

# Daniel 9:24-25

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/dan/dan-9/daniel-924-25/>

*God answers Daniel: Seventy “sevens” have been decreed. Not only will Jerusalem be rebuilt and restored, but God will send His Messiah, sin and transgressions will be finished, disobedience will be atoned for, prophecies will be finished, and righteousness will last forever.*

Gabriel delivers God’s response to Daniel’s prayer. Daniel, an exile from his home, confessed Israel and Judah’s sin and asked God to restore His people to Jerusalem. He prayed for God to be compassionate and end the time of punishment. God’s answer is bigger than what Daniel is concerned about.

Through Gabriel the angel, God tells Daniel, *“Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city.”* At the beginning of this chapter, Daniel was studying the prophet Jeremiah’s writings, specifically about God’s set time for Judah’s punishment: 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11). Since 70 years of Babylonian captivity were nearly done, Daniel hoped and prayed for the restoration of God’s people to God’s city, Jerusalem. But God now says there will be seventy weeks (literally “seventy sevens”) for the Jewish people and for Jerusalem to endure.

The purpose of this time period is to *finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring an everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.* This is quite a list. Not only will Daniel and his people’s transgression be finished, but sin itself will be put to an end. There will be an atonement for iniquity; the debt for sinfulness will be paid. Even more spectacular is the arrival of everlasting righteousness. Visions and prophecy will be sealed up; there will be no more need to speak of the future. Last in this list of events is the anointing of the most holy place. This may refer the anointing of the new temple, prophesied about in Ezekiel 40-46.

Daniel begins with a question about seventy years, hoping it means a restoration, and he gets an answer that dramatically exceeds his request: in seventy sevens, God is promising to restore not only the Jews to Jerusalem, but to replace sinfulness with righteousness. There is a future coming where iniquities, wickedness, and disobedience will be gone, and instead humankind will walk with God in righteousness—with obedience that will last forever. Prophecies won’t be necessary because everything will be fixed. The earth will no longer be a chaotic, conflicted place. If the world was guaranteed to have perfect sunny weather forever, all weathermen would be out of a job.

Despite the translation “seventy weeks,” the literal meaning is seventy “sevens,” from the Hebrew word, “shavua.” These are thought to be units of years, not weeks.

Gabriel emphasizes to Daniel that he is to *know and discern* that there are divisions of time in which these things will happen. Seventy weeks (490 years) is the entire length of time for this prophecy, but between the decree and the arrival of *Messiah the Prince*, *there will be seven*

*weeks and sixty-two weeks*, or a total of sixty nine weeks. At this point, the seventieth week is left dangling. After the sixty nine weeks, *Messiah the Prince will be cut off (9:26)*.

There are two different divisions to the sixty nine weeks, or 483 years. One is 49 years (seven weeks) and the next is 434 years (sixty-two weeks), adding up to 483 years, seven years shy of the entire 490 years. The prediction is that once the clock starts, there will be 483 years between the decree and the Messiah's coming.

The event that starts the seventy sevens clock ticking will be the issuance of a *decree* for the Jews to *restore and rebuild Jerusalem*. Gabriel describes its rebuilding, that *it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress*. Plazas are wide open spaces within cities for the sake of public gatherings and trade. The moat mentioned may have been a ditch dug around the city, for greater defense against invaders. The rebuilding of Jerusalem will occur during *times of distress*, but it will be completed. Gabriel mixes the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem (answering Daniel's specific request) with a much grander restoration, the restoration of humanity and the earth. In the grand scheme of things, the physical condition of Jerusalem is immaterial by comparison. But God shows His compassion and care, meeting Daniel at his point of passion, while answering above and beyond what Daniel even knows to ask (Rom 8:26; Eph 3:20).

Later in Israel's history, there are several decrees and proclamations given by several different kings, allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple, as well as the city entirely (Ezra 1:1-4, Ezra 6:1-12, Ezra 7:11-28, Neh 2).

One view is that the decree was made in 444 B.C. by King Artaxerxes which commands the Israelites to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:5-8, Daniel 9:25). 483 years later is 32/33 AD, where Jesus Christ enters Jerusalem triumphantly on a donkey, is hailed by the people as the king sent by God, and is soon thereafter crucified ("cut off," Daniel 9:26).

Another view is that the decree in this prophecy is found in Ezra 7, by King Artaxerxes. This decree was issued in 458 B.C. If this is the decree to which Gabriel refers, then 483 years later lands at 25-26 A.D., right around when Jesus began his ministry. So at the end of the 69 weeks (7 weeks + 62 weeks), the Messiah arrives in Israel and is anointed (Matthew 3:16-17).

There is no certainty of which exact event is in view, but there is ample certainty that the prophecy was fulfilled.

## **Biblical Text**

**24 "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.**