

DANIEL'S 70 WEEKS

(Daniel 9:20-27)

1) The historical context.

- a)** Jeremiah prophesied that the Jews would be in captivity for 70 years (Jeremiah 25:12).
- b)** It was to last 70 years because, for 490 years, the Jews had ignored the command to allow the land to rest every 7 years.
 - i)** Leviticus 25:1-7 records this command.
 - ii)** 2 Chronicles 36:21 lets us know that the Israelites would spend 1 year in captivity for each Sabbath year they had neglected, resulting in a 70 year captivity.
- c)** Based on his study, Daniel realized the 70 years were almost accomplished and in the first year of Darius, around 538 BC, Daniel prayed to God about the situation.
- d)** God, through Gabriel, would reveal to Daniel what would happen to the city, but more importantly, that there would be an Anointed One would come.

2) The timeline of the 70 weeks.

- a)** To understand the time, we need to know that weeks is probably better translated "sevens".
 - i)** What we have is a period of 70 7's.
 - ii)** Most commentators believe this to be 490 years.
 - iii)** There is some debate but this is what most believe.
- b)** Six things would happen during the 490 years.
 - i)** The transgression would be finished - finished means to fill up and seems to mean that the sins of the Jews would be filled up, or reached an end.
 - ii)** To make an end of sin – most believe this to be a reference to the end of the sin offering because of what Jesus did on the cross.
 - iii)** To make reconciliation for iniquity – our Lord made possible the ability to be reconciled to God through His offering of Himself on the cross.
 - iv)** To bring in everlasting righteousness – the gospel system allows one to be righteous before God.
 - v)** To seal up the vision and prophecy – the death of Jesus on the cross was envisioned and foretold by the prophets and this brought it to an end.
 - vi)** To anoint the most Holy – this is a reference to Jesus being anointed as King, with Jesus being referred to as prince in verse 25.
- c)** The 490 years would begin with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem.
 - i)** There are three possibilities as to what this means.
 - (1)** Some believe it was the decree of Cyrus to go back to Jerusalem, but his decree was to rebuild the temple not the city, which was given in 536 BC.
 - (2)** Some believe it was when Ezra took a group back to Jerusalem in 457 BC.

- (3) Some believe it was when Nehemiah was sent, recorded in Nehemiah 2, which was around 444 BC.
- ii) There is a tremendous amount of debate about this.
- iii) However, the first set of 7's, or 49 years fits best with the sending of Ezra in 457 BC.
 - (1) Notice Ezra 7:6-7 and Ezra 9:9.
 - (2) It seems as if Ezra was also commanded to build the walls.
- d) This also sets up with the next group of 7's, threescore and two weeks, or 62 weeks, the Messiah would be cut off.
 - i) With a little math, this would be seen as 27 AD, the year in which Jesus began His personal ministry for 3 ½ years.
 - ii) After 69 weeks, the Messiah would be cut off, which would be the 70th week.
 - iii) Notice the text says, but not for himself.
 - (1) This is translated "and shall have nothing" in almost every other translation.
 - (2) The idea is that the Messiah will be alone.
 - (a) All His disciples deserted Him.
 - (b) God had to forsake Him.
- e) Daniel 9:27 says a covenant shall be confirmed with many but that in the middle of the week, which would be the 70th, the sacrifice and oblation would be made to cease.
 - i) When Jesus died on the cross, the Old Testament sacrifices were made to be of none effect.
 - ii) Jesus completed the Old Testament, or fulfilled it.
 - iii) The personal ministry of Jesus lasted for 3 ½ years, or to the middle of the 70th week.
- f) What happened to the rest of the 70th week, or the last 3 ½ years?
 - i) There is some debate about this.
 - ii) Some believe it is not mentioned.
 - iii) Others believe that it was in 3 ½ years when Philip would preach to and baptize numerous Samaritans, recorded in Acts 8, which would make that the completion of the 490 years.
- g) So the timeline of the 70 weeks, really being 490 years, is 49 years for the completing of the rebuild of Jerusalem and the temple, and another 434 years til the beginning of the personal ministry of Jesus, 3 ½ years til the death of Jesus, and 3 ½ years for the preaching of the gospel to be only to Jews til Philip preached to and baptized a number of Samaritans.

3) Judgment on the Jews for rejecting Jesus.

- a) In Daniel 9:26, Gabriel says the people of the prince will come and destroy the people and the sanctuary.
- b) If you were to study what many premillennial teachers write, you would read that this is a reference to the anti-Christ.
- c) In reality, this is a reference to Titus, the son or prince of Vespasian, the Roman emperor in 67 AD.

- i)** Titus came against the city of Jerusalem and besieged it for 3 years.
- ii)** When he came, all the Christians left.
- iii)** They understood what he was there to do because Jesus had warned them, recorded in Matthew 24:15 – notice Jesus said that Daniel had spoken of this.
- d)** Daniel was told that this prince and his people would come like a flood, which happened in AD 70, after the Romans broke through the walls and gates of Jerusalem.
 - i)** They completely overwhelmed the city and totally destroyed the temple.
 - ii)** The Roman army was the abomination, because of their idolatrous nature, and the desolation was what was brought to Jerusalem.
- e)** This was all brought on because of the Jews rejection of Jesus.
- f)** It is very interesting that the Jewish historian Josephus, in his Jewish Antiquities work, wrote, “Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them”.

This material came from several commentaries as well as an article by Wayne Jackson.