

The Last Days

An In-Depth Study of Biblical Eschatology

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel

Daniel 9:20–27 Seventieth Week ⇒ Tribulation

An Outline of the Book of Daniel (Daniel 1-12)

- ✧ 1 The Captivity of Daniel
 - ✧ 2 King Nebuchadnezzar's First Dream
 - ✧ 3 The Image of Gold and the Fiery Furnace
 - ✧ 4 Nebuchadnezzar's Pride, Punishment and Redemption
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 - ✧ 10 Daniel's Vision of a "Man" Dressed in Linen
 - ✧ 11 From the Silent Years to the End Times
 - ✧ 12 The End Times
- Chapters 1-7 emphasize history
 - Chapters 7-12 emphasize prophecy
 - Chapters 2-7 were written in Aramaic, the rest of the book in Hebrew

Heart of a Godly Man: Daniel's Prayer (9:1-19)

The time setting for this chapter was the first year of the rule of Darius (c.539 B.C.).

While studying Scripture, Daniel read that the Babylonian captivity (that included Daniel) was prophesied by Jeremiah to last 70 years ^{Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10-11} (3 years from that time).

Daniel immediately began praying and fasting in repentance for his nation ^{2 Chronicles 7:14}.

Why 70 years? God defined a Sabbath rest for the land ^{Leviticus 25:1-7}; He told Israel to be obedient ^{Leviticus 26:1-13}; He warned them about judgement for disobedience ^{Leviticus 26:14-39}; He promised repentance would bring forgiveness ^{Leviticus 26:40-45}; He sent prophets to warn them about disobedience, they did not heed the warnings ^{2 Chronicles 36:15-16, Jeremiah 25:4-6}; so He sent Babylon as a judgement on Israel ^{2 Chronicles 36:17-19, Jeremiah 25:7-10}. Therefore, Scripture seems to indicate the 70 year captivity ^{Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10-11} was the result of the law of the Sabbath rest for the land not being observed for 490 years ^{2 Chronicles 36:20-21}.

Gabriel's Interruption of Daniel's Prayer (9:20-23)

The angel Gabriel interrupted Daniel's prayer at "about the time of the evening sacrifice" (Daniel observed the sacrifices even though the temple was destroyed ~70 years earlier). Gabriel told Daniel he had been sent in response to Daniel's prayer, in order to give him "insight and instruction", beginning with the following "message/vision" (prophecy) ^{v.24-27}.

Sacrifices were offered three times each day in the Jewish Temple: the morning sacrifice was at 9 AM (third hour), the mid-day at noon (sixth hour) and the evening at 3 PM (ninth hour).

The fulfillment of the prophecy that follows ^{v.24-27} was God's answer to Daniel's prayer, which was a plea to the LORD for the reconciliation between God & Israel. The following message from Gabriel details God's plan for the restoration of the Israelites - His chosen people.

Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (9:24)

Daniel 9:24 "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy."

"Seventy 'sevens' or 'weeks' ": both these phrases mean seventy sets of seven years

Most scholars agree the 'sevens' equal years ^{Leviticus 25:1-7, 26:27-35, 2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Genesis 29:27-30}.

Years are "decreed": signified the message was from God, through His messenger Gabriel

Decree is "for your people and your holy city": the prophecy focus was on Israel & Jerusalem

Gabriel listed six actions that will be completed within the seventy sevens:

In interpreting these criteria, it is critical to constantly keep in mind the Frame of Reference:

These conditions will be accomplished by the "seventy 'sevens' " for Israel and Jerusalem.

"to finish transgression"

"to bring in everlasting righteousness"

"to put an end to sin"

"to seal up vision and prophecy"

"to atone for wickedness"

"to anoint the most holy"

"to finish transgression": Israel has been on a course of apostasy in their nation's history: from their desert wanderings, through the idolatry of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, continuing with their rejection of the true Messiah, but will end in the Seventieth Week.

"to put an end to sin": Sin is judged with finality at the cross ^{Hebrews 9:24-26}, and Israel's sin will end in the 70th Week, because they will finally recognize Jesus as the Messiah.

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“to atone for wickedness”: The Messiah/Christ furnishes the covering of all sin through full atonement ^{Zechariah 13:1, Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17}, which was accomplished by Jesus on the cross. In the 70th Week, Israel will finally be able to receive the reconciliation Jesus came to bring.

“to bring in everlasting righteousness”: At the end of Israel’s apostasy in the 70th Week, the Glorious Appearing ^{Titus 2:12-14} will begin the righteous reign of Jesus on the throne of David during the Millennial Kingdom ^{Isaiah 9:6-7, Luke 1:30-33} and throughout the eternity in heaven.

“to seal up vision and prophecy”: All prophecies concerning the restoration of the Israelites will be fulfilled through revelation in the 70th week up to the Second Coming ^{Revelation 19:11-16}.

“to anoint the most holy”: May refer to the dedication of the Millennial temple ^{Ezekiel 40-48} following the purification of the Israelites during the Seventieth Week of Daniel.

Note: The first three seem to point to the First Coming and the rest to the Second Coming.

1. The first solid evidence of a time interval between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks:

It is obvious that not all (none?) of the above criteria are completed even today.

Timing of the Sixty-Nine Weeks (9:25)

Daniel 9:25 “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens, and sixty-two ‘sevens’. It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.”

This verse defines the beginning and the end of the first sixty-nine of the seventy weeks.

“there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens’ ”: this period of time was described as having two sections, with lengths of 49 and 434 years. There are three primary explanations for the “seven sevens”: the time to rebuild the city, the time to close the O.T. canon or both. Also, it seems obvious the seven weeks and sixty-two weeks are contiguous from start to end.

“From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem”: this is a critical phrase that designated the beginning (the *terminus ad quo*) of the sixty-nine sevens.

The following were kingly decrees at that time allowing the Israelites returning to Jerusalem:

Decree by Cyrus in 537 B.C. ^{2 Chronicles 36:22-23, Ezra 1:1-4, 6:1-5}

Decree by Darius ^{Ezra 6:6-12}

Decree by Artaxerxes Longimanus in 458 B.C. ^{Ezra 7:11-26}

Decree by Artaxerxes Longimanus in 445 B.C. ^{Nehemiah 2:4-8 *}

The first three decrees gave the right for the Jewish captives to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. The fourth decree* gave permission to rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

Please forward questions/concerns about these notes to ron price, 505-294-4743, ron@hopeinchristnm.com.

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“It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench”: Rebuilding Jerusalem was the prophecy key. Therefore, the fourth decree by Artaxerxes in 445 B.C.* marked the start of this time period. An emphasis was on streets, because Nehemiah described them as being so full of debris that his horse could not even get through ^{Nehemiah 2:12-15}, and Jerusalem could not be great without good streets. The “trench” (or moat or fortification or wall) indicated the need for protection.

“times of trouble”: resistance would occur during the rebuilding of Jerusalem ^{Nehemiah 4,6}

“until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes”: This phrase defined the end (*terminus ad quem*). This prophecy of the end of the sixty-nine weeks was fulfilled when Jesus (“the Anointed One, the ruler”) arranged for himself to be proclaimed The Messiah the King (*Meshiach Nagid*) at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem ^{Luke:19:29-39}, which also fulfilled prophecy ^{Zechariah 9:9}.

The Time Interval (9:26)

Daniel 9:26 “After the sixty-two ‘sevens’, the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.”

This verse describes the events between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth weeks.

2. The second evidence of a time interval between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks:

The existence of this verse between verses 25 and 27 seems to indicate a time break.

“the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing”: the “Anointed One” referred to the Messiah (Hebrew)/Christ (Greek), who was and is, Jesus. The prophecy continued by stating Jesus would be “cut off” (*kārat*), signifying He would be killed, and He “will have nothing” (better: ‘not for himself’) indicating Jesus’ death was for others (substitutionary ^{Romans 5:6-8}).

“The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary”: the main interpretations of the identification of the ruler (prince) in this aspect of the prophecy are:

- The Roman general, Titus Vespasian, attacked, sieged and destroyed Jerusalem (69-70 A.D.); he also had his army totally dismantle the Temple (70 A.D.) (predicted by Jesus ^{Matthew 24:2}). This timeframe fits between the end of the 69th week and the beginning of the 70th week.
- The ultimate fulfillment of this aspect of the prophecy will be what the Antichrist does during the last half of the 70th Week (the Great Tribulation). ^{Revelation 11:2, 13:5-8}

“The end will come like a flood”: The end will occur swiftly/completely. ^{Luke 21:9, Revelation 1:1,3}

“War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed”: The horribleness of the end times was prophesied by Jesus Himself in His Olivet Discourse ^{Matthew 24-25}.

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3. The third solid evidence of a time interval between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks:

The gap in time is apparent from something Jesus did **not** say ^{Luke 4:14-21, Isaiah 61:1-2}.

The Seventieth Week (9:27)

Daniel 9:27 "He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'. In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

This verse explains some of the circumstances which will occur during the seventieth week.

"He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven' ": The "he" is the End Times ruler ^{v.26}; not Titus Vespasian, but the Antichrist ^{1 John 2:18}. The word "many" is an idiom for Israel. The Antichrist will establish a seven year peace agreement with Israel ^{Isaiah 28:15}, but the "peace" will only last half that time. The "covenant" will mark the beginning of the 70th week.

"In the middle of the 'seven' ": literally 3½ years into the 70th week: "times, time and half a time" ^{Daniel 7:25, 12:7, Revelation 12:14}, "42 months" ^{Revelation 11:2, 13:5}, "1260 days" ^{Revelation 11:3, 12:6}.

"he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on them.": The Antichrist will carry out the "end to sacrifice and offering" and the "abomination that causes desolation" ^{Daniel 12:11, 2 Thessalonians 2:4} in the "middle" of the 70th week. There was an historical precedent when Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrated the Most Holy Place in 167 B.C. The "end that is decreed ... on them" refers to the time of the Second Coming ^{Revelation 19:11-16} when the Antichrist (and the False Prophet) will be "thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur" ^{Revelation 19:20} and his followers destroyed in the "great supper of God" ^{Revelation 19:17}.

The desecration of the Temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes ("illustrious") (167 B.C.) led to the Jewish insurrection referred to as the Maccabean Revolt. The rebellion was successful, enabling the Jews to reclaim the Temple and rededicate it in 165 B.C. *Hanukkah* ("dedication") (also called the Feast of Dedication ^{John 10:22} or Lights) celebrates the Temple rededication.

4. The fourth solid evidence of a time interval between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks:

The first sixty-nine weeks ended many years ago, but the last week has not even begun. Therefore, there must be an explanation for the difference between the 490 years prophesied and the more than 2500 years since Gabriel gave the prophecy to Daniel.

5. The final evidences of a time interval between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks:

Allusions in Scripture ^{Isaiah 54:7, Hosea 3:4-5, Micah 5:2-3, Zechariah 9:9-10, Luke 1:31-32, Acts 15:13-18}.