

The Prophetic

Seventy Weeks

In Daniel 9:24-27

PART 2 OF 2

In our study of Daniel’s book of prophecy, we will discover that several chapters are not written in chronological order. For example, Chapters 7 (first year of Belshazzar’s reign) and 8 (third year of his reign) actually come before Chapter 5 (last year of his reign) in its history. On the other hand, Chapter 6 of Daniel records events that transpired in the time of the Medo-Persian Empire, which chapter, chronologically, follows Chapters 7 and 8. Just a cursory reading of Daniel reveals that Chapters 8 and 11 should be read together and that Chapters 9 and 12 should be read together. Chapter 9 begins with the “first year of Darius” (539 BC).

This chapter also gives additional information not disclosed in Chapters 2 and 7 concerning the establishment of God’s Messianic Kingdom with the coming of Jesus the Messiah. This chapter reveals one of the most outstanding “prophetic miracles” in all of Scripture. This chapter nails down, once-and-for-all, the inspiration and accuracy of the Word of God. In spite of some of the most outstanding scholars—past and present—I think the commonly assigned date to begin the 490 years begins with **454 BC**, not 457 BC, or 538/536 BC. The following comments by Kurt Simmons set the tone for the 454 BC date rather than the 457 BC date, which date is the most popular for the beginning of the 490 years:

Most commentators choose the decree issued in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus for beginning the 490 years [457 BC]. However, there are several problems that prevent it from serving as the beginning of the seventy weeks. First, **the decree does not mention rebuilding the city**, but had only to do with a gift of money from the king and his nobles for the temple in Jerusalem and the return of certain vessels carried away by Nebuchadnezzar. The decree also invested Ezra with power to enforce the Torah “whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment” (Ezra 7:26). Thus, **although this decree comes very close to restoring full national sovereignty to the Jews, it stops short of allowing them to rebuild the city’s walls**, leaving the capital city in a weakened condition, unable to mount its own defense.¹ (Emphasis mine)

Just a casual reading of the scholars reveals that equally able and godly exegetical expositors arrive at various dates for the beginning of the 490 years. An example of the various

¹Kurt Simmons, *Adumbrations: The Kingdom & Coming of Christ in the Book of Daniel* (Carlsbad, NM: Biblical Publishing Co., 2009), 222. This chapter is one of the most informative examinations that I have read concerning the time frame of the 490 years.

positions is found in Edward Bowery Pusey's (1800-1882, an English churchman for over fifty years, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Christ Church, Oxford, and one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement), lectures on Daniel. His commentary consists of nine lectures on the Book of Daniel, which lectures are extremely informative concerning the various dates assigned to the beginning of the restoration for the countdown of the 490 years as forecast by Daniel. Even though the following citation is lengthy, nevertheless, we are immediately catapulted into the world of scholarship—a world in which there is no exact consensus of the beginning date for the 490 years. He sets forth the various scenarios of the dating system:

The decree spoken of was doubtless meant to be a decree of God, but to be made known through His instrument, man, who was to effectuate it. The *Commandment went forth* from God, like that, at which, Gabriel had just said, using the same idiom, he himself came forth to Daniel. But as the one was fulfilled through Gabriel, so the other remained to be fulfilled through the Persian monarch, in whose hands God had left, for the time, the outward disposal of His people.

In themselves, the will and decrees of God are in all eternity; but His immutable decree seems then to *go forth, when* He, in Whose hands are all things, so disposes men's wills, that it comes into effect. But, since there was no decree at all in favor of the Jews before Cyrus B. C. 536, it might be startling enough to one who does not yet believe in prophecy, that, even from Cyrus, the 490 years come within forty-six years of our Lord's Birth; and that, although there were four different edicts, from which the 490 years might begin, these two admit of no vague coincidence.

They do yield four definite dates. There is a distance of 90 years from the 1st of Cyrus to the 20th of Artaxerxes Longimanus, but the dates within those 90 years, from which the prophecy could seem to be fulfilled, are only four. Those dates are, (1) The first year of Cyrus, B.C. 536; (2) The third year of Darius Hystaspes, B.C. 518, when he removed the hindrances to the rebuilding of the temple, interposed by Pseudo-Smerdis; (3) The commission to Ezra in the 7th year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, B.C. 457; (4) That of Nehemiah, in the 20th year of the same Artaxerxes, B.C. 444. These would give, at the close of the 490 years, respectively, the end of 46 B.C. 28, B.C. 33, A.D. 46 A.D.

But further, of these four, two only are principal and leading decrees; that of Cyrus, and that in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus. For that of the 20th year of Artaxerxes is but an enlargement and renewal of his first decree; as the decree of Darius confirmed that of Cyrus. The decrees of Cyrus and Darius relate to the rebuilding of the temple; those of Artaxerxes to the condition of Judah and Jerusalem.²

It is my belief that the date can be established with a great deal of certainty, which I will develop as we proceed with our analysis. It goes almost without saying that within this time frame allotted by God, we are introduced to one of the most outstanding “prophetic miracles” found in the Book of Daniel (9:24-27). Within this pericope (unit or section), we see the announcement of the Gospel, which John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-2) and Jesus (Matthew 4:17) announced concerning the **near presence** of the kingdom of God as foretold by the prophets (especially Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14). Prior to Daniel's disclosure concerning the Gospel, God revealed this Gospel to Abraham (2166-1991 BC) about 1,500 years earlier. Paul, in his Epistle to the Christians in the province of Galatia, wrote about God proclaiming the Gospel to him (see Galatians 3:15-18; John 8:56-58; Genesis 12:3).

²E.B. Pusey, *Daniel the Prophet: Nine Lectures* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1885, reprint 1978), 186-189.

Gabriel gives information about forgiveness of sins and the date of God's activity in doing away with transgressions. Within this unique prophecy of Daniel, he enumerates six transactions that will occur with the coming of the Messiah: (1) to **finish transgression**, (2) to **put and end to sin**, (3) to **atone for wickedness**, (4) to **bring in everlasting righteousness**, (5) to **seal up vision and prophecy**, and (6) to **anoint the most holy** (Daniel 9:24). The question that confronts every believer is: when will these six things occur? Daniel discloses his answer with the following key to an understanding of God's redemptive acts "in" and "through" His "Anointed One" (Hebrew: Messiah; Greek: Christ, that is, the "most holy" person) [Daniel 9:24-27]. Listen to him once more as he details the revelation of the end times as he received Divine information concerning the 490 years from the angel Gabriel, which revelation unfolds God's Good News for lost humanity and its timing:

"Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city **to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.** ²⁵Know and understand this: From the **issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem [454 BC]** until the **Anointed One, the ruler** [*nagid*, the Prince = Jesus], comes, there will be **seven 'sevens,'** and **sixty-two 'sevens.'** It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. **After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing.** The people of **the ruler** [*nagid*, "the Prince" = Jesus] who will come, will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. ²⁷ **He will confirm a covenant [*b^erith*] with many for one 'seven.'** **In the middle of the 'seven'** he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an **abomination that causes desolation** [see Matthew 24:15], until the end that is decreed is poured out on him." (Daniel 9:25-27)

SEVENTY SEVENS

In Daniel 9:24, he spoke of "seventy 'sevens'" as determined for the events to transpire "from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler comes" (9:25). The issuing of this decree occurred in **454 BC** under Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 2:1-8).³ Daniel speaks of "seven sevens" (7 x 7 = 49 years), sixty-two sevens" (62 x 7 = 434 years), and "one seven" (7 years), which adds up to a total of four hundred and ninety years (490). The seven weeks plus the sixty-two weeks equal four hundred and eighty-three years (49 years plus 434 years = 483 years). The end of the four hundred and eighty three years

³Several scholars that I have consulted assign a date of 458 or 457 BC, not 454 BC. Yet, there are numerous scholars that start the beginning of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem with the date of 538/536 BC. Also, numerous scholars date the birth of Jesus as having occurred between 6 BC and 4 BC. I have examined their chronology, but their interpretation, as I understand biblical chronology, does not coincide with the biblical account of Jesus' beginning ministry. I have taken great pains to examine the various contexts in order to arrive at an interpretation that fits the contexts of the various Scriptures relied upon. I have purposely withheld the various citations from numerous scholars so that there would not be so much distraction from the original context(s). In spite of this difference in dates (**457 BC or 454 BC**), we must bear in mind that we are all still children of God. In this study, I have presented the evidence for **454 BC** as the most logical date as the starting point of Gabriel's prediction concerning the coming of the Messiah and the final desolation of apostate Judaism with its Temple and its sacrifices.

marks the appearance of the Messiah (483 BC minus 454 BC (time of the decree from Artaxerxes' reign) gives us the date of **AD 29** for the beginning ministry of Jesus.

What date should we assign for the decree to “restore and rebuild Jerusalem”? We have pointed out that the date **454 BC** is the most favorable date within the framework of biblical chronology, not man-made chronology. This date is the only date that actually coincides with the 490 years of Daniel’s prophecy. All other dates assigned by scholars either fall short by several years or go beyond the death of Jesus by several years. Fortunately, we have biblical data upon which to try to arrive at a correct date.⁴

There are a number of dates that have been assigned by scholars, as cited above, in their seeking to work out the mathematical calculations for the decree of the restoration. Since scholars cite from the Book of Ezra and the Book of Nehemiah, we need to become conscious of the context in which texts are cited to substantiate the correct date. For example, Ezra (1:1-4) gives a decree by Cyrus, king of Persia (539-530 BC),⁵ which decree occurred in **538 BC**.⁶ Yet, this particular historical event is not the starting point to begin the 490 years countdown to accomplish salvation and the final desolation of apostate Israel. Ezra (written about 440 BC) identifies the date for the decree of Cyrus as 538 BC:

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: ² “This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah.’ ³ Anyone of his people among you—may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. ⁴ And the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.” (Ezra 1:1-4)

If we start the decree with 538 BC (King Cyrus), this would fall far short for the time of the Messiah by several years (490 years minus 538 BC = 48 BC).⁷ Forty-eight years would be

⁴I am deeply indebted to Kurt Simmons, *Adumbrations: The Kingdom & Coming of Christ in the Book of Daniel*, 201-238, for his analysis of Daniel 9:24-27. I highly recommend his commentary.

⁵Marsha A. Ellis Smith, General Editor, *Holman Book of Biblical Charts, Maps, and Reconstructions* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 45.

⁶The most definitive examination of this date is from Philip Mauro’s (1859-1952, a lawyer who practiced before the Supreme Court as well as the author of numerous books about Christianity) commentary on *The Seventy Weeks: and the Great Tribulation* (Dahlonge, GA: Crown Rights Book Company, 1944, reprint 1999).

⁷The following are some of the scholars that start the countdown beginning with 538 BC: **Dale Ralph Davis**, *The Message of Daniel: His Kingdom Cannot Fail*, Old Testament Series, Editor, J. A. Motyer (Downer Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 134; **Edward J. Young**, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), 202; **H. C. Leupold**, *Exposition of Daniel*, 1949, 1969), 419; and **C. F. Keil**, *Daniel*, Commentary on the Old Testament (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1866-1891, reprint 1996), 743, 748 [Keil gives the date for Cyrus as 536 BC rather than 538 BC]; **Philip Mauro**, *The Seventy Weeks: and the Great Tribulation* (Dahlonge, Georgia: Crown Rights Book Company, 1944, reprint 1999), 30, 56.

Just a casual reading of the various scholars reveals that there are three main dates that are assigned to the issuing of the decree—538 BC, 457 BC, and 454 BC. It is evident that the scholars that I have consulted are all

about fifty years short of Christ's birth and seventy-eight years short of the beginning of His ministry, which ministry actually began in the fifteenth year of Tiberius' reign (**AD 29**). Apparently, Cyrus' work consisted in rebuilding the Temple but not the restoration of Jerusalem itself. We have another date associated with Darius I (522-486 BC)⁸ that is generally dated around 520/518 BC (Ezra 6:8-12). Even in this decree, there is nothing that relates to the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, only the Temple (6:8-9). Ezra pens the following events surrounding Darius I:

Moreover, I [Darius I] hereby decree what you are to do for these elders of the Jews in the construction of this house of God: The expenses of these men are to be fully paid out of the royal treasury, from the revenues of Trans-Euphrates, so that the work will not stop. ⁹ Whatever is needed—young bulls, rams, male lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem—must be given them daily without fail, ¹⁰ so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons. ¹¹ Furthermore, **I decree** that if anyone changes this edict, a beam is to be pulled from his house and he is to be lifted up and impaled on it. And for this crime his house is to be made a pile of rubble. ¹² May God, who has caused his Name to dwell there, overthrow any king or people who lifts a hand to change this decree or to destroy this temple in Jerusalem. **I Darius have decreed it.** Let it be carried out with diligence. (Ezra 6:8-12)

A third choice is one that many scholars choose as the beginning of the decree that Daniel wrote about. This decree is generally associated with Artaxerxes I Longimanus (reigned from 474-423 BC) around 457 BC.⁹ This date is appealing to numerous commentators, but this date could not be the starting date of the “seventy weeks” (490 years). The date of 457 BC (date assigned by many scholars), does not allow for an accurate date for the beginning ministry of Jesus.¹⁰ For example, 490 years minus 457 BC gives a date of AD 33 as the date for the start of Christ's ministry, which date (457 BC) for the issuing of the decree that Daniel mentions does not coincide with the actual date of Christ's beginning His ministry. Jesus was about 30 years

equally able and scholarly expositors of God's Word; yet, their studies lead them to different conclusions. These scholars, though they disagree, are all godly and sincere men. Even though, I may disagree with many of their opinions as they themselves seek to expound the correct interpretation of the Book of Daniel, I do not question their integrity or the genuineness of their Christianity. I have set forth my reasons for accepting 454 BC as the most plausible date.

⁸Marsha A. Ellis Smith, General Editor, *Holman Book of Biblical Charts, Maps, and Reconstructions*, Ibid.

⁹See John Noe, *The Perfect Ending for the World* (Indianapolis, IN: Prophecy Reformation Institute, 2010), 126, for the 457 BC date. I recommend this book, which I recently read. This book is informative. I also, suggest another book of his for reading—John Noe, *Beyond End Times* (Bradford, PA: Preterist Resources, 1999). Even though his commentary is extremely informative, nevertheless, 457 BC chronology, in my judgment, is not the correct date. Jesus' ministry began in AD 29, not AD 33.

¹⁰The following scholars give the date as beginning with 457 BC: **Rodney Stortz**, *Daniel: The Triumph of God's Kingdom*, Preaching the Word, General Editor (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2004), 163; **James Montgomery Boice**, *Daniel, An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2003), 100 [He gives the date 458 BC as the most plausible]; **William M. Taylor**, *Daniel: The Beloved* (Greenville, South Carolina: Ambassador, 1878, reprint 1997), 174; and **E. B. Pusey**, *Daniel the Prophet: Nine Lectures* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1885, reprint 1978), 187.

old, not thirty-three years old when he began his ministry, which date is the end of the 483 years.

Luke reports that Jesus was baptized in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar (AD 14-37) [Luke 3:1]. If we add AD 14 (the beginning of the reign of Tiberius) to the fifteenth year of his reign, we arrive at a date of AD 29 for the beginning ministry of Jesus. Again, Luke gives us the age of Jesus at the time of His baptism:

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened ²² and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” ²³ Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. (Luke 3:21-23)

The date 457 BC does not coincide with biblical chronology. On the other hand, there is another date (**454 BC**), as stated above, that is in perfect harmony with Luke’s account of Christ’s baptism. Nehemiah (2:1-8) gives an excellent key for setting the correct date to begin the count of the 490 years. He writes: “In the month of Nisan **in the twentieth year King Artaxerxes**” (Nehemiah 2:1), which chronology gives us a more accurate date for the prophetic seventy weeks. This data sets the date of his reign as 474 BC (474 BC minus 20 years = **454 BC**), not 465 BC as is commonly asserted as a date for the beginning of his reign. Many scholars base their dating system upon Ptolemy’s Canon, which calculation did not take into account “viceroy¹¹ relationships” as the starting point of their reign. The following comments are from James Ussher’s *Classic Survey of World History*:

3531a AM, 4240 JP, 474 BC

1177. Artaxerxes was made viceroy with his father Xerxes in the twelfth year of Xerxes’ reign. This time marks the first year of Artaxerxes’ reign. Ptolemy’s Canon does not record viceroy relationships hence starts Artaxerxes’ reign nine years later when his father died. (Since the time when Ussher wrote his document, this new information has come to light from archaeology. We are thankful for Dr. Floyd Jones for finding the exact source of this information. Editor.) Savile wrote the following: {*B. W. Savile, “Revelation and Science”, Journal of Sacred Literature & Biblical Record, Series 4 (London: Williams and Norgate Pub. April 1863) p. 156*}

“It is satisfactory to know that the idea entertained by Archbishop Ussher of dating the commencement of Artaxerxes’ reign nine years earlier than the canon of Ptolemy allows, grounded upon what Thucydides says of Themistocles’ flight to Persia, has been confirmed by hieroglyphic inscriptions in Egypt, showing that Artaxerxes was associated with his father in the twelfth year of Xerxes’ reign, so that there ought to be no longer any doubt respecting that famous prophecy of Daniel, so far as at least regards the crucifixion.”¹² (Emphasis mine)

According to Ptolemy’s Canon, Artaxerxes became king in 465 BC, not 474 BC. After the first seven ($7 \times 7 = 49$ years), we begin with the sixty-two sevens ($62 \times 7 = 434$ years), which totals equal 483 years (49 years plus 434 years = 483 years). **Artaxerxes began his**

¹¹governor of a country, province, or colony

¹²James Ussher, *The Annals of the World*, Third Revised Edition (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2003, 2010), 146.

reign in 474 BC. Twenty years after his reign (474 BC minus 20 years = 454 BC),¹³ he issued his decree to rebuild Jerusalem. If we start with 445 BC (Ptolemy’s Canon—465 BC minus 20 years = 445 BC), then 483 minus 445 BC would give us a date of AD 38 for the beginning ministry of Jesus. This calculation would take us beyond the earthly life of Christ by about five years (Jesus was crucified in AD 33, not AD 38). On the other hand, if we take 483 minus 454 BC then this calculation would give us the date of AD 29 for the beginning ministry of Jesus. From this more accurate calculation, we arrive at the date that Luke gives for the baptism of Jesus and the beginning of His ministry [three and one-half years] (Luke 3:1, 29).¹⁴

As stated above, Daniel begins his “seventy weeks” with seven weeks (7 x 7 = 49 years) and then calls attention to sixty-two weeks (62 x 7 = 434 years). The 483 years (49 plus 434) would expire in AD 29 at Jesus’ baptism and His anointing. If we subtract the date of the issuing of the decree by Artaxerxes to rebuild and restore Jerusalem, we have a termination date of the 483 years (483 – 454 = 29 years) for the beginning ministry of Jesus, which means that Jesus was born in 2 BC and was one year old in 1 BC. The end of the 483 years brings us to the appearance of Christ and His ministry of three and one-half years. In spite of the scholarly world of theologians, the traditional date for the birth of Christ from 6 BC to 4 BC does not coincide with Luke’s chronology in his Gospel (Luke 3:1, 23).¹⁵ The following chart from Simmons is presented in order for one to see the correlation of the counting system of dates associated with the birth of Christ:¹⁶

Year	Regnal Year	Year	Regnal Year
2 B.C. Christ born	42 nd of Augustus	15 A. D.	1 st of Tiberius
1 B.C. 1 st birthday	43 rd	16 A. D.	2 nd
1 A.D.	44 th	17 A. D.	3 rd

¹³See also Paton J. Gloag (1823-1906), *Messianic Prophecies: The Baird Lectures for 1879*, Delivered at the University of Glasgow (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1879, republished by Klock & Klock in the USA, 1983), 253. I recently read this book and found it extremely informative.

¹⁴In our dealings with arithmetical calculations, we must be careful that we do not force an unnatural mathematical calculation to fit our preconceived traditions. In my examination of the various scholars, I have frequently found their arguments extremely weak. Much of what I have read seems to resort to farfetched guesses, especially when many writers advance the notion that the last half of Daniel’s seventieth week has not yet taken place. The date of 457 BC appears to be the most entrenched in exegetical traditions.

¹⁵See **Kurt Simmons**, *Adumbrations: The Kingdom & Coming of Christ in the Book of Daniel* (Carlsbad, NM: Biblical Publishing Co., 2009), “Appendix C,” 345-366, for a detailed account of Christ’s birth. Also, see **Grant R. Jeffrey**, *Armageddon: Appointment with Destiny* (Toronto, Ontario: Frontier Research Publications, 1990), “The Date of Christ’s Nativity, Ministry and Crucifixion,” 225-230, for a carefully documentary defense of Christ’s birth as AD 1 (Simmons—2 BC). In spite of the differences between Simmons and Jeffrey, the data are still excellent. Nevertheless, I do not recommend Jeffrey’s book as a whole. Unfortunately, he does not adhere to the same objective facts in the whole of his book as he does in his analysis of the birth of Christ.

¹⁶Simmons, *Ibid.*, 346.

2 A.D	45 th	18 A. D.	4 th
3 A.D	46 th	19 A. D.	5 th
4 A.D	47 th	20 A. D.	6 th
5 A.D	48 th	21 A. D.	7 th
6 A.D	49 th	22 A. D.	8 th
7 A.D	50 th	23 A. D.	9 th
8 A.D	51 st	24 A. D.	10 th
9 A.D	52 nd	25 A. D.	11 th
10 A.D	53 rd	26A. D.	12 th
11 A.D.	54 th	27 A. D.	13 th
12 A.D.	55 th	28 A. D.	14 th
13 A.D.	56 th	29 A. D. 30 th birthday of Christ	15 th Baptism of Christ
14 A.D.	57 th Death of Augustus		

Last of the Seventy Weeks

Once more, we need to remember that Daniel writes about the 490 years as the timetable that God ordained (49 + 434 + 7 = 490 years) to bring in a new heaven and a new earth, which time table includes the Second Coming of Christ¹⁷ and the final abomination of desolation of the nation of Judah in AD 70. In the middle of the last seven, Jesus would die upon the Cross—the time allotted for Jesus’ ministry. We should remember that the first half consisted of three and one-half years. On the other hand, the second half of the seven deals with the “abomination of desolation,” which desolation would encompass three and one-half years. In other words, the latter part of the seven years reached its consummation in the destruction of Judaism in AD 70. From the death of Jesus to the full consummation of the last half of the seventieth week, there was a hiatus (a period of time when something is stopped) of thirty-seven years.

From the Gospels, we observe that Jesus’ ministry lasted three and one-half years, which is the time frame in which Gabriel said would be allotted for the Messiah who would be “cut off” in the middle of the final seven years (Jesus died at the approximate age of thirty-three and one-half years). Again, the remaining half of the final seven is reserved for the “abomination that causes desolation” by the Romans, which event, too, transpired over a three and one-half years, which is equivalent to “forty-two months” or “one thousand and two-hundred and sixty days” or a “time, times, and half a time” (3 ½ years) [Daniel 12:7; Revelation 11:1-3; 12:6; 14].¹⁸

¹⁷For an in-depth study on the Second Coming, see **Glenn L. Hill**, *Christianity’s Great Dilemma: Is Jesus Coming Again or Is He Not?* (Lexington, KY: Moonbeam Publications, 2010); **Gary DeMar**, *Is Jesus Coming Soon?* (Powder Springs, GA: American Vision, Inc., 2006); and Dallas Burdette, “The Second Coming of Christ,” in **Dallas Burdette**, *Commentary on the Book of Revelation: An Unraveling of the Olivet Discourse As a Preface to Understanding Revelation*, Volume 1 (Lakewood, FL: Xulon Press, 2013), 143-166.

¹⁸For an in-depth study of this time frame (three and one-half years), see Don K. Preston, *Who Is This Babylon?* (Ardmore, OK: JaDon Productions, 2006). This book is an excellent overview of the Book of Revelation. I recommend this book as one of the most informative commentaries that I have read on John’s Revelation.

Even though Daniel does write about Jesus' Crucifixion ("cut off"¹⁹), he does not give the date for the last half of the seven to occur other than the amount of time for the desolation by the Romans (3½ years). Apparently, Daniel was not allowed to disclose this datum. In fact, one of the angels said to him: "Daniel, **close up and seal** the words of the scroll until the time of the end" (Daniel 12:4). "The time of the end" is not the end of Planet Earth, but rather, the time of the end of apostate Israel. Jesus' ministry of three and one-half years **plus** three and one-half years for the desolation of apostate Judah equals the last seven years within which the Old Covenant world of Judaism would cease to exist.

From the beginning ministry of Jesus to the final **abomination of desolation**, we observe that God gave the Israelites a total of forty years to repent. Yet again, we need to read and reread the time frame for **the coming of the Anointed One** and the complete **desolation** of the holy city, which had turned harlot:

Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. ²⁶ After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One [Jesus] will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler [Jesus] who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. ²⁷ He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an **abomination that causes desolation**, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him." (Daniel 9:25-27)

There is some disagreement concerning "the Anointed One" in 9:26a and the word "*ruler*" in 9:26b. The context, in both references, seems to refer to the One who will "atone" for sin and bring in "everlasting righteousness." The pronoun "He" in 9:27 seems to refer back to the Anointed One who is also called the "ruler," that is to say "the Prince." The Messiah is the One who will complete the desolation of Jerusalem through the Roman army. Even if one interprets the word "*ruler*" in 9:26b as a reference to Nero or Titus, this concept does not take away from the destruction of Jerusalem by its ultimate source, namely Jesus, which obliteration Jesus himself foretold in His Olivet Discourse.²⁰ The context, so it seems, identifies the "ruler" as the Messiah in 9:26a and 9:26b as one and the same person.

Remember, in addition to the time frame concerning the date of **the coming Messiah** (AD 70), Daniel also foretold the destruction of the holy city and the Temple (AD 70). He writes, "The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and **desolations** have been decreed" (9:26). Remember, Jesus referred to this prophecy in His Olivet Discourse: "So when you see standing in the holy place the **abomination that causes desolation**, spoken of

¹⁹Isaiah (739 BC), too, wrote about the Messiah being "cut off" in Chapter 53 on the suffering and glory of the Servant:

By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was **cut off** from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. (53:8)

²⁰For an in-depth study of the Olivet Discourse, see Dallas Burdette, *Commentary on the Book of Revelation: An Unraveling of the Olivet Discourse as a Preface to Understanding Revelation* (Longwood, FL: Xulon Press, 2013).

through the prophet Daniel” (Matthew 24:15). Jesus warned that the Roman government’s atrocities would be like “eagles” gathering together (Matthew 24:28). This final desolation took place in AD 70.

The NIV renders this verse (24:28): “Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures (*aetoi*,²¹ “eagles”) will gather.” The KJV renders the Greek word (*aetoi*) as “eagles.” It is significant that Jesus uses the Greek word for eagle (*aetoi*). He uses a term that would have reminded His disciples of Rome. The following citation from Josephus (AD 37-100, Jewish historian) gives a description of the procedures of the marching orders of the Roman soldiers with their ensigns—the symbol of the eagle:

(115) But as Vespasian had a great mind to fall upon Galilee, he marched out from Ptolemais, having put his army into that order wherein the Romans used to march. (116) He ordered those auxiliaries which were lightly armed, and the archers, to march first, that they might prevent any sudden insults from the enemy, and might search out the woods that looked suspiciously, and were capable of ambuscades [ambush]. Next to these followed that part of the Romans who were most completely armed, both footmen and horsemen. (117) Next to these followed ten out of every hundred, carrying along with them their arms, and what was necessary to measure out a camp withal; (118) and after them, such as were to make the road even and straight, and if it were anywhere rough and hard to be passed over, to plane it, and to cut down the woods that hindered their march, that the army might not be in distress, or tired with their march. (119) Behind these he set such carriages of the army as belonged both to himself and to the other commanders, with a considerable number of their horsemen for their security.

(120) After these he marched himself, having with him a select body of footmen, and horsemen, and pikemen. After these came the peculiar cavalry of his own legion, for there were an hundred and twenty horsemen that peculiarly belonged to every legion. (121) Next to these came the mules that carried the engines for sieges, and the other warlike machines of that nature. (122) After these came the commanders of the cohorts, and tribunes, having about them soldiers chosen out of the rest. (123) **Then came the ensigns encompassing the eagle** [*ton aeton*], which is at the head of every Roman legion, the king, and the strongest of all birds, which seems to them a signal of dominion, and an omen that they shall conquer all against whom they march; (124) these sacred ensigns are followed by the trumpeters. Then came the main army in their squadrons and battalions, with six men in depth, which were followed at last by a centurion, who, according to custom, observed the rest. ²² (Emphasis mine)

CONCLUSION

Daniel announces the Good News of God concerning reconciliation to God “in” and “through” His Messiah (see also 2 Corinthians 5:17-20). This Gospel is presented by Daniel with six future transactions with the appearance of the promised Messiah. Within this unique prophecy of Daniel, he enumerates six dealings that will occur with the coming of the Messiah:

²¹This Greek word has three syllables: *á é τοι* (pronounced “ah” “eh” “toy”).

²²Flavius Josephus, “War of the Jews,” in *The Works of Josephus*, Complete and Unabridged, New Updated Edition, Translated by William Whiston (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), [Book 3, Chapter 6, Paragraphs 2], 645.

(1) to finish transgression, (2) to put and end to sin, (3) to atone for wickedness, (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) to seal up vision and prophecy, and (6) to anoint the most holy.

When will these six things occur? Daniel discloses his answer with the following key to an understanding of God's redemptive acts "in" and "through" His Anointed One, the Prince, that is to say, Jesus. Listen to him, once more, as he details the revelation of the end times as he received this from the angel Gabriel, which revelation unfolds God's Good News for lost humanity:

"Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city **to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.** ²⁵Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem [454 BC] until the **Anointed One, the ruler** [Hebrew: *nagid*, "**the Prince**"], comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of **the ruler** [*nagid*, "**the Prince**"] who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. ²⁷ He will confirm a covenant [Hebrew: *b^erith*] with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation [see Matthew 24:15], until the end that is decreed is poured out on him." (Daniel 9:25-27)