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The Beginning of the Great Tribulation

Dani'el 9:24-27 and Isaiah 28:14-22

The beginning of the Great Tribulation DIG: What do the 7 sevens, the 62 sevens and the 1 seven mean? What is the abomination that causes desolation (Mattityahu 24:15)? What is the covenant of death? In contrast to lies and falsehood, what is the sure foundation of God's Kingdom? What promise is given to those who will trust in that chief cornerstone? What is the warning given to those who do not?

REFLECT: For Dani'el and Jesus, what is the emphasis on *what* the future holds? Or on *who* holds the future? In what things (money, relationships, power, and so on) do people try to find refuge today? In your opinion, what is the gospel in these passages?

It has been emphasized that the signing of the seven-year **covenant** between the antichrist and **Isra'el** actually starts the Great Tribulation, not the Rapture. These two key passages of Scripture bear this out.

Dani'el 9:1-23 provide the introduction to the **70 sevens** prophecy found in **verses 24-27**. The background is given in **verses 1-2**. **Dani'el** had been studying **Jeremiah** as well as other prophets, such as **Isaiah**. **He** realized that the **seventy** years of Babylonian rule was nearly finished (see my commentary on **Jeremiah, to see link click Gu - Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule**). Much of the prophecy **he** clearly understood. But what **he** misunderstood about the prophecies of **Jeremiah** and **Isaiah** was that **he** thought the Messianic Kingdom would be set up following the **seventy** years of captivity. **He** also knew from the prophets that the prerequisite for setting up the Messianic Kingdom would be the nation of **Isra'el** confessing **her** sins. Assuming that the Babylonian rule would be immediately followed by the Messianic Kingdom, **Dani'el** prayed a prayer of confession for **Isra'el's** sins in **Dani'el 9:3-19**.

In **Dani'el 9:20-23**, the angel Gabriel was sent to correct **Dani'el's** misunderstanding about the Kingdom's being set up at the end of the **seventy** years of captivity. In a play on words, he informed **Dani'el** that it was not going to be **seventy** years, but **70 sevens** of years before the Messianic Kingdom would be established.¹⁸¹

70 sevens are decreed for your people and your holy city 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 (Dani'el 9:24).

70 sevens: The Hebrew word for **sevens** is *shavuim* and could refer to “seven” of anything, just like the English word “dozen” simply means “twelve” and could be twelve of anything. In this context it meant **sevens** of years because **Dani'el** had been calculating the **seventy** years of the Babylonian Captivity, assuming that afterward the Messianic Kingdom would be set up.

Are decreed for your people and your holy city: **Dani'el** was told that it was not **seventy** years that needed to pass before the Messianic Kingdom would be set up, but **70 sevens** of years, or a period of 490 years had been **decreed**. The Hebrew word for **decreed** means *to cut off*. Throughout **his** book, **Dani'el** had been dealing with the Times of the Gentiles. It began with the Babylonian destruction of **Jerusalem** in 586 BC and will end with the Second Coming of **Messiah**. Here **Dani'el** was told that a 490-year period was being *cut off* from the Times of the Gentiles (see [An - The Times of the Gentiles](#)) to bring about the restoration of **Isra'el**. This period of **70 sevens** would concern **the Jewish people** and the **holy city** of **Zion**. It would have nothing to do with the Church.¹⁸² The 490-year period that **YHVH** has **decreed** on **the Jewish people** is meant to accomplish six things. The first group of three are negative aspects of this period, while the second group of three are positive.

1. To finish transgression: The Hebrew word for **finish** means *restrain completely* or *bring to an end*. **Transgression** is a very strong word for sin coming from the Hebrew *avar*. It literally means *to rebel* or *to go beyond a set limit*. In the Hebrew text, it has the definite article. So it does not mean merely to **finish** rebellion, but to **finish** *the* rebellion. It refers to one specific act of rebellion and to bring it *to an end*. In this context, the one specific sin is the rejection of **Christ**. The leadership of **Isra'el** rejected **Him** and the leadership of **Isra'el** will have to ask **Him** to return before the Second Coming can take place (see [Ev - The Basis for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ](#)).

2. To put an end to sin: The Hebrew word for **to put an end** *to* means *to seal up* or *to be locked up*, and normally means the sealing up for the purpose of punishment (**Deuteronomy 32:34; Job 14:17**). The Hebrew word for **sin** here means *to miss the mark of a set standard*. It is in the plural and refers to the **sin** nature rather than a willful, consciously chosen **sin**. The unsaved Gentiles who survive the Great Tribulation will continue to **sin** during the Messianic Kingdom. But the daily **sins** of **Isra'el** will be **put to**

an end at Christ's Second Coming (Isaiah 27:9; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezeki'el 36:25-27, 37:23; and Romans 11:20-27).¹⁸³

3. To atone for wickedness: The verb **to atone**, the Hebrew word *kapar*, means *to cover*. The word **for wickedness**, from the Hebrew *awal*, means *failure to fulfill the standard of righteousness or lack of integrity*. *Kapar* is the main word for atonement in the TaNaKh. Yom Kippur is in view here (see my commentary on **Exodus 30 - The Day of Atonement**). On that day **ADONAI** provided a just basis on which **He** could deal with a guilty people. The mercy seat was the place of propitiation. The word propitiation means *to satisfy*. And it was at the mercy seat that **God's** wrath against sin was *atoned for, or satisfied*. At that time the high priest would sprinkle the blood of a goat over the mercy seat, when this was done **the LORD's** wrath against the **wickedness** of the nation was *satisfied*. So **Dani'el** prophesied that **Isra'el's** national **sin** of rejection of **Messiah** will be removed when the leadership of **Isra'el** asks for forgiveness (see above). At that time **Christ** will return and **all of Isra'el**, the one-third that is left at the end of the Great Tribulation, **will be saved (Romans 11:26)**.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **Your** holiness. It was your love, mercy and grace that offered **Your** eternal righteousness to all who chose to love and to follow **You**. **He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities. The chastisement for our shalom was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. We all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us turned to his own way. So, Adonai has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:5-6)**. We bow in worship. In the holy name of **Your Son** and **His** power of resurrection. Amen*

4. To bring in everlasting righteousness: The second three accomplishments deal with the positive aspects of **God's** program as a result of the Great Tribulation. Being *satisfied* with the atoning death of **Christ**, **ADONAI** will **bring in everlasting righteousness**. Literally, *to bring in the righteousness of ages*. This is a prophecy that **the Lord** will establish an age characterized by **righteousness**. This is a reference to the Millennial or Messianic Kingdom (**Revelation 20:1-6**).¹⁸⁴

5. To seal up vision and prophecy: All that **YHVH** said through the prophets about what **He** would do in fulfilling **His** covenant with **Isra'el** will be fully realized in the Messianic Kingdom. The Hebrew word **to seal up**, *hatam*, means *to enclose something authoritatively, hiding it from view and showing that its functions are completed*. When the Messianic Kingdom comes, then all the prophecies concerning the nation of **Isra'el** will be completed.¹⁸⁵

6. And to anoint the most holy: The Hebrew actually reads: **And to anoint the most holy place**. It does not point to a **most holy Person**, but a **most holy place**. To **the Jews**, this would have been the Temple. Not the First Temple of Solomon, nor the Second Temple of Zerubbabel, and surely not the Third Temple of the Tribulation (see [Bx - The Tribulation Temple](#)). More specifically, it is the Fourth Temple, the Millennial Kingdom Temple, built by **the Lord Himself** (see my commentary on [Jeremiah Gs - God Shows a Vision of the Millennial Temple](#)).

Know and understand that from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Yerushalayim until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be 7 sevens, and 62 sevens. It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble (Dani'el 9:25). The 490 year period, or 70 sevens, is then divided into three units: 7 sevens, 62 sevens and 1 seven.

Know and understand that from the issuing of the degree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem: This begins the second division of the prophecy and the beginning point to the **70 sevens** period. This period of time will begin with **the decree to restore Jerusalem**.

Until the Anointed One, the Ruler, comes: The end or goal of the prophecy was the appearance of **the Anointed One, the Ruler. Jesus Christ** will be anointed as **Ruler of His** Messianic Kingdom. The prophecy of the **70 sevens** does not end with **Yeshua's** First Coming, but with **His** Second Coming and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.

There will be 7 sevens and 62 sevens: The 7 sevens and the 62 sevens run consecutively with no time between them and combined for a period of 69 sevens. The first unit of **7 sevens** was a total of 49 years and refers to the time that it took to **restore and rebuild the holy city of Tziyon**.

It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench: Though **Nehemiah's** wall construction project took only 52 days, many years may have been needed to remove the city's debris after being left desolate for so many decades. They needed to rebuild adequate housing, and rebuild the **streets and a trench**, possibly for **Yerushalayim's** fortification.

But in times of trouble: This continued construction would be carried out in the face of **trouble** and opposition. **Ezra's** **trouble** in building spiritually are seen in **Ezra 9 and 10**, and **Nehemiah's** problems in constructing physically are presented in **Nehemiah 4:1-23, 6:1-14, 9:36-37**. **Nehemiah** also experienced **trouble** in building spiritually in **Nehemiah 13**.¹⁸⁶

After the 62 sevens, the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come, will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood. War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed (Dani'el 9:26).

After the 62 sevens: The second unit of **62 sevens** was a total of 434 years and started after **Jerusalem** was restored and lasted until the First Coming of **Jesus Christ**. **The Anointed One** was not **cut off** in the **70th seven**; **He** was **cut off** after the **7** and **62 sevens** had run their course. This means that there will be a period of time between the **69th** and **70th** seven.¹⁸⁷ Then **Dani'el** was told what *three events* would take place in that interval.

1. The Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing: Jesus would be killed. The expression **will be cut off** is used of executing the death penalty on a criminal. Furthermore, it says **and will have nothing**. This Hebrew phrase means *but not for Himself*. In other words: **For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).**



2. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: The word **people** in the Hebrew text has the definite article. It is *the people*, the specific **people**, who are the subject of the action. In other words, it is not **the ruler who will destroy the city and the sanctuary**, but rather **the people of the ruler**. The point here is that the nationality of **the people and the ruler** are the same. **The ruler who will come**, in this context is the antichrist of whom **Dani'el** has already spoken of in **chapters 7** and **8**. After **Christ** was **cut off** the Romans destroyed **the city and the sanctuary** in AD 70. Since the antichrist must be of the same nationality as **the people who** destroyed **the city and the people**, the Bible teaches that the antichrist will be a Gentile. **The people of the ruler** were not all Romans. Certainly in the years of the Roman Republic and the early years of the Roman Empire, most of the officers and soldiers in the Roman army were Romans, if not Roman citizens. But as the Empire grew in size, the city of Rome and its citizenry could not supply enough men to make up the whole of the Roman

army. Rome would allow citizens of conquered nations to join the Roman army, but simply being in the Roman army did not make one a Roman. Then **Dani'el** states that **the end will come like a flood**. When the figure of **a flood** is used symbolically in the Bible, it always is a symbol of a military invasion. **Jerusalem** was destroyed by a Roman military invasion, first under Vespasian and then under Titus.¹⁸⁸

3. War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed: For the remainder of the gap of time between the **69th seven** and the **70th seven**, the Land will be characterized by **war**. This prophecy has certainly been true throughout the history of the Middle East. As a result of these wars, **desolations** have occurred as **decreed**, or determined, by **YHVH**. The third unit of the **70 sevens** will be the last **seven** year period, the Great Tribulation, or **the end**.

And he will confirm a covenant with many for 1 seven. In the middle of that 1 seven he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wings he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him (Dani'el 9:27).

The **70th seven** is the **seven** years of the Great Tribulation. In **verse 27** these **seven** years are subdivided into two equal halves of three-and-a-half years. They are described differently in the books of **Dani'el** and **Revelation**. Sometimes each half is referred to as **1,260 days (Revelation 12:6)**; sometimes as **42 months (Revelation 11:2)**; and also **a time, times and half a time (Dani'el 7:25)**. Since there will be a period of time between the **69th seven** and the **70th seven**, what will be the sign that will begin the last **seven** year period?

And he: The pronoun **he** goes back to its nearest antecedent, or **the ruler who will come in verse 26. He is the antichrist**, who was identified as the **little horn (Dani'el 7:8, 19-25, 8:23-25)**. Since **Dani'el** has described **the antichrist** twice before and will again (**Dani'el 11:36-45**), it is not surprising that **he** would be brought back into the picture here.¹⁸⁹

Will confirm a covenant with many for 1 seven: This **will** be the sign that the Great Tribulation has begun. **The ruler who will come, or the antichrist, will confirm a covenant with many.** The Hebrew word **confirm** does not mean to renew an existing **covenant**, but to make a new agreement with firm guarantees. It will be a firm commitment. The Hebrew word **many** has a definite article, meaning *the many*. *The specific many, the Jews* who will enter into **a firm covenant** with **the antichrist** that will

begin the last **seven** years of **Dani'el's 70th seven**. They will comprise about **two-thirds** of **the nation of Isra'el** and will die in the worldwide persecution during the Tribulation.¹⁹⁰ As the Bible teaches that the Rapture will happen before the Great Tribulation, it never teaches that the Rapture *starts* it.

In the middle of the seven he will put an end to sacrifice and offering: After the first three-and-a-half years **the antichrist** will break **his covenant** with **Isra'el**. **He** will forcibly put an end to the ongoing sacrificial system in the Tribulation Temple (**Rev 11:1-2**).

And on the wings he will set up an abomination that causes desolation: The phrase **on the wings** is taken from the Hebrew root word *kanap*, which means *to cover over*, and as in **Isaiah 8:8** definitely has the idea of *overspreading* in a destructive sense. Therefore, in the middle of the Great Tribulation, the false prophet will **set up an image of the antichrist (Revelation 13:14b)**. The false prophet will be **given power** by Satan **to give** apparent life **to the image of the antichrist, so that it could speak**, deceiving many. Where **the One True God** dwelt between **the overspreading wings of the** cherubim on the mercy seat, Satan will foolishly try to take **His** place. **The antichrist** will cause **desolation** because for the next **42 months he** will attempt to destroy **the Jews**. **He** will attempt to finish what Hitler could not accomplish: genocide of the nation of **Isra'el**. It will be **his** final solution to the thorn that has always been in the side of the Adversary, **the Jewish people**.

Until the end that is decreed is poured out on him: God has determined that these things will come about long ago (**Isaiah 10:23** and **28:22**). The end of the **70th seven** will not go one single day beyond its predetermined duration (**Mattityahu 24:22**). At **the end** of the Great Tribulation, on the last day of the campaign of Armageddon, **Yeshua Himself** will kill **the antichrist (Habakkuk 3:13b; Second Thessalonians 2:8)**. The judgment that has been **decreed** upon **him** will be **poured out** on that day.

While **Dani'el 9:27** presents the **covenant** that begins the Great Tribulation from **mankind's perspective**, **Isaiah 28:14-22** presents the same **covenant** from **God's perspective**.

Therefore, hear the word of ADONAI, you scoffers who rule this people in Jerusalem (Isaiah 28:14). **Ha'Shem** calls the Jewish leadership **scoffers** and considers them mockers rather than godly leaders. The next verse explains why.

You boast mightily: We have entered into a covenant with death, with the grave we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place (Isaiah

28:15). The leaders of **Isra'el** think that by entering into this agreement with **the antichrist they** will escape the coming **overwhelming scourge**. Whenever used symbolically, the figure of a flood is always a symbol of a military invasion. So **they** think by entering into this **covenant, they** will be free from any further military invasions. But **YHVH** states that it will not be a **covenant** of life, but a **covenant** of **death**. It will not be a **covenant** from heaven, but a **covenant** from Sh'ol. Rather than obtaining security, **they** will only gain insecurity. There is a common misconception that **Isra'el** will accept the antichrist as **Messiah**. The Bible does not teach that. Instead, **Isra'el** will make a **covenant** with **him** and place **their** security in that agreement. But there will be a believing remnant, faithful **Isra'el**, that will refuse to place **their** security anywhere but in **the Lord**.

So this is what Adonai ELOHIM says: I am laying in Zion a tested stone, a costly cornerstone, a firm foundation-stone; the one who trusts will never be dismayed (Isaiah 28:16). This verse assures us that there will be a believing **remnant** of **Jews** who refuse to have anything to do with the **covenant of death**. This **remnant's** security is not in a **covenant**, but its security is in a **costly cornerstone for a sure foundation**. According to **Romans 9:33** and **First Peter 2:6-8**, this **stone** is **Christ**. **Jesus** states that **He** is the **costly cornerstone** that the Church would be built upon (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Ex - On This Rock I Will Build My Church**). And **the gates of sh'ol, the Jewish expression for death, could not overcome it**. Friend, if you put your faith/trust/belief in **Jesus**, you **will never be** disappointed. Then in **Isaiah 28:17-22**, the same **three results** are found as in **Dani'el 9:27**.

The first result will be the breaking of **the covenant** by the antichrist in **Isaiah 28:17-18**, followed by the military invasions they had hoped to escape. **I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line; hail will sweep away your refuge, and water will overflow your hiding place. Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the grave will not stand. When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by, you will be beaten down by it.**

In **the second result**, **sheer terror** will fall upon **the Jewish people (Isaiah 28:19-20)**. **Isaiah 28:15** teaches that **they** entered the **covenant** because of security, but in **Isaiah 28:19**, there will be invasion, and in **Isaiah 28:20**, there will be a lack of preparedness both militarily and spiritually. **As often as it comes it will carry you away; morning after morning, by day and by night, it will sweep through. The understanding of this message will bring sheer terror. The bed is too short to stretch out on, the blanket too narrow to wrap around you.** Instead of security, **they** will have insecurity.

The third result is the wrath of **Ha'Shem** found in **Isaiah 28:21-22**. Of the many names that we have in Scripture for the Great Tribulation, **Isaiah** gives us two of them in **Isaiah 28:21**. They are **ADONAI's strange work**, and **ADONAI's strange act (KJV)**. The reason it is a **strange work** and a **strange act** is seen in **Isaiah 28:22**; it is a **decree** of destruction **against the whole world**. As a result of the making of the **covenant** back in **Isaiah 14-15**, as in **Dani'el 9:27**, an announcement **of destruction** is contained in the sealed **scroll** of **Revelation 6**. Once those seven seals are broken, one by one, the judgment of the earth begins. By the time the Great Tribulation ends, the earth is in total chaos and despair. Therefore, once the **covenant** is signed, the Great Tribulation and the destruction begin.