

**LECTURE 26: DANIEL**  
**“The God who protects, discloses, & rules”**  
 Jason S. DeRouchie, PhD

I. Orienting Data	2
A. Synthesis	2
B. Focus	2
C. Content	2
D. Prophet	2
E. Date of Composition	2
F. Emphases	2
G. Canonical Placement	2
H. Key Theme	3
II. Summary	3
III. Linguistic and Literary Features	3
A. Use of Hebrew and Aramaic	3
B. Potential Chiasm in Chs. 2–7 (the Book’s Aramaic Portion)	4
IV. Overview of the Parts	4
A. Structure	4
B. Internal Connections Especially in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Half	4
V. Introduction: Preservation of a Remnant (ch. 1)	5
VI. The Hope of God’s Messianic Kingdom Shine in the Present (chs. 2–6)	5
A. Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream of an Image (ch. 2)	5
B. Three Friends in the Fiery Furnace (ch. 3)	6
C. Nebuchadnezzar’s Tree Dream (ch. 4)	7
D. The Writing on the Wall (ch. 5)	7
E. Daniel in the Lion’s Den (ch. 6)	8
VII. The Hope of God’s Messianic Kingdom Will Be Realized in the Future (chs. 7–12)	8
A. The Vision of the Four Beasts, the Son of Man, and His Kingdom (ch. 7)	8
B. The Vision of a Ram and Goat (ch. 8)	11
C. Daniel’s Prayer and the Vision of 70 Sabbaticals (ch. 9)	12
D. The Final Vision (chs. 10–12)	13
VIII. Synthesis	14
A. The Identity of the 5 Kingdoms	14
B. Daniel and Jesus	15
IX. Excursus: Interpreting Dan 9:24–27	15
A. The Significance of Dan 9:24–27	15
B. Dispensational Reading Synthesized	16
C. Traditional Reformed Reading Synthesized	17
D. The Two Stages of Israel’s Restoration	21
E. Establishing the Boundaries of Jeremiah’s “70 Years” Prophecy	23
F. The Interpretive Problem in Dan 9:25	25
G. Grasping the Concept of “70 Weeks of Years”	26
H. Counting the “70 Weeks”	29
I. The Meaning of the “70 Weeks” Prophecy in Dan 9:24–27	31

J.	The Last Half of the 70 <sup>th</sup> Week	34
X.	Guided Reading for Daniel	37
A.	Key Chapters	37
B.	Questions	37

## I. Orienting Data

- A. Synthesis:** Following the order of Jesus's Bible, the narrative in Kings ended with Israel in Babylonian exile and a Davidic descendant still alive. The story then pauses for two extended "commentary units" in the Latter Prophets (books like Jeremiah and Zechariah) and Former Writings (books like Psalms and Lamentations), all of which color and clarify the story itself. Now Daniel resumes the storyline, picking up in Babylon where Kings left off and giving tangible signs of kingdom hope through the lives of four Judean exiles, chief among whom is Daniel, whose life mirrors that of Joseph in the way he rises to a high authority in a foreign land. God is in charge of the kingdoms of mankind and will overcome all when his messianic king arrives and offers himself to atone for the sins of the world. From Daniel's perspective hope for God's coming Messiah shines brightly in the present and will be realized in the future.
- B. Focus:** The hope of the fulfillment of God's Kingdom; how to maintain distinctive faith in exile.
- C. Content:** A series of stories about how God brings honor to himself through Daniel and his three friends in Babylon, followed by four apocalyptic visions about future kingdoms and God's final kingdom.
- D. Prophet:** Daniel, one of the early exiles to Babylon from the tribe of Judah (605 B.C.), who was selected to serve as a provincial administrator in the Babylonian—and finally Persian—court.
- E. Date of Composition:** A view that takes seriously the historical account of Daniel itself places the book toward the end of the 6th century B.C. (ca. 520; cf. Matt 24:15). Because of the detail with which Daniel speaks of the future, however, many scholars today posit a very late date for Daniel, a view that appears to be driven by an unwillingness to truly affirm the stress in the book itself that God controls history and can foretell the future.
- F. Emphases:** God's sovereignty over all the nations and their rulers; God's care for the Jews in exile, with promises of final restoration; God's present overruling of and final victory over human evil.
- G. Canonical Placement:**
1. Intriguingly, Daniel is among the "Writings," not the "Prophets," likely because (1) his professional vocation was that of governor (political) rather than a prophet (religious) and (2) the book's message is wholly positive and future oriented, portraying the faith of four Israelites living in desperate times, which is characteristic of the Writings.
  2. Within the overall flow of the OT canon, Lamentations provided a bridge into Daniel in two ways:
    - a. A bridge back into the exilic context. At the end of the 2 Kings, the narrative of redemptive history paused with Israel in Babylonian exile. Lamentations returns us to the exilic context and readies us for the narrative to begin in Daniel, this time within the context of the exile.

- Lam 1:1, 3. How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow she has become, she who was great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become a slave. . . .<sup>3</sup> Judah has gone into exile because of affliction and hard servitude; she dwells now among the nations, but finds no resting place; her pursuers have overtaken her in the midst of her distress.
- b. A bridge back into kingdom hope. Lamentations highlights kingdom hope and raises the key question that Daniel seeks to answer.
  - Lam 3:21–24. This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope.<sup>22</sup> The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end;<sup>23</sup> they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
  - Lam 5:19–22. But you, O LORD, reign forever; your throne endures to all generations.<sup>20</sup> Why do you forget us forever; why do you forsake us for so many days?<sup>21</sup> Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may be restored! Renew our days as of old—<sup>22</sup> unless you remain exceedingly angry with us.

**Fig. 26.1. Daniel in the Flow of the Old Testament**

Law (Established)	Prophets (Enforced)		Writings (Enjoyed)	
	Former	Latter	Former	Latter
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua Judges 1–2 Samuel 1–2 Kings	Jeremiah Ezekiel Isaiah The Twelve	Ruth Psalms Job Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Lamentations	<b>Daniel</b> Esther Ezra-Nehemiah 1–2 Chronicles
<i>Narrative</i>	<i>Narrative</i>	<i>Commentary</i>	<i>Commentary</i>	<i>Narrative</i>
K-I-N	G			D

**H. Key Theme:** The Lasting all-Powerful Kingdom of Israel’s God vs. the short-term, weak kingdoms of men.

- Dan. 2:44. And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever.
- See Dan. 2:20–21, 37–38, 44–45, 47; 3:17–18, 28–29; 4:1–3, 17, 25–27, 34–35, 37.

**II. Book Summary:** The all wise and sovereign God will eventually overcome all other kingdoms by establishing his kingdom through the messianic Son of Man (new Adam), who will reign over all peoples and nations because of his substitutionary death and resurrection and who will use his royal power to deliver his people from their exile to death by raising them from the dead.

**III. Linguistic and Literary Features**

**A. Use of Hebrew and Aramaic:**

1. Chs. 1, 8–12 are in Hebrew; chs. 2–7 are in Aramaic.
2. Because Aramaic was the common language in Daniel’s day (comparable to English today), the Aramaic portion, which consists of stories + first vision, suggests open reading for all.

3. The introduction and most of the interpreted visions are in Hebrew, perhaps implying they are only for the people of God.

**B. Potential Chiasm in Chs. 2–7 (the Book’s Aramaic Portion):<sup>1</sup>**

1. Overview:
  - a. The interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream about the statue (ch. 2)
  - b. The deliverance of Daniel’s friends from the fiery furnace (ch. 3)
  - c. The humbling of Nebuchadnezzar (ch. 4)
  - d. The humbling of Belshazzar (ch. 5)
  - e. The deliverance of Daniel from the lion’s den (ch. 6)
  - f. The interpretation of Daniel’s dream about the beasts and son of man (ch. 7)
2. Synthesis
  - a. *Chs. 2 and 7*: Similar visions of future kingdom, ending in God’s final, eternal kingdom.
  - b. *Chs. 3 and 6*: Stories of miraculous deliverance (fiery furnace and lion’s den), where opposition has been directed against God.
  - c. *Chs. 4 and 5*: Stories about the demise of two Babylonian kings, who both acknowledge the greatness of Israel’s God.

**IV. Overview of the Parts:**

**A. Structure:**

1. *Introduction (ch. 1): God Delivers Judah to Babylon but Preserves a Remnant in the Line of David*
2. *Part 1 (chs. 2–6): The Hope of God’s Messianic Kingdom Shines in the Present.* Court stories about the exaltation of Daniel and his three friends in order to stress that, even though it may not always be evident in the present, Israel’s God is sovereign over all things:
  - a. Introduction: Preservation of a Remnant (ch. 1)
  - b. Nebuchadnezzar’s statue dream (ch. 2)
  - c. The fiery furnace (ch. 3)
  - d. Nebuchadnezzar’s judgment and restoration (ch. 4)
  - e. Handwriting on the wall (ch. 5)
  - f. Daniel in the lion’s den (ch. 6)
3. *Part 2 (chs. 7–12): The Hope of God’s Messianic Kingdom Will Be Realized in the Future.* A series of apocalyptic visions about the rise and fall of succeeding empires, in each case involving a coming tyrannical ruler (7:8, 24–25; 8:23–25; 11:36–45) in order to emphasize that, even though it may not always be evident in the future, Israel’s God is in control:
  - a. The vision of four beasts and the Son of Man (ch. 7)
  - b. The vision of a ram and goat (ch. 8)
  - c. The vision of 70 sabbaticals (ch. 9)
  - d. The final vision (chs. 10–12)

**B. Internal Connections Especially in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Half:**

1. Chapters 2 and 7 retell the same message of God’s kingdom overcoming earthly kingdoms.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel*, 304.

Chapter 2	Chapter 7	Meaning
Head of Gold	Winged Lion	Kingdom 1: Babylon (2:37)
Chest & Arms of Silver	Bear	Kingdom 2: Medo-Persia (8:2–4, 20; cf. 5:28)
Belly & Thighs of Bronze	Winged Leopard	Kingdom 3: Greece (8:5–8, 21–22)
Legs of Iron; Feet of Clay & Iron Mixed	Dreadful & Terrifying Beast with 10 Horns	Kingdom 4: Rome (?) as typological of spiritual power
Stone → mountain	Ancient of Days Gives Dominion to the Son of Man	Kingdom of God through the Son of Man (7:13–14)

2. After chapter 7, each successive vision provides greater detail of the parts.
  - a. Chapter 8 expands the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> kingdoms, identifying them as Medo-Persia (8:2–4; 20; cf. 5:28) and Greece (8:5–8, 21–22); the small horn (8:9–14, 23–26)
  - b. Chapter 9 expands upon the fourth kingdom followed by the Kingdom of God.
  - c. Chapters 10–12 develops further the second (11:2), third (11:3–4 [Alexander]; 11:5–35 [later kings]) and fourth kingdoms (11:36–45), along with the Kingdom of God.

#### V. Introduction: Preservation of a Remnant (ch. 1)

- A. Yahweh was in control of Israel’s exile: “The Lord *gave* Jehoiakim in [Nebuchadnezzar’s] hand” (Dan 1:2).
- B. The Lord preserved those “of the royal family and of the nobility” in the midst of exile (1:3).
- C. Further Messianic kingdom hope is then highlighted by the fact that the four human heroes are all from “the tribe of Judah” (1:7); the Lord has preserved a remnant, even making them “ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all the kingdom [of Nebuchadnezzar]” (1:20):
  1. Daniel (“God is my judge”) > Belteshazzar
  2. Hananiah (“Yahweh is gracious”) > Shadrach
  3. Mishael (“Who is like God?”) > Meshach
  4. Azariah (“Yahweh has helped”) > Abednego
- D. The righteous remnant caught in exile can be certain that their God reigns over all the powers of the earth and that the plan of his global kingdom is still progressing.

#### VI. The Hope of God’s Messianic Kingdom Shines in the Present (chs. 2–6): Court stories about the exaltation of Daniel and his three friends in order to stress that, even though it may not always be evident in the present, Israel’s God is sovereign over all things including the kingdoms of mankind, which he will bring down to establish his messianic kingdom.

- A. **Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream of an Image (ch. 2):** God discloses to Daniel through Nebuchadnezzar’s dream an image a succession of four kingdoms that will ultimately be overcome by the kingdom of God.
  1. The inability of the wise men of Babylon to tell the king the makeup and interpretation of his dream puts all in danger of death. Yet Daniel is confident in

Yahweh's oversight of all things (2:20–22). Daniel's God alone reveals the mystery of Nebuchadnezzar's image-dream (2:28).

- 2:19–22. Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven. Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.
  - Dan 2:27–28. No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked,<sup>28</sup> but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.
2. 4 human kingdoms that will be overcome by a 5<sup>th</sup>, God's kingdom:
    - a. Head of gold = Babylon
      - 2:37–38. You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—you are the head of gold.
    - b. Chest and arms of silver = a new kingdom
    - c. Belly and thighs of bronze = a new kingdom
    - d. Legs of iron; feet of clay and iron mixed = a new kingdom
    - e. A stone cut from a heavenly mountain crushes the kingdoms of men = God's kingdom
      - 2:44–45. And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."
  3. Nebuchadnezzar recognizes God's greatness.
    - 2:46–47. Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him. The king answered and said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery."

## **B. Three Friends in the Fiery Furnace (ch. 3)**

1. Caught up in the statue dream, yet determined to not just be the head but the whole, Nebuchadnezzar erected a massive image to which all peoples, nations, and languages were to worship, lest they immediately be cast into a blazing furnace. Upon Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's refusal to bow down, the king declared their foolishness (3:15). In response, the three asserted their massive faith in God (3:16–18).
  - Dan 3:14–18. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, . . .<sup>15</sup> "Who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"<sup>16</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in the matter.<sup>17</sup> If this be so, our God who we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.<sup>18</sup> But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."
2. The three were bound and cast into the fire, but they were not burnt for one "like a son of the gods" protected them (3:25). Nebuchadnezzar declared them to be "servants of the Most High God" (3:26), praised their God for his mighty act (3:28), and then decreed that none should speak against their God (3:29). Clearly

Nebuchadnezzar is growing in his awareness of Yahweh's sovereign control of the present.

- Dan 3:28–29. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God. <sup>29</sup> Therefore I make a decree: Any people, nation, or language that speaks anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego shall be torn limb from limb, and their houses laid in ruins, for there is no other god who is able to rescue in this way.”

### C. Nebuchadnezzar's Tree Dream (ch. 4)

1. Ch. 4 is a testimony given by the king after his salvation through judgment. The thesis is captured in 4:3.
  - Dan 4:2–3. It has seemed good to me to show the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me. <sup>3</sup> How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion endures from generation to generation.
2. He has a dream that depicts him and his kingdom as a great tree that is cut down with the king leaving his thrown and dwelling among the beasts until he learns that “the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will” (4:25; cf. 4:17, 32). This is exactly what happens.
3. God temporarily removes proud Nebuchadnezzar from his kingdom but then restores him in a way that magnifies God's greatness. Upon Nebuchadnezzar's brokenness, his senses return, he humbles himself, and declares his surrender the Most High God (4:34–35).
  - Dan 4:34–35, 37. At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; <sup>35</sup> all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”... <sup>37</sup> Now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

### D. The Writing on the Wall (ch. 5)

1. Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar is now king but has failed to learn from his father's story of pride and downfall, as is witnessed to in his use of vessels from Jerusalem's temple as a means to boast in his greatness and in his favor from the gods of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. God gives him a vision, and the king calls Daniel to interpret it. Daniel declares that his pride has brought about the end of the Babylonian empire, which will be replaced by the Medo-Persian kingdom.
  - Dan. 5:18–23. O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. <sup>19</sup> And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him.... <sup>20</sup> But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. <sup>21</sup> He was driven from among the children of mankind ... until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will. <sup>22</sup> And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, <sup>23</sup> but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven.... The God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.”
2. That very night the king was killed, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom (5:30–31).

**E. Daniel in the Lions’ Den (ch. 6)**

1. Filled with jealousy at Daniel’s successes, the other government officials of the land sought to destroy him, inciting the king to decree that for one month people could only petition to him and no other god or man, lest they be cast into a lions’ den. Because Daniel refused to not pray to Yahweh, the king was forced to cast him to his death, but in the process the king asserted, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” (6:16).
2. God preserves faithful Daniel in the lions’ den in a way that moves Darius the Mede to recognize God’s supremacy. Upon Daniel’s deliverance at the hand of the “living God” who “sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths” (6:20, 22), the king decreed that everyone on earth must “tremble and fear before the God of Daniel” (6:26).
  - Dan 6:26–27. I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. <sup>27</sup> He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.

**VII. The Hope of God’s Messianic Kingdom Will Be Realized in the Future (chs. 7–12):** A series of apocalyptic dreams and visions about the rise and fall of succeeding kingdoms that include tyrannical rulers (7:8, 24–25; 8:23–25; 11:36–45) who will ultimately be overcome by the messianic King and his kingdom (7:13–14; 9:24–26).

**A. The Vision of the Four Beasts, the Son of Man, and His Kingdom (ch. 7):**

Recasting the earlier statue dream in chapter 1, this vision portrays the four successive kingdoms as beasts that will ultimately be overcome by God’s kingdom through one “like a Son of Man/Adam.”

1. Within Daniel, ungodliness and God-hostility shown in pride and rebellion is portrayed as beastly, whereas proper imaging of God’s sovereignty over all is human.

**Fig. 26.2. Kingdoms in Daniel**

	Vision in Ch. 2	Vision in Ch. 7	Vision in Ch. 8	Empire	Date
	Head of Gold	Winged Lion		Babylon [626–539 B.C.] (Dan. 2:37–38)	600
	Chest & Arms of Silver	Bear	Ram with two horns	Medo-Persia [539–330 B.C.] (Dan. 8:20; cf. 5:28)	500
	Belly & Thighs of Bronze	Winged Leopard	Goat, one with a little horn	Greece [330–63 B.C.] (Dan. 8:21)	400
	Legs of Iron; Feet of Clay & Iron Mixed	Dreadful & Terrifying Beast with 10 Horns + 1 boastful horn		Spiritual typological kingdom [63 B.C.–A.D. 135] (Never named)	300
					200
					100
	Stone → mountain	Ancient of Days Gives Dominion to the Son of Man		Kingdom of God in Messiah (Dan. 2:44; 7:13–14, 18, 27; 9:)	0

2. *Overview:*
  - a. The four successive kingdoms of mankind are like beasts—not truly human in that they do not truly image God’s greatness (7:1–8; cf. 7:17). The parallel with the vision of ch. 2 suggests that the first portrays Babylon.
  - b. The fourth beast is “terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong” (7:7); it’s different from the previous beasts, has ten horns representing 10 kings (7:8, 24), and then an extra horn representing another king that speaks great things against the Most High (7:8, 24–25), changes the times and the law, and makes war on the saints until the time when the Ancient of Days gives victory and rule to the saints (7:21–22, 25–27).
  - c. The Ancient of Days gives global dominion to one like a Son of Man and to “the saints of the Most High” who receive the kingdom and under whom all peoples, nations, and languages shall serve (7:13–14, 18, 27). That the vision and interpretation maintain associated victory over the fourth beast with both the Son of Man and the saints of the Most High suggests a continuity between the two, such that the saints’ kingdom is the Son of Man’s kingdom, and the fourth kingdom and the unique king that grows from it are associated with the age of both the Christ and his church.
    - 7:13–14. I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.
    - 7:18. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.
    - 7:27. And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.
3. The Son of Man and the beastly human kingdoms (some of what follows was drafted with aid of Brian Verrett, PhD student at MBTS)
  - a. Since Genesis 3, we await a human in God’s image who will eternally reign over God’s earthly kingdom. This entails ruling over the beasts and animals as a human ought (Gen 1:26–28).
  - b. Because humans fail to live out their calling to rule God’s world, including the animals, they become seeds of the serpent and bring death into the world (Gen 3:15). And as offspring of the serpent, they become akin to the “beasts of the field” (3:1).
  - c. Being the serpent’s seed, humans act like beasts by giving into animal-like sinful temptations to violence (Gen 4:7). The initial result of these animal actions is the flood punishment (6:12–13), and the next in Gen 1–11 is the prideful rebellion expressed in the Tower of Babylon (11:1–9).
  - d. The seed of the woman and of Abraham will fix these problems by being a human who defeats the serpent and restores humanity’s eternal rule over the world and the beasts (Gen 3:15; 12:1–3; 22:17–18).
    - Gen 3:15. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”
    - Gen 22:17–18. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

- e. Within Daniel, human rulers are God's image (Dan 2:31), but instead of ruling earth on heaven's behalf, they pursue violence and pride that resembling the tower of Babylon (4:11, 37). This pride rebellion against God turns them into beasts (4:32–33; cf. 7:1–8, 19–27). Eventually, one who is truly human (like a son of man) will overcome all beastly temptations, rule on God's behalf over the world, and defeat death forever (Dan 7:13–14, 27; 12:2–3).
- Dan 7:13–14, 27. I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.... And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.
  - Dan 12:2–3. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.
4. *The Son of Man and the saints of the Most High*
- a. The interpretation of the vision associates the Son of Man with “the saints of the Most High,” who suffer tribulation (7:21, 25) and then later receive the kingdom from God (7:18, 22, 27)—some only after resurrection (12:1–3). The Son of Man likely represents the saints of God, delivers them, and oversees their rule. Two reasons suggest this:
- i. Just as the beastly kingdoms are represented by kings, so the saints of God are naturally represented by their own king (so Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 217).
  - ii. The third masculine *singular* pronouns in 7:27 appear to point to an individual whose reign is carried out through God's people (see ESV footnote): “And the kingdom ... shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; *his* kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey *him*” (cf. Luke 22:22, 28–30).
- b. At the very least, the broader biblical context shows a close link between the kingdom community and its representative ruler, the Messiah. Jesus is the king, the Son of Man, and the stone, who represents the saints and overcomes all the enemies.
5. *Jesus as the Son of Man*: The most common title applied to Jesus in the Gospels is Son of Man, which Jesus himself appears to link directly to the vision of Daniel 7.
- a. After giving “his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45; cf. 9:12), he would come on the clouds of heaven and establish his kingdom in power (14:61–62)—images drawn directly from Dan 7:13–14.
- Mark 14:61–62. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.”
- b. As the Son of Man, Jesus was exalted or glorified through the cross event (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:23, 34; 13:31) and was given “all authority in heaven

and on earth” from the Father (Matt. 28:18)—authority to save and to judge, to bestow life and to punish unto death (13:41–43; John 5:27; 6:27; 8:28).

- c. Those who identify with him will ultimately rule with him (Matt. 19:28; Rev. 3:21).
- d. To enjoy the future resurrection unto life rather than unto death (Dan. 12:1–3; John 5:27–29), Jesus’ call and promise are this: “Everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day” (John 6:40; cf. 6:53–54; Rev. 14:14–16).
- e. Those who heed this call in the present—even in the midst of deep suffering—can rest confidently in hope that God’s kingdom will triumph, evil will be eradicated, and universal peace will be enjoyed. “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.... No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him” (Rev. 21:4; 22:3).

- B. The Vision of a Ram and Goat (ch. 8):** God shows Daniel that kingdom 3 (the Greeks) will triumph over kingdom 2 (the Medo-Persians) (8:5–8, 21–22) and that ruler in kingdom 3 typologically anticipates the unique anti-Christ ruler of kingdom 4.
1. Chapter 8 builds on the kingdom visions given in chs. 2 and 7.
  2. In ch. 8, Daniel envisions first a ram with a two horns and then a goat with a single horn. The fact that there are only two animals suggests they display only two kingdoms that rise directly following Babylon—the first the united Medo-Persia empire (two horns) and the second that of Greece (8:20–21).
    - Dan. 8:20–21. As for the ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. <sup>21</sup> And the goat is the king of Greece. And the great horn between his eyes is the first king.
  3. The fact that Babylon was immediately succeeded by Medo-Persia (see 5:28) and then Greece (see 10:20) suggests that the great and terrifying fourth kingdom throughout the visions and during which the kingdom of God is to be inaugurated could be the Roman empire. Nevertheless, because this kingdom is not named, it likely highlights its typological role in depicting the ultimate evil power that stands against God and his kingdom-building purposes.
  4. Daniel’s temporal framework, therefore, spans most directly from his days in the Babylonian empire to the downfall of the Roman empire and the inauguration of God’s kingdom, ultimately in his Messiah.
  5. After breaking the two horns of the ram (= the two kings of Medo-Persia, 8:20), the single horn of the goat (= first king of Greece, Alexander the Great) gives rise to four horns (= four separate weaker kingdoms within Greece associated with Alexander’s four generals, 8:21–22). Out of one of these kingdoms will rise a strong king (= little horn, likely the Seleucid Antiochus IV Epiphanes), who will war against God’s people through false teaching and persecution (8:24–25). [Chapter 11 details this period much more.] As a little horn of the third kingdom, his life and destructive work foreshadows (= typology) the life and destructive work of the little horn of the fourth beast in ch 7 (i.e., the anti-Christ). Thus, we can anticipate that the anti-Christ’s rule against the saints will be characterized by false teaching (deceit) and persecution (destruction).

6. With allusions to LXX Daniel's "last hour" texts, John asserts: "Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18). Paul, too, writes, "Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day [of the Lord] will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.... And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refuse to love the truth and so be saved" (2 Thess 2:3-4, 8-10).
- C. Daniel's Prayer and the Vision of 70 Sabbaticals (ch. 9):** God shows Daniel that the 70 year Israelite exile (9:1-2, 9-11; cf. Lev 26:33-35; Jer 25:11-12; 2 Chr 36:20-23) will be followed by 70 weeks of years until the messianic king and his kingdom triumphs over the beastly unnamed fourth kingdom of mankind, completing the curse and initiating restoration blessing.
1. Dan 9 opens with Daniel recalling God's word to Jeremiah that the Judean exile would last "70 years" (Dan 9:2; cf. Jer 25:12; 29:10) and then praying that God would restore them in spite of the Judeans' sin, covenant rebellion, and covenant curse and in light of his mercy (Dan 9:4-19).
    - Dan 9:4-5, 11. O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,<sup>5</sup> we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules....<sup>11</sup> All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him.
    - Dan 9:18-19. O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy.<sup>19</sup> O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name."
  2. In response to Daniel's prayer, the Lord sent Gabriel to Daniel (Dan 9:20-23), giving him a vision with understanding regarding the future (9:24-27). Whereas Daniel anticipated the end of exile after 70 years, it would take 70 weeks of years for full reconciliation with God to be established. Daniel 9:24 highlights that the end of the 70 weeks of years would bring both the eradication of the curse and initiation of restoration blessing. It reads, "Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place."
    - a. *Complete the curse:* (1) Finish transgression; (2) Put an end to sin; (3) Atone for iniquity
    - b. *Initiate restoration blessing:* (4) Bring in everlasting righteousness; (5) Seal both vision and prophet; (6) Anoint a most holy place/thing/person
  3. After "7 weeks" Jerusalem would be rebuilt, but only after another "62 weeks" (i.e., the 70<sup>th</sup> week) would God "finish the transgression ... put an end to sin ...

and atone for iniquity” (Dan 9:24). There are many important interpretive questions related to this vision, which Sam Storms has asserted “is both the most complex and the most crucial text in either testament bearing on the subject of biblical prophecy” (*Kingdom Come*, 71).

4. I will argue in the excursus below that 9:24–27 anticipates both a literal and figurative reading of the numbers and that the “anointed” figure in vv. 25–26 is, in both instances, Christ Jesus, who would be “cut off” (v. 26) and who would “make a strong [new] covenant with many” (v. 27) in order “to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place” (v. 24). The completion of the initial 7 weeks of years and the building of Jerusalem occur in the days of Nehemiah and the beginning of the seventieth week at the start of Christ’s earthly ministry. This allows the first half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week to be focused on Jesus’s earthly ministry and the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week to fall at his cross event. These realities, occurring in Christ’s body, point beyond him to the church, his body, who also endure their own 70<sup>th</sup> week in the church age, journeying through tribulation unto triumph. Thus the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Christ inaugurates an extended “70<sup>th</sup> week” in which we are still living. For more on the interpretation, see the excursus below.

**D. The Final Vision (chs. 10–12):** Details the second, third, fourth, and fifth kingdoms, the latter of which God will initiate through great tribulation followed by resurrection and an age of wisdom standing against fools.

1. A heavenly messenger gave Daniel the last vision in the book to make him understand “what is to happen to your people *in the latter days*” (Dan 10:14), the latter phrase of which the LXX consistently translates “the last hour” in Daniel (cf. 1 John 2:18 with John 2:4; 4:21, 23; 5:25, 28–29; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 16:2, 4, 21, 25, 32; 17:1–2). The vision initially focuses on the next two kingdoms that would follow Babylon—Persia and Greece (Dan 10:20; 11:2), but these same visions typologically anticipate more ultimate fulfillments.
  - 1 John 2:18. Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.
2. With remarkable specificity, the messenger foretells the elevation and decline of the Persian empire (11:2), its overthrow by Alexander the Great, “a mighty king” (11:3), and the aftermath as the Greek kingdom was divided among Alexander’s four generals (11:4), with special focus being given to the history of the two most directly impacting Israel: the Ptolemies (based in Egypt [capital in Alexandria] and ruled by “the king of the south,” v. 5) and the Seleucids (based in Syria [capital in Antioch] and Babylonia and ruled by “the king of the north,” v. 6) (11:5–45). The “contemptible person” who gets must attention in 11:21–45 is likely the Seleucid Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who reigned from 175–164 BC and who took control of Egypt and oppressed Judah (11:21–28). Later he lost control of Egypt to Rome (11:29–30) and focused his aggression on Judah, massacring 8,000 people (2 Macc 5:12–14) and defiling the temple (Dan 11:31; cf. 12:11; see 1 Macc 1:44–47, 54, 59, 62–63; 2:18; 4:52; 2 Macc 5:15–21; 6:4–5; 7:24; 4 Macc 4:15–18:5) and standing against all those faithful to Yahweh (Dan 11:32).
  - Dan 11:31–32, 35. Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes

desolate.<sup>32</sup> He shall seduce with flattery those who violate the covenant, but the people who know their God shall stand firm and take action....<sup>35</sup> and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

3. Most clearly in Dan 11:36–45, we see the typological role of the prophecy, which vividly identifies the death of evil Antiochus IV (11:45) while also pointing beyond him to other anti-Christ figures (1 John 2:18), culminating in the ultimate “man of lawlessness” (2 Thess 2:3–4), “anti-Christ” (1 John 2:18), or “beast” (Rev 13:5–8). The anti-God figure(s) who will rise to bring destruction on God’s covenant people will do so through persecution and false teaching, fulfilling all that the Lord has decreed until God bring him to his end (11:36, 45; cf. 8:24–25).
  - Dan 11:36, 45. And the king shall do as he wills. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods. He shall prosper till the indignation is accomplished; for what is decreed shall be done....<sup>45</sup> And he shall pitch his palatial tents between the sea and the glorious holy mountain. Yet he shall come to his end, with none to help him.
  - 2 Thess 2:3–4. Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,<sup>4</sup> who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.
  - 1 John 2:18. Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.
  - Rev 13:5–8. And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.<sup>6</sup> It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.<sup>7</sup> Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation,<sup>8</sup> and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.
4. Daniel anticipates an incomparable time of tribulation from which God will deliver his people (Rev 12:7–14), resulting in the resurrection and eternal judgment of the righteous and wicked (the former to life and the latter to contempt) (Dan 12:1–4; cf. John 5:28–29). When Daniel asks, however, how long until all predicted is fulfilled, he is told only “a time, times, and half a time” (Dan 12:7), which we are told only those in the future would rightly understand (12:8–13). The book of Revelation now clarifies these figures, and we will address them in the excursus below.
  - Dan 12:1–2. At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.<sup>2</sup> And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.
  - John 5:28–29. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice<sup>29</sup> and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

## VIII. Synthesis:

### A. The Identity of the 5 Kingdoms:

1. Kingdom 1 = Babylon
2. Kingdom 2 = Medo-Persia
3. Kingdom 3 = Greece
4. Kingdom 4 = An evil, spiritual, typological unnamed kingdom

5. Kingdom 5 = God’s messianic kingdom

**B. Daniel and Jesus**

1. Jesus is the ultimate image of God (ch. 2).
2. Jesus is the stone cut from heaven that comes to earth and grows into a mighty mountain (ch. 2).
3. Jesus is the true image that people must worship (ch. 3; 7:14).
4. Jesus is the true tree of life (4:11–12).
5. Jesus is the humble king who seeks his Father’s glory and not his own (4:17).
6. Jesus is the one like a son of man who reigns over all the peoples of the earth from God’s right hand (7:13–14).
7. Jesus is the day of atonement sacrifice who rises into heaven on a cloud in conjunction with God’s destroying the fourth beast (7:13; 9:24).
8. Jesus is the one who shares his kingdom with the saints (7:18), who themselves will rise to everlasting life (12:2).

**IX. Excursus: Interpreting Dan 9:24–27** (Much of this material is adapted from two sources: Peter Gentry’s discussion in Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 537–63, and Sam Storms’ overview in *Kingdom Come*, 71–90; cf. Daniel I. Block, “Preaching Old Testament Apocalyptic to a New Testament Church,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 41 [2006]: 17–52.)

Dan 9:24–27 – NASB adapted (changes in italics)	Dan 9:24–27 – ESV
<p>Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and <i>prophet</i> and to anoint <i>a most holy thing</i>.<sup>25</sup> So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore [lit., cause to return] and rebuild Jerusalem until <i>messiah</i> [lit., anointed one], <i>a prince</i>, there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It will be built again [lit., it will return and be built], with plaza and moat, <i>but</i> in times of distress.<sup>26</sup> Then after the sixty-two weeks the messiah will be cut off <i>but not for himself</i>, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.<sup>27</sup> And he will make a firm covenant with the many <i>with respect to</i> one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on a wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.</p>	<p>Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.<sup>25</sup> Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time.<sup>26</sup> And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed.<sup>27</sup> And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”</p>

**A. The Significance of Dan 9:24–27**

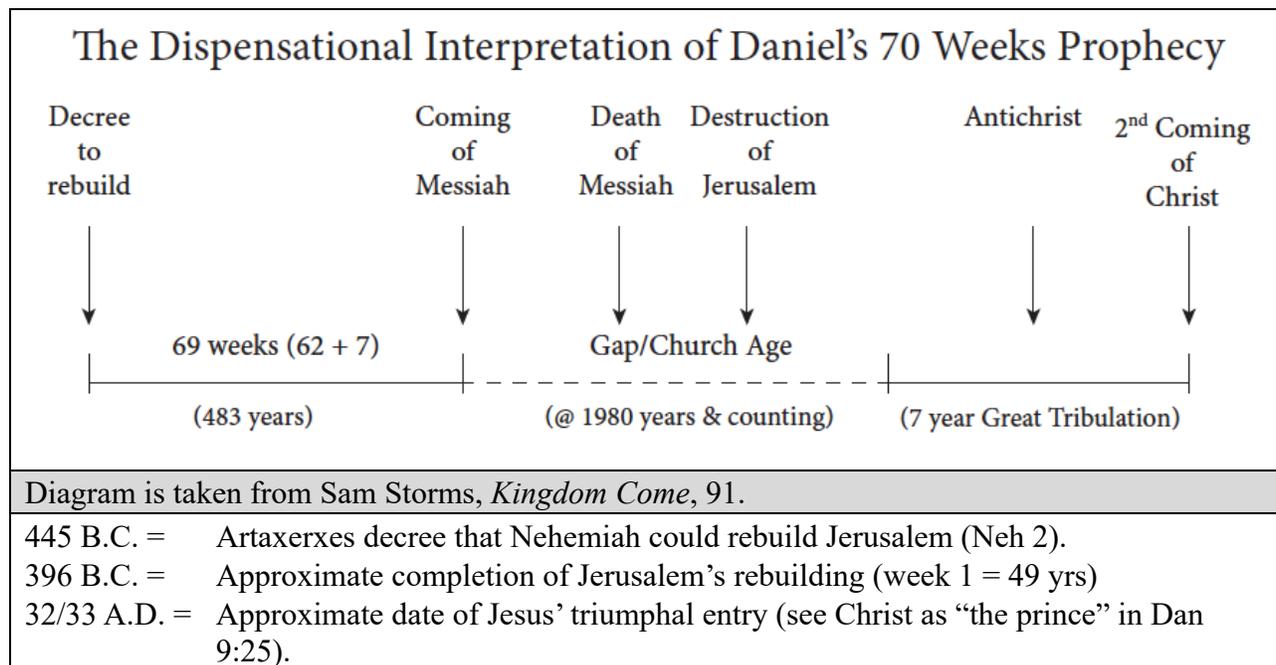
1. Sam Storms asserts that Dan 9:24–27 “is both the most complex and the most crucial text in either testament bearing on the subject of biblical prophecy” (*Kingdom Come*, 71). He asserts this especially in light of the pervasiveness of classic dispensational theology, which grounds so many of its convictions in this text:

- a. Separate divine programs for *Israel* and the *church* based on the idea of a prophetic and historical *gap*, during which time God's purpose for the former is suspended and his purpose for the latter engaged (that "gap" being identified with this present "church" age);
  - b. The reality of a future period of intense tribulation, precisely seven years in length, during which the divine program for Israel is resumed;
  - c. The rebuilding of a temple in Jerusalem at the inception of this seven-year period and its subsequent destruction;
  - d. The emergence of a personal Antichrist who will establish a seven-year covenant with Israel, reinstitute the Levitical sacrificial system, only to break the covenant after three and one half years.
2. If a dispensationalist reading of Dan 7:24–27 is found wanting, many of these doctrinal stances will struggle to stand.

**B. Dispensational Reading Synthesized** (Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 73–75):

1. *What are the "seventy sevens" in Dan 9:24?* The "sevens" refers to 7-year units of time, so seventy sevens = 490 actual solar years.
2. *When do the 70 weeks begin?* One of two dates: the 7<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes (458/57 B.C.; Ezra 7:11–26) or, more likely, the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Artaxerxes (445/44 B.C.; Neh 2:1–8).
  - a. Most dispensationalist prefer the latter option because Dan 9:25 focuses on the "city," and this was the focus in Nehemiah's ministry.
  - b. Furthermore, the time between the decree (v. 25) to the arrival of the Messiah is 69 "weeks of years" or 483 years. Now, if a year was 360 days, the 69 weeks takes 173,880 days (taking into account years that have an extra day due to leap year), which from the first of Nisan (March 14) 445 B.C. places us at April 6, A.D. 32, allegedly the occasion of Christ's triumphal entry. Beginning instead at 444 B.C. places the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> week at March 30, A.D. 33.
  - c. Assumptions:
    - i. 445–444 is the only year in which the decree to rebuild Jerusalem occurred.
    - ii. 70 weeks of years is supposed to be read literally as a fixed 490 chronological years.
    - iii. A "year" was 360 days (rather than 365), which is a questionable view in the minds of many scholars.
3. *What is the goal or purpose of the 70 weeks?* The six goals are highlighted in Dan 9:24: (1) to finish transgression, (2) to put an end to sin, (3) to atone for iniquity, (4) to bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) to seal both vision and prophet, (6) to anoint a most holy *place*. Dispensationalists hold that most of these will only be accomplished in Christ's second coming, thus requiring a futuristic reading of Dan 9:24–27.
4. *When exactly will the 70<sup>th</sup> week begin?* Dispensationalists assert that Dan 9:26 has two events happening *after* the 69<sup>th</sup> week but *before* the 70<sup>th</sup> week: (1) the cutting of the Messiah (i.e., the crucifixion) and (2) the destruction of the temple. The 70<sup>th</sup> week will only occur at Christ's second coming, during which the Great Tribulation described in 9:27 and the six goals of 9:24 will be accomplished.

5. *Who is the coming “prince” of 9:26 and the one who makes the covenant in 9:27? Both figures are one—the final, personal Antichrist. This one week (or seven-year period) will include the rebuilding of a physical temple in Jerusalem and the reinstatement and observance of sacrificial offerings. After 3 ½ years (i.e., the middle of the week), the Antichrist will break the covenant, persecute the people of God (i.e., Israel), only to be destroyed by the return of Christ at the end of the tribulation (i.e., at the close of the 70<sup>th</sup> week, during the battle of Armageddon).*
6. *On what basis do dispensationalists posit a gap between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week? Dispensationalists asserts that the six goals of 9:24 have yet to be accomplished, so the 70<sup>th</sup> week must be future. Furthermore, they believe the events of 9:27 are about the 70<sup>th</sup> week but must be read as *following* the events of 9:26. They assert that gaps of unforeseen prophetic time happen elsewhere (as in the way Jesus distinguishes the “year of the Lord’s favor” from his “day of vengeance”; Isa 61:1–2 in Luke 4:16–21), so it should not be strange to find it here, and they believe that Jesus’ own portrayal of the future in the Olivet Discourse in Matt 24:15–28 treats the 70<sup>th</sup> week as still future.*



**C. Traditional Reformed Reading Synthesized** (e.g., Sam Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 76–85; cf. Meredith G. Kline, “The Covenant of the Seventieth Week,” in *The Law and the Prophets* [ed. John H. Skolton; Nutley, NJ: P & R, 1974], 452–69.)

1. *What are the “seventy sevens” in Dan 9:24? The “sevens” refers to 7-year units of time, so seventy sevens = 490 years. However, the language is symbolic for Sabbatical cycles (see below) and points only to an extended period of time. In this view, while the seventieth week began during the ministry of Christ, it continues even now until his second coming.*
2. *When do the 70 weeks begin?*

- a. King Jehoiakim reigned in Judah from 609–598 B.C., and God first predicted through Jeremiah the “70 years” in the fourth year of Jehoiakim’s reign (605 B.C.), the very time Daniel and his three friends were exiled to Babylon (Jer 25:1, 9, 11–12; 29:10; cf. Dan 1:1–2).
- Jer. 25:1, 9, 11–12. The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon). . . .<sup>9</sup> “Behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation. . . .<sup>11</sup> This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.<sup>12</sup> 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.
  - Jer 29:10. For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.
  - Dan. 1:1–2. In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.<sup>2</sup> And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.
- b. Daniel 9 opens with Daniel praying for the completion of the “70 years,” and he does so “in the first year of Darius,” which is likely equivalent to the first year of Cyrus (539/538 B.C.) and his decree.<sup>2</sup> Daniel’s prayer aligns with Solomon’s request that God would heed the cry of those in exile and return them to the land (1 Kgs 8:33–34, 46–51).
- Dan. 9:1–5, 17–19. In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—<sup>2</sup> in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of Yahweh to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.<sup>3</sup> Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.<sup>4</sup> I prayed to Yahweh my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,<sup>5</sup> we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. . . .<sup>17</sup> Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate.<sup>18</sup> O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy.<sup>19</sup> O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.
  - 1 Kgs 8:33–34, 46–51. When your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you, and if they turn again to you and acknowledge your name and pray and plead with you in this house,<sup>34</sup> then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them again to the land that you gave to their fathers. . . .<sup>46</sup> If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near,<sup>47</sup> yet if they turn their heart in the land to which they have been carried captive, and repent and plead with you in the

<sup>2</sup> See Brian E. Colless, “Cyrus the Persian as Darius the Mede in the Book of Daniel,” *JSOT* 56 (1992): 113–26.

land of their captors, saying, “We have sinned and have acted perversely and wickedly,”<sup>48</sup> if they repent with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies, who carried them captive, and pray to you toward their land, which you gave to their fathers, the city that you have chosen, and the house that I have built for your name,<sup>49</sup> then hear in heaven your dwelling place their prayer and their plea, and maintain their cause<sup>50</sup> and forgive your people who have sinned against you, and all their transgressions that they have committed against you, and grant them compassion in the sight of those who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them<sup>51</sup> (for they are your people, and your heritage, which you brought out of Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace).

- c. 2 Chr 36:20–23 (// Ezra 1:1–2) explicitly connects Cyrus’ decree with the completion of Jeremiah’s 70 years.
  - 2 Chr 36:20–23. [King Nebuchadnezzar] took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia<sup>21</sup> to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.<sup>22</sup> Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:<sup>23</sup> “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up.’”
- d. The texts noted above all identify the decree of Cyrus (538 B.C.) with the completion of Jeremiah’s “70 years” prophecy. And Daniel 9:25 posits that the “70 weeks” is inaugurated at the decree.
  - Dan 9:24–25 (NASB). Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city. . . .<sup>25</sup> So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.
- e. Dispensationalists assert that Cyrus’ 538 B.C. decree cannot be the beginning of the seventy weeks because his decree did not include reference to the rebuilding of the *city*, which is demanded by Dan 9:25. Storms (79–80) believes, however, that the restoration of the land (Jer 29:10, 14) always included an understanding of the restoration of both the temple (Ezra 1:2–4; 2 Chr 36:23) and city (Isa 44:28; 45:13), and this is exactly how Daniel perceived it (Dan 9:2, 16–18). Furthermore, Jerusalem was at least partially inhabited *before* Nehemiah’s rebuilding (see Hag 1:4, 9; Ezra 4:6; 5:1; 6:9; Neh 3:20–29; 7:3).
- f. In light of this Sam Storms builds the following conclusions:
  - i. 538 B.C. must be viewed as both the terminus of the 70 years and the inauguration of the 70 weeks (contrary to the dispensationalists who posit 445–444 B.C.). For a critique of this view that may allow the 70 years to be concluded at Cyrus’ original decree but allow the 70 weeks of years to be started only sometime thereafter, see below.
  - ii. Jeremiah’s “70 years” prophecy must be understood as a general, even symbolic number, for 605–538 B.C. is only 66 years. We should, therefore, not treat the “70 weeks” prophecy as demanding a literal chronological 490 years. For a critique of this view that takes both the “70 years” and “70 weeks” as actual solar years/weeks, see below.

3. *What is the goal or purpose of the 70 weeks and how does this relate to the exact beginning of the 70<sup>th</sup> week?* Dan 9:24 clearly highlights the six goals that would be accomplished in the 70 weeks, but unlike the dispensationalists who assert the 70<sup>th</sup> week must be future because the six have not been accomplished, Storms rightly sees that their fulfillment has already been inaugurated at Christ’s first coming and will be consummated at his next (80). Storms posits that Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week began at Christ’s coming (specifically, his baptism) and covers the entire present church age until his second coming. This is the classic Reformed view.
4. *Who is the coming “prince” of 9:26 and the one who makes the covenant in 9:27?* Dispensationalists see the prince and covenant maker as the Antichrist. In contrast, Storms believes the “prince” is Titus, the Roman general, whose armies (i.e., “the people of the prince,” Dan 9:26) destroyed the city of Jerusalem and its temple in A.D. 70. I will note later an alternative reading is that the “anointed/Messiah” and “prince” of 9:26 are identical and *the same* characters mentioned in 9:25—namely, Jesus the Messiah. This would make “the people” of the prince to be the Jews, who were blamed with the city’s destruction even though the Romans were those who set it ablaze (so Gentry [see below]).

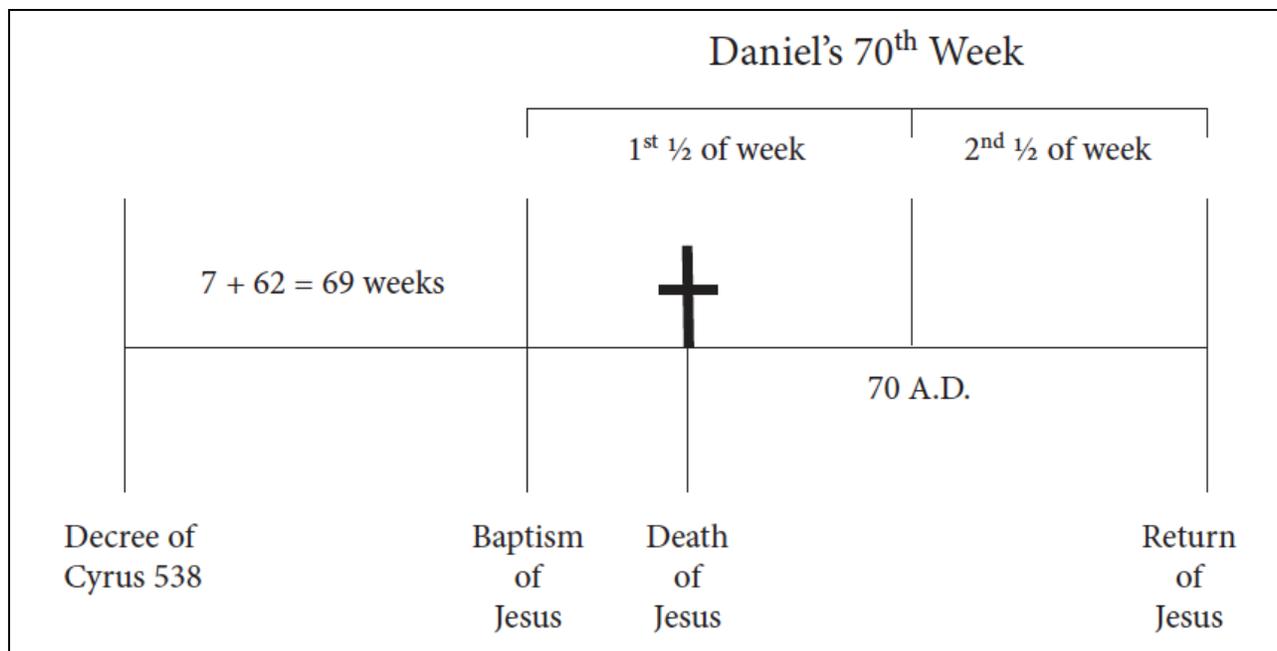


Diagram is taken from Sam Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 91.

538 B.C. =	Daniel’s prayer and Cyrus decree that Jerusalem could be rebuilt (2 Chr 36:22; Dan 9:2).
400 B.C. =	Approximate completion of Jerusalem’s rebuilding (week 1)
30 A.D. =	Approximate date of Jesus’ baptism and inauguration of his ministry
70 A.D. =	Destruction of the temple and Jerusalem by the Roman armies as unknowing agents of Jesus Christ (Matt 21:33–22:14; Acts 6:14).
End =	The return of Jesus (??)

5. *Is there gap between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week?* Dispensationalists posit an extended gap (i.e., the church age) between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks, reading the events of 9:26 and 27 sequentially as AB-CD. In contrast, Storms believes 9:26 and 27 are parallel descriptions to be read in an ABAB pattern. Thus “events that occur ‘after’ the sixty-ninth week (v. 26) occur ‘in’ the seventieth week (v. 27). The death of Messiah and the destruction of the Jerusalem are the two principal events portrayed in verses 26–27” (81–82). With this, Storms believes that the “abomination of desolation” and “great tribulation” that he believes is anticipated in 9:27 (cf. 11:31; 12:11; cf. Matt 24:15; Mark 13:14) both pertain to the events of A.D. 70 when Jerusalem and its temple are destroyed (83). An alternative reading of Dan 9:27 will be posited below. Finally, rather than reading an unexpected prophetic gap in texts like Isa 61:1–2 and Luke 4:16–21, Storms suggests that “the day of God’s wrath as well as the day of redemption were inaugurated by our Lord’s ministry (see Matt. 3:10–12; 23:37ff.)” (83).
6. *What is meant by 9:27?* Storms sees 9:27 paralleling 9:26, with the “anointed one” of v. 26 being identical to the “he” of v. 27a and the “prince” of v. 26 being the same as the “one who makes desolate” of v. 27b (i.e., the Roman general Titus in A.D. 70). The one who “causes a covenant to prevail” is Jesus himself, which he accomplishes through his shed blood (see Matt 26:27–29; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 8–10). Finally, the Messiah’s putting “an end to sacrifice and offering” refers either to the sacrifice of Christ abrogating the Jewish sacrificial system (so Heb 7:11–12, 27; 9:26–28; 10:9; Matt 27:51; Mark 15:38) or to the cessation of Jewish sacrifices by the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple in A.D. 70 (see Matt 23:37–24:2) (85).

#### **D. The Two Stages of Israel’s Restoration: Initial Return and Only Later Reconciliation**

1. Earlier, both Isaiah and Hosea had explicitly portrayed restoration in two stages, the first of which appears to align with Jeremiah’s “70 years” prophecy. That is, Israel would return to the land but only later see their sins addressed and their hearts reconciled to God.
  - a. Isaiah’s two-stage restoration included (1) physical return from Babylon to the land (Isa. 42:18–43:21) and (2) spiritual return from covenant violation to a restored right relationship with God (Isa. 43:22–44:23). The physical liberation would be accomplished by one named Cyrus (44:24–48:22), whereas the spiritual atonement would be secured by the royal Servant (49:1–53:12).
  - b. More specifically, Isaiah envisioned a king named Cyrus who would put an end to the exile by decreeing the rebuilding of both Jerusalem and the temple (Isa 44:28; 45:13). This decree appears to directly relate to the decree of Dan 9:25 that a word would go forth “to restore and rebuild Jerusalem”—a decree that would mark the beginning of the 70 weeks.
    - Isa. 44:28. [It is I, Yahweh] who says of Cyrus, “He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose”; saying of Jerusalem, “She shall be built,” and of the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.”
    - Isa. 45:13. “I have stirred him up in righteousness, and I will make all his ways level; he shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward,” says the LORD of hosts.

- Dan 9:25. . . . The going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem . . . it shall be built again with squares and moat.
- c. Similarly, Hosea portrayed the initial restoration as an intermediate period wherein God would redeem his people to the land but not enjoy intimate relations with them until later. During this window they would rest without king or full temple worship, but then afterward they would soften and be reconciled with both God and the ultimate David their king.
- Hos. 3:1–5. And the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.”<sup>2</sup> So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley.<sup>3</sup> And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.”<sup>4</sup> For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods.<sup>5</sup> Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.
- d. Daniel’s prayer in ch. 9 was that Jeremiah’s “70 years” prophecy would be fulfilled. Daniel was anticipating the completion of Stage 1, which is directly linked with Cyrus’ decree that the Jews can return and rebuild. Dan 9:2. “*In the first year of [Darius’] reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.*”
- e. God’s response (an overview): What is significant for our passage is that, whereas Daniel appears to plea for the completion of stage 1 (i.e., return to the land and restoration of Jerusalem), Yahweh responds by asserting the fulfillment of both stage 1 (i.e., Jerusalem will be rebuilt in the period of 7 weeks of years (i.e., 49 years) and stage 2 (i.e., redemption and reconciliation will be secured after an additional 62 weeks of years (i.e., 434 years, or after the 69<sup>th</sup> week = a total of 483 years). The six purposes highlighted in 9:24 all address stage 2 fulfillment:
- i. Negative purposes of judgment/curse:
    - (1) To finish transgression
    - (2) To make an end of sin
    - (3) To atone for iniquity
  - ii. Positive purposes of restoration/blessing:
    - (1) To bring everlasting righteousness
    - (2) To seal up vision and prophecy
    - (3) To anoint a most holy person/place

Like Storms, I believe that all these six purposes were fulfilled (though not consummated) in the *first* coming of Christ. God declares to Daniel that it will take 490 years for his kingdom promises to reach fulfillment (i.e., 70 weeks of years), and it will be accomplished “for your people and your holy city” through the work of Messiah. He will uphold a (new) covenant by being cut off, but not for himself, and through this he will put a stop to sacrifice and set in motion what will culminate in the destruction of the earthly temple, definitively representing the start of the new creation.

### E. Establishing the Boundaries of Jeremiah's "70 Years" Prophecy.

1. Storms places the end of the "70 years" at Cyrus' 538 B.C. decree; however, he argues for a non-fixed, non-chronological reading of the "70 years" prophecy, because 538 B.C. was only 66 years after the initial 605 B.C. prediction. He states that the original "seventy years" prophecy "is an approximate designation of length," standing as "the fixed term of divine wrath and indignation" (86). However, a number of arguments suggest that the "70 years" should be read literally.
  - a. Most of the biblical texts he uses to support the view that "70" is *only* symbolic are unconvincing (see Jer 27:7; Ezek 4:6–8; Zech 1:12; Ps 90:10), Isa 23:15 being the only potential example of the "70" being used figuratively. Furthermore, the symbolic can still be grounded in actuality, as will be argued further below.
  - b. The prophets of the exile seem to be counting the days as if the 70 years were fixed. Daniel's words in 9:2 seem to assume this: "In the first year of [Darius'] reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years." Similarly, of all other prophets, only the exilic prophets Ezekiel, Hosea, and Zechariah consistently *date* all their oracles, suggesting they are following a benchmark for counting days until fulfillment.
  - c. 2 Chr 36:21 alludes to Lev 26:34–35, suggesting that the length of the "70 year" exile was directly associated with the number of Sabbatical years that Israel did not celebrate. Thus there is one year of exile for every year missed: 70 Sabbaticals missed (over a 490 year period) results in 70 years of exile.
    - Lev. 26:33–35. And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste.<sup>34</sup> Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its Sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest that it did not have on your Sabbaths when you were dwelling in it.
    - 2 Chr 36:20–22. He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia,<sup>21</sup> to fulfill the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.<sup>22</sup> Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of Yahweh by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, Yahweh stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing. Cf. // Ezra 1:1.
2. In light of these facts, a number of potential dates have been proposed regarding the "70 year" window, the most likely of which are as follows:
  - a. 606/605–536/35 B.C. (The year of Jeremiah's initial prediction [Jer 25:1, 11–12], which came in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign [605 B.C.] and the year of Daniel's exile *to* the year the temple began to be reconstructed [Gordon Hugenberger] or to the reworked date for Cyrus' decree [Leslie McFall]).
  - b. 587/586–517/16 B.C. (The temple's destruction *to* the completion of the temple's rebuilding [Douglas Stuart; Marvin Sweeney]).

- c. 609/608–539/38 B.C. (Josiah’s death, three years before the “70 years” prophecy to Cyrus’ decree [Peter Gentry, original *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 540]).
  - d. 606/605–538/37 B.C. (The initial attack of Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem to Cyrus’ decree, 68 years rounded up to 70 [Peter Gentry, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.]
3. There are strengths and weaknesses to all these views, and the most likely is difficult to assess.
- a. One support for beginning with 605 B.C. is the fact that this was the year Jeremiah originally prophesied the “70 years” (see Jer 25:1, 11–12), and it was also the first year Babylon took exiles from Jerusalem, including Daniel and his three friends (see Dan 1:1; cf. Jer 25:11).
  - b. The case for ending the “70 years” with 539/38 B.C. (Babylon’s fall/Persia’s rise and Cyrus’ decree) is strong because Jeremiah had declared that Babylon’s punishment would conclude the “70 years” (Jer 25:12), after which would come return to the land (29:10). Furthermore, the Chronicler appears to associate Cyrus’ decree as the sign that the 70 years were complete (2 Chr 36:21–22).
  - c. Some historical challenges:
    - i. The initial three rulers of the Persian period are Cyrus the Great (559–530 B.C.), Cambyses (530–522 B.C.), and Darius I (522–486 B.C.). Daniel 9:1 stresses that Daniel’s plea to God for restoration came in the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede, who, if identified with Darius I, would render option 3 (iii) nonsensical, for the “70 years” would be extended beyond 539/38.
    - ii. Most scholars do not equate the Darius of Daniel with Darius Hystaspes of Persia (= Darius I), who reigned from 522–486 B.C., and during whose reign Haggai and Zechariah ministered and the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple was completed (see Hag 1:1, 15; 2:10; Zech 1:1, 7; 7:1; Ezra 4:5, 24; 5:5–7; 6:1, 12–15; Neh 12:22). Rather, the Darius the Mede in Daniel is believed to be otherwise unknown from ancient records (Dan 5:31; 6:1, 6, 9, 25, 28; 9:1; 11:1), though scholars have suggested that this Darius was another name for (1) Gubaru, a governor appointed by Cyrus and mentioned in tablets dated from 535–525 B.C. (so J. C. Whitcomb), (2) Ugbaru, a Gutian general who captured Babylon for Cyrus but who died within a few weeks (so W. H. Shea), or (3) Cyrus himself (so D. Wiseman; Brian Colless). While the last mentioned date in the book is “the first year of Darius the Mede” (11:1), most scholars point to Daniel’s having ministered “during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian” (6:28) and suggest that Cyrus’ reign extended latest. If the Hebrew connector *waw* here means not “and” but “even,” Cyrus could here be equated with Darius.<sup>3</sup> We know that Daniel received a revelation during Cyrus’ third year (10:1), and we know that Cyrus ruled from 559–530, which would make the latest

---

<sup>3</sup> See David W. Baker, “Further Examples of Waw Explicativum,” *VT* 30 (1980): 129–36.

possible date for Daniel being 530 B.C., well before the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple was completed in 516 B.C.

- iii. What makes the historical situation of Dan 9:1 more difficult is the way Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah appear to be dating their prophecies in relation to Jeremiah's 70 year prediction. For example, in the second year of Darius I (ca. 521), the prophet Zechariah appears to still be holding fast to the *hope* for the *end* of the 70 years (Zech 1:12; 7:5).
- Zech 1:12. Then the angel of the LORD said, "O LORD of hosts, how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, against which you have been angry these seventy years?"
  - Zech 7:5. Say to all the people of the land and the priests, When you fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh, for these seventy years, was it for me that you fasted?

It seems that Zechariah did *not* see Cyrus' decree as fulfilling Jeremiah's prophecy but rather posited the 70 years as running from temple destruction to temple rebuilding (586–516 B.C., option 2 [ii] above; see Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, 2:579, 640). This could suggest that the "Darius" of Daniel was indeed Darius I and that Daniel's ministry lasted far longer than was expected. The "first year of Darius" in Daniel 9:1 would then refer to 522, one year before Zechariah's own declarations. Another possibility is that Zechariah, speaking some 17 years after the "70 years" were completed, was treating Jeremiah's statement typologically, recognizing the stage 1 fulfillment of the 70 years in 538 but seeing it as anticipating stage 2, as unpacked in Daniel 9.

#### F. The Interpretive Problem in Dan 9:25

1. The accents in the Hebrew Masoretic Text suggest that "seven weeks" end a sentence and that "sixty-two weeks" begins the next. As such, the ESV translates v. 25: "Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time." In contrast, the Septuagint, Theodotion, Symmachus, and the Syriac Peshitta all favor viewing "seven weeks and sixty-two weeks" together (as seen in the NASB).
2. While the MT is possible syntactically, the proposed break forces a very unnatural distinction between the "anointed one" and "prince" of v. 25 and the figure with the same titles in v. 26. Without the presence of literary signals, the most natural reading of the text is to treat all figures as one and the same.
3. In support of this, when "seven weeks and sixty-two weeks" are read together, what follows is a conjunction-less (i.e., asyndetic) clause, which regularly marks explication. This structure would support the natural conclusion that "It will be rebuilt again . . ." in v. 25 is merely clarifying that Jerusalem would be rebuilt within the first seven weeks (i.e., 49 years) (using the same verbs as before), and then v. 26 unpacks what would take place "after the sixty-two weeks."
4. Elsewhere, whenever "prince" is linked with "anointed one" it only refers to an anointed king (see 1 Sam. 9:16; 10:1; 1 Chr. 29:22). While some have posited

that the “anointed figure” was to arrive only after seven weeks of years and thus must be Nehemiah (so Leslie McFall), it is more likely that he would arrive *after* sixty-nine weeks of years (7 + 62) and thus be identified with Messiah Jesus. Roger Beckwith has argued that the MT represents a Jewish reaction against a messianic interpretation (“Daniel 9 and the Date of Messiah’s Coming in Essene, Hellenistic, Pharisaic, Zealot, and Early Christian Computation,” *Revue de Qumrân* 40 [1981]: 521–42).

5. I propose that Dan. 9:24–27 associates the anticipated king’s return with the full end of the exile and the birth a (new) covenant. This terminus, however, will come only with great person tragedy: he will be cut off not for himself but for the sake of his people.

### G. Grasping the Concept of “70 Weeks of Years”

1. As highlighted above, 2 Chr. 36:21 explains Jeremiah’s 70 years as lasting “until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths,” which aligns with the curse promise in Lev. 26:34–35: “Then the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in your enemies’ land; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its Sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest that it did not have on your Sabbaths when you were dwelling in it.” The text goes on to anticipate a new covenant after this stage, accomplished when God remembers both his covenant with the patriarchs and his covenant with the exodus generation (26:40–45).
2. In light of this Sabbath connection, Paul R. Williamson has legitimately posited that “70 weeks” correlates with Sabbatical years and Jubilee: “The ‘seventy sevens’ chronography is probably best understood against the background of Jewish sabbatical years, and the Jubilee year in particular (cf. Lev. 24:8; 25:1–4; 26:43; cf. 2 Chr. 36:21). Thus understood, the seventy sevens constitutes ten jubilee years, the last (the seventieth seven) signifying the ultimate Jubilee (cf. Isa. 61:2). Given the Jeremianic context that prompted this revelation (Dan. 9:2: cf. Jer. 25:11–12; 29:10), some explicit association between this climactic Jubilee and the anticipated new covenant is not unexpected.”<sup>4</sup> Significantly, when Jesus reads from scroll of Isaiah in Luke 4:14–21, he sees the ultimate jubilee (“the year of the Lord’s favor”) being fulfilled in his life and ministry (see Isa. 61:2).
3. Meredith G. Kline notes that the Sabbath pattern, both for the people and land, functioned “as a prophetic symbol of the consummation of the covenant order . . . as a sign of the messianic age of redemptive liberation, restitution, and rest [see esp. Heb. 4:1–11].”<sup>5</sup> Building off this, Storms asserts that the “70 weeks” framework was chosen not to assert precise chronology but “because the sabbath (and the number seven) bore special symbolic import for the nation of Israel” (88). That is, the seventy weeks “serve to evoke a *theological image*, namely, that in ‘Messiah Jesus’ God will work to bring about the final jubilee of redemptive history . . . THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH (Rev. 21–22)” (90).
4. I appreciate and affirm Storms theological interpretation of the significance of the “70 weeks.” However, the theological association of the “70 weeks”

<sup>4</sup> Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God’s Unfolding Purpose*, NSBT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 174–75.

<sup>5</sup> Kline, “The Covenant of the Seventieth Week,” 5 (in the online version).

prophecy with the Sabbatical calendar or Jubilee does not mean a chronological reading of the 490 years is untenable. Indeed, it seems more likely that it is just the opposite. Storms asserts that “seventy sevens” is likely “symbolic of the divine work brought to consummate perfection” (86). Two factors, however, seem to be missed:

- a. As already noted, of all the texts Storms cites to support the view that “70” is *only* symbolic, only Isa 23:15 has potential for “70” being used figuratively (cf. Jer 27:7; Ezek 4:6–8; Zech 1:12; Ps 90:10). Furthermore, as will now be argued, the symbolic can still be grounded in actuality.
  - b. The Sabbatical and Jubilee cycle was fixed during Israel’s tenure in the land and moved ahead in alignment with Israel’s sabbatical calendar on a 49-year rotation. As such, if the Sabbatical cycle is indeed being pointed to in the “70 weeks” prophecy (i.e., 490 years or 10 Jubilees), a chronological, fixed reading of an actual 490 years seems most likely—a 490 year window that would most likely begin not on any general date but on a specific a Jubilee year.
5. Understanding Israel’s Sabbatical and Jubilee calendar (Lev 25):
- a. Israel had both a sacred and civil calendar (see *WOTARCA*, Fig. 4.5, p. 114). The sacred calendar began in the spring (March/April) in the month of Abib/Nisan around the celebration of the nations’ deliverance at Passover (14<sup>th</sup> of Abib). The civil calendar began in the fall (Sept/Oct), usually on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Ethanim/Tishri, except on Jubilee years when it began on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:9). The sacred calendar began at the opening of the harvest, but the civil calendar started after harvest with the beginning of plowing and then planting. The Sabbatical years and Jubilee years appear to follow the civil calendar (see *Rosh HaShanah* 1a in the Talmud), for Lev 25 speaks of sowing before reaping for both and the Jubilee is specifically said to begin at the start of the civil calendar in the seventh month at the Day of Atonement in Tishri (25:9–10).
  - b. The Sabbatical-year calendar followed a seven year cycle, comparable to the weekly Sabbath: 6 years of sowing, pruning, and gathering + 1 year of Sabbath rest for the land (25:3–5). While Lev 25:4–5 highlights that no planting, pruning, or reaping will take place in the Sabbath year, vv. 6–7 appear to suggest exactly the opposite: “The Sabbath of the land shall provide food for you. . . . All its yield shall be for food.” I see two reasonable possibilities for interpretation: (1) vv. 6–7 are merely asserting that obedience with respect to the Sabbatical year will result in lasting crops through the other six years; (2) the harvest at the front side of the 7<sup>th</sup> year (following the 6<sup>th</sup> year’s planting) will result in a crop sufficient to carry the Israelites through the Sabbatical year and through the planting of the 8<sup>th</sup> year until the harvest in the 9<sup>th</sup> (see 25:20–21).
  - c. The Jubilee was a “50<sup>th</sup> year” (25:10–11), but scholars are not united on (1) whether the pattern was truly  $[(6+1) \times 7] + 1$ , which would require *two* full years of no cultivated crops (i.e., the Sabbatical year + separate Jubilee year) (see Lev 25:21), or (2) whether the 7<sup>th</sup> Sabbatical year (= year 49), which included its harvest had built within it the Jubilee year, which began

in the seventh month at the time of planting and continued through what would have been the time of harvest (see 25:8–11, 21–22). Option 2 seems most likely for two reasons:

- i. Option 1 requires two consecutive years of voluntary refraining from sowing and reaping, but there is no support for this pattern anywhere else in Scripture.
  - ii. Because the Feast of Weeks (or Pentecost) was called for 50 days that actually equal 49 (Lev 23:15–16), the pattern of inclusive numbering seems most likely for the Sabbatical calendar as well. Similarly, the Feast of Tabernacles was to last seven days, but the final day is called the eighth (Lev 23:34–36). As such, with respect to the Sabbatical calendar and Jubilee, the starting year was most likely counted as year 1, making the actual 49<sup>th</sup> year into the 50<sup>th</sup>. We see the same type of reckoning in Christ’s resurrection on the third day, even though he died on Friday afternoon and rose on Sunday morning. (For more, see Young, “The Jubilee and Sabbatical Cycles,” 113).
- d. *The Sabbatical calendar remained unbroken on a 49-year cycle, and the 50<sup>th</sup> year Jubilee was built within it.* That is, every Jubilee marked year 1 for counting the next 50.
- i. Lev 26:21 states that the 6<sup>th</sup> year crops will be enough for *three* years, which could be read to support the view that the Sabbatical year fell in year 49 and Jubilee following in a full year 50: “I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year, so that it will produce a crop sufficient for three years.”
  - ii. However, when added to Lev 25:22, what appears to be portrayed is only a twelve-month cycle without sowing, pruning, and reaping (25:21–22): “I will command my blessing on you in the sixth year, so that it will produce a crop sufficient for three years.<sup>22</sup> When you sow in the eighth year, you will be eating some of the old crop; you shall eat the old until the ninth year, when its crop arrives.” This may suggest that the “three years” mentioned in v. 21 was meant only to note that the 6<sup>th</sup> year of sowing would reap benefit into the ninth. The pattern appears to be as follows:

Sacred YEAR 6		Sacred YEAR 7		Sacred YEAR 8		Sacred YEAR 9	
Reap	Sow	Reap	No Sow	No Reap	Sow	Reap	Sow
5	Civil YEAR 6	Civil YEAR 7		Civil YEAR 8/1		9/2	
				Year 50/1, Jubilee			

- e. Scholars see potential mention of Sabbatical and even Jubilee years in a handful of biblical texts (e.g., 2 Kgs 23:2 [cf. Deut 31:10–11]; Jer 34:8 [cf. Exod 21:1]; and esp. 2 Kgs 19:29 // Isa 37:30; Ezek 40:1; Neh 10:31).<sup>6</sup> It

<sup>6</sup> There are two clear fixed dates for Jubilee and/or just Sabbatical years. (1) 2 Kgs 19:29 // Isa 37:30 reads: “And this shall be the sign for you: this year you shall eat what grows of itself, and in the second year what springs from that. Then in the third year sow and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat their fruit.” This oracle of Isaiah was given in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah’s sole reign, the very year of Sennacherib’s siege of Jerusalem (701/700 B.C.).

must be noted, however, that all attempts to project post-exilic Sabbatical cycles back into pre-exilic times have failed because the stipulations for Sabbatical years were only to be observed while Israel was in the land (Lev 25:2). While something like the Feast of Tabernacles could be observed in a foreign land, it too was forgotten by 444 B.C. (Neh 8:14). However, the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah saw the re-institution of the Sabbatical calendar, which carried on into the times of Christ. Specifically, a reference appears to be made to the Sabbatical year in Neh 10:31, wherein a pledge was made by the people on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month (Ethanym/Tishri) to keep it: “And we will forego the crops of the seventh year and the exaction of every debt” (cf. 8:2; 9:1; ch. 30 of *Seder Olam* [2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. and *Arakin* 32b in the Talmud]). If indeed the vow was made on a Sabbatical year, which seems reasonable in light of the language, then a Sabbatical year date can be established in 444/443 B.C., and in relation to this fixed date a Sabbatical calendar can be shaped from the period of initial restoration forward. (See Bob Pickle’s overview of the discussion between Zuckermann and Wacholder at [www.pickle-publishing.com/papers/sabbatical-years.htm](http://www.pickle-publishing.com/papers/sabbatical-years.htm), which can only be used for post-exilic Sabbatical years; for a full discussion of the data, with special focus on pre-exilic Sabbatical years and its significance for dating the exodus, see also Rodger C. Young, “Evidence for Inerrancy from a Second Unexpected Source: The Jubilee and Sabbatical Cycles,” *Bible and Space* 21.4 [fall, 2008]: 109–22, esp. 114–15).

#### H. Counting the “70 Weeks”

1. According to Dan 9:24, God decreed to Daniel that, *following* the return to the land, “70 weeks” would pass before reconciliation and new creation would be realized. There is a temporal parallel, then, between the time it took to create the problem and the time it will take to fully see established the solution.
  - a. 70 Sabbaticals (= 490 yrs): the period of extended covenant rebellion that brought the exile
  - b. 70 years of exile: 10 Sabbaths for the land associated with the number of Sabbatical years missed (Lev. 26:34–35)
  - c. 70 Sabbaticals (= 490 yrs): the complete period of covenant restoration from exile

---

Nothing is mentioned that suggest this date was a Jubilee, but it does suggest a Sabbatical year. (2) Ezek 40:1 reads: “In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year (lit., on *Rosh HaShanah* [i.e., New Year’s day], on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was struck down, on that very day, the hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me to the city.” English translators consistently render the Hebrew *rosh hashanah* as “the beginning of the year” instead of the specific meaning acquainted with the Jewish calendar—i.e., New Year’s Day. This is most likely due to the fact that the New Year normally started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Tishri, not the 10<sup>th</sup>. However, on Jubilee years, the New Year started on the 10<sup>th</sup>, on the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:9), which suggests that Ezekiel’s vision in 40:1 came on what would have been the start of a Jubilee year, placing a fixed date for counting backward at the 10<sup>th</sup> of Tishri, 574 B.C. (14 years after the 587 destruction; cf. *Arakin* 12a; ch. 11 of *Seder Olam*). A further link between Ezek 40:1 and the Day of Atonement is the use of the phrase “on that very day,” which occurs in Lev 23:28–30 three times. Significantly, when 574 is taken as the start date for a Sabbatical year, 700 B.C. lands perfectly as a Sabbatical year, thus supporting my interpretation of 2 Kgs 19:29 // Isa 37:30.

2. In approaching Dan. 9:24–27 in particular, we note the following structure, which may allow for specific persons and events to be identified in light of progressive revelation:

Time Structure	Sabbatical Count	Year Count	Jubilee Count
7 sabbaticals (49 years) = Jerusalem restored and rebuilt (Dan 9:25)	7	49 (7x7)	1
62 sabbaticals (434 years) = nothing of note (9:25–26)	69 (7+62)	483 (49+[7x62])	
1 sabbatical (7 years) = a messiah rises and is cut off, a covenant is upheld, offerings and sacrifices are ended, the temple is destroyed (9:26–27)	70 (69+1)	490 (483+7)	10

3. Assuming a fixed time frame for the “70 weeks” prophecy, 5 traditional dates have been proposed for the beginning of the counting:
  - a. 605 B.C. = God’s initial declaration of a 70 year exile followed by Babylon’s judgment (Jer. 25:11–12; 29:10)
  - b. 586 B.C. = The fulfillment of God’s word regarding the fall of Jerusalem and the temple’s destruction
  - c. 538 B.C. = Cyrus’ word allowing the return from exile (2 Chr. 36:23; Ezra 1:1–4)
  - d. 457 B.C. = Artaxerxes’ commission to Ezra (Ezra 7:11–26)
  - e. 444 B.C. = Artaxerxes’ commission to Nehemiah (Neh. 2:1–6)
 When the 490 years are read as fixed time, the following options are established:

	605 B.C.	586 B.C.	538 B.C.	457 B.C.	444 B.C.
<b>7 Sabbaticals</b> (49 years)	556 B.C.	537 B.C.	529 B.C.	408 B.C.	395 B.C.
<b>62 Sabbaticals</b> (434 years)	122 B.C.	103 B.C.	55 B.C.	A.D. 27	A.D. 40
<b>1 Sabbatical</b> (7 years)	115 B.C.	96 B.C.	48 B.C.	A.D. 34	A.D. 47

4. It was already noted that Ezekiel, aware that the Day of Atonement in his 25<sup>th</sup> year of captivity would mark the beginning of a year of Jubilee, was apparently bemoaning the fact that his people, held captive in a foreign land, were unable to experience either the obligations or benefits of the Jubilee (Ezek 40:1) (so Young, “The Jubilee and Sabbatical Cycles,” 110). I also noted that while 574 is a fixed date for what would have been a Jubilee, the post-exilic Jubilee dates are distinct from the pre-exilic ones, seeing as Israel stopped celebrating the Jubilee while removed from the land. It seems unlikely, therefore, that 605 or 586 could even be part of the “70 weeks” counting. We know from Neh 10:31 that 444/443 B.C. was a Sabbatical year, which would also make 458/457 a Sabbatical year, but not 538! Significantly, Zuckermann and Wacholder’s studies also establish that both 457 and 444 were Jubilee years, which makes both dates as possible candidates for the start of the counting (see <http://www.pickle-publishing.com/papers/sabbatical-years-table.htm>).
5. Only the 457 B.C. date, however, allows for a precise alignment with the timing of Jesus’ ministry. Beginning the 70 weeks at the time of Artaxerxes’ commission to Ezra has the 69<sup>th</sup> Sabbatical ending in A.D. 27 and the 70<sup>th</sup> Sabbatical ending

in A.D. 34. The Messiah's death would happen somewhere in the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week (A.D. 27–34), exactly the window in which the death of Jesus of Nazareth occurs.

6. Storms argues that Cyrus' 538 B.C. decree must stand as the termination date for Jeremiah's "70 years" prophecy *and* the initiation date for the "70 weeks." However, he does not account enough for the fact that the single "decree" of Cyrus was developed by Darius and then confirmed by Artaxerxes in 457 B.C.—all of which were viewed in the biblical text as a single decree.
  - a. Isaiah prophesied that one named Cyrus would build Jerusalem and its temple (Isa. 44:24–28; 45:13) and that the city's judiciary would be restored (1:26). Cyrus commanded the building of the temple (Ezra 1:1–40), Darius confirmed this command (6:1–12), and Artaxerxes called for the judiciary (7:11–26), which Ezra established in Artaxerxes' seventh year on the twentieth day of the ninth month, 457 B.C. (10:9).
  - b. Significantly, Ezra 6:14 treats the commandment of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes as a *single* decree to rebuild and restore Jerusalem and its temple: "They finished their building by *the decree* of the God of Israel and by *the decree* of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes king of Persia." As such, it is reasonable to mark the initiation of the 70 weeks in 457 B.C. in association with Ezra's return, wherein the single decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes was finally carried out in full, especially through the ministries of Ezra and Nehemiah.

#### I. The Meaning of the "70 Weeks" Prophecy in Dan 9:24–27

1. The text (Dan. 9:24–27, adapted NASB, changes highlighted in italics):

24a	Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and <i>prophet</i> and to anoint <i>a most holy thing</i> .
25	So you are to know
b	and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore [lit., cause to return] and rebuild Jerusalem until <i>messiah</i> [lit., anointed one], <i>a prince</i> , there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.
c	It will be built again [lit., it will return and be built], with plaza and moat, <i>but</i> in times of distress.
26	Then after the sixty-two weeks the messiah will be cut off
b	<i>but not for himself</i> ,
c	and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.
d	And its end will come with a flood;
e	even to the end there will be war;
f	desolations are determined.
27	And he will make a firm covenant with the many <i>with respect to one week</i> ,
b	but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering;
c	and on a wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate,
d	even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.

2. An overview of the text structure:
  - a. The Purpose of the 70 Weeks Declared (9:24)
    - i. Negative purposes of judgment/curse:
      - (1) To finish transgression
      - (2) To make an end of sin
      - (3) To atone for iniquity
    - ii. Positive purposes of restoration/blessing:
      - (1) To bring everlasting righteousness
      - (2) To seal up vision and prophecy
      - (3) To anoint a most holy person/place
  - b. The Process of the 70 Weeks Described (9:25–27)
    - i. A general overview: From the time of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the messiah will be 7 Sabbaticals (49 years) and 62 Sabbaticals (434 years, totaling 483 years) (9:25ab)
    - ii. A specific description (9:25c–27)
      - (1) 7 Sabbaticals for restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem (9:25cd)
      - (2) *After* 62 more Sabbaticals (with time not specified) desolations are decreed (see 9:26f):
        - (a) The messiah will be cut off, but not for himself (9:26ab);
        - (b) The people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and holy place (i.e., temple) (9:26c), the end of which will come like a flood, the climax of an extended war (9:26de).
      - (3) During a one week period (the 70<sup>th</sup> Sabbatical week), the Messiah/prince will uphold a covenant with the many (9:27a), and half way through this week, he will make an end of sacrifice and offering (9:27b)—a reference now clearly seen as aligning to his being “cut off, but not for himself” (9:26ab).
      - (4) And coinciding with this ministry, will be abominations, on the wing of which will be one who makes desolate, who will operate until his decreed end (9:27cd).
3. Interpretation (substantially taken from Gentry):
  - a. Scholars seem to agree that Jesus Messiah is the most likely referent to the “anointed one” and “prince” in 9:25, but some still question whether he is to be identified with the “anointed one” in 9:26, who will “be cut off, but not for himself.” Because there are no contextual clues to suggest reading them as different people, normal rules of reading literature suggests that the use of the same title points to the same individual in both verses.
  - b. When the statement that the Messiah will be cut off, but not for himself in 9:26ab is linked with the covenant that one (“he”) will uphold with “the many” in 9:27a, there appears to be explicit echoes of Isaiah’s vision of Davidic servant, who will “make many to be accounted righteous” and bear “the sins of many” (Isa. 53:11–12), who will be given “as a covenant to the people” (42:6), and whose “faithful loyalties” will be equated with an “everlasting covenant” (55:3).

- c. If the “anointed one” and “prince” in 9:25 are identified with the “anointed one” of 9:26, it also seems likely that the “prince” in 9:26 also refers to Jesus Messiah and not to the Roman ruler Titus (Vespasian), who destroyed the temple (as Storms suggests). In this light, when we read in 9:26 that the prince’s people will destroy the city and sanctuary, this most likely points to the Jewish people either (1) serving to destroy Jesus, the true Temple (John 2:19–22; cf. Acts 4:27–28) or (2) playing the decisive role in instigating the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans (see Josephus’ *The Wars of the Jews* where he tries to exonerate the masses of Jews by blaming the few, i.e., the Zealots). It is also likely, in light of the parallels between 9:26–27, that the “abomination” of v. 27 is caused by the Jewish actions in v. 26 and that “the one who makes desolate” that accompanies the abominations is either the High Priest as representative of the Jews during his trial or (perhaps by expanding fulfillment) the Roman ruler Titus in the days of the temple’s destruction (A.D. 70).
- d. The “abomination of desolation” that Jesus foresaw in Matt. 24:13 (// Mark 13:14) likely echoes the destruction and abomination addressed in Dan. 9:26–27. “So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),<sup>16</sup> then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (Matt 24:15–16; cf. Mark 13:14–15). In contrast, the act of temple desecration spoken of in Dan. 11:31 and 12:11 are performed by a person (i.e., Antiochus Epiphanes?) and not by a people, as is being addressed in Dan. 9:26–27. Furthermore, “the prince of the covenant” in 11:22 is made a leader by means of that covenant, whereas the “prince” of 9:25–27 upholds a covenant with the many. Finally, the problems explicated in 8:12–14, 11:31, and 12:11 are all associated with the *third* kingdom of the book’s visions from chs. 2, 7, 8 (= Greek), whereas 9:24–27 is directly linked to the inauguration of the kingdom of God related always to the fourth kingdom of the other visions (cf. Jason Parry, “Desolation of the Temple and Messianic Enthronement in Daniel 11:36–12:3,” *JETS* 54/3 [2011]: 485–526).
- e. Intriguingly, one of the stated purposes that would be accomplished in the 70 weeks was the “anointing of the most holy one/thing” (9:24), which could point to a person—whether priest (Lev. 4:3), prophet (Ps. 105:15), or king (1 Sam. 2:35)—or thing, like the tabernacle’s holy objects (Exod. 29:36; 30:26; 40:9–11; Lev. 8:10–11). The link between the anointing of the most holy one/thing with the elevation of the Messiah and the destruction of the temple seems to set the reader up for Jesus’ becoming the central focus of God’s presence, through whom God “tabernacles” among his people (John 1:14) and who himself embodies the true temple (2:21). When the Jewish people rejected Jesus as the Messiah, seen most directly in Caiaphas the high priests’ rejection of Jesus’ testimony of being the one envisioned in Dan. 7:14 (Matt. 26:57–66, esp. v. 64), the stage was set for the destruction of the Jewish physical temple—a reality symbolized by the rending of the curtain of the Holy of Holies at the crucifixion (Matt. 27:51 // Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).

- f. I noted above how Lev. 25:10–11 suggests that the year of Jubilee began in the seventh month of the 49<sup>th</sup> year directly associated with the Day of Atonement and the first month of the civil calendar. So Jubilee was initiated with atonement, and therefore it seems very appropriate that the kingdom and covenant growing out of the 70 weeks that usher in the ultimate Jubilee (Isa. 61:1–4) are ignited in the context of the ultimate Day of Atonement at the cross, all in anticipation of the destruction of the entire evil age.
- J. The Last Half of the 70<sup>th</sup> Week** (I have adapted some of this material from Gentry’s updated chapter on Daniel 9 in *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., forthcoming.)
1. Introduction:
    - a. In their exceptional studies, Kline and Storms argue that the initial “69 weeks” of the “70 weeks of years” in Dan 9:24 generally move us in literal chronology from the time of the initial restoration under Cyrus to the time of Christ (69 weeks of years = 483 yrs, which if beginning at 457 B.C. takes us to 27 B.C.). However, they think that the last “week” covers the entire church age (stretching now more than two thousand years). This approach seems very difficult to maintain, though they find support in numerous statements in Revelation that appear to align the 70<sup>th</sup> week with the church age.
    - b. In contrast, I have argued above that the prophets viewed the “70 year” exile as a literal “70 years” and that we should view the “70 weeks of years” of Dan 9:24 as an actual 490 years, beginning from 457 B.C. and ending in 34 B.C. I have also interpreted 9:27 to mean that the Messiah is killed around the middle of the 70<sup>th</sup> week: “And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and at half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering” (Dan 9:27). This raises the question as to how I understand the last half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week and how I relate Daniel’s prophecies to clear ties of the 70<sup>th</sup> week to the church age in the book of Revelation.
    - c. The answer to the dilemma will only be found in wrestling with the concept of inaugurated eschatology, wherein Christ’s first coming initiated the ultimate Jubilee but where only his second coming will consummate it. As we work through OT prophecy concerning the Messiah, the distinction between Christ’s first and second comings is usually not clear. We must, therefore, often rely on Christ and his apostles to understand how inauguration of fulfillment relates to consummation.
  2. An Overview of Time in Daniel:
    - a. Daniel appears to speak of a period of roughly 3.5 years in 7:25; 8:14; 12:7, 11, 12. Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 use the more general phrase “a time, times, and half a time” and directly relate to the period of the fourth kingdom (Rome), whereas 8:14, 12:11–12 use specific the numbers 2,300, 1,290, and 1,335 and are connected to the third (Greece).
      - Dan 7:25. He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for *a time, times, and half a time*.
      - Dan 8:14. And he said to me, “For 2,300 *evenings and mornings*. Then the sanctuary shall be restored to its rightful state.”

- Dan 12:7. And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for *a time, times, and half a time*, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.
  - Dan 12:11–12. And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be *1,290 days*.<sup>12</sup> Blessed is he who waits and arrives at the *1,335 days*.
- b. Using specific numbers, Daniel 8:14 and 12:11–12 refer to a period of 3.5 years during the third kingdom (Greece) and are associated with a roughly 3.5 year period of Greek persecution of the faithful in Israel during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes IV (ca. 167–164 B.C.). Within Daniel itself this period of suffering is *typological* of the “time, times, and half a time” period of suffering against the saints during the fourth kingdom (7:25; 12:7). Moreover, Revelation will read *all of these* as typological of the suffering that is endured by Christians as they identify with Christ’s suffering between his first and second appearances.
  - c. Daniel 9:24–27 tells nothing explicit about the second half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week, but it may anticipate something when it declares that within the 70 weeks God would “anoint a most holy place/one.” Jesus is both temple (John 2:21) and priest-king, who following his resurrection sparked a global expansion of this temple-kingdom to the Gentiles (Acts 1:7–8), ultimately through the ministry of Paul (Acts 9:15; 26:16–18). I suggest, therefore, that the initial referent of Dan 9:24–27 relates to Christ’s first coming and the rise of the church.
  - d. This stated, in light of the distinction between Christ’s first and second comings, the book of Revelation interprets the 3.5 years of Dan 7:25 and 12:7 symbolically for the period of suffering during the church age. Because the vision of the Son of Man’s kingdom in Daniel 7 relates to both his first and second comings, it is likely that the fourth kingdom and “little horn” have both initial fulfillment in the days of Christ’s first coming and more ultimate fulfillment in the church age and Christ’s second coming. John points in this direction in 2:18 when he writes, echoing Daniel, “Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour.” Only in the LXX of Daniel is the phrase “latter days” consistently translated “last hour,” so we know that John had Daniel in mind when speaking about the antichrist and the numerous antichrists that anticipate him. In Christ’s first coming, the Jewish nation was in many ways opposed to the Messiah (John 1:11), and it was these who were responsible for putting Christ to death and for ultimately bringing about the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. (Dan 9:26a). Thus, the Jewish nation was typical of the final antichrist figure who will rise at the end of the age.
3. An Overview of Time in Revelation
    - a. Revelation reads the last half of the 70<sup>th</sup> week from Dan 9:27 typologically and reads the fourth kingdom and “time, times, and half a time” from Dan 7:25 and 12:7 both typologically and symbolically of a designated time of persecution that will be unleashed on the church of Christ. It addresses a

progression of 3.5 year periods in Rev 11:2–3 and then again in 12:6, 14; and 13:5. We also read of 3.5 days (1/2 a week) in 11:9, 11.

- Rev 11:2–3. But do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for *forty-two months*.<sup>3</sup> And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for *1,260 days*, clothed in sackcloth.”
  - Rev 11:7–11. And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them,<sup>8</sup> and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified.<sup>9</sup> For *three and a half days* some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb,<sup>10</sup> and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.<sup>11</sup> But after *the three and a half days* a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them.
  - Rev 12:6, 14. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for *1,260 days*....<sup>14</sup> But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for *a time, and times, and half a time*.
  - Rev 13:5. And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for *forty-two months*.
- b. We must assess these 3.5 year statements in context. The book of Revelation naturally divides into seven progressively parallel cycles, with different sections providing recaps or blow-up expansions of earlier sections and all detailing some aspect of the church age and the move from Christ’s first to second coming and beyond.

### The Structure of Revelation

<b>Prologue (Rev 1:1–20)</b>	
1.	The <i>seven letters</i> to the churches (2:1–3:32; cf. 2:1–7, 8–11, 12–17, 18–29; 3:1–6, 7–13, 14–22)
<b>Section Related to Scroll 1 (4:1–11:19; see 5:1–5)</b>	
	Prologue (4:1–5:14)
2.	The <i>seven seals</i> (6:1–8:1; cf. 6:1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8, 9–11, 12–7:17; 8:1)
	Prologue (8:2–6)
3.	The <i>seven trumpets</i> (8:7–11:19; cf. 8:7, 8–9, 10–11, 12, 13–9:12; 9:13–11:14; 11:15–19)
<b>Section Related to Scroll 2 (12:1–22:5; see 10:1–2, 8–11)</b>	
4.	The <i>seven visions</i> of warfare (12:1–14:20; cf. 12:1–2, 3–6, 7–18; 13:1–10, 11–18; 14:1–13, 14–20)
	Prologue (15:1–16:1)
5.	The <i>seven bowls</i> of plagues (16:2–21; cf. 16:2, 3, 4–7, 8–9, 10–11, 12–16, 7–21)
6.	The <i>seven visions</i> of victory (17:1–19:21; cf. ch. 17; ch. 18; 19:1–5, 6–10, 11–16, 17–18, 19–21)
7.	The <i>seven visions</i> of the end and new creation (20:1–22:5; cf. 20:1–6; 7–10, 11–15; 21:1, 2–8, 9–27; 22:1–5)
<b>Epilogue (20:6–21)</b>	See <a href="http://loveintruth.com/revelation/course">http://loveintruth.com/revelation/course</a>

- c. 11:2–3 are part of section 3 (the *seven trumpets*), and in it we read of two periods totaling one week: 3.5 years of persecution (11:2) and 3.5 years of kingdom proclamation (11:3). 12:6, 14 and 13:5 are part of section 4 (the *seven visions* of warfare), in which we read of the same two periods totaling

one week, but in reverse order: 3.5 years of nourishment and protection (12:6, 14) and 3.5 years of beastly authority (13:5).

- d. The second half of each week in the two sections is introduced by a comparable statement: “And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them” (11:7); “Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation” (13:7). These texts, I believe, parallel the vision of 20:7, wherein we are told, “And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for the battle; their number is like the sand of the sea” (20:7–8). The second half of the “week,” therefore, is associated with a major intensification of spiritual warfare against the body of Christ, the church, and this persecution will ultimately usher in the final conflict of the ages. From this perspective, the 3.5 *days* in 11:9, 11 appear to parallel the 3.5 years of times of persecution above—persecution that results in the death of the saints but that will ultimately give rise to their resurrection, first spiritually and then physically (11:11; cf. 20:4–5; cf. Dan 12:2; 1 Thess 4:16–17).

**NOTE:** Consider Storms, *Kingdom Come*, ch. 4 (p. 93) and Hugenberger’s summary of time in Daniel.

## X. Guided Reading for Daniel

### A. Key Chapters: 1, 2, 7, 9

### B. Questions:

1. Why do many critical scholars hold that Daniel is largely fictional? In contrast, when does the book itself suggest to have been written?
2. What is the theological theme for the book of Daniel?
3. Define “apocalyptic (revelatory)” material?
4. After being exiled to Babylon in 605 B.C., what was Daniel’s vocation?
5. Identify the most likely candidates for the “four kingdoms” spoken of Daniel 2 and 7. Identify the “Ancient of Days” and “one like a son of man” in Daniel 7.
6. In his prayer in Daniel 9, what covenantal description does Daniel give to Yahweh’s discipline on Israel that has resulted in the people’s exile?
7. “And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever.” Who spoke these words and to whom were they spoken?
8. “All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him.” Who prayed these words?