

Daniel Chapter 9 - Seventy Weeks

Thanks to Brother Russel for his introduction to this subject. The following is my contribution towards the understanding of this chapter.

Brother Russel highlighted this point about Daniel:

Daniel is one of the great prophets. Together with Noah and Job he is singled out as one of three men who spoke on behalf of God, as the contemporary prophet Ezekiel of his earlier years testified, 14v14&20.

What is remarkable about this is that Noah and Job were long dead. Their witness long established in the Holy Scrolls treasured and revered by the Jews. But Ezekiel included Daniel in his prophecy as a spokesman of God, who was still a living person. This means that Daniel as a captive in Babylon, had over a long lifetime of consistent Christian behaviour, become so well known that his reputation was established among all the Jewish captives, and exiles far and wide across the Babylonian empire. For Daniel to be included in this way is a testament to his courage, consistent message over many years, fame, lack of compromise to idolatry, open faith and obedience to the God of Isarel, and also shows that by comparing dates recorded in the Bible in parallel verses, that Daniel was when writing the later part of his prophecy a very old man.

Brother Russel highlighted the way that Daniel was so familiar with the writings of other prophets who were contemporary with at least part of his life. For example: Jeremiah. Quoting the prophecy of Jeremiah – *...In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.* This tells us also the way that there was a network of believers within the nation remaining in Judah, and throughout the Dispersed in the Gentile empire of Babylon and

Assyria, who held onto the words of Jeremiah, and took copies no doubt written by Baruch the scribe, (Jeremiah 45:1) and ensured that copies were sent to all those who would have appreciated the content. Such information was outlawed – we recall how the king of Judah took words of Jeremiah written on scrolls and threw them in the fire. (Jeremiah 36:23) Jeremiah himself was at one point thrown into the dungeon for his faith. (Jeremiah 38:6) To be in possession of his words therefore was dangerous. We can see a parallel in relatively modern times, when the Bible was highly treasured, but censored and outlawed in any language except Latin by the modern-day Babylon. (Men were burnt alive by the Roman Catholic Church for translating the Bible into native languages). Nevertheless, those powerful words contained therein have notified the readers of the signs of the sure return of the Messiah. So, we, you and me, can surely sense that thrill with Daniel when he read the words of Jeremiah and established that the end of the indignity of truth being trampled in the streets is not to last for ever, that there is light in the darkness, and the promises of God stand sure.

As the Persians took over the Babylonian empire, Daniel would have thought about the impact that would have upon his countrymen, his country and beloved city Jerusalem, he realised from a prophecy of Jeremiah that the period of the captivity of the Jews was set to expire. The passage he would have read would have been:

Jeremiah 25:11-12: And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

Daniel was not the only one who understood what Jeremiah was referring to. Ezra, the Divinely inspired scribe makes it clear what exactly Jeremiah was referring to: 2 Chronicles 36:20-23 *And them that had escaped from the sword carried he [Nebuchadnezzar] away*

to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years. Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia....(See the exact copy of these words in Ezra 1:1-2)

Thus the decree given by this Persian king was the beginning of the fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremiah. Later in this chapter, Daniel was given detailed information in a further revelation the things that would befall his people during the rule of the Gentiles over his people the Jews. But we will look at that prophecy of *seventy weeks* in a moment. **The fulfilment of this prophecy was not for Daniel's benefit**

Because in this chapter Daniel makes a remarkable prayer, and it was so heartfelt and powerful, that he was caused to write it down for generations following, that our faith might also be established.

Brother Russel emphasised the point that Daniel set his face to prayer. There was no casualness about it all. *And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.* We are often *instant in prayer* (Romans 12:12) that is spontaneous, when saying thanks, praising God, asking for help and so on. But there are times when special consideration is required, deep thought and meditation, in appealing to God especially over momentous events, which concern others for example. Daniel in his prayer gives a wonderful example.

Again, as Brother Russel mentioned, Daniel included himself with his people as he confesses their national sin. He uses every word he knows - sometimes more than once - to emphasise the depths to which the nation has sunk:-

they ...have sinned, committed iniquity, done wickedly, have rebelled, departed from precepts and judgments, not hearkened, have trespassed, have rebelled [again], not obeyed, not prayed, obeyed not [again] have sinned[again], have done wickedly [again]. This includes seven different ways to describe sin.

As Daniel knew by books the prophecies of Jeremiah, we can be sure he also knew the rest of the 'books' the scrolls of the Torah, the law, the histories, and the Psalms. This was embedded in his thinking. In his prayer for example, we see echoes of the words of Leviticus 26, of the great prayer of Solomon, and there are probably many other allusions to scripture there within his words. He refers to the curse of the law in 9:11: *the curse is poured upon us... that is written in the law of Moses*. In Leviticus 26 there was the promise that if Israel turned away from God and broke His covenant, God would turn His face against them, and allow them to be struck down by their enemies... if they walked country to Him, He would punish them seven times for their sins. This phrase is mentioned 4 times in this 26th chapter. Seven is in scripture associated with the idea of completion. God would execute complete punishment upon His people, exactly as He had determined – even to the very day He had decided. This we shall see in the fulfilment of the seventy weeks prophecy.

In the book of Daniel seven is very much used also in association with the judgements against both Israel and the nations. But also in Leviticus 26 towards the end of the chapter we can read: 40 -45 *If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. The*

land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God.

Well, Daniel was living when the land had enjoyed its sabbaths, the land had been free of the wickedness of the nation for seventy years, when the nation had been brought into the land of her enemies, and so Daniel reading this would have seen the words and seen himself in prophecy, and also seen the words... *If they shall confess their iniquity...⁴⁵ I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their fathers, ... that I might be their God: I am the Lord.*

So Daniel took it upon himself to do just that. He didn't think: *oh its not my place to*, or *I am not worthy*, not at all! He acted as a Mediator. He acted as Jesus Christ would. All Jesus servants should not shrink from praying on behalf of others, and asking that their backsliding be healed. That God may have mercy, and remember His grace, and compassion and give further opportunities for repentance.

Daniel thought very carefully about how he prayed. As we have seen he mirrors the text of Leviticus 26. He desires very much to draw nigh to God. In fact in this prayer the title YHWH is used 7 times – and is used nowhere else in the book of Daniel (except from chapter 9).

In the prayer Daniel confesses his own sins and the sins of his people. He explains what the sins were. He then justifies God in the punishments received: - *O Lord, righteousness belongs unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day...* He compares the supremacy of God, characterised as mercy and forgiveness, with the utter abjectness of him and his people *to us belongs confusion of faces...* He acknowledges that the terrible situation the nation faced,

being ruled over by one empire after another, being exiles in foreign lands was a direct result of their own disobedience, and lack of respect and gratitude for the God of their fathers, and exactly what God had said would happen to them had come to pass. But Daniel seeing the condition placed in Leviticus 26, saw that repentance and prayer was the only way things could be remedied, and so he continued in prayer, appealing to God to also show His mercy and forgiveness – for His own sake.

It is remarkable we notice that Daniel appeals to God not primarily for his own sake, neither for his nation's sake. But for the sake of the Name and Reputation of God.

Note verse 16-19: ... *I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem... because ... Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us....cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.* O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: ... O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

God manifestation, not human salvation was what concerned Daniel the most. The plight of his people was a shame and embarrassment to the Name of God among the nations. Let it be remedied!

As Daniel ended his prayer he echoed the tremendous prayer of Solomon: 2 Chronicles 6:21: *Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive...* Solomon repeated this appeal three times in his prayer... Daniel prayed: O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

What an emotional outpouring, so much feeling! Such pain and grief, yet such trust and faith coming out in his words. Is such passion a

feature of our prayers? ...*as great drops of blood falling down to the ground?* (Luke 22:44)

At this point, in vision came upon him, and the angel Gabriel came and visited him to speak with him. Gabriel means “God is my strength” Certainly strength was imparted to Daniel at this time.

Gabriel can mean also Warrior of God. This angel who stands in the presence of God was ensuring the great fulfilment of the plan and purpose of the Lord God. He was tasked with revealing it to Daniel. He was also tasked with ensuring its fulfilment. Exactly to the time proscribed.

This same Gabriel is only described as visiting three people out of the whole of those mentioned in Scripture: Daniel – twice, and Zacharias and Mary. Gabriel appeared to Zacharias to announce the last and greatest prophet – John Baptist who would prepare the way for the Coming of the Messiah, and Mary, now she would be the mother who would bare a son, and his name would be Jesus, who would fulfil the message of Gabriel given in Daniel Chapter 9; how he would atone for iniquity and bring in everlasting righteousness... *37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.* (Luke 1:37)

Daniel was told he was greatly beloved.

24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

The angel listed 6 requirements to be achieved by the close of the period of 70 weeks. Brother Russel showed us that each one was first accomplished in one man - Jesus Christ. (This is also explained in Exposition of Daniel by Bro. J Thomas in a lot more detail) That this was understood to be pointing forward to the appearance and work of the Messiah was well understood by the later believing Jewish

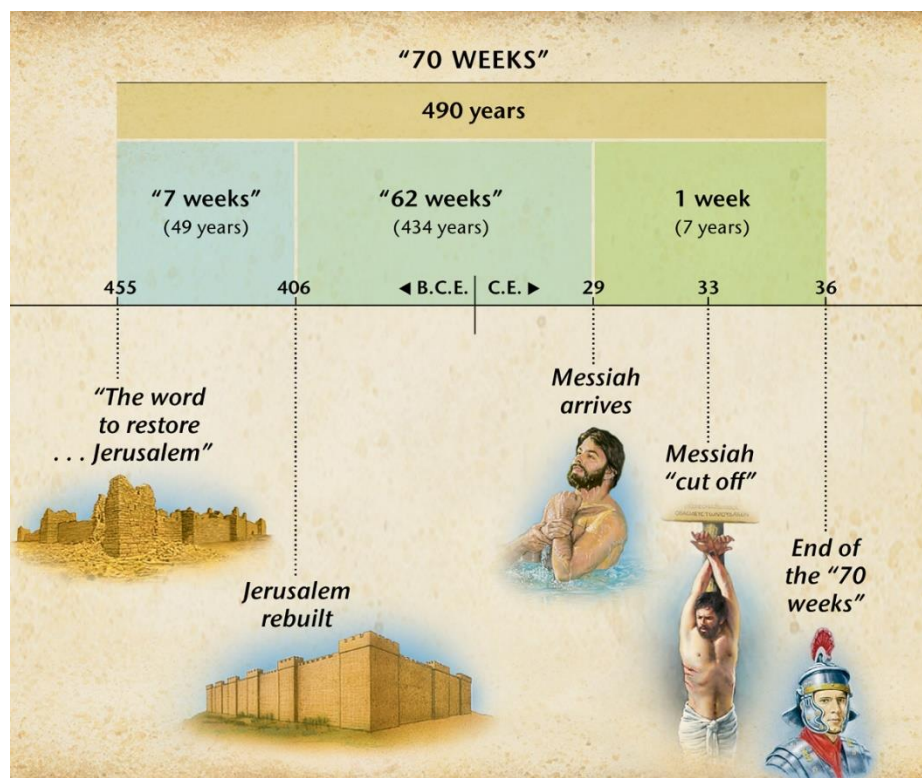
exiles so that *wise men from the east* knew the Messiah would soon be born see also Luke 3:15.

Just as the nation had endured seven times of exile – so the land could enjoy its sabbaths – so also the nation would live through another period of sevens (as per Leviticus 26) to achieve the next and most vital part of God's purpose with the world and man upon it.

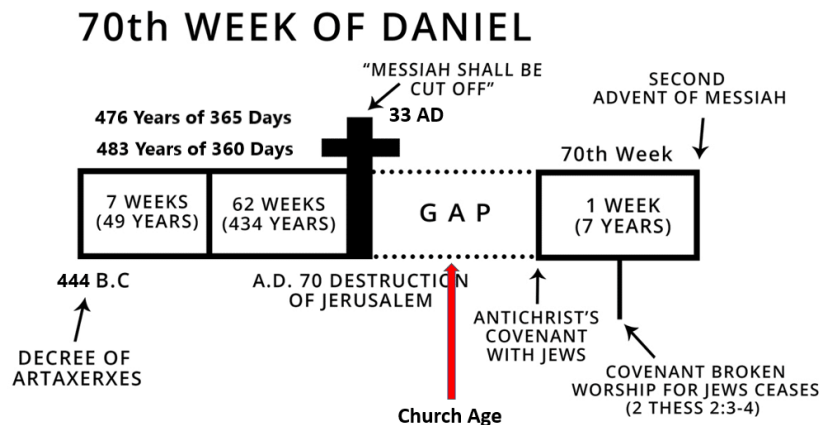
It was not a literal seventy-week period. Brother Russel mentioned a day for a year principle. This is a way to understand prophetic time periods, based on a pattern, an interpretation already given to us in scripture in passages such as Genesis 29:27, Numbers 14:34, Micah 7:15.

Daniel was informed therefore that 490 years would have to elapse before his appeal in his prayer could be fulfilled. To help future generations understand whereabouts they were living during this time period, The angel Gabriel broke down this time period into three parts. 7 weeks, 62 weeks and 1 week

The below diagram (not mine) shows the breakdown along with suggested dates:



There appears to be many arguments about the exact ruler, and dates, but the above chart seems to fit the requirements of the prophecy. Let us never be deceived by the false teaching of the apostate churches who present the following chart as the correct understanding. It is a lie.



There is no gap. Why should there be a gap? There is no scriptural reason. It is only a modern theory to fit the idea of the Great Tribulation idea of the Roman Catholic derived Pentecostal churches.

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9 was to show the First Advent of the Messiah not the second.

Verse 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:

Seven weeks 7×7 : 49 years, and 62 $\times 7$: 434 years.

The first period of 49 relates to the time when the decree went forth from Artaxerxes (actually the third decree - because this was when the work actually got going and was able to finally take place, despite previous decrees which were not acted upon for various reasons) This date was 455BC (argued about of course by various, so I would be pleased to understand other suggestions) It was in this time period that Ezra of whom we have referred to earlier and Nehemiah began the work of rebuilding the city of Jerusalem

the street [Hebrew can also be understood as the plaza or broadspace, gathering point] *shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.* During the time of this rebuilding, there was much jealous reaction from surrounding nations, as recorded by Ezra and Nehemiah. After this a further period of 434 years would pass and then the Messiah would be cut off. If the 455BC date suggested is accepted, adding 483 years(49+434) would arrive at the year AD 29, when the Lord Jesus was revealed to the nation by John the Baptist as ensured by the angel Gabriel. A further week or seven years would elapse before all of the six conditions laid down by the angel would be fulfilled.

Verse 26 *And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself:* (Original says *and shall have nothing*) but the Septuagint helpfully has for this phrase 'not for himself': *there is no condemnation in him.*

However, Daniel was told that even though the Prince would be cut off, - a great and wicked sin committed by the nation that would overshadow anything that Daniel had seen thus far, that the nation would be punished as a result (as per Leviticus 26, and Deuteronomy 28) that the city and temple so carefully restored would be destroyed once again. The Hebrew word used for cut off is *karat* the same word used for cutting a covenant.

and the people of the prince – the legions Jesus refers to in Matthew 26:53 – the Roman soldiers - *shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

But returning to the work of the Messiah before that, Gabriel continues:

27 *And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week* – or seven years: This was the confirming of the Promises made to the Fathers in the preaching of the New Covenant, the Commandments of Christ – during the life of Jesus until his death, and afterwards

until the fulfilment of this particular part of the Plan and Purpose of God, when the Gospel, the Covenant was opened to the Gentiles, by the preaching of the Apostles, perhaps the great conversion of the Roman centurion Cornelius was that symbolic moment, as the Holy Spirit fell upon him and his Gentile house –

Gabriel explained: *and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.* Through the cutting of the covenant in the sacrifice of Jesus, there remained no more sacrifice for sins, no more offering for sin – see Hebrews 10. The way into the holiest made possible by the blood of Jesus. The temple curtain was rent from top to bottom. No more need for the blood of bulls and goats – which were not effective anyway. To ensure this now defunct system would be done away, the angel continued..

and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate. The same Roman legions utterly destroyed the city, even the notion of a nation of the Jews. It would be desolate. A phrase mentioned 5 times in Leviticus 26, each time referring to the land.

271 'weeks' have passed since AD70 before the wall has been rebuilt again in troublous times. $271 \times 7 = 1897$. 1897 years from AD70 is 1967, when once more the Jews regained control of the temple mount in Jerusalem. How many more sabbaths of years must pass before the Second advent of the Messiah? Let us set our face to pray earnestly to God, that he remember the Confirmed Covenant for His Holy Names sake.

Brother Terry