

70 Weeks of Dani'el

Today I am going to explain how the 70 weeks of Dani'el chapter 9 has no relation to an alleged prophecy regarding Jesus and his alleged messiah-ship.

Dani'el 9:24-27: *Seventy weeks have decreed for your people and your holy city until the measure of transgression is filled and that of sin complete, until iniquity is expiated, and eternal righteousness ushered in; and prophetic vision ratified, and the Holy of Holies anointed. You must know and understand: From the issuance of the word to restore and rebuild Yerushalayim until the [time of the] anointed leader is seven weeks; and for sixty-two weeks it will be rebuilt, square and moat, but in a time of distress. And after those sixty-two weeks, the anointed one will disappear and vanish. The army of a leader who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary, but its end will come through a flood. Desolation is decreed until the end of war. During one week he will make a firm covenant with many. For half a week he will put a stop to the sacrifice and the meal offering. At the corner [of the altar] will be an appalling abomination until the decreed destruction will be poured down upon the appalling thing.*¹

For the context of when and where Dani'el is speaking these words, let's look at Dani'el 9:1-2:

*In the first year of Daryavesh son of Ahashverosh, of Maday descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Kasdians – in the first year of his reign, I, Dani'el, consulted the books concerning the number of years that, according to the word of יהוה that had come to Yirmeya the prophet, were to be the term of Yerushalayim's desolation – seventy years.*¹

Dani'el was in Bavel – having been taken into exile after the destruction of the First Beit Hamikdash. The reference to this time that Dani'el is referring is from three sources in Yirmeyahu haNavi.

Yirmeyahu 25:11-12: *This whole land shall be a desolate ruin. And those nations shall serve the king of Bavel seventy years. When the seventy years are over, I will punish the king of Bavel and that nation and the land of the Kasdim for their sins – declares יהוה – and I will make it a desolation for all time.*¹

Yirmeyahu 29:10: *For thus said יהוה; When Bavel's seventy years are over, I will take note of you, and I will fulfill to you My promise of favor – to bring you back to this place.*¹

Yirmeyahu 30:18: *Thus said יהוה: I will restore the fortunes of Ya'aqov's tents and have compassion upon his dwellings. The city shall be rebuilt on its mound, and the fortress in its proper place.*¹

Let's look at this text to figure out what Dani'el was saying and what the proper interpretation of this passage is when looking at the text in context. Let's begin with Gabriel approaching Dani'el with the vision.

Dani'el 9:21-23: *...while I was uttering my prayer, the man Gavri'el, whom I had previously seen in the vision, was sent forth in flight and reached me about the time of the evening offering. He made me understand by speaking to me and saying, "Dani'el, I have just come forth to give you understanding. A word went forth as you began your plea, and I have come to tell it, for you are precious; so mark the word and understand the vision."*¹

Now let's look at the particular vision.

Dani'el 9:24: *Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city until the measure of transgression is filled and that of sin complete, until iniquity is expiated, and eternal righteousness ushered in; and prophetic vision ratified, and the Holy of Holies anointed.*¹

Let's break this verse down.

Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city...

A week is a seven-year period as seen in Vayikra 25:8:

*You shall count off seven weeks of years – seven times seven years – so that the period of seven weeks of years gives you a total of forty-nine years.*¹

...until the measure of transgression is filled and that of sin complete, until iniquity is expiated, and eternal righteousness ushered in...

During the 490 years, the Yehudim could have made teshuvah, repented and turned back to God. If they had repented, the Messianic Age would have started.

...and prophetic vision ratified...

Prophecy ended with Malachi during this 490-year period.

...and the Holy of Holies anointed...

This references the building of the Second Beit Hamikdash.

Dani'el 9:25: *You must know and understand: From the issuance of the word to restore and rebuild Yerushalayim until the [time of the] anointed leader is seven weeks; and for sixty-two weeks it will be rebuilt, square and moat, but in a time of distress.*¹

Let's break this verse down.

You must know and understand: From the issuance of the word to restore and rebuild Yerushalayim until the [time of the] anointed leader is seven weeks...

Seven weeks of years passed after the destruction of the First Beit Hamikdash and the anointed of God was revealed. The prophecy of Koresh comes from Yesha'yahu.

Yesha'yahu 45:1, 13: *Thus said יהוה to Koresh, His anointed one – Whose right hand He has grasped, treading down nation before him, ungirding the loins of kings, opening doors before him and letting not gate stay shut ... It was I who roused him for victory and who level all roads for him. He shall rebuild My city and let My exiled people go without price and without payment – said יהוה צבאות.*¹

This prophecy was fulfilled as shown in Ezra 1:1-3:

*In the first year of King Koresh of Paras, when the word of יהוה spoken by Yirmeyahu was fulfilled, יהוה roused the spirit of King Koresh of Paras to issue a proclamation throughout his realm by word of mouth and in writing as follows...*¹

...and for sixty-two weeks it will be rebuilt, square and moat, but in a time of distress.

This refers to Yerushalayim having endured this tumultuous time.

Dani'el 9:26: *And after those sixty-two weeks, the anointed one will disappear and vanish. The army of a leader who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary, but its end will come through a flood. Desolation is decreed until the end of war.*¹

Let's break this verse down.

And after those sixty-two weeks, the anointed one will disappear and vanish...

This anointed one is referring to King Agrippa II. In 70 CE his rule came to an end suddenly with the siege and destruction of Yerushalayim and the exile of the people.

...The army of a leader who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary...

The leader referenced here is Vespasian who led the Roman army that eventually destroyed the Second Beit HaMikdash.

...but its end will come through a flood. Desolation is decreed until the end of war.

Yerushalayim's end came as a flood – refer to Nahum 1:8:

*And with a sweeping flood He makes an end of her place, and chases His enemies into darkness.*¹

Dani'el 9:27: *During one week he will make a firm covenant with many. For half a week he will put a stop to the sacrifice and the meal offering. At the corner [of the altar] will be an appalling abomination until the decreed destruction will be poured down upon the appalling thing.*¹

Let's break this verse down.

During one week he will make a firm covenant with many. For half a week he will put a stop to the sacrifice and the meal offering. ...

Vespasian made a peace agreement in the seventieth week which concluded the entire time period spoken of in verse 24. However, after three-and-one-half years (first half week) the Romans violated this agreement and abolished the sacrifices.

In a nutshell:

The seventy years prophecy falls from the time of the destruction of the First Beit Hamikdash through the rebuilding of the Second Beit Hamikdash as seen in Dani'el 9:2.

The seventy weeks (490 years) is from the destruction of the First Beit Hamikdash through the destruction of the Second Beit Hamikdash as seen in Dani'el 9:24-27.

The seven weeks (52 years) in verse 25 covers the time from the destruction of the First Beit Hamikdash through the edict of King Koresh.

The sixty-two weeks (438 years) in verses 25-26 covers the time from the edict of King Koresh through the time of King Agrippa.

The seventieth week in verses 26-27 refers to the time of Vespasian and the destruction of the Second Beit Hamikdash.

According to the Tanakh, these seventy weeks begin with the destruction of the First Beit Hamikdash and end with the destruction of the Second Beit Hamikdash.

Since Jesus supposedly died approximately 40 years before the destruction of the Second Beit Hamikdash, he is obviously not any of these three individuals and these verses in Dani'el have nothing to do with a Messianic prophecy regarding Jesus.

¹David Stein (ed.). JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1999.