

## Lesson 24

Last week we read Daniel 9:25-27, and we looked at what is labelled Event A on your handout.

**Verse 25** - "From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem."

Our goal is to place each of these events in its proper place on the 70 week timeline, and this one is easy to place.

Verse 25 tells us that Event A is the start of a 69 week period (7 weeks + 62 weeks).

As for which commandment Event A refers to, the natural answer is the decree of Cyrus in Ezra 1, which led to the first return from exile that occurred shortly after this prophecy was received by Daniel from God.

Later we will look at some other theories about this decree, one of which suggests that each day of these 70 weeks corresponds to a year, which means that the 70 weeks becomes 490 (or  $70 \times 7$ ) years.

There is a big problem with that view that we will discuss later, but I think we can see a big hint about the problem from the handout. If you look at the bottom of the handout, you will see three timelines corresponding to the three big returns from captivity - and not one of those timelines is 490 years. The shortest is 514 years, and the most likely is 608 years. More on that later.

## What is Event B?

Let's start, as always, by reading the text.

**Verse 25** - "Unto the Messiah the Prince."

All commentators agree that Event B ends the 69 weeks, and all agree that the Messiah is Christ.

But there is some disagreement over what part of Christ's life is in view here. His birth? His baptism? His death? His resurrection? His ascension? His coming in judgment against Jerusalem in AD 70?

We will investigate that question as we move on through the list of events, but for now all we need to know to place Event B on our timeline is that Event B ends the 69 week period.

One question, though, before we move on: why is the Messiah called a Prince?

In addition to being our perfect High Priest, Jesus is also King of kings and Lord of lords. We see that same combination in Zechariah.

**Zechariah 6:13** - Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, **and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne:** and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

And Jesus came from the tribe of Judah and the lineage of King David.

**Hebrews 7:14** - For it is evident that **our Lord sprang out of Juda**; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

So, the Messiah is both high priest and royal prince and king.

Why prince here instead of king? Both words denote royalty, and so no distinction may have been intended. But if there was a distinction, it may be that Daniel 7 showed Jesus receiving a kingdom at his ascension (the church), and so perhaps at this point, prior to that event, Jesus is shown as a royal prince.

## What is Event C?

Let's start by reading the text.

**Verse 25** - "The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times."

Event C is a little more difficult to place than the first two events.

Verse 25 tells us that from the command to restore Jerusalem up until the Messiah will be seven weeks and 62 weeks. The end of verse 25 then describes the rebuilding efforts. That ordering, along with the division into seven weeks followed by a much longer 62 weeks, causes almost all commentators to conclude that this rebuilding occurs during the initial seven weeks and is completed at the end of that seven week period.

That is, from the command to restore Jerusalem until the restoration of Jerusalem takes seven weeks, and then from that point until the Messiah comes is another 62 weeks. That means Event C occurs after the initial seven week period and before the following 62 week period.

And so this part of the decree speaks of the rebuilding efforts that occurred under Nehemiah and Ezra. And the events described in those two books explain what is meant in verse 25 by the "troubled times."

**Ezra 4:4** - Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and **troubled** them in building,

As we said, we will look soon at some different views of the seventy week prophecy that are based on the notion that each day in this seventy week period is a year. That chronological view really breaks down here. Why?

Because under that view, seven weeks would denote 49 years, but it did not take 49 years to rebuild the city. (One particularly desperate commentator has suggested that they may have finished much earlier but it took them a long time to clear away all the extra construction material and garbage!) If we agree, as I think we must, that the seven weeks to rebuild the city is wholly figurative, then that should confirm that the seventy weeks is also wholly figurative. We will have more to say about this view later.

And so we have placed Event C on our timeline, and we are ready to consider Event D, but let's skip Event D for now and look instead at Event E (for a reason that will become clear in a moment). We will come back to Event D later.

## What is Event E?

Let's start by reading the text.

**Verse 27** - "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week."

When we get to Event E, we are faced with a crucial question for our interpretation - who is the "he" referred to in Events D, E, and F? (They are circled on your handout.) Does this pronoun "he" refer to the same person in each instance or to different people?

As for that last question, read verse 27 again - "And he shall confirm the covenant ... he shall cause the sacrifice ... to cease, and ... he shall make it desolate..." I think a natural understanding of that language suggests that only one person is in view: he does this, he does that, and he does this other thing. Unless we find some very strong indicator to the contrary, I think we should look for one person as the subject of the pronoun "he" in Events D, E, and F.

So who is it? If we look for the antecedent of the pronoun, we have two possibilities in verse 26 - either the Messiah or the prince that shall come (likely referring to the Roman General Titus).

Of those three "he" events (D, E, and F), I have skipped over Event D and started with Event E. Why? Because I think Event E is the most helpful of the three in determining the identity of that one person to whom the word "he" refers. After we figure out who is doing these things, we will circle back and look at Event D.

What happens with Event E? "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week."

The location of this event in the seventy weeks is easy - this event occurs during the final week, and unlike some other final week events, this event apparently occurs throughout the entire final week.

What is the event? "He shall confirm the covenant." Two questions - which covenant, and how is a covenant confirmed? (And we still have our initial question remaining: who is doing the confirming?)

### **Which covenant?**

We have two obvious possibilities: the old covenant and the new covenant. The focus of this prophecy is "thy people and upon thy holy city" (speaking to Daniel in verse 24), and so we might suspect that this covenant is the old covenant.

But, as we know, the new covenant was the culmination of the promises under the old covenant, and the new covenant came into force under the Messiah, who (as evidenced at least by Event B) seems to be the focus of the final week, and so we might just as easily suspect that this covenant is the new covenant.

We know that the new covenant came into effect at the death of Jesus, that is at the death of the testator (Hebrews 9:16).

We know that the ordinances of the old covenant were nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14).

And we know that the new covenant made the first old, which then vanished away (Hebrews 8:13).

But surface vestiges of the old covenant remained for some time after the cross. Hebrews 10:11 says that "every priest standeth (present tense) daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." They were still going through the motions, as their old covenant waxed old and decayed (Hebrews 8:13), having been nailed to the cross. But after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, they no longer went through the motions because they were no longer able to do so - and to this very day the sacrificial system has never been restored after that complete and final desolation.

Are we saying that the old covenant remained in effect until AD 70? No. The old covenant was removed at the cross and was replaced with the new covenant. Hebrews 7:14 makes it very clear that Christ could not become a high priest until the old covenant was removed, and Hebrews 8:1 confirms that Jesus was High Priest when the book of Hebrews was written, which we know was prior to AD 70 from Hebrews 10:11.

So then which covenant is in view in Daniel 9:27? Let's hold off some more on answering that question until we look at a related question.

### How is a covenant confirmed?

To answer that question we can turn to Galatians 3.

**Galatians 3:17** - And this I say, that the covenant, **that was confirmed before of God in Christ**, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

That verse is discussing two covenants: God's covenant with Abraham and the old Mosaic covenant with Israel. We are told in that verse that the law came 430 years after the covenant with Abraham was **confirmed**. What was that confirmation?

First, that confirmation cannot be anything that occurred during the lifetime of Abraham. Why? Because Abraham preceded Moses by over 600 years, not 430 years.

Abraham was 75 when God first called him (Genesis 12:4) and was 99 when Isaac was conceived (Genesis 17:1; 18:14). By the time Isaac was born, the original promise had been in effect for 25

years. Isaac then lived to the age of 180, died, and was buried in Canaan (Genesis 35:29). Isaac's son Jacob was an old man himself by the time his sons went down to Egypt to beg food from Joseph. The family of Jacob went to Egypt as honored guests, only to wind up as slaves generations later. They spent over 400 years in Egypt (Genesis 15:13; Exodus 12:15) before Moses led them out and they received the law at Sinai. The traditional period between Abraham and Moses is 645 years.

So what event then did Paul by inspiration have in mind when he wrote that the covenant was confirmed 430 years before the law?

The birth of Isaac could hardly qualify as "offspring as numerous as the stars" (Genesis 15:5). Neither could possessing the land (Genesis 15:7) be dated from the time of Abraham, who, as far as we know, never bought a square foot of land except the burial plot of Sarah.

What then is it that happened 430 years before the law and that confirmed the covenant with Abraham? It must be the fulfillment of the prophecy that Abraham's offspring would go down into a foreign land to be enslaved for 400 years (Genesis 15:13).

And that makes sense - a covenant is confirmed when the events of the covenant take place, or, perhaps, begin to take place.

So which covenant is the covenant in Daniel 9:27?

It could still be either one. Events from each covenant were occurring in the first century. The dire warnings from the first covenant were about to occur with finality in the events of AD 70, and the establishment of the eternal kingdom and the wonderful miracles and signs by the Messiah were occurring as part of the new covenant, starting even before the new covenant came into effect at the cross.

But, and this is the central clue that tips the scales in my view, which of those events were just **beginning** to occur under the covenant and were occurring during the **entirety** of that final week, which we know begins with the coming of the Messiah? In my opinion, the confirmation of the **new** covenant better fits a week-long confirmation.

And why would the old covenant need any confirmation? It had already been confirmed over and over again. What Jew in the first century could have possibly complained that God had not confirmed the old covenant? And who was it in the first century who needed the old covenant to be confirmed?

The better interpretation in my view is that the covenant in verse 27 is the new covenant. Jesus and the apostles confirmed the new covenant over and over again starting with Jesus' own miracles and continuing with the miracles of the apostles. Those who rejected that covenant had no excuse for doing so - it had been confirmed for them by the Messiah himself.

**Matthew 11:3-5** - And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: **The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.**

Most of those signs had been prophesied of the new covenant under the old covenant (Isaiah 29:18-19, 35:5-6, 26:18-19, 61:1), and Jesus was confirming the new covenant by performing those signs. In fact, that was the point of Jesus' answer to the disciples of John - do you want to know if I am he, then look for the confirmation in "those things which ye do hear and see."

Who then is confirming the covenant?

That is, back to our original question, who is the "he" who is confirming the covenant? We have now answered that question. Jesus confirmed the new covenant personally, and he did so through his miracles and through those he sent out to preach.

**Mark 16:20** - And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and **confirming the word with signs following.**

**Hebrews 2:3-4** - How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, **and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness**, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

This type of confirmation had long been prophesied for this period of time.

**Acts 2:16-17** - But **this is that** which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

Peter was saying in Acts 2 that the "last days" prophecy of Joel 2 was happening on that first day of

Pentecost following the resurrection - "this is that," Peter said. All present could see the confirmation of the new covenant, and many, seeing that confirmation, believed and were baptized.

The new covenant was confirmed by Jesus and the apostles. No one who rejected the new covenant had any excuse for doing so. It had been confirmed over and over again by mighty works.

And yet the Pharisees had witnessed those wonderful miracles and had ascribed them not to God but to Satan! Is it any wonder that it was always in that context that Jesus discussed the unforgivable sin? What could be worse than to witness the mighty works confirming the new covenant and to ascribe those mighty works to Satan? Yet that is what some did. And for that reason, their final desolation was coming.

God had promised Daniel long ago that the covenant would be confirmed to Daniel's people during the prophetic week leading up to the end in AD 70.

We know from Romans 1:16 that the gospel was to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Why? Why to the Jew first? Was it just because the Jews were there first and it took longer to get the message to the others? I don't think the evidence supports that conclusion.

**Matthew 10:5-6** - These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

**Matthew 15:24** - I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

I think we see a much better explanation here in Daniel 9. **God had promised that the covenant would be confirmed to the Jews in the time between the coming of the Messiah and the destruction of their city.** I think that is why the message went first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel - their clock was ticking as the destruction of their city in AD 70 prophesied by Daniel here and by Jesus in Matthew 24 was getting closer and closer.

Let's now circle back to Event D.

## What is Event D?

Let's start by reading the text.



**Verse 27** - "In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease"

The "oblation" in verse 27 refers to the evening temple sacrifice, which would have been done around 3 PM. We saw the same word earlier in verse 21. Sometimes "oblation" was used to denote a grain offering.

Event D should be easier to place now that we know who the "he" is in this verse.

Had we started with Event D we might have thought "he" was the Roman General Titus who destroyed the city - and many commentaries adopt that view. And Titus certainly did cause the sacrifices to cease. Not only was the temple destroyed, but the priestly records were also destroyed, which effectively brought the Levitical priesthood and the sacrificial system to an end - and they have not returned even to this very day.

Antiochus had earlier done the same thing, and it is described as such in Daniel 11:31. So it would certainly be correct to say that Titus caused the sacrifices to cease, and if we were willing to say that the "he" in this clause does not have to be the same "he" in the prior clause, then maybe it is Titus. But if we take each "he" in this verse to be the same person, then it is Jesus who is causing the sacrifices to cease because we know that Titus did not confirm the covenant.

If the "he" is Jesus, then we have two possibilities for when the sacrifices ceased. They ceased first in substance at the cross, and second, they ceased in practice in AD 70 - and Jesus caused both cessations (using Rome as a tool in the judgment of AD 70).

The sacrifices ceased at the cross because at that time they lost their meaning and their reason for existence. Those sacrifices pointed forward to the cross, and so after the cross they ceased, even if the actions of the priests continued on for some time after the cross. Those actions became meaningless after the cross.

**Hebrews 10:1-3** - For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, **can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.** For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

**Hebrews 10:11-12** - And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the

same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.

Notice that key rhetorical question in Hebrews 10:2 - "For then would they not have ceased to be offered?" Yes, they would have been ceased. Why? Because the perfect sacrifice would have made them meaningless, and it did in fact make them meaningless at the cross.

But the sacrifices also ceased in AD 70 with the judgment against Jerusalem, which Matthew 24 figuratively describes as a coming of Christ in judgment against the city.

So which is it? The cross or AD 70?

The timing we are given helps us answer that question - this cessation occurred midway through the final week. The destruction of the city is the focus and occurs at the end of the prophecy (Event F, which we will consider next), and so on that basis I favor the view that this midweek event is the cross. The Jewish sacrifices ceased at the cross.

And if the midweek event is the cross, then that helps us answer an earlier question - what event in the life of Christ is the coming of the Messiah in Event B? If the middle of the week is the cross, then the beginning of the week must be either Jesus' birth or his baptism, and I favor the latter because that is when Jesus began to confirm the covenant, which we know occurred all throughout this final prophetic week.

Jesus begins his ministry at the beginning of that final week, he is cut off midway during that week (Event G, which we will discuss in just a moment), and he comes in judgment against Jerusalem at the end of that week. And all throughout that week, his new covenant is being confirmed with signs and wonders.

## What is Event F?

Let's start by reading the text.

**Verse 26** - "And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

**Verse 27** - "For the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the

consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

These verses describe the desolation that Jesus told us in Matthew 24:34 happened in the first century. So where do these verses go on our seventy week time line?

The language itself answers that question. Verse 26 twice refers to "the end," and verse 27 refers to the "consummation." Event F is located at the end of the seventy weeks, and it describes the first century destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

**Mathew 23:37-38** - O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! **Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.**

**Mathew 24:13-16** - But he that shall endure unto **the end**, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall **the end** come. When ye therefore shall see **the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet**, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.

**Matthew 24:34** - Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

**Luke 21:20** - And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that **the desolation thereof is nigh.**

By the way, the use of a "flood" in verse 26 to depict the judgment presents a problem for the premillennialists. "The end thereof shall be with a flood." Is the "end" in that verse the end of the world as many teach? If so, then how do we reconcile that view that the world will end by a literal flood with the covenant in Genesis 9:15?

**Genesis 9:15** - And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

These verses in Daniel 9 are not describing the end of the world. They are describing the end of Jerusalem, a first century event.

## What is Event G?

Let's start by reading the text.

**Verse 26** - "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself."

Verse 26 tells us that this event and Event H occur after the 62 weeks, which tells us they occur in the final week, but verse 26 does not tell us when in that final week they occur.

We know what the cutting off means.

**Isaiah 53:8** - He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? **for he was cut off out of the land of the living:** for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

And we know what it means that the cutting off was *not for himself*.

**Isaiah 53:4-5** - Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. **But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.**

This "cutting off" ushered in the blessings listed in verse 24. It also resulted in the destruction of the city in AD 70 because the Jews were at that time punished for having rejected and having cut off God's son.

Other translations have "and after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off, and shall have nothing." What would that mean?

That language would point toward the faithless Jews who rejected Jesus. They were not his people. He had nothing in their city and in their sanctuary. And remember from Matthew 24 that Jesus had told his followers what to look for so that they could escape the destruction of the city. Those that were his escaped, while those no longer his were destroyed.

So when in the final week did this cutting off occur? We have already answered that question when we looked at Event D. If we were correct that Event D happened at the cross, then this cutting off must be pointing to the same location as Event D, midway through the final week.

## What is Event H?

Let's start by reading the text.

**Verse 26** - "And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary."

We have also already placed Event H. It refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened at the end of the final week, where we also placed Event F. The "people of the prince that shall come" refers to the Roman people and the Roman prince, most likely Titus.

**Matthew 24:15** - When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)

**Luke 21:20** - And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

And so the 70 week decree has explained just what God said it would explain back in verse 24 - "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city." It has answered Daniel's questions about the fate of his people, the Jews, and the fate of their city, Jerusalem.

#daniel