

Lecture #12

Daniel 9:24-27

In Matthew 24:15, Jesus Christ in speaking of God's prophetic program with Israel which will feature Him reigning as King, said this: "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)...

What this teaches us is that there is a very important passage of Scripture that deals with prophecy in the book of Daniel that God's people need to carefully understand. That passage Jesus specifically refers to is Daniel 9:24-27. This passage has been called "the backbone of prophecy." This portion of Scripture is, as one writer said, "rich with meaning, both personal and prophetic." Dr. John Walvoord said that these concluding verses of the ninth chapter of Daniel are one of the most important prophecies in the Old Testament (p. 216). If I could give a thesis statement of what Gabriel reveals to Daniel it is this:

GOD'S PROGRAM WITH HIS NATION ISRAEL WILL EVENTUALLY END WITH HIS MESSIAH / KING REIGNING IN TOTAL RIGHTEOUSNESS. BUT BEFORE THIS HAPPENS, THERE WILL BE A SPECIFIC TIME OF TERRIBLE TROUBLE FOR ISRAEL WHICH WILL FEATURE A DESTRUCTIVE AND VICIOUS ANTICHRIST.

Now the context is that in the first year of Darius, 538-37 B.C. (Daniel 9:1), Daniel is reading the book of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10) and realizes that the seventy year captivity, which Jeremiah prophesied, was just about over. Now we know the reason for this specific penalty of seventy years captivity was due to the fact that she had neglected seventy sabbatical years of rest (II Chronicles 36:21). According to Levitical Law, every seventh year was to be a sabbatical rest year for the land in honor and worship of God (Leviticus 25:2-7). Israel had missed seventy of these rest years, so God put Israel into captivity for seventy years, something He specifically said He would do (Leviticus 26:33-35). Daniel also knew that if Israel prayed and repented, God would lift the judgment (Leviticus 26:40-46), which prompted Daniel to pray. **Now the thing that I want us to understand as we launch into the passage, is that the seventy sabbatical years actually cover seventy, seven year periods of time since the sabbatical year came only on the seventh year. So, seventy times seven is actually 490 years. The seventy years penalty was based on 490 years of previous disobedience.**

Now the reason why this is so critical is because Daniel **9:24** opens with the words seventy sevens or literally in Hebrew seventy units of seven. **If we put this in the immediate historical context, the most obvious interpretation is that seventy sevens equal 490 years.**

Observation #1 - The entire time period allotted for all events to occur is a time period called seventy units of seven. **9:24a**

Observation #2 - The entire prophecy is decreed by God specifically concerning Daniel's people and Daniel's holy city. **9:24b**

This is a reference to Daniel's people, Israel and Daniel's holy city, Jerusalem. This is a major difference from the other prophecies in Daniel which refers to Gentile nations (i.e. Daniel 2 and 7). This one has a direct reference to the Jews and Jerusalem. This immediately leads us to conclude that the Church has nothing whatsoever to do with the prophecy discussed in this context.

As we shall see, this prophecy is concerned with three main deliverances: 1) Israel delivered from Babylon in order to go back to Jerusalem; 2) Israel delivered from sin with an everlasting righteousness; 3) Israel delivered from terrible oppression and destruction.

Observation #3 - The prophecy is specifically decreed for six stated purposes:

1. To finish the transgression. **9:24a**
2. To make an end of sin. **9:24b**
3. To make atonement for iniquity. **9:24c**
4. To bring in everlasting righteousness. **9:24d**
5. To seal up vision and prophecy. **9:24e**
6. To anoint the most holy. **9:24d**

It is quite obvious that this prophecy has not been fulfilled yet—not in Daniel’s day, not in Jesus’ day and certainly not in our day. Dr. Donald Campbell said “History knows no such age” where all of these prophecies have been fulfilled (p. 141).

Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost believes that the first three purposes have to do with the sacrifice of the Messiah and the last three have to do with the reign of the Messiah. In his scheme, the first three would refer to the things Christ accomplished at His first coming, and the last three would refer to things Christ will accomplish at His second coming.

Observation #4 - There is a specified mathematical breakdown of the seventy units of seven. **9:25**

1. First, there is one of the seven units of seven. **9:25a** = 49 years—city rebuilt
2. Second, there are 62 units of seven connected to the first unit. **9:25b** = 434 years—specific additional years that lead to Christ’s first coming
3. Third, there is one more unit of seven. **9:27** = seven years—The Tribulation

The seventy units of seven may be legitimately viewed with the 69 units discussed in **verse 25** (7 + 62) and the 70th unit discussed in **verse 27**. If we take each unit to represent seven years, the first 69 units would be 483 years and then there is still one more unit of seven years left.

Observation #5 - The clock of the seventy units of seven starts when a decree is issued to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. **9:25a**

Now we must carefully observe that this is a complete rebuilding which includes “plaza and moat” (**v. 25**) and also time of “distress.” This is critical, for it is not just a command to rebuild the Temple that starts the clock, it is the command to completely rebuild and restore the city to its original condition which starts the prophetic clock.

Furthermore, the actual time when this specific decree was made was 94 years after this prophecy. Daniel and his people were released from captivity, but the prophetic clock of these events didn’t start until almost 100 years later when a specific decree was given.

Observation #6 - The end of the first unit of seven and the 62 units of seven (total 69 units of 7) will be marked by the appearance of the Messiah on earth as Prince of Israel. **9:25b**

So we may conclude that the end of the first 69 units would be in 483 years (69 x 7 = 483), which would feature an appearance of the Messiah apparently in Jerusalem.

Observation #7 - At a later time in the same time period of 69 units of seven, the Messiah will be cut off leaving one unit of seven yet to be accomplished. **9:26-27**

Some time after the 483rd year of this prophecy the Messiah will be cut off, which still leaves the final unit of seven years.

Observation #8 - After the Messiah has been introduced and cut off, there is still one unit of seven left in which another individual will make a firm covenant with Israel. **9:27a**

We will clearly show that this individual is none other than the Antichrist.

Observation #9 - In the middle of the final unit of seven, or 3 ½ years after making the covenant with Israel, he will break his covenant and will commit abominations which will bring about complete destruction. **9:27b**

The way this section breaks down is that an overview of the prophecy is given in **verse 24**. The first 69 units of seven are described in **verse 25**. Events between the 69th seven and the 70th seven are described in **verse 26**. The final 70th seven is described in **verse 24**.

Daniel 9:24 – The overall prediction of the prophecy.

The English word “weeks” in Hebrew is actually the plural of the word for seven; therefore, it may be translated 70 units of seven or 70 sevens. The word does not specify whether it refers to seven days, seven months or seven years. But as Dr. Walvoord said, “The only system of interpretation, however, that gives any literal meaning to this prophecy is to regard the time units as prophetic years of 360 days each.” The 70 x 7 is 490 years which the clock begins when a commandment is given to rebuild Jerusalem.

The comprehensive purposes to be accomplished in this time period are six:

- (Purpose #1) - Finish the transgression—the 70 sevens program will end Israel’s transgression.
- (Purpose #2) - Make an end of sin—the 70 sevens program bring to an end Israel’s sin problem.
- (Purpose #3) - Make atonement for iniquity—the 70 sevens program will feature a sacrifice that will take away sin both nationally and individually.
- (Purpose #4) - Bring in everlasting righteousness—the 70 sevens program will bring a righteousness to the earth that will never depart.
- (Purpose #5) - Seal up the vision and the prophecy—the 70 sevens program will put an end to all visions and prophecy. It will fulfill all covenantal promises.
- (Purpose #6) - Anoint the most holy—the 70 sevens program will anoint the Temple and the Righteous King who will reign from the midst of the Temple.

What is predicted in this one verse is the ultimate finale of all biblical prophecy pertaining to Israel.

Daniel 9:25 – The events of the first 69 sevens.

Now a question arises—when will the prophetic time clock begin? The critical thing to see from this verse is that it begins when a decree is given to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.

The Hebrew words “restore and rebuild” and “plaza and moat” indicate a complete rebuilding to former condition both inside the city—“plaza” and outside, around the city—“moat.” This decree would actually not be given for about another 100 years from the time Daniel received this vision.

In the O.T. there are four different decrees given concerning the rebuilding of things in Jerusalem; however, only one really fits what is predicted here:

- 1) The decree of Cyrus (538 B.C.) to rebuild the Temple (II Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4; 6:1-5);
- 2) The decree of Darius (518-519 B.C.) which confirms the decree of Cyrus (Ezra 6:6-12);
- 3) The decree of Artaxerxes (457 B.C.) giving Ezra permission to return to Jerusalem and restore the house of God (Ezra 7:11-26);
- 4) The decree of Artaxerxes (445 B.C. – see Nehemiah 2:1ff) given to Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-8). **The only decree that fits the rebuilding of Jerusalem to the level predicted by Daniel was one given by King Artaxerxes in 445-444 B.C. (Nehemiah 2:1-8).**

Now the specific prediction is that from the time the decree is given until the Messiah comes will be a time period of 69 sevens. This computes into years totaling 483 years ($7 \times 69 = 483$) and it also computes into 173,880 days ($360 \text{ days} \times 483 \text{ years} = 173,880$). So the remarkable prediction is that 173,880 days after a decree is made to rebuild Jerusalem, the Messiah will come into the city. Dr. Harold Hoehner did the math based on 360 prophetic days in a year and concluded that the exact day Christ had His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9) was precisely these predicted numbers (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, Volume 132). In fact, he specifically says that Christ had his triumphal entry on March 30, A.D. 33. Sir Robert Anderson and Alva McClain conclude precisely the same thing. This is an amazing prediction.

Daniel 9:26 – The events between the 69th seven and the 70th seven.

Notice that after the Messiah is introduced in the rebuilt city, He will be cut off and have nothing. The words “cut off” are often used for describing being cut off from God’s people and suffering a violent death (Leviticus 7:20, 21, 25, 27; Obadiah 9; Nahum 3:15). The words “have nothing” mean the Messiah will not have what He should have inherited or had. Now keep in mind that eventually the Messiah is to finish sin and reign in total righteousness, but apparently before that happens, He will be cut off.

This is exactly what happened a few days after He arrived in Jerusalem; He was nailed to a cross—He was cut off from life. He was not given a royal welcoming and when He died, He had even been stripped of His clothing; He had nothing.

What this chronologically means, then, is that there will be an interval of time which will occur between the 69th seven and the final 70th seven.

During this interval, **verse 26** informs us that the city and Temple would be destroyed and there would be much destruction to Israel from war and a flood of persecution. In A.D. 70, a terrible flood of persecution literally hit Jerusalem and the Temple. Titus Vespasian led four Roman legions to attack and destroy the Jews in Jerusalem killing multiple thousands and totally destroying the Temple. It is interesting that the soldiers searched for gold and literally overturned stones of the Temple, something Jesus specifically predicted would happen (Matthew 24:2).

Daniel 9:27 – The final 70th seven which will lead to the end.

The last seven year period will begin with a “prince” making a covenant with Israel. There is coming a temporary peace treaty and settlement to the Middle East, which will be established by the Antichrist. He will put a temporary Band-Aid on the Arab/Israeli conflict.

It is interesting that Orthodox Jews believe the Temple cannot be built until the Messiah comes. But it will be a false messiah, an antichrist that will see to it that the Temple is rebuilt. This will enable Israel to reestablish worship in Jerusalem. However, in the middle of the seven year period or 3 ½ years into the Tribulation, he will put an end to the sacrifices in Jerusalem and he will demand that he be worshipped in the Temple (II Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:8). This is the Abomination of Desolation spoken by Daniel the prophet. But then his own end will come, that which has been decreed about him, and he, along with his false prophet, will be cast into the lake of fire when Christ returns (Revelation 19:20; Daniel 7:11, 26).

Practical Lessons:

1. God fulfills prophecy literally. What He predicts will literally happen.
2. God’s prophetic program for Israel and Gentiles will end with the return of Jesus Christ to earth.
3. Jesus Christ is the only One who is able to finish the sin issue for every person.

MATHEMATICAL CALCULATION OF DANIEL 9:25

In Daniel **9:25**, it is predicted that from the time the decree is given to rebuild Jerusalem until the time the Messiah appears in the city will be 69 units of seven, or 483 years ($69 \times 7 = 483$). If the decree to rebuild Jerusalem were given in 445-444 B.C., the question arises, how do we arrive to the day Christ triumphantly came into Jerusalem in A.D. 33? It would appear as if we would be five years off ($445 + 33 = 478$).

Dr. Harold Hoehner, director of Ph.D. Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, solves the problem (*Vital Old Testament Issues*, p. 185).

“Using the prophetic year the calculation would be as follows. Multiplying the 69 weeks by seven years for each week by 360 days gives a total of 173,880 days. The difference between 444 B.C. and A.D. 33 then is 476 solar years. By multiplying 476 by 365.24219879 or by 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 45.975 seconds, gives the total of 173,855 days, 6 hours, 52 minutes, 44 seconds or 173,855 days. This leaves only 25 days to be accounted for between 444 B.C. and A.D. 33. By adding the 25 days to March 5 (of 444 B.C.), one comes to March 30 which was Nisan 10 in A.D. 33. This is the date of Jesus Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem.”

There were various systems of calculation used in O.T. times. (Historical documents have been found which verify this—Egypt, India, Assyria, Babylon. These places used 360 day years—12 months times 30 days and then figured out some way to incorporate five more days so the solar year came out correct.)

- 1) There were solar years—365 days in a year (literally 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 45.975 seconds.
- 2) There were sabbatical years—the focus is on seven-year periods of time
- 3) There were prophetic years—360 days in a prophetic year used often in the Bible:
 - One half week (Daniel 9:27);
 - Time, times and half a time (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 12:14);
 - 1260 days (Revelation 12:6; 11:3) = $3\frac{1}{2}$ years
 - 42 months (Revelation 11:2; 13:5)

The solution here is nothing short of amazing: Based on prophetic years in the Bible, 69 years times seven is 483 years. If you multiply the 483 years by prophetic days of 360, you come to 173,880. Now 444 B.C. to 33 A.D. is 476 years. If you take the normal 365 solar day year formula times 476 years (444 B.C. to A.D. 33 = 476 years) you have 173,855 days. If you add 25 days between March 5 and March 30, you end up with 173,880 days and you come to the exact day Jesus Christ made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The edict to rebuild Jerusalem was given on March 5, 444 B.C. and exactly 173,880 days later on March 30 A.D. 33, Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9).

Because God used sabbatical years, prophetic years and solar years in His mathematical computation, the biblical scholars should have known the exact day Jesus came to Jerusalem (Luke 19:39, 41-42).

STUDY QUESTIONS – LECTURE #12

(Daniel 9:24-27)

1. Explain what the number seventy sabbatical years actually means.

A sabbatical year occurred every seven years, so seventy sabbatical years is seventy times seven = 490 years.

2. Who are Daniel's people and what is Daniel's holy city?

Israel and Jerusalem

3. According to the six stated purposes of the prophecy, how did J. Dwight Pentecost connect them to Jesus Christ.

First three have to do with Christ's First Coming and second three with His Second Coming.

4. What is the mathematical breakdown of the seventy units of seven.

One unit of seven - 49 years city rebuilt
Second unit of 62 sevens - 434 years until Christ's First Coming
Third unit of one more seven - 7 years of the Tribulation

5. Which O.T. decree fits the time clock for starting this prophecy?

The decree of Artaxerxes in 445-444 B.C.

6. According to mathematical computations what happened 173,880 days after this decree?

Jesus Christ made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding a donkey.

7. Discuss what the Antichrist will do in the final 70th seven.

He will make a covenant with Israel and reestablish worship and then turn against Israel and demand that he be worshipped in her Temple.