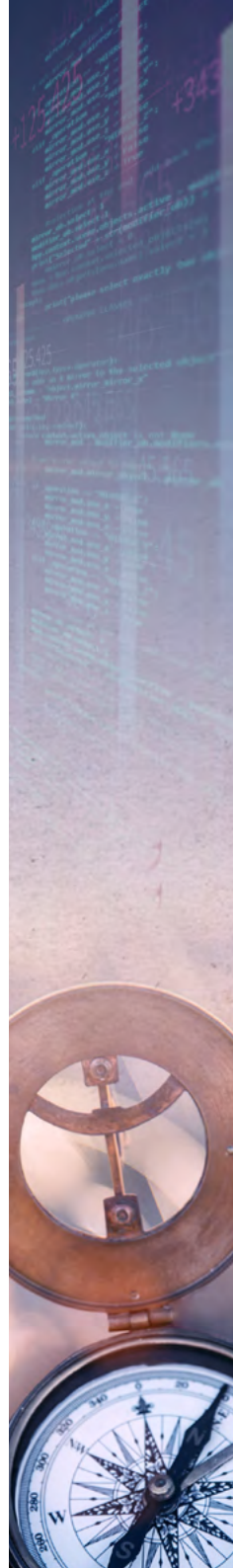
**Daniel 9:27** - ... *But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to \_\_\_\_\_ and offering*

.....

The “middle” of this last week (being half of the last seven years) is three and-a-half years after the coming of the Messiah in 27AD. That would bring us to 31AD – right on time according to Bible prophecy. When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was miraculously ripped from top to bottom. This symbolised the end to animal sacrifices exactly as the Bible predicted (Matthew 27:51).

In the temple service the Passover lamb was sacrificed once a year on a specific day and at a specific time (the

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afternoon of the 14th day of the Hebrew month Nisan). As the priests were preparing to kill the Passover lamb, Jesus was dying on a lonely cross. On that dark afternoon, prophecy was fulfilled as "Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

This historical time is verified by Jewish books such as the *Talmud*. Notice this statement referring to Jesus (Yeshu in Hebrew) being hanged on a tree (crucified):

"On the eve of Passover (the afternoon) they hanged Yeshu (of Nazareth) ... But they found naught in his defence and hanged him on the eve of Passover" (Babylonian Sanhedrin 43a).

By decoding the temple service of the Passover along with the amazing time prophecy of Daniel 9 we can see that Jesus Christ died on the very year, month, week and day predicted hundreds of years before it ever took place!

This time prophecy demonstrates that the Bible can be trusted and Jesus Christ is the true Messiah of Bible prophecy.

**The Messiah – Fact 7:** The Messiah is Jesus Christ who would die in 31AD



Q12.

## TO WHOM DID JESUS TELL HIS DISCIPLES TO FIRST PREACH?

**Matthew 10:5,6** - ...*"Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of \_\_\_\_\_"*

.....

After being anointed as the Messiah in 27AD, Jesus knew the Jewish nation only had seven years left to repent and accept Him as their Messiah and Saviour from sin. Jesus instructed His disciples to focus on preaching to the Jewish people. He longed for the Jewish nation to accept Him and present Him as the Messiah to the whole world. Even after His death, Jesus told His disciples to begin their ministry at Jerusalem. He had not given up on the people of Jerusalem. There was still time, if they would accept Jesus, the resurrected Messiah.

Q13.

## WHAT WARNING DID JESUS GIVE TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL?

**Matthew 21:43** - *Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be \_\_\_\_\_ from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it*

.....

Jesus loved the people of Jerusalem. Jesus Himself was a Jew. He wept over the city. He pleaded with the religious

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leaders to believe in Him and have a heart experience with God. He performed miracles, taught spiritual truths, healed the sick. Jesus did everything to help the Jewish people become a holy nation.

Jesus knew the prophecy of Daniel 9 and He passionately warned them about refusing to accept the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Jesus declared that the great promises of a glorious future would be taken away from the Jews and given to another people.

Q14.

## WHEN DID THE GOSPEL REALLY BEGIN TO GO TO THE GENTILES?

**Acts 7:59, 8:1-4** - *And devout men carried Stephen to his burial....Therefore those who were scattered went \_\_\_\_\_ preaching the word (Acts 8:2,4)*

.....

When Stephen was killed by the Jewish religious leaders, he became the first Christian martyr. This occurred in 34AD, exactly 490 years after the start of the prophecy. This was the end for the Jewish nation. When God saw what the Jewish leaders did to the leadership of His emerging church, He must have said in His heart, "Enough is enough. Go now and preach the gospel to the Gentiles." Because the Jewish nation hardened themselves against the longsuffering, love of their God, the prophecy was over.

**The Messiah – Fact 8:** The Jews' probation as God's only chosen people ended in 34AD



Q15.

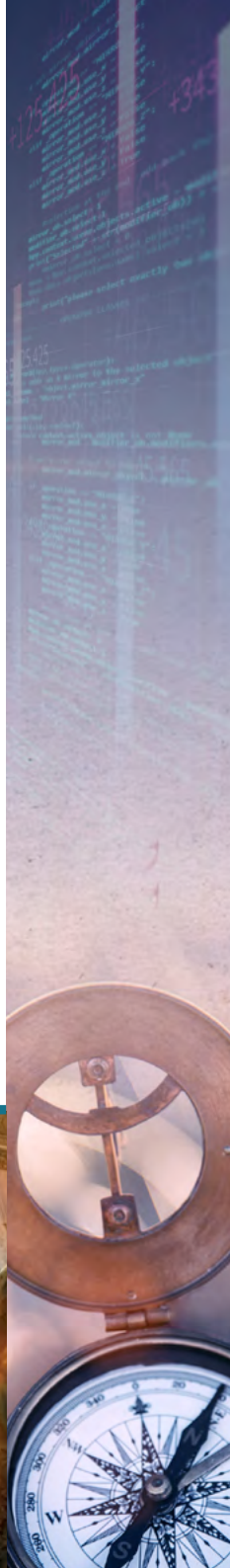
## WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO JERUSALEM AFTER THE DEATH OF THE MESSIAH?

**Daniel 9:26** - *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 \_\_\_\_\_ the city and the sanctuary*

.....

Here we are told that some time after the death of Jesus, the city and the sanctuary would be destroyed. This occurred in 70AD when the Roman army marched on Jerusalem and burnt it to the ground. The city and its temple were destroyed to such an extent that any remaining Jews were scattered to all parts of the then known world.

**The Messiah - Fact 9:** The city and temple of Jerusalem would be destroyed again



Q16.

## ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, WHO ARE GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE TODAY?

**Galatians 3:29** - *And if you are \_\_\_\_\_, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*

.....

The Bible says that if you belong to Jesus then you have access to all the promises once made to Abraham and his people. The Jews have not been abandoned or "cursed". As individuals every Jew who accepts Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Lord also has total access to the promises of God. But now we find it is the church of Jesus, who are a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people" (1 Peter 2:9).

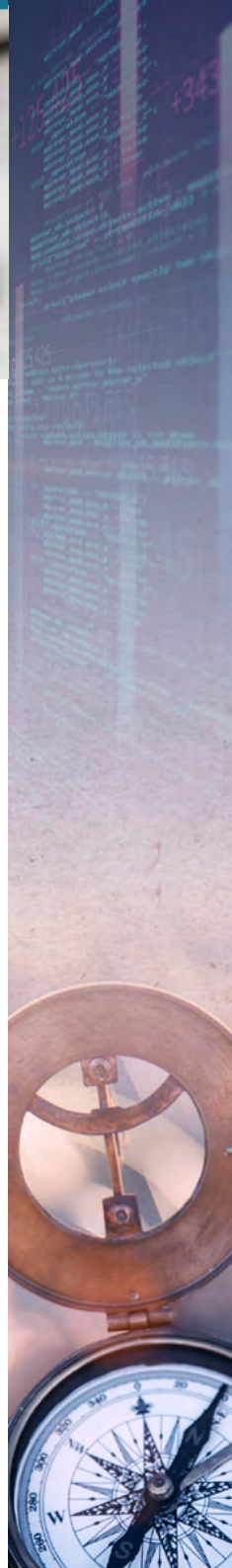
**The Messiah – Fact 10:** The Christian Church is now spiritual Israel

### *Three points to remember:*

- Jesus Christ is the theme of the entire Bible
- Jesus Christ is the Messiah for the Jews and the Saviour of all mankind
- If you have accepted Jesus Christ you belong to God's true people – spiritual Israel

### *The story:*

*A young lady by the name of Tabitha wore a gold locket around her neck. Tabitha's friends often talked about this locket and wondered who the love of her life might be? Tabitha would never open the locket but her friends could tell how precious the picture of her lover must be.*



*Tabitha would hold this locket in her hands and treasure it close to her heart. When Tabitha died (unmarried and at a fairly young age) her friends opened the locket. Inside they found a simple crumpled up note that said, "Him whom I have never seen ... I love".*

*What are your reflections on this story in the context of what Jesus means to you?*

### **Relational questions:**

1. How has the information in this booklet helped build your faith and trust in God and the Bible?
2. The baptism of Jesus was His anointing as the Messiah. Why do you think He has also asked us to be baptised? (John 3:5)
3. What would you say to a Jewish person who has not accepted Jesus as their Messiah?
4. What can you do in your reading of the Bible to ensure you appreciate the theme of Jesus in every passage?

### **Your response:**

The sacrifice of Jesus was for you. Would you like to accept His sacrifice today, and commit your life to Him as your Messiah, Saviour and Friend? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



What relevance does an ancient Jewish sanctuary have for us today? Learn more in Part 9 of the Secrets of the Future series. Email or call Hope Channel to continue your journey.

# REBUILDING *the* TEMPLE



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