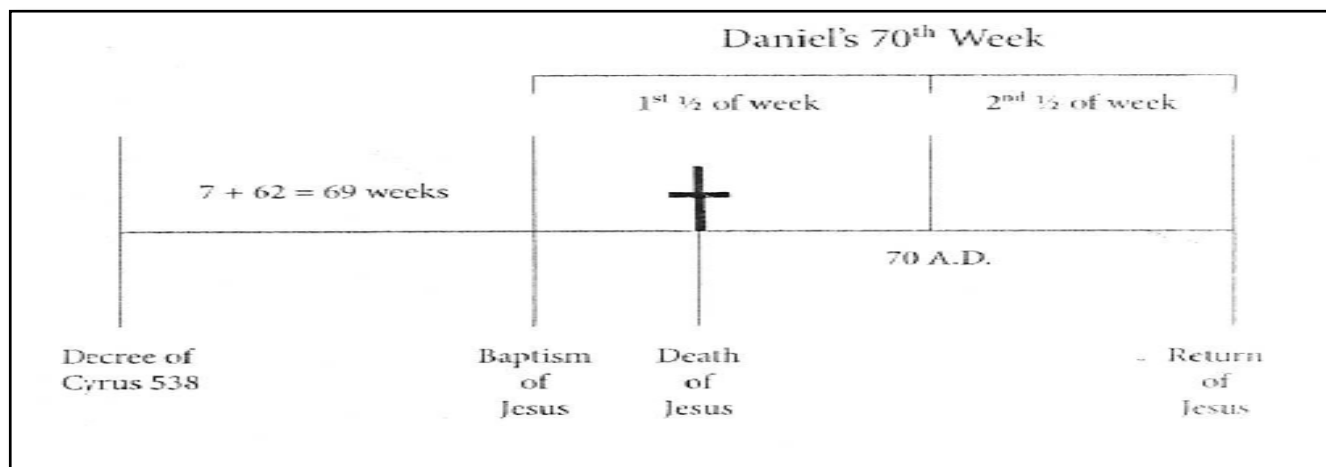


The Sign of Judgment – Matthew 24:15-18

The Question: Jesus says that the sign of judgment for the destruction of the temple is “seeing the abomination of desolation” that Daniel spoke of in Daniel 9. This raises the question – what is the prophecy that was given to Daniel by Gabriel in Daniel 9?



Interpretation Principle: What is the historical context in which Daniel 9 is taking place?

- In 9:2, Daniel prays to God concerning the prophecy Jeremiah gave about the 70-year captivity of Israel and the punishment of Babylon when the 70 years were complete. **(see Jeremiah 25:8-12)**
- Daniel brings this prophecy up because based on the numbers of years from when Jeremiah gave the prophecy the 70 years was just about up.
- This historical awareness motivated Daniel to pray for Israel and Jerusalem to be restored. (Daniel 9:16, 18 & 20)

KEY: Gabriel's response in Daniel 9:20-27 should be understood as an answer to Daniel's prayer. The logical conclusion is that the beginning of Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy coincides with the end of Jeremiah's 70 years captivity & punishment prophecy. The beginning of the "70 weeks" prophecy is around 538 B.C. or shortly thereafter. **(compare 9:25 with 2 Chronicles 36:17-23)**

Daniel 9:24 provides the purpose of the "70 Weeks" prophecy which is the arrival of the new covenant. Seventy weeks is the complete timeline in which the promises of the New Covenant will be fulfilled.

- a) "to finish the transgression" – *transgression refers to a rebellion against God and His laws.*
- b) "to put an end to sin" – *breaking the power and rule of sin.*
- c) "to atone for iniquity" – *most likely a reference to Christ atoning for their guilt.*
- d) "to bring in everlasting righteousness" – *reference to a permanent, lasting righteousness found only in Christ.*
- e) "to seal both vision and prophet" – *the foreshadowing of the old covenant will be sealed up because its purpose has been completed.*
- f) "to anoint a most holy place" – *literally reads "to anoint a most holy;" a reference to Jesus' baptism. He was set apart (or anointed) for God's use and empowered by the Holy Spirit. (no evidence in the Old Testament that the temple was ever anointed except for Moses anointing the tabernacle in the wilderness – Lev. 8:10-11)*

- ❖ 9:25 - Notice on the timeline in Daniel 9 that the first event is the decree of Cyrus to rebuild. After that you see $7 + 62 = 69$ weeks – Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time.

From our “looking back over history” vantage point we know that the “7 years” refers to the period of rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple during the time of Zerubbabel.

The subsequent “62 weeks” after the city was rebuilt refers to the ongoing rebuilding as well as a time of trouble for God’s people even though they were back in Jerusalem. (recorded in Nehemiah)

- ❖ The 69 weeks leads up to the coming of an “anointed one.” Because the purpose of the 70 weeks prophecy is the completion of the New Covenant, we can conclude the anointed one is Jesus which occurred at His baptism. (Acts 10:34-38)

Who is the “anointed one” that is cut off?

- ❖ “The anointed one that is cut off” – is an undeniably clear reference to the crucifixion of Jesus. (Isaiah 53:8)

KEY: At the crucifixion it is clear the Jewish people reject Christ as Messiah. Jesus speaks of this rejection in the events leading up to His crucifixion – which is found in the Olivet Discourse.

Who is the prince and his people?

With the advantage of history on our side we can look back and it is clear...

- The “prince and his people” is the Roman General Titus and the Roman army.
- The destruction refers to the city of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70.
- The “great tribulation” that Jesus says will occur (Mt. 24:21) is the siege and destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Titus and his armies. Titus and his army brought their legionary standards in the temple and offered sacrifices there declaring Titus the victor.

Who is the one who makes a covenant for one week and puts an end to sacrifice and offering?

Verses 26 & 27 are parallel descriptions of the same event, not sequential.

-Verse 26 describes the 70th week in “indefinite terms” while vs. 27 describes the week in more detail.

Jesus is the one who confirms a strong covenant with many and brings an end to sacrifice and offering.

Dr. Ian Duguid writes...

As soon as Jesus died on the cross the temple was functionally obsolete. Since His once-for-all sacrifice atoned for the transgressions of the many has been offered there was and is NO further need

for the temple in Jerusalem. That is why when Jesus breathed His last the curtain temple was torn in two, symbolizing the final departure of the Lord from His former abode, never to return there. Jesus himself declared the temple and the city of Jerusalem doomed by their refusal to come to Him and submit to His rule. This sentence was carried out in A.D.

KEY: Daniel was being told by Gabriel that the people of God would once again destroy Jerusalem and its temple in the exact same way as they had done in Daniel's day – through their disobedience and rebellion against God.

The hope, however, is that the Anointed One would confirm God's new covenant with the many, therefore making effective its provisions!

The Last Days

- ❖ Question 1 – When will the temple be destroyed?
- ❖ Question 2 – What will be the sign that you are returning?
- ❖ Question 3 – How will we know that the end of the age is upon us?

Matthew 24:29-31 is a symbolic description of the fall of Jerusalem and the temple. There are a few contextual hints that would indicate this...

1. The Greek word translated "immediately" in vs. 29 occurs thirteen times in Matthew's gospel. Every single time it is used it describes something that occurs very soon after the preceding event.
2. The Discourse is occurring in a section of scripture where Jesus has been issuing a warning of impending judgment on the people of Israel. He will soon implement the New Covenant and they will reject Him as the Messiah. (Matthew 23)
3. Jesus clearly does NOT address the issue of His second coming at the end of history until 24:36. In 24:34 He clearly states that "all these things" (*a reference to everything He has said prior to vs. 34*) must take place before "this generation" passes away.

There is a clear transition in vs. 36 where Jesus turns His attention to the second part of the disciples' question concerning when that day would be that He returns. He tells them that only the Father knows. Jesus goes on to describe what the final days will be like in Matthew 24:36-44.

Matthew 27:36-44 ³⁶ "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. ⁴² Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

- ❖ Jesus says very little concerning what the last days will be like. It would seem there will not be unprecedented global catastrophes or unparalleled calamities that will point to Christ's impending return.
- ❖ When Christ returns humanity will be deeply immersed in the routine affairs of life in the same way it was in the days of Noah. Christ's return will catch people off guard.

Final Thoughts

- 1. The destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in A.D. 70 might be a type or a foreshadowing of the events that will occur before the end of the age – except on a global scale.**

It is a mistake to project the historical details in A.D. 70 onto a literal, historical Jerusalem at the end of the age.

- 2. Our response to the darkness around us tends to be two-fold...**

- a) **Human activism – *put our hope in humanity trying to change it through our own efforts***
- b) **Passive despair – *assume nothing can be done***

- 3. Christ is our only hope in darkness so we must keep looking beyond this world for the ultimate fulfillment of God's promises.**

In the meantime – we must be praying that God will do what He promised in His word during this present time!