

Summary of Dispensational Eschatology: The End Times Events — The Tribulation (Handout)

Aug, 2024

The Tribulation or Daniel's 70th Week — Daniel 9:24-27

I. KEY PASSAGES

A. Daniel's 70th Week. Dan 9:24-27

1. The Extent of time — "Seventy weeks" (24)
2. The Divine Action — "are determined" (24)
3. The Subject of the 490 years — "for your people and for your holy city." (24)
 - a) The identity of "your" — Daniel.
 - b) The people of Daniel — The Jews.
 - c) The holy city of Daniel — Jerusalem.
4. The Purpose of the 490 years. (24)
 - a) To finish the transgression, — *to bring an end to the rebellion of the Jews.*
 - b) To make an end of sins, — *to lock up all kinds of sins under seal.*
 - c) To make reconciliation for iniquity, — *to cover up iniquity so that God does not see it.*
 - d) To bring in everlasting righteousness, — *the spiritual status of the nation of Israel will be "righteousness" from the point of the fulfillment of this purpose onward.*
 - e) To seal up vision and prophecy, — *lit. "Vision and the prophet"; refers to the preservation of both the prophecies of this vision and Daniel himself (12:4, 9:13).*
 - f) And to anoint the Most Holy.¹ — *the dedication of the Temple of the Messianic Kingdom.*
5. Daniel Is To Understand — Know therefore and understand, (25)
6. The Starting Point of the 490 Years — That from the going forth of the command (25)^{2 3}

¹ There are several options where this might be true.

1. In Daniel's day the temple had been destroyed.
2. Ezra — temple is rebuilt. Temple of Zerubbabel.
3. Antiochus Epiphanes — Temple is defiled.
4. Maccabees — Temple is rededicated in 164 B.C.
5. Herod the Great — Renovated and expanded the Temple of Zerubbabel.
6. A.D. 70 — The Roman's destroyed the Temple.
7. No temple exists to this day.
8. The Tribulation Temple — the Temple will be rebuilt and thus rededicated.
9. The Millennial Temple.

Now in evaluating these options we will find that only one fits along with the other 5 things that will be accomplished during the 70-Weeks; the Millennial Temple.

- Ezekiel's description of the Millennial Temple not only requires new construction, but also a rededication.

² There are three aspect that must correctly correlate for the command to be properly identified. So we have to find these three things to identify the command.

- It Is an Authoritative Word.

- With Authority — In other words, this cannot just be a request that is made. It is something that come with authority.
- From Authority — It must come from competent authority.
- Not Technical — This authoritative word, does not have to be a technical word for a *command* or *decree*.
 - The word translated "command" is *dabar* (דָּבָר).
 - This is the broadest word in Hebrew for communication, spoken or written; a message.
 - Only the context can tell you what kind of communication it is. Since the context is causing the rebuilding of Jerusalem, we know that it is a command.
 - This is important because as we try to identify the exact "command" being referred to here, people will discount views because of the lack of a technical or formal word for a command.

- The Time Starts With Issuing the Command.

- So the time is related to the giving of the command and not the execution of the command.
- So we are interested in when the command goes forth; issued.

- The Command Is About the Rebuilding of the City of Jerusalem.

- The command must be specifically about the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem itself.
- So it may include the building of the temple or the building of the walls, but these things aren't required. It must however, mention the building of the city of Jerusalem.

³ So when we see references to these times and events mentioned in other parts of the Bible, we will know where those things fit in God's timeline for prophecy.

7. The Content of the Command — To restore and build Jerusalem (25)⁴
8. The Presentation of the Messianic King — Until Messiah the Prince, (25)⁵
9. The Intervening Period of Time — There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; (25)⁶
10. The Extent of the Rebuilding of Jerusalem — The street shall be built again, and the wall, (25)
11. The Context of the Rebuilding of Jerusalem — Even in troublesome times. (25)
12. The Time After and Outside of the 69 Weeks — “And after the sixty-two weeks (26)
13. The Main Event Outside of the 69 Weeks — Messiah shall be cut off, (26)

⁴ The Options For Identifying This Command: (A) The Decree of Cyrus in 537 B.C. — Ezr 1:2-4; 6:3-5. (B) The Decree of Artaxerxes In His 7th Year, 458 B.C. — Ezr 7:11-26. (C) The Decree of Artaxerxes in His 19th/20th Year, 445 or 444 B.C. — Neh 2:5-8.

The Evaluation Of These Options.

- The Decree of Cyrus in 537 B.C. — Ezr 1:2-4; 6:3-5.

- Ezra 1:2-4 — This is a command with authority and from authority — Cyrus the Great. This is technically a command or decree. But this command is not about building the city of Jerusalem. In 1:2-4 this command relates to building the Temple: “And He (the LORD God of Heaven) has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem” (v. 2). “...and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel” (v. 3). This command only mentions Jerusalem in reference to the location of the Temple. Nothing is said about rebuilding the city.
- Ezra 6:3-5 — This is a command with and from authority — Cyrus the Great. This is a command that use the technical word for a command or decree. This command is all about the Temple: “Issued a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem” (v. 3). The dimensions of the Temple are mentioned (v. 3); note these dimensions could never be those of a city. There are provisions connected to the Temple which are mentioned; “Also let the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple which is in Jerusalem...” (v. 5). As with Ezra 1, this command only mentions Jerusalem in reference to the location of the Temple.
- **CONCLUSION:** So without even considering the historical matters of how the date of this command might workout, we can tell from the biblical data alone that this cannot be the command referred to in Dan 9:25 because these commands are only about the Temple and not building the city.

- The Decree of Artaxerxes in his 7th Year, 458 B.C. — Ezr 7:11-26 — It is a command with and from authority — King Artaxerxes. It uses the technical word for decree. But It is not about the building of the city Jerusalem. You will notice that “Jerusalem” is mentioned throughout this passage. But it is only mentioned as a location or destination, not as the object of a building project. The decree that is issued concerns the returning to the Land, to Judah and Jerusalem (v. 13). As part of the decree special attention is paid to “the house of (your) God” related to the provisions for the Temple. As with Ezra 1 & 6, no mention is made of building Jerusalem.

- **CONCLUSION:** While there are many scholar who prefer this date and decree for Dan 9:25, a careful reading of the passage reveals no mention whatsoever is made to building Jerusalem, but extensive attentions is paid to the Temple. So only in the absence of any suitable “commands or decrees to build” would we even need to consider how the date of this command reflects the historical reality.

- The Decree of Artaxerxes in His 19th/20th Year, 445 or 444 B.C. — Neh 2:5-8 — It will be noticed right away that this passage lacks the “command” and “decree” language of the two previous passages. However, in v. 7, Nehemiah’s request for letters is nothing less than a request for a royal decree to assist and allow Nehemiah to do his work. Second, notice the request which the King is granting, “if it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my father’s tombs, that I may rebuild it.” (v. 5) So the request and the granting the request is directly about rebuilding “the city of my father’s tombs” which is of course Jerusalem. We might also give further notice to the fact that Nehemiah is not asking for royal permission, he is asking for a royal mission. In v. 5 Nehemiah says, “I ask that you send me to Judah....” So he is asking for the king to send him.

Now if need be, we could get into the details of the how each of these dates impacts and informs the timing of this prophecy. But we simply don’t have to do that. Because a straightforward reading of the passages themselves reveals that only one of these relates specifically to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and that is Neh 2.

⁵ **Until** — This is a preposition that means “up to.” Now, we should recognize that “up to” includes the event in the time-span being spoken of. This means that “until Messiah the Prince” is included in the 69-weeks, or the 483 years and marks the end of it. “Until Messiah the Prince” will mark the end of the time being referred to.

Messiah — “Messiah” comes from the word “anointed” מָשִׁיחַ (*mashiach*). In this particular instance, it is an adjective modifying the following word “prince.” So a more straightforward reading of the phrase would be... “until the anointed prince.” This form (adjective) appears some 38 times in the OT. It is used of “priests” (Lev 4:3), of the king (1Sam 2:10), of the LORD’s Messiah (1 Sam 2:35); but it can also be used of anyone who the LORD has chosen for something specific.

Prince — The word “Prince” is a word that is a general reference to a “leader” נָגִיד (*nagiyd*). It is used some 43 times in the OT. It is used of kings (Saul, David, Solomon, and other kings of Judah); it is used of lesser rulers.

Who is this “anointed ruler”? Is it just a normal “king” or “priest”? There are 4 places which connect the word “anointed/Messiah” and “ruler/prince” — 1Sam 9:16; 10:1; 12:3; 1Chr 29:22. The first 3 are in reference to King Saul and the last to King Solomon. The point to see is that the combination of the words “messiah” and “prince” are in reference to the king of Israel. So who is this “anointed ruler”? It is the Coming King of Israel. Now, who was the King that everyone was looking for? The Coming King that God has promised of Israel.

In addition, we also need to consider the noun form of “Messiah” in v. 26 since it is within this context. Here it is unquestionably referring of the Messiah who has been predicted, who would be the one to restore Israel. So the event being spoken of is either: (a) The Coming of the Messiah, or (b) The Presentation of the Messiah. We will find when looking at “The Time”, this must be referring to the Presentation of the Messiah.

⁶ But we also need to recognize that there must be a reason for dividing this total time into two sections. But what that reason might be, it is not important enough to mention. Therefore we should note the division, but not dwell on it. Some have suggested, and it does make sense, that the 7-weeks or 49-years of the first division, refers to the time it will take to rebuild the City of Jerusalem as described in this verse. This would put the completion of restoring and building the city of Jerusalem at about 395 B.C. The significance of the two parts is that they are to be taken together to give 483 years between the “going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem” to “the presentation of the Messiah.”

14. The Substitutionary Atonement and Postponement of the Kingdom — but not for Himself; (26)⁷
15. The Domination of the Romans — And the people of the prince who is to come (26)
16. The Destruction of Jerusalem & Temple — Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. (26)
17. The Description of the Destruction of Jerusalem & Temple — The end of it shall be with a flood, (26)
18. The Continuing Situation of Jerusalem & Temple — And till the end of the war desolations are determined. (26)
19. The Covenant That Marks The Resumption Of The 490 Year Plan — Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; (27)
20. The Breaking of the Covenant — But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. (27)
21. The Continuing Activity of the Antichrist — And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, (27)
22. The End of the Week Mark by the Judgment of the Antichrist — Even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate." (27)

CONCLUSION

- The 7-year Tribulation is the last 7 years of God's 490 year plan for the Jews and Jerusalem.
- The 490 years goes together; to understand the last 7 you must understand the first 483.
- The beginning of the Tribulation is marked by the world ruler of that day ("little horn" of Dan 7; "Beast from the Sea" "Antichrist" of Rev) causing the Nation of Israel to make a covenant with him where he will allow them to worship in Jerusalem, in the Temple.
- At the 3 1/2 year mark of the 7-year-covenant, the Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jews by stopping Temple worship.
- From the 3 1/2 year point on, things are going to get worse and worse, especially for the Jews.
- The end of the Tribulation is marked out by God's judgment on the Antichrist.

⁷ This is a somewhat difficult expression — If we go with the translation of the KJV & NKJV — it seems to be a reference to the substitutionary atonement: The Messiah will not be cut off for himself...that is to say, he will be killed for the sake of others. However, if we go with the other translations such as the NASB or NIV — it seems to indicate the Messiah receives nothing; "and have nothing"; This is an idiomatic expression — i.e., a group of words which come to mean something other than what each word on its own might mean. ("That dog won't hunt" = that does not work) It does seem that in other places where this expression appears (Ex 22:2, 3; Lev 11:10, 12; Num 27:4, 8, 9, 10; 35:27; Dt 12:12; 14:10, 27, 29; 25:5; Judg 11:34) that it means "not to have."

I think there are sound arguments for both interpretations. If the expression is taken in a non-idiomatic way, "and not because of him/himself" (i.e., KJV & NKJV) — then it is speaking of the substitutionary atonement of the Messiah; We know this to be true from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Messiah will die a substitutionary death. If this expression is taken idiomatically as in "and he has nothing," the question comes up "What should he have had?" What is the thing he does not have? In the context, I think would a reference to the Restored Kingdom of Israel. In other words, when the Messiah is cut off, killed, He will not receive the Kingdom at this time.

These interpretations are not mutually exclusive. In other words, it is not necessarily "either/or" but could be "both/and." If the Messiah dies as the substitutionary atonement, then it is a given that He will not receive the Kingdom at that time.