
THE SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY

NOTE: No PowerPoint charts on this one. Go slow and deliberate.

James Smith:

The most important Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament is one given by the angel Gabriel in response to a prayer of Daniel. (Promised Messiah, p. 382).

Kim Riddlebarger:

Take away their interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27, and dispensationalism collapses. (Amillennialism, p. 150).

The prophecy of Dan 9 is amazing and we will try to understand what this passage is saying.

THE SETTING

Let's begin by reviewing some history.

In **605 BC** Nebuchadnezzar came and conquered Jerusalem – taking some away captive:

2 Kings 24:11-14

11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, as his servants were besieging it.

12 Then Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his servants, his princes, and his officers went out to the king of Babylon; and the king of Babylon, in the eighth year of his reign, took him prisoner.

13 And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said.

14 Also **he carried into captivity all Jerusalem**: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, **ten thousand captives**, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land.

Daniel was one of the captives taken at this time. He was about 17 years old (cf. Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, 2:21).

The Babylonian empire was conquered by the Medes and Persians.

Daniel 9:1

1 In **the first year of Darius** the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage **of the Medes**, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans –

This was the year **538 BC**.

Let's do some math:

605 BC (Babylonian captivity began)
-538 BC (1st year of Darius the Mede)

67 yrs. = how long Daniel has been in captivity

Daniel 9:2

2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish **seventy years** in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Jer 25:11 – is where Jeremiah made this prophecy.

So ... as we read this prophecy in Dan 9, we are reading a prophecy written by a very old man. Daniel is about 84 years old.

DANIEL PRAYS

When Daniel read Jeremiah's prophecy, he began to pray.

- The 70 years were coming to an end,
- There was no obvious sign that Jerusalem was about to be restored.

In Dan 9:4-19 Daniel begins praying – confessing his own sins and the sins of his people. He begs God to remember His promises and to bless Jerusalem once again.

The angel Gabriel was sent to respond to Daniel.

- Gabriel said he "*flew swiftly*" (v21)
- Because God gave a command to deliver this message (v23).

When God commands something, the highest angels of heaven get busy and do whatever God commanded. (Let us learn a lesson here from the angels.)

THE PROPHECY

Here is the message Gabriel gave Daniel:

Daniel 9:24-27

24 "Seventy 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.

25 "Know therefore and understand,
That 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;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.

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 destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it shall be with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are
determined.
27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many
for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one
who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is
determined,
Is poured out on the desolate."

If your Bible has footnotes, you will probably see a footnote attached to the word "*weeks*" in v24. The literal translation of "*seventy weeks*" is "***seventy sevens.***" (cf. Center-Column Reference)

Q: "Seventy seven" what?

- **77 days? weeks? months? years? centuries?**

The reader has to supply something to make sense of this. What does this refer to?

- **490 days?** (about 1+ yrs.)
- **490 weeks?** (about 9+ yrs.)
- **490 months?** (about 40+ yrs.)
- **490 years?**

A: Because Daniel had just been reading about **70 yrs. of captivity** (v2), the "seventy sevens" refer to years. Judah has just completed 70 yrs. of captivity. Now they must wait seven times that long before God works out his scheme of redemption (**70 x 7 = 490 years**).

- Westerners think in terms of decades (groups of 10 years).
- The Jews thought in terms of sevens.
- Every 7th year the land was to lie fallow (Ex 23:11).
- Every 7th year slaves were to be freed (Dt 15:12).
- This prophecy is about **the ultimate freedom granted to enslaved men**.

"Seventy weeks are determined" (v24) – God's mind is determined. This WILL happen. The Messiah's mission to the earth is on God's calendar. It's scheduled and nothing will stop it.

"Seventy weeks are determined for your people and your holy city" (v24) – Daniel had been praying for his people and the city of Jerusalem. The true deliverance and blessing will not be occurring as Jeremiah's prophecy comes to an end. The true deliverance of God's people is coming in 490 years.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

We have the time frame. Within 490 years God will bring about true deliverance thru the coming Messiah. But what all will happen?

The first pair of events:

1) "To finish the transgression" (v24).

2) "To make an end of sins" (v24).

These two items go together.

Daniel had been praying about the transgressions and sins of Israel:

Daniel 9:11

11 Yes, all Israel has **transgressed** Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have **sinned** against Him.

Daniel was praying that the sins and transgressions of Israel would be forgiven, but they won't be – because they won't stop.

NOTE: "*The transgression.*" Singular. This refers to the ultimate transgression.

Israel sinned from the very beginning of its history, but the ultimate transgression ("**the transgression**") was when she rejected the Messiah and crucified Him!

Israel will have 490 years to finish their sins against God – the "last straw" being the rejection and crucifixion of the Lord. That final transgression will seal the end of them as a nation.

Matthew 23:32

32 [Jesus said to the leaders of Israel] **Fill up**, then, **the measure** of your fathers' guilt.

1 Thessalonians 2:16

16 [the Jews are] [forbid] us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to **fill up the measure** of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

The days of Israel are numbered. It will take 490 years for God to bring the Messiah into the world and then God will be finished with the nation of Israel. He owes them nothing after that because of their transgressions against Him. (Read Dt 28).

The second pair of events:

3) **"To make reconciliation for iniquity" (v24).**

4) **"To bring in everlasting righteousness" (v24).**

These two items go together.

First: *Reconciliation for iniquity means **the Lord will shed His blood.***

Rather than animal sacrifices which could never take away sins (Heb 10:4), the Messiah would die for the sins of His people.

Hebrews 9:26

26 ... now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Colossians 1:14

14 in whom we have **redemption through His blood**, the forgiveness of sins.

Second: *The righteousness coming from the Lord would be **everlasting righteousness.***

God's people would be able to be righteous continually – not just for a year at a time:

Hebrews 10:3-4

3 But in those sacrifices there is a **reminder of sins every year**.

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

When Messiah comes, God's people will be cleansed permanently.

NOTE: This righteousness is conditioned on each person continuously "**walking in the light**" (1 Jn 1:7).

The third pair of events:

5) **"To seal up vision and prophecy" (v24).**

6) **"To anoint the Most Holy" (v24).**

These two items go together.

First: *To "seal up" a vision / prophecy means to authenticate them.*

Deuteronomy 18:21-22

21 And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' —

22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to

pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

The prophecies and visions of the OT were "sealed" (authenticated) when Messiah came.

Luke 24:44

44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **all things must be fulfilled** which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

Second: *The Most Holy One will be anointed.*

NASV – "to anoint the most holy *place*"

NOTE: The NASV was influenced by dispensationalism to add the word "place." I respectfully disagree with the insertion of the word "*place*" here. This is supplied by the translators – made obvious by italics.

"Messiah"/"Christ" – "*the anointed One*"

This refers to the baptism of the Lord when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him:

John 1:32-34

32 And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.

33 I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

34 And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

Acts 10:38

38 how **God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power**, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

This is when the Messiah was anointed. (cf. Lk 4:18ff; Acts 1:21-22).

Summary

Everything Gabriel revealed to Daniel was fulfilled in the days of the Messiah.

- **Not Jesus' 2nd coming.**
- **But Jesus' 1st coming.**

This prophecy was given to help God's people recognize the Messiah when He comes and be prepared for His NT system.

THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS

Now the countdown begins:

Daniel 9:25

25 "Know therefore and understand,
That 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;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.

"from ... the command to restore and build Jerusalem" – this is the beginning of the countdown. We must find where God gave this command and we will begin counting.

"until Messiah the Prince" – this tells God's people exactly when the Messiah will be anointed to begin His work of redemption.

Verse 24 spoke of **70 X 7 years** (490 years).

Verse 25 breaks these years into three sections.

"There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks" – watch how the 490 years are divided into three groups:

$7 \times 7 \Rightarrow 49$ years

$62 \times 7 \Rightarrow 434$ years

1×7 is left

Let's begin with the first group of years $\Rightarrow 7 \times 7 = 49$ years.

Q: What will happen during these 49 years? \Downarrow

"the street [of Jerusalem] shall be built again, and the wall" – the command to rebuild Jerusalem must include rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

"even in troublesome times" – the city and walls will be built during a time of trouble. It won't be easy.

Ezra is probably the one thru whom God issued the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.

Ezra 6:14

14 So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished it, according to **the commandment of the God of Israel**, and according to the command of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

According to this, the command of God must include the decree of Artaxerxes king of Persia.

The decree from Artaxerxes king of Persia came in **457 BC**.

NOTE: See **Ezra 7:11-28** for the decree. Note the date next to Ezra 7 in the Thomson Chain Reference Bible = **457 BC**

NOTE: If someone should object to the above date, let it be remembered that Ezra 6:14 clearly states that Artaxerxes' command must be included in considering "*the commandment of the God of Israel.*" Hence, the date must include Artaxerxes' reign. James Smith (Promised Messiah, pp. 393-396) states that the command from Artaxerxes was given to Ezra in 457 BC.

During the next 49 years the city and walls would be rebuilt.

Ezra – Nehemiah: The purpose of these books is to show us the command to rebuild Jerusalem and its walls and the troublesome times in which they were built.

"sixty-two weeks" (v25) – after the city is rebuilt, there will be a waiting period of **62 X 7 years (434 years)**.

Doing the math:

457 BC (command to rebuild)
-49 yrs. (troublesome times)
408 BC

408 BC (after rebuilding)
-434 yrs. (waiting for Messiah)
26 AD

JESUS' BAPTISM

Because of an error in calculation, **Jesus was born in 4 BC** during the days of Herod the Great (Mt 2).

Jesus was about **30 yrs. old when baptized.**

Luke 3:21-23

21 When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened.

22 And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

23 Now **Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, ...**

Let's do some more math:

$$\begin{array}{r} 30 \text{ yrs. old (Jesus baptized)} \\ - \underline{4 \text{ BC (Jesus born)}} \\ \hline 26 \text{ AD} \end{array}$$

AD 26 is the end of waiting period which Dan 9:25 spoke of.

The Messiah is anointed and begins His ministry.

THE SEVENTIETH WEEK

There were **70 weeks (490 years)** in the prophecy.

- **7 x 7** (49 yrs.) to rebuild Jerusalem
- **62 x 7** (434 yrs.) to wait till Messiah is anointed
- **1 x 7 left.**

Something significant will occur during this 70th week:

Daniel 9:26

26 "And **after the sixty-two weeks**
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
[stop]

Q: Exactly when will the Messiah be "*cut off*"?

A: We learn the answer in v27 ↓

Daniel 9:27

27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many
for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. ...
[stop]

"after sixty-two weeks ... in the middle of the week" – in the middle of the 70th week the Messiah will be "*cut off, but not for Himself.*" He will be crucified.

Half of seven = 3 ½ (years) after He is anointed.

Let's do math:

$$\begin{array}{r} 26 \text{ AD (Jesus baptized)} \\ - \underline{3 \frac{1}{2} \text{ (half a week)}} \\ 30 \text{ AD} \end{array}$$

Daniel saw when the Lord would be "*cut off*" (crucified).

"Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself" (v26) – Jesus didn't die for Himself. He died for us.

John 15:13

13 Greater love has no one than this, than to **lay down one's life for his friends.**

Romans 5:6-8

6 ... **Christ died for the ungodly.**

8 ... **Christ died for us.**

"He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering" (v27) – the animal sacrifices at the temple were foreshadowing the Lord's own sacrifice. When He died, He brought these sacrifices to an end.

Matthew 27:51

51 Then, behold, **the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom**; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,

Hebrews 8:13

13 In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

The purpose for animal sacrifices ended when Jesus died on the cross.

CONFIRMING THE COVENANT

Daniel 9:27

27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week ...

For 1 week (7 yrs.) Israel will have exclusive privileges of hearing the terms of the New Covenant.

NOTE: Jesus taught the gospel for 3 ½ years and then was "cut off."

Matthew 4:23

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, **preaching the gospel of the kingdom**, ...

But He preached only to Israel at this time:

Matthew 15:24

24 But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to **the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**"

NOTE: For another 3 ½ years the gospel was preached to the Jews.

Acts 11:19

19 Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, **preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.**

Romans 1:16

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, **for the Jew first** and also for the Greek.

So, the covenant was "confirmed" for 1 seven (7 years).

Let's do some math:

$$\begin{array}{r} 26 \text{ AD (Jesus baptized)} \\ - \underline{7 \text{ yrs. (the 70}^{\text{th}} \text{ seven)}} \\ 33 \text{ AD} \end{array}$$

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

Something significant happened at the end of this 70th seven:
Saul of Tarsus was converted.

This was significant.

1) Saul became the last apostle.

1 Corinthians 15:8-10

8 Then **last of all** He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

2) Paul became an apostle to the Gentiles.

Romans 11:13

13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as **I am an apostle to the Gentiles**, I magnify my ministry,

SUMMARY

Daniel saw the conversion of Saul and he saw the special privileges of the Jewish nation ending.

From this time forward, the Jewish nation would no longer be privileged.

- They had been "**chosen**" and special.
- But they were chosen **for service**.
- They were **not chosen for salvation**.

Once they performed that service, God was done with them.

When Israel rejected the Son of God and crucified Him, that was the last straw! God would pour out His fury on that nation and destroy it for what they did to His Son.

Matthew 22:1-9

1 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said:

2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,

3 and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.

4 Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'"

5 But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business.

6 And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them.

7 But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And **he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.**

8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.

9 Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.'

(cf. Mk 12:1-9)

This is exactly what God did.

Daniel saw Jerusalem's destruction.

JERUSALEM'S DESTRUCTION

Daniel 9:26-27

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 destroy the city and the sanctuary. ...

This is what Jesus referred to:

Matthew 22:7

7 ... when the king heard about it, he was furious.
And **he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.**

Daniel 9:26-27

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 destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it shall be with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are
determined.**

27 ... **And on the wing of abominations shall be
one who makes desolate, ...**

The Lord Himself applied this to the destruction of Jerusalem:

Matthew 24:15-22

15 "Therefore when you see **the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet,** standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.

18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

19 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

CONCLUSION

Daniel was given a great prophecy with such detail and accuracy it is astonishing.

- The Most High was anointed.
- He was cut off – not for Himself – in the middle of the seven years.
- Transgression was finished – God would tolerate the Jewish nation no longer.
- Their city was destroyed by the Roman prince – Titus.
- The Messiah confirmed the covenant for 7 years with Israel.
- Then came the conversion of Saul.
- Salvation began to be preached to the Gentiles.
- The Messiah "made an end of sins."
- He "made reconciliation for iniquity."

- He "brought in everlasting righteousness."
- He "sealed up vision and prophecy."

This is the story that says: You better listen to the Messiah and His apostles! They and they alone have the worlds of eternal life (Jn 6:68).

THE SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY

Questions:

- 1) What was written on God's calendar?
- 2) What was supposed to occur every seven years in Israel?
- 3) How are visions and prophecy "sealed up"?
- 4) At what point does the countdown begin for Daniel's prophecy?
- 5) What was the purpose of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah?
- 6) What year was Jesus born?
- 7) What year was Saul baptized?
- 8) What happened after Saul's conversion?