

Jesus confirms the covenant

by Douglas E. Cox

The covenant that is confirmed for one week, in Daniel 9:27, is especially significant, since in one week, all of God's creative work is accomplished. God worked six days, and rested the seventh, which is a pattern for the entire plan of creation. The seventh day represents the promised rest, for which the saints labor to enter. [Hebrews 4:11] Dispensationalists object to the idea that the covenant in Daniel 9:27 refers to the gospel, for two reasons; (1) they deny that the covenants and promises given to Israel apply to the church, and (2) they believe this covenant is limited to seven literal years. Their interpretation destroys the *continuity* of the seventy weeks, by introducing a vast *gap* into the specified time period.

The dispensational view also misses the purpose of the prophecy. It specifies the time of the appearance of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who is called "the messenger of the covenant," in Malachi 3:1. Dispensationalism views the covenant mentioned in Daniel 9:27 as one that is to be made between Antichrist and the Jews. This idea seems to be based upon ancient traditions, flawed interpretations, and superstition, rather than the scriptures. To say the first 69 weeks of Daniel's prophecy pertains to the appearance of Christ, but the 70th week pertains to Antichrist, is a gross incongruity, a *glaring inconsistency*, which is unworthy of credence by anyone.

When John the Baptist was born, his father Zacharias, who had been struck dumb for several months, began to speak; he gave a prophecy, referring to Christ as Israel's "horn of salvation." He said that God would "remember his holy covenant," which is what the gospel is all about. All the things to be accomplished in the 70 weeks, that are mentioned in Daniel 9:24, pertain to the gospel. But, dispensationalism excludes many of those things from the 70 weeks. The crucifixion, and the entire church age, are excluded! Zacharias said:

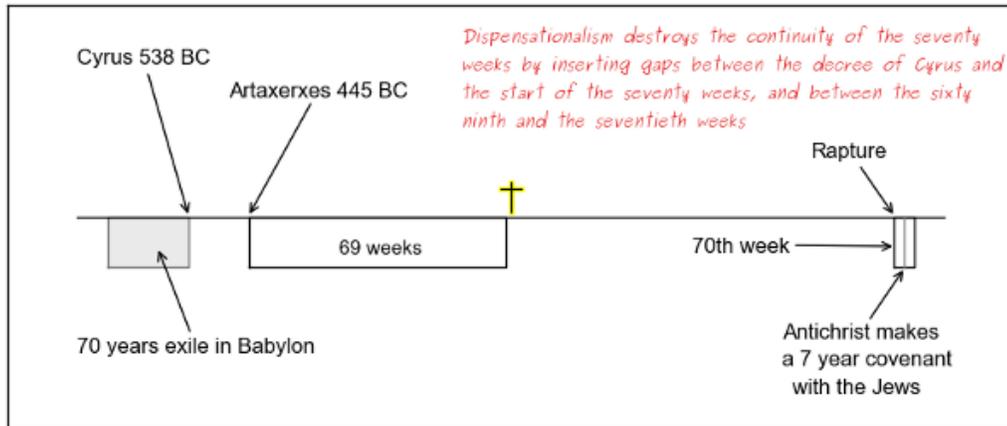


Figure 1: A dispensational view of the 70 weeks

Luke 1:68-75

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and re-deemed his people,
 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;
 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:
 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;
 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;
 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,
 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,
 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

Although the covenant in Daniel 9:27 is said to be confirmed for *one week*, this covenant is none other than the gospel, the *holy covenant* that Zacharias referred to in his prophecy, which includes the promises that Christ confirms with his followers throughout the present age. Everyone needs to seek to be included in it.

God's work of creation is also said to be accomplished in *one week* . Yet creation continues; the scripture says that the saints are a *new creation* .

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." [2 Corinthians 5:17] Creation continues, even though it is said to be encompassed in one week. Therefore, it would be *unwise* to limit the 70th week to seven *literal* years.

When God promised to give Abraham a son, and a seed, with whom he would establish his covenant, he referred to this as an everlasting covenant. [Genesis 17:19] And while the covenant is to be confirmed for one week to the church, it includes the promise of eternal life, which is *confirmed* to them in various ways during the present age, but will be *possessed* in the next one. When the saints are raised up, in the resurrection, and receive the promise, there will be no further need for it to be *confirmed*, and so, perhaps for that reason, it is said to be confirmed *for a limited time*.

Paul said that Christ is the promised seed, to whom all the promises made to Abraham apply. [Galatians 3:16]

The mark of the Old Covenant was circumcision; the mark of the New Covenant is circumcision of the heart. Paul said, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." [Philippians 3:3]

The New Covenant says that the saints are made nigh to the covenants of promise. These are the promises that Christ has inherited.

Ephesians 2:11-13

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.

The same Greek word is translated *covenant* and *testament* in the KJV. Perhaps the meaning of the covenant in Daniel 9:27 is best understood as: "And he shall confirm the *testament* with many for one week." Because this covenant is also a testament. Jesus is the Messiah who was "cut off, but not for himself" in the 70th week. [Daniel 9:26]

This, I think, is the true meaning of "he shall confirm the covenant with many" in verse 27; Jesus established the New Testament with believers in

his own blood, and he *confirms* it to them as they turn away from sin. Thus, Jesus is called "the mediator of the new covenant," [Hebrews 12:24] as well as "the mediator of the new testament." [Hebrews 9:15] The covenant and testament both refer to the gospel. Jesus intercedes on behalf of the saints who trust in him, throughout the church age. [Romans 8:27] A. W. Pink wrote: [1]

Let us next point out that this "new covenant," the Messianic, has assumed a form which no other covenant ever did or could, due to the death of its covenanter, namely, a "testament." The same Greek term does duty for both English words, being rendered "covenant" in Hebrews 8:6,8,9, and "testament" in 9:15-17. No word is more familiar to the reader of Scripture, for the second main division is rightly termed "The New Testament," yet it had been just as accurate to designate it "The New Covenant." But let it be clearly understood that it is called "New" not because its contents differ from the Old, for it is simply a fulfillment and confirmation of all that went before, everything in the Old Testament containing the shadow and type of the substance of the New Testament. The peculiar reason for naming it the New Testament is because it was newly accomplished and sealed by the precious blood of Christ just before it was written.

The present covenant that applies to the church is a betrothal; the church is pictured as a bride, who is preparing for a marriage; Christ is the groom. Paul said of the Corinthian church, he wished to "present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." He alluded to false teachers as those who would seduce them. False interpretations of prophecy seduce believers, luring them away from the covenant.

In a marriage, a bride becomes one with her spouse, in national identity; they become one flesh. Jesus was a Jew of the line of David. Peter described the saints as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," terms which can only apply to those who have entered into a blood relationship with Jesus.

The promise says God will bring his saints into the promised land, not the earthly Canaan, but "a *better* country." [Hebrews 11:16] The new covenant is similarly described as "established upon better promises." [Hebrews 8:6] The promises that Christians inherit are spiritual, and eternal. God has promised to give his Spirit to his saints which will guide them into all truth. [John 16:13]

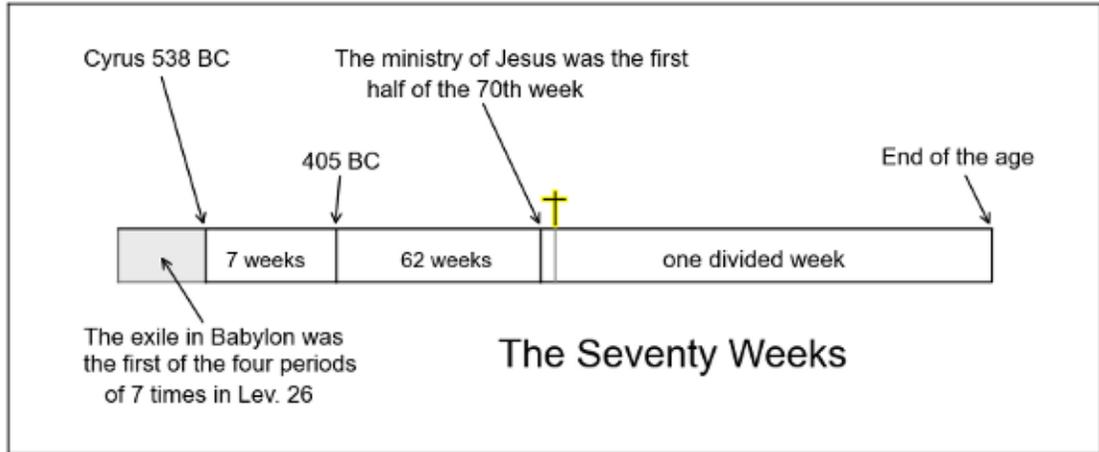


Figure 2: Timeline of the 70 weeks where the last half-week represents the present age of the church

A *superior* interpretation of the 70 weeks prophecy is presented in Figure 2. The three sections of the 7 weeks correspond to the last three of the four periods of seven times in Leviticus 25; the first one being the exile in Babylon. There are no gaps. The 70th week begins with the ministry of Jesus. The prophecy spans the entire period from the decree of Cyrus in 538 BC, to the end of the church age. In the final week, Jesus confirms the covenant. The first seven weeks are weeks of leap years with 13 months. A week of leap years is 19 years; seven weeks of leap years spans 133 years.

References

1. A.W. Pink. Divine Covenants, Part Seven-The Messianic Covenant.