

THE HEAVENLY CALLING

consider . . . Jesus

Heb. 3:1

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The Time of the End

Part XI

Daniel's Seventy Weeks

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts [living creatures'] saying, Come and see.

And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer (Rev. 6:1, 2).

Time during which the inheritance is redeemed (time covering the breaking of the seven seals on the scroll, resulting in ensuing judgments) and time covered by corresponding events (depicted in chs. 7, 11-14, 17-19a) is often referred to as *Daniel's Seventieth Week*. In Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks (Dan. 9:24-27), sixty-nine have been fulfilled, and one remains to be fulfilled. This last week, a period of time covering *seven years* (the complete prophecy covers 490 years), forms the time during which events in Rev. 6-19a will occur.

Times of the Gentiles

Daniel, in the overall scope of his book, deals with *the Jewish people in relation to the Times of the Gentiles, with a particular emphasis on that which will occur during the final seven years of this time*. And the book also goes on to relate that which will occur once *the Times of the Gentiles has run its course*.

The final seven years of the Times of the Gentiles, where Daniel places the emphasis, are singled out in Daniel's prophecy as *the final week of the Seventy-Week prophecy*. Then, immediately

following the end of this time would be *events leading into or within the Messianic Era*.

The Times of the Gentiles, succinctly defined, is *that period of time when Israel finds the sceptre removed from her hand and placed in the hands of the Gentile nations*.

The Times of the Gentiles *began* with the Babylonian captivity about 605 B.C., when the southern two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) were uprooted from their land and carried away captive to Babylon. The northern ten tribes had previously been carried away captive by the Assyrians, over one hundred years before (abt. 722 B.C.). And an uprooting of the southern two tribes completed the dispersion of the Jewish people, bringing an end to the theocracy.

The Times of the Gentiles will *end* following the Jewish people being brought to the place of repentance. And this will occur by the Jewish people being brought to the end of themselves through judgments during the coming Tribulation, during Daniel's unfulfilled Seventieth Week, during the time covered by Rev. 6-19a.

The Jewish people, following their repentance and acceptance of the nation's Messiah, will be gathered out of the nations and be restored to a healed land. Then, Gentile world power will be destroyed, the sceptre will be taken from the hands of the nations, and it will be given back to Israel, within a restored theocracy.

Daniel deals with the Times of the Gentiles solely in relation to *Babylon*. Gentile world power is seen in Babylon at the beginning, for several subsequent centuries during, and at the end of this time.

The Times of the Gentiles is introduced in Daniel through a dream. God had placed the dream in Nebuchadnezzar's mind, and God then revealed the dream and the interpretation to Daniel, who made both known to the king.

The dream is given in Dan. 2:31-35, and the interpretation follows in Dan. 2:37-45. The dream has to do with "a great image" seen standing in Babylon, consisting of four parts, *representing four periods of the Babylonian kingdom during the Times of the Gentiles*:

- 1) Head of gold, representing the kingdom under Nebuchadnezzar and any immediate successors prior to its conquest (abt. 605-538 B.C.).
- 2) Breast and arms of silver, representing the kingdom under the Medes and the Persians (abt. 538-330 B.C.).
- 3) Belly and thighs of brass, representing the kingdom under Greece (abt. 330-323 B.C.; then, following Alexander the Great's death in 323 B.C. and a four-way division of the kingdom, the kingdom of Babylon gradually faded from view as a world power).
- 4) Legs of iron and feet part of iron and part of clay, representing the kingdom under Antichrist (Daniel's Seventieth Week, yet future, with Babylon re-emerging as the center of world power).

The dream involves God's revelation to man concerning the Times of the Gentiles, *from beginning to end, with a particular emphasis on the end, the last seven years* (e.g., more space is given to the fourth part of the image in ch. 2 than to all the other three parts combined; and the same thing is seen in other parts of

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the book when the whole of the kingdom is in view [cf. chs. 7, 8, 11]).

God gave the dream about the “great image” through the Gentile world ruler of that day (2:1ff). God then revealed both the dream and the interpretation to a Hebrew prophet (2:19-23), in complete accord with a principle which He had previously laid down:

“He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

He hath not so dealt with any nation [Gentile]: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord” (Psa. 147:19, 20).

Or note Rom. 3:1, 2 in this same respect:

“What advantage then hath the Jew...?

Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”

God simply does not reveal His Word through Gentiles. Though God had caused a Gentile king to dream, it took a Jewish prophet to make the dream known and to reveal the interpretation.

There is no such thing as God, in past time, using a Gentile to author a book in Scripture (note, for example, the fallacious teaching that Luke was a Gentile, which would have had God revealing His Word in the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts to a Gentile). That would be out of line with God’s clear statement from the Psalms or from Romans.

Gentile world power is seen existing in Babylon for almost three hundred years at the beginning, but it is seen existing in Babylon for only seven years at the end. Nebuchadnezzar was the king in Babylon at the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles, and Antichrist will be the king in Babylon at the end of this time.

Babylon was the world power when the southern two tribes were carried away captive, and the Israelites were, accordingly, taken to *Babylon*. *Assyria* had been the world power when the northern ten tribes had previously been carried away captive, and those

removed from the land at this time had, accordingly, been taken to *Assyria*. But, following this time, *Babylon* had conquered the *Assyrian* empire.

Thus, it is only natural that the Times of the Gentiles in Scripture would have a peculiar relationship to *Babylon*. This period of time *began* with a world kingdom in *Babylon*, it *continued* for almost three hundred years with a world kingdom in *Babylon*, and it will *end* with a world kingdom in *Babylon*. This is how Daniel presents matters in his book.

This is also why Israel in her *harlotry* is seen associated with *Babylon* so much in the Book of Revelation. This book, as it has to do with Israel (chs. 6-19a), relates God’s dealings with this nation during the last seven years of the Times of the Gentiles, *when Babylon reappears as the main power among the Gentile nations*. And Israel, scattered among the nations, will find herself in the same position as seen at the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles — *dwelling within a Babylonian kingdom and committing harlotry in relation to this kingdom*, which is exactly the way Revelation chapters seventeen through the opening verses of chapter nineteen present matters.

(For a more detailed exposition of *Daniel’s image*, refer to the editor’s book, *THE TIME OF JACOB’S TROUBLE*, pp. 28ff. Also, concerning *Israel’s harlotry*, particularly in relation to *Babylon*, refer to this same book [the book in general, for *Israel’s harlotry* forms the central subject matter of this book].

Also, note that Daniel’s image presents matters as if the *Babylonian* power represented by the fourth part of the image [the future kingdom under Antichrist] immediately follows, in time, that seen represented by the third part of the image [the kingdom under Greece]. However, there is a gap of over two millenniums between these two parts of the kingdom, which is not seen in the prophecy.

This may seem strange to the Western way of viewing material of this nature, but not so with those in the East. Those in the East are interested in *the next important event*, not in the time which might intervene between two events. And Scripture, humanly speaking, is an Eastern book.

Franz Delitzsch, a Hebrew scholar from past years, put the matter in these

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written by the editor.

words: “Prophecy sees together what history unrolls as separate.”

This same thing can be seen in Daniel’s vision of the “four great beasts” in chapter seven and the interpretation of the vision in chapter eight. These four great beasts simply present another picture of the four parts of the image in chapter two, with added details provided in the interpretation. And, as in chapter two, the complete prophecy presents matters as if there were no break in time between any of the four parts, though the same break in time exists between the third and fourth parts as exists between the third and fourth parts of the image.

Examples of this same thing can be seen in other parts of Scripture as well. This is simply a peculiarity of the way Scripture is structured, which is seen at the very beginning, in the opening two verses of Scripture.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” [Gen. 1:1, 2].

Scripture presents all of the events in these two verses together, as if no break in time exists. But, in reality, two breaks in time exist, a break between the two verses, and another break between the first two sentences and the third sentence in verse two.

Note another similar example in Isa. 9:6. Over two millenniums lie between the first sentence and the remainder of the verse, though Scripture places all of these events together, as if no break in time exists:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Coun-

seller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Or, another example would be Isa. 61:1, 2:

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound:

To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.”

Christ, in the synagogue in Nazareth, read most of this passage from a scroll; but He stopped with the words, “To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” Then, after rolling the scroll up and handing it to the minister, He sat down. And the eyes of all those in the synagogue were fastened upon Him when He said,

“This day is this Scripture fulfilled [lit., ‘This day this Scripture has been fulfilled’ (Gk. perfect tense, pointing to a fulfillment in past time, with the matter existing during present time in that finished state)] in your ears” [Luke 4:16-21].

Christ stopped reading at this point in the passage because the remainder had to do with events which would occur at the time of His second coming. But note how the whole of the matter has been placed together in the two verses.

And understanding the manner in which Scripture is structured in this respect is vitally necessary when studying Daniel’s Seventy-Week prophecy. The complete prophecy, covering 490 years, appears to be fulfilled without a break in time throughout any part of the prophecy. But a break in time between the sixtieth and seventieth weeks has to be recognized [for evident reasons which will be shown]. And this break has already lasted almost two millenniums.)

Seventy Sevens

“Seventy weeks [‘Seventy sevens’] are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to bring 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 Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks [‘seven sevens’], and threescore and two weeks [‘threescore and two sevens’]: The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

And after threescore and two weeks [‘threescore and two sevens’] shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself [lit., ‘and shall have nothing’]: 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 [lit., ‘and unto the end war and desolations are determined’].

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

The word “week” or “weeks” in the prophecy is an English rendering of the Hebrew word, *shabua*, which is a septenary number and could be better rendered “seven” or “sevens.” Therefore, for the remainder of this study, this is the terminology which will be used.

The word *Shabua* is used two places in the Book of Daniel — in 9:24-27 and a couple of verses later in 10:2, 3. The word itself does not designate the length of the seven. The length (days, years, etc.) must be determined from the text and/or context.

In chapter nine, the prophecy consisting of seventy sevens is an end result of Daniel’s prayer concerning Israel’s captivity in Babylon. Daniel had understood from Jeremiah’s prophecy that the captivity in Babylon would last *seventy years* (v. 2; cf. Jer. 25:11, 12), he knew that this time was about up, and he had sought the Lord’s face through “prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.”

He had confessed over and over the sins of the people, which had resulted in their captivity (vv. 3-19). And while Daniel was presenting himself before the Lord in this manner, the angel Gabriel (who had been sent at the very beginning of his prayer and supplication) appeared to him, making it known to Daniel that

he was there to provide more “skill and understanding” surrounding the matter Daniel had been praying about (vv. 20-23). Then, to bring this to pass, Gabriel made known to Daniel the prophecy of the Seventy Sevens (vv. 24-27).

“Years” are in view in the context of the prophecy — *the seventy-year captivity in Babylon from Jeremiah’s prophecy* that Daniel had been praying about. Thus, it would only be natural to continue this thought and understand the prophecy of the Seventy Sevens as *sevens of years*.

This would be in contrast to the only other place in the Book of Daniel where the Hebrew word *shabua* appears, in 10:2, 3. In these two verses, the *shabua* is specifically stated to be *sevens of days*. The Hebrew text has the word for “days” (*yom*) following the word *shabua*, letting the reader know that the sevens in view here are different than the sevens in the immediately preceding section (9:24-27).

Most English translations (e.g., KJV, ASV, NASB) use “weeks” to translate *shabua* in both places in Daniel, probably causing an element of confusion, for the context in one shows that sevens of years are in view, and the text in the other shows that sevens of days are in view. The NIV takes a different approach, using “sevens” in chapter nine but “weeks” in chapter ten.

In short, the angel Gabriel made known to Daniel that it was not just *ten sevens* (70 years) but *seventy sevens* (490 years) that the Jewish people would have to remain in Gentile lands before being reestablished in their own land, with that seen introduced at the beginning of the prophecy then brought to pass — “to finish the transgression...” (v. 24b).

And, between the end of the seventy years of Jeremiah’s prophecy concerning the Israelites in Babylon and the beginning of Daniel’s prophecy of the four hundred ninety years, bringing matters surrounding the dispersion of the Jewish people to a close, there is a break in time as well. Jeremiah’s prophecy of the seventy years ended about 535 B.C., but Daniel’s prophecy concerning the four hundred ninety years did not begin until about 444 B.C.

The prophecy of the Seventy Sevens begins with “the going forth of the

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commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" (v. 25a), and that command, according to Nehemiah chapters one and two was issued by the Persian king, Artaxerxes, in the twentieth year of his reign, which, according to secular history, was 445 or 444 B.C.

(There are earlier decrees in Ezra, issued by Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes [1:1, 2; 4:1-5, 11-24; 6:1-5, 14, 15; 7:11, 20, 27], which had to do with the Temple. But the decree by Artaxerxes in Nehemiah is the only decree issued which had to do with the city itself, which the prophecy in Daniel specifically singles out. And this is the only decree which fits the chronology of the prophecy in Daniel; and it fits this chronology exactly, to the day.)

From the issuing of the decree by Artaxerxes "to restore and to build Jerusalem" until the time Israel's Messiah appeared would be sixty-nine sevens (483 years), and at the end of this time Israel's Messiah would be "cut off" (vv. 25, 26a).

(The Hebrew word translated "cut off," *karath*, is used many times in the O.T. referring to the death of individuals [e.g., Lev. 7:20, 25, 27; Num. 19:13, 20]. And it is apparent that this is the manner in which the word is used relative to Israel's Messiah in Dan. 9:26a.

To see and understand how the time from Artaxerxes' decree to Christ's crucifixion is exactly 483 years [using 444 B.C. and 33 A.D. respectively], note these figures: $444 + 33 = 477$ years. But these are years of 365 days per year, and Scripture uses a 360-day year [cf. Gen. 7:11, 24; 8:3, 4; Dan. 7:25; Rev. 11:2, 3; 12:14; 13:5]. To convert, the total number of days is needed. Thus, 477×365.25 [.25 added for leap years] = 174,224 days. Then, divide 174,224 by 360, which gives 483.96 years. But bear in mind that only parts of the first and last years are to be used, which would leave *exactly* 483 years if the correct beginning and ending dates within their corresponding years were used [444 B.C. and 33 A.D.].

Thus, the Jewish people at the time of Christ's first appearance could have looked at Daniel's prophecy and Artaxerxes' decree and not only have known that *their Messiah would be in their midst in 33 A.D. but also that they would slay their Messiah that year.* Christ was the Paschal Lamb, this Lamb was given to Israel, only Israel could slay this Lamb, and knowledgeable Jews would have known that. In fact, a knowledgeable Jew could have known the exact day and time Israel would slay their Messiah in 33 A.D., for he would have known the exact day and time when Israel would slay the paschal lambs.)

Then, according to Daniel's prophecy, the Messianic Era would be ushered in seven years following Messiah's death [cf. vv. 24, 26]. But, of course, this didn't happen. Instead, God stopped the clock, so to speak, at the time Israel crucified her Messiah; and the last seven years await a future fulfillment.

The break in time occurs in the middle of verse twenty-six, between Messiah's death and "the people of the prince that shall come," who will destroy "the city [Jerusalem] and the sanctuary [the rebuilt Temple on the Temple Mount]." "The people of the prince that shall come" is a Hebrew idiom referring to *the prince himself* (cf. Dan. 7:18, 27 where this same expression is used).

(Note that this destruction of Jerusalem and the sanctuary *can only refer to a future destruction*, not to the past destruction in 70 A.D., as often taught [cf. Matt. 24:15-23; Luke 21:20-24; II Thess. 2:3, 4; Rev. 11:1, 2] Events in the prophecy *must occur during time covered by the prophecy itself.*)

This destroying prince is the man who will have made the seven-year covenant "with many" in Israel, marking the beginning of the last seven years of Daniel's prophecy (v. 27). This is the man seen riding forth on a white horse in the Book of Revelation when the first seal is broken, "conquering, and to conquer" (6:1, 2). And, as *the ratifying of this covenant will mark the beginning of the seventieth seven in the Book of Daniel, the breaking*

of the first seal of the scroll will mark the beginning of this period in the Book of Revelation.

(Some have sought to see the antecedent of the pronoun "he" in Dan. 9:27 [the one who makes the covenant with many in Israel] referring back to *the Messiah* Who was to be slain rather than to *the prince* that would come in v. 26. Grammatically, either could conceivably be the antecedent. However, "the prince" is the nearer antecedent, and the rules of grammar always favor the nearer as the antecedent in cases of this nature, unless, of course, something in the passage clearly shows that it isn't.

In this case though, such doesn't exist. In fact, the passage clearly shows just the opposite, that "Messiah" couldn't possibly be the antecedent [e.g., Israel's Messiah didn't make a covenant with His people at the time of His first coming; and the Jewish sacrifices didn't stop until the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D.].)

When this future prince appears and makes his covenant "with many" in Israel, the Jewish people, in accordance with time in the prophecy, will be placed in the position of *having just crucified their Messiah.* The crucifixion occurred at the very end of and closed out the sixty-ninth seven. The Jewish people, time-wise in relation to the prophecy, will then be living at the very beginning of the seventieth and last seven. Time for them will be *exactly as if Christ were still on the Cross, or had just been placed in the tomb, awaiting resurrection.* And God will deal with the Jewish people accordingly (cf. Matt. 23:37-39).

But Daniel's prophecy is *about to be fulfilled, with the third day, referenced through events at the beginning of the prophecy, about to dawn.* And on this day, the opposite of Christ occupying space on a cross or in a tomb will be in view. On this day, *all of God's firstborn Sons — Christ, Israel, and the Church — will be raised up to live in His sight.*

— To be Continued —

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