

Judah and Jerusalem would be reinhabited. In 586 B.C. Jerusalem fell, the First Temple was destroyed, and most of the remaining population of Jews was deported to Babylon.

In 558 B.C. Cyrus II (the Great) became king of Persia, and enlarged his dominion to include Media, Lydia, and Bactria. In 539 Cyrus' general, Gobryas, attacked the Babylonians; and in 538 he took the citadel of Babylon, killing the king, Belshazzar. Gobryas became the king of Babylon, taking the name Darius the Mede. In the first year of Darius' reign (his only year) Daniel concluded from a study of the book of Jeremiah that the Babylonian Captivity was about to end. He began to pray fervently (as recorded in Daniel 9:3-19), and the angel Gabriel revealed to him the vision of the Seventy "Weeks". In 536 B.C. the foundations of the Second Temple were laid, thus ending the seventy-year captivity (605 to 536, inclusive enumeration).

(3) What is the chronological meaning of the seventy 'sevens'?

Six times in this passage the word  $\text{שְׁבוּעַ}$  is used. According to the TWOT,  $\text{שְׁבוּעַ}$  occurs twenty times in the OT, always indicating a period of seven. In a number of its uses  $\text{שְׁבוּעַ}$  means a period of seven days. What is its meaning here in Daniel 9:24-27?

The entire period of seventy sevens is subdivided into three distinct segments: seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and one seven. However these sevens are defined, the meaning must meet two requirements: (a) the duration of the seventy sevens must involve enough time to fulfill the purposes mentioned in verse 24 -- "to finish the transgression, and to seal sin, and to make atonement for transgression, and to bring in righteousness for ever, and to seal vision and a prophet, and to anoint the most holy place;" (b) the duration of the seventy sevens must stretch far enough into the future for the seventieth seven to fit Christ's statement (in the Olivet Discourse) that the period of Great Tribulation marked by the abomination of desolation is future to the giving of the Discourse and immediately prior to Christ's Second Coming in power and glory.

What meaning of the seventy sevens could fit the above two requirements? A period of seventy sevens of days would cover 490 or 1.34 years. A period of seventy sevens of weeks would cover 490 weeks or 9.42 years. A period of seventy sevens of months would cover 490 months or 40.83 years. A period of seventy sevens of years would cover 490 years. The only meaning of the sevens that allows enough time to complete God's purposes in verse 24 and allows Christ to speak of the seventieth seven as yet future is that of years. Now although these years could be understood as prophetic years or jubilee years, we will understand them as ordinary solar/sidereal years of 365 1/4 days each.

Applying this meaning of sevens to the three segments of Daniel's prediction, we arrive at the following:

Seven sevens of years	= 49 years
Sixty-two sevens of years	= 434 years
One seven of years	= <u>7 Years</u>
Seventy sevens of years	= 490 years