

Daniel's 70 Weeks Part 1

Daniel 9:24-27

Introduction

In answer to Daniel's prayer for the restoration of the people and the temple he is given a prophecy of seventy weeks. This prophecy is encyclopaedic of meaning and its full effect is lost on most readers in that there is a reflection with jubilee periods. It also represents the period between the first and second coming of Mashiach and supports a new, not renewed, covenant. In essence the prophecy was given to assure Daniel that his prayer would be answered at once, commencing with the return of the exiles from Babylon. The prophecy went on to disclose the prospects that lay in store for the temple which, after being restored, would again become a den of abomination, evoking YHWH to once again pour out His full vengeance. But it's not all doom and gloom, the prophecy secures a blessing for those who were to become the elect of the true Israel. Before the termination of the 'Mosaic order' Mashiach would institute the new covenant order, in which the old system would find consummation. But before the restored temple is levelled the foundations of the 'new' everlasting temple of the Spirit would be laid. We will see that this new, anti-typical restoration of YHWH's temple would be achieved in what is portrayed as ten jubilee periods.

The prophecy can be understood in two separate periods; one of 69 weeks and a final 70th week. In verse 24 Daniel splits the initial 69 weeks into 7 and 62 weeks and I believe there is a reason for this as explained below.

Daniel's 69 'Weeks'

Seventy weeks (Shâbûa) are decreed for your people and for your set-apart city, to put an end to the transgression, and to seal up sins, and to cover crookedness, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know, then, and understand: from the going forth of the command to restore and build Yerushalayim until Mashiach the Prince, is seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It shall be built again, with streets and a trench, but in times of affliction. And after the sixty-two weeks Mashiach shall be cut off and have naught. And the people of a coming prince shall destroy the city and the set-apart place. And the end of it is with a flood. And wastes are decreed and fighting until the end. And he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week. And in the middle of the week he shall put an end to slaughtering and meal offering. And on the wing of abominations he shall lay waste, even until the complete end and that which is decreed is poured out on the one who lays waste. (Dan.9:24-27).*

* Whilst 'Shâbûa' can correctly be translated week(s) it also has the meaning seven or sevens. Furthermore 'Shâbûa' can apply to days or years and history shows us that for this prophesy years are meant. The crux of Daniel's prophesy reiterates YHWH's sevenfold program for the salvation of humanity: a seventh day Shabbat, a Shemitah of seven years, a Jubilee of seven times seven years and seven thousand years for the age of man. This being the case, 'Shâbûa' should have been translated seven or sevens. This concept is accepted by everyone yet 'weeks' remains present in all translations. This anomaly has created confusion concerning the truth of Daniel's seventieth 'week' which is examined below.

We are told that the Mashiach would come after 69 weeks (7+62 weeks) from the decree to rebuild Yerushalayim. The return of the exiles to Judah, and the rebuilding of Yerushalayim was accomplished in three main stages.

- The first and main party returns with Zerubbabel in 538 BC. They rebuild the temple
- A second party returns with Ezra about 80 years later in 457 BC. They make spiritual and religious restoration and reform.
- A third wave returns with Nehemiah in 445 BC. They rebuild the city walls and gates but not many houses.

Part 2 of this study substantiates 457 BC recorded in Ezra 7:8, to be the correct starting point for the prophecy given to Daniel. Ezra 7:7-13 states that the decree was given in the seventh year of the king and we know that Artaxerxes I reigned from 465–424 BC, thus making the year of the decree 458/457 BC, (verse 9 tells us that it was the Jewish new year, thus the Jewish year spans across a normal year). Hopefully there is no need to waste

time on the Scriptural philosophy for a day equalling a year (Ezek.4:6), this being the case, sixty nine weeks equals 483 days equals 483 years. 483 Years from 457 BC bring us to 27AD (there is no year zero).

Mashiach was anointed with His immersion (Acts 10:38). We now have to prove that 27 AD was the year of Yahusha's immersion and we can start with Luke,

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar...Now when all the people were immersed it came to pass, that Yahusha also being immersed, and praying, the heaven was opened and the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven saying, "You are My Son, the Beloved, in You I am well pleased. (Luke 3:1, 3:21-22)

Here we have the Biblical account of the immersion of Yahusha. He was immersed in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. From historical records we know that Tiberius Caesar ruled from the year AD12,

Tiberius Caesar was granted supreme power from Augustus Caesar in AD.12 (www.roman-britain.org).

Although Tiberius officially became emperor shortly after the death of Augustus in September AD14, the ancient historian, Suetonius recorded the following,

After two years he (Tiberius) returned to the city from Germany and celebrated the triumph (for his military victories in Germany and Pannonia)...Since the consuls caused a law to be passed soon after this that he (Tiberius) should govern the provinces jointly with Augustus....(Augustus 97:21; Tiberius 20-21). (<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/ancient/suet-tiberius-rolfe.asp>)

Furthermore Velleius Paterculus, a soldier who served under Tiberius recorded the following,

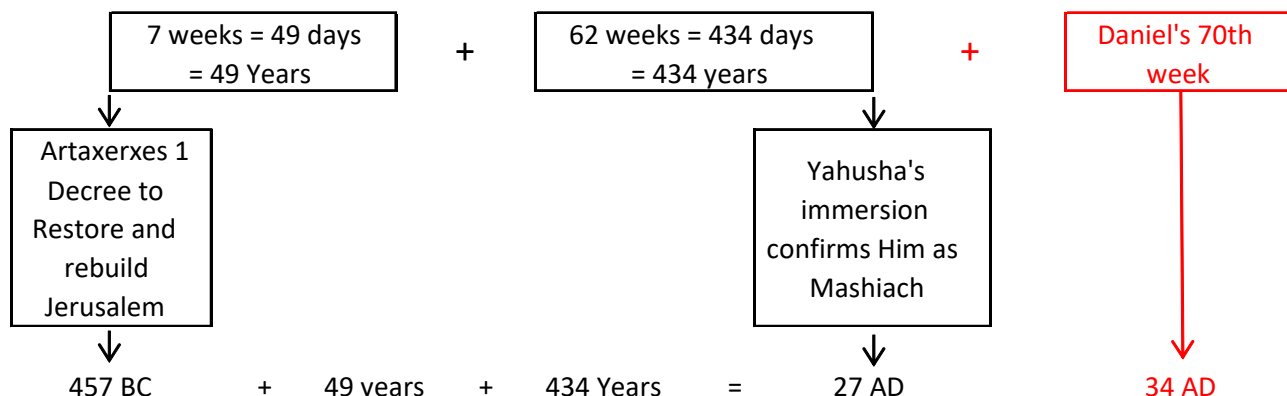
*After he had broken the force of the enemy by his expeditions on sea and land, had completed his difficult task in Gaul, and had settled by restraint rather than by punishment the dissensions that had broken out among the Viennenses, at the request of his father (Augustus) that **he should have in all the provinces and armies a power equal to his (Augustus')own, the senate and Roman people so decreed**. For indeed it was incongruous that the provinces which were being defeated by him should not be under his jurisdiction.*

(http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/VelleiusPaterculus/2D*.html)

According to another record: the Fasti Praenestini inscription states'

On October 23, AD12 'Tiberius rode a chariot in triumph from Illyricum' implying he received co-authority in AD12.

So, Tiberius Caesar was granted the position of co-ruler in 12 AD, before the death of Augustus in AD14 hence, the fifteenth year of his reign would bring us to 27 AD which, according to Luke, was the year of Yahusha's immersion and as shown in the time line below exactly as predicted in Daniel.



But why is the 69 weeks/years expressed in terms of 7 and 62? Seven years of weeks equals 49 years which if we count from 458/7 BC takes us to 409/8 BC and the completion of the rebuilding of Yerushalayim. The rebuilding of the city I believe is to be considered a milestone in the prophecy.

Daniel's 70th 'Week' (His Last 'Seven')

The prophecy continues with verses 26 and 27 and it is these verses that tend to cause confusion. So let us consider verse 26 first,

And after the sixty-two weeks (Shâbûa) (Sevens) Mashiach shall be cut off and have naught. And the people of a coming prince shall destroy the city and the set-apart place. And the end of it is with a flood. And wastes are decreed, and fighting until the end. (Dan.9:26).

Although the verse says 62 sevens we must not forget the earlier 7 sevens thus the total period is 69 sevens. We have just shown that the 62 aka 69 sevens ended with Mashiach's immersion and the commencement of His ministry. The verse does not tell us how long after the sixty nine weeks before Mashiach is cut off but we know He was executed 3½ years after commencing His ministry. The people of a coming prince who is to destroy (lay waste) to the city is a reference to the Roman army who destroyed Yerushalayim in 70 AD. 'Prince' in this verse is, I believe, a euphemism for leader and is referring to the Roman general Titus who later succeeded his father Vespasian as emperor. The term flood is a euphemism for warfare and conquest (refer Isa.8:7-8, Dan.11:10, 40, Nah.1:8), so we could rephrase verse 26 to read,

Three and a half years after the sixty-nine weeks Mashiach shall be killed. And the army of Rome +++shall make war on the people and lay waste to the city and the temple. (70 AD).

Now let us now consider verse 27 which, for analysis I have divided into parts A and B as follows,

27A And he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week (Shâbûa).^{} And in the middle of the week (Shâbûa) he shall put an end to slaughtering and meal offering. 27B And on the wing of abominations he shall lay waste, even until the complete end and that which is decreed is poured out on the one who lays waste.*

Although the seventieth week would terminate Daniel's prophecy at AD 34 there is no definitive event that highlights this year and whilst some affix the stoning of the apostle Stephen to this date, I am currently unaware of any solid evidence substantiating this as fact. What is more, in my opinion Stephen's death is immaterial to this prophesy. Even the year AD 34 is irrelevant because the prophesy ends with Mashiach's death 3½ years earlier. So let us analyse 27A,

1. *And he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week*
2. *And in the middle of the week he shall put an end to slaughtering and meal offering.*

1. And he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week

Note Daniel says confirm a covenant, not make a covenant and Matt. 26:28 should be read taking cognisance of Daniel's comment. See later.

To add to the confusion many consider this statement to be an end time reference concerning the false prophet and place this last seven at the end of this age. It is alleged that the false prophet will make a covenant of some sort for one week a.k.a. seven years with someone and after three and a half years will renege on the agreement. But this is all supposition and, in my opinion, incorrect. Why would the false prophet be interested in making a covenant for seven years? How does this period fit into the eschatological picture given in the Scriptures – it doesn't. We must remember seven is YHWH's number, not HaSatan's number and as mentioned above, Daniel's prophecy acknowledges YHWH's sevenfold plan. What is more, Daniel's prophesy is wholly about Mashiach and the 70th seven flows immediately after the 69th seven, hence it is Mashiach who is the person confirming a new covenant referred to by the prophet. But can we prove this? Yes, we can. The question to be answered is, why would Daniel speak in terms of a final period of seven years when Mashiach was crucified halfway through this period thereby ending the prophecy. The prophecy ended 3½ years prematurely. Can we connect Daniel's final seven to Mashiach's last years? Again, the answer lies with YHWH's sevenfold plan.

Let us remind ourselves of YHWH's sevens: YHWH's Shabbats;

1. Weekly and annual Sabbaths, (Lev.23:1-44)
2. There is a Sabbath year for the Land at the end of every Shemitah, that is, a repetitive seven-year cycle (Lev.25:1-7)
3. Then there is a Yovel/Jubilee, that is, a repetitive forty nine year cycle of release* (Lev.25:8-13).

*A Jubilee comprises seven Shemitahs of seven years equaling forty-nine years. The Jubilee year is superimposed over the forty-ninth year of the outgoing Jubilee and the first year of the following Jubilee (illustrated below). Whilst it is termed a fiftieth year and must be considered a separate, individual year it is not consecutive. The Jubilee year spans from The Day of Atonement to Day of Atonement (Lev.25:9).

A Jubilee starts and finishes with a seven-year Shemitah period. This said, let us now consider Mashiach's opening sermon in the synagogue at the start of His ministry as recorded in Luke,

*And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And having unrolled the scroll, He found the place where it was written: **"The Spirit of YHWH is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring the Good News to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to send away crushed ones with a release, to proclaim the acceptable year of YHWH. (Luke.4:17-19).***

Mashiach is quoting from Isa. 61:1-3, (highlighted), and scholars agree that the comment '**to proclaim the acceptable year of YHWH**' is a reference to the year of Jubilee. Then in verse 21 of Luke, Mashiach tells the synagogue audience that the words from Isaiah were filled that very day, confirming He commenced His ministry on a Jubilee year, that is at the start of a new Shemitah: year one of seven years. Daniel's terminology now becomes clearer. Daniel was measuring Mashiach's ministerial days in terms of the Shemitah. It would be the final Shemitah for Mashiach of which He would enjoy only 3½ years. Further confusion is from the construction of the verse. "He will make a covenant with many for one seven". But the confusion dissolves with the following statement, "In the middle of the seven He will put an end to slaughtering and meal offerings". Mashiach achieved this via His sacrificial death halfway through the seven-year period. Thus, the covenant itself was not for a period of seven years but would be enacted during the final Shemitah (seven) of Mashiach's life. Daniel's prophesy of a covenant was fulfilled by Mashiach when He ate the Pesach (Passover) with His disciples,

For this is My blood, of the new (Kainos) covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matt.26:28).

There is some contention whether the Greek (*Kainos*) should be translated new or renewed but *Kainos* correlates with the Hebrew *Gabar* in verse 27 of Daniel and according to Brown Driver Briggs whilst *Gabar* can mean confirm it also has the meaning: to be strong, mighty, to show oneself mighty. What Daniel is therefore saying, is that Mashiach will be mighty to this covenant. In other words Mashiach Himself will be the very essence, the very core, the very soul, of this covenant. This is what Mashiach is confirming in Matthew, by the spilling of His blood He singularly represents this covenant, without His blood there is no covenant. Because this was not the case with any previous covenant it has to be a new covenant. This reasoning is supported by the apostle,

Brothers, as a man I say it: a covenant, even though it is mans, yet if it is confirmed, no one sets it aside, or adds to it. (Gal.3:15).

*The old covenant was ended when it was broken via the golden calf incident at Sinai.

According to the apostle an existing covenant cannot be altered or changed in any way, therefore, Mashiach could not add His blood to an earlier covenant, thus He had to be referring to a new covenant. What is more the apostle refers to this covenant as a better covenant (Heb.8:6). Does this reasoning violate Deuteronomy 4:2 where YHWH commands nothing to be added or subtracted from His Torah? No, it doesn't because Mashiach is not changing any of YHWH's laws He is only changing the mechanics of implementation and fulfilling that which was prophesied to Jeremiah,

Behold, the days are coming says YHWH, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Mitsrayim; My covenant that they

broke, although I was an husband unto them, says YHWH. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, says YHWH, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be my people. (Jer.31:31-33).

When we become immersed in Mashiach we become a new man, a new person, (not a renewed man) with YHWH's Torah on our hearts. What is more the passage in Jeremiah confirms that new covenants are possible and provided they do not change (add to or subtract from) the Torah they do not transgress Torah. We must remember the Torah decrees there be a covenant between YHWH and Israel. Although the subject matter of this covenant is the same as the earlier covenant, i.e. the Torah, this new covenant is given spiritually and written on hearts, its implementation is the difference, stone tablets have no part in this new covenant hence Jer.3:16 saying there is no longer a need for the Ark of the Covenant, YHWH continues,

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know YHWH: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says YHWH: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jer.31:34).

We know Daniel is referring to the same covenant as Jeremiah because he (Daniel) says so,

Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and for your set-apart city, to put an end to the transgression, and to seal up sins, and to cover crookedness, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint the Most Holy.

Elohim tells Jeremiah under this new covenant sins will not be remembered, this correlates with Daniel's prophesy for sins to be sealed up. This understanding is reinforced in Rev.10:4 where it is explained that to seal up is the opposite of record. Hence, Jeremiah, Daniel and Mashiach must all be referring to the same covenant since no earlier covenant was capable of erasing sin. Erosion of sin, as the apostle tells us, required a higher sacrifice (Heb.10:4), again this requires a new covenant. It is a new covenant of grace through faith and belief in Mashiach's vicarious sacrifice.

Mashiach Never Made a New Covenant

There is a misconception that Mashiach introduced a new covenant when, eating the Pesach with His disciples, and said,

For this is My blood, that of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matt.26:28)

However, a close examination of His comment shows the subject is His blood not the covenant. Note Mashiach says, "This is My blood, that of **the** new covenant," and not **a** new covenant. In other words, He is referring to a new covenant mentioned earlier, that is, the new covenant YHWH promises in Jeremiah. The author of Hebrews confirms there is only the one new covenant,

And the Set-apart Spirit also witnesses to us, for after having said before, "This is the covenant that I shall make with them after those days, says YHWH, giving My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I shall write them, and, "Their sins and their lawlessness I shall remember no more." Now where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer a slaughter offering for sin.(Heb.10:15-18).

Here the writer is repeating the passage in Jeremiah word for word. Hebrews chapter 10 is about Mashiach and when we read this passage in context it can be construed to be adding Mashiach (specifically His blood) to the covenant mentioned in Jeremiah. As with the first covenant this new covenant will be a 'blood cut' covenant but with Mashiach's blood not the blood of an animal. Thus as prophesied in Dan.9:27 Mashiach is confirming the new covenant.

So, coming back to Daniel, the prophet is not saying Mashiach will create a covenant for one week but in the seventieth week (Mashiach's Shemitah) He will confirm a new covenant. Which is what He did in Matt.26:28 with the addition of His blood He sealed/confirmed the new covenant. We have the benefit of seeing the fulfilment of this prophecy.

2. And in the middle of the week (Shemitah) he shall put an end to the slaughtering and meal offering

It is because of this statement that many detach the last seven years of this prophesy and catapult it into the end times, believing this to be a reference to the false prophet. But as we said earlier this whole prophesy is concerning Mashiach and the new covenant. We know He died three and a half years into His ministry which correlates exactly with Daniel's statement and by His death Mashiach brought an end to sin offerings and sacrifices,

*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained **eternal redemption** for us. (Heb.9:12).*

*But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of Elohim. From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by a single offering he has perfected **for all time** those who are being sanctified. (Heb.10:12-14).*

*Now where there is forgiveness of these sins, **(eternal redemption)** there is no longer any offering for sin. (Heb.10:18).*

Paul's 'eternal redemption' is the same as Daniel's 'everlasting righteousness' of verse 24,

Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and for your set-apart city, to put an end to the transgression, and to seal up sins, and to cover crookedness, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint the Most Holy.

Not only did Mashiach, by His sacrifice, end the sacrificial system of slaughtering and meal offerings, He brought an end to the temple system and its rituals. The new covenant is the Torah on our hearts and we are a spiritual temple (1 Cor.6:19) under a Malkizedek (not Aharonic) priesthood. This is the change that the apostle was referring to when he spoke of a change in the law,

For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. (Heb.7:12).

It is not a change in the spirit of the law but in the mode of administration of the law as confirmed by the apostle when he says our prayers are our sacrifice (Heb.13:15) thus the principle of sacrifice remains as commanded but the style is changed.

We now come to the second part of the verse 27B.

And on the wing of abominations he shall lay waste, even until the complete end and that which is decreed is poured out on the one who lays waste

The seventieth week has to be considered in terms of pre Mashiach's death and post Mashiach's death. In other words we have two equal periods each of three and a half weeks/years and this sentence refers to the period after Mashiach's death. This sentence takes us to the time of Mashiach's return and His dealing with the false prophet (the second beast of Revelation 13). If we insert a couple of highlights the verse becomes a little clearer,

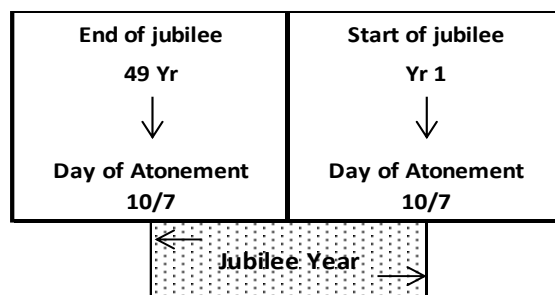
*And on the wing of abominations **(an unrighteous world)** He **(Mashiach)** shall lay waste **(bring to an end)**, even until the complete end and that which is decreed is poured out on the one who lays waste **(the binding of the false prophet).***

In fact, this sentence tells us that the latter three and a half weeks actually spans the whole period between Mashiach's first and second coming, which is clarified in the following section.

The Seventy Sevens and Jubilee Periods

Some point to a connection between Daniel's seventy weeks of sevens and YHWH's jubilee years and there may be some credence to this which does reflect on my interpretation that verse 27B (above) spans the period between Mashiach's first and second coming. But before we discuss Daniel's prophetic timeline in relation to the jubilee timeline, we should establish how the jubilee year actually fits into a timeline. Since as early as 200BC there has been contention whether a jubilee spans 49 or 50 years. I believe the jubilee year does not run as a

separate consecutive year to the 49th year, if this was the case, the jubilee cycles would be a deviation from YHWH's inherent cycle of sevens – seven days, seven years, seven sevens of years and seventy years. What is more the evidence supporting a 49 not a 50 year cycle can be seen in: the book of Jubilees, Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy and the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls. My personal understanding of Lev.25:8-10 is that the jubilee year is to span from Day of Atonement to Day of Atonement. Thus, what we have is,



Thus, I believe the jubilee year interlocks the end of one jubilee period with the start of a new jubilee period by overlapping the 49th year and 1st year of adjoining jubilee periods. Hence, the jubilee year is superimposed on two adjacent years. According to Geza Vermes ¹ the Qumran community also applied this understanding, when commenting on scroll 4Q319 he states six consecutive jubilees gave 294 years i.e. 6 x 49. Furthermore, scroll 4Q13 aligns with Daniel's prophesy but talks in terms of Malkizedek completing atonement in the tenth jubilee thereby correlating with Daniel's 490 years. But we need not go outside of Scripture for verification of the above picture, 2 Chronicles discussing the Babylonian exile says,

In order to fill the word of YHWH by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Shabbatot. As long as she lay waste she kept Shabbat, until seventy years were completed. (2Chr.36:21).

The exile corresponded to seventy Shabbatot the land never received, in other words 490 years had passed without the people observing the seventh year Shabbat rest for the land. The above infers an unbroken time line of sevens, the same as Daniel's prophecy. It is also interesting that the reason for the Babylonian exile and the exile itself both represented the same period as in Daniel's prophecy.

Returning to Daniel, it was explained above how the latter half of the seventieth week spans the period between the first and second coming of Mashiach. Looking again at our interpretation of 27B,

And on the wing of abominations (an unrighteous world) He (Mashiach) shall lay waste (bring to an end), even until the complete end and that which is decreed is poured out on the one who lays waste (the binding of the false prophet).

As said this verse takes us all the way to the return of Mashiach and the climatic end of this age. Now we can also consider Daniel's seventy weeks of years in terms of ten Jubilee eras i.e. 70 x 7 = 10 x 49. So we may have another level to Daniel's prophecy, predicting the end of this age will be within a tenth jubilee. Interestingly the apocalyptic pattern of ten is also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, where scroll 11Q13 (the Malkizedek scroll) identifies a tenth jubilee as the last jubilee and similarly in the 'The Apocalypse of Weeks' found in the book of Enoch where the tenth 'week' is the last week of this age.

The jubilee connection may raise addition questions but in terms of this article it supports the assertion that the latter part of Dan.9:27 refers to Mashiach's return. To put it another way, the latter half of the seventieth week represents the Messianic age inaugurated by Mashiach. What is more, the point of transition between the two halves of the seventieth week is Mashiach's death, resurrection and ascension. Thus, the latter three and a half years represents the whole of the messianic age, the age of the new covenant people and the disengagement from the old covenant and its ritual system. In other words, 27B will herald in the millennial age.

¹ The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English

Conclusion

In view of what we have said I believe a clearer presentation for Daniel 9:24-27 would be the following,

Seventy sevens are decreed for your people Israel and for your holy city Yerushalayim, to put an end to the transgression, and to seal up sins, and to cover crookedness, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophet, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know, then, and understand: from the going forth of the command to restore and build Yerushalayim until Mashiach the Prince, is seven sevens and sixty-two sevens, that is, sixty nine sevens. It shall be built again, with streets and a trench, but in times of affliction.

*And in the seventieth seven halfway through this seven, Mashiach shall be sacrificed and through His blood He will enact a new covenant for all, bringing an end to sin sacrifices and meal offerings. After which the army of Rome shall war against Yerushalayim and lay waste to the city and the set-apart place. **And at the end of this age** Mashiach shall destroy all abomination together with the beast and the false prophet, as is decreed.*

The 'end of this age' I believe to be a reference to Mashiach's return.

Clifford Fearnley 2020 (Revised 2023)