

***1 Daniel 9 – “The Prayer, The Sacrifice & The End of the Age”**

Read Daniel 9:1-19

***2 Jeremiah 29:1–14 (NLT)** ¹ Jeremiah wrote a letter from Jerusalem to the elders, priests, prophets, and all the people who had been exiled to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar...This is what Jeremiah’s letter said: ⁴ This is what YaHWeH of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the captives he has exiled to Babylon from Jerusalem: ⁵ “Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. ⁶ Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! ⁷ And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to YaHWeH for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare.” ⁸ This is what YaHWeH of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let your prophets and fortune-tellers who are with you in the land of Babylon trick you. Do not listen to their dreams, ⁹ because they are telling you lies in my name. I have not sent them,” says YaHWeH. ***3** ¹⁰ **This is what YaHWeH says: “You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you,” says YaHWeH. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. ¹² In those days when you pray, I will listen. ¹³ If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. ¹⁴ I will be found by you,” says YaHWeH. “I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your own land.”**

**Now approximately 65 years later – Daniel reads Jeremiah’s prophesy. Daniel could be as old as 75-80 at this point. (That is evidence of a blessed, long life!)

***4 Daniel 5:31 (NLT)** ³¹ And Darius the Mede took over the kingdom at the age of sixty-two. **6:1** Darius the Mede decided to divide the kingdom into 120 provinces, and he appointed a high officer to rule over each province. ² The king also chose Daniel and two others as administrators to supervise the high officers and protect the king’s interests. ³ **Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers.** Because of Daniel’s great ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire.

***5 Daniel 9** ¹ It was **the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede**, the son of Ahasuerus, who became king of the Babylonians. ² During the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, learned from reading the word of YaHWeH, as revealed to Jeremiah the prophet, that **Jerusalem must lie desolate for seventy years.**

***5a Jeremiah 25:11–13 (NLT)** ¹¹ This entire land will become a desolate wasteland. Israel and her neighboring lands will serve the king of Babylon for seventy years. ¹² “Then, after the seventy years of captivity are over, I will punish the king of Babylon and his people for their sins,” says

YaHWeH. “I will make the country of the Babylonians a wasteland forever. ¹³ I will bring upon them all the terrors I have promised in this book—all the penalties announced by Jeremiah against the nations.

***6** This was still three or four years before 70 years had passed from 605 b.c. This was not too soon for Daniel to begin praying. Daniel had the foresight to look ahead three or four years and to begin praying. **Even in God’s eternal decrees, God has an essential role for people to play. God’s plan of the ages is declared, yet Jeremiah made a prophecy; Daniel made a prayer, and Cyrus made a proclamation.** David Guzik

***6a** “Too often our interest in the prophetic Scriptures is of a curious and speculative nature, or else we conclude that God will carry out His sovereign purpose no matter what we do, and so we do not concern ourselves with those matters.” Strauss (on our prayerlessness)

***7 Daniel 9** ³ So I turned to YaHWeH God and pleaded with Him in prayer and **fasting**. I also wore **rough burlap** and sprinkled myself with **ashes**. **[These are emblems of humiliation and mourning.]** ⁴ I prayed to YaHWeH my God and confessed: “*O YaHWeH, you are a great and awesome God! You always fulfill your covenant and keep your promises of unfailing love to those who love you and obey your commands.*”

***7a** Daniel began his prayer where we all should – by recognizing the greatness and goodness of God. Sometimes we approach God as if He were a stingy person who must be persuaded to give us anything. But Daniel knew the problem was not with God. David Guzik

***8 Daniel 9** ⁵ *But we have sinned and done wrong. We have rebelled against you and scorned your commands and regulations.* ⁶ **We have refused to listen to your servants the prophets, who spoke on your authority to our kings and princes and ancestors and to all the people of the land.**

It would be easy to *complain* to God about Israel’s problems. Daniel didn’t think for a moment that God was too hard on Israel; he knew God was completely righteous and any failure was on Israel’s side. **Instead of complaining, Daniel confessed.** David Guzik

“What made Daniel one of God’s greatest saints was not his sinlessness but his sensitivity to the true depth of his sin.” Whitcomb

***8a** Israel had rebelled against God. Their sins had led to their captivity. But God is merciful even to rebels, **if they confess their sins and return to Him**. Don’t let your past disobedience keep you from returning to God. He is waiting for you and wants you to return to **Him**. Life Application Bible

***9 1 John 1:8–9 (NIV84)** ⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

***9a Daniel 9** ⁷ “YaHWeH, you are in the right; but as you see, **our faces are covered with shame**. This is true of all of us, including the people of Judah and Jerusalem and all

Israel, scattered near and far, wherever you have driven us **because of our disloyalty to you.** ⁸ O YaHWeH, **we and our kings, princes, and ancestors are covered with shame because we have sinned against you.** ⁹ But **YaHWeH our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against Him.** ¹⁰ **We have not obeyed YaHWeH our God, for we have not followed the instructions He gave us through His servants the prophets.** ¹¹ **All Israel has disobeyed your instruction and turned away, refusing to listen to Your voice.**

To disregard God's Word is "the beginning of all moral disorders." Leupold

***10 Daniel 9** **"So now the solemn curses and judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured down on us because of our sin.** ¹² You have kept Your word and done to us and our rulers exactly as You warned. Never has there been such a disaster as happened in Jerusalem. ¹³ **Every curse written against us in the Law of Moses has come true. Yet we have refused to seek mercy from YaHWeH our God by turning from our sins and recognizing His truth.** ¹⁴ **Therefore, YaHWeH has brought upon us the disaster He prepared. YaHWeH our God was right to do all of these things, for we did not obey Him.**

***10a Daniel 9:13 (NASB95)** ¹³ "As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not **"sought the face of"** YaHWeH our God **by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth.**

***11 Leviticus 26:27–35 (NLT)** ²⁷ **"If in spite of all this you still refuse to listen and still remain hostile toward Me,** ²⁸ **then I will give full vent to My hostility. I Myself will punish you seven times over for your sins.** ²⁹ Then you will eat the flesh of your own sons and daughters. ³⁰ I will destroy your pagan shrines and knock down your places of worship. I will leave your lifeless corpses piled on top of your lifeless idols, and I will despise you. ³¹ I will make your cities desolate and destroy your places of pagan worship. I will take no pleasure in your offerings that should be a pleasing aroma to Me. ³² Yes, I Myself will devastate your land, and your enemies who come to occupy it will be appalled at what they see. ³³ **I will scatter you among the nations and bring out My sword against you. Your land will become desolate, and your cities will lie in ruins.** ³⁴ **Then at last the land will enjoy its neglected Sabbath years as it lies desolate while you are in exile in the land of your enemies. Then the land will finally rest and enjoy the Sabbaths it missed.** ³⁵ As long as the land lies in ruins, it will enjoy the rest you never allowed it to take every seventh year while you lived in it. (Deut. 28:15-68)

The warnings of God to Israel were almost endless. At each level He would bring a disaster in discipline which was appropriate to help His people realize that they were on a wrong path and needed to return to Him in repentance (See Ps 78:31-33). Over and over in the Law He offered grace at each step. But once the grace of God was refused – there was no return. Paul warned us to learn from their mistakes:

***11a 1 Corinthians 10:6-12 (NASB95)** ⁶ Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. ⁷ Do not be idolaters... ⁸ Nor let us act immorally, ... ⁹ Nor let us try the Lord... ¹⁰ Nor grumble... ¹¹ Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

Ignoring the loving discipline and admonition of the Lord can lead to disastrous consequences in your life. It's a good habit when unpleasant circumstances come into your life to ask: "Lord, what have I done to cause this, if anything" and "Lord, what do You want me to learn through this?"

***12 Romans 2:4-5 (NLT)** ⁴ Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? ⁵ But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

***12a Acts 20:21 (NLT)** ²¹ I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike—the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus.

Daniel 9 ¹⁵ "O YaHWeH our God, you brought lasting honor to your name by rescuing your people from Egypt in a great display of power. **But we have sinned and are full of wickedness.** ***13** ¹⁶ In view of all your faithful mercies, YaHWeH, please turn your furious anger away from **your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain. All the neighboring nations mock Jerusalem and your people because of our sins and the sins of our ancestors.** ¹⁷ "O our God, hear your servant's prayer! Listen as I plead. For your own sake, YaHWeH, smile again on **your desolate sanctuary.** ¹⁸ "O my God, lean down and listen to me. Open your eyes and see our despair. **See how your city—the city that bears Your name—lies in ruins. We make this plea, not because we deserve help, but because of your mercy.** ¹⁹ "O YaHWeH, hear. O YaHWeH, forgive. O YaHWeH, listen and act! For your own sake, do not delay, **O my God, for your people and your city bear your name."**

One of the consequences of public sin among God's people is that it gives occasion for godless people to mock God and His people. It is a shame and embarrassment to God when His people act like those in the world, and it weakens our Gospel message. **Being holy, set apart unto the Lord strengthens your testimony with others.** Being like everyone else and indulging in the sins and enticements of the world, pretty much destroys your reputation and God's.

Notice that Daniel rightly confesses that the plight of his people and the Holy city of Jerusalem is their own fault. He confesses all the way through his prayer: **"We have sinned"**. He understands that the bad reputation of YaHWeH has come from the failure of His people – not from the failure of God.

***14** Daniel begged for mercy, not for help, because he knew that his people deserved God's wrath and punishment. God sends His help, not because we deserve it, but because He wants to show great mercy. If God would refuse to help us because of our sin, how could we complain? But when He sends mercy when we deserve punishment, how can we withhold our praise and thanksgiving? Life Application Bible

But Daniel also reminds God that He owns Jerusalem, the only city in the world that has ever borne the Name of God, that the Temple was His house, the only place He ever agreed to dwell among men and the descendants of Israel – the people that He made the everlasting covenant with! This is God's problem – because no man can rebuild the city, the Temple and the Jewish people.

We need to remember the singular, remarkable and supernatural position of the Jewish people. Paul's prayer echoes Daniel's prayer: ***14a Romans 9:2–5 (NIV84)** ² I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race, ⁴ the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. ⁵ Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.

But we must remember that even God's chosen people could turn their back on their covenant with YaHWeH – act like pagans – and receive a severe discipline/punishment for their actions. As God's children today, we have been given so much: forgiveness of our sins, acceptance into God's family, the Spirit of grace living in us, God's Law written on our hearts and a promise of being with God for eternity! We have so much to be thankful for, and yet, with these blessings come responsibilities to God and man. The writer to the Hebrews echoes these thoughts:

***15 Hebrews 10:26–31 (NIV84)** ²⁶ If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, ²⁷ but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. ²⁸ Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge His people." ³¹ It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Our fear of God can lead us to repent before God as the Spirit of Grace convicts us and cry out to God for His mercy!

***16 Daniel 9** ²⁰ I went on praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people, pleading with YaHWeH my God for Jerusalem, His holy mountain. ²¹ As I was praying, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the earlier vision, came swiftly to me at the time of the evening sacrifice (3pm). ²² He explained to me, "Daniel, I have come here to give you insight and

understanding. ²³ The moment you began praying, a command was given. **And now I am here to tell you what it was, for you are very precious to God.** Listen carefully so that you can understand the meaning of your vision.

Evidently Daniel had a vision while he was praying for his people, and that we do not have recorded until it is explained by Gabriel. I find it interesting that in answer to Daniel's prayer for the return to the land of Israel and the restoration of the temple and city – God shows him the future and how that restoration is going to happen. **But the answer goes much further to show how YaHWeH is going to deal with the root problem of rebellion and sin in His people.** God is showing him the physical restoration but also the more important spiritual restoration of God's people!

***17 Daniel 9** ²⁴ "A period of seventy sets of seven has been decreed for your people and your holy city **to finish their rebellion, to put an end to their sin, to atone for their guilt, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to confirm the prophetic vision, and to anoint the Most Holy Place.**

The answer to Daniel's prayer for Israel is two-fold. **First**, the length of the judgment of Israel is 70 years and it must be fulfilled. But YaHWeH is bringing about the end of the captivity and the restoration of Israel through world events. **Second**, God explains that the real problem of Israel is sin, and that sin must be dealt with. His attention to send His Son as the Messiah of Israel – the Anointed One who will make an end to sin and bring eternal righteousness to God's chosen people!

"This prophecy, it must be noted, concerns three deliverances. Daniel was greatly burdened about an early deliverance of the Jews from Babylon to return to Jerusalem. God was also interested in their deliverance from bondage to sin (at Christ's first advent) and in the final deliverance of the Jews from oppression (at Christ's second coming) . . ." Campbell

***18 Daniel 9** ²⁵ Now listen and understand! Seven sets of seven plus sixty-two sets of seven will pass from the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem **until a ruler—the Anointed One—comes.** ["the Anointed One, the ruler" NIV "strong, mighty ruler"] Jerusalem will be rebuilt with streets and strong defenses, despite the perilous times.

***18a** The Hebrew word translated "weeks" (*sabu'im*) literally means "sevens." It can refer to seven days (Gen. 29:27–28) or seven years (Lev. 25:3–5). Most scholars believe that this word here represents seven years. Daniel had been thinking of God's program for Israel in terms of years (vv. 1–2). It would have been normal then for him to interpret these sevens as years. For defense of this view based on additional internal evidence in the Book of Daniel, see Otto Zöckler,

“The Book of the Prophet Daniel,” in Lange’s *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, 7:2:194. See also Pentecost, “Daniel,” p. 1361. Tom Constable ¹

There are four decrees concerning the rebuilding in Jerusalem that Scripture records. The first was Cyrus’ decree to rebuild the temple in 538 B.C. (2 Chron. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4; 6:1–5). The second was Darius I’s decree in 512 B.C. confirming Cyrus’ earlier one (Ezra 6:1, 6–12). The third was Artaxerxes’ decree in 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:11–26). The fourth was Artaxerxes’ decree authorizing Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem in 444 B.C. (Neh. 2:1–8). The first two authorized the rebuilding of the temple, and the third provided for animal sacrifices in the temple. **The fourth one gave the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem’s walls, and it seems to be the one in view here. The Jews encountered opposition as they sought to rebuild and refortify their ancient capital, as the Book of Nehemiah records. The date 444 B.C. then marks the beginning of this 490-year period.** Tom constable

“This perfectly describes the work of Nehemiah and under what difficult circumstances he performed his tasks.” Daniel Feinberg

***19** “There was only one occasion in our Lord’s earthly ministry on which He is depicted as presenting Himself openly as Zion’s King, the so-called ‘Triumphal Entry,’ recorded in each one of the Gospels and fulfilling [Zechariah 9:9](#) and [Psalm 118:26](#).” (Newell)

***19a Zechariah 9:9 (NIV84)** ⁹ Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

***20 Psalm 118:22–27 (NASB95)** ²² The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief corner *stone*. ²³ This is YaHWeH’s doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. ²⁴ This is the day which YaHWeH has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it. ²⁵ O YAHWEH, do save, we beseech You; O YAHWEH, we beseech You, do send prosperity! ²⁶ Blessed is the one who comes in the name of YaHWeH; We have blessed you from the house of YaHWeH. ²⁷ YaHWeH is God, and He has given us light; Bind the festival sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.

***21 Daniel 9** ²⁶ **“After this period of sixty-two sets of seven, the Anointed One will be killed** (The word translated “cut off” is used of executing the death penalty on a criminal. Thus the prophecy clearly points to the crucifixion of Christ. (Walvoord), **appearing to have accomplished nothing,** and a ruler will arise whose armies will destroy the city and the Temple.

“Cut off” is a poignant description of Jesus’ earthly life up to and including the cross. ***21a** “Born in another man’s stable, cradled in another man’s manger with nowhere to lay His head during His life on earth, and buried in another man’s tomb after dying on a cursed cross, the Christ of God and the Friend of the friendless was indeed cut off and had nothing.” (Heslop)

¹ Tom Constable, [Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003).

***22** In Old Testament days the highpoint in Israel's festival calendar was the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16). On that day the nation assembled before God, acknowledged her sin, and offered blood sacrifices to cover that sin. Though that sacrifice covered Israel's sin for 12 months, it did not permanently remove that sin (Heb. 10:1–3). It was necessary that a sacrifice be offered God that would permanently remove all the accumulated sins. This sacrifice was offered by Jesus Christ who by His death made payment for all sins that had not been removed in the past (cf. Rom. 3:25). So His atoning work on the cross has made possible His future “finishing” of Israel's transgression. ²

***23** David Reagan (see full article below): The first person in modern history to calculate the 483 years to the “cutting off” of the Messiah was Sir Robert Anderson in his book, *The Coming Prince* (1894). Using the decree to Nehemiah issued in 445 B.C. as his starting point, and using what he called “the 360 day prophetic year,” Anderson calculated that it was exactly 173,880 days or 483 lunar years from the day the edict was issued to the day Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. His calculations placed the crucifixion in the spring of 32 A.D. These calculations have remained almost sacred in Christian thinking for the past one hundred years. (No one today is able dogmatically to declare that Sir Robert Anderson's computations are impossible.” (Walvoord))

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel as Understood by Sir Robert Anderson in *The Coming Prince*

Daniel 9:24-25 says that from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the Messiah there will be 483 years.

$7 + 62$ “weeks” = 69 groups of seven years. $7 \times 69 = 483$ years

Anderson understood a prophetic year as 360 days. This is based both on ancient history and on **Revelation 11:2, 13:5, 11:3, and 12:6** which indicate that 42 months – 3 ½ years – are equal to 1,260 days.

Therefore, 483 years x 360 days = 173,880 days

Artaxerxes started his reign in 465 b.c. The decree to rebuild Jerusalem was given on the first day of Nisan, in the 20th year of Artaxerxes. In our calendar system (the Julian calendar) that date is March 14, 445 b.c. (**Nehemiah 2:1**)

Jesus started His ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius (see **Luke 3:1**). Tiberius started his reign in a.d. 14, so Jesus' ministry started in a.d. 29. Anderson believed that Jesus celebrated four Passovers during His ministry, one each in a.d. 29, 30, 31, and His final Passover in a.d. 32. With the help of lunar charts, we can calculate the exact date of ancient Passovers, so it is

² J. Dwight Pentecost, “[Daniel](#),” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1361–1362.

possible to calculate the exact day of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem as April 6, a.d. 32.

From 445 b.c. to a.d. 32. there are 476 years on the Julian calendar (not 477 years, because there is no year zero).

476 years x 365 days = 173,740 days.

Adjusting for the difference between March 14 and April 6 adds 24 days.

Adjusting for leap years over a period of 476 years adds 116 days.

The total number of days from March 14, 445 b.c. to April 6, a.d. 32.

$173,740 + 24 + 116 = 173,880$ days.

According to his calendar, Daniel told us there would be 173,880 days between the decree and the arrival of Messiah the Prince.

Jesus said to the Jews of this day: *If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! (Luke 19:42). David said of this day in Psalm 118:24: This is the day which YaHWeH has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*

***24** Now, using Ezra's decree as the starting point (457 B.C.), if we count forward 483 years we will arrive at 27 A.D. According to the translator of Josephus, the Jewish New Year that began in the fall of 27 A.D. marked the beginning of the last Jubilee Year that the Jews enjoyed in the land before their worldwide dispersal by the Romans in 70 A.D. This is most likely the year that Jesus began His public ministry. This is hinted at in Luke 4 where it says that when Jesus launched His ministry at the synagogue in Nazareth, He did so by reading a passage from Isaiah 61 about the way in which the Messiah would fulfill the spiritual essence of the Jubilee. After finishing the reading, Jesus proclaimed, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21).

Here is the important thing to keep in mind: All the different theories and calculations have the Jesus coming as the "Anointed" and then being "cut-off" somewhere around 30 AD. Who else fulfilled these prophecies around 30AD? NO ONE! Jesus is the Messiah of Israel that Daniel prophesied would come.

***25 Daniel 9** The end will come with a flood, and war and its miseries are decreed from that time to the very end. ²⁷ **The ruler will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven, but after half this time, he will put an end to the sacrifices and offerings.** And as a climax to all his terrible deeds, he will set up a sacrilegious object that causes desecration, until the fate decreed for this defiler is finally poured out on him."

These events have yet to happen!

We can think of it in this way: God appointed 490 years of special focus on Israel in His redemptive plan. The years were paused by Israel's rejection of Jesus. Now there is no *special* focus on Israel in God's redemptive plan because this is the time of the church. God's focus will return to Israel when the church is taken away (at the Rapture) and the last seven years of man's rule on this earth begin. A significant event that will mark the beginning of this seven-year period is the confirming of **a covenant**. With this **covenant** Israel will embrace the Antichrist as a political messiah, if not the literal Messiah. The covenant he will make will evidently be a peace covenant, in which he will guarantee Israel's safety in the land. Therefore she will need and welcome the peacemaking role of this head of the confederation of 10 European (Roman) nations. Walvoord

***25a** The Book of Revelation sees this seven year period with both its halves as yet future (Revelation 12:6, 13-14; 13:5-9, 14-15). The **middle of the week** and the **end of sacrifice** had not yet happened in 90 a.d. David Guzik

***26 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 (NASB95)** ³ Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

***26a Matthew 24:15-20 (NIV84)** ¹⁵ **"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—** ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. ¹⁸ Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. ¹⁹ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! ²⁰ Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath.

***27 – Chart of Daniel's 70 weeks**

We are living in what some have called the age of grace. What they mean is the time between the resurrection and the end of the age. We could call this the "church" age or the calling of Gentiles. But the wonderful thing is that the Holy Spirit is calling those out of the world who will hear the Good News of a Risen Savior, will repent of their sin and will come to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sin. Maybe you need to come to Jesus today, repent of your sin and ask Him to save you from the wrath to come?

For those of us who are God's children, waiting for our Lord to come and get us; we are called to lead lives set apart to God in this last age. We are called as God's ambassadors to proclaim a message of reconciliation. That we have passed from death to life and we call others to follow us to know God through Christ our Savior. The strength of our witness to the world is our holiness and our commitment to God's Word. Maybe you haven't been living a holy life, but you are indulging in the forbidden pleasures of the world? Maybe you haven't been listening to God's word or heeding His discipline in your life and today you need to repent and confess your sins?

Let's spend some time praying!

For further study:**“Daniel’s 70 Weeks of Years”** By Dr. David R. Reagan

One of the most remarkable and important prophecies in the Bible is found in **Daniel 9:24-27**. It is the cornerstone of Messianic prophecy because it establishes the timing of both the First and Second Advents of the Messiah.

The prophecy is usually referred to as “The 70 Weeks of Years.” This name derives from the opening words of most English translations: *“Seventy weeks have been decreed”* (Daniel 9:24). In the Hebrew, the word translated “weeks” is actually the word “sevens.” **So, the text actually says, “Seventy sevens have been decreed...”**

Just as the English word “dozen” can refer to a dozen of anything, the Hebrew word shavuim, meaning “sevens,” can refer to seven of anything. Its exact meaning is dependent upon the context. In this key passage from Daniel, the context makes it clear that he is speaking of years — seventy sevens of years, which would be a total of 490 years. It is therefore appropriate to refer to the prophecy as “The 70 Weeks of Years” even though those exact words are not found in the passage itself.

The Jewish Context and Goals

Another important thing to keep in mind about the context of **the passage is that it is directed to the Jewish people**. The opening words of the prophecy make this clear: *“Seventy weeks have been declared for your people and your holy city...”* (Daniel 9:24). The focus of the prophecy is the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

The prophecy begins by stating that six things will be accomplished regarding the Jewish people during a period of 490 years:

“Finish the transgression”

“Make an end of sin”

“Make atonement for iniquity”

“Bring in everlasting righteousness”

“Seal up vision and prophecy”

“Anoint the most holy place”

Let’s take a moment to consider the meaning of these six prophecies. The first, “finish the transgression,” refers to the Jew’s rejection of God. The Hebrew word translated “transgression” connotes the idea of rebellion, and the rebellion of the Jewish people is their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. Jesus said He would not return until the

Jewish people are willing to say, “*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord*” (Matthew 23:37-39). The Jews will open their hearts to their Messiah before Daniel’s 490 year period ends.

The period will also witness an “*end of sin*” for the Jews. The word translated “sin” refers to the sins of daily life — sins of dishonesty and immorality. This end of sin will occur at the time the Jews accept their Messiah and His earthly reign of righteousness begins.

An atonement for Israel’s sins is the third thing that will happen during Daniel’s 70 weeks of years. This atonement occurred, of course, when Jesus shed His blood on the Cross for the sins of the world. But that atonement will not actually be applied to the Jews until they appropriate it by accepting Jesus as their Messiah.

The 490 year period will also “*bring in everlasting righteousness.*” This undoubtedly refers to the establishment of the Messiah’s earthly reign when the earth will be flooded with peace, righteousness and justice as the waters cover the sea.

The fifth achievement will be the fulfillment of all prophecy concerning the Messiah. The Apostle Peter referred to two types of Messianic prophecy — those related to “*the sufferings of Christ*” and those concerning “*the glories to follow*” (1 Peter 1:11). The suffering prophecies were all fulfilled at the Cross. The prophecies concerning “*the glories to follow*” are yet to be fulfilled. Just as Jesus was humiliated in history, He is going to be glorified in history. This will occur when the Jews accept Him, and He returns to reign over the world from Mt. Zion in Jerusalem.

The final goal to be achieved at the end of the 70 weeks of years is “*the anointing of the most holy.*” Most English translations say “*the most holy place.*” The Hebrew simply says, “**the most holy.**” Commentators therefore differ as to whether this is a reference to the anointing of the Messiah as King of kings or whether it is talking about the anointing of the Millennial Temple described in Ezekiel 40-48. Either way the anointing will not take place until the Lord returns in response to the national repentance of the Jews.

The Starting Point

Daniel says all these spiritual goals will be accomplished within a special period of 490 years. When did that period begin, and when did it end? It is when Daniel addresses these questions that he begins to give clues as to the timing of the First and Second Advents of the Messiah.

The prophecy says that the starting point of the 70 weeks of years will be “*the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem*” (Daniel 9:25). Keep in mind that this prophecy was given to Daniel by the

angel Gabriel during the time of Israel's exile in Babylon. The approximate date was 538 B.C., shortly before the first remnant of Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem in 536 B.C. under Zerubbabel. Jerusalem was in ruins at this time, having been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar 70 years earlier in 586 B.C. (The captivity had begun in 605 B.C., before the destruction of Jerusalem, when Nebuchadnezzar took Daniel and other "youths" to Babylon as hostages — Daniel 1:1-4.)

The crucial question relates to when the decree was issued "*to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.*" There are three possible dates:

538 B.C. — Cyrus, King of Persia, issued a decree to Zerubbabel to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-3; and Ezra 6:1-5).

457 B.C. — Artaxerxes, King of Persia, issued a decree to Ezra authorizing him to reinstitute the Temple services, appoint judges and magistrates, and teach the Law (Ezra 7:11-26).

445 B.C. — Artaxerxes issued a decree to Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-8).

On the surface, the third decree, the one issued to Nehemiah, seems to be the most obvious candidate for the starting date of the prophecy, for it is the only one that specifically relates to the rebuilding of the city. For that reason, most commentators have selected it as the beginning of the 70 weeks of years.

The Events of the 70 Weeks of Years

Daniel's prophecy next states that the 490 years will be divided into three periods as follows: seven weeks (49 years) plus sixty-two weeks (434 years) plus one week (7 years). He states that at the end of the first two periods (69 weeks or 483 years), the Messiah will be "*cut off*," a seemingly clear reference to the crucifixion. He then states that both Jerusalem and the Temple will be destroyed.

The prophecy concludes by focusing on the last week of years. It says that following the death of the Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem, "*the prince who is to come*" will make a covenant with the Jewish people that will enable them to reinstitute their sacrificial system. This prince will come from the same people who destroyed the Temple (the Romans).

We know from 2 Thessalonians 2 that this "*prince who is to come*" is the Antichrist, the "*man of lawlessness*" who is "*the son of destruction.*" The same passage makes it clear that his covenant will enable the Jews to rebuild their Temple.

Both passages — Daniel 9 and 2 Thessalonians 2 — establish the fact that in the middle of this 70th week (3 1/2 years into it) this “prince who is to come” will double cross the Jewish people. He will march into the rebuilt Temple and declare himself to be God. He will stop the sacrifices and he will erect “*an abomination of desolation,*” most likely an idol of himself. The book of Revelation specifies that the Messiah will return to earth 3 1/2 years after this desolation of the Temple takes place.

Now we have the timing of the two advents of the Messiah. He will come the first time at the end of 483 years and will be “cut off” before the Temple is destroyed. He will return the second time at the end of a seven year period that will begin with a treaty that allows the Jews to rebuild their Temple and reinstitute the Mosaic system of sacrifices.

Calculating Dates

The first person in modern history to calculate the 483 years to the “cutting off” of the Messiah was Sir Robert Anderson in his book, *The Coming Prince* (1894). Using the decree to Nehemiah issued in 445 B.C. as his starting point, and using what he called “the 360 day prophetic year,” Anderson calculated that it was exactly 173,880 days or 483 lunar years from the day the edict was issued to the day Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. His calculations placed the crucifixion in the spring of 32 A.D.

These calculations have remained almost sacred in Christian thinking for the past one hundred years. But they need to be examined carefully because the fact of the matter is that there are two serious problems with Anderson’s calculations.

Sir Robert Anderson’s Calculations

445 B.C. to 32 A.D. (476 x 365)	=	173,740 days
March 14 to April 6 ¹	=	24 days
Leap years	=	<u>116 days</u>
Total	=	173,880 days

¹Anderson calculated that the decree was issued on March 14, 445 B.C. and that Jesus died on April 6 in 32 A.D.

The Prophetic Year Problem

The first is his assumption that the years in the prophecy are lunar years of 360 days. That assumption is based upon the fact that the book of Revelation defines the 70th week of Daniel as lasting a total of 2,520 days (Revelation 11:3 and 12:6). The only way that can translate into seven years is by using lunar years of 360 days.

Now, on the surface, it seems logical to apply this Revelation principle to Daniel. If the years of the final week of Daniel’s prophecy

are lunar years, then surely the first 483 years must also be lunar years.

But there is a flaw in this logic. Daniel's prophecy was written to the people of his time to give them, among other things, an insight as to when the Messiah would come. And the fact of the matter is that Daniel does not even so much as hint that he is speaking of anything other than regular solar years.

Some would counter by saying that the Jews used a lunar calendar and therefore thought only in lunar terms when calculating time. But that simply is not true. The Jews have never relied on a pure lunar calendar, like the Muslims do. The Jews have always used a lunar/solar calendar. Their months are 30 days long, but they insert what is called an intercalary month every so often to make adjustments for the true solar calendar.

For the Jews this is an absolute necessity because their major festivals (Passover, Harvest and Tabernacles) are all directly related to the agricultural cycle. If they did not make the solar adjustments, their festivals would migrate around the calendar, resulting in harvest festivals falling during seed planting times! This is exactly the case with the Muslim calendar which is a pure lunar calendar. And thus, the sacred festival of Ramadan circulates around the year. One year it will be in August, the next in September, and the next in October.

The point is that the Jews in Daniel's time did not think in terms of 360 day years. Nor did Daniel. If you will look at Daniel 9:1-2 you will see that shortly before he was given the 70 Weeks of Years prophecy by Gabriel, he discovered Jeremiah's prophecy that the Babylonian captivity would last 70 years. He realized immediately that he was very near the end of those 70 years.

The indication of this passage is that Daniel interpreted Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years to be 70 regular years as defined by the Jewish lunar/solar calendar. And again, if his subsequent prophecy about the 70 weeks of years was to have any meaning to the Jewish people, it had to be understood in terms of regular years, not "prophetic years" of 360 days each.

Why then would there be a difference between the first 483 years and the last seven? I suspect it may relate to a statement made by Jesus in Matthew 24. He said the 70th week of Daniel will be "*cut short*" lest all life on earth be destroyed during that terrible period of tribulation (Matthew 24:22).

The Terminus Problem

The second problem with Anderson's calculations is their terminus date of 32 A.D. This just simply is not an acceptable year for the

death of Jesus since it would place the crucifixion on either Sunday or Monday. Even Anderson recognized this problem, and as one author has put it, Anderson engaged in some “mathematical gymnastics” to arrive at a Friday crucifixion.

In his book, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, Harold Hoehner of Dallas Theological Seminary shifts the date of Nehemiah’s decree from 445 to 444 B.C. and then calculates the 173,880 days to the spring of 33 A.D., when the crucifixion would have fallen on a Friday. But this creates more problems than it solves. The 444 B.C. date is suspect and the 33 A.D. date is very late. Luke 3:23 says Jesus was “about 30 years of age” when He began His ministry. His ministry lasted 3 1/2 years. Hoehner’s chronology would make Jesus 32 years old at the start of His ministry and 35 at the time of his death.

An Alternative Viewpoint

I believe a better solution is to interpret Daniel’s prophecy as speaking of lunar years adjusted periodically and thus amounting to regular years. I also believe that the best starting point for the prophecy is the decree issued to Ezra in 457 B.C.

I have already explained why I believe regular years should be used. Let me now explain why I think the decree issued to Ezra should be used as the starting point for the calculation of the first two periods totaling 483 years.

The decree given to Zerubbabel authorized the rebuilding of the Temple. The decree issued to Nehemiah concerned the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Ezra’s decree was more general in nature, covering a variety of subjects. But we know from Scripture that he interpreted it to mean that the Jews were authorized to launch a general rebuilding campaign that included the temple, the city, and the walls. His interpretation is stated in Ezra 9:9 — *“God has not forsaken us, but has extended loving kindness to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us reviving to raise up the house of our God, to restore its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem”* (Ezra 9:9).

Now, using Ezra’s decree as the starting point (457 B.C.), if we count forward 483 years we will arrive at 27 A.D. (There is only one year between 1 B.C. and 1 A.D.) According to the translator of Josephus, the Jewish New Year that began in the fall of 27 A.D. marked the beginning of the last Jubilee Year that the Jews enjoyed in the land before their worldwide dispersal by the Romans in 70 A.D. This is most likely the year that Jesus began His public ministry. This is hinted at in Luke 4 where it says that when Jesus launched His ministry at the synagogue in Nazareth, He did so by reading a passage from Isaiah 61 about the way in which the Messiah would fulfill the spiritual essence of the Jubilee. After finishing the reading,

Jesus proclaimed, “*Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing*” (Luke 4:21).

The Relationship of the Resurrection

Further evidence that this date is correct is the fact that it would place the end of Jesus’ 3 1/2 year ministry in the spring of 31 A.D. And that happens to be the most likely year of the crucifixion.

Most scholars have tried to place the crucifixion in either 30 or 33 A.D. because these are the only two years in the time frame of Jesus’ death when Passover fell on Friday. The belief that Jesus was crucified on a Passover that fell on Friday is based on a statement in Mark 15:42 which says the crucifixion took place on “*the day of preparation before the Sabbath.*”

But this statement does not necessarily mean that the crucifixion took place on a Friday. Such an assumption is rooted in Gentile ignorance about Jewish feast days. What the Gentile church has failed to recognize over the centuries is that the first day after Passover is a feast day, or “High Sabbath,” because it is the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is considered to be a Sabbath regardless of what day of the week it falls on (Numbers 28:16-18).

The Gospels make it clear that the crucifixion week had two Sabbaths. Mark 16:1 says a group of women bought spices to anoint the body of Jesus after the Sabbath was over. But in Luke 23:56 it says they bought the spices before the Sabbath and then rested on the Sabbath before proceeding to the tomb.

In the year 31 A.D. Passover fell on Wednesday. Jesus was crucified that morning and buried that evening. The next day, Thursday, was a High Sabbath. On Friday, after the High Sabbath, the women bought the spices and then rested on the regular Sabbath (Saturday) before going to the tomb on Sunday morning.

Further Collaboration

The time span I am proposing from 457 B.C. to 27 A.D. is also supported by another amazing piece of evidence. Do you remember how Daniel divided the first 483 years into two periods of time, first 49 years and then 434 years? Why did he do that? Go back and re-read Daniel 9:25 and notice that he makes specific reference to the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem. Did he divide the period into two parts to indicate that the rebuilding of the city would occupy the first 49 years?

In a recent booklet entitled “The Daniel Papers,” a publication of the Radio Bible Class, the author, Herb Vander Lugt, notes:

“According to Barnes and several other trustworthy Bible commentators, the historian Prideaux declared Nehemiah’s last action in rebuilding the city occurred in the 15th year of the Persian ruler Darius Nothus (423-404 B.C.). His 15th year was the 49th year from the 457 B.C. decree. Josephus seems to support this idea in his remarks about the death of Nehemiah.”

A Prophetic Gap

One puzzle remains about Daniel’s prophecy. What about the 70th week? Is it past or future? I believe there is no doubt whatsoever that it is future. The reason for that conclusion is simple. The prophecy begins by stating that the 490 years will produce six consequences among the Jewish people.

I began this article by outlining those six prophetic events in detail. If you will look back at them, you will readily see that they are still unfulfilled. The Jews are still in rebellion against God, they are still caught up in their sins, they are still refusing to accept the atonement for their iniquity, everlasting righteousness has not come to the earth, all prophecy concerning the Messiah has not yet been fulfilled, and “the most holy” has not been anointed.

There must, therefore, be a gap in the prophecy. This may seem strange to the casual reader. But students of prophecy are familiar with prophetic gaps. They are very common in prophetic literature because of the peculiar nature of the prophetic perspective. God would show His prophets great future events and the prophets would present them as if they were happening in rapid succession because that’s the way they appeared. The prophet was like a person looking down a mountain range seeing one mountain top after another, seemingly pressed up against each other, but in reality separated by great valleys which could not be seen.

Jesus Himself recognized this characteristic of prophecy when He read a prophecy from Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth. If you will check what He read (Luke 4:18- 19) against what Isaiah wrote (Isaiah 61:1-3), you will see that Jesus stopped reading in the middle of a sentence because the rest of the sentence had to do with His Second Coming.

The Implications

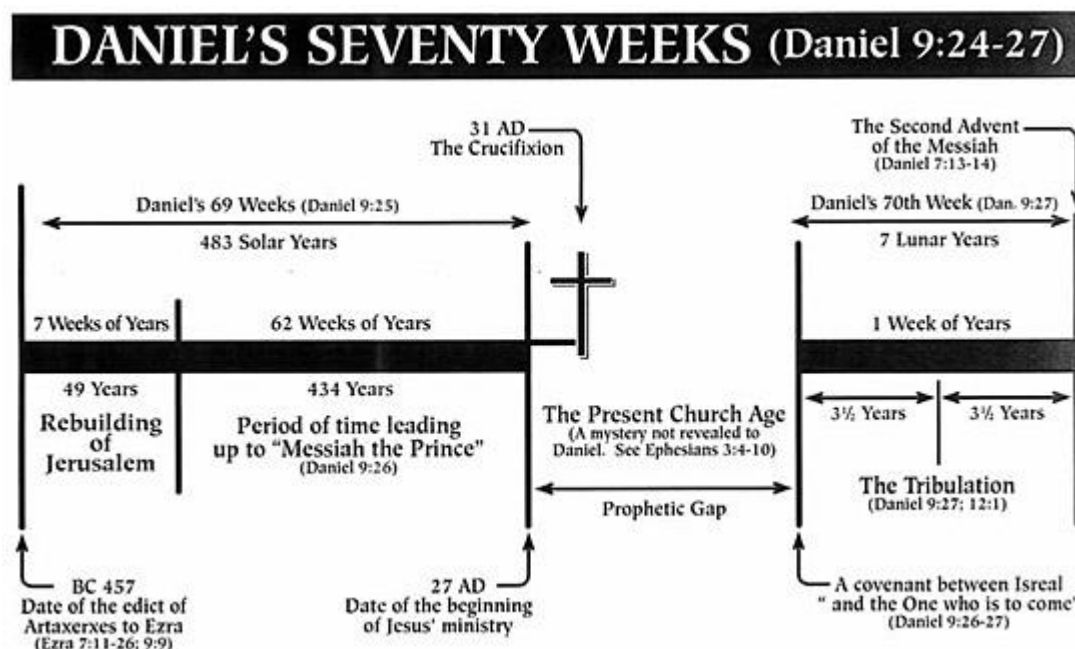
For Christians, Daniel’s prophecy should serve to underscore the supernatural origin of the Bible. It should also serve as confirmation that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah.

For Jews, the prophecy should be deeply disturbing for two reasons. First, it clearly teaches that the Messiah had to come before the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. That means that either God failed to keep His promise or else the Jews missed recognizing their Messiah.

Second, the prophecy clearly teaches that a terrible time of tribulation for the Jews still lies ahead.

Moses said it would be a time of “*distress*” that would occur in “*the latter days*”(Deuteronomy 4:30). Jeremiah called it “*the time of Jacob’s distress*” (Jeremiah 30:7). Daniel characterized it as “*a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time*” (Daniel 12:1). Zechariah says two-thirds of the Jews will “*be cut off and perish*” during that terrible time (Zechariah 13:8).

The process will be horrible. But the result will be glorious, for the remaining remnant will at long last turn their hearts to God, accept their Messiah, and cry out, “*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!*”



Recommended Reading

Archer, Jr., Gleason L., Daniel (Vol. 7 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* edited by Frank E. Gaebelin, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1985)

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Wood, Leon, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1973)