

Chapter Eight

The Seventy Sevens Prophecy

Often called the Seventy Weeks Prophecy, the Seventy Sevens Prophecy of Daniel has got to be the greatest prophecy ever fulfilled. Although aspects of this prophecy are found elsewhere in Scripture, like in Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, no other Old Testament prophecy presents such a fullness of the Gospel in such a concise manner as is found here in Daniel. In this short passage we find the great work of our Lord Jesus Christ in bringing the grace and mercy of God to His people by His substitutionary work on the cross. And it also sets forth the judgment of God against the sins of the Jewish nation in rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory. Thus we find both the goodness and the severity of our God.

Of considerable interest, this passage records the precise timing of the coming of Messiah. As such these few verses ought to be presented to the Jews as evidence of the coming of Christ and for that reason the **enemy of God has sown untold controversy regarding the meaning of Gabriel's message to Daniel.**

Whereas Chapter 8 and Chapters 11-12 deal mainly with the actions of the Gentile nations and their effect upon the Jews, the Seventy Sevens Prophecy speaks mostly of the Messiah and what God was going to accomplish through Him for and on behalf of His people. We will pick up the passage with Daniel interceding for his nation.

Daniel 9:20-23

And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; 21 Yea, whiles I was- speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. 23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

The following prophecy is a direct answer to Daniel's prayer. This portion may be a little easier from the New King James:

Daniel 9:24-27 NKJV

“Seventy weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.

“Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.

26

“And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it *shall be* with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

27

Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate.”

Let us now look carefully at the above passages. Daniel is confessing his sin and the sin of Israel when he sees the angel Gabriel. Note that Daniel hasn't **seen another vision, he has seen the** angel who was in the vision previously mentioned in Chapter 8 (Daniel 9:21), who has come to give him understanding of the vision (Daniel 9:23). Even though Gabriel had previously explained to him what the vision was about, Daniel still did not understand, he was utterly astonished by it and confessed that no-one understood it, presumably not even himself (Daniel 8:27), thus Gabriel has arrived to give him “skill to understand” (Daniel 9:22).

Be aware that the prophesied “seventy weeks” is covering the same time period covered by the vision of Daniel Chapter 8 which described what the actions of the prevailing Gentile kingdoms were going to be. However, there were aspects of that vision that Daniel simply could not comprehend. So in Daniel Chapter 9, Gabriel comes and complements the previous interpretation of the vision by revealing the plan that God was going to accomplish for and on behalf of the Jews while they endured the coming period of continued Gentile domination.

Daniel 9:24 NKJV

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For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
To make an end of sins,
To make reconciliation for iniquity,
To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.

Seventy weeks are “determined”. Many translations use the word “decreed”, and the literal from the Hebrew is “cut”, as in a something being clearly defined. It can also mean “appointed” as in the phrase “appointed time”.

Although almost every English translation has chosen to render the Hebrew word *shabua* as ‘weeks’, it is literally ‘sevens’. Mostly used of days to make a week, but in this case it is used of years.

Seventy sevens are: decreed; determined; defined; appointed, for your people and for your holy city. Now the prophecy defines what is going to be accomplished during the seventy sevens and we find six things mentioned. To cover these things fully would require a thorough exegesis on the revelation of the Gospel given to Paul in the New Testament which is beyond the scope of this study. However, these few passages of Scripture below should suffice.

1: To finish the transgression:

To finish: to add the final touch, to complete a project with a last addition. Some people think it means to stop sinning, but in reality it is talking about capping off the transgression with the supreme sin as we shall see as we continue. Look how Daniel spoke of it in the previous chapter:

Daniel 8:23 NKJV

And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness . . .

And look at how Jesus spoke about it:

Matthew 23:32-35 NKJV

Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ *guilt*. 33 Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? 34 Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: *some* of them you will kill and crucify, and *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35 that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

The word ‘*guilt*’ in the NKJV is in italics because it was added to the text by the editors for what they thought might clarify the meaning. **The vast majority of translations simply say, “Fill up the measure of your fathers.” But a few add the word ‘sin’. The word sin would actually make it clearer than the word guilt, for no greater crime has ever been committed on this planet than the crime against the Holy Son of God. The embodiment of love and truth and mercy and kindness and patience and goodness and gentleness was first rejected and then cruelly beaten and finally nailed to a cross to die. They nailed the source of all LOVE to a cross. They indeed ‘filled up’ and ‘finished’ the transgression; they capped off their wickedness with the ultimate sin.**

2: To make an end of sins:

Romans 8:3 NKJV

For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,

Hebrews 9:25-26 NKJV

. . . not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— 26 He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

John 1:29 NKJV

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

Through Christ, sin is brought to an end.

3: To make reconciliation for iniquity:

2 Corinthians 5:19

. . . that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Praise the Lord, through Christ we find reconciliation with God.

4: To bring in everlasting righteousness:

Romans 3:21-22

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Through Christ we have been made the righteousness of God.

5: To seal up the vision and prophecy:

Daniel 12:8-10

And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? 9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

Daniel heard but did not understand. Gabriel told him the words were sealed. At the time of the end, referred to above in Romans 9:26 as the end of the ages which is the end time of this prophecy, the wise will understand but the wicked shall not understand. The vision would remain sealed to the wicked.

Matthew 13:14-17

And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should

understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. 17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

The words were sealed to the wicked, so that they heard but did not understand, the vision was sealed so that they saw but did not perceive.

6: To anoint the Most Holy:

Acts 10:38

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

At the baptism of John, Jesus, the Most Holy Son of God was anointed with the Holy Spirit and so we find in this passage that Daniel is preaching the Gospel of Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One. All of the six defining things that the prophecy says were to be accomplished were all fulfilled in the ministry of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: in His life, His Baptism, His death and His Resurrection.

Daniel 9:25 NKJV

**Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.**

Seventy sevens equals four hundred and ninety and based on the day for a year principle that God has used in the Scriptures, this equals 490 years. The above verse divides this period into seven sevens plus sixty-two sevens which equals sixty-nine sevens. The seven sevens covers the troublesome times of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which spanned 49 years and is recorded in the book of Nehemiah. This was followed by the sixty-two sevens representing 434 years, when added to the 49 years spans a total of 483 years from the going forth of the command to rebuild Jerusalem until the baptism of Jesus where He was anointed as Messiah by John the Baptist.

Daniel 9:26 NKJV

**“And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;**

So then, after the seven weeks we have the sixty-two weeks, which means that sixty-nine weeks have been completed when Messiah is anointed. After the sixty-two weeks, after not during, Messiah shall be cut off. Therefore, following very ordinary and logical norms of comprehension and logic, and in accordance with the simplest laws of mathematics, we can safely with simplicity of mind assume that seventy actually does follow sixty-nine, and that it takes no stretch of the imagination to come to the conclusion that Messiah was cut off in the middle of the seventieth week, the week that followed the sixty-ninth week. I have laboured the point here because of so called scholars that insert a two thousand

year gap between the 69th and 70th weeks, who are simply giving their minds over to the convoluted fantasy of leapfrog mathematics and a wild theory about some supposed future peace treaty that is supposed to be broken after three and a half years. How people read such a thing into the above verses is beyond me. In so doing, they take a Scripture speaking of the coming of Messiah and try to turn it **into a future Antichrist. What spirit is behind that?! Mind you, there's plenty of money to be made** selling books predicting when the 70th week is supposed to happen so perhaps they are smarter than I think. Excuse my rant.

The use of Hebrew parallelism in this next portion of the passage causes some confusion to western thinking, but it is a common literary feature in the Old Testament (and even on occasion in the New) in which the words of two or more phrases of text are directly related in some way, usually repeating a statement in another form. This Hebraism can be found in many poetic passages, and sometimes even in the narrative, although it is more commonly found in the Psalms and Proverbs.

Recognizing Hebraic parallelism as a literary feature can aid in understanding a passage. Specific words or phrases that may be ambiguous or used in unusual ways can be clarified or more narrowly defined by seeing them in the context of a parallel structure. In fact, if you take a linear approach to a Hebrew parallelism you will simply be confused **and you will end up with a 'private interpretation'**. It should be kept in mind that Old Testament writers were very creative, and a great number of variations and combinations of these basic types of parallelism occur in the biblical text.

Here are a couple of examples to illustrate:

Psalm 19:1-2 NKJV

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.

Day unto day utters speech,
And night unto night reveals knowledge.

In the first verse "the heavens declare the glory of God" parallels with the "firmament shows His handiwork." The second verse has "day unto day utters speech" in parallel with "night unto night reveals **knowledge.**" Also in these two verses the general theme of God's handiwork is paralleled. Clever poetry.

See if you can see the parallelism in this next example:

Psalm 24:1-2

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;
the world, and they that dwell therein.

For he hath founded it upon the seas,
and established it upon the floods.

Psalm 24:3-4

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?
or who shall stand in his holy place?

He that hath clean hands,
and a pure heart;

who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,
nor sworn deceitfully.

Note: Verse 1. "The earth and the fullness thereof" parallels with "the world and they that dwell therein."
And in verse 2. "Upon the seas" parallels with "upon the floods." In verses 3-4 we have a triple parallel.

These are rather simple examples, but I hope you see the principle even though the parallelisms used here in Daniel are a little more complex. Okay, back to the prophecy:

"And after the sixty-two weeks

26

**Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it *shall be* with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.**

The next verse has the same message repeated in parallel form:

27

**Then He shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate."**

To help some of you 'get it', here is a repeat of the above parallelism, but this time phrase by phrase with the addition of the revelation from the New Testament:

26

Messiah shall be cut off

Paralleled with . . .

27

Then He shall confirm a covenant with many for one week

Luke 22:20 NKJV

Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.

1 Corinthians 11:25 NKJV

In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me."

Messiah being cut off parallels with Him confirming a covenant. We continue:

26

but not for Himself

27

But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

Jesus dying "not for Himself" parallels with "He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering."

So now we can see the entire message more clearly. I shall paraphrase it for you. After three and a half years of anointed ministry (thus making it the "middle of the week" or more literally the middle of the seven), Jesus confirms a covenant with many in His own Blood, bringing to an end the need to make sacrifice and offering for sin when He was cut off, not for Himself, but for us.

The remainder of the "seventieth seven" is not given much attention in the passage. We only have the phrase, "**He shall confirm a covenant with many for one week**" (Dan 9:27). Later we will find mention of the three and a half years in Daniel 12 and from the New Testament we can gather the following: For **three and a half years after the resurrection of our Lord, (the remainder of 'the week') the Gospel went** to the Jews first and many entered into the New Covenant. Then the Gospel door was opened to the Gentiles. See also A Time, Times and Half a Time in the Appendix.

Truly this prophecy was fulfilled in every way. The precise event marking the end of the seventieth week is difficult to ascertain. Some consider it to be the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts Chapter 7 after which the Church was scattered under great persecution and they went everywhere preaching the Word. Others think it may have been the conversion of the household of Cornelius in Acts Chapter 10. Whilst not dogmatic as both suggestions have merit, I favour the latter as it was with this event that the Apostles recognised that, "**God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life**" (Acts 11:18), so that the preaching was no longer to be exclusively for the Jews. Perhaps it was the Ethiopian eunuch, or the conversion and commissioning of Saul who later became Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. Whichever it was, there can be no doubt that many came into the Covenant in those first three and a half years. On the day of Pentecost there were three thousand converts in one day. James and all the elders declared to Paul before he was arrested in Jerusalem, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed" (Acts 21:20). The Greek word translated '**myriads**' is literally '**tens of thousands**'.

What follows is the final warning about what would happen soon after. Again we have Daniel presenting it in a parallelism:

Daniel 9:26b

And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.

Daniel 9:27b

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.

The awful prediction of "the prince who is to come shall destroy" parallels with "one who makes desolate." Followed by "the end of the war" brings desolation like "a flood" is paralleled with "the consummation . . . is poured out on the desolate." Truly the rest of the prophecy declared the awful consequences that were to follow. For those who would not believe, there was the destruction of the city and the sanctuary and the utter trampling of the host of Jews. This destruction is also mentioned in the interpretation of the vision in Chapter 8 and, as we shall see, in Daniel 12.

Daniel 8:11-13

Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of the sanctuary was cast down. 12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered. 13 Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

Daniel 12:1

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time:

Daniel 12:6-12

And one said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? 7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. 8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? 9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. 11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12 Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

These things Jesus reiterated in His discourse recorded synoptically in Matthew, Mark and Luke:

Matthew 23:37-39

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. 39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Matthew 24:1-2

And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Mark 13:1-2

And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! 2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Luke 21:5-6

And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, 6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Daniel 8:13

“. . . both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

Luke 21:21-22

Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

It is Jesus that said the destruction that was about to happen were the days of vengeance and that it was the fulfilment of all the things that were written. All the things written in Daniel 8, 9 and 12, concerning Messiah making a Covenant with many, the following Abomination of Desolation, and the trampling of the host of Jews was fulfilled in graphic detail. These passages in Daniel are clearly what Jesus was referring to as there are no other references to the Abomination of Desolation anywhere else in the Word of God.

A fuller account of the destruction wrought by the “people of the prince that was to come” can be found in the writings of Josephus, the Jewish historian whose historical record confirms the Gospel accounts (Josephus: *The Wars of the Jews*). **“Let the reader understand.**