

INTRODUCTION TO DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS

Daniel 9:24–27

IMPORTANCE

- it is the greatest *time* prophecy in the Bible
- it is the chronological key to all prophecy in the New Testament (e.g., the time of the abomination of desolation in Matt 24:15)
 - an understanding of Daniel's Seventy Weeks is necessary to correctly interpret the prophecies of the New Testament
 - the Book of Revelation is for the most part an expansion of the Seventieth Week of Daniel 9:27

HISTORICAL SETTING

- as chapter 9 opens Jerusalem and the Temple lay in ruins and the people of Israel were in captivity in Babylon
- the captivity was to last for 70 years (Jer 25:11–12; 29:10)—from 605 BC (first deportation) to 536 BC (49,897 exiles returned)
- reason for a 70 year captivity was neglecting 70 sabbatical rests over 800 years (Lev 25:2–5; 26:33–35, 43; 2 Chron 36:17–21)
 - in 538–537 BC Daniel knew this period of divine judgment was nearing its close (Dan 9:1–2), so he confessed the sins of his people (9:3–19; cf. Lev 26:40–46) and asked God to restore the nation Israel (9:16–19)
 - his prayer was interrupted by the angel Gabriel who brought this prophecy from God (Dan 9:20–23)

THE PROPHECY

- God not only granted Daniel's request to restore Israel but also revealed to him the rest of Israel's future—
from the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls to the establishment of the Messiah's righteous Kingdom
- the return of the people to their homeland will not be the end of Israel's troubles: they will face more tough times
 - six things will be accomplished in these 70 Weeks (9:24)—all blessings of the New Covenant:
 - (1) to end the national transgression of Israel (by removing the heart of stone and giving them a new heart, Ezek 36:26),
 - (2) to make an end of sin (judgment of sin on the cross, Isa 53),
 - (3) to make atonement for iniquity (provision of forgiveness through faith in Christ, Jer. 31:34; 33:8; 50:20; Ezek. 36:25),
 - (4) to usher in everlasting righteousness (through resurrection, Ezek 37:12–14, and the rule of the Messiah, Jer 23:5–6),
 - (5) to end visions and prophecies (no need for them because everyone will know the LORD, Isa 2:3; 11:9; Jer 31:34), and
 - (6) to return the Shekinah Glory to the Temple in Jerusalem (Ezek 37:26–28)

MAIN FEATURES OF THE PROPHECY

- the entire prophecy has to do with Daniel's "people" (Israel) and Daniel's "city" (Jerusalem) (9:24)
- two different princes are mentioned: "Messiah the Prince" (9:25) and "the prince who is to come" (9:26)
- the time-period is exactly Seventy Weeks (9:24): they are divided into three lesser periods of 7, 62, and 1 week (9:25, 27)
 - the beginning of the Seventy Weeks is "the issuing of a command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" (9:25)
- the end of the 7 weeks and 62 weeks (69 weeks) is marked by the appearance of Messiah as the "Prince" of Israel (9:25)
 - after 69 weeks Messiah the Prince will be "cut off,"
then Jerusalem and the Temple will again be destroyed by the people of another "prince" who is yet to come (9:26)
 - the beginning of the Seventieth Week is marked by the establishment of a firm covenant or treaty between the coming prince and the Jewish nation for a period of "one week" (9:27)
- in the "midst" of the Seventieth Week the coming prince will suddenly break his treaty and cause the Jewish sacrifice to cease, bringing upon the Jews a time of wrath and desolation that will last to the end of the Week (9:27)
- a time of great and unparalleled blessings will be ushered in for the nation of Israel when the 70 Weeks are completed (9:24)