

Daniel 9:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Analysis

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city (שבעים שבועים נחלק על-עמך ועל-עיר קדשך)—The Hebrew shavu'im shiv'im (שבעים שבועים, "seventy weeks") literally means "seventy sevens," interpreted as seventy weeks of years (490 years). The verb nechtak (נחלק, "determined/decreed") means "cut off" or "decisively fixed," indicating God's sovereign timetable for redemptive history. This prophecy concerns "your people" (Israel) and "your holy city" (Jerusalem), establishing its specific historical referent.

The sixfold purpose clause defines what these 490 years will accomplish:

1. **to finish the transgression** (lekalle hapesha, ללכלא הפשע)—to restrain or bring rebellion to completion
2. **to make an end of sins** (ulchatom chatta'ot, ולחתם חטאת)—literally "to seal up sin," ending its power
3. **to make reconciliation for iniquity** (ulkhapper 'avon, ולכפר עון)—to atone for or cover iniquity through sacrifice
4. **to bring in everlasting righteousness** (ulhavi tsedek 'olamim, ולהביא צדק עולמים)—to establish righteousness that endures forever
5. **to seal up the vision and prophecy** (velachtom chazon venavi, ולחתם חזון ונביא)—to authenticate and complete prophetic revelation

6. to anoint the most Holy (velimshoach qodesh qodashim, מְשִׁיחַ שְׁטִיחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ)
—to anoint the Most Holy One or consecrate the Most Holy Place.

This passage is the Old Testament's most precise messianic prophecy.

Reformed interpreters have historically identified these accomplishments with Christ's first advent: His death accomplished atonement (3), His resurrection brought eternal righteousness (4), His ministry fulfilled prophecy (5), and His ascension anointed Him as eternal High Priest (6, cf. Hebrews 9:11-12). The 490 years, calculated from Artaxerxes' decree (Nehemiah 2:1-8, 445 BC), extend to Christ's ministry and the temple's destruction (AD 70), demonstrating God's meticulous sovereignty over redemptive history.

Historical Context

Daniel received this revelation around 538 BC (9:1-2) during Darius the Mede's reign, while studying Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years' exile (Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10). His intercessory prayer (9:3-19) sought understanding of Israel's restoration. The angel Gabriel appeared with this stunning response: rather than merely 70 years, God's plan encompasses seventy weeks of years—490 years—to accomplish complete redemption. The prophecy's mathematical precision led Sir Robert Anderson (*The Coming Prince*, 1894) and others to calculate that the 69 weeks (483 years) extended from Artaxerxes' decree to Christ's triumphal entry. The seventieth week remains debated—some apply it to Christ's ministry and Jerusalem's destruction, others see a gap before future fulfillment. This prophecy sustained Jewish hope during intertestamental persecution and validated Jesus as Messiah through fulfilled timeline.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the precision of this 490-year prophecy strengthen your confidence in Scripture's divine inspiration and Christ's messianic identity?
2. Which of the six accomplishments (finishing transgression, ending sin, making atonement, bringing righteousness, sealing prophecy, anointing the Holy One) most encourages you in your current spiritual struggles?

Interlinear Text

שָׁבַע יָמִים	שָׁבַע יָמִים	נִחַתְּ הָ	עַל	עַמְּךָ אֶ	וְעַל	עִיר יֵר
weeks	Seventy	are determined	H5921	upon thy people	H5921	city
H7620	H7657	H2852		H5971		H5892
קִדְּשִׁים:	לְכֹל אֶ	הַפֶּ שֶׁעַ	וְלִחְתָּם	חַטָּאוֹת		
Holy	to finish	the transgression	and to seal up	of sins		
H6944	H3607	H6588	H2856	H2403		
וְלַכִּפּוּר	עוֹן	וְלַבְּרִיָּה	צְדִיקָה	עֲלֵמֵי יָמִים		
and to make reconciliation	for iniquity	and to bring in	righteousness	everlasting		
H3722	H5771	H935	H6664	H5769		
וְלִחְתָּם	חֶזֶן	וְנָבִיא	וְלִמְשָׁח	קִדְּשִׁים:	קִדְּשִׁים:	
and to seal up	the vision	and prophecy	and to anoint	Holy	Holy	
H2856	H2377	H5030	H4886	H6944	H6944	

Additional Cross-References

Romans 5:10 (Parallel theme): For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Isaiah 61:1 (Parallel theme): The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

Leviticus 25:8 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

Numbers 14:34 (Parallel theme): After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.

Isaiah 51:6 (Righteousness): Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

Isaiah 56:1 (Righteousness): Thus saith the LORD, Keep ye judgment, and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.

Acts 3:22 (Prophecy): For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

Psalms 2:6 (Holy): Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

Isaiah 51:8 (Righteousness): For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.

Psalms 45:7 (Righteousness): Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.