

1844 Made Simple



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Lev. 7:27; 17:10; Luke 3:1-22; Rom. 5:8; Gal. 3:13; 1 Thess. 5:9, 10; 1 Pet. 2:24.*

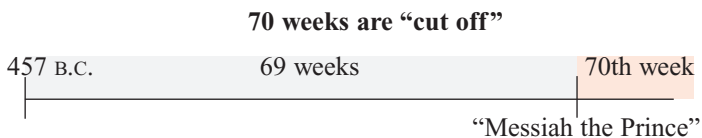
Memory Text: “And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent” (*Matthew 27:51*).

So far, we've seen that Daniel 8 ended with Daniel needing more explanation about the 2,300 days. Daniel 9 provides that explanation. Gabriel, the same angel interpreter in Daniel 8, points him directly back to the *mareh* of Daniel 8, the only part of the vision that he didn't understand. Gabriel immediately gives him another time prophecy, the 70 weeks, which is “cut off,” obviously from the larger time prophecy of the 2,300 days.

Unlike the 2,300 days, which doesn't mention a specific starting point, Daniel 9 does have one: the “commandment to restore and build Jerusalem,” which we saw last week was issued in 457 B.C.

Meanwhile, 69 of the 70 weeks of this prophecy reach to “the Messiah the Prince,” Jesus. Thus, Jesus Himself forms the center of this prophecy; He's the foundation, the focal point of the 70 weeks. It all rests on Jesus, “the chief corner stone” (*Eph. 2:20*).

So far, then, the 70 weeks look like this:



*Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, August 19.

Doing the Math

Last week we saw that the “commandment to restore and build Jerusalem” occurred in the reign of the Persian King Artaxerxes. That is, it was issued not during the time of Babylon but after, in the next kingdom of Media-Persia.

What kingdom did the prophecy of Daniel 8 start with? How does that answer provide another link between Daniel 8 and 9?

Daniel 9 gives us the exact starting point of the 70-week prophecy, 457 B.C. It then says that from that point, there will be 69 weeks until “the Messiah the Prince.” Sixty-nine weeks comes to 483 days; applying, then, the day-year principle means that, from the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, 483 years would pass.

Do the math, counting 483 years from 457 B.C. What date do you get?

To get at the date, you need to subtract 457 from 483. That comes to 26, which would mean A.D. 26. However, we are dealing with a calendar here and not a straight number line, which goes like this: -2 -1 0 1 2 3. The calendar, of course, doesn’t have a slot for zero (there’s no zero year). The calendar, instead, goes like this: -2, -1, 1, 2, or, more specifically, 2 B.C., 1 B.C., A.D. 1, A.D. 2. Thus, with the zero year missing on the calendar, 483 years would extend one more year on the calendar, coming to A.D. 27 instead of 26.

Read Luke 3:1-22. What major event is portrayed here, and how does this help us understand the meaning of the prophecy of Daniel 9?

The prophecy doesn’t talk about the birth of Jesus; instead, it talks about Him as the “Messiah,” the “Anointed,” the Christ; that is, Jesus in His official capacity. Luke puts John’s ministry in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, which can be dated to A.D. 27. Seeing that John baptized Jesus shortly after John’s own ministry began, we have this incredible prophecy, given more than five hundred years earlier, pointing to the ministry of Jesus.

What does the baptism of Jesus say to you about how closely Christ relates to humanity? What hope does His close tie to us offer us in our daily struggles?

Key Text: *Matthew 27:51*

Teachers Aims:

1. To help the class understand the significance of 1844 in a more simplified way.
2. To emphasize that the 1844 time prophecy revolves around heavenly things and spiritual realities.

Lesson Outline:

I. 1844 Simplified (*Dan. 8:14*)

- A. The 1844 time prophecy is part of a larger picture, depicted in Daniel 8 and 9: the 2,300 days.
- B. Simple math connects 1844 to the 70-week prophecy beginning in 457 B.C., tying into Christ's ministry and crucifixion in A.D. 27 and A.D. 34, respectively.
- C. The baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist emphasizes how closely Christ relates to humanity. This divine ordinance gives us hope that Christ is ever ready to relieve us, ever close to offer us peace amid our daily struggles.

II. "Not for Himself" (*Dan. 9:26*)

- A. Christ's death on the cross was an atoning sacrifice offered for a death-deserving world.
- B. Christ died to restore a fallen human race to God, whose relationship to Him was broken down by sin.
- C. Christ's death in our place should reassure us that, no matter how far we have fallen away, the penalty for our past actions has been paid by His blood.

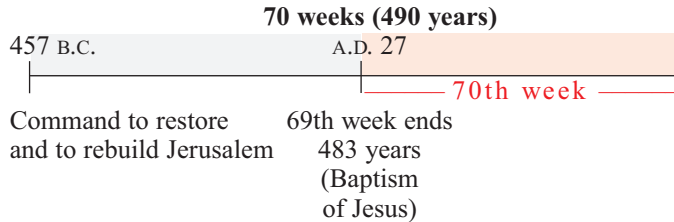
Summary: The year 1844 is significant, because it focuses on the launch year of the greatest Second Advent movement in ecclesiastical history. Equally important, 1844 began a heavenly process that will ultimately climax in the final purification of sin from the universe.

COMMENTARY

Last week we outlined the 70-weeks prophecy and its significance. We noted that it was cut off from the 2,300 years of Daniel 8:14. We also noted that the 70 weeks are divided into three portions, beginning with the 457 B.C. decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem: 49 years for the completion of Jerusalem, 483 years until the coming of the Messiah, and seven years for the confirmation of Christ's sacrifice and work on earth. This week we will show that the entire prophetic burden was focused on Jesus and His work

Messiah Cut Off

So far, in our study of the 70-week prophecy (490 years), we've covered 69 weeks (or 483 of those 490 years). We've also looked at two distinct historical events that can be accurately dated. See the chart below:



Study the above chart until the events depicted on it are clear to you.

Read Daniel 9:26. It says that after the 62 weeks the Messiah will be “cut off”; that’s the 62 weeks that come after the first 7 (*see vs. 25*), which means that after this 69th week (A.D. 27) the Messiah will be cut off, but “not for himself.”

Look up these following texts (*Isa. 53:5; Rom. 5:8; Gal. 3:13; 1 Thess. 5:9, 10; 1 Pet. 2:24*). **How do they help us understand what this prophecy is talking about?**

Up until now, the prophecy covered the first 69 weeks. Verse 26 now introduces the last week, the final seven years of the prophecy—and it does so with an image of Christ’s atoning death. Not only was He “cut off” (a different verb from that used in 9:24), but He was cut off “not for himself,” giving the idea that His death was in behalf of others. We see here the substitutionary aspect of Christ’s sacrifice: His death wasn’t for Himself; it was for us.

It’s interesting, too, that the verb (*krt*) used for “cut off” is directly linked with the Levitical sacrificial system, with those who violated the covenant being “cut off” from the people. (*See Lev. 7:27; 17:10, 14; 20:6, 17.*) In Daniel 9:26 we see an image of the innocent Jesus being “cut off” for the sins of others.

What does it mean that no matter what you have ever done, no matter how bad you have been, the penalty for those actions has been paid by the One who was “cut off,” not for Himself—but for you?

of redemption. We will study the rebuilding of the temple, the mission of the Cross, and the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary.

I. The Rebuilding of the Temple

Daniel 9 provides the starting point for the 70-weeks prophecy. Review Daniel 9:25. The period of 69 weeks begins with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem issued in 457 B.C. It took seven weeks (49 years) to rebuild Jerusalem's streets, walls, and temple. That event affirms that God keeps His promises. The promise made through Jeremiah that the captivity will last 70 years and that God's people will return to Jerusalem was fulfilled as stated. The nearness of God to His people—that “‘I will dwell among them’” (*Exod. 25:8, NIV*)—had once more become a reality.

II. The Work of the Anointed One

God gave us in Genesis 3:15 the first gospel promise. This promise was fulfilled “when the fulness of the time” (*Gal. 4:4*). Daniel 9 shows God's plan for the fulfillment of this promise, establishing once again the nearness of God to His people—this time in the form of Christ—God in human flesh, dwelling with us and dying for our sins. Gabriel says that this would take place 69 weeks from Artaxerxes' decree, taking us to A.D. 27.

What happened in A.D. 27? The baptism of Jesus, which publicly affirmed His messiahship. See Matthew 3:16, 17. Out of the Jordan and on to the cross, the journey was one of battling with Satan, proclaiming God's kingdom, choosing disciples to carry on His work, and performing God's mighty works—all in all, announcing that heaven has come down to earth to atone for sin and to redeem the sinner. Christ's mission reads amazingly like Daniel 9:24: “‘to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy’” (NIV).

Daniel 9:26, 27 informs us how part of Christ's work will be done and that most of this work is accomplished during the last of the 70-weeks prophecy. In the midst of that final week (around A.D. 31), “‘the Anointed One will be cut off.’” By this act, He “‘will put an end to sacrifice and offering’” (*vs. 27, NIV*). This refers to the Cross, upon which Christ became our sacrifice for sin and death (*Rom. 5:6-8, 6:10, 2 Cor. 5:15, Heb. 9:15, 1 Pet. 3:18*). “Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. ‘With His stripes we are healed.’”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.

Daniel 9:27 adds one more detail: “‘He will confirm a covenant with many for one “seven” [week]’” (NIV). After being cut off in the

In the Midst of the Week

Read Daniel 9:27. Twice it talks about the “week.” What week is it referring to?

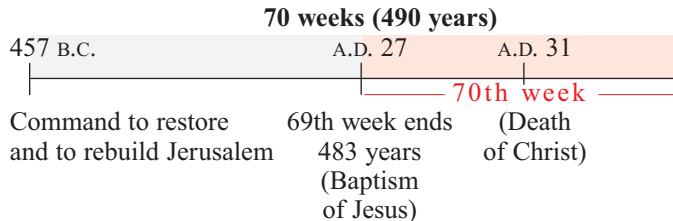
So far, we know that the prophecy is talking about Jesus, and that 69th week brought us to His baptism in A.D. 27. We saw, too, a direct reference in verse 26 to His atoning death. After all, that was the reason He came (*Mark 10:45, John 3:14*).

All that’s left of the 70-week prophecy is the final week, the 70th, the last 7 years.

What happens in the middle of the last week? What time period is it talking about?

Though verse 26 talked about Jesus’ death somewhat directly, verse 27 talks about it in the sense of what it accomplished: the end of the earthly sacrificial system, at least in the sense that they were of no more value (after all, some people today still offer sacrifices). This point was made clear in Mark 15:34-39, with the veil of the sanctuary rent in half, signaling the end of the earthly sanctuary service as a legitimate symbol of the ministry of Christ. The real sacrifice was, finally, offered; the old system had to give way for a new and better one. All that was equated with the old system—the sacrifice, the priesthood, and the sanctuary—have been replaced (*see Heb. 9:1-15*).

This occurred in the “midst of the week.” That would be three and a half years (half of seven). Through counting Passovers in John, we can show that it was three and a half years later, in the spring of A.D. 31, that Jesus was crucified. Thus, our chart now looks like this:



What a powerful prophecy for the messiahship of Jesus! Take whatever time you need until you understand what this prophecy is teaching. How is this amazing prophecy another revelation of God’s love to us? How does it help strengthen your faith?

middle of the final week for the sins of the world, the week ends with the confirmation of the covenant. The end of the final week brings us to A.D. 34—the year Stephen was stoned, Saul’s conversion came about, and his selection as the apostle to the Gentiles was confirmed by the Holy Spirit. Thus, God’s promise to Abraham that in him all nations shall be blessed (*Gen. 22:15-18*) became a reality.

III. The Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary

In Daniel 9, Gabriel rushed to Daniel to explain the 2,300 years

Inductive Bible Study

Texts for Discovery: *Isaiah 53:4-9, Mark 15:34-39, Luke 3:1-22, Romans 5:6-11, Hebrews 9:1-15*

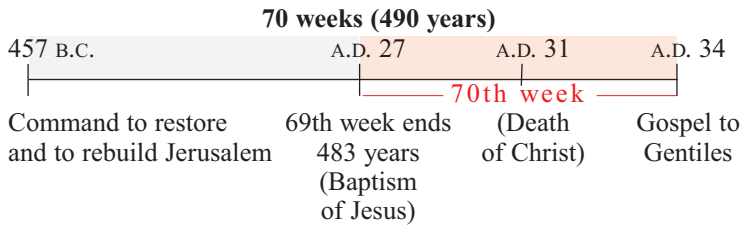
- 1 While history (necessarily) zeroes in on pivotal events and prominent people, it would be a mistake to assume that ordinary people like us are insignificant in the great sweep of history. Read the chapter, “The Chosen People,” in Ellen G. White’s book, *The Desire of Ages* (pp. 27–30). What characteristics is God looking for among His people today? Is He finding them in you and in your congregation? Explain.
- 2 Jesus’ earthly ministry literally changed the course of history, just as prophecy foretold: “ ‘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’ ” (*Dan. 9:27, NKJV*). From the perspective of a believer, list at least three things that changed with Jesus’ crucifixion.
- 3 The final week of the 70-weeks prophecy is significant not only for what happened in the middle of the week but for what happened at its end. With the stoning of Stephen and the commissioning of Paul to take the gospel to the Gentiles, this prophecy took on a worldwide dimension. In what tangible ways are you, as an individual and as a congregation, involved in the task of taking the gospel to the entire world?
- 4 The 2,300-day prophecy has been manipulated and rearranged to “prove” a lot of bizarre prophecies. Yet, the fact remains: The 70-weeks prophecy, beginning in 457 B.C., coincides perfectly with Jesus’ earthly ministry. If that much of the prophecy is accurate, the larger prophecy must be trustworthy, as well. What primary lesson about God and His faithfulness have you learned as a result of this study?

The 70th Week

The last thing we need to look at in the 70-week prophecy is found again in Daniel 9:27: “He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.” What week is that? Obviously, it’s the 70th week, the last one in the prophecy. If we begin with 457 B.C., then 490 years later bring the end of the 70-week prophecy to A.D. 34. Thus, the last week, the 70th week, ends at that date.

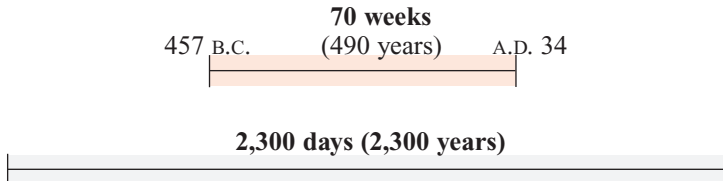
Daniel 9:27 talks about the “covenant.” What covenant could that be referring to? *Exod. 19:5, 34:10, Lev. 26:45, 1 Kings 19:10, Isa. 59:21, Jer. 50:5.*

Thus, the 70-week prophecy talks about an affirmation of the covenant that God made with Israel. He will “confirm the covenant with many” during that specific period, obviously referring specifically to the Jews who accepted Jesus at that time. Though the prophecy itself doesn’t give a specific event for that last year, A.D. 34, many believe it was the year that the apostle Paul accepted the gospel and became the great preacher to the Gentiles (*Acts 9*). In other words, Israel’s exclusivity came to a close, and a new era in salvation history was inaugurated at the end of the 490 years as the gospel went to all the world.



Review the above chart until you understand it well enough to explain it to others.

However fascinating the above prophecy, we must remember that it’s just part of a larger prophecy, the 2,300 days. That is, this 70th week was, as we saw, “cut off” from the larger *mareh* of Daniel 8. Thus, we have here two time prophecies, the 2,300 days, which didn’t have a specified starting point, and the 70 weeks which did. We have, therefore, the following two time periods:



(*Dan. 8:14*). The angel explained in detail 490 of those years, beginning with the restoration of the Jerusalem temple to the coming of the Messiah, the Cross, and the confirmation of God’s covenant. We have a definite starting point for this 490-year period—457 B.C., the year of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. But what is the beginning point for the 2,300-year prophecy? The answer must be found in the angelic announcement: “Seventy weeks are decreed” (*Dan. 9:24, NIV*)—that is, cut off. This implies that 70 weeks, or 490 years, must be cut off from the larger portion of 2,300 years. Hence, the 2,300-year prophecy must also begin with the same year. The math is simple and scriptural. The 2,300-year period ends in A.D. 1844—a year in which something was expected with the heavenly sanctuary. “‘Then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated’” (*Dan. 8:14, NIV*). We shall return to this theme in lesson 12.

Witnessing

The best place to hide something, Edgar Allan Poe wrote, is where everyone can see it. That formed the premise of his famous story, “The Purloined Letter,” and mystery writers have copied that idea for more than one hundred fifty years. But this notion truly may not be original to the great American writer and poet. I have the feeling that God was more than one step ahead of the author, especially when considering the prophecy of the cleansing of the sanctuary. As we saw in an earlier lesson, the mandate is clear: The sanctuary must be cleansed. But when is it to take place? How does it tie in to other prophecies? What’s the reason for all of this?

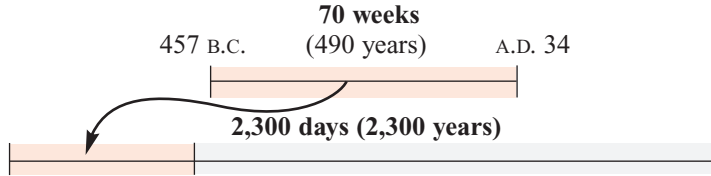
The answer is found here in this week’s study. The cleansing has to be reckoned with the 70 weeks running parallel to the start of the 2,300-day prophecy, or else that prophecy doesn’t work. When you lay the two time lines side by side, you end up with the 2,300 day-years concluding in . . . 1844.

And most of the Christian world has yet to fully acknowledge this. Instead, many have bought into a “dispensational” view that jumbles times and prophecies together, creating a mixture of scenarios that sound interesting but are not truly satisfying.

By “doing the math,” as our study implores, you can be certain of the importance of 1844 and its role in fulfilling Bible prophesy. Knowing that, you can share this truth with those who need it: with nonbelievers who will find further confirmation of the Bible as truth and with Christians who could use a little push onto the rock-solid ground of understanding.

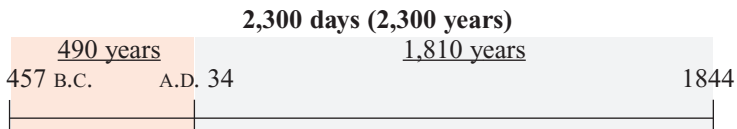
1844 Made Simple

As we've seen, the grounding of the 70-week prophecy is in Jesus, and because the 70-week prophecy is just part of the 2,300-day prophecy, that prophecy is grounded in Jesus, as well. The next step is obvious. The 70 weeks, which have a definite starting point, are "cut off" from the 2,300 days (see tomorrow on why it has to be "cut off" at the beginning as opposed to the end of the 2,300 days).



Do the math. If you use the 70 weeks as the starting point of the 2,300 years, what date do you come to?

If you count 2,300 years from 457 B.C. (remembering to delete the nonexistent zero year), you get 1844; or, if you count the remaining 1810 years from A.D. 34 (2,300 minus the first 490 years), you come to 1844, as well. Thus, the cleansing of the sanctuary in Daniel 8:14 can be shown to start in 1844.



Go back to week 5, Friday's study. We saw from the parallels between Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 that the cleansing of the sanctuary (the same event as the judgment scene in Daniel 7) had to occur after the 1,260-year period in Daniel 7 and yet before the Second Coming. How does the calculation done today fit in with that study?

What's so crucial, too, about the 2,300-day prophecy is that, being undeniably linked to the 70-week prophecy, it is inseparably tied in with Jesus. Again, one can't tamper with those dates in any substantial way without tampering with the dates of Jesus. Jesus Himself is the Surety of this prophecy. Obviously, then, the Lord deemed the 2,300-day prophecy important enough to, in a very real sense, base it on Jesus, on the greatest and most precise prophecy concerning His earthly mission, the 70-week prophecy of Daniel 9.

Review what we've studied this week. Be prepared to talk about it in class on Sabbath.

Life-Application Approach

Icebreaker: Here are some predictions from the past: “King George II said in 1773 that the American colonies had little stomach for revolution.

“An official of the White Star Line, speaking of the firm’s newly built flagship, the Titanic, launched in 1912, declared that the ship was unsinkable.

“In 1939 The New York Times said the problem of TV was that people had to glue their eyes to a screen, and that the average American wouldn’t have time for it.

“An English astronomy professor said in the early 19th century that air travel at high speed would be impossible because passengers would suffocate.”—“The World’s Worst Predictions,” eSermons, <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/p/prophecy.htm> (accessed February 23, 2005).

Thought Questions:

❶ What we can clearly see from these various predictions is that it is not easy to tell the future, is it? One of my favorite past predictions was about the personal computer. When told about the idea of a personal computer, a company executive dismissed the idea, saying, “Like maybe one home in all the country will need one.” What does this teach us about just how hard it is to tell the future? Why is this principle important for us as we seek to tell the future through Bible prophecy? Prophecy will come true, of course, because it is from God. But what about our interpretation of the prophecy? Why must we always be careful in this area?

❷ Read John 13:19. What important principle is Jesus giving us here on the role of prophecy?

Application Question:

As a church, we place a lot of emphasis on the prophecies of Daniel. In a sense, you could argue that we were founded on our understanding of the prophecies of Daniel. What role does your belief in Daniel’s prophecies play in your Adventist walk? What do some other denominations teach about the book of Daniel? In what areas do they see it the same as we do? What are the differences? Though there’s no question we would have plenty to show them, might we be able to learn something from them, as well?

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 409–432.

However clear it is that the 70 weeks are cut off from the 2,300 days, why do we cut them off from the beginning and not the end? The answer is because that's the only way it works logically. If we cut the 70 weeks off at the end, the 2,300 days would terminate in A.D. 34, an impossible conclusion, given the context of Daniel 8, which—parallel to Daniel 7—links the 2,300 days to the time of the end, and that hardly happened in A.D. 34. Plus, too, if you cut them off from the end, the beginning of the prophecy would start about sixteen hundred years before Babylon, the first kingdom depicted in these prophecies. In other words, cutting them off from the end doesn't work at all, given the context in which they appear. Meanwhile, cutting them off at the beginning places the start of the prophecy in the reign of Media-Persia, which fits the context of the vision (Daniel 8 began with Media-Persia) and places their end after the 1,260 years yet before the Second Coming, which also fits perfectly with the context of the vision.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 As a class, go over what has been studied in the past few weeks. Make sure, as much as possible, that everyone understands what has been covered.
- 2 Why does the date 1844 for Daniel 8:14 show why the sanctuary being cleansed is the heavenly one, not the earthly?
- 3 Why do you think is it important for us, as Adventists, to understand this prophecy, considering that the event depicted in it, the cleansing of the sanctuary, occurred so long ago? What does it mean to us as a church today?
- 4 As a class, talk about the implications of the phrase, he was “cut off but not for himself.” What hope does that offer to us? For whom was He cut off, why, and what does that mean? Talk about this too: The 70-week prophecy, a prophecy of the gospel, is linked with the 2,300-day prophecy. What does that tell us about why the gospel should form the foundation of our understanding of the meaning of the 2,300-day prophecy?