

## ***The 70 “weeks” of Daniel 9:24-27***

### ***V.24—Things to be accomplished within the space of 70 “weeks” (490 years):***

1. *To finish the transgression* (Matt.23:29-32)
2. *To make an end of sins* (Heb.9:26)
3. *To make reconciliation for iniquity* (2 Cor.5:19)
4. *To bring in everlasting righteousness* (Rom.3:21, 25-26)
5. *To seal up vision and prophecy* (Luke 21:22)
6. *To anoint the Most Holy (One?)* (Acts 10:38 / Heb.9:12)

### ***V.25—Theories concerning the period of the first 69 “weeks” (483 years):***

- A. Begins with Cyrus (536 BC), reaches to Jesus’ baptism (Young, Woodrow, Anstey, Mauro, later Scofield)  
The math: 536 BC – 483 years = 53 BC (about 80 years too early!—see reverse side)
- B. Begins with Artaxerxes’ first decree (457 BC), ends with Jesus’ baptism (Isaac Newton; Halley, *Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*)  
The math: 457 BC – 483 years = 26AD
- C. Begins with Artaxerxes’ second decree (444/445 BC), ends with Jesus’ death (Julius Africanus [AD 200-245]; Ussher, Sir Robert Anderson; early Scofield, Nolen-Jones, Baxter, most dispensationalists)  
The math: 445 BC – 483 years = 39AD (adjusted for lunar years and leap years = 32 AD)  
Anderson’s calculations: March 14, 445 BC – 173,880 days = April 6, 32 AD (Palm Sunday)  
(Another view places Palm Sunday on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 33 AD; another in the year 30 AD).

### ***Vv.26-27—The seventieth “week”***

*On theories A and B*, the crucifixion of Christ comes at the middle of the seventieth “week,” fulfilling the predictions of the ending of the sacrificial system. The second half of the seventieth “week” is fulfilled in the early years of the church (or, alternatively, in the Jewish War [66-70 AD] Luke 21:22)

*On theory C*, Christ is crucified at the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> “week” and the seventieth “week” is postponed until after the rapture of the church.

Eusebius wrote: *“Now the whole period of our Savior’s teaching and working of miracles is said to have been three and a half years, which is half a week. John the evangelist, in his Gospel makes this clear to the attentive.”* (Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel*, Book 8, chap.2)

***Verses 26 and 27 are parallel. Both speak of Messiah’s death (and its significance) followed by the destruction of Jerusalem, as follows:***

#### **Messiah...**

- Will be cut off sometime after the 69 weeks have run their course (v.26a)
- Will confirm the covenant at the beginning of His ministry (the beginning of the 70th week), but, by dying, will bring an end to the sacrificial system in the midst of the week (v.27a)

#### **Jerusalem...**

- will be destroyed by the people of the prince who is to come (Rome) resulting in determined desolations (v.26b)
- will be reduced to determined desolation as the result of a certain abomination (v.27b)

## **Revisiting the “Cyrus” starting point:**

536 BC — *Cyrus’ Decree to rebuild the “House of God”* (Ezra 1:3)

Dispensationalist J. Sidlow Baxter writes: *“Three decrees affecting Jerusalem are mentioned in Ezra—that of Cyrus in 536 B.C., that of Darius Hvstaspis about 519 B.C., and that of Artaxerxes Longimanus about 458 B.C....None of these can be the decree foretold to Daniel, for all three relate only to the temple and worship. The one edict in history for the rebuilding of the city itself is that which was issued by Artaxerxes at the appeal of Nehemiah...”*

Dispensationalist Gabelein wrote: *“It is wrong to reckon these 70 year weeks from...the time Cyrus gave permission for the people to return and to build the temple...for they are to begin with the word to restore and build the city itself.”*

Scripture assigns to Cyrus the honor of making such a decree (Isa.44:28ff). All subsequent decrees, whether by Darius or by Artaxerxes, were relatively inconsequential in comparison to the one that brought the end to the Babylonian captivity (of which Daniel was reading when this prophecy came to him—Dan.9:2)

Josephus says Cyrus gave leave to the Jews *“to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem, and the temple of God.”* In a letter to governors in Syria, Cyrus wrote: *“I have given leave to as many of the Jews that dwell in my country as please to return to their own country, and to rebuild their city, and to build the temple of God at Jerusalem on the same place where it was before. (Ant., Book 11, 1:2-3)*

Edward Young; Woodrow follows Mauro, Anstey (even Scofield changed his view from the Artaxerxes date to the Cyrus date after reading Anstey [Scofield, *What Do The Prophets Say?* (Philadelphia: Sunday School Times, 1916), p.142), though the Scofield Bible notes were not corrected):

‘Ussher, Lloyd, and others have all based their chronological conclusions on the canon of Ptolemy, a list of Persian kings and the length of time they reigned. But as Mauro says: “Ptolemy does not even pretend to have had any facts as to the length of the Persian period (that is to say, from Darius and Cyrus down to Alexander the Great)”; his dates are based on “calculations or guesses made by Erathosthenes, and on certain vague floating traditions.” (*Great Prophecies of the Bible*, 95)

Ptolemy (AD90-168) lists ten Persian kings after Cyrus the Great (with combined reigns lasting 206 years)

*Clement of Alexandria* (150-215 AD) lists eight kings after Cyrus: Cambyses (19); Darius (46); Xerxes (26); Artaxerxes (41); Darius (8); Artaxerxes (42); Ochus and Arses (3) = 205 years.

Daniel 11:2 indicates three (or four) to follow Cyrus.

### **Who is “the prince who is to come” (9:26)?**

Theory A: Christ (He is “the Prince” in v.25)

Theory B: Titus (Roman general whose forces conquered Jerusalem)

Theory C: Demonic principality of Rome, cf. “Prince of Persia” and “Prince of Greece” (10:13, 20)

Theory D: The future Antichrist

#### *Problems with Theory D—*

1. There is no mention of antichrist previously in the prophecy—and perhaps not elsewhere in Daniel (it is common to identify the “little horn” of chs 7 & 8, and the willful king of ch.11 with such a person)
2. The “prince who is to come” is said to have been the leader of the people who destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in AD70. A future antichrist would hardly fit such a description.

3. Verses 26 and 27 seem to link this prince with the abomination of desolation, which Jesus said some of His disciples would see (Matt.24:15), and which Luke identifies with the Roman siege of Jerusalem (Lk.21:20ff)
4. A future, individual antichrist is not clearly identified anywhere in scripture. Consider:
  - a) The beast of Revelation 13—like the beasts of Daniel 7:1ff, not a person but a political system
  - b) The “little horn” of Daniel 7—grows out of the Roman Empire (Dan.7:7-8, 11)
  - c) The “little horn” of Daniel 8—grows out of the Greek he-goat (Alexander’s empire) and is most naturally identified with Antiochus Epiphanes (as is the king of the north in Dan.11:29-35)
  - d) The willful “king” of Daniel 11:36-45—Variously identified, seems to be the next threat to Israel after the Maccabean conflicts (Rome? Herod?)
  - e) The “man of lawlessness” in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10
    - 1) Opposes God (v.4)
    - 2) Sits in the “temple of God” (v.4)
    - 3) Acts like he thinks he’s God (v.4)
    - 4) Deceives people by performing supernatural feats by satanic power (v.9)
    - 5) Is/was being restrained, at the time of writing, by some mysteriously unidentified entity (v.6)
    - 6) That entity would be taken away, allowing the rise of the man of sin (v.7)
    - 7) He will be destroyed by the brightness of Christ’s appearing (v.8)

***Theories of fulfillment of 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10:***

*1. Futurist theory: Antichrist in tribulation period*

- a) Will be Satan incarnate—hence the miraculous abilities
- b) Will sit in temple of God (there is no temple in Jerusalem today—speaks of future (third) temple)
- c) Must be future because he will be destroyed at the second coming of Christ.
- d) The present “restraint” is the Holy Spirit in the church, which must be raptured before Antichrist comes.

*2. Preterist theory: Some Roman or Jewish individual who desecrates the temple in AD70*

- a) John Geshala, leader of Jewish insurgents, who set up his jurisdiction in the temple and desecrated it
- b) Nero (held by Augustine and others, including Gentry)
- c) Gessius Florus— Roman procurator of Judea from 64 until 66
- d) Vespasian—emperor at the time of Jerusalem’s destruction

*3. Historicist theory: The papal institution, arising around 600 AD, to be destroyed at Christ’s coming*

- a) Identified with “the little horn” of Daniel 7, which arises from the Roman Empire (the fourth beast)
- b) “The temple of God” is Paul’s term for the church (cf., 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 6:16)
- c) Popes often blasphemed and claimed to be God, or to have the prerogatives of God
- d) Roman Church has claimed multiple miracles, stigmata, apparitions of Mary, images moving, etc.
- e) Like the “little horn” (Dan.7:21) the papacy has been a long-time persecutor of the saints— inquisitions, burning of “heretics,” religious wars, etc.
- f. In Paul’s day, the rise of the papacy was restrained by the Roman Empire, which had to be removed (cf., Daniel 7:11)
- g. Paul’s reticence about identifying the restrainer is because he had already been accused of teaching things against Caesar in Thessalonica (Acts 17:7), and did not want to speak plainly about the removal of the Roman State, lest the letter fall into hostile hands, and confirm suspicions about him.

## Interesting quotes from Church Fathers...

Lactantius:

"Beseech the God of heaven that the Roman State might be preserved, lest, more speedily than we suppose, that hateful tyrant should come."

Tertullian:

"What is the restraining power? What but man State, the breaking up of which by being scattered into ten kingdoms, shall introduce Antichrist upon [its own ruins]?"

Cyril of Jerusalem:

"This, the predicted Antichrist, will come, when the times of the Roman Empire shall be fulfilled....Ten kings of the Romans shall arise together...among these the eleventh is Antichrist, who, by magical and wicked artifices, shall seize the Roman power."

Jerome:

"He [Paul] shows that that which restrains is the Roman Empire; for unless it shall have been destroyed, and taken out of the midst, according to the prophet Daniel, Antichrist will not come before that... "Let us therefore say what all ecclesiastical writers have delivered to us, that when the Roman Empire is destroyed, ten kings will divide the Roman world among themselves, and then will be revealed the man of sin."

Ambrose:

"...after the failing or decay of the Roman Empire, Antichrist would appear."

Chrysostom:

"One may naturally enquire, What is that which withholdeth?...when the Roman Empire is taken out of the way, then he [Antichrist] shall come. And naturally. For as long as the fear of this empire lasts, no one will willingly exalt himself, but when that is dissolved. He will attack the anarchy, and endeavor to seize upon the government both of man and of God."

## And Popes...

"The Pope is of so great dignity, and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God and the vicar of God." (Ferraris Ecclesiastical dictionary)

"All names which in the Scriptures are applied to Christ, by virtue of which it is established that He is over the church, all the same names are applied to the Pope." (On the Authority of the Councils, book 2, chapter 17)

"The Pope and God are the same, so he has all power in Heaven and earth." (Pope Pius V, quoted in Barclay, Chapter XXVII, p. 218, "Cities Petrus Bertanous")

"To believe that our Lord God the Pope has not the power to decree as he is decreed, is to be deemed heretical." (the Gloss "Extravagantes" of Pope John XXII Cum inter, Tit. XIV, Cap. IV. Ad Callem Sexti Decretalium, Paris, 1685)

## And Reformers...

Martin Luther

"I feel much freer now that I am certain the pope is the Antichrist."

The translators, in *The Epistle Dedicatory* of the KJV:

"[King James' zeal for Protestantism] hath given such a blow unto that man of sin [the pope] as will never be healed."

Westminster Confession, chapter 25: "VI. There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ: nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God."