

Daniel 9:24-26: The Seventy Sevens Prophecy that Predicts the Time of the Messiah's Death

Week 2- Inspiration Handout

Daniel 9:24-26 (NASB)

- 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 a set of seven years in Daniel 9:

What is a "week"?

The word translated "week" is literally "seven." Therefore it may denote a 7-day week or a 7-year period of time. A 7-year week is preferred for the following reasons:

- Common sense: 69 weeks of days would only be a little over one year. This was nowhere near enough to rebuild the city. It took them over 46 years just to rebuild the Temple (Jn. 2:20).
- Context: In Dan. 10:2, Daniel says literally "(I) had been mourning three entire weeks of days." Why would Daniel go out of his way to notify his audience of such an obvious thing, unless he had been using "week" in a different way in chapter 9?
- Historical setting: Israel's 70 year exile (Dan. 9:2) was God's punishment for their neglect of the sabbath land rest (Lev. 25:1-7; 26:34,35,43). God removed them from their land one year for every year they violated this law (2 Chron. 36:20,21)-490 years or 70 "weeks" of years. Therefore as Daniel looks ahead to 70 future "sevens" they would most likely be sevens of years and not days.

(Lev. 25 1:-4) The LORD then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, saying,² "Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, 'When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a sabbath to the LORD. ³ 'Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop,⁴ but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard.

(2 Chron. 36:20,21) And those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah,

until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.

Therefore we conclude that in Daniel 9, "week" refers to a set of seven years. 69 weeks = 483 years. The 70th week = 7 years.

What kind of year?

The Jews **used a lunar year of twelve 30-day months**, irregularly adding a leap month to correct the calendar. So Daniel's audience would have understood this to refer to 360-day years. Other passages referring to the last "week" (Rev. 11:2,3) confirm this 360-day year. Therefore we will need to translate our 365-day year to the 360-day year to interpret this prophecy (calculated below).

What year was the decree?

Although several decrees pertained to the return of the Jews to Jerusalem and rebuilding their temple, the only decree that authorized a full rebuilding of Jerusalem (including fortifications-see Dan. 9:25) was the one given in **444 BC** by Artaxerxes Langimanus (see Neh. 2:1-8).

Fulfillment

Converting from Daniel's 360-day lunar years to our present solar years makes 69 "weeks" just over 476 years long. Crossing from BC to AD requires that we move one year further because there is no "zero" year. This brings us to 33 AD, the very year that Jesus rode into Jerusalem, was hailed as Messiah by the multitude of disciples (see Luke 19:35-44), and was crucified. No other Jewish Messiah claimant besides Jesus was within 100 years of this date.

Also notice that when Jesus predicts the destruction of Jerusalem in Luke 19:42-44, he is merely repeating what Daniel predicted on Dan. 9:26 (see below).

Additional resources: Xenos Central Teaching audio tape: t07348; *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* by Harold Hoehner; Gary DeLashmutt's paper on "Sejanus" on the Xenos web site, www.xenos.org.