

Is There a Prophetic Gap or Antichrist in Daniel's 70 Weeks?

Read on for an examination of Daniel 9:24-27.

A Debated Prophecy

I'm not sure that there is a more debated prophetic passage in the Bible than that of Daniel 9:24-27, also known as Daniel's 70 weeks. An entire [eschatological](#) belief system has been built upon the concept that there is a "prophetic gap" that exists between the 69th and 70th week mentioned in this prophecy and that an antichrist figure will someday establish a peace treaty midway through the 70th week. While the wording of this prophecy is a bit unusual and, at times, vague, I think that it is important for us to know what it does say and, more importantly, that we know what it doesn't say.

Let's explore this much-debated Biblical prophecy.

What Was the Purpose of This Prophecy?

[Daniel](#) was one of the young men that was taken to Babylon when [Nebuchadnezzar invaded and conquered Jerusalem](#). Daniel would end up serving the kings of Babylon in their courts because of his wisdom and was considered to be wiser than all of the wise men of Babylon and gained the trust and respect of the kings of Babylon and Medo-Persia, particularly King Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel longed for the return of the Jews to Jerusalem and he was contemplating the prophecy given to stating Jeremiah that [Jerusalem would remain desolate for 70 years](#). Daniel then confesses the unfaithfulness of his people and pleads with God to remember His promise, that they would indeed be returned to Jerusalem. While Daniel was still praying, the archangel

Gabriel appears to Daniel to give him insight and understanding, not only does Gabriel assure Daniel that they would return to Jerusalem, but he also tells him of additional events that would cause a seismic shift in the history of Daniel's people and with God's covenant with man.

Gabriel's Answer

It is my custom to use the NASB when quoting scripture, but in this case, I will use Young's Literal Translation, primarily because the YLT doesn't include as many inserted words that end up altering the perception of its meaning. The words that the YLT has inserted for readability in the English language are contained within brackets.

Daniel 9:24 `Seventy weeks are determined for thy people, and for thy holy city, to shut up the transgression, and to seal up sins, and to cover iniquity, and to bring in righteousness age-during, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint the holy of holies.

25 And thou dost know, and dost consider wisely, from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem till Messiah the Leader [is] seven weeks, and sixty and two weeks: the broad place hath been built again, and the rampart, even in the distress of the times.

26 And after the sixty and two weeks, cut off is Messiah, and the city and the holy place are not his, the Leader who hath come doth destroy the people; and its end [is] with a flood, and till the end [is] war, determined [are] desolations.

27 And he hath strengthened a covenant with many – one week, and [in] the midst of the week he causeth sacrifice and present to cease, and by the wing of abominations he is making desolate, even till the consummation, and that which is determined is poured on the desolate one.'

Understanding the Timespan of This Prophecy

First off, this is the only prophecy where you will read “weeks” (in some translations) to infer a span of time in prophecy. A better way to understand this is to think of it as a [heptad](#), or a period of seven. So, we can better understand this to literally mean “seventy periods of seven”. In fact, there are a few translations that correctly phrase it in that fashion. From a literal sense, this is 490 (70 x 7) periods of time and could have referred to 490 literal days, weeks, months, or years. But, it doesn’t take too much discernment to realize that 490 literal days, weeks, or even months would not have been enough time for everything in this prophecy to be accomplished. It is widely understood and accepted that each individual period represents one year.

I have seen some people perform mathematical gymnastics trying to convert 490 years from the 360-day Hebrews calendar to the 365.25-day Gregorian calendar. Please, stop it! If anyone tells you that you must multiply 490 x 360, then divide by 365 to calculate the timespan of this prophecy it only shows that they don’t know enough about the Hebrew calendar to be teaching you about this prophecy, and here is why.

The Jewish calendar has “leap years”. A leap year in the Jewish calendar has 13 months and occurs 7 times in a 19-year cycle. In the Hebrew calendar, a leap year is referred to as Shanah Me’uberet, or “pregnant year”. This keeps their lunar calendar in sync with the Gregorian/solar calendar over long periods of time, otherwise, events like the Passover would eventually end up in the summer, fall, and winter and the harvest-centered Feast of Tabernacles would be out of season most of the time. For more on this topic, please visit [this website](#).

The End of the Old Covenant Foretold

Verse 24 Seventy weeks are determined for thy people, and for thy holy city, to shut up the transgression, and to seal up sins, and to cover iniquity, and to bring in righteousness

age-during, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint the holy of holies.

Gabriel is telling Daniel that his people, the Jews, and the city of Jerusalem will have 490 years remaining to fulfill and complete what God had tasked them to do ever since He had made them into a nation. The sanctuary system was a shadow of heavenly things and it was intended to lead the children of Israel to the coming Messiah. The wording in this verse refers to the services that the Levitical priests performed in the sanctuary. The sealing and covering of sins was a reference to symbolic ceremonies that removed and cleansed Israel from their intentional and unintentional sins.

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. – Hebrew 10:4

The only true sacrifice for sin was to be paid later by none other than the Son of God.

And not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. – Hebrews 9:12

Recommended

Visions and prophets were also to be sealed up. God sent many prophets to correct and instruct Israel over the years and His word to them came in the form of dreams and visions. This was going to come to an end as the fulfillment of all things was to come.

The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. – Luke 16:16

The Rebuilding of Jerusalem

Verse 25 And thou dost know, and dost consider wisely, from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem

till Messiah the Leader [is] seven weeks, and sixty and two weeks: the broad place hath been built again, and the rampart, even in the distress of the times.

A lot of attempts have been made to determine which decree signified the beginning of the seventy weeks, but if the date doesn't end with the coming of the Messiah at the end of the 69th week (483 years), then the event that they have used to signify the start of the 490 years is wrong. We have come to understand that Jesus was not born in the "zero year", but was actually born around 4 B.C.. It should be understood that the end of the seven and sixty-two weeks signifies the time that Jesus was baptized and began His earthly ministry. The best that we can tell, Jesus was baptized between the years AD 27-29 which means that the decree to rebuild the city that Gabriel was referring to was most likely 457/458 BC found in Ezra 1.

Instead of Gabriel simply saying sixty and nine weeks, he breaks it into two segments. I believe that this should be understood to signify that the first seven weeks were the amount of time that it took to rebuild the city which was about 50 years. The remaining sixty-two years would have been the amount of time when services were conducted in the temple, with the exception of when Antiochus Epiphanes IV had caused them to cease, which resulted in the Maccabean Rebellion for which Hanukkah is celebrated even to this day. This period of time would have encompassed the so-called intertestamental period or "silent years" where we have no record of God sending any prophetic word through prophets.

Foretelling the Death of the Messiah

Verse 26 And after the sixty and two weeks, cut off is Messiah, and the city and the holy place are not his, the Leader who hath come doth destroy the people; and its end [is] with a flood, and till the end [is] war, determined [are] desolations.

Gabriel then tells Daniel that after 483 years that the Messiah would die without having obtained either the city or the temple. This was contrary to what the Jews were hoping for; a Messiah who would be an earthly ruler that would deliver them from Roman control. Jesus was crucified as a common criminal outside of the city walls and the temple which was under the control of the Jewish religious leaders had rejected Him. Verse 25 states that there would be 483 years from the time of the decree until the Messiah would come, therefore the Messiah being cut off could not have occurred at the end of 483 years. We know that there were between three and four years between the time that Christ was baptized and the time that time He died, this will be verified in the next verse.

We then read that there would be a Leader that would come and destroy with a flood. What does this mean? A flood-type destruction is descriptive of being swift and complete and it is determined that this end would be in the form of war and that there were desolations that would be declared. There is only one possible meaning for this part of the prophecy. It was the foretelling that the city and temple that the returning Jews would build would be utterly destroyed and that it would lay desolate. Josephus tells us that Jerusalem was unrecognizable after the Roman siege and that it was plowed like a field following the Roman siege of Jerusalem. The term "flood" as it relates to destruction is found elsewhere in scripture:

But with an overflowing flood He will make a complete end of its site, And will pursue His enemies into darkness. – Nahum 1:8

In Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21, the disciples were marveling at how beautiful the temple was, Jesus then told them that not one stone would be left upon another. After Jerusalem fell, the Jews were prohibited by the Romans from returning to Jerusalem, thus from a Jewish-held city and

temple perspective, Jerusalem was laid desolate.

The Covenant and Desolation

YLT Verse – 27 And he hath strengthened a covenant with many – one week, and [in] the midst of the week he causeth sacrifice and present to cease, and by the wing of abominations he is making desolate, even till the consummation, and that which is determined is poured on the desolate one.’ See below [Brenton Septuagint Translation](#) comparison.

Daniel 9:27

King James Version – ²⁷And 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.

New American Standard Bible – ²⁷“And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

Young's Literal Translation – ²⁷And he hath strengthened a covenant with many -- one week, and [in] the midst of the week he causeth sacrifice and present to cease, and by the wing of abominations he is making desolate, even till the consummation, and that which is determined is poured on the desolate one.’

Septuagint Bible – ²⁷And one week shall establish the covenant with many: and in the midst of the week my sacrifice and drink-offering shall be taken away: and on the temple the abomination of desolations; and at the end of time an end shall be put to the desolation.

Who is He? – “And he...” * Note: The Septuagint [Greek of Hebrew text to English] He is not in the text.

We read that a male (he) will strengthen a covenant. The first question that must be answered is “who is the he” mentioned in this passage? The word he is a [pronoun](#), and when a pronoun is used, it must refer either to the participants in the discourse or to someone or something mentioned elsewhere in the discourse (another words, [an antecedent](#)). At this point, there have been only two participants previously mentioned; **the Messiah** and **the Leader** who would come and destroy the city, both previously mentioned in verse 26.

As Christians, we believe that the Messiah is none other than

Jesus Christ. The identity of **the Leader** who would come and destroy should be understood to be Titus who led the armies of Rome against Jerusalem.

Did the Leader who came to destroy strengthen a covenant? No, there was no covenant or even a treaty made in the waning days of Jerusalem's existence. Therefore, the only participant in this prophecy who this could refer to is the Messiah. There is no antichrist, some imply this.

Did the Messiah strengthen a covenant when He came? Yes, He did!

And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. – Luke 22:20

Who Are the Many? – "...a covenant with many.

While the covenants made in the Old Testament were typically made with individuals or the children of Israel, ***the new covenant was made with many.***

For this is My blood of the covenant, which is ***poured out for many*** for forgiveness of sins. – Matthew 26:28

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. – John 3:16

What About the Week?

In most Bible translations, you will read "for one week", and yet, the word "for" does not exist in the Hebrew text. The Young's Literal Translation correctly reads "strengthened a covenant with many – one week". The assumption that many people make about this being a seven-year treaty has been made because of the misplaced word "for" that occurs in most Bible translations. This has allowed some to take liberty with this passage to claim that this covenant would last for a limited

period of one week or seven years when that is actually not the context.

What is actually being said? When you look at the sentence structure of the previous time periods, the action that is to take place is followed by the amount of time in which it would happen.

- from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem till Messiah the Leader [is] seven weeks, and sixty and two weeks
- And he hath strengthened a covenant with many – one week

When did the Messiah strengthen this covenant? The passage says “and [in] the midst of the week he causeth sacrifice and present to cease”. It was about 3-1/2 years after He was baptized and began His ministry on earth which would be halfway through or “the midst” of the final and 70th week of this prophecy. The covenant that Christ made was with His own blood and occurred within the timeframe of the final, 70th week.

Did Sacrifice Cease?

In terms of the context of this prophecy, yes. When in verse 24 we read that this prophecy foretold that the old sanctuary sacrificial system that served as a temporary covering of sin would come to an end.

And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. – Matthew 27:51

The veil that stood between the holy and the most holy place in the temple served as a barrier between God and man. Only the high priest could enter into the most holy place and that was but once per year when he atoned for the sins of the nation. When Jesus died and bore the sins of all men for all

time upon Himself. The old sacrificial system became obsolete at that very moment.

By a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh. – Hebrews 10:20

What do “by the Wing of Abominations He is Making Desolate” and “consummation” mean?

The phrase “by the wing” is not something that we would say in English, it simply doesn’t make much sense in our vernacular, so it then becomes necessary to examine the Hebrew and check to see how we can better apply this phrase to something that we can understand. The wing is transliterated from [kanaph \(H3671\)](#). The Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance gives the following definition:

an edge or extremity; specifically (of a bird or army) a wing, (of a garment or bed-clothing) a flap, (of the earth) a quarter, (of a building) a pinnacle

I think that we can safely rule out the idea that a literal bird, a garment flap, a quarter of the earth, or even the pinnacle of a building would possess the ability to make anything desolate, but the edge or extremity of an army? Absolutely! The Romans actually used the term Ala (Latin for “wing”, plural form: alae) to denote military formations. It should also be noted that the eagle was a mascot for all three of the Roman legions that laid siege to Jerusalem.

Were the Romans an abomination? Yes, they were. Not only was the paganism that the Romans practiced an abomination, but for pagans to be within the temple area was also an abomination.

The consummation simply means until completed or totally consumed. This referred to the utter and complete destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus declared the soon desolation of Jerusalem when He said:

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’” – Matthew 23:37-39

So, Where Is the “Prophetic Gap” or “Antichrist” Mentioned?

The honest answer would simply be, they aren't. This belief is held and promoted primarily by pre-millennial Dispensationalists who believe that the body of Christ is gathered up and taken to heaven before a period of great tribulation for a seven-year wedding feast while the events that take place in Revelation chapters 5 through 19 are going to be experienced by the Jews, the wicked, and by some extreme views, by Christians who don't believe in the rapture itself. They also believe that the great tribulation lasts for a literal seven-year period that coincides with the wedding feast of the Lamb. After this seven years of feasting and tribulation the body of Christ would then return to earth for a one-thousand-year reign of Christ. In order to support this belief, it becomes necessary to place a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel's 70 weeks. In order to make everything fit this eschatology; the following must be interpreted or assumed:

- The “he” who establishes a firm covenant with many in Daniel 9:27 is the end-time antichrist. However, when we closely examine this prophecy we learn that there are only two characters introduced here; the prince (Messiah) and the prince whose armies come to destroy the sanctuary and city. While there is no deviation over the interpretation that the first prince mentioned is indeed the Messiah, there is a tendency to deny that the second prince whose armies destroy Jerusalem can be

Titus Vespasian, whose father was Vespasian Augustus, Emperor of Rome. Thus it must be assumed that the 70th week of the prophecy has yet to be fulfilled. This also requires one to deny that it was Jesus who put an end to sacrifice in the middle of the 70th week.

- That when Jesus told the disciples in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 14 that not one stone would be left one upon another that Jesus did not answer the disciples' question as to when this would take place. This requires the reader to ignore Jesus' words of warning to flee Judea when seeing the armies surrounding Jerusalem in Luke 21. It also forces you to not acknowledge that Daniel was told that the sanctuary and city would be destroyed by these very armies which took place in 70 AD. This would then force the reader to believe that Jesus was talking about a third and future temple in Jerusalem.
- That John was being called up in Spirit to the throne room in Revelation 4 represents the church being raptured. This becomes difficult to prove since John only mentions seeing God, the Lamb who was slain, the twenty-four elders, the four living creatures and seven Spirits of God.
- The belief that the "Jacob's time of trouble" found in Jeremiah's 30:7 should apply to the tribulation that Israel will face during this 70th week while the church is absent. Keep in mind that Jeremiah was a prophet sent to Israel to warn them of what would be the result of their disobedience to God just prior to their Babylonian captivity. When we consider this and read Jeremiah's words in context we discover that God is telling Jeremiah that Israel and Judah will be delivered out of bondage and that they will no longer be slaves (verses 8 and 9). This should be applied to the distress that Israel faced while being enslaved to Babylon.
- That the 144,000 from every tribe of the sons of Israel mentioned in Revelation 7 are literal Jews. This of

course requires the reader to neglect what Paul states in Galatians 6:15, 16 that it is those who are a new creation that are called the Israel of God.

- That the wrath of God that is stored up against the ungodly and the tribulation that Jesus warned His followers that they would endure are one-in-the-same. This then becomes inferred that those who follow Christ will never be persecuted for their faith which is a mindset that could lead one doubting their relationship with God if indeed they do face trials.

What About the Final 3-½ Years?

You might ask “This prophecy is about 70 weeks, not just 69-½ weeks, what about the final 3-½ years?” My answer would be that this prophecy is about the following:

- The Jews returning from Babylonian captivity.
- The finishing up of the old covenant sacrificial system.
- The coming of the Messiah and His death midway through the final week.
- The establishing of the new covenant.

The destruction of Jerusalem falls outside of the 70 weeks and is the result of their rejecting the new covenant. The primary context of this prophecy is the timing of when the [old covenant would become obsolete and the new covenant would be established](#).

A Fascinating Messianic Prophecy

As it is with many scriptural passages, especially prophecies, there are many ideas that have come about over the years. But, in the case of Daniel’s 70 weeks, I am simply not comfortable with inserting words, context, and meaning for the sake of proving a broader belief system. I believe that we should let it say what it says and leave it at that. Anything else will

only serve to detract from the fact that this is perhaps the most fascinating Messianic prophecies in all of scripture, maybe that is the very reason why it has come under so much attack.

I find it interesting that Dispensationalists, who insist they hold to a literal interpretation of scripture, are comfortable with adding people and events and changing the meaning of this amazing Messianic prophecy.

For further study on the book of Daniel: [Daniel 8 and the 2,300 Evenings and Mornings](#)

For further studies on Dispensational teachings: [What Did the Apostle Paul Mean by "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth"?](#)

[Is the Book of James for the Church?](#)

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Tony Muse (author) from Texas, USA on June 29, 2020:

Daniel 9:1-27 – October 21, 2013 – by: Sam Storms

One might well argue that [Daniel 9:24-27](#) is both the most complex and the most crucial text in either testament bearing on the subject of biblical prophecy. Its complexity is questioned only by those who have not studied it, or perhaps by those whose conclusions concerning its meaning were predetermined by unspoken theological commitments. That Daniel 9 is as crucial as I have suggested can hardly be denied. For example, dispensationalists have largely derived from Daniel 9 several of their more distinctive doctrinal and prophetic themes, among which are,

1) distinctive divine programs for *Israel* and the

Church based on the idea of a prophetic and historical *gap*, during which time God's purpose for the former is suspended and his purpose for the latter engaged (that 'gap, of course, being identified with this present age);

2) the reality of a future period of intense tribulation, precisely seven years in length, during which the divine program for Israel is resumed;

3) the rebuilding of a temple in Jerusalem at the inception of this seven year period and its subsequent destruction;

and,

4) the emergence of a personal antichrist who will establish a seven year covenant with Israel, reinstitute the Levitical sacrificial system, only to break the covenant after three and one half years.

One could conceivably make an argument that apart from the dispensational interpretation of Daniel 9, these and related prophetic doctrines would lack substantial biblical sanction.

My purpose, however, is not to offer an extensive critique of dispensationalism. It will, of course, be necessary to review briefly what dispensationalists have said about Daniel 9. But, my goal is to be more constructive than destructive, and to that end I have devoted the bulk of this lesson to what I believe is the correct meaning of the text and its contribution to our understanding of God's purpose in redemptive history. The passage reads as follows:

Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place'(v. 24).

So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress (v. 25).

Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of *the prince who is to come* will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined (v. 26).

And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate (v. 27). (NASB)

The Dispensational Interpretation

of [Daniel 9:24-27](#)

1. *What are the 70 weeks of Daniel 9?*

According to 9:24, 'seventy sevens have been decreed. The latter of these two terms, here translated 'sevens, literally means *a unit of seven things* (hence, a 'week). The question, however, is: a unit of seven *what?* days? weeks? hours? months? years? Most commentators of the dispensational school conclude that Gabriel had in mind units of *years*. Consequently, 'seventy of these 'units of seven years would equal 490 years. Although commentators refer to this period as Daniel's 70 'weeks, the period of time in view is one of 490 years.

2. *When do the 70 weeks of Daniel begin?*

According to 9:25 the 70 weeks (i.e., the 490 year period) begin with '*the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild*

Jerusalem. Dispensationalists have opted for either one of two dates for this decree: (1) the seventh year of Artaxerxes in 458-57 b.c. ([Ezra. 7:11-26](#)), or (2) the twentieth year of Artaxerxes in 445-44 b.c. ([Neh. 2:1-8](#)). The latter of these two dates is preferred by most dispensationalists, and for *two reasons*. *First*, this decree pertains to the rebuilding of the 'city, in accordance with [Dan. 9:25](#). *Second*, v. 25 also indicates that between the decree and the coming of Messiah sixty-nine of the seventy weeks transpire. In other words, 483 years (or, 173,880 days, on the questionable assumption that a year = 360 days) from the decree brings us to Jesus Christ. If one begins with the first of Nisan (March 14), 445 b.c., and counts off 173,880 days (taking into account years that have an extra day due to leap year), one arrives at April 6, 32 a.d., the occasion of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. If one chooses to begin the count in 444 b.c., instead of 445, the 69th week terminates on March 30, 33 a.d. *Many people are obviously quite impressed with this sort of chronological precision and have embraced the dispensational view because of it.*

The dispensational view, therefore, appears to depend upon two crucial facts: (1) 445-44 b.c. is the only year in which a decree relative to the rebuilding of Jerusalem was issued; and (2) the 490 years or 70 weeks is a chronologically precise period of time, and must therefore span the period from the decree to the Messiah *to the very day*. If either or both of these assertions is false, the dispensational interpretation is seriously undermined. That is to say, ***if it can be shown that the decree of Cyrus in 538 b.c. meets all the qualifications for the decree which inaugurates the 70 weeks ([Dan. 9:25](#)), and if it can be shown that the 490 years or 70 weeks need not be taken with chronological and arithmetic precision, the dispensational view is considerably weakened.***

3. *What is the goal or purpose of the 70 weeks?*

The goal of Daniel's 70 weeks is stated in the six-fold

declaration of v. 24. Without going into detail at this time, suffice it to say that most dispensationalists insist that some, if not all, of these goals will only be achieved at the second advent of Jesus at the end of the age, perhaps not even until the end of the 'millennium. For this reason they insist that the 70th week is yet future.

4. *When exactly will the 70th week begin?*

The dispensationalist says that, according to v. 26, two events will occur *after* the 69th week but *before* the 70th. In other words, these two events will occur in the 'gap between the 69th and 70th weeks. These two events are, first, the cutting off of Messiah (the crucifixion), and second, the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 a.d. When, then, is the 70th week to occur? Only at the end of the present age when Christ returns to consummate the 6-fold purpose outlined in v. 24. This 70th week, the so-called 'Great Tribulation, says the dispensationalist, is described in v. 27.

5. *Who is the coming 'prince of v. 26 and the one who makes the covenant in v. 27?*

Both the '**prince who is to come** in v. 26 and '**he who**, in v. 27, makes a covenant with the many for one week, referring to the final, personal Antichrist. **This 'one week or 7 year covenant will entail the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem** and the reinstatement and observance of sacrificial offerings. After 3-1/2 years, i.e., '**in the middle of the week**, Antichrist will break the covenant, persecute the people of God (Israel), only to be destroyed by the return of Christ Jesus at the close of the 7 year tribulation period (i.e., at the close of the 70th week).

6. *On what basis does the dispensationalist posit a 'gap between the 69th and 70th weeks of Daniel 9?*

It is absolutely fundamental to the dispensational interpretation that there be a *gap or interval or historical*

parenthesis between the 69th and 70th weeks. Thus far in history this gap has spanned some 1,950 years. On what basis do dispensationalists justify this remarkable length of time? The arguments of [Alva McClain](#) are here taken as representative:

a) If one interprets the text as presenting the events in strict chronological and historical sequence, **a gap is implied**. First, in v. 25, there is a period of 69 weeks ending with the appearance of Messiah. Then, after these 69 weeks two other events occur: the death of Messiah and the destruction of the city. Finally, in v. 27, and after the events of v. 26, the final or 70th week occurs. Since two of the prophesied events occur *after* the 69th week but *before* the 70th week, **a gap is implied**.

b) The events of v. 24 were not fulfilled at Christ's first coming, nor have they been fulfilled at any time in history since his appearance. Therefore, the 70th week, in which time they will be fulfilled, **must be future**.

c) An unseen gap in prophetic time is not unusual in the OT. See, for example, [Isa. 61:1-2](#) and [Luke 4:16-21](#).

d) Jesus himself declared that the 70th week of Daniel is still future (see [Matt. 24:15ff.](#)).

Although other arguments may be cited to support the gap theory, these are certainly the more important ones.

Instead of responding critically to the dispensational interpretation, I prefer to present what I believe is a far superior understanding of the text. By means of asking and then answering a series of ten questions, I hope that the sense of Daniel's 70 weeks will become clear to us.

God's Final Jubilee

1. *What is the Historical and Literary context of*

Daniel 9?

The opening verses of Daniel 9 indicate that **Daniel prayed to God in the light of the prophecy uttered by Jeremiah** relative to the 70 years captivity of Israel ([Jer. 25:1-11](#)) and the punishment of Babylon when the 70 years were complete ([Jer. 25:12](#)). Daniel prays **'in the first year of Darius'**, son of Xerxes (Daniel 9:1-2), i.e., **in the first year of Cyrus's reign** (539-38 b.c.)^{Note} [added – (see [Ezra 1:1](#); [6:1](#); and [2 Chron. 36:22, 23](#))]. **If the beginning of the 70 years captivity is to be reckoned from 605 b.c.** ([Jer. 25:1,9](#)) when Daniel and his friends were deported to Babylon, it is obvious that the prophesied period was nearing completion. In fact, **66 of the 70 years had passed (605-539=66)**. This motivated Daniel to pray for the restoration of Israel and Jerusalem (Daniel 9:16,18,20). Certainly, then, **Gabriel's response in Dan. 9:20-27 is to be understood as an answer to Daniel's prayer (see esp. Daniel 9:20-23)**. Thus, Vern Poythress concludes:

*"The logical conclusion from this language is that the beginning point of the 70 weeks basically coincides with the end of Jeremiah's 70 years. **That is, it occurs in 538 b.c. or shortly thereafter.** On the other hand, a beginning point in 444 b.c. would not really answer Daniel's prayer. It would not be quick enough to satisfy Daniel's urgency. And it would not be related to the basis of Daniel's prayer in Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years."*

This relationship between the conclusion of Jeremiah's 70 years prophecy and the beginning of Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy is substantiated when we **consider the nature and purpose of Cyrus's decree**, to which we now turn our attention.

2. *What is the 'decree of [Dan. 9:25](#), or when do the 70 weeks begin?*

In his first year, after the fall of Babylon in fulfillment of prophecy, the Persian king, Cyrus, issued a decree relative to

the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem:

“Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel’” ([Ezra 1:2-3](#); cf. [2 Chron. 36:23](#)).

We are told explicitly in [2 Chron. 36:21-22](#) that the decree of Cyrus signaled the end of Jeremiah’s prophecy and the beginning of the restoration of Israel. This corresponds directly with Daniel’s concern for the completion of Jeremiah’s prophecy, on the basis of which he utters his prayer (Dan. 9:2).

In [Dan. 9:25](#) the decree that inaugurates the 70 weeks is ‘to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and that is precisely what *Isaiah* prophesied that Cyrus would do:

*“It is I who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.’ And he declares of **Jerusalem, ‘She will be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation will be laid’*** ([Isa. 44:28](#)).

‘I have aroused him [Cyrus] in righteousness, and I will make all his ways smooth; he will build my city, and will let my exiles go free, without any payment or reward, says the Lord of hosts ([Isa. 45:13](#)).

Let me now summarize. In 605 b.c. Jeremiah prophesied that Israel would be taken captive in Babylon for 70 years and that Jerusalem and its temple would be destroyed. He also prophesied that at the end of this period Babylon would fall. In 539 b.c. Babylon fell to Cyrus of Persia. Consequently, in that very year, sensing the completion of Jeremiah’s prophecy, Daniel prays for the restoration of Jerusalem. Gabriel (as God’s messenger) responds to Daniel’s prayer with the prophecy

of the 70 weeks, the beginning of which would be a decree to rebuild and restore the city. In 538 b.c. Cyrus issued just such a decree! The point, then, is this. The decree of Cyrus in 539-38 b.c. is both the conclusion of Jeremiah's prophecy of captivity ([2 Chron. 36:21-23](#)) and the beginning of Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy of restoration ([Dan. 9:25](#)).

3. *Did Cyrus's decree pertain to the rebuilding of the city as well as the temple?*

Dispensationalists insist that the decree of Cyrus in 538 cannot be the beginning of the 70 weeks because his decree did not include reference to the rebuilding of the *city*, only the temple. Several things may be said in response to this charge.

First, as Poythress points out, we must bear in mind that the Israelites –

“lived in an atmosphere where the restoration of the temple, the restoration of the city of Jerusalem, and the restoration of the land itself were closely bound up together. The city represented the heart-beat and security of the land around; the temple represented the heart-beat and security of the city ([Jer. 7:4](#)). Jeremiah prophesied desolation for the land, for the city of Jerusalem, and for the temple. In particular, Jeremiah's prophecy concerning 70 years of desolation speaks explicitly of restoration of the people to the land ([Jer. 29:10,14](#)), but is naturally interpreted to imply restoration of the city ([Dan. 9:2,16,18](#)) and of the temple ([Dan. 9:17](#)).”

Second, the focus of the decree in [Ezra 1:2-4](#) and [2 Chron. 36:23](#) is indeed the temple, but these passages may not give us the complete text of the decree. [Ezra 6:3-5](#), an alternate report of the decree, contains details not mentioned in [Ezra 1:2-4](#). When Josephus wrote of the decree he included direct reference to the city. But let us grant, for the sake of argument, that Josephus was wrong and that the decree of Cyrus contained no *explicit reference* to the rebuilding of the city.

The restoration of the city, observes Poythress,

“would nevertheless be presupposed as an accompaniment to the restoration of the temple. For one thing, there would have to be workers there in the city to engage in the restoration work on the temple. And the temple would make little sense without a body of priests to serve in it. Some priests would have to be settled in Jerusalem.”

Third, according to [Dan. 9:2](#), Daniel himself believed that the desolation of the city of Jerusalem would last for 70 years. It is only natural, therefore, that the restoration of the city, as well as the temple, would begin when the 70 years were completed. ‘To say that the restoration of the city had to wait until Nehemiah’s time [as the dispensationalist insists] is a denial of the validity of Jeremiah’s prophecy.

Fourth, we have already seen that [Isa. 44:28](#) and [45:13](#) include reference to the rebuilding of the *city*.

Fifth, numerous texts indicate that Jerusalem was at least partially inhabited *before* Nehemiah’s time (cf. [Hag. 1:4,9](#); [Neh. 3:20,21,23,24,25,28,29](#); [7:3](#); [Ezra 5:1](#); [6:9](#); [4:6](#)). That the restoration was not at that time complete is no proof that it had not begun.

Sixth, and finally, what about [Dan. 9:25b](#) and the reference to ‘plaza and moat? This poses no problem, for one must distinguish between the *decree* itself and the historical *results*. It is the verbal (or literary) act that marks the beginning of the 70 weeks. [Dan. 9:25b](#) simply describes the non-verbal historical results.

Given the available evidence, I see no reason why we should look for any decree other than that of Cyrus in 539-38 b.c. as the fulfillment of [Dan. 9:25](#) and thus the beginning (the *terminus a quo*) of the 70 weeks. Consequently, one of the principal foundations for the dispensational interpretation has crumbled.

4. *What is the goal or purpose of the 70 weeks?*

[Daniel 9:24](#) makes it clear that the goal of the 70 weeks prophecy is six-fold in nature: (1) 'to finish (or, 'restrain) the transgression; (2) 'to make an end of sin (or, 'to seal up sin); (3) 'to make atonement for iniquity; (4) 'to bring in everlasting righteousness; (5) 'to seal up vision and prophecy; and (6) 'to anoint the most holy 'place'.

Most are agreed that (3) *pertains to the propitiatory sufferings of Jesus.* The dispute concerning (1) and (2) focuses more on the time of their fulfillment. Are these statements descriptive of what our Lord already accomplished at his first advent, or do they pertain to what he will achieve at his second advent (particularly, for Israel)? My opinion is that this is a false disjunction [the act of disjoining]. What Jesus *fulfilled* at his first advent he will *consummate* at the second. More on this later.

The fourth (4) stated goal, 'to bring in everlasting righteousness, is a reference either to the justified state of the one who has faith in Christ ([Rom. 3:21-22](#)) or to the righteousness of the new heavens and new earth ([2 Pt. 3:13](#)). And yet, on further reflection, we discover that this too is a false disjunction. The witness of Scripture is to the interrelation between the redemption of the creature and the cosmos ([Rom. 8:18-25](#); [2 Pt. 3:13-14](#)). The reconciliation of both man and the material world has, in a sense, already occurred ([Col. 1:19-20](#)), and yet both await the consummation at the end of the age ([Rom. 8:21](#)).

The fifth (5) purpose, 'to seal up vision and prophecy, means that 'the period of preparation and type, characterized by the visions which the prophets received and proclaimed, will be sealed up, because its purpose has been completed. It will no longer be needed, since the Messianic age has come, and its work is finished." Again, should one insist that the ultimate consummation of all prophetic utterance in the second coming

of Christ is intended, no objection is forthcoming. One need not conclude, however, that the 70th week is therefore altogether future. If the 70th week of Daniel 9 is the present age, as I intend to argue, one may find the consummation of each goal in the second advent of Christ without conceding the validity of the dispensational scheme.

The sixth (6) purpose, 'to anoint a most holy, is a reference to the baptism (anointing) of Jesus (cf. [Acts 10:38](#); [Luke 4:34,41](#)). There is absolutely no evidence in the OT that the temple was ever anointed (aside from the single reference to Moses's anointing of the wilderness tabernacle in [Lev. 8:10-11](#)).

5. *Who is the coming 'prince of [Dan. 9:26](#)?*

Dispensationalists believe that this 'prince is the final Antichrist who will appear at the end of the age. However, we are told in **v. 26** that the city and sanctuary are to be destroyed by the people of the prince who is to come. The dispensationalist rightly insists that this refers to the Roman armies of 70 a.d. But the prince, says the dispensationalist, to whom these armies or people belong, was not Titus, the Roman general, but a prince who is to arise from a revived Roman empire conceivably 2,000 years *after* the people had died! Young responds:

"Now it is impossible thus to speak of the Roman armies who attacked Jerusalem in 70 a.d. These armies cannot be said to belong to a prince who has not even now appeared, although nearly two thousand years have passed. The genitival relationship [people of a prince] shows clearly that the people and prince are contemporaries. The people belong to the prince, they are his people. Now, how can the Romans of 70 a.d. be said to belong to a prince who has not appeared yet? They are not his people; they belong to a prince who is their contemporary. Suppose that this prince should appear upon the scene of history; he cannot look back to the armies of Titus

and call them his armies. To take a modern example, Mussolini could not have spoken of the armies of Titus as being his own armies. The very language itself rules out this interpretation.”

Simply put: the ‘prince who is to come (i.e., who is future to Daniel), is **Titus, the Roman general, whose armies destroyed the city of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 a.d.**

6. *Are vv. 26 and 27 sequentially related, or are they parallel descriptions of the same series of events?*

The key to the dispensational interpretation is that since v. 25 concludes with the 69th week and v. 27 opens with the 70th, v. 26 must describe events that occur in a gap between the two. That gap has now stretched to some 1,950 years. By way of response, two observations are in order:

a. According to LaRondelle, ‘when Daniel announced that seventy weeks are determined for national Israel and that the Messiah will be ‘cut off’ after the first sixty-nine weeks, the natural presumption can only be that the death of the Messiah will take place sometime *during the last week*. J. Barton Payne [thus] concludes, ‘What could be more naturally assumed than that it [the death of Messiah] concerns the 70th week?’

b. The dispensational argument for a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks is based on the belief that verses 26 and 27 are phrased in a modern style of prose that describes events in a strictly sequential and chronological order. But a close examination of these two verses reveals that they are structured in the poetic style of synonymous (or perhaps synthetic) parallelism in which the 27th verse repeats and elaborates the content of the 26th verse. Thus, events that occur ‘after the 69th week (v. 26) occur ‘in the 70th week (v. 27). The death of Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem are the two principal events portrayed in vv. 26-27. Note

especially the verbal correspondences between v. 26b and v. 27b.

7. *The dispensationalist insists there is a gap between v. 26 and v. 27. Why is this not true?*

a. The principal reason has just been given: vv. 26 and 27 are not relating events that are sequential (i.e., A B C D) but rather parallel (i.e., A B A B).

b. Even should we concede that some or all of the goals stated in v. 24 await the second advent of Christ for their fulfillment, a gap between the 69th and 70th week is unnecessary. If it can be demonstrated that the 70th week (or, more accurately, the latter 1/2 of the 70th week) is the present age, then clearly it followed immediately upon the 69th. As noted earlier, what Jesus fulfilled at his first coming he will consummate at his second.

c. The appeal to the alleged gap between [Isa. 61:1-2a](#) and [61:2b](#) is invalid. Although our Lord in Luke 4 did not cite the entire passage, it may easily be demonstrated that the day of God's wrath as well as the day of redemption were inaugurated by our Lord's ministry. See [Mt. 3:10-12](#); [23:37ff.](#)

d. It is also argued that the 70th week is wholly future because Jesus declared as much in [Mt. 24](#)/Mark 13. However, a careful study of these texts will reveal that 'the abomination of desolation to which he refers, as well as the 'great tribulation, pertain to the events of 70 a.d.

e. Jeremiah's 70 years on the pattern of which Daniel's 70 weeks were constructed admit of no gap.

f. There is no gap between the 7 weeks and the 62 weeks (v. 25), making it unlikely for there to be a gap between the 69 weeks (the 7 + the 62) and the 70th.

g. After examining other cases in which prophecy refers to a determinate specification of time ([Gen. 15:12](#); [45:6](#); [Num. 14:34](#)), Philip Mauro concludes: 'We are bold, therefore, to lay it down as an absolute rule, admitting of no exceptions, that when a definite measure of time or space is specified by the number of units composing it, within which a certain event is to happen or a certain thing is to be found, the units of time or space which make up that measure are to be understood as running continuously and successively. 'Seventy years' would invariably mean seventy *continuous* years; 'seventy weeks' would mean seventy *continuous* weeks; 'seventy miles' would mean seventy *continuous* miles."

h. Assuming for the sake of argument that the 490 units of time = 490 literal years, consider this: 'Is it credible that this prophecy, which speaks so definitely of 70 weeks and then subdivides the 70 into 7 and 62 and 1, should require for its correct interpretation that an interval be discovered between the last two of the weeks far longer than the entire period covered by the prophecy itself? If the 69 weeks are exactly 483 consecutive years, exact to the very day, and if the 1 week is to be exactly 7 consecutive years [these are assumptions, again, made only for the sake of argument], is it credible that an interval which is already more than 1900 years, nearly four times as long as the period covered by the prophecy, is to be introduced into it and allowed to interrupt its fulfillment?

i. I am also convinced that the theory of a gap is motivated as much by the antecedent determination to find additional justification for distinguishing between Israel and the church, as it is by any factors actually present in the text itself. In other words, if one had not *already* decided in favor of two distinct peoples of God with distinct dispensations in which God deals with each, would [Dan. 9](#) ever have been interpreted in such a way as to yield the concept of a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks? Or, again, to put it

even more bluntly, dispensationalists find a gap in [Dan. 9](#) because they are *predisposed* to find one in order to justify an already existent theological construct.

8. *What is the meaning of 9:27?*

As noted earlier, in view of the parallel construction of vv. 26 and 27, the Messiah of v. 26a = the 'he of v. 27a, and the 'prince of v. 26b = the 'one who makes desolate of v. 27b, i.e., the Roman general Titus in 70 a.d. In addition to this, I conclude that he who, literally, 'causes a covenant to prevail is Jesus, the Messiah. This he does through the shedding of his blood (cf. [Mt. 26:27-29](#); [Mark 14:24](#); [Luke 22:20](#); [1 Cor. 11:25](#); [Heb. 8-10](#)).

Finally, to what does Daniel refer when he speaks about Messiah putting 'a stop to sacrifice and grain offering? There are two possibilities, as I see it. This may be a reference to the sacrifice of Christ whereby he abrogated the Jewish sacrificial system (see [Heb. 7:11-12,27](#); [9:26-28](#); [10:9](#); [Mt. 27:51](#); [Mark 15:38](#)). Or, more likely still, this is a reference to the cessation of Jewish sacrifices by the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 a.d. (see [Mt. 23:37-24:2](#)).

9. *Are the 70 weeks to be interpreted 'chronologically or 'theologically?*

We are immediately made aware that the 70 weeks are probably not to be taken with chronological precision by the fact that **the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy were not precisely 70 years**. The fall of Babylon by which the end/conclusion of Jeremiah's prophecy is reached occurred in 539 b.c. There are several suggested beginning points for the prophecy, *none of which, however, add up to precisely 70 years*:

fall of Nineveh in 612 b.c. = **73 years**;

the battle of Carchemish or Nebuchadnezzar's accession, both of which were in 605 b.c. = **66 years**;

the beginning of the captivity in 597 b.c. = **58 years**;

the destruction of the temple and city in 586 b.c. = **47 years**.

My point is that '70 years is an approximate designation of length, such as we find in [Jer. 27:7](#) and [Ezek. 4:6-8](#). In Mesopotamian culture, 70 years refers primarily to a certain period of desolation followed by the visitation of God. As Baldwin observes, 'seventy years was the fixed term of divine indignation ([Zech. 1:12](#)).' David Kennedy, a dispensationalist, acknowledges this and points to [Ps. 90:10](#) and [Isa. 23:15](#) as examples where 'the number seventy . . . is to indicate the totality of judgment. Thus, he concludes:

'Chapter 9 of Daniel opens with the time indicator that the supremacy of Babylonia had now ended (539 b.c.). [Jer. 25:11-12](#) and [29:10](#) had emphasized that the seventy years would terminate with the punishment of the Babylonians. If the *terminus a quo* [beginning point] of Jeremiah's seventy years was indeed 605 b.c. . . . then 66 years had elapsed. Daniel does not wait fatalistically for the next four years to tick away. Rather he prays for Jeremiah's promises of restoration to be fulfilled now, because God keeps his covenant While 66 years are a close approximation to 70, Daniel seems to be more interested in the content of Jeremiah's seventy years than in calculating their precise duration. Perhaps also we should be more interested in the significant events of Daniel's seventy 'sevens' than in enumerating its statistics. . . . *If Jeremiah's seventy years turned out to be 66 or 48 years, we should not be too surprised if Daniel's seventy 'sevens' turn out to be something other than 490 years* (emphasis mine).

Leupold suggests that from the week of creation "seven' has always been the mark of divine work in the symbolism of numbers. 'Seventy' contains seven multiplied by ten, which, being a round number, signifies perfection, completion. Therefore, 'seventy heptads' – 7 x 7 x 10 – is the period in

which the divine work of greatest moment is brought to perfection." Although there is some truth to this, I believe the significance of the 70 weeks is more profound.

If the 70 weeks or 490 years is not to be applied with chronological and calendrical precision, what is its significance? In other words, what is the *symbolic* and ***theological*** meaning of the 70 x 7 units, or 490 years? Why did Gabriel communicate the answer to Daniel's prayer in terms of 70 weeks/490 years rather than, say, a 500 year period or a period of 40 weeks? What is so theologically special and distinctive about 70 weeks/490 years?

To answer this question we must begin by noting the obviously *covenantal* character of the entire 9th chapter of Daniel. Meredith Kline offers this helpful explanation:

'The common focus of the prayer and the prophetic response, the theme that pervades the entire chapter, is Yahweh's covenant with Israel, particularly the actualization of the covenant sanctions through the faithfulness of God [N.B. Chapter 9 is the *only* chapter in Daniel in which the peculiarly covenantal name of God, *Yahweh*, occurs]. This central theme emerges at once in the opening words of Daniel's prayer. Setting his face toward God, he describes Him as the Lord who 'keeps the covenant' (vs. 4). That is both the ground of Daniel's confidence and the subject of his plea. His prayer is that God would bring to realization the mercies of His covenant, as He had its curses. And the message of Gabriel's prophecy, answering to Daniel's prayer, is that God would straightway prove himself anew the keeper of the covenant, fulfilling the ancient Mosaic promise of restoration after exile ([Lev. 26:42ff.](#); [Deut. 30:3ff.](#)) according to the specific terms of that promise as it had been reissued by Jeremiah ([Jer. 29:10](#)). Then in its revelation of the future of the covenant, Gabriel's answer moves on beyond the horizon of the prayer, disclosing that the ultimate purpose of the seventy weeks program was that the divine covenant keeper should not

merely restore but consummate the covenant order He had given to Israel through Moses.

When Daniel's prayer is analyzed we see that it belongs to the *'Todah* genre, in which the petitioner acknowledges God's glory and grace in his actions toward his people, confesses the sins of the people in having broken the covenant, and pleads for its renewal. It is only to be expected that Gabriel's answer to Daniel's prayer will itself assume a covenantal pattern (see [Lev. 26:40-45](#)). This is, in fact, precisely what we see. For the chronological mold in which the prophecy is cast is **sabbatical**.

Let us remember that not only were the Israelites themselves to rest on the 7th day, the land also was to rest in the 7th year. When Gabriel spoke of the 'sevens, 70 of which were decreed for Israel, he had in mind the 7 year period, the 7th year of which was a sabbatical year of rest for the land ([Lev. 25:2-7](#)). Kline proceeds to make the point that the sabbath itself, whether for the people or the land, functioned 'as a prophetic symbol of the consummation of the covenant order. As elaborated in the Mosaic covenant . . . the sabbath served as a sign of the messianic age of redemptive liberation, restitution, and rest [see esp. [Heb. 4:1-11](#)].

It would appear, then, that this precise chronological or numerical framework was chosen not because Gabriel desired to set calendrical boundaries of a beginning and end in which the six-fold goal of 9:24 would be accomplished. Rather, he chose this framework, first, because it is sabbatical, and second, because the sabbath (and the number 7) bore special symbolic import for the nation Israel.

This point is confirmed when we observe that Gabriel spoke of '70 of these units of 7, hence 490 years. Why did he not choose 30 or 50 or 80 'sevens instead of '70 sevens? The reason is found in [Lev. 25:8-55](#) and the observance of the year of **JUBILEE**. Let us note particularly vv. 8-12.

You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, namely, forty-nine years (v. 8).

You shall then sound a ram's horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land (v. 9).

You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family (v. 10).

You shall have the fiftieth year as a jubilee; you shall not sow, nor reap its aftergrowth, nor gather in from its untrimmed vines (v. 11).

For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat its crops out of the field (v. 12).

When we examine the year of jubilee in detail we discover that its provisions were as follows: (1) the return of all property, according to the original Mosaic distribution, to the original owner or to his family; (2) the release of all Jewish slaves; (3) the cancellation of debts; and (4) the land is to lie fallow, i.e., it is neither to be sown, pruned, reaped, nor gathered for an entire year.

The Jubilee, therefore, was a year in which social justice and equity, freedom, pardon, release, and restoration were emphasized and experienced. The jubilee signalled a new beginning, the inauguration of moral, spiritual, and national renewal. Hence **it is no surprise that the jubilee became a symbol and prefigurement of the ultimate redemption, release, and restoration that God would accomplish spiritually on behalf of his people.** Indeed, the eschaton, the final day of salvation to be inaugurated by Messiah, was conceived and described in terms of the release ordinance of the Mosaic year

of jubilee.

This all takes on special significance when we realize that there is decreed for Israel a total period of seventy sevens of years or 490 years, which is to say **10 JUBILEE ERAS**, 'an intensification of the jubilee concept pointing to the ultimate, antitypical jubilee.

The jubiliary year of God in which the consummation of redemption and restoration is to occur is described in [Isa. 61:1-2](#),

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners (v. 1);

to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God . . . (v. 2).

This is the passage that our Lord quotes in [Luke 4:16-21](#) and applies to his own person and work. In other words, ***the fulfillment and anti-type of the prophetic and typical jubiliary year has come in the person and work of Jesus Christ!*** Robert Sloan explains:

'The Mosaic legislation of the jubilee/sabbath year is used, by both the author of Isaiah 61 and – through Isaiah 61 – Jesus/Luke, as a means of describing the eschatological Age of God that has dawned with the appearance and activity of Jesus.

The purpose of the 70 weeks prophecy, outlined in [Dan. 9:24](#), was to secure that ultimate salvation, that release, redemption, and restoration of which the Jubilee year was a type or symbolic prefigurement. ***When Jesus declares that in himself the jubilee of God has come he is saying, in effect, that the 70 weeks of Daniel have reached their climax. The new age of jubilee, of which all previous jubilees were prefigurements, has now dawned in the person and ministry of***

Jesus. THE GOAL OF THE 70 WEEKS PROPHECY IS THE CONSUMMATE JUBILARY SALVATION OF GOD! That is why the chronological frame of reference in which it is said to transpire is jubiliary in nature: 10 jubilees = 490 years! The meaning of the period, therefore, is **THEOLOGICAL**, not calendrical. The 70 weeks are not designed to establish precise chronological parameters for redemptive history. Rather, they serve to evoke a *theological image*, namely, that in 'Messiah Jesus God will work to effect the final jubilee of redemptive history. The 10 jubilee framework (i.e., the 490 years or 70 weeks) is thus symbolic of the divine work of redemption, at the conclusion of which the eternal and perfected jubilee will appear: THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH ([Rev. 21-22](#)).

10. *How, then, may we understand the contribution of Daniel's prophecy to the structure and flow of redemptive history?*

According to the conclusions reached above, ***the first half of Daniel's 70th week runs from the baptism of Jesus to 70 a.d. The destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in 70 a.d. is the middle of the week, and the present church age is its latter half.*** Kline concurs and summarizes as follows:

'When we survey the fulfillment of Gabriel's prophecy from our vantage point, it appears that the last half of the 70th week is the age of the community of the new covenant, disengaged from the old covenant order with whose closing days its own beginnings overlapped for a generation. In the imagery of the NT Apocalypse, the last half week is the age of the church in the wilderness of the nations for a time, and times, and half a time ([Rev. 12:14](#)). Since the 70 weeks are 10 jubilee eras that issue in the last jubilee, the 70th week closes with the angelic trumpeting of the earth's redemption and the glorious liberty of the children of God. The acceptable year of the Lord which came with Christ will then have fully come.'

Note 1. Research of the exact date is speculative, therefore,

unclear as the certainty of date can be fudged, however, this is a close approximation. [Return](#)