

Daniel's Seventy Weeks

The Angel Gabriel said to Daniel, "Seventy weeks are decreed on your people and on your holy city to finish disobedience, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy. Understand and discern, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the Anointed One, the Prince, will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. Jerusalem will be built again with street and moat, even in troubled times. After the sixty-two weeks the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the prince who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end will be with a flood and to the end will be war. Desolations are determined. He will make a firm covenant with many for one week and in the midst of the week he will cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease. On the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate even to the full end and what is determined will wrath be poured out on the desolate" (Daniel 9:24 to 27).

We can explain this prophecy by using plain English translated from the original Hebrew language. Firstly we need to understand, each 'week', normally seven days, in this prophecy a 'week' represents seven years. This prophecy reveals to the Jewish people exactly when the Messiah Jesus was to come, why He was to come, events surrounding the time when He came and the location this was going to take place. The seventy 'weeks' or 490 years are divided into three smaller units of time – a period of 49 years, a period of 434 years and a period of seven years. The Lord had to prepare Israel and the temple for the Jewish Messiah to come to God's chosen land and to God's chosen people. The Jewish people were chosen and trusted for two reasons (1) to bring the oracles of God to mankind (Romans 3:2) and (2) to bring forth mankind's Messiah. That meant the Messiah was going to come 490 years after Daniel received this Word from God but the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the second temple was to begin just 49 years after the Angel Gabriel spoke to Daniel, and it would all be destroyed again during the final 'week' after the Messiah had been killed or 'cut off' as the prophecy says. The first 49 years was the time it took to rebuild Jerusalem and the second temple. The next 441 years was the fulfilment of the prophecies regarding the coming of Jesus, His crucifixion and His atonement for our sin, then the final destruction of Jerusalem and the second temple when sacrifices and offerings ceased. The prophecy also describes the trouble in Israel because of the Roman Empire. At the time Gabriel gave this prophecy to Daniel, the city of Jerusalem was in ruins.

Daniel 9:24: "Seventy 'weeks' (seventy times seven = 490 years) are decreed (in Hebrew: segregated or isolated) on your people (Jewish people) and on your city of holiness (Jerusalem)." The word 'segregated' in this context means this prophecy was only for the Jewish people, not the Gentiles. Gabriel gave to Daniel an exact date and location these events were going to occur, and who it was for; Daniel's people, the Jewish nation who would be returning to Jerusalem. Seven 'weeks' plus sixty-two 'weeks' plus the final 'week' = seventy 'weeks' or 490 years. After Jerusalem and the temple had been rebuilt there would be 441 years until the Messiah came the first time. The prophecy was given to Daniel circa 538 BC but the authority to rebuild Jerusalem (see Books of Ezra and Nehemiah) was the decree given by Persian King Artaxerxes Longimanus on March 14 445 BC or according to the Jewish calendar, Adar 3315, or 3,315 years after the creation of Adam.

Continuing in verse 24, the reason for the rebuilding of Jerusalem at that time was so the Messiah could come to the Holy Land and it had to be prepared beforehand. God gave Daniel the reasons the Messiah was to come. Reason number one: To finish, detain or put an end to disobedience and transgression. There is a difference between sin and transgression. Sin is to deliberately disobey God's instructions. Transgression is the unwitting act of falling short of God's instruction. God was going to bring to an end the unwitting failings of mankind. Up until Jesus came, God ignored transgressions because He knew mankind did not know any better, but after Jesus came God expects everyone to repent because we all have knowledge of sin. 'In the former ages of ignorance, God, it is true, ignored and allowed transgressions to pass unnoticed but now He expects all people everywhere to repent' (Acts 17:30).

Reason number two: To seal off and make full the measure of sins to bring an end of sins. Jesus took all sin on Himself to atone for the sin of all mankind. Before Jesus came, Gentiles had no hope of forgiveness but now, all Gentiles have the opportunity to accept Jesus and be

saved. We actually seal our own fate. If we accept Jesus and walk with God for the rest of our lives, we will be accepted into heaven. If we reject Jesus and turn from God, we will be rejected on Judgement Day. The choice to be saved or not is completely our choice. God made the way but it is up to each individual to accept or reject God's way of salvation.

Reason number three: To make reconciliation for iniquity (in Hebrew: to cover depravity). To look at this verse in a human context, if a teenager rejects their parents' instructions and does something against the family, the parents may want to forgive the incident but if the teenager wants to keep their distance, the parents cannot reconcile with their child. If however, the teenager accepts their parents' forgiveness and rejoins the family fold, reconciliation has occurred. That is what Jesus did for us. His sacrifice brought about forgiveness of our sin but we must respond to our Holy Parent and accept His way. Only then can genuine reconciliation on both sides take place.

Reason number four: To bring in everlasting, permanent, moral and spiritual righteousness. Mankind is a fallen race without any form of righteousness. Any righteousness we have is like dirty rags in the sight of God (Isaiah 64:6). Only by accepting Jesus and walking with God, can we attain to any righteousness (Romans 3:22). Our eternal life can only be assured by our willing walk with God. Jesus came to usher in righteousness to the earth. Before Jesus came only the Jewish people had access to the righteousness of God but after Jesus came, people who follow Jesus can be the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles alike.

Reason number five: To seal up or fulfil vision and prophecy (regarding the Messiah) and to anoint the Most Holy (in Hebrew: the Holiness of Holinesses). Before John the Baptist came people had the prophets and the Law of Moses. 'All the prophets and the Law (of Moses) prophesied up until John' (Matthew 11:13). Since Jesus the Anointed One came we live by faith and by the grace of God. Every vision and prophecy regarding Jesus' first coming has been fulfilled and thus sealed up forever. It is finished and it will never, ever happen again. Jesus came once only to bring salvation. Jesus our Messiah was anointed by God the Father when He rose up from His baptism by full immersion, the Holy Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove and the Lord God in heaven said, "This is My beloved Son (or You are My beloved Son) in Whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him" (Matthew 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35; 2 Peter 1:17). The anointing of Jesus took place at the end of Daniel's 69th week. When Jesus comes again He will be our eternal King.

Verse 25. 'Understand and discern, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem to the coming of the Anointed One the Prince (Jesus), will be seven weeks (49 years) and sixty-two weeks (434 years). The temple will be built again (the second temple) with street, city square and moat, even in troubled times. In Hebrew this verse reads; 'You will know and you will be intelligent from the going forth of the Word to return and to build Jerusalem until Anointed One, Governor be sevens seven and sevens sixty and two. You will return and she (Jerusalem) will be rebuilt the square and salient, in the constraint of the era'.

Verse 26. 'After the sixty-two weeks (434 years) the Anointed One (Jesus) will be cut off (crucified) not for Himself, and will have nothing (to His name and no one defending Him). Jesus was crucified in the middle of Daniel's 70th week. Just before Jesus died He ushered in a new covenant written in His blood (Luke 22:20). (Note: This is when the final 'week' of seven years begins and is fulfilled to the last detail.) The people of the other prince (Roman Emperor) who will come, will destroy the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary (second temple). Its end will be with a flood (of shed blood) and even to the end will be war (a violent civil war). Desolations are determined (persecutions of Jews and Christians).

Verse 27. Continuing the final 'week'. 'He (the Roman Emperor) will master a strong and firm covenant with many (not everyone) for one 'week' (seven years) and in the midst of the 'week' (3½ years later) he will cause the (animal) sacrifice and the (burnt) offering to cease (that happened in 70 AD with the destruction of the second temple). On the wing or pinnacle of abominations will come one (Titus Vespasian) who makes desolate (after the antichrist Nero) and even to the full end and that is determined. Wrath will be poured out on the (spiritually lost and) desolate."

The 'full end' was the total destruction of the temple, the cessation of animal sacrifices and the scattering of the Jewish people and the Christians to the far ends of the earth due to the

terrible persecution. This entire prophecy was fulfilled during the years of about 5 BC to about 75 AD. This all adds up to 'Daniel's Seventy Weeks'. It is completed and the last 'week' was included in the final destruction. God gave Daniel reasons for these events – to end disobedience to God, to end unatoned sin, reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in eternal righteousness, to seal up all visions and prophecies and to anoint the Most Holy Messiah. For people who accept Jesus' sacrifice, the results bring righteousness and the chance to have our sin forgiven.

When Jesus came to earth the first time He set up His eternal Kingdom, which will never end. This prophecy was also given to Daniel when he was a young man. 'In the days of those (pagan) kings will the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom which will never be destroyed, nor will its sovereignty be left to another people (the sovereignty was given solely to the Jewish People) but it will break in pieces and consume all these (pagan) kingdoms and it (the Kingdom of God) will stand forever' (Daniel 2:44). Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God has come near to you," or, "The Kingdom of God is at hand" (Luke 10:9 & 11: Mark 1:15). The 'Anointed One' in Daniel's prophecy was then called a Prince but once Jesus came to earth He became our King. 'Rejoice greatly daughter of Zion! Shout daughter of Jerusalem! Behold your King comes to you! He is righteous and having salvation, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey' (Zechariah 9:9). 'Tell the daughter of Zion, behold your King comes to you, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey' (Matthew 21:5). Jesus fulfilled this prophecy exactly down to the last detail, Nisan 3791 or April 32 AD – 476 years since the decree of Artaxerxes to build second temple and restore Jerusalem. This precise fulfilment of ancient prophecy and historical facts is very typical of the Messiah. It proves God is in complete control of His earth, every person and every situation. Daniel's 'Seventy Weeks' prophecies have all been fulfilled.

Some Jewish people who had carefully studied the prophecies knew exactly when their Messiah would come as is recorded in Matthew and Luke but the majority of Jewish people were caught unaware when He came. This made Jesus furious and He held them accountable for not recognising His first appearing. 'When Jesus drew near, He saw the city and wept over it saying, "If only you had known today the things which belong to your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. The days will come on you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, surround you, hem you in on every side and will dash you and your children within you to the ground. They will not leave in you one stone on another because you did not know (realise) the time of your visitation (of the Anointed One)" (Luke 19:41 to 44). This prophecy was fulfilled in 70 AD during the reign of Titus Vespasian. Hardly a stone was left on top of another when the temple caught fire and the gold ran between the stones inciting the greedy Romans to prise the stones apart to gather the gold. The fire caused the total destruction of the temple which in turn brought animal sacrifices and burnt offerings to cease, just as the Gabriel told Daniel. That was during the final of Daniel's Seventy 'Weeks'. The animal sacrifices had to end because Jesus was the Ultimate Sacrificial Lamb of God and no animal could make atonement for sin after Jesus died. The scriptures explain this.

'If the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled over those who have been defiled could sanctify to the cleanness of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Jesus, Who through the eternal Holy Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this reason Jesus is the Mediator of a New Covenant, since a death has occurred for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, so those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance ... It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins' (Hebrews 9:13 to 15; 10:4). Jesus was the Ultimate Sacrifice so animal sacrifices will always be in the past. If people sacrifice animals now, it is for no purpose. God has brought animal sacrifices to an end forever as prophesied in Daniel 9:27.

It may come as a surprise to some Jewish people, even today, to learn the Anointed One, our Messiah was going to be cruelly executed as predicted by prophecy. His first visit was to bring Salvation. After His second coming He will rule as our King. God's ability to reveal His divine purposes and His foreknowledge that were given to prophets, also reveals His absolute sovereignty and control over all matters. Jesus also revealed His Deity through prophecies.

Jesus wanted to open the eyes of the disciples by revealing to them, He would be betrayed and by whom so when it happened they would know He truly is God. "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen but so Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.' From now on, I tell you before it happens so when it happens, you may believe I AM. Truly I tell you, those who receive whomever I send, receives Me and those who receive Me, receives God Who sent Me." When Jesus had said this He was troubled in spirit and testified, "Most certainly I tell you, one of you will betray Me" (John 13:18 to 21). The disciples had to learn, Jesus was the Great I AM Who spoke to Moses in the burning bush. Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, before Abraham came into existence, I AM" (John 8:58).

All these prophecies regarding the Messiah are written in the Torah and Tenach, which are the Old Testament Scriptures. If the Jewish people had studied the Bible properly they would have been fully aware Jesus was the Messiah they were waiting for, and they would have known what Daniel meant when he wrote, "The Anointed One will be cut off." They should have known their Messiah was going to be killed. The result of ignoring what was written in the Scriptures resulted in the terrible burning of Jerusalem, the Jews being scattered worldwide, the destruction of the second temple and the spiritual blindness that came down over them. "He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, would turn to God and I would heal them" (John 12:40). That was a terrible price to pay for ignoring the Words of God in prophecy. The only hope mankind has is to believe in Jesus, accept His sacrifice, walk wholly with God with gratitude and repentance. 'The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand! Repent and believe in the Gospel' (Mark 1:15). 'In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as the Atoning Sacrifice for our sins' (1 John 4:10).

We know Jerusalem and Israel had to be prepared so the land was ready to receive the Messiah Jesus (Yeshua) the first time He came, so the temple was rebuilt and many Jewish people returned to their Holy Homeland, Israel. Jesus is coming again as our King so Jerusalem and Israel have to be prepared once again. As before, many Jewish people are returning to their Holy Homeland, Israel. The temple is different this time. Instead of the temple being made of human hands with stones and mortar, the new temple is made up of people who have become the righteousness of God by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus, people who are collectively the Temple of the Holy Spirit. 'Do you not realise you are a temple of God and the Spirit of God lives in you?' (1 Corinthians 3:16). 'Do you not realise your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have from God?' (1 Corinthians 6:19). 'What agreement has a temple of God with idols (sin)? You are a temple of the living God. As God said, "I will dwell in them and walk in them. I will be their God and they will be My people" (2 Corinthians 6:16). 'You are no longer strangers and foreigners but you are fellow citizens with God's holy people and of the household of God, being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Messiah Jesus Himself being the Chief Cornerstone in Whom the whole building, fitted together, (collectively) grows into a Holy Temple in the Lord, in Whom you are built together for a habitation of God in the Spirit' (Ephesians 2:19 to 22).

Amen and God bless you.

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