

Revelation's Final Judgment

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The United States Supreme Court is a symbol of the majesty of law and justice in a world that's often tragically unfair. But each of us has a case pending before the highest tribunal of all—the Supreme Court of the Universe! The final judgment is the most important one of all. To many, this is a terrifying prospect. Our eternal destiny seems to be decided, as it were, in the wink of an eye; with the flick of His wrist, God assigns us a place with either the sheep or the goats. Is God really acting alone in the final judgment, making a private, arbitrary decision? How will He really conduct this all-important proceeding?

Daniel 7:9-10, NIV, says: “As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. . . . Thousands upon thousands attended Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened.” Note that it says, “thrones were set in place.” Thrones—in the plural. Evidently the Ancient of Days, God Himself, permits other heavenly beings to preside with Him in the judgment. That idea is further supported by the phrase, “The court was seated.”

Evidently God's decision isn't just a matter of divine decree. He's willing to carry this out in a courtroom setting, accompanied by others on their thrones, and in front of thousands upon thousands of witnesses. God's final judgment is not just a private decision but an open affair, which many will witness first-hand. When the court is seated, Daniel tells us, “the books are opened.” The all-knowing God needs no reminder of the facts, but He's chosen to make the final judgment a matter of public record; all the evidence is down in black and white.

In **Revelation 20:12** John the Revelator confirms that scene: “I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.” God doesn't just want to satisfy Himself in the judgment; He also wants to satisfy all those who witness the proceedings. Evidence is presented on which to render a verdict.

Those nine justices on our own Supreme Court have law clerks do a great deal of research on each case. They want as many facts as possible before making their decisions. The same is true here: There seems to be a thorough work of investigation that goes on. The court is seated; books are opened. Before the saved and lost are finally judged, God graciously goes over the evidence in an open and thorough investigation.

WHERE does the judgment take place? Obviously, in **Daniel 7:9-10**, the prophet was directed to heaven, to the throne room of the universe. There Daniel saw the supreme court of the universe set up in heaven's sanctuary. The books were opened there. God's final judicial investigation takes place in heaven.

What about WHEN? When does it begin? The surrounding verses of **Daniel 7:8 & 11**—tell of the Little Horn power speaking great, pompous words *on earth* while this heavenly court begins proceedings. And you may recall that **Revelation 14:7** tells us: “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come.” Note the text doesn't say “will come”—at some future time—but “has come.” The same text clearly states that *before* Christ returns, a message will go to all the world announcing the judgment hour. So we must look for a type of judgment that occurs *before* the Second Coming of Christ.

The prophet Daniel gives us the time frame in **Daniel 8:14**, the Bible's longest prophecy: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.” What does that mean, “the sanctuary be cleansed”? The Old Testament sacrificial system had God's people sacrifice an innocent animal representing Christ that would bear the guilt of the repentant sinner. A few drops of the animal's blood were sprinkled in the sanctuary. Thus the sin was transferred from the *sinner* to the *animal* to the *sanctuary*. All year long, sins

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symbolically accumulated in the sanctuary, and that's why the yearly cleansing service was

required. Each year, the Hebrews participated in the DAY OF ATONEMENT. That's when the sanctuary was cleansed. **Leviticus 16:29-30**: "In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall *afflict your souls*, and do no work at all. . . . For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord."

The Day of Atonement was the solemn day of judgment for God's people. The Jews would search their hearts, "afflict their souls," and make things right with God. Those *daily* sacrifices of animals pointed forward to Christ, but the *yearly* cleansing of the sanctuary pointed forward to something else: It refers to a very specific process of judgment that takes place before the end of Earth's history. When did this process begin? **Daniel 8:14** says, after 2300 days the sanctuary will be cleansed. Daniel himself didn't know what that meant. He was perplexed. So God sent an angel to explain things. God says in **Daniel 8:16-17**: "'Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.' So he came near where I stood, and . . . he said to me, 'Understand, son of man: that the vision refers to the TIME of the END.'"

Obviously, if the vision extends to the close of time, to "the end," then the 2300 days applies to God's *heavenly* sanctuary, because the *earthly* sanctuary and its system of sacrifices would be obsolete after Christ's death. Bible scholars know that a DAY represents a YEAR in Bible prophecy. **Ezekiel 4:6** tells us, "I have laid on you a day for a year." So the 2300 prophetic days represents 2300 actual years. Gabriel explained more about the 2300 days—that time period was broken into two segments. First he says this, **Daniel 9:24**: "Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city." Seventy weeks relate to "your people," the Jews. Seventy weeks equal 490 days, or, in prophecy, 490 years. In this period the Jews had their final chance to accomplish the work God gave them. If they failed, God would have to use other means to accomplish His purposes. Those seventy weeks or 490 years were "determined" or cut off from the 2300 days or years. The remaining 1810 years would lead to an event called the "cleansing of the sanctuary" or the time of judgment.

The master key for unlocking this entire time prophecy is in **Daniel 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. . . ." When Daniel received this prophecy, his people the Jews were exiled captives in Babylon. Jerusalem lay in ruins. The angel told Daniel this time prophecy would begin when the official decree was given, allowing the Jews to return home and rebuild Jerusalem. We have a precise date for that event: Artaxerxes, King of Persia, made exactly that decree in the fall of 457 B.C. So we have a starting date: The seventy weeks, or 490 years, began in 457 B.C.—and the 2300 days of which they are a part also began in 457 B.C.

In these prophecies Daniel actually foretells (1) the date of Christ's baptism, (2) the date of His death, and (3) the time when the gospel would be rejected by the Jewish nation and proclaimed to the Gentile world. The prophecy says from the decree to restore Jerusalem till the coming of Messiah is 62 + 7 weeks, a total of 69 prophetic weeks, or 483 literal years. Adding 483 years to 457 B.C. takes us to A.D. 26. But there was no *zero* year in history, so we must *add* a year, giving us A.D. 27. In that very year Jesus was baptized and began His ministry, preaching, "The time is fulfilled."

Christ's ministry lasted precisely three-and-a-half years, till A.D. 31. Then, **Daniel 9:26-27** predicted, "Messiah shall be cut off [killed] . . . in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering." In the midst of that 70th week, the last week allotted to the Jewish nation—sacrifices would come to an end. And when Christ died, the Temple's huge veil was torn in two by a divine hand. **Matthew 17:51**. Three-and-a-half years later, in A.D. 34 the first Christian martyr, Stephen, was stoned to death by the Jews, sealing their rejection of the gospel. The seventy weeks cut out of the 2300-day prophecy are clearly accounted for. But what about the remaining time of that prophecy? After 70 weeks or 490 years from the starting point, 457 B.C., we still have 1810 years left. Add 1810 years to A.D. 34—where we left off—we come to 1844. The Bible predicted that's when the sanctuary would be cleansed; the judgment hour would begin in heaven, in the heavenly sanctuary. As we face judgment, our case may seem hopeless. But **1 John 2:1** says: "I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have One who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One." We'll have expert counsel on that day: Jesus, who's never lost a case. His great argument is Calvary, the evidence of the Cross. And He'll win every time!

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“IT IS WRITTEN . . .”

Daniel 8:14 “And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

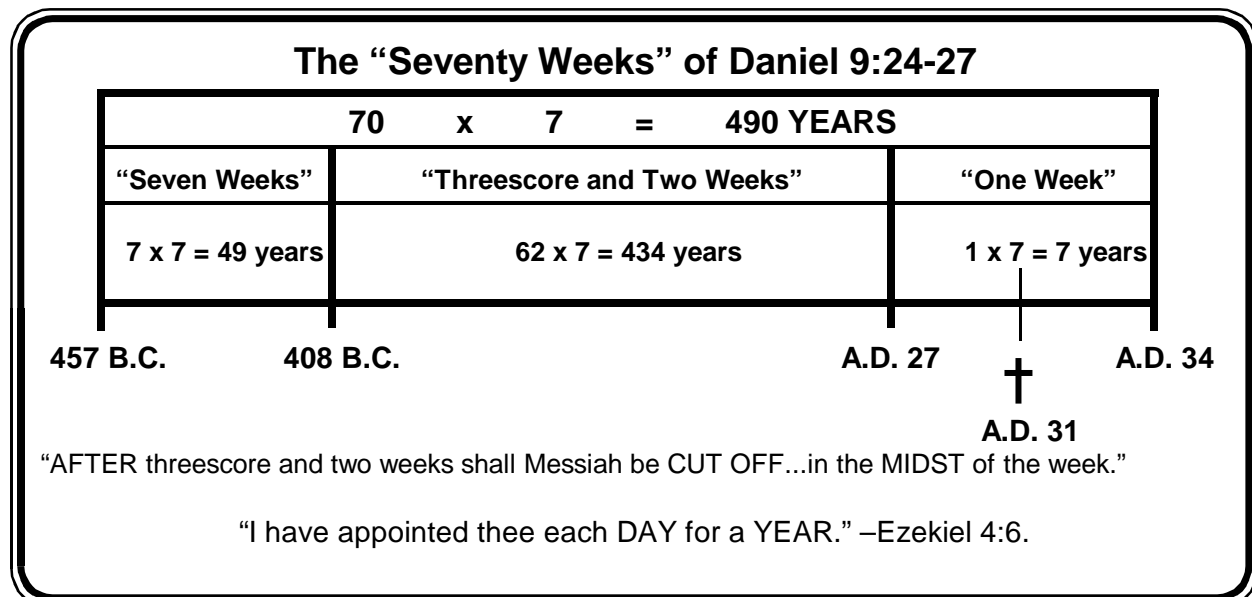
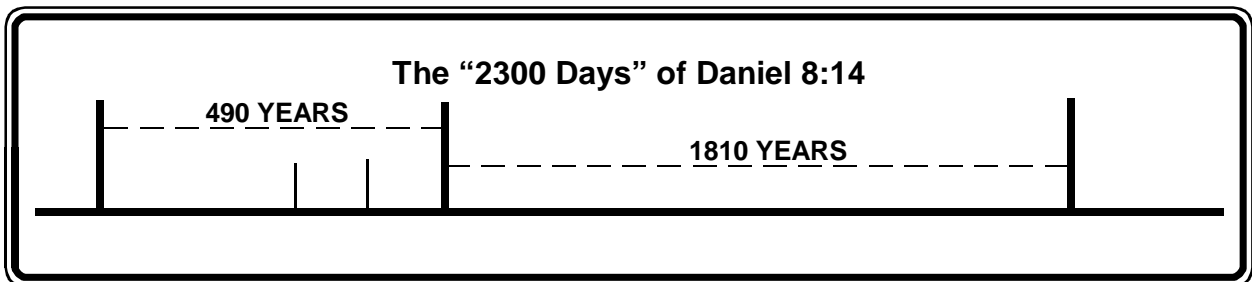
Daniel 8:16 Daniel didn't understand, so God sent an angel: “Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.”

Daniel 8:17 Gabriel explained, “The vision refers to the time of the end.”

Daniel 9:20-27 Gabriel further explained that 70 prophetic weeks or 490 actual years were determined or cut off from the 2300 days for the Jewish people, that the Messiah would come during that period but be killed in the middle of the final (70th) week, and that the time period would *begin* with the command to rebuild Jerusalem.

Ezra 6:14 Artaxerxes' royal command to rebuild Jerusalem, which lay in ruins at that time, went into effect in 457 B.C.

The *first* portion of the 2300-day prophecy—or the 490 years pertaining to Daniel's people, the Jews—ran out in A.D. 34. The *remaining* 1810 years concluded in 1844. See the two TIME LINES below:



Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

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1. In the midst of his earlier vision of the four great beasts, Daniel saw a vision of a Judgment scene commencing in _____ while the Little Horn power was still active on earth. **To check your answer, see Daniel 7:9-10, and verses 8 & 11.**

2. T F Amazingly, Daniel had a vision foretelling that the Messiah would be killed!
To check your answer, see Daniel 9:26. Compare Isaiah 53:8.

3. In interpreting TIME prophecies, we must follow the Bible principle that a prophetic _____ stands for an actual _____.
To check your answer, see Ezekiel 4:6.

4. The triggering event which started the vision’s count-down was the royal command to restore and rebuild _____, which had been lying in ruins for many decades.
To check your answer, see Daniel 9:25 and Ezra 7:12-27.

5. The first segment of “_____ weeks” (490 days/years) were determined or cut off from the 2300 days especially for _____’s people, the Jews.
To check your answer, see Daniel 9:24.

6. T F Three-and-a-half years after the cross, in A.D. 34, the stoning of Stephen as the first Christian martyr marked the end of the Seventieth Week. The 490 years of probationary time for the Jews were over, and the gospel began to go to the Gentiles.
To check your answer, see Acts 7:59-60 & 13:45-46, Matthew 21:43.

7. When Jesus died on the cross, He “confirmed the covenant,” sealing it with His own blood. Thus “in the _____ of the week,” He caused animal _____ to cease.
To check your answer, see Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 27:51.