

The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks

by John F. Walvoord

John F. Walvoord's sermon explores Daniel's prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, emphasizing the importance of prayer, confession, and God's faithfulness to His promises.

Scripture: Daniel 9:24-27

Topics: "Prophetic Scripture", "Gods Mercy"

Description

John F. Walvoord preaches on the third vision of Daniel, focusing on God's program for Israel culminating in the coming of their Messiah to reign on earth. The chapter reveals the comprehensive program for both the Gentiles and Israel, making the study of Daniel key to understanding prophetic Scriptures. Daniel's prayer, prompted by Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years of desolation for Jerusalem, leads to the third vision through the angel Gabriel, providing crucial insights into Scripture. The chapter highlights the importance of confession, prayer, and understanding God's mercy and righteousness in fulfilling His prophetic plans for Israel.

Transcript

The third vision of Daniel the prophet, following the two preceding visions of chapters 7 and 8, concerns the program of God for Israel culminating in the coming of their Messiah to the earth to reign. Although other major prophets received detailed information concerning the nations and God's program for salvation, Daniel alone was given the comprehensive program for both the Gentiles, as revealed to Daniel in preceding chapters, and for Israel, as recorded in Daniel 9:24-27. Because of the comprehensive and structural nature of Daniel's prophecies, both for the Gentiles and for Israel, the study of Daniel, and especially this chapter, is the key to understanding the prophetic Scriptures. Of the four major programs revealed in the Bible--for the angels, the Gentiles, Israel, and the church, Daniel had the privilege of being the channel of revelation for the second and third of these programs in the Old Testament.

This chapter begins with Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years of the desolations of Jerusalem and is advanced by the intercessory prayer of Daniel. The chapter concludes with the third vision of Daniel, given through the agency of the angel Gabriel, which provides one of the most important keys to understanding the Scriptures as a whole. In many respects, this is the high point of the book of Daniel. Although previously Gentile history and prophecy recorded in Daniel was related to the people of Israel, the ninth chapter specifically takes up prophecy as it applies to the chosen people.

The Seventy Years of the Desolations of Jerusalem

9:1-2 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

According to the opening verse of chapter 9, the third vision of Daniel occurred "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes." In other words, the events of Belshazzar's feast in chapter 5 occurred between the visions of chapters 8 and 9. It is not clear where chapter 6 fits into this order of events, but it also may well have occurred in the first year of the reign of Darius, either immediately before or immediately after the events of chapter 9. If Daniel's experience at Belshazzar's feast as well as his deliverance from the lions had already been experienced, these significant evidences of the sovereignty and power of God may well have constituted a divine preparation for the tremendous revelation now about to unfold.

The immediate occasion of this chapter, however, was the discovery by Daniel in the prophecy of Jeremiah that the desolations of Jerusalem would be fulfilled in seventy years. The expression by books may be understood to mean "in books." Jeremiah the prophet, in addition to his oral prophetic announcements, had written his prophecies in the closing days of Jerusalem before its destruction at the hand of the Babylonians. Although the first record of Jeremiah had been destroyed (Jer 36:23), Jeremiah rewrote it, acting on instructions from the Lord (Jer 36:28). Jeremiah himself had been taken captive by Jews rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar and had been carried off to Egypt against his will to be buried in a strange land in a nameless grave, but the timeless Scriptures which he wrote found their way across desert and mountain to far away Babylon and fell into the hands of Daniel. How long Daniel had been in possession of these prophecies is not known, but the implication is that Daniel had now come into the full comprehension of Jeremiah's prediction and realized that the seventy years prophesied had about run their course. The time of the vision recorded in Daniel 9 was 538 B.C., about 67 years after Jerusalem had first been captured and Daniel carried off to Babylon (605 B.C.).

Jeremiah had prophesied, "This whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations" (Jer 25:11-12). Later, Jeremiah added to this prophecy, "For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive" (Jer 29:10-14).

On the basis of these remarkable prophecies, Daniel was encouraged to pray for the restoration of Jerusalem and the regathering of the people of Israel. Daniel, although too old and probably too infirm to return to Jerusalem himself, lived long enough to see the first expedition of pilgrims return. This occurred in "the first year of Cyrus king of Persia" (Ezra 1:1), and Daniel lived at least until "the third year of Cyrus king of Persia" (Dan 10:1) and probably some years longer.

As brought out in the earlier discussion of chapter 6 relative to Darius the Mede, Darius had been appointed by Cyrus as king of Babylon. The assertion of Daniel 9:1 that Darius "was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans," indicates that he was invested with the kingship by some higher authority. This well agrees with the supposition that he was installed as viceroy in Babylonia by Cyrus the Great. This appointment is confirmed by the verb "was made king" (Hebrew *homlak*) which does not seem a proper reference to Cyrus himself. In this connection, it is of interest that in the Behistun Inscription, Darius I refers to his father, Hystaspes, as having been made king in a similar way.

In studying Daniel 9:2, with its reference to "the desolations of Jerusalem," Sir Robert Anderson distinguishes the duration of the captivity from the duration of the desolations of Jerusalem. Anderson states, "The failure to distinguish between the several judgments of the Servitude, the Captivity and the Desolations, is a fruitful source of error in the study of Daniel and the historical books of Scripture."⁴⁶⁴

Anderson goes on to explain that Israel's servitude and captivity began much earlier than the destruction of the temple. Although Anderson's dates are not according to current archeological findings (606 b.c. instead of 605 for the captivity, 589 b.c. instead of 586 for the desolation of the temple, and his date for the decree of Cyrus 536 B.C. instead of 538), in general, his approach to the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy is worthy of consideration. As previously discussed in the exposition of chapter 1, the captivity probably began in the fall of 605 B.C. at which time a few, such as Daniel and his companions and other of the royal children, were carried off to Babylon as hostages. The major deportation did not take place until about seven years later. According to Donald J. Wiseman, the exact date of the first major deportation was March 16, 597 b.c, after the fall of Jerusalem following a brief revolt against Babylonian rule. About 60,000 were carried away at that time.⁴⁶⁵

Jerusalem itself was finally destroyed in 586 b.c.,⁴⁶⁶ and this, according to Anderson, began the desolations of Jerusalem, the specific prophecy of Jeremiah 25:11, also mentioned in 2 Chronicles 36:21 and in Daniel 9:2.

The precise prophecy of Jeremiah 25:11-12 predicts that the king of Babylon would be punished at the end of seventy years. Jeremiah 29:10 predicted the return to the land after seventy years. For these reasons, it is doubtful whether Anderson's evaluation of Daniel 9:2 as referring to the destruction of the temple itself is valid. The judgment on Babylon and the return to the land of course took place about twenty years before the temple itself was rebuilt and was approximately seventy years after captivity beginning in 605 b.c. Probably the best interpretation, accordingly, is to consider the expression the desolations of Jerusalem, in Daniel 9:2, as referring to the period 605 B.C. to 539 B.C. for the judgment on Babylon, and the date of 538 b.c for the return to the land.

This definition of the expression the desolations of Jerusalem (Dan 9:2) is supported by the word for "desolations" (*h£orbo,t*) which is a plural apparently including the environs of Jerusalem. The same expression is translated "all her waste places" in Isaiah 51:3 (cf. 52:9). Actually the destruction of territory formerly under Jerusalem control even predated the 605 date for Jerusalem's fall.

Although it is preferred to consider Daniel 9:2 as the period 605 b.c.-539 b.c, Anderson may be right in distinguishing as he does the period of Israel's captivity from the period of Jerusalem's destruction. Zechariah 1:12, referring to God's destruction of the cities of Judah for three score years and ten, may extend to the time when the temple was rebuilt. This is brought out in Zechariah 1:16 where it is stated, "Therefore thus saith the Lord; I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith

the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem." It is most significant that the return took place approximately seventy years after the capture of Jerusalem in 605 b.c, and the restoration of the temple (515 b.c) took place approximately seventy years after the destruction of the temple (586 b.c), the latter period being about twenty years later than the former. In both cases, however, the fulfillment does not have the meticulous accuracy of falling on the very day, as Anderson attempts to prove. It seems to be an approximate number as one would expect by a round number of seventy. Hence, the period between 605 b.c and 538 b.c would be approximately sixty-seven years; and the rededication of the temple in March of 515 b.c, would be less than seventy-one years from the destruction of the temple in August of 586 b.c

What is intended, accordingly, in the statement in Daniel 9:2 is that Daniel realized that the time was approaching when the children of Israel could return. The seventy years of the captivity were about ended. Once the children of Israel were back in the land, they were providentially hindered in fulfilling the rebuilding of the temple until seventy years after the destruction of the temple had also elapsed.

Several principles emerge from Daniel's reference to Jeremiah's prophecy. First, Daniel took the seventy years literally and believed that there would be literal fulfillment. Even though Daniel was fully acquainted with the symbolic form of revelation which God sometimes used to portray panoramic prophetic events, his interpretation of Jeremiah was literal and he expected God to fulfill His word.

Second, Daniel realized that the Word of God would be fulfilled only on the basis of prayer, and this occasioned his fervent plea as recorded in this chapter. On the one hand, Daniel recognized the certainty of divine purposes and the sovereignty of God which will surely fulfill the prophetic word. On the other hand, he recognized human agency, the necessity of faith and prayer, and the urgency to respond to human responsibility as it relates to the divine program. His custom of praying three times a day with his windows open to Jerusalem still in desolation revealed his own heart for the things of God and his concern for the city of Jerusalem.

Third, he recognized the need for confession of sin as a prelude to restoration. With this rich background of the prophetic program revealed through Jeremiah, Daniel's own prayer life, and his concern for the city of Jerusalem as the religious center of the nation of Israel, Daniel approaches the task of expressing his confession and intercession to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Because Daniel, for the first time, used the word Lord or Jehovah in Daniel 9:2, repeating the expression in verses 4, 10, 13, 14, and 20, critics have used this as an argument against the authenticity of this passage and the prayer which follows.⁴⁶⁷

Daniel's Preparation for Prayer

9:3-4 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments.

Encouraged by his understanding of God's intention to restore Jerusalem, Daniel now seeks to make adequate preparation to present his confessions and petitions to the Lord. Every possible element of preparation is included. First, he declares, "I set my face unto the Lord God." This was a formal beginning in which Daniel turns away from other things to concentrate on his prayer to the Lord. It implies faith,

devotion, and worship. His activity in prayer has a specific end expressed by the word to seek. It anticipates that he hopes to find ground for an answer to his prayers. The attitude of mind and steadfastness of purpose indicated is now supplemented by prayer and supplications, that is, prayer in general and petition specifically. This is accompanied by every known auxiliary aid to prayer: namely, fasting, that he might not be diverted from prayer by food; sackcloth, a putting aside of ordinary garments in favor of rough cloth speaking of abject need; and ashes, the traditional symbol of grief and humility. In a word, Daniel left nothing undone that might possibly make his prayer more effective or more persuasive. While God honors the briefest of prayers, as the experience of Nehemiah 2:4 indicates, effective prayer requires faith in the Word of God, proper attitude of mind and heart, privacy, and unhurried confession and petition. Daniel's humility, reverence, and earnestness are the hallmarks of effective prayer. In beginning his prayer to the Lord, Daniel relies upon the fact that the majesty of God's person and the greatness of His power are manifested especially in His fulfilling His covenant promises and manifesting mercy to those who love Him and keep His commandments. As Nelson Glueck has brought out in his study of the word "mercy" (*hesed*), the word connotes not only forgiveness but loyalty in keeping His covenant with Israel.⁴⁶⁸ This loyalty of God to His covenant is contrasted with the inexcusable disloyalty of the people of Israel. In beginning his prayer, Daniel thus is assured of the greatness of God and the goodness of God. His problem is that the children of Israel have sinned, broken their covenant, and have made themselves liable to the divine judgment which the faithfulness of God must inflict according to His promises.

Daniel's Prayer of Confession

9:5-14 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

Having reminded himself of God's covenant and mercy, Daniel begins his prayer of confession. Daniel himself is one of the few major characters of the Old Testament to whom some sin is not ascribed. He is dealing not with his personal sins, but with his identification with the sin of the nation and the collective responsibility which Daniel shares both in promises of blessing and warnings of divine judgment. Daniel does not spare himself or his people in his confession. As John Calvin points out in his exposition, there is a fourfold description of the extent of their sin: first, they have sinned (Heb. *h–,–,–*), meaning a

serious crime or offense; second, they have committed iniquity, that is, "acted unjustly"; third, they have done wickedly, or "conducted themselves wickedly"; and fourth, sinning in this way, they have rebelled even by departing from thy precepts, that is, "become, rebellious and declined from the statutes and commandments of God."⁴⁶⁹ Moses Stuart notes, "The climactic construction of the sentence is palpable. To turn back from obedience to the divine statutes, in the frame of mind which belongs to rebels, is the consummation of wickedness, and so Daniel rightly considers it. The variety of verbs employed here, indicates the design of the speaker to confess, all sin of every kind in its full extent."⁴⁷⁰

The heinousness of their sin is amplified in verse 6 by the fact that they have disregarded the prophets which God sent to them. This disrespect and disobedience to the prophets characterized all classes of Israel, including their kings, their princes, other leaders referred to as "our fathers," and finally "all the people of the land." Even in such times of revival as during the reign of Hezekiah when the king's messengers went throughout the land calling people to the Passover at Jerusalem, the Scriptures record that many "laughed them to scorn, and mocked them" (2 Ch 30:10). The disregard of the Word of God in Israel's departure from the precepts and judgments as mentioned in verse 5 as well as the disregard of the prophets, "is the beginning of all moral disorders," as Leupold expresses it.⁴⁷¹

In verses 7-8, Daniel contrasts the righteousness of God and the confusion of face belonging to Israel. God has been righteous in His judgments upon Israel, and in no way does Israel's distress reflect upon the attributes of God adversely. By contrast, Israel's confusion or shame of face which had made them the object of scorn of the nations was their just desert for rebellion against God. Daniel itemizes those who are especially concerned: first, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that is, the kingdom of Judah which was carried into captivity by the Babylonians, and second, "all Israel, that are near, and that are far off," that is, also the ten tribes of the kingdom of Israel which were carried off by the Assyrians in 721 B.C. The scattering of the children of Israel "through all the countries which thou hast driven them," was not occasioned by one sin, but by generation after generation of failure to obey the Law or to give heed to the prophets.

In verse 8, those who are ashamed are itemized according to classes of society, that is, "our kings," "our princes," and "our fathers." The judgment of God did not spare any class but was according to their sins and their rebellion. In this passage, as in Daniel's earlier confession, he does not mince words but refers to Israel's trespasses and their sins with no attempt to excuse them.

Frederick A. Tatford summarizes Daniel 9:5-8 in these words, "There was no tautology in the prolific accumulation of expressions he used: it was rather that he sought to express by every possible word the enormity of the guilt and contumacy of himself and his people. They had sinned in wandering from the right, they had dealt perversely in their wilful impiety, they had done wickedly in their sheer infidelity, they had rebelled in deliberate refractoriness, they had turned aside from the Divine commandments and ordinances. Their cup of iniquity was full. Their guilt was accentuated by the fact that prophets had been sent to them with the Divine message and they had refused to listen. All were implicated--rulers, leaders (the term 'fathers' being used, of course, in a metaphorical rather than in a literal sense), and the people. God was perfectly just, but a shameful countenance betrayed their own guilt. Nor was the confusion of face limited to Judah and Jerusalem: it was true of all Israelites throughout the world. Indeed, their scattering was in punishment for their own unfaithfulness to God. Daniel associated himself completely with his people in acknowledging their wrong-doing and freely confessed that their shamefacedness was due to perfectly justified corrections: they had sinned against God."⁴⁷²

Having contrasted the righteousness of God to the sins of Israel, Daniel now turns in verse 9 to the contrast of the mercies and forgiveness of God as compared to the sin of Israel. The word mercies here is a different word than in Daniel 9:4 and is correctly translated. Although God is a God of righteousness, He is also a God of mercy. It is on this ground, of course, that Daniel is basing his petition. In doing so, he turns from addressing God directly in the second person to speaking of God in the third person, as if to state a truth for all who will hear, a theological fact now being introduced as the basis for the remainder of the prayer. As Stuart observes, "The plur. form of these nouns ["mercies and forgivenesses"] denotes intensity in the manifestation, or the continued and extended exercise of these qualities or attributes."⁴⁷³

Over against the reminder of the mercies and forgivenesses of God, Daniel now plunges into recital of the extent of Israel's sin in verses 10-11. Again, Daniel restates the facts that Israel has not obeyed the voice of the Lord their God. They have not walked according to His laws as proclaimed to them by the Lord's servants, the prophets. The word translated "laws" in verse 10 means literally, "instructions" (cf. Is 1:10 ff.). The rebellion was not on the part of a few but "all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing." Because of their persistent failure and rebellion against God, the prophesied curse pronounced upon Israel as "written in the law of Moses the servant of God" was applied.

In Deuteronomy 28, for instance, the conditions of blessing and cursing are set forth before Israel in detail. If they obeyed, they would have every blessing, temporal and spiritual, from God. If they disobeyed, God would destroy them and scatter them over the earth. Moses had made perfectly clear that Israel's situation would indeed be desperate if they disobeyed the Lord God. Most of Deuteronomy 28 is devoted to itemizing these curses, concluding with the prophetic warning of the world-wide dispersion of Israel (Deu 28:63-65) and the resultant uncertainty of life and future which would characterize individual Israelites.

How sad are Moses' words: "And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and you shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life: In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see" (Deu 28:63-67). It was to such passages and similar warnings of God to which Daniel referred.

G. E. Mendenhall has shown that the Mosaic covenant in its form has a close parallel in certain suzerainty treaties (i.e., treaties between the Great King and his vassals) of the Hittite Empire. Sanctions are typically supplied in these treaties by a series of blessings and cursings as also illustrated in Leviticus 26:14-39 and Deuteronomy 27-28. Such warnings are witnessed by heaven and earth (cf. Deu 4:26 and Is 1:2) and in their form are similar to many passages in the Old Testament.⁴⁷⁴

In verses 12-14, Daniel itemizes the evil which God had brought upon them as a result of their sin. In thus bringing judgment upon Israel, He had "confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us" (cf. Is 1:10-31; Mic 3). Above all, the other terrible judgment was that of the destruction of Jerusalem itself which was the final blow to Israel's pride and security.

Adding to all their earlier sins, Israel in their extremity did not turn to the Lord in prayer: "yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth." Even in the midst of the terrible manifestation of the righteous judgment of God, there was no revival, no turning to God; rulers and people alike persisted in their evil ways. What Daniel is saying is that God had no alternative, even though He was a God of mercy; for when mercy is spurned, judgment is inevitable. Daniel, accordingly, concludes in verse 14, "Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice." Porteous notes that the word watched, which can also be translated "keep ready" or "vigilant," is the same word Jeremiah uses when he tells how God was watchful over His word to perform it (Jer 1:12; cf. 31:28; 44:27). Jehovah was being faithful in keeping His word both in blessings and in cursings, which must have encouraged Daniel in anticipating the end of the captivity.⁴⁷⁵

Daniel's Petition for Forgiveness and Restoration

9:15-19 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

In his progression of thought, having laid fully the groundwork by confession of sin and recognition of the righteousness and mercies of God, Daniel now turns to the burden of his prayer--that God would, in keeping with His righteousness and according to His mercies, forgive and restore the people of Israel. In presenting his petition, Daniel first of all appeals to the revelation of the power and forgiveness of God in delivering the people of Israel from Egypt. In doing so, God had not only manifested His forgiveness but His power, and had gained "renown" among the nations for the demonstration of His mighty power. The deliverance of the people of Israel from Egypt is, in many respects, the Old Testament standard illustration of the power of God and His ability to deliver His people. By contrast in the New Testament, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is God's standard of power (Eph 1:19-20). In the future millennial reign of Christ, the standard of power will be the regathering of Israel and their restoration to the land (Jer 16:14-15). The three dispersions of Israel from the land and their regathering are among the more important demonstrations of power in relation to Israel. God had allowed them to go into Egypt and delivered them in the Exodus. He had punished them by the captives, but now Daniel is pleading with Him to restore His people to their land and their city. The future final regathering of Israel in relation to the millennial kingdom will be the final act fulfilling Amos 9:11-15, when Israel will be regathered never to be dispersed again. In both the dispersions and the regatherings, God's righteousness, power, and mercies are evident.

Having introduced the thought of God's deliverance of Israel from the land of Egypt, Daniel is once again overwhelmed by the wickedness of Israel which seems to block the way for the restoration. He injects, "We have sinned, we have done wickedly"--his theme song up to this point in the prayer--but, nevertheless, proceeds to his petition for Israel's forgiveness and restoration.

Stuart summarizes verse 15 in these words, "Here commences the supplication of the speaker; at least, this address is preparatory to it. The argument stands thus: 'O God, who in times past hast wrought wonderful deliverances for thy people, and thereby acquired a glorious name --repeat thy wondrous doings, and add to the glory which thou hast already acquired! As thou didst bring us out of exile in Egypt, so bring us out of exile in Babylon.'--a name, as at the present time, i.e. such a name, glory, honor, as is attributed to thee even now.--We have sinned etc., the deep sensation of penitence forces from the speaker the repetition of confession."⁴⁷⁶

In making his petition in verses 15-19, Daniel addresses God only as Adonai and Elohim and no longer uses the term Jehovah as he did in verses 4-14. Strangely, most commentators have ignored this significant change in address.⁴⁷⁷ Montgomery goes so far as to insert the word Jehovah in his translation, although he calls attention in his critical apparatus to the actual Hebrew.⁴⁷⁸ The explanation seems to be that in using the word Adonai, Daniel is recognizing God's absolute sovereignty over him as Lord.

In presenting his petition specifically, Daniel significantly appeals again to the righteousness of the Lord in verse 16. Although anticipating that the hope of the restoration of Israel depended on the mercies of God, Daniel recognized, nevertheless, that it must be "according to all thy righteousness." Here is implied the whole system of reconciliation to God by sacrifice, supremely fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Daniel recognizes that somehow there is no contradiction between the righteousness of God and His mercies and forgiveness. It is also true that the same Scriptures which predict God's judgment upon Israel also predict their restoration, and it would be in keeping with the veracity of God as a covenant-keeping God not only to inflict judgment but to bring in the promised restoration. In verse 16 as in verse 15, in beginning his petition, Daniel argues on the ground that the children of Israel are "thy people" and that his petition has to do with the restoration of Jerusalem which is "thy city," and "thy holy mountain." The appeal is to the fact that restoration will not only be an act of mercy but also that which will bring honor and glory to God and a testimony to the nations before whom Israel now is "a reproach." As Young expresses it, "The prayer is a tragic confession of guilt. Jerusalem should have been the mount unto which all nations would flow, and Israel should have been a light unto the Gentiles, but because of the people's sins, Jerusalem and Israel had become a reproach."⁴⁷⁹

With his petition now grounded on the fact that an answer would be to the glory of God, Daniel now adds one further item, namely, that the sanctuary itself, the place where God met man in sacrifice, was in desolation and that the whole sacrificial system had fallen into disuse because of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. Accordingly, in verse 17, he beseeches God to "hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications" and, in answer to Daniel's petition, to "cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake." Ultimately, it was not simply the restoration of Israel which Daniel sought, nor the restoration of Jerusalem or even of the temple, but specifically the sanctuary with its altars of sacrifice and its holy of holies.

The eloquence of Daniel's prayer now reaches its crescendo. How it must have delighted the ears of God to have heard His devoted servant present His petitions. How it must have moved the heart of God to have heard Daniel say, "O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies." If prayer to God can be called persuasive, Daniel's prayer certainly merits this description. Daniel in his holy life, his careful preparation in approaching God, his uncompromising confession of sin, and his appeal to God's holy character as the One who is both righteous and merciful, illustrates the kind of prayer that God delights to answer. Daniel, led by the Spirit of

God, had expressed precisely the prayer that God wanted to hear and wanted to answer.

In closing his prayer, Daniel once again beseeches God to hear, to forgive, to do, to defer not, all for God's own sake, for God's city Jerusalem, for God's people Israel, who are called by the name of the Lord. As Tat-ford has well said, "The prayer is one of the most remarkable in the pages of Holy Writ."⁴⁸⁰

Although no other portion of the Bible breathes with more pure devotion or has greater spiritual content than this prayer of Daniel, it has been attacked without mercy by the higher critics, of which Charles is an illustration. Acting on the premise that the book of Daniel as a whole is a second-century forgery and not written by Daniel the prophet in the sixth century B.C., exception is taken by the critics to this section of Daniel as a particular proof that the book of Daniel as a whole could not have been written by Daniel the prophet. Charles has seven arguments against accepting this passage as genuine.⁴⁸¹ Leupold representing conservative scholars summarizes the seven arguments of Charles and refutes them adequately.⁴⁸²

Montgomery has summarized the objections of the critics. Although making preliminary concessions that the prayer "is a liturgical gem in form and expression, and excels in literary character the more verbose types found in Ezr. and Neh.," he holds "the prayer is of the liturgical type which existed since the Deuteronomic age represented by Solomon's Prayer, 1 Ki. 8, the prayers of Jer., Jer. 26.32.44, and the prayers in Ezr.-Neh., Ezr. 9, Neh. 1.9." Montgomery goes on to say, "By far the largest part of this prayer consists of language found in those other compositions."⁴⁸³

Not all the higher critics, however, accept the explanation that Daniel 9:2-19 is an interpolation not originally in the book. These complicated arguments have been summarized both for and against by Montgomery. He states,

Von Gall, *Einheitlichkeit*, 123-126, has developed the thesis that Dan.'s prayer is an interpolation, although the rest of his work contends for the practical integrity of the canonical books. He is followed by Mar., Cha. [Marti's Commentary, and Charles]. It is patent, as these scholars argue, that the theme of the prayer does not correspond to the context, which would seem to require a prayer for illumination, cf. 2:20 ff., and not a liturgical confession bearing on the national catastrophe. Further, Dan.'s prayer for immediate redemption is in contrast to the recognition of the far distance of that event, 8:26 and end of this chap. It is pointed out that 5:4a repeats 5:3 and especially that 5:20 is a joint with the main narrative, which is resumed in 5:21; this would explain the repetition: "whiles I was speaking and praying and confessing" "whiles I was speaking in prayer." The present writer agrees with Kamp. [Kamphausen] in finding these arguments inconclusive. The second-century author may well have himself inserted such a prayer in his book for the encouragement of the faithful, even as the calculation of the times was intended for their heartening... For an elaborate study of the Prayer, defending its authenticity and also arguing for its dependence on the Chronicler, 10 Bayer, *Daniel-studien*, Part 1.⁴⁸⁴

The critics' argument is based on the false premise that Jeremiah's seventy years and the seventy weeks of Daniel 9:24-27 are the same. Because Daniel distinguishes these two periods, it is argued that the material is an interpolation. It is the critics who are wrong, not Daniel. The alleged copying from a common source on the part of Daniel, Nehemiah, and Baruch is better explained by the fact that Daniel was written first (sixth century B.C., not second century) and that Nehemiah and Baruch had Daniel before them. Again, it is the critics' theories which are the basis of their argument, and the theories are in error. The critics of Daniel argue in a circle; assuming a second century date for Daniel, they then criticize Daniel for

not harmonizing with their erroneous premises. The unity and beauty of this passage is its own defense.

The Coming of the Angel Gabriel

9:20-23 And whiles 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 for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

While Daniel was offering his petition to the Lord, the answer was already on the way by means of the heavenly messenger, the angel Gabriel. Daniel implies in verse 20 that the angel was sent at the very beginning of his prayer. As Daniel expresses it, it was accomplished "whiles 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 for the holy mountain of my God." According to verse 21, Gabriel touched Daniel about the time of the evening oblation. It is obvious that the prayer of Daniel recorded here is only a summary of the actual oral prayer which probably was lengthy and culminated at the time of the evening sacrifice.

The reference to "the man Gabriel" is not a denial that he is an angel, but serves to identify him with the vision of Daniel 8:15-16. The term man (Heb. *áish*) is also used in the sense of a servant.⁴⁸⁵ As brought out in chapter 8, there is an interesting play upon the thought here. Leupold notes: "The term 'Gabriel' means 'man of God,' but with this difference: the first root, *gebher*, means 'man' as the strong one, and the second root, *'el*, means the 'Strong God.'"⁴⁸⁶ In other words, the expression the man Gabriel could be translated "the servant, the strong one of the strong God." In addition to the identification by the name itself, Daniel adds, "whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning," that is, in chapter 8. Gabriel, according to Daniel, "being caused to fly swiftly," arrived at the time of the evening oblation. The Hebrew for being caused to fly swiftly is difficult, as all commentators note, but this seems to be the best possible translation. The thought is that God directed Gabriel to go immediately to Daniel at the beginning of his petition. Although he flew swiftly, he did not arrive until the end of Daniel's prayer.

It is a touching observation that he arrived at the time of the evening oblation. There, of course, had been no evening oblation for half a century since the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C.; but in Daniel's youth, he had seen the smoke rise from the temple site in the afternoon sky with its reminder that God accepts a sinful people on the basis of a sacrifice offered on their behalf. This sacrifice usually began about 3 p.m., and consisted of a perfect yearling lamb offered as a whole burnt offering accompanied by meal and drink offerings, which typified the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross as the spotless Lamb of God (Heb 9:14). Daniel does not speak specifically of the sacrifice but only of "the evening oblation," that is, the meal offering and the drink offering. The time of one, of course, was the time of the other. As the time of the evening sacrifice was also a stated time for prayer, Daniel was encouraged also to pray. As God in a sense met the spiritual need of His people at the time of the sacrifice and oblation, so Gabriel was sent by God to meet Daniel's special need at this time and remind him of the mercies of God.

Upon arrival, Gabriel talks with Daniel and states that the purpose of his coming is "to give thee skill in understanding." Although Daniel's prayer was not directed to his own need of understanding God's dealings with the people of Israel, this is the underlying assumption of his entire prayer. God, in a word,

wants to assure Daniel of His unswerving purpose to fulfill all His commitments to Israel, including their ultimate restoration. In verse 23, Gabriel confirms what is implied in verse 20 that he was given instructions to go to Daniel early in Daniel's prayer. The commandment apparently came from God Himself, although conceivably he might have been sent by Michael the Archangel. Because of the magnitude of the revelation which follows, however, it is better to ascribe it to God Himself. According to Gabriel's own statement, he had come to show Daniel what was necessary to understand the entire matter of Israel's program, and specifically, to consider the vision of the seventy weeks described in the verses which follow. Gabriel bears witness to the special relationship which Daniel had to the Lord in that he was one "greatly beloved," in many spiritual and moral characteristics like the Apostle John, the disciple whom Jesus loved (Jn 13:23). The long preamble of twenty-three verses leading up to the great revelation of the seventy weeks is, in itself, a testimony to the importance of this revelation. The stage is now set for Gabriel to reveal to Daniel God's purposes for Israel, culminating in the second coming of Christ to establish His kingdom on the earth.

The Revelation of the Seventy Sevens of Israel

9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

In the concluding four verses of Daniel 9, one of the most important prophecies of the Old Testament is contained. The prophecy as a whole is presented in verse 24. The first sixty-nine sevens is described in verse 25. The events between the sixty-ninth seventh and the seventieth seventh are detailed in verse 26. The final period of the seventieth seventh is described in verse 27.

Although many divergent interpretations have been advanced in explanation of this prophecy, they may first be divided into two major divisions, namely, the Christological and the non-Christological views.

The non-Christological approach may be subdivided into the liberal critical view and the conservative amillennial view. Liberal critics, assuming that Daniel is a forgery written in the second century B.C., find in this chapter that the pseudo-Daniel confuses the seventy years of Israel's captivity with the seventy sevens of Gabriel's vision. As Montgomery summarizes the matter in the introduction to chapter 9, "Dan., having learned from the Sacred Books of Jer.'s prophecy of the doom of seventy years' desolation for the Holy City, a term that was now naturally drawing to an end (1.2), sets himself to pray for the forgiveness of his people's sin and the promised deliverance (3-19). The angel Gabriel appears to him (20-21), and interprets the years as year-weeks, with detail of the distant future and of the crowning epoch of the divine purpose (22-27)."⁴⁸⁷ In a word, Montgomery is saying that this is not prophecy at all but is presented by the pseudo-Daniel as if it were. Whatever fulfillment there is, is a fulfillment in history already accomplished at the time this Scripture was written. In his extended note on the interpretation of the seventy weeks, Montgomery in general attempts to support the idea that the details of the prophecy are to a large extent fulfilled in the life and persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes.⁴⁸⁸ In his summary, Montgomery states,

The history of the exegesis of the 70 Weeks is the Dismal Swamp of O. T. criticism. The difficulties that beset any "rationalistic" treatment of the figures are great enough, but the critics on this side of the fence do not agree among themselves; but the trackless wilderness of assumptions and theories and efforts to obtain an exact chronology fitting into the history of Salvation, after these 2,000 years of infinitely varied

interpretations, would seem to preclude any use of the 70 Weeks for the determination of a definite prophetic chronology. As we have seen, the early Jewish and Christian exegesis came to interpret that datum eschatologically and found it fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem; only slowly did the theme of prophecy of the Advent of Christ impress itself upon the Church, along with the survival, however, of other earlier themes. The early Church rested no claims upon the alleged prophecy, but rather remarkably ignored it in a theological atmosphere surcharged with Messianism. The great Catholic chronographers naturally attacked the subject with scientific zeal, but their efforts as well as those of all subsequent chronographers (including the great Scalinger and Sir Isaac Newton) have failed.⁴⁸⁹

In other words, Montgomery, for all of his scholarship and knowledge of the history of interpretation, ends up with no reasonable interpretation at all.

Some conservative scholars have done no better, however, as illustrated in the commentary of Edward Young. Although treating the Scriptures with reverence, he finds no satisfactory conclusion for the seventy sevens of the prophecy and leaves it more or less like Montgomery without a satisfactory explanation.⁴⁹⁰

The conservative interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27 usually regards the time units as years. The decision is, however, by no means unanimous. Some amillenarians, like Young, who have trouble with fitting this into their system of eschatology consider this an indefinite period of time. Actually, the passage does not say "years"; and because it is indefinite, they consider the question somewhat open. Further, as Young points out, the word sevens is in the masculine plural instead of the usual feminine plural. No clear explanation is given except that Young feels "it was for the deliberate purpose of calling attention to the fact that the word sevens is employed in an unusual sense."⁴⁹¹

Most commentators agree that the time unit is not days. Further, the fact that there were seventy years of captivity, discussed earlier in the chapter, would seem to imply that years were also here in view. The interpretation of years at least is preferable to days as Young comments, "The brief period of 490 days would not serve to meet the needs of the prophecy, upon any view. Hence, as far as the present writer knows, this view is almost universally rejected."⁴⁹² Young finally concludes after some discussion that Keil and Kliefoth are correct when they hold that the word sevens does not necessarily mean year-weeks, but "an intentionally indefinite designation of a period of time measured by the number seven, which chronological duration must be determined on other grounds."⁴⁹³

With this point of view, Leupold, an amillenarian, also agrees: "Since the week of creation, 'seven' has always been the mark of divine work in the symbolism of numbers. 'Seventy' contains seven multiplied by ten, which, being a round number, signifies perfection, completion. Therefore, 'seventy heptads'--7x7x10--is the period in which the divine work of greatest moment is brought to perfection. There is nothing fantastic or unusual about this to the interpreter who has seen how frequently the symbolism of numbers plays a significant part in the Scriptures."⁴⁹⁴

Some amillenarians, however, use a literal year time unit for the first sixty-nine weeks but an indefinite period for the last seven years, as in the case of Philip Mauro (see pp. 232-37). In view of the precision of the seventy years of the captivity, however, mentioned in the same chapter, the context indicates the probability of a more literal intention in the revelation.

To be added to the non-Christological interpretation of Young is that of orthodox Jewry which concludes that the period ends with the destruction of Jerusalem in a.d. 70. This, of course, also does not give an adequate explanation of the text.

The overwhelming consensus of scholarship, however, agrees that the time unit should be considered years. It is normal for lexicographical authorities in the field of Hebrew to define the time unit as "period of seven (days, years)," and "heptad, weeks."⁴⁹⁵

Otto Zöckler, Professor of Theology in the University of Greifswald in Prussia in the 19th century, argued at length from the internal evidences within Daniel that the Hebrew term translated "week" denotes a period of seven years:

This cannot possibly denote seventy weeks in the ordinary sense, or 490 days; for the number has an obvious relation to the seventy years of Jeremiah, 5:2, and the brief limit of 490 days is not suited to serve as a mystical paraphrase of the period of three and a half years. Moreover, according to the descriptions in chapters 7 and 8, the three and a half years were throughout a period of suffering and oppression, while in 5:25 et seq. the latter and more extended subdivision (amounting to sixty-two weeks) of the seventy weeks is characterized as being comparatively free from sufferings. Finally, the three and a half years evidently reappear in 5:27, in the form of the "half-week" during which the sacrifices and oblations were to cease, etc.: and this undeniable identity of the small fraction at the end of the seventy weeks with the three and a half years of tribulation, heretofore described, removes it beyond the reason of doubt that the seventy weeks are to be regarded as seventy weeks of years, and therefore as an amplification of the seventy years of Jeremiah.⁴⁹⁶

In view of the great variety of opinions which find no Christological fulfillment at all in this passage, the interpreter necessarily must approach the Christological interpretation with some caution. Here again, however, diversity of opinion is found even though there is general agreement that the prophecy somehow relates to the Messiah of Israel. Christological interpretations divide again into two major categories. All Christological interpretations tend to interpret the first sixty-nine sevens as literal. The division comes on the interpretation of the seventieth seven. Amillennialists generally regard the seventieth seven as following immediately after the sixty-ninth seven and, therefore, is already fulfilled in history. The other point of view regards the seventieth seven as separated from the earlier sequence of years and scheduled for fulfillment in the future in the seven years preceding the second advent of Christ. Although many minor variations can be found, the principal question in the Christological interpretation of this text concerns the nature of fulfillment of the last seven years.

In the Christological interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27, it is generally assumed that the time units indicated are years. The English word "weeks" is misleading as the Hebrew is actually the plural of the word for seven, without specifying whether it is days, months, or years. The only system of interpretation, however, that gives any literal meaning to this prophecy is to regard the time units as prophetic years of 360 days each according to the Jewish custom of having years of 360 days with an occasional extra month inserted to correct the calendar as needed. The seventy times seven is, therefore, 490 years with the beginning at the time of "the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" found in verse 25 and the culmination 490 years later in verse 27. Before detailing the events to be found in the first 483 years (sixty-nine times seven), the events between the sixty-ninth seven and the seventieth seven, and the final seven years, Daniel gives the overall picture in verse 24. Careful attention must be given to the precise character of this important foundational prophecy.

The prophetic period of time in question is declared to be "determined." This involves the assumption of a comprehensive plan of God in which future events are rendered certain and conceived of as a part of an overall plan which is being executed by God.

A very important aspect of the prophecy given at the start is that the period of time in question relates to "thy people" and "thy holy city." Even in ruins, Jerusalem remains the city set apart in the heart of God (cf. 9:20) and Daniel shared this love for the city which is central in God's program for His kingdom both in the past and the future. Unlike the prophecies of Daniel 2, 7, and 8, which primarily related to the Gentiles, this chapter is specifically God's program for the people of Israel, as Daniel would obviously interpret it. To make this equivalent to the church composed of both Jews and Gentiles is to read into the passage something foreign to the whole thinking of Daniel. The church as such has no relation to the city nor to the promises given specifically to Israel relating to their restoration and repossession of the land.

Once it has been established that the prophecy relates to the people of Israel and the holy city Jerusalem, six important purposes of God are clearly discerned in verse 24: (1) "to finish the transgression"; (2) "to make an end of sins"; (3) "to make reconciliation for iniquity"; (4) "to bring in everlasting righteousness"; (5) "to seal up the vision and prophecy"; and (6) "to anoint the most Holy."

These six items, to be completed in the seventy sevens of Daniel 9:24, are comprehensive in nature. Some expositors, like Young, attempt to find three negative results, namely, "to finish the transgression," "to make an end of sins," and "to make reconciliation for iniquity." By contrast, the positive accomplishments would be "to bring in everlasting righteousness," "to seal up the vision and prophecy," and "to anoint the most Holy." This obviously is an arbitrary division, because "to make reconciliation for iniquity" is a positive rather than a negative act and, on the contrary, "to seal up the vision and prophecy" is probably negative instead of positive.⁴⁹⁷ The preferable approach is to take each on its own merits.

The first three, however, do deal with sin named in three ways: "the transgression," "sins," and "iniquity." Although a great variety of interpretations are possible, as the text itself does not explain the terminology, the general idea can be ascertained. In the period of the seventy sevens, first will be a program to finish the transgression. The expression to finish is derived from the piel verb form of the root ka,,la, meaning "to finish" in the sense of bringing to an end. The most obvious meaning is that Israel's course of apostasy and sin and wandering over the face of the earth will be brought to completion within the seventy sevens. The restoration of Israel which Daniel sought in his prayer will ultimately have its fulfillment in this concept.

The second aspect of the program, "to make an end of sins," may be taken either in the sense of taking away sins or bringing sin to final judgment.⁴⁹⁸ Due to a variation in textual reading, another possibility is to translate it "to seal up sin."⁴⁹⁹

Keil translates this aspect, "to seal up sin," and states, "The figure of the sealing stands here in connection with the shutting up in prison. Cf. ch.6:18, the king for greater security sealed up the den into which Daniel was cast. Thus also God seals the hand of man that it cannot move, Job 37:7, and the stars that cannot give light, Job 9:7... The sins are here described as sealed, because they are altogether removed out of the sight of God."⁵⁰⁰

The final explanation may include all of these items because the eschatological conclusion of Israel's history does indeed bring an end to their previous transgressions, brings their sin into judgment, and also introduces the element of forgiveness.

The third aspect of the program, "to make reconciliation for iniquity," seems to be a rather clear picture of the Cross of Christ in which Christ reconciled Israel as well as the world to Himself (2 Co 5:19). As far as the Old Testament revelation of reconciliation is concerned, lexicographers and theologians have understood the Hebrew word kipe,,r when used in relation to sin to mean to "cover," to "wipe out," to

"make... as harmless, non-existent, or inoperative, to annul (so far as God's notice or regard is concerned), to withdraw from God's sight, with the attached ideas of reinstating in His favour, freeing from sin, and restoring to holiness."⁵⁰¹

While the basic provision for reconciliation was made at the cross, the actual application of it is again associated with the second advent of Christ as far as Israel is concerned, and an eschatological explanation is possible for this phase as well as an historic fulfillment.

George N. H. Peters relates Christ's sacrifice to the kingdom specifically:

Following the Word step by step, it will be found that the sacrifice forms an eternal basis for the Kingdom itself. For it constitutes the Theocratic King a Saviour who now saves from sin without violation or lessening of the law, He having died "the just for the unjust," and even qualifies Him as such a King, so that in virtue of His obedience unto death He is given authority over all enemies, and to restore all things... The sacrifice affects the restoration of the Jewish nation; but when the happy time comes that they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, faith in that sacrifice shall also in them bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The allegiance of the nations, and all of the Millennial and New Jerusalem descriptions are realized as resultants flowing from 'this sacrifice being duly appreciated and gratefully, yea joyfully, acknowledged. It is out of the inexhaustible fountain from whence the abundant mercies of God flow to a world redeemed by it.'⁵⁰²

The fourth aspect of the program is "to bring in everlasting righteousness." There is a sense in which this also is accomplished by Christ in His first coming in that He provided a righteous ground for God's justification of the sinner. The many Messianic passages, however, which view righteousness as being applied to the earth at the time of the second coming of Christ may be the ultimate explanation. Jeremiah, for instance, stated, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer 23:5-6). The righteous character of the Messianic kingdom is pictured in Isaiah 11:2-5 (cf. Is 53:11; Jer 33:15-18).

The fifth aspect of the program, "to seal up the vision and prophecy," is probably best understood to mean the termination of unusual direct revelation by means of vision and oral prophecy. The expression to seal up indicates that no more is to be added and that what has been predicted will receive divine confirmation and recognition in the form of actual fulfillment. Once a letter is sealed, its contents are irreversible (cf. 6:8). Young applies this only to the Old Testament prophet,⁵⁰³ but it is preferable to include in it the cessation of the New Testament prophetic gift seen both in oral prophecy and in the writing of the Scriptures. If the seventieth week is still eschatological, it would allow room for this interpretation which Young, attempting to interpret the entire prophecy as fulfilled, could not allow.

The sixth aspect of the prophecy, "to anoint the most Holy," has been referred to the dedication of the temple built by Zerubbabel, to the sanctification of the altar previously desecrated by Antiochus (1 Macc 4:52-56), and even to the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:1-27).⁵⁰⁴ Young suggests that it refers to Christ Himself as anointed by the Spirit.⁵⁰⁵ Keil and Leupold prefer to refer it to the new holy of holies in the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:1-3).⁵⁰⁶ A. C. Gaebelien, expressing a premillennial view, believes the phrase "has nothing whatever to do with Him [Christ], but it is the anointing of the Holy of Holies in another temple, which will stand in the midst of Jerusalem," that is, the millennial temple.⁵⁰⁷

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