

Section 2

Israel and Jerusalem's 70 "Weeks"

of History



"When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory"
(Psalm 102:16)

Israel's Amazing "70 Weeks" Prophecy

The most amazing prophecy of God's plan for the nation of Israel is given in just four verses of Daniel chapter 9. It is called "The 70 Weeks Prophecy".

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of **the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem** unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*

*And after (the) threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of **the prince that shall come** shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*

*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for **one week**: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations (idolatry) he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (desolator)" (Dan.9:24-27).*

The prophecy begins with the words,

*"Seventy weeks (sevens) are determined upon **thy people**, and upon **thy holy city**",* ie 70×7 , or 490 years, are determined upon the Jews and Jerusalem...to do **six things** for them.

The word "*week*" is literally "*sevens*" in the Hebrew language and does not refer to a "*week*" of days. In Dan.10:2 the expression "*three full weeks*," ie 21 days, is literally "*three sevens of days*" in the Hebrew text. In Dan 9:24-27 it is simply "*sevens*", and we know that they refer to "*sevens of years*" because much of the prophecy is already fulfilled.

Therefore $70 \times 7 = 490$ years are determined on Daniel's people (the Jews) and on Daniel's holy city (Jerusalem) in order to achieve the following:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) "to finish the transgression | 4) to bring in everlasting righteousness |
| 2) to make an end of sins | 5) to seal up the vision and prophecy |
| 3) to make reconciliation for iniquity | 6) to anoint the most Holy" (place). |

Please notice that these six things only relate to **the Jews and Jerusalem**, and obviously have **not yet** been fulfilled for the 490 years conclude with "*everlasting righteousness*" experienced by Israel in Christ's millennial kingdom!

Background to the Prophecy

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon captured Jerusalem three times, first in 606BC during the reign of Jehoiakim, then in 597BC during the short reign of young King Jehoiachin, and finally in 586BC during the reign of Zedekiah. The city and the Temple were destroyed in 586BC.

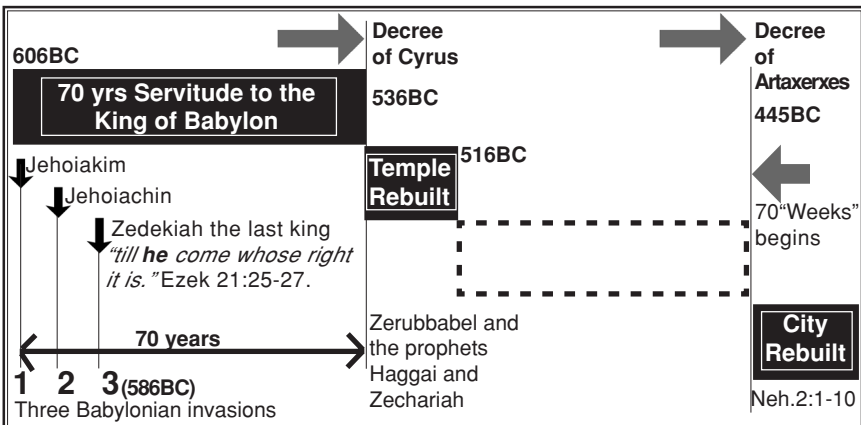
Daniel was taken to Babylon during the first invasion, and Ezekiel during the second. Jeremiah remained in the land and prophesied against the people because of their idolatry and wickedness. He prophesied that Israel would *"serve the king of Babylon seventy years"* (Jer 25:11-12; 29:10; Dan 9:2 ; Ezra 1:1).

The 70 years of servitude to the king of Babylon began in 606BC, and concluded in 536BC after Babylon was overthrown by the Medes and Persians; Cyrus wrote a decree allowing the Temple to be rebuilt.

The Decree of Cyrus

Isaiah had foretold more than 170 years beforehand that Cyrus, the Persian king, would decree the rebuilding of the Temple. This prophecy even gave Cyrus' name before he was born!

*"Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, **I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee**, though thou hast not known me (Isa 45:1-4).*



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*"...That saith of **Cyrus**, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid" (Isa.44:28).*

The Book of Ezra, chapters 1-6, records details of the decree of Cyrus to rebuild the Temple. Although Cyrus **said** that Jerusalem would be rebuilt, his **decree** only permitted the reconstruction of the **Temple**. The work was completed 20 years later in 516BC amidst opposition from the Samaritans (Ezra 6:15). This, however, is not the start of the "70 weeks," which relates to the reconstruction of the **city** of Jerusalem.

Start Date for the 70 Weeks - The Decree of Artaxerxes 445BC

The **start date** for the 490-year period is precisely given as *"the going forth of the commandment to restore and build **Jerusalem**"* (Dan.9:25).

Just as the decree of Cyrus focused on the **rebuilding of the Temple**, the start of the "70 weeks" focuses on a decree to **rebuild Jerusalem**.

This event is recorded in Nehemiah 2:1-11 and occurred in the month Nisan, of the 20th year of Artaxerxes the Persian king, which we know was 445 BC.

Nehemiah was King Artaxerxes' cupbearer, and was sad in the King's presence. When asked to explain his sadness, he replied,

"Why should not my countenance be sad, when the CITY, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" (Neh.2:1-3).

Artaxerxes immediately gave letters to Nehemiah authorizing him to rebuild the CITY of Jerusalem (Neh.2:8). This decree fixes the start date for Israel's 490 years which conclude at the second coming of Christ! It began in the month Nisan (first month of the Jewish year), in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, which was 445BC.

Some have confused the decree of Cyrus with the decree of Artaxerxes, however, it is clear that the city of Jerusalem was not rebuilt in the days of Zerubbabel under the decree of Cyrus. After Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem more than 90 years later, we are told that he inspected the ruins of the city which had not been cleared, so that he said, *"...there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass"* (Neh.2:14).

Only the Temple had been built, and after a concentrated effort of 52 days the wall was joined to provide some protection from their enemies while the city was built. Nehemiah wrote:

"The city was large and great: but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded" (Neh 7:4).

Three Divisions in the Seventy Weeks

The 70 x 7 years are divided into 3 periods in the following order -

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|----|--------|---|----------------|
| 1) | 7 x 7 | = | 49 years |
| 2) | 62 x 7 | = | 434 years |
| 3) | 1 x 7 | = | <u>7 years</u> |

Total 490 Years

During the first 49 years the city would be rebuilt "*in troublous times*", and this happened, as the Samaritans opposed the reconstruction of Jerusalem.

Then would follow 434 years which would conclude with the presentation to the nation of "*Messiah the Prince*" as Israel's **King**.

Following the 69th "week" Messiah would be "*cut off*", but not for any wrong which He had done.

Finally, the city of Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed before the last seven years, the 70th "week", began.

The summation of the **first two** periods is 49 + 434 or 483 years, which Sir Robert Anderson QC, in his book *The Coming Prince*, has shown was fulfilled on the **very day** Jesus Christ presented Himself to the nation of Israel on Palm Sunday as Messiah and King .

At no time prior to Palm Sunday did Jesus present Himself to the nation as King. It was then that He rode into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of an ass, and the crowds cried, "*Blessed be **the King** that cometh in the name of the Lord*"(Luke 19:38), in fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy.

*"Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, **thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass**" (Zech. 9:9).*

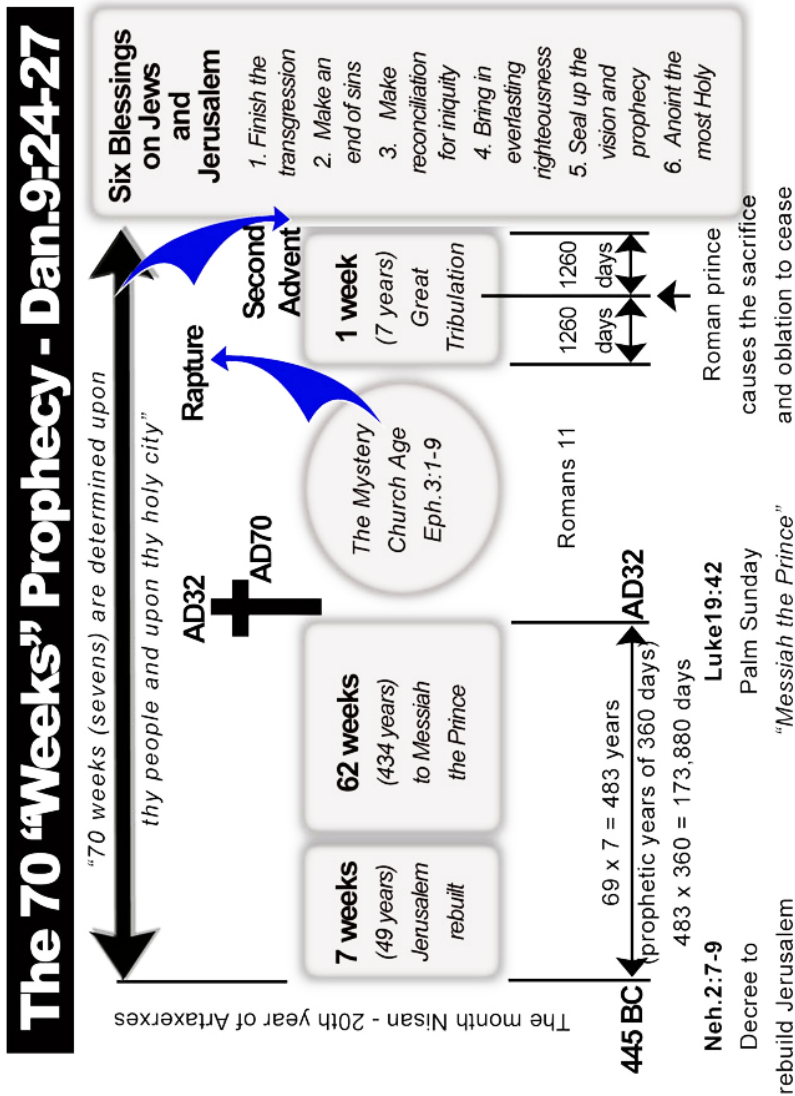
The multitude identified Jesus as the son of David, thus making Him eligible to sit upon David's throne. They cried:

"Hosanna to the son of David: BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD" (Matt 21:9,15; Luke 19:38).

Calculating using prophetic years of 360 days and converting back to the Gregorian calendar, Sir Robert Anderson QC has shown that this remarkable prophecy was fulfilled to the very day, 173,880 days from **the 1st of Nisan 445BC to the 6th April AD32**. (Prophecy always uses 360-day years).

As Jesus rode into Jerusalem on that day, He said to Jerusalem:

*"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in **THIS THY DAY**, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*



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For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke 19:42-44).

The consequence for Israel of failing to understand the prophecy of Daniel chapter 9, was that Jerusalem would be destroyed and the Jews scattered among the nations. Jesus said:

"When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh...there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:20-24).

Daniel, also, indicated that **after** Messiah was "cut off" Jerusalem would be destroyed, as it was in AD70!

*"And the people of the prince that shall come **shall destroy the city and the sanctuary**; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined"(Dan.9:26).*

Josephus, the Jewish historian, witnessed the siege of Jerusalem and recorded the details in his book *The Jewish Wars*. The story of the five-month siege makes grim reading indeed, for while Titus the Roman general was attacking the city there were three factions within the city engaged in a ruthless civil war. On some days the Romans crucified 500 Jews in view of the city, and within the city starvation drove women to eat their own children.

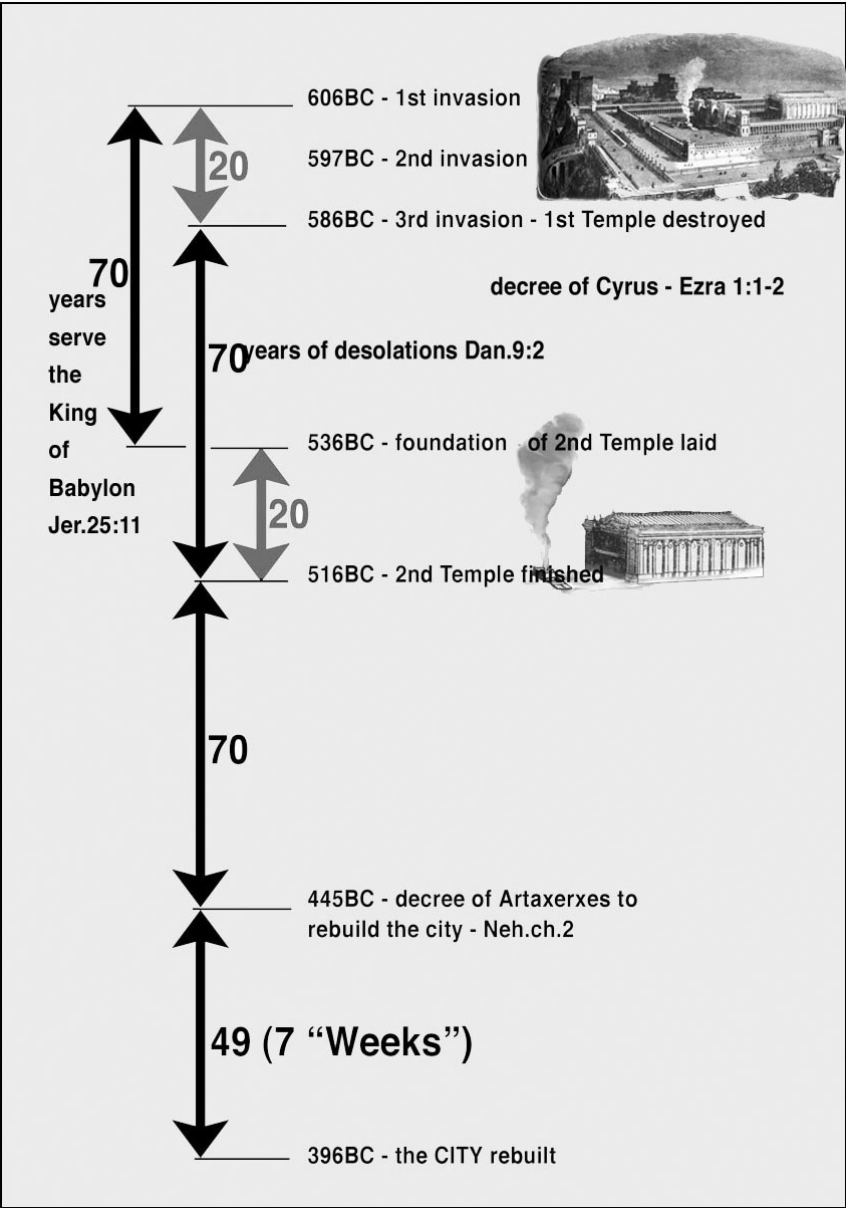
The destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the nation by the Romans was foretold in the Palestinian Covenant. Indeed two captivities are described, firstly to Babylon (Deut.28:36), and then, at the hands of the Romans,

"among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other" (Deut.28: 64).

*"The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, **as swift as the eagle flieth**; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young"(Deut.28:49-50).*

Josephus records that large numbers of the Jewish prisoners were sent to Egypt to work as slaves in mines, just as Moses warned:

*"And the LORD **shall bring thee into Egypt** again with ships, by the*



way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you" (Deut.28:68).

Daniel's Seventieth Week (last seven years)

Since the prophecy in question has been so accurately fulfilled up to the end of the 69th week, the question arises, When will the last seven years of Jerusalem's history run its course?

It is obvious that the 70th week has not yet been completed, for if it had, Jerusalem would now be enjoying everlasting righteousness, the most holy place in the rebuilt Temple would have been anointed for service, and the nation of Israel would have been reconciled to God.

The 70th week obviously did not commence immediately after the 69th week, when Christ presented Himself as King to the nation. In fact the prophecy itself indicates that the 70th week (7 years) would **NOT** occur immediately after Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, because two **other events** had to follow. They were -

- 1) Messiah would be cut off (four days later) AND
- 2) Jerusalem and the Temple ("*the city and the sanctuary*") would be destroyed! (thirty eight years later).

One could hardly say that the six blessings which will mark the conclusion of the 70 weeks (490 years) had become a reality when the nation actually slew its Messiah, and then was scattered by the Romans throughout the Roman Empire! Scripture foretold that such a dispersion would be the result of the nation's **disobedience** (Deut.28:36-37, 63-67).

Josephus' account of the siege of Jerusalem and other events in his time indicated that Jerusalem was anything but righteous or reconciled, and the Temple was not the place of godly worship. The behaviour of the combatants was so vile that even the Romans were shocked.

A Gap Between the 69th and 70th Weeks

In view of these facts we conclude that there is a gap in time, a parenthesis, between the 69th and 70th weeks. Someone may ask, How long is the gap? and, Why should there be a gap when there was no interruption to the first 483 years?

The concept of a gap in the 70 "weeks" prophecy is not an isolated occurrence, for other Scriptures indicate gaps in Israel's history.

James' Gap

James, in his address to the other apostles and the elders at Jerusalem, stated:

*"God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name...as it is written, **After this I will return**, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and **I will set it up**" (Acts 15:14 -16).*

First a Gentile Church would be gathered in, and AFTER THIS the Lord will return AND REBUILD THE THRONE OF DAVID! So the final re-establishment of the throne of David awaits the gathering in of the *"fulness of the Gentiles"*. Not only does James indicate a gap between the 69th and 70th weeks, but he tells us what the gap was for: *"to visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name."* Obviously this is the Church Age, and the people called out are those that make up the Gentile bride of Christ.

Ezekiel's Gap

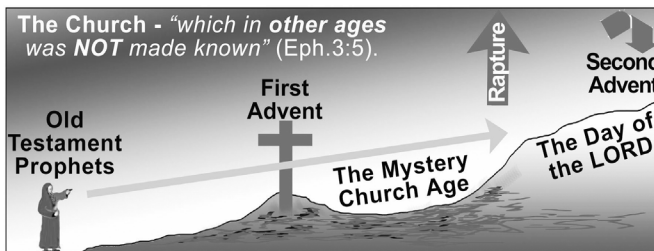
Ezekiel prophesied that King Zedekiah would be the last to wear a crown on the throne of David - *"UNTIL he come whose right it is"* (Ezek.21:25-27). In other words, from 586BC till the second coming of Christ there would be a long period when the throne of David would be unoccupied. The final blessing of Israel therefore awaits the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to sit on the throne of David as the angel Gabriel foretold:

*"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And **he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever**; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke1:32-33).*

Hosea's Gap

Hosea also spoke of a gap in Israel's history, after which the nation would turn to the Lord. He wrote,

*"For the children of Israel shall abide **many days without a king**, and*



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*without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without terephim: **Afterward** shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness **in the latter days**" (Hos.3:4-5).*

Hosea prophesied to the **northern kingdom** known as Ephraim or Israel, which was carried away captive by the Assyrians in 721BC. We learn from this Scripture that Israel, as well as Judah, will be restored to the land and to the Lord after a long period of "*many days*" without a king or sacrifices. That restoration of the nation to God's favour will come in **the latter days**!

Ezekiel also foretold the reuniting of the two kingdoms of Ephraim and Judah after a long period of separation. His prophecy of the two sticks looks forward to a time when God will make them "*one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all*" (Ezek.37:22); while Zechariah plainly states:

*"And I will strengthen the **house of Judah**, and I will save the **house of Joseph**, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be **as though I had not cast them off** (Zech.10:6).*

Hosea makes it clear that the restoration of the northern kingdom and its reunion with Judah will only occur after a long gap in time. This gap will conclude at the beginning of the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy.

Paul's Gap

Paul, in Chapter 11 of the Epistle to the Romans, also tells how Israel, the "natural olive branch," had been broken off (Rom.11:17), and the Gentiles, "the wild olive branch," had been grafted into their place. He goes on to say that the blindness of Israel would continue "*until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in*" (Rom.11:25).

This gap in Israel's prophetic history will continue **UNTIL** the Church is complete, and then, Paul says,

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (Rom.11:25-27).

Now that sounds very much like the blessings which will fall on Israel at the conclusion of the 70th week! What a difference! In Paul's day, AD60, the Jews were "*ignorant of God's righteousness*" (Rom.10:3), and he writes: "*As concerning the gospel, they are **enemies** for your sakes*" (Rom.11:28). However, he tells the Corinthians:

"Their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil

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*untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless **when it** (Israel)**shall turn to the Lord**, the veil shall be taken away (2Cor.3:14-16).*

The change for Israel can only take place after the FULNESS OF THE GENTILES HAS COME IN! And that blessed event is known as the RAPTURE of the Church!

The last 7 years of Israel's history must therefore be **preceded** by the removal of the Church, and be **followed** by the second coming of Christ as King of kings. At the beginning of that last 7-year period there will be 144,000 Jews converted. These will preach the Gospel of the coming kingdom of Jesus Christ and multitudes will be saved. The nation of Israel as a whole, however, will need the Great Tribulation judgments to bring it to repentance (Rev.7:1-17; Rom.11:26; Ezek.39:22).

The period between the 69th and 70th weeks has continued for nearly 2,000 years, while Israel has been dispersed among the nations, persecuted, and slaughtered. However, Israel is now partially back in the land in fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecy (Ezek.36), and once the Church is raptured, the 70th week will run its course.

The Church Age a Mystery

We might ask the question, Why wasn't the Church Age mentioned in Dan 9? The answer is given in Ephesians chapter 3, where we read that God ceased to deal with Israel in the same manner as He did in the Old Testament, and had begun to deal with a new body, the Church, made up of Jews and Gentiles who became "*fellowheirs and of the same body.*" This new body was **not revealed** in the Old Testament. It was a "*mystery.*" Paul says it was

*"not made known unto the sons of men, as it is **now revealed** unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph.3:5-6).*

On the day of Pentecost the Apostles spoke in Gentile languages "*the wonderful works of God*" (Acts 2:11). Isaiah had prophesied that there would be a period when God would speak to Israel "*with stammering lips and another tongue...yet they would not hear*" (Isa.28:11-12), and Paul quotes Isaiah's prophecy in 1 Cor.14:21, saying in verse 22 that the Gentile languages would be "*a sign*" to Israel.

By speaking in Gentile languages the Apostles were indicating that God was about to act in judgment on Israel and turn to the Gentiles.

Yet Peter reminded them that if they repented God would
*"send Jesus Christ...whom the heaven must receive **until the times of restitution of all things**, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:19-21).*

The casting away of Israel is only until the nation repents, and then God will send Jesus Christ with times of refreshing for the nation. The duration of the gap is linked to the period of Israel's unbelief.

The Future Roman Prince and the Last 7 Years

At the beginning of the 70th week of Israel's prophetic history there will arise a Roman prince who will confirm a treaty, or covenant, with Israel for 7 years.

We know he is a **future Roman** prince because Scripture states it was **his people** who would destroy the city and the sanctuary in AD70. Nobody would question that this was the Romans.

*"And the people of **the prince that shall come** shall destroy the city and the sanctuary" (Dan 9:26).*

Therefore during the last 7 years of Israel's prophetic history this future Roman prince will confirm the covenant for one week (7 years), but in the middle of the 7 years (after 3 1/2 years) he will turn against Israel and *"cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate"* (Dan.9:27).

This period is also described as *"1260 days," "42 months,"* and *"a time and times and the dividing of time"*, in the following places: Rev.11:2-4; 12:6,14; 13:5; Dan.7:25.

The Roman prince is without doubt the coming Antichrist who will arise out of the revived Roman Empire. He will stop the Jewish sacrifices in the **rebuilt Temple** at Jerusalem for *"the overspreading of abominations"* (Dan.9:27).



Some interpret the *"prince that shall come"* as a further mention of *Messiah the Prince*, saying that the reference to causing *"the sacrifice and the oblation to cease"* speaks of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary, which fulfilled the Old Testament types and replaced animal sacrifices.

However Dan.9:27 gives **the reason** for causing the sacrifice to cease; it is

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"FOR THE OVERSPREADING OF ABOMINATIONS," which of course refers to the **abomination of idolatry**. This future prince therefore can't be Messiah, but must be Antichrist who will replace the Jewish sacrifices during the 70th week with his own idol image. It would be blasphemous to suggest that Christ's sacrifice at Calvary had as its purpose *"the overspreading of abominations!"*

Paul tells us about this terrible event in 2 Thess.2:3-4, when the *"man of sin...the son of perdition"* would exalt himself *"above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he **as God** sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."*

Zechariah speaks of two shepherds in Israel. The Divine shepherd would be rejected by the nation and sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech.11:10-13), but the foolish (impious) shepherd, the *"idol shepherd,"* would turn on the nation and tear it as a wild beast would tear the flock. This foolish idol shepherd is the one to whom Jesus referred:

*"I am come in my Father's name, and you receive me not: if **another shall come in his own name**, him you will receive"*(John 5:43).

The idolatrous character of Antichrist's reign is described vividly in Rev 13:14 -15 and Dan.11:35-39. Daniel says,

*"...he shall exalt himself... above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods...Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers...nor regard any god: for he **shall magnify himself above all**. But in his estate shall he honour **the God of forces**: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.*

*Thus shall he do...**with a strange god**, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall **divide the land for gain**."*

That will be the *"overspreading of abominations"* which will desolate the renewed Temple worship. The word *"overspreading"* carries the thought of "wings" and some have translated it thus. Perhaps it may indicate the nature of Antichrist's image, like the Roman eagle.

In this regard Antichrist will fulfill the "type" of Antiochus Epiphanes, who erected his **idol image** on the altar of God in the Temple and placed other idols in every village in Israel. In 167BC Antiochus Epiphanes consecrated the Temple of the Lord to the Greek god Jupiter Olympus (1st Book of Maccabees 1:47-56 ; 2nd Book of Maccabees 6:1; Dan.8:11-14).

At the conclusion of the 70th week Christ will return and the Antichrist will be taken with his false prophet, and both will

"be cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev.19:20).

Daniel states that the Roman prince that shall come will reign until the end of the 70th week, but *"that determined"*, God's wrath, *"shall be poured upon the desolate"* (desolator). The word translated *"desolate"* may also be translated *"desolator"*. The Roman *"prince that shall come"* will be the desolator who will set up his idol in the Temple, and this blasphemous act will result in wrath being poured out upon him.

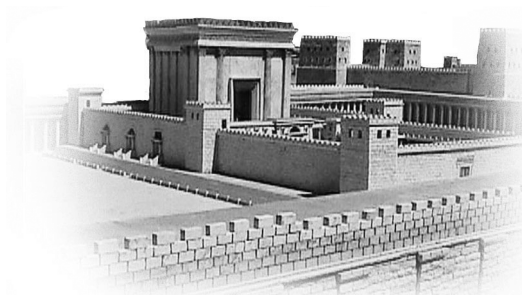
Implications of the Prophecy - A Rebuilt Temple!

Today we are fast approaching the end of the Church Age. The Rapture could take place at any moment, and Israel's last 7 years will begin. Already Israel is aligning herself with the revived Roman Empire (EU) and is an Associate Member of the EU. She is also a member of the European region of UN. The Temple will be built early in the 7 years as Israel turns back to the Lord, and sacrifices will again be offered.

There are yet **two Temples** to be built at Jerusalem. They are -

- 1) The **Tribulation Temple** described in Rev.11:1-4, and
- 2) The **Millennial Temple** described in Ezek.40 to 46.

The Tribulation Temple will be constructed with the approval of the Roman Antichrist and the encouragement of two prophets who are likened to Haggai and Zechariah. These were the two Old Testament prophets who urged Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest, to rebuild the Temple after the Babylonian captivity, under a decree issued by a pagan Persian emperor (Zech.4: 1-14).



In the same manner the two Tribulation prophets will urge the reconstruction of the Temple in the first half of the Tribulation. Notice that they are described as *"the two olive trees"* supplying the oil to keep the seven lamps of testimony burning (Rev.11:4 ; Zech.4:3).

It is interesting that Zechariah was murdered *"between the porch and the altar"* of the rebuilt Temple (Matt 23:35), and the two Tribulation prophets will be slain by Antichrist in Jerusalem (Rev.11:7-12)! History will repeat itself.

The Jews' Tribulation Temple will not occupy all of the Temple Mount, for John is told **not** to measure the courtyard surrounding the Temple, *"for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot 42 months"* (Rev.11:2).

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According to Luke 21:24, “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

After an initial period of peace under the protection of Antichrist there will be a sudden change, and Israel will suffer as never before. This last 3 ¹/₂ years before Christ returns will be the most intense part of the Great Tribulation. Matthew records, “**Immediately after the tribulation of those days...shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven**” (Matt.24:29-30).

The nations that survive the Tribulation will be judged by Christ (Matt.25:31-46), and Israel will be finally brought back to the land following the scattering which will occur during the Tribulation. They will come by plane and ship (Matt.24:31; Isa.60:8-9).

The nations that followed Antichrist will be cast into hell (Matt.25:41), but those who believed and stood with God’s people Israel during the Tribulation will enter the millennial kingdom of Christ (Matt.25:34-40; Zech.14:16; Isa. 60:3,10-16).

In that day Israel will sing the song recorded in Isa 26, and will be a righteous nation, “*the Priests of the LORD*” (Isa. 61:6).

The Tribulation Temple will be removed, possibly by a great earthquake (Rev.16:18; Zech.14:4-11), and a new glorious Temple will be constructed and operate according to the specifications laid down in Ezekiel chapters 40 to 46.

Finally, the Glory of God will return and will shine forth continuously from Jerusalem, which will have its name changed to “*Jehovah Shammah*,” meaning “*THE LORD IS THERE!*” (Ezek.48:35).

Seven Characteristics of the Antichrist

There are seven things we need to note about the latter-days Roman prince, the Antichrist.

- i) He will arise peaceably and confirm a 7-year treaty with Israel (Dan.9:27).
- ii) He will broker a deal in which Israel will be able to rebuild the Temple while allowing the Gentiles to occupy the courtyard of the Temple Mount, ie the Mosque of Omar (Rev.11:2).
- iii) He will “*divide the land (of Israel) for gain*” (Dan.11:39 ; Joel 3:2), ie the Arab/Israeli division of the land will be settled.
- iv) After 3 ¹/₂ years he will kill the two prophets of God in Jerusalem, but God will catch them away in resurrection bodies in the sight of all men (Rev.11:7-12).

v) He will stop the Temple sacrifices by the then-converted nation of Israel halfway through the 7-year Tribulation, and will persecute Israel (Dan.9:27). (Israel's conversion will be earlier in the first half of the Tribulation at the time of the Russian/Muslim invasion described in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. Note especially Ezek.39:22.)

vi) He will sit in the Temple claiming to be God! (2 Thess.2:3-4).

vii) He will set up his idol image in the Temple and throughout the world, demanding universal worship! (Rev.13:12).

This future Roman prince will thus continue for the last 42 months until the Lord Jesus Christ returns with the armies of heaven and casts both the beast and his false prophet into the lake of fire (Rev.19:11-21).

How Close Are We to the 70th Week of Israel's History?

There are many aspects of this prophecy which indicate that we are drawing near to the time when Israel will begin its last seven years before Jesus Christ comes to reign.

Israel has been recognized as a sovereign state since May 1948, and its Jewish population in the land has grown from 565,000 in 1945 to 5,200,000 in 2001. Arab population in Israel was about 1,000,000 excluding the West Bank.

The Temple Mount is occupied by a Muslim mosque, but many Jews are looking for Messiah to return to rebuild the Temple. Some want to build it before Messiah appears, and many instruments for use in Temple worship have already been made and can be inspected at the Temple Institute in Jerusalem.

In April 1997 an advertisement in the *Jerusalem Post* announced that the **"Restore the Half-Shekel Fund"** had been established in accordance with Moses' instruction in Exod.30:11-16, and as practiced in 2 Chron. 24:1-14. The Chief Rabbinate of Jerusalem will be selling specially minted coins, and each year these will be returned to Jerusalem, consecrated as Hekdesh (temple treasure), and stored in a vault under the Bank of Israel **until Messiah comes!** The silver holy half-shekel was for the maintenance of the Tabernacle and Temple buildings, and will provide funds for construction and maintenance of the Temple.

The first holy half-shekel was issued on the 50th anniversary of the nation, and the illustration on page 42 is to commemorate the 55th year of Israel's re-establishment.

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

Jewish funding, manufacture of instruments, and identification of the priestly family (the sons of Aaron), indicate that preparations are well advanced for the recommencement of Temple worship.



A report in *Israel Today* magazine October 2003 showed photos of a full-scale model of a temple erected in a Jewish community at *Mitzpe Yericho*, near the Dead Sea, which is functioning as a training centre to prepare priests (*kohanim*) for service in the Third Temple.

There is little doubt that the foundations of the Second Temple have been located by Professor Kaufman about 100 metres north of the Dome of the Rock in the northern courtyard of the Temple Mount.

Asher Kaufman, a Scottish Jew, migrated to Israel in 1960. In Israel he became a professor at the Hebrew University, researching fusion and the spectroscopy of ionized gases. He was a man given to detail and very precise.

Kaufman studied early Jewish writings to verify the measurements of the Temple, and found that it had been sited in an east/west orientation with the entrance facing the eastern gate of the wall surrounding the court of the Temple. If the eastern gate could be located, then it was only a matter of drawing a line due west to fix the position of the Temple.

In addition, he found that the red heifer had been sacrificed on the Mount of Olives at an elevated location where the Temple could be sighted above the walls of Jerusalem, and by standing on this high point it was only a matter of looking beyond the eastern gate (or Golden Gate) to fix the position of the Temple.

Underground drains used to carry blood to the Kidron Valley from beside the altar which stood in front of the Temple had already been located by a British surveyor, Captain Warren, in the 19th century, and his findings had been reported in the *Biblical Archaeological Review*.

Gershom Gorenberg, senior reporter with *Jerusalem Report*, wrote:

“He (Kaufman) studied the charts, drawn by the nineteenth-century explorers of the ancient cisterns on the north side of the Mount; they line up just outside where he says the walls were.”

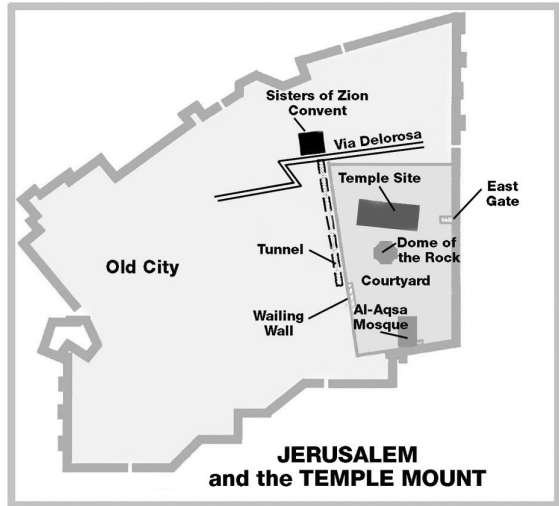
By 28 December 1974 Kaufman had enough evidence to assert that he had found the site of the Second Temple, **one hundred metres north**

of the Dome of the Rock! The Third Temple could be built without demolishing the Dome of the Rock.

The revival of the Roman Empire under the banner of the European Union (EU) and Israel's Associate Membership with the EU, prepare the way for Antichrist's involvement in Israel's affairs.

The "Oslo Accord" and other peace plans which seek to solve the Arab/Jewish conflict by dividing the land and making Jerusalem an international city, lay the groundwork for negotiations for the Temple Mount.

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism, which began in 1979 at the time the Shah of Persia was overthrown, is most significant. It is clear from Scripture that God will use the hatred of the Muslims to cause the nation of Israel to seek the Lord. Israel has defeated her Arab neighbours so decisively on the battlefield that she now feels secure, especially



with military support from the United States. However, the wider circle of Islamic nations: Iran (Persia), Turkey (Togarmah), Libya, and Ethiopia (Sudan), represent a more formidable threat, and when Turkey falls to the Islamists Israel will have no adequate military answer. **Russia's relationship with Islamic nations is an ominous sign.**

The Rapture of the Church takes place **before the 70th "week"** begins, when the Temple will be reconstructed, so although we must refrain from fixing any time for the Second Advent, it is evident that we are drawing near to the end of the age.

The Day of the Lord

Throughout Scripture the Day of the Lord is seen as the time of awful judgment which precedes the second coming of Christ. Events which are foretold in the Day of the Lord are the same as those which will occur in the period which Jesus called the "*great tribulation*", and we may safely say that they both refer to the same period.

The Basics of Bible Prophecy

Paul, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, wrote:

*"...the **day of the Lord** so cometh as a thief in the night...when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

*But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that **that day** should overtake you as a thief...For God hath **not appointed us to wrath** (of the day of the Lord), but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ...that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him" (1Thess.5:2-10).*

These verses leave us in absolutely no doubt that the Rapture will occur BEFORE the Day of the Lord, the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy. The 70th week is Israel's prophetic history and cannot apply to the Church. It is the "*time of Jacob's trouble*" (Jer.30:7), and the Church must be removed **before** that day comes. As Noah and Lot were removed to safety before judgment fell, so the Church will be removed before the Day of the Lord.

Summary

The seventy "weeks" were 70×7 , or 490 years, until **Israel and Jerusalem** would be brought into **everlasting righteousness**.

The prophetic time **begins** on the first day of the month Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, which was 445BC. It is divided into three periods. During the first 49 years the city was rebuilt.

At the end of the 69th week ($7 + 62 = 69$ weeks or 483 years) **Messiah** presented Himself as King to Israel. Christ did this on the first Palm Sunday.

Then four days later **Messiah was cut off** on the cross, and finally Jerusalem was destroyed as predicted, 38 years later in AD70. These events had to occur **between the 69th and 70th "weeks"** of the prophecy. The 70th week does not therefore immediately follow the 69th week. There is an obvious **time gap** between the 69th and 70th "week", known as the mystery Church Age, not made known in ages past (Eph.3:1-9).

When the Church is raptured, the Church Age will finish and Israel's 70th week will begin with a 7-year **peace treaty** confirmed by a **Roman prince (EU)**. This Roman prince will facilitate the final agreement to **divide the land** of Israel (Dan.11:39) and permit joint occupation of the Temple Mount by Jews and Gentiles (Rev.11:1-2). The Tribulation Temple will be built. At first Antichrist, the Roman prince, will appear friendly to Israel and will defend her against an Egyptian invasion (Dan.11:40-45), at the same time subduing the Middle East, which provides the pretext for occupation of the "*glorious land*".

Before the Tribulation judgments begin to fall 144,000 Jews will be sealed for protection with the Father's name in their forehead. Their task will be to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom, which must be preached in *"all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come"* (Matt.24:14). These ultimately suffer martyrdom and are seen in heaven halfway through the Tribulation (Rev.14:1-3). The conversion of the 144,000 may be triggered by the Rapture.

During the first 3 ¹/₂ years, **all Israel** is brought to repentance through the preaching of the 144,000 Jewish *"servants of God"* at the time of the Russian/Muslim invasion, as described in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 and Joel chapter 2. The two Jewish prophets described in Revelation chapter 11 may be two of the 144,000; these also are slain after they *"have finished their testimony"* which lasts for 3 ¹/₂ years (Rev.11:3,7).

In the first 3 ¹/₂ years the peace treaty will be broken and Antichrist will reveal his true character. He will then try to wipe out Israel but one third of the people will be preserved to the coming of the Lord, when Antichrist and his false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire. Israel will be protected by God in a wilderness location during the second half of the Tribulation, and will welcome Christ when He returns to reign as King of kings.

Divine testimony during the second half of the Tribulation will be administered by an angel who will proclaim the everlasting Gospel (Rev.14:6). The everlasting Gospel warns the world:

"Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come : and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev.14:7).

The first half of the Tribulation sees the Russian/Muslim armies invade Israel and Israel turn to the Lord, while in the second half of the 7-year Tribulation the judgment of the Gentiles culminates with the battle of Armageddon when *"all nations"* are gathered to Jerusalem.

Christ's kingdom will finally be established on earth, and only then will the six blessings determined upon Israel and Jerusalem become a reality. The **490 prophetic years** will have run their course.