



Magnolia Bible Church Men's Group - Prophecy Series

Lesson #6: Daniel's 70 Weeks (Daniel 9:24-27)

Thursday, October 13, 2016

About the Time of the End, a body of men will be raised up who will turn their attention to the Prophecies, and insist upon their literal interpretation, in the midst of much clamor and opposition.

Sir Isaac Newton

No study of prophecy would be complete without a study of Daniel's 70th Week. Similar to what we have seen in other subjects over the past 5 lessons, this matter is not without some level of controversy! It seems to be that the root of many divisions in End Time discussions center around whether or not prophecies relate to *fulfilled* events or those *yet to be* fulfilled. Further, how one views God's work through the Church and a future state of Israel has profound impacts on interpretation. For example, if one holds that all unfulfilled prophecy in the Old Testament applies only to the Church and not Israel (a position known as the *Preterist* view¹), it is not possible to interpret any unfulfilled passages as future events that could take place with the nation of Israel; hence, we are then forced to conclude that any prophecies which clearly apply to the nation of Israel must have been fulfilled. This happens to be the case when studying Daniel's 70 weeks.

As with the premillennial and amillennial views (where the vast majority of churches espouse the amillennial viewpoint, including the Roman Catholic church), the interpretation of Daniel's 70 weeks as being unfulfilled is a minority position. However, it is the traditional view held and taught by most Bible churches and Dallas Theological Seminary. Jumping straight into our Scripture passage, provided below is Daniel 9:24-27 (NASB), a passage commonly referred to as the "Seventy Weeks and the Messiah",

²⁴ "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. ²⁵ So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. ²⁶ Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. ²⁷ And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the **middle of the week** he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

This passage is divided into three major color-coded sections that reflect the following:

- **RED:** This text clearly identifies that the passage applies specifically to the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem. Fortunately, there is no debate among competing viewpoints in verse 24!
- **BLUE:** The passage applies to the Messiah, or Jesus. It sets the context for the time period from the edict to rebuild Jerusalem (March 14, 445 B.C.) to Jesus' Triumphant Entry (April 6, 32 A.D.). Once again, few arguments exist among theologians when interpreting verses 25 and 26.
- **GREEN:** the prince referenced in this passage is the "Roman" prince; also as "little horn" in Daniel 7, the "man of sin" in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, and Revelation's antichrist. *The debate starts here...*

¹ Preterism holds that Ancient Israel finds its continuation or fulfillment in the Christian church at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. The term preterism comes from the Latin *praeter*, which Webster's 1913 dictionary lists as a prefix denoting that something is "past" or "beyond".

The main focus of this lesson is on verse 27; however, probably the most exciting passage centers around the math associated with the first 69 of the 70 weeks. **Figure 1** is provided that captures mathematical calculations completed by Sir Robert Anderson (1841 to 1918) where he traces the fulfillment of prophecy from the *rebuilding of Jerusalem* based on the command from Artaxerxes (March 14, 445 B.C.) to *Jesus' Triumphal Entry* into Jerusalem (April 6, 32 A.D.) as a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9. There are several key points:

- In the context of this passage a “week” is referred to as a 7-year period of time. The Hebrew word for “week” is *shabua*, which would be better interpreted as “seven”. Hence, 69 “sevens” would correspond to a period of time spanning 483 years (i.e., 69×7).
- Had the Jewish leaders of Jesus' time carefully studied Daniel (and not been so obsessed with their self-preservation and self-honoring agenda), like you and me (and our dear Brother, Sir Robert Anderson), they could have predicted not only the timing on the Messiah, but the time of His entry into Jerusalem; a day we refer to as Palm Sunday. I find the accuracy of this passage astounding!

Now, turning our attention to verse 27, I would like to “pick apart” this text and attempt to provide a rational explanation (not that those having differing opinions are irrational(!); I am just doing my best to interpret the text and also integrate insights from Matthew 24). Verse 27 is copied below:

And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.

Listed below are key points to support the notion that the 70th week of Daniel has not been fulfilled and is a future event constituting the events of the Tribulation Period.

1. A fundamental question is “who is *he*” in this verse? If we refer to verse 26 we read “the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.” The “he” here is not the Messiah that is referenced in the previous verses (**RED** and **BLUE** text); rather, this is a future prince from a nation that will destroy the city and the sanctuary. Seeing the nation as the Roman Empire and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD, it would seem that this future prince would be from a Revived Roman Empire (we will address this further when we get into Revelation). This future prince appears to be none other than the antichrist.
2. Verse 27 states that the prince will make a covenant with the many for one week (i.e., 7 year). Jesus never made a covenant with the Jewish people; however, in light of what we read in verse 7 the prince will make a covenant; likely, a “peace treaty” with the Jewish people in an effort to establish harmony with their opposition (I realize this peace treaty is not inferred from the Daniel 9 text).
3. It states that in the middle of the week he will put a “stop to sacrifice”. Even though Jesus died and alleviated the need for a sacrifice, animal sacrifices continued in Jerusalem for another 40 years until 70 AD. Once again, assuming that a future Temple will be built there is no reason to believe this cannot take place in the future.
4. The final point concerns “on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate.” I am less concerned with the meaning of this passage and more concerned with its timing. What helped me understand this passage was to go to Matthew 24 (copied on the next page) and read what Jesus said in referencing the prophecy of Daniel. Please note the following:
 - a. Before the passage in Daniel can be fulfilled, the Gospel must be preached around the world (Matthew 24:14). This did not happen immediately following Jesus' time on earth.
 - b. Jesus tells us that the tribulation associated with this time period will be the worst the world has ever seen. The Roman Empire 70 AD might have been bad, but not the worst the world will ever see (or has ever seen).

Matthew 24: 4-16 (NASB)

⁴And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. ⁵For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. ⁶You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for *those things* must take place, but *that* is not yet the end. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. ⁸But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pangs.

⁹"Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. ¹⁰At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. ¹²Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. ¹³But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. ¹⁴This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

¹⁵"Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains... ²¹For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. ²²Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

5. The end of the 70 weeks will be the end of the Tribulation Period, or the end of Daniel's 70th week. As reflected in Matthew 24, God had to cut the days short or all life would have been destroyed. Once again, this can only reference a future event. As reflected in Daniel 9:24, "to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*." Only the end of Daniel's 70 week occurring at a future date beyond 34 AD (refer to **Figure 3**) could seal up vision and prophecy; for the Epistles and even Revelation had not been completed by this point in time.

Finally, it should be noted that scholarly work has been conducted by those who believe that Daniel's 70 week was completed continuously without a "gap" as presented in this study; for this reason **Figure 3** has been included. As in everything we have done in this series, I want to emphasize areas of unity (like salvation through Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection and His Second Coming) as we seek to honor Christ and de-emphasize our differences. For in the end only God knows for the certain the specific details of prophecy ordained by Him that are yet to be fulfilled!

References

- McClain, Alva J., *Daniel's Prophecy of the 70 Weeks*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1040 and 1969.

Questions for Consideration

1. How does seeing the correlation of the first 69 weeks and the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem impact your confidence in Scripture and prophecy?
2. Considering the information that has been presented, are you in agreement with the interpretation of Daniel's 70th Week? If not, identify your differences?
3. Explain graphically (by drawing) the various stages of Daniel's 70th week. Feel free to reference **Figure 2** (and **Figure 3**, if so inclined).

Sir Robert Anderson's computation of the 2nd 70:

From decree to rebuild Jerusalem to cutting off of Anointed one is "**sevens SEVEN**" plus "**sixty two sevens**", SO:

7 + 62 is 69. 69 x 7 is 483. 483 years x 360 days (prophetic year) is **173,880 DAYS**

The edict to rebuild Jerusalem was issued **MARCH 14, 445 B.C.** (to the Jews this was the 1st Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes)

Christ entered into Jerusalem (the Anointed One to be cut off) was **APRIL 6, A.D. 32**

The intervening period was 476 YEARS AND 24 DAYS.

476 x 365 days (Julian) ----- 173,740 days

Add (14 March to 6th April, both inclusive) 24 days

Add for leap years - 116 days

TOTAL: **173,880 days**

Figure 1: Anderson's calculation for the "sixty-nine" sevens

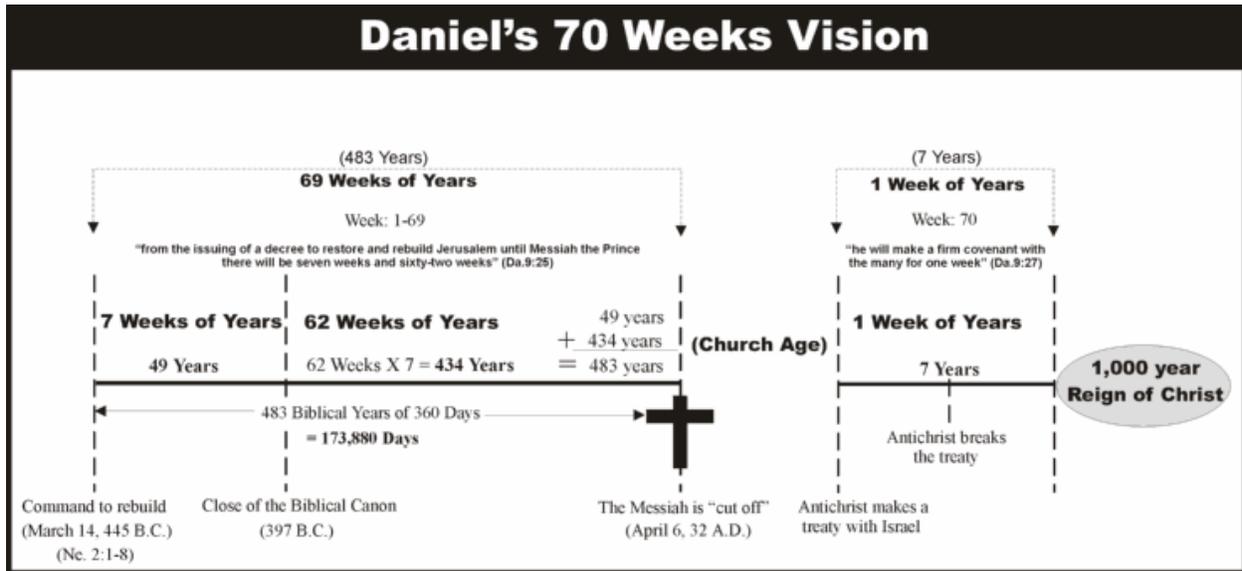


Figure 2: Daniel's 70 Weeks (assuming a "gap" position with unfulfilled prophecies)

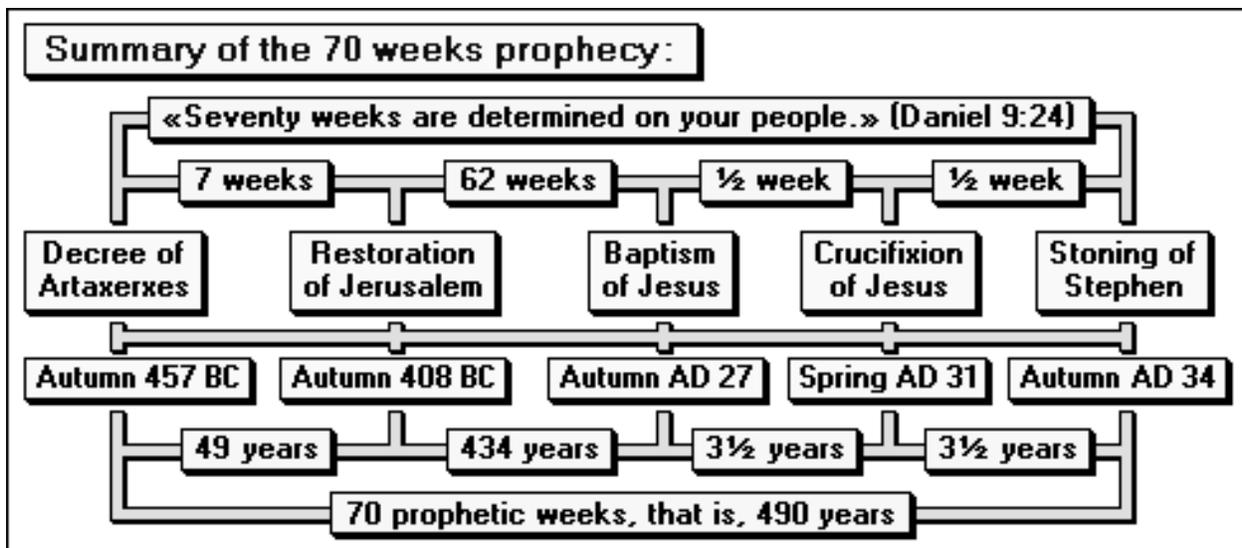


Figure 3: Alternative view of Daniel's 70 Weeks (Preterist View)