

# God's Master Plan In Prophecy

## Lesson 2 – Daniel's 70 Weeks & the Abomination of Desolation

**Key Scriptures: Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:1-22; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-4**

### Daniel's 70 Weeks

The entire concept of end time prophecy finds its roots in a period of seventy weeks that God showed Daniel. Keeping in mind our foundational principles and the law of double fulfillment of prophecy, let's examine these scriptures carefully as to their immediate fulfillment and see if there are any hints as to how they will be fulfilled a second time. As most prophecy passages, their first, immediate fulfillment deal with the first coming of Jesus Christ.

**Dan 9:24-25 "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.**

The term "Seventy weeks" is more literally translated from the Hebrew as "seventy sevens" and it is obvious from history that these are prophetic weeks which actually represent periods of years. "Seventy sevens" meant that God was telling Daniel that there was a period of 490 years (70 x7) that would pass before the Messiah would be born. Precisely, it would be "seven weeks and sixty-two weeks" or 69 weeks of years until the coming of the Messiah from a decree to go forth to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. Daniel received these prophecies while a prisoner and exile in Babylon and at this time, the entire city of Jerusalem lay destroyed.

**A prophetic "week"  
is seven years.**

From these few prophecies it would have been possible to pinpoint Jesus Christ's first coming to within a few years if one knew what year that the walls of Jerusalem began to be rebuilt after the time of Daniel. It was probably the discovery of these scriptures that enabled the wise men to be looking for a star that would signal the birth of the coming King of Israel.

It is interesting that the prophesied period of 490 years is not a random number because God has always dealt with natural Israel in periods of 490 years. Before we move forward, a greater understanding of this fact will be beneficial:

#### 1. *From Abraham until the exodus from Egypt*

From the birth of Abraham to the Exodus from Egypt was actually 505 years,<sup>1</sup> but by deducting the 15 years while Abraham's mistake, Ishmael, was Abram's seed thus delaying the seed of the promise, we find that 505 – 15 = 490 years!

#### 2. *From the exodus from Egypt until the finishing of the temple of Solomon*

In the Wilderness	40 years
Under the Judges	450 years <sup>2</sup>
King Saul	40 years
King David	40 years
King Solomon	40 years
King Solomon	3 years to the laying of the foundation of the temple <sup>3</sup>

The total of these is 573 years. However, during the time of the Judges, the children of Israel were led captive to various groups of people because of their idolatry and sin. Specifically they were captive under:

<sup>1</sup>

Genesis 12:4; 16:3; 21:5.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 13:20.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings 6:1, 37.

Written by R. Jeremiah Sibley, all rights reserved.

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> revision of what was previously known as the "Dispensation Prophecy Bible Study."

Copies of this study may be freely distributed for not-for-profit use only.

Unless otherwise noted, scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE © Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

## **Prophecy #2 – Daniel’s 70 Weeks & Abomination of Desolation**

Cushan	8 years <sup>4</sup>
Eglon	18 years <sup>5</sup>
Jabin	20 years <sup>6</sup>
Midianites	7 years <sup>7</sup>
Philistines	40 years <sup>8</sup>

In other words, Israel spent 93 years under the control of other nations in the time of the Judges because of their idol worship and sin. Subtracting these 93 years from the 573 years, we arrive at 480 years from the Exodus to the laying of the foundation of Solomon’s temple.

The temple of Solomon’s day was in building 7 years<sup>9</sup> and took another three years afterward to complete the work and finish the furnishings.<sup>10</sup>  $7 + 3 = 10$  years of work on the temple after the foundation was laid. When we add the 10 years of the building and finishing of the temple to the 480 years from the Exodus from Egypt until the laying of the foundation of Solomon’s temple, we find that:  $480 \text{ years} + 10 \text{ years} = 490 \text{ years}$  when we subtract the years Israel spent in captivity.

### *3. From the dedication of Solomon’s temple until Nehemiah’s return to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem*

From the dedication of the temple of Solomon until Nehemiah returned in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes’ reign was 560 years.<sup>11</sup> Because of their idolatry, the children of Israel were in captivity for 70 years.<sup>12</sup> Subtracting the time of Israel’s captivity, we find that  $560 \text{ years} - 70 \text{ years} = 490 \text{ years!}$

### *4. Daniel’s 70 prophetic weeks*

We now come to Daniel’s 70 weeks which represent the final period of 490 years of God’s dealings with the nation of Israel. Let’s refer back to those scriptures again now that we better understand what is being represented:

**Dan 9:24-25 "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.**

God told Daniel that from the time of the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, until Messiah the Prince comes would be “seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.” That means that it would be 69 prophetic weeks from when Nehemiah first received the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah would come. From history we can discern that each “week” or “sevens” represents 7 years so that  $69 \times 7 = 483 \text{ years}$ . Indeed it was exactly 483 years from the time that the decree to begin rebuilding Jerusalem was given until the time of Christ!

According to Daniel 9:24, the Messiah would “finish the transgression, make an end of sin, make atonement for iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness, seal up vision and prophecy, and anoint the most holy place.” Jesus Christ’s first coming perfectly fulfilled all of these prophecies. He “finished the transgression” or more literally “restrained evil” by the preaching and teaching and miracles that He performed in His earthly ministry. He made an “end of sin” and “atonement for iniquity” when He died on Calvary as the spotless Lamb of God. He provided a new plan of salvation by which men can find “everlasting righteousness.” He “sealed up the visions and the prophecies” by perfectly fulfilling the thousands of Messianic prophecies that had been issued throughout the Old Testament. Not only was Jesus Christ anointed, but He was able to ascend into heaven with atonement on our behalf and as our anointed high priest. Jesus Christ perfectly and completely fulfilled these verses in Daniel’s vision; let us go on to the next verses:

---

4

Judges 3:8.

<sup>5</sup> Judges 3:14.

<sup>6</sup> Judges 4:3.

<sup>7</sup> Judges 6:1.

<sup>8</sup> Judges 13:1.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Kings 6:38.

<sup>10</sup> See 1 Kings 7:13-51.

<sup>11</sup> See Nehemiah 2:1.

<sup>12</sup> See Jeremiah 25:11-12; Daniel 9:2.

## **Prophecy #2 – Daniel’s 70 Weeks & Abomination of Desolation**

**Dan 9:26-27** 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. 27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

God told Daniel that toward the nearing of the end of the prophesied period, that "the Messiah will be cut off." That is, after the sixty-two week period that follows the seven week period<sup>13</sup> or 69 weeks which represents 483 years, the Messiah will be killed. So was it fulfilled exactly as God prophesied, that 483 years after Nehemiah received his commandment to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, Jesus Christ was crucified and "cut off."

Then, Daniel continues, a "prince" would come with his people and destroy the city and the sanctuary of the temple and the result of the war would be that the sacrifice and grain offerings would be ceased and sacrificial offerings would no longer be able to be offered in the temple in Jerusalem. These scriptures find their immediate fulfillment in A.D. 70 when the Roman General Titus marched to Jerusalem in response to a Jewish revolt against the Roman government and completely destroyed Jerusalem and the temple so that "not one stone was left upon another" as Jesus had foretold.<sup>14</sup> Because there is no longer a temple in Jerusalem, from that time even until today all sacrificial worship and grain offerings have been stopped and are no longer being carried out by the Jews.

The 27<sup>th</sup> verse of this passage in Daniel where this prophecy becomes pertinent for you and I who are alive today. Because the verse is worded purposefully ambiguous so that the "he" of verse 27 could refer to either the Messiah or "the prince" that caused the sacrificial worship to cease in the temple. I believe that the "he" of verse 27 refers to the Messiah in its immediate fulfillment and to "the prince" who will destroy in its distant fulfillment. In the immediate fulfillment – taking the "he" of verse 27 to refer to the Messiah – it states that the Messiah would put a stop to the sacrifice in the temple "in the middle of the week" or in the middle of a 7 year period. Jesus' earthly ministry was almost exactly three and a half years long and the crucifixion at the end of those three and a half years effectively ended the need for blood sacrifices and Mosaic-style, sacrificial worship. Jesus' atonement and sacrifice opened the most Holy place to us and immediately after these things a complete destruction came upon Jerusalem in the form of the Roman General Titus.

Notice, however, that the immediate fulfillment of these prophecies give an incomplete account because they do not fully account for the last few years of the 490 year period allotted and appointed by God in His dealings with Israel. This incompleteness is because when Israel rejected their Messiah, God turned to the Gentiles and Samaritans and "whosoever will come" in the current era of grace. This time period – the delay caused by Israel's sin of rejecting their true Messiah – does not count against the 490 allotted time period and so towards the end of when the "time of the Gentiles is fulfilled"<sup>15</sup> God will turn back to the Jews and deal with them for the remaining amount of time as per Daniel's vision.

To review, it was exactly 483 years from the decree to go begin rebuilding Jerusalem's walls until the death or "cutting off" of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. That leaves 7 years of God's dealing with Israel yet to come. In between these two time periods, there is a delay of the Era of Grace where God has turned to the Gentiles. Nobody knows how long this time of Grace will be extended to or last, but it has been in effect from the Day of Pentecost until now which is over 2,000 years!

### **The Abomination of Desolation**

Let us now turn to the distant fulfillment of the end of Daniel's 70 weeks and seek to shed light on that last part of Daniel 9:27 where it speaks of someone coming "on the wings of abominations" and who "makes desolate." To better grasp what is being referred to here, we need another passage of scripture that refers to it and gives us a bit more information. It turns out such a reference came from the lips of Jesus Christ in the most famous prophetic passage in the Bible, the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew. This is called the "Olivet Discourse" by scholars because Jesus delivered it to His disciples while sitting on Mt. Olives. It all began when Jesus shocked the disciples by telling them about the

**The 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew is a key chapter of Biblical prophecy.**

<sup>13</sup> See the wording of Daniel 9:25, "seven weeks and sixty-two weeks" so the sixty-two weeks is actually 7+62 or 69 weeks from the command to rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

<sup>14</sup> Matthew 24:1-2.

<sup>15</sup> See Luke 21:24.

## ***Prophecy #2 – Daniel’s 70 Weeks & Abomination of Desolation***

destruction of the temple that was soon to come. Let’s quickly go through the first part of this chapter to ensure that we understand the context of Jesus’ reference to Daniel’s prophecy.

**Matt 24:3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"**

The disciples are not referring to the ending of the age of Law and Jesus’ first coming because He is already with them when they asked this question. They are for the first time grasping the truth that Jesus Christ will come twice and so they begin to ask “what will be the sign of your coming” when you come again? What will be the signs of the end of the age? Those questions are precisely the ones that we are seeking to answer in our studies so Jesus’ answer will be enlightening.

**Matt 24:4-8 And Jesus answered and said to them, " See to it that no one misleads you. 5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. 6 "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. 7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. 8 " But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.**

All of these signs – false Christs, wars and rumors of wars, fighting and conflict, famines and earthquakes – are not the sign of the end, but merely the sign that you are starting to get close to the end of the age.

**Matt 24:9-13 " Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. 10 "At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. 11 "Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. 12 "Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. 13 " But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.**

Jesus is speaking to His disciples and He tells that before the end of the age comes, they will be killed through much tribulation and persecution. There would also come many false prophets and a time of spiritual darkness and falling away. This is absolute proof that Jesus was giving signs not of the end of the Era of Law and of His first coming, but that He was speaking of a time that is still yet to come and a time of His second coming for the disciples would not be killed before His first coming.

**Matt 24:14 "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.**

Here is yet further proof that it is provable that Jesus is talking about the end of the age of Grace and of the time of His second coming because the end would come only after the gospel had been preached as a testimony in all nations.<sup>16</sup> Grasping the fact that Jesus is speaking of a time and event and a coming yet to happen, notice the words of the next verse:

**Matt 24:15-16 "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place ( let the reader understand), 16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.**

Jesus directly quotes Daniel 9:27 and is speaking of the end of the Era of Grace and of events that is yet to come. This proves that there will be a distant fulfillment of the verses that we studied in Daniel and that this distant fulfillment will have to do with Jesus Christ’s second coming which is yet to happen.

Jesus’ quote of Daniel adds some information that we did not know before because Jesus said that we would be able to “see the Abomination of Desolation” – that is, whatever the Abomination of Desolation is, it would be visible and obvious to those following Him and who would read His words. Jesus also told us that we would see the Abomination of Desolation “standing in the holy place.” “The holy place” refers to the most holy place behind the veil of the temple. Right now, there is not a temple in Jerusalem and yet at the end of the Era of Grace we will see the Abomination of Desolation stand in the holy place. Jesus is providing us with some extra information and that is that the temple in Jerusalem will one day be rebuilt during the time of His second coming and the end of the Era of Grace. We will come back to this fact and study other prophecies that give more details about this fact later in our lessons.

<sup>16</sup> By the way, we live in an age where this prerequisite has been fulfilled, it has been documented that the gospel of Jesus Christ has now been preached in every nation on earth.

## **Prophecy #2 – Daniel’s 70 Weeks & Abomination of Desolation**

Let’s focus instead on *who* will stand in the holy place. Because for Jesus to say that we will be able to see the Abomination of Desolation *stand* in the holy place, that tells us a person is involved. Obviously Jesus is not referring to Himself, here. An “abomination” is something that God particularly detests or loathes. “Desolation” means “to lay waste” so these are not a reference to a positive event. Our clues thus far tell us that this event spoken of by the prophet Daniel is when someone goes into the holy place of a rebuilt Jewish temple and when they stand there in the holy place, they will do sinful and abominable things and that will make the temple “desolate.”

We need some more clues and there is yet another reference to this even in scripture from the Apostle Paul. He wrote the church in Thessalonica and said:

**2 Thess 2:1-2 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.**

This letter to Thessalonica was written about A.D. 52 and apparently there were some people preaching errantly that all of the prophecies about Jesus Christ’s coming had already been fulfilled. Paul wrote to assure them that the “day of the Lord” or Christ’s second coming had not yet taken place.

**2 Thess 2:3-4 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.**

The day of Jesus Christ’s second coming could not come until two criteria were fulfilled: first, there must be a great “apostasy” or “falling away from faith and truth.” Secondly, “the man of lawlessness” or “man of sin” must be revealed.

I believe that the first criteria has already been met. Church history reveals that during the Middle Ages (A.D. 600 – 1500) the vast majority of people did not even own a Bible, nevertheless obey accurately the scriptures! Some preachers preach that we should expect a massive backsliding right before Jesus Christ comes again, but the scriptures teach us in many places to expect quite the opposite.<sup>17</sup> I do not believe that we will see an apostasy to the extent that has already happened in the “Dark Ages.”<sup>ii</sup>

The second criteria is of particular interest in our current study, because Paul said that for the day of the Lord and the second coming of Christ to happen, there must first be revealed “the man of lawlessness.” And the Apostle Paul then goes on to tell us what this “man of lawlessness” or “man of sin” will do and it becomes clear that Paul is speaking of the same event that Daniel and Jesus referred to in the Abomination of Desolation! Because this person will “oppose and exalt himself above every form of worship” and will “take a seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.” This is the person in prophecy whom scholars refer to as “the Antichrist” because he will try to pass himself off as the Messiah but will in actuality be the complete opposite of Christ.

Let’s add the extra clues given here by the Apostle Paul to what was revealed by Daniel and Jesus. Paul says that the person who goes into the Holy Place will be a “he” meaning that this person of whom the Abomination of Desolation refers will be male. Jesus said that this person would “stand in the holy place” and Paul gives us even further information: not only will he enter the holy place, but he will “sit down” in the temple of God – a figure of speech alluding to someone ruling and reigning from a throne – and that he will “display himself as God.” That is, this man will be an imposter but he will try to proclaim and rule as if he were God himself.

From these three passages a clear portrait emerges of the event called the Abomination of Desolation and let’s put it all together. Towards the end of the era of the Gentiles, as the age draws to a close, Jesus said that we would be able to see the Abomination of Desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel. That event, would involve a rebuilt Jewish temple on the temple mount because the Holy Place would be in existence. A man – let’s call him the Antichrist from here on out so that we can easily refer to him – will arise before the second coming of Christ and claim to be the Messiah of the Jews. To prove to them that he is their Messiah, he will enter into the temple and go stand in the most Holy place. Remember that in the Old Testament if someone other than the High Priest did this, God would strike them dead. God will not strike the Antichrist dead because God no longer dwells behind the veil of the temple because the death of Jesus Christ at His first coming fulfilled the laws of Moses and rendered the sacrifices of Moses obsolete. But the Jews who rejected Jesus Christ do not believe this and so they will be astonished that this man is not struck down and many will be deceived. As

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Daniel 11:32-33.

## **Prophecy #2 – Daniel’s 70 Weeks & Abomination of Desolation**

Daniel said, this man will “cause the sacrifice and grain offerings to cease” because he will say, “I am your Messiah and so you no longer need that stuff of Moses’ law.” And he will try to rule and reign over the Jews from the temple as the Messiah is prophesied to do. Only he will be a “man of sin” and commit abominations and thus lead to the desolation of the temple. This is the event that Jesus told us to look for and to watch out for, the Abomination of Desolation.

### **The Great Tribulation**

The Abomination of Desolation is a key event to understand because it triggers yet another key event in end time prophecy. Jesus said:

**Matt 24:15-16 "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place ( let the reader understand), 16 then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.**

Jesus said, “when you see the Abomination of Desolation. . . those who are in Judea must flee.” Judea is the modern day “west bank of Israel” whose people are much persecuted already, but when the Abomination of Desolation took place, they had better leave their homes and go hide and do so with great haste:

**Matt 24:17-20 "Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. 18 "Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. 19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 "But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.**

Clearly, Jesus is trying to get across the importance of those in Judea to flee and run when they see this event take place, but why? Jesus tells us plainly in the next verse:

**Matt 24:21-22 "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. 22 "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.**

“Then shall be a great tribulation.” This is not just any persecution but a greater persecution than even the Inquisition the times of the martyrs! Apparently not all of the Jewish people will believe the Antichrist and he will turn and begin to heavily persecute those who do not swear allegiance to or believe him. The time of this horrible persecution is commonly referred to as the “Great Tribulation” by scholars. Notice the following points taught from these scriptures about the “Great Tribulation.”<sup>iii</sup>

**The Abomination of Desolation begins the Great Tribulation.**

- *The Great Tribulation begins with the Abomination of Desolation which is when the Antichrist will go into a rebuilt Jewish temple and proclaim that he is the Messiah.*
- *The Great Tribulation is not the wrath or judgment of God but is the persecution of the Antichrist on those who do not believe his claims.*
- *The Great Tribulation will affect those in the local area of Judea the most and is primarily the persecution of the Antichrist against the Jewish people who live around Jerusalem.*

### **Conclusion**

Let’s conclude this lesson by returning to the original prophecy in Daniel with much more information from the New Testament prophecies and view the scripture as to its distant fulfillment before the second coming of Christ:

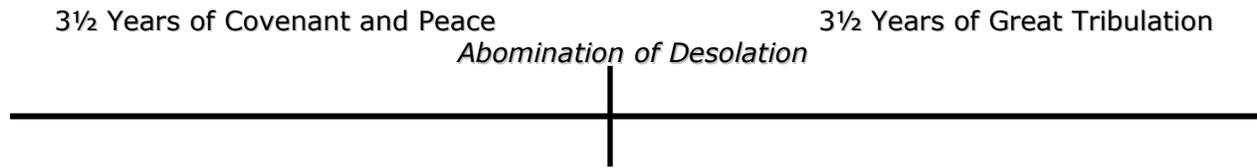
**Dan 9:27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."**

It is now very obvious that the “he” of this verse applies in the distant fulfillment to the Antichrist. He will begin the final week – the last seven years – of Daniel’s 70 weeks by making some sort of “covenant” with many. Apparently this covenant will have something to do with permission for the temple to be rebuilt or for sacrifice to begin in a rebuilt Jewish temple, because when the Antichrist breaks this covenant in the middle of the week, he will do so by entering into the Holy

## ***Prophecy #2 – Daniel’s 70 Weeks & Abomination of Desolation***

Place of the temple and causing the sacrificial offerings to cease and this is what Jesus referred to as the Abomination of Desolation, for Daniel said, “on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate.”<sup>18</sup> This event will see the Antichrist not only cause the sacrifice to stop, but will see him enter the most Holy place and claim to be God, the very Messiah of the Jewish people. It will also, Jesus said, signal the beginnings of a Great Tribulation and those in Judea had better beware because the Antichrist will bring such persecution that has never been seen in any time on earth before! This Abomination of Desolation will happen “in the middle of the week” – halfway in the final seven year period – and will last until the week is through, thus the Great Tribulation will last for three and a half years. At this time, God’s plan for Israel will be at its final stages and the Era of Grace and the time of the Gentiles completely fulfilled. The last period of 490 years in God’s Master Plan will be finished.<sup>19</sup>

Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week = 7 years total



---

<sup>18</sup> It will be impossible to identify who the Antichrist is before this, so guesses and theories as to the identity of the Antichrist right now are pointless.

<sup>19</sup> The terms and concepts of “Daniel’s 70 weeks,” “the Abomination of Desolation,” and “the Great Tribulation” are key concepts to grasp in studying prophecy and terms and events to which we will constantly refer.

## Endnotes

From all of these calculations and gleanings several important spiritual lessons can be learned. First, it is obvious that the sins of Israel did not change God's plans for them, but it did delay them. Similarly, our sins do not change what is the perfect will of God for us, but it can delay them, even to the point that they are delayed beyond our years so that we die and never experience them. When people turn back to sin and idolatry and doing things their own way, the will of God for their life is not altered as far as God's plan for their life, but God's plan is frustrated and held off pending their return to obediently living for God.

Secondly, the fact that God dealt with – or intended to deal with before their sin – Israel in periods of 490 years sheds light upon Jesus' answer to Peter about how many times we should forgive someone. (Matthew 18:21-22) When Peter asked, "how many times should I forgive someone for the same fault, seven times?" Jesus answered and said, "no, seventy times seven" or 490 times. What Jesus was in effect saying was, "as longsuffering and as many times that God was merciful and forgiving to Israel, so you be to others." In retrospect, this does not mean that on the 491<sup>st</sup> time that you could hold unforgiveness but rather that you should never stop forgiving someone because even the Messiah that was rejected and crucified by Israel will again give them a chance at salvation and to receive Him as their Messiah in the end.

<sup>ii</sup> I also believe that "you get what you preach" and that if you preach that people will backslide by the droves, then they will! But I will choose to preach that the greatest move of God is yet ahead and the greatest harvest of souls is yet to come!

<sup>iii</sup> In the first lesson of this series I stated that I believed that the Pre-trib, Mid-trib, and Post-trib theories of prophecy all had an element of truth to them and yet all had certain inherent beliefs that I believed were false. By common and traditional definition, to believe any of those three theories was to assume that:

1. The Great Tribulation begins before the Abomination of Desolation and thus lasts for a seven year period of time.
2. The Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God are the same.
3. The Great Tribulation is thus a world-wide time of pain and suffering.

I believe the Bible is very clear that the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God are two different events that happen one after the other. The Great Tribulation is the wrath of a man, the Antichrist on the Jews in the Jerusalem area and, to an extent, the Christians over whom he happens to have power. The Wrath of God is God pouring out judgment upon the world for their sins in ways that man cannot: hailstones falling, sun getting hotter, stars falling, earthquakes, etc... One of the most common errant thoughts is that to believe something other than "Pre-trib" means that one believes that the church must go through the wrath of God. A Pre-Wrath view states that there is a difference between the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God and the church may endure some persecution and tribulation from enemies in the flesh as she always have, but she will be taken out of the world before the Wrath of God falls. Also, since the Abomination of Desolation signals the beginning of the Great Tribulation and the Abomination of Desolation happens in "the middle of the week" (Daniel 9:27), then the Great Tribulation lasts only the last half of a seven year period, ie... three and a half years.