

Mid Week • Daniel 9

INTRODUCTION

Daniel 9 is considered by most students of the Bible to be one of the premier chapters in all of scripture as far as prophecy is concerned.

In it we find a timetable for events stretching from the Babylonians Exile right up to the Second Coming of Christ.

This chapter that gives great weight to the idea that Israel, as a geo-political nation, figures centrally in the plan and purpose of God.

You'll see that proved in our study tonight.

And by the time we're finished, I think you'll see that what's taking place over in the Middle East right now is just more of the final arrangement of props on the stage as we await the curtain rising on the Last Days.

Tonight's study is divided into two parts:

The second part, which covers vs. 20-27 is the more technical and prophetic and there are some extremely exciting things we'll discover there.

But if the second part is technical, then the first 19 verses are powerfully instructive in the arena of what it means to have a heart for God.

In this first section of the chapter we see a man who was completely sold out to God and who lived his life as a loyal servant to the most high.

CHAPTER 9

¹In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—²in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years *specified* by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

There is so much to glean from these first 2 verses!

This takes place in the first year of the new order in Babylon.

The Medo-Persian alliance has conquered Babylon and the Persian King Cyrus has installed his administrator Darius as his regent in the newly capture capital of the Babylonian Empire.

Now, how old is Daniel at this point? He is in his 80's!

And based on mortality rates for that time, that makes Daniel a really senior saint!

He would have been considered a very old man and ought to have been deep into retirement.

But what do we find Daniel doing in these verses?

He is reading his Bible. And not only reading, he is studying it!

He is reading with precision and care and as he does he discovers something that shook him.

As he was reading through the book of Jeremiah, he discovered a prophecy that Israel would be exiled in Babylon for 70 years.

Now, a couple things . . .

- 1) First of all, even though Jeremiah had lived and ministered just 70 some years before this time, Daniel considered his words to be genuinely prophetic – they were esteemed as the very word of God.

When Daniel was merely a teenager and was carried away captive from his home in Jerusalem, Jeremiah was still alive and performing his ministry as an oracle of God.

Jeremiah's words had already been recorded and were available to the Jews in exile in Babylon some 70 years later.

The point is that people realized soon after the scriptures were authored what was inspired and what wasn't.

Daniel esteemed Jeremiah as a true prophet and studied his words as the very words of God.

It's a truism that those whose hearts burn with passion for God are people who love to read and study the Bible.

To love God is to love His Word, for the Word of God is His revelation to man.

Throughout history, every genuine revival that's taken place, whether in the OT or the NT has resulted in a return to the study of the Scriptures and a revaluing of the Bible in the life of the redeemed.

This is one of the reasons why I wonder about the genuineness of the revival that is taking place in some circles today.

Instead of the Word of God being elevated and returned to a central place in the life of the Church, it's being submerged beneath an appeal to more and more experience.

In fact, experience and scripture are being set in opposition to each other.

Men like Rodney Howard Brown actually tell people to put their Bible's *away* and stop using the Scriptures as the filter through which to weigh experience: "Just let go your mind and let the Spirit move you," they say.

They call Christians who dare to challenge them with the Word of God, Pharisees.

Yet the Bible itself tells us to test the spirits. In 1 John 4:1 we read . . .

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

By what criteria do we try things? BY THE WORD OF GOD!

Daniel is in his 80's, and though he was a man who was thoroughly acquainted with God and His word, still he is reading and studying!

- 2) Second, Daniel was a *prophecy buff*!

As he read the prophecy of Jeremiah, Daniel was looking in scripture for a framework in which to understand the time in which he lived.

Daniel wanted to be faithful to God's purposes, not only for himself but for the larger work to which he was called as a man of God.

So he sought for guidance in God's Word.

You & I ought to do the very same.

We ought to realize that we are not here by accident.

God called us into existence for this moment, for this time and place and destiny is written all over our lives!

Do we understand our times?

Do we realize that the events taking place in the world around us are ordained by God and are working together to accomplish His eternal plan?

We all need to be Daniels – searching the Scriptures to understand what is taking place in the world today from a Biblical perspective, and then, like Daniel, applying that knowledge to our daily lives.

Daniel was reading, and he encountered Jeremiah's prophecy that Israel would be captive for 70 years.

In Jer. 25:11 & 12 we read . . .

¹¹And this whole land shall be a desolation *and* an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

¹²Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation.

Digging a bit deeper, he found these words in ch. 29:10 . . .

For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

In 2 Chronicles 36: 21 we learn that the reason God specified 70 years for their captivity wasn't merely arbitrary.

For 490 years the Jews had neglected to observe the Sabbath year rest for their fields and land.

At several places in the giving of the Law of Moses, God had commanded the people to *not* plow or plant their fields every 7th year. [Ex. 23:10-11 Lev. 25:15 ff. Deu. 15:1-11 31:10-13]

This Sabbath year rest for the land would renew the natural nutrients of the soil and keep it from wearing out.

The people were to just harvest whatever came up out of the soil of it's own accord.

This would thus renew their dependence on God and remind them every 7 years of their vital connection to Him as Provider and Defender.

But they had not obeyed the Sabbath year law for 490 years, and as a result, God said He would make sure the land got to enjoy it's Sabbath rests, for 70 consecutive years.

But once the 70 years were complete, God would move to effect the release and return of His people to the land.

Daniel then stopped and counted up the years since Nebuchadnezzar had conquered Jerusalem and carried the exiles away.

He realized the 70 years were coming to a close.

And with that realization came the inspiration to take God's promise of Israel's restoration to their Land before the throne of God and ask Him to move NOW on her behalf.

Let's be Daniels!

As diligent students of the Scriptures, let's understand the time I which we live. Then let's appropriate the promises of God and apply them to our lives and situations and the lives of those around us.

If these are indeed the last days, as so many believe, what does the Bible say about the last days?

What unique opportunities are there that we can appropriate and take advantage of today?

At this critical moment in history, just as Daniel faithfully interceded on behalf of Israel at that critical moment in her history, may we be found faithful to intercede on behalf of our nation and on behalf of the Church.

In 1 Chr. 12 we find a list of people who came to serve under David at the beginning of his reign as the king of Israel.

In v. 32 we find these words . . .

³²And [200] of the [tribe] of Issachar, *which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.*

Oh friends, how desperately we need some men of Issachar today; people who understand the times and so know what it is we ought to do.

We need that in our nation, and we need that in the Church!

Let's pray that God will not only raise up such men and women, that that He would make of us such people!

³Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. ⁴And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, . . .

Let's pause there.

Daniel knew the 70 years were at an end and that it was time for the Jews to return to their land.

But notice that the first thing he does is NOT to sit down and start making out a list of potential leaders of the return.

He doesn't start a project scroll with a Gantt chart and To Do items.

He prays!

And this wasn't some half-hearted request He shot up quickly and then went out for Babylonian burrito.

He set his face toward the Lord God with the intent that he was going to stay in this posture of prayer TILL HE GOT A RESPONSE FROM THE LORD.

Now, I'm sure he had no idea what form this response would take – but he knew that he would know when it came – and till it came, he would make request by prayer and supplications, while fasting in the not so fashionable garment of a burlap bag and adorned with the soot of a cooking fire.

Daniel suspended all normal activity, locked himself away in private, and put

himself in the place of serious prayer.

This was a life and death thing for the man!

It was time to get serious with God in a way he may never have done so before. I wonder how many Christians in this country today have gone any where near this kind of example we see in Daniel.

So many today are saying that this election is the most important in 100 years.

Many evangelical leaders are saying this election will determine the course of our nation for the *next* hundred years, whether we continue on the path of moral ruin, or see a turn around in the moral climate back to God.

I don't know how true that is, but I wonder, if they really believe that, how many will do what Daniel does here.

If things are really that serious, how engaged will we be in seeking God?

Friends, the polling booth is an important place of power – but the prayer closet is far more important and effective in determining the course of nations.

Maybe WE need to be Daniels and spend some time in serious intercession on behalf of our nation as we prepare to go to the polls.

Look at how Daniel prayed, for it is a clue to how to effectively touch the heart of God.

The first thing he did was focus on the knowledge that God is one who makes covenants with man.

For those who will but turn to Him, He will show mercy and grace.

⁵we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. ⁶Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. ⁷O Lord, righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us shame of face, as *it is* this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.

Daniel dares not suggest the innocence of Israel.

From the beginning they have been nothing but wayward and stiff-necked.

Even when God poured out His blessing and abundance on them in lavish measure, they denied and rejected Him.

He was a spurned lover and they were wayward harlots.

Notice how righteous Daniel doesn't point the finger at his wicked brethren.

He identifies with them. He doesn't say, "them" but "we."

He stands *with* those who have erred.

⁸"O Lord, to us *belongs* shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. ⁹To the Lord our God *belong* mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. ¹⁰We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. ¹¹Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. ¹²And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great

disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

Daniel doesn't gloss over the sins of the nation – He actually rehearses them!
He doesn't just lump them under one big tidy title – he spells them out and gets specific.

He marks them, lists them, identifies the many ways Israel had turned it's back on God and rejected his love and truth.

Then Daniel asks God to show His covenant mercy and forgiveness and show Himself to be superior to all Israel's failure.

We have much to learn from this prayer of Daniel's.

As Christians, we've entered into covenant with God.

No longer at war with Him, we are now His children.

But we are imperfect children and so we occasionally sin.

Like Daniel, it behooves us to confess, not just sin, but sins!

In 1 John 1:9 we read this . . .

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This verse is written to what John calls beloved children!

Christian - When you pray, do you ask God for forgiveness?

Is there a part of your prayer in which you make confession of sin and ask the Lord to cleanse you?

Is that confession just a general thing – “Oh Lord, forgive me for my sin.” Or do you confess you SINS?

“Oh Lord, forgive me for lying to my boss about that project.”

“Oh Lord, forgive me for gossiping about Mark.”

“Jesus, I looked too long at that gal at the donut shop this morning and thought things that were not holy. Please forgive me.”

Daniel gets specific here.

As we get more specific in making confession and asking forgiveness, it makes us more spiritual sensitive to the issue of sin and makes our conscience more tender so that we can be more cautious of sin.

13“As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. 14Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice. 15And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

For many generations Israel strayed from God.

He sent warning after warning of judgment.

And all the time, all people had to do was turn to Him in confession and repentance and He would have forgiven and stayed the judgment.

But they never did – they just proceeded from bad to worse.

So God brought His promised judgment on them.

16“O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us. 17Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. 18O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. 19O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”

Friends, let’s be very careful to understand the basis of Daniel’s request.

He does not ask that God would bless and restore Israel on the basis of anything Israel deserved, but rather *in spite* of Israel’s continued sin and waywardness.

He basis his request for restoration on God’s glory and Name.

He says, “Lord, oh great and awesome God – The People and Land of Israel are known by all the nations as being *Your* people. In their eyes, because of our sin and what has befallen us in the loss of our nation and the ruin of our holy places, it is YOUR NAME that has been defamed – and this is NOT RIGHT!”

“For Your own sake of God – that You may receive the honor and glory that are Your due, fulfill now your promise to restore Your people and Your land.”

Daniel basis his prayer on the desire that God be exalted and that His name and fame be honored by all – even the Gentile nations.

Now, I realize that we cannot confuse the promises God made to Israel with the United States of America.

But I think that we can use the very same principle of prayer that Daniel used is asking God to restore Israel and asking the Lord to restore this nation – and here’s why.

Israel was the Land and People that God singled out to work His redemptive purposes through.

In the ancient world, Israel was the covenant nation of Yahweh!

In this age, we live under a new covenant based on the cross and God’s redemptive plan is not now focused on one geo-political nation.

And yet, at the founding of this nation that we call the United States of America, the Founders consciously sought to establish a nation that would be based on the principles of God’s Word.

As you read their comments and remarks about what they were thinking and doing as they framed our founding documents, you realize they saw themselves as entering into a covenant with God to be a nation devoted to Him and enjoying His blessing.

This is seen all over the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

And the result is that for the last 200 years, the rest of the world has indeed considered the United States to be a *Christian* nation.

Ask anyone, anywhere around the world what the religion of the US is and they will tell you without hesitation – Christian.

You and I, living here as we do and seeing how far away from Christ the nation has gone in the last 50 years, can stand with Daniel and list off our national sins.

Like Israel of old, we deserve judgment.

But that doesn't change the fact that the US is still identified by the rest of the world as a Christian nation, albeit in name only.

So, why cannot we, with the same conviction and passion that Daniel prayed for God's restored blessings in spite of Israel's waywardness, pray that God, for His own great name's sake, would restore blessing and revival to *our* nation?

[Pray!!!!!!!]

²⁰Now while I was speaking, 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, ²¹yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

Daniel had set himself to pray until an answer came, though he didn't know what form the answer would take.

He just knew it was time for serious business and he got down to it.

How many days our hours had passed that Daniel was in prayer we don't know.

But finally the answer came in the form of the angel Gabriel who was sent to give Daniel a message.

Gabriel's appearance was as a man – meaning that Daniel was able to communicate with him in a normal and usual manner.

Notice at what moment Gabriel arrived – Daniel says it was at the time of the evening offering.

Do you see anything remarkable about this?

Were evening offerings being made? No!

The temple in Jerusalem was in ruins and no service was performed there.

Besides, Daniel is in Babylon, hundreds of miles away.

But while his body was in Babylon, his heart was in the holy city, worshipping at a spiritual temple.

The evening offering was made every day at 3 PM.

It was a year old lamb sacrificed whole on the altar, followed by a meal and drink offering.

This symbolized the sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and who offered Himself completely.

The meal and drink offering represent the fellowship God desires to have with us through the sacrifice of the Lamb who takes away our sins.

It was as Daniel was celebrating this evening offering in his heart, that God sends Gabriel to the prophet with a word about the future that is absolutely staggering in its scope.

²²And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. ²³At the beginning of your supplications the

command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

Daniel was praying because he understood that the time was arriving for the fulfillment of God's promise.

Gabriel has come to assure the prophet that God will indeed keep His word. Notice that as soon as Daniel had *begun* to pray, the command was given to Gabriel to go to him.

Why the delay then? Why did it take time on earth for the angel to arrive?

The text doesn't explain the delay, but it may simply be that Gabriel was waiting for Daniel to fully express His heart so that you and I who read his prayer today can receive instruction in how to pray on behalf of our nation.

Also, *time* is reckoned differently in the spiritual realm than it is on earth.

Gabriel now lays out a prophetic timetable . . .

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.

First of all, we need to understand what Gabriel means by "70 weeks."

The word "weeks" is a Hebrew word that literally means "sevens."

It's always understood to mean a grouping of seven days, months, or years.

You have to look at the context to decide which of these is meant.

Because specific things are said to take place within this 70-7's, virtually all commentators on this passage conclude that it refers to *years* because nothing of consequence happened in 70 weeks or even 70, 7 month periods.

So what we have here is 70, 7 year groups, or 490 years.

The reason Gabriel phrases it this way instead of just saying 490 years, is because it dovetails poetically with the 70 years of Israel's exile that is now coming to a close and is the context in which Daniel is praying.

In other words, for every year Israel has been in exile, 7 years are allotted to her to fulfill all of the rest of God's redemptive plan for her as a nation.

Look at who Gabriel says these 70 7's are appointed for . . .

For your people and for your holy city,

This 490 years is specifically set aside for Daniel's people, meaning the Jews, and for the city of Jerusalem.

In other words, the Land and people of Israel are the focus of God's prophetic time clock.

What will be accomplished during this 490 years?

6 things will be accomplished during this 490 years.

Now, there's a way in which Jesus accomplished each of these things at the cross, and yet won't be completely finished until He comes again and applies the full measure of His victory in the Millennium.

1) To finish the transgression,

The word "transgression" refers to willful rebellion and looks back to the Fall and humanity's rejection of God.

In the Cross, Jesus sounded the death knell to the reign of man's rebellion against God.

But it won't be till His return that the revolt is finally and forever put down.

2) To make an end of sins,

Again, Jesus brought an end to sins at the Cross when His death forever broke the chains of slavery to sin and death.

But it won't be till He returns that sin is banished from Earth.

3) To make reconciliation for iniquity,

The Cross is the place where rebel man and holy God are reconciled through the blood of Christ –

But the final reconciliation of all creation comes only in the Kingdom.

4) To bring in everlasting righteousness,

The Righteousness of Christ comes through the Cross, and yet we await the day when righteousness is the rule by which all nations are governed.

5) To seal up vision and prophecy,

It might seem that this only finds its fulfillment in the Second Coming, but in Acts 2 we read that Peter said the Last Days *began* with the Death and resurrection of Christ.

So the Cross begins the sealing, or conclusion of the plan of God for human history.

It ends with the Reign of Christ on earth.

Finally **6) And to anoint the Most Holy.**

While some commentators see this as a reference to the coming of the Messiah, which means, "The anointed one" the phrase "Most Holy" is never used in scripture to refer to a person.

It is always and only used in reference to the Temple.

This looks to the anointing of the last days temple, the Millennial temple spoken of by Ezekiel that will be the center of the Messiah's earthly rule.

What Gabriel is saying here is that 490 years have been determined for the Jews and Jerusalem till the Messiah comes to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

The question is, when does this 490 years begin?

What marks its beginning point – when do we start counting?

The answer to that is found in v. 25 . . .

- 25 **“Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.**
- 26 **“And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it shall be with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.**
- 27 **Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate.”**

These three verses neatly divide into three periods:

V. 25 tells us about the first 69-7's, or 483 years.

V. 27 tells us about the last 7 years

And v. 26, tells us about events that will take place BETWEEN the first 483 years and the final 7 years.

You see, there is a gap that takes place between the first 69-7's and the last 7.

The language of the text is quite clear on this account as we'll see.

- 25 **“Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.**

The starting point of the 490 years is the command to restore and build Jerusalem. I have to tell you that it is at this point the commentators divide into a multitude of camps.

For there are no less than *three* commands given in scripture regarding the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

You'll find them in your notes.

- 1) The decree of Cyrus in 538-537 BC to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:2-4, 6:3-5)
- 2) The decree of Artaxerxes in 458 BC to reprovision the temple (Ezra 7:11-26)
- 3) The decree of Artaxerxes in 445 BC to rebuild the city of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:1-18)

I won't go into the various views here and how these all work out in terms of calculating the 490 years.

You'll have to do that on your own.

I'll simply give you what I believe is the best understanding of this and the one which fits all the evidence most adequately.

First of all, I think the most important piece of evidence is that Gabriel says the command to look for is one which calls for the restoration and building of Jerusalem.

This command will lead to the streets and the wall, the word meaning a defensive structure, being rebuilt during troublesome times.

Both Cyrus' and Artaxerxes' first command did not give permission for the rebuilding of the city.

They were decrees to rebuild the temple so Yahweh could be worshipped once again.

The specific command to rebuild Jerusalem's streets and wall came in the 20th year of Artaxerxes and was given to Nehemiah as we read in Nehemiah 2.

So this forms the starting point of the 490 years.

Gabriel says that from this point until the Messiah arrives as Prince, will be 7-7's and 62-7's, or 49 years, then 434 years or a total of 483 years.

Why the division into two sections?

The answer is in realizing that Gabriel isn't merely using two words for the same thing when he says, ". . . to restore and build Jerusalem."

Restore is one thing while *build* is something else.

The restoration of Jerusalem will take 49 years which is followed by 434 years of the continual building up and expansion of the city.

Gabriel elaborates a bit on the first 49 years of restoration by saying the street and wall are rebuilt during troublesome times.

This seems to be a specific pointer to the book of Nehemiah which reveals this very thing.

Throughout Nehemiah's oversight of the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, they faced intense opposition and trouble at the hands of their enemies.

We ought to understand this as a pointer to which decree Gabriel means as the starting point of the 490 years determined for the Jews and Jerusalem.

So, let's recap, from the command to restore and build Jerusalem until the Coming of Messiah will be 483 years.

In Nehemiah 2:1-8 we learn that the command to rebuild Jerusalem came on the

first of Nisan in the 20th year of Artaxerxes.

That's March 14th, 445 BC.

483 years later brings us to April 6, 32 AD

Here's how we calculate the 483 years - These are *prophetic*, not *solar* years!

A prophetic year consists of 360 days.

[This is based on calculations determined from several sources. Genesis 7:11, 24, Genesis 8:4, Revelation 11:2-3, 12:6, and 13:5. It appears that the original calendar used by the ancients was based on a 360 day year but that something has occurred to the earth's orbit of the sun to alter this to a 365¼ day year. Consider the 360 degrees of a circle and the figuring of time into 60 minutes. Some suggest the near pass of Mars or cataclysmic upheavals during the flood which altered our calendars.]

483 years X 360 days = 173,880 days.

173,880 days from March 14th, 445 BC brings us to April 6, 32 AD.

Do you know what happened on that day?

That's Palm Sunday, the day Jesus rode into the City of Jerusalem in the Triumphal Entry, being heralded by the people as their Messiah, the Prince.

This is why Jesus makes the cryptic remark in response to the Pharisees who asked that he tell the crowds to halt their heralding Him as their Messiah and ruler, "If they should be silent, the very stones would cry out."

Why did Jesus say this?

Because of THIS VERY PROPHECY in Daniel.

Gabriel had said that from the command to restore Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince would be 173,880 days – and this was the day and time.

Since the Word of God cannot be broken, if the people were silent in their praise, then God would have to make the rocks spring to life and shout the Praises of Jesus as Messiah the Prince.

The people were shouting the words of Psalm 118 which says this . . .

- 24 **This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.**
- 25 **Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.**
- 26 **Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.**

In solar reckoning:

365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 46 seconds; that's 11:14 short of a 365¼ days per year.

So while we have a leap year every 4 years, any leap year that fall on a century is not a leap year, unless it is divisible by 400.

From 445 BC to 32 AD = 476 years (1 BC to 1 AD is 1 yr.)

476 years X 365 days = 173,740 days

Add leap years of 116 and the difference from Mar. 14 to April 6 = 173,880

days!

So, the first 69-7's were fulfilled right down to the exact detail and day.
Then what happens?

26 **“And after the sixty-two weeks**

Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;

And the people of the prince who is to come

Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.

The end of it *shall be* with a flood,

And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

After the 62-7's, which come after the first 7-7's, the Messiah will be cut off.

But this cutting off will not be for Himself, it's for others.

This perfectly pictures the cross in which Jesus died for the sins of the world.

A mere 5 days after the Triumphal entry, Jesus was arrested and crucified.

You see, with the Triumphal entry, God hit the button on His prophetic stopwatch.

And a gap in time was inserted in the 490 years.

483 have been literally fulfilled down to the very day.

But now the watch is stopped with 7 years yet to go.

Following the first 69-7's but before the onset of the last 7 several things are to happen.

A people will come who are associated with *another* prince, a different prince than Messiah.

These people will destroy Jerusalem and the temple.

Since at the time Gabriel said this there was no temple, that means the temple will have to be rebuilt as *well* as the city of Jerusalem.

But these people will destroy it again.

And so complete will this destruction be that it will be as when a flood sweeps through an area, wiping everything away.

The war which sees the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple will result in the land being laid waste and left desolate.

A look at history reveals the fulfillment of this at the hands of the Romans in 68 to 73 AD.

Just 40 years after Jesus' crucifixion, the Romans under Titus, destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple and swept through the land of Israel on a campaign of bringing desolation to the area.

Another Jewish uprising in 132 resulted in the Romans banishing the Jews from the Holy Land altogether.

They even renamed Jerusalem, Aelia Capitolina and erected a temple to Zeus over the temple mount.

Before we move on to the last verse and the 70th 7, remember that another prince has been introduced here in v. 26.

And the translators have not rendered the language in the proper manner for there is no definite article before the word “prince.”

Instead of reading . . . “And the people of the prince who is to come,” it should

be “a prince who is to come.”
Gabriel phrases it this way to set this prince in opposition to the Princely Messiah mentioned in v. 25.
This is a different prince – one somehow linked to the people who will come and destroy, not build Jerusalem.
And based on the chronology given here, this prince comes *after* the Messiah has come and been cut off, but *before* the advent of the 70th 7.

**27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the desolate.”**

Who is the “he” that begins this verse?

The rules of grammar demand that the previous person be understood by the pronoun next used.

So the “he” here is the prince of the people who came and destroyed Jerusalem. We know historically that that was the Romans – so this prince, this ruler, is somehow related to them.

The astute student of scripture is immediately moved to remember the little horn of Daniel 7 & 8 which speak prophetically of the Antichrist, the last great world ruler who rises to exert dominance over the remnants of the old Roman Empire.

This prince confirms a covenant whose terms specify 1-7, the last 7!

Just what this covenant is has been the subject of debate for many years.

But frankly, I think that we are in a position today to understand better than at any time before what this covenant may be about.

First of all, notice that it is a covenant made with who? Many!

Literally, “the many.” It pictures a covenant made with the *nations*.

It is *confirmed* – meaning it’s something that’s forged and then guaranteed or enforced.

While there have been many suggestions over the years for just what this covenant entails, most seem to believe it has something to do with Jerusalem and the temple.

Since this whole 490 years is determined for the Jews and Jerusalem, and since this introduces the last 7 year period, it does seem reasonable to conclude the covenant does concern Israel.

In light of current events, I think we can make a solid guess at what this covenant is about.

The tensions in the Middle East appear unsolvable. It seems Israel and her Arab neighbors are headed into war.

Saddam Hussein has mobilized his troops and is moving them west.

The Arab League just this week removed their sanctions on Iraq and welcomed Hussein back into the fold.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is at a complete impasse.

When Ehud Barak, the PM of Israel called for a time-out in the conflict, PLO leader Yasser Arafat told him to go to hell.

At the Arab League meeting in Cairo Arafat said, "Israel should lift the siege on our cities and people, and withdraw from all the Palestinian and Arab territories, including holy Jerusalem, the capital of our independent Palestinian state."

He then declared that the entire region of Jerusalem and specially the holy sites ought to be under UN supervision.

This is actually a resolution already passed by the UN.

What v. 27 may be referring to is that the Antichrist rises to a position of power and implements the UN resolution as a way to bring about an end to the fighting.

As leader of the restored Roman Empire, that is even now emerging in the form of the European Union, he will possess the force of arms to ensure all parties comply with the resolution.

In order to secure the participation of all sides, he could easily divide the temple mount into two sides, giving the Jews an opportunity to rebuild their temple on one side and securing the Muslim holy sites on the other.

In Revelation 11, John gives us a hint at this division of the temple mount into two parts.

Make no mistake friends, most of the world's rulers are trying to untie the Gordian knot of the Middle East.

Many nations are gravely concerned because unrest in that part of the world may quickly escalate and turn into world-wide shortages of oil which is the life-blood of modern commerce and economy.

For that reason, presidents, PM's and dictators everywhere are contemplating ways to bring and end to the crisis.

Our own president has been working feverishly to find a way to bring peace to the region.

And the sticking point in all the talks is guess what – JERUSALEM, just as Zechariah said it would be.

Friends the world is ripe for someone to rise up with a solution to the problem that is the Middle East.

And if someone were to suggest a means of peace that seemed viable, you can be sure people would fall all over themselves to embrace it.

Make no mistake – someone will rise – and from all appearances, that day may be soon indeed.

In any case, what's most important is to realize that the 70th 7 begins when this covenant, whatever it is, goes in to effect.

That's when God's prophetic time clock starts it's final ticking.

But the antichrist's career doesn't end with his confirming of the covenant.

At the mid-point, or 3½ years into it, he brings an end to the sacrifices and offerings going on in the newly rebuilt temple.

It's this that gives weight to the idea that the covenant has something to do with

allowing the Jews to rebuild their temple for a temple is needed before sacrifices can be offered.

That the building materials have been compiled, plans drawn, priests trained, and the implements for the temple service fashioned all suggest that the temple will be rebuilt, and soon.

But 3½ years after the covenant begins, the antichrist brings a halt to the temple service, and *swiftly* brings that in to the temple which is an absolute abomination to God.

The Apostle Paul tells us what this is 2 Thess. 2.

He says that the antichrist will enter the holy of holies in the temple and declare himself to be God.

He will demand that all worship Him as God, and the amazing thing is, most people will!

But Gabriel tells Daniel that this abomination will result in a desolation so sweeping that it results in the culmination of human history and the advent of the new age under the reign of Christ.

In Matthew 24, the disciples asked Jesus what the sign of the end and His return would be.

He told them many troubles would occur and would be like birth pangs leading up to the end, but there was only *one* sign that He gave them that would announce that His return was imminent – in v. 15 of Matthew 24 we read . .

“Therefore when you see the ‘*abomination of desolation*,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

See here – Jesus considered the 70th 7 of Daniel’s prophecy to be yet future.

And it also requires a temple in which the abomination of desolation can take place.

This is why most bible believing Christians today believe the temple *will* be rebuilt.

But Jesus says, drawing from the prophecy of Daniel, that at the mid-point of the last 7 years, something so terrible that it results in utter ruin is set up in the holy place of the temple.

He says, when you see that sign, get out of Dodge!

He goes on in the next verses to say that what follows is a time so tough that unless it was short, all human life would be wiped out.

That’s the last half of the Tribulation period, or what is known as the *Great Tribulation*.

For the first half of the last 7 years, the Jews look to the Antichrist as their Messiah.

He had brought about apparent peace and has pledged their safety.

He has even allowed them to rebuild their temple.

But when he enters that temple and claims to be God, then demands they worship him, they will realize him to be an imposter and will reject him.

His fury will be indescribable and will set out to wipe them out.

That is why Jesus tells them to flee without hesitation. It is at this point too that God in heaven finds the antichrist's demand of worship to be too much to let it go unanswered and begins to pour forth heavy judgments on him and his kingdom. This is what accounts for the terrible events of the last 3½ years of the Tribulation.

Just as we're able to measure from the decree of Artaxerxes on March 14, 445 BC to the Triumphal entry of Christ on April 6, 32 AD, people will be able to count the days from the day the covenant of v. 27 is confirmed with the many to the end of the age and the Return of Christ to inaugurate the Kingdom of God on earth.

But wait a minute, didn't Jesus say that no man knew the day or hour of His return?

And won't that be just as true during the Tribulation after the covenant has been forged?

Clearly then, the return Jesus was referring to cannot be the Second Coming, it refers to the Rapture of the Church, of which no one knows the day or hour. And here is another solid proof that the Rapture of the Church is *different* than the Second Coming.

CONCLUSION

In light of all the tension that is brewing in the world today and how very ripe the world is for someone to emerge with a solution to the crisis in the Middle East, it ought to motivate us to realize that the Rapture of the church is indeed near. Are you ready?