

SESSION THIRTEEN

DANIEL 9:20-27

The "Crown Jewels" of Old Testament Prophecy: The Seventy Weeks

INTRODUCTION

The first part of this chapter dealt with Daniel's prayer of repentance in response to his discovery in Jeremiah's writings that the time in exile would be seventy years. In view of his prayer, God was pleased to reveal even more to him:

1. The actual date when Messiah Jesus would come, the One whom Daniel had seen in vision in Dan 7 as the "Son of man."
2. The prediction that the Messiah would suffer violently (be "cut off") before the eventual Kingdom.
3. The "Little Horn" or Antichrist (who was revealed to Daniel in ch 7 and through type in ch 8) would enter into a unique covenant arrangement with Israel before his own judgment.

I. GOD'S RESPONSE TO DANIEL'S PRAYER BY WAY OF GABRIEL (9:20-23)

A. Gabriel's Purpose in Appearing

Gabriel declared that Daniel was to be given "*insight with understanding*" (v 22). Daniel had understood the purpose of the 70 years of captivity and that they were drawing to a close. But that was not sufficient for the completion of Jerusalem's desolations or for God's purposes for Jerusalem. God was looking toward the complete cure of Israel and the fulfilment of His promises to the nation (giving them Messianic rest).

B. Connection Between the 70 Years and the Completion

There would be a relationship between the 70 years of exile and God's future program with the nation. Paul Feinberg describes this:

The seventy *years* of captivity are the clue to a prophecy of seventy *weeks*. In the seventy years of captivity God put an end to idolatry, which had been a besetting sin prior to God's judgment. The new prophecy of seventy weeks foresees a time when *all* transgression, sin, and iniquity will be done away with in Israel.¹

II. THE NEW REVELATION TO DANIEL OF THE SEVENTY "WEEKS" (9:24-27)

A. The Accomplishments During the Period of the Seventy Weeks (9:24)

1. Key Observation: Who?

¹Paul D. Feinberg, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24-27," in *Tradition and Testament*, 189-220.

Note that the decree pertains to "*your people*" and "*your holy city*." Since Daniel is the recipient, these phrases have the Jewish people and Jerusalem in mind, not the Church. There may be implications for the Church, but the primary focus is on Israel.

2. Six Purposes of God to be Accomplished

a. "to finish the transgression" (לְכַלֵּא הַפְּשָׁעַ) (לְכַלֵּא הַפְּשָׁעַ)

This looks at Israel's apostasy and sin against the LORD (note Dan 8:12-13), and her wandering over the face of the earth in discipline. The restoration of Israel which Daniel sought in his prayer will ultimately be fulfilled within the "seventy week" period.

b. "to make an end of sin" (לְחַתֵּם חַטָּאוֹת) (לְחַתֵּם חַטָּאוֹת)

Christ Himself will be punished for Israel's sin, and will eventually remove sin from the nation at the 2nd Advent (Ezek 37:23; Zech 5; Rom 11:20-27).

c. "to make atonement for iniquity" (לְכַפֵּר עוֹן) (לְכַפֵּר עוֹן)

To "atone" means to *purge* iniquity on the basis of sacrifice, and thus to grant forgiveness. The grounds for this is the crucifixion of Christ at Calvary, although the phrase finds its ultimate fulfilment in Israel's national day of atonement at the 2nd Coming (Zech 3:8-9; 13:1).

d. "to bring in everlasting righteousness" (לְהָבִיא צְדָקָה עֲלָמִים) (לְהָבִיא צְדָקָה עֲלָמִים)

This alludes to the many Messianic passages which view righteousness as being applied to the earth at the time of the second coming of Christ (Jer 23:5-6; Isa 11:2-5; 60:21).

e. "to seal up vision and prophecy" (לְחַתֵּם חִזּוֹן וְנְבִיא) (לְחַתֵּם חִזּוֹן וְנְבִיא)

To "seal" (חָתַם, *hātām*) can mean (1) to authenticate by sealing (1 Kgs 21:8; Jer 32:10,11,44); (2) to conceal something or make inaccessible (Isa 29:11; Dan 12:4, 9?); or (3) to secure something or preserve it securely (poss. Dan 12:4, 9; Deut 32:34). If the latter idea is intended, the prophetic vision is sealed up now (for preservation), but will be ultimately realized in the "end of time" (cf. Dan 8:26; 12:4, 9). This looks at the full realization of what God said He would do in fulfilling His program with Israel, especially her restoration in preparation for Messiah's kingdom.

f. "to anoint the most Holy Place" (לְמַשְׁחָ קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים) (לְמַשְׁחָ קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים)

The word "place" is not in the Heb. text, though this can be inferred. The words קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים "the most holy" usually do not refer to a person—though they do in one case, namely, 1 Chr 23:13 in regard to Aaron. More commonly, these words describe the altar or furnishings of the Tabernacle as being "most holy" (Ex 29:37; 30:29). Significantly, the "sanctuary" (הַבְּיָדִים) in Ezekiel's eschatological vision is

called "most holy" in Ezek 45:3 (same words, קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים), as is the entire top of the mountain for the sanctuary (Ezek 43:10-12; see esp. v 12).

Summary: "The six summarize God's whole program to bring the nation Israel the blessings He promised through His covenants (Gen. 15:18-21; 2 Sam. 7:16; Jer. 31:31-34)."²

3. The Time Frame: "Seventy Weeks" (NIV = "seventy sevens")

Introduction: Israel's time of exile under Babylon had been 70 years (שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה), but this did not satisfy God's righteous anger against His people, nor did Israel yet have a "heart" for God (Deut 5:29). More time was needed for the "Times of the Gentiles" to run its course before Israel's final restoration would be complete. This would take 70 "weeks."

a. Meaning of the 70 "Weeks" (שְׁבַעִים שָׁבָעִים)

The term "weeks" (*šābu'im*, שְׁבַעִים) means "a unit of seven." The time reference could be days, months, or years. In this case, however, *šābu'im* (שְׁבַעִים) clearly means years. Hence, seventy periods of seven years (490 total) will be needed to accomplish God's purposes.³

INSIGHT

If the whole period was meant to be 490 years, why did the author not simply say this instead of "70 Weeks"? Answer: The expression used in Daniel has more flexibility, and does not have to mean 490 successive years.

b. Defense of "Week" = 7 Years

- (1) It is simply not possible for all these purposes of God to be fulfilled in 490 days or even 490 months. Furthermore, if "week" meant a period of 7 days, then Dan 9:27 would call for a covenant being made for 7 days (which is very doubtful).
- (2) Daniel had been thinking in terms of years (Dan 9:1-2).
- (3) The 70 years of captivity was a judgment for 490 years of failure to keep the sabbatical years. So, 490 years are assigned for the completion of Israel's desolations.

²J. D. Pentecost, "Daniel," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, OT*, 1362.

³For discussion of "weeks" as "7 years," see John C. Whitcomb, "Daniel's Great Seventy-Weeks Prophecy: An Exegetical Insight," *Grace Theological Journal* 2:2 (Fall 1981):259-63; Harold Hoehner, "Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ; Part VI: Daniel's Seventy Weeks and New Testament Chronology," *BibSac* 132 (Jan-Mar 1975):47-65; and Paul D. Feinberg, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24-27." Arguing that *šābu'im* means literal "weeks" rather than "units of seven," see Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Hebrew Masculine Plural for Weeks in the Expression 'Seventy Weeks' in Daniel 9:24," *AUSS* 31 (Summer 1993):105-118; and Frank W. Hardy, "The Hebrew Singular for 'Week' in the Expression 'One Week' in Daniel 9:27," *AUSS* (Autumn 1994):197-202.

"The most convincing reason is that Daniel had been thinking about seventy years of captivity (Jer. 25:11; 29:10). Every year of exile represented a cycle of seven years in which the seventh year, the sabbatical year, had not been observed. Thus, the 70 years of captivity were the result of having violated seventy sabbatical years. This would have been done over a period of 490 years. Daniel now is given a prophecy of units of seven concerning 490 years (2 Chron. 36:21; cf. Lev. 26:33-35; Jer. 34:12-22)."⁴

(4) The Argument of Analogous Hebrew Usage

The word שְׁבוּעָה has an interesting parallel with עֶשְׂרִים which although normally meaning "ten days" can also mean "ten strings" or "an instrument of ten strings." Hence, the word עֶשְׂרִים must mean a "unit of ten" and only context determines whether it means "ten days" or "ten strings."

(5) The word שְׁבוּעָה appears 3 times in the OT with the word "days" (יָמִים) added, suggesting that שְׁבוּעָה alone was not sufficient to indicate seven days. Hence, in Dan 10:2 we find יָמִים שְׁבַעִים שְׁלֹשָׁה which means three periods of seven days (= 21 days). Apparently, by adding "days" to the end, the author did not want his readers to think of the unit of seven the same way as it was in ch. 9.

(6) The final "week" in 9:27 most likely means seven years. The covenant is broken in the middle, and the final period of 3 1/2 parallels the 3 1/2 years of Dan 7:25 (cf. Rev 11–13).

(7) The word שְׁבוּעָה is used in Gen 29:27-28 in the sense "7 years," in the case of Jacob who was willing to serve Laban for seven years in exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage.

(8) Finally the term שְׁבוּעָה does mean "7 years" in other Jewish literature. In the Mishnah, we find the term שְׁבוּעָה clearly meaning "7 years":

"The Sanhedrin that puts to death one person in seven years (בְּשִׁבְעָה) is termed tyrannical."⁵

B. The Time of Messiah's Coming (Dan 9:25)

1. Messiah's coming will be after 7 weeks plus 62 weeks (69 weeks total)

The calculation is based on a certain "decree" (דְּבַר), namely the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. Hence, we must determine which decree this was, and when it took place.⁶

⁴Paul D. Feinberg, 209.

⁵Mishnah 4 (נוֹיָקִין), Makkoth (מַכּוֹת) 1:10. Cf. *Babylonian Talmud* (Sanhedrin 97a). For Jewish calculations of Dan 9:24-27 (both messianic and non-messianic) that assumed שְׁבוּעָה meant "7 years," see Roger T. Beckwith, "Daniel 9 and the Date of Messiah's Coming in Essene, Hellenistic, Pharisaic, Zealot and Early Christian Computation."

⁶McComiskey ("The Seventy 'Weeks' of Daniel") rejects the idea that a royal decree is meant, choosing to take דְּבַר in 9:25 as a "prophetic word" (namely, the prophecy of Jer 29:10). Though דְּבַר is not a specific term for "decree," it certainly can mean a king's *command* (e.g., 1 Chron 21:4).

2. Implication: Why does the text divide this into two periods (7 and 62)? Why not say 69? The first period of 7 weeks (49 years) is the time needed for the complete rebuilding of Jerusalem with fortification walls, etc. Note the last sentence of the verse!

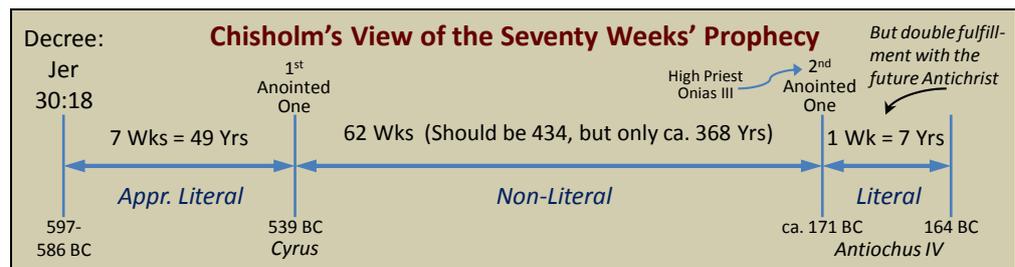
Explanation: From the time of the issuing of the decree, it will take 7 weeks (49 years) until the city is properly rebuilt. Then another 62 weeks (434 years) will be needed until the Messiah comes.

3. Four possibilities as to the identity of this decree:

- a. The "announcement" to Jeremiah in Jer 30:18 (ca. 597-586 BC)

[Robert Chisholm of Dallas Seminary holds this view]

Elaboration: Chisholm appeals to Isa 45:1, where Cyrus is called "anointed one," to establish that the word *meshiach* does not always have to refer to the Messiah. He claims (following McComiskey) that the Hebrew grammar demands that the 7 weeks be separated from the 62 weeks. Thus it is not 69 (7 + 62) weeks until "Messiah the prince," but 7 weeks (ca. 49 years) until "*meshiach* the prince/ruler" (i.e., Cyrus). He would see the first 7 weeks as the period from the announcement to Jeremiah (ca. 597-586 BC) until Cyrus' conquest of Babylon in 539 BC. For him, the next 62 weeks are not literal, but extend from 539 BC until Antiochus (r. 175-164 BC). The final week is the period of approximately 7 years that Antiochus persecutes Israel, beginning with the murder of the High Priest, Onias III, ca. 171 BC. Although the prophecy finds fulfillment with Antiochus, Chisholm claims that this has double fulfillment with the Antichrist. Hence, although the prophecy is not messianic, it is ultimately eschatological.



Problems with this view:

- (1) Chisholm's claim about the Hebrew grammar pertains to an accent marker, not the actual words of the text. This accent marker is NOT part of the inspired text, but was added centuries after Christ by some Jewish scribes known as the Massoretes.
- (2) In Chisholm's view, some of the numbers are literal while others are not. The first 7 weeks (49 yrs) are approximately literal, the 62 are clearly not, and the final week (7 years) is literal. On the one hand, he has failed to establish that all the numbers should not be taken literally, while on the other hand, he has not even been consistent.
- (3) Chisholm has not presented a convincing case that the words to Jeremiah in Jer 30:18 should indeed be considered "the decree" referred to in Dan 9.

- b. The decree of Cyrus about 538 BC (Ezra 1:1-4; 6:3-5)

[so Calvin, Keil, Leupold, Young, and Baldwin—though their starting date varies slightly from 539-536 BC]

Reasons to reject this possibility:

- (1) A close examination of these passages reveals that the decree of Cyrus concerned the Temple, not the rebuilding of the city.⁷
- (2) Within 49 years (7 'weeks' of years) of the decree, the city was to be completely restored. However, it obviously was not restored during the period 538-489 BC (see Neh 1).
- (3) A total of 69 "weeks" (483 years) from 538 BC would terminate about 55-54 BC, a date shy of the Messiah's coming.

- c. The decree of Artaxerxes to Ezra about 457 BC (Ezra 7:11-26)

[so J. Barton Payne, Gleason Archer, Leon Wood, Pusey, and Miller]

Defense: Calculating on the basis of solar years, this date would put the 69th "week" at AD 26/27, which advocates of this position would equate with the commencement of Christ's public ministry. This would allow for the death of Christ in AD 30, which Archer points out is the "generally believed" date for the crucifixion.⁸

Problems with this view:

- (1) There is no mention in the Ezra passage of rebuilding the city, but rather of permitting a return of the Jews and the "adorning" of the Temple.
- (2) Using AD 27 as the start of Christ's public ministry (so Archer) runs into a problem when one harmonizes the chronological data of the gospels. Hoehner has demonstrated that the commencement would have to be in AD 29 based on Luke 3:1-3, the 15th year of Tiberius.⁹

- d. The Authorization of Artaxerxes permitting Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem in 444 BC (see Neh 1-2)¹⁰

[so Walvoord, Ryrie, Hoehner, J. D. Pentecost, D. Campbell, P. Tanner]¹¹

⁷Proponents in favor of the Cyrus decree will sometimes counter with the argument that Isaiah prophesied that Cyrus would rebuild the city (Isa 44:28; 45:13). This is still not convincing, because the simple fact is that the city was not substantially rebuilt under Cyrus (as Nehemiah 1 makes obvious). It may be better to view the prophecies of Isaiah as proclaiming Cyrus as the one who set the whole process in motion.

⁸G. Archer, *EBC*, 7:114. Cf. L. A. Foster, "The Chronology of the New Testament," *EBC*, 1:598-99, 607.

⁹H. Hoehner, "Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ; Part II: The Commencement of Christ's Ministry," *BibSac* 131 (Jan-Mar 1974):41-54.

¹⁰This view of the *terminus a quo* may have had its origins with Julius Africanus (cf. Montgomery, 391). Julius Africanus (b. ca. AD 200; d. after AD 240) was from Emmaus (Nicomolis) of Palestine and eventually was a pupil under Heraclas, a disciple of Origen. He calculated the prophecy on the basis of the 20th year of Artaxerxes, but he held that all 70 weeks were completed by Christ's first coming (see his *Chronographia*).

¹¹The famous work of Sir Robert Anderson (*The Coming Prince*, 10th ed., [London: Hodder &

Concerns:

- (1) This decree is not a major one, but reaffirming an earlier existing edict.
- (2) This position demands a late date for the crucifixion (AD 33).
- (3) This relies for its calculations on a prophetic or 360 day year (lunar year).
- (4) Proponents calculate the *terminus ad quem* as the date of Christ's triumphal entry, although the text in Daniel says nothing about the specific time in Messiah's life.

Support:

- (1) The concern in Nehemiah was specifically over the dilapidation of the city (Neh 1).
- (2) Nehemiah's request before the King was specifically to rebuild the city (2:5), and the decree was for that purpose (2:7-8).
- (3) The Book of Nehemiah (and Ezra 4:7-23) indicates that the restoration was done in the most distressing circumstances (note Dan 9:25!).
- (4) The Book of Ezra makes an explicit statement that the *final completion* of the building work came about in the days of Artaxerxes: "they finished building according to the command (מִצְוָה) of the God of Israel and the decree (מִצְוָה) of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia" (Ezra 6:14).

Dating Nehemiah's Decree:

- (1) The biblical data: Neh 2:1 gives the date as the month Nisan in the 20th year of Artaxerxes. Comparing this to Neh 1:1, the author must be using the Tishri-to-Tishri system (rather than the Persian of Nisan-to-Nisan).
- (2) Historical date: The father of Artaxerxes (i.e., Xerxes) died shortly after Dec 17, 465.¹² Hence, the accession year of Artaxerxes would be Dec 465 to Nisan, 464 BC. His first regnal year as King (according to the Persian system) would be Nisan 464 to Nisan 463 (or Tishri 464 to Tishri 463 by the Jewish system).
- (3) Thus the decree in the 20th year would be Nisan of 444 BC according to the Tishri-to-Tishri system.¹³

Stoughton, 1915]) was also based on the decree to Nehemiah. Anderson, however, used the dates Mar 14, 445 BC to April 6, AD 32. These dates need correcting in light of more recent research. Walvoord, in his commentary (p 228) uses the 445 BC date, but changes this to 444 in his more recent work, *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook* (p 253).

¹²Cf. S. H. Horn and L. H. Wood, "The Fifth-Century Jewish Calendar at Elephantine," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 13 (Jan 1954), 9.

¹³ This date is further confirmed by Julius Africanus who dates the 20th year of Artaxerxes in the 4th year of the 83rd Olympiad, which would be Nisan of 444 BC (*The Extant Writings of Julius Africanus*, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 6, ed. Roberts and Donaldson [Edinburgh, 1867; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1989], 135).

4. Conclusion Regarding the Decree for the *Terminus a quo*

The best position seems to be the authorization to Nehemiah to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and its walls, which was given by King Artaxerxes in the month Nisan of 444 BC.

5. Dating Christ's Ministry

a. Possible Years

- (1) The year of crucifixion must be when Passover (14th Nisan) was on a Friday (so Gospels; esp. Mt 27:62; Mk 15:42; Lk 23:54).¹⁴
- (2) Solved astronomically, the 14th of Nisan fell on Friday in the years 27, 30, and 33 AD (but on other days in all other years between 26 and 34 AD).¹⁵

b. Which Year in Particular?

This can be determined on the basis of Christ's cleansing of the Temple on the 1st Passover of His public ministry (Jn 2:20), in which a comment is made about 46 years of the Temple. Taking this as the *Temple edifice* (ναός) and using the date supplied by Josephus (18/17 BC), Hoehner concludes that the 1st Passover of Christ's public ministry would be AD 29 or 30. Hence, the crucifixion would have to be in AD 33.¹⁶

c. Conclusions:

On the 10th of Nisan, March 30, AD 33 (Monday of that year), the people were to choose a lamb for the Passover and set it aside to observe it until Nisan 14 (see Exodus 12). [Some scholars believe that the Triumphal Entry of Christ actually took place on a Monday, not Sunday.] Christ died a few days later on Friday, April 3, AD 33.

6. The Calculation of "69 weeks" until Messiah

a. Calculate the Total Years

- (1) Each "week" is seven years
- (2) Messiah will come after 69 "weeks" ($7 + 62 = 69$)
- (3) Number of years until Messiah:

¹⁴See Harold W. Hoehner, "Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ; Part IV: The Day of Christ's Crucifixion," *BibSac* 131:523 (Jul-Sep 1974):241-264.

¹⁵Cf. J. K. Fotheringham, "The Evidence of Astronomy and Technical Chronology for the Date of the Crucifixion," *Journal of Theological Studies* 35 (April 1934):142-162; and Herman H. Goldstine, *New and Full Moons 1001 B.C. to A.D. 1651* (Phil.: American Philosophical Society, 1973).

¹⁶Harold Hoehner, "Chronological Aspects; Part V: The Year of Christ's Crucifixion," *BibSac* 131:524 (Oct-Dec 1974):332-48. Much of this discussion is quite technical, and does require him taking the verb in Jn 2:20 (οἰκοδομήθη) as an "effective" (or "perfective") aorist, with the idea "has been built . . . for 46 years." Arguing for the AD 32 date is Renald E. Showers, "New Testament Chronology and the Decree of Daniel 9," *Grace Journal* 11 (1970): 33-40. Further defense of the AD 33 date can be found in Paul L. Maier, "Sejanus, Pilate, and the Date of the Crucifixion," *Church History* 37 (1968): 3-13, and Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., Inc., 1998): 353-69.

$$69 \text{ "weeks"} \times 7 \text{ yrs/wk} = 483 \text{ years}$$

- b. Calculate the Total Days
 - (1) We need to assume that the years are "prophetic years" of 360 days, not solar years of 365 1/4 days.¹⁷
 - (2) $483 \text{ years} \times 360 \text{ days/yr} = 173,880 \text{ actual days}$
- c. Convert to Solar Years¹⁸

$$173,880 \text{ days} \times 1 \text{ yr}/365.242 \text{ days}$$

$$= 476.068 \text{ solar years}$$

$$= 476 \text{ solar years} + 25 \text{ days}$$
- d. Calculate from the Date of the Decree to Nehemiah
 - (1) Decree: March 5, 444 BC¹⁹
 - (2) Add 476 years + 25 days [Note: 1 BC to AD 1 = 1 year]
 - (3) Result: March 30, AD 33

Conclusion

From the decree of Artaxerxes on Nisan 1, 444 BC, 69 "weeks" would bring us to March 30, AD 33 (the 10th of Nisan), the very day of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

- (1) Zech 9:9 – The prediction of Israel's king coming on a donkey was fulfilled on March 30, AD 33.
- (2) Luke 19:41-44 – Israel's failure to discern the significance of this occasion. This was the time when Jesus was formally presented to the nation as her Messiah and evaluated by the Sanhedrin.

C. Tragedy to Follow the 69th Week (9:26)

1. "the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing"
 - a. This refers to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ

¹⁷Several lines of reasoning could be offered for using prophetic years: (1) several ancient countries had calendar systems based on a 360 day year (12 x 30) with some device to correct the lacking days (cf. P. Van Der Meer, *Chronology of Ancient Western Asia and Egypt* [Leiden: Brill, 1963]); (2) both Daniel and Revelation make use of 360 day prophetic years, and there seems to be a correlation between Dan 9:27 and the 360 day year in light of Dan 7:24-25; Rev 11:2-3; 12:6,14; and 13:5; and (3) a 30 day month is also used in Genesis (Gen 7:11; 8:4; comp. Gen 7:24; 8:3). On the other hand, those who advocate the prophetic year have to acknowledge that the Jewish calendar was tied to the seasons with methods for correction to the solar year (cf. Kings and Chronicles where OT authors used true solar years).

¹⁸J. Dwight Pentecost (*Bible Knowledge Commentary, OT*, 1363) and John Walvoord (*The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*, 254) use a similar method to Hoehner. Rather than using the decimal equivalent for days (365.242) as Hoehner does, Pentecost and Walvoord simply use 365. But then they add in 116 days for leap years, and 24 days for March 5-March 30 (notice that Hoehner uses 25!).

¹⁹According to Nehemiah 2:1, the decree was in Nisan of that year (i.e., March-April). Hoehner bases his calculations on the assumption that the decree was on Nisan 1 (= March 5), although the text does not state the exact day of the month.

"The 'cutting off' of Messiah indicates a violent death. The Hebrew word is used of making a covenant, involving the death of a sacrificial animal (Gen 15:10,18). The word is used of the death penalty (Lev 7:20) and always of an unnatural violent death (cf. Isa 53:8)."²⁰

- b. "have nothing" - Earlier in Daniel, the expectation had been given that the Messiah "Son of Man" would inherit the kingdom (Dan 7:14; cf. Ps 2:8) and take up His Messianic rule over the nations. In light of Israel's rejection and the crucifixion of her Messiah, the kingdom was not inaugurated at the time of His first coming.²¹

2. "destroy the city and the sanctuary"

This looks at the tragic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70 by the Romans under Titus. Notice carefully: it is not the "Prince who is to come" that destroys Jerusalem. Rather, it is the "people of the prince who is to come." The *people* obviously refers to the Romans, and hence the future "prince" (the "little horn" or Antichrist) must arise out of the remnant of the Roman Empire--a fact consistent with what was taught in Dan 7:24-25.

Crucial Observation: The "prince" does not come immediately after the 69th week, and he does not come until after AD 70!

D. The Final Week: A Covenant with Israel (9:27)

1. The final week (7 years) does not follow the first 69 weeks, and we must understand some gap of time between verse 26 and verse 27.²²
 - a. The goals of 9:24 were not accomplished with Christ's 1st coming.
 - b. The destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) is after the first 69 weeks by 37-38 years, but before the 70th week.
 - c. The "abomination of desolation" (alluded to in 9:27) is regarded by Christ as a future event connected with the 2nd coming (Mt 24:15).
 - d. The text never says that the prophecy in 9:24 is for 490 consecutive years; rather they are seen in 70 units of seven years.
 - e. The details of 9:27 fit well with what we know elsewhere of the tribulation period, especially the similarity to Dan 7:24-25. [A half "week" would be equivalent to "time, times, and half a time"].

²⁰Paul D. Feinberg, 202.

²¹Though the Messiah "has nothing" in regard to the kingdom promise, He certainly does have other things of value: (1) He has ascended to the right hand of the Father and is now glorified, and (2) He has the Church.

²²Some evangelical scholars (e.g., Young, Kline, and J. B. Payne) have mistakenly assumed that the 70th week immediately followed the 69th, and have interpreted the one making the covenant in 9:27 as Jesus Christ. However, it is highly unlikely that Christ made any covenant to prevail only one week. His death certainly did not make sacrifices cease, as these went on to AD 70 (though Young and Kline attempt to argue that He "delegitimized" sacrifices at His death).

- f. Paul, in 2 Thess 2:4, makes clear allusion to Daniel by describing the Antichrist as "the son of destruction" and associating him with a temple desecration.
2. The one making the covenant is the Antichrist
- a. In 9:25 mention is made of "Messiah the Prince," whereas v 26 speaks of "the prince who is to come." The latter cannot be Christ, because he is connected with the people that destroyed Jerusalem (i.e., the Romans).
- b. The near antecedent in 9:27 for "he" (i.e., the one who makes the covenant) is the prince of 9:26.²³
- c. There is a strong Christian tradition that the 70th week is the future time of the Antichrist.
- (1) Irenaeus (c. AD 120-202) not only identifies the subject as the Antichrist, but takes the last half of the week as the 3 1/2 years of his power.²⁴ He will make an "abomination of desolation" in a literal temple (fulfilling Mt 24:15 and 2 Thess 2:4).
- (2) Hippolytus (d. ca. AD 236) authored the earliest extant commentary on Daniel. He indicated that this period included the 3 1/2 year reign of the future Antichrist.
3. Details of the Covenant
- a. The covenant is with "the many." This refers to Israel (notice "your people" in 9:24).
- b. Hence, the covenant is an agreement between Israel and the "prince" of 9:26 connected with the future phase of the Roman Empire, i.e., the Antichrist.
- c. The nature of the covenant is not revealed. Some think this may be a type of agreement guaranteeing the peaceful existence of Israel as a nation. Another possibility is that the Antichrist *enforces* the Mosaic covenant, in his efforts to dupe the Jewish people into believing he is their Messiah. The mention of sacrifices in this verse would support the latter view. [This would be particularly appropriate, if indeed the Antichrist is actually Jewish. See further discussion at Dan 11:37].
- d. The Antichrist seems to honor the covenant for the first half of the week (3 and 1/2 years) but then deceitfully reneges on the agreement.
- e. The remainder of the verse seems to look at violations of the temple worship during the final 3 and 1/2 years.
- (1) Sacrifices are no longer allowed.
- (2) The "abominations" seem to look at Dan 12:11 and Mt 24:15 with the "abomination of desolation" set up in the temple. This may be connected

²³Baldwin observes that the covenant maker seems to be the enemy of God's cause: "The unusual verb used in *make a strong covenant* (*gābar*) bears this out, for it has the implication of forcing an agreement by means of superior strength" (*Daniel*, Tyndale series, 171).

²⁴*Against Heresies*, V.25.3-5. Remember that Irenaeus had heard Polycarp, the disciple of the Apostle John.

with the atrocities of 2 Thess 2:4 and the image of the beast in Rev 13 (in this regard, Antiochus was a prototype of the Antichrist).

4. The Outcome

This desolater will succeed momentarily, but only for the final 3 and 1/2 years of the Tribulation. Then will come his "destruction" which looks back to Dan 7:11,26—this is the work of Jesus Christ at His 2nd coming.

A LESSON FOR OUR LIFE

Although the passage basically deals with the future course of events for Israel as she anticipates a future in the Messianic kingdom, all of us who are Christians certainly benefit from the work of Messiah Jesus in making an atonement for iniquity. Indeed, He was "cut off"—crucified—not just for Israel's sin and rejection but for the sins of all of us. Yet there are millions who have still not heard a clear presentation of the gospel that Jesus was "cut off" for them. What is the role that you feel God would have you play in fulfilling the Great Commission? Would you pray that God will give you the opportunity to share the meaning of Messiah's death with someone else this week?