

## **How Long Do The Beast And The False Prophet War Against The Faithful Witnesses Of Christ? (#3)**

Ezra 7:11-12

Revelation 19:19-20

Daniel 9:24-25

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The Lord has not left us clueless as to the accurate interpretation of prophetic portions of the Bible. Prophetic Scripture is for our benefit and welfare, and not for our confusion. God has not given us the Book of Revelation in order that we might merely affirm that it is Scripture, but then skip over it because we have no idea what it is saying. Dear ones, there is a blessing that Christ promises to us as we read the Book of Revelation and keep it (Revelation 1:3). But so many Christians simply reason that if biblical scholars cannot agree as to the meaning of the Book of Revelation, what hope do untrained Christians have in understanding it?

My hope is that you will be greatly encouraged as you learn to use the prophetic keys to interpreting the Book of Revelation, which the Lord Himself has given to you in His Word. Once the Holy Spirit opens your eyes to use one prophetic key (as the Day-Year Principle) in order to interpret portions of the Book of Revelation, you will be much more encouraged to continue your search to find other biblical keys to interpreting other portions of the Book of Revelation.

Just as you had to begin at a level in which you understood little (in comparison to what you now understand) in regard to the doctrines of grace, so it is true in understanding the prophetic symbols and prophetic time periods in the Book of Revelation. But as more and more of prophetic Scripture is enlightened to your understanding, the joy and encouragement that God gives you will drive you deeper and deeper in

desiring to know and understand more. And then the Book of Revelation will not seem so overwhelming or so mysterious to you, but rather it will be (as Christ intended it to be), a revelation, (i.e. an unveiling of Christ's victory over all His enemies in history).

As we continue our study to identify the Beast and the False Prophet that Christ (as King of kings and Lord of lords) will destroy in Revelation 19:19-20, we have been considering the time periods that are given by the Apostle John in the Book of Revelation (1,260 prophetic days, 42 prophetic months, and a prophetic time, times, and half a time). For if we determine the actual length of these prophetic time periods (which are all the same length of time), we will be able to close the door to certain interpretations as to the identity of the Beast and the False Prophet, and we will be able to open the door to certain interpretations as to the identity of the Beast and the False Prophet. For if (hypothetically) the prophetic 42 months are a literal 42 months (i.e. a literal 3 ½ years), the possibility of the Beast of Revelation being a single individual (like Nero per preterism, or a yet future world political leader per futurism) is enhanced. However, if the prophetic 42 months of days are interpreted according to the Day-Year Principle (as demonstrated in the two previous sermons) to be 42 months of years, i.e. 1,260 years (per the Day-Year Principle), then the possibility of the Beast of Revelation being Nero or a future world political leader is impossible, and an antichristian political system that exists over hundreds of years is enhanced. Thus, I propose that before we even begin to consider closely what the Book of Revelation has to say about the Beast and the False Prophet, we can already be predisposed to a proper understanding of the identity of the Beast and the False Prophet by accurately interpreting how long these two enemies will wage war against Christ and His faithful witnesses.

Before moving on to identify the Beast and the False Prophet in sermons

yet to be preached, let us look at the argument given by futurism that a prophetic time, times, and half a time is a literal 3 ½ year period of time that is yet future. Interestingly, futurism grounds its literal interpretation of a time, times, and half a time (as being a literal 3 ½ year period of time) upon the very passage that was used to demonstrate the Day-Year Principle in the two previous sermons: namely, Daniel 9:24-27. Thus, we need to look at Daniel 9:24-27 a little more closely in order to respond to the argument of futurism that the time periods in the Book of Revelation are to be interpreted as a literal 1,260 days, a literal 42 months, and a literal time, times, and half a time (i.e. a literal 3 ½ years). The main points to be considered in the sermon this Lord's Day are the following: (1) What Is A Brief Overview Of The Futurist Position From Daniel 9:24-27? (2) Why Does Futurism Follow This Interpretation Of Daniel 9:24-27?

## I. **What Is A Brief Overview Of The Futurist Position From Daniel 9:24-27?**

A. The Futurist position for literal time periods in the Book of Revelation hinges upon their interpretation of the 70 prophetic weeks of **Daniel 9:24-27** (and particularly the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week of Daniel). Interestingly, futurism interprets the 70 prophetic weeks of Daniel using the Day-Year Principle, so that 70 prophetic weeks of days = 70 literal weeks of years (i.e. 70 weeks times 7 days per week = 490 prophetic days, which equals 490 calendar years, using the Day-Year Principle). So far so good.

B. Next, the Futurist argument addresses the 69 prophetic weeks of **Daniel 9:25**. Again, we have no disagreement with the way in which futurism reckons these 69 prophetic weeks (i.e. 69 weeks times 7 days per week = 483 prophetic days, which equals 483 calendar years, using the Day-Year Principle). According to futurism, the 69 prophetic weeks

(or 483 calendar years) run consecutively year after year until one arrives at some point in the ministry of Christ (prior to Christ's death).

1. Some Futurists understand that the 69 prophetic weeks (or 483 calendar years) bring one to the baptism of Christ in 26 a.d. (with which I agree), while other Futurists complete these 69 prophetic weeks (or 483 calendar years) with the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem.

2. However, regardless of which event (whether Christ's baptism or Christ's triumphal entry) that the Futurist uses in order to complete the 69 prophetic weeks (or 483 calendar years), the Futurist up to this point is using the Day-Year Principle to interpret these prophetic weeks (or calendar years) to mean that 483 calendar years continue consecutively, one immediately following the previous one, without any gaps of time occurring between the end of one calendar year and the next calendar year until the 483 calendar years have run their course. Again, so far so good, as it relates to applying the Day-Year Principle.

C. But now we come to the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week (i.e. the last 7 calendar years) in Daniel's prophecy (**Daniel 9:27**). Now this is where futurism diverges from the historic Protestant view (and from a sound biblical interpretation of Daniel's prophecy).

1. For the Futurist does NOT interpret this 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week (or last 7 calendar years) to consecutively and immediately follow the previous 69 prophetic weeks (or previous 483 calendar years).

2. Futurists do interpret the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week to be 7 calendar years (per the Day-Year Principle); however, futurists place a huge temporal gap of time (that has already exceeded 2,000 calendar years) between the completion of the 69<sup>th</sup> prophetic week (i.e. the first 483 calendar years) and the initiation of the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week (i.e. the last 7 years) of Daniel's prophecy.

3. In other words, the Futurist believes that the 69 prophetic weeks (or 483 calendar years) ended at some point in Christ's ministry

before his death, and then a parenthesis of now 2,000 years has intervened and will continue until the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week (or last 7 calendar years) begins in the future. And it is that last 7 calendar years (the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week of Daniel's prophecy) that the Futurist then divides into two 3 ½ year literal periods of time (which we will look at more closely in the next sermon, God willing). The first 3 ½ years being the literal period of time in which the Antichrist makes a covenant of peace with Israel (which allows Israel to offer sacrifices upon the altar of their rebuilt temple), and the second 3 ½ years being the literal period of time in which the Antichrist breaks this covenant with Israel and in which the Antichrist wars against Jews and Christians (Daniel 9:27). This latter 3 ½ year period is identified by Futurists as the Great Tribulation. And it is this literal 3 ½ year period of time, which futurism identifies with the periods of time in the Book of Revelation (a time, times, and half a time, 42 months, and 1,260 days). Thus, we see that Futurists begin correctly using the Day-Year Principle to interpret the 70 prophetic weeks of days (i.e. 490 prophetic days) found in Daniel 9:24 to mean 70 weeks of years (i.e. 490 years), but then completely separate the last 7 calendar years from the previous 483 calendar years by a gap or parenthesis of time that has already lasted over 2,000 years.

## **II. Why Does Futurism Follow This Interpretation Of Daniel 9:24-27?**

A. In other words, why does futurism introduce a huge gap of time between the 69<sup>th</sup> prophetic week of Daniel (i.e. the first 483 literal years of Daniel's prophecy) and the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week of Daniel (i.e. the last 7 literal years of Daniel's prophecy)? The simple answer is because the Futurist believes that the events prophesied to happen within the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week of Daniel (listed in Daniel 9:24) did not occur at the time of Christ's first coming (as does the historic Protestant interpretation of Daniel 9:24), but rather the Futurist believes the events prophesied to

occur within the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24) will be fulfilled just before and at Christ's second coming. Thus, the Futurist believes that a huge gap of time must transpire between the 69<sup>th</sup> prophetic week and the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week in order for these events to be realized (since the Futurist does not believe they have yet been realized). Let us briefly contrast how the futurist interprets the events prophesied to occur in Daniel 9:24-25 with that of the historic Protestant interpretation.

1. **Daniel 9:24.**

a. The Futurist takes these 6 Hebrew infinitives that describe what has been determined for Israel to be fulfilled not at the first coming of Christ but rather at the second coming of Christ, when the Lord will save Israel, forgive Israel of her sin, usher in everlasting righteousness to Israel, bring all prophecy concerning Israel to fulfillment, and anoint the most holy rebuilt temple of Israel. Thus, the Futurist argues that because all these blessings will be brought upon Israel just before the time of Christ's second coming, there must be a gap of time of indefinite space between the first 69 prophetic weeks (consisting of 483 calendar years) and the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week (consisting of the last 7 calendar years). Because the Futurist does not believe these blessings were fulfilled at the time of Christ's first coming, it must mean (the Futurist alleges) that the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week did not immediately follow the 69<sup>th</sup> prophetic week, but is yet to come.

b. The historic Protestant interpretation of Daniel 9:24, however, interprets all of these prophesied events as fulfilled at the time of the first coming of Christ (and all fulfilled within the 70 weeks of Daniel). Thus, the historic Protestant interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27 does not include a gap or parenthesis between the 69 prophetic weeks (i.e. the first 483 calendar years), which end with the baptism of Christ (26 a.d.), and the 70<sup>th</sup> prophetic week (i.e. the last 7 calendar years), which immediately follow and prophesy the death of Christ for His people

(both Jews and Gentiles). Dear ones, if all six of these prophesied events (in Daniel 9:24) occurred at the time of Christ's first coming, then the 70 weeks of Daniel are already fulfilled and not yet to be fulfilled in the future. Let us briefly consider these prophesied events in Daniel 9:24.

(1) **“To finish the transgression”** (literally, “to complete THE transgression”). The definite article “the” is used to indicate a particular transgression that brought Israel's sin against God to completion—namely, the transgression of God's covenant people Israel in rejecting and conspiring with the heathen Romans to crucify Christ (Matthew 23:32-35; Matthew 27:25; Acts 7:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16). This prophecy was fulfilled within the 70 weeks of Daniel and in the ministry of Christ at His first coming, not at His second coming.

(2) **“To make an end of sins”** (literally, “to seal up THE sins”). This prophetic statement most likely accompanies and is the consequence of what was just said (“to finish THE transgression”). To seal up a prophecy is to close it and reserve it for the day of its fulfillment, because it is not immediately or very soon to be fulfilled (cp. Daniel 12:4 with Revelation 22:10). What seems to be prophesied is that Israel's sins (especially as related to the rejection and crucifixion of Christ and the persecution of His prophets and apostles) are sealed or reserved for a future judgment, just as Jesus prophesied (Matthew 23:37-38; Luke 19:41-44). The sealing or reserving Israel's sins for punishment occurred before the Lord's death (in the 70<sup>th</sup> week, or last 7 years of Daniel's prophecy), as indicated in the words of Christ quoted above. However, the outpouring of that judgment did not occur immediately within the 70<sup>th</sup> week (or the last 7 years of Daniel's prophecy), but actually fell upon Israel some 40 years later when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem (in 70 a.d.). Likewise, this prophecy (“to seal up the sins” for punishment, not the punishment itself) was fulfilled within the 70 weeks of Daniel and in the ministry of Christ at His first coming, not at His second coming.

(3) **“To make reconciliation for iniquity”** (the Hebrew verb translated here as “to make reconciliation” is usually translated “to make atonement or propitiation”, i.e. “to make atonement or propitiation for iniquity”). Now this prophecy that is to be fulfilled within the 70 weeks of Daniel clearly refers to the once and for all atonement of Jesus Christ for the sins of His people (from among Israel and from among the Gentile nations). Although Israel (as a nation) is yet to be saved in the future (Romans 11:26), God will not make atonement for Israel’s sins in the future, because atonement for sin can only once be accomplished. And it was accomplished by Christ by means of His death (Romans 5:11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; 1 John 4:10). Likewise, this prophecy was fulfilled within the 70 weeks of Daniel and in the ministry of Christ at His first coming, not at His second coming.

(4) **“To bring in everlasting righteousness”**. By the death and resurrection of Christ, He has brought in an everlasting righteousness to His people (both Jew and Gentile). Since the Lord’s righteousness is an everlasting righteousness (Psalm 119:142), all who trust alone in the righteousness of Christ alone (rather than in their own righteousness) are imputed the everlasting righteousness of Christ once and for all (Romans 3:21-22; Romans 4:6; Romans 5:19; Philippians 3:9). All who were justified by faith alone before the first coming of Christ (like Abraham and David according to Romans 4), were declared righteous by faith alone with a view to the everlasting righteousness to be accomplished by Christ who was to come. Likewise, this prophecy was fulfilled within the 70 weeks of Daniel and in the ministry of Christ at His first coming, not at His second coming.

(5) **“To seal up the vision and prophecy”** (literally, to seal up the vision and prophet, Christ being the Prophet prophesied to come in Deuteronomy 18:18). This would seem to refer to those prophesied events by Christ, the Prophet, in particular (since Daniel 9:24-27 is clearly Messianic in character). Christ, the Prophet, prophesied

concerning both the judgment to be brought upon Israel (Matthew 23:37-38) and the salvation to be brought upon Israel in the future (Matthew 23:39; Acts 1:6-7). The sealing referred to (i.e. “to seal up the vision and prophecy of the Prophet”) once again refers to the closing and reserving of prophecies until the time of their fulfillment be at hand. Remember (as was noted earlier) that when prophecy is yet to be fulfilled a distant time away, it is closed and sealed up (Daniel 12:4); but when prophecy is near and at hand to be fulfilled, it is not sealed up (but is unsealed). Thus, the prophecy of Christ that is here sealed up refers to more distant prophecies concerning Israel. These prophecies are sealed up at the first coming of Christ. However, they are fulfilled in the distant future. Prophecies are not sealed and fulfilled at the same time. Prophecies are sealed up at a distant time from their fulfillment, and unsealed at a near time to their fulfillment. Likewise, this prophecy (of sealing up the vision and prophecy) was realized within the 70 weeks of Daniel and in the ministry of Christ at His first coming, not at His second coming.

(6) “To anoint the most Holy”. This does not refer to the rebuilding of a future temple of the Jews which God will allegedly (according to futurism) anoint with His blessing, but rather refers to the anointing of God’s most Holy Son, who in His earthly ministry declared Himself to be the temple of God in whom the shekinah glory of God tabernacled (Matthew 3:16-17; Luke 4:16-21; John 2:19; John 1:14; Acts 3:14). Dear ones, the temple, the altar within the temple, the sacrifices of the temple, and the priesthood of the temple have all passed away, because they were all fulfilled in Christ (Hebrews 9:1,8,10,23-24). To return to a rebuilt temple (as proposed by futurism) would be to return to the Old Covenant after Christ had instituted the New Covenant. That is precisely what some of the Jews were doing in the Book of Hebrews (returning to the temple and its ordinances), and in so doing they were leaving Christ (Hebrews 10:32-35). Likewise, this prophecy was realized

within the 70 weeks of Daniel and in the ministry of Christ at His first coming, not at His second coming.

## 2. **Daniel 9:26.**

a. I will not have time to expound upon this text presently, but will do so next Lord's Day (God willing). However what I want you to see is that futurism does not place the death of the Lord Jesus Christ within the 70 weeks of Daniel—that death which secured all blessings for all of God's people (Jew and Gentile alike), and especially the unfathomable blessings of the forgiveness of sin, the everlasting righteousness of Christ, and the certain hope of eternal life. That most important event in all of history which secured the blessings of salvation that are preached in the gospel and which shall be bestowed upon the undeserving, covenant-breaking nation of Israel (when all Israel shall be saved), that atonement of Jesus Christ is not included by Futurists within the 70 weeks of Daniel. Rather the death of Christ happens (almost incidentally) to fall into the huge gap of time between the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> week (i.e. the first 483 years) at Christ's baptism or triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup> week (i.e. the last 7 years). Instead of Christ's death being the pinnacle to which the previous 69 weeks point, the death of Christ simply becomes an event which falls into a parenthesis of time.

b. Dear ones, just as futurism would have a portion of God's people (the Jews) return to a rebuilt temple and to the Old Covenant that God has removed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, so likewise futurism would take the prophetic spotlight off the death of Christ (and place it in the gap or parenthesis), rather than exalting the death of Christ and the New Covenant secured by His death as being that prophesied event to which God's prophetic spotlight shone with the greatest brilliance—the death of Christ being the salvation of all God's people (both Jew and Gentile). Dear ones, when a prophetic system of interpretation would have the height of the 70 weeks of Daniel

to be the anointing of a rebuilt temple and would place the death of the anointed Son of the Most High God into a gap or parenthesis of indefinite time, I submit to you that such a system has ceased to be Messianic, Christ-centered, or biblical. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10). The Apostle John fell down to worship this angel (a mere creation, just as Peter wanted to build three tabernacles on the Mount of Transfiguration, and was told to hear Christ). So likewise, John is here told to worship God, because the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (i.e. the testimony concerning Jesus is that which gives spirit and life to prophecy—just as the body is dead without the spirit, so likewise prophecy is dead without the testimony of Jesus). Prophecy is intended to point us to Christ (Acts 10:43). Any time we place the eye of faith upon the creature, we are then taking the eye of faith off of Christ (whether in justification, whether in sanctification, whether in worship, whether in trials, or whether in prophecy). Let us always remember that if our understanding of prophecy is not driving us to Jesus Christ, we have failed to see the end and goal of prophecy—Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

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