

DANIEL 9

THE

SEVENTY

WEEKS

OF

GABRIEL

In the first year of Darius, king of the Medes (539 B.C.), Daniel prayed unto God confessing his sins and the sins of the people of Israel. He prayed earnestly before the Lord: "We have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and

those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You" (Daniel 9:5-7).

Daniel continued his heartfelt confession: "Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us" (Daniel 9:10-13).

The prophet concluded his prayer with desperate supplication: "We have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us. Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the

Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name" (Daniel 9:15-19).

The Lord heard the prayer of Daniel, and while he was still praying, sent Gabriel to give Daniel skill and understanding.

Gabriel proceeded by giving the timetable for Israel's continued existence unto the end: "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.

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. 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" (Daniel 9:24-27).

The message of Gabriel was clear and simple. God had determined that the nation of Israel and Jerusalem, their city, would continue until He had brought to pass the things before appointed. Seventy weeks are allotted for the restoration and building of Jerusalem, the coming of the Messiah, the Prince, the finishing of the transgression, the making of an end of sins, making reconciliation for iniquity, the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, the sealing up of the vision and prophecy, and the anointing of the Most Holy. After sixty-nine weeks, or during the seventieth week, the Messiah would be cut off or killed. Obvious reference is to the death of Christ and all that was accomplished by His death. The Messiah would confirm the covenant with many for one week, obviously the seventieth week, and in the midst of the week would cause the sacrifices to cease

until the end results of the abominations of the nation were brought to their completion in the utter desolation and destruction determined. The prophecy is a forecast of the complete rebuilding of Jerusalem and the fulfillment of all the prophetic promises of the coming Messiah, even unto the end of the nation.

Understanding Gabriel's timetable will be greatly aided by observing a portion of the subject matter in the prophecy. He said sixty-nine weeks would have been completely accomplished when the Messiah would make His appearance. The seventieth week then begins with the personal ministry of Christ at around AD 26/27, when Jesus is about thirty years of age, as Luke records: "Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:23). For three and one half years Jesus preached "but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). After His death and the subsequent beginning of the preaching of the New Covenant on Pentecost in 30 A.D., when Peter declared, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36), the preaching of His covenant was still only to the nation of Israel. Then, after two or three years, the gospel was taken to the Samaritans and

Gentiles as recorded in Acts chapters 8 and 10.

This helps to establish the weeks of Daniel's prophecy as weeks of years with each week standing for seven years. It was in the midst of this seventieth week of years that Messiah was "cut off" (Daniel 9:26), offered as sacrifice, in which the transgressions of the nation of Israel came to the full, an end of sins was made, and all else that Gabriel foretold was fulfilled: "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" (Daniel 9:24), with the Holy One being anointed King, as Peter proclaimed on Pentecost: "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ" (Acts 2:30-31).

With Gabriel's explanation we can pinpoint the meaning of the timetable he gives. The seventy weeks computes to 490 years. Since the Messiah was cut off in the midst of the seventieth week, that is, in 30 A.D., the end of the week would have been in 32 or 33 A.D. By moving backward in history 490 years from this date (33 A.D.) we come to the year 457 B.C., the exact year that

Ezra left Babylon with permission from Artaxerxes I (Longimanus, 464-424 B.C.) to return to Jerusalem to restore the service of God in the temple and make repairs to the house of God, as recorded: "And by the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, with his sons and brothers, eighteen men" (Ezra 8:18). Thirteen years later Nehemiah left Babylon with orders from the same king to rebuild the city and its walls: "And I said to the king, 'If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it'" (Nehemiah 2:5).

Ezra and Nehemiah then worked together to accomplish the rebuilding of the city and the restoration of the worship of God at Jerusalem. The prophecy of Gabriel dictated that the time was to be computed "from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem" (Daniel 9:25). When the seventy weeks are counted from 457 B.C., our timetable ends in 33 A.D. This explanation is reasonable, logical, and scriptural, following the principle that God established: "According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years"

(Numbers 14:34), and as Ezekiel was commanded: "And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year" (Ezekiel 4:6).

Three things within this prophecy need special attention. First, "And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" (Daniel 9:26). There can be no doubt but that the prophecy is foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Since the city and the temple both lay in ruins at the time of the prophecy, the fulfillment of these things of necessity pointed to a future time. The temple and the city were rebuilt and were not destroyed again until the final destruction in A.D. 70. It is apparent from the prophecies of Jesus that He identified Himself as the one who would destroy the city and the temple: "See! Your house is left to you desolate" (Luke 13:35), and "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near" (Luke 21:20). Stephen also testified: "This Moses whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush" (Acts 7:35), and later accusations were made: "For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place

and change the customs which Moses delivered to us" (Acts 6:14). While this was accomplished through the instrumentality of the Roman armies, it was God and His anointed Prince who carried it out, as John revealed: "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'" (Revelation 11:15).

Second, "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" (Daniel 9:27). Here the personal reference is not to the Roman prince but to the Messiah, and the time reference is not to the period of the destruction but to the seventieth week. Reference to cessation of the sacrifices and oblations is not to their offering but to the ceasing of their acceptability. With the offering of Jesus Christ in April of 30 A.D. as the sacrifice for the sins of the world, as John the Baptist proclaimed, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29), and as the writer of Hebrews declares: "But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12), and "For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14), the

acceptability of animal sacrifices for service and for sin ceased. The author of Hebrews explained: "For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins" (Hebrews 10:2). From God's viewpoint they had ceased to be offered, though in reality, they continued to be offered but were not accepted by God.

Third, "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" (Daniel 9:27). Desolate means destitute, or deprived, of inhabitants. So, the desolation referred to here is the absence of God from the city and especially from the temple. When Jesus died on the cross offering the final sacrifice that made an end of sins, "the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split" (Matthew 27:51) as a sign that God no longer dwelt there. Their house was left to them desolate, as Jesus had warned: "See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'" (Matthew 23:38-39), "even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (Daniel 9:27). As also previously stated, "And the end of it shall be with a

flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined" (Daniel 9:26).

The determined desolations and end of this nation had been announced in the plains of Jordan by Moses nearly 1,000 years earlier: "The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you" (Deuteronomy 4:27). Now, they are reiterated to Daniel by Gabriel. The determined end came in 70 A.D., some thirty-seven years after the seventieth week in which God fully accomplished all that Gabriel revealed would come to pass within that period. The destruction and end were to come after the events of the seventieth week, just as the prophecy foretold.

The chart below is a summary of the events stated in this paper and is not meant to be authoritative. You should make your closest approximation of your timeline, but this should suffice and be close enough to the actual events.

This chronological framework demonstrates how Gabriel's prophecy to Daniel provides a precise timetable that spans from the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 B.C. through the ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

The seventy weeks of years (490 years total) encompass the rebuilding of

Jerusalem, the first advent of the Messiah, His sacrificial death in the midst of the seventieth week, the cessation of acceptable animal sacrifices, the desolation of the temple, and the final destruction of the city and sanctuary. While scholars may debate specific dates and interpretations, this understanding places Christ's ministry and atoning work at the very center of prophetic fulfillment, showing how God's predetermined plan unfolded exactly as Gabriel foretold to Daniel during his prayer of confession and supplication for his people and the holy city.

Daniel 9 Timeline (70 Weeks Of Gabriel by Majola and Mike)

