Daniel

**Chapter 9**

*Daniel’s Prayer*

**In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom—  2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.  3 So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. 4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands,  5 we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws.  6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 7 “Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you.  8 O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you.  9 The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him;  10 we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets.  11 All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you. “Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you.  12 You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing upon us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem.  13 Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth.  14 The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him. 15 “Now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong.  16 O Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our fathers have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us. 17 “Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary.  18 Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.  19 O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”**

**9:1** *first year.* 539–538 b.c. (CSB)

 *Xerxes.* See NIV text note; not the later Xerxes of the book of Esther. (CSB)

**9:2** *Jeremiah … seventy years.* See note on Jer 25:11–12. (CSB)

**9:3–19** Daniel’s prayer contains humility (v. 3), worship (v. 4), confession (vv. 5–15) and petition (vv. 16–19). (CSB)

**9:3** *sackcloth and ashes.* See note on Ge 37:34. (CSB)

**9:11** *curses … written in the Law.* See Lev 26:33; Dt 28:63–67. (CSB)

**9:18** *because of your great mercy.* God answers prayer because of his grace, not because of our works. (CSB)

*The Seventy “Sevens”*

**20 While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill—  21 while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.  22 He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding.  23 As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision: 24 “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. 25 “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.  26 After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.  27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”**

**9:20** *While I was speaking.* See Isa 65:24. (CSB)

**9:24** *sevens.*† The sevens are nowhere defined as chronological years. But as the image of metals (ch. 2) and the beasts (chs. 7–8) are not meant to appear in these forms but are figurative of God’s direction of world events, so here the number seven, the sacred number of completeness, is not to be computed arithmetically but portrays, in apocalyptic language, the full attainment of God’s goal of history: the universal redemption of mankind. (CSB)

 FOR YOUR PEOPLE – Gabriel in 9:24 uses six infinitive phrases to describe God’s purpose for the seventy weeks. They are arranged in two groups of three with the third in each group being the climax. The first three are these:

to end transgression,

     to finish sin,

          and to atone for iniquity (CC)

These three assure Daniel that his sin and the sin of his people are forgiven through the coming Messiah. He will bring an end to sin’s power by atoning for all sin. These infinitives point to the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the purpose and goal of the seventy weeks. They view it from a negative perspective: our need for the forgiveness of our sin. (CC)

The second group of three infinitives focuses on the same thing, but in a positive sense:

to bring everlasting righteousness,

     to seal up vision and prophet,

          and to anoint a Most Holy One (CC)

The righteousness that the Messiah will bring will be everlasting. This implies that there will be no further need of righteousness obtained by repeated sacrifices at the temple; Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice atones for all sins committed by all people (Heb 7:27; 9:12; 10:11–14). Therefore, the advent and atonement of the Messiah toward the end of the seventy weeks will bring an end to the temple and its system of sacrifices instituted by Moses. (CC)

 SEAL UP VISION – The seventy weeks will also see the sealing of “vision and prophet” (9:24). While some commentators view this as a witness to the authenticity of the words of the prophets, a seal not only witnesses to the authenticity of the words on a scroll, but it also prevents further words from being written on it (see the fourth textual note on 9:24). Thus the sealing of “vision and prophet” is an affirmation that no further prophecy will be needed once the seventy weeks are ended. (CC)

 MOST HOLY – Jesus is the ultimate sanctuary for his people. In Mt 12:6 he compares himself to the temple and declares that he is greater. He is the Word who became flesh and dwelt or tabernacled (ἐσκήνωσεν) among us (Jn 1:14). His body is the temple that will be destroyed and raised in three days, since in his body dwells the fullness of God (Jn 2:18–22; Col 1:19–20). In the new Jerusalem, the eternal state of the redeemed, he, along with the Father, will be the temple (Rev 21:22). Moreover, Jesus is the cornerstone of the temple, which is his church (1 Cor 3:16–17; Eph 2:19–22; 1 Pet 2:4–9; Rev 3:12) and his body (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:27; Eph 4:12). (CC)

**9:25–27**† However, God would not carry out his plan of universal salvation at once or even in the immediate future. Therefore the 70 weeks are broken down in verses 25–27 into unequal stages or segments of “seven,” “sixty-two” and “one” weeks. This division of the symbolic total gave assurance that the redemption of mankind would take place in a historical setting but not before two distinguishable eras had run their course. The first seven weeks were God’s pledge to restore and build Jerusalem. But the vision enabled Daniel to look beyond his immediate concern. The 62 weeks to follow affirmed that the rebuilt city would continue to function as Israel’s religious center when the Messianic age was to begin. The final week would bring the consummation of all things which are decreed and preceded it: (1) the death of “the Anointed One, the ruler” to atone for sin; (2) the ratification of a covenant with abrogated sacrifices and offerings; (3) the destruction of rebuilt Jerusalem, no longer a holy city but filled with abominations. (CSB)

Having cleared most of the problems associated with this difficult and enigmatic prophecy, the events of 9:25–26 can now be identified in summary: (CC)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Gabriel’s Words* | *Fulfillment* |
| “Seven weeks” (9:25). | Rebuilding of Jerusalem (538–445 BC). |
| “Sixty-two weeks when it will again have been built [with] plaza and moat” (9:25). | From Nehemiah to Jesus (445–2 BC). |
| “Troubled times” (9:25). | The Hellenistic era (Daniel 11), especially the persecution of Antiochus (ca. 167–164 BC). |
| “Messiah will be cut off” (after the sixty-ninth week and during the seventieth week; 9:26). | Jesus’ crucifixion (ca. AD 33). |
| “The city and the holy place will be destroyed with a Leader who is coming,” the risen Messiah who will return (9:26) | Roman devastations of Jerusalem under Titus (AD 70) and Hadrian (AD 135), which portend the end of the world at the return of Christ. |

Gabriel finally relates details about the seventieth week. They were fulfilled in this way:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Gabriel’s Words* | *Fulfillment* |
| The Messiah “will confirm a covenant for the many” (9:27). | Jesus establishes the new covenant in his blood, shed for many (Jer 31:31–34; Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 3:6; Heb 7:22; 8:8, 13; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20). |
| In the middle of the week, the Messiah “will cause sacrifice and offering to cease” (9:27) | Titus conquers Jerusalem and destroys the temple, ending its sacrifices (AD 70). |
| At the end of the seventieth week, there will no longer be a connection between Daniel’s people and the holy city (cf. 9:24). | Hadrian conquers Jerusalem and bans Jews from entering the city (AD 135). |
| There will be desolation until the final decree is poured out on the desolator (the end of the seventieth week and beyond; 9:27). | The Roman Empire falls (as predicted in Daniel 2 and 7). The Antichrist continues to persecute the church until he falls at Christ’s return. |

**9:27** *He will confirm a covenant … will put an end to sacrifice.*† A reference to the Messiah’s (“the Anointed One,” v. 26) instituting the new covenant and putting “an end” to the OT sacrificial system. (CSB)

 *abomination that causes desolation.* See note on 11:31. (CSB)

The Messiah’s coming also brings an end to sacrifices: “on the wing of detested things (is) a desolator, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator” (Dan 9:27). Jesus speaks of “the detested thing of/causing desolation” (τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως) in Mt 24:15 and Mk 13:14, echoing Dan 9:27. Luke records Jesus saying, “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation [ἐρήμωσις] has drawn near” (Lk 21:20). This helps explain the difficult phrase “on the wing of detested things” (Dan 9:27). “Wing” (כָּנָף) brings to mind (by synecdoche of a part for the whole) a swift raptor such as an eagle or falcon. “Wing” is used several times in the Prophets in connection with swiftly attacking armies (Is 8:8; Jer 48:40; 49:22; Ezek 17:3, 7). The “desolator” (Dan 9:27) or “detested thing of/causing desolation” (Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14) is the pagan Roman legions that conquered Jerusalem in AD 70 and again in AD 135. (CC)

The Roman general Titus quelled the Jewish revolt in AD 70. Jews were still allowed to live in the city after it was conquered and the temple destroyed. However, in 132 a Jewish messianic revolt arose. It was led by Simon bar Kozibah, called “Bar Kochba,” meaning “son of the star,” in reference to the messianic prophecy in Num 24:17. This revolt was sparked by the Emperor Hadrian’s plan to build a temple dedicated to Jupiter on the ruins of the Jewish temple. For a short time, Jews took control of Jerusalem, but in 135 AD, they were defeated by Hadrian’s legions. He razed the city, renamed it Aelia Capitolina, and erected a temple to Jupiter. Jews were forbidden to enter the city. This marks the end of the seventieth week, according to the traditional messianic interpretation. (CC)

Gabriel adds one final note, the notice that a final decree will be poured out on the desolator (Dan 9:27). Following the end of the seventieth week, the desolator, Rome, will also have judgment poured out on it. This, of course, was already spoken of in Daniel 2 and 7, both of which predict the fall of the Roman Empire. Likewise, final judgment shall be poured out on Satan and his minions, including the Antichrist, at the end of the world (Rev 19:20; 20:10). (CC)