

Understanding Daniel's 70 Weeks

by Douglas E. Cox

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Chapter 1

How were Daniel's prophecies sealed?

The prophecies of Daniel were sealed up, so they would not be understood until the end of the age, according to Daniel 8:17, and Daniel 12:4, 9.

In Daniel 8:17, an angel says to Daniel, "Understand, O son of man: for at the time of *the end* shall be the vision."

In verse 27, Daniel says of the vision described in that chapter, "I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it."

In Daniel 12:4 an angel said, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of *the end*." In verse 9 he said, "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of *the end*."

The vision of chapter 8, and other prophecies in the book, were to remain sealed till the end time.

Several of the incidents described in Daniel illustrate that the Spirit given to Daniel enabled him to explain dreams and visions that had stumped the wise men of Babylon. They were unable to explain Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2, or the writing that appeared on the wall at Belshazzar's feast in chapter 5. One of the purposes of the 70 weeks prophecy was to *seal up* the vision and prophecy.¹ The 70 weeks prophecy has certainly been one of the most controversial prophecies in the Bible.

Daniel's prophecies were written in such a way that only the wise would understand them.

Daniel 12:10

Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall

¹Daniel 9:24

do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

The 70 weeks prophecy seals up other prophecies in various ways. It consists of three sections: 7 weeks, 62 weeks, and 1 week. Almost all commentators have assumed that the units in all sections are the same. They insist that the 70 weeks are weeks of years, for a total of 490 years. But that assumption is simplistic, and seems inconsistent with the role of the seventy weeks prophecy, as one that seals up other prophecies, and one that would be understood only by the wise.

Assuming that the weeks in all sections of the prophecy have the same units, and that the weeks are weeks of years, the period spanned by the first two sections of the 70 weeks does not fit the time from the decree of Cyrus to the Messiah. It is not even close. Either it ends too soon, or another decree must be found to begin the prophecy. Expositors usually select one of several minor rulings, or letters of permission, by kings that followed Cyrus, that were intended to implement some portion of the objectives of the original decree given by Cyrus. The scripture mentions several of these.

In the nineteenth century Sir Robert Anderson (1841-1918), an ultradispensationalist, and a detective at Scotland Yard, resorted to "prophetic years" of 360 days, to obtain an *exact fit* for the first two sections of the 70 weeks, between the 20th year of Artaxerxes Longimanus in 445 BC and the alleged year of the crucifixion of Christ. Anderson claimed Nehemiah had received an edict from Artaxerxes on March 14, 445 BC, and 173,880 days later, which was 483 *prophetic years* of 360 days, was 10 Nisan 32 AD. He claimed this was shortly before Christ was crucified. But other evidence indicates Christ was likely crucified in 30 AD, not 32 AD.

Anderson claimed that the 70th week is yet future, which removes the crucifixion of Jesus, his resurrection, the coming of the Spirit, the end of oblations and sacrifices, the destruction of the temple, and the entire church age from the scope of the 70 weeks. But Daniel 9:27 says, "he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." This plainly says that the termination of sacrifices and oblations was to occur in the midst of the final week. A critique of Anderson's work by Bob Pickle has exposed several flaws.¹

Preterists also have difficulty understanding the prophecy. They say the entire 70 weeks were fulfilled in the first century. If so, it must have happened without the knowledge of the apostles! None of them acknowledged that it had been fulfilled, in their writings of the New Testament. But that is unlikely to be true, since Daniel's prophecies were not meant to be understood till the end time.

Preterists disagree about when the 70th week was fulfilled. Some say it began with the ministry of Jesus, and ended seven years later. Others invoke a gap, and say it ended at the destruction of Jerusalem. Yet the 70 weeks were about the duration of the deso-

¹<http://www.pickle-publishing.com/papers/sir-robert-anderson.htm>

lations of Jerusalem, and so their fulfillment ought to bring peace and joy to Jerusalem, not desolation! Obviously the preterist interpretations of the 70 weeks prophecy are flawed.

If the units in the three sections of the prophecy differ, what might they be? The first two sections span the time from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, to the appearance of the Messiah. This decree was given by Cyrus in the first year of his reign, which is believed to be the year 538 BC. The prophet Isaiah said the Cyrus would be the one to give the word to build Jerusalem and the temple.¹

If the units in the first seven weeks are taken to be leap years, the first section consisting of 49 leap years would be 133 years. Leap years, in the ancient Hebrew and Babylonian calendars, were years of 13 months. These occurred about every second or third year, and seven leap years occurred in 19 years. Taking the units in the second section to be sabbatical cycles, the second section is 62×7 , or 434 years. Thus the first two sections together span 567 years, which fits the time from the decree of Cyrus to the coming of Christ in 28 AD precisely. But this simple solution has eluded the attention of the Bible scholars.

Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy has indeed sealed up prophecy, since although it has been scrutinized for centuries, it has not been fully understood. In particular, the 70th week has been misunderstood. It is the week when Christ confirms his covenant with his saints. This covenant is the New Covenant of the gospel. The 70th week is not a literal seven years, but it corresponds to "seven times."

The interpretation of the 70 weeks requires that we consider the four periods of "seven times" mentioned in Leviticus 26. Daniel stated in his prayer of confession which is the prelude to the 70 weeks prophecy that the curse of the law of Moses had been poured out upon Israel. The exile must have fulfilled the first of the four periods of seven times, which was poured out on the Jews during their captivity in Babylon. The three sections in the prophecy of the 70 weeks correspond to the other three periods of "seven times" mentioned in Leviticus 26. In the last of these, God had promised to remember his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel would become reconciled to God. This promise that God would remember his covenant with Abraham is mentioned in a prophecy given by John's father Zacharias, when his son was born.²

The 70th week corresponds to the last of the four periods of "seven times" of Leviticus 26.

The 70th week is when Christ "confirms the covenant with many." Paul identified God's promises to Abraham with the gospel in Galatians 3:8. The week when Christ confirms the covenant began when he was baptized by John the Baptist.

¹Isaiah 44:23-28

²Luke 1:72

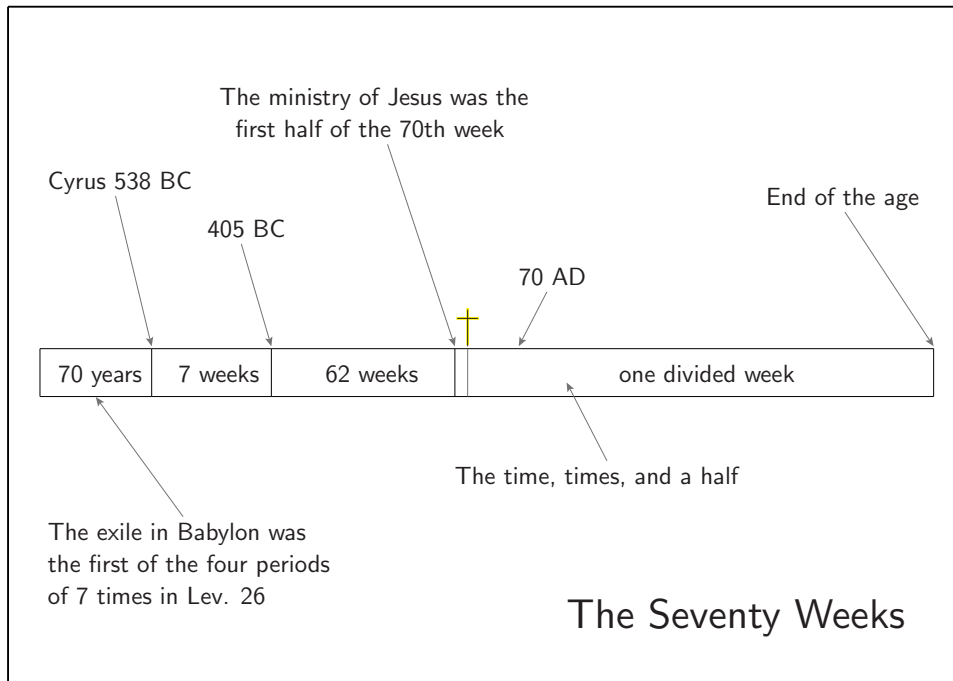


Figure 1.1: The 70 weeks and four periods of seven times

We can be confident that there can be no gaps in the 70 weeks, such as the one proposed by dispensationalists, since the four periods of “seven times” in Leviticus 26 correspond to the duration of the curse, and in Daniel, they can be viewed as an extension of the 70 years of Jeremiah’s prophecy. Thus they correspond to the duration of the desolations of Jerusalem. Any gap would imply a lapse in the curse, and would also require that God was temporarily reconciled to his people. But that has not happened; any reconciliation between God and his people must be permanent.

Daniel 9:27 shows that the abolition of sacrifices and oblations would happen “in the midst of the week.” It occurred as a result of the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. But the last half-week continues, as Christ still confirms his covenant with us. The final half of the 70th week is the “time, times, and a half,” and is symbolic, and includes the entire time of the church, in which the gospel goes to the world. It is the duration of the age in which we are now.

Figure 1.1 shows the relationships between Daniel’s numbers, the numbers in Revelation, and the 70th week. Figures 1.2–1.10 are similar, but with labels in various languages other than English.

Other prophecies in the Bible refer to the “time, times, and a half.” It is mentioned in Revelation 12:14, where the woman, who represents the church, flees to the wilderness for that period of time.

The same chapter refers to a period of 1,260 days, which is also mentioned in Rev-

elation 11:3. And the references to 42 months in Revelation 11:2, and 13:5, seem to apply to the same prophetic time period.

In Daniel 12:11-12, Daniel mentions two time periods, of 1,290 days, and 1,335 days. The 1,290 days is associated with the duration of the abomination of desolation. When we compare these to the 1,260 days mentioned by John, there is obviously a progression, as if the remaining time was decreasing. Such is the nature of time. John's 1,260 days is the smallest, and in Revelation 11:9 and 11 he even speaks of three days and a half, indicating a period very close to the end of the age.

All of these numbers have units of days, and they apply to the remaining time of the church. There is a contrast between these numbers, and those given in units of months, which apply to the forces of evil; the time that Gentiles trample the holy city, and the time that the beast persecutes the saints. These are of the night, rather than the day, and so their times are given in months, which are associated with the moon.

The reason the time periods related to the church are given in days can be seen from Paul's statement, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."¹

Also, there may be an allusion to the story of Jacob and Rachel. [Genesis 29:20] Jacob's seven years of labor "seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." The seven years were a pattern or type of the week for which Christ confirms his covenant with his church, which is his bride.

The intermediate period of 1,290 days is the time remaining after the abomination of desolation is set up. This must have been after the final half-week had begun, when Jesus ascended to heaven. It must also occur before the beginning of the 1,260 days, which is the time of the ministry of the two witnesses, and the time the church flees to the wilderness. The antichrist spirit, mentioned in John's epistles, which was established in the church before John wrote the Apocalypse, corresponds to the abomination of desolation. These are some of the ways that Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks seals prophecy. Properly understanding the 70 weeks opens up other prophecies which were previously obscure.

¹1 Thessalonians 5:5

Chapter 2

Belshazzar's feast

The feast made by Belshazzar for a thousand of his princes occurred in the night Babylon fell to the forces of Cyrus. During the feast, the king of Babylon, his wives, and princes, and concubines drank wine from the vessels taken from the temple of God.

Daniel 5:1-3

Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

Belshazzar, while he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.

John refers to the wine of Babylon metaphorically. It represents false doctrine, and superstition. He said "the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication . . . all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."¹

The wine of Babylon is pagan religion, and to drink it from the golden vessels of the temple is a figure of pagan superstition served as though it were the revelation of God. In worldly religion, pagan beliefs are represented as Christian, and as the gospel of Christ.

During the feast, Belshazzar saw a mysterious hand writing on the wall. The wise men of Babylon could not read it, or provide an explanation. The queen recommended sending for Daniel.

¹Revelation 17:2; 18:3

The writing was interpreted for the king by Daniel. It consisted of four words. Daniel said the words were, "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin," which meant "numbered, numbered, weighed, divided." These words seem to correspond to units of currency: the mina, shekel, and the pares, which is half of a mina.

Within a short time after the feast of Belshazzar, Daniel was given the revelation contained in the prophecy of the 70 weeks, that constitutes Daniel chapter 9. In the prayer included in the chapter, Daniel refers to the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy, and the curse of the law of Moses, which alludes to Leviticus 26. Since the 70 weeks are given in three sections, these together with the period of the exile amount to four distinct time periods.

Four periods of seven times are outlined in Leviticus 26. The four words interpreted by Daniel at Belshazzar's feast may be associated with the four time periods of prophecy, which consist of the exile in Babylon, and the three sections of the 70 weeks. These are called "the times of the Gentiles."

When the words written on the wall at Belshazzar's feast are related to each of the four periods of seven times, the last one corresponds to the term "divided." This was significant for the fate of Babylon, and also for understanding the prophecy of the 70 weeks, as illustrated in the table below. One part of the 70th week is the ministry of Jesus; the other is the whole age of the church. Just as Babylon was divided, and was given to the Medes and Persians after its capture by Cyrus, in the whole age of the church, there is a division, or a separation, between those who serve and obey Christ, and those who do not. Those who belong to Christ will take possession of the kingdoms of the world, when the times of the Gentiles end.

Leviticus 26	words on the wall	70 weeks
first seven times	numbered	In the exile in Babylon, Jews and Gentiles were mingled together. The period of exile corresponds to the 70 years of Jeremiah. It ended in 538 BC, with the decree of Cyrus.
second seven times	numbered	7 weeks of leap years of 13 months, that span 133 years; 538-405 BC. During this period the Jews returned from Babylon and built the temple.
third seven times	weighed	62 weeks or 434 years; 405 BC-28 AD.
fourth seven times	divided	1 week. The 70th week is divided; it consists of the three and a half year ministry of Jesus, plus the <i>time, times and a half</i> , which represents the whole age of the church.

The first half of the 70th week is the ministry of Jesus; the last half week is symbolic of the whole age of the church. During the last half week, the saints are called out of the world. Jesus confirms his covenant with them, and builds a new spiritual temple. When this temple is made desolate, the Spirit is poured out upon it; "that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."¹

¹Daniel 9:27

Chapter 3

Cyrus and the 70 Weeks

In the prophecies of Revelation, Babylon is a symbol of the worldly religious system. The city of Babylon is called a harlot, while the New Jerusalem is the bride of the Lamb.

In the prophecies of Daniel, the fall of Babylon is symbolic of the end of reign of the Gentile kingdoms. The kingdoms of man eventually are given to Christ and the saints. This is pictured in the prophecy of the image in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the subject of Daniel chapter 2.

In the prophecy of Isaiah 44:24-45:4, Cyrus is seen as a type of Christ. Some of the parallels between Cyrus and Christ are listed in the table below.

Cyrus	Christ
Cyrus was a liberator; his policies liberated Jews from the oppression of Babylon	Christ liberates his followers from sin and death
Cyrus was anointed	Christ is also anointed
Cyrus is called a shepherd	Christ is called a shepherd
His reign ended the 70 years of exile for Jews	Christ's coming ends the 70 weeks, and the domination of the saints by the little horn
Cyrus (or Darius) was 62 years old when he began to reign in Babylon	Christ's ministry followed 7 times of 62 years
Cyrus was a king of the Gentiles as well as the Jews	Christ is a king of the Gentiles as well as the Jews
Cyrus gave the word to build the temple	Christ is the one who builds the true temple of God

Just as the end of the 70 years of exile was a positive event in the history of Israel, and heralded the return of many of the Jews to their ancestral land, the end of the time represented by the 70 weeks of Daniel 9 is a time of blessings for the saints. It

represents the time when the kingdoms of the world are given to the saints, and the end of the desolation of the holy city. The angel Gabriel said that the 70 weeks was to “finish the transgression” and “to bring in everlasting righteousness.”¹

The 70 weeks did not end in the first century, as the preterists claim. The end of sacrifices and the destruction of Jerusalem fell “in the midst of” the 70th week, not at the end of it, or several decades after it had expired. Throughout the 70th week, Jesus confirms his covenant with the saints. The last half-week, the time, times and a half, spans the whole age of the church. This covenant is limited to one week, because it represents a betrothal, as the church is the bride of the Lamb.

Like the 70 years of Jeremiah, the period of the 70 weeks was the duration of the desolations of Jerusalem. But they apply partly to the earthly city, and partly to the heavenly one. The first two sections of the seventy weeks apply to the earthly Jerusalem.

The ministry of Jesus, which was three years and a half, was the first half of the 70th week, leaving a half week yet to be fulfilled when he ascended to heaven, where he has inherited the throne of David.²

Jesus is king of the heavenly Jerusalem. Paul said that believers are “translated into his kingdom.”³

Because it is a heavenly city, built by God, the time units that apply to it are not earthly units of days and months and years, but they are figurative. This also applies to its dimensions, which were given Revelation 21. John says the units given for the dimensions of the wall were “according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.” The cubits had an “angelic” or spiritual character.⁴ Who can tell what an angelic cubit is? If it were the same thing as an ordinary cubit, why would John mention that it was an angelic one? Similarly, the numbers mentioned in scripture, that represent the period when God is preparing the heavenly city, which is the age of the church, are not given in terms of natural days or months. No natural three years and a half is 1,290 days, or 1,290 days, or 1,260 days. In three and a half natural years, there are about 1,278 days, or about 1,240 days if the period is reckoned by lunar months, and 1,270 days if an embolismic month is included.

¹Daniel 9:24

²Luke 1:31-33

³Colossians 1:13

⁴Revelation 21:17

Chapter 4

The 70 weeks are founded upon Leviticus 26

Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy is related to the terms Israel's covenant in the Law of Moses, as outlined in Leviticus 26. The connection is explored below.

The author of 2 Chronicles describes the 70 years captivity of the Jews in Babylon as a consequence of the transgressions of Zedekiah, and of all the chief of the priests, and of the people. They had mocked the messengers of God, and misused his prophets.¹

According to the Old Covenant, and the Law of Moses, blessings would follow if Israel kept the covenant, but if they failed to do all the commandments, and broke God's covenant, a curse, including exile from the land, and the punishments described in Leviticus 26, would overtake them.

In his prayer of confession, Daniel said that the curse written in the law of Moses had been poured out on Israel.² He acknowledged that the exile in Babylon, and the destruction wrought by the Chaldeans began to fulfill the punishments outlined in the covenant, that specified *four* periods of *seven times* of punishment would be fulfilled upon Israel. In the invasion of Jerusalem and Judea by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, Solomon's temple was destroyed, Jerusalem's walls were broken down, and there followed 70 years of exile, as Jeremiah had foretold.

2 Chronicles 36:17-23

Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.

And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes;

¹2 Chronicles 36:11-16

²Daniel 9:11

all these he brought to Babylon.

And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:

To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.

While the Jews were in the land of their exile, "the land enjoyed her sabbaths," which alludes to the sabbatical years and jubilee years, when the land was supposed to remain at rest.

Daniel's 70 weeks prophecy incorporates "weeks" or periods of "seven times." Each section consists of one or more of some kind of "seven," usually called "weeks," but what the units of those weeks are supposed to be is not stated. Very likely, they would include weeks of seven years. Most expositors assume that the weeks are the same in each section, but that is not necessarily true. If the 70 years of exile correspond to "seven times," a "time" could mean ten years. The "times" may have different units the three sections of the 70 weeks. Meredith G. Kline stated,¹

The conclusion that the seventy weeks framework is sabbatical, naturally suggested by the numerical features of the passage, is confirmed by the relationship of this seventy weeks prophecy to the seventy years prophecy of Jeremiah. Though the former is not an interpretation, and certainly not a corrective reinterpretation, of the latter, it was given in response to a prayer that was prompted by the reading of Jeremiah's prophecy and, as we shall see, it employs the same symbolic model as that prophecy.

Expounding the seventy years of exile in terms of the explanation of the exile given in Leviticus 26:43, the Chronicler depicts it as a time of sabbatical

¹Meredith G. Kline. *The Covenant of the Seventieth Week*. In: *The Law and the Prophets: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Oswald T. Allis*. ed. by J.H. Skilton. [Nutley, NJ]: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974, pp. 452-469.
<http://tinyurl.com/4ukg9dk>

rest for the land: “To fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years” (II Chron. 36:21). Here each of the seventy years is seen as functioning as a sabbatical year so that the seventy years are the equivalent of seventy weeks of years. Under the exile’s condition of continuing desolation, 490 years were telescoped into 70 because the desolate land leaped without the normal six-year intervals of labor from one seventh year of rest immediately’ to its next sabbatical year. Thus, Gabriel’s seventy weeks prophecy actually made use of the very same symbol as the seventy years prophecy of Jeremiah — and that symbol is explained in II Chronicles 36:21 as sabbatical.

Kline suggested that the sabbatical years and periods of seven times of Leviticus 25 and 26 are a source, on which the 70 weeks prophecy depends. He wrote:

It has become increasingly clear that Leviticus 25 and 26 is an important source standing behind Daniel 9:24 ff. The seventy weeks prophecy is built on the sabbath-jubilee structure of Leviticus 25 (cf. 26:43). Daniel 9 as a whole follows the covenant administration pattern of Leviticus 26. The prayer (vss. 4 ff.) corresponds to the Tadah-confession of Leviticus 26:40 f., and the prophecy (vss. 24 ff.) corresponds to the covenant restitution and renewal of Leviticus 26:42 ff. This last equivalence is reinforced by the connection made between the seventy weeks and Leviticus 26:43 in II Chronicles 36:21.

The 70 years of captivity in Babylon, plus the three sections of the 70 weeks, together are the four periods of “seven times” outlined in Leviticus 26.

- 1st “seven times” = 70 years of captivity in Babylon, ended 538 BC
- 2nd “seven times” = 7 weeks, 49 leap years of 13 months, $7 \times 19 = 133$ years
- 3rd “seven times” = $62 \times 7 = 434$ years, ended 28 AD
- 4th “seven times” = three and a half years of Jesus’ ministry, plus “a time, times and a half”

The “time, times and a half” (along with related periods of 1,335 days, 1,290 days, 1,260 days, and 42 months) are symbolic, representing the whole age of the church, which is called the “Jerusalem which is above” and “the heavenly Jerusalem” in the New Testament. For the portion of the 70 weeks that applies to the heavenly city, which is the final half of the 70th week, the “time, times and a half,” units of time are not earth days, or earth months, or earth years, but are symbolic. The time span it represents is not a literal three and a half years. The nature of the time in the last half week is different, perhaps because these last three years and a half apply to the heavenly Jerusalem, not the earthly one. Once Jesus ascended to heaven, earth days, earth

months, and earth years no longer apply. That is when Jerusalem was lifted up, as Isaiah foretold. [Isaiah 2:1-3] Isaiah said it would be exalted to the tops of the mountains; in the New Testament it is in heaven, above all the earth's mountains. Jesus confirms the covenant for one week, but that week is partly on earth, and partly in heaven. He confirms the covenant by sending the Spirit to the church.

In the last half of the 70th week, the promised land is not the earthly territory of Canaan, but is described "a better country, that is, an heavenly." [Hebrews 11:16] In the 4th period of "seven times" of Leviticus 26, God said he will remember his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and will be reconciled to his people Israel. This 4th period of "seven times" corresponds to the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy.

The 70 weeks prophecy concerns Jerusalem, but when Christ ascended to heaven, the units of time in the prophecy were changed. This is similar with other units applied to the heavenly city, described in Revelation 21. The dimensions given for it are not literal. The 144 cubits mentioned for the wall, are not meant literally, as John indicates that the units are angelic cubits. If we compare the height of the wall with the height of the city, supposing the 144 cubits refer to its height, it seems quite out of any reasonable proportion; the height of the city is about 36,666 times greater than the height of its wall! Really, the dimensions of a wall require a height, and a width, and a length, but here, only one dimension is given. That is because the wall is spiritual; it represents "salvation." And each gate in the wall is a single pearl. So, are we to imagine huge oysters in heaven, where such pearls could grow? No, the pearls are figurative. So are the units of furlongs, and cubits, when these apply to a heavenly, and eternal city. And the same applies to the time periods that refer to the heavenly city. They are not earth days, earth months, or earth years, but spiritual or figurative. This, I think, helps to explain why the last half week of the 70 weeks differs from the previous 69 and 1/2 weeks.

Kline pointed out that the 70 weeks of Daniel 9 began with the decree of Cyrus, and follow immediately after the 70 years of exile. He wrote:

The seventy weeks prophecy of Daniel 9 reflects yet another aspect of the Leviticus 26 forecast of covenant restoration after covenant breaking as that forecast is taken up and developed in II Chronicles 36. Immediately after the Chronicler has referred to the period of the exile as seventy sabbatical years (II Chron. 36:21), he makes mention of the decree of Cyrus issued in the first year of his reign, officially ending Israel's exile. In these closing words of his historical work the Chronicler points to the figure of the restorer who accomplished the Lord's word by Jeremiah concerning the divine visitation after seventy sabbath years (Jer. 29: 10) and introduced the post-exilic jubilee-restoration (II Chron. 36:22 f.; cf. Ezra 1:1 ff.). The Chronicler was at the same time recording the fulfillment of another prophetic word of God. Isaiah too had spoken of the one who should command the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple, even Cyrus, whom Isaiah designated as the Lord's "anointed" (Isa. 44:28; 45:1).

Because the 70 weeks correspond to the last three of the four periods of “seven times” in Leviticus 26, which is the duration of the curse, clearly there are no gaps in the 70 weeks. Any gap would mean *a lapse in the curse*, and would require a *temporary* reconciliation of God with Israel, and a temporary restoration, but the restoration is to be *permanent*.

Chapter 5

The 1,260 days

In the Old Testament, there are many references to periods of seven years, and seven times, but in the New Testament, that time period seems less significant, and there is a far greater emphasis upon one half of it, which is three years and six months, expressed in various ways, as 42 months, 1,260 days, and as a time, times and a half.

The expression “seven times” occurs in the New Testament, not as designating any particular time span, but as the number of times that one should forgive a brother.

Luke 17:3-4

Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.
And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

In Matthew’s gospel, Jesus contrasted forgiving seven times with the number “seventy times seven,” possibly alluding to the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9.

Matthew 18:21-22

Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?
Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

There is only one reference to seven years in the New Testament. It was the number of years that the 84 year old prophetess Anna had lived with a husband. [Luke 2:36]

The New Testament emphasizes three and a half years, rather than a period of seven years, or seven times, especially after Jesus’ crucifixion. I suggest that a reason for this may be that the first half of the *seven times* of the Old Testament prophecies in Leviticus 26 and Daniel 9 was fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus, leaving one half of the prophetic “week” yet to be fulfilled. The remaining part of the seven times which was yet to be fulfilled is represented by various expressions for three and a half years, all of

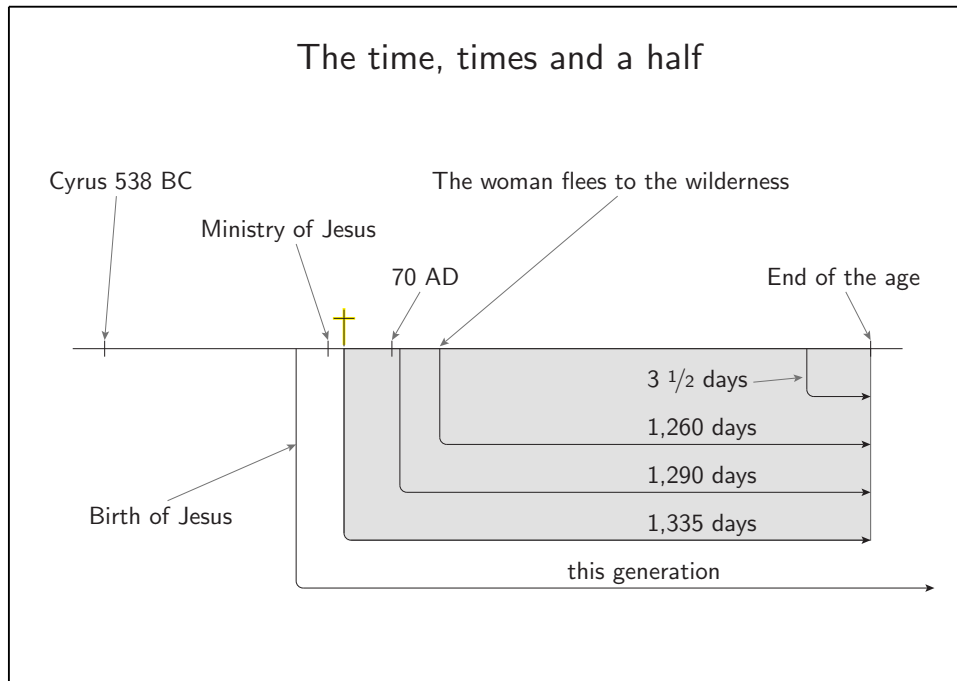


Figure 5.1: The time, times and a half

which represent either the whole age of the church, or the remaining part of it.

The three and a half years of Revelation 11, 12 and 13 is one half of a prophetic week, or “seven times.” The first half-week was the ministry of Jesus.

Figure 5.1 depicts the *time times and a half* as a diminishing period which together with the ministry of Jesus makes one week, in which he confirms his covenant with many.

The seven times that began with the ministry of Jesus is represented by various Old Testament types and figures, such as:

1. the seven years of Jacob’s labor for his bride Rachel, a type of Christ and the church
2. the seven years of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua
3. the last of the four periods of seven times in Leviticus 26
4. the seven years of burying the weapons of Gog and Magog, Ezekiel 39
5. the seven months of burying the corpses of the armies of Gog and Magog, Ezekiel 39
6. the seven years it took for Solomon to build the temple, 1 Kings 6:38

7. the 70th week in Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks, during which Christ "confirms the covenant" with his church

The three and a half years emphasized in the New Testament corresponds to the last half of the 70th week of Daniel 9. The units of the first 69 1/2 weeks are natural years, but the final half-week is represented in non-natural ways, perhaps because earth-days, earth-years, and earth time do not apply to the heavenly city, or to spiritual things.

While the units of the first 69 1/2 weeks of the 70 weeks prophecy are natural, they are not all of the same kind. I suggest, the first seven weeks are weeks of leap years, that is, years having 13 months. Seven such weeks span 133 years, as there are seven extra months in 19 years, in the Hebrew and Babylonian calendars. Using this scheme, the 70 weeks can be calculated beginning with the decree of Cyrus, 538 BC, and the end of the first two sections of the prophecy, the 7 weeks, and 62 weeks, occurs in 28 AD, the year that Jesus began his ministry. That began the 70th week.

The final half of the 70th week, called a time, times and a half, is the period when the saints are dominated by a little horn, in Daniel 7:25. This sinister figure is characterized by "eyes like the eyes of a man," and so represents a human viewpoint, which contrasts with a divine one.

Daniel 12:7 indicates that this period extends to the end of the age. And so, it represents "the last time." In the New Testament, John said that we are in the "last time," and that many antichrists had appeared.

1 John 2:18

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

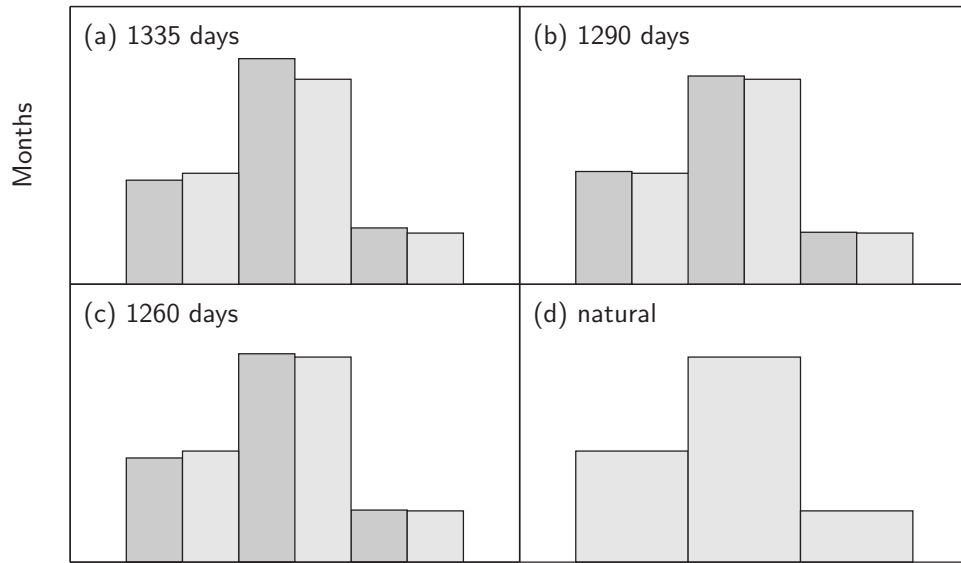
In Daniel 12:11-12, two numbers are presented, each of which expresses three and a half year periods in an unnatural, and unreal manner.

Daniel 12:11-12

And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

These numbers both fit the pattern contained in the expression "a time, times and a half," where months are 30 days, and two kinds of years are included, the first differing from the others in each case. The two kinds of years are regular years of 12 months, and leap years of 13 months.



The time, times, and a half vs. natural time

Figure 5.2: Prophetic times vs. natural times where one year is 13 months

$$1,335 \text{ days} = 12 \times 30 + 2 \times 13 \times 30 + \frac{1}{2} \times 13 \times 30$$

$$1,290 \text{ days} = 13 \times 30 + 2 \times 12 \times 30 + \frac{1}{2} \times 12 \times 30$$

In the book of Revelation, John introduced another, smaller, but similar number: 1,260 days. This also fits the pattern of *a time, times and a half*, where the years are all 12 months, and months are 30 days. The 42 months is similar. Thus, these numbers represent a symbolic three and a half years, not a natural three and a half years. No natural three and a half years has 1,335 days, or 1,290 days, or 1,260 days, in any calendar.

In Figure 5:1, the various time periods associated with the *time times and a half* are compared with natural years in the Jewish calendar, where some years are 12 months and some are 13 months.

These numbers also seem to represent a diminishing period of time, as they progress from the larger to smaller periods. This is the nature of time; it tends to run out. The remaining time in the church age is constantly running out, and decreasing. At the very end of the age, it is represented by three and a half days.

The dimensions and units of space connected with the heavenly Jerusalem are also given in a non-natural manner. The dimension of the wall of the holy city seems to be given in terms of a special kind of angelic cubit.

Revelation 21:17

And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

The number is 12×12 , and so has an obvious symbolic significance, as 12 is connected with the number of tribes of Israel, and the number of the apostles of Christ. The prophetic times related to the church are clearly given from God's perspective, rather than man's.

Chapter 6

The nature of the seventy sevens

One of the great questions about the 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel 9, that Bible scholars have sought to answer, is why did Daniel specify the time to the appearance of the Messiah as divided up into two sections? Daniel represents this time by seven weeks, and sixty and two weeks. Why didn't he simply say sixty-nine? In most expositions, the question is left unanswered, and is usually ignored.

In the discussion by O. Palmer Robertson quoted below, the problem is stated: "some reason must be given for the breakdown of Daniel's seventy sevens into three periods consisting of seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and one seven." O. Palmer Robertson suggested that symbolic time periods included in the 70 weeks may resolve it.¹

The nature of the seventy sevens

It might be presumed that the seventy sevens of Daniel 9 should be regarded purely from a figurative perspective, in light of the broader scriptural role of the Sabbath concept in redemptive history. Indeed, the symbolic character of the number seven as an aspect of the Sabbath concept must not be ignored. The perfection of sevens as embodied in the "seventy sevens" speak of the movement toward the final climax of the Covenant Lord's redemptive work in the world, The Sabbath rest that remains for the people of God must be seen as the ultimate goal of the seventy sevens (Heb. 4:9).

At the same time, the context in which Daniel's prophecy is found inevitably points to an actual chronological ordering in the purposes of God, Jeremiah did not predict Israel's banishment from the land to be, for example, twenty-three years or forty-one years in length—he predicted seventy years. While the overscrupulous may bicker about the precise beginning and ending of

¹O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Prophets*. P & R Publishing, 2004. pp. 339-341.

the seventy years, the span still stands quite definitively. Seventy years prior to 536 BC, takes us back to approximately 605 B.C., which served as Jeremiah's marker for the beginning of the seventy years of exile (Jer. 25:1-3, 11).

If a specific chronological ordering is manifest in the seventy years of Israel's captivity as predicted by Jeremiah, and if this principle of seventy in the earlier portion of Daniel 9 has a significant connection with the seventy of the latter portion of the same chapter, it seems likely that the "seventy sevens" also have some chronological significance. In addition, some reason must be given for the breakdown of Daniel's seventy sevens into three periods consisting of seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and one seven. A purely figurative analysis is totally at a loss to explain this subdivision of the sevens; and yet the breakdown clearly has significance in Daniel's vision.

Resolution of the question concerning the nature of the seventy sevens may be found in an inclusion of the symbolic in the chronological. The larger picture of movement through history toward the climax of God's redemptive purposes in the rest, the Sabbath that remains for the people of God, must not be forgotten. At the same time, some effort must be made to determine the intentional chronological ordering of the ages.

Robert B. Chisholm Jr. noted that the seven weeks and sixty two weeks are separate and distinct in the Hebrew text of Daniel 9:25. He wrote:¹

The text reads literally "seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks." Some combine the numbers and understand the text to mean "until an anointed one, a ruler [arrives], [there will be a period of] sixty-nine weeks." However, this would be an odd way of expressing the number sixty-nine. Elsewhere, numbers in the sixty range are expressed by combining "sixty" with the other number. For example, sixty-two is literally "two and sixty" (Dan. 5:31) or "sixty and two" (Dan. 9:25-26), sixty-five is "sixty and five" (Isa. 7:9), sixty-six is "sixty and six" (Gen. 46:26; Lev. 12:5), and sixty-eight is "sixty and eight" (1 Chron. 16:38). The traditional scribal punctuation of Dan. 9:27 marks a clear break between "seven weeks" and "sixty-two weeks." The latter is best taken as a temporal adverbial phrase that begins the following clause. The reference to "sixty-two weeks" (not "seven weeks and sixty-two weeks") in v. 26 shows the sixty-two weeks are understood as distinct from the seven weeks.

In an article surveying the interpretations of Daniel's prophecy, Elke B. Speliopoulos

¹Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *Handbook on the Prophets*. (Baker Academic, 2009) p. 313, note.

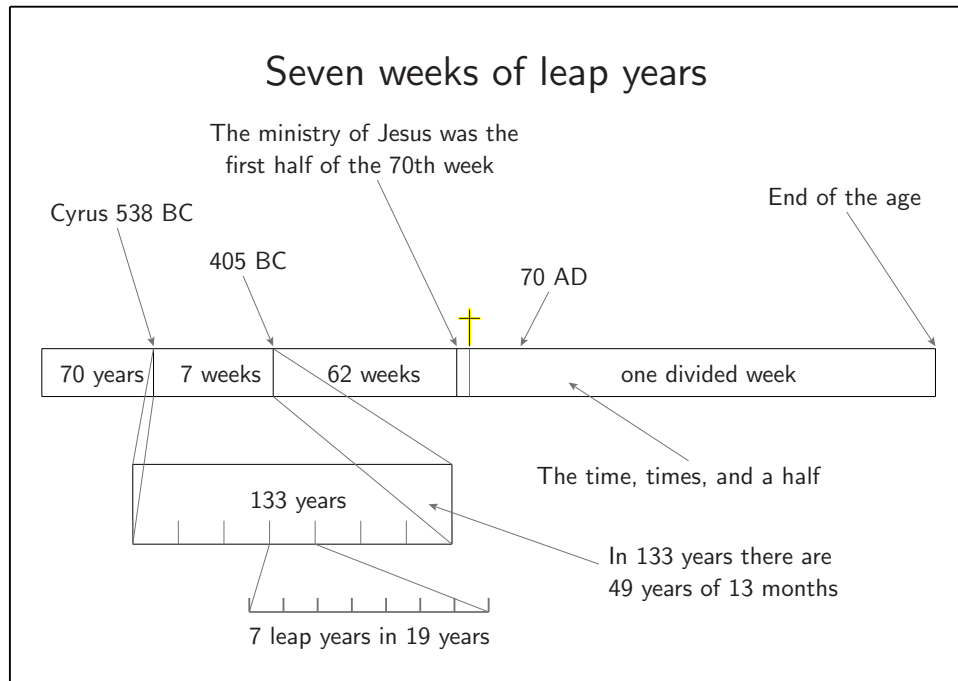


Figure 6.1: The first section: seven weeks of leap years

quoted Chisholm as saying:¹

There seems to be no point in saying ‘seven weeks and sixty-two weeks’ unless something is going to happen after the seven. Moreover, the repetition of ‘sixty-two’ in v. 26, ‘After the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off’, also suggests that the two periods of seven and sixty-two are discrete ones, separated by something.

The requirement of different units in the first two sections of the seventy weeks provides the simplest explanation for distinguishing between the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks. The first section of the 70 weeks consists of seven weeks of leap years, that is, years of 13 months. Each week in the first section spans 19 years, and 49 leap years spans 133 years. In the second section, the units are either sabbatical cycles of seven years, or seven weeks of sixty-two years, (the age of Darius when he became ruler of Babylon) and spans 434 years. Together these two periods end at the appearance of Christ in 28 AD, when the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC is used as the beginning of the 70 weeks.

Figure 6.1 focuses upon the first section of the 70 weeks. Taking the seven weeks as seven weeks of leap years having 13 months, removes the need for gaps in the 70

¹Elke B. Speliopoulos, The 70 weeks of Daniel: a survey of the interpretive views. Available online at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/24471945/The-70-Weeks-of-Daniel-Survey-of-the-Interpretive-Views>

weeks. Applying different units in the first two sections, the first section of the 70 weeks began at the decree of Cyrus, and the termination of the second section was early in the ministry of Jesus.

Another reason the period to the coming of Christ is specified in two sections is that the first two sections of the 70 weeks prophecy correspond to the second and third of the four periods of seven times in Leviticus 23. The correspondence is illustrated in the table below.

Leviticus 26 and the 70 weeks		
Leviticus 26	Daniel 9	Dates
1st 7 times	exile in Babylon	ended with decree of Cyrus in 538 BC
2nd 7 times	7 weeks; 49 leap years	133 years; 538 BC – 405 BC
3rd 7 times (vs. 24)	62 weeks	434 years; 405 BC – 28 AD
4th 7 times (vs. 28)	1 week	3 ¹ / ₂ year ministry of Jesus; 27 AD – 30 AD. The last half-week is the whole age of the church, and it is represented by the time, times and a half, 1,335 days, 1,290 days, 1260 days, etc.

It is in the fourth period of seven times that the people become reconciled to God, and God remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and “remembers the land.”¹

O. Palmer Robertson pointed out that the final week of the 70 weeks prophecy is also divided into two sections. And units form the basis for the division in this case also; the units in the last half-week are symbolic. He wrote:²

This final week, unlike all the previous weeks, is divided into two halves: “In the midst of the seven [i.e., at the halfway point of the seven; khatsi], he will cause sacrifice and offering to cease” (9:27). This cessation of sacrifice corresponds with the atoning of iniquity and the bringing in of eternal righteousness (9:24) accomplished earlier in the seventy sevens. Once iniquity has been covered by a proper atonement, there can be “no more sacrifice for sin” (Heb. 10:26). This climactic event, according to Daniel 9:27, is to occur at the halfway point of the seventieth week of seven years, or 3.5

¹Leviticus 26:42

²O. Palmer Robertson, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 345-346.

years into the last week.

The figure of 3.5 years receives further development in the final chapter of the book of Daniel and even more extensively in the book of Revelation. In his final interview with the revealing person, Daniel overhears the question, "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?" (Dan. 12:6 NIV). The man clothed in linen takes a solemn oath that the period will be "for a time, times, and half a time," reflecting the same earlier measurement of the time that the saints will suffer at the hands of the little horn of the fourth beast of Daniel 7 (12:7; see also 7:25). This same measurement recurs in the form of 1,290 (or 1,335) days that are to expire between the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up (12:11-12).

Contrary to O. Palmer Robertson's statement above, the 1,290 days are not the time *unto* the setting up of the abomination of desolation, but the time remaining *after* that event, which therefore occurs early in the church age. Both the 1,290 days, and the 1,335 days run to the end of the age, and are symbolic. The 1,290 days, being the smaller number, is a portion of the greater period. Similarly, the 1,260 days in Revelation are a yet smaller portion of the same period. The apostle John declared that there were many antichrists already in his time.¹

O. Palmer Robertson wrote:²

The various ways in which this last half of the final week is designated in Daniel suggest that the time measurement has been modified from the chronological/symbolical to the purely symbolical. The book of Revelation reflects the same diversity in referring to an identical period as a symbolical device: the 1,260 days, 42 months, and "time, times, and half a time" (Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). The last half of the seventieth week of Daniel may thus be regarded as a different form of time measurement. This last half-week symbolically represents a longer period of time, indefinite in length, which extends from the ending of sacrifice until the destruction of the antichrist at the consummation of the present age. During this last epoch of time, if the book of Revelation is allowed to provide some insight, the true people of God will be persecuted relentlessly as they bear witness throughout the world. But they will also be protected by the providential orderings of the Lord (11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). At the end, all enemies of the Lord will be destroyed at his coming.

Here is a reason for the change in the nature of time units in the final half-week: that portion of the prophecy applies to the heavenly city, not the earthly one. The

¹1 John 2:18

²O. Palmer Robertson, *Op. Cit.*

previous part of the prophecy employs earthly units, because they apply to the earthly Jerusalem. They consist of natural years, and leap years, units which would not apply to the heavenly Jerusalem. Rather, in the heavenly city, the time is represented symbolically. The months are not real lunar months, but ideal months of exactly 30 days. Daniel represents it by the numbers 1,335 days, and 1,290 days, which do not fit a real three and a half years in any calendar. And a real three and a half years cannot equal two different numbers of days. These numbers represent symbolic periods consisting of leap years of 13 months and regular years of 12 months, the first year differing from the rest in each case. The 1,260 days of Revelation 11 and 12 is based on the same pattern, but all years are 12 months.

Chapter 7

The exodus theme in Daniel 9

In an article on “Daniel’s Seventy Weeks and the New Exodus”, Peter J. Gentry, Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, presents a preterist interpretation of Daniel’s 70 weeks prophecy.¹ He discusses the background of Daniel’s prayer of confession, which he relates to Solomon’s dedication of the temple.² He notes that the exile is due to the violation of the covenant which brought on the curse.³

The return from exile, Gentry suggests, was to involve not merely the physical return to the land, but a “return from covenant violation to a right relationship to God so that the covenant relationship is renewed and restored (see Isa 42:18-43:21 and 43:22-44:23 respectively).” He described this as “getting Babylon out of the people,” requiring a spiritual return from exile, or another exodus. He wrote:⁴

The physical return from exile gets the people out of Babylon, but the problem of getting Babylon out of the people must be dealt with by a second stage. The second stage is the spiritual return from exile: it deals with the problem of sin and brings about forgiveness and reconciliation in a renewed covenant between Yahweh and His people.

Gentry denies there are any gaps in the 70 weeks, and interprets them in terms of sabbatical periods of seven years, citing Jeremiah’s prophecy of seventy years as lasting “until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths.”⁵ He selects 457 BC, the date of Artaxerxes’s Commission to Ezra as the beginning point,⁶ a date which is popular among expositors, but it implies a gap between the expiry of Jeremiah’s 70 years and the beginning of the

¹Peter J. Gentry. Daniel’s Seventy Weeks and the New Exodus. *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, 14.1 (2010): 26-44. Available online at: http://www.sbts.edu/resources/files/2010/05/sbjt_v14.n1.gentry.pdf

²1 Kings 8:33-34, 46-51

³Deuteronomy 28:15-68

⁴Peter J. Gentry. *Op. Cit.*

⁵2 Chronicles 36:20-22; Leviticus 26:34-35

⁶Ezra 7:11-26

70 weeks, which tends to weaken the connections of Jeremiah's prophecy and Daniel's prophecy to the sabbatical periods of Leviticus 25-26.

Gentry finds the first 69 weeks were fulfilled in 27 A.D. He wrote:¹

Sixty-nine sabbaticals or weeks of years bring the time to 27 A.D. when the "word to restore Jerusalem" is understood to refer to the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 B.C. The calculation of sabbatical years in Israel for antiquity is based upon evidence from Maccabees, Josephus, inscriptions, the Talmud, and Maimonides. The standard treatment derives from Benedict Zuckermann in 1866. More recently Ben Zion Wacholder has analysed the data differently and provided a table of sabbatical years from 519 B.C. to 441 A.D. Here I follow the standard view of Zuckermann according to the critique of Ben Zion Wacholder by Bob Pickle, although the difference between the chronologies reconstructed by these two scholars is only one year. Thus, the seventieth sabbatical is from 27-34 A.D. following Zuckermann or 28-35 A.D. following Ben Zion Wacholder.

Gentry says the crucifixion occurred in 31 A.D. which he says was halfway through the 70th week. On the statement in Daniel 9:27, that the Messiah would "confirm a covenant with many for one week," Gentry wrote:²

In Dan 9:27a the statement "he will uphold a covenant with the many" refers to the work of the Anointed King in effecting the new covenant described by the prophets at different times and in a variety of ways. It is important to note that there are different perspectives in the prophets on the new covenant. Their contributions are not monolithic, but view the gem of God's future covenant renewal from many different facets. Usually the expression is *kārat berît*—to cut a covenant—to indicate a covenant that did not exist previously and is being initiated now between partners for the first time. Excellent examples are Isa 55:3, Jer 31:31, and Ezek 34:25 and 37:26. Yet Ezek 16:60, 62 employs *heqîm berît* for the new covenant. We should not assume here, against the linguistic use in general, that the expression is now equivalent to *kārat berît*, but rather looks at the making of the new covenant from a different point of view. Verse 60 speaks of Israel breaking the covenant of Sinai and of God subsequently establishing an everlasting covenant with them. Ezekiel's language indicates that there is a link between the Sinai covenant and the new. He employs the expression "confirm or uphold a covenant" to show that the new covenant establishes effectively what God intended in the Sinai covenant. The point is supported by the fact that the new covenant is called here an everlasting covenant whereas the term "everlasting" is never used of the Sinai covenant. Something similar

¹Peter J. Gentry. *Op. Cit.*

²*Ibid.*

is probably the thrust of Dan 9:27a. The expression “uphold a covenant” is chosen and used here because the context entails the return from exile and the “renewing” of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel.

Gentry commented as follows on the anointing of the holy place mentioned in Daniel 9:24:¹

Only in Dan 9:24 do we have the “Holy of Holies” being anointed. This phrase could be construed as “the most holy place” or “the most holy person.” The latter meaning would be most unusual. Thus we have a verb that is normally used of a person and an object normally used of the temple. It may suggest that both future king and temple are one and the same. It finds fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth as both Messiah and true Temple. Some interpreters have opted for a proposal that views *nāgîd* in v. 26b as referring to an evil prince, perhaps even the Antichrist, and different from v. 25 where the *nāgîd* refers to the Messiah. This is bolstered by interpreting v. 27a as referring to this evil ruler making a false covenant which disrupts sacrifice in a way similar to the abomination causing desolation in 8:12-14, 11:31, and 12:11. A supporting connection may even be drawn between the fact that several texts in Daniel appear to speak of a three and one-half year period (7:25, 12:7, 11, 12; cf. 8:14, 26). All of these texts are fraught with interpretive problems and associated with them is the identification of the four kingdoms portrayed symbolically in the dream of chapter 2 and the vision of chapter 7 followed by the expansions on these themes in chapters 8 and 10-12.

Gentry says that in the 70th week, Jesus dies, and the literal temple gets condemned, because of the actions of the Jews, and rude behavior of the high priest towards Jesus, although Gentry puts the destruction of the temple outside the 70th week. He wrote:²

The Gospels present Jesus as both genuine Messiah and true Temple. The paralytic lowered through the roof by four friends, for example, was not only healed, but forgiven his sins. This angered the leaders because Jesus was claiming to do something that could only happen at the Temple; thus he was claiming to be the true Temple (John 2:18-22). So when the Jewish people rejected Jesus as Anointed One / Messiah and the High Priest blasphemed Jesus, the true Temple, the Herodian temple supported by the Jewish people had to fall and the city had to be destroyed. According to v. 26b this destruction is something that would happen after the sixty-ninth sabbatical. In v. 27b, there is nothing stated that actually requires the desolation of Jerusalem to happen precisely in the seventieth week, although this event is associated with the events happening at that time. Thus, the fall of

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

Jerusalem some time later does fit suitably because it is the final working out of the Jewish response to Jesus in the seventieth week. This situation is similar to God telling Adam that in the day he ate of the forbidden fruit, he would die. In one sense this did happen on the very day, but took time to be worked out. Just so, when the Jewish people rejected the Messiah and the High Priest blasphemed Jesus, the true Temple, the Herodian temple had to fall and the city had to be destroyed. The coming destruction, symbolized by the curtain protecting the Holy of Holies torn in two at the crucifixion, finally came to pass in A.D. 70, i.e., within the time of that generation which committed this sacrilege.

The reference to “the time of that generation” is typical of the preterist approach. But, I wonder, why are so many Christians blind to the fact that Jesus himself is part of “that generation”? If Jesus indeed remains alive, as the New Testament affirms, his generation has not passed away.

Gentry’s view of the last half of the 70th week is obscure. It seems to have passed without notice. Certainly, if it passed in 34 A.D., no mention of that date appears in the New Testament. In his conclusion, Gentry wrote:¹

In the climactic seventieth week, Israel’s King arrives and dies vicariously for his people. Strangely, desecration of the temple similar to that by Antiochus Epiphanes in the Greek Empire is perpetrated by the Jewish people themselves resulting in the destruction of Jerusalem. These events are fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He is the coming king. His crucifixion is the sacrifice to end all sacrifices and the basis of the New Covenant with the many. His death is “not for himself,” but rather vicarious. The rejection of Jesus as Messiah and desecration of him as the true Temple at his trial by the High Priest result in judgment upon the Herodian Temple carried out eventually in A.D. 70. The notion of a gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week is contrary to a vision of chronological sequence. The prophecy is remarkable both for its precision and imprecision as it fits the events concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

Gentry’s thesis suffers because ignoring the last half of the 70th week is anti-climactic. His interpretation is chained to a literal view of all three sections of the 70 weeks. In my opinion they are “chains of darkness.”

The first section of seven weeks may be something other than sabbatical cycles of seven years; I suggest they are seven weeks of leap years having 13 months, a period that spans 133 years. This way, the 70 weeks may begin with the decree of Cyrus. The 70 years of exile that Jeremiah foretold, and the 70 weeks of Daniel’s prophecy would be continuous. A gap between the end of the 70 years and the start of the 70 weeks implies a lapse in the curse. The role of Cyrus as the one whose decree began

¹*Ibid.*

the 70 weeks is suggested by Isaiah's prophecy, that seems to apply to Daniel 9:24: "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid."¹

Basically I agree that the weeks in the second section of 62 weeks probably correspond to sabbatical cycles. I find Gentry's take on the last half of the 70th week uninspiring. In the 70th week, Christ "confirms the covenant with many." Gentry rightly suggests that this applies to the new covenant. But Christ has been confirming his new covenant throughout the whole age of the church. The last half of the 70th week, therefore, is on-going. It did not expire without notice in 34 A.D., as preterists suggest.

Gentry is right, I think, in rejecting the dispensationalist idea of a gap between the 69th and 70th week. Both preterism, and dispensationalism, are chained to the same literalist dogma, that all sections of the 70 weeks have the same units, and they are nothing else than weeks of literal years. But that is an *interpretation*.

Gentry's thesis seems flawed because he puts the destruction of the temple, which was to occur "in the midst of the week," outside the scope of the 70 weeks, and because in his opinion, Christ's work of confirming the covenant is limited to three and a half literal years. These positions are discredited by Daniel 9:27, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." When the destruction of the temple is put in the midst of the week, rather than outside the scope of the 70 weeks, it becomes evident that the remaining half-week spans the whole age of the church.

In the last half of the 70th week, "the mountain of the Lord's house" was raised up, above the hills, as Isaiah had foretold.² This must have been when Jesus ascended to heaven after his resurrection.³ In the New Testament, Jerusalem has been raised up to heaven; it is the "bride of the Lamb" in Revelation 21. Jesus has occupied the throne of David in heaven, an eternal throne. Thus the things described in Daniel 9:24, which relate to the gospel, are accomplished as Jesus continues to build his church. The desolations referred to in Daniel 9:27 apply to the church, as well as the promise of its anointing mentioned in that verse: "that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." Preterism, and dispensationalism, are flawed interpretations that contribute to the desolation!

¹Isaiah 44:28

²Isaiah 2:1-3

³Acts 2:32-36; Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22-23

Chapter 8

The one week covenant

Preterism and dispensationalism are belief systems that struggle with the idea that Jesus Christ is confirming his covenant with his saints in the present age. The New Testament shows that in fact, that is what the New Covenant is all about. In the New Covenant, God promises, “their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”¹ It means God forgives the sins of his people Israel, as the New Covenant is made with Israel and Judah.

In the New Covenant, believers no longer remain under the curse, cut off from God, and from the promises that Israel inherits. Paul said, “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”²

Notice that Paul mentioned “the covenants of promise” as among the things that the Gentiles formerly had no part of, but now, access to these promises is available to them by the blood of Christ.

Dispensationalism says the promises, and Israel’s covenant, apply to ethnic Jews, not to Gentiles. But they allow that Gentiles who have been circumcised in the flesh, who embrace Judaism, may become Israelites. They claim that the covenant which is confirmed for one week, mentioned in Daniel 9:26, is a covenant yet to be made, and it is between Antichrist and the Jews, during a future seven-year tribulation. They claim it does not apply to Christians.

Figure 8.1 is a chart showing the dispensationist view.

Preterism says that the covenant mentioned in Daniel 9:26 was confirmed for one week, consisting of seven literal years, in the first century. Either it was the week in which Jesus was crucified, that expired in 34 AD, or it expired some time after the

¹Hebrews 8:12

²Ephesians 2:11-13

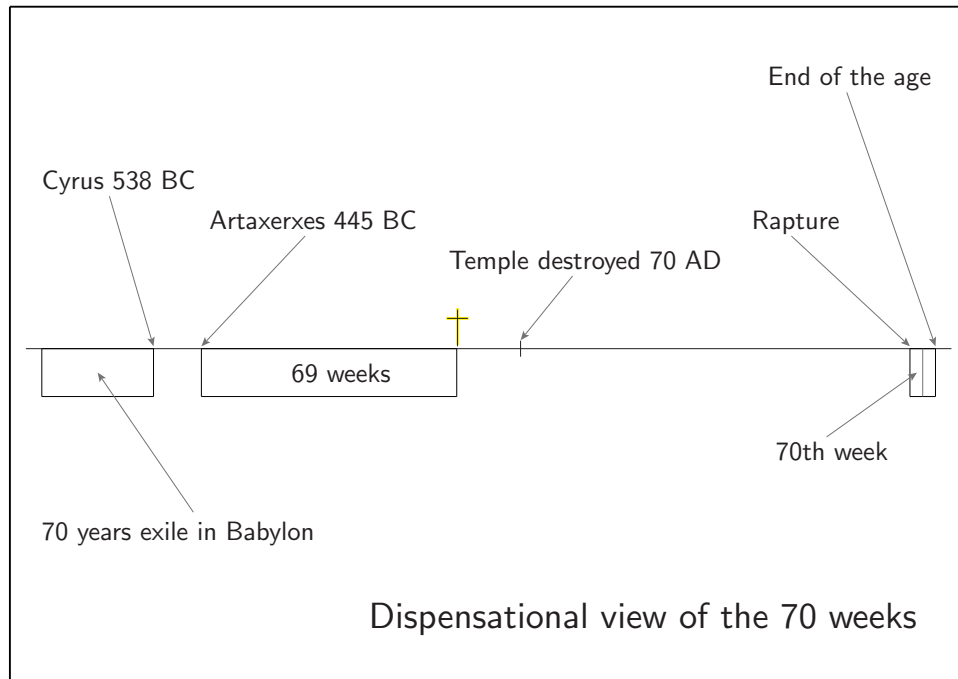


Figure 8.1: 70 weeks in dispensationalism

destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

Both preterists and dispensationalists deny that the one-week covenant mentioned in Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks is about Christ confirming his covenant with his saints, from the very beginning of his ministry to the end of the age.

Three different preterist interpretations are shown in Figures 8.2, 8.3, and 8.4.

This gross misunderstanding was foretold in Daniel's prophecy. The angel speaking to Daniel said, "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."¹

Paul must have had Daniel 9:24-27 in mind, I think, when he declared that Christ came to "confirm the promises made unto the fathers." He wrote: "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name."²

If that is true, the 70th week must have extended past the date of 34 AD. The last half-week must be an extended period, rather than so many literal days. Daniel

¹Daniel 12:9-10

²Romans 15:7-9

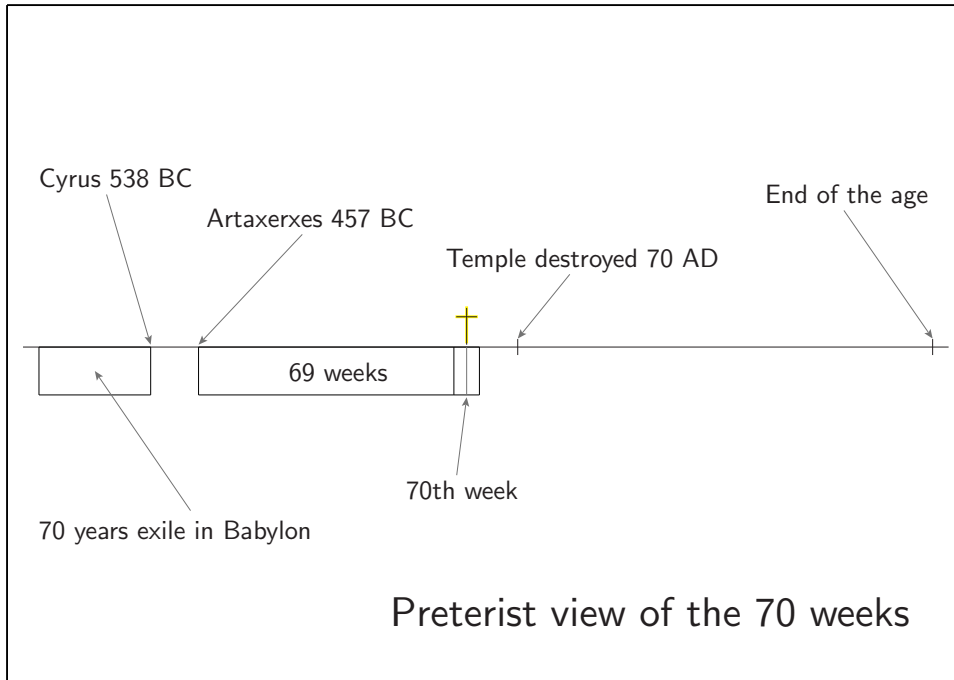


Figure 8.2: Common preterist interpretation

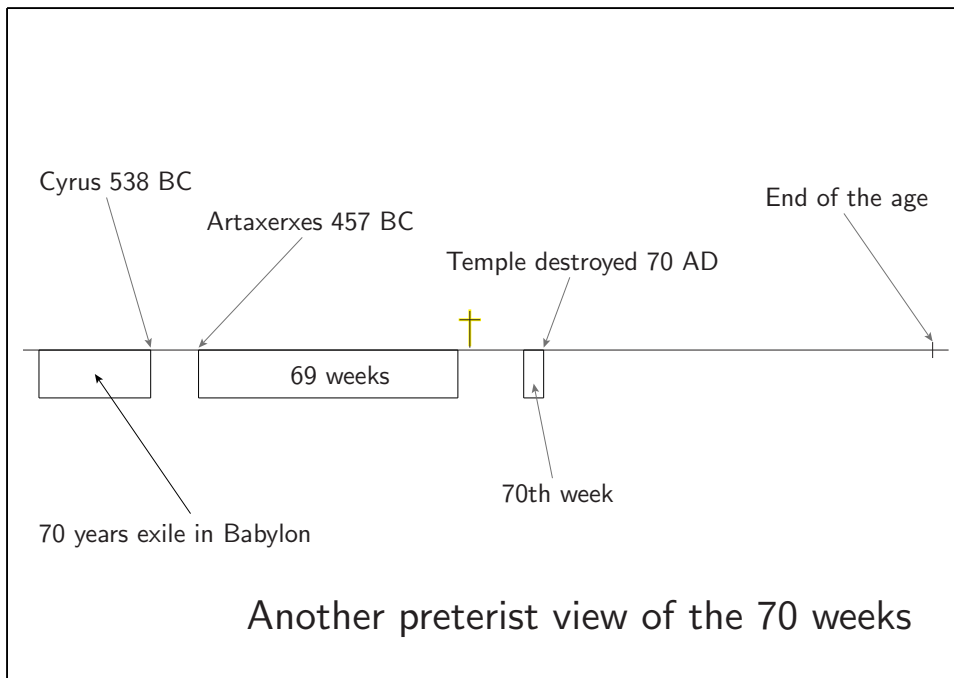


Figure 8.3: Preterism with gap

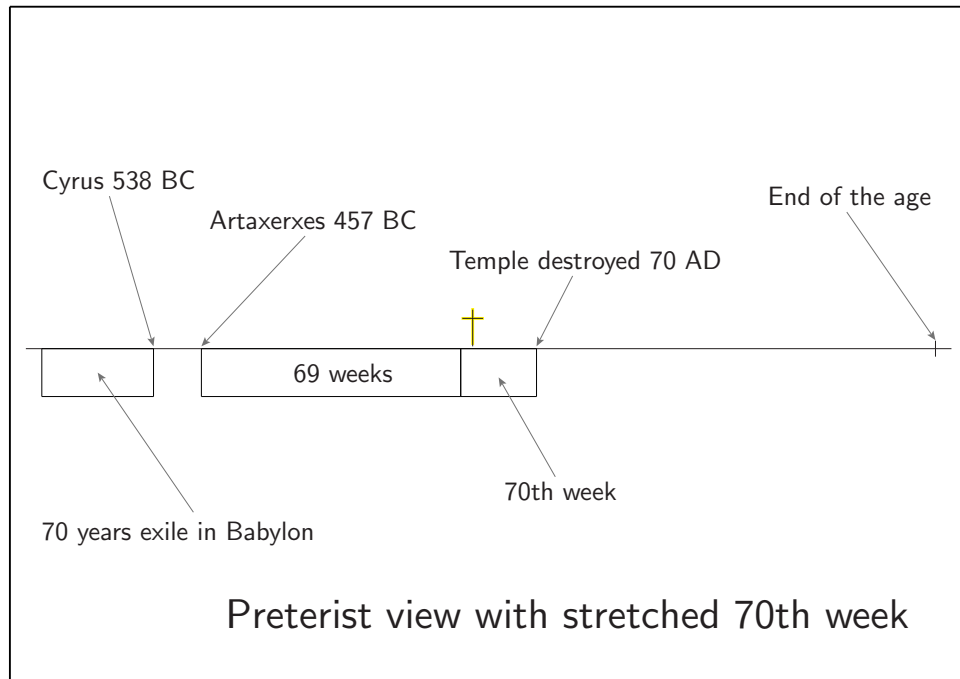


Figure 8.4: Preterism with stretched 70th week

gave two numbers to represent the “time, times and a half,” which was to extend to the very end of the age, according to Daniel 12:7. That period is represented by two numbers, 1,290 days, and 1,335 days. Neither of these fit a literal three years and a half. They are mystical, and each represents an unreal, or symbolic three years and a half.

Daniel 12:11-12

And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

When broken down into months of 30 days, these numbers fit the pattern of a time, times, and a half, as they consist of two kinds of years; regular years of 12 months, and leap years of 13 months, where in each case, one year differs from the rest.

$$1,335 \text{ days} = 12 \times 30 + 2 \times 13 \times 30 + 1/2 \times 13 \times 30$$

$$1,290 \text{ days} = 13 \times 30 + 2 \times 12 \times 30 + 1/2 \times 12 \times 30$$

Thus, by providing those two numbers to represent the time, times and a half, Daniel indicates that it is not a period of three and a half literal years, but symbolic. In the time, times and a half that followed the ministry of Jesus, he continues to confirm his covenant with his saints, and the promises to the fathers, which are available to the

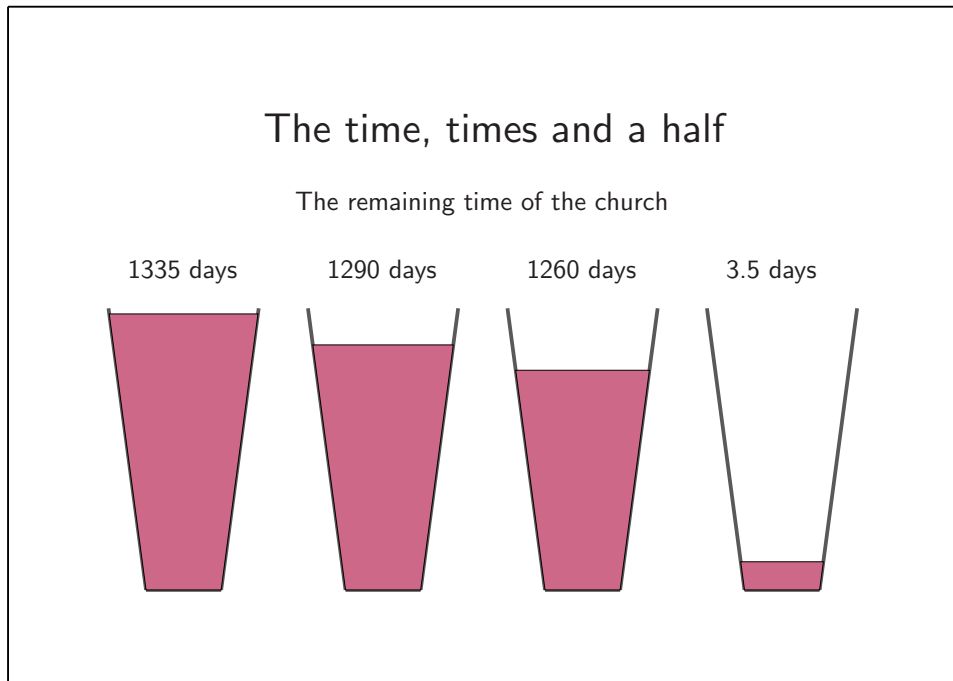


Figure 8.5: The contents of the cups represents the remaining time at different parts of the church age

Gentiles who believe, as Paul said. According to Paul, these promises represent the gospel. He wrote:

Galatians 3:8

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Together with the three and a half years of the ministry of Jesus, the time, times and a half completes the 70th week of Daniel 9. It is the age in which we are today, the whole age of the church.

Jesus asked his disciples to remember his covenant by sharing a cup of wine. In the image below, the wine cup is a symbol for the period of time when he fulfills that covenant. The various numbers provided in the prophecies of Daniel and in Revelation, that represent the time remaining in the age of the church, are the labels on the four glasses in the image.

In Figure 8.5, a cup of wine is associated with the time during which Christ continues to fulfill the New Covenant, in the last half of the 70th week, which corresponds to the whole age of the church. Like a cup of wine the time continually decreases. The label above each cup indicates the remaining *symbolic time* for confirming the covenant.

The symbolic time periods are 1,335 days, 1,290 days, 1,260 days, and three days and a half.

All of these fit the pattern of "*a time, times and a half.*" This expression may be associated with the cup itself. The prophetic numbers which fit the patter of a time, times and a half are ilustrated by the amount of wine remaining, and the amount of time remaining for the church to bring the gospel to the world. The numbers become progressively smaller.

The cup at the left represents the very beginning of the church age, when Jesus sent the Spirit, and great deeds were accomplished by the apostles. Daniel 12:12 says, about the 1,335 days, "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." It is Christ who waits for the time when his church is complete and the saints are ready for his return.

Next is the cup associated with the 1,290 days. Daniel says, "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days."¹

Two events are mentioned here. The daily sacrifices were taken away, and discontinued, when the Jerusalem temple was destroyed in 70 AD. Some time afterwards, the abomination of desolation was established. This is associated with the antichrist spirit, which John said was already present, and he said there were "many antichrists." This *abomination* has been present throughout much of the church age, beginning near the end of the first century. After the apostolic period, false teachers began to rise up, and seduce the saints. Many were carried away in heretical movements. In Daniel 7 the little horn of the beast (which represents the Roman empire) makes war with the saints, and prevails against them.

The third cup is associated with 1,260 days. This represents the age in which the two witnesses prophesy and so it must begin after the Apocalypse was completed. It is a smaller number than the 1,290 days, so it begins later than the destruction of Jerusalem, and the appearance of the antichrist spirit. The same time period is assigned to the woman in the wilderness, where she is nourished.

The cup at the right is very nearly empty. It is associated with the period when the two witnesses lie as corpses in the street, a figure of the widespread unbelief in God's word, and the lack of evidence of the Spirit. When this condition prevails, the remaining time of the church is short.

The 70th week, which is a period of seven times, was foreshadowed by several Old Testament types and figures. In the last of the four periods of seven times in Leviticus 26, God remembers his covenant with Jacob, and his covenant with Isaac, and his

¹Daniel 12:11

covenant with Abraham, and he will “remember the land.”¹

The seven years that Jacob labored for his bride Rachel was a type of the covenant that Christ confirms with his church, which spans seven times. This explains why it is for a limited period of time. Like the years of Jacob’s labor, it is a betrothal.

Also, the domination of the little horn of Daniel 7 over the saints is for a limited period of time. It is represented by the phrase a time, times and a half. Eventually the little horn will be destroyed.

Other periods of seven years, or seven times in the Old Testament also foreshadow the period in which Christ confirms his covenant, which includes his earthly ministry, and the whole age of the church. They include the seven years of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua; the seven years for which the weapons of the armies of Gog and Magog are burned as fuel, and the seven months for which their corpses are buried. Ezekiel’s prophecy about the invasion of Gog and Magog is applied to the church in Revelation 20:8-9.

¹Leviticus 26:42

Chapter 9

The acceptable year of the Lord

At the synagogue in Nazareth, where he had been brought up, Jesus read from the book of Isaiah a prophecy that refers to “the acceptable year of the Lord,” which Jesus said was fulfilled on that very day.

Luke 4:17-22

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

What was special about that particular year? The “acceptable year of the Lord” was the year that Jesus began his ministry. It has to do with the beginning of the last of the four periods of seven times in Leviticus 26, when God would be reconciled to Israel.

Luke 4:20-21

And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

The occasion was during the first year of his ministry, soon after his baptism by John. It was after the first two sections of the prophecy of Daniel about the 70 weeks had been fulfilled.

In his prayer of confession, Daniel referred to the covenant.

Daniel 9:4

And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said,

O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

At the end of the first two sections of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks, the Messiah would appear.

Daniel 9:25

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:

During the 70th week, Daniel said, Christ would “confirm the covenant with many for one week.”¹

The word “*covenant*” refers to all the revelations and promises of God. Examples are:

- the “everlasting covenant” which is represented by a rainbow²
- God’s covenant with Abraham represented by circumcision,³ which was to be established with Isaac⁴
- the Sabbath⁵
- the Mosaic legislation⁶
- the “sure mercies of David”⁷
- the regular succession of day and night⁸
- etc.

The covenant includes the promises; the promise of the land, which Abraham did not receive in his lifetime, was the basis for his confidence in a resurrection. Paul said the covenant had been confirmed to Abraham.⁹ He used this as the basis of his argument about the role of the law which was given centuries later.

¹Daniel 9:27

²Genesis 9:16

³Genesis 17:4-10

⁴Genesis 17:18-19

⁵Exodus 31:16

⁶Jeremiah 34:13-14

⁷Isaiah 55:3

⁸Jeremiah 33:20-22

⁹Galatians 3:17

All the promises of God are included in the covenant that Christ confirms with the saints in the 70th week; and it includes his righteous life, that was offered up as a sacrifice to take away the sin of the world.

Daniel said: "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, . . ." ¹

The "midst of the week" includes the death of Jesus on the cross, and the end of the sacrificial system, when the city and temple were destroyed.

Jesus was baptized during the ministry of John the Baptist. The date for the beginning of John's ministry was given by Luke.

Luke 3:1-3

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

If the first year of Tiberius was 14 AD, his 15th year would occur in 28 AD. However, Tiberius was associated with Augustus as ruler of the Roman Empire before Augustus died. Jack Finegan gives the year 12 AD; other scholars have suggested 11 AD, or 13 AD as the year Tiberius was made co-ruler. Thus, if Luke used the actual year when Tiberius became ruler, his 15th year was about 26 AD. Some time after John began his ministry, Jesus was baptized and began his ministry.

The year 27-28 AD was the start of the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy. It also began a new sabbatical cycle. It was when Jesus read from Isaiah's prophecy in the synagogue at Nazareth on a sabbath day.

Jesus said, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." ²

The year 27-28 AD marked the beginning of a new era, the seven times of the reconciliation of God with his people, when God remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ³

¹Daniel 9:27

²Luke 16:16

³Leviticus 26:42

The 70th week is the week when Jesus confirms the covenant, which began in 27-28 AD and continues to the end of the age.

Beginning with the decree of Cyrus, the first two sections of the 70 weeks work out correctly to 28 AD, when the first 7 weeks are 49 leap years having an extra month. Seven weeks of leap years spans 133 years. The second section is $62 \times 7 = 434$ years, and together that is 567 years, the time from the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC, to the beginning of the ministry of Jesus in 27-28 AD.

Some claim that the fulfillment of the first 69 weeks occurred at the end of the ministry of Jesus, rather than the beginning of it, but their interpretations require one or more gaps, and some offer dubious manipulations of historical dates, or spurious schemes contrived in order to get the dates to work out to the year of the crucifixion, which was probably 30 AD.

Daniel said, of the 70th week, "In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering."¹

This seems to mean the Mosaic temple sacrifices. They ended when the temple was destroyed, in 70 AD. So that must be the middle of the seven, which makes sense, since the first three and a half years were natural, but the last three and a half years apply to the heavenly Jerusalem, and so are symbolic. Earth days, earth months, earth years do not apply to things divine and spiritual. Rather, they are symbols or types.

The 69th week ended in 28 AD, if one counts from the decree of Cyrus, 538 BC, and if leap years are used in the first section, of 7 weeks. This avoids invoking a gap between the end of the 70 years of Jeremiah, and the beginning of the 70 weeks. In fact, Daniel said the "curse" written in the Law of Moses had been poured out, Daniel 9:11, which alludes to the curse that is outlined in Leviticus 26. This consisted of four periods of seven times. In the last of the four periods of seven times, God would be reconciled to his people.

The beginning of the last of the four periods of seven times, the one during which God would be reconciled to his people, was the "acceptable year of the Lord," that Jesus referred to.

If the captivity in Babylon was the first of these four periods of "seven times," the three sections of the 70 weeks correspond to the remaining three periods of seven times. There can be no gap in the curse, as that would imply that God was temporarily reconciled to Israel. The curse does not lapse, and resume again. Any reconciliation with God is a permanent one.

The 70 years of Jeremiah, plus the three sections of the 70 weeks, are the four periods of seven times described in Leviticus 26, and they are continuous, right to the

¹Daniel 9:27 NIV

end of the age, and “the times of restitution of all things.”

Acts 3:20

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:
Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things,
which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world
began.

Chapter 10

The land promise and the 70 weeks

Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9 was about the city of Jerusalem, which in those days lay in ruins, and was desolate.

Daniel mentioned Jeremiah's prophecy of the 70 years of desolation upon Jerusalem.¹

The people of Israel and Judah had been removed from the land; some were in Babylon, but Daniel indicates they had become scattered in many countries. In verse 7, Daniel acknowledged that "confusion of faces" belonged to "the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee."

Daniel said that the curse of the law of Moses had been poured out upon Israel.² The curse alludes to Leviticus 26, where four periods of seven times are specified. In the last of these four periods, God would remember his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and he would remember the land.³

Daniel's prayer was for "thy holy mountain"⁴ and "the holy mountain of my God,"⁵ the same mountain that Isaiah said would be "exalted above the hills." Isaiah said that "the mountain of the Lord's house" would be established in the tops of the mountains, and exalted above the hills.⁶ As discussed here, there is continuity of the land promise, from the Old to the New Covenants, and from the Old Covenant to the New Testament era.

¹Daniel 9:4

²Daniel 9:11

³Leviticus 26:42

⁴Daniel 9:16

⁵Daniel 9:20

⁶Isaiah 2:1-3

Comparing Daniel 9:20 and Isaiah 2:1-3 indicates these prophecies apply to the same Jerusalem, the “mountain of the Lord’s house,” the Jerusalem which is raised up to heaven in the New Testament. The promised land is represented by Mount Zion, and by Jerusalem, which in the New Testament, are names applied to the church. Paul referred to the church as “Jerusalem which is above” and “the mother of us all.”¹ In Hebrews, the saints are said to have come to “Mount Sion,” and the “heavenly Jerusalem.”² The saints of all nations have come to the heavenly Mount Sion, and the heavenly Jerusalem. Isaiah’s prophecy, and a similar prophecy in Zechariah 14:10, say that Jerusalem will be raised up; both witness to the continuity of the land that was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with the heavenly city of the New Testament. The heavenly city is the part of the promised land that was raised up, when Jesus ascended to heaven.

Daniel asked God to look upon the desolations of Jerusalem, and cause his face to shine on his holy city again. Just as the earthly city was desolate when Daniel offered up his prayer of confession, the church has been made desolate, and many of the saints are captives in the worldly religious system referred to in prophecy as Babylon, in the present age. A prayer similar to Daniel’s might be prayed about the church today. The state of desolation, that Jesus referred to in his prophecy about the abomination of desolation, is the condition of the church; he was not referring to an earthly temple becoming desolate.

This seems to be supported in Acts 15:16, where James applied an Old Testament prophecy about the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David, which had fallen down, to the church.

The angel Gabriel appeared, and gave Daniel the prophecy of the 70 weeks, which was “to give him skill and understanding.”

While the first two sections of the 70 weeks and part of the third apply to the earthly city, after Jesus ascended to heaven, the Jerusalem to which Daniel’s prophecy applies is the church, the heavenly Jerusalem of Hebrews 12:22. The temple also is the church, rather than one made with hands.

Thus, the last half-week of Daniel’s 70 weeks prophecy applies to the heavenly Jerusalem. This is depicted in Figure 10.1.

The 70 weeks prophecy outlines a time frame, and limits the duration of the desolations of the holy city. This was the earthly city in Daniel’s time, but when Jesus ascended to heaven, and in the period since then, the prophecy refers to the church. For the first two sections of the prophecy, the time periods are fulfilled in earthly units. In the 70th week Christ confirms his covenant with many. It began in the first century when Jesus began his ministry. In the midst of the week, Jesus was crucified, or cut off. The first half of the 70th week was his earthly ministry. In the last half week, when Jesus ascended to heaven, earthly time units no longer apply. The last half-week

¹Galatians 4:26

²Hebrews 12:22

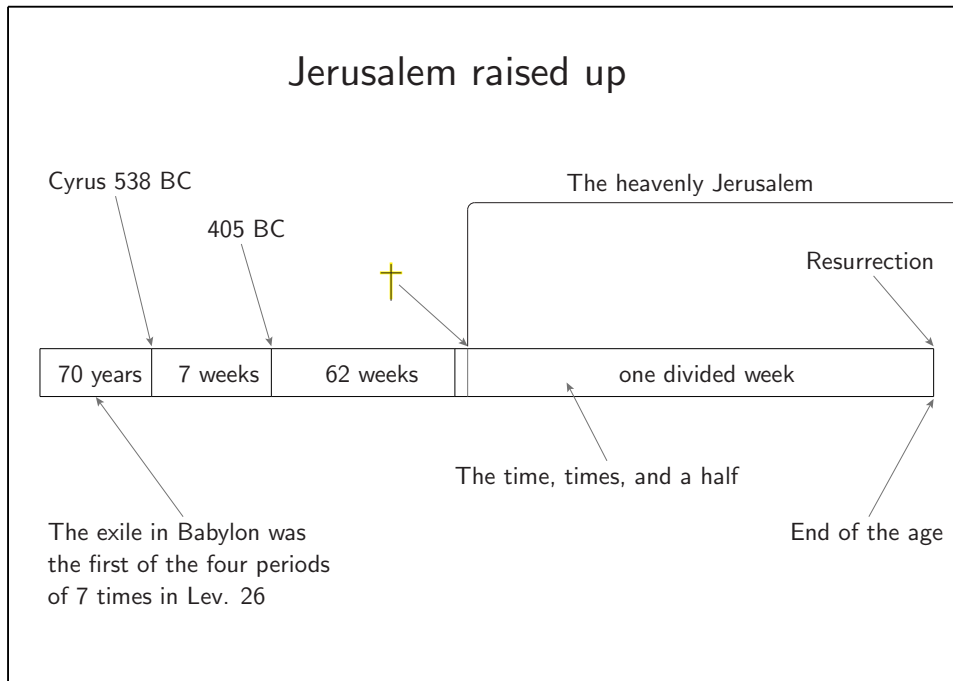


Figure 10.1: When Jesus ascended to heaven, Jerusalem was raised up

is symbolic of the entire age of the church. In the last half-week of the 70 weeks, all the things mentioned in Daniel 9:24 must be accomplished. These things are all related to the gospel.

The three sections of the 70 weeks correspond to the last three of the four periods of seven times in Leviticus 26. The first of the four periods can be identified with the exile in Babylon.

Leviticus 26 says that in the last of four periods of “seven times,” God will remember the land. What does it mean?

If the land is symbolic of spiritual things promised to the church, one of those promises is that the Spirit will lead the church into the truth.¹

There is no place for false teachings in the land of promise.

John the Baptist preached the message of Isaiah 40:4, that every mountain will be made low, and every valley will be filled. If the mountains are symbolic and represent blessings, promises, covenants, and prophecies, being made low may mean their mysteries will be revealed and the prophecies will be explained. Every valley filled, may mean missing information will be provided. The prophecy implies that false teachings will be exposed.

¹John 16:13

When God “remembers the land,” the meaning of the land will be properly understood. It is not the literal land of Palestine; the promised land is represented by the heavenly Jerusalem, and a heavenly country.

The present is a time of spiritual darkness and confusion, but while there is gross darkness in the world, light will shine in the holy city. The holy city is the part of the land that is raised up.¹ Jesus described a time when the saints will “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”²

Isaiah said the saints will have light, in a time of darkness.

Isaiah 60:1-3

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

There is to be a time of “restitution of all things,” which Peter referred to in Acts 3:21. It is when all the things mentioned in Daniel 9:24 will be fulfilled.

Daniel’s prophecy of the 70 weeks is actually a prophecy about the land; the 70 weeks are about the city of Jerusalem which was raised up to heaven as foretold by Isaiah; the last half-week of the 70th week applies to the heavenly city. The final week is the time when Christ confirms his covenant with his saints.

Daniel 9:27 says that in the 70th week, “that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” The enemy responsible for the desolation of the church will be destroyed, and the Spirit will be poured out upon the saints.

In Genesis, God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the promise includes the heavenly city, which is Jerusalem raised up as Isaiah said. The prophets said all Israel will be brought into the land.³ These are all things that relate to the promise that God will “remember the land.”

¹Isaiah 2:1-3

²Matthew 13:43

³Ezekiel 39:28

Chapter 11

The genealogy of the gap

The idea of a gap in the 70 weeks, or in the period prior to the 1260 days has been nurtured for centuries by scholars who embraced the year-day theory. 1260 days is the duration of the ministry of the two witnesses of Revelation 11, and the period for which the woman in Revelation 12, who represents the church, flees to the wilderness. The idea of a gap prior to the 1260 days was adopted by futurists and incorporated into dispensationalism, whose gap surpasses every historicist gap.

An interpretation that invokes a gap is flawed, as the 1260 days, and the time, times and a half, and related periods signify, not a certain number of earth-years or earth-days, but the whole age of the church, which is the heavenly city, a city not made with hands, and so is spiritual in nature. It remains forever. How could earthly units of days, and months, and years apply to it?

The time, times and a half of Daniel and Revelation and the 1260 days represent the last half of the “week” in which Christ confirms his covenant with his saints, or a portion thereof. The period is one half of “seven times,” and completes the week of Daniel 9:27, the 70th week of Daniel’s prophecy. The first half-week of the 70th week is the earthly ministry of Jesus. There can be no “gap” in the 70th week, because Jesus has promised his disciples, “surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”¹ He continues his ministry of confirming the covenant throughout the church age.

Misunderstanding the “times and laws,” including the prophetic times is characteristic of the little horn of Daniel 7, which would wear out the saints of the most High.²

The opinions of more than 100 authors on the significance of the prophetic 3 1/2 years, 1260 days, and the time, times and a half, are summarized in the table below. The names are ordered by the middle column, which is the size of the “gap” that is invoked in the interpretation; that is, the period of time invoked from 30 AD, taken as the date of the crucifixion of Jesus, and the beginning of the 1260 days of Revelation 12:6 and 14, sometimes interpreted by the year-day theory as 1260 years, and sometimes

¹Matthew 28:20

²Daniel 7:25

taken as literal days.

Author	Gap	Dates
Hugo Grotius (1583-1645)	20 years	50-64
Moses Stuart (1780-1852)	37	67-70
James Stuart Russell (1816-1895)		
Robert Young (1822-1888)		
Frederic William Farrar (1831-1903)		
Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr. (1950-)		
Henry Hammond (1605-1660)	102	132-136
Walter Brute c. 1391	104	134-1394
B. H. Carroll (1843-1914)	220	250-1510
Dr. H. More (1614-1687)	227	257-1517
Peter Artopaeus (1505-1574)	230	260-1520
J. Funck (1558)	231	261-1521
Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669)	262	292-1522
John Napier (1550-1617)	270	300-1560
Thomas Brightman (1562-1607)	274	304-1546
Aretius (1573)	282	312-1572
James Brocard (b. 1563)	283	313-1573
John Napier (1550-1617)	286	316-1576
Michael Servetus (1509-1553)	295	325-1585
Johann Heinrich Alsted (1588-1638)	332	362-1622

Author	Gap	Dates
Joseph Mede (1586-1639)	346	376-1636
James Macknight (1721-1800)	349	379-1639
Thomas Parker (1595-1677)	359	389-1649
Ephraim Huet (1643)	360	390-1650
Samuel Hartlib (1600-1662)	365	395-1655
John Cotton (1585-1652)		
John Tillinghast (1604-1655)	366	396-1656
Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680)	376	406-1666
E. R. Leorinus	380	410-1670
David Chytraeus (1530-1600)	382	412-1672
A. Osiander (1545)		
William Alleine (1614-1677)	396	426-1686
Joseph Hussey	397	427-1687
Hanserd Knollys (1599-1691)	398	428-1688
Pierre Du Moulin (1568-1658)	399	429-1689
Thomas Beverley (1684)	407	437-1697
G. Nigrinius (1570)	411	441-1701
Pierre Jurieu (1637-1713)	420	450-1710
	424	454-1714
William Whiston (1667-1752)	425	455-1715
Mitchell	425	455-1697
Joseph Mede (1586-1638)	446	476-1736
William Whiston (1667-1752)		

Author	Gap	Dates
Charles Daubuz (1673-1717)		
James Bicheno (1752- 1831)	499	529-1789
Edward Bishop Elliott (1793-1875)		
John Bayford		
B. D. Bogie	500	530-1790
Lewis Way (1818)	501	531-1791
James Hartley Frere (1779-1866)	502	532-1792
William Cunninghame (1776-1849)		
Archibald Mason (1753-1831)	503	533-1792
Charles David Maitland (1785-1865)		
Edward Cooper (1770-1833)		
George Croly (1780-1860)		
James Hartley Frere (1779-1866)		
William Cunninghame (1776-1849)		
Bishop Thomas Newton (1704-1782)	503	533-1793
Matthew Habershon (1789-1852)		
Alexander Keith (1791-1880)		
Edward Irving (1792-1834)		
Albert Barnes (1798-1870)		
Edward Bickersteth (1814-1892)		
Henry Grattan Guinness (1835-1910)		
Sylvester Bliss (1814-1863)		
Michael Paget Baxter (1834-1910)	507	537-1797

Author	Gap	Dates
G. Bell (1796)		
John Fry (1822)		
David Simpson (1745-1799)	508	538-1798
William Miller (1782-1849)		
Uriah Smith (1832-1903)		
Edward King (1798)		
Sharpe	510	540-1800
William Ettrick (1757-1847)	518	548-1808
Robert Fleming (c. 1660-1716)	522	552-1794
G. Bell (1796)	523	553-1813
Roderick C. Meredith (1930-)	524	554-1814
Edward King (1798)	508	538-1798
Matthew Habershon (1789-1852)	554	584-1844
John Aquila Brown (c. 1827)		
John Fry		
J. Ph. Petri (1768)	557	587-1847
Joseph Wolf (1795-1862)		
W.C. Davis (1818)	558	588-1848
J. Bicheno	563	593-1789
George Stanley Faber (1773-1854)	574	604-1864
Drue Cressener (1642-1718)	576	606-1848
Joel Mann (1789-1844)		
Robert Fleming (c. 1660-1716)	576	606-1848

Author	Gap	Dates
Joseph Galloway (1731-1803)	576	606-1849
Thomas Parker (1595-1677)	576	c: 600-1859
Matthias Flacius (1520-1575)	576	606-1866
David Pareus (1548-1622)		
William Whiston (1667-1752)		
John Gill (1697-1771)		
John Mayer (c. 1627)		
Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)		
Bishop Thomas Newton (1704-1782)		
Joseph Galloway (1731-1803)		
David Simpson (1745-1799)		
Thomas Scott (1747-1821)		
Henry Gauntlett (1762-1833)		
George Stanley Faber (1773-1854)		
Edward Bishop Elliott (1793-1875)		
Albert Barnes (1798-1870)		
Henry Grattan Guinness (1835-1910)		
William Hales (1747-1831)	590	620-1880
Hans Wood (1787)		
John Aquila Brown (1823)	592	622-1844
John Chappel Woodhouse (1749-1833)	592	622-1882
Edward Wells (1667-1727)	600	630-1890
William Henry Hechler (1845-1931)	607	637-1897

Author	Gap	Dates
Philipp Melancthon (1497-1560)	630	660-2000
David Simpson (1745-1799)	636	666-1926
Bishop Thomas Newton (1704-1782)	697	727-1987
Frederick Fysh (d. 1867)		
Albert Barnes (1798-1870)	722	752-2012
Dr. John Smith	725	755-2015
Alexander Fraser (1749-1802)	726	756-1998
Bryce Johnston (1747-1805)	726	756-1999
Moses Lowman (1679-1752)	726	756-2016
David Simpson (1745-1799)		
Alexander Pirie (c. 1794)	727	757-2017
Robert Fleming (c. 1660-1716)	728	758-2000
Isaac Newton (1642-1727)	770	800-2060
Johan Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752)	834	864-1521
	1028	1058-1836
John Wesley (1703-1791)		
Albert Barnes (1798-1870)	1043	1073-2333
J. J. Brachmair	1120	1150-1500
Keith	1168	1198-2450
Hans Hut (c. 1490-1527)	1495	1525-1528
Melchior Hoffman (1495-1544)	1496	1526-1530
Lodowicke Muggleton (1609-1698)	1622	1652-1658
Edward Irving (1792-1834)	1802	1832-1835

Author	Gap	Dates
Robert Baxter		
Michael Paget Baxter (1834-1910)	1837	1867-1871
Joseph Franklin "Judge" Rutherford (1856-1942)	1884	1914-1918
Florence Houteff	1925	1955-1959
Herbert W. Armstrong (1892-1986)	1942	1972-1975
Ronald Weinland (1949-)	1975	2008-2012
Herbert L. Peters (1946-2007)	1977	2010-2014

Chapter 12

Interpreting the *time, times and a half*

A consistent pattern of interpretation of the time, times and a half, and or the 1,260 days or 3 1/2 years of Daniel and Revelation, that persists throughout the history of the church, is evident among those scholars who interpreted this mysterious period as symbolic, representing *the whole age of the church*. This period is connected to the ministry of Jesus, and completes the prophetic week, in which Christ *confirms his covenant with many*. The scholars whose conclusions are presented below understood this.

Methodius of Olympus (died c. 311)

Methodius, the bishop at Olympus in Lycia, suffered martyrdom under Maximinus Daia in 311.

On the woman who flees to the wilderness for 1,260 days in Revelation 12:6, Methodius wrote:¹

Now she who brings forth, and has brought forth, the masculine Word in the hearts of the faithful, and who passed, undefiled and uninjured by the wrath of the beast, into the wilderness, is, as we have explained, our mother the Church. And the wilderness into which she comes, and is nourished for a thousand two hundred and sixty days, which is truly waste and unfruitful of evils, and barren of corruption, and difficult of access and of transit to the multitude; but fruitful and abounding in pasture, and blooming and easy of access to the holy, and full of wisdom, and productive of life, is this most lovely, and beautifully wooded and well watered abode of Arete [virtue]. . . . For the Bride of the Word is adorned with the fruits of virtue. And the thousand two hundred and sixty days that we are staying here, O virgins, is the accurate and perfect understanding concerning the Father, and the

¹Methodius, The Banquet of the ten virgins, or, concerning chastity. In: The writings of Methodius, Alexander of Lycopolis, Peter of Alexandria, and several fragments. Volume 14 of Ante-Nicene Christian library. T. & T. Clark, 1869. p. 75.
<http://books.google.com/books?id=XcIUAAAQAAJ>

Son, and the Spirit, in which our mother increases, and rejoices, and exults throughout this time, until the restitution of the new dispensation, when, coming into the assembly in the heavens, she will no longer contemplate the I AM through the means of [human] knowledge, but will clearly behold entering in together with Christ.

Primasius (died c. 560)

Primasius was Augustinian bishop of Hadrumetum and primate of Byzacena, in Africa.

Edward Elliott said Primasius “explained the 42 months, 1260 days, and time times and a half a time, as specially designating the time of Antichrist’s last persecution, yet as signifying also the whole time of the duration of the Church.”¹

Bede (672-735)

The venerable Bede was a monk at the Northumbrian monastery of Saint Peter at Monkwearmouth, in Sunderland, England.

On the 1,260 days of Revelation 12:6, he wrote: “In this number of days, which makes three years and a half, he comprehends all the times of Christianity, because Christ, Whose body the Church is, preached the same length of time in the flesh.”²

Alcuin (c. 735-804)

Edward Elliott reported that Alcuin concluded that the period of the ministry of the two witnesses is the whole age of the church.³

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

Thomas Aquinas was a Sicilian priest of the Catholic Church in the Dominican Order, also known as known as *Doctor Angelicus*. Thomas wrote:⁴

The thousand two hundred sixty days mentioned in the Apocalypse (12:6) denote all the time during which the Church endures, and not any definite number of years. The reason whereof is because the preaching of Christ on which the Church is built lasted three years and a half, which time contains almost an equal number of days as the aforesaid number. Again the number of days appointed by Daniel does not refer to a number of years to elapse before the end of the world or until the preaching of Antichrist, but to the time of Antichrist’s preaching and the duration of his persecution.

¹Edward Bishop Elliott. *Horae apocalypticae: or a commentary on the Apocalypse*. Volume 3. p. 235.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=ZL87AAAAcAAJ>

²Bede (the venerable.) *The explanation of the Apocalypse*. Translated by Edward Marshall, 1878. p. 83.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=r6UCAAAAQAAJ>

³Edward Bishop Elliott. *Op. Cit.*, p. 126.

⁴Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologica*. Treatise on the resurrection. Question 77.2.2. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/aquinas/summa/sum623.htm>

John Bale (1495-1563)

John Bale was the first to write a commentary on Revelation in English; it was titled *The Image of Both Churches*.

Bale understood the holy city of Revelation 11:2, which is trampled by gentiles, to be the church, and the 42 months as symbolic. On this verse he said:¹

And the holy city (of whom glorious things are spoken) they shall tread under foot for the space of 42 months. Not the earthly Jerusalem is this city, builded of men, and made holy by the outward observations and ceremonies of the Jews as many expositors have fantasied. For of that (as Christ prophesies) is not one stone standing upon another. But this city is the sure building of God, grounded upon the strong foundation of the Apostles and prophets, even upon the hard rock stone Jesus Christ. This is the pleasant possession, the wholesome household, the sure hold, and the delectable vineyard of the Lord of Hosts. This is the living generation of them which feareth, loveth, and seeketh their Lord God in faith, spirit, and truth, and not in outward shadows. These are the children of promise, the true offspring of Abraham, the chosen of Israel, and the kingdom of the holy ghost. Pure, clean, and holy hath Christ made this city, by none other thing but the only shedding of his precious blood.

William Fulke (1538-1589)

William Fulke connected the 1,260 days with 70 weeks of years in Daniel 9. He thought the 42 months and 1,260 days represent three and a half years, and signify a limited time, and that "a short space of time is permitted to the devil that he may strive with all his force to beat down the Church." Fulke wrote on Revelation 11:2-3:²

And the holy city they shall tread under foot two and forty months &c. The wicked and profane gentiles shall tread under foot, that is, shall grievously oppress, persecute, and afflict the Church of God, to the full space of two and forty months, that is for that time which Christ doth grant unto Antichrist to rage in cruelty against the godly. Some do count the number of months, from the first persecutions of the Christians by the Roman conquerors, even till the time of the emperor Constantine which granted peace, unto the churches. But let them which maintain that opinion see how certain it is. But to me it seems more plain that under numbers the certain fixed, and determinate time of the persecution of Antichrist is assigned, which he cannot pass, although he fret fume and rage never so much. For the Lord hath counted the same time by months days and hours. The reason of the numbers seemeth to be of this sort, this time which sometime is called two and forty months, sometime a thousand two hundred and sixty

¹John Bale, *The Image of Both Churches*. 1547. (Spelling is modified in the quote.)

²William Fulke. *Praelections vpon the sacred and holy Reuelation of S. Iohn, written in latine by William Fulke Doctor of Diuinitie, and translated into English by George Gyffard*. 1573.

days, sometime a time two times and half a time, maketh in all three years and an half, that is the one half of a propheticall week, which time also is called three days and an half. And this place alludes to the weeks of years in the 9 Chapter of Daniel. Whereupon we gather to the great consolation of the Church, that a short time is appointed to Antichrist to wait the same, which is also shewed twice afterward in the 12 Chapter and in the 20, that a short space of time is permitted to the devil that he may strive with all his force to beat down the Church, this interpretation as most simple and plain pleases me best; those that seek more subtler may follow their own judgment.

George Gifford (c.1548-1600)

Puritan minister George Gifford saw that it was unwise to identify the 1,260 days or the 42 months of Revelation 11:2-3 with specific dates, but instead he argued that in this book, "a number certain is put for an uncertain." He wrote:¹

Then next here is shewed how long the great Antichrist and his rout of profane Gentiles, possessing the outer court of the Temple, shall tread down the holy city. The time is set to be two and forty months: and that is three years and a half: for twelve months to a year, three times twelve is thirty and six, and then six months for the half year, do make up two and forty. From this place the Papists do draw one argument, by which they would prove that the Pope is not Antichrist. After this manner they reason: The Pope hath governed the Church many years: the great Antichrist shall reign but two and forty months, which is three years and a half: (for they do rightly confess that the Gentiles which possess the outer court of the temple, are the rout of Antichrist) therefore say they, it is impossible that the Pope should be Antichrist. For answer unto this: let it be demanded, doth not Saint John in this prophecy speak mystically, even as the Prophets did in old time? they cannot deny this. And then demand further, is not every day put for a year in the seventy weeks which Daniel the Prophet speaketh of? so every week is seven years. And why may not every month here then be put for thirty years? which then do amount unto 1,260 years. Which indeed is a long time in comparison of three years & an half: but compared with the eternity of Christ's kingdom, it is as nothing. And that is one cause why the Lord numbers it by days & months which quickly run out. But then here will arise another scruple: If the kingdom of Antichrist shall continue twelve hundred and sixty years, we must either say that the Bishop of Rome was Antichrist more than a thousand years past, yea above thirteen hundred, if we take his reign to be no longer than until he was disclosed by the Gospel: or else we must say he hath yet long to continue. Let not this trouble us, seeing it is most clear and out of all controversy, that in this book, a number certain is put for an uncertain. As in the seventh chapter

¹George Gifford. *Sermons vpon the whole booke of the Reuelation Set forth by George Giffard, Preacher of the Word at Mauldin in Essex.* Richard Field and Felix Kinston, 1599. p. 189-190.

of this book it is said, that of every tribe there was sealed twelve thousand. And because twelve times twelve amount unto one hundred forty & four, it is said chap. 14 that so many thousands stand with the Lamb upon mount Sion. Is any man so unwise, as to take it, that of every tribe there should be saved just twelve thousand neither more nor less, and so on all of the Jews in these latter days just an hundred forty & four thousands to be saved? & not rather that the Lord by a number certain doth declare that even when his Church doth seem utterly to fail, he saves a great number, of which he expresses not the just sum. So in this place when God will comfort his people, he shows that Antichrist shall tread down the holy city but for a short time, that is, two and forty months, which is but three years and an half, he meaneth not to note the just number of years that he shall continue.

Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802-1869)

A German Lutheran churchman and theologian, Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg rejected the idea that the 1,260 days refer to a particular time in the history of the world, but instead he interpreted these and related numbers as symbolic, and represented the whole course of the church's history, and he said the three and a half years were a signature of the church. On Revelation 11:2, he wrote:¹

The two and forty months contain only an apparent determination of time; as, indeed, all numbers in the Apocalypse have only an ideal signification; they belong not so properly to the chronological, as to the symbolical forum. The common signature of the dominion of the world over the church in the Revelation, resting on the prophecies of Daniel, (comp. at ch. xii. 6, xiii. 5), is the three and a half, in which we have only to think of the broken seven, the signature of the church. So that the meaning is here conveyed, that however the world may lift itself up, however it may proudly triumph, it can never attain to anything complete and lasting. These three and a half years return again in different forms: a time, two times, and an half time, ch. xii. 14, forty and two months, here and in ch. xiii. 5, 1260 days in ch. xii. 6. In the number of the beast also in ch. xiii. 18, the same thing substantially holds as in these numbers. We have here before us a representation, which does not bring into view some particular period of time in the world's history, but the whole course of it, only that towards the end every thing realizes itself in a more perfect manner. Wherever the world is found over owing the church, from that of which John himself saw the commencement, to the last in ch. xx. 7-9, of which we have now the beginning before our eyes, there the substance of the prophecy always verifies itself anew, there the obligation still remains to those who are affected by the evil, to take it as the ground of consolation and warning to their hearts. . . . The thought in this prophecy was in other respects quite correctly apprehended by the older expositors. Thus on the expression, "the holy city shall be trodden down,"

¹Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg. *The Revelation of St John: expounded for those who search the Scriptures*, Volume 1. T. & T. Clark, 1851. p. 396

Bossuet remarks, "Christians shall be under the sway of the unbelievers; but though the weak shall fall, the church shall continue in strength. This is the first point which St John apprehends in the persecutions: the church continually abiding."

Patrick Fairbairn (1805-1874)

Patrick Fairbairn was a minister for 27 years, and was appointed Professor of Theology at the Free Church Theological College in Aberdeen in 1853. He was the principal of the Free Church College, Glasgow, for 18 years. He was the author of several biblical works, including *Typology of Scripture*, and a commentary on Ezekiel. Below are comments by Fairbairn on the symbolic nature of the 3 1/2 years of Revelation 11, 12, and 13.¹

It remains only to notice the indications of time contained in the portion of the Apocalypse we have been surveying. These appear to be simply three, though one of them is expressed in a threefold manner. It is the period of the church's tried and oppressed condition—denoted first in chap. xi. 2, as a period of forty-two months, during which "the holy city is trodden down of the Gentiles," during which also the beast was to continue in its power to blaspheme and injure (chap. xiii. 5); then as consisting of 1260 days (forty-two months multiplied by 30 days), during which the witnesses, representatives of a faithful, but oppressed and persecuted church, were to prophesy, chap. xi. 3, and the church was to abide in the wilderness, chap. xii. 6, having a place and food prepared for her by God; and finally, as a time, times and a half (corresponding to one year of twelve months, two of the same, and a half-year of six, or to forty-two months, or again to 1260 days), during which the church was to remain and be fed in the wilderness, chap. xii. 14. In Dan. vii. 25, where the expression first occurs, it is the time during which the saints of God were to be given into the hand of the power that was to speak great words against the Most High. These are manifestly but different modes of expressing one and the same period, as the state of things also to which they are applied is substantially identical, though variously represented. For the sojourn in the wilderness on the part of the faithful and proper spouse, the treading down of the holy city by those who belonged only to the court of the Gentiles, and the testifying for the truth of God by a faithful remnant clothed in sackcloth, and wrestling against error and corruption; these are obviously but different symbolical representations of the same abnormal and dislocated state of things. The other two periods mentioned are both very brief, as compared with the one just noticed. The shortest is that during which the bodies of the faithful witnesses are represented as lying dead, though unburied, three and a half days, chap. xi. 12; and the other is the five months during which the scorpion-locusts were to have power to torment the followers of the beast,

¹Patrick Fairbairn *Prophecy viewed in respect to its distinctive nature, its special function, and proper interpretation* T. and T. Clark, 1865. [PART 2, CHAPTER III.]
<http://vinyl2.sentex.ca/~tcc/PF/IP.php?page2=Fairbairn2-3.html>

chap. ix. 5.

Now, it is scarcely possible to avoid being struck even on the most cursory inspection of these periods, with a peculiarity that is common to them all—the broken and incomplete aspect they present. A certain whole was evidently in respect to each of them in the mind of the Divine author of the vision, as that toward which the parties spoken of were aiming, but were arrested midway in their career. This is particularly observable in the largest and by much the most important number, which in every form—whether as time, times and a half, or as the months and days that make up three and a half years—is most expressive of an unfinished course, a period somehow cut off in the middle. In like manner, the three and a half days of rejoicing over the unburied corpses of the slain witnesses, betokens the same violent and abrupt termination of the course indicated; in their ungodly triumph, the adversaries could not complete more than half of one of the briefest revolutions of time—one of the smallest cycles of the whole period allotted to the ascendancy of evil. The incompleteness may appear less palpable in the five months specified for the plague of scorpion-locusts; but it will scarcely do so to those who have attended to the use made in Scripture of ten with reference to certain kinds of totality. The five is simply the broken ten.

So marked a peculiarity in the use of all these numbers is itself a strong presumption in favour of their symbolical import. It seems to stamp their value as indications of relative, rather than of absolute periods of duration—relative both as regards each other, and also as regards an ideal whole. And it will appear to do so the more convincingly the more the periods are viewed in reference to the parties mentioned, which are the entire spiritual church throughout the world, on the one side, and the whole antichristian power on the other; for in regard to such vast bodies, and their wide-reaching interests, what could such periods avail in their natural sense! They could obviously afford but a mere fraction of the time necessary for the accomplishment of the results connected with them; nor could such results in actual history be shut up into any periods consisting of such exact and definite measures. Another, and very powerful consideration in favour of the same view is the place of these historical numbers—surrounded on every hand, not with the literal, but with the symbolical. The woman that is persecuted, and the dragon who persecutes; the wilderness into which she flees, and the floods sent after her; the beast that rages against the truth, and the two witnesses who testify for it to the death; the holy city that is trodden down, and the Egypt or Babylon by whom the treading is effected; all are symbolically used, and shall the periods of working be otherwise than symbolical? In that case there would be the violation of one of the plainest laws of symbolical writing, and confusion and arbitrariness, as a matter of necessity, would be brought into the interpretation. It is true, the number seven, as applied to the heads of the beast, and the number ten spoken of its ultimate forms of separate organization, have already been found by us to possess a kind of historical verification. But this, when more closely considered, manifests

an evident striving after the symbolical. For, it is to make out the number seven, that St John diverges so strikingly here from the representation of Daniel, taking in the two earlier worldly kingdoms, which Daniel had omitted, and making of the divided state of Daniel's fourth empire a separate kingdom—the seventh. Nay, even this seventh he calls in a sense also the eighth—chap. xvii. 11—although seven still is taken as the proper number, because it alone has the proper symbolical import. The beast comes into view mainly as the rival of God, and seven being the common symbol of completeness for the Divine manifestations in the world (Isa. xxx. 26; Zech. iii. 9, iv. 2; Prov. ix. 1; Rev. i. 4, iii. 1, etc.)—originating, no doubt, in the sevenfold acts of God at creation—the worldly rival of God's power and glory in the world is, in token of its God-defying character, presented under the same number of manifestations. For a like reason the divided state of the last manifestation is distributed into the number ten. This also is often used as a symbol of completeness, on which account the ancients called it the perfect number, which comprehends all others in itself. But it commonly denotes completeness in respect to human interests and relations—as in the tithes or tenths (ten being regarded as comprising the entire property, from which one was selected to do homage to him who gave the whole), and the ten commandments, the sum of man's dutiful obedience. When, therefore, the divided state into which the modern Roman world fell, is represented under ten horns or kingdoms, it may well be doubted whether this should be pressed farther than as indicating, by a round number, the totality of the new states—the diversity in the unity—whether or not it might admit of being exactly and definitely applied to so many historical kingdoms. There is always some difficulty in making out an exact correspondence; and we should the less hold such a correspondence to be necessary, since even in the case of the tribes of Israel, when taken to represent the company of an elect people (chap. vii.), one tribe is totally omitted to preserve the symbolism of the historical twelve. This shows very strikingly the stress laid on the symbolical element, and strengthens the conclusion, that both in the seven and ten, as applied to the beast, and in the broken periods now under consideration, that element is primarily respected. Lastly, there is to be added on the same side the obviously loose setting of the periods; neither their starting-point, nor their termination is sharply defined. Viewed historically, indeed, one does not see how it could have been otherwise. The flight of the church into the wilderness, or the treading down of the holy city by the Gentiles, came on gradually; and appeared in different places at different times. It cannot be linked to definite historical epochs, as if at one or other of these it commenced for the first time, and for the whole church; and from the very nature of things, the termination must have a like diversity and gradation in its accomplishment. This draws a plain line of demarcation between the periods before us, and Daniel's seventy weeks, which are definitely bounded both in respect to their commencement and their close. The narrower field, and more outward character of the things they referred to, easily admitted of such a limitation; but here the world is

the field, and the cause of vital Christianity throughout its borders the great interest at stake.

Giving all these considerations their due weight, we cannot avoid arriving at the conclusion, that the periods mentioned, in accordance with the general character of the book, are to be chiefly, if not exclusively, understood in a symbolical manner, as serving to indicate the times of relative length or brevity which the operations described were destined to occupy. If anything further is implied, it should only, we conceive, be looked for in some general correspondence, as to form, between the symbol and the reality, such as might be sufficient to guide thoughtful and inquiring minds to a more firm assurance of the realisation of the vision. But all precise and definite calculations respecting the periods, as they necessarily proceed upon a disregard of the symbolical character of the book, and upon a too external and political contemplation of the events to which it points, so they must inevitably be defeated of their aim in the future, as they have continually been in the past. The prophecy was not written to give men to know after such a fashion, the times and the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power.

Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885)

Christopher Wordsworth was an Anglican priest, and canon of Westminster, and the bishop of Lincoln. He was a gifted scholar. The following is a discussion of the prophetic numbers from his *Lectures on the Apocalypse*.¹

In the Apocalyptic History of Scripture and the Church, as now revealed, we meet with repeated mention of **twelve hundred and sixty days**.

What is meant by this period?

It is with much diffidence that I speak concerning this difficult question, which involves another, –

1. What is the true interpretation of the Numbers used in the Apocalypse?

Many recent learned expositors, you are aware, regard each of these Days as a *Year*; and, having fixed an anterior limit, they proceed to date this period, so formed, from that limit; and thus they suppose that they are able to determine *the times and seasons*, even to the end.

This theory seems to rest on an insecure basis. It appears to contravene the express declarations of Christ, *It is not for you to know the times and seasons. Of that Day and that hour knoweth no man.*

Besides, it is founded on an erroneous estimate of the style of Prophecy, and of the use of the Numbers employed in this book.

If we may so speak, the numbers of the Apocalypse, and especially those

¹Christopher Wordsworth. *Lectures on the Apocalypse: critical, expository, and practical*, delivered before the University of Cambridge. London: Francis & John Rivington. 1852. pp. 193-204.

<http://www.archive.org/details/lecturesonapocal00word>

which refer to *future times*, which are not for men to know, represent certain *ideas* (resting on an *historical* or *natural* basis), and not *precise quantities*.

2. Thus, for example, instead of saying a *large* part, the Apocalypse commonly speaks of a third part. For instance, the third part of the trees was burnt up: the third part of the sea became blood: the *third part of the creatures died: the third part of men were slain*; and in many other places.

None can imagine that this is to be understood *literally*. No; this is the language of Poetry, especially of Hebrew Poetry, which avoids what is vague, and loves what is distinct.

3. Thus, again, the number four is an exponent of all space. Hence we read of the *four corners of the earth*; and *the four winds*. The heavenly City, that is, the *Universal Church*, glorified, is *four square*. And to signify the *universal* destruction of God's foes in the mystical Armageddon, it is said that the blood from the winepress of His fury flowed to *four times four hundred furlongs*. This, I conceive, cannot be understood literally.

4. So, again, the number **twelve** in the Apocalypse, being the number of Christ's **Apostles**, represents the Apostolicity of the Church. Thus, the Woman, or Church militant, is displayed as crowned with *twelve* stars; so, the Holy City or heavenly Church, has *twelve* foundations, and *twelve* gates; the tree of life bears *twelve* fruits; and the Elect of God consist of *twelve* thousand, sealed out of each of *Twelve Tribes*.

Assuredly it would be a very great error to imagine that the Elect of God are *limited* to this number. Indeed the Apocalypse itself forbids us to do so; it declares them to be innumerable; therefore the number twelve times twelve thousand is not to be taken *literally*. It does *not* express a *quantity*, but a *quality*. It teaches us the important truth, that this great, this innumerable, company, are all united in one Faith, and by the same Sacraments, that is, the Faith taught, and the Sacraments administered, by the Twelve Apostles of Christ.

The same truth is expressed in the twelve stars, twelve foundations, twelve gates, and twelve fruits.

That these expressions represent a principle may be inferred from Our Lord's own words to His Apostles: *Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. And yet He says, *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a Devil?* One of the twelve was a traitor; and so the *quantity* was marred; but the *idea* remained: they were still "the Twelve," and so they are called in Holy Scripture — "*the Twelve*." The Apostolicity of the Church is unimpaired. It is still built upon twelve foundations; for we read, *the wall of the City has Twelve foundations, and in them the names of the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb*.

5. The same mode of exposition must be applied to the *Thousand* years, during which Satan is bound. They who thence infer a *literal* Millennium seem to misconceive the spirit, and overlook the manner, of St. John. They forget that the Apocalypse is not a prose History, but an inspired Poem, and a divine Prophecy.

The *ancient* Expositors pursued a safer course when they recognized a

dogmatic truth, and not a precise quantity, in this perfect number often centenaries; by which, as we have already seen, they understood the entire time between the first Advent of Christ and the full revelation of Antichrist, whatever that time may be, which is known to God alone.

6. So again, with respect to the number seven in the Apocalypse. It indicates an idea, — that of completion.

There were many more than Seven Churches in Asia when St. John wrote; but he addresses Seven Churches, because he writes in them to all the Churches of all places and all times. Similarly we read of Seven Angels, as representing all ministers of the Gospel: seven spirits express the full effusion of the Holy Ghost: seven seals exhibit all the sufferings of the Church: seven trumpets proclaim all God's judgments on her enemies: seven vials pour out all God's wrath on the mystical Babylon: and many other septenary combinations there are, all expressive of completion; all ending in some great consummation, just as the Hexaemeron of Creation terminated in the Sabbath of God.

Similarly, in order that we may understand that the triumph of the Two Witnesses will be *complete*, we have a combination of the two numbers, *seven* and *a thousand*. There were slain of men, we read, *seven thousand; and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

7. Let us now apply these observations to the period of **twelve hundred and sixty days**.

These 1260 Days are equal to forty-two months, or to three Years and a half; and they are mentioned under all these terms in the Apocalypse.

The Holy City is trodden by the Gentiles forty-two Months. It is given to the Beast, to exercise his power forty-two Months. The Two Witnesses preach in sackcloth 1260 Days. The Woman is in the Wilderness 1260 Days; and she is also said to be in the Wilderness a time, times, and half a time; that is, three years and a half.

Now, if we examine the records of Scripture, we find that the period of *three years and a half* represents an *idea*; one of spiritual toil, pilgrimage, and persecution.

First, it may be observed, that three and a half, being the half of seven, which is the number of completeness, represents a semi-perfect state; one of transition and probation.

In illustration of this, it may be remarked here, that the body of the Two Witnesses is said to remain unburied *three days and a half*.

The same kind of *opposition* to the Apostolic number Twelve exists in the *half* of that number, Six. It shows itself in the *Sixth* period, which is the time of trial, — as Christ was crucified on the Sixth day of the Week — and exhibits itself in the remarkable combination of Six Hundreds, Six Tens, and Six Units, which constitute the Number of the name of the Beast; and which indicate a profession of, but a declension from, Catholic Unity and Perfection represented by the number Seven.

Let us pass to facts connected with the period three years and a half.

Three years and a half, or forty-two months, or 1260 days, are, as we

have seen, the time of the pilgrimage of the Woman in the Wilderness, that is, of the Church in her trials. This number *forty-two* connects her with the History of the *Israelitish* Church in the Wilderness. Its haltings are enumerated in the Book of Numbers, and they are *Forty-two*. *And all these things* (says St. Paul) *happened to them as types of us*. They foreshadow the history of the Christian Church in her pilgrimage through the Wilderness of this World to the promised land of Heaven.

Again: *I tell you of a truth*, says Our Blessed Lord, *many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land*. And St. James says, *Elias prayed it might not rain; and it rained not on the Earth by the space of three years and six months*.

It also pleased God to strengthen the type, if we may so speak, by assigning the same duration of *three years and a half* to the persecution of the Church of Israel by Antiochus Epiphanes.

St. John's precursor, Daniel, had named that period as the duration of that persecution. He had also identified it with the future time of the trials of the *Christian* Church, which are more fully described by St. John.

Thus the very mention of *three years and a half* had an ominous sound to the ear of an Israelite. It was his chronological symbol of suffering.

And to us Christians there is another reason why it should be identified with a time of trial, since, as some ancient Writers assure us, and there is good reason to believe, this period of *three years and a half* was the duration of the earthly Ministry of Him, — the great Prophet, the Divine Witness — *Who was a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*; and Who, as Daniel prophesied, *caused the sacrifice of the Temple to cease in the midst of a Week* — that is, at the end of three years and a half — by His own oblation on the cross.

Hence this period of three years and a half, forty-two months, or 1260 days (resting on a solid historical basis), is employed in the Apocalypse as a typical exponent of an idea; just as the numbers four, seven, twelve, and twelve times twelve, do not represent a precise sum, but a well-defined principle.

I do not venture to affirm, that the Church may not be called hereafter to endure severe suffering, condensed, as it were, in the period of *three years and a half*, and so a second, literal, fulfilment may be given to this prophecy; but, on the whole, we arrive at this conclusion, that we cannot safely deduce any precise arithmetical results, with regard to the future, from this number of three and a half years, forty-two months, or 1260 days.

Let us not, however, imagine that these numbers are superfluous. Nothing in Scripture is so. *God has ordered all things in measure and number and weight*. We cannot now understand all the harmonies of the divine Arithmetic, yet some we can. These numbers in the Apocalypse are of great use. They do not indeed gratify the illicit cravings of human curiosity. They do not enable us to construct a prophetic Ephemeris, or an Apocalyptic Almanack. But they present to us certain parallelisms. They show that the

sufferings of Scripture coincide with those of the Church. They remind us of our own ignorance, and of God's knowledge. They teach us patience. They tell us that *the days of man are few*, and that a Millennium is a moment to the Eternal. They warn us that we are not to expect sabbatical perfection in *this* World. They have also an analogical value. They remind us that here we are to look for trials — trials *such as* were endured by the Ancient Church of Israel in her forty-two sojournings in the Wilderness; — trials *such as* were endured by Elias under Ahab, by the Maccabees under Antiochus, and by Christ from His own countrymen. And they encourage us with the joyful assurance, that if we are true to Christ, and maintain His cause with zeal, courage, and charity, then, though we suffer, we shall conquer also; that our sufferings will soon be over; that they will appear like a few *days*; then even for us there will be a chariot of fire, and a heavenly Feast of Dedication, and a cloud of heavenly glory, and an eternity of joy.

In a note, Wordsworth quoted Lightfoot: "The 'forty-two months,' '1260 days,' and a 'time, times, and a half time;' are but borrowed phrases from Daniel, who so expresses the three and a half years of Antiochus' persecution (Dan. xii. 7;) and they mean times of trouble, and are used to express that, and not any fixed time. . . And perhaps it had been much for the reputation of the Commentators upon the Book of Revelation, if they had looked upon that number and the forty and two months, and the thousand two hundred and sixty days as spoken allusively, and not applied it to any precise or determinate time."

William Milligan (1821-1892)

William Milligan was a Scottish theologian, and a professor of biblical criticism at the University of Aberdeen, who is known for his writings on Revelation. He found similarities in structure in the fourth gospel and the book of Revelation. John's gospel, he suggests, omits the Olivet Discourse of Jesus which is present in the other gospels, because the book of Revelation serves as an expanded account of the things contained in Christ's prophecy. The 42 months and the 1,260 days in Revelation 11, 12, and 13 are symbols of the church age; the three and a half years corresponds to the duration of the ministry of Jesus. He said the 1,260 days "denote the Christian era from its beginning to its close." He wrote:¹

One question still remains: What is the meaning of the forty and two months during which the holy city is to be trodden under foot of the nations? The same expression meets us in chap. xiii. 5, where it is said that "there was given to the beast authority to continue forty and two months." But forty and two months is also three and a half years, the Jewish year having consisted of twelve months, except when an intercalary month was inserted among the twelve in order to preserve harmony between the seasons and

¹William Milligan. *The Book of Revelation*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1889. pp. 175-177.

<http://vinyl2.sentex.net/~tcc/dload/MillRev.pdf>

the rotation of time. The same period is therefore again alluded to in chap. xii. 14, when it is said of the woman who fled into the wilderness that she is there nourished for "a time, and times, and half a time." Once more, we read in chap. xi. 3 and in chap. xii. 6 of a period denoted by "a thousand two hundred and threescore days;" and a comparison of this last passage with ver. 14 of the same chapter distinctly shows that it is equivalent to the three and a half times or years. Three and a half multiplied by three hundred and sixty, the number of days in the Jewish year, gives us exactly the twelve hundred and sixty days. These three periods, therefore, are the same. Why the different designations should be adopted is another question, to which, so far as we are aware, no satisfactory reply has yet been given, although it may be that, for some occult reason, the Seer beholds in "months" a suitable expression for the dominion of evil, in "days" one appropriate to the sufferings of the good.

The ground of this method of looking at the Church's history is found in the book of Daniel, where we read of the fourth beast, or the fourth kingdom, "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." [Dan. vii. 25.] The same book helps us also to answer the question as to the particular period of the Church's history denoted by the days, or months, or years referred to, for in another passage the prophet says, "And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." [Dan. ix. 27.] The three and a half years therefore, or the half of seven years, denote the whole period extending from the cessation of the sacrifice and oblation. In other words, they denote the Christian era from its beginning to its close, and that more especially on the side of its disturbed and broken character, of the power exercised in it by what is evil, of the troubles and sufferings of the good. During it the disciples of the Saviour do not reach the completeness of their rest; their victory is not won. Ideally it is so; it always has been so since Jesus overcame: but it is not yet won in the actual realities of the case; and, though in one sense every heavenly privilege is theirs, their difficulties are so great, and their opponents so numerous and powerful, that the true expression for their state is a broken seven years, or three years and a half. During this time, accordingly, the holy city is represented as trodden under foot by the nations. They who are at ease in Zion may not feel it; but to the true disciples of Jesus their Master's prophecy is fulfilled, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." [John xvi. 33.]

William Hendriksen (1900-1982)

William Hendriksen was pastor to several Christian Reformed churches, and professor of New Testament literature at Calvin Theological Seminary. In his commentary of Revelation, he said the two witnesses represent the Church, and the 1,260 days in which

they prophesy represents the entire dispensation of the Church. He wrote:¹

The true Church is now represented under the symbolism of two witnesses. These witnesses symbolize the Church militant bearing testimony through its ministers and missionaries throughout the present dispensation. The fact that there are two witnesses emphasizes the missionary task of the Church (cf. Lk. 10:1). The Lord sends his missionaries two by two; what the one lacks the other supplies. Now the Church as an organization, functioning through its ministers and missionaries, will carry on this work for twelve hundred and sixty days. This is the period that extends from the moment of Christ's ascension almost until the judgment day (cf. Rev. 12:5, 6, 14). It is, of course, exactly the equal of forty-two months, for forty-two times thirty is twelve hundred and sixty; and of 'a time, and times, and half a time,' which is three years and a half (Rev. 12:14). It is the period of affliction; the present gospel age. The question may arise, why is that period expressed now in terms of months (verse 2) then in terms of days (verse 3)? Here our answer is a mere guess: in verse 2 we have the picture of a city that is being besieged and finally taken and trampled upon. Now, the duration of the siege of a city is very often expressed in terms of months. In verse 3, however, the two witnesses are described as prophesying; this is a day-by-day activity. Every day they bear witness, throughout the entire dispensation. They preach repentance and for this reason they are clothed in sackcloth.

Charles D. Alexander (1904-1991)

Charles D. Alexander was a Baptist minister in Liverpool, England. In his book *Revelation Spiritually Understood*, he discussed the significance of the 42 months and 1,260 days mentioned in Revelation 11, 12, and 13, which he said represent "the whole period of time from Patmos to the Second Advent of our Lord." He wrote:²

FORTY AND TWO MONTHS

All the numbers in Revelation are symbolic. They cannot be fitted into the framework of world history, though there are many startling coincidences which embolden the unwary and create an enthusiasm for chronological interpretation. The spiritual interpretation of this great book must be maintained at all costs, for the past history of chronological investigation is strewn with the carcasses of confident predictions which now have no relevance to contemporary events. Historicism has run out of time and has almost disappeared in the vagaries of post-millennialism presently revived by the contemporary situation in Palestine while ignoring the contemporary state of the church and the revival of heathenism. Some day soon, perhaps,

¹William Hendriksen. *More Than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids: Baker. 1939. p. 129.

²Charles D. Alexander. *Revelation Spiritually Understood*. <http://www.allbygrace.com/alexrevelationmainpage.html>

many of our friends may awake to the realities of the Latter Day apostasy, and the realisation that the Millennium is past!

If not a measurable period of time in the realm of historical chronology, what then does the figure of 42 months signify? We have already said in a previous chapter that the numbers in Daniel and Revelation of 1260 days, 42 months, 3 1/2 years and 'time, times, and half a time' all correspond with each other and are to be interpreted in terms of the most indefinite of them — 'time, times, and half a time'. Thus we are dealing with an indefinite period of time, known only to God and not intended to be measured by man. If it could be measured in advance what consolation would it be for those who were able to calculate that no deliverance was to be expected in their day or perhaps for centuries to come? Or what office would be left to faith, if it could be ascertained that in the period of one's own lifetime all would be consummated and the Lord would return? What becomes of the Saviour's warning that of the day and hour of His return no man knows, nor yet is it a part of the Son's commission from the Father to make it known?

THE BROKEN SEVEN

In place of these speculations we find it much more comforting to see all these strange figures in the Apocalypse as being signs of THE BROKEN SEVEN (the 3 1/2 years). Seven being the number of divine completeness, and being so used throughout the Apocalypse, the broken seven must relate to judgment and is a warning to the world and an assurance to the people of God of the steadfastness of the divine purposes in commanding a limited period only for the power of this world. The enemy will not endure one day beyond the divine decree.

The 42 months we regard therefore as the whole period of time from Patmos to the Second Advent of our Lord. It began with John's imprisonment, and the Book of Revelation is concerned with that event and the interpretation of it in terms of the prolonged sufferings and probation of the church typified in the afflictions of "John our brother".

During that immense period of time, the church is comforted in the knowledge that the onset and the termination of the 1260 days (and its other numerical equivalents) are fixed by the Lord's sovereign determination. The arbiter of time is the Mighty Angel of chapter 10: the true Michael, the Angel of the Covenant, Christ, the Son of God, the Conqueror of sin, death and hell, the Woman's Seed, the Bruiser of the Serpent's head. It is not for us to know the times and the seasons which forever remain in the Father's own power (Acts 1:7); our part is to preach the Word of God and hold forth the testimony of Christ in a hostile world in which all power appears to be given to the enemies of the kingdom of God.

James Burton Coffman (1905-2006)

James Burton Coffman was a preacher, teacher, and scholar, and an influential minister of the Manhattan Church of Christ in New York City; he was previously the minister of the Central Church of Christ in Houston. In 1992 he finished a 37-volume commentary of the entire Bible which was published by ACU Press.

Coffman identified the “time, times and a half” with “the whole Christian dispensation” in his commentary on Daniel. In his commentary on Revelation he said, on the 1,260 days of Revelation 12:6:¹

A thousand two hundred and threescore days . . .

What can this mean? Is there a certain time-period only when Christ will be with his church? No indeed! This time-period represents every minute of the whole Christian dispensation. This is given in exactly the same form as in Rev. 11:3; and there it was understood as all of the time between the two Advents of Christ, and so it must be understood here. “It describes the period of this world’s existence during the whole of which the devil persecutes the church.” It is also called forty-two months; and someone has suggested that this was the number of the forty-two stations of the Israelites in the wilderness. Hendriksen called this time-period “the millennium of Rev. 20”; and we believe this understanding of it to be correct, despite the description of it there by use of a different figure. The saints of Christ are reigning with him now in his kingdom; and Christ already has the authority in heaven and upon earth (Matthew 28:18-20). His rule is not accepted by many, due to the freedom of the will of man; but that does not contradict the higher truth that Christ is truly reigning today in the hearts of those who love and serve him.

Meredith G. Kline (1922-2007)

Meredith G. Kline was a Presbyterian minister who taught the Old Testament at several theological seminaries. He was professor emeritus at Westminster Seminary, California. He became an expert on ancient treaties, and their connections with the covenants found in the Bible.

Kline believed the last half of the 70th week in Daniel’s prophecy of the 70 weeks spans the whole age of the church. In his article “The Covenant of the Seventieth Week,” he wrote:²

In the course of the climactic seventieth week, *masiah nagid*, the anointed priest-king, would make the covenant prevail both in renewal and in judgment. Cut off in death, Messiah would make priestly reconciliation for iniquity, so perfecting sacrifice forever and instituting the new covenant. Then exercising His royal heavenly rule over all the nations, Messiah in the midst of the seventieth week would send forces of destruction against the Jerusalem temple, so making the old ritual system cease and bringing the old covenant to its end.

When we survey the fulfillment of Gabriel’s prophecy from our vantage point, it appears that the last half of the seventieth week is the age of the com-

¹<http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=re&chapter=012>

²Meredith G. Kline. *The Covenant of the Seventieth Week*. In: *The Law and the Prophets: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Oswald T. Allis*. ed. by J.H. Skilton. [Nutley, NJ]: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974, pp. 452-469.

[http://www.monergism.com/Kline, Meredith - The Covenant of the Seventieth Week \(Daniel 9\).pdf](http://www.monergism.com/Kline, Meredith - The Covenant of the Seventieth Week (Daniel 9).pdf)

munity of the new covenant, disengaged from the old covenant order with whose closing days its own beginnings overlapped for a generation. In the imagery of the New Testament Apocalypse, the last half week is the age of the church in the wilderness of the nations for a time, and times, and half a time (Rev. 12:14). Since the seventy weeks are ten jubilee eras that issue in the last jubilee, the seventieth week closes with the angelic trumpeting of the earth's redemption and the glorious liberty of the children of God. The acceptable year of the Lord which came with Christ will then have fully come. Then the new Jerusalem whose temple is the Lord and the Lamb will descend from heaven (Rev. 21:10,22) and the ark of the covenant will be seen (Rev. 11:19), the covenant the Lamb has made to prevail and the Lord has remembered.

Kline's understanding of the 70th week was correct, in my opinion. It consists of the two periods, one that consists of the three and a half year ministry of Jesus, and the other being the whole age of the church, which is represented symbolically by the phrase "a time, times and a half."

During this time, Daniel 7 depicts the saints at war with the little horn of the fourth beast, which has "eyes like the eyes of a man." Its eyes represent the human viewpoint, which is opposed to the divine viewpoint. The period is also the time of the beast described in Revelation 13, who makes war with the saints.

During the same period, the saints flee to the wilderness; they are separate from the world. They are represented by the woman, described in Revelation 12. In the wilderness, she occupies a place prepared for her by God, where she is nourished, by the word of God, and the gospel. She is given two wings of a great eagle. These may be symbolic of an understanding of prophecy. Equipped with powerful wings of an eagle, she is able to soar high above the earth, and from there, she views things from above. The view from above represents a divine viewpoint, which contrasts with the human viewpoint.

A flood of water from the mouth of the serpent threatens the woman; the flood from the mouth of the serpent mimics the river of living waters from the temple of God, described by the prophets. It is a flood that includes all sorts of flawed interpretations of prophecy.

The two witnesses of Revelation chapter 11 minister during the same symbolic period of 1,260 days. That can be identified with the Word of God, and the Spirit. The doctrine of a gap in the 70th week, promoted by dispensationalism, and the preterist doctrine that the 70th week expired in the first century, oppose and obscure the truth that Christ confirms his covenant with his saints throughout the present age. They fulfill the prophecy about the beast ascending from the bottomless pit, which makes war against, and overcomes the two witnesses.

The serpent's flood is eventually swallowed up, when the earth, or the land, opens its mouth. In the final "seven times" of Leviticus 26, God "remembers the land," and the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In the promise to Abraham, all nations are to be blessed. The land represents the spiritual inheritance of the saints. One of the

things Jesus promised his disciples was that the Spirit would guide them into all truth.¹ Only when the church understands the truth, is the serpent's flood of false interpretation swallowed up completely.

Gregory K. Beale (1949-)

Gregory K. Beale is professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. He considers the time, times and a half of Daniel and the related numbers as representing the inter-advent age beginning from Christ's resurrection and leading up to the final judgment. He wrote:²

John views the 'time, times and half a time' of Dan. 12:7 as the interadvent age beginning from the time of Christ's resurrection and leading up to the final judgment. The identification of the threefold time formula from Daniel is deducible especially from 12:4-6, where the period begins from the time of Christ's ascension and refers to the church's time of suffering (so also 12.14). The same meaning is apparent for the equivalent phrase 'forty-two months' in 13.5, which describes the time of the beast's blasphemous and persecuting activities.

In his Revelation commentary Beale wrote:³

The two witnesses prophesy for three and a half years, the same length of time that "the holy city," "the woman," and "those that tabernacle in heaven" are to be oppressed (11:2; 12:6, 14; 13:6). If these texts speak of the persecution of a community, then it is plausible to identify the witnesses likewise. If the image of an individual woman signifies the community of faith existing during the three and a half years, then the image of two individual prophets might also represent the same reality during the same time period (similarly an individual harlot represents the ungodly community in ch. 17). If it is correct to see 11:3 continuing what is in the preceding two verses, then the two witnesses are another depiction of the true Israel, "the holy city," during its time of distress. As already noted, the period of three and a half years is based on Dan. 7:25; 12:7, 11 (and perhaps Dan. 9:27), which prophesies a time of tribulation for Israel as a community. The number represents a concept rather than a literal enumeration, as with other numbers throughout the Apocalypse (see the comments on, e.g., 1:4, 12, 16, 20; 2:10; 3:10; 4:4-7; 5:1, 6; 6:1-8; 7:1-9; 9:5, 10, 14-15). Here the figurative emphasis is on the true covenant community experiencing tribulation, irrespective of how long the tribulation lasts in literal time.

¹John 16:13

²G. K. Beale. *John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation*. Sheffield Academic Press. 1999. p. 263.

³G. K. Beale. *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text. New International Greek Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdsman's Publishing, 1999. p. 574.

In Beale's view, the prophetic three and a half year period commenced at Christ's ascension and continues until his return.¹

The "three and a half years" have been established as the time of tribulation predicted by Daniel 7, 9 and 12, which commences at Christ's ascension and continues until his return. Of all John's references to this time period, Rev. 12:6 is the clearest in identifying the temporal boundaries of the period (cf. 11:2-3; 13:5). Undoubtedly, here the limited age extends from the resurrection of Christ (v 5) until his final appearance (14:14-20). This is a conclusion similar to that of Rissi, who also argues that Christ's death, cited in 11:8, is the beginning point of the period in 11:2 (for Christ's death as commencing the same period in 13:5 see on 13:3). We have also seen that this period is a time of harm to believers in the earthly sphere but protection for them in the invisible realm of the divine sanctuary.

¹*Ibid.*, p. 646.

Chapter 13

The 70 weeks and 2,300 days

In the Olivet Discourse where Jesus responds to the question about the sign of his coming and the end of the age, Jesus focused upon seeing the abomination of desolation mentioned in the prophecies of Daniel. Scholars have long debated what he meant. In Daniel chapter 8, a prophecy is described that refers to 2,300 days, and its meaning would only be understood at the “time of the end.” [Dan. 8:17] When Jesus referred to one of the prophecies of Daniel in connection with the “sign” of the end time, he must have meant that when Daniel’s prophecies are understood, that would be the sign of his coming that the disciples requested.

Frederic William Farrar (1831-1903) was an Anglican churchman and scholar. He was the archdeacon of Westminster Abbey and the Dean of Canterbury. He was the author of a critical work on Daniel’s prophecies.¹

Farrar doubted that Daniel really lived in ancient Babylon. On Daniel 8:1, he wrote:²

This vision is dated as having occurred in the third year of Belshazzar; but it is not easy to see the significance of the date, since it is almost exclusively occupied with the establishment of the Greek Empire, its dissolution into the kingdoms of the Diadochi, and the godless despotism of King Antiochus Epiphanes.

The seer imagines himself to be in the palace of Shushan: “As I beheld I was in the castle of Shushan.”

The date mentioned in verse 1, the third year of Belshazzar or about BC 553, is crucial for understanding the 2,300 days mentioned in the vision, which extends from the date of the vision itself: “unto 2,300 days.” But the “days” are not literal days; they are symbols of a much longer time period, and are best interpreted as years, so Daniel’s prophecy really alludes to 23 centuries. The date in which it was given is significant, because it points to a time 23 centuries in the future. But like other nineteenth century critics, Farrar discounted the possibility that Daniel is genuine prophecy. He described the vision as follows:³

¹Frederic William Farrar. *The book of Daniel*. Hodder and Stoughton. London. 1895.
<http://archive.org/details/thebookofdaniel00farruoft>

²*Ibid.*, p. 252

³*Ibid.*, p. 254

Lifting up his eyes, Daniel sees a ram standing east ward of the river-basin. It has two lofty horns, the loftier of the two being the later in origin. It butts westward, northward, and southward, and does great things. But in the midst of its successes a he-goat, with a conspicuous horn between its eyes, comes from the West so swiftly over the face of all the earth that it scarcely seems even to touch the ground, and runs upon the ram in the fury of his strength, conquering and trampling upon him, and smashing in pieces his two horns. But his impetuosity was short lived, for the great horn was speedily broken, and four others rose in its place towards the four winds of heaven. Out of these four horns shot up a puny horn, which grew exceedingly great towards the South, and towards the East, and towards "the Glory" *i.e.*, towards the Holy Land. It became great even to the host of heaven, and cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and trampled on them.

He even behaved proudly against the prince of the host, took away from him "the daily" (sacrifice), polluted the dismantled sanctuary with sacrilegious arms, and cast the truth to the ground and prospered. Then "one holy one called to another and asked, For how long is the vision of the daily [sacrifice], and the horrible sacrilege, that thus both the sanctuary and host are surrendered to be trampled underfoot?" And the answer is, "Until two thousand three hundred *'erebh-bôqer*, evening-morning; then will the sanctuary be justified."

Daniel sought to understand the vision, and immediately there stood before him one in the semblance of a man, and he hears the distant voice of some one standing between the Ulai—*i.e.*, between its two banks, or perhaps between its two branches, the Eulaeus and the Choaspes—who called aloud to "Gabriel." The archangel Gabriel is here first mentioned in Scripture. "Gabriel," cried the voice, "explain to him what he has seen." So Gabriel came and stood beside him; but he was terrified, and fell on his face. "Observe, thou son of man," said the angel to him; "for unto the time of the end is the vision." But since Daniel still lay prostrate on his face, and sank into a swoon, the angel touched him, and raised him up, and said that the great wrath was only for a fixed time, and he would tell him what would happen at the end of it.

Farrar thought the horn of the goat growing up to the sky, and casting stars to the ground, and trampling upon them, and casting the truth to the ground, all referred to the afflictions endured by Jews in the time of Antiochus IV, and struggled to fit the time period of 2,300 days into the history of that time. He dismissed the angel's statement, "for unto the time of the end is the vision." Events of a political nature, and the temporary desecration of the Jewish temple in the second century BC could hardly be very significant at the end of the present age. Farrar wrote:¹

With one only of the four kingdoms, and with one only of its kings, is the vision further concerned—with the kingdom of the Seleucidæ, and with the

¹*Ibid.*, p. 259

eighth king of the dynasty, Antiochus Epiphanes. In this chapter, however, a brief sketch only of him is furnished. Many details of the minutest kind are subsequently added.

He is called "a puny horn," because, in his youth, no one could have anticipated his future greatness. He was only a younger son of Antiochus III. (the Great). When Antiochus III. was defeated in the Battle of Magnesia under Mount Sipylus (B.C. 190), his loss was terrible. Fifty thousand foot and four thousand horse were slain on the battlefield, and fourteen hundred were taken prisoners. He was forced to make peace with the Romans, and to give them hostages, one of whom was Antiochus the Younger, brother of Seleucus, who was heir to the throne. Antiochus for thirteen years languished miserably as a hostage at Rome. His father, Antiochus the Great, was either slain in B.C. 187 by the people of Elymais, after his sacrilegious plundering of the Temple of Jupiter-Belus; or murdered by some of his own attendants whom he had beaten during a fit of drunkenness. Seleucus Philopator succeeded him, and after having reigned for thirteen years, wished to see his brother Antiochus again. He therefore sent his son Demetrius in exchange for him, perhaps desiring that the boy, who was then twelve years old, should enjoy the advantage of a Roman education, or thinking that Antiochus would be of more use to him in his designs against Ptolemy Philometor, the child-king of Egypt. When Demetrius was on his way to Rome, and Antiochus had not yet reached Antioch, Heliodorus the treasurer seized the opportunity to poison Seleucus and usurp the crown.

The chances, therefore, of Antiochus seemed very forlorn. But he was a man of ability, though with a taint of folly and madness in his veins. By allying himself with Eumenes, King of Pergamum, as we shall see hereafter, he suppressed Heliodorus, secured the kingdom, and "becoming very great," though only by fraud, cruelty, and stratagem, assumed the title of Epiphanes "the Illustrious." He extended his power "towards the South" "by intriguing and warring against Egypt and his young nephew, Ptolemy Philometor; and "towards the Sunrising" by his successes in the direction of Media and Persia; and towards "the Glory" or "Ornament" (*hatstsebi*) i.e., the Holy Land. Inflated with insolence, he now set himself against the stars, the host of heaven i.e., against the chosen people of God and their leaders. He cast down and trampled on them, and defied the Prince of the host; for he

"Not e'en against the Holy One of heaven
Refrained his tongue blasphemous."

His chief enormity was the abolition of "the daily" (*tamîd*) i.e., the sacrifice daily offered in the Temple; and the desecration of the sanctuary itself by violence and sacrilege, which will be more fully set forth in the next chapters. He also seized and destroyed the sacred books of the Jews. As he forbade the reading of the Law of which the daily lesson was called the Parashah there began from this time the custom of selecting a lesson from the Prophets, which was called the Haphtarah.

It was natural to make one of the holy ones, who are supposed to witness

this horrible iniquity, inquire how long it was to be permitted. The enigmatic answer is, "Until an evening-morning two thousand three hundred."

The obvious meaning of this requires that the period began immediately, when the words were spoken. But Farrar apparently thought Daniel was a contemporary of Antiochus IV. He supposed the period referred to was a lapse in the regular temple offerings, and he applied it to the duration of the desecration of the temple initiated by Antiochus. Below, Farrar discusses whether the 2,300 "evening-mornings" refer to a period of 2,300 days, or half that time, 1,150 days. Like other scholars he was frustrated because neither period fits the events recorded about the history of the period. Farrar wrote:¹

Daniel is bidden to hide the vision for many days, a sentence which is due to the literary plan of the Book; and he is assured that the vision concerning the "evening-morning" was true. He adds that the vision exhausted and almost annihilated him; but, afterwards, he arose and did the king's business. He was silent about the vision, for neither he nor any one else understood it. Of course, had the real date of the chapter been in the reign of Belshazzar, it was wholly impossible that either the seer or any one else should have been able to attach any significance to it.

Emphasis is evidently attached to the "two thousand three hundred evening-morning" during which the desolation of the sanctuary is to continue.

What does the phrase "evening-morning" (*'erebh-bôqer*) mean?

In ver. 26 it is called "the vision concerning the evening and the morning."

Does "evening-morning" mean a whole day, like the Greek *νυκθημερον* or *half* a day? The expression is doubly perplexing. If the writer meant "days," why does he not say "*days*," as in xii. 11, 12? And why, in any case, does he here use the solecism *'erebh-bôqer* (*Abendmorgen*), and not, as in ver. 26, "evening and morning"? Does the expression mean two thousand three hundred days? or eleven hundred and fifty days?

It is a natural supposition that the time is meant to correspond with the three years and a half ("a time, two times, and half a time") of vii. 25. But here again all certainty of detail is precluded by our ignorance as to the exact length of years by which the writer reckoned; and how he treated the month *Ve-adar*, a month of thirty days, which was intercalated once in every six years.

Supposing that he allowed an intercalary fifteen days for three and a half years, and took the Babylonian reckoning of twelve months of thirty days, then three and a half years gives us twelve hundred and seventy-five days, or, omitting any allowance for intercalation, twelve hundred and sixty days.

If, then, "two thousand three hundred evening-morning" means two thousand three hundred half days, we have *one hundred and ten days too many* for the three and a half years.

¹*Ibid.*, p. 262

And if the phrase means two thousand three hundred *full* days, that gives us (counting thirty intercalary days for *Ve-adar*) too little for seven years by two hundred and fifty days. Some see in this a mystic intimation that the period of chastisement shall for the elect's sake be shortened. Some commentators reckon seven years roughly, from the elevation of Menelaus to the high-priesthood (Kisleu, B.C. 168: 2 Macc. v. 11) to the victory of Judas Maccabaeus over Nicanor at Adasa, March, B.C. 161 (1 Macc. vii. 25-50; 2 Macc. xv. 20-35).

In neither case do the calculations agree with the twelve hundred and ninety or the thirteen hundred and thirty-five days of xii. 12, 13.

Entire volumes of tedious and wholly inconclusive comment have been written on these combinations, but by no reasonable supposition can we arrive at close accuracy. Strict chronological accuracy was difficult of attainment in those days, and was never a matter about which the Jews, in particular, greatly troubled themselves. We do not know either the *terminus a quo* from which or the *terminus ad quem* to which the writer reckoned. All that can be said is that it is perfectly impossible for us to identify or exactly equiparate the three and a half years (vii. 25), the "two thousand three hundred evening-morning" (viii. 14), the seventy-two weeks (ix. 26), and the twelve hundred and ninety days (xii. 11). Yet all those dates have this point of resemblance about them, that they very roughly indicate a space of about three and a half years (more or less) as the time during which the daily sacrifice should cease, and the Temple be polluted and desolate.

Turning now to the dates, we know that Judas the Maccabee cleansed ("justified" or "vindicated," viii. 14) the Temple on Kisleu 25 (December 25th, B.C. 165). If we reckon back two thousand three hundred *full* days from this date, it brings us to B.C. 171, in which Menelaus, who bribed Antiochus to appoint him high priest, robbed the Temple of some of its treasures, and procured the murder of the high priest Onias III. In this year Antiochus sacrificed a great sow on the altar of burnt offerings, and sprinkled its broth over the sacred building. These crimes provoked the revolt of the Jews, in which they killed Lysimachus, governor of Syria, and brought on themselves a heavy retribution.

If we reckon back two thousand three hundred *half*-days, eleven hundred and fifty *whole* days, we must go back three years and seventy days, but we cannot tell what exact event the writer had in mind as the starting-point of his calculations. The actual time which elapsed from the final defilement of the Temple by Apollonius, the general of Antiochus, in B.C. 168, till its repurification was roughly three years. Perhaps, however for all is uncertain the writer reckoned from the earliest steps taken, or contemplated, by Antiochus for the suppression of Judaism. The purification of the Temple did not end the time of persecution, which was to continue, first, for one hundred and forty days longer, and then forty-five days more (xii. 11, 12). It is clear from this that the writer reckoned the beginning and the end of troubles from different epochs which we have no longer sufficient data to discover.

It must, however, be borne in mind that no minute certainty about the exact dates is attainable. Many authorities, from Prideaux down to Schürer, place the desecration of the Temple towards the close of B.C. 168. Kuenen sees reason to place it a year later. Our authorities for this period of history are numerous, but they are fragmentary, abbreviated, and often inexact. Fortunately, so far as we are able to see, no very important lesson is lost by our inability to furnish an undoubted or a rigidly scientific explanation of the minuter details.

Farrar discounts the prophecy of Daniel. He says the 2,300 days refers to the events in the time of Antiochus, but he is uncertain whether it means 1,150 days or 2,300 literal days. His approach mimics that of other critics of his own age and depicts Daniel as a fraud. His tone is sometimes haughty, and scornful. In his interpretation the prophecy has no meaningful application to the time of the end. He dismissed the idea that the book of Daniel contained any predictions at all. This is evident from his statement on p. 37: "How lofty and enduring are the lessons to be learnt alike from its historic and predictive sections we shall have abundant opportunities of seeing in the following pages. So far from undervaluing its teaching, I have always been strongly drawn to this Book of Scripture. It has never made the least difference in my reverent acceptance of it that I have, for many years, been convinced that it cannot be regarded as literal history or ancient prediction."

Farrar missed the whole point of Daniel's prophecy in chapter 8. But he was not living in the end time, to which Jesus referred, when he mentioned the abomination of desolation in his Olivet Discourse. Jesus said, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains." [Matt. 24:15-16] The mountains are symbolic of *the promises of God*. The *time* when Daniel is correctly understood would be the end time that the disciples asked about, when *the wise will understand*. [Dan. 12:10] In Daniel 8:17 the angel said, "Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision." The 2,300 days are not literal days; the period began when the vision was given, and spans 23 centuries from the mid 6th century BC to the mid 18th century AD. The 2,300 days are compared to the 70 weeks in Figure 13:1.

The events portrayed in the vision have a cosmological significance. Stars and the truth cast to the earth, and the place of God's sanctuary which was cast down, are the starry heavens. In the scriptures, changes were introduced by Antiochus IV, that redefined the '*raqia*' of Genesis 1:8. Originally the creation account said the earth's rocky crust was formed on day 2. This was changed, to disguise the true account, and make it conform to the geocentric ideas of the Greeks. That is what the 2,300 evening mornings or days refer to. The phrase evening mornings may be a link to Genesis 1. Here, the KJV refers to "firmament of heaven" several times. If the "firmament" was always heaven, it would be redundant to use the phrase "firmament of heaven." The chapter became overloaded with the word "firmament," because of the fraud initiated by Antiochus IV and his Jewish supporters in the 2nd century BC.

In Genesis 1, the statements that God named some of the things he created were introduced. None of these are genuine. In particular, the statement "And God called the firmament Heaven" is fraudulent. The Greeks worshipped the rigid heaven as a god,

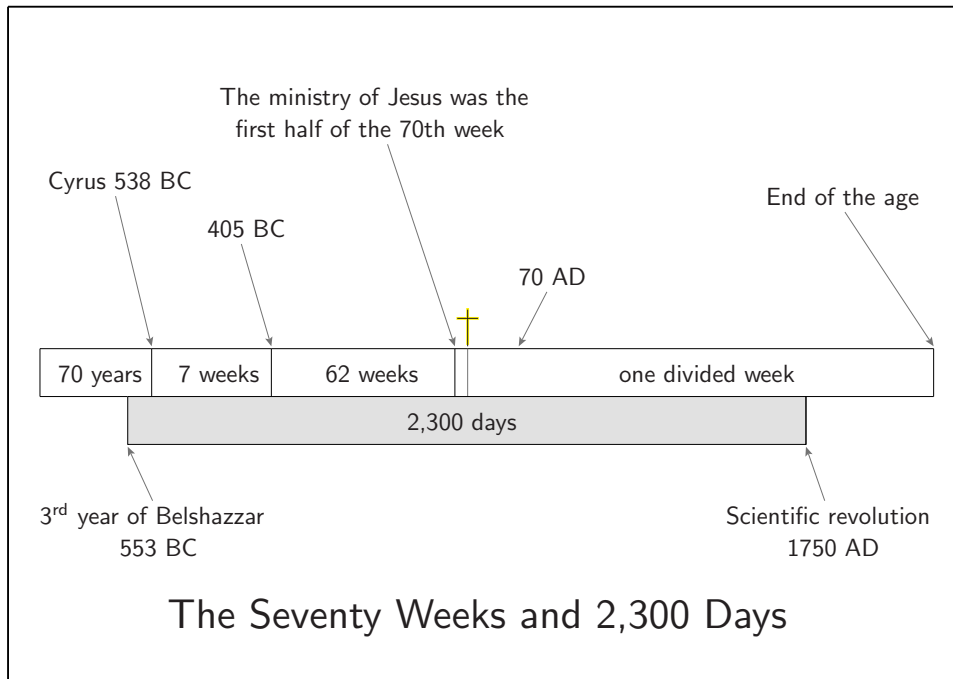


Figure 13.1: The 2,300 evening mornings represent 23 centuries

and the chief of their gods, Zeus. This underlies the introduction of the statement that “God called the firmament Heaven” in Genesis 1. Apostate Jews promoted this change in the scriptures in the following centuries. Early Christian scholars who admired the Greek cosmology were deceived by it. The apostle Peter wrote, “For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” [2 Peter:3:5-7]

Peter understood that the earth was made, in the midst of the primeval waters, on day 2, not the sky.

The 2,300 days is 23 centuries, and the prophecy points to the duration of the flawed geocentric cosmology. In the mid 18th century it was overthrown, because of the discoveries of astronomers, and the work of men like Kepler, Galileo, and Sir Isaac Newton. They developed the ideas that led to the scientific revolution. In about 1750, there was a great “enlightenment.” Men all over the world realized the earth revolves on its axis, not the sky. The rigid firmament was abolished, along with all the imaginary planetary spheres. This fulfilled Daniel’s prophecy of the 2,300 days.

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