

## THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL

\* \* \* THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING END TIMES CHRONOLOGY \* \* \*

S.L.H.  
Soli Deo Gloria!

"At the beginning of thy supplications, the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved. Therefore, **understand the matter** and consider the vision." (Dan9:23)

**Introduction.** The prophecy of the Seventy Weeks given by Gabriel in Daniel 9:24-27 is the key to understanding the framework of end time chronology, especially the 7-year Tribulation period. In the previous dreams and visions, God revealed to Daniel the exact sequence of Gentile empires (i.e., Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome in two phases) from his own day until Messiah brings the Kingdom of God to earth. In the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27, God reveals to Daniel that the exact period of time required for these empires to run their course will be "seventy weeks" [of years]. At the end of these 70 Weeks, the "times of the Gentiles" (Luk21:24) will be concluded, and under the righteous rule of King Messiah Israel will be exalted as head of the nations in the Kingdom of God (Deut28:13; Zech14:9-21).

**The Scope of the Prophecy.** Daniel 9:24 gives the overview of the entire 70 Weeks [see the CHART: *Daniel's Prophecy of the 70 Weeks*]. Israel's national history during "the times of the Gentiles" will be made up of "seventy weeks". This period of time has been "determined" [by God] (i.e., it is part of His divine plan; Isa46:9-11) and pertains to "[Daniel's] people" and "[Daniel's] holy city" (i.e., the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem). This is not a prophecy about the Church, nor does it pertain to the Church *in any way*; it is a prophecy concerning the nation of Israel.

This period of time (i.e., all 70 Weeks) is required in order to accomplish 6 things:

- 1) "finish the transgression" – end Israel's rejection of Messiah and receive Jesus as King (Hos5:15; Zech12:10; 14:9; Matt23:39)
- 2) "make an end of sins" – inauguration of the New covenant with Judah and Israel (Jer31:31-34; Rom11:27; Heb8:8-12)
- 3) "make reconciliation for iniquity" – the propitiation of Christ must be applied to national Israel (Isa53:5; Rom11:26)
- 4) "bring in [an age of] righteousness" – establish the Millennial Kingdom (Isa11:1-5; Rev20:1-6)
- 5) "seal up the vision and prophecy" – complete all prophecies for Israel (i.e., the promises of the Abrahamic, Land, Davidic, and New covenants will be fulfilled)
- 6) "anoint the most Holy [Place]" – Millennial Temple established and operational (Ezek40-48; Zech6:12-13)

Note Concerning "Weeks". The Hebrew word rendered "weeks" in many English translations is simply the plural of the number 7. Whereas in English the word "week" denotes 7 days, this is not so for the Hebrew word (perhaps the English word 'heptad' would be more appropriate). The Hebrew word simply denotes a unit of 7, and the context determines what comprises those units. Hebrew society was divinely organized around a multitude of "weeks" (i.e., sevens). The Sabbath was celebrated after a week of days (Lev23:3). The Feast of Weeks (i.e., Pentecost) was celebrated after a week of weeks (Lev23:15-22). The cycle of Jewish festivals were organized according to a week of months (Lev23:4-44). The Sabbatical year was celebrated after a week of years (Lev25:1-5). And the Jubilee Year was celebrated after a week of Sabbatical years (Lev25:8-24). The context of Daniel 9, where Daniel has been studying Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the Babylonian captivity of the nation of Judah, is **years**. Judah was dispersed out of the Land of Israel and held captive in Babylon for 70 years (Jer25:11; 29:10), in part because the nation neglected to observe the Sabbatical year for 490 years (2Chron36:20-21); with the Jews out of the Land for 70 years, the Land received the "rest" it required (Lev26:33-35). Thus, the prophecy of the 70 "weeks" is a prophecy concerning 70 weeks of years, or 490 years. The Babylonian captivity was a result of 490 years of disobedience on the part of the nation of Israel/Judah; Gabriel informed Daniel that the future history of Israel involves another period of 490 years.

**The First 69 Weeks.** Daniel 9:25, recorded by the prophet Daniel in the 6th century BC, contains a prophecy of **the exact day** on which Messiah (i.e., Jesus Christ) would "come" to the nation of Israel. The Messiah

Artaxerxes, Old Persian ARTAKHSHATHRA, name of Achaemenid kings, grouped below chronologically and indicated by the symbol •.

- Artaxerxes I (d. 425 BC, Susa, Elam [now in Iran]), Achaemenid king of Persia (reigned 465-425 BC).

He was surnamed in Greek Macrocheir ("Longhand") and in Latin Longimanus. A younger son of Xerxes I and Amestris, he was raised to the throne by the commander of the guard, Artabanus, who had murdered Xerxes. A few months later, Artaxerxes slew Artabanus in a hand-to-hand fight. His reign, though generally peaceful, was disturbed by several insurrections, the first of which was the revolt of his brother the satrap of Bactria. More dangerous was the rebellion of Egypt under Inaros, who received assistance from the Athenians. Achaemenid rule in Egypt was restored by Megabyzus, satrap of Syria, after a prolonged struggle (460-454). In 448 fighting between the Achaemenids and the Athenians ended, and in the Samian and Peloponnesian wars Artaxerxes remained neutral; toward the Jews he pursued a tolerant policy. His building inscriptions at Persepolis record the completion of the throne hall of his father. The tomb of Artaxerxes is at Naqsh-e Rostam.

would come 69 "weeks" of years after the decree to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and its walls (not the Temple). This decree to allow the rebuilding of Jerusalem was issued by the Persian Emperor Artaxerxes in the 20th year of his reign (Neh2:1).

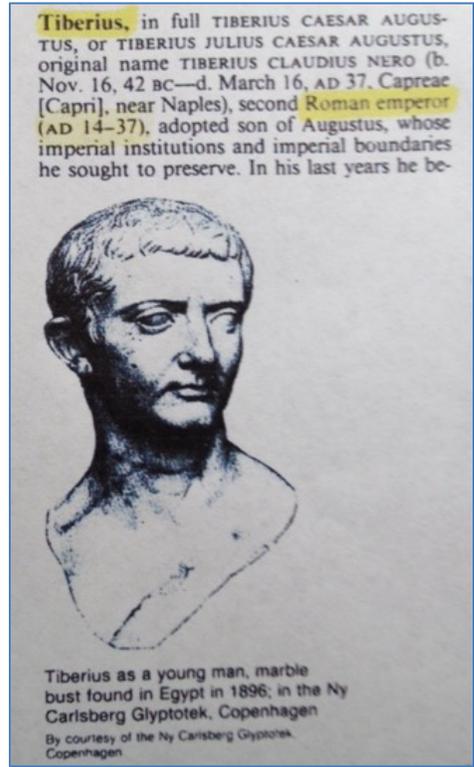
The date of the reign of Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) is known with great precision from secular sources. The Encyclopedia Britannica gives the dates of his reign as 465-425 BC, so the 20th year of his reign was 445 BC. With no date within the month of Nisan specified in Neh2:1, the 1st of Nisan is considered to be implied by traditional Jewish reckoning. The date of Nisan 1, 445 BC on the Jewish calendar corresponds to March 14, 445 B.C. on our modern calendar (where reconciliation of the chronological information is taken from Sir Robert Anderson, The Coming Prince).

Daniel's prophecy states that after 69 "weeks" [of years], beginning from March 14, 445 BC, the Messiah would "come". The Biblical or prophetic year is made up of 360 days; this is true throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation (Cp., Gen7:11; 8:3-4; Rev12:6,14;

13:5). Converting these weeks of years into days gives (69 weeks)x(7 years/week)x(360 days/year) = **173,880 days**.

To work in our modern calendar, this number of days must be converted to 365-day years: 173,880 days ÷ 365 = 476 years, with 140 days left over. Adding 476 years to 445 BC gives 31 AD. However, there is no calendar year "0", so an additional year must also be added, taking the termination of the prophecy to the year 32 AD (i.e., the year the Messiah would "come").

There remain two details for which to account: 1) the 140 days left over, and 2) leap years. In 476 years there are apparently 476 ÷ 4 = 119 leap years; however, only every 4th 'century' year, which would normally be a leap year, is reckoned as a leap year. In 476 years there are 4 'century' years, three of which are NOT leap years. So, from 119 apparent leap years 3 must be subtracted, giving 119 - 3 = 116 actual leap years. Since leap years include an additional day, there are 116 too many days in the working total. Correction for these extra days is accomplished by subtracting them from the 140 'left over' days, still leaving 140 - 116 = 24 days. These 24 days are added on to the



starting date of March 14 to arrive at April 6. Thus, Daniel's prophecy is that the Messiah of Israel would "come" to the nation of Israel on **April 6, 32 AD**. The calendar for the month of April in 32 AD is:

APRIL 32 AD						
S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Passover always occurs on the 14th of Nisan. In the year 32 AD, Passover fell on April 10th, which as seen above was a Thursday. This particular Thursday Passover was the CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST! This year is can be pin-pointed as the year of the crucifixion because it is known that John the Baptist began his ministry during the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (Luk3:1). The Encyclopedia Britannica gives the reign of Tiberius as 14-37 AD; thus, the 15th

year of his reign would be 29 AD. The first year of John's ministry was the year of Jesus' baptism and the start of His public ministry. The gospels record that his public ministry lasted for three Passovers, or just over 3 years, ending in his crucifixion. Thus, by this reckoning it is independently confirmed that the crucifixion of Christ occurred in 29 + 3 = 32 AD.

April 6th in 32 AD, the termination of Daniel's 69 Weeks, was the Sunday before the crucifixion of Christ. The Church refers to this particular Sunday as 'Palm Sunday' or 'the Triumphal Entry', the day that Christ rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, officially presenting

Himself to Israel as the Messiah in the precise manner prophesied in the OT (Zech9:9; Cp., Matt21:1-9; Mk11:1-10; Luk19:29-38; Jn12:12-16).

What is sobering is that Jesus gives the failure of the Jewish nation to recognize the prophesied day of His coming as the reason for the 2nd destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD (Luk19:41-44). Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks gave the precise day on which the Messiah would officially appear to the nation of Israel, and Jesus held the Jewish nation accountable to both "know" and "understand" this prophecy!

**A Gap between the 69th and 70th Weeks.** Daniel 9:26 inserts a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks. Note, "after" the 62 weeks have been completed (and since the 62 weeks follow the 7 weeks in v25, this is equivalent to saying after the 69 weeks have been completed), but before the 70th week begins (v27), at least two events are said to occur. Thus, it must be recognized that there is an explicit gap of time, of *unspecified duration*, that is to take place between the end of the 69th week and the beginning of the 70th week; **the 70th week does not immediately follow the 69th week**. The 69th week ended with the 1st coming of Jesus Christ to the nation of Israel in 32 AD, and the 70th week is yet to begin, so that the gap of time represented by this verse has gone on for almost two thousand years.

The first event mentioned is that "Messiah [shall] be cut off, but not for Himself"; this is a direct reference to the death of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for the sins of the world (Isa53:8; Jn1:29), which occurred on April 10, 32 AD (4 days following the 'Triumphal Entry'). The second event mentioned is that the [rebuilt] city of Jerusalem and the Temple will be destroyed by an invading army (Luk19:43-44; 21:20-24), which occurred in 70 AD. This destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple would be by "the people of the prince that shall come". The "prince that shall come" is a designation for the Antichrist (v27). Since it was the Roman army that destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD, this necessitates that the future Antichrist will be Roman; as the "little horn" (i.e., Antichrist) arises out of the "fourth beast" (Dan7:7-8), which represents the 4th and final Gentile empire, it is known with certainty that the 4th Gentile empire of Daniel 2 & 7 is the Roman empire.

**The 70th Week.** Daniel 9:27 reveals that the final, 70th week will begin when "he" (referring back to "the prince that shall come" in v26; i.e., the Antichrist) enforces a covenant (i.e., a peace treaty that Isaiah calls "a covenant with Hell"; Isa28:15,18) with Israel for 7 years. However, at the midpoint of that 7-year period of time, Antichrist will commit the "abomination of desolation" (Matt24:15), historically prefigured by Antiochus Epiphanes (Dan8:10-12; 11:31); this includes putting an end to "the sacrifice and the oblation" (the bloody and the non-bloody offerings in the Temple), setting up an idol in the Holy of Holies (Rev13:14-15), and from the Holy of Holies demanding worship of himself as God (2Thess2:4; Rev13:12,15). This prophecy necessitates the future rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, and requires that it be functioning with sacrifices by the midpoint of the 70th week; it does not have to be rebuilt by the start of the 70th week, and it may well be that the terms of the Antichrist's peace treaty with Israel include a provision for rebuilding the Temple.

This 70th week is the yet future 7-year Tribulation period. Note that it begins with the Antichrist's peace treaty with Israel, not the Rapture of the Church (i.e., the pre-tribulational Rapture of the Church will take place before the Tribulation period begins). Much more elaborate details regarding the 70th week are given in Revelation 6-19, which covers this very same period of time. The 70th week ends with the destruction of Antichrist at the 2nd coming of Christ (2Thess2:8; Rev19:11-21), when "that determined shall be poured upon the desolat[or]".

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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