

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL 9

This morning I want to talk about what is known as Daniel’s Seventy Weeks. What the passage in Daniel does is that it creates a gap, an undetermined amount of time, between Week 69 and Week 70. That gap is seen as the time which represents what we call the church age. Because of Daniel’s prophecy and other biblical elements, the church age is often regarded as a **parenthesis** in God’s program as far as Old Testament prophecy is concerned. I personally do not like the term “parenthesis” because it seems to make the church to be an afterthought – which it certainly is not. [Ephesians 3:10-11](#) says,

Eph 3:10 (NKJV) to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, ¹¹ according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

The church is not just a parenthesis in God’s program, but it is something that has an “**eternal purpose**”. This was all planned before time even began. I prefer the idea that the church is another “dispensation” or another “age” in which God has worked differently than in previous dispensations. Much of this idea of the church being a “parenthesis” is derived from [Daniel 9:24-27](#), and what is commonly known as Daniel’s 70th week.

Da 9:24 (NKJV) "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, 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. ²⁵ "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. ²⁶ "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. ²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."

So, what we consider to be the church age up to the rapture of the church prior to the 7 years of Tribulation, occurs between the 69th week and the 70th week of [Daniel 9](#). [Daniel 9](#) is really a Bible series in and of itself, so what I present to you will be fairly limited, and will be the “elementary” and basic version of [Daniel 9](#) and its explanation. Once again, I am going to explain this from the Pre-millennial, Pre-tribulational view without trying to give you all of the alternate views. So, there is much that will not be stated.

The overwhelming consensus of theological scholarship agrees that the time unit of [Daniel 9](#) should actually be considered as years – not weeks. The English word for “**weeks**” is very misleading in that the actual Hebrew word is the plural of the word for “**seven**” (*shavuim*), and it is without any specific reference to days, months, or years. If it was to be translated as “weeks”, then the Hebrew word would be “*shavout*”, but that is not the case. Since the translation is the Hebrew word for “seven” and not “weeks”, it could be seven of anything, and it certainly does not have to be a “week”. It would be similar to the word “dozen” which simply means “twelve”. It could be twelve eggs, twelve pairs of shoes, or

twelve days. So, in the context of Daniel, it must be referring to a seven of “years” since Daniel has been dealing with years, and specifically the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity. The NIV actually translates it as “**seventy sevens**” (which may be the most accurate), the RSV translates it as “**seventy weeks of years**” (which is very good), and the Amplified says “**seventy weeks of years or 490 years**” (maybe the best). If a literal meaning is given to these verses, then the time units are regarded as prophetic years of 360 days each according to the Jewish custom of having years of 360 days, rather than 365 days. They occasionally insert an extra month to correct the calendar as needed. So, if seventy times seven is actually 490 years, then it begins in [Daniel 9:25](#) which states,

Da 9:25 (NKJV) "**Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.**

Now what this verse is clearly saying is that these 69 weeks that are mentioned are really 483 years or 69 weeks x 7 years/week. The chronology of when they begin is when there was a command “**to restore and build Jerusalem**”, and they end when the Messiah comes, or “**until Messiah the Prince**”. The reason that it says that “**there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks**” is because the seven weeks is 49 years, or the time that was required to rebuild the temple once the command was given. Historically, and according to the Jewish calendar, the time frame from the command to restore and rebuild was up until the time of the Messiah. So, the question after that is resolved is what is the 70th week that is mentioned.

One very important aspect for the Pre-tribulational view is the various terms in v24 referring to “**your people**” and “**your city**”. We all know that Jerusalem is the city that has been set apart by God, both in the past and in the future. So, when Daniel talks about “**your people**”, he is specifically talking about the Jews, about Israel. How do we know that? It is because he directly links and connects the people to their city. The focus of the program of the seventy weeks is specifically the Jewish people and the Jewish city of Jerusalem. As Christians, we are not physically connected to Jerusalem – maybe the new Jerusalem in the future, but not the old. So, to make this passage equivalent to the church as the other views do is to read into this something that is not there. The church as a spiritual entity in the New Testament has no relationship to the city of Jerusalem other than the fact that the early church was driven out of the city by persecution. The church has no relationship to Israel regarding their restoration or their repossession of the land which happened in 1948. The church did not repossess Israel, nor does the church now worship in Jerusalem. They are not related. The point of all of this is simple in that **the church is NOT the focus of Daniel’s 70 weeks.** At best, by Scriptural silence in [Daniel 9](#), the church is another dispensation or age that occurs between the 69th week and the 70th week (which would be the 7 year period of Tribulation). This only makes sense because the church is a “**mystery**” in the Old Testament and is not even mentioned.

So, what are the first 483 years, or the first 69 weeks of seven years, and when did they start and end? Those are the important questions to answer – and did they refer to the church. The answer is no – they did not and do not refer to the church. They refer to specific events that occurred in Israel and to the Jewish people. Generally, the date of **445BC** has been established and accepted as the date that King Artaxerxes Longimanus, who reigned over Persia from 465-425BC, commanded the rebuilding of Jerusalem. This date has been well documented by much research and is widely accepted as the year

that begins Daniel's first 69 weeks. Artaxerxes was also the one who commissioned Ezra to return to Jerusalem in 457BC. The date of 445BC is based on [Nehemiah 2:1](#) which says,

Ne 2:1 (NKJV) And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before.

The rest of this chapter basically describes Nehemiah's request to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild, as well as King Artaxerxes granting that request. If he started ruling in 465BC and this happened in the 20th year of his reign, then he gave this commandment in 445BC. This is not a date that is really contested at all – whether conservative or liberal. It is a well-established date theologically. A well-known biblical scholar named Sir Robert Anderson has made a very detailed study of the chronology of these dates. His conclusion is that the 69 weeks of seven (483 years) began on the first of Nisan, or March 14, 445BC, and ended on April 6, 32AD – which he believes to be the day in which Christ came into Jerusalem in His triumphal entry on a donkey. The computation is based on a 360 day Jewish year X 483 years (69 weeks of seven years), or 173,880 days. The Jews base their calendar on 12 months of 30 days/month, or 360 days in a year and then insert a 13th month when needed to correct the calendar. To give even more credibility to the use of a 360 day year, [Revelation 11:2-3, 12:6](#), and [13:5](#) speak of the forty-two months of the Great Tribulation as being equated with 1,260 days, or 360 days X 3.5 years.

Rev 11:2 (NKJV) But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.
³ And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

Rev 12:6 (NKJV) Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Rev 13:5 (NKJV) And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months.

The principal difficulty in Anderson's conclusions rests on the date of Christ's crucifixion in 32AD. Without making the issue complicated, what we (and most others) would agree on is that the death of Christ occurred AFTER the 69th week of sevens, or after the 483 Jewish years were completed. [Daniel 9:26 \(a\)](#) says,

Da 9:26 (NKJV) "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off...

The term “**cut off**” means to destroy or to kill. So, after the 69 weeks is completed, the Messiah will be killed. It does not say immediately after, or 5 days after, or give any specific time frame, so there is some conjecture relative to the exact timing. The obvious interpretation of this verse, however, is that it refers specifically to the death of Christ. As it relates to the chronology of the prophecy, it is evident that the Messiah will be living at the end of the 69th week of sevens, and will be crucified after that date.

So, what do we do with the 70th week? Does it refer to the next 7 years that follow the 69th? The Pre-tribulational view holds that there is a “gap”, or a dispensation, between the 69th week and the 70th week. Other views hold to what they call the “continuous fulfillment theory” where the 70th week immediately follows the 69th week. [Daniel 9:27](#) is where the differences in interpretation come to a climax.

Da 9:27 (NKJV) **Then he (the antichrist) shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he (the antichrist) shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."**

Those that believe the 70th week immediately follows the 69th week have no way of legitimately fulfilling what takes place in v27. Obviously, these events **DID NOT** occur immediately after the death of Christ, and they have not yet occurred. The actual offerings and sacrifices were not ended until 40 years after the death of Christ by the Romans when they destroyed the temple. So, from that perspective, there is great credibility to the events described in [Daniel 9:27](#) actually referring to futuristic events that coincide with Jesus' explanation in [Matthew 24:15](#) which says,

Mt 24:15 (NKJV) **"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),**

In the context of [Matthew 24-25](#), this is clearly a reference to the midpoint of the Tribulation. So, Jesus is referring to a very clearly defined event that happens in the middle of the 7 year Tribulation called the **"abomination of desolation"**. Obviously, this event occurs just ahead of the Second Coming which is very futuristic. So, let me summarize all of this as simply as I can.

1. The prophecies of [Daniel 9](#) refer to the history of Israel and **NOT** the church. It begins with Nehemiah in 445BC and extends all the way to the Second Coming of Christ.
2. In the first period of seven sevens, or 49 years, Nehemiah, Ezra, and others rebuild the city of Jerusalem, the temple, and the streets.
3. In the next period, the 62 weeks of seven, the Messiah is eventually born and is living at the end of these 69 weeks of seven.
4. Between Week 69 and Week 70, an **intervening gap** of time occurs which is the church age in which we live. You must remember that the church age was a complete **"mystery"** to the Old Testament Jews.
5. At the end of Week 69, Christ is crucified and resurrected. Scripture is specific that no man knows the day or hour in which this age will end, but in the Pre-tribulation view it occurs near or at the rapture of the church just prior to the beginning of the 7 years of Tribulation.
6. The 70th seven, or Week 70, is the 7 year Tribulation as described in [Matthew 24-25](#) and [Revelation 6-18](#). It begins with the anti-Christ, or the prince that is to come in [Daniel 9:26](#), making a covenant with Israel, then breaking that covenant after 3 ½ years. The remaining 3 ½ years describe a time of Great Tribulation where all of the protections and liberties previously granted to Israel in the first 3 ½ years are removed and they begin to suffer great persecution. This is marked by the **"abomination of desolation"** where the anti-Christ desecrates the temple and sets himself up to be worshipped as God. At this point in the prophetic timetable, he demands that everyone take the mark of the beast and that if they do not that they can neither buy or sell.
7. The culmination of the 70th week is the Second Coming of Christ where He establishes the Millennial kingdom.

Now, what is so encouraging to me is that I find great comfort and peace in knowing that God has already written history. [Daniel 9](#) is not in the Scriptures by mistake, and it certainly confirms everything that has prophetically taken place to this very moment in history. God's timing for all of these end time events will be perfect for those who trust Him, but for those who are unbelieving, it will be a rude interruption and awakening in their life that most likely they will never overcome.

I was reading through [2 Thessalonians 2](#) recently, and I was saddened by the fact that so many people will be left behind, and once that reality actually happens to them, their chances of coming to Christ are greatly diminished – no matter who they are, and no matter what they say they believe. [2 Thessalonians 2:11](#) says,

2Th 2:11 (NKJV) And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The word “**them**” represents all of those people who were not willing to receive the truth that they might be saved (v10). Most of those kinds of people, the “**them**” are those who have actually grown up in a church, or at least been exposed to the gospel in many different ways. In this context, I believe that “**the lie**” mentioned in v11 specifically concerns the midpoint of the Tribulation when the antichrist sets himself up as God in the temple in Jerusalem, and that people will actually believe that he is God. As wicked and deceptive as the antichrist will be, men will still choose to believe him over God. Men have this incredible propensity to believe anyone but God, and then revel in it. Then to make it worse, at that exact time God is going to send those people a “**strong delusion**” so that they will actually believe that the antichrist is God. It would be similar to what happened to Pharaoh when God kept hardening his heart. That is not a good thing, and once that happens they will be condemned by their choice to believe the antichrist and will take the mark of the beast. At that point, their fate is sealed. I can assure you if someone survives the first 3 ½ years of God's judgments, they will not survive taking the mark of the beast on their forehead or their right hand.

With all that God has done, and with all that God is still going to do to give people a chance to put their faith in Him, it is a tragedy beyond words that people still refuse to come to Christ and be saved. I have been saved for over 50 years and the only regret that I have is that I waited until I was 23 to put my faith in Christ. The difference between living in the light vs. living the darkness is not even describable. May God give us all the grace to be committed followers of Jesus Christ.