

AN EXEGESIS OF DANIEL 9 WITH A FOCUS ON
THE IMPLICATIONS OF DANIEL'S 70 HEPTADS

A Paper
Presented to
Dr. Alan Ingalls
Baptist Bible Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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April, 2013

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INTRODUCTION

The book of Daniel is indeed the key to prophetic Revelation.¹ An accurate understanding of this prophetic book is essential to a proper interpretation of the book of Revelation as well as other important biblical passages (Matt 24, Lk 17, 1 Thess 4, 2 Thess 2 among others). Daniel 9 gives the framework and key events for the coming period of time, theologians refer to as the tribulation. Because one's understanding of the texts cited above hinges upon a proper interpretation of Daniel 9, careful exegesis of this passage is crucial. This paper will focus on such a task.

The primary purpose of this paper will be to develop a better understanding of the nature, timing, and key events of the seventieth heptad.² The primary means of doing so will be a careful and thorough exegesis of Daniel 9:1-3 and 20-27. A summary of Daniel's prayer (4-19) will also be included.

An Outline of Daniel's Book

Part 1: Six Stories (Chapters 1-6)³

1. Daniel and Friends in the King's Court of Babylon
2. King's Dream: A Huge Statue/Small Stone
3. Daniel's Friends and the Fiery Furnace
4. King's Dream: A Huge Tree
5. Belshazzar and the Writing on the Wall
6. Daniel Rescued from the Lion's Den

Part 2: Four Revelations (Chapters 7-12)

7. A Vision of Daniel: Awful Beasts/Son of Man
8. A Vision of Daniel: the Ram and Goat
9. A Prayer of Daniel and the Revelation of 70 Weeks
- 10-12. A Vision of Daniel: The Writing of Truth

¹ This is the subtitle of John F. Walvoord's commentary on the book of Daniel.

² Daniel 9:24-27 speaks of seventy sevens. A heptad refers to a period of time involving multiples of seven, seven "somethings," seven days, seven weeks, seven months, or seven years.

³ This outline is adapted from Peter J Gentry's, "Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the New Exodus." in *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 14, no. 1: 26.

The history of Israel is a long and troublesome one. Abraham's descendent, Jacob, due to famine, went down to Egypt along with his family. They went down as a family, but years later they emerged as a nation. After their redemption from slavery in Egypt, and on their way back to Palestine, a covenant was made at Mount Sinai between Israel and God. It was a covenant following a typical suzerain vassal treaty. God would be their king, and they were to be His people (Ex 6:7; Lev 26:2). God promised to bless Israel for their obedience and curse Israel when disobedient (Deut 28:1-46). God also promised that if Israel was not faithful to their king, that He would send foreign invaders to ravage their land and oppress them (Deut 28:47-68). This is exactly what happened. Time and time again, Israel rebelled against their king. Although God was longsuffering, he remained faithful to his promises. He sent Assyria in 722 BC to take Israel into captivity, and in 586 BC Judah was also taken into captivity by the Babylonians. Daniel, a faithful follower of Yahweh, was among the young men taken.

EXEGESIS OF DANIEL 9:1-2

Chapter 9 begins with Daniel gives an exact time in which his prayer and God-given revelation takes place. Similar constructions are found in the other three major prophetic sections of Daniel's book (7:1; 8:1; 10:1). Daniel tells us that this prayer and vision happened **בְּשָׁנָה** **אֶחָת** לְדָרְיוֹשׁ "in the first year of Darius' reign." Previously, Daniel had introduced his readers to the historical man named Darius (5:30). According to the documentation of the Nabonidus Chronicle, the fall of Babylon took place during the month of Tishri in 539 B.C. Assuming that this record is accurate, we are given a good historical marker by which we can date the events of Daniel's prayer and subsequent revelation.⁴

⁴ See appendix 4, for a more detailed discussion of the identity of Darius the Mede.

This introduction to the prophetic section of 9:1 has some unique features setting it apart from the other prophetic sections (7:1; 8:1; 10:1).⁵ McClain astutely notes that at no other time in the book of Daniel, a king is identified with more than three descriptive elements, yet 9:1 includes five descriptive components.⁶ These five parts include: (1) name – “Darius,” (2) descent – “son of Ahausuerus,” (3) ethnicity – “descent of the Medes,” (4) title – “made king,” (5) subjects - “of the kingdom of the Chaldeans.”⁷ Why such a complex and unique construction? McClain’s observations are helpful,

...it emphasizes the fact that a transition has occurred. The Babylonian Empire of Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar has entered the realm of history and the Medo-Persian Empire of Cyrus now rules the contemporary world.⁸

Daniel utilizes this rhetorical device to highlight an important transition. Darius is of Mede descent. He was not born a Chaldean, and he is placed to rule over the Chaldeans. A foreigner is now reigning over the land of the Chaldeans. A major transition has just happened, yet Daniel “coincidentally” weathers this transition of empires.

It is significant that the writer uses the hophal form of the verb הִמְלִיךָ . This verb is appropriately translated “caused to rule,” or “made to rule.” The implication is that the authority to rule was given by another.⁹ This fits nicely with Whitcomb’s view of Darius the Mede being

⁵ Charles E. McClain, “Daniel’s prayer in Chapter 9,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 9 (2004): 267-268.

⁶ McClain points out that the most common identification of a king has two parts, typically name and title. Of the 49 times where a king is referenced, 27 references in Daniel have the most common two part form, 16 of them reference a king with no descriptive words or clauses, 5 times a three part form is used, but only when speaking of Darius, a five part description is given.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., 269.

⁹ Seow calls this a “circumlocution for divine agency,” indicating that it is by divine action that Darius is made king, C. L. Seow, *Daniel*. 1st ed. Westminster Bible Companion. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 138. While this is certainly within the realm of possibility, there is nothing in the text other than the passive voice to imply such and therefore it is more natural to understand it to be a human ruler placing Darius as king, Such a scenario is not only a valid option but is confirmed by extra-biblical historical records.

the same as Gubaru, appointed by, and not equivalent to, Cyrus. Keil states concerning the significance of this hophal verb,

It shows that Darius did not become king over the Chaldean kingdom by virtue of a hereditary right to it, nor that he gained the kingdom by means of conquest, but that he received it from the conqueror of Babylon, Cyrus, the general of the army.¹⁰

Darius is said to be made ruler of מְלֻכּוֹת כַּשְׁדִּים the kingdom of the Chaldeans.” This was another way of referencing Babylonia. The Chaldeans were the dominant race in Babylonia.¹¹

The kingdom of the Chaldeans was broad, however it was much less than the entire Persian Kingdom, for which Cyrus was responsible.¹²

A second rhetorical device is used by Daniel to emphasize the importance of this event. McClain contends that Daniel repeats what was mentioned in verse one to emphasize the transition that has occurred.¹³ While this certainly is an effect of such a repetition, Goldingay raises a different possibility. He says the reason for the repetition could be that this is the exact year that Jeremiah’s prophecy should come to completion.¹⁴ Daniel was one of the יְלָדִים that were deported to Babylon (Dan 1:4-6).¹⁵ This being the case, if Darius did begin his reign either as a co-regent appointed by Cyrus (Whitcomb, Archer, Vines, Showers), or as Cyrus himself (Wiseman, Miller) in 539 BC, then Daniel would be in his mid 70’s to 80’s by the time he

¹⁰ Carl Friedrich Keil, and Franz Delitzsch. *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Vol. 9. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1996), 320.

¹¹ Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, (Wipf & Stock Pub, 1998), 232.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ McClain, “Daniel’s Prayer in Chapter 9,” 269.

¹⁴ Although Goldingay does raise this as a possibility, he later argues against it, expressing that the numeral 70 should not be regarded as literal, nor would Daniel have read it as such. Goldingay takes it to mean a lifetime. Such an explanation does not adequately explain why coincidentally the 70 years, if taken literally is just about to be finished, John Goldingay, *Daniel*. Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 239.

¹⁵ The NASB, ESV, and ASV translate this “youth” and the NIV, NET, HCSB “young men”.

received the revelation from Gabriel recorded in Daniel 9.¹⁶ Miller makes a strong case for being over 80.¹⁷ It is safe to say Daniel was not a young man, but rather, over the age of 70.

After affirming again that the writer is Daniel himself **אֲנִי דָנִיֵּאל**, Daniel says he **בִּינְתִּי** “perceived” or “realized” something **בְּסִפְרִים** “in the books.” The article is used, which indicates that it is more than just any set of books.¹⁸ Daniel goes on to qualify these writings as the **דְּבַר־יְהוָה** “Word of the Lord.” He proceeds to reference Jeremiah’s writings as one of those books. Some critical scholars arguing for a late date contend that the author is referencing a recognized canon, which in their opinions, could not have been established during the life of Daniel. However, it is more appropriate to say, as does Wood, “It is only to be expected that the Judeans, exiled for many years by this time in Babylonia, would have had with them a number of Old Testament writings which were generally recognized as sacred.”¹⁹ Young confirms this also, “It should be noted that there is nothing whatsoever in this phrase which lends support to the idea that the canon was closed.”²⁰

At 70+ Daniel was still searching Scriptures to understand it better, and he was still noticing new insights that he had previously glossed over, and/or not fully understood. As he was searching **בְּסִפְרִים**, he came to understand Jeremiah’s prophecy more clearly. Jeremiah had

¹⁶ According to Whitcomb’s calculations Daniel would be in his middle 80’s (Whitcomb, 121), Miller says over 80 (Miller, 60), Wood calculates about 82 (Wood, 232), and DeHann safely estimates he is past 70 years of age, (DeHann, 234).

¹⁷ His reasoning is built upon the following premises: (1) the lexical range of meaning for **יָלַד** includes “young men,” (2) Plato speaks of Persian youth starting their education at the age of 14 (Alcibiades 1.121), (3) one can assume that Babylonians also began educating their youth at approximately the same age, (4) Daniel would therefore have been 14 or just a few years older when he was taken to Babylon in 605 B.C. (5) The events to follow, can be dated around 539.

¹⁸ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 232.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 232-233.

²⁰ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 183.

prophesied that the city of Jerusalem would be **לְחָרְבוֹת** literally “desolations” for 70 years.

Wood states, “it is plural, no doubt to stress intensity.”²¹ Jeremiah’s prophecy is recorded in his 25th chapter.

¹¹ This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. ¹² Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste.²²

In 605 B.C. Jeremiah prophesied concerning the judgment that would fall upon Judah for their rejecting God’s law.²³ This rejection of God’s precepts amounted to rebellion against God Himself. Jeremiah 25 was a decree of judgment by God upon Judah for its lack of fidelity. Jeremiah predicted that they would be conquered by foreign invaders. Along with judgment, Jeremiah gave hope. This judgment was to last only 70 years, after which the king of Babylon would also be punished for his mistreatment of the people of God. Isaiah also prophesied about the coming of Cyrus, the one who will be God’s instrument to “punish the king of Babylon” (Is 44:26-28; 45:1-5, 13).²⁴

As Daniel was reading this God-given judgment as recorded by Jeremiah, he realized the time-table of the prophecy was about to come to a close. Daniel uses the piel infinitive construct **לְמַלְאוֹתָ** translated “to be fulfilled.” The Hebrew people would once again be allowed back to inhabit the land and rebuild the city. It is this discovery that led Daniel to call out to God for

²¹ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 233.

²² From this point forward the English Standard Version will be used unless otherwise indicated.

²³ Most conservative scholars take 605 to be the *terminus a quo* of the 70 years. However, this is not universally accepted. Some argue for the second (597) and third phase (586) of captivity. These views inevitably push back the *terminus ad que* many years after Daniel’s prayer.

²⁴ Paul D. Feinberg, “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24-27” in *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 191.

mercy on behalf of his people.²⁵ While some take these 70 years to be a “round number” (Porteous, 135; Miller, 242; Meadowcroft, 177; Walvoord, 204), or reference to a “human lifetime,” (Seow, 139; Goldingay, 239), it is best to understand the 70 years as it seemed Daniel did, a literal chronological period of time which was to be fulfilled in precise detail (Vines, 137; Whitcomb 121-122; Showers, 111; Archer, 107; Wood, 233; Keil, 320).²⁶ Archer states,

Now while 538 might be three or four years short of the full seventy, it was not too soon for Daniel to begin praying (v.3). In view of the recent collapse of the Chaldean Empire and the benevolent attitude of Cyrus the Great toward the religious preferences of his newly conquered subjects, Daniel was moved to claim the promise implied by the number seventy in the Jeremiah passages he had just read.²⁷

Keil has an interesting explanation which accounts for a precise fulfillment of the 70 year prediction. He concludes that the *terminus ad quem* of the 70 year time-table is the year that Cyrus became the sole ruler over the empire. His math adds up.

The first year of the reign of Darius the Mede over the Chaldean kingdom is the year 538 B.C., since Babylon was taken by the Medes and Persians under Cyrus in the year 539-538 B.C. According to Ptolemy, Cyrus the Persian reigned nine years after Nabonadius. But the death of Cyrus, as is acknowledged, occurred in the year 529 B.C. From the nine years of the reign of Cyrus, according to our exposition, two years are to be deducted for Darius the Mede, so that the reign of Cyrus by himself over the kingdom which he founded begins in the year 536, in which year the seventy years of the Babylonian exile of the Jews were completed...

Wood argues in a similar fashion as Archer, but concludes that God, in answering Daniel’s prayer, relented and showed mercy upon the Hebrew people a few years shy of the complete 70

²⁵ Showers puts forth an interesting theory. He believes the reason that Daniel was praying so intensely, even though he knew the 70 years of Jeremiah’s prophecy was coming to a close, was because he recalls the vision recorded in chapter 8, where God pictured a later chastening of Israel. How could this be, Daniel wondered? Daniel may have thought that God was going to prolong his judgment on Israel, so Daniel called out for mercy. Renald Showers, *The Most High God*, 116. Matheny argues in a similar vein, but believes Daniel was aware of God’s promises to multiply Israel’s judgment by seven if they do not respond to God’s initial chastisement (Lev. 26:18-28). James F. and Matheny and Marjorie B Matheny, *The Seventy Weeks of Daniel: An Exposition of Daniel 9:24-27*. (Brevard, NC: Jay and Associates, 1990), 15-16.

²⁶ It is important that the literalness of 9:2 is maintained if one is to contend that the 70 heptads of Daniel 9:24-27 should be understood as a precise number, not a “round” one or a “human lifetime.” This seems to be an inconsistency in Walvoord’s position.

²⁷ Archer, *Daniel*, 107.

years.²⁸ This view maintains a literal 70 year prediction, and is in keeping with the Biblical description of a God who rewards the persistent and faithful prayer of his followers. In other words, if it were not for the prayers of Daniel, the 70 years would have come to fruition, but in response to the prayer of a righteous man, God relented and extended mercy. Gurny has an interesting take,

Although Judah came under the Babylonian heel in 605 B.C., Babylon's ruling of nations actually dated from the overthrow of Assyria a few years earlier. After the fall of Ninevah in 612 B.C. (to the allied Medes and Babylonians), Ashur-uballit established his government at Harran. This city fell to the Babylonians in 610 B.C., and Assyria was finally obliterated when Ashur-uballit failed to recapture it in 609 B.C. *Seventy years* after she had finally conquered and destroyed Assyria, Babylon herself was conquered by Cyrus in 539 B.C. Since then Babylon has fallen into decay, and for many centuries it has been a desolate waste.²⁹

This view accounts for an exact fulfillment of the 70 years. It reconciles the biblical account with extra-biblical sources, and does so in a manner that does not feel contrived. For these reasons Gurny's chronology is most satisfactory.

While each of the above views has their own strengths and weakness, one must acknowledge that we do not have complete information at our disposal. However, it is best to apply a consistently literal hermeneutic when interpreting prophetic material. For this reason, an approach like Archer, Showers, Wood, Keil, and Gurny should be preferred. Unless there is something in the Scripture itself that would preclude a literal interpretation, the normal reading of Scripture must be favored.

²⁸ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 233.

²⁹ Robert Gurney, *God in Control*, 6:2. http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/book_god-in-control_gurney.html

DANIEL'S PRAYER 9:3-19

Having read and understood the prophecy of Jeremiah, Daniel turns to the Lord. As Gentry states, His prayer was both “motivated by Scripture and based upon Scripture.”³⁰ Daniel uses a cohortative verb **וַיִּתְּנֶנָּה** to indicate resolve, although not noticeable in most English translations. A good translation that indicates the perseverance of Daniel might be, “So, I was determined to sit in the presence of my Lord God...” The verb translated **וַיִּתְּנֶנָּה** literally means to give. He intentionally gave himself to prayer. As Young points out, **פָּנָי** “in the presence does not mean, “...he is directing his face toward Jerusalem, but merely that he is turning his face toward the Lord God.”³¹ The piel infinitive construct **לְבַקֵּשׁ** is used to indicate his earnest seeking for mercy on behalf of his people. Daniel was fully aware that God was a promise-keeping God. He knew that Judah was paying for the consequence of their disobedience. He was also aware that God would relent if they would call out in repentance (Deut 30:1-10). So Daniel, on behalf of his people professes repentance. Daniel, in the expression **אֲדֹנָי הָאֱלֹהִים** “my Lord God,” recognized the personal relation that he had with his God and using the title **אֲדֹנָי** acknowledges God’s sovereignty over all. His pray might well have been expressed, “my God” please function as the God of the Hebrew people, “our God.”³² Daniel also expressed his deep humility and concern for his people with his outward visible expressions of repentance (1) **בְּצוּם** “fasting,” (2) being clothed in **וְשֵׁק** “sackcloth” and (3) in **וְאָפֶר** “ashes.”

³⁰ Peter J. Gentry, *Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the New Exodus*, in *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 14, no. 1:29.

³¹ Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, 184.

³² Goldingay, *Daniel*, 241.

Outline of Daniel's Prayer	
I.	An acknowledgment of God's loving-kindness 4b
II.	A confession of Israel's corporate sins 5-6
III.	God's faithfulness juxtaposed to Israel's unfaithfulness 7-11a
IV.	God's righteous judgment upon Israel for her infidelity 11b-14
V.	Daniel's prayer of mercy on behalf of his people 15-19

Daniel begins by acknowledging God's loving-kindness. Daniel appeals to a God who intervenes in time and space and accomplishes his own will, and one who loves to answer the prayers of his saints.³³ Daniel knows, while Israel has not kept the covenant, הַגָּדוֹל "the great," and וְהַנּוֹרָא שִׁמְר "one to be feared," has. The Hebrew noun וְהַחֲסֵד communicates the idea of steadfast, unfailing love and complete loyalty.³⁴ God was completely loyal and maintained a steadfast love for Israel, despite her rebellions.

After fully acknowledging God is great, worthy of respect, and has been faithful to His covenant, Daniel turns to confess that Israel has been anything but loyal and loving to their covenant-keeping God. Daniel uses the first person plural form of verbs in this section to give a clear impression of corporate sin of his people, that he, as their spokesperson, confesses. He lists six wrong actions for which they plead guilty.

List of Corporate Sins Confessed by Daniel	
1.	חָטְאָנוּ "we sinned"
2.	וַעֲוִינוּ "we did wrong"
3.	וְהָרַשְׁעָנוּ "we were wicked"
4.	וּמָרְדָנוּ "we rebelled"
5.	וְסוּר מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ "and abandoned your commandments"

³³ McClain, "Daniel's Prayer in Chapter 9," 277-278.

³⁴ R. Laird Harris, "דסה," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 305.

David expresses clearly and repeatedly, we violated everything that you asked of us, and everything for which you stand. Daniel is brutally honest in recognizing that they are fully responsible for the dismal circumstances in which they find themselves.

Daniel turns his attention from the sins of the people to their character. Their sinful condition stems from a lack of character. This absence of character is compared to the magnificent character of God. McClain is perceptive in his statement, “Israel’s sinful actions did not arise from a void. Israel’s sinful actions reflected their shameful character. On the other hand, Daniel’s appeal to God to act with mercy and favor are based on God’s righteous character.”³⁵

Daniel speaks of הַיְצִדְקָהּ the “righteousness” of God in comparison to בְּשֹׁת the “shamefulness” and בְּמַעֲלָם “unfaithfulness” of his people. It is solely based upon Daniel’s knowledge of the nature of God, full of compassion, that he makes a request of mercy.

Daniel recognizes fully that the exile and oppression by foreign invaders is the just consequence of the people’s breaking of their covenant with God (Deut 28:15-68). They were unfaithful to their faithful God, and the consequences of their infidelity is not only appropriate, but was also promised by God Himself.

EXEGESIS OF DANIEL 9:20-27

In the midst of a heart-wrenching intercessory prayer characterized by humility and confession to God, God sent his messenger to share with Daniel what will happen. Daniel explains the timing of the revelation using a series of successive participles מְדַבֵּר “while I was speaking,” מְתַפִּלֵּל “and while I was praying,” וּמְתוֹדֶה “and while I was confessing”

³⁵ McClain, “Daniel’s Prayer in Chapter 9,” 284.

וּמְפִיל “and while making a plea.” Wood points out, “The four verbs... all used earlier in this chapter by Daniel, are repeated to give a full characterization of the prayer, as if to summarize all that Daniel had intended in it.”³⁶ The object of Daniel’s plea was הַר־קֹדֶשׁ אֱלֹהֵי “the holy mountain of God.” This is a clear reference to Mount Zion (1 Ki 8:1; 2 Ki 19:21; 1 Chr 11:5; Ps 87:2). When the temple was operational, this was the dwelling place of the Shekinah glory, prior to its departure. This is where people were to go and meet with God and offer sacrifices to him via priests. Daniel calls on God to give back Jerusalem to the people for whom he initially entrusted it.

The Appearance of Gabriel

Daniel had not completed his prayer to the Lord, when God sent his messenger to give Daniel the answer to the very prayers not yet finished. Daniel identifies this messenger as גַּבְרִיאֵל “Gabriel.” Gabriel’s name literally means “mighty warrior of God.” Daniel also reminds his readers that this is the same messenger that God sent to him previously (Da 8:16). Daniel calls him אִישׁ גַּבְרִיאֵל “the man Gabriel.” While the reader knows, as did Daniel, that this was no ordinary human male, this messenger of God came in the appearance of a man. He came “swiftly,” in answer to Daniel’s prayer.³⁷

³⁶ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 245.

³⁷ There is some debate on how to accurately translate the phrase which includes the hofal participle, followed by a noun with the same root בִּיאַךְ בִּיאַךְ Is this a reference to Daniel as some scholars and versions translate it “weariness” (NASB, HCSB, Goldingay, 228; Keil, 335; Miller, 251; BDB)? The implication of this translation is: Daniel was physically weary from the prolonged prayer of intercession. Or is this phrase speaking of the flight of the messenger Gabriel? There are three explanations given for those that see it as referring to Gabriel’s flight: (1) as a “close flight” (REB, NJB), (2) a “swift flight” (NIV84, NIV11, ESV, RSV, ASV, KJV, NKJV, Whitcomb, 127; Walvoord, 215; Archer, 111; Wood, 245), or (3) “weariness” on the part of Gabriel because of his journey (Meadowcraft and Irwin, 188). None of these translations make any major theological difference, however it does give better understanding of the historical context in which the event takes place. While each translation has its proponents and persuasive points, a quick appearance or “swift flight” of the angel, shortly after the

The phrase **כְּעֵת מִנְחַת-עֶרֶב** “at the time of the evening offering” is worthy of notice.

The term that Daniel uses **מִנְחָה**, is used to speak of the offerings given at the temple in the morning and evening, as required by the law.³⁸ The evening offering probably took place around 3-4 PM (cf. Ezra 9:5; Ps 141:2).³⁹ Daniel previously informed his readers that he was accustomed to praying three times a day (Da 6:10). Although the morning and evening sacrifices ceased many years before, Daniel, a dedicated follower of Yahweh, continued to practice prayers at the appointed time. It was physically impossible to offer sacrifices, but Daniel continued what was possible, prayer. Not only does this detail highlight the significance of Daniel’s prayer life, it also keeps at the forethought of the reader’s mind concern for the temple and the sacrificial system.⁴⁰ Daniel recently referred to the desolate temple in verse 17. In the coming verses, he will record the events involving another future abolition of sacrifices and another future desolation of the temple (Dan 9:27).

Gabriel came for a clearly defined purpose, he was **לְהוֹשִׁיבֵנִי** “to give insight” and **בִּינָה** “understanding” to Daniel. These meanings “insight” and “understanding” are synonyms used for a literary effect. The intent for which Gabriel came is clear. He came to help Daniel understand the events that would take place in the future.⁴¹ The messenger of God says that Daniel’s **תְּחִנָּתִי** “plea for mercy” has been heard. It was heard **בְּתֹחֶלֶת** “at the beginning.”

prayer began on the part of Daniel seems to be the best translation in light of the context. For a greater detailed discussion see *A Commentary on Daniel* by Leon Wood, 245.

³⁸ G. Lloyd Carr, " ni ", *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 515.

³⁹ Miller, *Daniel*, 251.

⁴⁰ Tim Meadowcroft and Nate Irwin, *The Book of Daniel*. (Singapore: Asia Theological Association, 2004), 188-189.

⁴¹ The Septuagint and vulgate read here, *καὶ συνεισε με καὶ προσηλθε* the equivalent of **וַיָּבֵא וַיְבִינֵנִי** “and he came and said to me.” The reading of the MT is preferred, because the Septuagint and Vulgate appear to have smoothed out the harder reading.

While this could be a reference to an earlier part of the day, since his preparations started much earlier in order to include: fasting, sackcloth, and ashes (see comments on 9:3), it is more likely a reference to the beginning of the actual prayer itself.⁴² God responded to his prayer by sending Gabriel to share insights with Daniel. The conjunction כִּי indicates cause. Because Daniel is חֲמוּדָה “greatly loved,” (ESV) “highly esteemed,” (NIV) “treasured by God” (HCSB), God saw fit to reveal to him more specific details regarding the coming 70 heptad. There was a special appreciation God had for Daniel. Because of this special relationship, and at the request of Daniel, God shared with him “insights and understanding.”

Gabriel commands David using the imperative verbal וְיָבִין “understand” the message and וְיָדַבֵּר “teach” what has been revealed. A literary device is used here, the same verb employed using two different tenses, to mean two different things. In the qal form, this verb means to understand, but when used in the hifil form it means “to teach.” A clear parallel is in play. Two commands are given, two tenses of the same verb are utilized, and two synonyms are included, בְּרִבְרָה “message” and בְּמַרְאֵה “revelation.” While some argue that this is a vision, similar to those in chapters 7 and 8, Daniel was in “a state of natural consciousness.”⁴³ Daniel is commanded to carefully understand this revelation and teach it to others. Meadowcroft and Irwin make a very significant point,

Daniel has not been asking for insight and understanding so much as for mercy and forgiveness. What he is about to get is an indirect answer to that request in the form of an assurance about the concerns that triggered the prayer in the first place, namely ‘the desolation of Jerusalem’ and the promise of the seventy year limit (v.2). Daniel’s prayers were focused on the immediate needs of his people for forgiveness and restoration, but

⁴² Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, 190.

⁴³ Kiel, *Daniel*, 336.

the answer comes in the form of a vision of events that would continue to reverberate throughout the centuries.⁴⁴

Daniel was concerned with the closure to the 70 years of captivity, and restoration to Palestine. He was seeking restoration. Although, King Cyrus would allow a return to the promise land by the people of God (in which Daniel would not participate), God chose to reveal to Daniel concerning another 70. The 70 heptads, which would occur at a future time, would also involve divine judgment on Israel. It is these 70 heptads to which Gabriel's revelation will depict with some specificity.

Daniel's Prophecy

Daniel 9:24-27 is called by Miller four of the most controversial verses in the Bible,⁴⁵ James Montgomery uses the metaphor of a "dismal swamp," in describing the difficulties of understanding this passage, comparing it to wading through a swamp.⁴⁶ The challenges are many, but the effort is worthwhile and the dividends are immeasurable. The immense value of this passage is seen in Ford's comment that it contains "the crown jewels" of Old Testament prophecy.⁴⁷ What Meadowcroft and Irwin call a "cryptic outline" of the tribulation is given in Daniel 9.⁴⁸ Verse 24 contains an overview of this time-period and the objectives that it will accomplish, verse 25 describes the first 69 heptads, verse 26 records the events between the 69th

⁴⁴ Meadowcroft and Irwin, *The Book of Daniel*, 189.

⁴⁵ Miller, *Daniel*, 252.

⁴⁶ J. A. Montgomery, *Daniel* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1927), 400.

⁴⁷ Desmond Ford, *Daniel*. Anvil Biblical Studies. (Nashville: Southern Pub. Association, 1978), 198.

⁴⁸ Meadowcroft and Irwin, *The Book of Daniel*, 189.

and 70th heptad, and verse 27 outlines the 70th heptad. A good outline of this section is proposed by Walvoord follows.⁴⁹

Outline of the 70 Heptads of Daniel	
I.	Overview of the 70 Heptads (9:24)
II.	The First 69 Heptads (9:25)
III.	Events Between the 69 th and 70 th Heptad (9:26)
IV.	The 70 th Heptad (9:27)

Overview of the 70 Heptads

It is helpful to be reminded that in 9:2 it became evident to Daniel, after reading Jeremiah's prophecies (a reference to Jer 25:1-14; 29:1-23), that the 70 years of captivity under the Babylonian invaders should be coming to a close soon. Aware of this, Daniel cries out to God and asks for mercy. God does answer Daniel's prayer in one sense, by sharing that the Hebrews will be allowed to return to Jerusalem. However, God reveals to Daniel much more. He reveals to Daniel that there will be an additional time-table surrounding the same number, 70, for the people of God. Unfortunately for them, this number 70 will be multiplied by a heptad of "somethings." Concerning this prophecy, it is also useful to be reminded of the promises of God recorded in Leviticus 26.

¹⁴ But if you will not listen to me and will not do all these commandments, ¹⁵ if you spurn my statutes, and if your soul abhors my rules, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant, ¹⁶ then I will do this to you: I will visit you with panic, with wasting disease and fever that consume the eyes and make the heart ache. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. ¹⁷ I will set my face against you, and you shall be struck down before your enemies. Those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when none pursues you.

This passage in Leviticus was fulfilled in the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. Yet the Lord gave another promise to them. He promised if they did not respond to this divine

⁴⁹ Adapted from John F. Walvoord's outline, *Daniel*, 216.

chastening, He would multiply this period of time by seven. This is exactly what we see in Daniel 9, God's prophetic promise to multiply their Babylonian experience seven times over. This is clearly stated in four different verses in Leviticus (26:18, 21, 23, and 27). God's plans are certainly not cryptic here.

¹⁸ “And if in spite of this you will not listen to me, then I will discipline you again sevenfold for your sins,”

²¹ “Then if you walk contrary to me and will not listen to me, I will continue striking you, sevenfold for your sins.”

²³ “And if by this discipline you are not turned to me but walk contrary to me, ²⁴ then I also will walk contrary to you, and I myself will strike you sevenfold for your sins.”

²⁷ “But if in spite of this you will not listen to me, but walk contrary to me, ²⁸ then I will walk contrary to you in fury, and I myself will discipline you sevenfold for your sins.”

Despite what seems to be a repeated warning to the nation of Israel regarding the consequences of continued rebellion, they heard, but did not listen. As Matheny states, “If, after the 70-year chastisement of the Babylonian captivity, Israel continued to sin, God, in keeping with His warning, would be forced to punish her seven times seventy.”⁵⁰ God's message to Daniel through the angel Gabriel can be summarized: they have not learned from the 70 years and therefore a period of 70 X 7 years, or 490 years will await their future before they can inherit the promised kingdom (Gen 12; 15).

⁵⁰ James F. Matheny and Marjorie B. Matheny, *The Seventy Weeks of Daniel: An Exposition of Daniel 9:24-27*. (Brevard, NC: Jay and Associates, 1990), 16.

Key Scholars Interpretation of the 70 heptads

Non-Christological Fulfillment		Christological Fulfillment	
Liberal	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative
J. A. Montgomery ¹ Norman Porteous ³ Daniel Heaton ¹ Paul Redditt ¹	Edward Young ¹ C. F. Keil ¹ Herbert Leupold ¹ Philip Mauro ² John Goldingay ¹		John Walvoord ³ John Whitcomb ³ Gleason Archer ³ Alva McClain ³ Leon Wood ³ Peter Gentry ⁴ Joyce Baldwin ¹

1. Holds to a purely figurative period of time.
2. Holds to the first 69 heptads to be literal but the last figurative.
3. Holds to a literal 70 heptads, with a period of time between the 69th and 70th heptad, final heptad to be finished at the second advent of Christ.
4. Holds to a literal 70 heptads with no parenthesis between the 69th and 70th heptad, completed shortly after Jesus death, in AD 70.

To determine which of the above interpretations accurately reflects the intention of the original author, the meaning of שָׁבָעִים must first be addressed. This Hebrew noun can literally be translated “sevens,” but some versions cause confusion by translating it “weeks.” This is often referred to as a heptad. It is recorded 20 times in the Old Testament, and is used to speak of a seven periods of time: days, weeks, months, or years.⁵¹ So, which does Daniel have in mind? Cooper, while being clear to point out, the idea of year is not necessarily inherent in the word שָׁבָעִים, contends that context must dictate the referent.⁵² Most commentators recognize this heptad to be a period of seven years not seven days, weeks, or months. Wood believes that seven weeks, or 490 days, would be meaningless in this context. However, a week of years does fit the context very well.⁵³ Showers states,

Seventy sevens of years would have been very meaningful to the Jews. God had divided their calendar into seven year periods with every seventh year being a sabbatic year (Lev.

⁵¹ Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), 988-89.

⁵² David L.Cooper, *The 70 weeks of Daniel*. (Los Angeles: Biblical Research Society, 1941), 20-21.

⁵³ Young argues similarly, "what comfort would have been afforded to Daniel, if he had been told that, as a compensation for the 70 years of desolation, the city would stand for 70 ordinary weeks, and then be destroyed again?" For this reason, Young contends the view of 490 days is almost universally rejected. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, 196.

25:3-9), and their Babylonian captivity was to last seventy years because they had violated seventy sabbatic years over the course of 490 years (2 Chr. 36:21). Daniel himself was thinking in terms of years in the context of this prophecy (9:1-2).⁵⁴

In the mind of the Hebrew people, the concept of seven sets of years is familiar and the most natural interpretation in light of the year of Jubilee spoken of in Leviticus 25:8.⁵⁵

Having established, that virtually all commentators recognize the 70 heptads to be a reference to years, and not: days, weeks, or months, it is important now to establish exactly how the 70 heptads are to be fulfilled. There are four primary interpretations regarding Daniel 9. The first and second listed below take the years to be non-literal, and the third and fourth literal.

Four Interpretations of Daniel 9:25-27⁵⁶
1. The “seventy sevens” are symbolic periods of time ending in the first century AD.
2. They are symbolic periods of time ending at Christ’s second coming.
3. They are literal years extending through the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
4. They are literal years ending with Christ’s second coming.

Concerning a literal understanding of שְׁבַעִים שְׁבַעִים, McLean surveys various evidence and concludes,

Linguistic, contextual, and historical evidence indicates that שְׁבַעִים שְׁבַעִים was and should be understood literally and not symbolically. The establishment of an exact chronology for the fulfillment of this passage should not determine the meaning of שְׁבַעִים שְׁבַעִים, but rather the natural meaning in the context as intended by the original author.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Renald Showers, *The Most High God*, 117-118.

⁵⁵ For a detailed treatment of this, see Harold W. Hoehner’s, “Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ. Part VI, Daniel’s Seventy Weeks and New Testament Chronology.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132, no. 525 (Ja-Mr 1975): 49-50.

⁵⁶ Young is a proponent of the first view, Keil the second, Montgomery the third, and virtually all conservative scholars who see a messianic fulfillment hold to view four.

⁵⁷ John Andrew McLean, *The Seventieth Week of Daniel 9:27As a Literary Key for Understanding the Structure of the Apocalypse of John*, 64.

This paper will present the fourth approach, the literal futuristic, as the one most consistent and true to the divine intention. The arguments for such will be brought out, as appropriate in the exegesis of the text.

Gabriel proclaims to Daniel that these 490 years has been נְחָתָהּ “decreed” on עַמּוֹ “his people” and on עִיר קְדִישָׁהּ “his holy city.” The niph'al (passive) verb נְחָתָהּ “decreed” is used to indicate that God has determined these events, and they will happen according to his plan. The objects of judgment are Daniel’s people and their holy city, Jerusalem. As Wood states,

That this concern is to be with the city, as well as the people, militates against the idea that the 490 years carry reference only to Christ’s first coming and not to His second. It is difficult to see how the physical city of Jerusalem was involved in the deliverance from sin which Christ then effected, but it will be in the deliverance from the destructive oppression which the Antichrist will bring prior to Christ’s second coming.⁵⁸

In this one statement, Wood rightly defends a literal interpretation of the object of God’s judgment, a literal return of Christ concluding the judgment, and a literal deliverance of sin.

Wood’s view is the most consistent interpretation taking into account the normal laws of communication. There is no persuasive reason to take these statements as anything other than what they mean at face value. It is also worthy to note, that in ancient book *Last Words of Baruch*, dated AD 136 by James Harris,⁵⁹ it becomes evident, in the words of Harris, that many

...had still the memory of seventy weeks of affliction in ancient days and were adding seventy to the date of the capture of the city by Titus, in the hope that somewhere about the year 140 A.D. would be fulfilled their expectation that “The Lord will have mercy on Jacob yet, And again in his border see Israel set.”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 248.

⁵⁹ Harris, “Hadrian’s Decree of Expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem,” 199.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 199-200.

We can deduce two things from this: (1) after the events had transpired, the Jewish people still took the 70 year Babylonian captivity literally, (2) although mistaken in their final interpretation; they took the numbers of Daniel's 70 heptads literally, and they were hoping/expecting its conclusion. In Summary, the natural laws of communication, the understanding of the original recipients of these prophecies, and the harmonization of history itself with past prophetic fulfillments, point to a literal application of the 70 heptads or 490 years.

The question concerning this coming period, also begs the question, "who will be involved?" Will the church enter into this time? The prophecy given to Daniel clearly states that this time-frame is focused on "your people," the nation of Israel, and "your holy city," Jerusalem.⁶¹ Three of the purposes listed, soon to be developed, are also clearly aimed at Israel and her sins. It is also significant to note, that previous prophetic revelations (Daniel 2, 7, and 8) focused on the Gentile nations. This passage is clearly honed in on Israel and no one else.⁶² Walvoord states, "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."⁶³

When answering the question of who, we must also answer the question, of why? The purpose and the people cannot be separated. The purpose(s) focus on the Jewish people and their preparation for the millennial reign of Christ. Neither, the who, nor the why, of Daniel's prophecy involves the church. The church has nothing to do with the city of Jerusalem, the restitution for Israel's sins, nor the inheritance of the land and temple.

⁶¹ Referring to *וְעַל-עֵינֵי קְדֻשָּׁתָא | אֶל-עַמְּךָ* Whitcomb states, "This hermeneutical key unlocks the meaning of large numbers of prophetic Scriptures that have remained obscure during the centuries when Israel and the church have been considered to be essentially the same entity." John Clement Whitcomb, *Daniel*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 129.

⁶² John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Prophetic Key to Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 220.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 220.

Both the Old and New Testaments record manifold purpose statements. In Genesis a statement is recorded by God, indicating the divine objective for mankind (Gen 1:26-27). John's Gospel records the purpose for which he wrote (John 20:31), as did his first epistle (1 John 1:3).⁶⁴ To understand God's plan: past, present, and future it is necessary when coming to purpose statements in Scripture, to sit up and pay attention. Daniel 9:24 is one such example. Daniel records the purposes or objectives declared by Gabriel for these prophetic 70 heptads.

Having declared the object of God's pending judgment, Gabriel proclaims the purposes for it. He lists a total of six reasons. Young,⁶⁵ Goldingay,⁶⁶ and Gentry⁶⁷ categorize them into two groups: three negative and three positive. All of these statements utilize a "↳" + infinitive construction. The first three appear to deal with Israel's sin problem, while the second three are concerning the ushering in a kingdom characterized by righteousness.⁶⁸ There is a diversity of opinion by some scholars as to what each objective denotes.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ There is some debate whether this purpose statement can be extended to the whole book or if it should be restricted to just the preceding miracles of Jesus. For a detailed treatment of this see further, John Niemela's "Finding True North in John," *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 6 (2000): 25-48.

⁶⁵ Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, 197.

⁶⁶ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 258-260.

⁶⁷ Gentry, "Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the New Exodus," 31.

⁶⁸ H. L. Willmington, *Willmington's Bible Handbook* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997), 437.

⁶⁹ This diversity of opinion by scholars who hold to a non-Christological fulfillment (cf. "Key Scholars Interpretation of the 70 heptads" chart) as to what each of these specific objectives denotes, shows a sizeable weakness in their view. While some commentators throw their hands in the air, and say we cannot really know the intention of the author (Porteous, 140), others just parse verbs and indicate lexical meanings of words without their specific fulfillments (Redditt, 161). Seow, on the other hand, sees the first two objectives referring to Antiochus the third to Israel, the fourth to the restoration of the temple, fifth to Daniel's prophecy, and sixth to the "re-consecration" of the sanctuary by Judas Maccabee in 164 BC (Seow, 147-148). Goldingay tries to argue the ambiguity of the first three purposes, as to their referent (Israel or Antiochus Epihanes), may point to its lack of importance (Goldingay, 259). While there is great disparity of opinions by those who hold to a non-Christological fulfillment, there is great unanimity amongst those who hold to a Christological fulfillment. In these scholars' views, generally speaking, all objectives will be fulfilled at the coming of Christ, and are in preparation for the millennial reign, which is preceded by the repentance of Israel.

Gabriel gives three negative reasons followed by three positive reasons for the 70 heptads.⁷⁰

Reasons for the 70 Heptads

Negative Reasons	Positive Reasons
to finish the transgression	to bring in righteousness forever
to seal the sins	to seal up the vision
to pay for iniquity	to anoint the holy sanctuary

The first negative reason cited is לְכַלֵּא הַפֶּשַׁע “to finish the transgression.”⁷¹

Regarding הַפֶּשַׁע “transgression” TWOT states, “the fundamental idea of the root is a breach of relationships, civil or religious, between two parties... in a religious sense, Israel was accused of rebelling against her divine king and the established covenant between them.⁷² The end of this period of time will see the end to covenant unfaithfulness on the part of Israel. As Archer notes, “This seems to require nothing less than the inauguration of the kingdom of God on earth. Certainly the crucifixion of Christ in A.D. 30 did not put an end to man's iniquity or rebellion on earth, as the millennial kingdom of Christ promises to do.”⁷³ Some scholars argue that לְכַלֵּא does not imply complete cessation but rather more of a sense of restraining or imprisoning.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Walvoord sees some positive and some negative components, concluding, “The preferable approach is to take each on its own merits,” while also acknowledging that the first three reasons do deal with the issue of sin. Walvoord, *Daniel*, 220-221. Archer believes the first three, concern the removal of sin and the last three, the restoration of righteousness. Archer, *Daniel*, 112.

⁷¹ Cooper argues that the article points to a specific transgression in the mind of God. Cooper, *The 70 Weeks of Daniel*, 25-28. While this is possible, it is difficult to determine which of the transgressions is most heinous to God, defiling his Sabbath, rejecting the law of Jubilee, worshipping other gods. It is better to accept “the transgression” in a more general sense referring to rebellion against their covenant-making and keeping God.

⁷² G. Herbert Livingston, “פֶּשַׁע” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 741.

⁷³ Archer, *Daniel*, 112.

⁷⁴ Meadowcroft and Irwin, *The Book of Daniel*, 191.

This fits well with the premillennial interpretation. Christ's return to establish a millennial kingdom (and the accompanying imprisonment of Satan and the Anti-Christ in the bottomless pit) will indeed restrain sin, but Scripture is clear that some will still rebel, and die prematurely as a result (Is 65:20), and of course there will be one final rebellion before sin is completely obliterated (Rev 20). The preterist's interpretation of this passage falls far short of the ending or even "imprisoning" of transgression.

The second negative reason given is **וּלְחַתֵּם חַטָּאוֹת** "to seal the sins." The word translated sin, simply means, to miss the mark. It is a common word used for falling short of God's standard. The first two reasons are similar, in fact, they are nearly parallel. However, the first speaks of corporate rebellion by the nation as a whole, and the second focuses on their personal sins.

The last negative reason mentioned was **וּלְכַפֵּר עֲוֹן** "to pay for iniquity." Iniquity has the idea of wrongdoing, and focuses on the guilt for the wrongdoing that occurred.⁷⁵ Some contend that this phrase is a reference to the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners. It is true that Jesus ultimately paid the penalty of the sin at Calvary. However this is not an accurate interpretation of this specific phrase. First, the 69 heptads are complete at the "coming" of the "anointed ruler."⁷⁶ Therefore, the crucifixion of Christ happens in between the 69th heptad and the beginning of the 70th heptad. (2) This prophecy is regarding Israel, but Christ died for the whole world (1 Jo 2:2; He 2:9). It is more probable that this phrase, "to pay for iniquity," refers to the time when all Israel will acknowledge their rebellion against God,

⁷⁵ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

⁷⁶ The three views regarding the *terminus ad quem*, are: (1) the birth of Christ (circa 5 BC), the baptism of Christ (circa AD 26), or the Messiah's triumphal entry (circa AD 30).

recognizing both their national sins, as well as personal sin, and in response call on the name of their God for redemption. At which point, the atonement already completed will become a reality in their lives.⁷⁷

The first positive reason mentioned is וְלִהְבִּיא צְדָק עַל־מִיָּם “to bring in righteousness forever.” Archer states, “This clearly indicates an order of society in which righteousness, justice, and conformity to the standards of Scripture will prevail on earth.”⁷⁸ When Christ returns and establishes a millennial kingdom, a righteous king will rule, and justice will prevail. This will be characteristic of the kingdom. At this point, Driver makes a helpful comment, “The general sense of the four clauses, of which this is the last, is that the Messianic age is to be marked by the abolition and forgiveness of sin, and by perpetual righteousness.”⁷⁹ While Driver is not correct in his final analysis of the referents in verses 25-27, he is right on, concerning these objectives prepare for the “Messianic age,” i.e. millennial kingdom.

The second positive reason is וְלִחְתֹּם חִזְוֹן וְנִבְיָא “to seal up the vision and the prophecy.” These events will bring to a culmination to all that the visions and prophecies entailed concerning the coming of Christ in his first and second advents.⁸⁰ It is important to note that the Hebrew noun נְבִיא translated “prophecy” is actually the word for prophet, however for

⁷⁷ Cooper, *The 70 Weeks of Daniel*, 30.

⁷⁸ Archer, *Daniel*, 113.

⁷⁹ S. R. Driver, *The Book of Daniel* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1900), 138.

⁸⁰ John Phillips and Jerry Vines. *Exploring Daniel*. (Loizeaux Brothers, Incorporated, 1990), 148.

reasons of clarity, it is probably best to translate it as “prophecy,” knowing that the word **נְבִיא** stands in place of the prophecies in which the prophet speaks.⁸¹

The final reason given by the angel Gabriel is **וְלַמְשַׁח קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים** “to anoint the holy sanctuary.” The holy sanctuary can be none other than the temple itself located in Jerusalem, where Christ will reign during His theocratic kingdom. What the “anointing” predicts is not entirely clear, however it must involve some form of preparation for the coming Millennial kingdom.⁸² The end of these 70 heptads will be the coming of Christ to reign. Archer makes a strong case for the futuristic interpretation of these events,

If all six goals were in fact attained by the crucifixion of Christ and the establishment of the early church seven years after his death, then it might be fair to assume that the entire 490 years of the seventy weeks were to be understood as running consecutively and coming to a close in A.D. 37. But since all or most of the six goals seem to be as yet unfulfilled, it follows that if the seventieth week finds fulfillment at all, it must be identified as the last seven years before Christ’s return to earth as millennial King.⁸³

The events of Daniel 9:24 have not been fulfilled as of yet, and as Archer points out must therefore be fulfilled in the future. The way God has worked in the past argues for a literal interpretation of these 70 heptads. The period of time from the establishment of the Kingdom of Israel until its collapse was seventy-sevens or 490 years. The time of Israel’s exile was seventy years. The time predicted by God for continued judgment is another seventy-sevens. A visual is helpful.

God’s Program for Israel

The Kingdom of Israel	Babylonian Captivity	Future Predicted Judgment
$70 \times 7 = 490$ years	70 years	$70 \times 7 = 490$ years

⁸¹ Meadowcroft and Irwin, *The Book of Daniel*, 193.

⁸² Whitcomb contends that it speaks of when he is “officially inaugurate into public ministry.” *Daniel*, 131.

⁸³ Archer, *Daniel*, 113.

The symmetry seen in God’s time-table gives just one more reason that a literal futuristic approach to Daniel’s prophecy should be maintained.

The First 69 Heptads

Verse 25 begins with the two verbs in the imperfect tense **וְתִדְעוּ** “know” and **וְתִשְׁכַּלּוּ** “understand.” These should probably be taken as jussives which relays urgency.⁸⁴ In Daniel 9:1 a *terminus de quo* was seen, followed by a seventy year period. In this passage another *terminus de quo* is mentioned along with the *terminus ad quem* for a 69 heptad period. The *terminus de quo* is **מִצְאָת דְּכָר** the “granting of permission” **לְהָשִׁיב** “to return” **וְלִבְנוֹת** “and to rebuild” Jerusalem. Three different edicts were given by respective kings that are in contention for the beginning of the 69 heptads: (1) the edict of Cyrus in 538 BC (Ezra 1:1-4; 6:1-5), (2) Darius’ decree in 519 BC, (3) Artaxerxes’ decree in 458 BC (Ezra 7:11-26), and (4) a second decree by Artaxerxes in 445 BC (Neh 2:5-18).

Which Medio-Persian decree listed begins the 490 year count down? Gabriel says a **רְחוֹב** “public square” and a **וְחַרְוִיץ** “defensive trench” will be **וְנִבְנְתָה** “rebuilt.” Some translate the first object of construction “streets” (NIV, KJV), others “plaza” (NASB, NET, HCSB), still others “square” (ESV, RSV). Since scholars are uncertain of what is referenced by Daniel, it is best to translate this word with the least specific meaning as possible. “Broad open space,” could include: streets, plaza, or a market square. Daniel also speaks of a moat being rebuilt. This word translated “moat,” is only found here in Scripture. Montgomery however

⁸⁴ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 251.

points out that in the Copper Scroll at Qumran it has the meaning of “conduit.”⁸⁵ Building upon Montgomery’s discovery, Redditt concludes, “the two terms signified the whole of the city, with ‘plaza’ denoting the city’s interior and ‘moat’ denoting its exterior. In other words, Jerusalem would be built again ‘inside and out.’”⁸⁶ Showers comes to a similar conclusion,

The word *plaza* refers to the broad open space just inside a city’s gates—the space that was center of city life. It should be noted that this was space inside *gates* (2 Chr. 32:6). But a city does not have gates unless it has walls...It was common practice of walled cities to build big deep trenches around their walls as part of their defenses. Thus, the building of a moat implies the construction of a wall and the construction of defenses...which three permitted the rebuilding of Jerusalem’s defenses including its wall and moat?⁸⁷

Which of the above decrees fits the description of building a moat and an open area?⁸⁸

After eliminating views 1-3 as possibilities, Showers states, “it had to be the decree of Artaxerxes issued to Nehemiah in 445 B.C. (Neh. 1; [sic] 2).”⁸⁹ Hoehner also argues for the fourth decree, listing four reasons:⁹⁰

Hoehner’s Arguments for Artaxerxe’s 2nd Decree
1. There is a direct reference to the restoration of the city (2:3, 5) and of the city gates and walls (2:3, 8).
2. Artaxerxes wrote a letter to Asaph to give materials to be used specifically for the walls (2:8).
3. The Book of Nehemiah and Ezra 4:7-23 indicate that certainly the restoration of the walls was done in the most distressing circumstances, as predicted by Daniel (Dan. 9:25).
4. No later decrees were given by the Persian kings pertaining to the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

⁸⁵ J. A. Montgomery, *Daniel*, 380.

⁸⁶ Paul Redditt, *Daniel: Based on the New Revised Standard Version*. New Century Bible. (Sheffield, Eng: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 162.

⁸⁷ Showers, 121-122.

⁸⁸ Alva McClain states regarding the first three views, “these decrees without any exception have to do with the rebuilding of the *Temple*, not the city.” *Daniel’s Prophecy of the 70 Weeks*, 23.

⁸⁹ Showers, 122.

⁹⁰ Harold W. Hoehner, “Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ. Part VI, Daniel’s Seventy Weeks and New Testament Chronology.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132, no. 525 (Ja-Mr 1975): 49-50.

Referencing Hoehner’s third point above, Gabriel indicates with the phrase **וּבְצוֹק הַזְּמַנִּים** translated “in the distress of the time,” that this reconstruction will take place during a time of duress. View four certainly passes this test as well. This is exactly the picture of what is seen in the book of Nehemiah (Neh 4:17).

Hoehner’s Terminus De Quo

Event	Jewish Month	Roman Month	Year
Xerxe Dies	--	(circa) Dec. 17	465 BC
Artaxerxe becomes king	Nisan ⁹¹	(circa) Dec. 17	464-463
Neh. hears report from Jerusalem	Chislev	Nov/Dec	445
Artaxerxes’ Decree	Nisan ⁹²	March/April	444

Not only must the historical events match the decree, but from the *terminus de quo*, the issuing of the decree, until the *terminus ad quem*, the anointed leader comes there must be a total of 69 heptads or 483 years.⁹³

The *terminus ad quem* is when **עַד-מְשִׁיחַ נָגִיד** “the anointed ruler comes.” Although the word “comes” is not in the Hebrew text, it is implied and therefore warrants being added to translations. It cannot be taken for granted that everyone recognizes **מְשִׁיחַ נָגִיד** as Jesus of Nazareth. The majority of liberal scholars, who date the writing of this book in the 2nd century AD, identify this person as Onias III, the high priest who is **יִכָּרֵת** “cut off,” i.e. murdered in AD 170.⁹⁴ Gentry, who builds upon the foundation laid by Donald Murray, develops a whole theory

⁹¹ Hoehner notes that “to have Nisan later than Chislev (in the same year) may seem strange until one realizes that Nehemiah was using a Tishri-to-Tishri dating Method. Nehemiah was following what was used by the kings of Judah earlier in their history.” 57.

⁹² Following the Persian Nisan-to-Nisan accession-year system, rather than the Jewish Tishri-to-Tishri, Hoehner, 58.

⁹³ Showers calls these the “two tests.” *The Most High God*, 121.

⁹⁴ Norman Porteous defends this view in his commentary, *Daniel: A Commentary*. (Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), 141. While space does not allow for a rebuttal to this view, a cogent and convincing

based upon his new understanding of the word נָגִיד translated “leader” compared to מֶלֶךְ
“king.”

“nāgîd communicates kingship according to God’s plan and standards whereas melek communicates kingship according to the Canaanite model of absolute despotism and self-aggrandizement. That is why the term nāgîd dominates in the passage on the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7) and is also the term used here.”⁹⁵

He argues that Jesus is referred to both here and again in verse 26, which is a verse that refers to the anti-Christ. He is committing an exegetical fallacy here by reading too much into synonyms.

There are also three possible options for the *terminus ad quem*: (1) the birth of Christ (circa 5 BC), the baptism of Christ (circa AD 26), the Messiah’s triumphal entry (circa AD 30).

This period of time, from the granting of permission, until the coming of the מְשִׁיחַ will be seven heptads (49 years) and sixty-two heptads (434 years), which is equivalent to 483 years.

McClain, Anderson, and Hoehner use what is called “prophetic years” in their calculations (McClain, 24-27; Anderson 67-75; Hoehner, 57). A prophetic year is comprised of 360 days. Not only is this a viable possibility, 3.5 years is equal to 1,260 days, which “just so happens” to be the amount of time that the book of Revelation equates to be half of the tribulation period (Rev 11:2-3; 12:6). So a prophetic year appears to be the appropriate method of time calculation.

Using the prophetic calendar, to calculate the total amount of days for the 69 heptads, the formula will look like: 360 days X 483 years = 173,880 days. Now assuming a 444 BC dating of the decree by Artaxerxe (see chart: Hoehner’s *Terminus de Quo*) and an AD 33 triumphal entry

response is articulated by Donald Block in his journal article, “Preaching Old Testament Apocalyptic to a New Testament Church,” in *Calvin Theological Journal* 41 (2006): 17-52.

⁹⁵ Gentry, 33. building on, Donald F. Murray’s, “Divine Prerogative and Royal Pretension: Pragmatics, Poetics and Polemics in a Narrative Sequence about David (2 Samuel 5.17-7.29)” in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series* 264 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 299.

date, the calculation looks like so: 444 BC – AD 33 = 476 solar years.⁹⁶ And to calculate how many prophetic days is equal to 476 solar years, you would calculate: 476 solar years X 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 45.975 seconds = 173,855 prophetic days. There is only a discrepancy of 25 days. Assuming Hoehner’s dating of Christ’s crucifixion to be on Friday, Nisan 14 / April 3, AD 33, and Nissan 1 in 444 BC was March 4 or 5, you add these 25 days to March = March 30th as the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.⁹⁷ Using Hoehner’s calculations, the period of time that transpires from the issuing of the decree until the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, is exactly 483 years.

The Events Between the 69th and 70th Heptad

As indicated in the outline adapted from Walvoord’s work, the information recorded in verse 26 is believed by most dispensational scholars, to be the parenthetical period of time between the 69th and 70th heptad. One of the reasons that such a parenthesis is necessary is to allow time for at least six things recorded in this verse to be accomplished.

Five Events That Occur Between the 69th and 70th Heptad
1. The “anointed one” is cut off.
2. The people of the “leader who will come” will destroy the city.
3. Those people referenced above will destroy the sanctuary.
4. The end of the people will come like a flood.
5. Everything will be left desolate from these events.

The prophecy recorded by Daniel, announces that the events described in verse 26 will not take place during the 69th heptad, but rather afterwards, as indicated by the Hebrew preposition **וְאַחֲרָיִם**. There is no suggestion as to how long this period of time will be, or when

⁹⁶ For a detailed calculation of the triumphal entry, see Harold W. Hoehner’s, “Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ, Part II: The Commencement of Christ’s Ministry,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 131 (January-March 1974): 41-54.

⁹⁷ Hoehner, “Daniel’s Seventy Weeks and New Testament Chronology,” 64.

these events will happen in relation to it. Clearly, if one takes the triumphal entry as the end of the 69th heptad, the first event listed takes place only days later. The text says, after the 69th heptad, the anointed leader **יְכַרְתֶּנּוּ** “will be cut off.” The verb employed, is a common one that can be taken literally for the removal or destroying something (1 Sam 5:4; 1 Ki 5:6) or figuratively, as to the death of kings (Gen 9:11; Exo 31:14; Jer 11:19).⁹⁸ It is in the imperfect tense, indicating a future action in relationship to the completion of the sixty-two heptads. The niph'al is also utilized to indicate that something or someone(s) will be the agent causing the cutting off of the “anointed one.”⁹⁹ The cutting off was fulfilled when Jesus Christ was crucified. An argument could be made here for a divine causation, especially in light of Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, *μη̄ τὸ θέλημά μου ἀλλὰ τὸ σὸν γινέσθω*, “Not my will but yours be done.” God the Father caused the cutting off of the Messiah. From a human vantage point, from which it would have been read, it is most likely the Jewish religious leaders who would be perceived as causing the “cutting off” of the anointed one. The phrase **לֹא יִשְׂרֹף** translated, “and he shall have nothing,” is problematic. Seow says a translation is, “little more than a guess at the enigmatic Hebrew.”¹⁰⁰ Gentry translates it, “not for himself.”¹⁰¹ While there is no room for dogmatism, it seems context helps the reader to understand its meaning. It will appear as if the **מְשִׁיחַ** accomplished nothing. The appearance is of course deceptive for he will accomplish an enormous feat, the atonement of sin. History helps the reader to understand what may have been in Seow’s words, “enigmatic Hebrew.” Christ achieved ultimate victory through apparent defeat.

⁹⁸ Miller, *Daniel*, 267.

⁹⁹ As mentioned previously, liberal scholars believe the High Priest, Onias III, is the character who the 2nd century, pseudo Daniel had in mind when writing this “prophecy.”

¹⁰⁰ Seow, *Daniel*, 149.

¹⁰¹ Gentry, *Daniel’s Seventy Weeks and the New Exodus*, 37.

In verse 26 and 27 we see the comparison of two influential leaders: (1) The “Messiah” who will be cut off, who appears to accomplish nothing, but who will return at the end of the last heptad (9:24c), bringing an end to “rebellion,” “sin,” and “iniquity” with (2) the anti-Messiah, the “leader who will come,” the one who will initiate a covenant with many, break that covenant midway through the 70th heptad, and will commit a detestable offense that will cause desecration.

Earlier, Gabriel proclaimed that after the Babylonian captivity (the first 70 years) that Jerusalem will be rebuilt. Now he indicates that at a later time, after the 69 heptads, the holy city will be יִשְׁחָרֵרָה “destroyed” again. The vast majority of critical scholars identify this person as Antiochus Epiphanes (Seow, 151; Driver, 140; Porteous, 143; Redditt, 162-163) Young follows the teachings of Calvin, maintaining Titus to be the person in question (Young, 216). Archer also holds this to be Titus, who is a type of the coming Anti-Christ (Daniel, 117). Goldingay says it is Jason, the High Priest following Oninias III (Goldingay, 262). Gentry has an awkward view to Jesus (Gentry, 37). It is best however to recognize that “he” in verse 27 is referring back to the nearest antecedent in verse 26, “the one coming.” The leader in question is none other than the Antichrist himself (Keil, 362; Walvoord, 233; Leupold, 428; Whitcomb, 133). It is important to note that the subject is the אָמָּר “people” of the coming leader. In other words, it is the “people” of the coming leader who will destroy the city.¹⁰² One must not assume he is speaking here of a leader who will accompany the people. In fact, verse 27 makes this clear. Wood makes an astute observation regarding the article used, “The use of the article also suggests that this one has been noted in the book earlier (which indeed is the case, when he is identified with the “little horn” of

¹⁰² Some manuscripts and versions have אִתּוֹ translated, “with,” rather than אִתּוֹ people. This was probably an attempt on the part of a scribe(s) to connect their belief that the “one who will come” of verse 26 is the same individual as “the anointed one” of verse 25. The harder MT reading is therefore preferred.

7:8, 24-26).”¹⁰³ Titus is not referenced earlier, however the Anti-Christ is. This must be a reference to the Romans, the 4th Empire of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in chapter 2. This is not fulfilled by Antiochus, who was neither a Roman, nor destroyed the City of Jerusalem. This prophecy is fulfilled by the “people” of the coming Anti-Christ. The Anti-Christ was previously described (7:8, 20-25). The people who did fulfill this prophecy, destroying both the city and the temple of Jerusalem were the Romans, led by Titus in AD 70. The actions of the “leader to come” will be described in greater detail in verse 27. This leader must be of the revived Roman Empire.

Gabriel indicates that the end of “it” will come quickly “like a flood.” To what is “it” referring? Many of the critical scholars, who see this fulfilled in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes, argue this pronoun should be translated “him” (Driver, 141; Porteous, 143; Redditt, 162). It would be better however to recognize “it” speaking of Jerusalem, which will be destroyed (Miller, 268; Wood, 256; Walvoord, 231). This destruction will come “as a flood.” Walvoord notes that same phrase is used elsewhere by Daniel (11:10, 22, 26, 40) and Isaiah (8:8) to denote armies that will annihilate their enemies.¹⁰⁴ Josephus’ records depict such an event. Rome was sacked and the temple was burned down. Much of the temple treasures were taken and according to Josephus 1,100,000 Jews died during the siege.¹⁰⁵

As previously mentioned, it is important to note that a literal interpretation of the 7 + 62 + 1 heptads, necessitates a parenthesis of time between the 69th and 70th. Feinberg also recognizes a need for such, and gives 8 specific reasons why this is so.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel*, 256.

¹⁰⁴ Walvoord, *Daniel*, 231.

¹⁰⁵ Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, 6.9.3

Feinberg's 8 Reasons for a Gap Between the 69th and 70th Heptad
1. The six goals of the seventy weeks as given in Daniel 9:25 have not been fulfilled yet.
2. The seventieth week is treated separately from the first sixty-nine.
3. The crucifixion of the Messiah and the destruction of the city and Temple are after sixty-nine weeks.
4. Intervals in the fulfillment of prophecies are common (Lk 4:18-19; Is 61:1-2)
5. The difficulties in giving an adequate interpretation of 9:26-27, when the seventieth week follows immediately after the first sixty-nine.
6. Daniel 9:27b fits well with what we know elsewhere about the events of the last half of the Tribulation period (Dan. 7:25; 2 Thess. 2:3ff.; Rev. 12, 13, 19).
7. The idea of an interval can be seen in Daniel 7, 8, and 11.
8. Jesus speaks of the abomination of desolation as yet future (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14).

Feinberg's arguments are logical, convincing, and make the best sense of the text. This parenthesis in God's timetable of 70 heptads also involves the "church age."

Paul calls the church a *μυστήριον* "mystery" (Eph 3:1-7). A biblical mystery is something, "decreed 'before the ages' ...and veiled to human understanding, but awaiting its disclosure, throughout the ages."¹⁰⁷ Paul also refers to the event when living and "sleeping" believers receive their glorified bodies as a mystery (1 Cor 15:51). In God's sovereign plan, he determined not to reveal the church age to Daniel. Due to the mystery still unrevealed, and Daniel's concern primarily with God's special dealings with Israel, the prophecy he received, shared very little information regarding the events between Calvary and the appearance of the "one to come."

The 70th Heptad

It is unclear how much time transpires between verse 26 and 27. However, some time is necessary. This final heptad, or seven years, will start when this prophesied leader **יְהוֹשֻׁעַ**

¹⁰⁶ Paul D. Feinberg, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24-27," 212.

¹⁰⁷ S. S. Smalley, "B. Usage" In , in *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard et al., 3rd ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 794.

“confirms” a בְּרִית “covenant.” It is significant that Gabriel does not use the normal Hebrew verb כָּרַת “to cut” a covenant. The reason could be, as articulated by Baldwin, he forced at least one of the parties into the agreement.¹⁰⁸ The hifil verb used וְהִגְבִּיר is in the third person. Young believes “he” refers to the Messiah (Young, 208-209), critical scholars, who hold to the Maccabean dating of the book, speak of Antiochus Epiphanes (Redditt, 162; Porteous, 143; Goldingay, 267), or a “surrogate” of Antiochus’ (Seow, 151). However, it is best to side with those that believe the events described here are yet future, and therefore must reference the Anti-Christ (Walvoord, 232; Archer, 116; Wood, 257). Even Keil and Leupold, amillennialists acknowledge that the “he” must refer to its closest antecedent in the text, and believe it to be the Anti-Christ (Keil, 367; Leupold, 439). Walvoord includes a helpful summary statement,

Antiochus Epiphanes does not satisfy the passage for anyone who accepts it as Scripture. Christ does not satisfy the description of verse 27 because there is no seven-year period related to Christ which provides fulfillment for the entire passage. Under these circumstances, the normal antecedent of *he* is *the prince that shall come*, who is not to be identified with Titus but rather with a future enemy of the people of Israel who will bring them into the great tribulation anticipated as still future in the book of Revelation, which was written at least sixty years after the death of Christ and twenty years after the destruction of Jerusalem.¹⁰⁹

It is right to surmise that this Anti-Christ will be of Roman descent, or at the very least a recognized ruler of a future Roman Empire, since his people are those who accompanied Titus destroying Jerusalem and the temple (9:26).

This confirmation of the covenant is said to be לְרַבִּים “with many.” It is interesting that Archer, when speaking of “the many” states this, “clearly indicates...quite evidently...this is a technical term referring to the true believers among the people of God, presumable Jewish

¹⁰⁸ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*. (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 171.

¹⁰⁹ Walvoord, *Daniel*, 234.

believers in Christ.”¹¹⁰ And Walvoord says the complete opposite, while also articulating the clarity of this passage, “this is a clear reference to unbelieving Jews who will enter into an alliance with *the prince that shall come*.”¹¹¹ It is best to understand the **רְבִיִּים** to be a reference to the nation of Israel (Wood, 259; Miller, 271). This confirmation of a covenant with Israel begins what is often referenced as “the 70th Week of Daniel.” Miller surmises, concerning the nature of the covenant,

His agreement probably entails a promise of protection in return for certain favors (likely including those of an economic nature). It is easy to understand why Israel would enter into such an arrangement with the powerful forces of the Antichrist. With such protection Israel will feel safe and secure.¹¹²

If the temple is not already built or in process of being rebuilt, this will allow the opportunity for the rebuilding and reinstatement of sacrifices.¹¹³ Apparently the Anti-Christ for a time, allowed these sacrifices to take place and such an agreement may be a part of the covenant. At the 3 ½ year point or in the **וְהָצִי** “middle” of the heptad, this covenant **יִשְׁבֵּית** he will, “cause to cease,” “put an end”¹¹⁴ to the **זֶבַח** “sacrifice” and the **וּמִנְחָה** “offering” that will apparently be taking place in the temple. Instead of allowing sacrifices, he will institute his own detestable thing that causes defilement.

There is much speculation over the phrase **וְעַל כַּנָּף** literally translated “on a wing.” Walvoord was not exaggerating when stating, “Many fantastic explanations have been given of

¹¹⁰ Archer, *Daniel*, 117.

¹¹¹ Walvoord, *Daniel*, 234.

¹¹² Miller, 271.

¹¹³ Feinberg, “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24-27,” 213.

¹¹⁴ Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), 991-92.

the use of the word wing.”¹¹⁵ Archer states, “it is...reasonable to understand ‘wing’ (kenap) as a figure for the vulturelike role of the Antichrist as he swoops down on his beleaguered victims for the purposes of oppression and despoliation.”¹¹⁶ Goldingay proposes to amend the text, with **כַּנָּפַי** to mean, “lord of wing,” a title for the Syrian god of heaven. He then surmises it is the subject of the previous phrase “causes to cease.”¹¹⁷ Young propose it to refer to the pinnacle of the temple.¹¹⁸

The Hebrew noun **כַּנָּף** does literally mean “wing,” and is used 107 times, often in reference the wing of a bird (Ezek 26; Ps 12; 1 Ki 10).¹¹⁹ Other times it is used to reference the character of God in protection of his people. While not the most frequent use, the lexical range of meaning does include “corner.” Ezra speaks of the “corners” of the earth (Ezek 7:2). It seems best to understand **כַּנָּף** to be translated “corner” with the implication of being in the temple. This is so for several reasons. First, the temple, and the “holy hill,” which is the dwelling place of the temple, is mentioned recently by Daniel (9:16, 26). Secondly, in the mind of Daniel and the Hebrew people, the temple on Mount Zion is where sacrifices and offerings are made. Thirdly, if Antiochus Epiphanes, and his detestable, abominable act, is a type of the “coming one,” than it argues for this, the anti-typical event, to also take place in the temple. It just so happens Daniel prophesied about this very thing (Dan 11:31). Fourthly, the phrase **שְׁקוּצִים**

¹¹⁵ Walvoord, *Daniel*, 235-236.

¹¹⁶ Archer, *Daniel*, 118.

¹¹⁷ Goldingay, *Daniel*, 230.

¹¹⁸ Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, 218.

¹¹⁹ John N. Oswalt, "כַּנָּף" In , in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, electronic ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 446.

מְשַׁמֵּם “detestable thing that causes defilement” is only found in two other locations (both in Daniel), and both occurring in the temple. Fifthly and finally, the Words of Jesus recorded by Matthew should remove all doubt. Jesus says, “Ὅταν οὖν ἴδητε τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δαυιδ τοῦ προφήτου ἐστὸς ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ, “Therefore when you see the detestable thing causing defilement, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place...” Jesus himself speaks of the detestable thing, ties it to the prophet Daniel, and says it takes place in the Holy place. For these reasons, the temple must be the location of the event.

Now that the location has been established, what is the event? The Hebrew noun שְׂקִינִיּוֹת is translated “a detestable thing.” It is found elsewhere to refer to objects that God considers abhorrent and which cause contamination to those who partake in them (i.e. idol worship, eating forbidden foods).¹²⁰ This detestable sacrifice is said to מְשַׁמֵּם “cause defilement.” This verb here is identified as a poel, a very uncommon stem which is associated with the piel.¹²¹ The poel stem is used to, “expresses an aim or endeavor to perform the action, especially with hostile intent, and is hence called, by Ewald, the stem expressing *aim* (Zielstamm), *endeavour* (Suche-stamm) or *attack* (Angriffs-stamm).”¹²² This construction points to what is already suspected; the “one to come” will offer, with evil intentions, a detestable thing. This prophetic message contains the combination of the noun שְׂקִינִיּוֹת and the verb מְשַׁמֵּם. This construction is unique to Daniel’s book and when translated together means “a detestable

¹²⁰ Hermann J. Austel, "שְׂקִינִיּוֹת" in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, electronic ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 955.

¹²¹ Some Hebrew reference works identify this debated stem as a qal participle. Michael S. Heiser and Vincent M. Satterholm, *Glossary of Morpho-Syntactic Database Terminology* (Logos Bible Software, 2013; 2013).

¹²² Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch and Sir Arthur Ernest Cowley, 2d English ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), 152.

thing that causes defilement.” This phrase is only used three times. As alluded to previously, all three times it references an event taking place in the temple. One of these occasions speaks of the hideous actions of Antiochus (11:31), and the other two refer to the same event, which is to be fulfilled in the future (9:27, 12:11) at the mid-point of the 70th heptad.

What is the object causing defilement? The answer to this question is a little bit more difficult to establish. However, the close parallels to the blasphemous actions of Antiochus, and other correlating prophetic passages can help us to establish a good theory. The detestable act performed by Antiochus recorded in Dan 11:13, appears to foreshadow the greater event of the Anti-Christ in the future eschaton. Antiochus Epiphanes, set up an idol, some believe of Zeus in the temple. It is very likely, that the Anti-Christ will do the same. Such an idol would certainly be considered blasphemous and defile the one true God’s dwelling place. It would also fit the description of the detestable thing spoken of by Jesus as ἑστὸς “standing” (Matt 24:15) and described by Daniel from his vision as וְלִתֵּת “set up” (Dan 12:11) in the holy place. The book of Revelation speaks of the Anti-Christ setting up an image of himself (Rev 13:14), while also mandating everyone to worship him (Rev 13:8, 12). While Revelation does not speak of the specific location of the Anti-Christ’s image, it would seem reasonable, when Daniel’s prophecy is correlated with the words of Jesus and the revelation of John, to conclude that the “detestable thing that causes desecration” is an image of the Anti-Christ placed in the holy place. The temple of God becomes the dwelling place of an image of the Anti-Christ, and a location where people are required to worship him. One is hard-pressed to think of a more blasphemous and detestable act in the eyes of God.

The defilement spoken of previously will continue וְעַד-כָּלֵה “until the end.” The Hebrew noun כָּלֵה conveys the idea of a process that is completed. It occurs 237 times in the

Old Testament, and is used to speak of the completion of something: a building project (2 Chr 8:16), speaking (Gen 17:22), harvesting (Ruth 2:21).¹²³ The nifal participle וְנִחַרְצָה “has determined,” is utilized here to indicate the divine intention. The same verb is utilized in 9:26, but as an infinitive construct. God has determined exactly how long this atrocity will be allowed to continue, and its end has already been determined.

The conclusion to Gabriel’s message is very abrupt, just as abrupt as the end of the 70th heptad it predicts. The conclusion of this time will be, when the Anti-Christ, who has caused desolation מְשַׁמֵּם will himself be שְׁמָם desolated. A clear play on words is being used to indicate, there will be judgment for this wicked man. He who is pouring out his wrath on others, God’s wrath will be poured out on. The qal imperfect verb יִתֵּן translated “pour out” is used here. This verb is also found in 9:11, and regularly refers to God’s wrath being poured out on someone(s). In verse 11 God’s wrath was poured out on Israel for disobedience, resulting in the Babylonian captivity, and now in this context it speaks of God’s wrath on the wicked one.

In summary, the defilement that occurs will continue for the duration of the 70th heptad, the last 3 ½ years, at which point the one pouring out his wrath on Israel, will have God’s wrath poured out on him, when the true Messiah returns to judge the wicked, and rule the righteous.

CONCLUSION

The book of Daniel truly is the “key to prophetic revelation.” The prophecies recorded therein help the Bible student to understand many of the other prophetic passages pertaining to

¹²³ John N. Oswalt, "כָּלָה" In , in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr. and Bruce K. Waltke, electronic ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 439.

the coming eschaton. Daniel 9 in particular, is of special import. It describes the 70 heptads, which contains the entire prophetic future of the Jewish nation.

Daniel 9 instructs the reader about (1) the beginning of the 70 heptads with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, fulfilled by the dictum of Artaxerxes in 455 BC. It predicts (2) the completion of the 69th heptad with the coming of the anointed one, fulfilled in the triumphal entry of the Messiah, (3) records certain events that will take place between the 69th and 70th heptad, including the cutting off of the Messiah, and the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, (4) it foretells the initiation of the 70th heptad when the covenant is confirmed, (5) it describes the events at the mid-point of the final heptad: the presence of the Anti-Christ, the breaking of the covenant, the termination of the sacrificial system, and the defilement that causes desecration, which takes place in a corner of the temple. Finally, (6) it prophesies about the culmination of this period of time, with the second advent of the Messiah, which will “finish the transgression,” “seal the sins,” “bring in righteousness forever,” “seal up the vision and the prophecy,” and “anoint the holy sanctuary.” All of this occurs just prior to, and in preparation of, the establishment of God’s theocratic kingdom on earth. All of the prophetic future of Israel packed into five verses. If Daniel is the key to prophetic Scripture, and it is, than Daniel 9 is the key to the prophetic future of the nation of Israel.

APPENDIX 1

TRANSLATION OF DANIEL 9

1 In the first year of Darius, son of Ahasuerus, from the descent of the Medes, who was made to rule over the kingdom of the Chaldeans, ² In the first year he began to reign, I Daniel perceived in the books, the Word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah the prophet to be fulfilled regarding the desolation of Jerusalem was seventy years. ³ So I was determined to reside in the presence of my Lord God, I sought to pray for mercy while fasting clothed in sack cloth and ashes. ⁴ And I prayed to the Lord God and I confessed saying: I beseech you my Lord, the great God, one worthy to be feared, the one who keeps the covenant of loving-kindness with those who keep his commands. ⁵ We sinned and we did wrong. We were wicked and we rebelled. We abandoned your commandments and also your judgments. ⁶ We did not listen to your servants, the prophets, which spoke in your name to our kings, our leaders, our fathers, and to all the people of the earth. ⁷ For you Lord are righteous but this day we are shameful in your presence, all the men of Judah and all the ones who inhabit Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and all those exiled throughout the earth because of they were unfaithful to you. ⁸ Lord, we are full of shame, for our kings, our leaders, and our fathers sinned against you. ⁹ Oh Lord, our God full of compassion and forgiveness for we rebelled against him. ¹⁰ We did not obey the Lord God's voice to walk according to his laws which he gave in our presence by his servants, the prophets. ¹¹ All Israel disobeyed your laws and turned away and did not obey your voice. The curses were poured out on us, according to the promise which was written in the law of Moses, the servant of our God, because of our sin against Him. ¹² And his word was fulfilled which was spoken to all us and to all of our rulers, a great disaster befell us, which never anything like it ever happened as what happened in Jerusalem. ¹³ Just as it was written in the book of Moses, all that disaster it came on us, yet we did not seek the face of the Lord God. ¹⁴ Now the Lord watched all the disaster that came upon us because all the work the Lord God did was righteous and we did not listen to his voice. ¹⁵ Now the Lord our God who brought your people out from the land of Egypt with a strong hand and made a great name for yourself until this day, we sinned, we were wicked. ¹⁶ Lord like all your righteousness, turn away from us your anger from your city Jerusalem, the holy hill because our sin and our iniquity/punishment of our fathers of Jerusalem and your people an object of reproach to those all around us. ¹⁷ Now our God, hear the prayer of your servant and his pleas for mercy and shine your presence for the sake of your desolate sanctuary. ¹⁸ My God, open your ears and hear, open your eyes and see the desolation of the city which is called by your name, we do not plead for mercy because of our righteousness, but because of your great compassion. ¹⁹ Lord, Lord hear, Lord forgive, listen and do not delay because your people and your city and on account of your name. ²⁰ Again while I was speaking an intercessory prayer and while I was confessing my sin and the sin of my people of Israel and while making a plea for mercy in the presence of the Lord God, on behalf of the holy mountain of God. ²¹ while I was speaking a prayer a man, Gabriel who I saw in an earlier revelation, flying swiftly, came to me at the time of the evening offering. ²² Now he taught me and spoke to me, and he said, "Daniel now I come out to give you insight and understanding. ²³ At the beginning of your plea for mercy, the command went out, and I came to share it with you because you are greatly loved, understand the message and teach what is revealed. ²⁴ Seventy heptads have been decreed on your people, and on your holy city to finish transgression, to seal the sins, to pay for her iniquity, to bring in righteousness forever and to seal up the vision and the prophecy and to go to anoint

this holy sanctuary. ²⁵ You will know and understand from the permission to return and rebuild Jerusalem until the anointed ruler comes, there will be seven heptads and sixty-two heptads. And then it will be rebuilt, a broad open space and defensive trench in the distress of the time (will be built). ²⁶ But after the sixty two heptads the anointed one will be cut off and shall have nothing and the holy city will be destroyed, the people of the leader who will come, they will destroy the city and the sanctuary, and will end with a flood, until the end of war everything will be lade desolate. ²⁷ And he will confirm a great covenant with many for one heptad and in the middle of the heptad he will prohibit sacrifice and offering, in the corner [of the temple], a detestable thing that causes defilement, which will continue until the end that is determined is poured out and desolate.

APPENDIX 2

THE DATING OF DANIEL

There are arguments for both the early and later dating of the book of Daniel. The two positions are separated almost entirely by the line “drawn in the sand,” as it pertains to the acceptance or rejection of the supernatural events and the inspiration of Scripture.

The Maccabean Dating of Daniel

The majority of critical scholars hold to what is known as the “Maccabean date.” This position argues for a pseudonym. Usually adherents to this view, theorize that the intention of the writer was to encourage resistance to Antiochus epiphanies.¹²⁴ This particular position is first articulated by Porphyry (AD 232-303). Here is our first historical critic. Jerome spent a great deal of time responding to Porphyry. Archer rightly argues that “essentially the same position is maintained even to this day by liberal scholars throughout Christendom.”¹²⁵ The Maccabean date hypothesis is predicated upon the fourth kingdom of Daniel 2, being Greece rather than Rome. Logically, this requires one to conclude that Daniel saw the Medes as its own empire unique from Persia.¹²⁶ Archer believes this to be a tenuous argument. He points out that Babylonians ruled for 67 years, the Persians for 200 years, and the Greeks for 160 years. However, the Medes ruled for merely one and a half years.¹²⁷ Furthermore, the symbolism of the reclining bear with

¹²⁴ Archer, *Daniel*, 13.

¹²⁵ Archer, *Daniel*, 13.

¹²⁶ Most conservative scholars believe that the four kingdoms of Daniel 2 speak of Medio-Persia as one empire. The others being: Babylon, Greece, and Rome. Goldingay is an exception to this. He takes an interesting mediating position. He seeks to contend for the normally accepted Daniel of 600 BC as its writer but sees the fourth kingdom to be a reference to Greece and not Rome.

¹²⁷ Archer, *Daniel*, 24-25.

one side higher than the other seems to point to one empire, the Medio-Persian Empire, with the Persians having predominance over the Medes.¹²⁸

There are many varying theories and opinions by critical scholars as to who actually wrote the book of Daniel, when it was written, and the integrity of its contents. Such diversity has led Harrison to rightly conclude, “there is so little consensus of opinion...it is difficult to have much confidence in the method whereby these varying results were reached.”¹²⁹ There are so many variant views, that there is neither space here, nor value in, such a development given the purposes of this paper.

*Arguments for an Early Date and Supernatural
Explanation for its Content*

While there is great diversity of opinion amongst critical scholars, there has been great consensus of opinion amongst conservatives. In fact, Harrison points out “the uniform view of Hebrew and Christian tradition was that Daniel was an historical person who composes a book in the sixth century B.C.”¹³⁰ J. A. Soggins concurs that for 1800 years the traditional view of Daniel authorship went virtually uncontested.¹³¹ The exception to this is Porphyry, mentioned above, who argued from an *a priori* assumption “that there could be no predictive element in prophecy.”¹³²

What it is unavoidable, the author claims to be Daniel (8:1; 9:2, 20; 10:2). He claims to be a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar (605-562), Belshazzar (556-539), and Cyrus (539-530).

¹²⁸ Ibid, 25.

¹²⁹ Roland K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1109.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 1110.

¹³¹ J. A. Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), 407.

¹³² Waltke, Bruce K., “The Date of the Book of Daniel,” *BSac* 133 (1976): 319.

Archer points out, "it is conceivable that a close friend or colleague of the prophet might have composed the earlier chapters since they refer to Daniel in the third person except where he is directly quoted. But careful examination shows that the author usually writes about himself in the third person, as was the custom among ancient authors of historical memoirs."¹³³

It is also apparent that the author's intention was for his reader's to believe the contents were prophetic in nature (2:29; 4:24; 5:24-30; 8:26; 12:4, 9). Because of the clear prophetic nature of these sayings, the liberal who has an anti-supernaturalism bias, must argue that these events have already come about, and the author is just portraying them as if they were in the future.

It is also evident from Scripture, that Jesus regarded the sixth century Daniel as its author (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14). Regarding this Kiel states, "Such a production Christ, the eternal personal truth, never could have regarded as the prophecy of Daniel the prophet, and commend to the observation of his disciples, as he has done."¹³⁴ Archer points out that, "it is significant that Ezekiel (14:14, 20) respectfully referred to as contemporary Daniel by quoting God is saying, 'even if these three men – Noah, Daniel and Job – were in it, they could save only themselves.'"¹³⁵

Another strong argument for a sixth century Daniel, the author knew a lot about the Babylonian reign, just as one would expect of someone living through it. Conservative scholars would argue that no one writing years later would know and remember so many intimate details without divine involvement (which of course they would deny). Josephus also seems to believe Rome is the fourth empire and maintains a prophetic meaning to the writings of Daniel.

¹³³ Archer, *Daniel*, 4.

¹³⁴ Kiel, *Daniel*, 57.

¹³⁵ Archer, *Daniel*, 5.

Goldingay states "Josephus...hesitancy over revealing the meaning of chapter two suggests that he assumes Rome is the fourth Empire."¹³⁶ Archer aptly states concerning Daniel's book, "this represents a collection of his memoirs made at the end of a long and eventful career which included government service from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar in the 590s to the reign of Cyrus the great in the 530s."¹³⁷ The case made by conservative scholars is convincing, and there is no valid reason as to why we should not accept Daniel authorship unless one presupposes naturalism. The burden of proof is upon the critical scholar to produce evidence to reject what is the historically accepted understanding.

¹³⁶ Goldingay, *Daniel*, xxix.

¹³⁷ Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. (Moody Publishers, 2007), 388.

APPENDIX 3

DARIUS THE MEDE

Concerning this mysterious character, named Darius, Walvoord writes, "More attention has been directed to Darius the Mede, the king of Babylon at this time, than the events of the chapter itself."¹³⁸ Why is the case? Because critical scholars claim this is a historical error.¹³⁹ The critical scholars are predisposed to treat the extant manuscripts of the *Nabonidus Chronicle* with a greater degree of historicity than the book of Daniel. Arguments are made from silence. Since there is no mention of Darius the Mede in extra-biblical sources, Gurney very fancifully states they believe Darius is "a figment of the author's fertile imagination."¹⁴⁰ Rowley more subtly says Darius the Mede is a "conflation of confused traditions."¹⁴¹

Three other views have been articulated, which hold to a historical figure. Whitcomb contends that Darius is to be identified with Gubaru¹⁴² who was appointed by Cyrus to reign over Babylon.¹⁴³ Whitcomb states concerning Darius/Gubaru,

...the book of Daniel is speaking of an entirely different person, a subordinate of Cyrus the Great, who 'was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans' (9:1, where the verb *homlak*, "was made king," is passive). This can be none other than Gubaru, the man

¹³⁸ John Walvoord, *Daniel*, 132.

¹³⁹ In H.H. Rowley's work, *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the book of Daniel*, he argues that Darius of the book of Daniel could not be the same as: Astyages, Cyaxares, Gubaru (also called Ugbaru), or Cambyses. Instead, the book of Daniel is simply inaccurate, which also substantiates the claims of second century authorship.

¹⁴⁰ Gurney, *God in Control*. http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/book_god-in-control_gurney.html

¹⁴¹ H. H. Rowley, *Darius the Mede and the Four World Empires in the Book of Daniel*, 1935.

¹⁴² While most scholars believe Gubaru and Ugbaru is the same individual (as does the *Nabonidus Chronical*), Whitcomb distinguishes the leader of Cyrus' army (Ugbaru), who led a victorious effort to conquer the Babylonian empire on the night of Belshazar's feast (Dan 5:30), from Gubaru who was later appointed by Cyrus to be king over Babylon.

¹⁴³ For a more detailed explanation, see Whitcomb's *Darius the Mede: The Historical Chronology of Daniel*, Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1959.

whom Cyrus made to be governor over all of Babylonia, who is said in the ‘Nabonidus Chronicle’ to have ‘installed sub-governors in Babylon’,¹⁴⁴

Whitcomb’s position effectively harmonizes the *Nabonidus Chronicle* with the book of Daniel.

In 1957 Wiseman articulated a second, less complicated theory.¹⁴⁵ This alternative view also harmonizes the book of Daniel with the extra-biblical records. This view, takes Cyrus the Great to be the same as Darius the Mede. Wiseman states,

The basis of the hypothesis is that Daniel 6:28 can be translated ‘Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, even (namely, or i.e.) the reign of Cyrus the Persian.’ Such a use of the appositional or explicative Hebrew waw construction has long been recognized in Chronicles 5:26 (‘So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria even the spirit of Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria’) and elsewhere.

Wiseman’s explanation seems very attractive and legitimate. Both Whitcomb and Wiseman recognize that it was common place for a ruler to have more than one name. A third explanation is articulated by Keil and Delitzsch. They argue that the only thing needed to harmonize these respective documents is not to assume Darius’s reigned immediately followed Belshazzar’s rule.¹⁴⁶

Each of these views has their own strengths and weaknesses. While it is important to seek to harmonize historical documents, it is also valuable to note that all these views presume the *Nabonidus Chronicle* to be historically accurate. It might very well be, the Chronicle to be erroneous and there is no need for harmonization at all. Ultimately, as Meadowcraft and Irwin remind us, “we have to surrender to the incomplete state of our knowledge and say that there is

¹⁴⁴ Whitcomb, *Daniel*, 80.

¹⁴⁵ Wiseman, *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel*, 12.

¹⁴⁶ Carl Keil and Friedrich Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Daniel*, 38.

not a neat explanation.”¹⁴⁷ What is certain, there is no incontrovertible evidence to cause one to doubt the reliability, inspiration, or canonicity of the book of Daniel.

¹⁴⁷ Meadowcroft and Irwin, *The Book of Daniel*, 176.

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