

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.*

(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

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Daniel's 70 Weeks

(24) "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. (25) "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. (26) "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. (27) "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." (Daniel 9:24-27 NASB)

Early on in my walk with the Lord, I was taught from an end-time dispensational view that said seven years (or; one week) of Daniel's vision have yet to be fulfilled, meaning that when Jesus was crucified, the vision was suspended at 69 weeks or 483 years. According to this eschatology, the remaining seven years will play out as an end-time tribulation and great tribulation thought to be portrayed in the book of Revelation. A variation of this is that the suspension occurred in the middle of the last week (70th week), signifying a great tribulation of three and a half years. All of this is generally well understood among many evangelicals, especially those holding to a pre-tribulation rapture. It really doesn't matter which view is held, for the result is pretty much the same. It is not my intent to focus on this, so we will leave it. The point is that I once accepted this as truth but no longer do.

The more plausible explanation of Daniel's 70-week vision, and the one I hold to, is it was fulfilled with the crucifixion of Jesus in 33 AD, meaning it is over, so there is no need to be looking for its fulfillment.

Someone once wrote that history is fulfilled prophecy; therefore, prophecies should be understood in light of their actual historical fulfillment. This is important in understanding Daniel's vision; however, it is not the purpose of this issue to delve into all the history or to provide a lot of explanation. The purpose is to make the point and highlight the fact that Daniel's vision has been fulfilled, which is good news for all.

Daniel's vision is a prophetic timeline of weeks that signify 7-year rest cycles, meaning each week signifies 7 years. Seven weeks signify 49 years, sixty-two weeks signify 434 years, and one week signifies 7 years, for a total of 490 years from the time the decree went forth. In answering Peter's question about forgiveness, Jesus directed him to Daniel's 490 years (70 x 7): "**I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven**" (Matthew 18:22). In that day, the good news was that Messiah had finally arrived, and the 70 weeks ended with forgiveness for all. This is based on the command to rebuild Jerusalem that went forth in 458 BC with a decree from Artaxerxes I that ended 490 years later in 33 AD on the cross of Calvary. This is how the dates and weeks line up:

Seven Weeks	458 BC – 409 BC	49 years
Sixty-Two Weeks	409 BC – 26 AD	434 years
One Week	26 AD – 33 AD	7 years

The keys to understanding the timing of Daniel's vision are found in two lines. The **first one** is: **After the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing** (vs. 26). Most end-time eschatology assumes that this means the Messiah was cut off precisely at the 62-week mark, leaving one week or the 70th week unfulfilled. But this is not what it states; it simply states that sometime after the 62 weeks, He would be cut off. This occurred in 33 AD, precisely 490 years after Artaxerxes' decree, when Jesus' crucifixion brought an end to the sacrificial system of Judaism, even though the Jews continued sacrificing animals until 70 AD when the temple and Jerusalem were completely destroyed at the hand of God's Roman army headed by Titus (Matthew 22:7). The entire system based on animal sacrifices was made obsolete. **He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear** (Hebrews 8:13). From God's perspective, any sacrifice made after Jesus' ultimate and final sacrifice holds no sway with Him regarding sin, for the Lamb of God has been slain for the sin of the world. The **second one** is: **And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering** (vs. 27). Many see the one putting a stop to sacrifice as an end-time antichrist that will appear in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. They also see this triggering the great tribulation of three and a half years. What they fail to see is that Messiah is the one that stops the sacrifice, not by His death on a cross but through His baptism. The sacrifice and grain offering would cease in the midst of the one week, the final or 70th week, meaning it would occur sometime during the last week or from 26-33 AD.

Now, to understand the midst of the week, we need to make a distinction between Jesus' legal death and His actual death. His legal death occurred when He was baptized by John, which signified His death. The middle of this week corresponds to the fall of 29 AD when Jesus presented Himself to John the Baptist for baptism on the **Day of Atonement**. Paul makes the point for us that baptism signifies death.

(2) ... How shall we who died to sin still live in it? (3) Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? (4) Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (5) For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.... (Romans 6:2-5 NASB)

We are baptized into Christ's death; as such, we are to die with Him daily, meaning we die to our old self-life. Consequently, we identify with His death in baptism. When He comes the second time, we who have died with Him will be raised up in resurrection and/or transfigured to live with Him.

Jesus' baptism was a type of death. As far as God was concerned, this ended the sacrifice and grain offering or the sacrificial system, even though it continued on for about 40 years. It was made obsolete on the Day of Atonement, but the final nail in its coffin, so to speak, came when it pleased God to crush His Son as He was literally nailed on a cross. Consequently, Jesus did away with the sacrifices and established **a new covenant with the many**. It mattered not that sacrifices continued from Jesus' baptism in 29 AD until, probably, sometime prior to 70 AD.

So, we could say that Messiah was actually cut off in two stages – the first was in 29 AD on the Day of Atonement (in the middle of the one week, 26-33 AD) with Jesus' baptism, which started His ministry, and the second was in 33 AD on Passover (at the end of the one week, 26-33 AD) with Jesus' crucifixion, which ended His earthly ministry but set the world free. Hallelujah!

Don't expect some future antichrist to stop the sacrifices in some rebuilt temple as so many Christian Zionists believe. Why would God want the so-called Jews (who are liars [Revelation 2:9; 3:9]) to reinstitute animal sacrifices at the end of our present age and into the next age? This is trampling underfoot the blood of Jesus and making void His sacrifice. **It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God** (Hebrews 10:29-31). Jesus was crucified to bring to a full end Daniel's 70-weeks or 490-year period. It is finished, so let us not go looking for a fulfillment of this vision in our day, and let us rejoice that God is not going to resurrect a dead religion in this age or in any future age. The purpose of the 70 weeks was and is to set us all free from sin and death by the one perfect sacrifice and death that led to the resurrection of the Son of God, so that all mankind can and will follow, each in their own order or rank. **If the Son makes you free, you will be FREE INDEED!** (John 8:36) Praise God!