

COVENANT TIME: God's 490-Year Pattern

Introduction

This is a study of the 490 Year periods from Abraham to Daniel's 70th Week. These periods of years, beginning with Abraham, teach an order about God's administration of His redemption plans for Israel. These years form a pattern which may contain keys for understanding the time of the end.¹ This article will focus on the pattern of 490-year periods generally.

There are four 490 year periods totaling 1,960 years in Israel's redemption plan beginning with Abraham and ending with Daniel's 70 Weeks prophecy. These four periods utilize God's method of counting the years. These four periods may be associated with God's promises to Abraham, Moses, David and Daniel's prophecy. They can be termed God's measure of covenant or determined time ("Covenant Time").

God counts time differently than man. We will see that God deducted days and years for unbelief and disobedience. It would appear that God reckons covenant time according to Israel, exclusively. As Jehovah², He is known as the Covenant God of Israel who keep His promises.

In the Book of Numbers, there is an example of God's counting method. It is in the context of the Nazarite vow to God. Numbers 6:12 states:

"And he shall consecrate unto the Lord the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation [unto God] was defiled."
[Words added for clarification]

We may infer that God counts Israel's time when Israel and God are in a right covenant relationship or in the case of Daniel's 70 Weeks a "determined" or "prophetic time". It appears that these 490 year periods may be associated with a covenant relationship suggesting intimacy as in a marriage, or in the case of Daniel, restoration and fulfillment of Abraham's promises.

However, when Israel acts in a manner unbecoming, according to God's standards, God does not count time. God declares a timeout in His plan. Presently, we live in one of the timeout periods, which Paul describes as a "mystery"³. We are going to notice that time was deducted from each of these four periods as an expression of a 490-year period of right and determined⁴ relationship.

For students of gematria who enjoy reading God's words as numbers⁵, you may know that the numeric value of the Hebrew word "covenant" is 612. Is it a coincidence that the word

¹ Daniel 12:4; 1 Corinthians 15:24

² Exodus 3:13-14 when God revealed His name to Moses

³ Ephesians 5:32

⁴ Daniel 9:24

⁵ Revelation 13:18

"covenant" may be associated with Numbers 6:12 ? The word of God is perfectly ordered⁶. This verse speaks to the defilement of an exclusive relationship with God. Could this be a confirmation that God's counting is associated with aspects of a covenant and determined relationship ? Is anything too hard for God⁷ ?

It seems appropriate to label these 490-year periods as Covenant Time. Who is our Lord but "the strength of the covenant"⁸.

Abraham To the Law: 490 Years

With the birth of Abraham, God's redemption plans for Israel would develop with greater specificity. The full scope of the Abrahamic promises encompassed the goals of Daniel's 70 Weeks prophecy⁹. This covenant necessarily contemplated the Mosaic and Davidic promises.

God's revelation is progressive, built by precept upon precept, line upon line, a little here and a little there¹⁰. God builds his doctrines in these manners for the purpose of building up and establishing all who would inquire with the right motives.

God was going to introduce His own unilateral¹¹ promises to Abraham and his seed. These promises were based on the oath of God¹² and did not require Abraham's performance. These promises were everlasting¹³. These promises are forward-looking in that they extend through all 490-year periods into the Millennium and eternity. Each of the subsequent 490-year periods are key components of the Abrahamic covenant. It is a covenant which looks forward to the King ruling His kingdom in Righteousness and Peace forever.

From Abraham to the Law of Moses was 505 years. The law was given 430 years¹⁴ after Abraham departed out of Haran at the age of 75¹⁵. We need to add 75 years to 430 years which totals 505 years. However, in order to calculate God's Covenant Time we need to deduct 15 years¹⁶. You ask why ? Because God did not count the years from the time that Abraham had sexual intercourse with Hagar¹⁷ until Isaac's birth¹⁸. This was during the fifteen year period when Ishmael represented the seed of Abraham. God did not count this time because Ishmael was not the promised seed. If we deduct 15 years from 505 years the result is 490 years.

⁶ Exodus 18:14; 2 Samuel 22:31

⁷ Exodus 18:14; Jeremiah 32:17

⁸ The Aleph Tav, a proper name for Jesus, is an Hebrew pictographic image declaring "the strength of the covenant". Jesus is the Aleph Tav (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13) He, as the Aleph Tav, is the Word of God, which became flesh.(John 1:14) (See: <http://www.alephtavscriptures.com/who-is-the-alephtav-%D7%90%D7%AA-symbol/>)

⁹ Daniel 9:24

¹⁰ Isaiah 28:9-10

¹¹ Genesis 15:17-18

¹² Genesis 22:16

¹³ Genesis 17:7, 8, 13, 19

¹⁴ Galatians 3:17

¹⁵ Genesis 12:4

¹⁶ Genesis 16:3 (Abraham at 75 years, plus 10 years in the land, so he was 85 when he took Hagar)

¹⁷ Genesis 16:4

¹⁸ Genesis 21:5

In terms of the Abrahamic covenant, Abraham had no performance obligations. God's promises did not depend on Abraham's conduct. So, the suspension of time represented by the 15 years cannot be viewed as Abraham breaching the covenant. So, what action caused God to suspend the counting of years? Certainly, Abraham exhibited "unbelief" in God's promise regarding an heir. He had lived in the land ten years with no child. He and Sarah took action, being unsatisfied with God's delay, by adding Hagar as Abraham's wife for the purpose of producing an heir. Ishmael, the product of the union, was not God's planned heir. The heir, Isaac was to be the "son of promise" not the "son of a bondwoman". God did not count the time of Ishmael. Although Ishmael was the seed of Abraham, he was not the heir of God's choice. God began counting again when Isaac, the son of promise, was born.

Beginning with Abraham, the first period of "covenant time" totals 490 years.

Moses to King David: 490 Years

God established the Law on Mt. Sinai with Moses. The purpose of the law was to establish God's standard for righteousness. Before the law, there was no transgression¹⁹. Ultimately, the purpose of the Law was to lead all to Christ. The Law was our schoolmaster leading us to Christ²⁰.

During the first 490-year period, we learned that Abraham met Melchizedek²¹, a priest of the Most High God. The Book of Hebrews speaks about this King of Righteousness and after, the King of Peace²². This is a picture of Messiah Jesus who has become an eternal High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Messiah Jesus' first appearance satisfied the righteousness requirements of the Law.²³ Christ's atoning work confirmed the promises made to Israel's fathers²⁴. I point out this interesting fact about Melchizedek because it joins the promises of Abraham to the Law and ultimately Christ. Abraham was counted as righteous because he believed God.²⁵ The Apostle Paul teaches that "the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed".²⁶ The Law was given to teach God's righteousness and lead all to Christ through faith, apart from works of the Law.

The period of the Law lasted 601 years, but God only counted 490 years because Israel was in exile as a captive nation for 111 years. God did not count the years of captivity. God had judged Israel for the worship of false gods.

¹⁹ Romans 4:15

²⁰ Galatians 3:24

²¹ Exodus 14:18; Hebrews 7:1

²² Hebrews 7:2, note the sentence syntax "after that" which appears to speak to a first and second coming aspect of this King. We can learn a redemption principal. Righteousness precedes peace.

²³ Galatians 3:17

²⁴ Romans 15:8

²⁵ Genesis 15:6

²⁶ Galatians 3:8

The 601²⁷ years are computed by adding the following periods of years:

40 years in the wilderness²⁸

20 years under Joshua

450 years under the Judges and Samuel²⁹

40 years under Saul³⁰

40 years under David³¹

11 years under Solomon until the dedication of the Temple³²

The years of captivity were 111 which must be deducted from the 601 years:

8 years captive in Mesopotamia³³

18 years captive in Moab³⁴

20 years captive under the Canaanites³⁵

7 years captive under the Midianites³⁶

18 years captive under the Ammonites and Philistines³⁷

40 years captive under the Philistines³⁸

This total number of 111 years has a deeper message even if it cannot be seen literally. It may be read numerically in a manner consistent with the text aligned with God's character traits. God chastens his children toward obedience with a view to hasten repentance and restoration in relationship. Captivity's purpose was to cause God's people to repent and return to Him on His terms. The gematria value of the number 111 is instructive. If we have understanding, we know we can read this number as words. Scripture confirms this methodology as understanding which produces wisdom.³⁹

The Hebrew phrase "the beginning of wisdom" has a numeric value of 111. Psalm 111:10 declares: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever." Other words and phrases which share this value include: wonderful⁴⁰, the Lord my God⁴¹, children of the Living God⁴² and the blood

²⁷ Harrison, James, The Pattern and the Prophecy, Isaiah Publications, Peterborough, Ontario 1996. All year counting cited in this paper is from Mr. Harrison's book.

²⁸ Acts 13:18

²⁹ Acts 13:20

³⁰ Acts 13:21

³¹ 1 Kings 2:11

³² 1 Kings 6:1, 6:38, 8:1-11

³³ Judges 3:8

³⁴ Judges 3:14

³⁵ Judges 4:3

³⁶ Judges 6:11

³⁷ Judges 10:8

³⁸ Judges 13:1

³⁹ Revelation 13:18

⁴⁰ Isaiah 25:1

⁴¹ Psalm 38:15

⁴² Hosea 1:1

of Jesus⁴³. What is the hidden message. The captivities were God's judgment based on His wisdom producing reverence and right living in His covenant people. This wisdom would ultimately be expressed in His love for the children as He would manifest divine forgiveness as the gracious Passover atoning offer of His only Son, Jesus, the Anointed Most Holy One⁴⁴.

Subtracting 111 from 601 produces 490 years. This is the second period of Covenant Time.

King David to Temple Rebuilding 445 B.C.: 490 Years

From David's dedication of the altar in 1005 B.C. on Mt. Moriah until Artaxerxes' command to restore and rebuild the Jerusalem in 445 B.C. was 560 years. However, we must deduct the 70 years when Israel was exiled in Babylon. The third period of Covenant Time is determined by subtracting 70 years from 560 years which results in 490 years.

Israel's exile was the result of failing to keep God's commandments including the Sabbath rest of the land.

Daniel's 70 Weeks Prophecy: 490 Years

The 70 Weeks prophecy of Daniel spans a 490 year period. It is comprised of 7 periods of 70 years, representing seventy Sabbath periods. This 490-year period differs from the three preceding 490-year periods. Those periods were associated with Abraham, Moses and David and their respective promises. God's redemptive plan promises were specifically addressed in these three men. All periods were forward-looking to Israel's Messiah, Christ.

Daniel's prophecy is not directly associated with the promises made to Abraham, Moses or David. It is a prophetic promise given to Daniel which would indirectly and ultimately fulfill the direct promises to Abraham, Moses and David. It surely follows the pattern of the prior 490-year periods.

In Daniel 9:24 we find six items addressed in the prophecy: (1) to finish the transgression, (2) to make an end of sins, (3) to make reconciliation for iniquity, (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) to seal up the vision and prophecy, and (6) to anoint the most Holy. It appears as a summation prophecy. The period is termed a "determined time"⁴⁵. It appears to be the last quarter, if you will excuse the use of an athletic term. It unifies the promises of Abraham, Moses and David, in Christ.

In Daniel 9:26 we see Christ crucified, as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world⁴⁶. In His offer, having kept all the Law, He fulfilled the Law⁴⁷. He became an High Priest after the order of Melchizedek⁴⁸, the priest which Abraham honored with his tithes⁴⁹.

⁴³ 1 John 1:7

⁴⁴ Daniel 9:24

⁴⁵ Daniel 9:24

⁴⁶ John 1:29

⁴⁷ Galatians 3:17

⁴⁸ Hebrews 7:21

⁴⁹ Genesis 14:20

Abraham had seen the type of future Christ during the first 490-year period. The Law of Moses had been fulfilled producing a new High Priest fulfilling another "oath prophecy"⁵⁰.

In Daniel 9:27 we learn of "the covenant" which will be confirmed with many for one week. What are we to make of this covenant and he who confirms it? The love story must continue. God has not finished with His people, Israel. Verse 27 is the end of Daniel's prophecy. What happens to Abraham's promises? Did the fulfilling of the Law in Verse 26 annul God's promises? If these Abrahamic promises are not fulfilled here, then where and when? Do we just say God will do it later in the Millennium or Eternity? Surely the fullness of God's promises extend into Eternity. We have to ask ourselves what is the purpose of this last verse? Obviously, the Book of Revelation is the expanded version of Verse 27. So we must look there for the answer. We cannot run off and create some private interpretation which fails to align with the "big picture".

I see word pictures as I study and search the Scriptures. In Verse 27, I see Christ standing in front of the verse. I see Him standing at the end of the verse. God invites this vision. Christ, the Word of God, the Alpha and Omega, the *Aleph Tav*, stands in Revelation 1:8 and at the end in Revelation 22:13. He is the beginning and the end⁵¹. Therefore, He stands as previously stated in Verse 27. Christ is the spirit of prophecy⁵². This means all prophecy testifies to Him. Daniel's prophecy is the greatest prophecy in all Scripture because it commences the "Genesis correction event". Christ stands in Genesis 1:1. He is named in Word 4, as the "*Aleph Tav*", His proper name, as the Word of God. Interestingly, this word is not translated in English Bibles. It is omitted. Fortunately, we have John to thank for helping us understand this name.

It is in the Book of Revelation and John 1:1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God⁵³. Then, in the sixth word we see Him again in His role as "God Man". He is the "*Vav Aleph Tav*"⁵⁴. *Vav* is the sixth Hebrew word representing man who was made on Day 6. The *Vav* is the Hebrew pictograph symbol of a nail meaning to connect or to bridge. Notice that this image is of Christ holding out his arms with nail holes in his hands as the bridge between the words heaven and earth.

John tells us again about his image. He says: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me⁵⁵." Simply said, if you want to get to heaven, you must accept His hand and pass through Him. Grace, grace, it is all grace⁵⁶, an expression of divine forgiveness. Forgiveness 490 times is the expression Jesus used to describe God's gracious form of divine forgiveness⁵⁷. Divine forgiveness happens in Daniel 9:27 unto them [all Israel⁵⁸] that turn from transgression in Jacob⁵⁹.

⁵⁰ Psalm 110:4

⁵¹ Revelation 1:8; 22:13

⁵² Revelation 19:10

⁵³ John 1:1

⁵⁴ See: <http://www.alephtavscriptures.com/what-is-the-vavaleph-tav-%D7%95%D7%90%D7%AA-symbol/>

⁵⁵ John 14:6

⁵⁶ Ephesians 2:8-9

⁵⁷ Matthew 18:22

⁵⁸ Romans 11:26

⁵⁹ Isaiah 59:20; Jeremiah 31:34

Sixty-nine of Daniel's 70 Weeks had transpired then Messiah Christ was "cut off"⁶⁰ by a crucifixion death. After the 69th week, God's counting of Covenant Time was suspended. The rejection of the Messiah was Israel's [Jacob's] greatest transgression. Israel was blinded⁶¹ and set aside for a time⁶².

Daniel's 70th week is in the future for the nation of Israel. This week will also be known as the Time of Jacob's Trouble⁶³ and the Tribulation as described in Matthew 24 and the Book of Revelation.

This week will begin when God determines the "fullness of the Gentiles"⁶⁴ has come in and the covenant relationship is restored with Israel, on God's terms. God may simply "confirm" the Abrahamic promises, yet once again or perhaps a modern day Daniel, a messianic Jew, will intercede for Israel, in prayer and God will act. This is surely the inference we are necessarily compelled to make given the three preceding 490-year patterns.

God stopped keeping His covenant or determined time when Israel nationally rejected Christ. God intends to save remnant Israel as His people⁶⁵. He will begin this work with Daniel 9:27. Remnant Israel will return to the mighty God⁶⁶. He is the "mighty God" of covenants⁶⁷. Jehovah or Yhwh is His personal covenant name, that he uses with His friends, those who know him, who are in covenant relationship with Him. His name is the Mighty God⁶⁸.

Daniel 9:27, Daniel's 70th week begins with the declaration: "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week:"

This statement affirms that Covenant Time will begin once again and be counted for the last seven year period. God's relationship with Israel will, after some 1,984 or more years, be restored⁶⁹. The prophets declare this:

¹⁸Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

¹⁹He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

⁶⁰ Daniel 9:26; Isaiah 53:8

⁶¹ Romans 11:7

⁶² Romans 11:20, 25

⁶³ Jeremiah 30:7

⁶⁴ Romans 11:25

⁶⁵ Romans 11:27

⁶⁶ Isaiah 10:21

⁶⁷ Nehemiah 9:32

⁶⁸ Deuteronomy 7:21, 10:17, Job 36:5, Psalm 50:1, Isaiah 9:6; Jeremiah 32:18, Habakkuk 1:12

⁶⁹ Romans 11:25-27; Isaiah 59:20-21, Jeremiah 31:34

²⁰Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old." (Micah 7:18-20)

Conclusion:

We began the first period of 490-years with God's promises to Abraham and end with God's implementation of promises to Abraham and his "seed" in Daniel's 70th Week.

Micah announces the covenant love story between God and Israel bringing God's redemption plan to a dramatic finish at the end of Daniel's 70th Week. But, the ending is just beginning. God has big plans for His people !

Jeremiah declares:

"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:34)

From the foregoing discussion we can discern that God measures time differently. It is a measurement of time from the perspective of Israel. This is God's Covenant Time. The clock only runs when Israel is in a right or determined relationship with God. This is not a hard concept. In fact, most athletic games keep "game time" which excludes "time-outs" for a variety of events.

We can know that unbelief and disobedience results in judgment and exile when God suspends the counting of His "Covenant Time" with Israel.

Jesus came to tell Israel about God's righteousness. They did not want God's righteousness. They wanted to skip righteousness and go straight to the head of nations in glorious peace and dominion⁷⁰.

Israel rejected Christ at His first coming. However, the remnant, the true and obedient Israel, will receive Him during the Time of Jacob's Trouble⁷¹. The love story continues. God rules.

God requires righteousness before He will bring peace. The King of Righteousness, the King of Peace is coming soon !

Maran'athah

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⁷⁰ Genesis 12:2

⁷¹ Revelation 12:17; 14:12,