

Thursday Evening Bible Study

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

**Teaching Summary for Week 47**

## **The Tribulation Period**

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

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

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 completed our study of the first sixty-nine weeks of Daniel's prophecy. We saw that all of the events of verse 24-26 were completed in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

We also established that the events of the seventieth week have not been fulfilled yet.

The events described in verse 27 will occur at some time in the future.

And as we have seen, this necessitates a gap in time between the 69<sup>th</sup> and the 70<sup>th</sup> week. The length of this gap of time is not specified in the Bible.

Now we turn our attention to the chronology of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week, a future period of 7 years.

### **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 final 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.

Note carefully what starts the 70<sup>th</sup> week – it is *not* the Rapture of the church. It is this firm covenant which the prince who is to come makes with the many.

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 these events in some manner.

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.**

So sacrifice and grain offering were being performed before the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week.

In the middle of the week, this prince 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. There is no prophecy that describes it being built. Nor is there any record of the Lord commanding the nation of Israel to build it (unlike the temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel.

“ 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 “

Daniel 9:27 is the frame on which all of the other prophecies of the Day of the Lord are placed. And the reference line is the abomination of desolation.

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.

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

While Daniel specifies the events that begin and end his 70<sup>th</sup> week, as well as the event that occurs in the middle, he does not fill in any of the details about the events that occur during the first or the second 3 1/2 years.

For that, we have to rely on other prophetic material – mainly New Testament material.

Let me point out at the outset that there is a great detail of information about the second 3 1/2 years, and comparatively little is said about the first 3 1/2 years.

Also, there is no mention of a covenant with the many for 7 years in any of the New Testament prophecies of the Tribulation. That includes the book of Revelation.

That fact alone makes it somewhat difficult to pinpoint which events occur during the first half of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week.

With that, let's now turn to the New Testament prophecies of the Tribulation Period.

The first one is found in the first book of the New Testament: the gospel of Matthew.

The gospel of Matthew was written to the Jewish people.

The first prophecy is spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ in chapter 24 of the gospel of Matthew:

Matt 24:1-31

1 Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. 2 And He said to them, "Do you not see all these things? **Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.**"

In verse 2, Jesus is predicting the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Roman armies in 70 AD.

Next, notice the questions that His disciples pose to Him:

3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, **when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?**"

Note carefully how the Lord's coming is linked with the end of the age.

Luke 21 is a parallel passage to Matthew 24. However, there are noticeable differences between the two passages as well.

Luke records these questions being asked of Jesus:

Luke 21:7 They questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, **when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?**"

I hope you can see that Jesus is asked about two different signs in the two accounts.

In Matt 24:3, He is asked about the sign of His coming, and of the end of the age.

While in Luk 21:7, He is asked about the sign when "these things" are about to take place. "These things" refers to the days that will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.

Jesus gives the first sign, the sign of His coming and of the end of the age, here in Matthew 24:14-15 and Matt 24:29-30.

He gives the second sign, the sign of the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, in Luke 21:20. The sign is when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies.

Let's continue with Matt 24:4.

4 And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. 5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. 6 "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. 7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. 8 "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.

9 "Then **they will deliver you to tribulation**, and will kill you, and you will be **hated by all nations** because of My name. 10 "At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. 11 "**Many false prophets will arise** and will mislead many. 12 "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13 "**But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.** 14 "This gospel of **the kingdom** shall be preached in **the whole world** as a testimony to all the nations, and then **the end** will come.

15 "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.

The Glorious Return

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. 31 "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and **THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER** His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

Let's piece together the timeline here.

First of all, our Lord does not mention the peace treaty that begins the 70<sup>th</sup> week in Daniel's prophecy.

Because of this, it is difficult to place verses 4-8 in the timeframe of Daniel 9:27.

We will return to Matt 24:4-8 when we cover the timeline in the book of Revelation.

On the other hand, verses 9-14 cover the second half of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week in outline form.

Then verses 15-31 cover the same time period, giving additional details. In other words, we have a recurrence (recursion) here.

Matthew 24:9-14 begins with the Jews being delivered to tribulation and killed. (verse 9)

It ends with the gospel of the kingdom being preached to all the nations, followed by the end. And remember: the end refers to the coming of the Lord.

Verse 11 speaks of many false prophets who will mislead many.

Verse 24 speaks of false prophets who mislead even the elect .

Recall that the lynchpin of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week is the **abomination of desolation** which will occur right in the middle of the 7 year period.

In Matthew 24:15, our Lord Jesus refers to this same event, and even references Daniel:

15 "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),**

Jesus' description of the Great Tribulation ends in verse 28.

Verse 29 begins with these words:

29 "But **immediately after the tribulation of those days**

What occurs immediately after the tribulation?

The sun is darkened, the moon will not give forth its light, the stars will fall from the sky – and the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky.

And then all the people on earth will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.

An observation: just like our Lord does not mention the event which begins Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week (the peace treaty with the many), so too He does not mention the event which ends Daniel's 70 week – complete destruction poured out on the one who makes desolate.

One other thing: our Lord does not provide lengths of time (like for example, 1260 days or 42 months).

So let's return to Matt 24:9 and note the events that will take place in the second 3 ½ years of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week.

1. The Jews will be delivered to tribulation, and be killed.
2. They will be hated by all the nations because of the name of the Lord.
3. Those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.
4. Many false prophets will arise and mislead many, even if possible the elect (remnant of Jewish tribulation saints).
5. Lawlessness will be increased.
6. Those who endure to the end will be saved (this means brought into the Messianic Kingdom – earthly eschatological salvation, not eternal salvation. They were already believers in Christ.



7. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to the nations.
8. The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give forth its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.
9. The sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky.
10. Then all the tribes of the earth will mourn.
11. The Son of Man comes in the clouds with great power and glory.
12. The Son of Man will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

The next New Testament prophetic passage that mentions the abomination of desolation appears in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

We will read it together tonight; we will study it in some detail next week.

## 2 Thess 2:1-12

1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

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