

# THE 70 WEEKS OF DANIEL

## *Chapter 9*

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During the reign of Darius, the son of Xerxes, Daniel was reading the scriptures and realized that God was about to allow the Jewish captives to return to their land after about 70 years (see Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10).

Understanding now, that the 70-year captivity was a consequence of violating the Mosaic Covenant, Daniel prays on behalf of his people asking for God's mercy and forgiveness. Even though Daniel himself was a righteous person he identifies so strongly with his fellow Jews that he uses the word "we" instead of "they" when referring to their rebellious actions.

In response to Daniel's prayer, Gabriel the archangel, brings further clarification to Daniel's previous vision.

## A. WHAT TO WATCH FOR

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Notice how Daniel describes God as a faithful covenant keeper. Daniel realizes why he and his fellow Jews were taken out of their Promised Land and made to live in a foreign pagan land. He clearly sees the connection with Deuteronomy 28 which describes the conditions of the Mosaic Covenant. Notice too how Daniel views himself as part of the covenant people, pleading for God's mercy..."we have sinned" he writes, not "they have sinned."

## B. BACKGROUND

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This vision takes place during the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus (539 BC), about 11 years after the vision in Chapter 8. Daniel appears to be about 80 years old when this event takes place, and while reading from Jeremiah, he understands why the exile came upon the Jewish people, and he confesses his own sin and his people's sin, praying for God's forgiveness and mercy.

His prayer contrasts God's righteousness and faithfulness to Daniel's people who have been so unfaithful. In response to his prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem, Daniel receives an angelic message and the prophecy of seventy weeks.

## C. DANIEL CHAPTER 9 (NIV)

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### DANIEL'S PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE (9:1-19)

"In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom--" <sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. <sup>3</sup> So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>4</sup> I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: "Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, <sup>5</sup> we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. <sup>6</sup> We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land. <sup>7</sup> "Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame-- the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. <sup>8</sup> We and our kings, our princes and our ancestors are covered with shame, LORD, because we have sinned against you. <sup>9</sup> The

Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; <sup>10</sup> we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. <sup>11</sup> All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you. "Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. <sup>12</sup> You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing on us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come on us, yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. <sup>14</sup> The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster on us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him. <sup>15</sup> "Now, Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong. <sup>16</sup> Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our ancestors have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us. <sup>17</sup> "Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. <sup>18</sup> Give ear, our God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. <sup>19</sup> Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name."

#### **GABRIEL BRINGS AN ANSWER (9:20-23)**



<sup>20</sup> While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill-- <sup>21</sup> while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. <sup>22</sup> He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. <sup>23</sup> As soon as you began to pray, a word went out, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the word and understand the vision:"

#### **THE SEVENTY WEEKS (9:24-27)**

"Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place. <sup>25</sup> "Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild

Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. <sup>26</sup> After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. <sup>27</sup> He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him. ""

## D. CHAPTER SUMMARY

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There are two views<sup>1</sup> held to this prophecy of 70 weeks:

- **Historical View:** The prophecy culminated in the past when Titus destroyed the temple and Jerusalem in AD 70. The covenant (contract) in 9:27 was made by Antiochus Epiphanes IV. There are several problems with this view, such as there is no evidence of AE IV ever making a contract with Israel.
- **Futuristic/Dispensational View:** The prophecy culminates in the future when the Antichrist stops future sacrifices during the Tribulation Period. The covenant (contract) in 9:27 will be made by the future Antichrist. This view seems to be better supported in scripture (Dan. 11, 12; Rev. 12, 13, 19).

S. Michael Houdmann<sup>2</sup> offers a description of the widely held futuristic/dispensational view of “The seventy weeks” prophecy by pointing out that it is one of the most significant and detailed Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Chapter 9 begins with Daniel praying for Israel, acknowledging the nation’s sins against God and asking for God’s mercy. As Daniel prayed, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and gave him a vision of Israel’s future.

The Divisions of the 70 Weeks: In verse 24, Gabriel says, “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city.” Almost all commentators agree that the seventy “sevens” should be understood as seventy “weeks” of years, in other words, a period of 490 years. These verses provide a sort of “clock” that gives an idea of when the Messiah would come and some of the events that would accompany His appearance.

The prophecy goes on to divide the 490 years into three smaller units:

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about these views see “Is the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel Future?” by John F. Walvoord <<https://bible.org/seriespage/2-seventieth-week-daniel-future>>. Accessed November 10, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> S. Michael Houdmann, [www.GotQuestions.Org](http://www.GotQuestions.Org).

- one of 49 years
- one of 434 years
- one 7 years

The final “week” of 7 years is further divided in half. Verse 25 says, “From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’” Seven “sevens” is 49 years, and sixty-two “sevens” is another 434 years: 49 years + 434 years = 483 years.

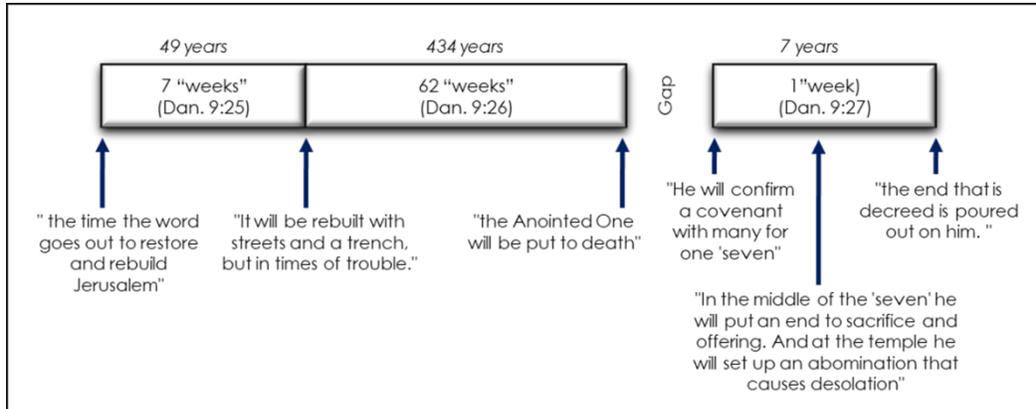


Figure 1: Daniel's 70 Weeks Prophecy<sup>3</sup>

The Purpose of the 70 Weeks: The prophecy contains a statement concerning God's six-fold purpose in bringing these events to pass. Verse 24 says this purpose is:

- “to finish transgression,”
- “to put an end to sin,”
- “to atone for wickedness,”
- “to bring in everlasting righteousness,”
- “to seal up vision and prophecy,”
- “to anoint the most holy.”

Notice that these results concern the total eradication of sin and the establishing of righteousness. The prophecy of the 70 weeks summarizes what happens before Jesus sets up His millennial kingdom. Of special note is the third in the list of results: “to atone for wickedness.” Jesus accomplished the atonement for sin by His death on the cross (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17).

<sup>3</sup> This chart follows that of “The 70 Weeks of Daniel” by David L. Cooper.

The Fulfillment of the 70 Weeks: Gabriel said the prophetic clock would start at the time that a decree was issued to rebuild Jerusalem. From the date of that decree to the time of the Messiah would be 483 years. We know from history that the command to “restore and rebuild Jerusalem” was given by King Artaxerxes of Persia c. 445 B.C., (see Nehemiah 2:1-8).

The first unit of 49 years (seven “sevens”) covers the time that it took to rebuild Jerusalem, “with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble” (Daniel 9:25). This rebuilding is chronicled in the book of Nehemiah.

Using the Jewish custom of a 360-day year, 483 years after 445 B.C. places us at A.D. 30, which would coincide with Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-9). The prophecy in Daniel 9 specifies that after the completion of the 483 years, “the Anointed One will be cut off” (verse 26). This was fulfilled when Jesus was crucified.

Daniel 9:26 continues with a prediction that, after the Messiah is killed, “the people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.” This was fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The “ruler who will come” is a reference to the future Antichrist, who, it seems, will have some connection with Rome, since it was the Romans who destroyed Jerusalem.

The Final Week of the 70 Weeks: Of the 70 “sevens,” 69 have been fulfilled in history. This leaves one more “seven” yet to be fulfilled. Most scholars believe that we are now living in a huge gap between the 69th week and the 70th week. The prophetic clock has been paused, as it were. The final “seven” of Daniel is what we usually call the Tribulation Period.

Daniel’s prophecy reveals some of the actions of the Antichrist, the “ruler who will come.” Verse 27 says, “He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’” However, “in the middle of the ‘seven,’ . . . he will set up an abomination that causes desolation” in the temple. Jesus warned of this event in Matthew 24:15. After the Antichrist breaks the covenant with Israel, a time of “great tribulation” begins (Matthew 24:21, NKJV).

Daniel also predicts that the Antichrist will face judgment. He only rules “until the end that is decreed is poured out on him” (Daniel 9:27). God will only allow evil to go so far, and the judgment the Antichrist will face has already been planned out.

Conclusion: The prophecy of the 70 weeks is complex and amazingly detailed, and much has been written about it. Of course, there are various interpretations, but what Houdmann has presented here is the dispensational, premillennial view. One thing is certain: God has a time table, and He is keeping things on schedule. He knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10), and we should always be looking for the triumphant return of our Lord (Revelation 22:7).”



