

# 'SEVENTY WEEKS ARE DETERMINED'

Theme: God gives Daniel insight into the schedule of events that will follow after his people's return to their land.

(Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from The Holy Bible, New King James Version; copyright 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc.)

Daniel read the Scriptures during the first year of the reign of King Darius of Media-Persia; and made a remarkable discovery. The time of God's judgment upon the Jewish people--the time predicted in Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10-14--was coming to a close. The seventy-year captivity began in 606 B.C.; and was ending with the decree of Cyrus that the people be returned in 536 B.C. (see Ezra 1:1-4). Daniel was encouraged by this to pray; and he prayed one of the greatest prayers of intercession recorded in the Bible--a prayer, in fact, that received an answer even as he was praying it. The angel Gabriel was sent to him at the end of the seventy-years, to tell of another "seventy" yet to come.

This is the third of Daniel's four prophetic visions. Its specific focus is on God's program for His chosen people, the Jews, in the times that were to come. Because it is specifically "Jewish" in nature, it doesn't mention many of the details about the end-times that we find in the New Testament.

## **I. DANIEL'S DISCOVERY FROM SCRIPTURE (vv. 1-2).**

This discovery occurred in the first year of Darius (538 B.C.). Daniel read from many books; but particularly from Jeremiah 25:11-12, and 29:10-14. Daniel's prayer may have been inspired by what was said in Jeremiah 29:12 in the context of the prophesied end of the time of captivity: "Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you."

## **II. DANIEL'S PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE (vv. 3-19).**

Daniel set his face to pray for his people. Note the humility with which he prayed. His prayer consisted of worship (v. 4), confession (vv. 5-11a); admission of God's justice (vv. 11b-15); and a humble plea for mercy (vv. 16-19). And note that throughout his prayer--even though he himself was a manifestly righteous man--Daniel owned the guilt of his people. Many times, he said, "We" and "us". This is a true model of "intercessory" prayer! (We would do well to pray it for our own land!)

## **III. DANIEL'S REVELATION FROM GOD (vv. 20-27).**

Gabriel (the angel mentioned in Dan. 8:16; and also in Luke 1) came to Daniel swiftly--even as he prayed. He came to give Daniel further understanding (vv. 20-23). And note how God affirms his love for Daniel. He gave him the details of what would yet happen to his people *after* their return to their homeland. The figure used is of "seventy-weeks" (each week representing seven years; see the chart on the next page). The object of the seventy-weeks is described in verse 24. It outlines the completion of the redemptive work of Christ and the restoration of the temple on earth. It involves six specific purposes which will be achieved by the end of the seventy-weeks--six purposes which will fulfill God's prophetic agenda for the Jewish people. The first three deal with the negative aspects of the sins of Israel, and the last three deal with the positive fulfillment of the promises of God toward them. They include:

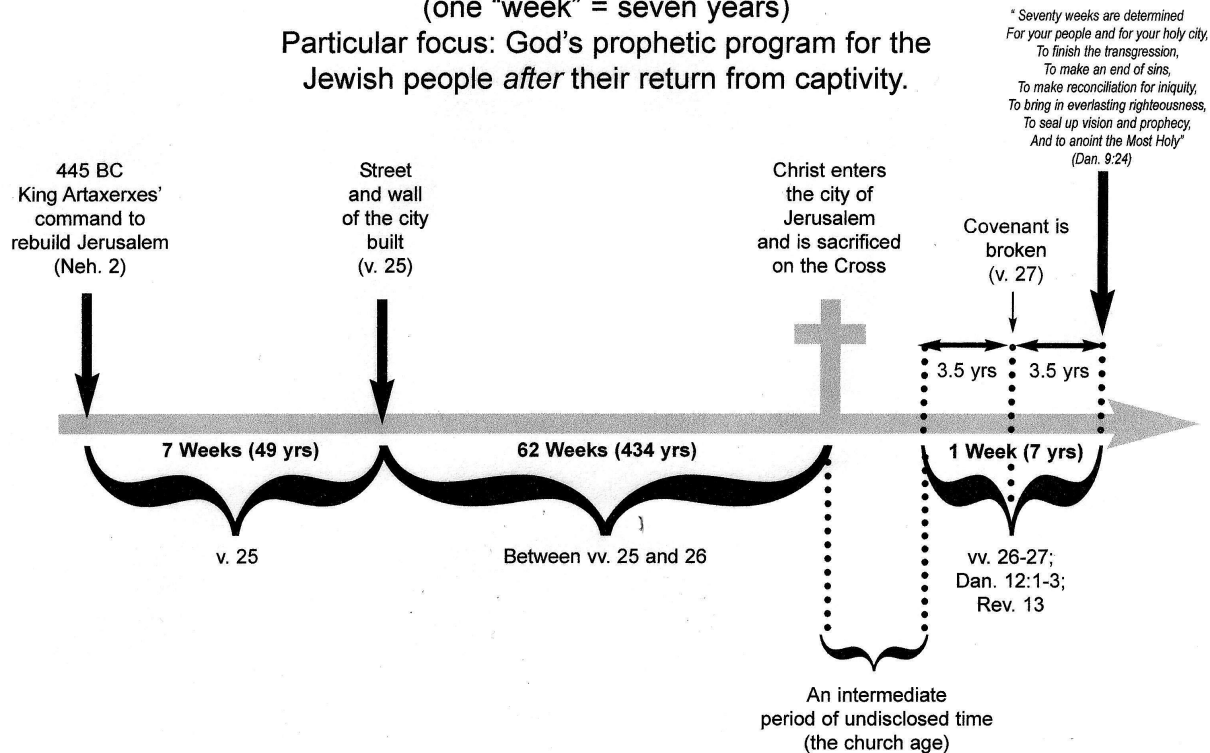
1. The finishing of transgression (that is, the transgression that brought the judgment of captivity upon the Jewish people).
2. The making an end of sins (that is, to bring about a full judgment of it at the cross).
3. The making of reconciliation for iniquity (which expresses full atonement for sin; which points to the atoning work of Christ).
4. The bringing in of everlasting righteousness (a fulfillment of the promise of Jeremiah 31:31-34).

5. The sealing up of vision and prophecy (that is, the completion of God's prophetic revelation).
6. The anointing of the Most Holy (which implies the rebuilding and sanctifying of the future temple in Jerusalem).

## OVERVIEW OF THE "SEVENTY WEEKS" OF DANIEL 9

(one "week" = seven years)

Particular focus: God's prophetic program for the Jewish people *after* their return from captivity.



Note that verse 25 describes the first sixty-nine of the seventy weeks. Note also that they are split into seven and sixty-two weeks.

1. The first seven 'weeks' began with the command of King Artaxerxes in 445 B.C. to rebuild Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-10); and ended with the completion of that work forty-nine years later. This is a work that, we're told, would be carried on "even in troublesome times" (v. 25)--which are certainly the hostile opponents to the work described for us throughout book of Nehemiah.
2. The latter sixty-two 'weeks' describe the 434 year period after the completion of the rebuilding of the city. That period culminated in the entry of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem to die for us. We're told that, at the end of this period, "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself . . ." (v. 26).

An intermediate period of undisclosed length would occur between the end of the first sixty-nine weeks and the beginning of the last week. This last 'week' is also presented as split into two halves, and will involve the career of the Antichrist. This period is called elsewhere in Daniel's book "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time" (Daniel 12:1).

1. It is preceded by the "people of the prince who is to come" destroying the city of Jerusalem again (v. 26). The people being referred to are the Romans; and they destroyed the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
2. After an undisclosed period of time, the prince himself (who is of the Roman empire; see Daniel 7:23-25) shall arise and confirm a seven-year covenant with the Jewish people. But he will break the covenant in the middle of this seven-year period and will bring an end to sacrifice and offering (v. 27). The dreadful details of that time are described for us in Revelation 13.