

Survey of the Bible Daniel 9:1-24 Intro to the 70 Weeks

In chapters 7 and 8 Daniel was receiving visions from the Lord during the reign of Belshazzar, who was the King who blasphemed the Lord by drinking wine from the Temple vessels taken from Jerusalem.

And so, chapter 9 begins with the name of the King who takes the throne of Belshazzar whose name is Darius. He is the one mentioned earlier in this book.

Daniel 5:29-31 ²⁹ Then Belshazzar gave orders, and they clothed Daniel with purple and *put* a necklace of gold around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he *now* had authority as the third *ruler* in the kingdom. ³⁰ That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. ³¹ ***So Darius the Mede received the kingdom at about the age of sixty-two.***

It is this same Darius who is once again introduced into Jehovah's revelation concerning the Kingdom of God.

Daniel 9:1-3 ^{NAU} In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans-- ² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was *revealed as* the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, *namely*, seventy years. ³ So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek *Him by* prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.

In this part of Daniel's revelation from God we are given the motivation for Daniel seeking the Lord that is based, not upon new revelation, but in response to revelation that has already been written by the prophets "in the books."

And one of the specific books that Daniel consults is the book of Jeremiah.

Now, keep in mind that Jeremiah wrote from between 627 BC to 560 BC regarding the 70 year captivity of Israel to Babylon. The captivity itself occurred around 606 BC with Daniel being a part of that first deportation to Babylon. And so, Daniel was a contemporary of Jeremiah and would have been very familiar with the prophet and his writings.

So, what did Jeremiah write, at least 21 years before the actual Babylonian invasion concerning this 70 captivity of Israel as promised by God?

Jeremiah 25:10-13 ¹⁰ 'Moreover, I will take from them [God's people] the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. ¹¹ 'This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon *seventy years*. ¹² 'Then it will be when *seventy years* are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,' declares the LORD, 'for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation. ¹³ '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.

Jeremiah 29:10-11 ¹⁰ '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. ¹¹ 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

Daniel longs for this hope to be able to return to the land of his fathers, (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), and carry on the name of his

God who has promised to return a remnant to Jerusalem, the holy city.

And it is during the reign of Darius that he finds himself toward the latter years of his ministry and seeks God as an older saint and prays that God's promise would now begin to manifest itself in his lifetime according to what was written by the prophet Jeremiah.

What is interesting about this portion of God's word is that as much as Daniel wants to approach God about His promise to restore a remnant to Israel Daniel makes clear that he along with the nation don't deserve the grace that will be poured out on Israel.

Daniel humbles himself as he prays to God who has promised to show compassion as he sums up his attitude in this way.

Daniel 9:17-19 ¹⁷ "So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary. 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; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion. ¹⁹ "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

Daniel knows the seventy years are coming to an end and like a disobedient child meekly coming to his father looking for reconciliation, Daniel approaches God in meekness understanding that Israel deserves God's wrath and yet relies entirely upon the promise of God as truth.

And as Daniel is praying the Lord answers his prayer.

Daniel 9:20-21 ²⁰ Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting

my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, ²¹ while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in *my* extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering.

You'll notice that Daniel makes mention of Gabriel who had appeared to him in a previous vision. It was the vision we saw in the 8th chapter during the third year of the reign of Belshazzar.

Daniel 8:15-17 ¹⁵ When I, Daniel, had seen the vision, I sought to understand it; and behold, standing before me was one who looked like a man. ¹⁶ And I heard the voice of a man between *the banks of* Ulai, and he called out and said, "***Gabriel, give this man an understanding of the vision.***" ¹⁷ So he came near to where I was standing, and when he came I was frightened and fell on my face; but he said to me, "Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end."

By the way, why does Daniel refer to Gabriel as a man in both passages?

Because, though Gabriel is an angel, according to Luke 1:19,26, he is also one whose appearance is that of a man. Again, this begs the question as to the nature of angels. Though angels by definition cannot be men, since all men must be conceived after Adam and Eve, who were formed by God from the dust of the earth, it angels were created by God with the same appearance of men.

This is precisely why human beings cannot distinguish angels, in most cases, from other human beings when angels minister to God's elect.

Hebrews 1:14 ¹⁴ Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?

Hebrews 13:2 ² Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

And so, though angels are not of the same “kind” according to the order of God’s creation, they are quite clearly the same in appearance according to the designation “man”, being identified as men in a variety of places in both the Old and New Testament.

But Gabriel’s message to Daniel, in response to Daniel’s hope of Israel being delivered from Babylon after 70 years, is going to be reinterpreted for Daniel to extend well past the 70 year mark to include a multiple of 70 as we will see.

Daniel 9:22-27 ²² He gave *me* instruction and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. ²³ "At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell *you*, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision. ²⁴ "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*. ²⁵ "So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. ²⁶ "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. ²⁷ "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

A lot is going on here but it's worth noting a couple of things before we get into the meat of the 70 sevens that Gabriel describes.

The first thing to notice is that God issued a command to send Gabriel at the very beginning of Daniel's supplication.

What might this tell us of God's ability to hear and then answer our prayers?

But did God answer Daniel's prayer according to Daniel's understanding of the 70 years?

Yes and no. God was certainly faithful to bring a remnant back to Jerusalem as we know from books like Ezra and Nehemiah, and Gabriel will allude to this in his division of the 70 sevens, but Gabriel will extend the idea of 70 sevens well into the future, while the 70 years for Daniel's understanding are coming to an end.

So, what is the connection between 70 years coming to an end as Jerusalem will be reestablished and the 70 sevens that Gabriel connects to the prayer of Daniel who is expecting an answer to the 70 year period?

Gabriel first approaches Daniel and tells him that what he is about to tell Daniel is going to take some understanding as he is given discernment. Well, why would that be important if the only understanding Daniel needed in respect to his prayer was that God was faithful to Jeremiah's clear indication that after 70 years a remnant would go back to Jerusalem?

Only if Gabriel was there to give Daniel an answered prayer that he wasn't even praying about; namely future events that mirror the restoration of Jerusalem and the temple well beyond the end of the 70 years that Daniel had in mind.

So, what is being mirrored as it relates to the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem? Events that lead up to the true restoration of

the true Israel of which Jerusalem, during Daniel's time, is but a shadow.

And so, what we're going to see is that God's true answer to Daniel's prayer will begin to take place at the end of the 70 years and that a remnant during Daniel's lifetime leaving Babylon to go back to Jerusalem will in fact happen but the true nature of that remnant leaving Babylon and residing back in Jerusalem and the temple only points to a future remnant leaving a future Babylon.

Revelation 18:2-4 ² And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. ³ "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed *acts of immorality* with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality." ⁴ I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "***Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues;***

But we're getting a little ahead of ourselves. Let's look at the actual vision as Gabriel delivers it to Daniel.

Daniel 9:24 ²⁴ "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy *place*.

Gabriel knows that a literal 70 years prophesied by Jeremiah are coming to an end and that a remnant will return to Jerusalem, that holy city.

But this is not the only thing Gabriel is addressing. Instead he uses the same set of numbers in multiples to describe the fulfillment of

what Daniel longed for: the restoration of God's people to God's land promised to His people, with God's name dwelling in that land.

Daniel 9:19 ¹⁹ "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

Gabriel begins with the phrase, "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city..."

The number 70 would not have escaped Daniel but he is told by Gabriel that the number 70 is not limited to a previous promise of God found in Jeremiah to restore Jerusalem, but is now pointing to the future as this 70 weeks is an extended period of time that will stretch out well beyond the life of Daniel.

This 70 weeks will be divided up into three segments as we'll see, but Daniel is told that the entire 70 weeks represents all of which leads up to the end of that 70 week period which leads to the final anointing of the Holy place that is everlasting.

So, however the dividing up of the 70 weeks takes place the 70th week is the end. There are no more weeks to be added to the vision or the fulfillment of the promise of the decree for God's people and His holy city.

There are 6 things taking place during this 70 weeks (Sinclair Ferguson pg.186 of Daniel).

- 1) Transgression will be finished
- 2) Sins will be brought to an end
- 3) Reconciliation will be made for iniquity
- 4) Everlasting righteousness will be established
- 5) Vision and prophecy will be sealed
- 6) The Most Holy will be anointed

For most of us looking at the passage in Daniel we can clearly see the ministry of Jesus Christ being described.

Daniel tells us that part of the vision deals with a future time in which transgressions for God's people will be finished. This was the emphasis of Christ's redemptive work on our behalf.

Romans 4:25 ²⁵ *He who was delivered over because of our transgressions*, and was raised because of our justification.

Ephesians 2:4-6 ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were *dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ* (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

In Christ's work on our behalf sin has been brought to an end to the extent that our sin is no longer held against us as Christ has taken that sin and nailed it to the cross.

Romans 8:1-4 ^{NAU} Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

The future fulfillment of sin being brought to an end and the wages of that sin is made clear in Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:54-57 ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. ⁵⁵ "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" ⁵⁶ The sting

of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Gabriel also points out how, during this 70 weeks, atonement will be made for iniquity.

The atonement that Gabriel is addressing is future oriented but it would have been clear to Daniel what type of atonement was being addressed.

Exodus 30:10 ¹⁰ "Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement once a year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD."

This atonement was a blood offering to make the people holy.

Moses understood that it was only through this atonement that sins could be forgiven.

Exodus 32:30 ³⁰ On the next day Moses said to the people, "You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to the LORD, perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

We know that the bloody animal atonement of the Old covenant did not actually take away sin but rather what that sacrifice pointed to.

Hebrews 10:4-10 ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ⁵ Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME; ⁶ IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE. ⁷ "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'" ⁸ After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND

WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND *sacrifices* FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE *in them*" (which are offered according to the Law), ⁹ then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

There is no question as to what Gabriel is addressing as taking place in this 70 week period, but as we'll see the three divisions are made up of 7 weeks and 62 weeks that add up to 69 weeks and then the final 7 which is the 70th week.

Next time we'll look at the division of the 70 weeks or 70 sevens, which is the literal translation, and determine the time frame in which all of God's will being described here will take place and the different events that take place in these time frames.