

An Overview of Redemptive History

Romans 11:1-24

INTRODUCTION: In September of 1899, Harper's Magazine published an essay by the most famous writer in America. Mark Twain was not a preacher. He was not a friend of the church. He was a skeptic with a sharp pen who had just come home from a year in Europe, where he had watched the Jewish people despised, restricted, and blamed for everything from bad harvests to bad politics. So he sat down to write about it, and he ended the essay with a question he could not answer. Listen to how Mark Twain closed "Concerning the Jews":

"The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

Twain asked the right question. He just asked the wrong people. He was asking the historians and the sociologists, and they had no answer. The answer had been sitting in a letter for eighteen hundred years, written by a Jewish rabbi turned Christian missionary to a little church in Rome. ***The secret of the Jew's immortality is not the Jew. It is the God who made the Jew a promise.***

And notice when Twain wrote that. 1899. There was no Israel on any map. There had not been one for eighteen centuries. Forty-nine years later, on May 14, 1948, a nation that had been dead, buried, and scattered across every continent on earth stood up and walked. No people in history has been dispersed for nineteen hundred years, kept its identity, and come home speaking its own ancient language. It has happened exactly once. It happened to the one people God made a covenant with.

There is an old story, and I cannot vouch for every detail of it, that Frederick the Great of Prussia once turned to his chaplain and demanded, "Give me one proof that God exists." The chaplain did not need a lecture. He needed two words. "The Jews, sire."

CONTEXT: Now here is why this matters to you this morning, and why this is not going to be a history lecture. Romans 9, 10, and 11 sit in this letter for one reason: to protect Romans 8.

Paul has just told you that nothing in all creation can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus. But a thinking person in that Roman church had a hand up. *"Paul, God made promises to Israel too. Look at them. They crucified their Messiah. If God's promises to Israel failed, why in the world should I trust His promises to me?"*

Do you see it? If God can be done with Israel, God can be done with you. So the question of Romans 11 is not really “What about the Jews?” The question of Romans 11 is “Does God keep His word?” ***And to answer it, Paul has to pull the camera all the way back and show us the whole sweep of redemptive history.***

Before we jump into Romans 11, turn back to Daniel 9:24 and let me show you something very important.

Daniel 9:24–27 (ESV) To understand Daniel’s writings, you must understand that in Prophetic Language a week = 7 years. With that in mind, look what it says in verse 24

²⁴“Seventy weeks (490 years) have been decreed for your people and your holy city,

The holy people are the Jews and the holy city is Jerusalem. So, there are **490** years of human history that have been uniquely, irreconcilably decreed by GOD for a particular purpose. For what purpose?

24b. 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.

Ok, so the 490 years of human history are uniquely ordained until Christ's work is fully consummated and a new order is established under the rule of Messiah Himself. Not only that, God is going to tell Daniel the most important part - when the countdown begins.

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 (**49 years**) and sixty-two weeks (**434 years**); it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. ²⁶“Then after the sixty-two weeks (**434 years**) the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing.

Now, the decree’s date is found in **Ezra 7:7,9**:

“In the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king... on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylonia”. The decree itself is recorded in Ezra 7:11–26. Artaxerxes’s seventh year is generally dated to 458–457 BC.

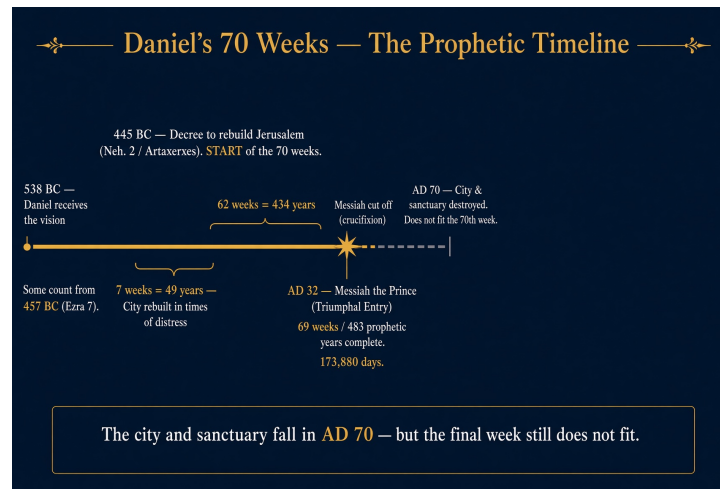
Sir Robert Anderson, in his book “The Coming Prince,” says that it was April 6, 32 A.D., when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, exactly 483 years after the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem that we read about in Nehemiah.

Starting point: **March 14, 445 BC**

69 weeks × 7 years = **483 prophetic years**

483 × 360 days = **173,880 days**

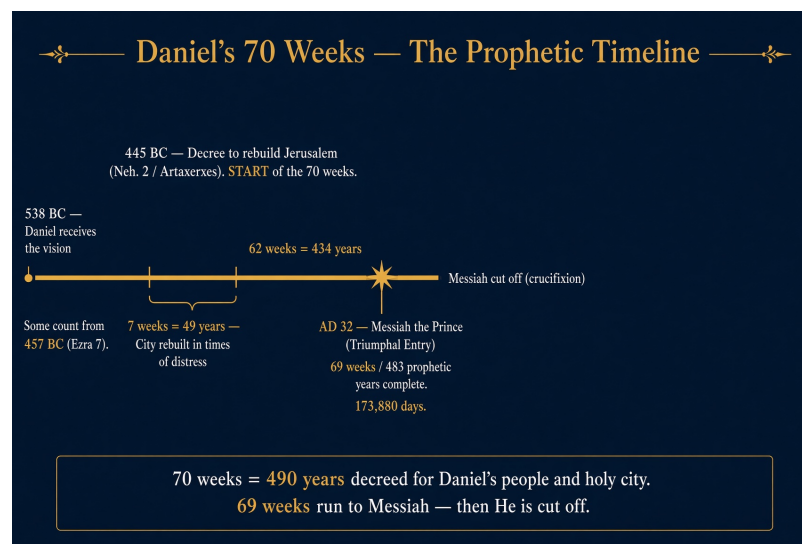
Ending point: **April 6, AD 32**, which Anderson identifies as Christ’s triumphal entry.



So, in 538BC, Daniel, one of Israel's greatest prophets, tells us exactly when and how the Messiah would arrive. This explains a couple of things: why the people rejoiced to see Jesus enter Jerusalem on this particular date we call Palm Sunday. It also explains why, 33 years before Palm Sunday, the Magi, guided by a new star in the Heavens, knew that Israel's King had been born and came to pay homage. You see, this is not even difficult math. A 9th grader could calculate this.

BUT, there is a problem - So far we have only identified 483 years. Daniel said that 70 weeks, or 490 years, were decreed. What's missing? 7 Years. We have a description of those 7 years in 26b and following:

26b. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. ²⁷ And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."



So the math was absolutely and remarkably precise for the first 483 years. One might assume the final week (7 years) would occur immediately after Christ's resurrection.

- But no foreign prince came to invade Jerusalem at that time.
- No covenant was made.
- No one put an end to sacrifices at the 3.5-year mark.
- No foreign invader was destroyed.

Some would argue this is describing what happened in 70AD when Rome invaded Jerusalem, but the time doesn't fit, nor does the specific prophetic story fit.

Thus, we are left to assume that the final WEEK (7 years) is yet to be fulfilled, which aligns perfectly with a seven-year period that John the Revelator describes as a time of tribulation the world has never seen. Jesus describes this time in detail in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24.

So, if I am correct that Daniel's 70th week is a 7-year period yet to come, we can draw a few conclusions.

1. Israel must exist as a political entity prior to the tribulation. That occurred May 14, 1948.
2. Second, we can presume a revival of Old Covenant Judaism, complete with Temple Worship, because we are told that the coming prince will end sacrifices.
3. Third, we can presume that the Jews must reclaim the Temple Mount in order to rebuild the Temple.

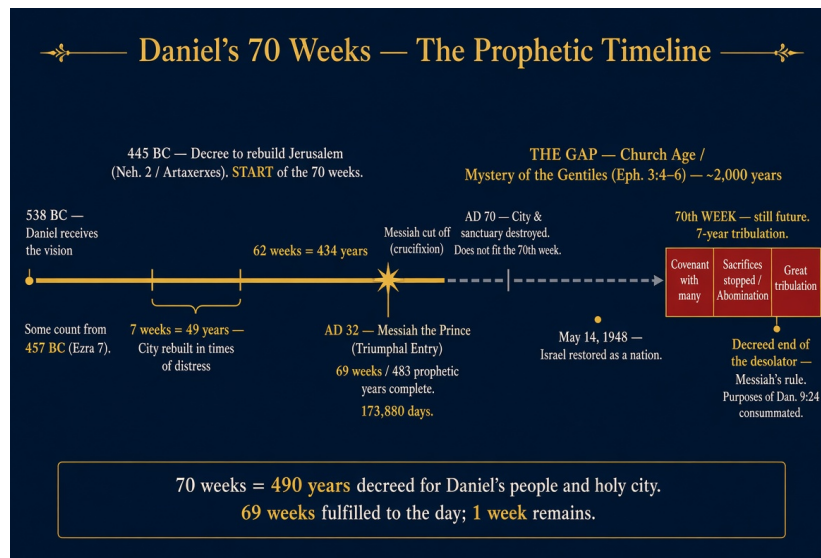
Incidentally, the Temple Institute, based in Jerusalem, is preparing for a future Third Temple by:

- Reconstructing sacred vessels and priestly garments
- Training men of priestly descent—the Kohanim
- Researching Temple sacrifices and worship procedures
- Preparing architectural plans for the temple - incidentally, it would take years to rebuild the temple, but a Tabernacle could be in place in a few hours.
- They are also supporting efforts related to obtaining a biblically qualified red heifer

4. One final thing we have to resolve - what do you do with the 2000 years between the crucifixion of Christ, and the final 7 years of tribulation? I want to suggest to you that this is the MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH AGE. In fact, this is specifically how Paul describes it in Ephesians 3 -

Ephesians 3:4–6 (ESV)

⁴ When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶ ***This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.***



- *Ok, in review - we were given specifics down to the coming of the Messiah.*
- *7 years were missing and are yet to come.*
- *Between the 483 years that led to the coming of the Messiah and the 7 years of tribulation, there is a mystery I call the Church age, or the time of the Gentiles.*

With this in mind, look with me at Romans 11.

CONTEXT: Remember where in this timeline Paul is living and writing - he is in the Church age. The Mystery has just been revealed that the Gentiles would embrace the Messiah that the Jews rejected. So several questions must be answered, and Romans 11 provides them.

In typical Pauline fashion Paul raises 3 questions, answers the questions, then supports his answers from the Old Testament.

TEXT: Romans 11:1-36 (ESV)

1. Question 1 - Is God Done with Israel?

- **Question** - 1 I ask, then, has God rejected his people?
- **Answer** - 1b. By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.
- **Illustration** - Elijah - 2b. Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? 3 "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." 4 But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. 6 But

if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

So, Paul says, Israel has not been permanently cast away; even Paul himself was a Jew, and God always keeps for Himself a remnant.

2. Question 2 - Did Israel Ultimately Fail?

- **Question** - ⁷ What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking.
- **Answer** The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened.
- **Illustration** ⁸ as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day."
- ⁹ And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; ¹⁰ let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever."

3. Question 3 - Why Would God Let This Happen?

- **Question** - ¹¹ So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall?
- **Answer** - By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. ¹² Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! ¹³ Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry ¹⁴ in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?
- **Illustration** - ¹⁶ If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches.

¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree,

So follow Paul's line of reasoning - Jesus came unto His own, and His own received Him not; thus Israel was broken off, and the Gospel was given to the Gentiles, people from every tribe and tongue. Thus, we were grafted into the Olive Tree.

What great event commemorated this? Pentecost! When the Gospel was heard in every language!

For the last 2000 years the Gospel has gone into all the world, and God's elect spring up in faith like a mighty harvest. But then comes a warning -

¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. ¹⁹ Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰ That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. ***So do not become proud, but fear.*** ²¹ For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you.

Paul is not saying that an individual christian might fall from grace, but rather that the Gentiles as a whole might lose their experience of grace and gospel.

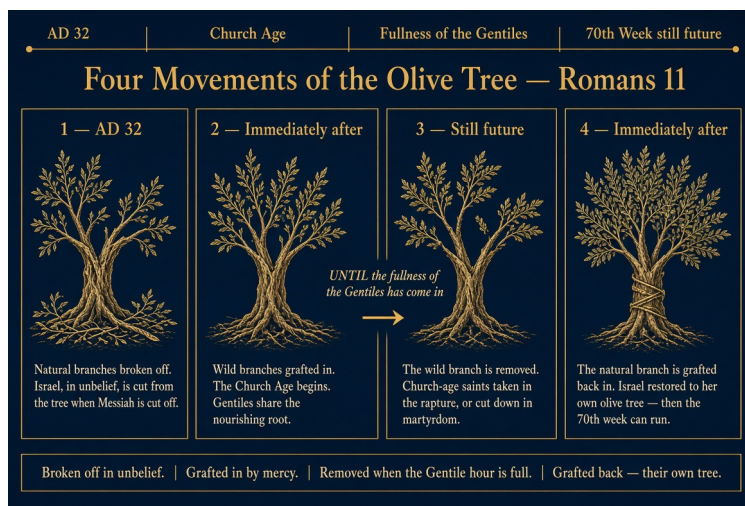
²² Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. ²³ And even they, if they do not continue in their unbelief, **will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again.** ²⁴ For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree.

This is a time yet to come, when a nation will be born in a day. All of Israel will be saved. Can you see it? There has just been the mass removal of the Gentile Church from the world; the Restrainer, that blessed Holy Spirit, has lifted His hand - wickedness quickly grows to levels never before seen since the days of Noah.

In the midst of the Chaos, Israel reclaims the Temple Mount and establishes Temple Worship - then, may it be on Yom Kippor - the Day of Atonement, the High Priest of Israel will lead in the sacrifices...

- **A young bull** as a sin offering for himself and his household.
- **A ram** as a burnt offering for himself.
- **One male goat** as a sin offering for the people.
- **A second male goat—the scapegoat**— would not be killed. The high priest would confess Israel's sins over it, and it would be led into the wilderness.
- **A ram** as a burnt offering for the people.

And then as the cameras of the world are fixed on this event that hasn't happened in thousands of years, his eyes are opened, he believes in Christ his Savior and Lord - he turns to the cameras and begins to preach the Gospel. Jews across the world believe and are saved. That is what Paul is alluding to in this text and what a glorious day it will be.



What keeps it from happening today? Well, we are told the Church age will continue until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. Somewhere, perhaps in this very room, there is a final conversion that must take place. I am convinced that once that last Gentile believes, a mighty trumpet will sound, and the dead in Christ will be raised, and we that are alive and remain will meet Him in the air. ***Then, Daniel's final week begins.***

CONCLUSION/INVITATION: The Branch on the Ground: Here is what I want you to see before you go. A branch that has been cut from a tree does not look dead. Not at first. Cut a limb off an olive tree and lay it on the ground, and for a day or two the leaves stay green. It looks exactly like the branches still on the tree. But it is not connected to the root, and it is dying, and it does not know it. Church can do that to a person. You can lie right up against this tree for years. You can grow up in a Christian home, sit in a pew, sing every hymn, be a good neighbor and a good citizen, and never once be joined to the root. Religion lies beside the tree. Grace is grafted into it. And there is only one graft. Paul told you what it is in verse 20: "you stand fast through faith." Not through heritage. Not through attendance. Not through being a decent person from a good family. Faith is the graft.