

Thursday Evening Bible Study

**Series: the End Times – Bible prophecy about future events and periods**

**Teaching Summary for Week 46**

## **The Tribulation Period**

### **Part 3. The Chronology of the Tribulation Period**

#### **Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks**

If you want to understand the chronology of the tribulation period, you must first study Daniel 9:24-27. In this astounding prophecy of the seventy weeks, Daniel gives an outline of the chronology concerning God's future plans for Israel.

Daniel 9:24-27 provides the indispensable key to the chronology of all New Testament prophecy. Dan 9:26 predicts the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 21:12-24). Our Lord's prophetic discourse in Matthew 24:15-22 and Mark 13:14-20 fixes the time of the Great Tribulation within the seventieth week of Daniel (Dan 9:27). And the prophecies of Revelation 6-19 also occur during Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week.

Dan 9:24-27

24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. 25 "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

26 "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Last week we answered several questions about this passage.

*What does Daniel mean by a "week"?*

In order to understand the chronology of Daniel 9:24-27, we need to determine what Daniel means by a "**week**".

The Hebrew word that Daniel uses here is *shabua*. It literally means "a seven".

So Daniel 9:24 should be translated as

"**Seventy sevens** have been decreed for your people and your holy city..."

So what time period does it refer to in Daniel 9:24-27?

We learned that there are two sevens that were essential in the Jewish calendar,

The **seventh day** of the week was a day of rest for the nation of Israel. It was the **Sabbath for men**. It was a day given to man by God.

The **seventh year** was the year in which the land rested. It was called the Sabbath year, and it was a **Sabbath for the Lord**.

So which "seven" is Daniel referring to in Daniel 9:24-27?

After an exhaustive study, we concluded that here in Daniel *shabua* refers to a **seven year period**.

## *The past and the future*

We now return to Daniel's great prophecy:

Dan 9:24-27

24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. 25 "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

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27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

The first sixty nine sevens of years have already been fulfilled in the past.

The Messiah, the Prince of Israel, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, was cut off (crucified) almost 2,000 years ago.

And the people of the prince who is to come, the Romans, destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD.

So that leaves the final seventieth period of 7 years.

We know from verse 24 what happens at the end of the seventieth seven of years:

The Lord will bring in everlasting righteousness, seal up vision and prophecy, and anoint the most holy place.

Everlasting righteousness refers to the Millennial reign and the eternal state. The Millennial reign will begin in the future.

There are still prophecies that remain unfulfilled, so they will be sealed up in the future, after the prophecies of the day of the Lord, the Millennial reign, and the New Jerusalem have all been fulfilled.

The most holy place is the holy of holies in the Millennial Temple, as we learned in Ezekiel.

Very simply, then, the events of Daniel 9:27 will occur sometime in the future.

Our Lord Jesus Christ validates this in Matthew 24.

Daniel 9:27 states that upon the wings of abominations he will bring desolation

Daniel 12:11 refers to this same event as “the abomination of desolation”.

Dan 12:11

11 "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.

Yes, we have another period of time here – 1,290 days. We will address that later.

The abomination of desolation is connected with the abolishment of the regular sacrifice, which takes place in the middle of the seventieth week.

With that in mind, let’s now read Matthew 24:15-30:

Matt 24:15-30

"Therefore **when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place** (let the reader understand), 16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. 17 "Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. 18 "Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. 19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

20 "But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. 21 "For **then there will be a great tribulation**, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. 22 "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. 23 "Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. 24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. 25 "Behold, I have told you in advance. 26 "So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, or, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe them. 27 "For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 "Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

29 "But **immediately after the tribulation of those days** THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and **they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.**

So again, Daniel fixes the abomination of desolation precisely in the middle of the seventieth week.

Our Lord places it at "the end", just before His second coming in glory.

Therefore, the seventieth week must come at the end of the present age just before Christ comes in glory.

The Lord has not yet come in glory, so the seventieth week is still future. Therefore there is a gap of time between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks of Daniel's prophecy.

If the first 483 years ended with the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the last 7 years given to Israel are still future, then there is a gap between the sixty-ninth "week" and the seventieth "week".

The length of this gap of time is not specified in the Bible.

## *Implications*

This fact protects us against certain dangers that commonly occur in interpreting prophecy.

It explains why we cannot find the present age in the Old Testament prophets.

It dispels the lie that God is finished with the nation of Israel.

And it exposes any date-setting schemes for the Tribulation Period and the Second Coming as doomed to failure and a waste of time.

Finally, it preserves the hope that the Lord may return for His body, the church, at any moment.

*Does Daniel give any information about our present age (between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week)?*

He identifies clearly only two events: the death of Messiah, and the destruction of Jerusalem. This is sort of amazing when we think about all that has transpired on planet earth since the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

But Daniel doesn't totally ignore the character of the age. But while the world magnifies great men, science, and "progress", God through His prophet sums up these times of the Gentiles with two short statements:

- "Even to the end there shall be war"
- "Desolations are determined"

Even to the end there shall be war.

Well, he's certainly been right so far! World history from the first century AD up to the present day is riddled with war. In fact, wars are often the markers of historical time periods: the collapse of Rome; 1066 AD; the Mongol invasions; the revolutionary war; the war of 1812; the civil war; the first world war; the second world war; Korea; Vietnam; Desert Storm.

Until the end there will be war. Wars and rumors of wars.

Desolations are determined. This means that none of these wars happen without God decreeing for them to happen.

In other words, God is in control over the events of this crooked and perverse generation.

Prov 21:1

The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord;  
He turns it wherever He wishes.

The Lord has the last word in human history.

Ps 2:1-6

Why are the nations in an uproar  
And the peoples devising a vain thing?  
2 The kings of the earth take their stand  
And the rulers take counsel together  
Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying,  
3 "Let us tear their fetters apart  
And cast away their cords from us!"

4 He who sits in the heavens laughs,  
The Lord scoffs at them.  
5 Then He will speak to them in His anger  
And terrify them in His fury, saying,  
6 "But as for Me, I have installed My King  
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

Next, we will turn our attention to the chronology of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> "week".

## Daniel's Seventieth Week

Dan 9:27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Daniel provides three markers for the seven-year period.

He tells us what happens at the beginning, the middle, and the end.

The seventieth week begins when the prince who is to come makes a firm covenant with the many for 7 years. The "many" are a large majority of the Jews.

The seventieth week ends when the prince who is to come is completely destroyed.

What happens in the middle of the week is the key to understanding the internal chronology the Tribulation period.

Each of the major New Testament prophecies of the Tribulation mentions it.

It divides the 70<sup>th</sup> week in half, into two 3 ½ year periods.

So what will occur in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week?

Daniel tells us that the prince who is to come will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering.

And at that time, he will bring desolation by the wing of abominations.

Jewish sacrifices and grain offerings were always performed in the Temple.

There is no Temple standing in Jerusalem today; the Jews do not offer up sacrifices and offerings now, and haven't since 70 AD.

This means that sometime between now and the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week a new temple must be built. This temple, however, will not be sanctioned by the Lord.



### ***Who is this prince who is to come?***

Daniel describes him elsewhere in the book of Daniel.

Dan 7:23-27

23 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it. 24 'As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and **another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.** 25 'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for **a time, times, and half a time.** 26 'But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. 27 'Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.'

Here we learn that the prince who is to come speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints (Jewish believers) of the Highest One.

The saints will be given into his hand for a specified period of time: a **time, times, and half a time.** This refers to a period of 3 ½ years, and the context requires that this be the second 3 ½ years of Daniel's seventieth week.

By the way, this same expression appears several times in the book of Revelation:

Rev 12:13-15

And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. 14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a **time and times and half a time,** from the presence of the serpent.

And we also find this same expression in chapter 12 of the book of Daniel.

## Dan 12

"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. 2 "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. 3 "Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. 4 "But as for you, Daniel, conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time; many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."

5 Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river and the other on that bank of the river. 6 And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?" 7 I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for **a time, times, and half a time**; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed. 8 As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?" 9 He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. 10 "Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. 11 **"From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. 12 "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!** 13 "But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

To get ready for next week, read the following passages:

Daniel 8:1-27

Matthew 24:1-31