

In 538 B.C. Cyrus, king of Persia, issued a decree ending the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and permitting them to return to their homeland. This would certainly seem to be sufficient reason for calling Cyrus "Messiah the Prince" or "an anointed ruler"!

- (3) The time span between the going forth of the word of the Lord to Jeremiah in 587 B.C. promising that Jerusalem would be rebuilt and reinhabited, and the decree of Cyrus ending the captivity of the Jews in Babylon in 538 B.C. (49 years) is seven 'sevens' of years.

Is it merely a coincidence that Isaiah, writing in 700 B.C., predicted that a ruler named Cyrus would be God's anointed instrument to foster the rebuilding of the temple and the city of Jerusalem; and that 162 years later Cyrus, king of Persia, would issue a decree freeing the Jews in 538 B.C.; and that Daniel would record a vision in which an anointed ruler, 49 years after God's promise to Jeremiah that Jerusalem would be rebuilt and reinhabited, would be mentioned in connection with that rebuilding?

All of the views of the first 69 of Daniel's 70 sevens that simply add together the 7 sevens and the 62 sevens in immediate succession either bring us to a date too early or too late for Jesus Christ, or do not specify the restoration of the city of Jerusalem. However, if a time interval is seen between the 7 sevens and the 62 sevens, the view that proposes the time of the beginning of Daniel's 70 sevens as the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem in 587 B.C. would fit all the data, provided that a rationale for the time interval, and a basis for the beginning of the 62 sevens, could be found.

When did the 62 sevens of Daniel begin and when did they end? If there is a time interval between the 7 sevens and the 62 sevens, how long is that interval, what happens during that time, and when does the interval come to an end?

Immediately upon coming to power in Babylon, Cyrus decreed that all nationals captive in Babylon and in the surrounding country might return to their homelands. This included the Jews. The Babylonian captivity of Judah thus came to an end. Early in 538 B.C., Zerubbabel led an expedition to the Holy Land to begin the work of rebuilding the temple. The altar of the Second Temple was dedicated in October of the same year. The work on the temple was often interrupted; both under the urging of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, this temple was finally completed 23 years later, in 515.

Ezra led another expedition of returnees in 445 B.C., and Nehemiah led still a third contingent, in 444 B.C. Under Nehemiah the repair of Jerusalem's walls was carried through to completion. Nehemiah continued as governor from 444 to 433 B.C. The restoration of the streets and houses continued, amid much trouble and opposition. In 433 B.C., Nehemiah was recalled to the Persian court, to resume his duties as cupbearer to the king. Nehemiah returned to Judea and Jerusalem in 430 B.C., to commence his second governorship. Restoration and rebuilding continued, along with internal and external problems and harassment. We do not have specific knowledge of the time of Nehemiah's retirement or death. However, we do have knowledge of a letter (in the Elephantine Papyri) from a Jewish colony in Egypt to a certain Bagoas, a Persian who had been appointed to Nehemiah's post of Judean