

**Daniel**  
**Chapter 9:20-27**  
**The Seventy “Sevens”**

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**20 While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the Lord my God for his holy hill— 21 while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. 23 As soon as you began to pray, a word went out, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the word and understand the vision:**

**24 “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.**

**25 “Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. 26 After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. 27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”**

**Introduction**

Upon the conclusion of Daniel's prayer, the Archangel Gabriel (whom Daniel had previously met in **Chapter 8**) is immediately dispatched with the answer. Gabriel's arrival coincides with the time of the evening sacrifice (**vs. 21**). When the Jews were still living in their beloved homeland, two sacrifices would be offered to God every day; one in the morning and one in the evening. The time of the evening sacrifice came at 3 p.m. each day, which was precisely the time of day that Christ would later yield up His spirit upon the cross (**Matt. 27:50**). This is no coincidence, considering that Jesus was the Lamb of God, given for the sins of the world (**John 1:29**). He was the final evening sacrifice, the last one to ever be required. It is fitting therefore, when Gabriel brings the revelation of the seventy weeks foretelling the suffering of the coming Messiah, that he arrives at precisely the time of the evening sacrifice! Our God is an Awesome God! He pays careful attention to every detail.

Gabriel begins by telling Daniel that God had heard his prayer of repentance, and He had immediately dispatched the answer, for Daniel was treasured (CSB) by God (**vs. 23**). There is no greater honor in life, than to receive the praise of God. As a believer in Christ, I long to live my life in a manner worthy of being highly esteemed by my Father in heaven. Those who faithfully serve and follow our Lord will be bestowed with this very same privilege when they hear Him say, **“Well done, good and faithful servant...”**, as they stand before the judgment seat of Christ (**Matt 25:23**). On that day, nothing else will matter. I wonder if the old prophet of God began to weep, when he heard those words, **“for you are highly esteemed”**.

Daniel had prayed for the restoration of Israel and the forgiveness of her sin. What he received in reply was much more than he could ever imagine. For God had laid out a plan, not only of forgiveness and restoration, but for the complete eradication of sin... forever. Israel would one day stand in the presence of God as a spotless, sinless example of His holiness. The angel explained that "seventy sevens" had been "**decreed**" for Daniel's people (**vs. 24**). It is important to understand that by saying "your people", God is referring to the Jews and not the church as some have suggested. The Hebrew word for decreed means to "cut out". What Gabriel is describing here is best understood by saying that during the times of the Gentiles a set amount of time, "seventy sevens", was to be cut out from among those days as a precise measure for the restoration of God's chosen people, the nation of Israel. The times of the Gentiles were to last for millennia, but out of those days God would cut seventy sevens to do his wondrous work with Daniel's beloved brethren.

The Hebrew word used here for "sevens" (*shabuwa*) is often translated as "weeks". In this passage, it is best understood to mean a period of seven years; a week of years as it were. Seventy times seven years, or 490 years had been set aside by God to do His work within the nation of Israel. The weeks of years have been broken down into three sections; seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and a final seven (**vs. 25, 27**). The first two sections are consecutive, but the final section that contains only one seven year period (**vs. 27**) is not connected to the first two. Remember that these periods of time have been strategically "cut out" from the times of the Gentiles. Therefore, it must not be viewed as simply a 490 year period, but rather a 49 year period, followed immediately by a 434 year period, with a final seven year period to come later. Just as God worked for six days during the creation week of **Genesis Chapter One**, He also gives Daniel six objectives that He intends to accomplish during these seventy weeks; to finish transgression, put an end to sin, atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy (**vs. 24**).

The first thing God intends is to finish transgression. The word used here for transgression actually means *rebellion*. God's grand plan will bring mankind's rebellion against Him to an end. Secondly, God plans to put an end to sin. The word used here for sin, *chatah* (which we have discussed earlier), means *to miss the mark, to not live up to the standards of God*. Thirdly, God promises to "atone" for sin. The word *Kaphar* in Hebrew used here for atone actually means *to cover* and is the root word used in Yom Kippor, otherwise known as "The Day of Atonement", one of the highest holy feast days in the nation of Israel. It is the day when the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies and sprinkle blood upon the mercy seat (ark of the covenant) to atone for or "cover" the sins of all Israel. God is telling Daniel in this text that He has a plan in place that will one day atone for sin, once and for all. He is referring to the cross of Jesus Christ, the atoning sacrifice that would wash away sin forever. Jesus, our High Priest, offered His own blood to take away the sins of the world, and once He had finished his work, He **SAT DOWN** at the right hand of the Father! (**Hebrews 10:12**). In the past, the Day of Atonement was unable to wash away the sins of the people, but was merely an act of faith that looked forward to the day when Christ would come to fulfill all prophecy. When the Messiah did come and shed His blood, He atoned for sin once and for all. This is why the book of *Hebrews* tells us that He **sat down** when it was finished. The death and resurrection of Jesus paved the way for the fourth, fifth, and sixth objectives as well. This great salvation plan of God would bring everlasting righteousness, seal up vision and prophecy (meaning literally "*finish*" God's work for redemption), and anoint the Most Holy; namely The Lord Jesus Himself, Who would one day be proclaimed Lord of All (**Phil. 2:10-11**).

Together these "seventy weeks" account for the greatest prophetic time table given in all *The Old Testament*, for they give us the message of the cross. Daniel is about to receive insight into the perfect plan for Israel's redemption. He will be shown here, the very day when Israel will see her deliverer ride into the city of Jerusalem! God would truly prove with this beautiful prophecy the words that He had so graciously given to the prophet Jeremiah, **"I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."** (**Jer. 29:11**). Let us look together at the three sections that God has cut out from time to prosper Israel and to give her a hope and a future.

### The Seven Sevens

The first section of "seven sevens" was to begin when the decree was issued to rebuild the wall and the city of Jerusalem (vs. 25). We already know from the earlier prophecies of Jeremiah, that the Jews would be allowed to return to their homeland after the seventy years of captivity were ended. There were several decrees that were given by the Medo-Persian monarchs to fulfill this prophecy (i.e.- Ezra 1:14; 6:1-12; 7:11-26), but none of these were in reference to the rebuilding of Jerusalem. That decree can be found in Nehemiah 2:5-9, when King Artaxerxes officially rules in favor of Nehemiah's request to restore Jerusalem to its former glory. God in His sovereignty, even gives us the exact date of this decree so that we can calculate the events of Daniel's seventy weeks of prophecy! The decree was issued to rebuild Jerusalem in the month of Nissan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes reign (Nissan 445 B.C.). From the time of this decree, Nehemiah would labor along with his fellow Jews to rebuild the great city. The process would take forty-nine years (seven x seven years) to complete, and all the while they would endure harsh persecution (in times of trouble - vs. 25) for their efforts. One only needs to read the book of Nehemiah to understand just what hardships he faced as he endeavored to restore his beloved homeland, but once the task was completed, the second set of "sevens" would begin. These sixty-two sevens would culminate in the greatest single event in world history, the coming of the Messiah.

### The Sixty-Two Sevens

From the time of Jerusalem's restoration, there was to be a period of waiting for the Anointed One. The Hebrew word for anointed One is "*Mashiach*" (or *Messiah*). This "Anointed One" was to come at the end of the sixty-two sevens that would follow the rebuilding of Jerusalem (vs. 25-26). These sixty-two sevens or 434 years would be a time of great trial for the Jewish people. Though back in their beloved homeland, they were still subject to Gentile servitude, for the days of the Gentiles were by no means ended. As the long years passed, they would find themselves under the dominance of not only the Medo-Persians, but also the Greeks, culminating in the horrific era of Antiochus Epiphanes, and, as if those days were not terrible enough, as the 483 year period was coming to its conclusion, the Jews found themselves caught firmly in the jaws of the merciless Roman Empire. No doubt, by this time, the people of Israel were desperately longing for a deliver, someone who could break the Roman chains of cruelest bondage. They had read the prophecies and they were waiting; waiting for the Anointed One to come... to finally come to set them free.

By using a lunar calendar (the method of timekeeping used by the Jews), we will discover that exactly 483 years (seven sevens plus sixty-two sevens) after the decree was issued to rebuild God's beloved city of Jerusalem, a thirty-three year old Rabbi rode into the city on the back of a donkey that had never before been ridden (Matthew 21:1-11). As He rode through the crowded streets on His way to the temple mount, He was greeted by massive throngs of people waving palm branches and shouting "Hosannah" meaning save us now! Jesus the Messiah rode into Jerusalem to give His life to ransom those who were enslaved by sin. To put an end to rebellion, to finish sin, permanently atone for wickedness, to usher in everlasting righteousness, and to finish the work of God. He came unto His own, but His own received Him not (John 1:11), for they expected a different kind of deliverer. He came to do much more than they were hoping for. But because they did not understand God's plan, these same crowds that were worshiping Him as he entered the city, would just a few days later cry out for His execution. Daniel foresaw this fateful day, when the angel Gabriel said, "After the sixty-two sevens, the Anointed One will be cut off" (put to death) and will have nothing" (vs. 26). Jesus came to save. It was always the plan, but it would require His death on the cross to save the world from sin. On this day, He seemed to be finished and "have nothing", but the plan of God would one day include its final objective in "anointing Him the Most Holy (One)" (vs.24). There was still a final "seven" yet to come. It would come in the distant future, the "week" when the Nation of Israel would finally recognize their Messiah and crown Him as Lord!

## **The Seventieth Seven!**

After the death of The Anointed One, the angel tells Daniel that the people of "the ruler who is to come" will once again destroy the city of Jerusalem (**vs. 26**). This is a reference to the Roman destruction of Israel in seventy A.D. to crush the Jewish resistance once and for all. The "ruler who will come" is a reference to the Antichrist, who will one day revive the now dormant Roman Empire, to usher in Satan's final assault upon the chosen people of God, the nation of Israel. Gabriel describes the time leading up to this conclusion as being filled with strife (**vs. 26**). War upon war will engulf this world until the Antichrist comes upon the scene bearing false hopes of peace and security.

Israel is now in a holding pattern, awaiting this time. These days of Israel's anticipation are known to all Evangelicals as the "church age". It is as if Israel's progress has been halted for a time to allow the church of Christ to complete its work upon the earth. Some have described it as though the Nation of Israel is now stopped in "traffic" as it were, to allow the parade of the church to pass by. Once the "parade" is over (when the church is raptured), then Israel's forward progression can resume. The "gap" between the 483 years and the final seven years has been ordained for the church to reach as many as will believe in the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. We as believers are to use this time wisely to fulfill the "Great Commission" given us in **Matthew 28:19**.

During the final "seven", which we know from the apostle John's prophecy in Revelation as "The Tribulation Period", the Antichrist (**ruler who will come – vs. 26**) will establish a covenant with the nation of Israel and promise to protect her (**vs. 27**). He will appear to truly care for the tiny nation and will allow the temple that was destroyed by his Roman predecessors to be rebuilt. Halfway through the seven year period, he will break his promises to the Jews and set up an image of himself inside the Jewish Temple and demand its worship (**vs.27, Rev.13:14-16**). For the final three and one half years of this final "seven" he will severely persecute the Jews, who refuse to worship him as God. This last three and one half year period is known as "The Great Tribulation". The Jews, who resist the Antichrist and refuse to give him glory, will turn to Jesus as their Messiah (**Zechariah 12:10**). Jesus will finally be "anointed" as the rightful King of the Jews. This will be the final "sealing of all prophecy, as well as, the anointing of the Holy One" (**vs. 24**). God's plan for His people will be completed. The seventy weeks of Daniel will accomplish all six of God's objectives. Israel will unite with the church of Jesus Christ, and just as God did in the seventh day of creation when His six days of work had ended, we too will finally be at REST.