

Daniel 9:26-27

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The Messiah will be cut off, Jerusalem will be destroyed again. A prince will come in the future and betray Israel, but will ultimately be destroyed.

Since 70 years of Babylonian captivity predicted by Jeremiah the prophet were nearly complete, Daniel has prayed for the restoration of God's people to God's city, Jerusalem. Gabriel, the messenger of God, is telling Daniel about the restoration of Jerusalem in Judah, and beyond.

Gabriel's message is about allotments of time divided into seven year periods. Even though the translation uses "weeks," the literal meaning is "sevens," from the Hebrew word, "shavua." These are thought to be units of years, not weeks. Each "week" is a seven year timeframe.

God's promised Messiah will *be cut off and have nothing* after the *sixty-two weeks*. In hindsight, this clearly refers to Christ's death. He was rejected by the Jewish leaders and people, was crucified, and buried.

The people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The *people of the prince who is to come* likely refers to the people of Rome. The *prince who is to come* might refer to Daniel 7, where it is explained that a ruler from the Roman era will arise and oppose the people of God. The Revelation version of this prophecy calls this ruler the "beast." The message here does not say that the "beast" himself will destroy Jerusalem, only that the people of the nation from which he will emerge will destroy Jerusalem. The "beast" is the *prince who is to come*, which is a future event even now. But the people of the prince (his nation: Rome), will destroy the rebuilt Jerusalem. This took place in 70 A.D., when the Romans completely crushed the rebuilt city of Jerusalem, including the rebuilt temple.

Jesus Himself foretold of the temple's destruction in Matthew 24:1-2, "Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. 2 And He said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.'"

The *end* of Jerusalem *will come with a flood*, which seems to be figurative language describing the complete destruction that washed over the city in 70 A.D. To the *end* of Jerusalem's destruction there will be *war* and *desolations*. The city and temple were rubble when the Romans were finished with their assault. The Roman destruction of Jerusalem was an event of the Jewish wars that spanned from 67 to 73 A.D. These wars ended when the Roman army built a siege ramp and conquered the last of the Jewish zealots at the natural fortress near the Dead Sea called Masada.

Gabriel then references *he*, the *prince who is to come* who was mentioned earlier, and who is spoken of at length in Daniel 7 (the boastful horn). We know from the vision in Daniel 7 that this ruler will wage war against God's people and will rule over the earth (Daniel 7:21-23). But here

Gabriel tells Daniel that this future prince *will make a firm covenant with the many for one week*. The *many* probably refers to Israel and the Jewish people, who will make an agreement with the prince that will last one *week* (seven year period). Perhaps it is some kind of peace treaty. Whatever it is, the prince will later break his word and violate the agreement.

In the *middle* of this seven year covenant, the prince *will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering*. Sacrifices and religious practice will be forbidden by this world dictator. The vision in Daniel 7 spoke of this prince changing times and laws; his complete dominance of other nations would last for 3 ½ years (Daniel 7:25). This fits with words of prophecy here and in Daniel 9, that halfway into the seven year covenant, the prince would violate the treaty and forbid the Jews from sacrifices. In 2 Thessalonians, the Apostle Paul writes of the Antichrist, “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” (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Jesus also talks about this moment that will take place during the end times, referencing the book of Daniel, “the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place”(Matthew 24:15).

This prince who is to come, who is the “beast”, will forbid worship of other gods and make himself out to be god, demanding worship. Gabriel explains that on *the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate*, the “beast” will make the temple desolate (empty), and assert himself as god in the temple.

Gabriel brings his message to a conclusion, explaining that the *prince* will persist in blasphemies *until a complete destruction, one that is decreed* by God will be *poured out on the one who makes desolate* (the “beast”). Daniel has already witnessed this destruction in a vision during the reign of King Belshazzar, who preceded King Darius. This vision is recorded in Daniel 7, where the beast’s destruction is described, “the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire” (Daniel 7:11).

This will conclude the 70 weeks of this message. The first 69 weeks happened in succession (7 weeks + 62 weeks), one after the other. But the last week (7 years) has yet to happen. The clock is on pause. The first event that started the clock ticking was a *decree* to rebuild. The next event that will start the clock ticking will be *a firm covenant*.

The text says that *after the sixty-two weeks, the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing*. It does not say he will be cut off during the final week, but after the sixty-two weeks, indicating that there is time between the consecutive 69 weeks and the final week of prophecy. The final seven is discussed separately from the first 69 sevens. There is a clear gap in this prophetic message.

From the present, we can look back and see that all the events of the first 69 weeks have happened (a decree was made, Jerusalem was rebuilt), as well as the events after the 69 weeks happened (the death of the Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem). But the final week (7 years) is reserved for the future. It contains the final abominations, rebellions, and wicked rulers on earth before God restores His creation fully. When the last week is finished, the promises in verse 24 will come to pass; God will *finish the transgression* of the world and *bring in*

everlasting righteousness. This has not yet happened. The Book of Revelation covers the final three and a half years in greater detail (Revelation 6-16). This three and a half year period is likely the time referred to by Jesus as the time of “great tribulation” (Matt 24:21).

The chapter ends without further explanation or commentary from Daniel. Doubtless, he was astounded by the message. He had begun with a prayer hoping that God would restore Jerusalem and Judah to the Jewish people. The answer was beyond his expectations: Jerusalem will be rebuilt, it will also be destroyed again, but God is working to do more than restore one city. He is working to end all sin and establish eternal righteousness. That is God’s final purpose for the earth; to redeem it and put away wickedness forever. Despite Daniel’s exile, he is given a message of hope and blessing far greater than he imagined.

Biblical Text

26 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.”