

Daniel 9:20-27

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

The angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel in answer to his prayer while he was still praying. "At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved..." Daniel's standing with the Lord was unique. We often bemoan the difference between our timing and God's and think of ourselves as always waiting on the Lord. It may be that our experience might be closer to Daniel's where God apparently was waiting on Daniel's prayer and as soon as Daniel started praying God started sending him the answer to his requests.

The prophecy of the 70 weeks has many interpreters and so the danger is that we would try (as others before us) to fit the prophecy into the system of thought that we are already committed to. It is better to ask of every scripture, "What is it saying?"

and face some issues of consistency than to have all of the answers and therefore need to find a way to make a particular scripture "fit."

Daniel prayed after reading of Jeremiah's prophecy that Israel's captivity would last for 70 years. We cannot know what Daniel's assumptions might have been but God's answer clearly revealed that the 70 years of captivity were just the beginning. God had many more plans for His people. And so Gabriel announced, "70 weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city..." We understand this to be 70 weeks of years. Daniel prayed with the understanding that the 70 years of the captivity were almost up and God answered that there are 70 weeks of years yet to come.

God stated the purpose for the 70 weeks of years: "to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." The impression made by this list sounds like the ultimate, as if God is saying to Daniel that after the 70 years of captivity, this is what I have left to do.

The specifics of the prophecy rest upon when the 70 weeks begin and when they end. Looking back from where we are in history, if the prophecy ends at a time when nothing significant seems to have happened then we could conclude that the 70 weeks began at a time other than what we had thought. Scholars using this premise have concluded that the command to go forth and restore and build Jerusalem would have been that issued by Artaxerxes to Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in 445 BC. The first 7 weeks of years would have been a continuation of the cleanup of the city. The completion of the next 62 weeks of years would get you to the ministry of Jesus the Messiah after which He was cut off (killed) but not for Himself. It is notable here that there was a high level of Messianic expectation at the time of Jesus' birth and ministry and you have to wonder if Daniel's prophecy was a factor in such expectation.

The 70th week is separated from the first 69 and the events described are like but different than the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD. So the prince who is to come appears to be the Antichrist who is yet to come and the last of the 70 weeks the Great Tribulation of the Book of Revelation.