

## Reformation Fellowship Notes • June 28, 2020

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### Handout #11

### Daniel 9

#### I. Introduction

##### A. Listener Questions

1. How long into the future were Daniel's prophecies?
  - a) About 4 centuries
    - (1) This is why many scholars date the composition of Daniel to 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.
2. Why do you think there is an ultimate Antichrist coming?
  - a) Daniel 7 talks about an arrogant horn related to the fourth beast.
    - (1) But his dominion will be destroyed forever.
    - (2) And power will be given to the people of the Highest One.
  - b) Daniel 9
  - c) Daniel 11
3. Why was Daniel so devastated by his vision in chapter 8?
  - a) He was appalled by the arrogance and destruction he saw.
  - b) I think he was probably disappointed.
    - (1) I think he expected the exile to mark Israel's entrance into the glorious future the prophets said awaited it.

##### B. Chapter 9 dates to the first year of Persian control of Babylon.

1. Three chapters of Daniel take place at about this time.
  - a) Chapter 5: Belshazzar's writing on the wall and the fall of Babylon
  - b) Chapter 6: Daniel was thrown into the lions' den for praying.
    - (1) This happened early in Cyrus' reign.
      - (a) He was organizing his administration.
  - c) Chapter 9: This prayer of Daniel (first year of Cyrus' reign)
2. This would be about the time when Cyrus was signing his decree granting the Jews permission to return to Israel.
  - a) Daniel may have had some impact on that decision.
    - (1) Daniel could have been in a position to inform Cyrus about Isaiah and Jeremiah.
  - b) According to Josephus, Cyrus did this after reading the OT.

In the first year of the reign of Cyrus which was the seventieth from the day that our people were removed out of their own land into Babylon, God commiserated the captivity and calamity of these poor people, according as he had foretold to them by Jeremiah the prophet, before the destruction of the city. That after they had served Nebuchadnezzar and his posterity, and after they had undergone that servitude seventy years, he would restore them again to the land of their fathers, and they should build their temple and enjoy their ancient prosperity. And these things God did afford them; for he stirred up the mind of

Cyrus, and made him write this throughout all Asia: "Thus said Cyrus the king: Since God Almighty has appointed me to be king of the habitable earth, I believe that he is that God which the nation of the Israelites worship; for indeed he foretold my name by the prophets, and that I should build him a house at Jerusalem, in the country of Judea."

This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision: "My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple." This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the divine power, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was so written; so he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem, and the temple of God, for that he would be their assistant, and that he would write to the rulers and governors, that were in the neighborhood of their country of Judea, that they should contribute to them gold and silver for the building of the temple, and besides that, beasts for their sacrifices. (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, Book 2, Chapter 1)

c) Margaret's hypothesis is interesting in this context:

Why did Daniel accept the purple robe and gold chain, with their accompanying authority, when he said he wouldn't?

Why did Darius/Cyrus let the Jews go, with all the Temple holy things?

When Daniel first came into the presence of Belshazzar, he did not know why he had been summoned. Belshazzar told him that he'd be given the purple robe and gold chain and the position of third in charge of the country if he would interpret the words on the wall. Daniel replied that he'd not accept the reward but would interpret. At that point Daniel did not know what the words meant.

Then YHWH told Daniel the words' meaning and significance, including that Belshazzar would die and Babylon would be taken over by the Medes and Persians. When, contrary to what he'd said earlier, Daniel then accepted the reward, it was because he now knew that Belshazzar would shortly die, and Babylon left without a leader to deal with an impending invasion, since Belshazzar's father was in hiding.

When Cyrus showed up, as the effective king of Babylon, Daniel negotiated a deal: he would hand over Babylon if Cyrus would let his people go with the treasures from their destroyed Temple and resources to help rebuild it. Daniel ransomed the Jews with Babylon, a bloodless coup. Grateful Cyrus agreed.

- (1) I don't know about the negotiated deal.
  - (a) We have so little information.
  - (b) However, Daniel probably knew Gobryas.
    - (i) They probably shared a dislike for Belshazzar.

- (2) The possibility that Daniel accepted the position because of what he learned from the writing on the wall sounds plausible to me.
3. What would Cyrus have learned from Isaiah?
- Isaiah lived from 740-680 BC.
  - This is what is written in Isaiah 44:24-45:6:

Is. 44:24 *"This is what the LORD says—  
your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb:  
I am the LORD,  
who has made all things,  
who alone stretched out the heavens,  
who spread out the earth by myself,  
25 who foils the signs of false prophets  
and makes fools of diviners,  
who overthrows the learning of the wise  
and turns it into nonsense,  
26 who carries out the words of his servants  
and fulfills the predictions of his messengers,  
who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be inhabited,'  
of the towns of Judah, 'They shall be built,'  
and of their ruins, 'I will restore them,'  
27 who says to the watery deep, 'Be dry,  
and I will dry up your streams,'  
28 who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd  
and will accomplish all that I please;  
he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt,"  
and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid." "*

Is. 45:1 *"This is what the LORD says to his anointed,  
to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of  
to subdue nations before him  
and to strip kings of their armor,  
to open doors before him  
so that gates will not be shut:  
Is. 45:2 I will go before you  
and will level the mountains;  
I will break down gates of bronze  
and cut through bars of iron.  
Is. 45:3 I will give you the treasures of darkness,  
riches stored in secret places,  
so that you may know that I am the LORD,  
the God of Israel, who summons you by name.  
Is. 45:4 For the sake of Jacob my servant,  
of Israel my chosen,  
I summon you by name  
and bestow on you a title of honor,*

*though you do not acknowledge me.  
 Is. 45:5 I am the LORD, and there is no other;  
 apart from me there is no God.  
 I will strengthen you,  
 though you have not acknowledged me,  
 so that from the rising of the sun  
 to the place of its setting  
 men may know there is none besides me.  
 I am the LORD, and there is no other.*

- C. It is not clear where chapter 9 fits in the chronology of these events.
1. Chapter 5: Clearly, Babylon has fallen, and Persia is in control.
  2. Chapter 9: I assume that Cyrus has not yet issued the decree for the exiles to return.
  3. Chapter 6: I don't know where this fits in with respect to Daniel going to the lions' den.
    - a) Could he have been praying this prayer when he was caught?

## II. Daniel 9:1-3

*In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—<sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.<sup>3</sup> So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.*

- A. Darius, son of Xerxes
1. I am assuming this is another name for Cyrus (following D. J. Wiseman).
    - a) Xerxes was the name of several Persian kings.
      - (1) This is not the most famous Xerxes.
    - b) Cyrus was apparently part Mede and part Persian.
  2. This would be 539 BC.
    - a) Sometime this year, Cyrus decreed that the Jewish exiles could return to Jerusalem.
- B. What occasioned Daniel's prayer?
1. Daniel reads in Jeremiah.
    - a) The three prophets appear to have known about each other.
      - (1) Ezekiel mentions Daniel.
      - (2) Daniel quotes from Jeremiah.
    - b) Jeremiah was recognized as a prophet by some.
      - (1) His writing is referred to here as Scripture.
        - (a) His writing was available in Babylon.
          - (i) Jeremiah 29:1: Jeremiah wrote a letter to the exiles in Babylon.

- (ii) There are indications other writings of his were also circulating in Babylon.
2. There are two passages that Daniel could have read.
- a) Jeremiah 25:12-14

*“But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt,” declares the LORD, “and will make it desolate forever. <sup>13</sup> I will bring upon that land all the things I have spoken against it, all that are written in this book and prophesied by Jeremiah against all the nations. <sup>14</sup> They themselves will be enslaved by many nations and great kings; I will repay them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.”*

- b) A letter from Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylon
  - (1) Context of the letter to the exiles in Babylon
    - (a) What prompted Jeremiah to write to the exiles?
      - (i) There were false prophets in Jerusalem and Babylon saying that the exiles would return to Jerusalem in less than two years.
      - (ii) Jeremiah 28:10-17

*<sup>10</sup>Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah and broke it, <sup>11</sup> and he said before all the people, “This is what the LORD says: ‘In the same way will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon off the neck of all the nations within two years.’” At this, the prophet Jeremiah went on his way.*

*<sup>12</sup> Shortly after the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: <sup>13</sup> “Go and tell Hananiah, ‘This is what the LORD says: You have broken a wooden yoke, but in its place you will get a yoke of iron. <sup>14</sup> This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will put an iron yoke on the necks of all these nations to make them serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they will serve him. I will even give him control over the wild animals.’”*

*<sup>15</sup> Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, “Listen, Hananiah! The LORD has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies. <sup>16</sup> Therefore, this is what the LORD says: ‘I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die, because you have preached rebellion against the LORD.’”*

*<sup>17</sup> In the seventh month of that same year, Hananiah the prophet died.*

- (2) So Jeremiah wrote a letter to the exiles in Babylon to tell them to settle in because they would be there for 70 years.
- c) Here is Jeremiah’s letter (Jeremiah 29:1-14):

*<sup>1</sup>This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. <sup>2</sup> (This was after King Jehoiachin and the queen mother, the court officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen and the artisans had gone into exile from Jerusalem.) <sup>3</sup> He entrusted the letter*

to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It said:

<sup>4</sup> This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: <sup>5</sup> "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. <sup>6</sup> Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. <sup>7</sup> Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." <sup>8</sup> Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. <sup>9</sup> They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the LORD.

<sup>10</sup> This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. <sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. <sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup> I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

3. This was all foreseen by God centuries earlier.

a) Deuteronomy 28:15-26:

<sup>15</sup> However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

<sup>16</sup> You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country.

<sup>17</sup> Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed.

<sup>18</sup> The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.

<sup>19</sup> You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out.

<sup>20</sup> The LORD will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking him. <sup>21</sup> The LORD will plague you with diseases until he has destroyed you from the land you are entering to possess. <sup>22</sup> The LORD will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish. <sup>23</sup> The sky over your head will be bronze, the ground beneath you iron. <sup>24</sup> The LORD will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder; it will come down from the skies until you are destroyed.

<sup>25</sup> The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven, and you will become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms on earth. <sup>26</sup> Your carcasses will be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away.

- b) The chapter continues with more curses, then says this (Deuteronomy 28:49-53):

*<sup>49</sup> The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand, <sup>50</sup> a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old or pity for the young. <sup>51</sup> They will devour the young of your livestock and the crops of your land until you are destroyed. They will leave you no grain, new wine or oil, nor any calves of your herds or lambs of your flocks until you are ruined. <sup>52</sup> They will lay siege to all the cities throughout your land until the high fortified walls in which you trust fall down. They will besiege all the cities throughout the land the LORD your God is giving you.*

*<sup>53</sup> Because of the suffering that your enemy will inflict on you during the siege, you will eat the fruit of the womb, the flesh of the sons and daughters the LORD your God has given you.*

- c) But God follows up with a promise of restoration (Deuteronomy 30:1-10):

*<sup>1</sup> When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, <sup>2</sup> and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, <sup>3</sup> then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. <sup>4</sup> Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. <sup>5</sup> He will bring you to the land that belonged to your fathers, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers. <sup>6</sup> The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. <sup>7</sup> The LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. <sup>8</sup> You will again obey the LORD and follow all his commands I am giving you today. <sup>9</sup> Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your fathers, <sup>10</sup> if you obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

4. Keil thinks that Daniel does not see a changed heart on the part of his people.

That which moved Daniel to prayer was rather the religious condition of his own people, among whom the chastisement of the Exile had not produced the expected fruits of repentance; so that though he did not doubt regarding the speedy liberation of his people from Babylonish exile, he might still hope for the early fulfilment of the deliverance prophesied of after the destruction of Babylon and the return of the Jews to Canaan. This appears from the contents of the prayer. From the beginning to the close it is pervaded by sorrow on account of the great sinfulness of the people, among whom also there were no signs of repentance. (Keil, p. 326)

- a) While this is probably true, I think he had another motivation.
- 5. This is the prayer of a righteous Israelite on behalf of his people.
  - a) The Pentateuch contained an example of one righteous Israelite praying for God's mercy on the people of Israel, despite their sinfulness.
    - (1) Moses on Mt Sinai
    - (2) Daniel appears to be doing the same kind of thing.
- C. This is a prayer of repentance.
  - 1. Fasting, sackcloth, and ashes
    - a) Nothing celebratory, despite some positive developments
  - 2. Uses God's name, YHWH, four times
    - a) Only times YHWH is used in the book of Daniel
    - b) The name of the God who made a covenant with Israel

### III. Daniel 9:4-11

<sup>4</sup>I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed:

*"O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands, <sup>5</sup>we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. <sup>6</sup>We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. <sup>7</sup>"Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. <sup>8</sup>O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you. <sup>9</sup>The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; <sup>10</sup>we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. <sup>11</sup>All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you. "Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you.*

- A. He refers to God as "YHWH, my God."
  - 1. Stressing a more intimate relationship
- B. O Lord
  - 1. This is not the name YHWH.
  - 2. As a servant to the emperor, Daniel probably used the form of address habitually.
- C. Even though Jeremiah had said the Jews would return after 70 years, Daniel prays for it.
- D. Daniel repents and appeals for mercy.
  - 1. He appeals to God who is faithful to his covenant.
  - 2. "We have sinned!"
    - a) All of us
      - (1) Jews. Israelites.



- (2) Wherever they are
    - (a) They have been scattered because of their sinfulness.
  - (3) Current generation and past generations
  - (4) Daniel recognizes that he has the same flaw that his countrymen share.
    - (a) In his confession of wrongdoing, he shifts to 1<sup>st</sup> person plural (we).
  - (5) Leaders and common people alike
  - b) We have not listened to God's servants and prophets.
    - (1) Over a long period of time
    - (2) Even though they proclaimed their messages to the whole nation
  - c) We have rebelled against the laws of God.
3. A problem was obviously going to happen.
- a) God is righteous.
  - b) But we have been wicked.
    - (1) We are ashamed.
    - (2) Jews everywhere did wrong.
  - c) But God is just in doing what he did.
    - (1) You had said that you would punish us if we did not obey.
    - (2) And yet we did not refrain from sin.
4. But God is righteous, and his righteousness has been undiminished in dealing with us.
- a) But God is merciful and forgiving.
    - (1) Despite our rebelliousness
  - b) It is just that the curses described in Torah for disobeying God's laws have been poured out on us.

#### IV. Daniel 9:12-14

*<sup>12</sup> You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. <sup>14</sup> The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.*

##### A. God acted fairly in punishing Israel.

- 1. *Under the whole of heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem.*
  - a) This could just be hyperbole.
  - b) Or it could be referring to the whole scenario.
    - (1) God told a people what he required of them.
    - (2) He told them if they did not obey, he would punish them.
    - (3) They didn't obey.
    - (4) He punished them just like he said he would.
      - (a) This was all laid out in advance in the Torah.

The destruction of Jerusalem was in a category apart from the destruction of any other city, because in no other had the Lord deigned to dwell (verse 19: cf. Ps. 9:11), yet despite this there had been no decisive move on this people's part to seek his forgiveness. Such apathy was in itself blameworthy. (Baldwin, p. 185)

2. This punishment came because we did not seek the favor of YHWH.
  - a) We didn't turn from our sins.
  - b) We didn't give attention to God's truth.
3. God has done all this because he is righteous.
  - a) He is very worthy of our obedience.
  - b) And we still didn't obey him.

## V. Daniel 9:15-19

<sup>15</sup> "Now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong. <sup>16</sup> O Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our fathers have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us.

<sup>17</sup> "Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. <sup>18</sup> Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. <sup>19</sup> O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name."

- A. God has done remarkable things with respect to Israel.
  1. Most notably God brought the Israelites out of Egypt.
    - a) The importance of the Exodus for OT theology can't be overemphasized.
    - b) In so doing, God made a name for himself.
  2. But we have not been grateful.
    - a) We have sinned.
      - (1) Jerusalem was justly destroyed because of our sins.
- B. But now don't allow your acts of punishment of us to reflect badly on your reputation in the eyes of the world.
  1. Turn your anger from your special place Jerusalem and your special people.
    - a) The sinfulness of us and our ancestors made us an object of scorn.
      - (1) Due to the punishment that God inflicted in response to our sin
  2. Listen to our appeals.
    - a) Look with favor on your demolished temple.
      - (1) Do it for your sake.

- b) We do not appeal to you on the basis of our righteousness.
  - c) We are appealing to your mercy.
  - d) For the sake of your name.
- C. This prayer is just what Solomon called for in his speech for the dedication of the temple (I Kings 8:46-53).

*<sup>46</sup>“When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them and give them over to the enemy, who takes them captive to his own land, far away or near; <sup>47</sup>and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their conquerors and say, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly’; <sup>48</sup>and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their fathers, toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name; <sup>49</sup>then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause. <sup>50</sup>And forgive your people, who have sinned against you; forgive all the offenses they have committed against you, and cause their conquerors to show them mercy; <sup>51</sup>for they are your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out of Egypt, out of that iron-smelting furnace.*

- 1. Daniel is doing this very thing.
  - a) He is asking that God would forgive his people and restore them and their city and temple.

## VI. Daniel 9:20-23

*<sup>20</sup>While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill— <sup>21</sup>while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. <sup>22</sup>He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. <sup>23</sup>As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision:*

- A. Gabriel came when Daniel was still praying.
  - 1. A very prompt response
    - a) God responded as soon as Daniel began praying.
  - 2. God was listening.
- B. Gabriel came during the time of the evening sacrifice.
  - 1. The evening sacrifice was for the community of Israel.
- C. Gabriel came to give greater insight and understanding.
  - 1. Because Daniel is highly esteemed

**VII. Daniel 9:24-27**

<sup>24</sup> *“Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.*

<sup>25</sup> *“Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. <sup>26</sup>After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. <sup>27</sup>He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”*

A. This is a very difficult passage.

The last four verses present the most difficult text in the book, as commentators agree, but they most certainly do not agree as to the right way to understand the figures given. Where others have failed it would be presumptuous to assume that one more commentator will succeed. All one can do is to continue to apply agreed criteria as consistently as possible, weigh carefully the conclusions of others, and make suggestions as to the most likely solution to a difficult problem. (Baldwin, p. 182)

1. It is a labyrinth of exegetical conundrums.
  2. I will just make a few observations.
    - a) I will go down one rabbit whole, but I think it is worth our time.
- B. What would we expect from this response?
1. It should be a meaningful response to Daniel’s prayer.
  2. With respect to the time issue, analyzing the predicted 70-year exile might be helpful.
- C. Can we learn from the prediction of 70 years of exile?
1. Jeremiah predicted that Judah would be in exile in Babylon for 70 years.
    - a) We have already looked at those passages.
  2. What are the dates of the exile?
    - a) There are various dates that have been proposed.
    - b) I think we are meant to date it by the time that the temple vessels were in Babylon.
      - (1) 605: Nebuchadnezzar took the vessels to Babylon.
      - (2) 539: Cyrus sent the vessels back to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:7-11).
    - c) So the exile lasted approximately 66 years.
  3. There was a reason for the 70 years of exile.

- a) Leviticus lists the blessings for obedience and the curses for disobedience (Leviticus 26:1-4; 26:32-35):

*<sup>26:1</sup> “Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the LORD your God.*

*<sup>2</sup> “Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the LORD.*

*<sup>3</sup> “If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, <sup>4</sup>I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruit.*

*<sup>26:32</sup> I will lay waste the land, so that your enemies who live there will be appalled. <sup>33</sup> I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins. <sup>34</sup> Then the land will enjoy its sabbath years all the time that it lies desolate and you are in the country of your enemies; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. <sup>35</sup> All the time that it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not have during the sabbaths you lived in it.*

- (1) They were warned that if they disobeyed God, they would be punished.
  - (a) In particular, if they did not keep the sabbath years, the land would be desolate for as long as it took to get all of its neglected sabbath years.
  - (b) 70 sabbath years would be the number of sabbath years in 490 years.
    - (i) This takes us back to about 1095 BC.
    - (ii) The neglected sabbath years began in the time of Saul.
- (2) If we take everything at face value, the Israelites were being punished for not celebrating the sabbath year since Saul.
  - (a) Note 2 Chronicles 36:21:

*<sup>20</sup>He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. <sup>21</sup> The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.*

- (b) Not celebrating the sabbath year was just symptomatic of more general sinfulness.
  - (i) But not celebrating the sabbath year was significant.
- (3) Significance of the Sabbath year
  - (a) The command (Leviticus 25:1-7):

*<sup>1</sup>The LORD said to Moses on Mount Sinai, <sup>2</sup> “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the LORD. <sup>3</sup> For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. <sup>4</sup> But in the seventh year the land is to have a sabbath of rest, a sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. <sup>5</sup> Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. <sup>6</sup> Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your manservant and maidservant, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, <sup>7</sup> as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.*

- (b) Keeping the sabbath year would have been a huge exercise in trusting God to provide for them.
  - (i) Remember that Empire developed out of man's desire to provide for his own security apart from God.
  - (ii) By not celebrating the sabbath years, the Israelites were evidencing the same distrust of God that motivated the builders of the tower of Babel.
- 4. Summary of what we can learn from the 70-year exile:
  - a) The number was literal.
    - (1) But approximate
  - b) The number was not arbitrary; it was fitted to the crime.
    - (1) It was tied to the number of sabbath years that were ignored.
  - c) It is a multiple of the number 7.
- D. Looking at this passage part by part
  - 1. First three are about dealing with sin.
    - a) To put an end to rebellion
    - b) Make an end of sins
    - c) Make atonement for sins
  - 2. The second three are about the establishment of a righteous order
    - a) Establish everlasting righteousness
    - b) Fulfil the vision and prophecy
    - c) Establish a holy place for God to be with his people
  - 3. Seventy sevens is the period of time decreed for this to happen.
    - a) First phase (seven sevens) (amount of time between Jubilee years)
      - (1) From the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem
        - (a) Decree of Cyrus (539 BC)?
      - (2) Till the temple is rebuilt
    - b) Second phase (sixty-two sevens)
      - (1) From the completion of the temple
      - (2) Till the Anointed one is cut off
        - (a) Reference to Jesus the Messiah (30 AD)?
    - c) Third phase (one seven)
      - (1) A ruler will come and destroy Jerusalem.
      - (2) He will force many to make a covenant with him.
      - (3) Halfway through the phase, he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.
      - (4) He will set up an abomination of desolation on the Temple Mount.
      - (5) He will be destroyed.

### VIII. Conclusion

- A. What is this chapter about?
  - 1. The Jews are approaching their 70<sup>th</sup> year in exile in Babylon.

- a) Daniel knows that God had said they would be in exile for 70 years.
  - b) Daniel also knows that God had told them to face the temple and pray for forgiveness and restoration.
2. Daniel is doing just that.
3. God was eager to respond when Daniel confessed the sins of Israel.
- a) The rebelliousness of Israel will be cured and forgiven.
  - b) An eternal, righteous order will be established.
  - c) But getting from here to there will not be a straight line.
    - (1) Many twists and turns
      - (a) Even though Jerusalem will soon be restored, its travails are far from over.
      - (b) But the cause of many of these travails, the Antichrist, will eventually be destroyed as God has decreed.

### **IX. Appendix**

Notes on Chapter 9 by Earle Craig are appended to these notes. Earle's notes offer a different interpretation to consider. (David will mention them when he concludes his talk on Chapter 9.)

## Daniel's Prayer and Gabriel's Explanation of Daniel 9

### Hebrew<sup>1</sup>

**Dan. 9:1** This occurred in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans.<sup>2</sup>

**Dan. 9:2** in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books (בְּסֵפֶרִים) (ἐν ταῖς βίβλοις) the number of the years which according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem (לְמַלְאוֹת לְתַרְבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם) (εἰς ἀναπλήρωσιν ὀνειδισμοῦ Ἱερουσαλημ), i.e., seventy years.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Daniel 1:1-2:4 is written in Hebrew, along with 8:1-12:13. The rest of Daniel, 2:5-7:28 is written in Aramaic.

<sup>2</sup> This is not the same as Darius the Great, i.e., Darius Hystaspis, who ruled Persia from 522-485 B.C. Apparently, there is no explicit evidence outside the Bible for this man, but he is most likely a “king” of Median descent, who was appointed ruler of the Babylonian region by Cyrus the Great, much like Herod the Great and his sons who were appointed by the Roman Senate and Emperors as rulers of the area of Israel and granted the title “king.” The word *dara* means king in Avestan Persian, allowing us to conclude that Darius was an honorific title much like even the Hebrew Messiah.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Jeremiah 25:11-13, “This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 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. I will bring upon that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book which Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations.”

Cf. Jeremiah 29:10,11, “For thus says the Lord, ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans that have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.’”

It is probably appropriate to take the year 604 B.C. as the starting point of the 70 years. It was this year in which Nebuchadnezzar first invaded Israel and when Daniel himself was taken captive and led into exile to Babylon. This is in contrast to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C.

cf. Isaiah 44:28 – “It is I who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.’ And he declares of Jerusalem, ‘She will be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation will be laid.’”

cf. Isaiah 45:1-7, 1 “Thus says the Lord to Cyrus His anointed (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ) (ὁ χριστὸς μου), whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him and to loose the loins of kings, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: 2 ‘I will go before you and make the rough places smooth. I will shatter the doors of bronze and cut through their iron bars. 3 I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden wealth of secret places, so that you may know that it is I, The Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name. 4 For the sake of Jacob My servant, and Israel My chosen one, I have also called you by your name. I have given you a title of honor though you have not known Me. 5 I am the Lord, and there is no other. Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me, 6 that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other, 7 the One forming light and creating darkness (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ) (ἐγὼ ὁ κατασκευάσας φῶς καὶ ποιήσας σκότος), causing [making] well-being and creating calamity (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ) (ὁ ποιὼν εἰρήνην καὶ κτιζὼν κακά). I am the Lord who does all these.”

[Interesting comments by Expositor's Bible Commentary (EBC) – “It is significant that [Daniel] included the written prophecies of Jeremiah as inspired Holy Scripture, even though Jeremiah had died only a few decades before (probably as a martyr in the Jewish refugee colony at Tahpanhes, Egypt). Even before any formal ecclesiastical endorsement had been accorded the Book of Jeremiah by an official council, Daniel recognized that Jeremiah's writings were inspired of God and therefore inherently trustworthy and dependable.” This comment demonstrates that the author relies on “official” and “church” meetings of purportedly leaders of Judaism and/or Christianity to make his decisions for him about what documents are biblical, thus also implying that a church council in the early centuries of Christianity was necessary to choose which documents are apostolic and deserve to be in the NT. However, in my opinion, there is no rational basis to conclude that “an official council” is necessary to determine whether or not a document is from God. Any individual can and should do this for himself. In fact, this is what Daniel is doing, and we should all follow his lead and do our own homework and due diligence to decide which written documents in human history are from God as inerrant truth and should be included in the Bible.]



Darius the Mede<sup>4</sup>

Jeremiah, prophet to the Kingdom of Judah

539-530 B.C.

627-586 B.C.

**Dan. 9:3** So I gave my attention to Adonai God to seek Him by prayer and asking, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

**Dan. 9:4** I prayed to Yahweh my God and confessed and said, “Alas, Adonai, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,<sup>5</sup>

**Dan. 9:5** we have committed immorality, committed evil, acted wickedly, and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances.

**Dan. 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.<sup>6</sup>

**Dan. 9:7** “Morality (הַצְדִּיקוּת) (ή δικαιοσύνη) belongs to You, Adonai, but to us belongs 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 the violations of their legal obligations, which they have committed against You.<sup>7</sup>

**Dan. 9:8** “Open shame belongs to us, Yahweh, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have committed immorality against You (אֲנִי חָטֵאתִי לְפָנֶיךָ) (ὅτι ἡμάρτομέν σοι).

**Dan. 9:9** “To Adonai our God belong compassion and forgiveness (הַרְחִמֵנוּ וְרַחֵם) (ή δικαιοσύνη και τὸ ἔλεος), but we have rebelled against Him.

**Dan. 9:10** We have not obeyed the voice of Yahweh our God, to walk in His teachings (בְּדַבְרֵי) (τῷ νόμῳ σου), which He set before us through His servants the prophets.<sup>8</sup>

**Dan. 9:11** “Indeed, all Israel has transgressed Your instruction (אֶת-תּוֹרַתְךָ) (τὸν νόμον σου) and turned aside, not obeying Your voice. Therefore, the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the instruction of Moses (בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה) (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ Μωσῆ), the servant of God, for we have committed immorality against Him.<sup>9</sup>

**Dan. 9:12** “As a result, He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity (רַעַה גְּדֹלָה) (κακὰ μεγάλη), because, under the whole heaven, there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup> **Babylonian Persian (Mede) Greek Syrian Greek Egyptian Greek Roman M.E. Messianic**

<sup>5</sup> cf. Genesis 12 regarding God’s expressing His promises, i.e., His lovingkindness, towards Abraham and his descendants. Cf. Exodus-Deuteronomy regarding God’s commandments that He gave to the Jews via the Mosaic Covenant, including in Deuteronomy 28:13, “Yahweh will set you as the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of Yahweh your God, which I am commanding you today to observe to do them.” In this verse from Deuteronomy 28, God is promising that the Jews will exercise hegemony over all other nations if they obey the Mosaic Covenant from their hearts, which is what will finally happen on a global basis when Jesus restores the Kingdom of Israel at his return.

<sup>6</sup> cf. Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Amos, et al.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel is referring to the Jews of both the Assyrian exile (722 B.C.) from the northern Kingdom of Israel and the Babylonian exile (605-586 B.C.) from the southern Kingdom of Judah. Their legal obligation was to obey the Mosaic Covenant with proper inwardness, i.e., circumcised hearts, and yet they rebelled against God instead.

<sup>8</sup> The most important of these servants and prophets was Moses. Thus, Daniel is speaking of the Mosaic Covenant along with those who repeated the covenant during the history of the Jews prior to this time.

<sup>9</sup> cf. Deuteronomy 28 where God promises to curse the people of Israel, even exile them from the land of Israel and cause the Gentiles nations to exercise hegemony over them, if they disobey the Mosaic Covenant. God has followed through on His threat via both the Assyrian exile of the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and the Babylonian exile of the 7<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

**Dan. 9:13** “As it is written in the instruction of Moses (בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה) (ἐν διαθήκῃ Μωσῆ), all this calamity (כָּל-הַרָעָה הַזֹּאת) (πάντα τὰ κακὰ) has come on us. However, we have not sought the face of the Yahweh our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth (וְלֹא-שָׁכַחְנוּ לְבָאֵמֶתֶךָ) (διανοηθῆναι τὴν δικαιοσύνην σου).

**Dan. 9:14** “Therefore, Yahweh has kept the calamity in store (וַיִּשְׁקַרְךָ יְהוָה עַל-הַרָעָה) (καὶ ἠγγρύπνησε κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ τὰ κακὰ) and brought it on us, because Yahweh our God is morally perfect (צַדִּיק) (δίκαιος) with respect to all His actions which He has performed, and we have not obeyed His voice.<sup>10</sup>

**Dan. 9:15** “Now, Adonai our God, You 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 committed immorality. We have been evil.

**Dan. 9:16** “Adonai, in accordance with all Your morally perfect actions (כְּכָל-צְדָקֹתֶיךָ) (κατὰ τὴν δικαιοσύνην σου), let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain. Because of our immoral and the evil actions of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a disgrace to all those around us.<sup>11</sup>

**Dan. 9:17** “Consequently, now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his requests, and for Your sake, Adonai, let Your face shine on Your desolate holy place.<sup>12</sup>

**Dan. 9:18** “O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city, which is called by Your name. We are not presenting our requests before You on account of any merits of our own (עַל-צְדָקֹתֵינוּ אֲנַחְנֵנוּ) (ἐπὶ ταῖς δικαιοσύναις ἡμῶν), but on account of Your great compassion (עַל-רַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּימִים) (διὰ τὸ σὸν ἔλεος).<sup>13</sup>

**Dan. 9:19** “Adonai, hear! Adonai, forgive! Adonai, 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.”<sup>14</sup>

**Dan. 9:20** I was still speaking, praying, and confessing my immorality and the evil of my people Israel, thus presenting my request before Yahweh my God on behalf of the holy mountain of my God.

**Dan. 9:21** While I was still speaking in prayer, the person Gabriel (וְהָאִישׁ גַּבְרִיאֵל) (Γαβριηλ), whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering.<sup>15</sup>

**Dan. 9:22** He gave me instruction, talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding.

<sup>10</sup> God has brought the disaster of the two Assyrian and Babylonian destructions and exiles on the Jews because of two factors—1) His faithfulness to His own word that He would do so if they disobeyed Him, and 2) their disobedience.

<sup>11</sup> Notice how prominent the city of Jerusalem is in Daniel’s thinking. God through Gabriel will also consider it prominent in the verses below, vs. 20-27.

<sup>12</sup> “Desolate holy place” is the destroyed temple in Jerusalem.

<sup>13</sup> Daniel understands properly that it is impossible for morally depraved human beings to earn God’s approval and, certainly, His grace and mercy. By using the plural pronoun “we,” Daniel assumes that his fellow Jews, at least those with changed hearts and proper inwardness, have been and will continue to request of God the same things that he is.

<sup>14</sup> Daniel’s final appeal is based on the fact that the Jews and Jerusalem are so intimately connected to God, because this is what God has chosen from the time of Abraham and the Abrahamic Covenant, that they are His chosen people and city. So, certainly, God will defend His own good reputation and fulfill His promise to the Jews to bring them back from captivity after 70 years and eventually turn them into a changed-heart people who are the “great nation” of Genesis 12:1-3, exercising hegemony over all the Gentile nations according to Deuteronomy 28.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Daniel 8:16ff.

**Dan. 9:23** “At the beginning of your requests, the command was issued (וְצִוָּה לְדַבֵּר) (ἐξήλαθε πρόσταγμα παρὰ κυρίου), and I have come to tell you, because you are chosen for mercy (פָּיַיְתָם מִיְהוָה) (ὅτι ἐλεεινός εἰ). Therefore, give heed to the message, and gain understanding of the vision.<sup>16</sup>

**Dan. 9:24** “Seventy weeks have been specified for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of immorality, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness (וְלָמַדְתִּים) (καὶ δοθῆναι δικαιοσύνην αἰώνιον), to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy one (וְלִמְשָׁחַת) (εὐφράναι ἅγιον ἅγιον).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> While other commentators state that Daniel is highly esteemed by God because of his faithfulness and commitment to prayer, it makes more sense in the light of the LXX translation of פָּיַיְתָם מִיְהוָה with ὅτι ἐλεεινός εἰ to consider Gabriel’s saying that, while Daniel is desirable (דְּמוּת), it is because God has chosen him as someone whom He is using for these very special moments of conveying information through dreams in Babylon at that time. In other words, Daniel’s high esteem is not because of Daniel and his character, but because of God and His sovereign choices.

<sup>17</sup> [EBC – “The culmination of the appointed years will witness the conclusion of man’s “transgression” or “rebellion” (pesa) against God—a development most naturally entered into with the establishment of an entirely new order on earth.”]

It seems most reasonable to interpret “weeks” as units of 7 years, so that 70 weeks = 70 x 7 years = 490 years.

I am not sure why the commentator interprets “your people” and “your holy city” (עַל-עַמִּי וְעַל-עִירִי) (ἐπὶ τὸν λαόν σου καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν Σιών) as all mankind. This does not make sense, especially when speaking directly to Daniel after he has prayed for God’s promise through Jeremiah to the Jewish people to remain faithful to them for their return to the land of Israel after the Babylonian exile. Thus, the 70 weeks = 70 x 7 years = 490 years that the Jews have from God is a second chance to get their act together and serve God properly after His judgment on them for their disobedience that He brought about through the Assyrian and Babylonian destructions of the Kingdom of Israel and Kingdom of Judah respectively. The meaning is that if they do not repent and obey God properly after 490 years, “finishing the transgression” (choosing not to rebel against God’s commandments), “ending immorality” (bringing an end to their pursuits that are sinful), “making atonement for their iniquity” (becoming genuinely repentant), “bringing in everlasting righteousness” (becoming an entire people of perpetual changed hearts), “sealing up vision and prophecy” (fulfilling all the good things that God has promised of the Jews), and “anointing the most holy one” (considering the temple as truly a sacred place), there will be another judgment of destruction on Jerusalem and them. The commentator also interprets “finish the transgression” (לְכַלֵּא הַפְּשָׁע) (συντελεσθῆναι τὴν αμαρτίαν) and “make an end of sin” (וְלִמְשָׁחַת) (καὶ τὰς ἀδικίας σπανίσαι) as bringing about an end to mankind’s sin and rebellion, which will occur with the arrival of the millennial kingdom of the Messiah near the end of history. Instead, it makes more sense to interpret Gabriel’s speaking of the Jews’ setting aside their own rebellion against God by repenting and committing themselves to following appropriately the Mosaic Covenant *before* the Messiah’s *first* appearance (see below).

Then the commentator interprets “make atonement for iniquity” (וְלִמְשָׁחַת) (καὶ ἀπαλεῖψαι τὰς ἀδικίας) as the crucifixion of the Messiah, instead of the Jews’ humbling themselves properly inwardly and making the appropriate sacrifices to God for their rebellion against Him, even embracing their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, when he first appears.

“Bring in everlasting righteousness” (וְלָמַדְתִּים) (καὶ δοθῆναι δικαιοσύνην αἰώνιον) is interpreted as the conformity of society to biblical morality as the opposite situation of brief periods when this has occurred in human history. Instead, it makes more sense that Gabriel is referring to the Jews’ being granted eternal forgiveness and “justification,” i.e., God’s mercy, with perpetual changed hearts as a group. Thus the LXX understands it, because it translates it “and be given eternal (aionic) *dikaioSunay*.”

Then, “anoint the most holy place” (וְלִמְשָׁחַת) (εὐφράναι ἅγιον ἅγιον) is interpreted as the consecration of the millennial temple, rather than the Jews’ granting to Jerusalem and the temple that they will build when they return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile the respect that these places deserve because God has instructed them to do so in the Mosaic Covenant, with Jerusalem as the eventual capital of the Messianic Kingdom and the temple as God’s perpetual dwelling place among His people, the Jews.

Therefore, I have interpreted these comments as referring to a period of 490 years, starting with 7 years before the issuing of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (see below), during which the Jews have the opportunity to clean up their hearts and obey Yahweh properly according to the Mosaic Covenant. The end of this period will be approximately

Seventy “weeks” =  $70 \times 7 \text{ years} = 490 \text{ years}$

God is giving the Jews 490 years to get their act together and welcome the Messiah

**Dan. 9:25** “Therefore, know and discern that, from the issuing of the order 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.”<sup>18</sup>

Seven “weeks” =  $7 \times 7 \text{ years} = 49 \text{ years}$

Sixty-two “weeks” =  $62 \times 7 \text{ years} = 434 \text{ years}$

Total = 483 years

The order to rebuild Jerusalem, not just the temple, came in 457 B.C. by Artaxerxes (464-424 B.C.) (cf. . The total time between God’s issuing this order and the appearance of the Messiah will be 49 years + 434 years = 483 years, i.e., A.D. 27 [483-457 (+1 for transition from B.C. to A.D.) = 27].

Cyrus the Great <sup>19</sup>	559-529 B.C.
Conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.	
Darius the Mede <sup>20</sup>	539-530 B.C.
Cambyses, Cyrus’ elder son, who conquered Egypt	529-523 B.C.
Guamata, Pseudo Smerdis, Cyrus’ younger son	523-522 B.C.
Darius Hystaspis	522-485 B.C.
Lost the Battle of Marathon (490 B.C.)	
Xerxes, who invaded Greece	485-464 B.C.
Lost the Battles of Salamis and Thermopylae (480 B.C)	
Artaxerxes I	464-424 B.C.
Darius II	423-404 B.C.
Artaxerxes II	404-359 B.C.
Artaxerxes III	359-338 B.C.
Arses	338-336 B.C.
Darius III	336-331 B.C.

A.D. 33/34, 3½ years after the crucifixion of the Messiah and 47 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans on A.D. 70.

<sup>18</sup> According to 2 Chronicles 36:22,23 & Ezra 1:1-4, Cyrus the Great of Persia (559-529 B.C.) gave the order to rebuild the temple in his first year, which would be his first year in reigning over Babylon after conquering it in 539 B.C. Then, over a hundred years later, it was Artaxerxes I of Persia (464-424 B.C.), according to Ezra 7:12-26 [and interpreted by Ezra in Ezra 9:9, “For we are slaves. Yet, in our slavery, our God has not forsaken us. Instead, He has extended lovingkindness to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us reviving to raise up the house of our God, to restore its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem.”], who issued the decree so to speak for Jerusalem and its walls to be rebuilt now that its temple was in place.

Ezra had arrived in Jerusalem in 457 B.C., the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, and Nehemiah, cupbearer to Artaxerxes, arrived 12-13 years later in 445-444 B.C., so that the walls and moat were completed in 408 B.C., 151 years after Cyrus first announced that the Jews were to return to the land of Israel and rebuild their temple.

Thus, God through Gabriel is saying that  $69 \times 7 \text{ years} = 483 \text{ years}$  will be the total time from the decree for the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city (or its wall) and temple until the arrival of the Messiah. There will be  $7 \times 7 \text{ years} = 49 \text{ years}$  to rebuild the city (or its wall) and the temple and then  $62 \times 7 = 434 \text{ years}$  before the arrival of the Messiah. Thus  $457 \text{ B.C.} + 483 \text{ years} = \text{approximately A.D. 27.}$

<sup>19</sup> **Babylonian Persian (Mede) Greek Syrian Greek Egyptian Greek Roman M.E. Messianic**

<sup>20</sup> This is not the same as Darius the Great, i.e., Darius Hystaspis, who ruled Persia from 522-485 B.C. There is no explicit evidence outside the Bible for this man, but he is most likely a “king” of Median descent, who was appointed ruler of the Babylonian region by Cyrus the Great, much like Herod the Great and his sons who were appointed by the Roman Senate and Emperors as rulers of the area of Israel and granted the title “king.” The word *dara* means king in Avestan Persian, allowing us to conclude that Darius was an honorific title much like even the Hebrew Messiah.

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**Dan. 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 holy place (שְׁדָרְבָרַי) (καὶ τὸ ἅγιον). Its end will come with a flood. Even to the end (עַד אֶחָד) (ἕως καιροῦ συντελείας) there will be war. Desolations are determined (נִקְרְצָת שְׁמִמּוֹת) (ἀπὸ πολέμου πολεμηθήσεται).<sup>21</sup>

Sixty-two “weeks” = 62 x 7 years = 434 years, which follow the first 7 “weeks” or 49 years of the rebuilding of Jerusalem (or its wall) and the temple.

After the 434 + 70 years (total of 483 years), the Messiah will come during the 70<sup>th</sup> and last “week” (7 years) of the time that God is giving the Jews to repent and pursue authentic righteousness. But midway through this last 7 years, the Messiah will be crucified and killed. Then, once the 70<sup>th</sup> “week” is completed, ending God’s promise of the time He gave the Jews to repent and obey Him properly, God will eventually have the **Roman Emperor Vespasian** send his “people” under the command of **General Titus** to destroy Jerusalem and its temple (in A.D. 70).

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**Dan. 9:27** “He will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a “end” to sacrifice and grain offering. On the wing of abominations there will be a destroying force, right up to a complete destruction. Indeed, it has been ordered. The complete destruction will be poured out on anyone who does appalling things.”<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> [EBC – the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus in A.D. 70, forty-three years after the end of the sixty-ninth “week.”]

But rather than interpret the last sentence of v. 26 as also referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, the EBC sees it as referring to what will take place *afterwards* within the implied 70<sup>th</sup> week at whose end is the second coming of the Messiah, as if Jesus throughout all of Matthew 24:7-24 in the Olivet Discourse is referring to the end times. Instead, more coherently Gabriel is saying that after the coming of the Messiah, he will be “cut off,” i.e., crucified and killed, resulting eventually in the complete destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in A.D. 70 by the Roman General Titus, the “prince” and his “people,” the Roman army. Thus, the “end” (אֶחָד) (συντελείας) in this verse is the end of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The “desolations” that “are determined” will lead up to and include the destruction of both Jerusalem and the temple within it. God once again will bring about vengeance on the Jews, Jerusalem, and the temple, which happened in A.D. 70 and 132-135, the latter time being when 580,000 Jews were killed by the Romans, 50 fortified towns and 985 villages were destroyed, and the rest of the Jews were exiled from the land, never to return in any great number until the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Zionist Movement.

<sup>22</sup> [EBC – In the last days of the present realm, the ruler of the “Roman” people will confirm a covenant with the believing Jews for seven years, permitting them to make sacrifices to God in obedience to the Mosaic Covenant. This same ruler then becomes “the one who makes desolate,” the Antichrist and world dictator, who resorts to violence to carry out his ruthless despotism.]

More coherently with the previous verse than the EBC’s interpretation, v. 27 is referring to God’s faithfulness to His covenant to the Jews in the midst of the death of the Messiah, who properly relativizes the sacrifices of the Mosaic Covenant, until the Jews indicate clearly that they are not going to repent, even of crucifying their Messiah, resulting in the destruction of both Jerusalem and its temple 37 years later in A.D. 70.

Thus, God assures the Jews that during the entire final 7 year period of the total 490 years of giving them a second chance to get their act together and become the kind of people He wants them to be, including even the 3½ years after they crucify the Messiah, He will be waiting for their heartfelt repentance of all their disobedience, especially that of rejecting their Messiah.

In addition, in the middle of this 7 year period, the death of the Messiah will constitute an “end” to any value of the Mosaic Covenant animal sacrifices in the temple, because Jesus will become the only adequate propitiatory offering for a Jew (or Gentile) in gaining God’s eternal mercy and being granted eternal life. Nevertheless, the execution of the Messiah will become the most extreme abomination, i.e., displeasing sin against God, that the Jews have committed. Therefore, as a result of this extreme end of all the abominations (“wing of abominations”), crucifying Jesus of Nazareth, God will again become a destroying force towards the Jews, right up to the time of the complete destruction

One “week” = 7 years

God (“He”) will definitely keep His covenant with the Jews into the “7 years” that constitute the final period of the 490 years (483 years + 7 years) mentioned in v. 24. The 7 years begins with the public appearance of the Messiah around A.D. 27. Thus, God will give the Jews the entire 490 years to repent of their rebellion, including repenting of crucifying the Messiah half-way through the last 7 years. In addition, half-way through this final 7 year period, God will put an “end” so to speak to temple offerings in terms of their still having significance as the only offerings by the Jews to Yahweh, when the Messiah allows himself to be crucified in order to be the one, true propitiatory offering to God on behalf of morally depraved Jews (and Gentiles) (cf. Hebrews and Jesus’ being the high priest according to the order of Melchizedek).

Finally, after so many acts of rebellion against God by the Jews, especially the crucifixion of their Messiah, God, because they will have never repented and become true changed of heart sinners during the 490 years, “the destroying force,” God, will completely destroy Jerusalem in both A.D. 70 and A.D. 132.

Consequently, the very last mid-week period (3½ years) becomes a very important time of God’s continuing to look to extend His mercy to the Jews—if they will but repent of crucifying their Messiah and embrace him as such instead. However, they do not, and the result is the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70 and A.D. 132, this latter date being when the Jews are expelled from the land of Israel until the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Zionist movement.

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of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70 by Titus and the expulsion of the Jews from the land of Israel during A.D. 132-135. I have chosen to interpret the last part of v. 27 as referring to the desolation that God has determined, that anyone who rejects the Messiah in Jerusalem and Israel will encounter God’s judgment in the form of the Romans’ destruction of the city and its temple and expulsion from the land.