

Separated and Submitted

When I was in school, the primo job for any student who didn't like being a student was the AV aid. For some of you, this is before your time. However, the AV guys got to get out of some class time in order to move around the carts that carried the film projectors and other equipment for showing movies to the classes. I really envied those AV guys.

But I don't envy their Biblical counterparts – the prophets of old. You see, much of the time they WERE the viz-aids. Isaiah went around naked for three years (Isa 20), Jeremiah wore a sash, then buried it and then dug it up – a ruined mess. (Jer 13) He was also forbidden to take a wife or have children (Jer 16) In another instance, he smashed a potter's flask in full view of the elders of Jerusalem and then proclaimed God's message. (Jer 19)

Then there's Ezekiel – his wife was taken to paradise (Eze 24), he had to eat a scroll (Eze 3), to cook with cow's dung (Eze 4) and to lay on his sides – 390 days on his left side and 40 days on his right. (Eze 4). No, I don't envy his ministry but I am so very grateful for it! And it is this last visual aid that I want to expound upon because it, like many other prophecies, has been fulfilled in our times very exactly. Studying it should increase our faith in God's masterful control. Let's start with the passage:

4 “Lie also on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. According to the number of the days that you lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity. 5 For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; so you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. 6 And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year.

From this visual aid, we learn of a period of time that corresponded to 390 years plus 40 years equaling 430 years. This was the period of time in which the “son of man” (see Eze 4:1) was to bear or carry the iniquity of Israel and Judah. Now, in order to understand what this judgment consisted of we need to reference the prophecies of Ezekiel's semi-contemporary, Jeremiah. He spoke of two specific judgments and a single length of time.

First Judgment: *And it shall be, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish,’ says the LORD, ‘with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand. (Jer 27:8)*

Second Judgment: *Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, “Thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: ‘If you surely surrender to the king of Babylon’s princes, then your soul shall live; this city shall not be burned with fire,*

and you and your house shall live. But if you do not surrender to the king of Babylon’s princes, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans; they shall burn it with fire, and you shall not escape from their hand.’” (Jer 38:17,18)

Length of Time: *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; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive. (Jer 29:10-14)*

The two judgments are known as the **Servitude of the Nation** and the **Desolations of Jerusalem**. The periods of time they represent largely overlap, but they are two separate judgments. The initial time in which the Jews were in captivity at Babylon was seventy years.

Now, the first judgment began when the nation lost its independence in 606 BC. This was when the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar first conquered Judah and Jerusalem. At this point, the city was left in tact. Later, by the declaration of the Persian king Cyrus II, the Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem, but less than

50,000 of them took advantage of that. This was a small percentage of the population most of whom apparently found living in their new homes more appealing than making the trek back to a destroyed city and homeland. Clearly, this was rebellion against the Spirit of God for Jeremiah spoke, *This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfil my gracious promise to bring you back to this place.” (Jer 29:10 NIV)*

“In Jeremiah 25:11-12, the prophet said that the Jews would suffer 70 years of Babylonian domination. Jeremiah also said Babylon would be punished after the 70 years. Both parts of this prophecy were fulfilled. In 609 BC, which is about 2600 years ago, Babylon captured the last Assyrian king and took over the holdings of the Assyrian empire, to which the land of Israel previously had been subjugated. Babylon later asserted its domination by taking many Jews as captives to Babylon, and by destroying Jerusalem and the Temple. The domination ended in 539 BC, when Cyrus, a leader of Persians and Medes, conquered Babylon and brought an end to its empire. Cyrus later offered the captive Jews the freedom to return to their homeland. The prophecy also might have been fulfilled in another way too: The Babylonians had destroyed Jerusalem’s Temple in 586 BC, and the Jews rebuilt it and consecrated it 70 years later, in 516 BC. Having the Temple again showed, in a very important way, that the effects of Babylonian domination truly had come to an end.”—AboutBibleProphecy.com

So we see from this that the 70 year prophecy(ies) applies accurately to both the Servitude of the Nation(s) and to the Desolation of Jerusalem (as represented by the Temple) as well as the captivity of the Jewish people. For the nations, this was from 609 BC to 539 BC. Notice I'm using the plural. For the **nation** of Israel (as represented by Judah) the beginning of servitude began in the summer of 606 BC and ended in 536 BC. This latter date was the second literal year as well as the first legal year of reign for Cyrus. (See 2 Chron 36:22,23) The first year was considered a year of ascendancy. For **Jerusalem**, i.e. the **temple**, as mentioned above, this was from 586 BC when it was destroyed to 516 BC when it was rebuilt.

Now, we know from 2 Chron 36 that the seventy years were determined by God to account for the seventy Sabbath years that the Jews had ignored. Their seventy years of absence gave the land rest: *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, 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.* (2 Chron 36:20,21)

On the other hand, we are not told explicitly why God determined the 430 years. In the only previous judgment that came upon the Jewish people involving a day for a year, it was when the spies went in to the promised land and came back with a faithless report. God said, *According to the number of the days*

in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. (Num 14:34) Forty years in the wilderness led to a new more faithful generation who followed Joshua into the promised land. In other words, the judgment had a purpose and a message.

Now, the only other mention of 430 years (concerning the Jews) in the Bible is: *Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations.* (Ex 12:40-42)

Scripturally, Egypt is a picture of the world. The Jews went there when Joseph was powerful and were treated well at first but after his death became servants and were ultimately oppressed. Now, the Jewish people, contrary to what the Lord has ordained for them, have always desired to be a part of the world, accepted by the world and even esteemed highly by the world. Worldly success and notoriety are very important to them. Therefore, I suggest that the purpose and message in this 430 days/years judgment was to produce a people separate from the world -- truly separated unto the Lord, crying out for a Prophet like Moses to lead them out. (See Deut 18:15)

Now, we need to introduce another key verse. In the book of Leviticus 26, the Lord laid down a very serious condition upon His people:

*I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves; I have broken the bands of your yoke and made you walk upright. 'But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set My face against you, and **you shall be defeated by your enemies.** Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you. 'And **after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.** (Lev 26:13-18)*

You see, in Jeremiah, God had said that after the seventy years, He would cause the Jews to return. But though some did make the trip, the vast majority were rebellious to the nudge of His Spirit. For that reason, we can consider the condition cited above in Lev 26 as 'kicking in' so that the balance of the period of judgment after the 70 years was being multiplied by seven. We started with 430 years. Then after 70 years we're left with 360 years. Multiplying this by seven, we get 2,520 years. Hang with me, this will be worth it.

Now, as we are dealing with prophecy, we must use the biblical year of 360 days. When we do, we find that 2,520 years equals 907,200 days. If we add to that number the days represented in the first 70 years (25,200) we get 932,400 days total. "So what," you say. Here's what – start with May 14, 1948, the day the modern nation of Israel was reborn, and go backward 932,400 days and guess where you land – July 17, 606 BC which corresponds to the first week of Av 3155 on the Jewish calendar.

That means that indeed, starting with the servitude of Judah to Babylon in the summer of 606 BC, we don't see a truly sovereign nation of Israel again until May of 1948 just as prophesied.

And then there is the Desolation of Jerusalem. History shows that from the time that the nation was put into servitude until the desolation of the city and the temple was 19 years. Likewise, the time from the re-establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948 until the liberation of Jerusalem in the 1967 6-day war was 19 years.

So, as we should expect, the prophecy of Ezekiel and the prophetic condition declared by Moses were both fulfilled precisely concerning the nation's servitude and the desolation of Jerusalem.

There is, however, another very important aspect of this that has yet to play out. To understand it, we need to review again Moses' words in Lev 26:

Initial Condition:

You shall not make idols for yourselves;...

You shall keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary...

But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. I will set My face against you, and you shall be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall flee when no one pursues you. (Lev 26:2 – 17 excerpts)

Why God Brought Babylon Upon Them:

*For behold, I am calling All the families of the kingdoms of the north," says the LORD; " They shall come and each one set his throne At the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, Against all its walls all around, And against all the cities of Judah. I will utter My judgments Against them concerning all their wickedness, Because **they have forsaken Me**, Burned incense to other gods, And worshiped the works of their own hands. Jer 1:15,16*

*They have **committed adultery with their idols**, and even **sacrificed their sons** whom they bore to Me, passing them through the fire, to devour them. Moreover*

*they have done this to Me: They have **defiled My sanctuary** on the same day and profaned My Sabbaths. For after they had slain their children for their idols, on the same day they came into My sanctuary to profane it; and indeed thus they have done in the midst of My house.*

Eze 23:37-39

From these and other passages, we can see that Israel utterly failed the **initial** condition set forth by Moses and thus the Lord did as He said He would in the **first part** of Lev 26. And, as we discussed in some detail above, we've also witnessed the consequences of the following passage: **And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.** (v18)

But now, how about the balance of the prophetic conditions in Lev 26? During the long period of time in which the nation was in servitude and Jerusalem desolated, God said: *I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit.* (v19,20)

Indeed, the Roman Legions that crushed the nation in 70 AD completely broke the nation and scattered the people, even renaming the land and cities. In rejecting Christ, the Jews were incommunicado with God and ultimately became vagabonds on the earth. Everywhere they relocated they were eventually rejected and persecuted. Meanwhile, the land of Israel was

pillaged and destroyed. In fact, a tax from a Turkish ruler upon trees resulted in the complete deforestation of the land. Visitors to what was Israel in the nineteenth century described it as the most desolate place on earth.

But all that ended in the twentieth century as Israel was re-established and Jerusalem taken back from foreign control. The judgment spoken by Ezekiel and compounded by Moses was over. The year was 1967.

Now, for forty years since, the Lord has waited to see if the nation will turn to Him. There has been, however, **no change of heart**. The Jews are still unrepentant and unyielding to Him, stuck in their stubborn adherence to worldliness and spiritual apathy. They have become more powerful militarily and economically than all of the nations surrounding them put together and are supported by their 'superpower' ally the US. Consequently, their confidence is in **their own power**, not God's.

Daniel the prophet was told concerning this very situation: *At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time...and when the **power of the holy people has been completely shattered**, all these things shall be finished.* (Dan 12 excerpts)

This period is also known as the 70th week of Daniel's 70 week prophecy found in Dan 9 and also as the "time of Jacob's trouble", a seven year period we call the Tribulation. Now, I'll suggest that

the remainder of Lev 26 continues to describe it when it says:

- *Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you **seven times** more plagues, according to your sins. (v 21)*
- *And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will punish you yet **seven times** for your sins. (v23,24)*
- *And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you **seven times** for your sins. (v27,28)*

In the balance of the chapter, we see that there are three more sets of judgments, seven times each upon a rebellious people. Now, what do we know about the Tribulation period from the book of Revelation that comes upon a Christ-rejecting people in three sets of seven? Right – seven seals, seven trumpets and seven vials of God's wrath. In Revelation we read:

- *But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts. (Rev 9:20,21)*

- *And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. (Rev 16:9)*
- *They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. (Rev 16:11)*

In fact, if you carefully examine the judgments in this latter portion of Lev 26 and compare them with the direful tribulation events of Revelation, they are very, very similar.

Yet, the conclusion of Lev 26 also offers a glorious promise:

...if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt—

then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land.

... for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God:

I am the LORD.” (v40-42, 45)

And Revelation concludes:

Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or

his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

(Rev 20:4)

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.”

(Rev 21:2-5)

And so, although God has dealt and will continue to deal with His rebellious people, their end is a glorious one. Our Father is looking for a people separated from the world and submitted to Him. May His bride, both Jew and ‘gentile’ be such a people! Maranatha!