

# **The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks**

## **A Supplement to the Notes on Daniel 9**

**Compiled by Kevin S. Lucas, Bible Teacher  
Victory Baptist Church  
Macon, Georgia**

"About the time of the End, a body of men will be raised up who will turn their attention to the prophecies, and insist upon their literal interpretation, in the midst of much clamor and opposition." Sir Isaac Newton

### **The Passage Itself: Daniel 9:24-27**

"24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And 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."

### **Some Introductory Thoughts**

There is no more important passage in the Word of God on the subject of prophecy, especially in the area of the first advent of our Lord and of the Great Tribulation Period than Daniel 9:24-27. Others have recognized its importance and their words are a fitting introduction to this very important study.

Dr. Alva J. McClain wrote a remarkable study of this passage in this little book "*Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks*". He was the President of Grace College and Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana for 25 years. He was a superb student and teacher of the Word of God and his little book is a classic. This is some of what he had to say concerning this passage:

"Probably no single utterance is more crucial in the fields of Biblical Interpretation, Apologetics, and Eschatology.....A proper understanding of the seventy weeks of Daniel not only safeguards the Christian against the elaborate guesswork of those who persist in setting dates for the Lord's return, but also furnishes the infallible key to the real chronology of all New Testament prophecy."

Dr. John Walvoord of the Dallas Theological Seminary is acknowledged by many as the Dean of American writers on the subject of Biblical Prophecy. Listen to what he has to say about this passage:

"In the concluding verses of Daniel 9, one of the most important prophecies in the Old Testament is contained....Properly interpreted, the prophecy of Daniel furnishes an excellent example that prophecy is subject to literal interpretation. Practically all expositors, however opposed to prophecy per se, agree that at least part of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel is to be interpreted literally...if the first sixty-nine weeks of Daniel were subject to literal fulfillment, it is a powerful argument that the final seventieth week will have a similar fulfillment."

Clearly this is crucial passage of Scripture and its interpretation is the key to most of the New Testament's prophetic utterances. Therefore, we are going to study this passage in more depth than usual. These notes, gleaned from my study of this passage and from the works of the best authors on the subject, are offered as

signpost to help direct you in your further study of the passage at home.

### **The Background of This Passage**

In order to grasp the significance of this passage to Daniel we must understand the background of this passage. Dr. J. Vernon McGee gives a very summary of what Daniel had in his mind before this prophecy was given:

"Now Daniel was puzzled as to how the end of the 70 years captivity would fit into the long period of Gentile world domination which the visions of chapters 7 and 8 had so clearly indicated. He obviously thought that at the end of the 70 years his people would be returned to the promised land, that the promised Messiah would come, and that the Kingdom which had been promised to David would be established. How could both be true? It appeared to him, I am sure, to be an irreconcilable situation created by these seemingly contradictory prophecies....The Seventy Weeks, or the seventy sevens, answer two questions. Israel's kingdom will not come immediately. The seventy sevens must run their course. These seventy sevens fit into the Times of the Gentiles and run concurrently with them. They are broken up to fit into gentile times. The word for *determined* (verse 24) literally means "cutting off". These seventy-sevens are to be cut off, as the following verses will indicate. The seventy sevens for Israel and the Times of the Gentiles will both come to an end at the same time, that is at the second coming of Christ. This is important to know in the correct understanding of the prophecy."

### **The Value of This Passage**

There are three extremely important observations made by McClain concerning the value of Daniel 9:24-27 to us:

1. It serves as a witness to the truth of the Scripture.

"That part of the prophecy relating to the first 69 weeks has already been accurately fulfilled, and in this remarkable fulfillment we have an unanswerable argument for the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures. It is, in fact, nothing less than a mathematical demonstration. For only an omniscient God could have foretold over five hundred years in advance the very day on which Messiah would ride into Jerusalem and present Himself as the "Prince" of Israel. Yet, this is precisely what has been done in the prophecy of the 70 weeks."

2. It exposes the folly of the critic of prophecy.

"It is the impregnable rock upon which all naturalistic theories of prophecies are shattered. These theories deny the possibility of any "predictive element in prophecy." And since the Book of Daniel did forecast many well-attested historic events, the critics have sought to save their theories by denying to Daniel the authorship of the book and moving its date down to a point subsequent to the events described, thus making the unknown author a mere historian who pretended to be a prophet. In this rather easy and summary fashion they hoped to get rid of the troublesome specter of "predictive prophecy." But no critic has ever dared to suggest a date for the book of Daniel as late as the birth of our Lord. Yet Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks predicts to the very day Christ's appearance as the "Prince of Israel"...On this prophecy, whole case of the critics goes to pieces. For if even one predictive prophecy is established, there remains no valid reason for denying the others."

3. It is the chronological key to New Testament prophecy.

"It is an indispensable chronological key to all New Testament prophecy. The Olivet Discourse fixes the time of Israel's greatest trouble within the days of Daniel's Prophecy. And a greater part of the Book of the Revelation is simply an expansion of Daniel's prophecy within the chronological framework as outlined by the same seventieth week, which is divided into two equal periods, each extending 1260 days, or 42 months, or 3 1/2 years. (Revelation 11:2-3; 12:6,14, 13:5)

### **Nine Key Points to Keep in Mind**

As we begin our study, there are nine things we need to keep in mind in order to be faithful to the teaching of the Word of God:

- 1. The focus of this passage is without question upon Daniel's people (the Jews) and their city (Jerusalem). v.24 The Church is not here. It is not in view at all.
- 2. This passage features two impressive and powerful Princes. They are separate and distinct from each other. They must not be confused in our thinking. The first Prince is the none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He is called here "Messiah the Prince." v. 25 The second Prince is the Coming Prince whose people destroyed the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. These people are the Romans. This Prince is to be the leader of a revived Roman Empire in the seventieth week, that is Antichrist. v.26
- 3. The entire period is designated as "Seventy Weeks" v.25 and these 70 weeks are further divided into 3 distinct periods. First, there is an initial period of 7 weeks which deals with the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. Then, there is a period of 62 weeks which ends with the Messiah making an appearance and then being cut off for the people. Finally, there is 1 last week in which the Jews will be betrayed and slaughtered by the Antichrist.
- 4. The beginning of the seventy weeks is foretold in v.25 as the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and can be verified in history.
- 5. The end of the 7 weeks and the 62 weeks (69 weeks) is marked by an appearance of "Messiah the Prince." (v.25)
- 6. Sometime after the 69 weeks end, two significant events are to occur. Messiah will be cut off and Jerusalem will be destroyed by the people of the Prince who is yet to come."
- 7. After the cutting off of Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem, there will be a final week, the beginning of which is marked by the confirming of a covenant or treaty of peace with the Antichrist for a period of one week. (v.27)
- 8. In the middle of the 70th week, the Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jews and cause sacrifice to cease. This will plunge Israel into a time of severe suffering and desolation under the wrath of God lasting until the consummation (the end of the week). v.27
- 9. At the time of the completion of the entire 70 weeks there will a time of great and unparalleled blessing for Israel and by extension, the world. (v. 24) These blessings include: "to finish the transgression", and "to make an end of sins", and "to make reconciliation for iniquity", and to "bring in everlasting righteousness", and "to seal up the vision and prophecy", and to "anoint the most Holy".

### **The Meaning of the Word "Weeks"**

Our Scripture text announces that "24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." We must ask ourselves the question what does the word "weeks" mean? When we think of weeks we think

in terms of periods of seven days. That's not necessarily what Daniel would have thought. "Weeks" or "shabua" is somewhat akin to our English word "dozen". A dozen means "twelve of something". In the Hebrew vocabulary, the word "weeks" means "seven of something." Seventy Sevens of what?

The Jews recognized three classifications of weeks:

**1. A week of days or a Sabbath week:** Exodus 20: 8 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."

**2. A week of years which was reckoned from one Sabbatical year to another and consisted of seven years.** Leviticus 25:3-7 "3 Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; 4 But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. 5 That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land. 6 And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, 7 And for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat." This is also the week referred to by Laban in Genesis 29: 15 " And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be? 16 And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17 Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured. 18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, *I will serve thee seven years* for Rachel thy younger daughter. 19 And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. 20 *And Jacob served seven years for Rachel;* and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her. 21 And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for *my days are fulfilled*, that I may go in unto her. 22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. 23 And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her. 24 And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid. 25 And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? 26 And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. 27 *Fulfil her week*, and we will give thee this also for the service which *thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.* 28 *And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week:* and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. 29 And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid. 30 And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with *him yet seven other years.*" Both Laban and Jacob would have understood that the word "week" and seven year period was interchangeable here. It was a common usage of the word "weeks".

**3. There was the week of seven times seven years, or forty-nine years, which was reckoned from one year of Jubilee to another. This the Jubilee week.** Leviticus 25:8 " And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the *seven Sabbaths* of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. 9 Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. 10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. 11 A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. 12 For it is the jubile; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. 13 In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession. " (Note: The phrase "*seven Sabbaths of years* shall be unto thee *forty and nine years*" was understood by Israel to mean weeks of years. The period of seven years was looked upon as one week.)

Now I believe a strong case can be made that when Daniel heard seventy weeks he thought of a seventy sevens of years or a period of 490 years.

1. **Daniel had just been thinking in terms of periods of 7 years.** This chapter opens with his contemplation: Daniel 9:1 " In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish *seventy years* in the desolations of Jerusalem."

2. **Daniel knew that the length of the captivity of his people was based upon the Sabbath law.** The land was to rest for the Sabbath years missed by the people. Seventy of the seven year periods were missed, which amounted to 490 years during which this practice was ignored. So the children of Israel were taken out of the land, one year for each seven year period they missed, equaling a total of 70 years. 2 Chronicles 36:21 " To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, *until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.*" (seventy years) Jeremiah 25:11 "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of *Babylon seventy years.*" Jeremiah 25:12 "And it shall come to pass, when *seventy years* are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations."

3. Daniel would have understood the significance at the end of this seventy year period of judgment for the Jews when an angel was sent to him with the announcement that the new era of God's dealings with the Jews would be exactly the same in length as the previous period of 490 years for which they had just been judged. As Lehman Strauss puts it so well:

"Returning now to Daniel 9, the conclusion is that the prophecy of the "seventy weeks" refers to seventy sevens of years, 490 years. Daniel had been reading in Jeremiah of the seventy years' captivity recorded by Jeremiah are coming to an end. Then it is as if God said, 'Yes, Daniel, you have discovered rightly that seventy years captivity recorded by Jeremiah are coming to an end. But now I want to show you another seventy, a time period within which I shall accomplish all My plans for My people and My holy city.'"

Clearly Daniel understood from the context of all of these that God was referring to a time period of seventy weeks of years or seventy sevens of years or (more simply)  $70 \times 7 = 490$  years.

It is also interesting that in Daniel 10:2-3 is the only other mention of the word "weeks" in the book of Daniel. "2 In those days I Daniel was mourning *three full weeks.* 3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till *three whole weeks* were fulfilled. " But Daniel used a different form of the Hebrew word which can only mean "weeks of days". Why the use of a different form? Simply put, Daniel did not fast for 21 years but 21 days. He used the different form because he wanted to make a clear separation between the weeks of years in chapter 9 and the weeks of days in chapter 10.

So it is clear that these "seventy weeks" or "seventy sevens" of Daniel are period of 70 times 7 years or 490 years. Or as Alva McClain puts it:

"Therefore, by every fair and sensible rule of interpretation, the "Seventy Sevens" must be understood as years, not days which we must surreptitiously change into years to make the prophecy come out right"

### **What is the Length of A Year in Prophecy?**

If the prophecy of the seventy weeks is period of 490 years in which God is going to accomplish His purpose with Israel, we must ask the question, just how long is a year? After all our way of marking time is somewhat different from that of the Jews. The history of setting up calendars to mark the passing of time is

certainly a rich one. Our own calendar openly admits a flaw in its system because every fourth year (leap year) we have to add a day to make it come out right. It is a scientific fact that it takes the earth about 365 and 1/4 days to rotate completely around the sun which is our measure of a year. There is very clear and abundant evidence that the prophetic year mentioned here in Daniel composed of **360 days or 12 months of 30 days each**.

There are two great arguments for the 360 day year. One is based on history. The other on prophecy. The historical argument goes like this. In Genesis we are told that the flood began on the seventeenth day of the second month ( Genesis 7:11 " In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.") and that the flood ended in the seventh month also on the seventeenth day (Genesis 8:4" And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.") That is exactly five months. Very fortunately we also told the time in numbers of days as well, namely 150 days. ( Genesis 7:24 " And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days." Genesis 8:3 "And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.") So five months equals 150 days which comes out to five months of exactly 30 days each. Extending this to a full year, it would make a year of 12 months made up of 30 days each or 360 days.

The prophetic argument of the year being 360 days in length is even more convincing and powerful because it arises directly out of this passage in Daniel 9. In Daniel 9:27 we read: "27 And 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..." The Antichrist makes a peace treaty with the Jewish people for one week or seven years. **In the midst of that week, or 3 1/2 years into the treaty** he breaks the covenant and persecutes the Jews until the end of the 7 years, that is for the last 3 1/2 years the Tribulation. This same period of time is referred to in Daniel 7:24-25 " And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. 25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until **a time and times and the dividing of time.**" A "time and times and the dividing of time" is an Aramaic idiom for **3 1/2 years**. (one year + two years + 1/2 year = 3 and 1/2 years.) This same period of time is referred to in the Book of Revelation in the same language. Revelation 12: 13 "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for **a time, and times, and half a time**, from the face of the serpent."

Now, speaking of this exact period of prophetic history, the Apostle John declares that the persecution of the Jews will last **42 months**. Revelation 13: 4 "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue *forty and two months*. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations". And this same period of time is referred to by the Apostle John as a period of " **a thousand two-hundred and three score days**." Revelation 12: 6 "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there *a thousand two hundred and threescore days*."

Therefore, we have the same period of time referred to as 3 1/2 years, 42 months, and 1260 days. This would be 42 months x 30 days = 1260 days. 42 months ÷ 12 months in a year = 3.5 or 3 1/2 years. 1260 days ÷ 30 days in a month = 42 months. 360 days in a year x 3.5 years = 1260 days. Anyway you add it up, the prophetic year referred to here is a period of 360 days in duration.

### The Historical Event That Begins The Seventy Weeks of Daniel

This is clearly spelled out for us in Daniel 9:25 "Know therefore and understand, that *from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem...*" The event that marks the beginning of Daniel's 70 weeks is the issuing of a command or a decree to restore and build Jerusalem. Three decrees were issued concerning the restoration of the worship of God at Jerusalem.

**1. The first decree was issued by Cyrus in 538 BC and is recorded in Ezra 1:1-4:** " Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, 2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem. 4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem." But you will note that this decree was limited to the rebuilding the Temple. Therefore, this cannot be the decree referred to in Daniel 9.

**2. The second decree was issued by Darius in 517 BC and is recorded in Ezra 6:1-12** "Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. 2 And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written: 3 In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; 4 With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house: 5 And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God. 6 Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shetharboznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from thence: 7 Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place. 8 Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered. 9 And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail: 10 That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons. 11 Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this. 12 And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed." Once again this decree is limited to the rebuilding of the Temple and thus it does not satisfy the requirements of Daniel 9.

**3. The third decree was issued by Artaxerxes in 445 BC as recorded in Nehemiah 2:1** "And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. 2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, 3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? 4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. 6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when

wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. 7 Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; 8 And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me." This meets the exact requirements of Daniel 9 and we are given precise details as to the actual day that it was issued. Note again Nehemiah 2:1 "And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king ..." We know that Artaxerxes came to the throne in 465 BC, therefore, his twentieth year would be 445 BC. The month was Nisan, and it was a Hebrew custom that the date would be understood as the first if no other date was given. Therefore, according to our calendar the date would have been March 14, 445 BC.

### **The Beginning and the End of the First Sixty-Nine Weeks**

We have now established the Seventy weeks are weeks of years, and that the length of the year is 360 days, and that this whole period of the Seventy weeks began on March 14, 445 BC, we are now ready make some computations which will take us to a significant event in the earthly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. All of the following information was first worked out by Sir Robert Anderson and was presented concisely in *Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks* by Dr. Alva J. McClain from which I now quote:

"In order to find the end of the Sixty-nine Weeks we must reduce them to days. Since we have 69 weeks of seven years each, and each year has 360 days, the equation is as follows:  $69 \times 7 \times 360 = 173,880$  days. Beginning with March 14, 445 BC, this number of days brings us to April 6, 32 AD.

To prove that the 173,880 days equal exactly the period from March 14, 445 BC, to April 6, 32 AD, it is necessary to compute this period in terms of our own calendar year, as follows:

445 BC to 32 AD is 476 years (BC 1 to AD 1 is one year)

$476 \times 365$  days = 173,740 days

Add for leap year 116 days (three less in four centuries)\*

March 14 to April 6 24 days (inclusive)

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Total 173,880 days

\* Note: To divide 476 by 4 would give 119 leap years. But since century years are not leap years unless divisible by 400 and since 476 years involve four centuries, it follows that only one of the four century years would be a true leap year. Therefore, it is necessary to subtract 3 from 119 to get the exact number of the extra leap year days in 476 years.

April 6, 32 AD, therefore, is fixed definitely as the end of the era of the first 69 weeks; and according to Daniel's prophecy, it should mark the very day of Messiah's manifestation as the Prince of Israel. Without attempting to enter into the clear but intricate chronological calculations set forth by Anderson in his book, *The Coming Prince* (pages 95-105), I shall simply state his conclusion that April 6, 32 AD, was the tenth of Nisan, that momentous day on which our Lord, in fulfillment of Messianic prophecy, rode up to Jerusalem and on the "foal of an ass" and offered Himself as the Prince and King of Israel."

The gospel record gives a precise account of the events of April 6, 32 AD and would you note the precise language which our Lord uses concerning it?

Luke 19: 28 "And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. 29 And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, 30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. 31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him. 32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. 33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? 34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him." All this Christ did in exact fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 which states: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, **thy King cometh unto thee**: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Christ is Messiah the Prince!

Continuing on in Luke's account we read: "35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. 36 And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. 37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; 38 Saying, **Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord**: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." The multitude understood this symbolism from Zechariah 9 and from Daniel 9:25 and they began to cry out using the quotation from the Messianic Psalm 118:22-26 "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. 23 This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. 24 **This is the day which the LORD hath made**; we will rejoice and be glad in it. 25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. 26 Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD."

Returning to Luke's account, we read this in verse 39 "And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. 40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." You will recall in your reading of the Gospels that Christ was continually warning the disciples not to make Him known, but now He now only urges them on, but makes it clear that this is His will. Without a doubt what is happening on this day is nothing short of the direct fulfillment of Daniel 9:25! Now He can be fully revealed to the nation of Israel! His hour is come! Messiah the Prince is revealed at exactly the correct date: April 6, 32 AD.

Even more powerful than these incidental observations are the direct words of our Lord Jesus on this occasion. "41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, 42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least **in this thy day**, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. 43 *For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, 44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; **because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation**.*" Standing and weeping as He looked over the skyline of Jerusalem on that day, our Lord Jesus Christ makes it clear that this is an important day for the nation of Israel. Had they but recognized Who He really was, their joy would have been complete. But He knew the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks was being literally fulfilled. Remember again the words of Daniel 9:25 "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem **unto the Messiah the Prince** shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and

the wall, even in troublous times.<sup>26</sup> And after threescore and two weeks **shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself;** and **the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary**" And now, 483 years after the clock of prophecy had begun to tick on the fate of Israel with the decree of Artaxerxes in 445 BC , the moment had arrived. Messiah the Prince had come and had presented Himself to the nation.

Now two great events were certain to occur. Messiah would be cut off, but not for Himself, and the city of Jerusalem with its Temple would be destroyed. Within a week, the Lord Jesus Christ would be dead and buried in the borrowed tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and precisely one week from that very day He would rise victorious over sin, death and Satan. Within a generation (70 AD to be precise), the second part of Daniel's prophecy would come to pass as the city and the sanctuary would be utterly destroyed, fulfilling the words of the Lord Jesus Christ also on this occasion: "43 *For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,* 44 *And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; **because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.**"*

Let me bring this section of our study of the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks to a close with the concluding words of Dr. Alva J. McClain from his book "Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks":

"Thus the 173,880 days of the first Sixty-nine Weeks ran their course to the very day --- deep and abiding encouragement to all who love the Lord and His precious Word of prophecy. And I close this discussion with but one remark: The exact fulfillment of this prophecy is sufficient to demonstrate the accuracy of Daniel and also by implication the inspiration of the Bible and truth of Christianity. Only God can "declare the end from the beginning" and forecast to the very day "things that are not yet done" (Isaiah 46:10)."

#### **The Gap Between the Sixty-Ninth Week and the Seventieth Week**

Before turning to the final, or sixty-ninth week of this prophecy, we need to consider the break between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy. If, as we have shown, the first sixty-nine weeks came to an end on April 6, 32 AD, what happened to final week or the final period of seven years? I strongly believe that Dr. Alva J. McClain was right when he wrote:

"...there is a great parenthesis of time between these two which has already lasted for over nineteen hundred years, and therefore the Seventieth Week still lies in the future."

Dr. Lehman Strauss agrees:

"Now the question that confronts us is, did the seventieth week (7 years) run its course successively, without interruption, meaning of course that it is now past and its prophecy has been already fulfilled? The answer is a clear and emphatic, No! The sixty-nine weeks are separated from the last week by an interval of time. Verse 26 refers to the death of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., while verse 27 passes on to a time yet future. The seventieth week of seven years awaits its fulfillment at some future date....There is then a "gap" or "parenthesis" between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks, an undetermined period of time not included in the writings of the Old Testament prophets."

Now let's be clear about this: this is not an arbitrary method of interpretation. We are not inventing a method of viewing the Scriptures so that they say what we want them to say. Rather, we are letting the Scriptures speak for themselves in their entire context. There are very sound and Scriptural reasons for concluding that God had fully intended a gap between the 69th and 70th week, and that this time gap was not at all uncommon in the Scriptures. Both Strauss and McClain give solid arguments from the Scripture concerning the gap between the 69th and 70th week which I would like to summarize for you, and then I would like to throw in an argument of my own:

1. As McClain points out: "Such a gap in time before the Seventieth Week is implied by the most natural reading of the prophecy." The great Dr. Melvin Grove Kyle used to speak of "our Anglo-Saxon passion for a continuous chronology" which was simply not something that the Oriental mind was interested in. According to Dr. Kyle, the Oriental mind was interested in the next important event, not in the time that might intervene!

When we read Daniel 9:24-27 we are not immediately brought to the conclusion that these weeks have to be continuous, except for the statement in verse 24 that the weeks are "determined" or "cut off" as the Hebrew word implies. But if you carefully read verses 25-27 and notice the order of the events, there is clearly the indication of a gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks. The end of the 69th week is clearly marked by the appearance of Messiah the Prince according to verse 25. Then, after these 69 weeks come two really key events, the death of Messiah and the utter destruction of the city of Jerusalem. A simple reading of the text indicates that these two events occur between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel.

2. This leads to the second clear argument for the gap, as McClain spells it out: "A gap in time between the Sixty-ninth and Seventieth Weeks is demanded by the historical fulfillment of the two predicted events of verse 26." Remember that the death of Messiah and the destruction of the city of Jerusalem took place after the end of the sixty-nine weeks. History records that Titus, the Roman, completely destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD, nearly 40 years after the end of the 69 weeks. But in the prophecy, the destruction of the city of Jerusalem is placed before the events of the final or seventieth week. As McClain points out, "the very historical fulfillment of this one detail of the prophecy...demands a gap of at least thirty-eight years, and thus provides an infallible clue to the problem which has puzzled so many interpreters. For if even so much as one year is allowed between the last two weeks, the *principle* of the gap interpretation is admitted. And if, as we have seen, there must be at least thirty-eight years, then we have no ...reason for denying that there may be nineteen hundred." The beauty of this argument is that it is founded upon the rock of fulfilled prophecy and nothing assures us more of the fulfillment of unfulfilled prophecy more than the clear fulfillment of other parts of that same prophecy.

3. The third argument is a common sense argument. If the Seventy Weeks are continuous, then where in recorded history do we find the tremendous accomplishments listed in verse 24? You will recall what verse 24 promises: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, *to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*" Keeping in mind that these events are for the Jews (thy people...thy holy city), ask yourself the question, when have these things ever come to pass? If you take the position that there is no gap, then you must believe that events of the 70th week have already occurred. Following a strict continuous chronology, these events would have had to occur sometime in the early days of the book of the Acts of the Apostles and even a light surface reading of the Acts ought to be sufficient to prove that these events simply never took place during that time. As McClain says:

"But the history of those years contains nothing that in any reasonable way corresponds with what Daniel saw at the end of the Seventy Weeks. Even if we should adopt the "spiritualizing" scheme of interpretation, still the bed is too short and the cover too narrow. Where in the history of Acts, for example, can you find any finishing of Jewish transgression, or an ending of Jewish sins? On the contrary, the transgression of the chosen nation increases by leaps and bounds until the crisis comes in the twenty-eighth chapter, where Paul turns definitely to the Gentiles. Or where in the period of the Acts can we find the "sealing up of the vision and the prophecy"? On the contrary, it is during this period and beyond that we find the greatest loosing of "vision and prophecy" in all the history of Revelation (Ed. note i.e.. the entire New Testament). But at the second coming of our Lord in glory, which will take place at the close of the Seventieth week, vision and prophecy will no longer be needed. The Word of God will be present in visible manifestation, and His law will go forth from Jerusalem."

4. The fourth argument for a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks is the example of the Scriptures themselves. The Bible is replete with examples of the gap between two events which at first appear to be continuous. Look carefully at these examples.

In Isaiah 9:6 which is clearly a Messianic prophecy we read: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." We all know that the first part of the verse ("For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:") was fulfilled at Christ's first coming 1900 years ago, but the last part of the verse ("and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.") has yet to be fulfilled and will only be fulfilled at the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. These two parts of this verse appear to be continuous, yet between them is over 1900 years!

In Psalm 34:16 David wrote "The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." Peter quotes from this Psalm in third chapter of his first epistle "For the eyes of the Lord [are] over the righteous, and his ears [are open] unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord [is] against them that do evil. 1 Peter 3:12, however you will note that he does not give the entire quotation. Why? Because the Holy Spirit prevented him from writing it. God is against those who do evil, but He has reserved their judgment until the future, again indicating a gap of time between the first part of the verse and the second part of the verse.

Still clearer is an example we have already looked at in this paper, namely the prophecy of Zechariah fulfilled by Christ at the Triumphal Entry. Read it again: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he [is] just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Zechariah 9:9 That's where we usually stop. But without the slightest literary or chronological break the next verse continues: "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: *and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion [shall be] from sea [even] to sea, and from the river [even] to the ends of the earth.*" Zechariah 9:10 This prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, but it will be fulfilled just as surely as the first part was. This illustrates the gap that often appears between prophecies in the Old Testament.

Perhaps the best example of this is from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. It was His habit to read in the synagogue in Nazareth the precious Scriptures. Oh, to have been there to hear Him read the Word of God! One Saturday He took the Book and turned to the passage which we know as Isaiah 6:1-3. The whole passage reads like this: "1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified." But a strange thing happened, after He finished the first verse, He started the second verse and ended the reading before the verse ended. Let the Spirit of God paint the picture for us:

"16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Luke 4:16-21

He stopped His reading in mid-verse, why? The answer is clear. The first coming of Christ would be the

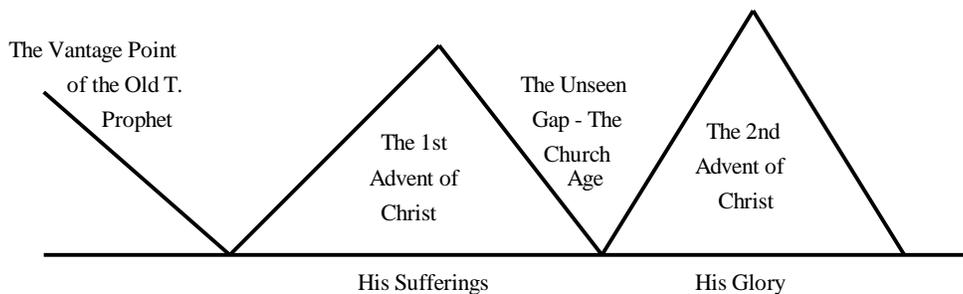
proclamation of the acceptable year of the Lord, and in His second coming we find the "day of vengeance of our God." So far there is a least a nineteen hundred year gap between those commas! As McClain put it so well:

"By this one single act of His, Our Lord as the infallible Interpreter laid down the principle of "gap interpretation", apart from which the chronology of the Old Testament prophecy is an insoluble enigma."

Even the Hebrew prophets themselves recognized this curious practice of inserting long gaps in the very same prophecy. You will recall that Peter wrote: "10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: 11 Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand **the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.**" The prophets often puzzled at the same prophecies which they gave, for they testified on the one hand about the sufferings of Christ, and at almost the same breath they testified of the glories of Christ. The two seemed almost incompatible. But our Lord put them together when, on the day of His resurrection, He taught the first Sunday School class consisting of two disciples on their way home from Jerusalem. Listen to the story and pay close attention to what He told them:

Luke 24:13 " And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem [about] threescore furlongs. 14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. 16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. 17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? 18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? 19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. 21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. ....25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26 *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?* 27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

The Hebrew prophets of old saw from a distance the first and second advents of Christ together, like a man looking from a long distance at a mountain. But as he draws near he discovers that it is not one mountain he is seeing but two! So the Old Testament prophets saw the first and second comings of Christ as one event, but they did not see the wide gap of over 1900 years in between.



5. A fifth argument for a gap between the 69th and 70th week is the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself that the 70th week was yet to come in the future. Verse 27 of this passage says: " 27 And 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." The Hebrew is exceedingly difficult here as reflected in our English translation which is also difficult. The word "overspreading" is the same word in our Bible that is sometimes translated "wings". Martin Luther rendered this verse like this: "Upon the wings stands the abomination of desolation." This same expression is found in Daniel 12:11 "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." We will save a discussion of the abomination of desolation for later in our study of the book of Daniel, but suffice it to say that Daniel understands that it is directly connected with the ending of the Jewish sacrifices in the middle of the 70th week.

Now turning to the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in the 24th chapter of Matthew we find that Christ is speaking of the same thing as Daniel. In the 15th verse He warns the Jews to flee from their homes to the mountains "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)" Then He gives the reason for the warning in verse 21: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." But the Lord made it clear to them that they were not to be utterly disheartened because "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." Daniel 9:29-31

Now Daniel has clearly placed these events in the middle of the Seventieth Week and our Lord has further explained that they will immediately precede His second coming in power and glory. Therefore, it is abundantly clear that Seventieth Week must also come at the end of the present age of grace just prior to Christ's return to this earth to set up His earthly kingdom for 1000 years! Now this is the clear teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ on the matter and it ought to once and for all settle the matter. Our Lord has not yet come in His glory. The Seventieth Week is still in the future. There is a clearly discernible, Scripturally supportable gap between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel.

6. The sixth argument for the gap between the 69th and 70th week is my own and yet I think it falls right in line with the other arguments. It is simply this: Daniel did not know about the great plan of God which Paul would reveal, that is the mystery of the Church. Romans 16:25 "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began." In the Bible sense a mystery is a doctrine revealed in the New Testament that was concealed in the Old Testament. This mystery was the plan of God to set Israel aside for a time because of their rejection of Christ and unbelief, and to create a new body of believers here upon the earth called the "church" as mentioned in Romans 11:25 "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

It was the plan of God that Israel be set aside and that a mostly Gentile Church take her place in the plan and program of God following the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. God has stopped the clock so to speak on His dealings with the Jews on a national level. The clock of God's dealings with Israel will resume when the Church is taken out of the world at the rapture. God is not finished with the Jews! They will be restored to their place of prominence in God's prophetic plan! And this return to focus on the Jews after the rapture of the Church happens to coincide nicely with the beginning of the tribulation period, which is Daniel's Seventieth Week! The Word of God interpreted literally and dispensationally dove-tails so smoothly that it appears to be seamless.

To conclude this part of the paper, I would like to give you four practical benefits of understanding this gap between the 69th and 70th week as pointed out by McClain:

1. Understanding that there is a gap between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel will keep us from being confused as we interpret the Bible. Great scholars of the past have really stumbled over the chronology of the seventy weeks. Dr. Nathaniel West expressed the feelings of many of the great scholars of the past who failed to understand the nature of the gap when he wrote: "The effort to connect it (the 70th week) immediately with the sixty-ninth has led to results in exegesis both amazing and amusing. Never was the hopelessness of any task more thoroughly evinced than here." One writer while defending the literal fulfillment of the first sixty-nine weeks admits: "Chronology fails as to the last week." Dr. E. B. Pusey, a scholar of the Church of England of the last century known for his orthodoxy and scholarship honestly confesses his inability to understand this passage. He writes that he cannot explain the final week because "we do not have the chronology data to fix it." One writer put it very clearly when he wrote: "every fresh interpretation only adds to the force of our conviction that *some radical error* lies at the foundation of all our Christian interpretations, and, till it is discovered, the Seventy Weeks of Daniel will remain unexplained and inexplicable to the comprehension of every unprejudiced inquirer." As McClain answered so well: "*this radical error' was the failure to see the great interval of time between the sixth-ninth and seventieth weeks.*" This certainly clears up the confusion! We can now "rightly divide the Word of Truth". It underscores a solid need for understanding the dispensational nature of the theology of the Bible!

2. The second practical point made by McClain is that "this important principle explains why the whole of our present age, so great in so many respects is passed over by the prophets with comparative silence. And it constantly keeps us on our guard against attempting to find things in Old Testament prophecy which are not there." One thing is for certain, you will not find the Church or the Church age in the Old Testament at all.

3. The third principle is that this understanding of the gap between the 69th and 70 week of Daniel is proof that God is not yet finished with the nation of Israel. The rise of Reformed and Charismatic theologies in the past few years with their insistence that the Church replaces Israel and the promises of God to Israel have been assumed by the Church has led to the feeling that God is forever finished with Israel. A clear understanding of the gap here presented reconfirms to us that God is not yet finished with Israel. There seven years to go, and then an earthly kingdom of 1000 years in which Israel will play a conspicuous role.

4. The final practical principle, and I think the most important is the observation made by McClain that "acceptance of the Gap interpretation of the Seventieth Week makes utterly impossible all date setting schemes for the present age and for the second coming of the Lord, since the entire parenthesis of time is both unrevealed and elastic from the human standpoint. Every scheme of date-setting requires for its basis a continuous prophetic chronology covering the present age. Without this, date-setters are helpless. And according to the Gap principle, there can be no such chronology. Only an omniscient God could have given such a continuous chronology, and He for good and wise reasons did not give it. Therefore, we need not waste any time even discussing the possibility of setting a date for the Lord's return. It simply cannot be done."

### **The Seventieth Week**

So far in our study of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel we have focused on the first Sixty-Nine Weeks of prophetic years. The period began on March 14, 445 B.C. with the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild and restore Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-18) and concluded with the so-called "Triumphal Entry" of the Lord Jesus Christ on April 6, 32 A.D. when our Lord presented Himself as the King of Israel and was rejected by the nation. This period encompassed 69 sevens of years or 483 years out of a total of 490 years.

Then we examined the gap between the fulfillment of the 69th and the 70th week. We demonstrated that the 70th week was postponed for indefinite period of time which we know has now extended almost two thousand years. This gap, we have proven, is not unusual in the Scriptures and is marked by two events of enormous importance: the cutting off of Messiah (at Calvary), and the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple ( in 70 A.D. by Titus the Roman). These two events have occurred just as they were prophesied. Now the Seventieth Week of Daniel is clearly yet to be fulfilled in the future. It is this last week of years, the final period of seven years, which is our focus in the closing pages of this study.

The Seventieth Week of Daniel is found detailed in Daniel 9:27 "And 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." But before look closely at this verse, we must pick up one thought out of Daniel 9:26.

"And after threescore and two weeks shall *Messiah* be cut off, but not for himself: and *the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary*; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

The first thing that ought to be immediately obvious is the mention of two different princes. In the first part of verse 26 we read about "Messiah" who is called "the Prince" in verse 25. This is the Lord Jesus Christ Who we are told in this verse is "cut off, but not for himself." That is, the Lord Jesus Christ took your place and mine on the cross of Calvary and paid our sin debt by the shedding of His own precious blood. He became the propitiation for our sins and satisfied fully the righteous demands of the Father as our sinless substitute by means of His vicarious atonement. He was cut off, so that we might be accepted in the Beloved!

But there is a second prince here who is wholly unlike Messiah the Prince, although he would like very much to be thought of the same way. He is "the prince that shall come". Unlike Messiah, who arose out of the nation of Israel, this prince shall be a descendent of the people who destroyed the city of Jerusalem and its Temple. History, of course, clearly records that Titus the Roman and his legions of Roman Soldiers destroyed the city and the temple in A.D. 70. So this prince comes from somewhere within the Roman Empire, possibly Italy itself, but most assuredly Europe. This prince is known in the Scriptures by other names: the little horn, the son of perdition, the beast, and the antichrist. He is clearly identified as a ruler who will arise out of the area once encompassed by the Roman Empire. It is my personal belief that this one is a Gentile, because the times of the Gentiles, beginning with destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and ending with the setting up of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ in Jerusalem, will not have yet been fulfilled. The antichrist will be the last great Gentile ruler who will hold sway in Jerusalem.

Now in verse 27 we are given a rather disturbing picture of this prince who shall come:

"And 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."

He will make a covenant with the nation of Israel for a period of seven years ("one week") and in the middle of that period he will break the covenant, and turn against the people of Israel with a vengeance.

Having identified the antichrist, now let's examine the nature of this last week of seven years in which he acts as the principal player on the world stage. McClain gives us an excellent breakdown of this Seventieth Week into six points which I will largely follow here:

**1. The Seventieth Week is a period of seven years which takes place in God's prophetic plan between the Rapture of the Church and the Revelation of Christ (His return in glory at Armageddon).** We have clearly established that the Seventieth Week of Daniel is yet future of our own time for several reasons which we have already spent abundant time upon and which will not be repeated here. But let's simply remind ourselves that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself says that the "abomination of desolation" of the Seventieth Week would appear before His own return to the earth in power and glory.

Matthew 24:15-30 " **When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place,** (whoso readeth, let him understand:)  
16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: 17 Let him which is on the

housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. 23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. 27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

But we can be even more precise. We know that this Roman prince, the antichrist will make his appearance on the earth at the beginning of this final seven year period. But we also know from the Scripture that the antichrist cannot make his appearance until the rapture of the Church. Listen to the words of Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-9:

"3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 ***And then shall that Wicked be revealed***, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, "

Now the restraining influence that withholds the revelation of the man of sin cannot be anything less than the direct influence of the Holy Spirit of God, Who presently indwells the life of every believer in this Church Age. In order of the man of sin to be revealed the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit must be removed, hence the Seventieth Week cannot begin until the Church is raptured out of the world. Then, and then only the man of sin can be revealed and be allowed to plunge the world into tribulation. The language here is crystal clear. The Roman prince cannot be revealed until the removal of the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit after the rapture of the true church from the earth. Immediately after the rapture, the man of sin quickly moves into the world spotlight and takes command. For years good men have labored greatly in the field of speculation concerning the identity of the antichrist. This passage, concert with Daniel 9, makes it very clear that his identity is secret and will remain so until after the rapture. We ought to be focusing our attention not on the antichrist, but on the real Christ. He alone has the answers to the deepest need of the human heart.

It is also very clear that what marks the end of this Seventieth Week is the return in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is true for a number of reasons. First, the blessings listed in Daniel 9:24 will come to Israel at the end of the Seventieth Week and as we shall see later in this study, these blessings can only be brought in by the literal return of the Lord Jesus Christ to set up the Throne of David again and His direct rule over the earth for 1000 years. Second, since the evil power of the Roman prince continues to the full end of the Seventieth Week as predicted in 9:27, and since this same evil man is the one "whom the Lord shall

consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming", it only makes sense that the appearance of the Lord Himself mark the end of the Seventieth Week. In fact, as McClain points out: "it will be the glorious second coming of Messiah which will terminate the entire period of the Seventy Weeks and usher in the covenanted blessings to Israel."

2. The Seventieth Week gives us an exact and precise chronological framework for the climactic events recorded in the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ from chapters six to nineteen. I am referring to the last 3 1/2 years of the seven year period. This period is referred to as the *Time of Jacob's Trouble* or the *Great Tribulation* period. We have already studied the extraordinary occurrences of references to this time period in the Biblical record. It is called "a time, times, and half a time" in Revelation 12:14 and in Daniel 7:25, 12:7. It is called "forty and two months" in Revelation 11:2 and 13:5. And it is called "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" in Revelation 11:3 and 12:6. However you slice it, it all adds up the same: 3 1/2 years of 360 days each!

Now understanding that these three and one half years of Jacob's Trouble as recorded in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ are identical to the last half of Daniel's Seventieth Week we can use the prophecy of the Seventieth Week as an inspired key to the interpretation of the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Note Revelation 11:2-3 for the key to unlock the chronology of the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ:

"2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. 3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."

Now the 42 months mentioned in verse 2 is when the holy city (Jerusalem) will be trodden under foot by the Gentiles. Naturally this 3 1/2 year period represents the later half of the Seventieth Week when the antichrist is in full possession of his powers and authority and stops the Jewish sacrificial system from functioning ( Daniel 9:27). It is likewise clear that the "thousand two hundred and threescore days" of verse 3 which features the work of the two witnesses speak of the first 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation period. The two witnesses are able to work unmolested until the antichrist reaches the height of his power in the middle of the Tribulation Period. Thus, we can say that the book of the Revelation encompasses the entire Seventieth Week of Daniel. The first half marked by the work of the two witnesses and rise to power of the antichrist, and the second part marked by the man of sin's absolute domination of the world and his awful persecution of the nation of Israel. The middle point in the Tribulation appears to be the slaying of the two witnesses in Revelation 11 and the sounding of the seventh angel (Revelation 11:15-19).

With those facts in mind we can now locate the beginning and ending of the Seventieth Week of Daniel in the Book of the Revelation. We know that the Seventieth Week of Daniel will end with glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ from Heaven. So therefore the Seventieth Week ends in Revelation 19:11-21 with His victory over the armies of the antichrist at the Battle of Armageddon. Since Daniel 9:27 tells us that the Seventieth Week begins with the signing of the peace treaty between Israel and the Beast, we can fix the beginning of the Seventieth Week to Revelation 6:1-2 where the false Christ rides out on his rise to world conquest. As McClain puts it:

Thus chapters six through nineteen of Revelation cover the Seventieth Week of Daniel's prophecy, an exact period of seven prophetic years divided into two equal halves at the sounding of the "seventh angel". Borne along by the same Spirit of prophecy, Daniel furnishes the chronological frame, and John fills in the details. If we separate the two, the prophecy becomes an insoluble enigma."

3. The Seventieth Week will begin with the making of a confirmed covenant between the Roman Prince and the Jewish people which will result in their being able to rebuild the Temple and restore the sacrificial system. I remind you our text says:

"And 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."

Now this verse is rich in significance. Although we are not given the precise nature of the treaty between the Roman prince and the Jewish people, there is at least a clue in this verse. You will note that after 3 1/2 years (the midst of the week) the Roman prince breaks the treaty and causes the "sacrifice and the oblation to cease". This suggests that a major feature of this treaty is the restoration of the Jewish sacrificial system.

Why would a treaty with a foreign power be necessary in order to commence the Mosaic sacrificial system? The answer lies in the current reality in the Middle East, just as God had planned it in eternity past. With all of its wealth, power and sophistication, the nation of Israel lacks something that it desperately desires: the ability to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem and to reinstate the sacrificial system. But the nation of Israel realizes that it would be national suicide to attempt such an undertaking. On the spot where the Temple once stood, on that holy ground, a Mohammedan mosque now stands. This mosque is one of the most sacred sites to the Islamic peoples of the Middle East. If Israel would raise a hand to tear this mosque down every Moslem country in the world would declare a holy war against Israel. All the military might of the United States would not be sufficient to save the Jews in such a case. So there they are, locked in a stare-down, the Jews and their Moslem neighbors, waiting for the other person to blink.

But what if there was a leader in Europe who could unite the countries the former Roman empire into a formidable fighting force? With the Soviet Union now broken and the United States on a moral, financial, and military decline, the world is ready for the emergence of another superpower, and many are looking to the European Union for such a superpower. It would be almost as if the Roman Empire had come back to life again! The leader of this coalition would have to be a man of enormous personal magnetism. And a wonderful way for him to prove his ability would be to orchestrate peace between the Jews and their Arab neighbors in such a fashion that the Jews would realize their cherished dream of reinstating the Mosaic system. We can certainly see how a scenario like this could play out in the hands of the antichrist.

4. In the very middle of the Seventieth Week, the antichrist will suddenly and unexpectedly reverse his attitudes of friendship with the Jews, and will shatter his covenant with them. He will put an end to Jewish worship in the reconstructed Temple. This will be a very dramatic shift. The antichrist uses his league with the Jews to rise to power and prominence. Then, when he is at the very pinnacle of power, he turns on the Jews. There are several reasons why this happens.

Let's remember who this is. He is the antichrist. He is a false Christ, empowered by Satan. He has no love for Christ, only an intense burning hatred. The true Church is safely beyond his reach, so he goes after the earthly people of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Jews. He will be virulently anti-Semitic, making Hitler look like a Sunday School teacher. His treaty with the Jews is like everything else the devil does: it is a lie. Once he has the power and the wealth he needs, he will scrap the treaty and turn and rend Israel.

But there is a far more sinister and yet more obvious reason for his change of attitude toward the Jews. We read this in Second Thessalonians 2:

"3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. "

Intoxicated with his power, this false Christ will take his seat in the Temple and declare to all that world that he is god. To the sternly monotheistic Jew, this act will be an "abomination of desolation" and the backlash will be sufficient to make Israel the target of the fierce wrath of this evil man. He will use their refusal to pay homage to him as a pretext to break his treaty and will forcibly cease the worship in the Temple.

The growing humanism of the age with the new age philosophy inherent in our institutions is paving the way for the religion of the antichrist. Listen to the words of MacClain on this subject. "F. L. Godet, noted Swiss theologian, pointed out that the 'theological system' of the antichrist could be summed up in three propositions:

- 1. There is no personal God without and above the universe.
- 2. Man is himself his own god -- god of this world.
- 3. I am the representative of humanity; by worshipping me, humanity worships itself."

5. From the middle of the Seventieth Week to its bitter end (3 1/2 years), Israel will be plunged into horrible "desolations" unlike anything ever seen on this earth before. Look at the end of verse 27 again:

*"And 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."*

This period of desolations begins in the middle of the week, after 3 1/2 years, so it will continue on for 3 1/2 more years. MacClain points out that "this is exactly the time specified in Daniel 7:25 during which the Roman beast would "wear out the saints of the Most High"; the same measure of time given in Revelation 13:5-7 when this beast "shall make war with the saints and ... overcome them"; the same time mentioned in Revelation 11:2, during which the holy city shall be trodden down of the Gentile nations; the same time referred to in Revelation 12:6, 14, during which the "woman" (Israel) will be given the special protection of God. Thus all of divine prophecy fits perfectly together: the same persecutor, the same kind of persecution, the same nation under persecution, and exactly the same length of time....In this way, the prophecy of the Book of Revelation synchronizes exactly with Daniel's great prophecy of the end time."

There will be a sort of calm before the storm of the Tribulation. The first 3 1/2 years under the treaty of the man of sin will be relatively peaceful, but those last three and one half years will be so terrible that the Lord Himself said: And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Matthew 24:22 The word for shortened does not mean decreased, but rather limited. The time of Jacob's Trouble will last exactly 1260 days, 42 months, or 3 1/2 years which ever you want to say, and no more than that. If it were prolonged any more than that the nation of Israel simply would not survive it.

6. The end of this Seventieth Week, this final seven period, will bring to a close the entire prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (490 years) and will result in the blessings promised in Daniel 9:24. We end this paper where we came in. God began this prophecy with a promise that at the end of 490 years (70 weeks of sevens) that there would be great blessing. Let's look one last time at those blessings.

*"24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."*

Let's remind ourselves that this is a prophecy to a certain people and to a certain city. The people are Daniel's people, the Jews, and the city is Daniel's city, Jerusalem. Therefore, the promises here are for the Jewish remnant left at the end of the Tribulation period. These are not promises for the Church, nor even the Gentiles. They do, however, have certain applications which can be made for our spiritual profit.

- 1. "To finish the transgression and to make an end of sins" This refers to the sin and rebellion of the Jewish people. Never again will they stray or rebel from their God but rather will be in obedient submission to their Messiah.
- 2. "To make reconciliation for iniquity" This does not directly refer to what Christ did for the world when He died upon the cross. Rather, on the basis of His sacrifice on the cross for their sins, at His

glorious appearing He will draw the believing remnant of Israel to Himself and they will resume their status as His chosen people.

- 3. "To seal up the vision and the prophecy" This refers to the fulfillment of all the prophecies made to the nation of Israel throughout its long and troubled history. The office of prophet will not exist during the kingdom age because the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will speak directly to all mankind.
- 4. "To anoint the most holy" Some have thought this is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, however from the context it appears that this has reference to the Millennial temple in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. It will be a place of prayer and worship for all nations and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will meet with men face to face. Someday He shall return and all the world will flock to meet Him in Jerusalem.