

# THE PEG IN THE HOLY PALCE

David Baker, prepared for the Apostles' Fellowship word, 4 July 2021  
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## Introduction

Hello, everyone, and welcome to our tenth session on the Seventy Weeks prophecy.

In our last session, we identified the beginning of the prophecy as 'the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem'.

'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; the street shall be built again and the wall, even in troublesome times.' Dan 9:25.

## Four commands to restore and build Jerusalem – one, integrated package

We considered the summary statement of Ezra concerning the command, because this verse, and other Scriptures, record four commands. Ezr 6:14.

There is the commandment of the God of Israel; the command of Cyrus; the command of Darius; and the command of Artaxerxes.

Our key point was that *all four of these commands are part of one, integrated package*.

'The commandment of the God of Israel', which was issued by the Lord Himself in response to the prayer of Daniel, determined, or decreed, the seventy weeks. Dan 9:20-24.

It also ordained the *timing* of the various commands by the Persian kings that followed.

We know that when Cyrus issued his command, it brought the exile in Babylon to an end, and the people were able to return to their homeland.

The command of Darius was also significant, because it enabled the people to finish building the temple.

And the command of Artaxerxes was also significant, because it enabled Ezra to return.

According to the sovereign timing of the Lord, the command of Artaxerxes marked the specific *commencement of the Seventy Weeks prophecy*. That was our key point last week; and this is clear because of the content and nature of that command.

## The command of Artaxerxes

Artaxerxes said, '*Whatever* is commanded by the God of heaven.' Ezr 7:23.

In this, he was really issuing Ezra a 'blank cheque'. '*Whatever* is commanded by the God of heaven, let it diligently be done for the house of the God of heaven. For why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?' Ezr 7:23.

He also said to Ezra that, according to the wisdom of God that had been given to him, he was free to instruct and teach the people concerning the ways of the Lord. He was also free to set up magistrates and judges in the land, so that they had the freedom to set up their own autonomous administration under the Lord Himself. Ezr 7:25.

That was the content of the decree - it is clear that this is the beginning of the Seventy Weeks prophecy.

The timing of the decree also makes this clear.

Last week, we noted that according to the secular dates, which are widely accepted and readily accessible, the seventh year of Artaxerxes, when the decree was issued, was 457BC. Ezr 7:8.

Sixty-nine weeks is equivalent to four hundred and eighty-three years. If we count four hundred and eighty-three years from 457BC, remembering that there is no year 'zero', it brings us to 27AD, which is the most likely date for the baptism of Jesus.

So, the *timing* of the command also confirms that this is the beginning of the Seventy Weeks prophecy.

Most importantly, however, the command of Artaxerxes coincides with *the return and the ministry of Ezra*. This is what we will particularly consider in this session.

## Daniel's prayer - for the Lord to open His eyes upon the people

It is important to remember that Daniel received the Seventy Weeks prophecy *in response to his prayer*.

This was a *prayer of repentance and faith*. Daniel prayed that the Lord would cause His face to shine on His desolate sanctuary, and that He would open His eyes upon the city that was called by His name.

Daniel prayed, ‘Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations.’ Dan 9:17-18.

Now, that is a very important phrase – Daniel is praying and asking the Lord to open His eyes upon the people. He is asking the Lord to come and *meet them, eye to eye and heart to heart*.

‘Open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies.

‘O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.’ Dan 9:18-19.

### **For the people and for the holy city**

Remember that the focus of the Seventy Weeks is *for the people and the holy city*. In the first case, this was the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem.

When we come to the offering of Jesus Christ, however, we note a big transition, and the focus shifts to the *heavenly Jerusalem and Jew and Gentile in one body*.

But we are making the point here that the focus is *the people and the city*.

We know that the people returned to the land at the conclusion of their exile in Babylon. And then, in the days of Zechariah and Haggai, the Lord caused His face to shine on the desolate sanctuary, and the people were able to rebuild and dedicate the temple.

Furthermore, the Lord significantly upgraded the administration and the mandate of the priests. He gave them access among the angelic host in the heavenly sanctuary.

### **The restoration of the city – the sanctification of each household; each marriage**

However, in relation to the *restoration of the city of Jerusalem*, we must ask the question, considering Daniel’s prayer, ‘When did the Lord meet the people eye to eye and heart to heart to address the culture of their households?’

It was clearly in the days of Ezra. We know this to be true, because the fruit of the Lord meeting us eye to eye and heart to heart is *the fear of the Lord*, and this is what we observe in this account.

It is important to remember that ‘the going forth of the command’ was to *restore and build Jerusalem*. We note that the emphasis, or the priority, was ‘the *restoration*’, before ‘the building’.

It would be a mistake, when we consider a city, to limit our consideration to the building of the infrastructure or the administration, because a city – and this is true of any city – is firstly a *dwelling place for a multitude of households*.

Then, there are public meeting places and infrastructure and administration which support that grouping of households.

But the city is firstly the dwelling place for a multitude of households.

The key point, then, is that the primary emphasis of the restoration of Jerusalem was *the sanctification of each household*.

And the sanctification of each household began with the sanctification of each *marriage*. This is what we see happening when Ezra returned.

### **The sanctification of Abraham’s marriage and household**

When we consider the various commands of the Persian kings and then the *recovery*, or the *restoration*, which was able to take place in response to these commands, we notice a similar pattern to the major visitations of the Lord to Abram, or Abraham.

We know that the God of glory first appeared to him when he was still in Mesopotamia, or Ur of the Chaldeans, and commanded him to leave his father’s house, *to come out of Babylon*, and to go to a land that the Lord was going to show him. Gen 12:1.

We know that later, Jesus Christ, as Melchizedek, met Abram when he was returning from winning the first 'world war', and He enjoyed an *agape* meal with him. He promised that Abram would be possessor of heaven and earth. Gen 14:18-19. Heb 7:1. Rom 4:13.

After this encounter, He, the word of the Lord, appeared to Abram again in a vision, and said to him, 'Abram, do not fear, I am your shield [meaning, 'I am your faith'] and I am your exceedingly great reward.' Gen 15:1.

The Son of God was saying to Abraham, 'I will be your Son.' He was also saying, 'You will become a son of God in Me, in the fellowship of My offering.'

This was an amazing prophetic insight for Abram. But it was many years later, when Abram was ninety-nine years old, that the Lord came to him and said, 'Abram, walk before Me and be blameless.' Gen 17:1.

We have been considering this in some detail over this present season. This is where the Lord began to address *the culture and the sanctification* of Abram's marriage and his household, and addressed the *mixture* that was in his house.

### **God's people similarly 'called out of Babylon', to sanctify their households**

In a similar way, we observe that the command of Cyrus enabled the people to leave Babylon and to come back to the land.

Then we observe the profound prophetic ministry of Zechariah and Haggai to the people.

When we read the book of Zechariah, particularly, we note how profound his ministry was. He prophesied concerning many years ahead, looking toward Christ as the Builder of *the true temple*. He described His Melchizedek ministry, and the way in which He would branch out, through a lampstand administration, and *build that temple and judge Babylon*.

He looked right down to the time of the end, and the application of the *spirit of grace and supplication* to the Jewish nation in the days ahead of us, when one third will be saved and brought in to the fellowship of the body of Christ.

But, in terms of the spirit of grace and supplication coming to the people in *that* day and addressing the culture of *their* households, so that

every household *mourned*, every man, every woman mourned alone, this happened in the days of Ezra.

### **The ministry of Ezra – repentance from mixed cultures and grace for restoration**

Sixty years after that incredible prophetic ministry of Zechariah and Haggai, Ezra returned and confronted the people *concerning their marriages and their households*.

In the same way that the Lord said to Abram, 'Walk before Me and be blameless', Ezra confronted the people, as a messenger of the Lord, on *exactly the same point*.

We will pick up the narrative in Ezra Chapter 9: 'When these things were done [after Ezra had returned], the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites and the Moabites, the Egyptians and the Amorites.

' "For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass".' Ezr 9:1-2.

We note that the issue was the *mixed culture in the marriages*, in the same way that the issue with Abram and Sarai was the mixed culture in their marriage.

The Lord gives a remnant of the Spirit, or a portion of the divine nature, to each married couple, because *He desires godly seed*. Mal 2:15.

Ezra noted here that the fruit of the mixed culture in the marriages was seen *in the children*. The 'holy seed' had become mixed with the peoples of the lands.

### **An unction of repentance in the fear of God**

Ezra responded, 'So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished.' Ezr 9:3.

This is an amazing statement! Ezra made this response because *he feared God*, and he was *astonished* at the *lack of fear* before the eyes of the remnant who had returned from Babylon not too long earlier.

Those who did fear God soon gathered around Ezra.

‘Then everyone who *trembled at the words of the God of Israel* assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.’ Ezr 9:4.

Ezra recognised that, even though the people had come back from Babylon, they had returned from the seventy-year exile, they were *still captive to the administration of Babylon* that rules over all seven kingdoms of the world, *because their culture was mixed*.

They had intermarried with all of the various nations in the land, so they were *still captives*, even though they had been set free from their captivity to the nation of Babylon.

‘At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the Lord my God.

‘And I said: “O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens.”’ Ezr 9:5-6.

Ezra was ashamed; he was humiliated; but, he *did not recoil* from the Lord’s gaze. The Lord’s eyes brought Ezra to the point of *true humility*.

We note that the *same unction*, or anointing, of *repentance* that had fallen upon Daniel when he prayed his prayer of repentance, also fell upon Ezra.

‘Since the days of our fathers to this day.’ Ezr 9:7. We note that he went right back and recognised all of the corruption among the fathers and the kings and the priests that had led to the exile in Babylon. He said that corruption was *still present*, even though they had returned from captivity.

‘Since the days of our fathers to this day we have been very guilty, and for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to humiliation, as it is to this day.’ Ezr 9:7.

So, this issue was ongoing. Ezra prayed with the same *unction of repentance and faith* that had rested upon the prophet Daniel.

### **Grace for restoration – ‘a peg in the holy place’**

However, in a spirit of faith, he also prayed, ‘And now for a little while grace has been shown from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us *a peg in His holy place*, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage.’ Ezr 9:8.

This prophetic declaration of Ezra, that the Lord had given the people ‘a peg in the holy place’, is particularly significant in relation to the Seventy Weeks prophecy.

The word ‘peg’ may also be translated as ‘nail’. At first glance, this appears to be quite an unusual statement. Most commentators, when they consider this verse, endeavour to link it to something in the days of Ezra. They might, for example, connect it to the priesthood or even to the temple buildings.

However, we know that the priesthood in the days of Ezra was *not secure*. It was not secure, because the priests were foremost guilty in relation to marrying foreign wives. There was a completely *mixed culture* and *uncleanliness* among the priests. So, they were in no way secure. They had *no capacity to restore* and recover the people in this matter, because they were also guilty.

So, ‘the peg’ does not refer to the priesthood in the days of Ezra. However, when we connect this prophetic statement to the book of Hebrews, its meaning and significance become clear.

The ‘peg’, or the ‘nail’, is something that is *firm, secure, sure and steadfast*.

In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul proclaimed, ‘Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

‘This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast and which enters the Presence behind the veil.’ Heb 6:17-19.

This is the holy place. And Jesus Christ, as our great High Priest, is the Peg in the most holy place.

### **Jesus Christ, our great High Priest – the ‘peg in the holy place’ to those who obey Him**

When you think of ‘an anchor’, don’t think of an anchor that you throw off the back of a boat. It is a peg, or a nail, which is *firmly driven into a secure place* as an anchor point for us.

‘This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.’ Heb 6:19-20.

The *hope of our sonship is sure and steadfast*, because Jesus Christ, as our great High Priest, has fully identified with our fallen condition and our judgement, while, at the same time, learning our obedience, fulfilling our righteousness, completing the works of our sonship.

And, having perfected our sonship, He has taken His seat at the right hand of God, and He is *now ministering* to us our *participation in His finished offering*.

That priestly ministry of Christ is the *guarantee* that we will inherit our sonship, as long as we *continue to obey Him*. There is a big proviso here – *if we obey Him, and continue to embrace our fellowship in His offering and sufferings*.

Remember that He is the source of eternal salvation for all those *who obey Him*. Heb 5:9.

### **Zechariah declared Christ as the Peg – anchor point for every household**

Prior to the return of Ezra, the prophet Zechariah also declared that Christ is the Peg.

He prophesied concerning the tribe of Judah. He proclaimed, ‘From him comes the cornerstone.’ Zec 10:4. We know that he was referring to Christ; He is the Cornerstone of the true temple, and He is the Head of His many-membered body.

‘From him comes the cornerstone, from him the tent peg.’ Zec 10:4.

So, it is a particular kind of peg. It is a *tent peg*. This is the *anchor point for every household*, the place where we *live*.

### **Isaiah declared Christ as the Peg – His finished work and His offering journey**

The prophet Isaiah also identified Christ as being the Peg. Isaiah prophesied concerning Eliakim as a type of Christ.

‘The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he shall open, and no-one shall shut; and he shall shut, and no-one shall open.’ Isa 22:22.

We know that this refers to Jesus Christ, because He addressed the presbytery in Philadelphia as the One ‘who has the key of David, He who opens and no-one shuts, and shuts and no-one opens’. Rev 3:7. He said to them, ‘I have set before you an open door which no man can shut.’ Rev 3:8.

Isaiah continued, ‘I will fasten Him [speaking about Christ] as a *peg in a secure place* [this is ‘the peg in the holy place’], and He will become a glorious throne to His Father’s house’. Isa 22:23.

This describes the finished work of Christ as our great High Priest and our King. He has taken His seat on the throne of the Father and on the throne of David.

Significantly, Isaiah also spoke of *the offering journey of Christ* by saying, ‘In that day, the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed and be cut down and fall, and the burden that was on it will be cut off; for the Lord has spoken.’ Isa 22:25.

This illustrates the other side of the cross. It refers to the day of Christ’s offering journey from Gethsemane to the cross.

As the scapegoat, Christ was incrementally cursed and cut off from the land of the living. He bore our transgressions, sin and iniquity in His physical body so that, as He was cut off, this burden was also cut off and assigned to the sea of God’s forgetfulness, forever. This was for the sake of those who join the fellowship of His offering and sufferings and come back with Him by the resurrection life of God in His blood.

As we have considered a number of times, this is the central tenet of the Seventy Weeks prophecy: that Jesus Christ was cut off, ‘but not for Himself’. Dan 9:26.

## **Ezra and the people mourned in repentance under the spirit of grace and supplication**

Ezra looked forward to this finished offering of Christ as the Peg in the holy place, or Jesus Christ as our great High Priest now ministering to us a participation in His finished offering. This is 'the peg in the holy place'.

We will read our key verse again: 'And now for a little while grace has been shown from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage.' Ezr 9:8.

There are a lot of statements in that one verse, and Ezra enunciated there a very integrated 'package'.

We could start with the fact that we have a peg in the holy place, because Jesus Christ is our great High Priest, and He is ministering to us our participation in His finished offering.

He does so by sending messengers. These are the presbyteries in His right hand, who proclaim to us the word of the cross. And the word of the cross is coming *with a spirit of grace and supplication*.

So, as Ezra declared, *grace* is being shown to us from the Lord. This spirit of grace and supplication enables us to *turn* so that we can meet Christ Himself, eye to eye and heart to heart.

When we meet Christ this way, eye to eye, our eye is enlightened and we are able to see the iniquity that is in our heart. Thus, we are illuminated to know what we are turning from, or need to turn from, so that we are delivered from the judgement of God.

It is a tremendous *mercy* to us when Christ meets us in this way because, once we see the iniquity in our heart, and our eyes are enlightened, *we fear God*, and we run for *refuge within the veil* to escape the judgement of God. Heb 6:18-20.

This is exactly what Ezra said: 'That our God may enlighten our eyes to leave us a remnant to escape' – to escape His judgement by fleeing for refuge within the veil, so that we then find revival and receive His resurrection life.

Ezra understood that a *spirit of grace and supplication* flowed from the face of the Lord to the people, in their bondage. The spirit of grace and supplication that Ezra received from the face of the Lord then

flowed to the people *through the prayer and supplication of Ezra*, who was the Lord's messenger.

'Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God.' Ezr 10:1.

We see the spirit of grace and supplication here upon him – he *mourned* as one who is *bankrupt in spirit*; he mourned with godly sorrow.

'Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly.' Ezr 10:1.

The group here continued to grow. It began with Ezra; then those who feared the Lord gathered to him. Then he lifted up his hands and began to pray this prayer of repentance under the unction of the spirit of grace and supplication. So the crowd continued to grow.

This spirit of grace and supplication fell upon all of them as they gathered, so that they turned to look upon Jesus Christ whom they had pierced. *They met Him, eye to eye, heart to heart*, in exactly the same way that Christ met Peter in the court of Caiaphas.

As Peter met Christ in this way and then began to weep bitterly, this crowd also wept bitterly. This is godly sorrow. Like Ezra, *they began to see*. They saw the iniquity in their heart. They saw why they are under the judgement of God. They also saw, like Ezra, that *there is a peg in the holy place*. Therefore, they could flee for refuge *to lay hold of a hope that is sure and steadfast*.

## **The repentant response of the people to restore their households in the fear of God**

I love this next point – the response of this man: 'Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam'. Ezr 10:2.

We don't know, particularly, who this man was. We know that he was of the third generation of those who returned from Babylon. We know that he was not one of the priests; nor was he one of the Levites.

He was gathered as the head of his household. The spirit of grace and supplication fell upon him, and he met Christ, eye to eye and heart to heart. He responded and articulated his own repentance

and faith, by saying, 'We have trespassed against our God.' Ezr 10:2.

He made this confession to Ezra, but also before the Lord. He said, 'We have trespassed against our God, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this', because *he saw the Peg in the holy place*. Ezr 10:2.

Ezra then issued a proclamation throughout the whole region of Judah and Jerusalem that every man needed to assemble in Jerusalem within three days. Ezr 10:7-8.

We note the urgency of the Spirit upon this matter. The stakes were high. If anyone refused to assemble in this manner, their property was to be confiscated, and they would be separated from the assembly of the people.

'All the men of Judah and Benjamin [from all the surrounding regions] gathered at Jerusalem within three days. It was the ninth month, on the twentieth of the month; and all the people sat in the open square of the house of God, trembling because of this matter and because of heavy rain.' Ezr 10:9.

It is interesting that the Scripture specifically recorded the 'heavy rain'. But the primary point of their trembling was because of 'this matter' - because they were beginning to meet Christ eye to eye and heart to heart, and to recognise that they were under the judgement of God.

This demonstrated that they had *received the fear of God*. They recognised the need for *obedience to the word of Ezra*, and for *repentance*, because they were under the judgement of God.

They said to Ezra, 'Please, let the leaders of our entire assembly stand; and let all those in our cities who have taken pagan wives come at appointed times, together with the elders and judges of their cities, until the fierce wrath of our God is turned away from us in this matter.' Ezr 10:14.

We note that this confrontation between the Lord and the people, through the ministry of Ezra, initiated a *whole season of repentance*.

Ezra was joined by a presbytery of elders, and they were all sanctified, according to their name, to this work, to examine the matter with Ezra. It

took them three months to even assess the extent of the problem. Ezr 10:16.

### **A season of repentance and a season of revival in response to His word**

This initiated a whole season of *repentance*, and then a whole season of *revival*, as the people responded to the word.

I am sure that you are bearing witness in the Spirit that we have been in a similar season, where the Lord has been specifically addressing us concerning the culture of our marriages, and the culture of our households, and the way in which we are raising our children in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord; our commitment to the order of headship; our commitment to the sanctification of our households from mixed cultures, so that we are able to eat and drink the communion in a worthy manner, and be delivered from unclean spirits and the influences of the world upon our households.

This is a season of repentance for us; but the Lord is also speaking to us in this way so that it is a season of *revival*.

That revival does not, in the first case, concern numbers coming into the church; rather, it is *revival in our households*, as we see the resurrection life of God come to us in all of these areas.