

## 2. 2 Chronicles

\*2 Chronicles 36; 70-year prophecy, sabbath rest for the land, end times (36:20-23)

- "He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years" (36:20-21; ESV Bible). This 70-year period is the same period that is mentioned in the prophecies of Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10 (see also Daniel 9:2; Zechariah 1:12). What is the significance of 70 years? This was the number of years that the people had failed to observe God's law of a "sabbath rest" for the land. God told the sons of Israel that every seventh year, the land was to have a sabbath rest (Leviticus 25:1-5); "but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard" (Leviticus 25:4). They would have to trust the Lord to provide for their needs for that year. If the people would fail to follow this command, God would remove them from the land to enforce this "sabbath rest" (Leviticus 26:33-35). For hundreds of years the nation disobeyed God by ignoring this command. This resulted in a 70-year judgment that would allow the land to enjoy its "sabbath rest". This judgment was also a result of the unfaithfulness of the people as they followed all the abominations of the nations and defiled the temple in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36:14). Indeed all Israel had transgressed God's law and turned aside, not obeying His voice and rebelled and sinned against Him (Daniel 9:9, 11). For additional information, refer to section 54 (The 70-Year Bible Prophecies).

- This prophecy will apparently be fulfilled in two phases, totaling 70 years. The Babylonian captivity began in 605 B.C. (refer to Jeremiah 25:11-12 commentary) and marked the beginning of phase one. In 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon captured Jerusalem and took some of the vessels from the house of God (temple) to place them in a Babylonian temple (Daniel 1:1-2). He also took captive some of the sons of Israel, including Daniel (Daniel 1:3-7). Phase one began with the removal of the "sons of Israel" from the land and would end with the return of the Jewish people to the land more than 66 years later (538 B.C.). Phase two will be fulfilled during the second half of the Great Tribulation. Since phase two is exactly three and a half prophetic years long (1,260 days; Revelation 12:6), phase one must be 66 and a half years long to total 70 years. Just as phase one began with the desecration of the temple and the captivity of the Jewish people, so will phase two. At the midpoint of the Great Tribulation, the antichrist will desecrate the temple and declare war on the Jewish people. Those who are in Judea and Jerusalem must flee to the mountains. Many Jews "will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24; Revelation 11:2). Some Jews will escape and God will miraculously provide a safe haven for them during the second half of the Tribulation (Matthew 24:15-22; Luke 21:20-24; Revelation 12:6, 14). During these three and a half years, the Gentiles (Babylon the Great; refer to Revelation 17, 18) will control the land of

Israel and the land will once again have a sabbath rest. This 70-year prophecy will ultimately be fulfilled when Jesus Christ returns and brings His people back to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 29:10).

- "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia – in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah – the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, 'Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!"'" (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; refer also to Ezra 1:1-3). The decree of Cyrus in 538 B.C. was necessary to "fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah". The first phase of the desolation of Jerusalem (Daniel 9:2) and the desolation of the land ("sabbath rest") could not be completed until the Jewish people returned to the holy city. This return was a foreshadow of the second coming of Christ when He will bring His people back to Jerusalem for the last time (Jeremiah 29:10).