

## 70 Years and Counting...

*Jer 29:10 For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.*

*11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

*12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.*

*13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*

*14 I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity;*

This past year at Cornerstone we have spent a considerable amount of time studying that which is to unfold after the church has been caught up to the JSOC and the Bride has been revealed. God will resume His dealings with Israel as the seven seals on the seven-sealed scroll that reveal what is necessary for the redemption of the inheritance are opened.

We have visited Daniel 9:24-27 on numerous occasions as an integral part of our study of the Tribulation, the Time of Jacob's Trouble. We have seen how the future world-wide kingdom of Anti-Christ will play out within that final 'week', the final 7 years of Daniel's 70 'weeks' prophecy. A prophecy that was given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel for Daniel's people Israel whilst Israel was still in captivity.

*Da 9:24 "**Seventy weeks** are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.*

*25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be **seven weeks** and **sixty-two weeks**; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.*

*26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

*27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for **one week**; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."*

Invariably our focus has been on those final 7 years, the final 'week' of that prophecy with little time spent on reflecting on the first 7 'weeks', the 49 years that begin the prophecy, or on the following 62 'weeks'. And so reflecting on the fact that God divided the first 69 'weeks' and/or 'sevens', up into 7 and 62 'weeks' set me upon my present path of study. Seven is a number of Divine Completion of that which is in view and therefore seven sevens must have some significance beyond just the marking of time.

Let's begin where Daniel began, which was with the marking of time:

*Da 9:1 ¶ In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans-*

*2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.*

*3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.*

*4 ¶ And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,*

*5 "we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.*

Daniel had set his face towards the Lord God to pray, to fast, and to mourn in sackcloth and ashes, to confess the sins of his people Israel because he had come to realize the 70 years of the desolations of Jerusalem spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet were soon to be accomplished.

### Jeremiah's Prophecy:

*Jer 25:10 'Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp.*

*11 'And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.*

*12 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation.*

*13 'So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations.*

Here we clearly see that Israel, shall serve the king of Babylon 70 years. The Babylonian kingdom would indeed last 70 years before being superseded by the Medo-Persian Empire.

*(Slide #1 - Title followed by Slide #2)*

*(Please bear in mind that historians work on a 365 day calendar and scripture uses a 360 day calendar. Also any parts of years at the beginning or end will count as whole years).*

Daniel had been taken from Jerusalem into captivity in Babylon in 605BC by Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar also laid siege to Jerusalem again in 597BC and again in 586BC taking even more Israelites into captivity. And it is in 586BC that he finally destroyed the temple in Jerusalem and carried away the precious items from the temple to Babylon.

605BC marked the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles, when the Gentile nations and the Babylonian Empire in particular, had the ascendancy and because the Glory of the Lord had already departed from the temple as witnessed by Ezekiel, prior to the final siege, it brought to an end the Theocracy. The Times of the Gentiles is a period of time that is still ongoing today which Christ referred to in:

*Lu 21:24 "And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*

During those 70 years Daniel witnessed several changes in rulership including towards the end the conquering of the Babylonian Empire by the Medes and Persians and interestingly in the very first chapter of the Book of Daniel we have the 70 years revealed to us:

*Da 1:19 Then the king [Nebuchadnezzar] interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king.*

*20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.*

*21 Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.*

*(Slide # 3)*

It started with Nebuchadnezzar in 605BC and ended with the first year of Cyrus - exactly 70 years. For 70 years Daniel is shown to be in a position of prominence and service to the rulers in Babylon as a result of his God given wisdom and understanding. Daniel chapter 10 shows he was still alive during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the reign of Cyrus: *Da 10:1 ¶ In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. The message was true, but the appointed time was long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision.*

Let's now look at the very end of the Book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles that details this same period of time.

*2Ch 36:15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place.*

*16 But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, **till there was no remedy.***

*17 Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, [Nebuchadnezzar] who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand.*

*18 And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all these he took to Babylon.*

*19 Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions.*

*20 And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia,*

21 to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, **to fulfill seventy years.**

22 ¶ Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,

23 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!

The Lord God sent Israel warnings, He had compassion on them but they mocked and despised His words until the wrath of the Lord was such and 'til there was no remedy'! He then used king Nebuchadnezzar to bring about their destruction and the destruction of the city and temple. Jeremiah's prophecy was part of those very warnings they failed to heed:

*Jer 15:1 ¶ Then the LORD said to me, "Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth.*

*2 "And it shall be, if they say to you, 'Where should we go?' then you shall tell them, 'Thus says the LORD: "Such as are for death, to death; And such as are for the sword, to the sword; And such as are for the famine, to the famine; And such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.""*

*3 "And I will appoint over them four forms of destruction," says the LORD: "the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy.*

So Israel was taken into captivity until the time of Cyrus king of Persia. But how does God view Cyrus king of the Persians given that we know the Medo-Persian Empire is a part of that progressive Gentile world-wide empire in Daniel chapter 2; an empire which followed on from the Assyrian/Babylonian Empire and which will ultimately see its fulfillment in the kingdom of Anti-Christ? It says in 2Chron.36: 22 that God 'stirred up the spirit of Cyrus'.

Cyrus:

*Isa 44:28 Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid."*

*Isa 45:1 ¶ "Thus says the LORD to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held-To subdue nations before him And loose the armor of kings, To open before him the double doors, So that the gates will not be shut:*

*2 I will go before you And make the crooked places straight; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze And cut the bars of iron.*

*3 I will give you the treasures of darkness And hidden riches of secret places, That you may know that I, the LORD, Who call you by your name, Am the God of Israel.*

*4 For Jacob My servant's sake, And Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me.*

*5 ¶ I am the LORD, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me. I will gird you, though you have not known Me,*

*6 That they [Israel] may know from the rising of the sun to its setting That there is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other;*

Cyrus is an astonishing character who we see referred to in Isaiah as 'God's shepherd' (44:28) and 'God's anointed' (45:1). God clearly names him though Cyrus 'has not known Him' (45:4, 5). Isaiah also details many things God will do for Cyrus in order that he might prosper as The Gentile World Ruler of his day.

Now here is what is so amazing to me - Isaiah is writing 150 to 200 years before Cyrus begins his reign from Babylon in approximately 538BC. Cyrus at the time of Isaiah writing clearly 'has not known Him' because Cyrus was not even born at this point in time!

Cyrus as a Gentile ruler and worshipper of several pagan gods did not know God until God stirred up his spirit and we see the amazing statement he makes in: 2 Chronicles 36:23 '*All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah*'.

Maybe even more fascinating is the fact that when Isaiah is prophesying about Cyrus and the building of Jerusalem and the laying of the temple foundations, the city and the temple that Solomon built was still standing!

Cyrus will be the instrument of God who would be used to bring God's plans to pass concerning Israel's repentance and return from captivity after 70 years

in direct fulfillment of God's word through Jeremiah the prophet; for the purpose that they might know that *'from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is none besides Him. He is the Lord and there is no other'*!(Is.45:6)

By extension we can also see from Daniel chapter 4 that all earthly rulers in some way or other can be viewed as God's instruments - God's anointed; in the same way that Lucifer is also referred to as "God's anointed' cherub who covers" in Ezekiel 28:14.

*Da 4:17 'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'*

The statement is made 3 times in this chapter that the 'Most High God rules in the kingdom of men and gives it to whomever He chooses'; and the statement is made because Nebuchadnezzar has become puffed up and prideful over what he sees as his own achievements.

*Da 4:30 The king spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"*

*31 While the word was still in the king's mouth, a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you!*

*32 And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."*

*33 That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.*

*34 ¶ And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation.*

*Da 4:37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works are truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.*

In the same way that God brought judgment and a great fall upon Nebuchadnezzar temporarily taking his dominion away from him in order to bring Nebuchadnezzar to his senses and deal with his pride, so God has used and will use the same method to bring Israel to her senses also, that they might know according to *Isaiah 45:6* that *'there is none besides Him, He is the Lord and there is no other'*!

It would appear that the Persian King Cyrus was less arrogant:

*Ezr 1:1 ¶ Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying,*

*2 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah.*

In 2008 John and I were fortunate enough to visit the British Museum in London where they were having a special exhibition on Babylon. They had on loan and on display many fine Babylonian artifacts for example a section of the hugely impressive Ishtar Gate from the original Processional Way in Babylon which was recovered by archeologists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is housed in a Berlin Museum. In just that small section of wall on display (approx. 3' x 7') and from looking at photographs of the completely restored edifice in Berlin it is easy to see why Nebuchadnezzar might be very impressed with his achievements and allow it to go to his head, to the point that God humbled him and brought him literally to his knees.

However one of the other notable artifacts in the British Museum's own collection on display is that which is known as 'The Cyrus Cylinder'. It is a 9" long barrel-shaped clay cylinder with cuneiform writing on it which was discovered buried in the foundations of the city wall, put there after the capture of the city by Cyrus in approx. 538BC. The cylinder tells of Cyrus's conquest of Babylon and of his decree to let captives, previously held by Babylon, return to their lands and restore their temples. This 'return home' decree was one of many issued by Cyrus and although it does not mention specific religious groups such as Judah, it does confirm that this was his policy. In fact today the Cyrus Cylinder is valued around the world as a symbol of tolerance and respect for different peoples and faiths so that a copy of the cylinder is on display in the United Nations in New York.

But back to scripture - after the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy has transpired, in keeping with God's word, the first of what would be 3 known returns to Judah and Jerusalem takes place. This happened around 538 or 537BC according to the historians dating of the event in Ezra 1:1-2. Suffice to say we can **believe, by faith**, that when the first group of captives returns to Jerusalem it was 70 years, because God said it would be 70 years!

The released captives, numbering over 42,000 are led by Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua/Joshua the son of Jehozadak the priest. Zerubbabel is in the lineage of Christ:

*Mt 1:1 ¶ The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: 2 Abraham begot Isaac....*

*11 Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. 12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel....*

*16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.*

Zerubbabel would have been king in Judah **if** there had been a kingdom and so we can see an example of the courtesy that Cyrus bestows upon him by making him governor of Jerusalem.

The Assyrian and Babylonian policy was to take conquered peoples from their homeland and scatter them in other regions of their provenance, as happened with both Israel and then Judah. And people from other provinces were sent to occupy Israel and Judah. The Persian policy was to repatriate captives back to their homelands as happened under Cyrus as well as during the reign of Artaxerxes when Ezra and then Nehemiah return to Jerusalem.

On the return of the captives work begins on the temple with the construction of the altar and the reinstatement of the burnt offerings and as it was the 7<sup>th</sup> month they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles:

*Ezr 3:3 Though fear had come upon them because of the people of those countries, they set the altar on its bases; and they offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both the morning and evening burnt offerings.*

*4 They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings in the number required by ordinance for each day.*

*5 Afterwards they offered the regular burnt offering, and those for New Moons and for all the appointed feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and those of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the LORD.*

*6 From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, although the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid.*

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup> month they began work on the temple proper by laying the foundation:

*Ezr 3:10 When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel.*

*11 And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever toward Israel." Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.*

However work would soon halt due to opposition:

*Ezr 4:1 ¶ Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the LORD God of Israel, 2 they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' houses, and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do; and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here."*

*3 But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers' houses of Israel said to them, "You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God; but we alone will build to the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us."*

*4 Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building,*

*5 and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.*

*6 ¶ In the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.*

*7 In the days of Artaxerxes also...*

*(Slide # 4)*

Discouragement can be a very powerful force as it was initially with the returning captives. It would be easy to think if I stop; lie low for a bit then the enemy will leave me alone or forget about me. I can catch my breath and return to the fray later. Whilst all that might be true, there lies a real danger that we might never return to the work. As soon as we stop gathering ourselves together or studying with like-minded individuals then we have probably been overcome and the enemy has had a victory in our lives. It is not surprising that in the 4<sup>th</sup> part of the progressive warning to be found in chapter 10 of the Book of Hebrews we are told not to neglect the gathering together of ourselves as we see the day approaching (Heb.10:24-25). We need the encouragement that will enable us to continue on.

Fortunately we find in Ezra chapter 5 that after a break of several years the prophets Haggai and Zechariah encourage the Jewish people, and Zerubbabel and Jeshua in particular, to resume work on the temple:

*Ezr 5:1 ¶ Then the prophet Haggai and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them.*

*2 So Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and the prophets of God were with them, helping them.*

*Hag 1:1 ¶ In the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying,*

*2 "Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.'"*

*3 Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying,*

*4 "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this temple to lie in ruins?"*

*5 Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways!*

*6 "You have sown much, and bring in little; You eat, but do not have enough; You drink, but you are not filled with drink; You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm; And he who earns wages, Earns wages to put into a bag with holes."*

*7 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways!*

*8 "Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD.*

*Zec 4:6 So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.*

*7 'Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain! And he shall bring forth the capstone With shouts of "Grace, grace to it!"'"*

*8 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying:*

*9 "The hands of Zerubbabel Have laid the foundation of this temple; His hands shall also finish it. Then you will know That the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.*

*10 For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see The plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the LORD, Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth."*

*(Slide # 5)*

So 16 years after the Jews had returned home, under the encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, work on the temple resumed and shortly after a decree from Darius the king (not to be confused with Darius the Mede) is issued that the temple should be completed with an order to draw funds from the royal treasury as needed, the temple is completed 4 years later in 516BC. This is 22 years after the return of the captives with Zerubbabel and Jeshua/Joshua the high priest. Interestingly it is, according to historians, 70 years after the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586BC that the temple is finally completed.

We know from history that Herod the king will greatly enhance this temple. We know from history and from prophecy that this temple would be destroyed in 70AD by the Romans.

Zechariah tells us that 'Zerubbabel has laid the foundation of the temple and his hands shall also finish it', which he does, but he goes on to say in the very next verse:

*Zec 4:11 ¶ Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees-at the right of the lampstand and at its left?"*

*12 And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?"*

*13 Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord."*

*14 So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."*

As we know from our previous studies here at Cornerstone the 'two anointed ones' referenced are Moses and Elijah, the Two Witnesses of Revelation chapter 11 so which temple is Zechariah referring to in v.9? Clearly we can see here that Zerubbabel is a type of Christ. The construction of the temple, the reinstatement of the temple services and sacrifices along with the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles all foreshadow the future Millennial Temple and the 7<sup>th</sup> day when the One typified by Zerubbabel and Jeshua/Joshua the high priest is King and Priest.

There was a second return from captivity led by Ezra the priest in 457BC. He went to teach the people the Law of God, to restore temple worship and to deal with the people's idolatry.

Then in 445BC Nehemiah, recorded in Nehemiah chapter 2, was given permission to return and to continue the restoration work by rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem.

*Ne 2:3 ... "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?"*

*4 Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven.*

*5 And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it."*

*6 Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), "How long will your journey be? And when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.*

Nehemiah was sent by Artaxerxes in fulfillment of *Da 9:25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.*

*(Slide # 6)*

With Nehemiah's return and the rebuilding of the wall Daniel's 70 'weeks' or 70 'sevens' is finally set in motion. This would be over 90 years after Daniel is given the prophecy. And so begins a new marking of 70's in time. This time it will be 70 x 7 years. It will bring an end to Gentile world power. It will bring an end to Israel's harlotry by using those same Gentile powers under Antichrist to bring Israel to her knees, just like Nebuchadnezzar in chapter 4 of Daniel!

When those 70 lots of 7 years have run their course Israel will have '*considered her ways*' (*Hag.1:5, 7*) and will know that '*from the rising of the sun to its setting, there is none besides Him, He is the Lord and there is no other*' (*Is.45:6*).

Captivity **is the remedy** for Israel's unbelief (2Chron.36:16)

And why do we have 70 years initially but then 70 x 7 years? Obviously Israel began to rebel and walk in unbelief yet again after the first 70 years of captivity had expired and they were back in the land. And although there were a faithful remnant during the subsequent years the nation as a whole were not cured. It will take much more to bring about the nations repentance and healing for all time.

Dispersion and captivity **will be the remedy** along with very much affliction if Israel is to be repentant and God's plans finally brought to conclusion. And that persecution, harsh as it will be, will indeed show the love, the graciousness and the mercy of God towards His people:

*Mt 18:21 ¶ Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"*

*22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*

*23 "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants...*