

The Vision Of The Seventy Weeks (9:20-27)

INTRODUCTION

1. We come now to one of the most difficult passages of the Old Testament...
 - a. Commonly called "**The Vision Of The Seventy Weeks**" - **Dan 9:20-27**
 - b. Edward J. Young describes it as "one of the most difficult in all the OT, and the interpretations which have been offered are almost legion."
 - c. Stuart says that "it would require a volume of considerable magnitude even to give a history of the ever-varying and contradictory opinions that have been offered"
2. With such a difficult passage before us, we should ...
 - a. Approach it with humility, and not dogmatically
 - b. Not draw conclusions that would contradict clear teachings of Scripture

[We begin our study with **verse 20**, in which Daniel first describes...]

I. THE ARRIVAL OF GABRIEL

A. AT THE TIME OF EVENING OFFERING...

1. Even as Daniel was confessing his sin and the sin of his people, and making supplication for the holy mountain of God (i.e., Jerusalem) - **Dan 9:20-21**
2. This was the same person seen in the vision at the beginning - cf. **Dan 8:16**

B. TO GIVE DANIEL SKILL TO UNDERSTAND...

1. Commanded to do so even at the beginning of Daniel's prayer - **Dan 9:22-23**
2. For Daniel was "greatly beloved" - cf. **Dan 10:11,19**

[And so Gabriel, who provided explanation to Daniel regarding the vision of the ram and the goat (**Dan 8:16**), now proceeds to give details concerning...]

II. THE VISION OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

A. A GENERAL STATEMENT OF WHAT IS TO OCCUR...

1. 70 "weeks" are determined for Daniel's people (Israel) and his holy city (Jerusalem) - **Dan 9:24**
 - a. The word "weeks" in Hebrew is actually "sevens" (i.e., 70 "sevens")
 - b. Most agree it likely refers to "weeks", but weeks of what?
 - 1) Weeks of days?
 - a) Then it would be 490 days
 - b) Few believe this to be the case, and so most all figuratize this passage to some extent
 - 2) Weeks of years (i.e., each day representing a year)?
 - a) Then it would be 490 years
 - b) But the Jews used a lunar calendar (360 days/yr), so it would be 483 years according to our calendar)
 - c) Many suggest this to be the answer, but it is not without difficulty
 - 3) Of some complete, yet non-specific period of time?
 - a) Then it may just refer to seventy complete periods of time
 - b) And each week may not be equivalent in time (i.e., one "week" may be longer than other "weeks")
 2. This period of time will be for the fulfillment of six things, each apparently related to the work of the coming Messiah
 - a. To finish the transgression
 - 1) The marginal reading has "restrain" for "finish"
 - 2) The idea is that Messiah would provide a restraining power and influence which would check the progress of sin (Barnes) - cf. **Ac 3:25-26**
 - b. To make an end of sins
 - 1) The marginal reading has "to seal up" for "make an end"
 - 2) The idea is that sins will be sealed up, or closed, or hidden, so that they will not be seen, or will not develop themselves (Barnes) - cf. **Ac 3:19**

- c. To make reconciliation for iniquity
 - 1) Literally, to cover iniquity
 - 2) How this would be done is not stated here, but cf. **Isa 53:5-6,10-12**
-- Note: The first three things relate to our Lord's work of dealing with the problem of sin, how sin would "restrained", "sealed up", and "covered over"
- d. To bring in everlasting righteousness
 - 1) Literally, to cause to come
 - 2) To provide a way by which a man could become righteous and holy - cf. **Ro 3:21-26; 2 Co 5:21**
- e. To seal up the vision and the prophecy
 - 1) To complete, to finish, meaning the prophecies would be fulfilled (Barnes)
 - 2) Young suggests that it is referring to OT prophecies, especially those related to the work of the Messiah making an end of sin - cf. **Lk 24:44-47**
- f. To anoint the Most Holy
 - 1) Barnes opines that the Most Holy refers to the temple in Jerusalem
 - 2) And that the anointing of the temple refers to the presence of the Messiah in the temple - cf. **Mal 3:1-2; Mt 12:6**
 - 3) Especially regarding the presence of the Lord in the temple during His final week - cf. **Mt 21:1-16**
 - 4) Some believe it may refer to the baptism of Jesus when the Spirit came upon Him in the form of a dove - **Mt 3:16-17**

B. A SPECIFIC DESCRIPTION OF HOW THIS WOULD OCCUR...

1. There shall be 7 weeks and 62 weeks - Dan 9:25

- a. Beginning with the command to restore and build Jerusalem, until Messiah the prince (the street and the wall shall be built, even in troublesome times)
- b. At least three possible decrees may serve as the "terminus pro quo" (starting point) of the 70 "weeks"
 - 1) The decree of Cyrus (539-538 BC) - cf. **Ezr 1:1-4**
 - a) To rebuild the temple (and the city, cf. **Isa 44:26-28; 45:13**)
 - b) If one starts here, then the 70 weeks could not be 490 literal years, for that would place the end of the 70 weeks around 55 B.C. (much too early)
 - c) The appeal of using this decree as the starting point
 - 1] It is the most well-known decree regarding the restoration of Israel
 - 2] It was given about the time Daniel received his vision of the 70 weeks -- This decree is preferred by many who do not hold to a literal 490 years (Young, Harkrider, McGuiggan)
 - 2) The decree of Artaxerxes (457 BC) - cf. **Ezr 7:13-14**
 - a) For Ezra to restore the Law and its worship
 - b) Starting here, 490 Julian years would end the 70 weeks around 33ad
 - c) But 490 lunar years end the 70 weeks around 26 A.D. (seven years too early) -- This decree is preferred by some amillennialists who hold to a literal 490 years, but not lunar years (Haley's Bible Handbook)
 - 3) The second decree of Artaxerxes (445-444 BC) - cf. **Neh 2:1-8**
 - a) For Nehemiah to build the city
 - b) Starting here, 490 lunar years end the 70 weeks around 38 A.D.
 - c) This would place the start of the 70th week near the beginning of Jesus' public ministry (ca. 30 A.D.)
 - d) There are problems with the first 7 weeks ending around 396 B.C., which some contend is too late for the restoration of the city -- Premillennialists prefer to start with this decree, but so do some amillennialists such as Albert Barnes
- c. Each starting date has its problems, but I lean towards Barnes' choice of the second decree of Artaxerxes in 445 B.C. as the terminus a quo for this prophecy
 - 1) The 7 and 62 "weeks" is the period of time from the decree until "Messiah the Prince"
 - 2) Barnes has this period ending with the baptism of Jesus and the beginning of His public ministry

2. After the 62 weeks, certain events will occur - Dan 9:26-27

- a. Messiah will be cut off, but not for Himself
 - 1) This refers to the death of Christ
 - 2) Whose death occurs midway during the 70th week (see below)
- b. People of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary
 - 1) The end of it shall be with a flood; until the end of the war, desolations are determined
 - a) The people are generally accepted to be the Romans, who destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70
 - b) The "prince" is thought to be either Titus, the Roman general, or perhaps referring to Jesus Himself (with the Roman army as the instrument of God's judgment upon Jerusalem)
 - 2) Many contend that the destruction must fall within the 70th week
 - a) However, Young and Barnes argue that such is not necessarily required by the text
 - b) The desolation to befall Jerusalem may be the consequence of events during the 70th week, and not fall within the period of the 70th week
- c. For 1 week, he shall confirm a covenant with many
 - 1) "He" refers to Jesus (Barnes)
 - 2) "Confirm a covenant" describes the work done by Jesus and His apostles in Israel, before and immediately after His death (Barnes)
 - a) His earthly ministry lasted about 3 and half years
 - b) The gospel was preached only to Jews for 3-4 years after Pentecost
- d. In the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering
 - 1) This refers to Jesus who was cut off, but not for Himself (Barnes)
 - 2) Through His death, He brought the need for sacrifices to an end - **He 10:12-18**
- e. The abomination and desolation to come - Dan 9:27
 - 1) Alluding to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70
 - 2) Jesus referred to this in Mt 24:15
 - 3) Again, this desolation may be the consequence of what occurred in the 70th week, even though it occurred after the 70th week
 - 4) But if required to occur during the 70th week, then the 70th week must extend beyond A.D. 70 (Harkrider, McGuiggan)

CONCLUSION

1. Such a brief look at this difficult passage will naturally raise many questions, which are beyond the scope of our study
2. For more detailed study, one might consider the following commentaries which provide several alternative views...
 - a. Commentary on Daniel, Albert Barnes
 - b. The Prophecy of Daniel, Edward J. Young
 - c. Commentary on Revelation, Robert F. Harkrider
 - d. The Book Of Daniel, Jim McGuiggan
 - e. Exposition Of Daniel, H. C. Leupold
 -- Each of these examine the passage from the amillennial perspective, which finds no place for the "gap theory" favored by dispensational premillennialists

While the passage is admittedly difficult, let's not lose sight of the wonderful promises concerning the Messiah's work related to sin and righteousness. For Jesus through His death has truly brought an end to the consequences of sin and introduced everlasting righteousness!

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The following chart is an example of the Dispensational Premillennialist's view of the 70 weeks of Daniel chapter 9.

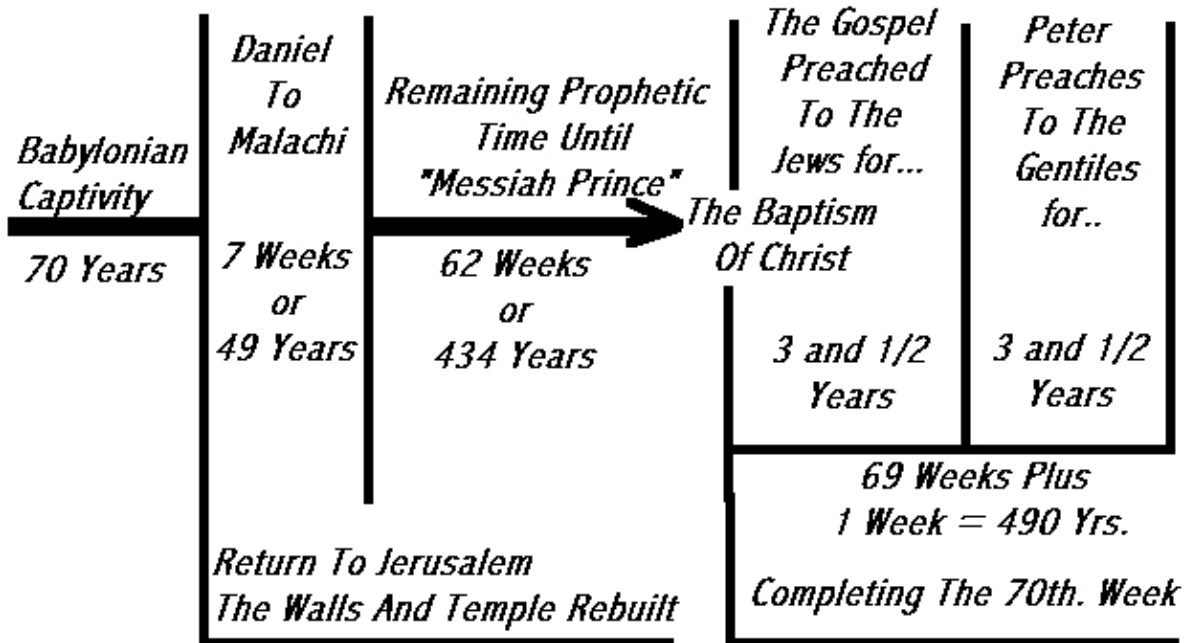
Redraw this chart using the view that the weeks were figurative in Daniel 9 and that each time period was specifically designated for a specific period instead of a certain number of years.

Why is it necessary for the Premillennial view to have a literal 490 years?

Does it take some mathematical oversights (willing to skip or have gaps) to make this a 490 years and fit exactly?

If we take the 70 7's instead of seventy weeks (literal in Hebrew) what symbolic figures to 7 and 10 and the combinations of them carry?

70 Weeks or 490 Years Were Determined To Complete God's Dealings With Israel As A Nation {Daniel 9:24-27}



The Key To Understanding Symbolic Time Reckoning is Found In {Ezekiel 4:4-5 - each day for a year}