

## **The Biblical Timeline**

### **Understanding The Timing of the 70 Weeks**

Daniel 9:24-27

#### 1. The Purpose and the Time of the Prophecy (Dan. 9:24)

Daniel had been in captivity in Babylon for most of his life from when he was brought into Captivity in 605 B.C. (Dan. 1:1ff) until he died. Nearly 65 years later he prayed to the Lord in anticipation of the completion of the nation's 70 year captivity (cf. Dan 9:1ff). The Lord responded by giving the prophecy of the 70 sevens (Dan. 9:24-27). The context of the chapter require that we interpret the 70 sevens as seventy groups of seven years each.

#### 2. The Ending of the Countdown (v.24b)

The first difficulty in interpreting this prophecy is determining what is accomplished at its conclusion. Just as the context of the chapter determines the fact that we are dealing with years, the content of the decree indicates that the prophecy is dealing with the nation of Israel. Israel had been consistently faithless to the Lord and will continue to be until the fullness of the gentiles are brought to faith (cf. Rom. 11:25-27). This prophecy does not look for its fulfillment in the first advent of Christ with His death and resurrection, but rather at the finishing of the transgression of Israel and the initiation of the millennial kingdom.

#### 3. The Countdown Through the 69th Week (v.25)

The second difficulty in interpreting this prophecy is determining when the beginning of the weeks begins. There are several options put forth:

- A. Ezra 1:1-4 (539 BC)
- B. Ezra 7:11ff (457 BC)
- C. Neh. 2:1-8 (444 BC)

#### 4. After the 69th Week (v.26)

It is important to note that Messiah the prince is cut off "after" the 69th week, but not necessarily during the 70th week. Some may argue that the insertion of a delay between the 69th and 70th week is forced on the text because of a prior theological conclusion about the millennium. However, the language of the prophecy as well as the fact that prophecies often have a temporal split in their fulfillment answers this objection (cf. Isa. 61:1-2; Zech 9:9-10).

#### 5. The 70th Week (v.27)

The 70th week is yet to come, and we await it with anticipation and confidence that the Lord will bring it to pass as He has faithfully done with the first 69 weeks.