

politically, and geologically during that heptad of years with which this age will close. So, as Bible students may see, this final seven-year block of time, divided at the midpoint, which marks the boundary between the first and the last 3<sup>1/2</sup> years, is a central focus of the prophetic Scriptures. Let us now turn to the Biblical Book of Daniel for the context of this highly important dated prophecy.

## The Chronological Backbone of Prophecy

*“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” (Dan. 9:2).*

The prophecy of the seventy weeks was given in response to Daniel’s landmark prayer. But his prayer actually was prompted by a thoroughgoing study of the prophetic Word of the Lord, given in a dated revelation to Jeremiah. The passage(s) under perusal seems to have been Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10, which reads, *“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; For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.”*

Daniel recognized that he was living in a unique era of prophetic fulfillment. He understood from Jeremiah’s inspired prediction that he was living in the 67<sup>th</sup> year (BC 539) of their captivity, and only approximately three years remained until the time of the promised restoration. Babylon had by this time fallen to

the Medes and Persians (Daniel 5:30,31). His was a period of fresh prophetic fulfillment, and in anticipation of the promised restoration from captivity, Daniel set his face to God to seek by prayer and supplication in order that the process which had been set in motion by the fall of Babylon might be brought to completion. He thus participated in the eternal purpose of God for Israel through prayer. Such prayers, based upon God’s Word of promise, and a thoroughgoing confession of sin (Dan. 9:5,6,20), are always heard (9:23). Consider for a moment the fruit of this Scripture-guided prayer. Cyrus came under the mysterious influence of a supernatural stirring in BC 536, which resulted in an edict granting the Israelites the right of return (Ezra 1:1); the heart of a remnant was stirred to join Zerubbabel in the long trek back home in BC 536; later, in BC 458 Ezra, the ready scribe returned with a remnant, according to the hand of God upon him (Ezra 7:6); and then, in a third return, Nehemiah in BC 444 came to rebuild the broken walls and restore the gates of Jerusalem; all of this, and much, much more as a result of one man’s prayers. And may not our prayers, mingled with angel incense (Rev. 8:3), be poured out in their Kingdom-establishing, Satan-overthrowing, and soul-saving power for many generations to come?

## God’s Further Purpose

*“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” (Daniel 9:24).*

Gabriel informs Daniel, however, that the ultimate answer to his desire and prayer for Israel, and God’s further purpose, will not be exhausted by a return to the land, but by a return of the nation to its Messiah. Moreover, he is told that God’s disciplinary process whereby Israel will be prepared to receive the

Lord Jesus will involve more than seventy years of Babylonian captivity; it will involve *seventy times seven*, or 490 long years of suffering under foreign domination, and periodic revivings until the “times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24; Rev. 11:2) have fully run their course, and had their desired effect. Gentile world power, according to chapter 2 and chapter 7 of Daniel, will involve the rise and fall of successive world empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Rome again in its final form of a ten nation confederacy ruled over by “the prince that shall come” (Daniel 9:27), or chapter 7’s “little horn” (Daniel 7:8) that speaketh great things. The שבעים שבעים-seventy sets of seven-year periods, though technically referring to seventy heptads in general, are contextually determined here to be years, since the six results of God’s disciplinary dealings with the city and the people could not have conceivably been produced, either in seventy weeks of days or seventy seven-month periods.

Note also, dear reader, that these units of time are *determined*, (דִּקְדָּקָה- ‘decreed, marked out, determined’). God never deals with His people haphazardly, or by happenstance. Just as the exact number of years of the Babylonian captivity, and the 490 years of Israel’s further refinement have been fixed by Divine decree, so the times that go over God’s saints (I Chron. 29:30), are in God’s hands (Ps. 31:15). He will not suffer His people to be tempted above that which they are able (I Cor. 10:13), but will shorten the days and limit the time for His elect’s sakes (Matt. 24:22). The six results of God’s extended activity concerning national Israel and the holy city are as follows:

- *To finish the transgression* [rebellion], לְכַלֵּא הַפְּשָׁע, The rebellion which stoned the prophets, precipitated the destruction of Jerusalem in BC 586, and crucified their Messiah Jesus will, by purging judgments (Eze. 20:38) and the operation of the Spirit of grace (Zech. 12:10), be reversed at the close of the Great Tribulation, as with godly sorrow they say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matt. 23:39).

- *To make an end of sins.* וְלִקְחָתֶם הַפְּשָׁאִים. What a glorious day that will be when a fountain is “opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness” (Zech. 13:1). Though the fount has been opened provisionally in the objective fact of Christ’s shed blood (Rom. 3:25), it will then become a personal and subjective reality when Israel is given repentance to behold Him whom they have pierced and mourn with godly sorrow (Zech. 12:10). Then shall a remnant, whom the Lord shall call (Joel 2:32), return wholeheartedly to the Lord (Isa. 10:21), do no iniquity (Zeph. 3:13), and be holy even as He is holy (Isa. 4:3).

- *To make reconciliation for iniquity.* וְלִכְפֹּר עֲוֹן. The great prophecy of the seventy sevens envisions a coming Day of Atonement, when the implications of the Old Testament observance will be fulfilled in fact for the whole nation. When Jesus gives repentance unto Israel (Acts 5:31), the objective reality of Calvary will become personal experience for the Jewish nation, as God removes the iniquity of that land in one day (Zech. 3:9). On that day, when Israel as a nation recognizes that they have by wicked hands crucified the Lord of glory, they will be thrown into the soul agony of great mourning, as God gives them godly sorrow that worketh repentance (II Cor. 7:10). Zechariah describes the scene: *“In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart”* (Zech. 12:11-14). It is at that time that God will apply the provisions of the New Covenant to the penitent nation, and all Israel shall be saved (Jer. 31:31; Rom. 11:25-27).

- *To bring in everlasting righteousness.* צְדָקָה עֲלָמִים וְלִקְבִיא. God will at the close of the seventieth week of years institute an age characterized by never-ending righteousness. This new society will match the renewed status of the nation before God. Justified by grace through faith (Rom. 5:1), they will cling to the Lord Jesus as Yahweh their righteousness (Jer. 23:5,6), Who will Himself reign in righteousness (Isa. 32:1) and decree justice as King over all the earth (Zech. 14:9). Thus, before the introduction of an age of righteousness, there must be a removal of sin, by the sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 9:26), Who made reconciliation (atonement) for iniquity (Dan. 9:24), thereby finishing the rebellion of His people and making an end of sin.

- *To seal up the vision and prophecy.* וְלִחְתֹּם הַזִּוְנִים וְנָבִיא. Seventy weeks of years, and in particular the final seven years, will be required to bring to completion the predictions of the prophets concerning the gathering and judgment of the Gentile nations (Joel 3:1,2; Zeph. 3:8; Zech. 14:1-3), the ultimate salvation of Israel (Rom. 11:26,27), and the ushering in of a Kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness (Isa. 9:7). During Daniel's seventieth week the seventh angel shall sound and the mystery of God's secret purpose of a coming Messianic Kingdom will be fulfilled: *"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets"* (Rev. 10:7); *"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever"* (Rev. 11:15).
- *To anoint the most holy.* וּלְמַשְׁחָה קֹדֶשׁ גְּדוֹשִׁים. The holy of holies, the inmost shrine in the Millennial temple to be built by Jesus when He returns to Earth (Zech. 6:12,13; Eze. 41:4), will be graced and glorified and anointed by the Person of the great King, Messiah Jesus, Who sits enthroned in the most holy place. Thus, would God's greater purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus (Eph. 3:11), be fulfilled in the latter days when He sits upon the throne of His glory (Matt. 25:31).

## After Sixty-Two Weeks

*"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: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off; but not for himself: and the people of the prince that 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"* (Daniel 9:25,26).

At the end of 69 weeks (7+62), or 483 years from the edict of Artaxerxes to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in March, BC 444, Messiah the Prince would become a visible figure to the nation. Taking into account the translation of prophetic months and years into Gregorian calendar terms, leap years, etc., 483 prophetic years from March 5, BC 444 would bring us to March 30, AD 33, the exact day that Jesus made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44)! At this point Israel rejected its rightful King, crucified Him after the sixty-second week, and suffered the punishment of the AD 70 siege of Jerusalem under the Roman general, Titus. But in

addition to Messiah Prince there is mention made of another prince—a Roman, earthly, political prince. This is none other than the endtime man of sin, the Antichrist. And since the armies that vanquished Jerusalem in AD 70 were primarily the legions of Rome, this political figure must be the leader of the fourth world empire, Rome, in its latter-day, final phase (Daniel 7:23,24; Rev. 17:12). This mysterious figure will play a significant role in the final, seventieth week.

Thirty-seven years or so after the rejection of Christ, the nation was scattered in a worldwide dispersion (Luke 21:24), and Jerusalem began to be trodden down of the Gentiles. National Israel was therefore temporarily set aside, the church of Jesus Christ was born on Pentecost (AD 33) and the long interval of the interadvent period commenced. But God would once again resume His dealings with Israel in the years leading up to the final seven years of human history as we know it.

## The Final Seven Years

*"And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (Daniel 9:27).*

The focus of Daniel 9:27 is upon the final seven years of history prior to the Second Advent of Christ and the establishment of the Mediatorial Kingdom. This period, known as "Daniel's 70th week," or "the Tribulation" (the last 3<sup>1/2</sup> years of which are the "Great Tribulation"), is the subject of much attention in the Biblical revelation of earth's closing scenes. It occupies a place of prime importance geopolitically, spiritually, and religiously in last day global affairs.

This period commences with "a covenant" that is confirmed with the nation of Israel in a state of unbelief in regard to the gospel of Christ (Rom. 11:28). The "prince that shall come" (v. 26) will broker this agreement (וְהַגְבִּיר בְּרִית לְרַבִּים) with "the many," or "the majority" for seven years. This pact will evidently bring a temporary settlement to Middle East hostilities, while gaining global fame

for the "man of sin," whose true character will be momentarily concealed by his phenomenal success in peace-making gestures. He will no doubt ride a high wave of popularity after solving the world's most pressing political conundrum. He will seem to be the consummate politician, excelling in both war (Rev. 13:4; Dan. 7:24) and peace (Dan. 9:27; 8:25). The world will be revelling in this newfound sense of peace and security, when suddenly the Beast's unmitigated fury will be unleashed upon the unsuspecting world. While his agreement may have granted Israel the political right to rebuild the temple and resume Levitical animal sacrifices, after 3<sup>1/2</sup> years, he will cause the sacrifices to cease and move against Israel militarily, intruding into God's domain and sitting in the temple, "shewing himself that he is God" (II Thess. 2:4). During this period, an image of the Beast (man of sin) will be installed in the holy of holies of the Tribulation temple, an abomination standing in the holy place (Matt. 24:15), that causes worshippers to desert the temple. At this midpoint of the week, a global crisis of nightmarish conditions begins to prevail. Military movements culminating in the final battle of Armageddon will sharply increase and horrific, supernatural judgments will pummel the earth (the trumpet and vial judgments of Revelation). This worldwide affliction is called by Jesus great tribulation: *"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be"* (Matt. 24:21). And at the close of these final 3<sup>1/2</sup> years the Lord shall come to destroy the Antichrist and his armies and assume His rightful place as acknowledged Lord of lords and King of kings. These final seven years are even now casting their long shadows. Would you escape the woes to come? Call on Christ in sincerity. Repent of all known sin. Confess Him before men (Matt. 10:32). Begin by God's grace to live a godly life in Christ Jesus (II Tim. 3:12). Pray always that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things (Luke 21:36).

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# THE Latter-day Chronology

Central to any discussion about the Divine program of endtime events is the important question of chronology: the study of *what happens when*. And Christians are abundantly blessed in that God has condescended to give predictions of detailed time notices in regard to the last seven years of human history. This seven-year period, commonly known as "Daniel's seventieth week," or "The Tribulation Period" because of the unprecedented throes and woes to which a world under judgment will be subjected (Rom. 8:20-23), is clearly delineated by chronological markers in the Old Testament book of Daniel (Daniel 9:27), highlighted by our Lord in the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24:8-31; note "the beginning" of v. 8, the "abomination" of v. 15, and the "immediately after" of v. 29), and referenced by Paul in II Thessalonians 2:1-5, as being a period when the man of sin is revealed and ventures to sit in the very temple of God. Then, in a much more comprehensive manner, the Book of Revelation details the signal judgments that will shake the world spiritually, socially, economically,