

Daniel 9

- In Chapter 2 of Daniel, we were introduced to God's plan to place Israel under Gentile authority for an age – the Age of the Gentiles
 - Prior to the start of that age, prior to the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar, Israel was the chief nation on earth
 - Under David, and later Solomon, the Nation of Israel rose to the peak of its power
 - No Gentile nation could challenge Israel
 - But after Solomon died, a number of tribes elected to rebel against the rule of Judah
 - They split away and tried to form a separate kingdom
 - Ultimately, the Lord brought discipline to those rebellious tribes at the hands of the Assyrian army
 - Meanwhile, Judah, Benjamin and Levi in the south, remained under God's protection until the days of Daniel
 - By the time Daniel was serving in the Jewish court, Judah was equally due judgment
 - The Lord declared that if He was willing to judge the North for their sin, how could He overlook Judah's sin?
 - So, He sent prophet after prophet to Israel, warning them of the coming judgment
 - In the end the people of Judah failed to heed the warnings
- If Judah would ignore the Lord's warnings spoken through the prophets, they couldn't ignore the message when it came at the point of a Babylonian sword
 - The Lord called for Babylon to do His bidding in judging Israel
 - They were under judgment for failing to keep the Old Covenant
 - And they were no longer under God's protection
 - But as Daniel explained to King Nebuchadnezzar, the Lord had sentenced Israel to remain under Gentile oppression for a long time

- The Babylonians would be merely the first of multiple Gentile kingdoms to capture the city and the temple
- The Lord would no longer defend Israel as He once did under David and Solomon
- Instead, the Lord said He would send wave after wave of Gentiles against His people
 - First the Babylonians, then the Persians, then the Greeks, and then the Romans
 - And even in centuries after Rome's fall, the remnants of the Roman Empire would continue to judge Israel
- Daniel foresaw this future for his people, and it has left him astounded, exhausted, speechless and even sick for days, he said in Chapter 8
 - Nevertheless, Daniel's visions did not foretell the destruction of the Jewish people
 - On the contrary, his visions of the Age of the Gentiles always ended with the Promised One returning to save Israel
 - At the end of this age of Gentile rule, the Messiah will return to establish a new Kingdom to replace all Gentile authorities
 - In that day, Israel receives the promises God gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
 - So Daniel's prophecies are bittersweet
 - They present a troubling premonition of dark times to come for Israel
 - Yet the dark period eventually ends with Israel in glory
- But up to this point in Daniel's visions, the Lord has given no indication how long this age will last
 - So given the happy ending, it's only natural that Daniel would be hoping for the end to come quickly
 - Unfortunately for Daniel, the Age of the Gentiles isn't a short-lived period of history
 - It will run a very long time, certainly longer than Daniel's lifetime

- Furthermore, the age proceeds through various stages and overlaps other prophetic events God has revealed for Israel
 - The people of Israel will go in and out of various situations, including bondage, exile, regathering, and exile again
 - Specifically, the Lord told Israel through another prophet, Jeremiah, that Judah would be held in captivity during the early years of this age
 - But then at a point, Israel would be permitted to return to Jerusalem, though they still remain under Gentile authority
- As we open in Daniel 9, we find Daniel reading this passage from Jeremiah

Dan. 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans –

Dan. 9:2 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.

- Once again, Daniel dates his chapter by the reign of a king...this time, it's Darius son of Ahasuerus
 - We are in the first year of Darius, who was the first king of the Medo-Persian empire following Persia's conquest of Babylon
 - You may remember that the feast of Belshazzar in Chapter 5 occurred on the night the Babylonian kingdom fell to Persia
 - And Chapter 8 occurred several years earlier, in the third year of Belshazzar
 - Therefore, the events of this chapter happened after Chapter 5 and long after Chapter 8
 - At this time, we find Daniel reading a copy of Jeremiah's scroll
 - Jeremiah was a contemporary of Daniel
 - Jeremiah was already about 40 years old and a known prophet when Daniel was taken into exile to Babylon
 - Jeremiah was never sent to Babylon like Daniel was

- Instead, Nebuchadnezzar allowed Jeremiah to choose where he would live, because the prophet had advocated that Israel's kings should submit to Babylon's authority
 - Jeremiah continued to prophesy in Judah until 586 BC
 - In that year, he was taken against his will to Egypt by Jewish rebels seeking to flee Babylon's control
 - He finished his prophecies while in Egypt, and eventually died there, probably when Daniel was in his late thirties or forties
- Now in Chapter 9 of Daniel, we find the prophet holding a scroll of Jeremiah's writing
 - This curious scene is important for numerous reasons
 - Seeing Daniel studying Jeremiah demonstrates that Jeremiah's writings were understood to be prophetic from the beginning
 - Daniel interprets this work as a literal, historical prophecy
 - Also, Daniel's possession of Jeremiah's work proves Israel took great care to preserve, honor and share the Word of God among themselves as soon as it was available
 - Somehow, this book has made its way intact from Judah, or maybe Egypt, to Daniel in Babylon
 - Finally, it reminds us that even a prophet still needs the revelations of other prophets if they are to understand the whole counsel of God's Word
 - God revealed portions and parts to men until the whole counsel of His Word was completed in Scripture
 - And there is one more curiosity in this scene, one that sets up the rest of this chapter
 - Despite being a prophet himself, Daniel misinterprets the meaning of what he reads in Jeremiah's writings
 - In v.2, Daniel notes that he came across the number of years that God declared Israel and Jerusalem would experience desolation
 - He's reading from Jeremiah 29:

[Jer. 29:10](#) "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.

[Jer. 29:11](#) '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.

[Jer. 29:12](#) 'Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

[Jer. 29:13](#) 'You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.

[Jer. 29:14](#) '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.'

- In this passage, Daniel learns that the length of time the Lord intended to hold Judah in captivity in Babylon and Persia would be 70 years
 - This was news for Daniel
 - He had not received that detail himself
 - And he had not seen Jeremiah since he entered captivity
 - So it required that the Word of God reach Daniel through Jeremiah's writings
 - And as he comes to this passage, Daniel suddenly realizes that there was a firm time limit on Israel's judgment of captivity
 - The Lord told Israel that despite their captivity, they shouldn't doubt the Lord's intentions toward them
 - He didn't intend to destroy His people, but instead, He had good plans for their welfare
 - The Lord's judgment was for discipline, not destruction
 - So, the Lord promises He will regather Judah after 70 years
 - They will return to their land, enjoy the Lord's favor once more and see their fortunes restored
 - This in fact happened, as Jeremiah said it would
 - 2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah record how Cyrus, king of Persia, released the exiles to return to Judah to rebuild the temple
 - That group returned after 70 years of captivity
 - And in the centuries that followed, Israel enjoyed a measure of prosperity in their land

- However, the people of Israel did not see an end to Gentile oppression over them and the city of Jerusalem
 - The Age of the Gentiles continues, as the Lord predicted
 - Even though Israel returned to the land, they still endured Gentile resistance, even as they built the temple
 - And in later years, Persian kings still threatened Israel from time to time
 - After Persia, Alexander the Great conquered the city and Greek generals desecrated the temple
 - Later, Rome came to do the same
 - In other words, the end of exile didn't mean the end of the Age of the Gentiles, and that is an important difference
 - The Lord gave Daniel the big picture
 - While He gave Jeremiah the tactical view
 - Israel would be under Gentile authorities until the Messiah's return
 - But Judah's exile in Babylon would only constitute the first 70 years of the age
- But this distinction was lost on Daniel, so as he reads the account, he assumes that the end of exile is also the end of the entire period of the Age of the Gentiles
 - He sees the two periods as one and the same, and so Daniel believes it's time to put God's plan into action
 - Daniel begins to pray
 - His prayer on behalf of his people is recorded in vs.4-14
 - Many commentators assume that Daniel's prayer was prompted by what he read in Jeremiah's book
 - In Jeremiah 29:12-14, the Lord said that when Israel called upon Him in prayer, then He would listen and restore their fortunes
 - So perhaps Daniel is praying in obedience to that word, they assume

- But looking at Jeremiah's text, this doesn't make sense
 - Jeremiah says that *after* the people have returned to Jerusalem they will pray, not before
 - Jeremiah is referring to the moment the people pray at the temple ruins when Zerubbabel leads the exiles back to Jerusalem
 - Jeremiah's prayer is after the exiles have returned, it's not the prayer to prompt their release
- So if Daniel isn't prompted to pray because of Jeremiah's text, why does Daniel pray?
 - The answer comes when we look carefully at the content of his prayer
 - Beginning with part 1

Dan. 9:4 I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,

Dan. 9:5 we have sinned, committed iniquity, 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.

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

Dan. 9:8 "Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

Dan. 9:9 "To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him;

Dan. 9:10 nor have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets.

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

- First, notice in v.4 that Daniel said he prayed and confessed
 - That second word is important, because Jeremiah's book never indicated that a confession was required

- Yet, Daniel feels compelled to offer a confession here
- And in fact, as we examine his prayer, it's nothing but one long confession
- As we scan down the content of his confession, it becomes clear that Daniel is thinking of another place in Scripture
 - He's not thinking of Jeremiah's prayer
 - Daniel is thinking about a prayer requirement found in the Law of Moses given to Israel in the Old Covenant
- We can see this by noticing the major ideas found in his confession
 - First, in v.5, Daniel confesses on behalf of the entire nation
 - He says "we" have sinned, committed iniquity and acted wickedly
 - In fact, throughout the prayer, Daniel speaks as "we" on behalf of the entire nation
 - Daniel is attempting to offer a national prayer of confession
- Next, Daniel confesses that the people of Israel have broken the Covenant they entered into with the Lord at Sinai
 - He says in v.5 the nation has turned aside from the commandments and ordinances of the Law
 - And the nation didn't heed the warnings of the prophets sent to her
 - And in vs.7-10, Daniel contrasts the Lord's righteousness in keeping the Covenant with Israel's unfaithfulness
 - In particular, notice Daniel describes the way the Lord drove Israel into the nations as a punishment for unfaithfulness
 - Daniel is using this as an example of the Lord's faithfulness to the Covenant
 - Because the Old Covenant stipulated that scattering would be one of the penalties Israel would face for failing to keep the Covenant
 - So even in the punishment given to Israel, the Lord is completely faithful to His Word, while Israel was completely faithless

- Then in v.11, Daniel says indeed, the people of Israel have transgressed the Law, turned aside and a “curse” has been poured out on us according to the oath found in the Law of Moses
 - This is our confirmation that Daniel isn’t praying because of Jeremiah’s text
 - Daniel is on to something much bigger
 - He believes Israel has reached the moment when the Old Covenant of Israel is about to be fulfilled
 - In the Old Covenant the Lord made with Israel, He told the nation to obey Him in everything He instructed them
 - Most of the Law is dedicated to explaining what the commandments and ordinances of God required
 - But in a couple of places within the Law, the Lord gives a summary of the expectations of the Covenant itself
 - One of those places is Leviticus 26
 - That summary begins this way

Lev. 26:2 ‘You shall keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am the Lord.

Lev. 26:3 ‘If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out,

Lev. 26:4 then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit.

- The Lord says to the people of Israel that if they do as He instructed, they would see many blessings as a nation
 - The Old Covenant is a national covenant
 - It was not made between an individual and God, but between a nation of people and God
 - So whatever comes of the Covenant, it will affect the entire nation for better or worse
 - So the Lord says that if the entire nation obeys the Covenant, the entire nation will see many blessings
 - From v.2 to v.13, the Lord lists the ways in which He is prepared to bless the nation for their obedience under the Covenant

- But then, the chapter changes tone dramatically

[Lev. 26:14](#) 'But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments,
[Lev. 26:15](#) if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant,
[Lev. 26:16](#) I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up.

- The Lord says, starting in v.14, that if the nation failed to keep the Covenant, they would receive many curses, He calls them
 - And then from v.14 to v.39, the Lord lists calamity after calamity that will befall Israel for their disobedience
 - This list is a dramatic and scary accounting of the wrath of God against sin
 - The nation will bear great tragedy because of their inability to keep the Law of God perfectly
 - As Daniel sat reading Jeremiah, he reflects on the many calamities Israel has experienced over the past 70 years
 - And then, he remembers the list of calamities listed in Leviticus 26
 - So he concludes that this period of exile is the promised time of curses for failing to keep the Covenant
 - And in particular, Daniel draws a connection between one passage in Leviticus 26 and Jeremiah's promise to return Israel to their land after 70 years

[Lev. 26:31](#) 'I will lay waste your cities as well and will make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will not smell your soothing aromas.

[Lev. 26:32](#) 'I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled over it.

[Lev. 26:33](#) 'You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste.

[Lev. 26:34](#) 'Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths.

[Lev. 26:35](#) 'All the days of its desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it.

- Israel was supposed to leave their farm land fallow every seventh year
 - To prepare the people for that year, the Lord would provide a double harvest on the sixth year to carry the people through the seventh year
 - Instead of obeying this commandment, sinful Israel decided to farm on the seventh year anyway
 - This way, they gained a double portion on the sixth year AND gained an additional harvest on the seventh year
 - The Lord allowed this sin to continue for nearly 500 years, so that eventually, the nation “owed” God 70 Sabbath years
 - So in Leviticus, the Lord foretold that He would force the nation to leave their land for that time to recover those lost Sabbaths
 - Jeremiah said the 70 years Israel has spent in Babylon has been that payback
 - So naturally, Daniel concludes that Jeremiah is also calling for the end of the period of curses in Leviticus 26
- We can see that conclusion in what Daniel says next:

Dan. 9:12 “Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem.

Dan. 9:13 “As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth.

Dan. 9:14 “Therefore the Lord has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the Lord our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice.

- Daniel says the Lord has been doing exactly what He said He would do in the Law
 - He has brought calamities for the nation’s failure to keep the Law
 - The nation was scattered, as God proclaimed
 - He has set them outside the land for seventy years because they didn’t observe the Land Sabbaths
 - And now, the Lord is prepared to return the people to their land as promised

- All this is true, but then Daniel takes a step too far in his interpretation of events
 - He begins to assume that all the calamities spoken in Leviticus 26 have been fulfilled during Israel's time in Babylon
 - Daniel believes that when the nation returns from exile, it will bring an end to the curses of Leviticus 26
- Why is this important? Because according to Leviticus 26, the end of the curses will come in conjunction with Israel receiving the promises given to Abraham

Lev. 26:40 'If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me –

Lev. 26:41 I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies – or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity,

Lev. 26:42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land.

- Moses told Israel that if the people of Israel recognized their sins under the Old Covenant and confessed their sins, they could be restored
 - But notice the form the confession must take
 - First, Israel must confess both their own sin and the sin of their forefathers
 - Obviously, this is not a confession of faith, since confessions of faith don't depend on confessing our forefathers' sin
- This is a specific repudiation of Israel's violations of the Old Covenant
 - Leviticus 26 says they must confess their unfaithfulness
 - He means their unfaithfulness to the terms of the Old Covenant
- But more importantly, Israel must confess they acted in hostility toward God
 - This is a confession that Israel's forefathers crucified their Messiah
 - So the confession prayer of Leviticus is a prayer for all Israel to recognize that Jesus is Messiah

- Finally, Moses says that if Israel prays this specific confession, then the Lord will remember the Abrahamic Covenant
 - By “remember”, God doesn’t mean He forgot
 - To remember means to enact or fulfill something
 - So the Lord is saying He will bring to fulfillment the Abrahamic Covenant
 - The Abrahamic Covenant promised Abraham’s descendants a Kingdom, where they dwell with God in eternal peace and security
 - In other words, the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant is the arrival of the Messianic Kingdom at Christ’s Second Coming
 - So let’s review what’s going through Daniel’s mind right now
 - He just learned from Jeremiah that Israel is scheduled to return to the land after 70 years of exile and captivity
 - Those 70 years have now come to pass, so Daniel realizes that the end of Israel’s exile has come
 - Furthermore, Daniel remembers how the Old Covenant promised a period of exile and captivity for Israel violating the Old Covenant
 - So as he learns that the exile is about to end, Daniel assumes Israel is also approaching the end of all the Old Covenant curses
 - Which means the Kingdom was about to arrive
 - Furthermore, Daniel knows from his own visions that the arrival of the Kingdom puts an end to the Age of the Gentiles
 - So putting all this together, Daniel sees an opportunity to bring to an end Israel’s exile and the end of the Age of the Gentiles
 - And to usher in the arrival of the Kingdom
- Therefore, with that mindset, Daniel has launched into this confessional prayer on behalf of his people
 - He is praying the confession required in Leviticus 26, not the prayer described by Jeremiah

- We can see his thinking reflected in the final words of his prayer

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

Dan. 9:16 “O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those around us.

Dan. 9:17 “So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary.

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; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion.

Dan. 9:19 “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.”

- First, notice Daniel is thinking back to the days of the Exodus
 - Those were the days when the Old Covenant was inaugurated
 - Daniel is thinking of that time as he declares his people’s guilt and the Lord’s righteousness in bringing judgment
 - And then he asks that the Lord turn His wrath away from Jerusalem
 - Remember, the Age of the Gentiles is a period of judgment both on the people of Israel, and specifically, their holy city of Jerusalem
 - So Daniel is asking the Lord to bring the Age of the Gentiles to an end at this moment
 - Daniel repeats this plea eloquently in vs.17-19
 - And all the way through to the end, he’s asking for the judgment against the city of Jerusalem and the temple to be lifted
 - That’s a judgment unique to the Age of the Gentiles, which confirms Daniel’s thinking
- But there’s a problem with Daniel’s interpretation of these passages
 - He assumed wrongly that these two periods of judgment are one and the same

- He's assumed that the Age of the Gentiles is only 70 years long
- And He's assumed that Jeremiah's prophecy of the end of Israel's exile in Babylon is also the end of the curses promised in Leviticus 26
- And he's assuming that his confession on behalf of the people of Israel is the confession Moses described in Leviticus 26
- And he assumed that praying that confessional prayer would lead to the arrival of Israel's promised Messiah and Kingdom
- Unfortunately for Daniel, none of these assumptions are correct
 - His confession is not the one Moses described
 - That confession awaits a day in Israel's future
 - And the Kingdom was not about to arrive
 - And the Age of the Gentiles, which must take place prior to the Kingdom, will be much longer than 70 years
- Because Daniel has been assigned the mission of explaining these things to Israel, the Lord cannot afford for His prophet to remain confused
 - So the Lord intervenes in an unique way to offer Daniel a correction

Dan. 9:20 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,

Dan. 9:21 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.

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

Dan. 9:23 "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.

- As Daniel is praying this prayer, no less than the archangel Gabriel is dispatched to instruct Daniel
 - Notice Daniel says he was praying and confessing the sin of both himself and that of his people

- Once again, that phrase confirms that Daniel was seeking to fulfill the prayer of Leviticus 26
- His goal is admirable, but his timing is way off
- He also gets an “A” for effort, since he was up late into the night praying until he was extremely weary
- That’s quite a testimony to this man’s faith, that even in his late years, he is still dedicated to praying to the brink of exhaustion
- So Daniel says that as he is praying in this way, a “man” Gabriel appears
 - This is the same man who appeared to Daniel in his visions in Chapter 8
 - In Chapter 8, Daniel had visions or dreams of this man, who we know was actually an angel
 - But now Daniel sees him in person, not in a vision or dream
- It makes sense that the Lord would send Gabriel to Daniel, because Daniel would recognize him from his vision
 - Since Gabriel had been in Daniel’s earlier dream, Daniel would know he was a supernaturally sent messenger
 - Daniel wouldn’t have reason to doubt Gabriel’s word
- So when God needs to send an archangel to correct a person’s understanding of Scripture, does it mean the person is really important or just really wrong?
 - I think it’s both in this case
 - In v.22, we’re told Gabriel gave Daniel instruction so that Daniel would have insight with understanding
 - The word “insight” could also be translated “wisdom”
 - So in this context, “wisdom” or “insight” refers to the knowledge God reveals to men
 - While “understanding” refers to comprehension of that revelation
 - So Daniel’s understanding was lacking in two ways
 - First, he lacked details of God’s plans

- Daniel only had some of the facts, so he needed more data to have the full picture of what God was planning
- And secondly, even the things Daniel did know from reading Moses or Jeremiah he had misunderstood it
- Daniel needed someone to explain the meaning of those texts in a proper way
- Finally, it's worth noting that v.23 says the Lord sent Gabriel expressly to ensure Daniel gets this right
 - Not everyone is a prophet authoring Scripture, obviously
 - So perhaps you assume God only sends supernatural teachers to someone special like Daniel
 - But you would be wrong, for while Daniel received an angelic visitor a few times in his life, a believer has the Spirit of God Himself with us everyday
 - And as Jesus said, our Teacher will explain all things to us
 - We have a superior teacher, even to the one Daniel received
- So now we come to the heart of the chapter, the main message of Daniel 9
 - Daniel receives a correct interpretation of the length of time of the Age of the Gentiles

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

Dan. 9:25 "So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

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 sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

Dan. 9:27 "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain of 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."

- It's been said that there is no single prophetic utterance in all the Bible more crucial in the fields of Biblical interpretation, apologetics and eschatology than this passage
 - It's no exaggeration to claim this passage holds the key to understanding the entire sweep of Israel's prophetic history
 - And yet it's written in a particularly difficult style, making interpretation tricky
 - I've found it easiest to understand when accompanied by a visual aid I will make available online with the study
 - The explanation begins in v.24, as Gabriel corrects Daniel's misunderstanding
 - What did Daniel misunderstand again?
 - He thought the Age of the Gentiles was to last just 70 years
 - Which meant that the Kingdom would come immediately afterward
- So Gabriel begins by telling Daniel that the Age of the Gentiles will last not 70 years, but seventy "weeks"
 - In v.24, he says seventy weeks of judgment have been decreed (by God) for Israel in order to accomplish six things
 - First, to finish "the" transgression
 - Note this is a singular transgression...this isn't all sin, but one particular sin of Israel
 - That sin is the rejection of the Messiah
 - So the Age of the Gentiles will result in all Israel accepting their Messiah
 - Secondly, to put an end to sin in general
 - The Age will bring Israel to a point of sinlessness
 - This will require that Israel will be living in glorified, resurrected bodies
 - Third, this age will serve as Israel's atonement for their sin under the Old Covenant

- That's what Leviticus explained to Israel in advance
- Their failure to keep the Old Covenant would result in a period of curses, and the Age of the Gentiles is that period
- Fourth, the age will bring in everlasting righteousness
 - That's a clear reference to the Kingdom
 - And this agrees with Daniel 2 and 7, where we learned that the end of the age leads to the arrival of the Kingdom
- Fifth, to seal up vision and prophecy
 - This means the ending of such things
 - Presumably, they are put away because they are no long needed, since all things are known
- And sixth, a new temple is anointed in Jerusalem
 - This temple will be the Millennial Kingdom temple
 - The anointing is the presence of Christ Himself living in Jerusalem
- All these things will be accomplished by the conclusion of the Age of the Gentiles
 - Moreover, the events of this age will be used by God to bring about these outcomes
 - Obviously, all these outcomes are good for Israel, so Israel will be blessed by this age in the end
 - But in the meantime, it will be a period of suffering for Israel
 - God will use Israel's enemies to discipline His people, leading to good things for them
 - And how long will Israel have to wait for these things to come to pass?
 - Gabriel said seventy weeks, but this doesn't make sense
 - By the time Daniel received this revelation, the Age of the Gentiles had been ongoing for much longer than 490 days
 - But a closer examination of the Hebrew word translated "weeks" clears up the confusion

- The word in Hebrew for “weeks” is *shavat*, which is literally translated “seven”
 - So Gabriel literally said seventy “sevens” have been decreed for Israel
 - So we need to figure out what seven sevens stands for...is it seventy of (*i.e.*, 70x) seven days, seven months, or seven years?
- Traditionally, Israel only uses the word *shavat* to refer to a group of seven days or seven years
 - So we’re talking about 70 x 7 days or 70 x 7 years
 - Clearly, the length of the Age of Gentiles can’t be just 70 x 7 days, since that’s barely 18 months
 - The age lasts much longer than 18 months, which leaves us to conclude that Gabriel is speaking of 70 x 7 years
 - Plus, we just read that Daniel assumed this period was only 70 years, to which the angel has said no, it’s 70 x 7
- So the angel is telling Daniel that the Age of the Gentiles is a period of 70 x 7 years, or 490 years
 - We know that period began with Nebuchadnezzar conquering the city of Jerusalem in 605 BC
 - So all that is needed is to count forward 490 years and we arrive at Christ’s Second Coming and the start of the Kingdom, right?
 - Well, not exactly, because Gabriel gives more details that complicate our interpretation considerably
 - In v.25, Gabriel begins to count out the 490 in several increments
 - And as he does this, he gives historical markers, like distance markers along a highway, that act as anchors in time
 - These anchors help us track the passing of these 490 years
 - But following what he says will require careful observation of the text
- First, we know that the Age of the Gentiles begins at 605 BC, for that was given to us in Daniel 2 and 7

- Jeremiah tells us that the first 70 years of that period are payback for the lost Sabbaths in the land
 - After those 70 years, Israel would be permitted to return to their land
 - Daniel did the math while reading Jeremiah and recognized he was at that point and the return was imminent
 - Cyrus was about to issue a decree to allow Israel to return to the land and rebuild the temple that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed
- Only now, Daniel is learning that a new prophetic clock has started
 - Following the 70 years of exile, there would be another 490 years of judgement for Israel
 - That period begins, Gabriel says, with Cyrus' decree
 - We find that decree described in 2 Chronicles

2 Chr. 36:22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia – in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah – the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, **2 Chr. 36:23** “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up!’”

- So Gabriel says that when Cyrus issues this decree, we start the clock on 490 years
 - But then, Gabriel begins to cut up the period of 490 into segments
 - And in typical Hebrew form, the sections are intertwined
- Specifically, in v.25, Gabriel lists three events (or time markers) and two spans of time measured in periods of sevens
 - The first event is the decree to rebuild the temple
 - The second event is the cutting off of the Messiah
 - The third event is the completion of the temple
 - The two spans of time are seven sevens and 62 sevens

- Logically, the two spans of time must separate the three events
 - And from history, we know how to assemble this puzzle
 - From the books of Ezra and Nehemiah we know that Israel took 49 years to complete the temple construction, including the city walls
 - So between the decree of Cyrus and the completion of the walls and pit surrounding the city, were “seven sevens”, or 49 years
 - Furthermore, Gabriel adds in v.26 that the Messiah is “cut off” after the 62 weeks
 - The term “to cut off” in Hebrew is a euphemism for “to die”
 - Therefore, the time from the completion of the walls until the death of Jesus Christ will be 62 sevens or 483 years
 - We know the 49 year period agrees with history, but what about the 483 year period? Is it correct?
 - First, can we date the year of Jesus’ death?
 - Based on an analysis of the Gospels and astronomical records, we can determine that Jesus was born between 6-5 BC and died in April AD 27
 - For more, see [How do we count the seventy “weeks” of Daniel 9 in history?](#)
 - If we count backward by 483 years, we arrive at 456 BC
- We learned in 2 Chronicles that the decree issued by Cyrus came in his first year of ruling
 - But the calendar adopted by historians reports Cyrus’ first year of rule following his conquering of Babylon was 538 BC
 - So the common calendar places an additional 82 years between Cyrus and Jesus’ death in 27 AD
 - So is the Bible wrong?
 - Well, before we answer that question, we need to ask where historians got the date for Cyrus’ rule

- Our calendar for ancient rulers is largely based on a timeline called Ptolemy's Canon
- Ptolemy was an ancient Greek astrologer who developed a timeline of ancient rulers based on his analysis of astronomical references
- Since his canon is the only scientific assessment of ancient events, it has served as the authority for all ancient dating
- So is the Bible wrong? Or perhaps is Ptolemy wrong?
 - Simply put, there's no reason to accept Ptolemy's dating scheme above the Word of God
 - Dr. David Cooper made the following assessment of Ptolemy's accuracy as a historian:

Ptolemy (A.D. 70-161) was a great constructive genius. He was the author of the Ptolemaic System of Astronomy. He was one of the founders of the Science of Geography. But in Chronology he was only a late compiler and contriver, not an original witness, and not a contemporary historian, for he lived in the 2nd Century after Christ. He is the only authority for the Chronology of this period. He is not corroborated. He is contradicted, both by the Persian National Traditions preserved in Firdusi, by the Jewish National Traditions preserved in the Sedar Olam, and by the writings of Josephus.

- As Cooper points out, the Ptolemy Canon of dates doesn't have much to commend it, except popular acceptance
 - It doesn't agree with Josephus or other Jewish historical records
 - And it doesn't agree with the Bible
 - So as a matter of faith, we hold that the Biblical record is correct and Ptolmey was wrong
 - But don't expect to see the Bible's dates reflected in the common historical record
 - Just as the world rejects the Bible's Creation account, while preferring Darwin's fable
 - Nevertheless, let's return to the angel's explanation
 - The angel tells Daniel that after the Messiah is cut off, the city of Jerusalem will be destroyed

- The destruction will come like a flood, which is the Bible's term for an army that overruns with great force
- And not only will the city be destroyed, but the temple will be desolated, he says at the end of v.26
- We know these events happened in AD 70, following Jesus' crucifixion
 - The city was overrun by the Romans
 - And the temple destroyed completely
 - But notice, the angel does not associate this event with a period of sevens
 - The destruction of the city is not intended to be a time marker
 - So why did the angel include it at all?
- The mention of Jerusalem's destruction is included for one reason: to give context for the final "seven" of the seventy sevens
 - Notice in v.26, the people who destroy the city are the "people of the prince who is to come"
 - The people are the Romans, who are the beginning of the fourth kingdom from Daniel's statue and beasts
 - These people, the fourth kingdom people, will one day produce a "prince"
 - And that prince is the key actor in v.27
 - This prince will be of the fourth kingdom
 - This isn't a prince from an earlier kingdom like Persia or Greece
 - The events of v.27 are associated with the final "beast" only
 - And who is this prince?
 - He is the same man we studied earlier in Chapter 8
 - He's the antichrist, the final ruler of the fourth kingdom
 - We come to this understanding principally by returning to our time markers

- Notice that in our count so far, we have already accumulated 483 of the 490 years
 - At the point of Jesus' death, the people of Israel have endured all but the final seven years of the Age of the Gentiles
 - Yet here we are today, still in the Age of Gentiles, for Jesus has not returned yet and the Kingdom has not come
 - Yet it's been 2,000 years since Jesus died
 - So how can the 490 years of the Age of the Gentiles still be incomplete?
 - Take a look at the time markers Gabriel gave us
 - There were 49 years between Cyrus and the walls completed
 - There were 434 years between the walls completed and the death of Jesus
 - We're still missing one seven-year period in the count of 490
 - When that final seven-year period has run out, then Jesus will return and the Kingdom will come to earth
 - We find that final seven in v.27, when Gabriel says that a covenant will be made for a "week", or for seven years
 - We have the time marker to start that final seven-year period
 - But notice, there is no connection between that event and the death of Jesus
 - Those final seven years are literally floating apart from the rest of the timeline
 - That separation tells us that there is a gap in the timeline
- The final seven years of the 490 is still waiting to complete, but ever since Jesus' death, God has suspended the countdown
 - The clock is on pause while the world waits for the prince to make a covenant
 - At the start of the covenant, the clock will begin to run again
 - And the final seven years will run

- That period will lead us to the arrival of Jesus and the inauguration of the Kingdom on earth, as Daniel foretold earlier
- So what is this covenant and who are the “many” who make the covenant?
 - Gabriel doesn’t explain the covenant, but he does give us a very big clue
 - Whatever the covenant will be, it permits “sacrifice and grain offering”
 - We know this because Gabriel says the prince will make a covenant, but then at a later point, he will put a stop to these things
- Therefore, the natural conclusion is that the covenant permitted the “many” to perform sacrifice and grain offering
 - But then at the midpoint of the seven years, he will violate the covenant, ending the practices
 - This tells us enough that we can deduce the rest of details
- If we’re talking about sacrifice and grain offering, then we must be talking about the Jewish temple where these things take place
 - And if the covenant permits these things to take place, then the many must be Jewish people who desire the right to sacrifice
 - They are the “many” because apparently, some of the Jewish people will not desire to participate in this covenant
- Putting all this together with what we learned earlier in Chapter 8, the prince is the antichrist, the man who comes to rule the world in the last days of the age
 - Remember, we said he comes to power at the midpoint of a seven-year period called the Tribulation
 - That seven-year period corresponds to the seven-year period in this prophecy
 - And now we know that seven years will begin when this man brokers a covenant to permit Israel to return to their temple mount
 - Today, that mount is controlled by the Arabs of Jordan

- So it will require a powerful world leader to negotiate an opportunity for Israel to sacrifice again
- Then at the midpoint of Tribulation (after a time, times and half a time or 42 months), the antichrist will suspend the sacrifices
 - We learned last time that at this point in the seven-year period, the antichrist is killed
 - Yet he is resurrected by the power of Satan, at which point, he will assume control of the entire world government
 - Paul said the antichrist will also seat himself in the Jewish temple calling himself god and demanding the world's worship
- Gabriel confirms this event in v.27, saying the prince will commit an abomination on the wing
 - The word "wing" is a Jewish euphemism that refers to the highest point of the temple
 - So the wing of abomination refers to an abomination over or above the temple itself
 - This describes the antichrist indwelt by Satan himself entering God's temple and declaring himself to be god
- This desolation of the temple is the same one Jesus spoke about in Matthew 24

[Matt. 24:15](#) "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), [Matt. 24:16](#) then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.

[Matt. 24:21](#) "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.

- Jewish believers in the city are told to flee at this point because a great tribulation will break out during the final three and a half years
 - But we know that as that final period ends, then the Age of the Gentiles will be complete
 - The judgment against Israel will have come to an end
 - Then the Lord will return and defeat the antichrist

- Gabriel ends, saying a complete destruction will come upon the one who desolated the temple
 - The death of the antichrist is the final act of this age
 - And with it, Gentile rule over Israel will finally be over after 70 years of exile plus another 490 years of judgment
 - Plus an even longer period of time while the countdown is paused
- So the final thought for the night is why did the Lord pause the clock on the Age of the Gentiles
 - Israel is never told of the pause explicitly
 - But we saw it inferred in Gabriel's explanation to Daniel
 - The final seven years of the 490 wasn't connected the earlier timeline
 - So that made possible a gap of time
 - Nevertheless, the Jewish people didn't see that gap clearly and never understood it was planned
 - And that's because the gap wasn't intended for Israel
 - It's a gap made necessary by God's promises to Abraham concerning other nations

**Gen. 12:3 And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."**

- The Lord promised to bless the entire world with the promises He gave to Abraham's descendants
 - The Church is the vehicle the Lord is using to reach all nations
 - And the Lord needed time in His plan to fulfill this promise
 - So He suspends the clock for 2,000+ years to make room for the Church to receive the New Covenant
- In a day to come, the gap made necessary for the Church will close and the Lord will return to counting down His judgment for Israel

- Those final seven years is a period promised to Israel of the future
- But it will not come upon the Church, for we are not destined for that wrath
- So with that, Daniel receives his correction from the angel
 - He now knows that Israel's time in exile may be coming to an end
 - But her time under judgment in the Age of the Gentiles is just beginning
 - And it won't end until numerous Gentile kingdoms have risen and fallen
 - And until the antichrist has ruled the entire earth