

The Bible's 70-year Prophecies – Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D.

While studying the Scriptures between the time of Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon (Jer. 25:1, 46:2; Dan. 1:1 – 606 BC) and the 6th year of Darius the Great, King of Persia (Ezra 6:15 – 516 BC), many consult the commentaries. When done, one often engages a confusion regarding the mention of a 70-year prophecy. Statements such as: “whereas Scripture indicates a span of seventy years here yet only fifty may be found” are frequently encountered.

The reason for this is that the author's treat the Word of God as if it's just another book: also, they did not do their homework. They usually conclude there is but one or perhaps two 70-year prophecies given in the above 606-516 time span. However, there are four! Not having discovered this, they blur the information of one with the others. Chaos! Below is a brief of each.

1. **The 70-year Servitude** began with Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim king of Judah (606 BC). Part of the vessels of the Temple were brought to Babylon and placed in the house of the Babylonian king's god. Daniel and his three friends were also carried away and placed in the school of the Chaldean cult for three years (Dan. 1:1-7). The 70 years ended in the first year of Cyrus (Jer. 29:10) when the Persian king allowed Sheshbazzar¹ to *begin* rebuilding the Temple and return all it's vessels (536 BC, 2 Chr. 36:20b-23; Ezra 1:1-11).

2. **The Captivity** began with Jehoiachin (aka Jeconiah & Coniah) and all Jerusalem being carried away to Babylon (597 BC, 2 Ki. 24:10-16) along with Ezekiel (Ezk. 40:1, 33:21-22) and Mordecai (Est. 2:5-6; Ezra 2:2). In the first year of his reign (561 BC, the 37th year of the captivity), Evil-merodach, Nebuchadnezzar's son and successor, liberated Jehoiachin from prison and raised him to a position of honor at the palace (2 Ki. 25:27-30; Jer. 52:31-34). Unlike the other three 70's, its end (*terminus ad quem*) is not stated. As the period began with Jehoiachin and also speaks to his prison release, perhaps the 527 ending marks that of his passing.

3. **The Indignation** of 70 years begins with the Epoch of the Boiling Caldron (Ezk. 24:1-2). It began when, after taking an oath of loyalty in the Name of the Lord, Zedekiah broke the vow and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chr. 36:13). The final siege of Jerusalem began one year to the day from this prophesy and lasted c.18 months (10-10 year 9 of Zedekiah: Jer. 52:4, 39:1; 2 Ki. 25:1). It ended on day 24, month 9 of the 2nd of Darius (12 Dec., 520 BC, Hag. 2:10, 18-19). Its termination is clearly reaffirmed on day 24 of the 11th month (Zech. 1:7, 12-13).

4. **The Desolations** began in 586 BC (*terminus a quo*) with Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem and its walls but so designated *more especially* because of the razing of Solomon's Temple (2 Ki. 25:1-12; 2 Chr. 36:11-21; Jer. 52:12-14). Its time span is given in Jer. 25:8-11 as that of 70 years. In the first year of Darius the Mede (538 BC) Daniel studied these very verses and again states the “desolations” as lasting 70 years and that the emphasis was on the Temple (Dan. 9:1-2, 17-18). It terminated with the completion of the second Temple in the 6th year of Darius the Great (516 BC, aka the first or Hystaspis: Ezra 6:15; Zech. 7:1-5).

Finally, Zech. 7:5 refers to a 70-year span. How can we know to which of the four it pertains? Well, Zech. 7:1 is said to be the 9th month of the fourth year of Darius (518) and the month five in 7:3 demands that it is the following year (517). Thus, the 70 years in 7:5 must be referring to something in 517 BC or beyond. If we now begin at 517 and reflect upon the dates for the four 70-year prophecies we find that 1, 2, and 3 have already been fulfilled. However, only one year forward brings us to 516 BC – the end of the 70-year period during which the Temple was destroyed in 586 – which Scripture designates as “the desolations”. Thus, the 70 years of Zech. 7:5 have to do with the Temple completion in the 6th year of Darius I (516 BC).

¹ Sheshbazzar is Zerubbabel's Chaldean name.

Note: See my [Chronology Chart 5-Kings of the Divided Monarchy BC-975-586](#)