

The Prophecy of Daniel's 70 Weeks *Daniel 9:24-27*

As a young man, Daniel was taken captive by Babylon in 605 B.C. There he served under several rulers and two empires (the Babylonian and the Medo-Persian). Near the end of his life, while reading the book of Jeremiah (9:2; cf. Jer. 25:11-12), Daniel realized that the promise of 70 years of judgment under the Babylonian empire was nearing an end, so he prayed that God might deliver the nation of Israel and return her to her land (9:16-19). As a response to that prayer, God sent Gabriel to interpret the vision of Daniel; the prophecy of the 70 weeks is God's answer to Daniel. What follows is a summation of the main points of that message from God.

9:24 *"SEVENTY WEEKS HAVE BEEN DECREED FOR YOUR PEOPLE AND YOUR HOLY CITY, TO FINISH THE TRANSGRESSION, TO MAKE AN END OF SIN, TO MAKE ATONEMENT FOR INIQUITY, TO BRING IN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS, TO SEAL UP VISION AND PROPHECY, AND TO ANOINT THE MOST HOLY PLACE.*

seventy weeks = lit., "seventy sevens." That "sevens" refers to years is supported by the context:

- ✓ Earlier, Daniel had been thinking about years (9:1-2)
- ✓ Each year of captivity resulted from the neglect of a Sabbath year (2 Chron. 36:21; Lev. 25:4; 26:34-35, 43).
- ✓ Neither days nor weeks fit the events of 9:24-27; only years fit the passage.
- ✓ 9:27 says the covenant of "one week" will be broken in the middle. If this is seven years, then the middle is 3-1/2 years, which fits with 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14.

These 70 weeks are for the people of Israel: ***your people and your holy city***. The church is not in view in this passage. The text is definite — *your people* (i.e., the people of Israel) and *your holy city* (i.e., the city of Jerusalem). This must be a reference to national Israel.

God has six stated purposes for these 70 weeks. The first three deal with the sin of Israel as a nation and the benefits of Christ's redemptive work on the cross; the final three deal with the Millennial Kingdom:

- (1) ***finish the transgression*** = not only will sin be terminated, but *Israel's* sin will be over. It refers to the halting of sin.
- (2) ***make an end of sin*** = i.e., the sin will be removed; it likely refers to the sealing of Satan's prison to restrain him (Rev. 20:1-3). The word "make an end" also suggests a "sticking" or "lasting" of the stoppage of sin.
- (3) ***make atonement for iniquity*** = lit., "to cover sin." It is a reference to the propitiatory work of Christ on the cross.
- (4) ***bring in everlasting righteousness*** = This is a reference to the righteousness established through the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34) when people will be inwardly transformed (cf. also Is. 11:1-5).
- (5) ***seal up vision and prophecy*** = All prophecies and visions will be fulfilled, so there will no longer be need for them.
- (6) ***anoint the most holy place*** = a reference to the return of God's glory to the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies in the millennial temple (Ez. 43:2-4).

9:25 "SO YOU ARE TO KNOW AND DISCERN THAT FROM THE ISSUING OF A DECREE TO RESTORE AND REBUILD JERUSALEM UNTIL MESSIAH THE PRINCE THERE WILL BE SEVEN WEEKS AND SIXTY-TWO WEEKS; IT WILL BE BUILT AGAIN, WITH PLAZA AND MOAT, EVEN IN TIMES OF DISTRESS.

issuing of a decree to restore... = This could refer to several different decrees:

- (1) The decree of **Cyrus, 538 B.C.** (2 Chron. 36:23; Ezra 1:2-4). This is probably not the correct one, since it was given to rebuild the temple, and no mention of the city was made in it.
- (2) The decree of **Artaxerxes, 458 B.C.** (Ezra 7:12-26). Neither did it refer to the reconstruction of the city, but rather provided for the "needs of the house of your God" (Ezra 7:20), i.e., for the instruments of worship.
- (3) The decree of **Artaxerxes, 444 B.C.** (Neh. 2:1-8). This was given specifically for the rebuilding of the walls and gates of Jerusalem. The date of this decree was March 5, 444 B.C. [Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, 139.]

until the Messiah = From the time of the decree of Artaxerxes in 444 B.C. until the Messiah would be 69 weeks (i.e., 483 years). It is important to note that these years are "prophetic years," that is, 360-day years. This is established in Daniel 7:24-25 (also 12:7) and Rev. 12:14, in which the 3-1/2 year persecution (42 mo.) is equated to 1260 days (42 months, each 30 days long). This is verified in Genesis when the flood is stated to begin on the 17th day of the second month (7:11) and end on the 17th day of the seventh month (8:4). Those five months are reckoned to be exactly 150 days (7:24; 8:3), thus confirming the 30-day months in Biblical literature.

Using the 360-day years, the 483 years adds up to 173,880 days, which takes one from March 5, 444 B.C. to Monday, March 30, 33 A.D. It would have been on that date that Christ would have triumphantly entered the city of Jerusalem, proclaiming Himself as Messiah (Lk. 19:42). It was after this that He was *cut off* (v. 26).¹

9:26 "THEN AFTER THE SIXTY-TWO WEEKS THE MESSIAH WILL BE CUT OFF AND HAVE NOTHING, AND THE PEOPLE OF THE PRINCE WHO IS TO COME WILL DESTROY THE CITY AND THE SANCTUARY. AND ITS END WILL COME WITH A FLOOD; EVEN TO THE END THERE WILL BE WAR; DESOLATIONS ARE DETERMINED.

After the 483 years, the Messiah would be *cut off*, i.e., executed. As the execution came on the Friday following His triumphant entry, Christ was crucified on Friday, April 3, 33 A.D.

The remainder of this verse is probably a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus in A.D. 70, when the city was burned and 1-1/2 million Jews were killed. Of necessity, there is a gap after the 69 weeks. There is no historical reference to anything that could have been constituted as a fulfillment of the final week within the seven years after the crucifixion of

¹ This accounting of time works with the solar calendar as well. From March 5, 444 B.C. to March 5, 33 A.D. is 476 years. Those 476 years multiplied by 365.24219879 days equals 173,855 days. Add to that the 25 days between March 5 and March 30, and the same total of 173,880 days is reached!

Christ.

9:27 *“AND HE WILL MAKE A FIRM COVENANT WITH THE MANY FOR ONE WEEK, BUT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WEEK HE WILL PUT A STOP TO SACRIFICE AND GRAIN OFFERING; AND ON THE WING OF ABOMINATIONS WILL COME ONE WHO MAKES DESOLATE, EVEN UNTIL A COMPLETE DESTRUCTION, ONE THAT IS DECREED, IS Poured OUT ON THE ONE WHO MAKES DESOLATE.”*

he = is a reference back to the “prince” (a type of the antichrist), not the anointed One (Christ). Thus, the antichrist will make a decree with Israel (*the many*) for a period of seven years. He will keep that covenant for 3-1/2 years (42 mo.), after which he will turn against the Jews and attempt to destroy them through persecution (cf. Mt. 24:9ff; 2 Thess. 2; Rev. 12-13). Despite his attempt to destroy God’s chosen people, *destruction...[will be] poured out on [him]*. That is, the antichrist will ultimately be destroyed by the Christ (Dan. 11:40-45 pictures this as well; cf. also Rev. 19:20-21).