

I. Daniel's Prayer and the 70 Weeks Vision (Daniel 9:1-27)

A. Introduction

This chapter contains the prayer of Daniel for his people who were still in exile as well as God's response to that prayer in the 70 Weeks vision.

Daniel's prayer expressed his earnest petition for his fellow Israelites, confessing their shame because of their sin and asking the Lord to restore them. In response, the angel Gabriel came to Daniel to tell him that he had come to give him understanding regarding Israel's future and that Daniel was greatly loved by God. Gabriel then unfolded the words giving the panorama of the 70 weeks God had determined for Israel.

Daniel was a man of integrity and character which was evident in his prayer life. In chapter 6, Daniel proved himself to be a man of prayer when he defied the law that outlawed prayer to anyone other than Darius. His commitment to prayer is evident also in this chapter where he acknowledged his sin and the sin of his people and cried out for God's forgiveness.

His prayer serves as a tutorial on the kind of prayer that honors the Lord.

The answer Daniel received in the 70 Weeks vision is one of the most important prophetic passages in the Bible. The four verses (vs. 24-27) have often been called the "backbone of Biblical prophecy" since several NT passages make references to this text (Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2; Rev 11, 12, 13). Thus, a right understanding of Bible prophecy and the events of the end times depends upon a right interpretation of this text.

"Daniel's message of the seventy sevens is one of the greatest prophecies in the Bible."¹⁸²

B. Expositional Notes

1. The Prayer of Daniel (vs. 1-19)

Daniel 9:1-2 ~ In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans – 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

- Daniel's prayer occurred in the "first year of Darius who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans."
- The fact that he "was made king" may point to the fact that Darius was Gubaru, the one who was appointed as governor over the Chaldean portion of the Medo-Persian kingdom which was ruled over by Cyrus (see discussion on Darius the Mede in chapter 6).

¹⁸² Miller 1994: 273.

- The “first year of Darius” was about 539/538 BC, when Daniel would have been about 80 years old after having been in captivity for about 66-67 years.
- Apparently moved by Darius’ victory, Daniel searched the Scriptures to understand the events which were taking place.
- He did what every godly person does...he studied the Word of God, being particularly interested in how long their captivity would last.
- He studied the “books,” most likely the books or scrolls of the law which the Jews had no doubt brought with them into exile, including the book of Jeremiah the prophet.
- Daniel understood the significance of the moment he found himself in – Babylon had been overthrown, an event that prepared the way for the liberation of the Jewish people who had been in exile since Nebuchadnezzar’s first invasion of Jerusalem in 605 BC.
- Not only had Jeremiah predicted that the Israelites would go into exile, but also that their captivity would last 70 years (cf. Jer 25:11-12; 29:10-14).
- Since the year was 539 BC and Daniel had been in Babylon for at least 66-67 years, he knew, through his study of Jeremiah, that the end of their 70-year exile must have been near.
- He knew that God’s assigned period for Judah’s captivity was nearing its end.
- As a result, he was encouraged to pray for the restoration of Jerusalem and the regathering of the people of Israel.
- As he saw the end of the 70 years getting closer, he prayed for God’s next move on behalf of Israel.
- It was when Daniel saw the plan in Scripture that he began the prayer.
- His prayer was born out of an understanding of the Word of God. In other words, Daniel let Scripture drive his prayer life.
- As Daniel saw God’s promises starting to be fulfilled, he prayed with greater urgency, pleading for God’s mercy and favor to rest upon His people.
- This shows that Daniel had a proper understanding of the balance between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.
- On the one hand, Daniel fully believed in the sovereignty of God and knew that God’s promises to Jeremiah would be fulfilled.
- On the other hand, Daniel’s understanding of God’s sovereign plan didn’t dissuade him from prayer; it actually encouraged it.
- He was no hyper-Calvinist, using the sovereignty of God as an excuse not to pray.
- It was precisely when Daniel read in the Scriptures the plan of God to judge Babylon and restore His people that and saw that sovereign plan starting to be put into effect in history that he lifted up his voice in prayer.

- Daniel saw that, since God had given this promise about the 70 years, it was his responsibility to ask the Lord to fulfill it.
- In short, he recognized that God employs means to accomplish His purposes and prayer is one of those means.

Daniel 9:3 ~ So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

- Daniel knew nothing about flippant, trite, superficial praying; rather his prayer life was fervent, strong, disciplined, and deliberate.
- This verse literally says that Daniel “set his face to the Lord God.”
- That describes the fervor with which Daniel turned away from other things to concentrate on prayer.
- The idea here is one of faith, devotion, consecration, commitment, and earnestness, intensity.
- His prayer was with “fasting, sackcloth, and ashes,” revealing a fervency in his heart.

Daniel 9:4-15

- Verses 4-19 contain the content of Daniel’s prayer, with verses 4-15 focused primarily on Daniel’s confession of Israel’s sin.
- Daniel admitted the shame that had come upon the Israelites was due to their sin and rebellion against the Lord.
- He prepared the way for his corporate confession by describing the character of God (vs. 4).
- God’s great character formed the backdrop against which Daniel saw the disobedience of his people.
- Contrasted with God’s faithfulness and lovingkindness (*hesed*) was the disloyalty and unfaithfulness of God’s people.
- Everything God was, Israel wasn’t.
- Daniel started with the greatness of God in order to show just how far Israel had transgressed in breaking God’s law and covenant.
- “The key to spiritual and God-honoring confession is to have a clear grasp of who God is in all of His infinitely perfect moral attributes of holiness, truth, and love.”¹⁸³
- By heaping word upon word and phrase upon phrase, Daniel repeatedly admitted the heinousness of their disobedience:
 - “we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances” (vs. 5)
 - “we have not listened to Your servants” (vs. 6) – (cf. Matt 21:33-36)
 - “their unfaithful deeds which they committed against You (vs. 7)

¹⁸³ Whitcomb 1985: 123.

- “we have sinned against You” (vs. 8)
 - “we have rebelled against Him” (vs. 9)
 - “nor have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God” (vs. 10)
 - “all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice...we have sinned against Him” (vs. 11)
 - “we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth” (vs. 13)
 - “we have not obeyed His voice” (vs. 14)
 - “we have sinned, we have been wicked” (vs. 15)
- The curse in verse 11 refers back to the blessings and cursings in Deut. 28:15-22, 63-67 and similar passages in Moses like Lev. 26.
 - The calamity (vs. 12, 13, 14) they were presently experiencing was the consequences of their rebellion.
 - Genuine confession (“perpetual broken-heartedness” according to the Puritans) is one of the characteristics of God-honoring prayer.
 - The prayers of truly godly people should be saturated with broken-hearted confession (cf. Ps 32:3-5; Is 66:2).
 - The godly always cultivate a hatred of sin and keep short accounts of it.
 - Interestingly, Daniel was not guilty of any of the iniquities he confessed in his corporate confession.
 - Yet, he included himself in the confession which is evident from the numerous uses of “we/our” (vs. 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13).
 - NOTE: Helpful resources on the issue of corporate apologies:
 - <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/toward-theology-apology/>
 - <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/how-should-christians-think-about-corporate-apologies/>
 - <https://cpt.mbts.edu/2018/10/09/is-christ-enough-brief-thoughts-on-corporate-representation/>

Daniel 9:16-19 ~ O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those around us. 17 So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary. 18 O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion. 19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.

- These verses contain Daniel's supplication and petition on the part of his people.
- "For the first time in his prayer Daniel makes a request of his God. Instead of rushing into the presence of His lord with a mouth filled with petitions, requests, and demands, Daniel sets a worthy pattern for all saints."¹⁸⁴
- He asked that God's discipline might be lifted and the people freed from their present bondage.
- He appealed to God to respond with grace and mercy by restoring the city and His people and being faithful to His unworthy people.
- Specifically, he asked the Lord to "hear...forgive...listen...take action." (vs. 19).
- "In v. 19 the prayer reaches a passionate crescendo as the prophet concludes with short staccatolike sentences reflecting the emotion that filled his heart."¹⁸⁵
- Notably, he appealed to God, not on the basis of Israel's worthiness, but for the sake of God's honor and reputation:
 - "Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain...Your people" (vs. 16)
 - "for Your sake...Your desolate sanctuary" (vs. 17)
 - "the city which is called by Your name...Your great compassion" (vs. 18)
 - "For Your own sake...Your city...Your people...Your name" (vs. 19)
- God's reputation was the primary concern of Daniel's prayer.
- It was as if he was saying: "God, do You understand what's going on?...Do You understand what the people and the nations think about You?...You are the God of Israel...You couldn't protect Your people...Your people's city was destroyed, their temple was destroyed, their sanctuary was destroyed, their land is desolate...They have been hauled off into captivity....That's not good for Your reputation...So hear this prayer and answer it because Your Word, name, and reputation are at stake"

2. The 70 Weeks Vision (vs. 20-27)

Daniel 9:20-21 ~ Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, 21 while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering.

- Daniel received the answer to his prayer even before he finished praying.
- He was interrupted in his prayer by the appearance of the angel Gabriel, who was mentioned previously (8:16) when he helped Daniel understand the ram-goat vision.
- Gabriel is the PR angel, making big announcements in both the OT (Dan 8:16; 9:20) and the NT (Luke 1:19, 26).
- Ironically, it was Gabriel who announced the arrival of the Messiah to Daniel here (in 539 BC) and it was Gabriel who announced the arrival of the Messiah to Mary at His conception.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 126.

¹⁸⁵ Miller 1994: 249.

- Gabriel came “about the time of the evening offering,” the time when the evening offering would have been offered if the temple had been still standing (3-4 pm).
- Even though the temple has been destroyed, Daniel still observed that time of day as an appointed time of worship.

Daniel 9:22-23 ~ He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. 23 At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision.”

- Gabriel had been dispatched from heaven, presumably by God Himself, at the “beginning of your supplications.”
- No sooner did Daniel begin to pray than heaven went into action and the angels flew with the answer to Daniel’s request.
- He was sent to give Daniel “insight with understanding.”
- He was sent to show Daniel the events surrounding the end of the Babylonian exile and what would transpire prior to Messiah’s arrival.
- Daniel wanted to know about God’s program for His people until its consummation in the covenanted kingdom of Israel’s Messiah.
- Thus, God sent Gabriel to reveal to Daniel the circumstances under which Israel would be restored.
- The stage was set for Gabriel to reveal to Daniel God’s purposes for Israel, culminating in the arrival of their Messiah to establish His kingdom
- Gabriel then revealed to Daniel a complex, marvelous, and thrilling prophecy known as the 70 Weeks Vision.

Daniel 9:24 ~ Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.

Issue #1 - The Duration of the “Weeks”

- 70 weeks described the amount of time from Daniel’s day until the coming of Messiah.
- 70 “weeks” (*shabua*, literally “seventy sevens” or “70 units of sevens”) would take place before all would be restored.
- Since the text doesn’t specify whether it is days, months, or years that are in view, it is necessary to let the context dictate the meaning (i.e. whatever is most natural).
- Clearly, the “seventy sevens” could not refer to days since 490 days would be about 1 1/3 years which would not be enough time for the events prophesied here to occur.
- It is best to take the “70 sevens” as referring to years (i.e. 490 years) as opposed to days or months for the following reasons:

1. In their calendar system, the Jews were very familiar with a “week of years.” They were free to work the land for six years but the seventh was to be a Sabbath rest for the land. Additionally, after every “seven sevens” of year there was to be a Sabbath year (the Year of Jubilee). Thus, the “week of years” was well known to the Jewish people. Whereas people today tend to think in units of tens (decades), Daniel’s people thought in terms of sevens (heptads).
 2. Daniel had been clearly thinking in terms of multiple “sevens” already in this chapter (cf. vs. 2 where 70 years equals 10 sevens). So it would not be a stretch to think that he is thinking about 70 sevens in verse 24.
 3. In the other occurrence of the word “sevens” (*shabua*) in Daniel, (10:2-3 ~ “three entire weeks”) it is literally “three sevens of days.” There Daniel included the Hebrew word “day” (*yom*) to ensure that it would be obvious that days are in view. However, in verse 24, Daniel did not use the word *yom* to likely point to years.
 4. Years remarkably work out to the time of Christ whereas days or months do not work out to anything meaningful.
 5. One of the reasons the Jews had been taken captive for 70 years was so that the land might rest and be restored in honor of the number of Sabbath years that the Jews had failed to keep. The Jews had violated the Sabbath years in their desire to keep the land producing and live the life they wanted to live (cf. Lev 25:1-7; 26:34-35). On 70 occasions, they had to observe a sabbath rest for the land. In 2 Chronicles 36:20-21, God said that Israel would be removed from the land for 70 years because they had violated 70 Sabbath years. Thus, the 70 year Babylonian captivity was God’s way of giving the land the rest he wanted. In the 70 Weeks Vision, the Lord promised that 70 more of those 7-year periods of time would occur prior to Israel being restored. Thus 490 years would be required to complete 70 sabbatical years with one occurring every seventh year.
 6. Verse 27 appears to have in view seven years since it refers to the seventieth week/seven and to the middle of it. The “middle of the week” likely means 3½ years, fitting well with other time references (Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 11:3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). Thus, the final “seven” of the 70 sevens is a “seven of years,” showing that the first 69 years are also “sevens of years.”
- Thus, God ordained that His plan would be accomplished when “70 sevens” (490 years) are completed.

Issue #2 – The Meaning of the Six Objectives

- This prophecy is not concerned with world history but with the history of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

- These six accomplishments refer, not to Israel's near history, but to their future as it relates to end of the age.
 - By the time 490 years have been completed, God will have accomplished six things for Israel.
 - Daniel is told about two sets of three accomplishments each, the first three which are negative and the last three which are positive.
 - The first three pertain to dealing with Israel's sin and the last three which deal with bringing in a kingdom of everlasting righteousness for Israel.
 - The basis for the first three was provided in the work of Christ on the cross in His first coming, although their application to Israel as a nation is still future.
 - The final three await fulfillment at the Second Coming of Christ, when all six will be fully realized for Israel.
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- First, it will "finish the transgression" in that it would bring Israel's rebellion and sin to an end and will stop Israel's trend toward idolatry and apostasy.
 - Although this does not deny Gentile transgression will also be finished at the same future time, the emphasis is upon finishing the transgression of the nation of Israel.
 - Gabriel emphasized the sin of Daniel's particular people since the immediate context concentrates on "your people and your holy city."
 - Israel's sin of disobedience will be finished at Christ's Second Coming when she repents and turns to Him as her Messiah and Savior.
 - This does not deny that there can be sin afterward in the millennium.
 - "Sin will be suppressed and controlled, but not totally eliminated, for as the Millennium continues and children are born to the regenerate parents who enter it, the 'rod of iron' aspect of Messiah's rule will become evident (Ps. 2:9; Rev 2:27; 12:5; 19:15). Rare cases of open rebellion will be dealt with suddenly and supernaturally (Isa. 11:3-5; 65:20)."¹⁸⁶
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- Second, it will "make an end of sin" in that it will judge sin once and for all (cf. Heb 9:26).
 - Christ will remove Israel's sin at His Second Coming.
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- Third, it will "make atonement for iniquity," an atonement that will come through sacrifice.
 - Christ made the provision for Israel's atonement at the cross, but Israel as a people have not been reconciled to God.
 - The work of reconciliation includes not only a provision in the death of Christ but an actual bringing of Israel to a right relationship with God.
 - This also refers to God's final atonement of Israel when she repents at Christ's Second Coming since the provision for that atonement has already been made at the cross.

¹⁸⁶ Whitcomb 1985:130.

- Fourth, it will “bring in everlasting righteousness,” literally “bring in righteousness of ages.”
 - This is a prophecy in which God promised an age characterized by righteousness, a reference to the Millennial kingdom when righteousness is brought to earth when Messiah reigns (cf. Is 60:21; Jer 23:5-6).
 - More than just spiritual righteousness is in view here.
 - Although many have received Christ’s righteousness through his atoning work, the nation of Israel has yet to experience it.
 - But, at the Second Coming of Christ, a fountain for cleansing will be opened to the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Zech 13:1) when they finally enter into the blessings of Messiah whom they have rejected for centuries.
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- Fifth, it will “seal up vision and prophecy,” referring to the time when the glorified Christ will be present with His people Israel in the millennial kingdom, fulfilling all prophecies and making visions and prophecies unnecessary.
 - With the Second Coming of Christ, the kingdom will begin and will never end.
 - When that occurs, no more revelation will be needed since it will all be fulfilled and knowledge and prophecy will be rendered inoperative (1 Cor 13:8-12).
 - “Since Christ, in all His glory, will be present with His people, there will be no further need for visions and prophecies.”¹⁸⁷
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- Sixth, it will “anoint the most holy place,” likely a reference to a time when there will be a temple and sacrifices again.
 - Ezekiel 40-48 describe that great millennial temple which will be the center of worship during the Millennium.
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- These six accomplishments, then, anticipate the Millennial kingdom when Christ fulfills God’s program to bring the nation of Israel all the blessings that were promised her through the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants.

Daniel 9:25 ~ So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

Issue #3 – The Beginning of the 70 Weeks

- Verse 25 indicates that the starting point is “the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.”
- Scripture describes three decrees that were issued to return to the land and rebuild the temple: 1) Cyrus in Ezra 1:1-4 (538 BC); 2) Darius I in Ezra 6:1, 6-12, a confirmation of the first decree (520 BC); 3) Artaxerxes in Ezra 7:11-26 (457 BC).

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 130.

- But none of those can be the one referred to in verse 25 since those were decrees to rebuild the temple, not the city and verse 25 clearly says that the decree is to return and “restore and rebuild Jerusalem.”
- So, the 490 years must start with the decree to rebuild the city.
- There is only one decree in OT history that can be identified as the one Gabriel described here.
- It was a decree given by Artaxerxes to Nehemiah (Neh 2:1-8, esp. vs. 5) authorizing them to rebuild the city.
- According to Nehemiah 2:1, the decree was given in the month of Nisan in the 20th year of King Artaxerxes.
- The date of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem by Artaxerxes is one of the best-known dates in ancient history.
- It is known that Artaxerxes came to power in 465 BC so the 20th year of his reign would be 445 BC.
- The month was Nisan and since no day is given, according to Jewish custom the date would be understood as the first day of Nisan 445 BC.
- This date corresponds to March 14, 445 BC, the day the 490 years began.

Issue #4 – The Identification of “Messiah the Prince”

- While some have taken this “anointed one” to be the first high priest following captivity, Joshua (Ezra 3:2), most agree that this is a reference to Christ.
- This is corroborated when the 69 “sevens” are taken literally and point specifically to Christ’s day.

Issue #5 – The Reason for the Distinction Between the 7 Sevens and the 62 Sevens

- The reason probably is to distinguish the period of restoration of Jerusalem under Nehemiah.
- The 49 years included the years that the city of Jerusalem was rebuilt.
- The city began to be rebuilt in 445 BC when the decree was issued and took 49 years to complete, finishing in 396 BC.
- The end of verse 25 describes this period of building (“it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress”).
- Nehemiah’s building campaign certainly took place during “times of distress” as he met much opposition in the form of attacks by his enemies.
- Although Nehemiah’s wall construction project took only 52 days, many more years were needed to clean up the city (after decades of neglect), to build adequate housing, and to rebuild the infrastructure.
- Additionally, the 49 years may include the end of the ministry of Malachi and the closing of the OT canon.

Daniel 9:26 ~ Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

Issue #6 – The Ending of the 69 Weeks

- Daniel is told that “from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks” (vs. 25).
- Thus, a total of 69 weeks (483 years) passes from the decree to “Messiah the Prince.”
- The first 49 years ended with the completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the close of the OT.
- The next 434 years (62 sevens) describe the time from the completion of the construction of Jerusalem to the time that Christ was introduced to the nation of Israel.
- This occurred in the Triumphal entry, when Jesus entered Jerusalem and was presented as the Messiah.
- Gabriel says there would be a total of 69 weeks from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to when Messiah arrives in Jerusalem, a total of 483 years.
- That time period began on March 14, 445 BC (see above).
- Counting off 483 years (using Biblical years of 360 days each) requires 173,880 days ($69 \times 7 \times 360 = 173,880$).
- 173,880 days from March 14, 445 BC was April 6, 32 AD (10 Nisan) – it is necessary to take into consideration leap years and the difference between Jewish calendars and Gregorian calendars in order for the math to work out.
- In short, the 483 years in the Jewish calendar correlates to 476 years in the Gregorian calendar.
- Thus, Christ entered Jerusalem in His triumphal entry on that very date – April 6, 32 AD – in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, officially presenting Himself to the nation of Israel as the Messiah.
- With incredible precision, God told Daniel the very day that Messiah the Prince would arrive in Jerusalem.

The 483 Years in the Jewish and Gregorian Calendars

Jewish Calendar (360 days per year *)

$(7 \times 7) + (62 \times 7)$ years = 483 years

483 years

× 360 days

Gregorian Calendar (365 days a year)

444 B.C. to A.D. 33 = 476 years

476 years

× 365 days

173,880 days

173,740 days

+ 116 days in leap years

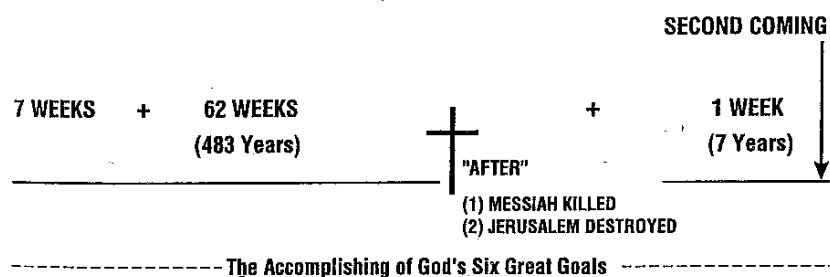
+ 24 days (March 5–March 30)

173,880 days

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- Verse 26 mentions that two important things will happen after the 62 weeks:
 1. Messiah will be cut off
 2. The city and the sanctuary (temple) will be destroyed
- In the wording of Daniel, these events are not said to be IN the 70th week of years but specifically AFTER the 69 weeks.
- The 70th week in the panoramic sweep of time does not follow the 69 immediately but will come at the end of this present age.
- Thus, both of these events would occur between the 69th and 70th week which implies that the 69th and 70th weeks are not continuous.
- They are separated by a gap, a gap that has presently lasted for over 2000 years, a gap during which time the nation of Israel is set aside for a season in order that God's new program for the church might be instituted.

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL



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- First, the “Messiah will be cut off and have nothing.”

¹⁸⁸ This chart taken from “Daniel” by J. Dwight Pentecost in The Bible Knowledge Commentary 1985: 1367.

¹⁸⁹ This chart taken from Benware:1995, 169.

- This speaks of Messiah's death and constitutes a prophecy about his crucifixion.
- After His arrival in Jerusalem, He would be killed which is exactly what happened.
- It was just a matter of days after Christ rode into the city that He was killed.
- Daniel is told that, after being cut off, He would "have nothing," a reference to being completely rejected by His people and His earthly kingdom not instituted at that time.
- The fact that the Messiah "has nothing" is shocking.
- The Messiah of Israel would come, be killed, and would die with nothing – no kingdom and no everlasting righteousness would occur.
- He would not receive the royal glory as the King on David's throne over Israel.
- Second, "the city and the sanctuary" will be destroyed, a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple.
- This predicts the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple with the Roman invasion of Jerusalem in 70 AD (cf. Luke 21:20-24).

Issue #7 – The Identity of the "people" of the Prince to Come

- Almost all conservative scholars agree that this refers to the Romans who would come to destroy the city and sanctuary.

Issue #8 – The Identity of the "prince" Who is to Come

- This "prince" is not the same as the Prince in verse 25, who is the Messiah.
- This "prince" has been variously identified as Antiochus (liberal), or Emperor Vespasian, or Titus the Roman general who destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD.
- Many amillennialists do take this "prince" to refer to Messiah.
- But it is best to take this "prince" as the Antichrist.
- That this is an evil person and not Jesus the Messiah is affirmed by the descriptions of him in verse 27 in which he commits an abominable act in the temple and is destroyed for his desolations.
- The text says that the "people" (Romans) bring this destruction. It does not say that the prince does it, so it does not require the prince to be there in the first century.
- The "people of the prince," namely the Roman people who belong to the same fourth empire as the prince will centuries later, are there, though he himself will not come until a later phase of the fourth empire.
- In other words, he himself will not be the one who destroys but rather it is his people who will do it.
- Thus, this is a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.
- The city and its temple would be destroyed "with a flood" (vs. 26), literally "its end in the overflowing."
- It would be the "end" of the Jewish establishment.
- The "flood" spoken of here was not a flood of water, but a flood of invading soldiers (cf. Dan 11:22; Is 8:7-8; Rev 12:15-16).

- That's exactly what happened in 70 AD when the Romans came into Jerusalem and absolutely destroyed the city.
- Just about 40 years after Jesus died, the city was obliterated when Titus attacked with Roman artillery.
- He smashed the walls, destroyed the temple, and crucified as many as 500 people a day.
- In all, a million Jewish people died in this onslaught.
- Verse 26 indicates also that "even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined," indicating that Jerusalem's trials and woes would continue even after the destruction of Jerusalem.
- The invasion by the Romans in 70 AD did not end the nation's sufferings, a reality that Israel's tumultuous history since 70 AD shows.
- They would continue to experience war and desolations right up to the very end.
- Even though Israel was to be set aside, she would continue to suffer until the prophecies of the 70 "sevens" were completely fulfilled.
- Her sufferings would span the entire period from the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD to Jerusalem's deliverance from Gentile dominion at the Second Advent of Christ.
- Jesus himself predicted that the "times of the Gentiles" would continue even after the destruction of Jerusalem (cf. Luke 21:24).

Daniel 9:27 ~ And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.

Issue #9 – The Identity of “he” in Verse 27

- While some identify this individual as Antiochus and others as Christ, the best view is to take this as a reference to Antichrist.
- There are two princes mentioned in this passage and they must be kept separate: the “Prince” of vs. 25 is Messiah; the “prince” of vs. 27 is Antichrist.
- The nearest antecedent to “he” is the “prince” of vs. 26 who is the Antichrist.
- He is well-known to the readers of Daniel because he has already been mentioned as the “little horn” in 7:8.
- He is Satan's false Christ, the one who will rise to power swiftly among the 10 kings of the revived Roman empire.
- He is the one who will wield almost unlimited power over the nations of the world, who will be the last great persecutor of Israel, and who will be a strong military and political leader.
- Verse 27 describes the events of the last “week,” the 70th week, the Tribulation.
- Just as the first 69 weeks were literal, so too must the last week of seven years be literal.

- To make the final week anything other than a seven-year period is to violate the context.
- Antichrist will “make a firm covenant with the many,” referring to a covenant he will make with the nation of Israel.
- It is this covenant that will begin this final “week,” not the Rapture. Although the final “week” will begin soon after the Rapture, the Rapture will not technically start the Tribulation.
- It is the “firm covenant” that Antichrist will make with Israel that actually begins the final “week.”
- In this covenant, Antichrist will most likely promise to guarantee Israel’s safety in the land, promising to protect them.
- He will enter into a seven-year covenant with them and will allow them to rebuild their temple and resume their worship and their sacrifices.
- “Antichrist, on behalf of his empire, will make a treaty with the nation of Israel. This agreement probably entails a promise of protection in return for certain favors (likely including those of an economic nature). It is easy to understand why Israel would enter into such an arrangement with the powerful forces of Antichrist. With such protection Israel will feel safe and secure.”¹⁹⁰
- But the peace that Israel enjoys in its covenant with Antichrist won’t last.
- Antichrist will break his covenant “in the middle of the week.”
- Halfway through the seven years, he will turn on the Jewish people.
- This breaking of the covenant will begin the final 3 ½ years known as the Great Tribulation when the Antichrist dominates the religious and political life on earth (cf. Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 11:2; 12:6).
- He will try to eradicate the distinctive character of the worship of Israel by putting “a stop to sacrifices and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate.”
- He will assume power in the religious realm and will cause the world to worship him (2 Thess 2:4; Rev. 13:8).
- He will halt the Jewish worship system, will destroy their sacrifices, will terminate all organized religions, will demand the world worship him, and will turn against Israel and become her destroyer.
- Because he will hate Christ, he will naturally hate those who are Christ’s people and will be violently anti-Semitic.
- Once he has reached the pinnacle of world power and influence, he will have no further use for them.

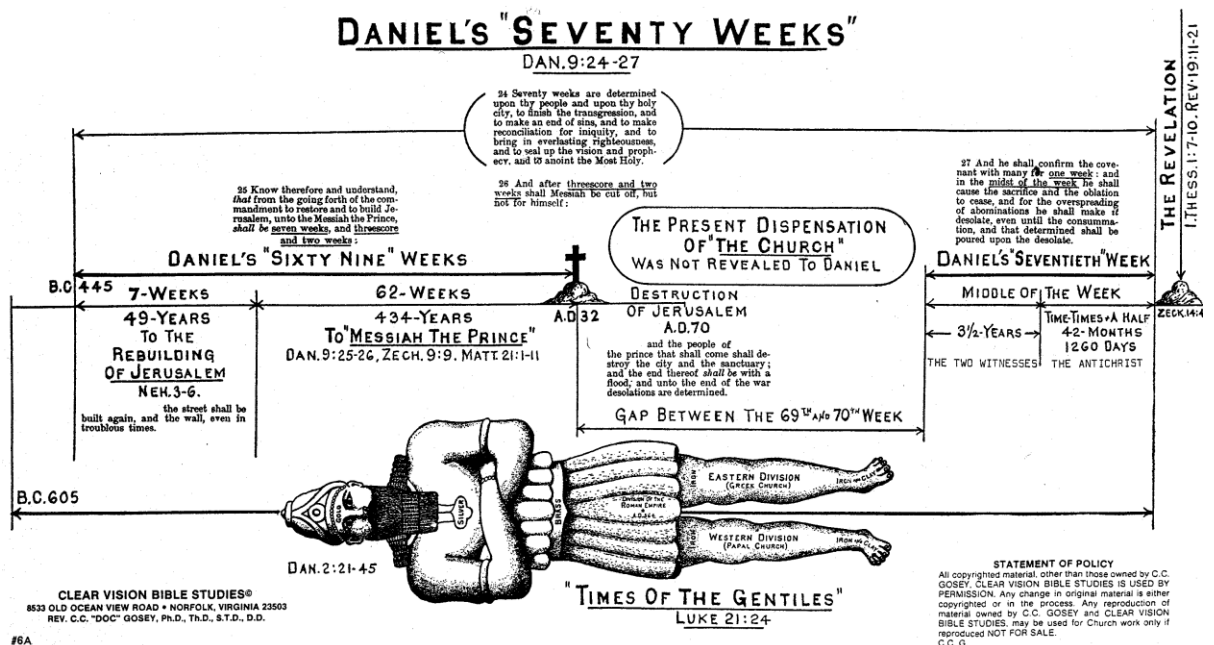
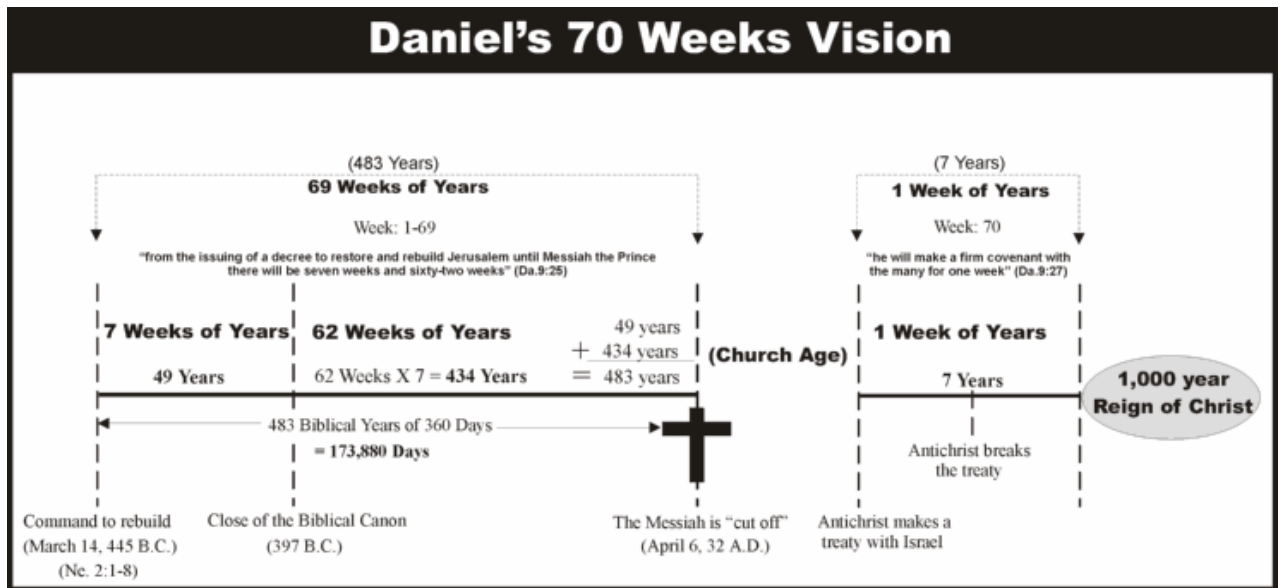
¹⁹⁰ Miller 1994: 271.

- He will cause “abominations,” referring to his attempt to ruin everything the Jews regard as sacred.
- The abomination of Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century BC serves as prefiguration of what Antichrist will do in the Tribulation.
- Christ referred to this incident in Matt 24:15 ~ when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place.
- Despite his attempts to eradicate the Jewish people, Antichrist will experience a “complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”
- This desolator is headed for destruction.
- He does his “abominations” only “until the decreed end.”
- God’s wrath will be poured out on this evil prince.
- Christ will triumph over Antichrist at His Second Coming.
- Paul says that “that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming” (2 Thess 2:8; cf. Dan 7:26; 11:45; Rev 19:20).
- When he is destroyed, then all the promises of verse 24 will be fulfilled in Israel.

Issue #10 – Is the 70th Week Still Future?

- Amillennialists believe that the 70th week of Daniel occurred immediately during and after Christ. They hold that, since there was no gap between the 7 and 62 weeks, no gap can occur between the 69th and 70th weeks.
- For them, the 70th week runs immediately after the 69th week.
- They say that Daniel’s 70th week expired in the late 30s AD in the seven years following the end of the 69th week around 33 AD.
- However, a number of reasons argue for it being the future Tribulation period:
 1. Verse 26 states that the Messiah will be cut off AFTER the 69th week not IN the 70th week. He is not cut off at the “end” of the 69 weeks or at the beginning of the 70th week. Instead, he is cut off “after” the 69 weeks. This is an important distinction.
 2. Gaps appear in Daniel 2:40-41, Daniel 11:35-36, and Isaiah 61:1-2. Furthermore, a gap exists between the first and second comings of Christ. Thus, many of the prophecies concerning Christ have a gap in them (cf. Is 9:6-7; Zech 9:9-10). Since gaps are not unusual in other prophetic passages, it is possible that a gap could be present in Daniel 9:24-27, occurring before the 70th week.

3. The six predictions of Daniel 9:24 have not all been fulfilled yet. If one holds that the 70 weeks expired in the first century AD, then all six predictions should have been completely fulfilled in the 30s AD. But that did not happen. While the basis for the first the predictions occurred at the first coming and death of Christ, Israel has not yet been cleansed of their sin. Furthermore, the last three predictions have not occurred yet either. Thus, their complete fulfillment awaits a future period.
4. The events described as happening in the 70th week have not been fulfilled yet. A coming evil prince from the Roman empire has not made a seven-year covenant with the Jewish people yet. No breaking of this covenant after 3.5 years has occurred yet. No Antichrist figure has caused abominations in the temple that has led to divine destruction of the one committing these horrific acts. These events were not completed in the 30s AD and await future fulfillment.
5. Matthew 24:15 is yet future to Jesus. This is the same event predicted in Daniel 9:27. It is known that a gap of 35 years occurred between Christ's death/resurrection and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. So, if a gap exists for that period of time, why not a longer gap?
6. Paul spoke of the events of Daniel 9:27 as still future. In 2 Thessalonians 2, he described a "man of lawlessness" who enters a temple and declares himself to be God (vs. 3-4). He also described this man's destruction at the hands of the Lord Jesus who will kill him with the breath of his mouth (vs. 8). Thus, predicted these events as still future from his standpoint (50s AD).
7. The book of Revelation places the fulfillment of Daniel 9:27 in the future. Writing in the 90s AD, John referred to a coming 3.5-year period of time on multiple occasions (Rev 11:2; 12:6; 13:5). Thus, John referred to the time frame and events of Daniel 9:27 as needing to be fulfilled in the future.
8. Daniel 2, 7, 11, and 12 point to the vey end of Gentile dominion when Israel will be blessed in the Millennial kingdom. Daniel 9:27 would fit with this if it extends to the same point when the blessings of verse 24 are fully realized.
9. No seven-year covenant between a leader from the Roman Empire and the Jewish people has ever happened.



C. Theology Notes

1. An Example of an Amillennial Approach to Daniel 9:24-27

See <http://headhearhand.org/blog/2016/02/24/how-does-an-amillennialist-interpret-daniel-9/>

2. Daniel's Intertextual Use of Jeremiah

- “Some scholars view these ‘seventy weeks’ as a symbolic interpretation of the seventy years prophesied by Jeremiah. If that is the case, then Daniel reinterprets the numbers in Jeremiah in a way he did not originally intend.”¹⁹¹
- “In response, we may initially note that Daniel interpreted Jeremiah correctly. Daniel prays because he recognized the seventy years Jeremiah specified had reached their completion (Dan. 9:1-2). This means he understood seventy year as a period of seventy years. In fact, one commentator cites this as an example of taking prophecy ‘literally’ or according to the normal rules of language and grammar. Thus, Daniel interprets the meaning of Jeremiah quite accurately.”¹⁹²
- “The intertextuality of Jeremiah with Kings and Deuteronomy clarifies what Daniel is wondering in Daniel 9. First Kings 8:30 and Deuteronomy 30:1-6 focus on the ultimate end of exile. By contrast Jeremiah 29 predicts a return from Babylon after seventy years but does not directly associate the seventy years with that full restoration...The Lord does not...guarantee in Jeremiah that they will be ultimately restored *when* they return to the land after seventy year. Accordingly, Daniel wonders how the prophecy in Jeremiah 29 works with what was declared in Deuteronomy and Kings. Daniel’s prayer pleads for God to cause all of these prophecies to coincide.”¹⁹³
- “God responds to Daniel’s request by sending an angel to offer him knowledge and insight (Dan. 9:20-22). In essence, God presents a wordplay to help Daniel understand how the conclusion of the seventy-year captivity fits into God’s greater plan to end the exile...[I]nstead of Jeremiah’s seventy years being the complete conclusion of exile, it actually will be seventy times seven sets of years (weeks) till the end of exile, a much longer time (Dan. 9:24). Israel would return to rebuild the city (cf. Dan. 9:24-25). However, that does not mark the completion of exile. Redemptive history will be fulfilled only after Messiah dies and further tribulation occurs. Through this, Daniel knows how Jeremiah’s seventy-year prophecy fits with the eschatological statements found in Deuteronomy and Kings.”¹⁹⁴
- “All of this displays Daniel’s accurate interpretation of Jeremiah. He understood the seventy years as referring to seventy years – a mark of the grammatical-historical method.”¹⁹⁵

D. Preaching Helps

1. Todd’s Outline (2 messages):

4 Components of True, Intercessory, Contrite Prayer

It is Word-Driven (vs. 1-2)

It is Fervent (vs. 3)

It is Repentant (vs. 4-14)

It is Petitionary (vs. 15-19)

¹⁹¹ Chou 2018: 66.

¹⁹² Ibid., 67.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 67.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 68.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 68.

- 3 Elements in Response to Daniel's Prayer
 - The Announcement of Messiah's Arrival (vs. 20-23)
 - The Blessings of Messiah's Arrival (vs. 24)
 - The Timing of Messiah's Arrival (vs. 25-27)