

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel Nine

Scripture texts are from the King James Bible

Introduction

Every student of the Bible who has any interest at all in prophecy has spent time trying to understand the 70 weeks of Daniel 9. Somehow we all sense that these verses have great significance in regard to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In understanding God's teachings in any part of the Bible, we know we have not arrived at a satisfactory conclusion until every phrase of the passage in question can be understood. In other words, while it may be readily possible to find a solution that aligns with a few of the key phrases in a passage, we can know that our conclusion is still possibly unsatisfactory if it does not harmonize with all the phrases of the passage.

Moreover, a further test must be applied. Our conclusion must harmonize with the other teachings of the Bible that relate in any way to the passage in question.

In this study we will suggest a solution to the 70 weeks which we believe meets the above criteria. Every phrase in these verses finds its logical place within this solution. The solution as a whole agrees with everything else the Bible offers insofar as the nature of God's salvation program is concerned, including the coming of Christ.

We trust that you will read this booklet thoughtfully and prayerfully. Because it is the work of man and therefore is not infallible, there may be corrections which can be made to make it a more accurate study.

Seventy weeks

One of the most intriguing passages in the Bible is that of Daniel 9:24-27. In this fascinating passage, God presents to us a vision that He had given to Daniel, in which He declares that certain events would take place during a period of 70 weeks. Scholars have worked long and hard to discover the import of these verses because they seem to offer a timetable concerning the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A most serious problem in interpreting this passage is to discover the meaning of the words of **Daniel 9:25:**

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

The event of the setting forth of the commandment to build Jerusalem appears to be the beginning of the 70 weeks or sevens. (The Hebrew word translated "week" also can be translated "seven.") In order to obtain any light from the rest of the passage it does appear that we must determine when this commandment was given.

Most Bible students, theologians, and writers of commentaries understand the language of restoring and building Jerusalem to refer to a physical rebuilding of the literal city of Jerusalem. However, as we shall see, this kind of understanding is not required by the Bible, nor is it possible to find a solution to the 70 weeks by this means. We shall discover that the key to the 70 weeks is to understand that the Bible frequently uses Jerusalem as a figure or type of Christ's body of believers. The command to restore and to rebuild, therefore, will be found to mean that the Word of God was proclaimed so that believers could come into the Kingdom of God. We shall develop this as we work out this study.

Is Nehemiah a Candidate?

One of the most commonly accepted beginning points for the 70 weeks is the year 445 B.C., when Nehemiah, who was the cupbearer for the Persian King Artaxerxes, asked the king for permission to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. In a period of 52 days, he did indeed rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah, however, is not a possible answer to our question of when the 70 sevens began. First of all, while King Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah permission to build the walls, he did not command the rebuilding of the walls. Moreover, nowhere do we read that God gave such a command either to the Persian king or to Nehemiah. Therefore, Nehemiah cannot be related to Daniel 9:25, where God states that a command was given. Furthermore, no matter how we try, we cannot go through the 70 sevens from a time standpoint and arrive at anything that properly relates to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is one solution, beginning with Nehemiah, that has been suggested; namely, that we take all the days between 445 B.C. and A.D. 32, assuming 365½ days in a year, and then divide this product by 360 days. By following this computation, we get exactly 69 sevens, or 483 years of 360 days, from 445 B.C. to A.D. 32. One can read about this in almost any study on the 70 weeks of Daniel 9.

While this solution may seem interesting and intriguing, it does not appear at all valid. There is no place

in the Bible where this kind of computation, wherein time is first calculated on the basis of 365- days in a year and then divided by 360 days, is utilized. Therefore, we have no Biblical authority for it.

Christ was Crucified in A.D. 33

Moreover, Christ was not crucified in A.D. 32. We know from the Bible that He was crucified in A.D. 33. In [Luke 3:1](#), as God describes the preaching of John the Baptist at the time Jesus was baptized, we read:

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene . . .

This piece of information gives us an historical time clue. We know from very accurate secular records that Tiberius Caesar began to reign alone in the year A.D. 14. His fifteenth year, therefore, was A.D. 29. We also know from carefully reading the Gospel of John, that Jesus actually preached for about 3« years. Since He was crucified at the Passover, which was observed in the spring of the year, His baptism would have been in the fall of a previous year. Thus, 3« years following A.D. 29 brings us to A.D. 33, when He was crucified.

Furthermore, because of the moon phases which governed the timing of the Jewish feasts, the year A.D. 32 could not possibly have been the year He was crucified. The timing of the Passover Feast was related to the full moon. Only A.D. 30 or A.D. 33 were possible years that would agree with the timing of the Passover observed at the time Jesus was crucified. (See paragraph 459, page 296, "Handbook of Biblical Chronology," by Jack Finegan, Princeton University Press, 1964.) Therefore, the Biblical evidence appears to point to the year A.D. 33 as the year that Christ was crucified. When we understand the 70 sevens of Daniel 9, we will see that it also shows us that A.D. 33 was the year of His crucifixion.

For all of the foregoing reasons, therefore, we must reject Nehemiah's activity in Jerusalem as being a solution to our problem.

Is King Cyrus a Possibility?

A second solution has been suggested by some. While it appears to be attractive in some ways, it, too, will not meet all the criteria demanded by Daniel 9. This solution involves a predecessor of Artaxerxes, a king named Cyrus, who defeated Babylon in 539 B.C. We read about him in [II Chronicles 36:22-23](#):

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.

Indeed, in 537 B.C., about 50,000 Israelites who had been captives in the land of Persia, as a result of the command given by God to Cyrus to rebuild His house in Jerusalem, did return to Jerusalem; and they did lay the foundation of the temple.

Significantly, this activity of Cyrus was predicted almost 200 years earlier by Isaiah, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, when he declared in [Isaiah 44:28](#):

That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

Thus, we see that Cyrus meets two qualifications demanded by Daniel 9:25, namely, that the command was of the Lord and that the command concerned itself with the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, there is one fatal flaw to his candidacy being considered the beginning of the 70 weeks. There is no possible way to relate the year 537 B.C., on a 70-week basis, to the Lord Jesus, who was baptized in the year A.D. 29 and crucified in the year A.D. 33. Thus, Cyrus, as well as Nehemiah, must be reluctantly set aside as a solution to Daniel 9:24-27.

Ezra Returns to Jerusalem

Now we must consider a third possibility, which, we shall see, meets all the requirements of Daniel 9. This solution relates to the return of Ezra to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. This was the year 458 B.C., at which time Ezra returned to Jerusalem to reestablish the law. While preaching the Word of God or teaching the law of God seem quite unrelated to building a city, we will see that the Bible does show us an intimate relationship between these two activities. Therefore, we will examine the Scriptures and show that a command to reestablish the law was indeed equivalent to a command to build Jerusalem.

Let us look at Cyrus again. As we study the language concerning him, we will begin to see the close relationship that exists between the physical building of Jerusalem and the sending forth of the Gospel. While he was commanded to build Jerusalem and lay the foundation of the temple, the prophecy of Isaiah 44:28 quoted above speaks of Cyrus as God's shepherd. King Cyrus was not a shepherd. He was a king. When the Bible speaks of a shepherd, we immediately think of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the Good Shepherd.

While God uses the name Cyrus in Isaiah 44 and 45, and while in a physical sense the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Cyrus was fulfilled when the foundation of the temple was laid about 537 B.C., in another sense the language is pointing altogether to the Lord Jesus Christ. God uses Cyrus as a type or figure of Christ. Even as Cyrus, the king of the Persians, destroyed Babylon in 539 B.C., so Christ,

typified by Cyrus, destroyed the kingdom of Satan by going to the cross. We know, of course, from passages such as Revelation 18, that the kingdom of Satan is typified by Babylon.

Cyrus was commanded by God to build a literal house of God, and Christ was commanded by God to build a spiritual house. The temple and the city that Christ came to build is His body. This can be seen in [Isaiah 45:13](#), where God, in speaking of Cyrus, declares:

I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.

He goes on in verse 17:

Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.

Thus, God is equating the building of a city with salvation, which is everlasting. Therefore, when God speaks in the Book of Isaiah about Cyrus building a city and a temple, in its spiritual fulfillment, God has in mind the Lord Jesus Christ, who builds Christ's body.

[The Body of Christ: A Temple and A City](#)

The concept that the temple of God and Jerusalem are figures of the body of Christ is amply seen in the Bible. For example, God speaks of Israel and the fact that peoples from the world will come to build its walls, and says in [Isaiah 60:14](#): "they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel."

In [Isaiah 62:12](#), we read: "And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken."

In both of these passages, God equates Israel with a city. In the New Testament, we see the same truth as God uses the word Jerusalem. In Revelation 21, God presents the picture of the bride of Christ coming down out of heaven. The bride is called the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. The bride of Christ is a people, the people who are the body of Christ. The bride cannot be a physical city, and yet it is portrayed in Revelation 21 as a city with foundations, gates, and a wall.

In the New Testament, God speaks about building walls and building the ruins and doing so in the context of sending forth the Gospel. For example, Acts 15 gives an account of the leaders of the New Testament church puzzling about and wondering what to do with the Gentiles who were coming into the body of Christ, so they held a council in Jerusalem to discuss the problem. Finally, James stood up to speak about the phenomenon of the Gentiles coming in. He said in verses 15-17:

And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

James saw that the inclusion of Gentiles in the body of Christ was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies about the rebuilding of the walls and the ruins of Jerusalem. In other words, bringing the Gospel is an effort to build the city of Jerusalem.

The same figure is used in Ephesians 2, which speaks of the believers as building blocks in the temple of God. We are not a physical temple, of course, but we read about the body of Christ in [Ephesians 2:20-22](#):

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

God also speaks of believers as lively stones in the house of God in [1 Peter 2:4](#).

In the Bible, God distinctly uses the figures of Jerusalem and the temple to refer to the body of believers. I believe that this is the clue with which we can break open, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the 70 sevens of Daniel 9. This is the key to the correct solution of these 70 weeks.

Unfortunately, most theologians get tangled up looking for a command to rebuild a literal city. So often, in relation to salvation and in relation to God's salvation program, we keep our eyes on this sin-cursed world, and we never look beyond. We never look at the true nature of salvation. Salvation is concerned with something far more precious and exciting than this sin-cursed world. Salvation has to do with the people of God; salvation is eternal in character. When we understand that Daniel 9:25, where God speaks about rebuilding Jerusalem, relates to bringing the Gospel, then the 70 sevens can be understood in every detail.

[Ezra's Bringing the Law Equals Building the City](#)

Returning to Ezra, you will recall that in the year 458 B.C., Ezra was commanded by King Artaxerxes to reestablish the law in Jerusalem. We read of Artaxerxes in [Ezra 7:12-13](#):

Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time. I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.

[Ezra 7:23](#): Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?

[Ezra 7:10](#) tells us: "For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."

To reestablish the law is the equivalent of bringing the Gospel, and bringing the Gospel is the equivalent

of building the city, as we have just seen. Therefore, God, through the king, had effectively given a command to Ezra to rebuild the city. This command agrees with the statement of Daniel 9:25, which places the beginning of the 70 weeks at the time when the command was given to rebuild the city. Therefore, we are on very safe Biblical ground to begin the 70 weeks at the year 458 B.C., when Ezra was given the command to reestablish the law in Jerusalem.

In fact, Ezra, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, relates the teaching of the law to a literal building activity. Ezra 7:10 indicates that Ezra, the priest of God, was first concerned with teaching the law of God, but in Ezra 9:9, in a prayer concerning the command of God through King Artaxerxes, Ezra uses language that relates to normal building activity.

Ezra 9:9: For we were bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.

From this verse, we see that God's command to King Artaxerxes to send Ezra to reestablish the law, in the year 458 B.C., meets all the requirements of Daniel 9:25, where it speaks of a command going forth to restore and build Jerusalem.

We read in Daniel 9:24:

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

We have learned that the holy city actually refers to the people of God, but to what do the other phrases in this verse refer, and when do they find fulfillment?

An Exact Path is Found to Satisfy Daniel 9:24

By answering the question as to when the phrases of Daniel 9:24 find fulfillment, we will also discover to what they refer. When did God finish the transgression on behalf of those who are being saved? When did He make an end of our sins? When did He make reconciliation for iniquity?

Immediately you might say, "Why, it was at the cross, of course. Christ hung on the cross to pay for our sins. This verse is speaking of the cross." Yes, indeed, this verse is pointing to the cross. At the cross, Christ did make reconciliation for iniquity. He did make an end of our sins. He did undergo the judgment of God in order that we might be saved.

Does the timing of the crucifixion of Christ in A.D. 33 relate to 458 B.C.? Indeed it does! From 458 B.C., when Ezra was mandated by King Artaxerxes I, to go to Jerusalem to reestablish the law (that is, to bring the Gospel or to build the spiritual city), to A.D. 33, when Christ hung on the cross to make atonement for sins, is precisely 490 years. Let us see how this computation works out.

In going from the Old Testament to the New Testament, we must add the Old Testament years to the New Testament years. From this sum, we must subtract 1 to get the actual number of years between the two events, one of which took place in the Old Testament and the other in the New Testament, because there is no year 0.

Ezra to the Cross Equals Seventy Weeks

Ezra went to Jerusalem to build a city, that is, to reestablish the law, in the year 458 B.C. Christ hung on the cross in A.D. 33. If we add 458 to 33, the sum is 491. Subtract 1 from 491, and we have 490 actual years from the going forth of the command to rebuild the city to the time of the cross when Christ brought in everlasting righteousness, when He made reconciliation for iniquity, when He finished the transgression. God put His seal on the vision and prophecy at the cross. And 490 years equals 70 weeks; that is, $70 \times 7 = 490$. Immediately we see the precise fulfillment of Daniel 9:24-25.

The phrase "seal up [or seal] the vision and prophecy [or prophet]" can be understood to mean that when Christ hung on the cross, God put His seal on the whole program of salvation and upon Christ as the Savior. It was the official declaration that God's salvation program was absolutely certain. The phrase "anoint the most Holy" points to the cross, at which time Christ established His Kingship. The "most Holy" identifies with the "holy of holies." Inasmuch as Christ is the sanctuary (John 2:19: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"), He is the one who is anointed in the sense that He is officially our King, as well as Everlasting Prophet and High Priest.

Four hundred and ninety years equal 70 sevens, as called for in Daniel 9:24. Therefore, we see a direct path from 458 B.C., when Ezra was commanded to reestablish the law, that is, to rebuild the city, until Christ hung on the cross. Thus, we have discovered one certain solution to the 70 weeks of Daniel 9.

That is only part of the prophecy, and in the next chapter, we will see that God has laid out another path which also goes from the time of the command to Ezra to reestablish the law to the time of the coming of Christ. We will see that the other path in Daniel 9 brings us to the end of time, when Christ comes again.

I want to leave this thought with you in regards to reconciliation for iniquity: What about your sins? Have your sins been paid for? Have you repented of your sins and abandoned yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ, so that you know the good news of the Gospel refers to you, too? There are very important questions. As we continue our study together, if you are not already saved, may it be that you will truly place your trust in Him.

Thus far in our study of Daniel 9:24-27, we have learned that the key that unlocks the mystery of the 70 weeks is to remember that the command to restore and build Jerusalem signified the reestablishing of the law in Jerusalem. To put it in New Testament language, it has to do with the sending forth of the

Gospel. Whenever we present the Gospel of the Lord Jesus and witness to someone, we are temple builders; we are city builders, building the city of God. Therefore, we should not be surprised to find in Revelation 21 that the whole body of Christ is pictured as the Holy City, the New Jerusalem.

We have learned that Daniel 9:24 can be understood if we realize that the beginning of the time referred to in this verse relates to Ezra, a priest of God, who had been mandated by the Persian King Artaxerxes I, in the year 458 B.C., to reestablish the law in Jerusalem. Exactly 70 weeks of years later, that is, 70 times seven or 490 years later, in the year A.D. 33, Christ hung on the cross. On the cross, Christ finished the transgressions, that is, He paid for the sins of all who believe on Him. He made reconciliation for iniquity, and He brought in everlasting righteousness. Only because He went to the cross can we have everlasting life. Only because Christ went to the cross can we be covered by Christ's righteousness so that our sins no longer can be held against us.

A Second Path to Christ

In verses 25-27, we will see that another path leads to Christ. This path does not lead to Christ hanging on the cross, but it leads to Christ coming in judgment at the end of time. This path begins at the same point as the first path, that is, 458 B.C., when the command was given to reestablish the law. This path is more complicated, because it is impossible to chart two events which are separated by almost 2,000 years by following a path that deals only with 70 sevens of years. There must be something more mysterious about this second path.

Let us begin our study of these verses. In verse 25 of Daniel 9, we read:

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Immediately, the question surfaces: Why does God divide this path into two parts, into seven weeks, which would be 49 years, and into 62 sevens, which would be 434 years? Why does He not simply say 69 sevens? God does nothing accidentally. Everything in the Bible was carefully put there by God and has a very definite purpose. So, as we puzzle about this initial seven sevens, we wonder: What is significant about it?

First a Jubilee Period

The thought came to me years ago that seven sevens signifies a Jubilee period. In Leviticus 25, we read about the Jubilee year, which was to occur every 50 years. Thus, between successive Jubilee years there was a period of 49 years, which is equal to seven weeks of years. The Jubilee year was the year when all debts were cancelled. It was the time when the land went back to its proper owners, and every Israelite who had been enslaved to another Israelite was set free. Since a period of seven sevens or 49 years was the period between two Jubilee years, immediately I began to wonder: Is God saying that in this second path from 458 B.C. when Ezra went to Jerusalem to reestablish the law, that is, to build the spiritual city, the first period of time to be considered is a Jubilee period? Is He using the phrase "seven weeks" to signify the period from one Jubilee year to the next, so that we are to begin the next period of three score and two weeks the year after a Jubilee year?

Let us examine this possibility by first looking at the Biblical timetable of the Jubilees. We shall see how this meshes with the language of Daniel 9:25, which suggests a Jubilee period as the initial part of the second path leading from 458 B.C. to the second coming of Christ.

Let us determine which calendar years were Jubilee years. We can then see how that relates to Ezra's return to Jerusalem. To determine which years were Jubilee years, we must go back to the initial Jubilee year. In Leviticus 25:2, God indicates that at the time the nation of Israel was to come into the land of Canaan, they were to keep a Sabbath unto the Lord. He continues in verse 8: "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years," for a total period of 49 years. In verse 10, God declares:

And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.

Thus, the 50th year after they entered Canaan would have been a Jubilee year. With this knowledge, if we can determine the calendar year that Israel entered the land of Canaan, we would know which calendar years were Jubilee years.

Because so much work has been done in recent times, particularly in relation to the dating of the kings of Israel, this can be done rather readily. We are particularly indebted to the eminent scholar, Edwin R. Thiele, whose book, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, established the date of the death of Solomon and the division of the kingdom as 931 B.C. (page 52). (See also *Adam When?*, by Harold Camping, pages 137-153.) Since Solomon reigned for 40 years (I Kings 11:42), he would have begun to reign in the year 971 B.C. And since he began to build the temple in the fourth year of his reign (I Kings 6:1), this building would have begun in the year 967 B.C. (971 - 4 = 967). Thus, we know that the foundation of the temple was laid in 967 B.C.

Very significantly God gives us the time bridge from the Exodus to the beginning of the building of the temple. This is recorded in I Kings 6:1:

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second

month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

A time span of 480 years brings us to 1447 B.C. as the date of the Exodus ($967 + 480 = 1447$). In view of the fact that Israel spent exactly 40 years in the wilderness going from Egypt to Canaan, we know that they entered the land of Canaan in the year 1407 B.C. ($1447 - 40 = 1407$).

Remembering what we learned from Leviticus 25:2-10, we can therefore ascertain the date of the first Jubilee year. Leviticus 25:2 declares that the year of entrance into Canaan was to be a Sabbath year. We have now determined that to be the year 1407 B.C. This was to be followed by seven sevens of years, with the following year becoming the first Jubilee year. That would have been the year 1357 B.C. ($1407 - 50 = 1357$). Thereafter, in every century, every year that ended in 07 or 57 was a Jubilee year. For example, Jubilee years would have been 1357, 1307, 1257, 1207, etc.

The Year Immediately Following Ezra's Return was a Jubilee Year

Because we are interested in the period of time around 458 B.C. when Ezra returned to Jerusalem, we want to know when the closest Jubilee year occurred. Of course, it was the year 457 B.C., which immediately followed the year 458 B.C. This certainly is encouraging to our study, is it not?

Since the last year of each seven of the seven sevens of years that made up the 49 years between two Jubilee periods was a Sabbath year, we know that **the year before each Jubilee year was a Sabbath year**. Thus, the year 458 B.C. would have been a Sabbath year, while the year 457 B.C., which was a year ending in 57, would have been a Jubilee year. Therefore, the concept that the initial period spoken of in Daniel 9:25 is to be considered a Jubilee period is greatly strengthened by the discovery that Ezra returned to Jerusalem in a Sabbath year just before a Jubilee period. Thus, the seven weeks spoken of in Daniel 9:25 fit very logically with the idea of an initial Jubilee period.

Returning now to Daniel 9:25, we know that Ezra returned to Jerusalem in the year 458 B.C. As we have seen, this was a Sabbath year. The next year, 457 B.C., was a Jubilee year.

Going from the Jubilee year 457 B.C. to the next Jubilee year, which would have been seven sevens of years or 49 years later, we come to 407 B.C. as the next Jubilee year. The next period of 62 weeks would then have begun the next year after the Jubilee year 407 B.C. That would have been the year 406 B.C.

A Period of 434 Years Follows a Jubilee Period

The Bible speaks of a **period of three score and two sevens, or 62 times seven years**. There is no suggestion of a break during this 62 sevens, which is a period of 434 years. Therefore, if we go in unbroken fashion through history for 434 years from the next year, 406 B.C., which immediately followed the Jubilee period considered above, we come to the year A.D. 29. This arithmetic can be checked. First add the 406 years of the Old Testament to the 29 years of the New Testament. This sum equals 435. Then subtract 1, because there is no year 0, and we arrive at 434 years, which is 62 times seven.

Thus far, we have seen that God is giving us a path which begins with the command by King Artaxerxes to Ezra to reestablish the law in the year 458 B.C. God is saying that until the coming of the Messiah the Prince there should be seven sevens and 62 sevens. **The seven sevens is a Jubilee period which follows 458 B.C., a Sabbath year. The first Jubilee period signified by seven sevens** is, therefore, the period beginning in the year 457 B.C. and ending in 407 B.C. Beginning then in the next year, 406 B.C., and going for 434 years, that is, for 62 sevens, we arrive at A.D. 29 as the year that ended the 62 sevens and begins the 70th seven.

Jesus was Baptized in A.D. 29

This is becoming increasingly interesting because A.D. 29 is the year that Christ was baptized in the River Jordan. Thus, we are beginning to see that the computation called for in Daniel 9 identifies clearly with the historical fact of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. You will remember when we followed the first path (in verse 24), without a break for 70 sevens or 490 years, we arrived at the year A.D. 33 as the end of the 70 sevens. Christ was crucified in the spring, that is, on Passover Day, in the year A.D. 33. He preached for approximately 3½ years, so it was 3½ years earlier that He was baptized in the River Jordan. At this time, He officially began His role as High Priest, to offer the sacrificial Lamb, which He Himself was. Going back 3½ years from the spring of A.D. 33, will take us to the fall of A.D. 29. But this is the same year that ends the 62 sevens, in accordance with the second path we have found in Daniel 9. Do you see how it is all beginning to tie together? Verse 25 of Daniel 9, therefore, takes us to A.D. 29.

Then verse 25 declares: "the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." In other words, God is indicating that there is going to be a rebuilding of Jerusalem. The Gospel is going forth again. Remember that in this passage the language that refers to the building of Jerusalem is not speaking of a physical building; it is talking about building the body of Christ. It is concerned with building the spiritual temple, which is the body of Christ. Christ, of course, came not only as our sin-bearer but also as a preacher of the Gospel (Luke 4:43-44).

In verse 26, we read: "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself . . ." We know that 3½ years after A.D. 29 was A.D. 33, when Christ was crucified. Remember, A.D. 29 was the year that ended the 62 sevens. Then it was indeed after the 62 sevens, or after A.D. 29, that the Messiah was cut off. In the language of the Bible, **being cut off refers to being under God's judgment**. Any time we read the phrase "cut off" in the Bible, we can be sure that it is speaking about being under the judgment of God.

Thus, we see that phrase by phrase, verse by verse, this is all beginning to identify precisely with the

coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was not cut off for Himself; He was cut off on behalf of the believers. He came under judgment because of the sins of the believers. Christ was cut off, that is, He experienced God's wrath for our sins in the year A.D. 33. This was after the year A.D. 29, which was the last year of the 62 weeks of Daniel 9:25.

Christ Crucified

Verse 26 goes on: "and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." Immediately, a lot of theologians think of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 because, as we saw before, they have in mind a physical city, a literal city. But remember, the key to this whole passage is that the city in view is not a literal city; it is the body of Christ.

The passage speaks of the people of the Prince. The Prince that is referred to is the Messiah. He came as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). He came as the King to die for our sins. When He was on the cross, a sign hung over His head, which read: "And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Luke 23:38). Indeed, He was the King. He established His kingdom by going to the cross. The people of the Prince, that is, the Jewish nation, made the decision to put Him to death. We might recall that it was the high priest Caiaphas who made the decision that Jesus must be crucified. In John 11:50, he condemned Jesus to be crucified, and declared: "Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John 11:50).

Christ is the City and the Sanctuary

What are the city and the sanctuary that are to be destroyed by the people of the Prince who was to come? Remember how beautifully Christ related to this? Maybe you have never thought of this before, but when Jesus was talking to the pharisees, He said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). What was Jesus speaking about when He said that? Did He have in view the physical temple? That is what the Jews thought. They said in John 2:20: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?"

But Jesus was speaking of His body, wasn't He? He, Himself, was the temple of God that was to be destroyed and rebuilt. We do not want to fall into the same snare that the Jews fell into when Jesus talked about Himself being the temple. We do not want to begin to look for a physical temple here. God says in Daniel 9:26: "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." Jesus said that He was the sanctuary. He was the temple that was to be destroyed and rebuilt in three days. Thus, Daniel 9:26 is disclosing to us that the Jews, who were the people of Christ, would destroy Christ. Christ was the Prince who was to come. Christ was the Sanctuary, which was to be destroyed.

Verse 26 also refers to the destruction of the city. To what or whom does this refer? Is this also a reference to Jesus? Indeed, it is, as we shall see.

Remember that even as Christ calls Himself the temple, He calls His body, the believers, the temple. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. We are built into a holy temple, as we read in Ephesians 2. That is easy to see, is it not? He is the head of the church, the body of believers; and if He is the temple, we are the temple.

By the same token, since He is the head of the body of believers, if the believers are the city of God, He is the city of God. We have already seen that the Bible speaks of believers as being the city of God. This is shown dramatically in Revelation 21, where God speaks of the whole body of believers, the bride of Christ, as the Holy City, the New Jerusalem.

If we are the city of God, then Christ as our head is the city. He is the temple; we are the temple. If we are the city and we are "in Christ" (Romans 8:1), which we read so frequently in the Bible, then Christ is also a city. Thus, verse 26, which speaks of the city being destroyed, is also pointing to the crucifixion of Jesus.

Daniel 9:26 Predicts Christ's Death on Our Behalf

We can now see how we are to understand Daniel 9:26. "After threescore and two weeks," that is, after the 434 years that end in the year A.D. 29, "shall Messiah be cut off." That is, He was crucified after He was baptized in A.D. 29. It was 3« years later, 3« years after the 434 years. He was cut off by "the people of the prince," that is, the pharisees, the Sanhedrin, and the high priest, who headed up the nation of Israel. It was they who would come and destroy the city and the sanctuary. They are the ones who caused Jesus to be crucified.

Verse 26 of Daniel 9 also declares, "but not for himself." Christ was not crucified for Himself or because of His sins. He was crucified on our behalf. He took upon Himself our sins. Therefore, He had to come under the wrath of God.

Daniel 9:26 then declares: "And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." When the Bible talks about a flood, it is talking about the wrath of God being poured out. We see this figure in Genesis, Chapters 7 and 8, where God details the flood of Noah's day. Then God's wrath was poured out by the flood, through which He brought judgment against the wicked of that day. Likewise, when Christ hung on the cross, God poured out His wrath on Him, to pay for our sins. There was Judgment Day at the cross. It was typified by the flood of Noah's day.

The phrase, "unto the end of the war," of course has reference to the warfare that exists between the Kingdom of Christ on the one hand and the kingdom of Satan on the other. That warfare continues to the end of time in one sense. Revelation 19, therefore, describes the conclusion of that warfare as a great

battle. That battle will be Judgment Day itself, when all of Christ's enemies are judged and removed into hell.

But the end of the war also refers to the cross because it was at the cross that Christ defeated Satan. Hebrews 2:14 declares that Christ by His death destroyed Satan. At the end of the world, we will see Satan and all his kingdom completely destroyed.

We have thus far looked at verses 24-26 of Daniel 9. We have seen that there is one path of 490 years that goes directly from 458 B.C., when Ezra was commanded by King Artaxerxes to reestablish the law in Jerusalem, that is, to build the spiritual city. In A.D. 33, Christ hung on the cross to pay for our sins (verse 24).

We saw that there is another path that goes from 458 B.C., which also brings us to Christ, but it is more complex. It began with a period of 50 years, a Jubilee period called seven sevens of years. This was followed by a period of 434 years, which brought us to A.D. 29. Thus, we see that the 70th seven, the last seven of years, began in A.D. 29, when Christ was singled out as the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world. Next in our study, we are going to look at this 70th seven in greater detail. As we discover a solution to the 70th seven, we will also find a solution to the 1,260 days, or the 42 months, of Revelation 11, 12, and 13.

It is imperative that we remember, as we make this study, that the Bible is its own interpreter. We must let the Bible give us the clues and the keys whereby we can understand difficult Scriptures. We cannot just look at Scriptures and say, "Well, that looks like so and so. That seems to make sense; let's go on from there." We have to make sure we have scriptural justification for the conclusions we believe we receive from the Bible. In this study, we have seen that the Holy City is the body of Christ or the body of believers. We have also seen that the sanctuary and the city are a picture or figure of Christ Himself, and there is ample scriptural justification for this. We have seen that, having learned this, these verses of Daniel 9 begin to open up beautifully. We begin to find that every phrase fits into place.

Now you may be wondering: "What about the 70th seven?" Let us go on with the study and see how that period of seven years fits into place.

So far in our study of Daniel 9:24-27, we have seen that every phrase in this intriguing passage begins to make sense once we have caught the key. After we discovered the major clue, that the city and the sanctuary discussed in these verses are not a literal city and a literal temple, these verses began to open up for us. We discovered that the city and the sanctuary refer to Christ Himself or to His body, the believers in Him who will hear the Gospel or hear the law of God and thus become saved. After we discovered this, we began to see that every phrase in this passage began to fit into place.

In our study of the 70 sevens, we determined that the time period in view began in 458 B.C., when King Artaxerxes I, the Medo-Persian king, gave Ezra the scribe the command to go to Jerusalem to reestablish the law, that is, to rebuild the spiritual city. We have found that there was one path that went directly from 458 B.C. to the cross 490 years later, in A.D. 33 (verse 24).

Then in verses 25 and 26, we saw a more difficult path that consisted first of seven sevens or a Jubilee period. This was followed by an unbroken path of 62 sevens or 434 years, which brought us to the year A.D. 29, when Christ was baptized. It was at this time that He officially began His work as Messiah.

Christ Confirms His Covenant

Let us begin to unravel verse 27 of Daniel 9, where God declares that He shall confirm the covenant with many for one seven. How are we to understand this phrase? Who is "he"? What covenant is it that He will confirm? Who are the many with whom He will confirm this covenant?

Many theologians stumble on this verse. They suggest that the "he" is the Antichrist, who will make a covenant with the Jews. Moreover, they insist that this verse is concerned with the tribulation period that must come, as prophesied in Matthew 24:21. Is that what this phrase is discussing?

When we looked at verses 25 and 26, we saw that God was talking about the Prince who was to come, who could be only the Messiah. Therefore, the antecedent of the "he" that shall confirm the covenant can be only the Messiah of verses 25 and 26. There is no suggestion in these verses that the "he" of verse 27 could be the Antichrist.

Furthermore, we shall see that this verse cannot be discussing the final tribulation period because shortly we will see that sacrifice and offering ceased in the middle of the week, and that can refer only to the time when Christ was hanging on the cross. It was at that time that He completed the ceremonial laws and ended sacrifices and offerings.

The Covenant of Salvation is in View

We find that ordinarily in the Bible when God speaks of a covenant, He has in view God's covenant of grace or redemption that He has made with believers. This word "covenant" in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word berith. It is found some 280 times in the Old Testament. Sometimes it is translated "league," for example, when one political nation had made a league with another nation. But in more than 87% of the times that it is used in the Old Testament, it definitely relates to the covenant of grace or the covenant of salvation.

In the New Testament the word "covenant," which is also translated "testament," is the Greek word diatheke. It is found 33 times in the New Testament, and in every instance, it relates to the covenant of salvation.

For example, when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He declared in **Matthew 26:28, "This is my blood**

of the new testament." In Romans 11:27, God quotes from the Old Testament as He explains why a remnant from national Israel was chosen by grace to come into the body of Christ. Romans 11:27: "For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." Hebrews 12:24 declares: "Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." Hebrews 13:20 speaks of the "the blood of the everlasting covenant." These references to the covenant can be speaking only of Christ, who went to the cross so that God's covenant of grace or salvation might become effective for all who would believe on Him.

When Jesus stood on the shore of the River Jordan, John the Baptist looked at Him and said: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Christ came as the Lamb to confirm the covenant.

Going back to Daniel 9:27, God indicates that He shall confirm the covenant with many. The many for whom Christ came to confirm His covenant of salvation are those He came to save. Matthew 1:21: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." Matthew 20:28: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

From the above, we can see that the phrase we are studying has no Biblical validation to suggest that it is the Antichrist who would make some kind of covenant. Moreover, we see that the phrase emphatically relates to the covenant of grace, which is a major subject of the whole Bible.

As we have seen, the end of the 62nd week of Daniel occurred in A.D. 29, when Jesus was baptized. It was at that time, as the Holy Spirit came upon Him, that He was officially anointed as High Priest; He was officially declared to be the Messiah. It was also that year that became the beginning of the 70th week.

Therefore, we see that everything is fitting into place exactly as it should.

To Him be all glory and power and praise. Amen.

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