

# Exegetical Analysis — Daniel 9:24-27

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Before we begin jumping into one of the most important prophetic texts in scripture, we need to look at the context. It is important to backtrack to the context of the chapter. From (vs.1-19) we see Daniel's prayer approx. 14 years after his previous vision (chapter 8). It was clear that Daniel had been reading Jeremiah during this time and was convicted regarding the time period of captivity that Israel faced. The 70-years of captivity was his focus in (vs.2). Daniel began his prayer to the Lord God and pleaded with him. Daniel saw that in Jeremiah there was a focus upon the announcement of restoration (Jer. 25:11-12).

*Jeremiah 25:11-12 NASB*

*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.*

At the close of the 70-year captivity the Lord was going to judge Babylon and make it desolate. Daniel is encouraged by what he reads in Jeremiah and so he begins to pray. Daniel's prayer here should be a model for all of us when we seek the Lord. Daniel confesses on behalf of his people that they have sinned and abandoned the way of the Lord (vs.5-6). He then pleads that the Lord have mercy and compassion on Israel (vs. 7-19). Their rejection of God and the desolation that had been experienced was rightful, as Daniel points out. However, Daniel desires that the Lord once again show his glory.

David is still in the middle of praying and confessing his sin for Israel and for himself and Gabriel brings an answer to his prayer (vs.20-22). He has come to give Daniel insight and understanding and was issued to come to tell him this vision. We now move into 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.**

כִּדְשָׁבָעִים שְׁבָעִים נְחַתָּךְ עַל־עַמָּךְ וּעַל־עִיר קָרְשָׁךְ לְכָלָא הַפְּשָׁע וְלַקְבִּיהָ אֶזְקִיק

Gabriel tells Daniel that seventy weeks (שְׁבָעִים שְׁבָעִים) have been decreed (determined) for his people (Israel). Before we get too far, let's begin by unpacking the "seventy weeks" that Gabriel mentions at the beginning of (vs.24). In order to determine what the "seventy weeks" are we need to interpret this from the context and language that Daniel has been previously using.

The Hebrew word (shabua) means “a period of seven” (days/years). These “seventy weeks” refer to “units of seven years and thus Daniel is speaking of seventy of these units of seven years or a total of 490 years”.<sup>1</sup> To validate the conclusion that these are seventy units of seven or 490 years we turn to the following arguments from H. Hoehner:<sup>2</sup>

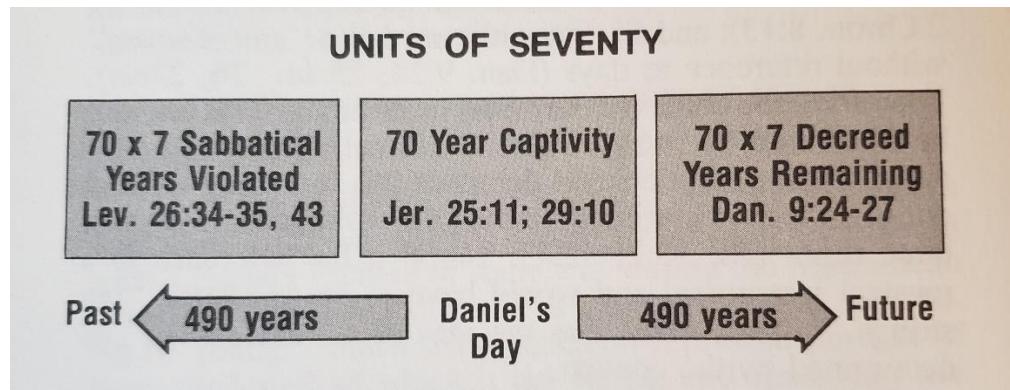
1. Daniel 9:1-2 proves that Daniel has been thinking in terms of years as well as multiple values (i.e. “in the first year” (vs.1), “in the first year” (vs.2), “number of the years” (vs.2), “seventy years” (vs.2)). It makes sense that Daniel is thinking in the “day/year” model when he communicates the “period of seventy weeks”.

*Daniel 9:1-2 NASB*

*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.*

2. Daniel has been reading Jeremiah 25:11 and 29:10 which speaks of 70 years of captivity. This 70-year captivity was based upon a direct violation of the sabbatical year. We can see the units of seventy if we look back 490 years to the  $70 \times 7$  years (Lev. 26:34-35, 43).

Image: Taken from *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*:<sup>3</sup>



3. If we look to the other usages made by Daniel of the units of seventy, we can see that there is consistency in Daniel 10:2, 3. The phrase used is “units of seven days” or “twenty-one days”. Daniel could not have fasted for 21 years (twenty-one days). So, the word “day” must be understood appropriately here. This further adds to the evidence that Daniel is using “years” not “490 days” when he speaks in Daniel 9:24-27.

<sup>1</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, 117.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 117-119. H. Hoehner establishes in his book the 490 years principle based upon 6 convincing arguments. I will leverage these same arguments in my exegesis, by condensing them down into a more readable format in my own words.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 118.

4. It is impossible to fit all the events outlined in Daniel 9:24-27 into the 490 days. Ergo, we must understand the seventy weeks as (490 years).

5. The units of time in relation to Daniel 9:27 is important. Clearly, Daniel is thinking in units of years here. He sees that a covenant will be confirmed for 1 unit (7 years) and then broken in the middle of this singular unit (3.5 years). The halved unit of 3.5 years is spoken of consistently in Daniel and in John's Revelation. These 3.5 "years" are understood as "time, times, and half a time".

6. The Mishnah also uses this format in years.

Based upon these 6 arguments it is reasonable to conclude that Daniel is thinking in terms of 490 **years** and not 490 **days**. There is scholarly consensus that this is in fact true:

Alva McClain writes:

"Turning now to the simple facts concerning these "weeks" in Daniel, we shall find no necessity for tampering with the exact language of the text. The Hebrew word is shabua, which means literally a "seven," and it would be well to read the passage thus, dropping for a moment the word "week" which to the English ear always means a week of days. Thus the twenty fourth verse of Daniel's ninth chapter simply asserts that "seventy sevens are determined" (cf. Stuart's translation), and what these "sevens" are must be determined from the context and from other Scriptures. The evidence is quite clear and sufficient, as follows: Most important is the fact that in their divinely inspired calendar, the Jews had a "seven" of years as well as a "seven" of days. And this Biblical "week" of years was just as familiar to the Jew as the "week" of days. It was, in certain respects, even more important. Six years the Jew was free to till and sow his land, but the seventh year was to be a solemn "Sabbath of rest unto the land" (Lev. 25:3-4). Upon a multiple of this important week of years--"seven Sabbaths of years"--there was based the great jubilee of social and economic adjustment every fiftieth year, when debts were wiped out, estates returned to the original holders, and slaves went free (Lev. 25:8-9). Nothing could be so important to the Jew as this week of years. Now there are several reasons for believing that the "Seventy Sevens" of Daniel's prophecy refer to this well-known "seven" of years. In the first place, the prophet Daniel had been thinking not only in terms of years rather than days, but also in a definite multiple of "sevens" (10 x 7) of years (Dan. 9:1-2). Second, Daniel also knew that the very length of the Babylonian captivity had been based on Jewish violations of the divine law of the Sabbath year. Since according to II Chron. 36:21 the Jews had been removed from off the land in order that it might rest for seventy years, it should be evident that the Sabbath year had been violated for 490 years, or exactly seventy "sevens" of years. How appropriate, therefore, that now at the end of the judgment for these violations the angel should be sent to reveal the start of a new era of God's dealing with the Jew which would extend for the same number of years covered by his violations of the Sabbath year, namely, a cycle of 490 years, or "Seventy Sevens" of years (Dan. 9:24). Furthermore, the whole context of the prophecy demands that the "Seventy Sevens" be understood in terms of years. For if we make them "sevens" of days, the entire period would extend for merely 490 days or a little over one year. Considering now that within this brief

space of time the city is to be rebuilt and once more destroyed (to say nothing of the tremendous events of verse 24), it becomes clear that such an interpretation is altogether improbable and untenable. Finally, there is a remarkable and convincing argument based on the usage of the Hebrew word, curiously overlooked by many of the commentators. Outside of the prophecy of the "Seventy Weeks," the Hebrew word shabua is found only in one other passage of the book (10:2-3), where the prophet states that he mourned and fasted "three full weeks." Now, here it is perfectly obvious that the context demands "weeks" of days, for Daniel would hardly have fasted twenty-one years! And significantly, the Hebrew here reads literally "three sevens of days." Now, if in the ninth chapter, the writer intended us to understand that the "Seventy Sevens" are composed of days, why did he not use the same form of expression adopted in chapter ten? The quite obvious answer is that Daniel used the Hebrew shabua alone when referring to the well-known "week" of years, a customary usage which every Jew would understand; but in chapter ten, when he speaks of the "three weeks" of fasting, he definitely specifies them as "weeks of days" in order to distinguish them from the "weeks" of years in chapter nine. And if the "weeks" of chapter nine were composed of days, there would have been no possible reason for changing the Hebrew form in chapter ten. Therefore, by every fair and sensible rule of interpretation, the "Seventy Sevens" must be understood as years, not days which we must surreptitiously change into years to make the prophecy come out right."<sup>4</sup>

Mark Hitchcock concurs:

"The term "week," or "sets of seven," refers to sets of seven. It could refer to sets of days, weeks, months, or years. The context determines its meaning. We know in the context of Daniel 9:24-27 (NASB) that this refers to sets of years because Daniel had already been thinking in terms of years in Daniel 9:1-2."<sup>5</sup>

As does Gleason L. Archer:

"This verse [vs.24] sets forth the approach of "seventy 'sevens'" of years during which God would accomplish his plan of nation and spiritual redemption for Israel. The seventy "weeks" or "heptads" ... are 490 years (divided, as we shall see, into three sections)."<sup>6</sup>

As does Renald E. Showers:

"Seventy sevens is the same as 70 times seven or 490. God has decreed 490 units of time. But how much time would be involved in these 490 units? Did God decree 490 years, 490 days, 490 weeks, or 490 months? It had to be 490 years, for that is the only length of time that would work historically."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Alva McClain, *The First Sixty-Nine Weeks and the Coming of the Messianic Prince*, 2-4.

<sup>5</sup> Mark Hitchcock, *The End: A Complete Overview of Bible Prophecy and the End of Days*, (Carol Stream, Ill., Tyndale House Publishers, 2012), 67.

<sup>6</sup> Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *Daniel in the Expositors Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, 112. [Brackets added by me].

<sup>7</sup> Renald Showers, *The Most High God: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 120.

As does Brock Hollett:

“These seventy “weeks” are almost universally understood to mean seventy groupings of seven years (70 x 7 years = 490 years; cf. Gen. 29:27-28).”<sup>8</sup>

And finally, James A. Borland:

“Seventy weeks meant, literally, seventy units of seven, or seventy times seven. Almost all expositors, ancient and modern, have seen this as signifying seventy units, each composed of seven years, making a total of 490 years.”<sup>9</sup>

Now that we have established that the **70 weeks of years is 490 years** lets move further into the Israel’s prophetic destiny.

In order to properly understand Israel’s prophetic destiny, we must understand each of these points below in relation to Israel. If we remove Israel from the picture of Daniel’s 70 weeks, we lose sight of the point of the text, and we lose sight of the purpose of Daniel’s prayer, which was (as previously stated) in connection to Israel’s national sin.

**P1. "to finish the transgression"** [אָלֹת עַשְׁפָה] — This means to shut up, restrain, or withhold the transgression. “The transgression” [עַשְׁפָה] means to “rebel” or be in “rebellion to”. Here in the context of the passage Israel is in rebellion to God and will remain in rebellion until the 490 years has finished.<sup>10</sup> This sin of rebellion has been consistently pointed by the various prophets from the beginning (Lev 26:40-42; Jer. 3:11-18; Hos. 5:15) and this is why Gabriel points towards “their” sin as a national entity “for your people and your holy city” (vs.24). The question that must be asked is *when* will the transgression be finished? Gleason L. Archer tells us:

“This seems to require nothing less than the inauguration of the kingdom of God on earth. Certainly the crucifixion of Christ in A.D. 30 did not put an end to man’s iniquity or rebellion on earth, as the millennial kingdom of Christ promises to do.”<sup>11</sup>

Walvoord agrees:

“The accomplishment defined as “the finished transgression” most probably refers to Israel’s tendency to apostasy which must be brought to a close as Israel is brought to restoration and spiritual revival at the time of the second coming.”<sup>12</sup>

**P2. "to make an end of sin"** [מִתְּנִלְוָה וְנִאֲפָה] — This means to place a seal or close up sin. This

<sup>8</sup> Brock Hollett, *Debunking Preterism: How Over-Realized Eschatology Misses the Not Yet of Bible Prophecy*, Kindle, (Morris Publishing, 2018), Location 628.

<sup>9</sup> James A. Borland, *Daniel in the King James Version Bible Commentary*, 973.

<sup>10</sup> Renald Showers says: “This rebellion was the root sin which prompted all of Israel’s other sins. Gabriel was saying that Israel would not stop its rebellion against God’s rule until these 490 years would run their course.” Renald Showers, *The Most High God: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 121.

<sup>11</sup> Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *Daniel in the Expositors Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, 112.

<sup>12</sup> John F. Walvoord, *Every Prophecy of the Bible: Clear Explanations for Uncertain Times*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2011), 243.

ending of sin will occur when the Israelites are given a new heart (Ez. 36:24-32). This will occur after the second coming of Christ and during the installation of the Millennium.

“Thus, in both the verbal and nominal forms the idea of wrongdoing and that of atonement for sin blend. The context, therefore, is to determine which idea stands in the foreground. Since in the preceding phrase the thought of rebelling against God was mentioned, it is quite natural that this phrase should be a development of that thought. Hence, we take it in the primary literal meaning of sin and transgression. Again, since the transgression mentioned in the first phrase pointed out the national sin of the race, the second phrase seems to indicate sins in general--acts of wrongdoing, iniquities, and immoral conduct. The infinitive, "to seal up" or "to make an end of" sin, would seem to indicate that this statement is a prediction of the time when sinning shall cease in Israel. Since the cause of sin must be removed before the cure can be affected, this expression assumes that at the time here foreseen the nation will have turned to the Lord, and that by His Spirit a new heart and spirit will have been given to all the people.”<sup>13</sup>

**P3. "to make atonement for iniquity"** [שׁׁוֹן וְלִכְפָּר] — Israel will acknowledge her national sin and will call upon the name of the Lord and be saved (Mt. 23:39; Rom. 11:32).

“The phrase, "to make reconciliation for iniquity," doubtless is a clear reference to the time when all Israel in genuine penitence shall acknowledge her departure from God and her national sin. At the same time each individual, of course, will acknowledge his own wrongs and all will call upon God for pardon. Then that which was foreshadowed by the annual atonement will become a reality. At that time the nation will be brought back into fellowship with God and become a blessing in the earth.”<sup>14</sup>

**P4. "to bring in everlasting righteousness"** [עַלְמָיִם אָזֶק וְלִכְבִּיא] — After the 490 years are complete everlasting righteousness will be brought in. As Brown, Driver, Briggs note the Hebrew noun *holamim* means: “long duration, antiquity, futurity.”<sup>15</sup> This emphatically means that this is *eternal righteousness*, not a *temporal righteousness*.

“What is the significance of עַלְמָיִם? In the singular form it is constantly translated "forever." Frequently it indicates an age—an indefinite period of time unless there are specific facts in the context which show that it in a given case is to be limited. In the phrase under discussion it has the meaning of "ages." Hence the phrase "righteousness of the ages" signifies that there are rules or formulas of attitude and conduct that are right and will be reckoned as correct throughout all ages—past, present, and future. These criteria are, therefore, God's standards of ethics and morals.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> D.L. Cooper, *The Seventy Weeks of Daniel, Chapter II-Sixty-Nine Weeks of Years*, 33.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>15</sup> Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (London: Oxford, 1907), 762.

<sup>16</sup> D.L. Cooper, *The Seventy Weeks of Daniel, Chapter II-Sixty-Nine Weeks of Years*, 35.

“. . . in view a theodical “age of righteousness” (cf. Isa. 1:26; 11:2-5; 32:17; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-18) that resolves the theological scandal (note Dan. 9:15-16) of the former age characterized by “the rebellion” (i.e., Israel’s rejection of the Messiah). Therefore, this age will be vindication of God’s promise to national Israel (Ezek. 36:17-23) and a reversal of her condition and fortunes with respect to Messiah, hence a “messianic age” or the messianic kingdom.”<sup>17</sup>

**P5. "to seal up vision and prophecy"** [וְנִזְבְּאָה חִזּוּן וְלִתְמָם] — The sealing up of the vision and the prophecy relate to Daniel's predictions and the fulfillment of those predictions as well as *all* other predictions. There is a direct correlation to the sealing up of the vision and prophecy at the completion of the 490 years.

Cooper, Feinberg, MacRae, and Bultema all agree:

“The phrase, then “to seal up prophecy and vision” signifies that at the conclusion of this period of 490 years, God will have fully made known His will; hence, there will no longer be any necessity of further revelations.”<sup>18</sup>

“...refers to giving the seal of confirmation to Daniel and his vision by fulfilling his predictions. In Isaiah 8:16, this phrase meant that the prophecy was complete, and the command was given to bind it up, to roll it up like a scroll and seal it. Again, in Daniel 8:26 the thought was to seal up the prophecy and make a permanent record of it, so that when it is fulfilled the event can be compared to the prophecy to show how completely the one corresponds to the other.”<sup>19</sup>

“There is no Scriptural warrant for saying that the functions of the Old Testament vision and prophecy came to an end at the time of Christ’s first advent or that these terms do not also include visions and prophecies of the New Testament.”<sup>20</sup>

““Prophecy” does not refer to Christ here but to prophecy in general. The “vision” this verse speaks of is not a reference to this vision nor to any of the other visions Daniel received, but together with the word “prophecy” refers to all predictions. A scroll was not complete until it was completely filled. Thus, this sealing of a scroll became a symbol of fulfillment (Isa. 8:16). So also, here it indicates a complete fulfillment of all prophecy.”<sup>21</sup>

There is no reason to limit these events to Christ’s first coming.

**P6. "to anoint the most holy place"** [וְלִשְׁשֵׁת קֹדֶשׁ קָדָשִׁים] — This phrase is most likely referring to the “holy place” as referenced in Ezekiel 45:3, the coming future kingdom. It makes no sense

<sup>17</sup> J. Randall Price, *Prophetic Postponement in Daniel 9 and Other Texts*, in Wesley R. Willis, John R. Master, and Charles C. Ryrie, editors, *Issues in Dispensationalism* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 150.

<sup>18</sup> D.L. Cooper, *The Seventy Weeks of Daniel, Chapter II-Sixty-Nine Weeks of Years*, 35.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, *Daniel: The man and his visions* (Chappaqua, NY: Christian Herald Books, 1981), 128.

<sup>20</sup> Allan A. MacRae, *The Prophecies of Daniel* (Singapore: Christian Life Publishers, 1991), 188.

<sup>21</sup> Harry Bultema, *Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1988), 283.

that the anointing of the most holy place refers to a person (i.e. Christ).

“The final goal to be achieved at the end of the seventy weeks is the anointing of “the most holy” (qōdeš qādāšim). This is not likely a reference to the anointing of Christ (as some writers have suggested) because qōdeš qādāšim nowhere else in Scripture refers to a person. Here the anointing of the “most holy” most likely refers to the consecration of the temple of the Lord, quite conceivably the millennial temple, to which so much attention is given in Ezekiel 40-44.”<sup>22</sup>

*Ezekiel 45:3 NASB*

*From this area you shall measure a length of 25,000 cubits and a width of 10,000 cubits; and in it shall be the sanctuary, the **most holy place**.*

This sanctuary is the entire complex of the temple as Leon Woods points out:

“The phrase “holy of holies” (qodesh qadashim) occurs, either with or without the article, thirty-nine times in the Old Testament, always in reference to the Tabernacle or Temple or to the holy articles used in them. When referring to the most holy place, where the Ark was kept, the article is regularly used (e.g., Ex. 26:33), but it is not when referring to the holy articles (e.g., Ex. 29:37) or to the whole Temple complex (e.g., Ezek. 43:12). In view of these matters, it is highly likely that the phrase refers to the Temple also here, which, in view of the context, must be a future Temple; and, since the phrase is used without the article, reference must be to a complex of that Temple, rather than its most holy place.”<sup>23</sup>

We have now provided an exegetical analysis of Daniel 9:24 which will help us as we further our study in the next three verses. These events (i.e. the events of Daniel 9:24) have not elapsed in history for Israel and still require their consummation when the Lord comes back at the end of the 70 weeks (490 years).

“The seventy weeks have to do with the Jews. We cannot spiritualize the phrase ‘your people’ (v.24) into a spiritual Israel inclusive of the Gentiles without doing violence to the plain sense of the passage. For example, the destruction of Jerusalem, spoken of prominently in the prophecy, deals with Israel the nation. And yet, since in the seventy weeks the goals listed in verse twenty-four were to be accomplished, the seventy weeks cannot have entirely elapsed, for the finishing of Israel’s transgression, the purging of her iniquity, and the bringing in of her everlasting righteousness have not reached completion. Paul writes of these as still in the future for Israel (Rom. 11:25-27).”<sup>24</sup>

“The reason for our detailed discussion of the six goals of Dan 9:24 is that the *terminus ad quem* of the 70 weeks must first be established before the question of the 70th week can be properly handled. If all 6 goals were in fact attained by the crucifixion of Christ and the establishment of

<sup>22</sup> Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *Daniel in the Expositors Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, 113.

<sup>23</sup> Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 250.

<sup>24</sup> Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*, 189.

the early church seven years after his death, then it might be fair to assume that the entire 490 years of the 70 weeks were to be understood as running consecutively and coming to a close in A.D. 37. But since all or most of the six goals seem to be as yet unfulfilled, it follows that if the 70th week finds fulfillment at all, it must be identified as the last seven years before Christ's return to earth as millennial King.”<sup>25</sup>

“To view the six things in Daniel 9:24 ... as having been fulfilled in Christ's death at His first advent is impossible. All these have reference to the nation of Israel and none of these has been fulfilled to that nation.”<sup>26</sup>

**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.**

כהִנְמֶלֶע וּמִשְׁלֵל מִן-מִזְאָה דָּבָר לְהַשִּׁיב וּלְבָנֹת יְרוּשָׁלָם עַד-מִשְׁיחָה גָּלִיל שְׁבעִים וָשָׁנִים וְשָׁנִים קְשִׁיבָה וְבָנָתָה רְחֻוב וְחָרוֹז וּבָצָוק הַעֲמִים

Vs. 25 opens up with Gabriel telling Daniel to “know” [תֵּדַע] and “discern” [תִּמְשְׁלָל] the times and from the issuing of the decree. The immediate question that must be asked is “what decree”? There are many decree's during that time that one could chose from, but only one of the decrees fits together *all* the information properly. The decree *must* contain an order/command “to restore and rebuild Jerusalem” [ירושלם ולבנות להשיב] with a plaza and moat (i.e. the building of a wall, and defences for the city). Let's look at the possible decrees to narrow down which one Gabriel has in mind that we are to “know” and “discern”. Once we have established which decree is being spoken of we can return to the two time segments (7 weeks & 62 weeks) in this verse.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Possible Decree: Cyrus (537-539 B.C.)**

In evaluating the first decree we turn to Ezra 1:1-4:

*Ezra 1:1-4 NASB*

*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 all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying: [2] “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. [3] Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem.*

<sup>25</sup> Gleason L. Archer, *Daniel in The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Vol. 7), 113.

<sup>26</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 131.

*[4] Every survivor, at whatever place he may live, let the men of that place support him with silver and gold, with goods and cattle, together with a freewill offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.”*

Remember the requirement for the issue of the decree is the “rebuilding of the city...with a plaza and moat”. Nowhere within the text that we just quoted is there any sense that the “city” would be rebuilt with a plaza and moat. Cyrus’ focus was upon the rebuilding of the temple.

“This says nothing about the restoring and building of the city as such, though of course the rebuilding of the temple itself would imply the building up of a community of worshipers around it. It is most unlikely, then, that this decree can fulfill the specifications of v. 25.”<sup>27</sup>

“However, this edict clearly referred only to rebuilding the Temple and not only mentioned nothing of rebuilding the city, but also accomplished nothing in that regard.”<sup>28</sup>

“This is a decree of Cyrus that the Jews can go back to Judah and Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. This decree is from about 537 BC. There is no mention of building the city, and especially of rebuilding the wall, which is almost the definition of a city back then, so this is probably not what the prophecy is a reference to.”<sup>29</sup>

“First, Cyrus’ edict refers to the rebuilding of the temple and not to the city. Although it is granted there were inhabitants and a city was built in Cyrus’ time as predicted by Isaiah, certainly it was not a city that could defend itself as described in Daniel 9:25... Second, a distinction should be made between the rebuilding of a city and the restoration of a city to its former state... The commencement of the rebuilding began with Cyrus’ decree but the city’s complete restoration was not at that time. Third, if one accepts the seventy weeks as beginning with Cyrus’ decree, how does one reckon the 490 years?... the final week would be divided into two parts, the first half covering the life of Christ and going even until the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, a period of thirty-five to seventy years (about ten to twenty years for each week), and the second half of the seventieth week would have not terminus ad quem. . . it seems that this system makes havoc of Gabriel’s sayings, which were rather specific... In conclusion, then, it is most *unlikely* that Cyrus’ decree marks the *terminus a quo* of the seventy weeks described in Daniel.”<sup>30</sup>

“Three factors make this interpretation especially problematic. First, Cyrus’s decree was for the captives to return to the Holy Land from Persia, not for the restoration of Jerusalem. Second, Daniel understands Jeremiah’s prediction of the 70 years of captivity to be literal years and so calls into doubt treating these numbers symbolically. Third, there would be no significance to

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<sup>27</sup> Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *Daniel in the Expositors Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, 114.

<sup>28</sup> James A. Borland, *Daniel in the King James Version Bible Commentary*, 973.

<sup>29</sup> <https://evidenceforchristianity.org/when-was-the-decree-to-restore-and-rebuild-jerusalem-issued-daniel-925/>

<sup>30</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 122-124.

this prediction since any amount of time could be used to fulfill it.”<sup>31</sup>

“Cyrus. What was the nature of the order issued by him we have seen above. It was a command to build the temple, and was limited to that, and involved no reference to the city. The command, as we have seen above, did not extend to that, and there were probably good reasons why it was not contemplated that it should be rebuilt in its former strength, and fortified as it was before. The purpose to fortify the city, or to encompass it by a wall or ditch, or even to build it at all, could not have been brought within the order of Cyrus, as recorded in Ezra, and that is the only form of the order which we have. The language of Daniel, therefore, seems to have been chosen of design when he says that the command would be issued to rebuild the city, not the temple. At any rate, such is the language, and such was not the order of Cyrus.”<sup>32</sup>

Some have attempted to appeal to Isaiah 45:13 to support Cyrus’ decree and the rebuilding of the city yet this argument is also unconvincing:

“Isaiah 45:13 is probably the strongest passage supporting the concept that Cyrus’ decree may have included the rebuilding of the city, but the questions must be asked: What does “rebuild the city” mean, and when was the rebuilding to occur? At first this might appear to be an attempt to avoid the obvious; but it is very clear in Nehemiah 2:11-17 that the temple was built first and not the city of Jerusalem. Nehemiah 2:11-17 is important since it describes the city during the reign of King Artaxerxes who ruled after Cyrus (Nehemiah 2:1). In the passage we are told that the city is desolate and the walls are “broken down.” The Hebrew text in Nehemiah 2:13 states explicitly that the walls and gates were in utter ruin. Nehemiah 2:17 is also very significant since it states that Jerusalem is desolate and the gates were burned by fire. The Hebrew word for “is desolate” can also be translated as “to lay waste” or “to lay in ruins.” If Cyrus’ decree included rebuilding the city and the walls, why is the city in ruins during Artaxerxes’ reign? It is very possible that Isaiah 45:13 simply means that during the Persian rule the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt. Therefore, Cyrus’ decree is rejected.”<sup>33</sup>

Based upon the evidence indicated above, it seems to be quite a stretch to think that the decree that Gabriel was speaking of was indeed Cyrus’. Let us now move to the next decree Darius.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Possible Decree: Darius (519 B.C.)

The next possible decree (Darius) is quite simple to rule out if Cyrus’ decree was previously ruled out. Darius’ decree is also in relation to the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem. Let’s look at the passage:

*Ezra 6:1-12 NASB*

*Then King Darius issued a decree, and search was made in the archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon. [2] In Ecbatana in the fortress, which is in the province of Media, a*

<sup>31</sup> Michael Rydelnik, *Daniel in The Moody Bible Commentary*, (2014), 1306.

<sup>32</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Whole Bible, Commentary on Daniel 9:25*, website:

<https://www.studylight.org/commentary/daniel/9-25.html>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.neverthirsty.org/bible-studies/book-of-daniel/prophecy-of-daniels-70-weeks/>

scroll was found and there was written in it as follows: “Memorandum— [3] In the first year of King Cyrus, Cyrus the king issued a decree: ‘Concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the temple, the place where sacrifices are offered, be rebuilt and let its foundations be retained, its height being 60 cubits and its width 60 cubits; [4] with three layers of huge stones and one layer of timbers. And let the cost be paid from the royal treasury. [5] Also let the gold and silver utensils of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be returned and brought to their places in the temple in Jerusalem; and you shall put them in the house of God.’ [6] “Now therefore, Tattenai, governor of the province beyond the River, Shethar-bozenai and your colleagues, the officials of the provinces beyond the River, keep away from there. [7] Leave this work on the house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews rebuild this house of God on its site. [8] Moreover, I issue a decree concerning what you are to do for these elders of Judah in the rebuilding of this house of God: the full cost is to be paid to these people from the royal treasury out of the taxes of the provinces beyond the River, and that without delay. [9] Whatever is needed, both young bulls, rams, and lambs for a burnt offering to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and anointing oil, as the priests in Jerusalem request, it is to be given to them daily without fail, [10] that they may offer acceptable sacrifices to the God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and his sons. [11] And I issued a decree that any man who violates this edict, a timber shall be drawn from his house and he shall be impaled on it and his house shall be made a refuse heap on account of this. [12] May the God who has caused His name to dwell there overthrow any king or people who attempts to change it, so as to destroy this house of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, have issued this decree, let it be carried out with all diligence!”

Again, it is quite apparent that the temple structure (house of God) is in view, and not the city, plaza, or moat. Because Darius is not forming a “new” creed per se, he is merely confirming Cyrus’ decree it should likewise be rejected as not encompassing the proper information for the fulfillment of Gabriel’s statement.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Possible Decree: Artaxerxes (457-458 B.C.)

This third decree was to Ezra in 457 B.C. It was issued to encourage the return of more exiles with Ezra and to further enhance the temple.

#### Ezra 7:11-24 NASB

Now this is the copy of the decree which King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest, the scribe, learned in the words of the commandments of the Lord and His statutes to Israel: [12] “Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace. And now [13] I have issued a decree that any of the people of Israel and their priests and the Levites in my kingdom who are willing to go to Jerusalem, may go with you. [14] Forasmuch as you are sent by the king and his seven counselors to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of your God which is in your hand, [15] and to bring the silver and gold, which the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, [16] with all the silver and gold which you find in the whole province

*of Babylon, along with the freewill offering of the people and of the priests, who offered willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem; [17] with this money, therefore, you shall diligently buy bulls, rams and lambs, with their grain offerings and their drink offerings and offer them on the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem. [18] Whatever seems good to you and to your brothers to do with the rest of the silver and gold, you may do according to the will of your God. [19] Also the utensils which are given to you for the service of the house of your God, deliver in full before the God of Jerusalem. [20] The rest of the needs for the house of your God, for which you may have occasion to provide, provide for it from the royal treasury. [21] “I, even I, King Artaxerxes, issue a decree to all the treasurers who are in the provinces beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, may require of you, it shall be done diligently, [22] even up to 100 talents of silver, 100 kors of wheat, 100 baths of wine, 100 baths of oil, and salt as needed. [23] Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done with zeal for the house of the God of heaven, so that there will not be wrath against the kingdom of the king and his sons. [24] We also inform you that it is not allowed to impose tax, tribute or toll on any of the priests, Levites, singers, doorkeepers, Nethinim or servants of this house of God.*

Again, we can quickly spot that this decree has nothing to do with the re-establishment of the city, moat, or plaza, as these concepts are excluded completely from the discussion. Hoehner indicates several problems with this decree as being the one Gabriel had in mind:

“There are several problems with this view. First, and foremost, is that this decree has not a word about the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem but rather the temple in Jerusalem... The proponents of this of this theory say that a wall was permitted to be built because Artaxerxes gave unlimited freedom to use the leftover silver and gold (Ezra 7:18) and because Ezra was to appoint civil authorities (Ezra 7:25) who would want to build a wall. But the leftover silver and gold was to be used for temple worship and the civil authorities were appointed for the purpose of judging not for building defense walls. Second, the have the sixty-nine weeks terminate at the commencement of Christ’s ministry in A.D. 26 or 27 is untenable for two reasons: (1) the cutting off of the Messiah (Dan. 9:26) is a very inappropriate way to refer to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus at the commencement of His ministry. (2) The date for the beginning of Jesus’ ministry is not A.D. 26 or 27 but A.D. 29, as discussed previously. Third, to what does Daniel refer in 9:27 when he states he is confirming a covenant? If it refers to Christ, then what covenant was it and how did He break it? Fourth, to say that the middle of the seventieth week refers to Christ’s crucifixion in A.D. 30 is untenable on two grounds: (1) the sacrifices did not cease at Christ’s crucifixion, and (2) though the date of A.D. 30 is possible the A.D. 33 date is far more plausible. Fifth, to say that the end of the seventieth week refers to Stephen’s death and Paul’s conversion in A.D. 33 is pure speculation. There is no hint of this in the texts of Daniel 9:27 and Acts 8-9 to denote the fulfillment of the seventieth week... In conclusion, the decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra in 457 B.C. serving as the stating point of the seventy weeks is highly unlikely.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 125-126.

Michael Rydelnik agrees with Hoehner:

“However, this particular decree only provided a call for more exiles to return , the restoration of the temple’s utensils, and permission to appoint civil leaders (Ezk 7:1-26). It did not include the most essential element mentioned here, namely, a decree for the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem.”<sup>35</sup>

We can safely conclude that the 3<sup>rd</sup> decree is also quite unlikely to fit the description required in Daniel 9:25.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Possible Decree: Artaxerxes (444-445 B.C.)**

Up until this point none of the decrees that have been mentioned fit the requirements for a possible decree. Perhaps Artaxerxes decree in 444 B.C. will? Artaxerxes decree in 444 B.C. is found in Nehemiah 2:1-8:

##### *Nehemiah 2:1-8 NASB*

*And it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, that wine was before him, and I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. [2] So the king said to me, "Why is your face sad though you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of heart." Then I was very much afraid. [3] I said to the king, "Let the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies desolate and its gates have been consumed by fire?" [4] Then the king said to me, "What would you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. [5] I said to the king, "If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it." [6] Then the king said to me, the queen sitting beside him, "How long will your journey be, and when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me, and I gave him a definite time. [7] And I said to the king, "If it please the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the provinces beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah, [8] and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city and for the house to which I will go." And the king granted them to me because the good hand of my God was on me.*

Finally! We have a text that now indicates and speaks specifically about the “city” (vs.3) and about the rebuilding of the “city” (vs.5). This fits perfectly with what was spoken of by Gabriel. Let’s indicate some of the facts listed here.

1. There is a clear and direct reference to the restoration of the city (2:3,5)
2. There is a clear and direct reference to the city gates and walls (2:3,8)
3. Artaxerxes clearly wrote a letter to Asaph talking about the materials that were necessary to

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<sup>35</sup> Michael Rydelnik, *Daniel in The Moody Bible Commentary*, (2014), 1306.

rebuild the walls (2:8)

4. Nehemiah 4-6 speak about the turbulent times that the restoration of the city would face.
5. No other decree references the rebuilding of Jerusalem, so if all other options have been demonstrated to be in error than it necessary follows that this is the best and most likely decree.

Therefore, based upon the evidence, Gabriel was most likely speaking about the command/decree issued by Artaxerxes in 444 B.C.

“The most likely starting point was Artaxerxes second decree in 444BC, authorizing Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Neh 2:1-8). This decree fits the requirement of the prediction since it was indeed for the restoration of Jerusalem. Moreover, the restoration was carried out in times of distress just as Daniel predicted (vs. 25) and Nehemiah described (Neh 4:1-6:14).”<sup>36</sup>

“Fortunately, the author of Nehemiah has provided a link between the events of his book and those here in Daniel. By alluding to this prophecy, Nehemiah provides the date of the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes (445 B.C.) as the time when the word was issued to rebuild the city of Jerusalem (Ne 2:1-9).”<sup>37</sup>

“The only decree that passes both tests is the decree of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah in 445 BC. Therefore, the starting point to the 490 years of the prophecy in Daniel 9 was March, 445 BC (Neh. 2:1-8).”<sup>38</sup>

“This [Nehemiah Decree] . . . is the only decree which we find recorded in Scripture which relates to the restoring and building of the city.”<sup>39</sup>

“In any case, the city wall and the city itself were not rebuilt until the time of Nehemiah (445-444 BC). Scholars differ as to whether the exact date is the last month of 445 BC or the first month of 444 BC. Though scholars continue to debate the subject, the most plausible explanation is the 444 BC date because this works out precisely to the fulfillment of the prophecy and also coincides with the actual rebuilding of the city. This interpretation provides the most literal explanation without disregarding some of the specifics of the prophecy.”<sup>40</sup>

“...only the last decree – that of Artaxerxes (465-425 B.C.), issued to Nehemiah in the twentieth year of his reign (445 B.C.) – really meets the full specifications of a decree “to restore and to build [the city of] Jerusalem” and yields a reasonably literal interpretation of the prophecy.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> John H. Sailhamer, *Daniel in the NIV Compact Bible Commentary*, 411.

<sup>38</sup> Renald Showers, *The Most High God: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 125.

<sup>39</sup> Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *Daniel*, 98.

<sup>40</sup> John F. Walvoord, *Every Prophecy of the Bible: Clear Explanations for Uncertain Times*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. 2011), 245.

<sup>41</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *Daniel in Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol II: Isaiah-Malachi, (Moody Press, Chicago, 1981), 1665-1666.

“In conclusion, this is the only decree that adequately fits the strictures given in Daniel 9:25. Hence this decree of Artaxerxes is considered the *terminus a quo* of the 70 weeks.”<sup>42</sup>

“The first two of these decrees authorized the rebuilding of the temple, and the third provided for animal sacrifices in the temple. Only the fourth one [Artaxerxes decree] gave the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem, and it seems to be the one in view here. The Jews encountered opposition as they sought to rebuild and fortify their ancient capital, as the Book of Nehemiah records. The date 444 B.C. then, probably marks the beginning of this 490-year period.”<sup>43</sup>

Now that we have established the decree, we need to unpack the following: “**until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.**”

In the Hebrew there are several syntactical challenges around the 7 weeks and 62 weeks. Some see them as separate; some see them as continuous. Based upon the investigation done by Hoehner it seems likely that they should be understood as continuous.<sup>44</sup>

**Note:** An argument could be made for 1-2 gaps here based upon the Hebrew.

“While the prophecy does not specify a gap, the grammatical construction of the passage divides the 490 years into *three distinct periods* of seven weeks (49 years), sixty-two weeks (434 years), and one week (7 years). This allows for the possibility of one or two gaps, especially since the angel specified that certain prophetic events would signal the start and completion of each period.”<sup>45</sup>

Now that we have established that the 69 weeks are running continuously, we can begin to foresee a prophetic timeline coming to fruition. From the command to rebuild and restore Jerusalem we can pinpoint the dating to 444 B.C. (Nisan, March 5), twentieth year of Artaxerxes reign. Next, we need to understand the Jewish calendar. There are 3 different variations for the calculation of years: (*solar years, sabbatical year, and 360-day year*). Whatever method is selected for the year it must conform with the Messiah being present “until Messiah prince” and must include the necessary time for Jerusalem to be rebuilt. Robert Anderson based his calculation off of the *360-day year* method which seems to be common in the ancient dating systems. In studying various ancient (year) calculations it is relatively consistent that the 360 days within a year are used.

“Therefore, in light of these observations the 360-day year should not be too surprising”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 127.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Constable, *Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas Constable, Commentary on Daniel 9:25*. (Brackets added by me)

<sup>44</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 127.

<sup>45</sup> Brock Hollett, *Debunking Preterism: How Over-Realized Eschatology Misses the Not Yet of Bible Prophecy*, Kindle, (Morris Publishing, 2018), Location 2578.

<sup>46</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 137.

Two terms are used here in conjunction with the starting and ending of the 69 weeks. *Terminus a quo* (Starting Date) – which is 444 B.C. and *Terminus ad quem* (Ending Date) which is what we are going to determine using the 360-day year method.

Let's break this down:

*Terminus a quo = March 5<sup>th</sup>, 444 B.C. (Nisan 1 of Artaxerxes)*

*62 weeks/years + 7 weeks/years = 69 weeks*

*69 weeks x 7 years = [483 weeks/years] x 360 days [prophetic calculation] = 173,880 days*

*March 5<sup>th</sup>, 444 B.C. + 173,880 days = March 30, 33 A.D.*

*Terminus ad quem = March 30<sup>th</sup>, 33 A.D. (Triumphal Entry of Messiah Nisan 10)*

Establishing both the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* we are now ready to address the remaining 7 years (1 week). The last two verses of this section are the most difficult and will be addressed shortly. My position defends that between the 69th and 70th week there must be a gap in time. If we add 7 years after 33 A.D. there is no significant evidence of the consummation of the remaining events issued in (vs.24). This is problematic. Scholars have rightly pointed out that the 70<sup>th</sup> week is disconnected from the 69 weeks. Evidence for a gap will be shared below:

#### **Reasons that necessitate a gap:**

1. There is no possible way that all the events that are stipulated in (vs.24) were fulfilled by 40 A.D. All these stipulations in (vs.24) are directly tied to Israel and clearly by the time of Jesus' death -- messiah being cut-off -- (after the 69 weeks) we still have no possible way of accounting for these pieces of information.

“However, it is far more plausible to see the sixty-nine weeks fulfilled historically and the seventieth week as yet unfulfilled... to view the six things in Daniel 9:24... as having been fulfilled in Christ’s death at His first advent is impossible.”<sup>47</sup>

“But since all or most of the six goals seem to be as yet unfulfilled, it follows that if the 70th week finds fulfillment at all, it must be identified as the last seven years before Christ’s return to earth as millennial King.”<sup>48</sup>

“It is a fact that those things have not happened even yet.”<sup>49</sup>

2. The Messiah was cut-off “after” the 69<sup>th</sup> week not “during” the seventieth. Had the 70<sup>th</sup> week (the final 7 years) mentioned that the Messiah was cut-off “in the midst” of the week then we would have good reason to believe that the 70<sup>th</sup> week was fulfilled.

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<sup>47</sup> Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977), 131.

<sup>48</sup> Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *Daniel in the Expositors Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, 113.

<sup>49</sup> Renald Showers, *The Most High God: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 130.

“There can be no honest difference of opinion about that: the cutting off of Messiah is 'after' the sixty-two weeks. It is not the concluding event of the series of sixty-two weeks. Neither is it said to be the opening event of the seventieth. It is simply after the seven plus sixty-two weeks.”<sup>50</sup>

“the cutting off of Messiah, and of the people of the prince, are stated to occur after the sixty-nine weeks. If this was intended to occur in the seventieth week, the text would have read here during or in the midst of (cf. Daniel's use of *hetzi*, in the middle of, verse 27). This language implies that these events precede the seventieth week, but do not immediately follow the sixty-ninth. Therefore, a temporal interval separates the two.”<sup>51</sup>

“After the reconstruction of Jerusalem in the first seven sevens (forty-nine years), another sixty-two sevens (434 years) would pass. Then two momentous events would take place. First, the 'Anointed One' would come (v.25), then he would be 'cut off.' Apparently his coming would be immediately at the end of the sixty-nine sevens, . . .”<sup>52</sup>

3. The one who confirms the “covenant” in Daniel 9:27 cannot refer to Christ, ergo, it must refer to someone different (more will be discussed in our analysis of 9:27).

4. Christ's death did not cease the sacrificing of animals, as they continued up until the temple destruction in A.D. 70. 37 years after the 69<sup>th</sup> week.

5. The abomination of desolation spoken of in Daniel 9:27 did not occur in A.D. 70 which signaled the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the tribulation (Jacob's trouble). This never occurred in A.D. 70, ergo, a gap is necessary.

6. The “prince of the people” is not Christ, he is the wicked man that is mentioned numerous times in Daniel in connection with the abomination of desolation (c.f. Daniel 12:11). This “prince” is always recognized as an evil ruler (Daniel 7:25). This couldn't have happened slightly after the *terminus ad quem* of the 69<sup>th</sup> week.

7. It is impossible for the remaining 7 years to stretch from A.D. 33 to the temple destruction in A.D. 70:

“It has been well observed by various writers that if the seventy weeks are to end with the death of Christ and the incoming destruction of Jerusalem, it is simply impossible—with all ingenuity expended in this direction by eminent men—to make out an accurate fulfillment of prophecy from the dates given, for the time usually adduced being either too long to fit with the crucifixion of Christ or too short to extend to the destruction of Jerusalem.”<sup>53</sup>

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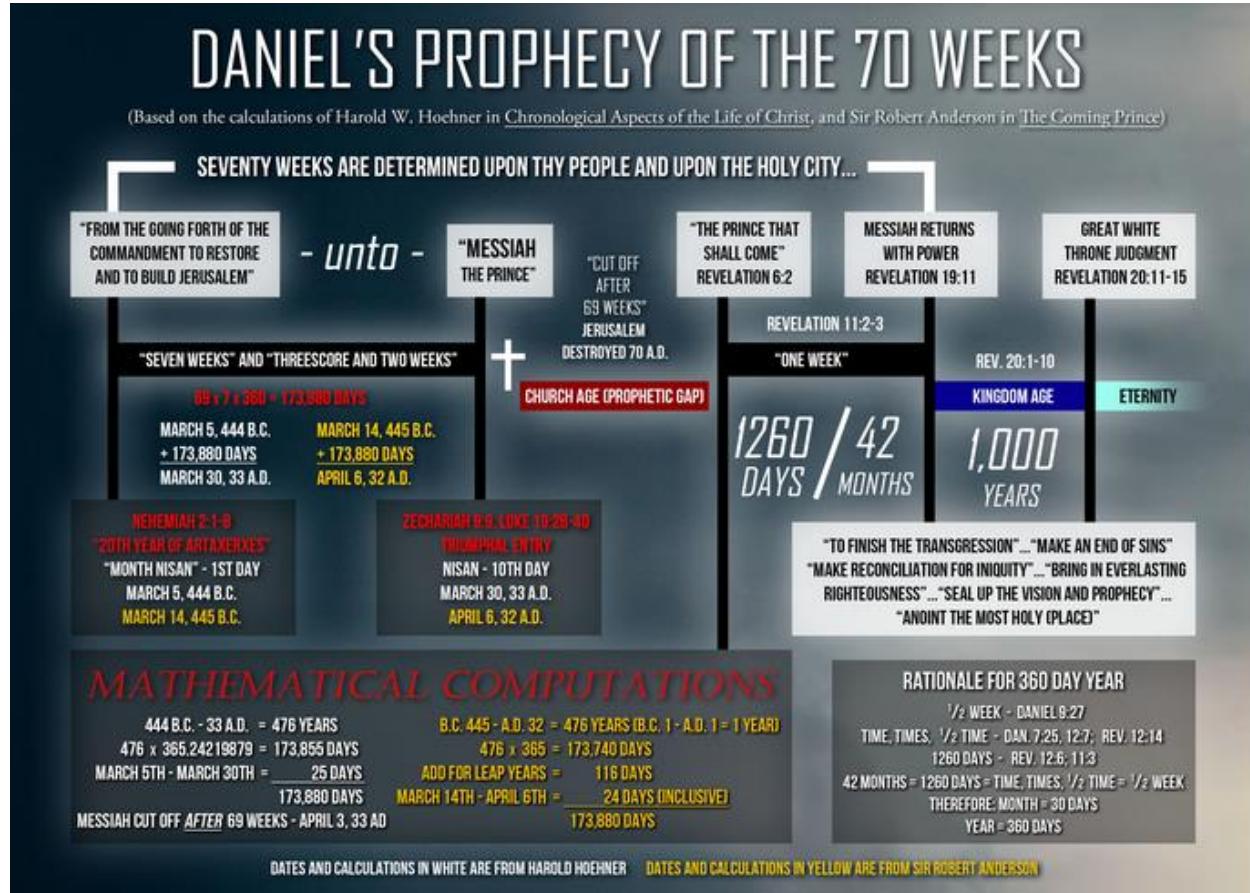
<sup>50</sup> Robert Culver, *Daniel and the Latter Days* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), 157.

<sup>51</sup> Randall Price, *Prophecy of Daniel 9:27* (San Marcos, TX: World of the Bible, n.d.), 22.

<sup>52</sup> Steven R. Miller, *Daniel*, Vol. 18 of The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 267.

<sup>53</sup> George N. H. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, 3 Vols. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, [1884], 1978), Vol. II, 659.

As we have seen, there are several reasons why a gap is necessary within the confines of the text.



Adapted from: <http://www.jewishawareness.org/the-vision-of-daniel-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.**

כֹּוֹאַבְּרִי הַשְׁבָעִים שְׁשִׁים וָשָׁנִים יִפְרַת מִשְׁמֵן וְאַזְנוֹ לְזִבְחָר וְקִרְבָּנָשׁ יִשְׁחַרְתָּ עִם נָגִיד כְּבָא וְקִצְוֹ בְּלַטְף וְעַל קָרְבָּן מְלֹחָה גְּהַרְאָת שְׁמָמֹת

Pressing forward we now come to (vs.26), which is one of the most debated texts in scripture. Three things are said to occur after the 69th week of years:

**P1. "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing"** — This is clearly a reference to Jesus, the Messiah, being cut off after the 69 weeks, as we have seen.

"Now, His crucifixion took place four days after His appearance as the Prince—that is, four days after the close of the Four Hundred and Eighty-third Year. Nevertheless, the prophecy does not

represent this great event as occurring in the Seven Years which yet remained to be fulfilled. Here, then, is the beginning of an interval, which separates the Four Hundred and Eighty-three Years from the final Seven.”<sup>54</sup>

**P2. "and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary" —** There are several difficulties in this section of the text. If one is to understand that the Messiah is the one cut-off after the 69<sup>th</sup> week how can 37 years elapse between his death and the destruction of the sanctuary as a part of the 490 years decreed, especially if one sees a gap in between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week? It makes no sense for Gabriel to mention the destruction of the temple in A.D 70 here, especially if (vs.27) is directly tied to (vs.26). The text doesn’t warrant a break between the one week and the sanctuary being destroyed in A.D. 70 and then an entirely new “prince” is introduced in (vs.27). The “he” who finds his direct antecedent in the Hebrew text in (vs.26) must be the same one who makes a firm covenant with the many for one week (vs.27).

In order to make sense of this difficult text it seems wise to take everything from the preposition [וְאַתָּה] to the end of (vs.27) as being related to (vs.27) and the events that occur in the final week of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. Gabriel inserts a break here by saying “and after” which makes sense that the events in vs.26b and 27 are directly tied to this period “after” the Messiah is cut-off, and that they are viewed as a singular unit rather than both to the destruction of the temple and to the final week. By breaking the text at the conjunctive, we can now tie the final elements of the text together with the final and remaining week.

The people of the prince will destroy the sanctuary and the city in the future period of destruction as seen in the Olivet Discourse. This is clearly a reference to the third temple that will be established before the birth pangs begin (Mt. 24). This sanctuary will be trampled by the people of the prince in Revelation 11:2.

*Revelation 11:2 NASB*

*Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.*

The outer court is trampled in (vs.2), and yet this prince will sit within the temple and profess himself to be God (2 Thess. 2:2-4). It is this prince that is to come (the little horn) that will desecrate the temple. This is directly tied to the final enemy and not to the temple destruction in A.D. 70.

**P3. "And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined." —** Here the end of “it” (the sanctuary and the city) will be destroyed by a “flood” which is best seen as figurative for judgment.<sup>55</sup> The sanctuary will be destroyed by this judgment

<sup>54</sup> G.H. Pember, *The Great Prophecies of the Centuries Concerning Israel and the Gentiles*, (Miami Springs, FL: Conley & Schoettle Publishing Co., 1984 [1909]), 345.

<sup>55</sup> Brown-Driver-Briggs sees the Hebrew word for flood [נֹפֶל] as being figurative in the context of Daniel 9:26 and 11:22 “noun masculine Nahum 1:8 flood; — absolute נֹפֶל Nahum 1:8 3t.; construct פָּנָא Proverbs 27:4, פָּנָא Psalm 32:6;

that will come from the people of the prince in the final week. Wars will continue until the sanctuary and temple are destroyed and left desolate. This is true well past the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 and thus the tail end of (vs.26) will see its conclusion at the final destruction of the temple at the hands of the little horn.

**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.**

כזְהַגְּבִיר בְּרִית לְרַבִּים שְׁבּוּעַ אֶתְךָ וְחַצִּי הַשְׁבּוּעַ יִשְׁבִּית זְבַח וְמִנְחָה וְעַל כָּנֶף שְׁקוֹצִים מִשְׁמָם וְעַד-כָּלָה וְגַנְגַּרְתָּה תִּפְעַק עַל שׁוֹמֶם

Now that we have determined the interconnectivity of (vs.26-27) the text will flow much better than to see (vs.26) in its entirety as being fulfilled in history and then the remaining verse as being fulfilled in the future.

The first thing that is often disputed in (vs.27) is who the “he” is in the context of the passage. Is this Messiah who will make a firm covenant with the many for one week? Is this the “prince” who is spoken of in the previous passage? It is my belief that the “he” in the passage is referring to the “coming prince”, which is the little horn, man-of-lawlessness, antichrist, beast from the sea (abyss). [הַגְּבִיר] is in the “third masculine singular” which means that we need to look back to the direct antecedent of the word. The antecedent of the “he” must be the last preceding noun. The last noun is tied to the “prince” [צָמִים]. The prince who is to come must be the “he” that Gabriel is referring to at the beginning of the passage. Scholars tend to agree with this conclusion:

“Therefore, we conclude that the person referred to in verse 27a – “he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week” (seven years) – is the normal antecedent, namely, “the prince that shall come” (v.26), so styled because he has already been introduced (7:8, 24-27) as the final Antichrist, as Keil correctly notes (KD). The prince is not to be identified with Titus, for the Romans who destroyed Jerusalem (A.D. 70) were his *people*, because they both belonged to the fourth, or Roman, stage of world empire, as revealed in chapters 2 and 7.”<sup>56</sup>

“The nearest antecedent of “he” is “the prince who is to come” (Daniel 9:26). Titus made no covenant with Israel, so who is in view? Apparently a future ruler of the revived or reorganized Roman Empire, the little horn of chapter 7, is in view. This seems preferable to taking the antecedent of “he” as Messiah, since Jesus Christ did not do the things predicted of the prince

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— flood, figurative of “s judgement, שְׁבָר ‘שְׁבָר Nahum 1:8, compare Daniel 9:26, רִעְיוֹת ‘רִעְיוֹת Daniel 11:22 (compare Dr.)” *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, Unabridged*, נַפְשׁ.

<sup>56</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *Daniel in Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*, Vol II: Isaiah-Malachi, (Moody Press, Chicago, 1981), 1670.

here. Young held that Christ is the prince, and He fulfilled what Daniel predicted, in that He put the covenant of grace into effect at the time of His death, and abolished the sacrifices of the old dispensation. [Note: Young, pp213-17, 220-21.] If the little horn of chapter 7 is in view, as seems preferable, this means that the seventieth week does not follow the sixty-ninth week immediately. Such a break in prophetic chronology has precedent in the predictions of Messiah's first and second advents (Isaiah 61:1-2). Another evidence of a break between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks, is the fact that there was a 37-year gap, between Messiah's cutting off in A.D 33, and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D 70. Yet Daniel presented both of these events as after the sixty-ninth week and before the seventieth week. Thus there must be a break in the chronology after the sixty-ninth week.”<sup>57</sup>

“he shall confirm the covenant = make a firm covenant: i.e. the little horn will do this at the beginning of the last seven years.”<sup>58</sup>

“The subject of “he” should be a Roman king, since the immediate context is the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This fits the description of the antichrist, who will rise out of the Roman Empire. He is so well known in Old Testament prophecy that Daniel simply referred to him as “*the Prince that shall come*” (v.26).”<sup>59</sup>

“Some scholars have stated that the *he* of verse 27 referred back to the Messiah the Prince, and that verse 27 related to things that Messiah would do during His First Coming. At least three things militate against that view. First, according to verse 27, he would make a covenant with many people for seven years (one week or one seven). Nowhere do the Scriptures indicate that Jesus made a covenant with people for seven years. Second, as noted earlier, the context immediately preceding verse 27 related things concerning the coming Roman prince or Antichrist rather than the Messiah. In other words, the Antichrist was the closer antecedent of the *he* in verse 27. Thus, it is much more natural to regard the *he* as referring back to the Antichrist. Third, other passages that clearly refer to the Antichrist relate activities of his that are parallel to the activities of the *he* of verse 27. It can be concluded, then, that the *he* of verse 27 referred to the Antichrist.”<sup>60</sup>

“Although some consider this prince to be Christ, establishing the new covenant and ending the OT sacrificial system it is inconceivable that Messiah would be the one who would commit the abomination of desolation. Therefore, he is more accurately identified as the antichrist, who will desecrate the future temple and stop worship in it. This covenant is yet future and will make the beginning of a time of oppression of the Jewish people.”<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Constable, *Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas Constable, Commentary on Daniel 9:27*. Website: <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/daniel/9-27.html>

<sup>58</sup> Ethelbert W. Bullinger, *E.W. Bullinger's Companion Bible Notes, Commentary on Daniel 9:27*. Website: <https://www.studylight.org/commentary/daniel/9-27.html>

<sup>59</sup> Paul L. Tan, *A Pictorial Guide to Bible Prophecy*, (1991), 254.

<sup>60</sup> Renald Showers, *The Most High God: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, 132.

<sup>61</sup> Michael Rydelnik, *Daniel in The Moody Bible Commentary*, (2014), 1307.

“Second, as noted above, the unusual manner of mention in verse twenty-six regarding that prince calls for just such a further reference as this. There is no reason for the earlier notice unless something further is to be said regarding him, for he does nothing nor plays any part in activities there described. Third, several matters show that what is now said regarding the one in reference does not suit if that reference is to Christ. (a) This person makes a "firm covenant" with people, but Christ made no covenant. God made a Covenant of Grace with people, and Christ fulfilled requirements under it, but this is quite different from Christ's making a covenant. (b) Even if Christ had made a covenant with people during His lifetime, the idea of mentioning it only here in the overall thought of the passage would be unusual, when the subjects of His death and even the destruction of Jerusalem have already been set forth. (c) The idea of the seventieth week, here closely associated with this one, does not fit the life or ministry of Christ, as will be shown presently. (d) The idea that this one causes "sacrifice and offering to cease" does not fit in reference to Christ in this context. The amillennial view holds that these words refer to Christ's supreme sacrifice in death, which made all other sacrifices and offerings of no further use, thus making them to cease in principle. But, if so, what would be the reason for such a statement (true as it is) in view of the purpose of the overall prediction? One could understand a direct statement concerning Christ's providing atonement for sin—though its placing at this point in the general thought order the passage would be strange—because that would be important to sin-bondaged Israelites. But why, if that is the basic thought, should it be expressed so indirectly, in terms of sacrificing and offering being made to cease?”<sup>62</sup>

“27. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week (make a firm covenant, ASV). The language (*higbîr*, from *gâbar*, “be strong”) does not signify confirmation of a covenant but causation of a firm covenant. And he shall cause to prevail is an excellent translation. The most natural antecedent for he, the subject of the clause, is the wicked “prince” of verse 26. This is the nearest noun in grammatical agreement, and it fits the sense. The many here, as elsewhere, is a reference to the Hebrew people, the subject of discussion throughout chapter 9 (cf. vv. 2, 12, 18, 19, esp. 24, “thy people ... thy holy city”). Evidently the covenant is to be made between Antichrist and Israel when the Jews are back in their homeland in the last days. The exact nature of the covenant is unknown.”<sup>63</sup>

“This covenant could not have been made or confirmed by Christ at His First Advent, as amillenarians teach, because: (a) His ministry did not last seven years, (b) His death did not stop sacrifices and offerings, (c) He did not set up “the abomination that causes desolation” (Matt. 24:15). Amillenarians suggest that Christ confirmed (in the sense of fulfilling) the Abrahamic Covenant but the Gospels give no indication He did that in His First Advent.”<sup>64</sup>

“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.... Sixty nine of the seventy weeks being accounted for, and the several events observed to be fulfilled in them; the angel proceeds to take notice of the remaining "one" week, or seven years, and what should be done within that

<sup>62</sup> Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 257.

<sup>63</sup> Wycliffe Bible Commentary of OT, *Daniel*, Commentary on Daniel 9:27.

<sup>64</sup> Bible Knowledge Commentary, *Daniel*, Commentary on Daniel 9:27.

space of time: a covenant should be confirmed with many; which is not to be understood of the Messiah's confirming the covenant of grace with many, or on account of all his people, by fulfilling the conditions of it, and by his blood and sacrifice, through which all the blessings of it come to them; for this is not for one week only, but for ever; but this is to be interpreted of the Roman people, spoken of in the latter part of the preceding verse; who, in order to accomplish their design to destroy the city and temple of Jerusalem, made peace with many nations, entered into covenant and alliance with them, particularly the Medes, Parthians, and Armenians, for the space of one week, or seven years; as it appears they did at the beginning of this week.”<sup>65</sup>

“Hävernick, Hengstenberg, and Auberlen regard the Messias as the subject, and understand by the confirming of the covenant, the confirming of the New Covenant by the death of Christ. Ewald, v. Lengerke, and others think of Antiochus and the many covenants which, according to 1 Macc. 1:12, he established between the apostate Jews and the heathen Greeks. Hitzig understands by the “covenant” the O.T. Covenant, and gives to הָגְבִּיר the meaning to make grievous: The one week shall make the covenant grievous to many, for they shall have to bear oppression on account of their faith. On the other hand, Hofmann (Schriftbew. ) renders it: The one week shall confirm many in their fidelity to the faith. But none of these interpretations can be justified. The reasons which Hengstenberg adduces in support of his view that the Messias is the subject, are destitute of validity. The assertion that the Messias is the chief person spoken of in the whole of this passage, rests on the supposition, already proved to be untenable, that the prince who was to come (Daniel 9:26) was the instrument of the Anointed, and on the passages in Isaiah 53:11; Isaiah 42:6, which are not parallel to that under consideration. The connection much more indicates that Nagid is the subject to הָגְבִּיר, since the prince who was to come is named last, and is also the subject in the suffix of קָצָו (his end), the last clause of Daniel 9:26 having only the significance of an explanatory subordinate clause. Also “the taking away of the daily sacrifice combines itself in a natural way with the destruction (Daniel 9:26) of the city and the temple brought about by the הָבָא נָגִיד;” - further, “he who here is represented as 'causing the sacrifice and oblation to cease' is obviously identical with him who changes (Daniel 7:25) the times and usages of worship (more correctly: times and law)” (Kran.). “The reference of הָגְבִּיר to the ungodly leader of an army, is therefore according to the context and the parallel passages of this book which have been mentioned, as well as in harmony with the natural grammatical arrangement of the passage,” and it gives also a congruous sense, although by the Nagid Titus cannot naturally be understood.”<sup>66</sup>

As we have seen from several scholars it is best to see the “prince” who is to come as the direct antecedent of the one who forms the “firm covenant”.

Next, let us address what this “firm covenant” is. The firm covenant [בְּרִית] is a covenant that he will make with many [לָרְבִּים]. This covenant is made for a total of 7 years (which is the remaining 7 years in the 490 years and is to be seen as future) which is “broken” in the middle of

<sup>65</sup> John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Whole Bible*, Commentary on Daniel 9:27.

<sup>66</sup> Keil & Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Commentary on Daniel 9:27.

the week (3.5 years). The firm covenant here isn't the new covenant because the covenant wasn't put into place during Christ's time on earth, nor did any such covenant get made with the people of Israel during that time. There was also no covenant made that only lasts 7 years and comes with abomination. Jesus simply cannot be in view here.

Daniel sees part of these 3.5 years in relation to the beast (little horn) who will speak against the Most High and will oppress the holy people (Israel). It is here that he, the prince of the people will attempt to "change" the laws, which is seen Daniel 7:25 with the cessation of the sacrifices in the middle of the week, *and* also in Daniel 12:11.

*Daniel 7:25 NASB*

*He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time.*

*Daniel 12:11 NASB*

*"From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.*

Finally it is said that during this last week that he will come and bring an end to the daily sacrifice. We saw this in a foreshadowing with Antiochus IV Epiphanes in Daniel 11:31-32. Note the similarity of actions here. There is nothing symbolic, nothing unknown, nothing spiritualized. It is clearly that Antiochus would set up the abomination that causes the sanctuary to be desolate, and there is also a connection to the violation of a covenantal agreement or pact.

*Daniel 11:31-32 NASB*

*"His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation. [32] With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.*

Daniel in his final chapter states that at the end this will occur once more for 3.5 years (break in between Daniel's final week). It is here that we cannot conclude anything other than a wicked and evil man causing the desolation of the temple with his abomination.

"However, in every reference to the abomination of desolation in the book of Daniel, it is a self-exalting, evil ruler who removes the daily sacrifice from the sanctuary: And the regular burnt offering was taken away from him [the little horn], and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown. And a host will be given over to it together with the regular burnt offering because of transgression ["that makes desolate" v. 13] (Dan. 8:11b-12a) Forces from him [the king] shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate. He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant . . . Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him. (Dan. 11:31-32a, 45) And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that

makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days. (Dan. 12:11)<sup>67</sup>

*Daniel 12:11 NASB*

*“From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.*

Here the wicked man declares himself to be God (2 Thess. 2:2-4, Revelation 13:5-7) and will attempt to rule as God until his time is over. He will make the temple desolate and his reign will end at the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Having done our best to exegete the 4 verses, the evidence is conclusive that we await the final week of Daniel's 70 weeks. The final week will be full of wrath, and is outlined in detail in Matthew 24, Revelation 6-18, 2 Thessalonians 2, and the O.T. prophets who speak about the Day of the Lord, the Birth Pangs, and Jacob's trouble. At the completion of the 490 weeks the Lord will return and will establish his kingdom on earth and will crush the rulers of this world. Come Lord Jesus.

*Daniel 7:26-27 NASB*

*“But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. [27] Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him. ’*

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<sup>67</sup> Brock Hollett, *Debunking Preterism: How Over-Realized Eschatology Misses the Not Yet of Bible Prophecy*, Kindle, (Morris Publishing, 2018), Location 2609.