**“Revelation”**

# Daniel – The Purpose of the Seventy Weeks

## **Summary**

God reveals his timeline for the Time of the Gentiles and lays the foundation for a deeper understanding of the Revelation.

**Scripture**: Daniel 9:1-3, 24-27, Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10, Numbers 14:34, Leviticus 25:2-5, 26:18, 21, 27-28, 34, 43, 2 Chronicles 36:19-21
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## **Introduction**

Today we are turning to chapter nine of Daniel and the fourth vision given to the prophet concerning the Times of the Gentiles. Remember with each successive vision God is revealing more and more information. The first two visions dealt with which Gentile nations are going to hold power and their order… of course ending with the second coming of Christ.

The fourth vision is the vision of the seventy weeks. But instead of looking at what will be happening among the Gentile nations, it’s going to show us what will be happening to the Jewish nation during the Times of the Gentiles.

This week we lay groundwork for understanding this vision. Next time we’ll get into dividing the seventy weeks up according to Scripture.

**PRAYER**

## **Sermon**

### **Daniel’s Confusion**

**Daniel 9:1-3 (ESV),**

**In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. 3 Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.**

If we were to read on, we find Daniel in prayer seeking forgiveness for himself and the Jews. This has to do with his confusion over timing in the visions that he and the prophet Jeremiah had received.

Daniel was not only a prophet of God, but a student of prophecy. He did his best to understand the words given to other Jewish prophets. In these verses we see that Daniel had been studying Jeremiah and what had been predicted about the length of Jewish captivity in Babylon. He became confused.

**Jeremiah 25:11 (ESV),**

**This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.**

**Jeremiah 29:10 (ESV),**

**For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you [the Jews], and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place [Jerusalem].**

When God allowed the Jews to be taken captive by Babylon because of their disobedience, He gave Jeremiah these two prophecies. God promised seventy years of exile before He would allow then to return to Jerusalem.

It tells us in Daniel 9:1, that Daniel was reading from Jeremiah and trying to understand. The empire of Babylon had just been destroyed and the Medo-Persian Empire had taken over. It’s the first year of Darius’ reign, so we can date this chapter to 538 BC.

This is important because Daniel knew that the timing of the Jewish captivity began in 606 BC. He and his people were only two years away from completing the seventy years of captivity.

But Daniel knew from the visions that he just received that the Jews were supposed to experience a prolonged time of dispersion and subjugation to Gentile rulers. He was unable to reconcile Jeremiah’s prophecy of a seventy-year exile with his own visions of two more ruling empires existing before the Jews regained their prominence among the nations. He knew that both Jeremiah’s prophecies and those given to him were true. He just didn’t see how they fit together.

It’s then that God sent Daniel the answer… the angel Gabriel came to explain the time difference. Daniel saw how the seventy years of captivity that the nation of Israel just experienced was a foreshadowing of a period of time that would be seven times as long.

At this point we need to read the key passage of this Scripture.

**Daniel 9:24-27 (ESV),**

**Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. 25 Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. 27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.**

### **Seventy Weeks**

The first thing we need to understand is what is meant by seventy weeks. Just how long of a period of time is this, and how do the Jews fit in?

**A. How Long Is a Week?**

If you were to ask the average person on the street how long seventy weeks is, you’d probably get an answer of 490 days. For us a week means a period of seven 24-hour long days.

But the word “week” doesn’t necessarily have to mean a period of seven days. The word translated as “week” is the Hebrew word shabuwa (shaw-boo-ah) it means a group of seven, not necessarily seven days.

It is like our English word “dozen.” When we use the word dozen, we know we are referring to a group of twelve. It may be twelve eggs, or twelve shirts, or twelve books. We don’t know for sure what a dozen is referring to; we only know a dozen stands for a group of twelve.

And this is how the word “week” is used in the Bible. It could be seven days, seven donkeys, seven chairs, seven whatever.

In order to find out how long seventy weeks is in God’s timing; we need to know how long one week is. A week of days is 7 days. A week of weeks would be seven weeks or 49 days. A week of months is seven months or approximately 215 days. A week of years is seven years or about 2557 days. Those are vastly different lengths of time.

**B. God’s Week**

Which one is God referring to here in Daniel 9? The key to this passage is found in Numbers 14.

God has brought the Israelites out of Egypt and led them to the Promised Land. When they reached its borders Moses sent one man from each tribe to scout out the land and then report back what they had found.

The men were gone for forty days and when they returned only two of the twelve men recommended taking the land that the Lord gave them. God wasn’t pleased and pronounced a punishment upon all of the Israelites. In this punishment we get the first glimpse of how God handles time.

**Numbers 14:34 (ESV),**

**According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, a year for each day, you shall bear your iniquity forty years, and you shall know my displeasure.**

This judgment was literally fulfilled. The children of Israel wandered in the wilderness desert forty years, one year for every day they scouted out the land. From this passage and another one in Ezekiel 4 we see that on God’s timetable a day stands for a year.

Applying this knowledge to the seventy weeks, we find that we’re talking about a total of 490 years.

### **Why Seventy Weeks?**

Now that we know how long this time period is, that leads us to a question: “Why seventy weeks? We find that answer in the book of Leviticus.

**A. The Sabbath Year**

When the nation of Israel was first being established in the wilderness, God gave them the Law which they were to live by. Part of this Law established the schedule of feasts and sabbaths.

**Leviticus 25:2-5 (ESV),**

**Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, when you come into the land that I give you, the land shall keep a Sabbath to the Lord. 3 For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits, 4 but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. 5 You shall not reap what grows of itself in your harvest, or gather the grapes of your undressed vine. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land.**

God command His children was to observe the weekly sabbath… a day of rest every seventh day. He also commanded them to observe a yearly sabbath, which was a year of rest every seventh year.

The problem was… they never observed this yearly sabbath of the land. In fact, they let seventy sabbaths pass without letting the land rest. So, God punished them by sending them into Babylonian captivity for seventy years – one year for each of the sabbaths they refused to observe. God forced them from the land so that the land could rest.

**2 Chronicles 36:19-21 (ESV),**

**And they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned all its palaces with fire and destroyed all its precious vessels. 20 He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, 21 to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.**

**Leviticus 26:34, 43 (ESV),**

**34 Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its Sabbaths.**

**43 But the land shall be abandoned by them and enjoy its Sabbaths while it lies desolate without them, and they shall make amends for their iniquity, because they spurned my rules and their soul abhorred my statutes.**

This is why the Jews were in captivity for seventy years. But this doesn’t explain the seventy weeks which we said stands for 490 years. Where does this longer time frame come from?

**B. Seven Times Over**

When God gave the Israelites the Law, He also gave them a warning about the punishment they could expect to receive if they broke the law.

**Leviticus 26:18, 21, 27-28 (ESV),**

**18 And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins**

**21 Then if you walk contrary to me and will not listen to me, I will continue striking you, sevenfold for your sins**

**27 But if in spite of this you will not listen to me, but walk contrary to me, 28 then I will walk contrary to you in fury, and I myself will discipline you sevenfold for your sins.**

Not only had the Jews not observe the sabbath year seventy times, but they also had a multitude of other sins to be punished for that occurred during that time. God had given them several chances to repent. But when they continued in their disobedience, God said He would punish them seven times over.

Since the sabbath year occurred every seventh year, and the Jews ignored seventy of them. That’s 490 years of sins and transgression to be atoned for. The Jews served seventy years of punishment for the seventy sabbaths they ignored, but God told Daniel that they still have to be punished for the 490 years of transgressions between those sabbaths.

That’s what the seventy weeks of Daniel 9 is about. That’s what the Times of the Gentiles is about. It is about God keeping His word to punish the Jews seven times over for their sins if they didn’t repent and turn back to Him.

## **Conclusion**

Have we received what we deserved for your sins?