

CONCERNING THE WAY

February 10, 2009

LESSON 47: PROPHECY SERIES — THE BOOK OF DANIEL



Chapter 9 - 538 BC

The passage from verse 24-27 of chapter 9 is one of the most significant prophecies in the Old Testament. There's an amazing amount of information in these four verses. The chronological structure given in this prophecy becomes the basis for understanding many other prophecies, and gives us a clear framework for understanding the last days events.

Prophecy has several functions. Prophecy should have a comforting function for believers. You can comfort yourselves when it looks like everything is breaking loose. Let me give you one very trivial example. Back when I was young everyone was worried that we were to have nuclear disaster, that we would blow our planet up. I remember parade after parade, demonstration after demonstration, stop nuclear weapons because nuclear weapons are going to destroy mankind. Nuclear warfare was going to end the world and everybody was upset. Any Christian that knows anything about prophecy knows there's something wrong with that kind of thinking. The world is not going to end until Jesus Christ returns; we do not have to fear nuclear annihilation.

That ought never to be a fear of the Bible-believing Christian. We have to be cautious obviously, nuclear bombs hurt people when they go off, and I expect we probably will have a nuclear attack of some kind. But we're not going to blow up planet earth by some nuclear device. The Christian can approach nuclear confrontation with both eyes open and relax because he knows that Jesus Christ will return to a surviving human race.

Now do not interpret this as being careless; we're not talking about that, we're talking about getting rid of this morbid fear that the human race is going to kill itself; it is not, God will not permit it. So that is a source of comfort if you accept prophecy.

Now prophecy has another function, a function to the non-Christian as well as a to the Christian. Prophecy's main function to the non-Christian is that it gives him vital evidence that the Christian faith is the true faith; it's an evidence of the faith, an evidence which is not available from any other religion or philosophy in the world. Not one philosophic or religious competing system can claim a massive number of prophets writing over a span of 30 centuries with a consistent message always centering on the same person, Christ. No other religion can claim that; they can claim a founder and a miracle here and there, but only the Judeo-Christian faith has a 30 century long history of prophecy that has been confirmed on numerous occasions.

Daniel saw a confirmation of prophecy in his day. We see a confirmation by the restoration of the state of Israel since 1948 in our day. Prophecy is an evidence. Now this isn't going to club somebody into believing, but it should act as a challenge to you; do you have a philosophy of history and of your life that can answer and explain these phenomena, can explain the 30 century long message that has been given into history, substantiated numerous times? We have to make our choice; as Christians we have available prophecy, we can believe it or disbelieve it. As an unbeliever you may face the claims of the Christian position and you know these prophecies or you ought to study them if you don't. Many people down through history have; one of the greatest French mathematicians who ever lived, Pascal, said that the reason that the Jews were cast out into the world was to give every continent the word of prophecy so that

when Jesus finally did come to make His claim the seed would have already been sown, in Asia, in Europe, in Africa. Prophecy has those two functions.

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.*

This is one year after the events in chapter 5, 66 years after the deportation in 605 BC, and about three years before Cyrus will issue his edict in 536 BC allowing the Jews to return to their homeland. Medo-Persia is in power at this time, the 2nd kingdom of the statue vision. Daniel is in his early 80's.

This is the same time frame as the lion's den event in chapter 6, but we don't know if that came after or before this vision. It says Darius was "made king", which would seem to prove that Darius was a subordinate of Cyrus, not the same person as Cyrus. Cyrus had been king of Persia long before Babylon was conquered.

Daniel had been in high position in both governments for a long time, but he was never too busy to pray and study the Word of God. He knew the book of Jeremiah, and understood that the captivity would last for 70 years, that's in Jeremiah 25:11, and 29:10.

Jeremiah 25:8-12 "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Because you have not obeyed My words, (9) behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' declares the LORD, 'and I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them and make them a horror and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. (10) 'Moreover, I will take from them the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. (11) 'This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. (12) 'Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.

Jeremiah got the 70 year period from the book of Leviticus, which says every 7th year Israel was to let the land rest. They were not to grow crops on the land during that Sabbath year. Israel did not do that for 490 years. Israel disobeyed that command for 70 years (490 / 7), so God removed them from the land for 70 years in punishment.

Leviticus 26:32-34 'I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled over it. (33) 'You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste. (34) 'Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths.

Also read 2 Chronicles 36:17-21 and Jeremiah 29. So in 605 BC he announces 70 years. Those 70 years are going to be up in the year 535 BC. The first year of Darius is 538 BC. So the time of the completion of those seventy years is very, very close to the time of Daniel in this chapter.

So Israel was disobedient for 490 years, now in this chapter God is going to tell us about the next 490

years. Daniel begins to pray; he knows the time of captivity is almost over. He begins to seek the will of the Lord for the future of Israel. This is one of the three great prayers of the post-exilic period, the other two being in Nehemiah 9, and Ezra 9 (all of these are in the 9th chapter of a book). If you want to understand what a great prayer is, what the principles of prayer are, you need to study these prayers.

The prayer is given in verses 3-19, and could be outlined as follows:

1. Confession of sin
2. Acknowledgment of Judgment
3. Request for divine mercy

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

This is how you repented before God in the Old Testament, how you got serious with God. I want to mention here that this is a good example of what the study of prophecy will do. Daniel read Jeremiah's prophecies, and Daniel set aside the things he was doing to think about the things of God. It caused him to humble himself before God, deny himself by fasting, humiliate himself by wearing sackcloth and ashes, confess his and Israel's sins, and pray for others. Knowledge of Bible prophecy causes spiritual purity and growth.

Daniel 9:4-5 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, (5) we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances.

Daniel is confessing for himself, not just the nation. He includes himself, so don't think Daniel was sinless. The background of this prayer is the Mosaic covenant structure. Daniel acknowledges God, "who keeps His covenant" for those who "keep His commandments" Daniel is not approaching an arbitrary, vindictive God, but One who is loyal to His covenant commitments, and to the people of the covenant.

Daniel 9:6 "Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land.

The prophets were sent whenever Israel was in disobedience, to call attention to the Mosaic covenant, try to get the people to repent, and warn them about what would happen if they didn't. This was never a popular message. The life of a prophet was usually pretty short, they were generally stoned to death or something. They would tell the people that if they kept disobeying, the curses would keep coming, but if you obey, then the blessings will come. That's what prophets did, that was their job; they were covenant-enforcers. See Jeremiah 7:25-26, 2 Chronicles 36:15-16.

This is a big problem today. More than 25% of the Bible is prophecy, but most people don't want to know what it says. Jesus told us to watch for the signs, but the vast majority of church member are not interested and not looking. It is no different than it was in Daniel's day. Ignoring God's Word is a sure way to invite His judgment.

Daniel 9:7 "Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day--to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You.

This is recalling Deuteronomy 28:49, 64, which specifically said that if Israel rebels against God, God would

evict them from the land. Daniel is acknowledging that God was right in doing so, because they rebelled against the covenant.

Daniel 9:8-10 "Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. (9) "To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; (10) nor have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets.

Again Daniel is confessing both his personal sins and the national sins of Israel, saying we didn't keep the covenant we made with God, we didn't listen to the prophets. Here are seven Biblical reasons why your prayer may not be answered:

1. Unbelief and doubting God (James 1:6, Hebrews 11:6)
2. Asking for the wrong reasons (James 4:3)
3. Sin in your life (Isaiah 59:2, John 9:31, 1 Peter 3:7)
4. Neglecting the needs of others (Proverbs 21:13)
5. Failure to forgive others (Mark 11:25)
6. It is not God's will (Luke 22:42)
7. Self-exaltation (Luke 18:9-14)

Daniel 9:11 "Indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him.

What curse is Daniel talking about? Deuteronomy 28:15-68 lists the curses that would happen to Israel if they did not keep the covenant.

Daniel 9:12-14 "Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem. (13) "As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. (14) "Therefore the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice.

Daniel keeps mentioning the Law of Moses. (Leviticus 26:40-42, 44, Deut. 30:1-3) This whole thing is based on the Mosaic covenant. Notice he is praying the Bible, his prayer is in line with the revealed will of God. The most effective type of prayer is that which accurately reflects the Word of God. I believe it is our ignorance of the Word of God that prevents many prayers from being answered.

Daniel 9:15-16 "And now, O Lord our God, who have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for Yourself, as it is this day-- we have sinned, we have been wicked. (16) "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.

Now Daniel moves from the confession to the request. He recalls the deliverance from Egypt, and probably thinks it's a good time for a similar deliverance from Babylon. Why did God take the Jews out of Egypt?

Because of the covenant He made with Abraham. (Exodus 2:24) Everything God has done or will do is based on the promises He made in that Abrahamic covenant. Remember way back when we studied Genesis that if you didn't understand the ramifications of the Abrahamic Covenant, you would never be able to understand the Bible and the plan of God? The covenant is behind everything that happens in the Bible, it is the epicenter of the Bible. God will never be a liar; He will always act consistently with what He has sworn in that covenant. Daniel is appealing to the covenant, saying you delivered us from Egypt because of the covenant, now deliver us from this bondage because of your faithfulness to your covenant.

What are we supposed to pray for?

1. For those in authority over us (1 Timothy 2:2)
2. For people to do God's work (Matthew 9:38)
3. For those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44)
4. For God's kingdom to come, His will to be done, food, forgiveness, and deliverance from temptation (Matthew 6:9-13)
5. For the peace of Jerusalem (Psalm 122:6)
6. For others (Ephesians 6:18, 3:14-19)
7. For wisdom (James 1:5)

Daniel 9:17 "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."

This is a request for the presence of God to return to a rebuilt temple. Remember, God's presence had left the temple before it was destroyed, because of the sin and idolatry of the nation.

Daniel 9:18-19 "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."

In verse 18, he is saying, I don't expect you to hear me because I pray three times a day, or because of anything good we might have done, but because of what you've already promised in your covenant. This should also be our attitude in prayer. We approach God in our era by the shed blood of His son, period. We ask, not because of anything good we have done or will do, but because of what Christ has done. We don't list the righteous things we have done, not on our own merits, but only on the basis of what He has already promised. Daniel makes the righteousness of God the basis for this request. He reminds God that His reputation is at stake here.

Notice Daniel's passion for the things of God in this prayer. Oh, if we could only pray this way! There's no vain repetition, no filler, no wanderings into selfish requests. This is the kind of prayer that moves the hands of God. And it did!

Daniel is praying for three things – Jerusalem, in verse 16, the temple in verse 17, and the Jewish people in verse 19. In the 70 weeks prophecy coming up, God is going to give the future blueprint for Jerusalem, the temple, and the Jew. Daniel prayer is about to be answered.

Then Gabriel shows up! Many times it seems like there are delays in getting answers to our prayers. This is one that was answered before Daniel even finished!

Daniel 9:20-23 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. (22) 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.

Again, Daniel was confessing his own sins and the sins of the nation. Why did Gabriel show up and not Michael? Gabriel has a different function than Michael. Gabriel's job is to disclose information, Michael's job is to protect Israel. Angels have different roles and functions.

Daniel gets three great truths from Gabriel:

1. He gave Daniel an understanding of the future of Israel and Jerusalem.
2. He told Daniel that he was greatly loved and desired by God
3. He told Daniel his prayer had moved the hand of God. The assumption here is that Daniel (and us) would not have received this information if he had not prayed. It's a great example of the fact that prayer makes a difference.

Gabriel is about to give Daniel "insight with understanding". This is a key piece of the prophetic jigsaw puzzle, without which prophecy would be a mystery. Gabriel is saying, the kingdom will come, Daniel, but not at the end of this 70-year exile, but at the end of another 490 year period.

Gabriel tells Daniel he is highly esteemed. Why is he highly esteemed? Is it because he was sinless? Is it because he prayed three times a day? No, it was because he honored the Covenant, he believed God's promises.

If you read the books of Kings, when it says this king is bad, this king is good, etc., what do you think that conclusion is based on? How well they honored the covenant. It's very simple. If they honored the covenant, he was good, if they did not honor the covenant, he was a bad king. The Covenant is everything! Everything God has done in the past and will do in the future is consistent with what He promised Abraham in Genesis 15. I can't possibly stress this enough.

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.

"We could call this the heart of Daniel's prophecy and the backbone of all predictions. It is the unanimous opinion of all students of prophecy that whoever does not understand these four verses cannot possibly obtain a clear concept of unfulfilled predictions."

This prophecy is the foundation. Revelation is built on top of this foundation. Many people jump into Revelation, wanting to understand prophecy, without understanding the foundation. The foundation of Revelation is the 70-weeks prophecy. There's people like Hank Hanegraff (The "Bible Answer Man") that go to Revelation and start screaming, "There's no 7 year tribulation period here!" Well, he obviously hasn't started with Daniel 9. Revelation provides us with more details.

Liberals try to get around these prophecies by attempting to late date Daniel, as we have discussed at the beginning of the book, so that they are not prophecies, but just a summary of history that took place, somehow, in Antiochus' day. However, the 6th century date of authorship is very well supported, there is overwhelming evidence for it. And, there is a prophecy in the next verse that makes the late date argument irrelevant.

Amillennialists (those who don't believe in a literal millennium and other fulfillments of prophecy) vary in their approach. Some see the 70 weeks as an indefinite amount of time, some see that the 69 weeks are literal, but the unfulfilled 70th week is an indefinite period. The amillennialist, who insists that Israel has been rejected permanently by God and replaced by the church, is forced to allegorize predictions like this, which always leads to subjectivity and vagueness. But a literal/normal reading does not lead to interpretative obscurity, but to an opening up of astounding truths of both comings of the Messiah.

The Hebrew word for week here is just a reference to a unit of seven. So, seventy units of seven (or 490) have been determined for Israel. It is the context that determines what these units are, and the evidence shows that it is 490 years being spoken of, for the following five reasons:

1. Nearly everyone agrees that this couldn't be 490 days. In this prophecy the city of Jerusalem must be rebuilt, destroyed, and rebuilt again. There wouldn't be time in a year and a half to do all that plus the other parts of the prophecy.
2. Daniel had been thinking of years, since he was thinking of Jeremiah's 70 years of captivity. He knew that in about two years the captivity should be over.
3. The length of Israel's captivity was based on their violation of God's law of the Sabbath year. It's no accident that Israel's violations in years would be matched in years by their eventual restoration. How many total years did Israel violate the law? 70 times 7, 490 years. So, again, God is very intentional about this. He is revealing the start of a new era in dealing with the Jews which will last the exact amount of time in years.
4. Daniel's use of "sevens" is found just once more, in the next chapter, when he says he had been fasting for three units of seven. But then he carefully makes it clear that he speaking of days. He obviously did that so the reader wouldn't assume that it was years he was talking about.
5. Treating the units as years fits well with other scriptures. The final "week" begins with the signing of a covenant, which is broken halfway through the week, which is when the time of great tribulation comes on Israel. This would obviously equate to a 3½ year period, which also fits well with the description "time, times, and half a time" in Daniel 7:25, 12:7, and Revelation 12:14.

There are six very specific purposes for the 490 year period. The first three have to do with how sin will be dealt with, the last three with how the kingdom will be established:

1. To finish the transgression – remembering that this prophecy is all about Israel, this declares that the apostasy and rebellion of Israel will be brought to an end after the 70 weeks, specifically speaking of their rejection of their Messiah. At the completion of the 70 weeks, in order for the Messiah to return and the kingdom to be established, Israel must turn in faith to Him. This was Peter's point in his sermon in Acts 3:19-21, and it was declared by Jesus in Matthew 23:37-39.
2. To make an end of sin – All sin by Israel, both individually and corporately, will come to an end. This is a final culmination of Israel's sinful condition.
3. To make atonement for iniquity – this has to be speaking of the cross of Christ, since that is the only thing that can take care of sin. It is only the cross that makes it possible for anyone to be reconciled to God, Jew or Gentile (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). One of God's goals for the 70 weeks is to save Israel, through the cross of Jesus, and bring them into the New Covenant (Zechariah 12:10, 13:1, Isaiah 59:20-21, Ezekiel 36:25-27, Jeremiah 31:31-34).
4. To bring in everlasting righteousness – one of the characteristics of the Messiah's kingdom is it's righteousness (Isaiah 11:2-5, Jeremiah 23:3-6). There has never been a time on earth since the fall

in which there was complete righteousness and no sin. We as believers are considered righteous today because of what Christ has done, but this will be ultimately fulfilled in the kingdom. It will be an age of righteousness. Amillennialists believe this was fulfilled at the first coming of Christ, but that is impossible to support, considering that righteousness has never dominated the world since Christ came the first time, rather, it is the opposite. Sin has dominated the world and continues to, Satan is still very much the "god of this world". You cannot even say that the church itself is dominated by righteousness.

5. To seal up vision and prophecy – all prophecy will be completely fulfilled, and there will be no more need for prophetic revelation from God.
6. To anoint the most holy – although most think this refers to the anointing of our Lord Jesus Christ, this term is never used of a person. It is probably referring to the consecration of the holy of holies in the Millennial temple of God, which is where the presence of God will again reside.

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."

Here Gabriel gives us the start of the 490 years, and it is not the giving of the prophecy, but when a command to rebuild and restore Jerusalem is given, and the language tells us that it must be a complete rebuilding, not partial.

So, what command is this in history? Well, there are four possibilities:

1. There is a decree given by Cyrus concerning the rebuilding of the temple in Ezra 1:1-4. The problem with this one is that it specifically mentions the temple, not Jerusalem. While I'm sure part of Jerusalem had to be rebuilt to support the temple, but we know the entire city was not even close to being restored.
2. There is a decree in Ezra 6:6-12 of Darius that reaffirms the decree of Cyrus. This one can be rejected for the same reasons as the first, and it wasn't a new decree.
3. There was the decree of Artaxerxes given to Ezra permitting him to proceed with temple service (Ezra 7:11-26). Like number two, there is not much support for this one either, because it is still about the temple, not the city.
4. The decree of Artaxerxes allowing Nehemiah to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-8). This is the decree that makes the most sense. It specifically mentions rebuilding Jerusalem, which is what Gabriel said, and it was done in times of distress and difficulty, fulfilling the end of verse 25. This decree was issued in the 20th year of Artaxerxes reign, which would put it in the spring of 444 BC.

So from the time of this decree until the coming of the Messiah there would be 69 weeks, or 483 years. If you add 483 years to 444 BC, that takes you well past the time of Christ on earth, so that doesn't seem to work. However, the calendar we use today is not the calendar that was used back then. Sir Robert Anderson and Harold Hoehner have shown that it is a 360 day year that is used in Bible prophecy, not the 365 day solar year we use today. Using the 360 day year, adding 483 years to the decree puts you right at 33 AD, when Christ presented Himself to the Jews as their Messiah by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

Luke 19:37-40 As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, (38) shouting: "BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (39) Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." (40) But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!"

Jesus allowed people to call him King that day, but refused to allow them to do it at any other time. See Luke 19:41-44 for what Jesus said as he approached the city.

Luke 19:41-44 When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, (42) saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. (43) "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, (44) and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

It is obvious that Jesus expected the Jews to know and expect His coming. He held them accountable for not expecting him. Because they failed to know and understand this prophecy, God allowed the Romans to destroy the temple and Jerusalem in 70 AD, and why the Jews are still blinded today.

Romans 11:25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery--so that you will not be wise in your own estimation--that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

Apparently the first 7 weeks (49 years) is the time it took to completely restore Jerusalem. Then it went right into the next 62 weeks. There doesn't seem to be a break in the first 69 weeks, all 483 years are consecutive, especially since the history works so well with the prophecy.

And, of course, the identity of the Messiah is questioned. Liberal scholars, in order to avoid admitting that predictive prophecy is real, try to make this prophecy fit some known figure in history like Alexander the Great. Jewish orthodox scholars cannot allow themselves to believe that this is Jesus, so they have to look for a future fulfillment of some other Messiah. But, if you take this prophecy literally and let it speak in its plain and obvious sense, you will see that this is an amazing prediction of the coming of Jesus Christ.

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.

Analyzing verses 26 and 27, we can see that between the end of the 69th week and the end of the 70th week two things will happen – the death of the Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem. There are two main theories about the relationship between the first 69 weeks and the 70th week. The first one is that the weeks are unbroken, one following immediately after the other, 490 consecutive years. This view, then, assumes, that the entire 70 weeks is already history, it has already occurred. Some say that the death of Christ is referred to in verse 27 where the temple sacrifices cease midway through the 70th week. But there are major problems with this view.

First, the death of Christ did not cause the animal sacrifices in the temple to cease, that didn't happen until 37 years later. Second, this view assumes that the "he" in verse 27 is Jesus, which is not likely. Third, this view doesn't explain the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem. Fourth, in this view you can't fit anything in verse 27 into known history. Nothing like this happened in the 70th week of this view.

The 2nd view sees a gap, a period of time between the 69th and 70 weeks. During this time period the two major events mentioned in verse 26 would happen. The language of the text seems to support this view, since the events of verse 26 do not say "during the 70 week", or something like that. It seems to imply that

they happen after the 69th week, but before the 70th week. The last (70th) week is not mentioned until verse 27.

Also remember the six goals for these 70 weeks in verse 24. If all 70 weeks have passed in history, all the goals would have had to be completed by AD 40. Just a quick reading of those goals makes it obvious that they have not been fulfilled, therefore the 70 weeks have not been completed yet. Some people have a problem with the whole idea of a “gap”, but actually there are other examples of “prophetic postponement” in the Bible. (Isaiah 9:3-7, 61:1-2, Zechariah 9:9-10, and many others) It is a common thing in prophetic passages.

So God’s time clock of the 70 weeks is now stopped, and has been stopped for over 1900 years. We don’t know when God will start it again (the 70th week), but most prophecy experts think it will be soon because the Jews are back in the land, Jerusalem is no longer desolate, and many of the Jews are preparing for the day they can rebuild the temple.

The phrase “will be cut off” is the standard expression of capital punishment in the Old Testament, and seems to imply that not only would the Messiah be killed, but he would be executed. This fits the crucifixion of Jesus perfectly. The term “and have nothing” seems to fit Jesus also, in that in this first coming, because He was rejected and despised by Israel, He did not receive that which rightly belonged to Him – the kingdom and great honor. He did not receive anything that rightly belonged to Him.

Then we have the prophecy that once again the city of Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed, and it would be “the people” who would do this. We don’t have to guess at this prophecy, either, because this was obviously fulfilled in 70 AD. “The people” were the Romans, under a man named Titus, who came and destroyed the city and the temple. The “prince who is to come” is not Titus, as some suppose, because it says “who is to come”. This can only be a reference to the antichrist who will come from a revived Roman Empire (the 4th empire of Daniel 2 and 7). This prince who is to come is the subject of verse 27 in the 70th week.

“It’s end will come with a flood”, that is exactly what happened to Jerusalem in 70 AD. This was a massive invasion. The end of Jerusalem and the temple would be with a flood of men.

Historians to this day still do not understand what happened. There were people in the streets outside the temple that don’t know what happened in 70 AD, but something happened. When Titus’ men breached the wall and they went in to sack the temple Titus gave a general order to his army, don’t destroy the temple, save it. And for some strange reason, a soldier reported fire inside the temple and they tried to go in and stop it and it didn’t happen, and one thing led to another and some of the supports in the walls burned, broke down, and the whole thing came crashing down. Nobody knows who started the fire, whether it was accidentally or whether some of the zealots set it, whether the soldiers set it; but something happened in the flood and the chaos of an invading army. A general order was either disobeyed, neglected or something happened and the temple was destroyed. Now we could have told Titus not to bother with a general order because God’s Word says the temple is going to be destroyed and it was.

“Even to the end there will be war.” The end of Israel’s warfare is what it’s talking about, so there will be, according to Gabriel, from 70 AD on down until the end of history, constant warfare over the city of Jerusalem. And it says, “desolations are determined,” desolations or multiple destructions have been determined. So from 70 AD to the end of Jerusalem’s warfare, there will be many destructions of the city. That’s the prophecy.

So what Gabriel in effect has told them, don’t buy real estate in Jerusalem, it’s a bad investment. But look

at why it's a bad investment, here's just a brief history of the major desolations of Jerusalem. In 70 AD Titus under the Romans destroys it. In 135 AD Hadrian comes and conquers Jerusalem and declares Jerusalem to be a Gentile city, kicks out all the Jews and says there'll never be another Jew in all of Jerusalem. Hadrian builds a third wall and conducts a massive thing in the second revolt. In 614 AD the Persians come in and take over the land. In 637 AD the Arabs from the south, the Muslims come in and take over Jerusalem. In 1517 AD the Turks take it over and it becomes part of the Ottoman Empire. In 1917 the dramatic General Allenby conquered Jerusalem, walking into Jerusalem after whom the great Allenby Bridge is named. Allenby was a man who trained soldiers using Scripture; he was a great Christian general in the British army in World War I. In 1948 the Arabs take it, and in 1967 the Jews took it. So it's a city that has changed hands time and time again.

Now of all this time, the most interesting thing from the standpoint of prophecy is that only in 1967 do you have Jerusalem ruled by a government in the land. All the previous rulers had Jerusalem ruled by a government in another country. The Turks ruled from Turkey. The Persians ruled from Persia. The Arabs ruled from the south. Never was there a government locally established that ruled except beginning in 1967 when the Israeli government ruled the land and the city. That is a unique development and something that one senses in the flow of history, ears ought to go up, you ought to be pricked in your conscience, something is happening. This is the first time this is happening, that a local government is now reigning in Jerusalem.

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."

This verse reveals the monumental events of the 70th week. This week of seven years is called the Tribulation Period. First of all, who is the he? Is it the Messiah or the antichrist? Normal rules of grammar would say he is the antichrist, since the previous verse spoke of the prince who is to come. Also, the rest of the verse does not fit with Jesus. Jesus never made a seven year covenant with anyone, and if He did, He certainly would never break it. He never oppressed Israel, and never stopped the sacrifices. All of these things do fit the antichrist, however. They fit the type we have seen so far in Daniel and the picture we will see in Revelation. Also, if this were Jesus, then that puts the 70th week in the past, and we've already established that's not possible. But here's the kicker: Jesus Himself put this event (the abomination of desolation) in the future in connection with His 2nd coming to the earth in Matthew 24:15.

Matthew 24:15-21 "Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), (16) then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. (17) "Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. (18) "Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. (19) "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! (20) "But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. (21) "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will."

So, it can't be a past event. It has to be a future event connected with the antichrist.

"The many", in the context of this chapter, are the people of Israel, but it could also include other nations who are part of this agreement (maybe the United Nations?). Current peace treaties in the Middle East involve the United States, Israel, the Palestinians, Russia, Europe, and the United Nations. The Roman prince will come out of the 4th empire and enter into an agreement with unbelieving Israel (can't imagine

true believers will be fooled by him). This agreement marks the beginning of the 70th week, a seven year period called the Tribulation. We should realize that it is not the Rapture that starts this period of time. It could be on the same day, or it could be months before, we don't know.

This verse says that in the middle of the 70th week the antichrist will stop the sacrifice and grain offering. This means there will be sacrifices occurring at this time, and for sacrifices to be occurring, there has to be a temple. So, Israel at some point will gain at least partial control over the Temple Mount and a temple will be rebuilt some time before halfway through the 70th week. Today's Jewish Sanhedrin, which is active again after more than 1900 years, wants to build a prefabricated temple somewhere off-site, store it in sections, and have it ready to erect on the temple mount in as little as six weeks, as soon as they get permission.

All of the utensils for the sacrifices, all of the garments for the priests, and all of the musical instruments for the worship services have been made and are ready to go. The priests have been selected and trained, and some are actually practicing sacrificing animals at rabbinic schools near the Temple Mount. Red heifers are needed to cleanse the Temple Mount and the priests who set up the temple. The herd was thought to be extinct for almost two thousand years, but it has been reestablished, and heifers without blemish or spot are now available.

The "middle of the week" divides the 70th week into two equal 3 ½ year segments. At the midpoint of the 70th week the antichrist will break his covenant with Israel. According to Jesus in the passage we just read, this is when Israel's time of "great tribulation" will begin. There are some monumental events which happen 3½ years into the 70th week, including Satan being thrown down to the earth out of heaven (Revelation 12), the destruction of the apostate world religion (Revelation 17), and the assassination and return to life of the antichrist himself (Revelation 13). Also, Satan will understand at this point that his time is almost up (Revelation 12), and he apparently is desperate to be worshiped as God. So the antichrist will present himself in the temple as God, replacing the Jews' Levitical worship with worship of the antichrist.

The phrase "wing of abominations" can be difficult to interpret. There are some other scriptures that can help - Matthew 24:25, and Daniel 11:31, 12:11. It's obvious that the temple will be terribly defiled by the antichrist. Some think "wing" is a reference of the pinnacle of the temple, which would suggest that the entire temple was completely defiled. Or, it could be a reference to the wings of the cherubim on the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 2 that the antichrist (with Satan indwelling him) will actually sit in the Holy of Holies. You can't get any more evil and defiling than that.

The verse ends with an assurance that the antichrist will be completely destroyed. This prophecy will be fulfilled at the 2nd coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when the antichrist and the false prophet will be thrown into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:19-21, 20:10). This will completely fulfill the six goals of the 70 weeks.

Summary of verses 24-27:

There are basically ten concepts here: Each one builds on the ones that came before.

1. The prophecy pertains to the Jewish people and the city of Jerusalem (v. 24). This prophecy has absolutely nothing to do with the church or any other nation. There is absolutely no other interpretation you can bring to this passage. I'm amazed at how many smart people, much smarter than I am, argue that there is no literal 7 year tribulation, or that we're currently in the Tribulation, and they completely miss (actually, ignore) this verse. It's staggering.
2. This is a 490 year time period (v. 24). The word "weeks" here in Hebrew means a unit of seven, it's like using the word dozen. So, in the context, the 70 weeks are 70 weeks of years. How do I know that? Because Daniel had been thinking in terms of years. If this is anything other than years, it

doesn't fit anything, it has to be years. Genesis 29:27, the word there for week also means seven years, the time period Jacob served Laban to gain Rachel.

3. Each year of the prophecy is 360 days, not 365. This is important, because something very specific occurs at the end of those 490 years. Years in the Bible are always 360 day years. Revelation speaks of a period of 1260 days, then calls the same period 42 months. That is 30 day months, which comes out to be 360 day years. It's the same in Genesis 7 that the flood lasts 150 days, and then told later that the flood lasted 5 months.
4. At the conclusion of this 490 year time period six goals will be met:
 - a. Finish the transgression – that will be the end of Israel's rejection of their Messiah
 - b. An End of sin – Israel's sins will be done away with. The New Covenant that promises an internal restraint to keep people from sin will be implemented. (Jeremiah 31)
 - c. There will be an atonement for iniquity – the means by which the first two will be accomplished. The atonement of Christ will be applied to Israel once they accept Him as their Saviour.
 - d. Everlasting righteousness will be established – that's the Kingdom of God which Christ will reign
 - e. A sealing up of the vision and prophecy – everything that's predicted for Israel, including her covenants, will be fulfilled.
 - f. There'll be an anointing of the most Holy Place – the Millennial temple will be functioning

So, in other words, after this 490 year period of time, Israel will be restored spiritually and physically. People are taking this and saying this is happening in the age of the church right now, because they're missing the first concept – it's about the Jews!

5. When does this 490 year period begin? (Verse 25) Some say it's the decrees in the book of Ezra, but that one has nothing to do with Jerusalem, it's about the temple. It is the decree of Artaxerxes in Nehemiah 2:1. We know when Artaxerxes came to power – secular history says 464 BC, so the decree was issued in 444 BC. 1st of Nisan, 444 BC, or March 5, 444 BC. That days starts the 490 year cycle
6. Exactly 483 years will pass between the decree to rebuild Jerusalem and when the Messiah comes (v. 25). 7 sevens and 62 sevens = 483 years. 360 days/yr times 483 years = 173,880 days. March 5, 444 BC + 173,880 days = March 30, 33 AD. Christ presented Himself to the nation of Israel on Palm Sunday – March 30, 33 AD. This prophecy was fulfilled to the exact day. Luke 19:37 is when Jesus presented Himself as their Messiah. Verse 42 confirms that Jesus held them accountable for knowing that day, it was the day that had been prophesied. Jesus spent the first part of His ministry trying to keep it a secret that He was the Messiah; he would tell His disciples not to tell anyone. Then all of a sudden on a certain day He arranges it so He would ride into Jerusalem on a donkey (which always indicated Kingship) and be hailed by the people. This totally controls your hermeneutics. If the first 69 weeks of years were fulfilled literally, wouldn't the remaining week of years be fulfilled literally, also?
7. There is a gap of unspecified duration between the 483rd and 484th year of the prophecy. It runs consecutively for 69 weeks and then stops. There is a gap between verse 26 and 27. Why?
 - a. Verse 26 – the Messiah will be cut off – that's obviously the Crucifixion
 - b. "the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary" – this is the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Titus in AD 70.
 - c. So, verse 26 has happened. Verse 27 has not happened yet. Therefore the clock has stopped for now at 69 weeks. If the 70 weeks had completed, then verse 24 would have been completely fulfilled. Israel would have accepted their Messiah, there would be no more sin, and Christ would be here reigning on earth.
 - d. The New Testament assumes a gap. Jesus quoted this passage in Matthew 24:15, in the

context of His return. He believed there was a gap.

- e. There are other gaps in prophecy, even here in Daniel (the 4th kingdom)
 - f. There is no way you can fit the events in verse 27 in history, they have never happened
8. The final seven years of the prophecy comprise the future seven year Tribulation period. So Daniel 9:27 is describing the future Tribulation.
 9. Daniel 9:27 provides a general overview of the Tribulation period, a thumbnail sketch. It also tells us when the Tribulation starts – He confirms a covenant with the many. It also tells us what happens in the middle of the Tribulation. It tells us of the Abomination of Desolation, which tells us this guy is the antichrist, because Revelation 13 tells us about the same event. The Tribulation ends with the coming of Christ, so all the events of verse 24 will be fulfilled when Christ comes back, He's the only one that can fulfill those things anyway. World events are setting us up for these things. Verse 27 says there's going to be a covenant between Israel and the antichrist. How can that be fulfilled unless there's an Israel in unbelief? We have that today. How can there be a covenant with Israel unless Israel is locked into a mentality that says we have to exchange land for peace? Well, we have that today. How can the antichrist desecrate the temple unless the temple exists? There's a great movement in Israel to rebuild the temple. The stage is being set for verse 27.
 10. A relationship exists between Daniel 9:27 and Revelation 6-19. They are talking about the same period of time. How do we know that?
 - a. Both books describe the Tribulation as having 3 ½ year parts
 - b. There's an antichrist, and his defeat in both books.
 - c. Both at least hint at a return of Christ.

Daniel gives us the blueprint, the thumbnail sketch, Revelation provides the details. Then Revelation goes on and describes events after the Tribulation. You can't study Revelation without Daniel. The apostle John assumed the reader knew Daniel.

Questions:

1. Daniel's prayer seems to fit the basic elements of the Lord's Prayer that Jesus gave us. What were those elements and which of them seem to be missing from the prayers of many Christians? Which elements would you be most likely to find in your prayers?
2. Daniel fasted and put on sackcloth when praying. Is this something we should do when we're in prayer?
3. Daniel's prayer was filled with confession. What place should confession have in our prayers? How specific should we be?
4. What were the subjects of Daniel's prayer, and why is it important to know them in order to interpret the prophecy?
5. Which if the six purposes of God for the 70 weeks do you think have been fulfilled, or partially fulfilled? Are there any that are yet to be fulfilled?

