

SEVENTY WEEKS FOR ISRAEL

Is there a chronological gap (of 2000 years) between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth week?

Daniel 9:24-27: ²⁴*Seventy weeks have been appointed for your people, and for your holy city, in order to finish the transgression, and to bring the sins to an end, and to make atonement for lawlessness, and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy One.* ²⁵*Know then, and understand, that from the issuing of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, until (the coming of) Christ the Leader, will be seven weeks, and sixty two weeks; the city square and the wall will be built again in troubled times.* ²⁶*And after the sixty two weeks, the Christ will be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the leader who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary; and its end will come with a flood, and destructions have been determined until the end of the war* (after the word “war”, LXX contains the word [συντετριμμένου] which means: ‘the days of which have been cut short’; compare with Matthew 24:22.) ^{27a}*And He will establish* (or ‘make solid’, ‘make unshakable’; LXX: [δυναμώσει] = ‘strengthen’) *the covenant with many in one week;* ^b*and in the middle of the week the sacrifice and the offering will come to an end,* ^c*and the abomination of the desolation* (or ‘the abomination which causes desolation’) *will be upon the wing of the holy place,* ^d*and until the end of time, a deadline* (or ‘an extension of time’) *will be given to the desolation.”* (AT) (The above four verses are author’s translation from the Greek “Βάμβρα” (Vamva) version; author’s parentheses.)

To understand the above verses, one must read the entire chapter of Daniel 9. In that chapter, Daniel prayed to God (verse 4) and asked **forgiveness for the sins and the iniquities on behalf of the people of Israel who had departed from the commandments of God** (verse 5).

While he was praying (verse 20), Gabriel came to give him understanding (verses 21,22). And in verses 24-27, Gabriel revealed God’s plan for Israel regarding:

- a) **The time** in which He would provide the means for Israel’s forgiveness,
- b) **who would the Messiah be**, the Leader, who would come to save Israel from their sins, and
- c) **how He would accomplish this task**,

At the same time, Gabriel indicated that:

- **Not all** of Daniel’s people would accept the Messiah, the Leader of their salvation, and that,
- they would **kill Him!** For this reason,

- He would establish the unshakable covenant **with many** in Israel in one week --- but not with all!

Also, Gabriel spoke of another “*leader*” who, along with his “*people*”, would come like a “*flood*” to destroy the city and its temple! Now, let us examine Daniel 9:24-27 one verse at a time.

Daniel 9:24: “*Seventy weeks have been appointed for your people, and for your holy city, in order to finish the transgression, and to bring the sins to an end, and to make atonement for lawlessness, and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy One.*” (AT)

Examining verse 24

The true gospel of the Bible, presents **the Person and the work of the Savior!** Therefore, from the above verse, we realize that Gabriel (verse 21), presented to Daniel the gospel of salvation hundreds of years before the coming of Christ, because **he presented the Person and the work of the Savior!**

What did Gabriel reveal about the Person of the Savior?

In the end of verse 24, we read the words,

“... *to anoint the Most Holy One*” (also, please check NIV’s footnote).

There is only one Person in the whole universe who is the “*Most Holy One*” --- **God!** Therefore, from Gabriel’s words, we realize that the One who would become the Christ (to be anointed) in order to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21), would be **God in the flesh** (Philippians 2:6-11; John 1:1,14)!

What did Gabriel say about the work of the Savior?

He said that He would:

1. Bring an **end to transgressions!**
2. Bring an **end to sins!**
3. Make **atonement for lawlessness!**
4. Bring in **everlasting righteousness!**
5. “*Seal up vision and prophecy!*”

Now, let us examine the foregoing five points one at a time:

1. Bring an end to transgressions

Did Jesus bring an end to transgressions?

Yes, He did! He brought an end to transgressions **by removing the Old Covenant with its Law and ordinances** that were against the people of Israel (Colossians 2:14), and **by establishing the New Covenant in His blood** (Jeremiah 31:31; Matthew 26:28).

What connection is there between Law and transgressions?

In Romans 4:15, the apostle Paul wrote that,

“... where there is no law neither is there transgression.” (EMTV)

Therefore, Jesus fulfilled the Law and He took it out of the way (Colossians 2:14).

2. Bring an end to sins

Did Jesus bring an end to the sins?

Yes, He did! Please consider the following scriptures:

Luke 24:47

“... remission of sins must be preached on His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

John 1:29

“On the morrow, John sees Jesus coming toward him and said, Behold! The Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world!”

Acts 13:38

“... through this One remission of sin is announced to you.”

Hebrews 9:26

“... But now once for all, at the completion of the ages, He has been manifested for putting away of sin through the sacrifice of Himself.”

Matthew 1:21

“And she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.”

Matthew 26:28

“For this is My blood of the New Covenant which concerning many is being poured out for remission of sins.”

3. Make atonement for lawlessness

Did Jesus make atonement (propitiation, reconciliation) **for lawlessness?**

Yes, He did! Let us read the following verses:

1 John 3:4,5

“*Everyone practicing sin also practices lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. ⁵And you know that that One was revealed that He might take away our sins, and sin is not in Him.*”

Romans 3:24,25

“being justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood, as a demonstration of His righteousness through the passing over of the sins that had taken place before, in the forbearance of God,”

Hebrews 2:17

“For this reason He ought by all means to become like His brothers, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the things respecting God, in order to make propitiation for the sins of His people.”

Titus 2:14

“who gave Himself on our behalf, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness and purify a special people for Himself,” zealous of good works.”

1 John 2:2

“And He Himself is the propitiation relating to our sins, and not relating to ours only, but also relating to all the world.”

1 John 4:10

“In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation relating to our sins.”

Bring in everlasting righteousness

Did Jesus bring in everlasting righteousness?

Yes, He did! Let us consider the following scriptures:

Romans 3:21-26

“²¹But now a righteousness of God has been revealed apart from Law, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²²even the righteousness of God through faith of Jesus Christ toward all and upon all those believing; for there is no difference, ²³for all sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴being justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood, as a demonstration of His righteousness through the passing over of the sins that had taken place before, in the

forbearance of God, ²⁶for a demonstration of His righteousness in the present time, for His being just and justifying the one that is of the faith of Jesus.”

Romans 10:3,4

“³For being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to the righteousness of God. ⁴For Christ is the end of Law for righteousness to everyone that believes.”

Hebrews 9:12

“nor through the blood of goats and of calves, but through His own blood, He entered once for all into the Holy of Holies, having procured everlasting redemption.”

1 Corinthians 1:30

“But of Him, you are in Christ Jesus, who was made to us wisdom from God, both righteousness and sanctification and redemption,”

Please note:

In Romans 3:22 and 10:4, the righteousness of God is towards all those who believe in Jesus only! To the Jews who did not believe in Him, Jesus said,

“Therefore, I said to you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins.” (John 8:24)

And to the scribes and Pharisees, He said,

“Serpents! Offspring of vipers! How shall you escape the judgment of Hell?” (Matthew 23:33)

From the above words of the Lord Jesus we realize that His everlasting righteousness would not apply to all the Jews as a nation, but only to those Jews who will hear the gospel and who will believe that Jesus is the YHWH (the Lord) of Romans 10:13 whose Name they must call upon (to whom they must pray) in order to be saved (Romans 10: 1,9,13-14)!

4. “seal up vision and prophecy”

Did Jesus “seal up (fulfill) vision and prophecy”?

Yes, He did! In Matthew 5:17 Jesus said that He did not come to annul the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them! And from the Scriptures we know that He fulfilled (or “sealed up”) every prophecy which referred to the Person and to the work of the Messiah concerning sin!

How did Jesus accomplish the foregoing 5 points?

Through His death and resurrection! We conclude, therefore, that all the prophecies mentioned in verse 24, were fulfilled in the first Christian century by the Lord Jesus Christ!

Daniel 9:25: “*Know then, and understand, that from the issuing of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, until (the coming of) Christ the Leader, will be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks; the city square and the wall will be built again in troubled times.*” (AT)

Examining verse 25

Wow! The above words constitute one of the most powerful prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah! Other prophecies had pointed to the place of His birth and to the work He was to do in order to save His people from their sins. But, **this prophecy, gives us the exact timing of the appearance of the Christ:** From the issuing of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem until the coming of Christ, there would be sixty-nine weeks (7+62) or 483 years (“*a day for a year*”: Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6)! For this reason, there was no excuse for any Jew of the first century who had read this verse, not to look around to see whether the Messiah had arrived!

The last part of verse 25, “*the city square and the wall will be built again in troubled times*”, is simple and it needs no explanation.

An important point

In verse 25, Gabriel did not say that Christ would come sometime in the 68th week or sometime in the 69th week; he was specific and said, “*until (the coming of) Christ the Leader, will be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks*”, in other words, **69 complete weeks**. Consequently, the Most Holy One would become the Christ **in the beginning of the seventieth week!**

Daniel 9:26: “^a*And after the sixty two weeks, the Christ will be cut off, but not for Himself;* ^b*and the people of the leader who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary; and its end will come with a flood, and destructions have been determined until the end of the war.*” (AT)

Examining verse 26^a

“^a*And after the sixty-two weeks, the Christ will be cut off, but not for Himself;*”

The above words are clear: The Christ was to be “*cut off*” (to be executed) “after” the 69th week (7+62) and consequently, **during the 70th week!**

What do the words, “*the Christ will be cut off, but not for Himself*”, mean?

The above words mean that the Christ would die for the sins of the world (John 1:29), “but not for Himself” because He was without sin (2 Corinthians 5:21)!

Did the Christ die for the sins of the world in the first century?

Amen! Yes, He did! He killed, He was buried and, on the third day, He was raised from the dead **for the everlasting justification of all those who will believe in Him** (1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Romans 4:25; 10:4).

Examining verse 26^b

“^b*and the people of the leader who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary; and its end will come with a flood, and destructions have been determined until the end of the war.*”

A point of interest

In verse 26, we observe that right after the mention of the execution of Christ, Gabriel went on to say that there will be another “*leader*”, who, along with his “*people*” (his “*soldiers*”; please see glossary below and compare with Luke 21:20), would come like a “*flood*” to destroy the city and its temple!

Glossary

In verse 26^b, we met the words “*people*” and “*flood*”. What do these words mean? About the word “*people*”, please check Strong’s Dictionary, word #H5971 from H6004: a people [as a congregated unit] ... **troops** ... ;). And about the word “*flood*”, please meditate on Isaiah 59:19.

Daniel 9:27: “^a*And He will establish* (or ‘*make solid*’, ‘*make unshakable*’; LXX: [δυναμώσει] = ‘*strengthen*’) *the covenant with many in one week*; ^b*and in the middle of the week the sacrifice and the offering will come to an end*, ^c*and the abomination of the desolation* (or ‘*the abomination which causes desolation*’) *will be upon the wing of the holy place*, ^d*and until the end of time, a deadline* (or ‘*an extension of time*’) *will be given to the desolation.*” (AT)

Examining verse 27^a

“^a*And He will establish* (or ‘*make solid*’, ‘*make unshakable*’; LXX: [δυναμώσει] = ‘*strengthen*’) *the covenant with many in one week*;”

In verses 25 and 26^a, we met “*Christ the Leader*” who would be “*cut off*” (executed), and in verse 26^b we met this other “*leader*” who, along with his “*people*” (his “*soldiers*”), would come like a “*flood*” to destroy the city and its temple.

How do we know that “Christ the leader” of verses 25 and 26^a is not the same Person as “the leader” of verse 26^b?

The answer is simple: “*Christ the leader*” would come to be “*cut off*” on behalf of others --- a fact that took place 3½ years after He started His ministry, while the other “*leader*” would come later with his “*people*” (his soldiers) to destroy Jerusalem --- a fact that took place approximately 40 years after the death of Christ, in the year 70 A.D.

In the above verse, 27^a, it says that “He will establish the covenant with many in one week”. Who does the word “He” refer to? To Christ who would be “*cut off*” or to the other “*leader*” who would come to destroy Jerusalem and its temple?

As the words of Gabriel were an answer to Daniel’s plea for forgiveness for the sins and the transgressions of his people, **the above word “He” refers to Christ** because, according to verse 24, it would be Him who would bring an end to all these! And as we learned earlier, Jesus accomplished this task through His death and resurrection! Thus, when He poured His own blood on the cross, He brought the Old Covenant to its end (the covenant which He, as “*the Angel of the Covenant*” and as “*the Angel of Jehovah*”, had established with Israel [Malachi 3:1; Judges 2:1] and He replaced it with **the New Covenant which He established in His blood** (Jeremiah 31:31; Mark 14:24). On the other hand, the work of the other “*leader*” was to destroy the city and its temple --- **not to make a covenant with those who were about to be destroyed by him!**

Please note:

The above verse (27^a) says that He will establish the covenant “with many” (in Israel because verse 24 says, “*for your people*”) in one week or seven years!

Why did the prophecy say that Christ would establish the covenant “with many in one week”? Why not with all Israel?

The prophet Jeremiah had prophesied that God would “*cut a new covenant with the house of Israel*” (Jeremiah 31:31). Therefore, when Jesus established the new covenant with His blood, **the invitation to enter His new covenant was extended to the entire house of Israel**. However, only those Israelites who would recognize the fact that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God and therefore God in essence, and who would believe in Him, would be partakers of it (John 3:16; 6:40; 8:24)! And **many did** --- but not all! This is the reason Jesus said,

“... this is my blood, the blood of the new covenant, which is poured out on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26:28; AT)

The above words of the Lord echoed the words of Daniel 9:27^a!

Does this mean that the Christ would not include other nations in His newly established covenant?

Absolutely not! Jesus died for the sins of **all mankind** (1 John 2:2). However, according to the foregoing prophecy of the seventy weeks which God had appointed **for Israel only** (Daniel 9:24), we realize that it was His will for Israel to receive that benefit **first** (Romans 1:16; 2:9,10; Luke 24:47)! In other words, God had decided to offer grace and salvation from their sins, through faith in His Son Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8), **exclusively to Israel** (Matthew 10:5,6; 15:22,24; 19:9,10) **for one week (the 70th week) only**! After the end of the 70th week, without cutting Israel off, **God would bring this exclusivity with Israel to an end** and He would extend this offer of grace and salvation from their sins **to all people of all nations** (Genesis 22:18) who would believe that Jesus, “*the Angel of Jehovah*” of Judges 2:1, **is the “Lord of all”**; and He started with the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:36; please read the entire chapter of Acts 10).

Examining verse 27^b

“^band in the middle of the week the sacrifice and the offering will come to an end,”

Did the Christ bring “the sacrifice and the offering” of the Old Covenant to an end “in the middle of the 70th week”?

Yes, He did! After 3½ years of ministry as the Christ, He poured His own blood on the cross for the sins of all those who will believe in Him (John 8:24). By doing so, **He brought the sacrifices and the offerings concerning sins to their end** because these were only a “*shadow*” of the real things to come! Let us read Hebrews 10:1-18:

“¹For the Law had a shadow of the coming good things, not the image itself of those things. Appearing year by year with the same sacrifices, which they offer continually, they never are able to perfect the ones drawing near. ²Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered? Because those serving did not still have conscience of sins, having once been cleansed. ³But in these there is a remembrance of sins year by year, ⁴for it is not possible for the blood of bulls

and goats to take away sins. ⁵For this reason, coming into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but You prepared a body for Me. ⁶You did not delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices concerning sins." ⁷"Then I said, Lo, I come, in the heading of the Book it was written concerning Me, to do Your will, O God." ⁸Above, saying, "You did not desire nor were pleased with sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and sacrifices concerning sins," (which are offered according to the Law), ⁹then He said, "Lo, I come to do Your will, O God." He takes away the first in order that He may set up the second; ¹⁰by which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ¹¹And indeed every priest stands day by day ministering, and often offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹²But He, offering but one sacrifice for sins, "sat down" in perpetuity "at the right hand" of God, ¹³from then on expecting "until His enemies are placed as a footstool" of His feet. ¹⁴For by one offering He has perfected in perpetuity the ones being sanctified. ¹⁵And the Holy Spirit witnesses to us also. For after having said before, ¹⁶"This is the covenant which I will covenant to them after those days, says the Lord: Giving My Laws on their hearts, and I will write them on their minds;" ¹⁷also He adds, "I will not at all still remember their sins" and their lawlessnesses. ¹⁸But where remission of these is, there is no longer offering concerning sins."

Can we prove from the Scriptures that Christ's ministry lasted 3½ years, in other words, that He died in the middle of the 70th week?

Yes, we can! Let us consider the following truths:

1. After His baptism, where the Holy Spirit anointed Him (Luke 3:22), He went to the desert to be tried by the Devil for 40 days [about 1½ months] (Matthew 4:1).
2. He celebrated 4 Jewish Passovers:

The first, is mentioned in John 2:13; there, it says,

"And the Passover of the Jews was near. And Jesus went up to Jerusalem."

The second, is mentioned in John 5:1; there, we read:

*"After these things, there was the feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."
(AT)*

Please note

Although the word "*Passover*" is not mentioned in the above verse, I believe that it refers to a Passover for two reasons:

- a) Although in English translations of John 5:1 we meet the phrase "*a feast of the Jews*" with the article "*a*" in front of the words "*feast of the Jews*", there are some Greek manuscripts which have the definite article "the" (η) in front of the words "*feast of the Jews*" and the phrase appears as "*the feast of the Jews*" (check GNT-V).
- b) The "*Passover*" was the most important feast of the Jews, and John, in the past, had called it, "*the feast of the Jews*" (please read John 6:4 below).

The **third**, is mentioned in John 6:4. There, it says,

“And the Passover was near, the feast of the Jews.”

The **fourth**, appears in John 13:1. Let’s read it:

“And before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He should move from this world to the Father, loving His own in the world, He loved them to the end.”

Jesus was executed on the 4th.

The above four Passovers account for 3 years.

3. After He was tried in the desert and up to the time He celebrated the first Passover, Jesus dwelled for some time in Capernaum where He started preaching about the kingdom of God, He selected His disciples, He travelled throughout Galilee (Matthew 4: 12-25) and He went to Cana to attend a wedding (John 2:1). All this activity required time --- **at least a few months!**
4. After He died and was raised from the dead, He spent another 40 days [approximately 1½ months] with His disciples (Acts 1:13).

When we add all the above time together, we come very close to 3½ years!!!

What have we learned so far?

That **through His eternal sacrifice**, which took place “*after*” the 69th week (7+62) and consequently in the middle of the 70th week, **Jesus established a new covenant with the people of Israel and brought an end to the sacrifices and to the offerings which were prescribed by the Law concerning sins!** Therefore, Jesus fulfilled the prophecies found in Daniel 9:27^a and 27^b in the first Christian century!!

Examining verse 27^c

“and the abomination of the desolation (or ‘the abomination which causes desolation’) will be upon the wing of the holy place,”

Was this part of the prophecy to be fulfilled in the first Christian century also?

Yes, indeed! In Matthew 24:15,16, and Luke 21:20-22, Jesus referred to the above words of Daniel 9:27 and warned His disciples as follows:

Matthew 24:15,16

“¹⁵Then when you see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (the one reading, let him understand), ¹⁶then let those in Judea flee into the mountains;”

Luke 2:20-22

“²⁰And when you see Jerusalem being encircled by armies, then recognize that its destruction has come near. ²¹Then let those in Judea flee into the mountains; and those in its midst, let them go out. And those in the open spaces, let them not go into her. ²²For these are days of vengeance when all things that have been written are to be fulfilled.”

Examining verse 27^d

“^dand until the end of time, a deadline (or ‘an extension of time’) will be given to the desolation.”

The above words show us that the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple (Matthew 24:1,2), **would not** take place in the 70th week, but **later**, because an extension of time would be given to the desolation!

How much later?

In Matthew 24:34, Jesus said that all these things would take place in their generation! Let us read His words:

“Truly I say to you, In no way will this generation pass away until all these things have occurred.”

The above words of the Lord Jesus Christ constituted a true prophecy because the destruction of Jerusalem and of its temple took place **in their generation**, approximately 40 years later, in the year 70 AD.!

Is it possible that there is a “gap”, let’s say, a period of 2,000 years, between the end of the 69th week and the beginning of the 70th?

Absolutely not! To believe so is to believe that Jesus was not the Christ! As we observed from the prophecies of Daniel 9:25, *“from the issuing of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem, until (the coming of) Christ the Leader, will be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks”* --- in other words, 69 (7+62) completed weeks! And from Daniel 9:26, we realized that the Christ would be cut off, in other words, He would be killed, AFTER the sixty-nine weeks! That means that He would be killed in the middle of the seventieth week, in order to bring the animal sacrifices and the offerings concerning sin, to an end, as verse 27^b says: *“and in the middle of the week the sacrifice and the offering will come to an end”*! If the seventieth week is still to come, then the Christ has not come, neither has He died for the sins of the world! Such a doctrine will please religious groups which do not believe that Jesus was the Messiah and for this reason, they are still waiting for the Messiah to come!

A brief recap

From all the above, we realized that all the prophecies found in Daniel 9:24-27, that is, **the prophecy of the 70 consecutive weeks concerning the sins and the transgressions of the people of Israel, the prophecy concerning the timing of the coming of the Most Holy One who would be the Christ, the prophecy regarding the timing of His death by which He would make atonement for iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness, establish the new covenant, seal up vision and prophecy (regarding the coming and the work of the Christ) and the prophecy**

of the destruction of the city and of its temple which would take place later, after the 70 consecutive weeks, were all fulfilled in the first century! Except for the mention of that other *“leader”* who, with his *“people”* (his soldiers), would come like *“a flood”* to destroy Jerusalem and the temple, all the verses (24-27) referred to the coming of the True Christ and to His salvific work --- not to the coming of a future antichrist and to the political future of the nation of Israel!