

Don't complicate the seventy weeks!

Know therefore and understand: From the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah, the Prince, are seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks.. - Daniel 9:25

This Lesson Outline was prepared by John M. Wharton

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Sources -

All bible text, unless otherwise indicated, is the Darby Translation. ASV indicates the American Standard Version, with KJV indicating the King James Version. Quotations are often included from various classic christian commentaries such as John Gill's Expositor, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures, and others. Greek and Hebrew word definitions are often included from the Strong's Concordance, unless otherwise indicated. All of these sources, both the bible text's, commentaries, and Strong's definition's are taken from THE WORD from Online Bible 1.00, or The Power Bible also from Online Bible, unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction -

In the process of preparing this study on the prophecy of Daniel 9 I did some searching on the Internet to see what some of the other opinions might be about the chapter and the 'seventy weeks'. A relatively simple search for "the seventy weeks" yielded an incredible number of articles. Some of them, to me, were rather good, not all being elaborate or extensive, but they still had interesting perspectives on the facts of Daniel's vision and what it might mean. And there were others which drew conclusions that I just couldn't agree. Some of these that I disagreed with the conclusions of were very well written with large amounts of research and information, and some of that information was genuinely informative. In doing this search as part of the study preparation, an intention was to see what some of the alternate approaches and conclusions might be to help improve my understanding and the ability to present that understanding.

Those who study Bible prophecy are said to fall into three main camps of interpretation which are the Preterist (seeing much of Bible prophecy as already fulfilled), the Futurist (seeing many of the same prophecies as still to be fulfilled) and the Historicist (who sees much or perhaps most of prophecy as being fulfilled in a progression of events as society is helped or bettered by the influences of the church). These three definitions are broad, surely with subdivisions in each of them, so that it is tempting and unwise and even unfair to over-generalize people and their opinions.

In this Study we will look first at Daniel's seventy weeks in chapter 9 and then move to Nehemiah chapter 2. We will see some differences between the Preterist and Futurist camps as we look closely at the 'seventy weeks', attempting to reason through the possible interpretation by using, I believe, a common sense approach and a few historical dates that seem fairly well attested to. The study will cover the meaning of the weeks in periods of time and a simple method of calculation that bridges the gap from Daniel's prophecy to the time of Christ's entry into Jerusalem and death on the cross and the later destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans. Next we will look to Nehemiah chapter 2 to see the decree of King Artaxerxes to Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple and the probable time of the command which is the starting point for the countdown of the seventy weeks as given to Daniel in his prophecy. Does the date of the decree countdown to a common sense understanding of the seventy weeks stopping at the time of Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem to the praise of the common people? If so we have either an amazing coincidence or a fulfilled prophecy. Let's begin the study.

Part 1 of the Study - Daniel 9:24-27

24 Seventy weeks are apportioned out upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to close the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make expiation for iniquity, and to bring in the righteousness of the ages, and to seal the vision and prophet, and to anoint the holy of holies.

Comments -

It really is saying seventy 'sevens' or seventy 'sevens' as I understand it and a quick check of Strong's basic definition of the word here translated "weeks" will show that this is true. And so we have seventy sevens or seventy times seven which is 490. But the question is 490 of what? Looking at the prophecy it says that these 490 units are set out for Daniel's people (the Jewish people) and to accomplish all of the things mentioned in verse 24. Things like *to close the transgression and to make an end of sins* and also *to bring in the righteousness of the ages* which accomplishments must refer to an ultimate sacrifice for all sin and would to us in the Christian world seem to have in mind more than just the sacrifices of bulls and lambs used in the Old Testament. And it also mentions something else equally incredible which is *to seal the vision and prophet, and to anoint the holy of holies* and the last of these would require the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem which the Babylonians had destroyed some years before early in Daniel's life. And the Jewish people at that time were still held in captivity in the Medo-Persian Empire which replaced the Babylonian Empire before it. Hence the people of Daniel are to be involved in this effort of God to accomplish these matters here outlined in verse 24. Looking simply at the list of items to accomplish it should be clear that it will take some time to do all of that. God could cause it all to happen immediately if He designed to. But He has shown in other prophecies in the Old Testament that He often enters into history causing people to ultimately do the things He wants and then uses the actions of those people to accomplish the things He wants. An example is the very Babylonian Empire just mentioned whose people were idolatrous and violent and yet God used them to conquer His people in Judah as a punishment for their own continued sin and idolatry. He used sinful man to accomplish His desires ultimately. And remember that this prophecy here in Daniel 9:24 requires the rebuilding of the temple which must be on the mount in Jerusalem and no where else on the earth. And priests from the tribe of Levi must maintain it. And the High Priest who only can officiate at many of the ceremonies at the temple must be from the lineage of Aaron, Moses brother as set out in the Law of Moses. This is a tall order and you should be seeing that it will require the freedom of some significant portions of the Jewish people, including some specifically from the needed portions of the tribe of Levi, to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. For this prophecy to be accomplished these things must be done.

Since God has shown us that he has, at least sometimes, a preference to use man to accomplish His will (and perhaps even if man doesn't want to accomplish that particular will) we can reason that it will require some time to set all of this in motion from this point and accomplish it. So could these units be measures of time? Many scholars of more than one understanding on the whole interpretation of this prophecy have still in common concluded that they are units of time and are specifically years. In other words 490 years to accomplish all of these things mentioned. Does that make sense? Well, seconds or minutes don't make any sense in regard to a list of accomplishments like that. And 490 weeks would equal 3430 days or a little over 9 solar years. We know from history that these matters were not all done in 9 years from the beginning of this period which is given in verse 25 as the issuing of a command to go and rebuild the city of Jerusalem itself. And 490 months (using an average of 30 day months) gives 14700 days which is a little over 40 solar years. That could refer possibly I suppose to the approximate time involved in rebuilding the temple and city and starting the sacrifices again. But we know also from verse 25 that the coming of the Messiah is involved in this seventy sevens as well as in verse 26 a second destruction of the temple by yet another great world empire after the Medo-Persian Empire and that did not all happen within 40 some years of the start of this period. We are left then with 490 years from the start.

Many modern popular prophecy writers use a beginning date of March 5, 444 B.C. or thereabouts (more about that in the next verse). Don't worry at this point about where that date came from. Using that date then 444 years to 1 A.D. plus 33 more years to the traditional time of Jesus crucifixion in 33 A.D. gives 477 years minus one year (because there wasn't a year from 1 B.C. to 1 A.D.) giving us 476 years. It isn't 490 years but is roughly within the general time frame we are looking for and so we might wonder if we are on track with our reasoning and that we just need to fine tune our understanding a little. I don't mean that God is playing horse shoes here where close is good enough (as we often say) but rather that I think we have to accept at the start that our understanding and our historical dates can't always be perfect. It's better to use the best dates and figures you have and then look for a pattern and see if it matches up to God's revealed patterns and designs in the prophecies. If it does you might be on track with your research. We do know that the ancients didn't use necessarily our method of time and calendar. So we might wonder if Daniel was thinking in terms of a different calendar. The Hebrews did use a Lunar calendar of essentially 30 days per month. And God spoke to His people in terms of significance to them and perhaps if He entered into their history he may have designed cultures to ultimately see these matters in terms that he has His own reasons for wanting to use (and that is just a little wondering on my part). With these suspicions and ideas in mind let's look ahead to verses 25 and 26.

25 Know therefore and understand: From the going forth of the word to restore and to build

Jerusalem unto Messiah, the Prince, are seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks..

The street and the moat shall be built again, even in troublous times

26 And after the sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with an overflow, and unto the end, war, —the desolations determined.

27 And he shall confirm a covenant with the many *for one week*; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and because of the protection of abominations *there shall be* a desolator, even until that the consumption and what is determined shall be poured out upon the desolate.

Comments -

and because of the protection of abominations there shall be a desolator, even until that the consumption and what is determined shall be poured out upon the desolate – Admittedly that is very difficult to understand. Perhaps the translation from The Emphasized Bible or that from the Revised Standard Version below may be a little easier on the mind. The essence seems to be, as many Futurist's understand it, that the future evil ruler of the end time will enter into a covenant with the people of Israel for the last or seventieth week and in the middle of it he will break the treaty and invade Israel, actually going as far as to enter the temple and desecrate it terribly.

27 And he will confirm a covenant to the many, for one week,—but, in the middle of the week, will cause sacrifice and present to cease, and, in his stead, shall be the horrid abomination that astoundeth, even till, a full end, and that a decreed one, shall be poured out on him that astoundeth. - Rotherham's Emphasized Bible from The Online Bible

27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week; and for half of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator." - Revised Standard Version from The Online Bible

Some of the Preterist camp have interpreted the prince here in verse 27 as Jesus Christ Himself, who they feel confirms a covenant with His people of Israel for the final week of seven years and half way through (at the three and a half year point) removes the need for the the covenant (of the Old Testament Law) by dying on the cross for their forgiveness. I find this interpretation incredible and a forced effort to get a fulfillment of Daniel 9 here that seems contrary to soem of the context of the prophecy. The prince in verse 7 seems to be in the context a continuation of the thought started in verse 26 before about the people of a later empire after the Persian one which will destroy Jerusalem and the Temple a second time. The Romans did this in 70 A.D. And theirs was the fourth of these great Gentile Empires that Daniel saw in chapter's 2 and 7 which did so much harm to the chosen people of Israel. The final prince of verse 27 is implied to come from a continuation of these great and evil Gentile Empires and he as an evil ruler will break a covenant or treaty that he makes with Israel and enter into the Temple and commit an ultimate abomination. And that cannot have happened yet because the Temple hasn't been rebuilt. But that verse 27 then can be seen to indicate that it must yet be built a third time so that this necessarily future evil prince can desocrate it after breaking the treaty with Israel.

Most of the writers I have seen agree that the units meant in the prophecy are years. The sixty two plus the seven would then be 69 sevens or 483 years. Daniel was told that the beginning of this period would be the issuing of a word to go and rebuild Jerusalem. Many scholrs have noted that the decree to Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem and rebuild it's walls and gates was given by King Artaxerxes as recorded in Nehemiah chapter 2. The date often used by modern writers, including articles on the Internet, for this decree going forth is March 5, 444 B.C. If that date is at all feasible it should be possible to check against the known history. In preparing this lesson I reviewed quite a few articles from the Internet to see what modern religious (and irreligious) and prophecy writers (some skillful and some not so skillful) used as a basis for interpretation of the prophecy including the date of the decree. Many writers are familiar with this understanding of Daniel and many of them did in fact use the date of March 5, 444 B.C. as the beginning point. Following references from teachers who I respect as I have studied the subject, I obtained this date from the book Daniel In The Critics' Den (1979) by the well known writer Josh McDowell. This date is referenced in that book as being researched and developed by H. W. Hoehner in Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ. McDowell used a different date in 445 B.C. in his earlier book Evidence That Demands a Verdict (1972) that date being developed by a well known scholarly writer of several generations before and so I understand this new date in 444 B.C. to represent further research and better understanding now. I am still very much in the process of learning and growing in my undersanding of God's word and so I try to be cautious and unpretentious in my presentations of my honest understandings and my

sources and reasons for my ideas. And I rely heavily on the excellent research of many scholars both recent as well as many of previous generations. I can say that I genuinely believe something I once heard from a great teacher on the prophecies, which I paraphrase as well as I can remember here, 'which was that our understanding (and that surely still includes at least some of our historical dates) isn't perfect. So we need to look for an understandable approach and see if a pattern exists that fits the prophecy.' So we cannot expect to take a mathematically detailed prophecy like this and expect our best efforts at calculating it all out to work out perfectly. But if we have a good starting date and an adequate understanding of the meaning of these 70 sevens then we should end up with a date and ending point that is so close that to anyone willing to see and believe it is clear that God did give this prophecy and it is indeed true.

And so, if we can't be certain that our dates in history are perfect it doesn't make sense (at least to me) to think that God would give us a calculation based on such exacting understanding of the ancient calendars of the Hebrews and other ancients and also of the early days of (the less than perfect development of) our own modern calendar to even be able to attempt an understanding of the prophecy. The Hebrews did have a leap year type of concept as I understand it but can we be sure that we have to worry with this in trying to understand the prophecy. I would rather suspect that God is referencing a simpler and more straight forward approach to make it possible to calculate it out and see if the interpretation has worked and the prophecy is accurate. I don't mean here to force a fulfillment of the prophecy where historically there just isn't one. And given that we have a fairly fixed beginning day and an ending time that can probably be tied down to within a week or so of the time of the Passover in 33 A.D. (which to my understanding was an early traditional time of Jesus crucifixion) then it should be possible to do the calculation based on simple Hebrew Lunar calendar years and days and see if the end date comes within acceptable parameters of the Passover time 33 A.D.

Also, I am referencing the time just before the Passover in 33 A.D. As the end of this 483 year period because the prophecy in verse 25 says unto Messiah, the prince which I agree with the scholars would seem to refer to Jesus at the time of His greatest acceptance seemingly politically on the part of the common people as when He rode into Jerusalem that last time just before the Passover and was welcomed and applauded like an entering king. From the description of this event in the Gospel it makes sense to me to think that this is the most likely time of His viewing as Messiah the prince, a truly royal personage in the eyes of the people who wanted Him to actually reign over them as a just ruler. Unfortunately that time was not yet. And if our idea doesn't work at all then so much for that theory. But if it does that is something incredible given that we believe that Daniel penned this prophecy the better part of 600 years before the time of Christ. The calculations in this simple straight forward approach will either work well or they won't. Which is it?

Daniel is told that from the giving of the command unto the coming or revelation of Messiah the prince is 7 sevens and 62 sevens which is 69 times seven which is 483 years by our understanding. Let's calculate it into days because we have to check this against our historical dates which are based on our modern Solar Year of 365.24 days. So we will have to use the most basic unit common to both calendars and as many writers and scholars show that is days. Let's not complicate it with concerns about Leap years and extra days at this time. I really don't personally believe that God has complicated the prophecy to such a degree as to make it impossible, in effect, to really know for sure when the projected end point of the period might be. Let's just use basic Lunar Years of 360 days and see what the calculations reveal. They will either be on target or they won't.

$360 \text{ Days (in a basic Lunar Year)} \times 483 = 173880 \text{ days}$. That's our total period of time we are using then from the command to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the prince. So remember that number.

From March 5, 444 B.C. (our starting point) to March 5, 33 A.D. is 477 Solar Years minus one year (since 1 B.C. to 1 A.D. wasn't a year) yields 476 Solar Years on our modern calendar. And so 476 Solar Years times 365.2425 days in a Gregorian Calendar (and a Solar Year is 365.24219878 days if anyone wants to start being argumentative about it) = 173855.43 days. We need still 24.57 days. Remember that the Passover is from around the very end of March or the first of April to late April. Starting at March 5th we can see that these extra 24-25 days added on here will take us to the end of March on our calendar. Just around the beginning of the festivities of the Passover time in the Hebrew calendar. The prophecy only said further in verse 26 that *after the sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off*. It does not say that He would be cut off the next day but only sometime after. And he was cut off in death just before the start of the Passover that year of 33 A.D. if our traditions are correct and I think I believe that they are on this point. The only other thing that the prophecy specifies about this in verse 26 is that after the cutting off of the Messiah *the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary* indicating that a yet future (at Daniel's time) empire would come and destroy the temple in Jerusalem a second time. The Roman's (the second empire after the Medo-Persian Empire which was in control at the time of Daniel's writing of chapter 9) did destroy the temple the second time

in 70 A.D.

All of these points are fulfilled exactly based on this simple and straight forward approach to this prophecy in Daniel 9. And that's why I really do believe it is the correct (and understandable) approach to interpretation of the prophecy. And we didn't force any figures or misuse any of the history of these times either. And what an amazing fulfillment. The Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary gives the date of Daniel's receiving the prophecy as 537 B.C. given that it was in the first year of Darius - Cyaxares II who had his nephew and son-in-law (and eventual successor) Cyrus take Babylon in his name in 538 B.C. It was then at this time of great change in these kingdoms, which God had revealed to Daniel in earlier chapters, that He chose to reveal yet further to Daniel what would happen in relation to his people and the great and violent Gentile nations that would arise further in the future. Considering that we had to take a step of faith, so to speak, and test this interpretation using years and days of a simple Lunar Calendar as the basis to see if it would fit known history, what do you think are the odds that the basic calculations would work out this unbelievably well and accurate just by coincidence? I don't think they're very high.

More comments on the Historical approach to the prophecy -

One approach that I came across in the Internet search (being Preterist in perspective and seeing much prophecy as already fulfilled) felt that the connecting of the decree by a king to rebuild Jerusalem to the year 444 B.C. (which is often used today by those in the Futurist camp) had always been problematic because Nehemiah had made no mention of such a decree as this during the 20th year of king Artaxerxes. But I seemed to remember reading something along that very line in Nehemiah and so I ran a few references and found the correct verses in Nehemiah chapter 2. And so now we will proceed to review those verses which occurred many years after the time of Daniel's prophecy in chapter 9 and see if there is such a reference to a decree to rebuild Jerusalem. And we will also review a little of what some of the bible commentaries and encyclopedias say about the probable dating of these events in Nehemiah chapter 2.

Part 2 of the Study - Nehemiah 2:

1 ¶ And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, [that] wine was before him, and I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now, I had never been sad in his presence.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia from The Online Bible Program **ARTAXERXES**

ar-taks-urk"-sez (Artaxerxes): Is the Greek and Latin form of one, and perhaps of two or three kings of Persia mentioned in the Old Testament.

1) All are agreed that the Artaxerxes at whose court Ezra and Nehemiah were officials is Artaxerxes I, the son of Xerxes, commonly called Longimanus, who reigned from 465 to 424 BC. This Artaxerxes was the third son of Xerxes and was raised to the throne by Artabanus, the murderer of Xerxes. Shortly after his accession, Artaxerxes put his older brother Darius to death; and a little later, Artabanus, who perhaps aimed to make himself king, was killed. Hystaspes, the second brother, who seems to have been satrap of Bactria at the time of his father's death, rebelled, and after two battles was deprived of his power and probably of his life. The reign of Artaxerxes was further disturbed by the revolt of Egypt in 460 BC, and by that of Syria about 448 BC.

R. Dick Wilson

John Gill's Expositor from The Online Bible Program

Ver. 1. And it came to pass in the month Nisan; in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, &c.] It was still but in the twentieth year of his reign; for though Nisan or March was the first month of the year with the Jews, and from whence the reigns

of their kings were dated *{l}*; yet, with other nations, Tisri or September was the beginning of the reigns of their kings *{m}*; so that Chisleu or November being since, see #Ne 1:1, it was no more in Nisan or March than the twentieth of the said king's reign, and was three or four months after Nehemiah had first heard of the distress of his people; which time he either purposely spent in fasting and prayer on that account, or until now his turn did not come about to exercise his office, in waiting upon the king as his cupbearer: but now it was

Comments -

I've used the dates of reign given in the article above from the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, which I feel is a little more liberal in perspective, as the base from which to begin calculating. If Artaxerxes began to reign in 465 B.C. presumably his reign being counted from the first of their year, which is around September of our year according to John Gill above, then the 20th year of his reign would begin around September of 445 B.C. As John Gill has demonstrated above, Nehemiah refers to Nisan 1 which is the first of the Hebrew Calendar and around March of our calendar as the day when he receives from the king permission to go rebuild the city of Jerusalem and this occurs in the 20th year of the king's reign. So it was about six months into the twentieth year of the king's reign which would be around the start of March 444 B.C. of our modern calendar. So the date commonly used by many Bible and prophecy writers today of March 5, 444 B.C. seems completely plausible as far as this check. As we will see just a little further into the lesson, the king granted Nehemiah's request to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls and the gates of the city. So the countdown began on this day in early March 444 B.C. according to our calendar.

2 And the king said to me, Why is thy face sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sadness of heart. And I was very sore afraid.

3 And I said to the king, Let the king live for ever! Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lies waste, and its gates are consumed with fire?

Comments -

And so Nehemiah made it clear from the start exactly what the point of concern was for him and it was that the city of Jerusalem was in ruins; the walls were torn down and the gates were destroyed. These were the matters that he approached the king for help with. The question is, did the king grant him permission to go and restore these parts of the city. If he did then the decree to go and build the wall and gates as recorded in chapter 9 of Daniel occurred on this date in early March 444 B.C. The counting of the seventy sevens would have to start from this date.

4 And the king said to me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of the heavens.

5 And I said to the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

6 And the king said to me—the queen also sitting by him, —For how long shall thy journey be, and when wilt thou return? And it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

Jamieson, Fausett and Brown Commentary from The Online Bible Program

6-9. the queen also sitting by him—As the Persian monarchs did not admit their wives to be present at their state festivals, this must have been a private occasion. The queen referred to was probably Esther, whose presence would tend greatly to embolden Nehemiah in stating his request; and through her influence, powerfully exerted it may be supposed, also by her sympathy with the patriotic design, his petition was granted, to go as deputy governor of Judea, accompanied by a military guard, and invested with full powers to obtain materials for the building in Jerusalem, as well as to get all requisite aid in promoting his enterprise.

7 And I said to the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may set me forward till I come into Judah;

8 and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which [appertains] to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

John Gill's Expositor from The Online Bible Program

Ver. 8. And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, &c.] The forest or mountain of Lebanon, which, because of its odoriferous and fruit bearing trees, was more like an orchard or paradise, as this word signifies, and so it is

translated in #Ec 2:5 So 4:13 and at the extreme part of it, it seems, there was a city called Paradisus {r}; such an officer as here was among the Romans, called Saltuarius {s}, and is now among us:

that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertaineth to the house; not the king's palace near the temple, for that might have occasioned suspicion in the king, that his view was to set up himself as king in Judea; but for the gates of the courts adjoining to the temple, and of the wall of the outward court, and of the wall which was to encompass the mountain of the house, the whole circumference of it:

and for the wall of the city; to make gates of in various places for that, where they stood before:

and for the house which I shall enter into; and dwell in during his stay at Jerusalem:

and the king granted me; all the above favours:

according to the good hand of my God upon me; the kind providence of God, which wrought on the heart of the king, and disposed it towards him, and overruled all things for good.

{r} Ptolem. Geograph. l. 5. c. 15. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 23.

{s} Vid. Servium in Virgil. Aeneid. l. 2. ver. 485.

Comments -

Now what did Nehemiah ask the king for? He asked for permission to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the city - *5...that thou wouldest send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it...*

And what else did he ask for? He asked the king for permission to get timber from the king's forest to make beams to build the gates of the palace, the wall of the city and the house he would live in - *8 and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which [appertains] to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into.* Did he get permission for this venture and the materials to accomplish it from the king? Yes he did as the rest of verse 8 shows - *8...And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.*

Now I don't know about others, but to me that is a decree from the king to Nehemiah to go back to Jerusalem with all the materials he needed and to rebuild the city, the walls and the gates as they had been before and this decree is recorded in our Bible in chapter 2 of Nehemiah. And good reference sources give a date for the king's twentieth year as starting in late 445 B.C. But Nehemiah approached the king with this petition on the first of the Hebrew month of Nisan and that would have placed this event in our March. So the request and the decree granted occurred in Nisan (around our March) 444 B.C. which was in the twentieth year of the reign of the king.

9 ¶ And I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of a force and horsemen with me.

Comments —

Any ideas that that there isn't a decree mentioned in Nehemiah chapter 2 from the king to go and rebuild the walls and the gates of Jerusalem is just not accurate and not what Nehemiah chapter 2 verses 1 through 9 say in my opinion. It wasn't a suggestion to Nehemiah that he could do it if he wanted to but a granting of a request that Nehemiah himself had brought up and asked the king to grant to him. And once the king had granted this wish to Nehemiah he intended for him to accomplish it fully and sent letters authorizing him to get all of the materials and help he would need and an armed guard to accompany Nehemiah to Jerusalem and keep him safe as he did the work. That's definitely a decree from the king to rebuild Jerusalem's walls and gates! And it was given in early March 444 B.C. in the 20th year of king Artaxerxes reign.

Conclusion -

- And so we can see from [Part 2](#) of the Study that chapter 2 of Nehemiah does in fact reference a decree from the king in his 20th year of reign to Nehemiah himself to go and rebuild Jerusalem, the walls and the gates. And basic reference to our calendar using some older scholarly sources such as John Gill as well as the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia gives us a very probable date in March 444 B.C. for the issue of this command from the king to his cup bearer Nehemiah. He made Nehemiah Governor of Jerusalem and sent him back to rebuild the city just as had been prophesied much earlier in 537 B.C. by Daniel the prophet.

- And as we saw in [Part 1](#) of the Study, 483 years after that decree to Nehemiah to go and rebuild Jerusalem we arrive

just before the time of Passover in Jerusalem again in the year 33 A.D. Around the time that Jesus Christ would have been entering the city to the acclaim and applause of the common people, as if He were a king or royal personage. A matter of a few days after that He was crucified on a cross on Golgotha.

- And as we know from history generally, some years after that in 70 A.D. The Romans, the great Gentile Empire in control of that portion of the world at that time, destroyed both Jerusalem and the temple yet a second time. The Bible prophecy and known historical dates seem to me to corroborate each other very well both in the order of occurrence and the amount of time predicted for the events to transpire.

I hope you have enjoyed this study and learned to have an even deeper appreciation for God's word and for His ability to keep His word to us and to do the things He has promised.