

MORE SEED & BREAD, ISSUE NO. 327

A House of Cards: Daniel's 70 weeks

By Andrew Brown

God's truth is not a weak, flimsy thing that will topple when examined. The exact opposite is true: it is a firm foundation. Common interpretations of the prophecy Gabriel brought to Daniel in Daniel 9 are a house of cards awaiting collapse, a "Three Card Monty" sleight of hand. The conclusions do not follow through. These widely-spread theories place the first 69 weeks as history and separate the 70th week (the Great Tribulation) as future. Can the 70th week be separated from the other 69? The separation is attributed to the crucifixion of Christ and the laying aside of Israel. This is preposterous since they claim the crucifixion was predicted in the passage. The timeline's interruption occurs because something in the timeline happens?! It is a self-contradicting impossibility. Furthermore, Israel was not laid aside at the cross; the Lord asked that they be forgiven. Israel still had the prominent place throughout the book of Acts. Under scrutiny, many problems arise. Beliefs that results in absurdities should be questioned. There is no evidence to support the separation of the 70th week. These weeks must remain intact.

Daniel prayed concerning the 70-year captivity that resulted from Israel's sin. The angel Gabriel answered Daniel's prayer by revealing to him a vastly greater "70x7" period of Israel's glorification, **Seventy weeks have been declared 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** (Dan. 9:24 NASB throughout). Daniel spoke of 70 years, whereas God responded with "seventy weeks" of years.

The Hebrew "weeks of years" is established in Leviticus 25. After six years, the farmer is commanded to give his field a yearlong "sabbath" rest, a pattern symbolic of a "week" made of years instead of days. Then, after seven Sabbaths, comes another Jubilee year (Lev. 25:10) where everything resets, including slaves and property laws. The Jubilee year is set apart and NOT COUNTED since 49 years would pass till the next Jubilee. The math does not add up any other way. Gabriel quoted this precedent when he spoke of seventy-sevens. Therefore, Gabriel set apart 490 years plus 10 Jubilee years (500 years). This portion is commonly interpreted as 490 years passing *until* the thousand-year reign of Christ. Other interpretations ignore details and create similar errors by making these fulfilled in Jesus Christ's death on the cross. The passage clearly states, **seventy weeks have been declared FOR your people and the holy city** listing six amazing characteristics of the time. The 500-year period will be represented by those six characteristics: a future 500-year period of blessing BEFORE the second coming.

Gabriel next said, **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** (Dan. 9:25). Gabriel revealed a decree to **restore and rebuild Jerusalem**. This decree waits to be given. There was a declaration of Cyrus in 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 and Ezra 1:1 about rebuilding the temple, but not the city. Furthermore, both passages cite fulfilling Jeremiah's words, not Daniel's writings. If Daniel were fulfilled surely God would cite it somewhere. Darius (Ezra 6) and Artaxerxes (Ezra 7) both made orders pertaining to the temple, but not the city. Serious problems arise if one makes the building of Ezra's temple equal to restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem. Dr. Bullinger started the 70 weeks with Artaxerxes allowing Nehemiah to rebuild the Jerusalem wall, but there is NO decree in Nehemiah to warrant this. Why would Scripture be silent? There is no recorded decree because no connection exists. It did not happen.

One might start at Christ's death in 29AD (a probable date) and conjure up a historical date working backward to an imagined Artaxerxes' decree date in Nehemiah (which did not happen) in 454BC and conclude (from misinterpreting Gabriel's prophecy) the temple must have been finished by 405BC (instead of Ussher's 516BC date). In comparison, Solomon's temple took seven years to build (1 Kgs. 6:38). God does not reveal how long Zerubbabel's temple took to build. In this bait-and-switch game one can be duped into believing certain Roman dates on Bible events are accurate. Tying these specific events to this prophecy is downright manipulation.

Before the Roman fixed dating method, dates of specific events were normally compared to other events. This made the exact times and dates highly uncertain to fix in time. For example, **The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar** (Jer. 32:1). This common practice can be seen all over the Bible where dates are pinned

to a king's reign. Attaining a specific date for historical events BEFORE Roman times is highly debatable and uncertain. Usher, Bullinger, and Josephus are all fallible men trying to do the best they can to anchor these dates into the timeline. Problems often arise (especially trying to cement them with B.C. dates) as kingdoms exaggerate their antiquity, like the Persian Empire was known to do. In the case of Gabriel's prophecy, history has been bent to fit a twisted interpretation.

There is no Scriptural reason to start the seventy weeks anywhere in the past. Nor any reason to conclude the completion of the temple occurs in the seventh week (49th year). The decree continues **until Messiah the prince**. This says nothing about the temple! The seventh week is specifically connected to the appearance of **Messiah the Prince**. The Hebrew word *mashiyach* occurs 40 times in Scripture and is consistently translated everywhere as "anointed," *except here* where it is "Messiah" twice. These two occurrences are interpreted rather than translated which leads to the uneducated conclusion that this can only refer to Jesus Christ. It should be consistently translated "anointed." Scripture calls others anointed, like Saul and David.

One should carefully consider that the entirety of Gabriel's prophecy should not be divided. Gabriel was encouraging righteous Daniel with the fully-future 500-year period (not 490). He describes an incredible time of blessing **declared upon your people [Israel] and your holy city [Jerusalem]** that would reverse all ill-effects of the captivity being experienced. (The Word of Truth Ministry calls this the pre-millennial Kingdom of God.) The characteristics of blessing entail a period when transgression is restrained (finished), sin has been ended (sealed up), iniquity has been removed (covered/atoned for), eonian (flowing) righteousness has been brought in, vision and prophecy have been sealed up (attested to daily), and an anointed most holy place exists. This prophecy describes a time of blessing which culminates in the Great Tribulation, when the holy place is desecrated.

The seventy weeks launch with the command to **restore and rebuild Jerusalem**. This could refer to a resurrected King Cyrus' fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy, (Isaiah wrote about 200 years prior to Cyrus). **It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid'** (Isa. 44:28). The Anointed Prince appears at the seventh week (at the first Jubilee), possibly for his inauguration. "Anointed" and "prince" are connected to King David in Scripture. Consider the following prophetic verses: **David My servant will be their prince** (Ezek. 37:24, 25), or **but they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them** (Jer.30:9), or **afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king** (Hos. 3:5, consider also Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15 and Ezekiel 34:23, 24). These passages refer to David long after he was dead. They foretell the resurrection of David, who will once again be anointed as the kingly "prince." Chapters 45 and 46 of Ezekiel mention this prince during a future time with a working temple and sacrifice. The anointed prince continues to reign uneventfully until sixty-two weeks (434 years/442 years counting Jubilees). The straightforward reading reveals this anointed one living longer than 400 years.

Gabriel continues, **and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing** (Dan. 9:25, 26). (There is no reason to add 7+62=69 except coincidental math). It is incredibly significant that after sixty-two weeks the plaza and moat will be built again. At that point characteristics of peace and utopian economic prosperity will have persisted for hundreds of years. The plaza refers to capitalism reemerging to replace the sharing of God's government and to the reinstatement of wealth opening the path for the mark of the beast mentioned in Revelation. The "moat" carries the idea of defense. Since wars and rumors of wars are reentering the world, people start to protect themselves to solidify their might to keep this newfound "wealth." The Anointed Prince David is cut off from his throne in Jerusalem and possesses absolutely no authority. This likely connects to Psalm 27:5 in which David hides in the secret place of the temple. This event is never recorded in the past and likely occurs in this future time.

The Kingdom rule of peace, wherein no one is allowed to fight back, makes it easy for the Anti-Christ, the little horn, to overthrow David. **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** (Dan. 9:26). The Anti-Christ takes David's place as king and his army eventually takes over. Many details in Daniel can be compared to other Scriptures about the Anti-Christ destroying the city and the sanctuary. Desolations are obviously characteristic for the man known as the **abomination of desolation** (Mt. 24:15). His end occurs with a sudden flood in the battle at Christ's second coming. Before this comes to pass, **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 abomination will come one**

who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate (Dan. 9:27). This man will make a strict covenant-agreement with many Israelites allowing the temple sacrifices and offerings to continue. However, he then breaks that covenant, stopping the sacrifices and offerings. This occurs in the middle of the week covenant (3 ½ years) when he sets himself up in the wing of God's temple and declares himself God (desecrating the temple). At this point, those in Judea flee to the mountains where protection awaits from God. His complete destruction has also been decreed and is cemented into Biblical prophecy awaiting the time when God will pour it out on **the one who makes desolate**. He will reap what he sowed.

Common interpretations of Daniel 9 are a house of cards attempting to prop up guesses of dates and events of Scripture. We have to maintain integrity in our study that allows the full message of God's prophecy to speak. When we do, the truth revealed is stunning: in this case, a display of the pre-millennial Kingdom and future events. The solid foundation of God's Word is firm.