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Frank W. Nelte

THE 70 WEEKS PROPHECY AND THE TWO WITNESSES

Of all the prophecies in the Bible that address **the two comings of Jesus Christ**, the one that provides us with the most information, as far as dating Christ's two comings is concerned, is the short "70 weeks prophecy" recorded in Daniel 9:24-27. While we have correctly understood how this prophecy helps us to accurately date the start of Jesus Christ's ministry, **we have thus far never before correctly understood how this prophecy applies to the second coming of Jesus Christ**.

When you have read this article, then you judge for yourself whether that statement is correct or not. This present article should be read in conjunction with my other article "**The Second Coming Of Jesus Christ**", because these two articles complement one another in the information they present.

Let's start by looking at the introduction to this prophecy. While Daniel was praying, the angel Gabriel appeared to him (Daniel 9:21). Gabriel then spoke to Daniel.

And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, **I am now come forth to give you skill and understanding**. (Daniel 9:22)

The obvious implication is that the short prophecy which Gabriel then presented to Daniel (the 70 weeks prophecy) is supposed to give us "**understanding**". It is not intended to make things more difficult to understand.

In plain terms: the explicit purpose of this prophecy is to help us understand certain things about Christ's first coming and about Christ's second coming. As Gabriel continued to say:

"... therefore **understand** the matter, and **consider** the vision" (Daniel 9:23).

What follows is the 70 weeks prophecy.

First, the Hebrew word "dabar" in verse 23 translated as "matter" primarily means "**word**". Next, in this verse the one Hebrew verb "**biyn**" is used twice. It is first translated as "**understand**" and then it is translated as "**consider**". Translating this Hebrew verb two different ways within the same sentence was a somewhat arbitrary choice by the translators. Further, in both places this Hebrew verb is used in the **imperative** voice, expressing a command.

In addition, however, in the first instance (i.e. in "understand the word") this verb is used in the "qal" form, which expresses **a simple action**, while in the second instance (i.e. in "consider the vision") this verb is used in the "hiphil" form, which expressed **a causative action**.

A simple illustration might help to clarify this a bit. Let's consider the Hebrew verb that means "to eat". Used for a man in the "**qal**" form this verb means "**he ate**", and used in the "**hiphil**" form this verb means "**he caused to eat**", or, as we would more commonly say, "**he fed**". (This example is taken from the Online Bible Hebrew-English Dictionary.)

In other words, understanding is something that is the consequence of having considered something. Considering something causes or leads to understanding. Thus a better way to translate Daniel 9:23 is to reverse the two English ways of translating this Hebrew verb, and to say:

"... therefore **consider the word**, and (as a result) **understand the vision**." (Daniel 9:23)

So the preamble of the 70 weeks prophecy offers us understanding, **if** we are willing to carefully think through all the statements in that prophecy. At the same time it implies that if we do not carefully think through exactly what we are told in this prophecy, then we will also not gain any understanding. **Understanding is the result of careful consideration.**

And since in both places this verb is in the imperative form, it means that God commands us to carefully think through this prophecy. So that is what we are now going to do.

Let's carefully examine this prophecy.

Daniel 9:24 states:

Seventy weeks are determined upon your people and upon your holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and the prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. (Daniel 9:24)

Note the following things about this verse:

1) The expression "70 weeks are determined" implies both, a specific starting point, and a specific end point. A period of 70 weeks spans a very precise period of time.

2) The Hebrew verb "chathak" which is here in the KJV translated as "are determined" is used only here in the whole Old Testament. Most Bible translations translate it as "**are decreed**" (ASV, NAB, NRSV, RSV, ERV, Lexham English Bible, etc.), which seems to be the intended meaning.

3) This verse links together the first coming of Jesus Christ with the second coming of Jesus Christ! The expressions "**to make an end of sins** and to make reconciliation for iniquity" refer to **the first coming** of Jesus Christ. That is what Jesus Christ did when He died for our sins. But the expression "**to bring in everlasting righteousness**" refers to **the second coming** of Christ. That applies to the time when Jesus Christ will rule worldwide.

4) So we should expect this prophecy to provide us with:

A) **A starting date** for the "70 weeks".

B) **A way of calculating** to the first coming of Christ.

C) **Some kind of link** from the first to the second coming of Christ.

D) **The conclusion** of the "70 weeks" to pinpoint the second coming of Jesus Christ.

E) The expression "to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity" tells us that the initial dating will lead us to **the start of Christ's ministry**, and **not** "**to His birth**"! The "reconciliation" was made possible by His death, which occurred at the end of His ministry.

One point that we did not understand correctly in the past is that the 70 weeks simply **must end** at the second coming of Jesus Christ! There cannot be any part of those 70 weeks that has not yet been completed when Jesus Christ returns! The statement:

"Seventy weeks are decreed upon your people ... to bring in everlasting righteousness ... and to anoint the most Holy" ...

must end at the second coming, when Jesus Christ returns as the anointed King of kings and Lord of lords. That is what is "decreed"! It cannot be that Jesus Christ brings in "everlasting righteousness" and that He is anointed after 69½ weeks, with supposedly another ½ week having to be completed after Jesus has been anointed and after He has brought in everlasting righteousness. So the 70 weeks end with the second coming of Jesus Christ.

That is something we had previously not understood correctly.

Now let's examine the next verse.

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 ... (Daniel 9:25)

Note the following things:

1) This verse gives us **a starting point**, introduced by the word "**from**".

2) This verse also gives us **a concluding point**, introduced by the word "**unto**".

3) This **concluding point** is identified as the start of the ministry of "the Messiah the Prince".

4) This verse gives us a period of 7 + 62 = **69 weeks**.

5) So after the initial "concluding point" of this verse has been reached, once Jesus Christ has started His ministry, we are left with only "one week" to somehow link the first and second comings of Christ. Of the 70 weeks, 69 weeks will have been "used up".

That last "**one week**" is something we had not understood correctly in the past. That "one week" is the key to understanding how God the Father decides about Jesus Christ's second coming.

Here is the point: 69 weeks take us to the start of Christ's ministry. The remaining one week takes us through Christ's ministry and to the second coming of Jesus Christ. **The 70 weeks conclude with the return of Jesus Christ.** No part of the 70 weeks applies to anything that happens after Jesus Christ has returned.

We'll look at that 70th week in more detail later.

It seems fairly clear that in this prophecy God is employing the principle of "**a day for a year**" ... a day in this prophecy represents a year in the actual fulfillment (see Ezekiel 4:4-6). So the whole prophecy covers a period of 70 * 7 = 490 years. The 69 weeks referred to in verse 25 represent 69 * 7 = 483 years in the actual fulfillment.

When we have a specific period of time (in this case 483 years), then we can do one of two things:

A) If we know the exact starting point, then we can add this period of time to it in order to calculate the end-point of the period.

B) If we know the exact end-point, then we can subtract this period of time from it to arrive at the starting

point of the period.

Now the starting point is a specific Persian royal decree, and the end-point is the start of Jesus Christ's ministry. So we can **either work forwards** from the time of the decree, **or** we can **work backwards** from the time Jesus Christ started His ministry.

Since there are a number of different decrees that people sometimes refer to in this regard, it may be helpful to initially work backwards from the start of Christ's ministry. In that way we can pinpoint the exact decree in question, thereby eliminating all other "decrees".

It seems reasonably clear (as is also indicated in the last verse of this prophecy) that the year Jesus Christ was crucified the Passover date fell on a Wednesday (observed on a Tuesday evening), the middle of a literal week. Jesus Christ was crucified in either 30 A.D. or in 31 A.D., where both years had Wednesday Passovers, based on starting every month with the first visibility of the new crescent, rather than based on some questionable calculations.

For these two dates the duration of Christ's 3½-year ministry from the Feast of Tabernacles of the starting year to the Passover of the concluding year would have been as follows:

EITHER:

Tabernacles 26 A.D. - Passover 30 A.D., with a Wednesday Passover date in 30 A.D.

OR:

Tabernacles 27 A.D. - Passover 31 A.D., with a Wednesday Passover date in 31 A.D.

So if we subtract 483 years from 26 A.D. (or from 27 A.D.), then that takes us back to 458 B.C. (or to 457 B.C.). This takes us to the specific decree which King Artaxerxes made in his 7th year, recorded in Ezra chapter 7. No other decrees recorded in the Bible are compatible with either a 30 A.D. or a 31 A.D. crucifixion date.

So now we have correctly identified the specific royal decree that is the one referred to in Daniel 9:25! It is found in Ezra 7:13.

I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and *of* his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee. (Ezra 7:13)

With this decree as a starting point, **we can now examine all of the historical evidence**, both biblical and secular, to verify the start of the ministry of Jesus Christ. In other words, we can verify the date for the start of Christ's ministry by now **working forwards from the decree we have identified** as the correct one for the 70-weeks prophecy.

This approach requires us to accurately date the decree of Ezra 7:13.

In one of my articles about the Jewish calendar titled "A Candid Reply to the UCG Study Paper Titled 'Summary of the Hebrew Calendar'" I have presented a detailed discussion of the available historical evidence. This historical evidence all points to the start of the 70-weeks prophecy as being the year 458 B.C., and the start of Jesus Christ's ministry as being in 26 A.D., with a crucifixion date of a Wednesday Passover in 30 A.D.

The historical information in that article is based on a book written in 1956 by Richard A. Parker and

Waldo H. Dubberstein, entitled "**Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C. to A.D. 75**". This was published by Brown University Press, Providence, Rhode Island, USA. For more details regarding all the historical evidence for the start of Jesus Christ's ministry refer to that article. A search in that article on words like "Parker" and "Dubberstein" will quickly guide you to the relevant section of the article.

Anyway, as far as the years 30 and 31 A.D. are concerned: **Neither date has any kind of influence on anything**, not on the date when Jesus Christ will return, and not on which calendar God wants us to use. Both 26 A.D. and 27 A.D. are in themselves **completely meaningless dates**! And it is foolish to argue about them.

To get back to the 70 weeks prophecy:

Daniel 9:25 has by means of a royal decree and by a period of 483 years pinpointed the exact start of the ministry of Jesus Christ, and it is immaterial whether that was 26 A.D. or 27 A.D., as I will show. Thus 69 weeks have been taken care of. That leaves us with exactly **one week remaining**.

So let's now continue in Daniel chapter 9.

And after threescore and two weeks **shall Messiah be cut off**, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. (Daniel 9:26)

Note the following points about this verse:

1) "After 62 weeks" is a way of saying "after the whole period of "7 + 62 weeks", i.e. after 69 weeks. The period of "7 weeks" preceded the period of "62 weeks".

2) Since the Messiah's ministry started after "69 weeks", it follows that He is killed at some point thereafter **during the 70th week**. There is only "1 week" (i.e. 7 years) available for this to happen. The next verse will tell us that this happened after exactly 3½ years, halfway through that 70th week.

[Comment: As an aside, notice that 69 is equal to 3 x 23. So the countdown to the start of Christ's ministry is **3 x 23** weeks = 69 weeks. We might also note that the year of the flood was 1656 years after Adam's creation. And 1656 is equal to **72 x 23** years. So the number 23 appears both in the year for the flood, and also in the countdown to Jesus Christ's ministry.]

3) At some point **after** the Messiah's death, Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed by the invading Roman armies. That happened in 70 A.D.

4) **This reference** to the destruction of Jerusalem is a major clue! It shows that after the death of the Messiah **a time-lapse, which does not feature in the calculation of the 70 weeks, enters the picture**!

5) The reference to "... and the end thereof shall be with a flood" is a reference to when the 70 weeks prophecy will end.

6) The reference to "... and unto the end of the war" shows that the 70 weeks prophecy concludes with a war! That particular war will end with decisive destructions and desolations. That is the time of the second coming, when rebellious humanity will fight against the returning Jesus Christ. It is **not** 3½ years **after** Jesus Christ has returned.

So the 70 weeks prophecy is actually bound by two decrees: it starts with the command or decree of a

human king, and it ends with a war that God has decreed or determined. **Within this framework there is a period of time which is not included in the calculation of the 70 weeks**. That not-included period goes from the crucifixion of Jesus Christ up to 3½ years (i.e. half a week) **before** the second coming of Christ.

There is no indication anywhere in the Bible, not even the slightest hint, regarding how long that period of time will be. It is totally and absolutely at the sole discretion of God the Father Himself. This is explained in great detail in the article "The Second Coming Of Jesus Christ".

There is no value or merit of any kind in speculating about the time of Jesus Christ's second coming, because there simply is no way whatsoever, prior to the last 3½ years, for anyone to know how close we are to Christ's return. **It is foolish to speculate about the year of Jesus Christ's return.**

Now let's examine the last verse of this prophecy, which will tie together all the loose ends.

And He (i.e. Jesus Christ) 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, and for the overspreading of abominations he (i.e. the end-time beast-power) shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (margin: **the desolator**, i.e. the one who caused the desolation leading up to Christ's 2nd coming, which is **the beast power** at the end). (Daniel 9:27)

This verse speaks about "the missing 70th week". This whole week (i.e. the full 7 years) is devoted to Jesus Christ "confirming the covenant".

However, Jesus Christ is "cut off" in the midst of that week (see verse 26). That means that **Jesus Christ Himself in person cannot actually do any "confirming" for the second half of that 70th week**.

We **also** need to understand that **there cannot be any more "confirming" of the covenant after Jesus Christ's second coming**!

Once Jesus Christ has returned and started to rule in the Kingdom of God as King of kings and Lord of lords, the confirming is past tense! Can you understand that?

Look, exactly how did Jesus Christ "confirm" the covenant during His 3½-year ministry? Jesus Christ "confirmed" the covenant by preaching "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17), the identical message that John the Baptist had also preached earlier (Matthew 3:2).

To confirm the covenant means **to preach** "repent because the Kingdom of God is at hand"! **And that is all it means!** There are no other ways in which the covenant "will be confirmed"!

That is the message that has to be preached for 7 years. But that type of preaching will no longer be done once Jesus Christ has come the second time. Then the time for preaching that message will be past. It will be history, because the Kingdom of God will in fact have started, and no longer be merely "at hand".

Can you understand this?

There is no such thing as "confirming the covenant for 3½ years with anyone" **after** Jesus Christ has returned. That idea is ridiculous! The confirming must precede the ruling as King of kings. Confirming the covenant precedes the reality or the implementation.

But before His second coming Jesus Christ Himself cannot do any "confirming". So someone else must do that on behalf of Jesus Christ. **Someone else must preach** to the world, not to the Church, "repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" on behalf of Jesus Christ in order to complete that 70th week.

THE TWO WITNESSES

Enter Jesus Christ's two witnesses!

In Revelation 11:3 Jesus Christ very specifically calls them "**My** two witnesses". And they happen to preach for exactly 3½ years, the missing half week from the 70 weeks prophecy. That period is also identified as "1260 days" and as "42 months" (verse 2).

This brings us to **the real purpose** for the ministry of the two witnesses. That purpose is not simply to just give the world a warning message. That purpose is first and foremost **to complete the one week of confirming the covenant with many** (see Daniel 9:27). The purpose is to complete the process that was started by Jesus Christ's own ministry.

We need to understand that there is absolutely no way that Jesus Christ's two witnesses will be identified by anyone more than 3½ years before the second coming. For example, four years before the second coming no human being will know who the two witnesses will be, because God will not yet have identified them to His people and to the world at large. **It is a huge mistake for anyone to attempt to preempt God** by trying to figure out in advance who those two men will be. Wait till God reveals their identities.

And because they will be fulfilling a responsibility on behalf of Jesus Christ Himself, **therefore** they are "**His** two witnesses", and **not merely** "**the** two witnesses". They will not just be ministers or prophets in a general sense. They will be completing the job Jesus Christ Himself had started and done until He was cut off in the midst of that 7-year "week".

Do you now understand why Jesus Christ will have two witnesses for **the same length of time as His own ministry**? And can you understand why these two witnesses **have to be killed** (though not as brutally!), even as Jesus Christ was killed at the end of His ministry. And why they must be dead **slightly longer** (i.e. out of respect, as well as a day for each year of their ministry) than Jesus Christ was dead? Christ was dead for 3 days and they will be dead for 3½ days. They will be fulfilling one specific part of Jesus Christ's own ministry, the same part that John the Baptist had fulfilled before Jesus Christ had started His own ministry.

In total the covenant, by which God offers human beings the opportunity to become immortal spirit-born members of the Family of God, must be confirmed for 7 years (i.e. for "one week") **before** Jesus Christ will return. That confirming consists of preaching for a period of 7 years "repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand". For the **first 3½ years** Jesus Christ preached this message Himself almost 2000 years ago. For the **second 3½ years** it will be preached by Jesus Christ's two witnesses. But the message will be the same.

And when the two witnesses are killed, **then the 70th week will be complete**. Now let's go back to Daniel 9:27.

CONTINUING WITH DANIEL 9:27

The reference to "**in the midst of the week**" shows that this final 7-year period is actually divided into two equal parts of 3½ years each, as we have just discussed. This tells us that Jesus Christ's ministry was exactly 3½ years long ... 15th of Tishri in 26 A.D. to the 14th of Nisan in 30 A.D. ... starting at a Feast of Tabernacles and ending on a Passover day.

"The midst of the week" also refers to Jesus Christ being killed on the 4th day of a literal week, on a Wednesday, in addition to being killed in the middle of a 7-year "week".

The expression "**for the overspreading of abominations**" is suitably rendered in the margin as "with the abominable armies". This is a reference to the Roman armies destroying Jerusalem.

The expression "**even until**" introduces a time element, a starting point for the second half of that remaining "70th week".

The whole expression "he shall make it desolate even until the consummation" refers to Jerusalem being basically under threat from foreign powers until almost the return of Jesus Christ. So this expression introduces the start of the second 3½-year period.

At that point in time "**the desolator**" (i.e. **the beast power**) will be punished in the manner that God has "determined" or "decreed" in advance. What God has "decreed" in advance is that **the seven last plagues** will be poured out in the presence of Jesus Christ especially "upon the beast". We are told that the first plague is poured "upon the men which had **the mark** of the beast" (Revelation 16:2). The fifth plague is poured "upon **the seat** of the beast" (Revelation 16:10). That decreed punishment from God for the beast will culminate in the leader of the beast power, the desolator, being thrown alive into a lake of fire (Revelation 19:20), together with the false prophet.

So verse 27 ties together both comings of Jesus Christ, as was also implied already earlier in verse 24.

There remains the second 3½-year period for Christ's two witnesses to "confirm the covenant with many".

And **when the two witnesses are killed, then that concludes the 70-weeks prophecy**. In other words, when Jesus Christ was killed, then that concluded the first one-half-week of confirming the covenant. And when the two witnesses are killed, then that concludes the second one-half-week of confirming the covenant.

What we have seen is the following:

A period of "70 weeks" is determined to culminate at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

From the starting date in 458 B.C. a period of 483 years (69 weeks) takes us to the start of Christ's ministry in 26 A.D.

Then, after a 3½-year ministry, (½ a week) Jesus Christ is killed on the Passover day which fell on a Wednesday.

Then a time-lapse of unspecified duration is introduced.

That time-lapse, which is ignored in the 70 weeks prophecy, goes from the end of Jesus Christ's 3½-year ministry to the start of the two witnesses 3½-year ministry, thereby linking the two halves of that last one week.

There is no indication anywhere in the Bible regarding exactly how long that time-lapse will be. It is not the only time-lapse of unspecified duration in God's dealings with mankind.

These time-lapses are discussed at length in the article "**The Second Coming Of Jesus Christ**". That article corrects and replaces my 1998 article (which I had briefly revised in 2013) "When Will Jesus Christ Return?" It also explains why I believe it is impossible to predict the time for Jesus Christ's return until the ministry of the two witnesses actually starts. I have removed the article "When Will Jesus Christ Return?" from my website.

If you have not yet done so, you now really need to read that new article "The Second Coming Of Jesus Christ". That article answers the questions I have not dealt with in this present article.

Well, how does that stack up with the way we have always understood the 70 weeks prophecy? And can we now understand the main purpose for the 3½-year ministry of the two witnesses? That purpose is to complete the witness of God's coming Kingdom, which witness Jesus Christ had started to bring during His ministry. And when their ministry ends, that is when the Kingdom of God here on Earth will then start.

Frank W Nelte