

The Prophecy of Seventy “Weeks”

(Daniel 9:24-27 NASB) “Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the wrongdoing, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for guilt, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy Place. 25 So you are to know and understand 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 streets and moat, even in times of distress. 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. 27 And he will confirm a 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 the one who makes desolate, until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, gushes forth on the one who makes desolate.”

I. Understanding the Context of this Prophecy

- a. The prophecy of seventy weeks is one of the most (if not the most) important and consequential end time prophecies in the entire Old Testament and there is much debate related to the interpretation of certain parts of it regarding if it was fulfilled in 70 A.D. or if it has yet to be fulfilled. Our interpretation of the 150 end time chapters greatly hinges on how interpret ***Daniel 9:24-27***.
- b. ***Daniel 9*** begins with him committing to a season of fasting, prayer, and studying the prophecies of Jeremiah related to the 70 years of exile. While he was in intercession for the Jewish people, Gabriel appeared to Daniel to explain an even bigger picture related to the redemption of Jerusalem (The Prophecy of 70 weeks).

(Daniel 9:2-3, 23 NASB) “In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. 3 So I gave my attention to the Lord God, to seek Him by prayer and pleading, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes... 23 While I was still speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the Lord my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, 21 while I was still speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. 22 And he instructed me and talked with me and said, “Daniel, I have come now to give you insight with understanding. 23 At the beginning of your pleas the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, because you are highly esteemed; so pay attention to the message and gain understanding of the vision.”

- c. It’s imperative that we understand, Daniel received this significant revelation not because he was asking God for “end time revelation”, but because He committed his heart to fast and pray for his people, and because of his partnership with God through intercession, God revealed even more than Daniel was expecting. The main point here is that there is a unique undeniable connection between a lifestyle of fasting and prayer and end time revelation.

II. 70 Weeks – 490 Years

(Daniel 9:24a NASB) “Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city”

- a. The term used for “weeks” is the Hebrew word “*shavu'im*”, which essentially means “a unit of 7”, or specifically here, seventy “sevens”. When we look at the context of the passage we can understand Gabriel is using “*Shavu'im*” to refer to units of seven literal years. 70 multiplied by “units of 7 years” equals 490 years. Basically, Gabriel begins this revelation by saying it is concerning a period of 490 years.

- i. It was common practice in Jewish culture to refer to periods of 7 years “*weeks* or *Shavu'im*”, similar to how we tend to count things in decades (units of 10). **Genesis 29:27-28** uses the same language to speak about a period of 7 years.

(Genesis 29:26-28 NASB) “*But Laban said, “It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn. 27 Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me, for another seven years.” 28 Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.”*

- b. While Daniel was praying about the 70 years of captivity (**Daniel 9:2**), God sent Gabriel to speak to him about a period of 70 weeks, or 490 literal years and tied literal events to this period (**vv. 25-27**). These 490 years are not symbolic of anything, they are literal.

III. 6 Purposes of the 70 Weeks for Jerusalem

- a. A major point to understand about the “70 weeks” is that they are centered around Jerusalem and the Jewish people. We can’t develop our understanding about the 70 weeks and an end time theology apart from Israel and Jerusalem being the centerpiece.

(Daniel 9:24 NASB) “*Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people [Daniel’s people] and your holy city [Jerusalem]...”*

- b. Gabriel begins the message by telling Daniel that there’s 6 purposes for the 70 weeks (**Daniel 9:24**), they are:
 - i. To finish the wrongdoing
 - ii. To make an end of sin
 - iii. To make atonement for guilt
 - iv. To bring in everlasting righteousness
 - v. To seal up vision and prophecy
 - vi. To anoint the Most Holy Place
- c. All 6 of these purposes are positive and are redemptive or salvific and ultimately point to the future redemption of Jerusalem. *It’s important to remember that all 6 of these purposes have been provided for by the blood of Jesus, but have not been actualized in Israel.* Each of these purposes will be actualized only after Israel has repented after being broken by the Antichrist Empire. These redemptive purposes are fundamentally connected to the “crushing” of Israel.

(Jeremiah 30:5-7 NASB) “*I have heard a sound of terror, of fear, and there is no peace. 6 Ask now, and see If a male can give birth. Why do I see every man with his hands on his waist, as a woman in childbirth? And why have all faces turned pale? 7 Woe, for that day is great, there is none like it; And it is the time of Jacob’s distress, yet he will be saved from it.”*

- i. If we remember the context of Daniel’s initial prayer (70 years of captivity), it puts into perspective God’s pattern of using difficult situations such as tribulation, to bring about redemption in His people. We must take into account God’s promise to Israel in **Jeremiah 29**, and see here in **Daniel 9**, His promise yet again to restore His people using judgment.

(Jeremiah 29:10-14 NASB) “*For this is what the Lord says: ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans that I have*

for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for prosperity and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 I will let Myself be found by you,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.’”

IV. The Messianic Aspect to the Prophecy of 70 Weeks

(Daniel 9:25-26 NASB) “So you are to know and understand 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 streets and moat, even in times of distress. 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.”

- a. The first part of this prophecy states that from “*the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem*” there would be 7 weeks (49 years) and 62 weeks (434 years) equaling 483 years until “Messiah the Prince”. After the 62 weeks the Messiah would be cut off (killed) and have nothing. This is powerful because the Jewish people, if they were leaning in, could have counted down the days to the emergence of Jesus the Messiah and the season of His crucifixion.
- b. There’s a few different decrees in scripture to rebuild the temple, but the only decree recorded to “rebuild the city” is in *Nehemiah 2:1-8,17-18* by Artaxerxes in 444 BC. If we count the prophesied days from the issuing of that decree, after 483 years, it lands exactly on the day that Jesus entered Jerusalem at the “*triumphal entry*”. The precision of this prophetic fulfillment can give confidence about the literal and precise fulfillment of the rest of this prophecy.
- c. *Verse 26* tells us that after the “*cutting off of the Messiah*” the city and the sanctuary (The temple) would be destroyed (which happened in 70 A.D.). The prophecy even tells us who would destroy the temple, the “*people (ethnic denotation) of the prince who is to come (the Antichrist)*”, followed by a season of flood, war, and desolations. It’s at this point in the prophecy, that there’s a shift and it begins to emphasize the end of the age.
- d. The coming of the son of Man and his “*cutting off*” marks the end of the first 69 weeks, leaving only one week (7 years left). The 70th week has not yet been fulfilled, there has been a “2,000+ year prophetic pause”. After the 69 weeks, Gabriel told Daniel there would be a season of flood, war, and desolations (the 2,000+ year gap).

V. The 70th Week

(Daniel 9:27 NASB) “And he [“the prince who is to come” the Antichrist] will confirm a 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 the one who makes desolate, until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, gushes forth on the one who makes desolate.”

- a. The 70th week will be the final 7 years of this age, before Christ returns. What initiates this final 7 years is when the Antichrist “*confirms a covenant with the many for one week (7 years)*”. The word used for “confirm” means to strengthen or affirm. This “*covenant*” will likely be instrumental in the Jewish people being allowed to make sacrifices (the Antichrist will “affirm” Israel’s covenant with God). It will be a covenant with “*many*”, which means it will likely include many of the nations surrounding Israel.

(Isaiah 28:14-16, 18 NASB) “Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, you scoffers, Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, 15 Because you have said, “We have made a covenant with death, And with Sheol we have made a pact. The gushing flood will not reach us when it passes by, Because we have made falsehood our refuge and we have

concealed ourselves with deception.” 16 Therefore this is what the Lord God says: “Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, a tested stone, A precious cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. The one who believes in it will not be disturbed. 18 Your covenant with death will be canceled, And your pact with Sheol will not stand; When the gushing flood passes through, Then you will become its trampling ground.”

(Isaiah 10:20 NASB) “Now on that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will no longer rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel.”

(1 Thessalonians 5:3 NASB) “While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction will come upon them like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.”

- b. In the middle of the week (3 ½ Years) The Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jewish people and put an end to the temple sacrifices, and institute the “*abomination of desolation*”. The abomination of desolation will be characterized by the Antichrist both desecrating the temple and desolating the temple.

(Daniel 8:13 NASB) “Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that particular one who was speaking, “How long will the vision about the regular sacrifice apply, while the offense causes horror, so as to allow both the sanctuary and the army to be trampled?”

(Daniel 11:31 NASB) “Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation.”

(Daniel 12:11 NASB) “And from the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.”

(Matthew 24:15 NASB) “Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place let the reader understand”

(2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 NASB) “No one is to deceive you in any way! For it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.”

- i. The second half of the week (3 ½ years) is what we call “*The Great Tribulation*” (*Matthew 24:21*). It is repeatedly described throughout scripture in various ways: “*forty-two months*” in *Revelation 11:2, 13:5*, “*1260 days*” in *Revelation 11:3*, “*One thousand, two hundred and sixty days*” in *Revelation 12:6*, and “*A time, times, and half a time*” in *Daniel 12:7*.
- c. God’s intended purpose for revealing these truths about the last days is to ensure that praying church is informed and prepared in order to participate. The major sign events within *Daniel 9:27* are meant to be clear and obvious signs that alert and encourage the praying church that the hour of His return is near.

(Matthew 24:32-33 NASB) “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: as soon as its branch has become tender and sprouts its leaves, you know that summer is near; 33 so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.”

(1 Thessalonians 5:1-8 NASB) “Now as to the periods and times, brothers and sisters, you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord is coming just like a thief in the night. 3 While they are saying, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction will come upon them like labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, so that the day would overtake you like a thief; 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; 6 so then, let’s not sleep as others do, but let’s be alert and sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who are drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we are of the day, let’s be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.”