

Daniel's 70 Week Prophecy

Text: Daniel 9:20-27

Introduction:

1. In Daniel 9 we have a prayer (Vs. 1-19) and a prophecy (Vs. 20-27). Daniel receives a speedy answer to his fervent prayer (Vs. 20-23) as Gabriel outlines to Daniel the 70-week prophecy. This prophecy of Daniel 9 is one of the most foundational and important prophecies in the Word of God. Some have referred to it as “the backbone of Bible prophecy”.
2. Daniel 9 powerfully demonstrates the inspiration of Scripture. Denis Lyle notes, “Some scholars consider (Dan 9:20-27) the single greatest defence of the divine inspiration of the Bible, for it precisely states when the Messiah would come to earth. Sir Isaac Newton, who wrote a discourse on the topic, said we could stake the truth of Christianity on that prophecy alone, made five centuries before the Lord Jesus Christ.”
3. David Cloud writes, “The seventy weeks prophecy gives the exact timeline from the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Babylonian Captivity to Christ’s first coming. And it gives the major events of the seven-year Tribulation that precede Christ’s second coming...In a nutshell, the 70 weeks describes the finishing up of God’s business with Israel: her judgment and restoration.”
4. We will study this great prophecy in 4 parts:

I. The Period of the 70 Weeks (Vs. 24a)

A. The Definition – “seventy weeks”

1. The Hebrew term for ‘week’s means ‘sevens’. It is similar to our term ‘dozen’. It can be used in a variety of contexts. The context of the Bible passage will reveal whether it refers to a week of days or a week of years.
2. Strauss: “A heptad (seven) is used to designate a collection of seven things, just as we would use the word ‘dozen’ to designate a collection of twelve things. However, the word ‘dozen’ does not stand alone. If I enter a food store and ask the clerk for a dozen, he would reply, “a dozen of what?” Do I want a dozen eggs, a dozen doughnuts, or a dozen something else...Here then are seventy sevens, but seventy sevens of what? It is clear in the context that the prophecy is dealing with time. But time is made up of units of varied duration. Are these seventy sevens of seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, or years? I am led to the conclusion that the seventy sevens in Daniel 9:24-27 have to do with years.”
3. Illustration: Jacob serves 7 years for Rachel (Gen. 29:14-30) Note particularly Vs. 18, 20, 27, 28 & 30.
4. The context reveals Daniel has years in mind (Vs. 2)

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5. The weeks that have already been fulfilled show plainly that these are weeks of years, not days.
6. So, 70×7 years = 490 years of prophetic history outlining God's Divine program for the people of Israel.

B. The Determination – “are determined”

1. Remember overarching theme of Daniel? God reigns, He is on the throne!
2. These 490 prophetic years will surely come to pass. They are sovereignly determined by the Almighty, Sovereign God.

II. The People of the 70 Weeks (Vs. 24b)

A. Jews – “thy people”

1. To try and include the church into this prophecy results in confusion. God is NOT dealing with the church in this prophecy but the nation of Israel.
2. The Gentiles are not the primary focus either.
3. This provides a strong argument against the pre-wrath, mid-trib or post-trib rapture theories. To inject the church into the 70th week of Daniel is confusion. God is dealing with Israel and the ungodly during this time to bring her to repentance, not the church! (See Rev. 3:10)

B. Jerusalem – “thy holy city”

1. Jerusalem the focal point of this prophecy.
2. Jerusalem is already becoming the focus of world attention which is setting the stage for Antichrist's treaty with Israel.

III. The Purpose of the 70 Weeks (Vs. 24c)

Six purposes of the 70-week prophecy are outlined all introduced by the word 'to'. We could summarize them under 2 headings:

A. The Removal of Sin

1. “to finish the transgression” = refers to the completion of Israel's transgression against God (Cloud).
2. “to make an end of sins” = “Israel's course of apostasy and rebellion will be brought to an end.” (Sargent)
3. “to make reconciliation for iniquity” = the word 'reconciliation' is the Hebrew word for 'atonement'. Provision made at the cross but Israel's national conversion still future (Rom. 11:25).

B. The Restoration of Righteousness

1. “to bring in everlasting righteousness” = the establishment of Christ's eternal, righteous kingdom.
2. “to seal up the vision and prophecy” = all Messianic prophecies will be fulfilled. All vision and prophecy will be fulfilled at the end of this 490 years of prophetic history

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3. “to anoint the most Holy” = reference to the Millennial Temple that will be anointed with Christ’s own presence (Ez. 40-48).

IV. The Past Phase of the 70 Weeks (Vs. 25)

A. The Edict to Commence the 70 Weeks (Vs. 25a)

1. The command to “restore and to build Jerusalem” would be the event that set the prophetic clock ticking until 69 weeks (483 years) were complete.
2. Decree of Cyrus to rebuild the temple was in 536 B.C. but wouldn’t qualify since it does not include the rebuilding of the wall and the city.
3. This was the decree of Artaxerxes in 445 B.C. and is found in Nehemiah 2:1-8

B. The Eras that Completed 69 Weeks (Vs. 25b)

1. The **7-week** period (49 years) – Jerusalem Rebuilt
 - a. Walls rebuilt under Nehemiah quickly in just 52 days (Neh. 6:15) but city of Jerusalem took a lot longer to rebuild. The times are described as ‘troublous’ (See Neh. 4-6)
 - b. These 49 years (7 weeks) cover the time from the decree in 445 B.C. to the close of Hebrew prophecy and the O.T. canon in Malachi. (Sargent)
2. The **62-week** period (434 years) – Messiah the Prince
 - a. Add to the previous 49 years and you have 483 prophetic years.
 - b. Sir Robert Anderson’s Calculation: Sir Robert Anderson was a lawyer, investigator with Scotland Yard and a serious Bible student. He concluded that the commandment was given March 14, 445 B.C. and Christ entered Jerusalem on the donkey April 6, 32 A.D. He documented this position in his 1895 book *The Coming Prince*.
 - c. John Phillips summarizes this position as follows: “Probably the most convincing attempt to calculate the countdown from the signing of the decree to the death of Christ is that of Sir Robert Anderson. He put the edict for the rebuilding of the city as the first of Nisan, 445 B.C. From that date to Messiah the Prince was to be 69 x 7 of years = 483 years. The Hebrews used a 360-day calendar, so 483 years x 360 days = 173,880 days. Sir Robert’s calculations show that from the tenth of Nisan, 445 B.C., to the end of the 173,880 days brings us to the tenth of Nisan in the eighteenth year of Tiberius, the day when the Lord made His public Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem and presented Himself to the nation as “Messiah the Prince.” Sir Robert Anderson contends that this prophecy of Daniel was fulfilled to the very day.”

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- d. Perhaps this is why our Lord made this statement on Palm Sunday: Luke 19:42 Jesus said, “...*If thou hadst known, even thou, at least **in this thy day**, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*” (See also Matt. 21:4-5) That was the most important day for the Jewish people and they missed it!!!
- e. Zechariah 9:9 “*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: **behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.***”

V. The Pause in the 70 Weeks (Vs. 26)

There is a gap/pause in the prophecy with a number of events taking place in between the 69th and 70th week. Sometimes there are gaps in Bible prophecy. Compare Isaiah 61:1-2 and Luke 4:16-21

A. Messiah is Cut Off (Vs. 26a)

1. “cut off” = speaks of Messiah’s violent death on the cross. He was cut off from man, life and from God the Father. Here we have the cross (Gospel) in the Book of Daniel!
2. “not for himself” = Messiah did not die on account of his own sins. He was sinless and His death was on behalf of others (sinners). “*Christ died **for our sins**...*” (1 Cor. 15:3).
3. Christ was presented as Israel’s Messiah and King but was rejected and crucified. This stopped the prophetic clock as Israel was temporarily set aside.
4. The church age is in this interlude between the 69th and 70th week. Romans 11:25 “*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, **until** the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.*”

B. Jerusalem is Conquered (Vs. 26b)

1. The city and the sanctuary (temple) destroyed. This took place under the Roman general Titus in A.D. 70
2. Note! The future prince is Roman. He is the little horn of the revived Roman Empire described in Daniel 7:7-8.

C. Wars will Continue (Vs. 26c)

1. There are wars and desolations until the end (See Matt. 24:6-14).
2. This is a perfect description of Israel’s history since Christ “cut off”.

VI. The Prospective Phase of the 70 Weeks (Vs. 27)

A. The Agreement with Antichrist (Vs. 27a)

1. “he shall confirm the covenant with many” = a false peace covenant made with Israel at the start of the 70th week by Antichrist

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2. Antichrist is depicted as a man of peace in Revelation 6:2 – *“And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.”*
3. It is likely that the rebuilding of the temple and peace with the Arab nations will be a feature of this treaty. The 3rd temple is obviously re-built as we have reference to the “sacrifice and oblation”.
4. The Jews believe that whoever builds the temple and brings peace is the Messiah. They are crying out for peace and for the rebuilding of the 3rd temple! The temple will be rebuilt but it won't be Christ's temple, it will be the temple of Antichrist.

B. The Abomination of Antichrist (Vs. 27b)

1. Half way through the 7-year period (3.5 years), Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel and desecrates the temple, setting himself up as God.
2. *“When ye therefore shall see **the abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) ... For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be”* (Matthew 24:14, 21). Jesus interpreted Daniel's prophecy literally!
3. *“... that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God”* (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

Conclusion:

1. The first 69 weeks (483) years of prophecy have been fulfilled exactly as the Word of God predicted. The final 7 years still future, will also be fulfilled in exact detail.
2. The next event on the calendar for the church is the rapture which will take place before this 7-year tribulation period.
3. If Jesus Christ came to snatch away His bride (church) today, would you be caught up or left behind? Where will you spend eternity?