

BOOK OF DANIEL
DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY
DANIEL 9:24-27

Introduction

These few verses give us a vital prophecy. Some feel they are too difficult or controversial to understand, however, I believe that a careful "step-by-step" approach will give us a very understandable interpretation.

There are **FIVE IMPORTANT THINGS** to note concerning this prophecy:

I. PART OF THIS PROPHECY IS GENERAL AND PART OF IT IS DETAILED!

Vs 24 gives a general overview and informs us that the length of God's dealing with the Jews would be 70 weeks.

II. THE SEVENTY WEEKS ARE SEVENTY WEEKS OF YEARS (OR SEVENTY SEVENS OF YEARS)!

A. Why Are These "Weeks" Of Seven Years Duration?

1. They could not refer to the 70 (literal) years of captivity prophesied by Jeremiah, because those were almost over.
2. They could not be 70 literal weeks (i.e. 490 days or 1 year, 5 months, and 2 weeks) because the events listed to take place in this period were not fulfilled in that length of time.
3. The Hebrew word rendered "weeks" in this passage is "shabua", literally meaning "sevens" or "heptads".

It means a group of seven of anything, similar to our word "dozen." Daniel would have understood this expression to mean "70 sevens of years" because he had been contemplating years at the time! (*Vs 2*)

4. This principle of time measurement has precedence in prophecy—see: *Numbers 14:34*—

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Numbers 14:34—"After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise."

This is NOT a primary principle of interpretation. It may only be applied when reason and the evidence supports it.

Some interpret the phrase in *Genesis 29:27*, "...fulfill her week..." to refer to the seven years Jacob had to work for Rachel.

5. God's dealings with Israel have been in cycles of 490 years. For example:
Abraham to Canaan — 490 years
Joshua to the Kingdom — 490 years
David to the Captivity — 490 years
6. The "week = 7 years" interpretation fits the facts of subsequent history in a remarkable way.

The almost unanimous conclusion of all Bible students—premillennial, amillennial, or postmillennial is that the 70 Weeks amounts to 490 years.

B. What Is A Prophetic Year?

When calculating time it is important to follow the Jewish reckoning.

Our Julian calendar follows a "solar" year of 365 ¼ days, counting 1 year to be 365 days long with a leap year every fourth year.

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The Old Testament uses a “*lunisolar*” year of 12 months of 29 ½ days, or 354 days. In reality, the Jewish year has 12 months of 29 and 30 days alternatively with a 30 day “*leap month*” added every 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th year of a 19 year cycle.

The Scriptural demonstration of this reckoning may be seen by comparing *Genesis 7:11* with *Genesis 8:3-4* which shows 5 months to equal 150 days. Also, a comparison of *Revelation 12:6* with *Revelation 13:5* shows 42 months to be 1,260 days (average 30 days per month).

III. THERE ARE FOUR PERSONAGES MENTIONED:

1. “...Thy People...” (Vs 24)

This refers to Daniel's people, the Jews. The reference to “*thy holy city*” further confirms this fact. This is a vital point. There is nothing Gentile or Christian about this prophecy.

2. “...The Messiah The Prince...” (Vs 25)

There can be no doubt this refers to the Lord Jesus Christ. “*Messiah*” is the name used by the Jews.

3. “...The Prince That Shall Come...” (Vs 26, 27)

The second word of vs 27 is “*he*,” and this is critical to the interpretation. Many would say it is Jesus Christ. However, the normal rules of grammar provide that the antecedent of “*he*” is the nearest preceding possibility. Backing up to vs 26, therefore, would identify this “*he*” as the “*prince that shall come*”—not the Messiah. The works of this “*he*” in vs 27 indicate he is an ungodly person.

4. “...The People Of The Prince That Shall Come...” (Vs 26)

This “*...prince that shall come...*” refers to the Antichrist.

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Since *Daniel 7* reveals that the Antichrist will arise out of the latter stages of the fourth world empire (Rome), these “*people*” must belong to the Roman empire at some stage of its existence.

IV. THERE ARE EIGHT SEPARATE EVENTS MENTIONED IN THIS PROPHECY:

1. The Going Forth Of The Commandment. (Vs 25)

It is vital to establish this date from the historical record, because it is from this point that the 70 Weeks begin.

There are four possibilities to consider here:

a. The Decree By Cyrus In 536 B.C.

(*Ezra 1:14; 2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Cf. Isaiah 44:28*)

This cannot be the date concerned, because it was decree to rebuild the temple, not the city.

b. The Decree By Darius In 519 B.C. (*Ezra 6:1-12*)

This cannot be the date concerned, because this decree is just a reaffirmation of Cyrus' proclamation.

c. The Decree By Artaxerxes In 457 B.C. (*Ezra 7:11-22*)

This cannot be the date concerned, because it only deals with the purchase of sacrifices for the temple.

d. The Decree By Artaxerxes Longimanus In 445 B.C. (*Nehemiah 2:5-8*)

This is the commandment which signaled the beginning of the 70 Weeks, because Nehemiah was permitted to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city.

2. The Street And The Wall Built In Troublous Times.

(Vs 25) This portion of the prophecy has now been fulfilled and is recorded in detail for us in the Book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah chapters 4 – 6 speak of these troublous times.

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3. **Messiah Cut Off. (Vs 26)**
This obviously has reference to the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Consider the following:
- a. **He Was "Cut Off"—indicating a sudden death. (Cf. Isaiah 53:8)**
 - b. **"But Not For Himself"—His was a substitutionary death for sinners. (Cf. Isaiah 53:4-6; 2 Cor. 5:21)**
 - c. **After 7 + 62 = 69 Weeks.**
The end of the 69TH Week occurred when the Lord rode into the city of Jerusalem and was hailed KING by His followers. [Cf. *Matthew 21:1-11; Luke 19:28-44 (esp. vs. 38. Also consider vs. 42)*]
It was after this that He was "cut off."
 - d. **The Wise Men From The East—Matthew 2:1-2.**
These wise men came from the same area in which Daniel lived almost 600 years previously. No doubt they followed Daniel's prophecy and knew the approximate time to beginning looking for His star—*Numbers 24:17*.
 - e. **Simeon And Anna—Luke 2:25, 36-38.**
It is believed that these two aged saints also knew their Bibles as they were expecting the Messiah to come in their lifetimes.
4. **The City And The Sanctuary Destroyed. (Vs 26)**
This part of the prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D. by the complete destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman legions under the future Emperor of Rome, General Titus Vespasian with Tiberius Julius Alexander as his second-in-command.

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5. **Desolations Determined Unto The End. (Vs 26)**
This part of the prophecy speaks of the continuing trouble in Israel right up to the second coming of Jesus Christ. (Cf. *Matthew 24:6-14*)
6. **The Covenant Confirmed. (Vs 27)**
Remember the "he" here refers to the coming Antichrist. He will confirm the Covenant with the Jews. What covenant??

As a counterfeit Messiah (*Revelation 6:2*) the Antichrist will bring an apparent peace to Israel, and establish an agreement with that nation.

From *Daniel 11:39-43*, it appears that **land** is involved. The Abrahamic Covenant promises the land to Israel—something Jews are desiring even in this day. (Cf. *Genesis 13:14-17; 15:18; 17:8.*)

The Jews expect to acquire the full promise of the land when their Messiah comes!
7. **The Overspreading Of Abominations. (Vs 27)**
In the midst of this 70th Week, the Antichrist will break the covenant, caused the restored animal sacrifices to cease, and install himself as God in the temple. (Cf. *Matthew 24:15; Daniel 11:36; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:5-6*)
8. **The Consummation. (Vs 27)**
This is the final event in the history of the world as we know it. It corresponds to the second coming of Jesus Christ (*Daniel 2:45; 7:22*), and involves the following:
- a. **The Judgment Of The Desolater. (vs 27; Rev. 19:20)**

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- b. **Everlasting Righteousness Established. (vs 24)**
(Cf. Micah 4:1-3; Revelation 20:2)
- c. **The Most Holy Anointed. (Vs 24; Isaiah 9:7)**

V. THERE IS A TIME GAP BETWEEN THE 69TH AND 70TH WEEK.

The 70th Week of Daniel's vision is yet to be fulfilled, and the gap between the 69th and 70th Week has extended now for almost 2,000 years. God's Prophetic clock stopped when the Messiah was cut off!

A. Why Is There A Gap Between The 69th And 70th Weeks?

1. If the 70 Weeks were continuous (as many suppose), they would have ended around 37 A.D.—somewhere in the Book of Acts. But everlasting righteousness was not brought in, and the city of Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D.!! which is when the sacrifices ceased.

Furthermore, the "*consummation*" (the second coming of Christ) has certainly not occurred.

2. Daniel is a Book in which there are several "*gaps*" or parentheses within its prophecies.
There is a time gap between *Daniel 2:40 and 2:41*.
There is a time gap after the last semicolon in *Daniel 7:7*.
There is a time gap between *Daniel 8:8 and 8:9; and Daniel 8:22 and 23*.
Another parenthetical gap is found between *Daniel 11:35 and 36*.
3. Perhaps the best illustration of this "*Gap Principle*" in prophecy is found in *Isaiah 61:2 and Luke 4:16-21*.

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Our Lord stopped read at a comma—between the "*acceptable year of the LORD*" and the "*day of vengeance of our God*," thereby distinguishing His first and second advent.

B. The Significance Of Daniel's 70th Week.

Daniel's 70th Week is the only unfulfilled part of this great prophecy. (Note: That which has been fulfilled was fulfilled literally!)

Because it is a 'one week' period, it represents a yet-to-be-fulfilled SEVEN YEAR PERIOD.

From *Revelation 12:6 and Revelation 13:5* we read of a coming 3½ year reign of terror by the BEAST (Antichrist). Thus we conclude that Daniel's 70th Week refers to a coming 7 year period just prior to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ—the final 3½ years of which will be the GREAT TRIBULATION. *(Cf. Matt. 24:21; Jer. 30:7)*

Daniel was told to "*seal up*" the prophecy (*Daniel 12:4,9*). With the unsealing of the book in *Revelation 5* the details of this Week are unfolded in *Revelation 6-19*.