

The Vision of 70 Weeks

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: The Book of Daniel

Test: Daniel 9:1-2

Daniel 9 is one of the most amazing and significant prophetic passages in the Bible, and it begins with his understanding and application of prophecy. Chapter nine brings us to Daniel's **third** vision. The year is about 536 B.C. Daniel's second vision left Daniel weak and faint.

Daniel 8:27 The truth is we would all feel faint if we knew how close the end might be. This third vision is a word from God about the **future** from then until now.

Daniel is now in his 80's. He has seen the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar when he was carried away to Babylon. He has seen the fall of Babylon and the rise of the Medo-Persian Empire. As Daniel is reading, he remembers that Jeremiah prophesied that the Jewish captivity would last **70** years. Daniel understood something from reading the words of God's prophets. Prophecy is meant to be **understood** – perhaps not in every detail, but certainly in its main points. While doing the math Daniel realizes the exile time is almost over. From the previous vision of the “little horn” Daniel understood full well the future of Israel. Jeremiah's first prophesy had happened. **Jeremiah 25:11** Daniel also remembered that Jeremiah had prophesied a **happier** outcome. **Jeremiah 29:10-12**

Daniel 9:3-4

Knowing the times that he lived in, Daniel went to prayer. Throughout his life and in captivity, Daniel never forgot his spiritual **roots**. Daniel made supplications. This simply means that he prayed humbly. Daniel, who was a counselor and advisor to kings and a spiritual leader to his people, had no problem getting on his face before God. He knew well the writings of Jeremiah.

Lamentations 3:22-23

Daniel 9:5-6

As Daniel prays it is important to notice that he uses the word **we**. He identifies himself with the people, much in the same way Jesus did for us. He lists the sins that brought Israel into captivity seventy years earlier. The top three were rebellion, disobedience, and a refusal to **listen** to the prophets of God. Daniel teaches us what true confession looks like. It is repentant, specific and open. Instead of complaining, Daniel confessed. During times of great revival among God's people, the Holy Spirit always brings a deep conviction and awareness of sin. Genuine, appropriate confession will be sincere, specific, and thorough.

J. Edwin Orr describes how in the 1952 revival in Brazil a woman in a crowded church confessed, “Please pray for me, I need to love people more.” The leader told her gently, “That is not a confession, sister. Anyone could have said it.” Later in the service the lady stood again and said, “Please pray for me. What I should have said is that my sharp tongue has caused a lot of trouble in this congregation.” The pastor leaned over to Orr and whispered, “Now she is talking!”

Daniel 9:7

Daniel compares the **righteousness** of God to the state they are in. Daniel prays for the Jewish people who were both near and far. The Jews were not just personally confused as a people, they were **scattered** over all of the near East. Some were still in Judea and other in Babylon.

Daniel 9:8-14

In this prayer Daniel did not **blame** God for Israel's situation. He blamed himself and Israel. As a matter of fact, he confesses that God righteously did what He had warned He would do. Daniel confesses that even after all this happened, the people did not pray a prayer of repentance and turn from their ways. Verse twelve tells us that never in history had a city been as devastated as Jerusalem. Daniel contrasts the **righteousness** of God with their disobedience.

Daniel 9:15-18

Daniel's prayer is not only a prayer of repentance but a cry for **mercy**. He remembers that it was God who brought Israel out of Egypt and gave them **freedom** and deliverance.

Daniel is sickened by the fact that despite all of God's mercy to Israel they had turned on Him. God delivered from Egypt because He remembered His promise to **Abraham**. **Exodus 2:24-25**

Daniel not only confessed specifically, he **requested** specifically. He prayed for God's anger to be turned away and for His face to **shine** on them again. A shining face speaks of favor and favorability. Daniel's prayer was consumed with the glory of God, not primarily with the benefit of man. His purpose in prayer was to see God's work accomplished and His cause glorified. It isn't wrong to pray for our own needs. Jesus invited us to ask, '*give us this day our daily bread*'. At the same time, we need to have an even greater passion for the glory and benefit of God than for our own needs. This also speaks to **purify** of motive in Daniel's prayer. Sometimes we pray for God to do a great work so we can be known as great workers for God. We need to pray for the sake of the LORD's cause, both in our words and heart.

Daniel 9:19

Daniel also prays with a poetic **passion**. O Lord **hear**, O Lord **forgive**, O Lord **listen** and **act**. Do not **delay**.

Daniel 9:20-22

Notice how quickly God responds to Daniel. Those who seek the face of God find themselves with skill and understanding. God was not only showing Daniel that Jerusalem would be restored but through Gabriel, God showed Daniel well into the future.

Daniel 9:23-27 – Daniel’s 70 weeks

There is almost universal agreement among Bible scholars and commentators that this refers to seventy sets of seven years, or weeks of years. In ancient Hebrew, weeks simply refers to a unit of seven. The Hebrew word here is often used to mean a unit of seven days, but it may also be used for a unit of seven years. Daniel has already been praying in terms of years.

These verses are given as a kind of timetable to give us an idea when Messiah would come to Bethlehem and some of the events that would accompany His appearance. The seventy weeks were focused upon Daniel’s people (the Jews) and his holy city (Jerusalem). This is not a prophecy concerning the church. Israel has not become the church. It is important that we do not allow replacement theory to replace prophecy. As Christians we are Gentiles saved by grace and have become the seed of Abraham by adoption. Israel is Israel and the Church are all of those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb of God, both Jews and Gentiles.

Six-Fold purposes of God will be accomplished in the seventy weeks.

- To finish the transgression (rebellion) - this means that transgression itself will be finished. Taken literally, this means establishing an entirely new order on earth, with an end to man’s rebellion against God. **Matthew 1:21, 1 John 3:8**
- To make an end of sins, this means not only the end of the guilt of sin, but an end of sin itself. It means to “seal up” or to “restrain” sins. **Colossians 2:14, Hebrews 9:26 & 10:14**
- To make reconciliation for iniquity - man’s iniquity must be reconciled to God’s justice and holiness. This work was clearly accomplished at the cross. It was on the cross that Jesus paid the debt for our sin and made atonement for our wickedness. **Romans 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Hebrews 2:17**
- To bring in everlasting righteousness - to make each individual righteous but also to totally cleanse and make righteous all of creation. **Isaiah 51:6, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Romans 3:21-22**
- To seal up vision and prophecy - both the ending and fulfillment of prophecy. Concluding the final stage of human history and culminating with the reign of the Son of God. At the end of these seventy weeks of years all of God’s plan will be finished. **Luke 24:25-27 & 44-45, John 19:28-30**
- To anoint the Most Holy - the cross of Christ dealt with atonement - sealing up of vision and prophecy deals with enthronement. Jesus will rule over all the earth as the Sovereign King. **Isaiah 61:1, Hebrews 1:8-9**

Gabriel announced that the timing of the prophetic clock would begin when a decree was issued to rebuild Jerusalem. From the time of that decree to the time of Messiah would be 483 years. Artaxerxes made a decree giving Nehemiah permission, safe passage and supplies to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and the walls in 445 B.C. **Nehemiah 2:1-8**

It is important to remember that in Daniel's day a year contained only **360** days not 365. We use a Roman calendar not a Jewish calendar.

The 69 weeks from the time of the Persian decree with Nehemiah until the time of Jesus entry into Jerusalem was 483 years. (of 360-day years) Since the decree to build Jerusalem came in 445 B.C. and we add 483 years to that the projection puts us right in the adult years of Jesus life.

Breaking it down

Daniel prophesied that the **Messiah** would come 173,880 days after the Persian decree.

* 69 prophetic weeks x 7 – each being a 7-year time span - that gives you 483 years times 360 days = 173,880 days.

* Daniel wrote that 173,880 days following Artaxerxes command to rebuild Jerusalem, the Messiah would enter the holy city in triumph.

* The actual date of the Persian decree was March 14, 445 B.C. (2,466 years ago from 2021)

* Jesus came into the city of Jerusalem on April 6, AD 32.

* Zachariah told us that the time of Messiah would begin on the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem and was proclaimed King of the Jews.

Zachariah 9:9, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:28-38

Some people have taken the time to do the math and calculations between the Jewish calendar and the Roman Calendar. Counting leap years and the difference in accounting for solar days. They have discovered that Daniel was spot on to the day.

Of the seventy “sevens” **69** have been fulfilled in history. This leaves one more “seven” yet to be fulfilled. Most scholars believe that we are living in the huge gap between the 69th and 70th week. The prophetic clock has been paused. The final “seven” of Daniel is what we refer to as the **tribulation** period. **Daniel 9:27**

It is important to understand that the 70th week is projected into the future. It does not follow the other 69 weeks chronologically. This gap is known as the **church** age or the age of **grace**. It is our theology in the Assemblies of God that this age of grace will end when Jesus raptures His church. **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** The word ‘rapture’ is derived from the Latin word ‘raptu’ which means “caught away or caught up”. Following the rapture this world will see the rise of the antichrist.

The “**he**” Gabriel described in Daniel 9:27 is the prince who is to come mentioned in the previous verse. If we know that the prince's people destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70, then we know this coming prince has his ancestral roots in the soil of the ancient Roman Empire. Therefore, the prince who is to come will in some way be an heir to the Romans, even as the final world government is an heir to the Roman Empire.

He shall confirm a **covenant** with many for one week - a seven-year peace treaty. The coming prince will make a covenant with Israel for the final unit of seven years, completing the seventy weeks prophesied for the Jewish people and Jerusalem. The word ‘many’ here is a *specific* reference to Israel, not a *general* reference to a group. With this covenant Israel will embrace the antichrist as a political messiah, if not the literal Messiah. Jesus predicted this in **John 5:43**

The 70th week will begin when the coming prince shall confirm a covenant with the Jewish people. These gaps or pauses in prophecy may seem strange to us, but they are common.

In the middle of the week (3 ½ years) he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. The coming prince will break the covenant with Israel in the middle of the seven years. With this peace treaty will come the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. It will be restored to its former glory and all of the sacrifices and rituals will be restored.

On the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate: The ending of sacrifice will come with abominations, followed by tremendous *desolation*.

‘Abominations’ translates an ancient Hebrew word (shiqquwts) that is connected to horrific idolatry. The idea is that the coming prince breaks the covenant and brings an end to sacrifice and offering by desecrating the holy place of the temple with a horrific idolatry.

Jesus called this the ‘abomination of desolation’ **Matthew 24:15** He indicated that it would be a pivotal sign in the Great Tribulation.

Paul referred to the idolatry of the coming prince in **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4**

Until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate: This breaking of the covenant and abomination of desolation has a promised consummation. Before the 70th week is completed, each of the things described in Daniel 9:24 will be accomplished and everlasting righteousness will reign.

The antichrist comes on the world scene with a peace initiative that includes Israel. In Revelation, Jesus describes the antichrist as the rider on the white horse, which is the first of the four horses of the Apocalypse. The next are war, world-wide famine, and death.

Daniel chapter 7 describes the antichrist as the fourth beast that is dreadful and exceedingly strong who devours and breaks with iron teeth. The antichrist will be vicious.

This vision reminds us how important the work of Jesus is and how vital it is to know Jesus as our Savior, so we are not here when this world ruler comes on the scene.