

It was in the year of 539 that Daniel was given one of the world's most spectacular prophecies concerning the timing of the first Palm Sunday.

Judah by 600 B.C. had become an idolatrous nation; a nation which had been warned time and again to repent and return to Jehovah God. Judah was ripe for God's discipline. Discipline was about to fall upon the apostate southern kingdom.

In 606 Babylon advanced upon Judah with a great and powerful army. Judah was devastated and many hostages were taken captive to Babylon as slaves; among those were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. As a result of Judah's continued rebellion, further defeat and hostage taking occurred in 597. Babylon returned in 586 to further ravage Judah; this soiree resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple.

In 539 Daniel as an old man read from the 25th chapter of Jeremiah where he learned their dispersion would last only 70 years. The old prophet put a pencil to 606 minus 539 arriving at 67; he knew deliverance had to be near; excitedly he began to pray. The prayer can be found in Dan 9:1-19. The prophet only wanted to know, when are we going to be permitted to return to the land? Gabriel was sent to answer his prayer, and much more. Let's review the angel's answer.

Expanded Translation:

Dan 9:24 Daniel I have heard your prayer ...

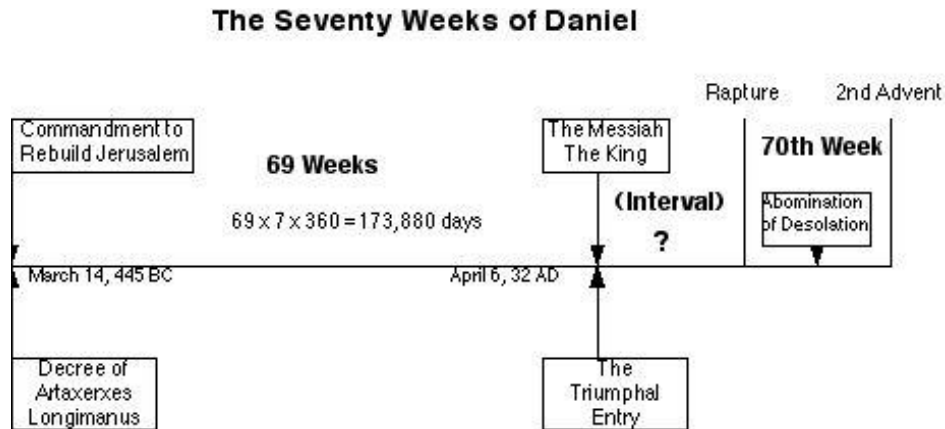
Dan 9:25 I want you to understand, that from the commandment to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, which will occur on the first of Nisan 445. From that day until the Messiah arrives in Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday shall be exactly 483 years. The streets of Jerusalem and its inner and outer walls shall be restored, even in dangerous times. Nehemiah and his people will work on the city walls with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other.

Dan 9:26 After the 483 years the Messiah will be crucified, but not on behalf of Himself but rather as a substitute for the sins of the world.

These Scriptures represent a remarkable prophecy for both Israel and the Church. They tell us Christ will enter the city 483 years from the 1st of Nissan in the 20th year of Artaxerxes. His edict will authorize the rebuilding of the entire city. No other time in history was Israel given such promulgation. The edict was unique.

Jesus would enter Jerusalem and offer His Kingdom to Israel 483 years after the command to rebuild the city--thus becoming the first Palm Sunday which we celebrate today. Christians call it Palm Sunday because Palms were spread to welcome the Messiah.

Chuck Missler in his book *Cosmic Codes* has developed an interesting chart entitled The Seventy Weeks of Daniel. He, like many others sees a relationship of the 69 weeks of Daniel's chapter nine to the missing seven years still owing the Jew; 490 minus 483 = 7 years.



To further understand the meaning of Dan 9:24-27, I want to quote from Volume IV of Lewis Sperry Chafer's *Systematic Theology*.

"Again the interpretation is angelic and therefore not subject to question. From a reading of Jeremiah written at the time of the captivity -- Daniel learned that Jehovah would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem (Dan. 9:2 cf. Jer. 25:11-12)-- the desolation then in effect because of the captivity which seventy years were about accomplished, he turned to specific prayer ... While he was thus in prayer, the angel Gabriel appeared with information which constitutes the vision of the ninth chapter ... The words are, like all plain prediction, to be taken in their natural meaning, just as Daniel himself accepted Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years as seventy actual years. The translation of the Hebrew term ... weeks is misleading. In this instance, history provides the interpretation, and, as will be seen, these are years rather than weeks. Seventy years of captivity had been predicted and accomplished for the captors ... the angel asserts that, beginning with this release, a new prophetic period begins which is 70 sevens of years, or 490 in all. In this time all prophecy concerning Israel is to be fulfilled, even to the finishing of Israel's transgression ... and the anointing of the most Holy. This prediction reads:

"Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy 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 prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy" (Dan 9:24) ... the period of 490 years ... It is divided into three subdivisions, namely, (1) from the edict ... to the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem, which is said to be 7 seven's, or 49 years; (2) a period of 62 weeks, or 434 years, which is marked with respect to its end by the "cutting off" of Messiah, or the crucifixion of Christ; and (3) a period of one week, or 7 years, which must follow the crucifixion.

“In that eventful seven years all that remains to be fulfilled of the 490 years both as concerns the end of Gentile times and the bringing in of Israel's blessings must be fulfilled--Israel's transgression will then be finished, an end of sin secured, reconciliation by the death of Christ will have been brought in, all vision and prediction will be sealed by fulfillment, and the Holiest anointed.

“The last period of seven years is properly termed *Daniel's seventieth week*, and is yet unfulfilled. In recognizing the point in time when this seven year period--so momentous in itself --will become history, it is necessary to observe again the unrelated character of the Church age, which, as an intercalation is thrust between the death of Christ and the departure of the Church from the earth. The time feature ... is stated in Daniel 9:25-26, "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: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

“And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." The period of 490 years is distinctive in the divine measurements ... the 490 years that were to follow the captivity are of a different character. In this time, Jerusalem was to be rebuilt; the Messiah cut off in sacrifice; the city and sanctuary were to be destroyed, as they were in A.D. 70; and the prince's people ... should do this work of destruction--the Romans. The prince himself does not appear until after the experience defined as ‘The end thereof shall be with an overflow, and unto the end, war--desolations determined,’ ... which evidently refers to the present age and may be considered the nearest any prophet of old ever came to anticipation of this age ...”