



LESSON 25

Foundations Curriculum

Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the Abomination of Desolation

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Introduction

Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the Abomination of Desolation

In this twenty-fifth lesson, we will study the prophecy of Daniel's 70 weeks and the abomination of desolation. It is found in the book of the prophet Daniel, chapter 9, verses 24 through 27. To make it easier to understand, we will answer eight questions.

1) The "Mountain Effect" in Prophecies

Before we get specifically into Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks, we want to draw attention to what has come to be called the “mountain effect,” which refers to a phenomenon that occurs when, in the middle of a prophecy, there is a leap in time. Because it is common in various prophecies, this phenomenon has led many to think that prophecies are difficult to understand.

However, when we learn that this is something common in the teaching of the prophets within Hebrew culture, we feel better prepared to understand these prophecies.

Picture it this way: it is as if someone were looking, through binoculars, at the peaks of some mountains and saw two small flags atop the peaks that appear to be very close to each other. Even though the flags are not actually close, from the observer's point of view they appear to be. Yet between the two mountains lies a valley, which places a great distance between them.

What we are attempting to show, in graphic form, are the leaps in time that occur within prophecies.

Let us turn to a classic example of the “mountain effect,” found in a prophecy given by Jesus in John 5.

Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

John 5:28–29 (NKJV)

Notice that the expression “the hour is coming” gives the impression that Jesus is referring to events that will happen at the same time. But when we read Revelation 20:1–7, we understand that these are different moments. Jesus says there will be a period of 1,000 years between the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment.

Let us look at one more example, found in the prophet Joel.

And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

Joel 2:28–31 (NKJV)

What is foretold in verses 28 and 29 has already been fulfilled and is recorded in the book of Acts, chapter 2. However, the continuation of the prophecy, found in the following verses, has not yet been fulfilled.

Between these events, approximately two thousand years have already passed.

2) Daniel's Seventy Weeks

In the book of Daniel, there are 166 predictions of events that were future to his own time. We will study one of his prophecies, found in chapter 9, verses 24 through 27. We will answer eight questions that will help our understanding, seeking to examine closely what is foretold.

Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

Daniel 9:24 (NKJV)

01 To Whom Does the Vision Refer?

To the people of Israel and to the city of Jerusalem. The prophecy announces events that will occur during this period of 70 weeks and at the end of the seventy weeks.

02 What Are the 70 Weeks?

The word “week,” in this case, is the translation of the Hebrew word *shabua*, which means a group of seven, or a sevenfold unit. It can be a group of 7 days or of 7 years.

In Leviticus 25:8, the Lord says: “*And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years.*”

In this text, we see that a week represents a group of 7 years. In the text of Daniel, we find the same meaning.

Another piece of evidence, which we will see further ahead, is that the daily sacrifice ceases in the middle of the final week; and in Daniel 12, it says that 1,290 days will still remain, approximately 3½ years.

So, if half of the week is 3½ years, a week is 7 years.

Summary:

The prophecy refers to a period of 490 years.

CHART 1 <i>What Are These 70 Weeks?</i>
A week = shabua = a group of 7, or a sevenfold unit.
One week = 7 years.
70 weeks x 7 years = 490 years.

03 When Does the Count of the 490 Years Begin?

Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

Daniel 9:25 (NKJV)

The count begins when the command is given to restore and build Jerusalem.

At that moment of the prophecy, the situation was as follows: Daniel was a captive in Babylon, and Jerusalem had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, as judgment for Judah's unfaithfulness. However, after the fall of the Babylonian Empire, the Persian Empire arose, and the sovereign Lord moved these Persian kings to allow the restoration of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem.

There were four decrees by Persian kings (which can be found in the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah), ordering restorations in Jerusalem. However, the first three concerned the restoration of the temple, while the fourth encompassed the city and its walls.

So we take the last decree (Nehemiah 2:1–6), given in the 20th year of King Artaxerxes I, in 445 B.C. This was given when the king saw Nehemiah sad, because Jerusalem was in ruins, and allowed him to return to Jerusalem and organize the rebuilding of the city.

CHART 2 <i>When Does the Count of the Years Begin?</i>
Nehemiah 2:1–6
In the 20th year of King Artaxerxes I, in 445 B.C.

04 What Will Happen During the First 69 Weeks?

Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

Daniel 9:25 (NKJV)

The prophecy presents a first part, which is the first 69 weeks.

CHART 3
<i>Events of the First 69 Weeks</i>
7 weeks + 62 weeks = 69 weeks.
Command to restore and build Jerusalem: ~445 B.C.
69 weeks x 7 years = 483 years.
Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and the Anointed One will come.

05 What Will Happen After the 69th Week?

And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself...

Daniel 9:26 (NKJV)

CHART 4
<i>What Will Happen After the 69th Week?</i>
The Anointed One will be cut off!
Command to restore and build Jerusalem: ~445 B.C.
483 years (476 years on our calendar) later...
The death of Jesus: ~A.D. 32.

This is a moment that generates faith and encouragement. Daniel received this prophecy 538 years before Christ, 93 years before the rebuilding of Jerusalem, when the first part was fulfilled. More than 500 years beforehand, Daniel announces that the Anointed One would come and that He would be cut off 483 years after the beginning of the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Our God holds the agenda and the history of the universe in His hands and is fulfilling His entire will. Jerusalem began its rebuilding in the exact year the Lord had planned. Jesus died in the year, month, day, and hour that had been prepared by the Lord (the 14th day of the month of Nisan, at 3:00 p.m.).

Our God is the Lord of History, and He will fulfill the rest of His plans, with absolute precision, until the end.

06 When Does the 70th Week Occur?

And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; ...and the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.

Daniel 9:26–27 (NKJV)

Here we identify yet another prophecy in which the “mountain effect” occurs. The prophet, even without realizing it, begins to speak of an event far distant from the first.

When he speaks of this prince who is to come, who will make a covenant with many for one week (7 years), and in the middle of the week will bring the sacrifice to an end (3½ years), he is referring to the Antichrist.

Notice the expression: ‘*shall be cut off, but not for Himself.*’ Here there is an interruption in the timeline of the prophecy. The prophecy concerns the people of Israel and the events that involve them.

This moment in the prophecy is exactly the moment of the death of the Anointed One, when Jesus says to the Jews, two days before His death: “...for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’” (Matthew 23:39).

Summary:

CHART 5	
When Does the 70th Week Occur?	
Past — 69 weeks:	from the rebuilding of Jerusalem to the death of Jesus.
Mountain effect —	an interval of time.
Future — the 70th week:	the period of the manifestation of the Antichrist.

07 What Will Happen in the 70th Week?

The 70th week refers to the period of the manifestation of the Antichrist.

And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.

Daniel 9:26–27 (NKJV)

The Antichrist will make a covenant with many nations for one week = 7 years.

Summary:

CHART 6
<i>What Will Happen in the 70th Week?</i>
The manifestation of the Antichrist (7 years).
3½ years: covenant with many.
3½ years: the saints will be delivered into his hands.
The abomination of desolation.

In the middle of the 7 years (3½ years), he will bring the daily sacrifice to an end, setting up the abomination of desolation (the profaning of the temple). This is exactly the moment that Jesus cites in Matthew 24:15: *“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand).*

This marks the moment of Jerusalem being besieged and the beginning of the Great Tribulation.

Jerusalem will be besieged;

the sacrifice of the temple will cease and the temple will be profaned;

a most violent persecution will rise up against the Jews and against the church.

In chapters 7, 11, and 12 of Daniel, we find other prophecies speaking of this man:

He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

Daniel 7:25 (NKJV)

And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Daniel 12:11 (NKJV)

And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.

Daniel 11:31 (NKJV)

This man has several names. Daniel refers to him as the prince who is to come (9:26); the vile person (11:21); and a king of fierce countenance (8:23). Paul calls him the man of lawlessness, John calls him the antichrist, and in Revelation he appears as the beast.

But the prophecy still declares his end at the return of the Lord: *“...Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”* When Jesus returns, He will destroy him.

08 What Will Happen at the End of the 70th Week?

Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

Daniel 9:24 (NKJV)

We will not go into detail about these events, but we do want to draw attention to the fact that they refer to two important events:

a work of the Holy Spirit upon Israel, producing conversion and its restoration: "...to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity...";

the reign of the Messiah for a thousand years: "...to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."

CHART 7		
Summary of the 70 Weeks		
Past — 483 years: from the command to restore Jerusalem to the death of Jesus (~A.D. 32).		
Mountain effect — an interval of time.		
Future — 7 years: the Antichrist (3½ years) and the abomination of desolation (3½ years).		
At the end: the conversion and restoration of Israel, and the reign of Jesus.		
CHART 8		
Jesus' Teaching and the 70 Weeks		
1st — Not yet the end.	}	3.5 yrs: the vile man
2nd — The beginning of sorrows.		
3rd — The great tribulation / the abomination of desolation.	}	3.5 yrs
4th — The powers of the heavens will be shaken.		
5th — The gathering of the elect.		
6th — The sign of the Son of Man.		
3½ years and 3½ years: the vile man (7 years).		

Finally, Jesus will come to destroy the Antichrist and to establish His thousand-year reign. The Lord is fulfilling His purpose. He is the Lord of history.

CONCLUSION

In this twenty-fifth lesson of the Foundations Curriculum, we studied the prophecy of Daniel's 70 weeks. Our goal, as already mentioned, was to simplify the information so that everyone could

understand it. Thus, we studied a prophecy that speaks of events that will be fulfilled over 490 years. Of these, 483 have already been fulfilled in detail, at which point the prophecy was interrupted. We are living in a period of what is called the “mountain effect,” and 7 years remain before the complete fulfillment of the prophecy takes place in the future. We have not engaged in speculation about when or how these seven years will occur. Let us be encouraged, and let us prepare ourselves for the return of our beloved Jesus.

CONSIDER CAREFULLY

01 Do you know what the mountain effect is in prophecy? Have you been able to identify this effect in any other prophecy?

02 Of Daniel's 70 weeks, how many have already been fulfilled, and how many remain to be fulfilled?

03 With the complete fulfillment of the seventy weeks, two important events will take place. Can you say what they are?

*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*

Ephesians 2:20 (NKJV)

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