God’s Protection

Deut. 33:12—*And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.*

*Joshua 20:2 Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses:*

Nu 35:6-34; De 19:2,9

2Ch 32:21 And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword.

Dan. 4:3 How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

34—*And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:*

4:27*—Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.*

35*—And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*

37*—Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.*

Job 5:22

Job 11:18-19

Ps 4:8

Ps 5:11

Ps 25:21

Ps 91:11

Ps 121:5,7-8

Pr 3:24

Pr 18:10

Pr 30:5

Ac 2:25

1Pe 3:13

Cain

A fallen countenance

A fierce countenance

Ge 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6 ¶ And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

Ps 145:14 The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.

Ps 146:8 The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:

9 The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

Ps 147:6 The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

Intercessory Prayer

Daniel had reason to pray.

* To bring a resolve,
* To settle the dispute.
* To seek to know and to do God’s Will.

The fate of the sanctuary –

Da 8:11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his **sanctuary was cast down**.

12 And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

A state of desolation **-**

Dan. 9:26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Dan. 8:13 Then I **heard one saint speaking**, and another saint said unto that **certain saint** which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

Luke18:1—*And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*

Romans 8:26—*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

1. Daniel's Reason for Prayer.

Dan. 9:1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

1. To fully understand what he was reading and learning that he might apply it to his life now.

“I Daniel understood by books”

1. Daniel **understood** something from reading the words of God's prophets. Prophecy is meant to be **understood** - perhaps not in every detail, but certainly in its main points.

ii. Daniel understood this **by the books** - the *specific words* recorded in *God-inspired* **books**. Daniel couldn't read 2 Timothy 3:16, but he did believe the truth of it: *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

iii. "These verses show Daniel as a diligent student of Scripture who built his prayer life on the Word of God." (Archer)

iv. "Oh! That you studied your Bibles more! Oh! That we all did! How we could plead the promises! How often we should prevail with God when we could hold him to his word, and say, 'Fulfill this word unto thy servant, whereon thou hast caused me to hope.' Oh! It is grand praying when our mouth is full of God's word, for there is no word that can prevail with him like his own." (Spurgeon)

b. **The number of years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah**: Daniel knew that effective prayer comes out of knowing and praying both God's word and our present circumstances. His study of prophecy showed him a *specific number* - the 70 years described in Jeremiah 25:11-13 and Jeremiah 29:10, and his knowledge of the times led him to know those passages applied to his time.

i. *"And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity," says the Lord; "and I will make it a perpetual desolation. So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations."* (Jeremiah 25:11-13)

ii. *For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.* (Jeremiah 29:10)

iii. It is important to note that Daniel regarded these as *real, literal years*. They were in no way understood as "symbolic" years.

iv. Daniel was undoubtedly also familiar with Isaiah's prophecies concerning Cyrus (Isaiah 44:28-45:4). He must have been encouraged to see a man named Cyrus rise in power over Persia.

c. **That He would accomplish seventy years**: If Daniel believed that God **would accomplish seventy years** of captivity, then why did he pray as passionately as he did in Daniel 9? Daniel knew that God's promises *invite* our prayers and participation; they don't *exclude* our prayers and participation.

i. "Nothing, therefore, can be better for us, than to ask for what he has promised." (Calvin)

ii. This principle is repeated in many passages. 2 Peter 3:12 indicates that there is a sense in which we can *hasten* the Lord's coming by our holy conduct and godly lives; we can also hasten the Lord's coming through evangelism because Paul says that God's prophetic focus on Israel will resume when the *fullness of the Gentiles has come in* (Romans 11:25). This means that we can also hasten the Lord's coming through prayer, even as Daniel asked for a speedy fulfillment of prophecy regarding captive Israel (Daniel 9). We can also pray *Even so, come, Lord Jesus!* (Revelation 22:20) If you want Jesus to come soon, there is something you can *do* about it!

iii. But a second important reason is that Daniel asked God, in His mercy, to take the earliest of all possible starting points (Daniel's abduction) for determining the beginning of the 70 years. There were three "waves" of captivity:

*         605 b.c. - Jerusalem attacked, Daniel and other captives taken to Babylon
*         597 b.c. - Jerusalem attacked, treasure taken from the temple
*         587 b.c. - Jerusalem falls and the nation is exiled

iv. If Daniel can prevail with God in prayer, and God then takes the earliest starting point to determine the 70 years then His mercy comes to Israel 18 years earlier.

v. At the time of this prayer was still three or four years short of 70 years since 605 b.c. - it was not too soon for Daniel to begin praying.

d. **The word of the Lord through Jeremiah**: Even in God's eternal decrees, human agencies are essential. God's plan of the ages is declared, yet Jeremiah made a prophecy, Daniel made a prayer, and Cyrus made a proclamation

i. "Too often our interest in the prophetic Scriptures is of a curious and speculative nature, or else we conclude that God will carry out His sovereign purpose no matter what we do, and so we do not concern ourselves with those matters." (Strauss)

ii. By tribal heritage or calling Daniel was not uniquely qualified for a ministry of intercession. He did not belong to a priestly family like Ezekiel and he wasn't a "career" prophet like Isaiah or Jeremiah. Yet like all of us, he could pray.

iii. In fact, Daniel's calling and station in life made it *less* likely that he would be such a man of prayer. He was a high government official who almost certainly had a busy schedule - yet he took time and energy to pray.

iv. "Do not, I pray you, get into the habit of neglecting the assembling of yourselves together for prayer. How often have I said, 'All our strength lies in prayer'! When we were very few, God multiplied us in answer to prayer."

2. (3) Daniel's preparation for prayer.

Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

a. **I set my face**: This implies *determination* in prayer. Daniel had an objective to achieve in prayer, and he approached God as a man who would not be denied. He did this because he was rightly convinced that his prayer was in the will of God, and knew it was not motivated by any selfish desire.

b. **To make request by prayer and supplications**: Daniel wasn't *passive* as God's prophetic plan unfolded before him. In his approach to God, he made a **request**, *asking* God to perform His promise in the way that Daniel thought would bring God most glory.

i. "We ask but little, and God gives it." (Spurgeon)

c. **With fasting, sackcloth, and ashes**: This reflected Daniel's humble heart in approaching God. **Fasting, sackcloth, and ashes** are emblems of humiliation and mourning.

i. Daniel was determined to do what ever it took to get this job done in prayer. He "left nothing undone that might possibly make his prayer more effective or more persuasive." (Walvoord)

3. (4-15) Daniel confesses the sin of his people, and glorifies the goodness and righteousness of God.

And I prayed to the Lord my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us shame of face, as *it is* this day; to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You. O Lord, to us *belongs* shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. To the Lord our God *belong* mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. As *it is* written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. Therefore the Lord has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the Lord our God *is* righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice. And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as *it is* this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly!"

a. **O Lord, great and awesome God**: Daniel began his prayer where we all should - by recognizing the greatness and goodness of God. Sometimes we approach God as a stingy person who must be persuaded to give us something. But Daniel knew the problem was not with God. God **keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him**.

i. Daniel's prayer is remarkable for both its *understanding* and *earnestness*. Many pray with understanding but not earnestness; others are earnest but have no understanding in prayer. The two together are a powerful combination.

ii. "Oh! That our prayers could get beyond praying, till they got to agonizing." (Spurgeon)

b. **We have sinned and committed iniquity**: As Daniel confesses Israel's sin he prays as if he is as bad as the rest of Israel. This is a confession of **we**, not *they*. In this sense, *they* prayers never really reach God; genuine **we** prayers see self correctly and see our fellow saints with compassion.

i. Daniel's confession of sin might seem phony until we realize how passionately and completely he is focused on God. Compared to God, even the most righteous among us falls far short.

ii. "I firmly believe that, the better a man's own character becomes, and the more joy in the Lord he has in his own heart, the more capable is he of sympathetic sorrow; and, probably, the more of it he will have. If thou hast room in thy soul for sacred joy, thou hast equal room for holy grief." (Spurgeon)

c. **Righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face**: Daniel knew that Israel's sin was not God's fault; God was utterly righteous and blameless. Any **shame of face** belonged to Israel, not to God.

i. It would be easy to *complain* to God about Israel's problems. Daniel didn't think for a moment that God was too hard on Israel; he knew God was completely righteous and any failure was on Israel's side.

ii. Instead of *complaining*, Daniel *confessed*. During times of great revival among God's people, the Holy Spirit always brings a deep conviction and awareness of sin. When that is responded to rightly, confession is appropriately made. J. Edwin Orr gives a good principle to govern confession: "If you sin secretly, confess secretly, admitting publicly that you need the victory but keeping details to yourself. If you sin openly confess openly to remove stumbling blocks from those whom you have hindered. If you have sinned spiritually (prayerlessness, lovelessness, and unbelief as well as their offspring, criticism, etc.) then confess to the church that you have been a hindrance."

iii. Genuine, appropriate confession will be sincere, specific, and thorough. Orr describes how in the 1952 revival in Brazil a woman in a crowded church confessed, "Please pray for me, I need to love people more." The leader told her gently, "That is not a confession, sister. Anyone could have said it." Later in the service the lady stood again and said, "Please pray for me. What I should have said is that my sharp tongue has caused a lot of trouble in this congregation." The pastor leaned over to Orr and whispered "Now she is talking!"

iv. This is praying from a low place, and very effective. Football players try to hit their opponent *low*, because they gain leverage from coming in low. Our prayers are leveraged when we come to God humble and lowly.

d. **We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God**: Daniel does not make the slightest excuse for Israel's sin. The fault belongs to Israel and Israel alone. We are prone to excuses for our sin and often even make even excuses in our "confessions."

e. **He has confirmed His words . . . As it is written in the Law of Moses**: Daniel realized that even in His judgment against Israel, God was totally faithful to His word. He promised that curses would come upon a disobedient Israel (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28) and they did.

f. **All this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God**: As Daniel confesses his sin and the sin of Israel, he comes to the sin of *prayerlessness*. Even when they faced great trial and calamity, Israel still did not make their **prayer before the Lord**. When we sense trial or difficulty it should drive us *immediately* to prayer - when we are not so driven it should be a wake-up call to the coldness of our heart.

g. **Who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand**: As Daniel prayed he remembered that the Lord delivered Israel from Egypt. He remembers the Old Testament "standard" of God's power, the deliverance from Egypt. The New Testament "standard" of God's power is the resurrection of Jesus (Ephesians 1:19-20).

4. (16-19) Daniel asks God to forgive and to restore Jerusalem.

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

a. **Let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem**: After his confession of Israel's sin and God's great righteousness, Daniel simply asks God to mercifully turn His kind attention to Jerusalem and the temple (**cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary**) and that God would do this without delay (**do not delay for your own sake**).

i. Daniel prayed as a patriot - but a patriot more of the Kingdom of God than the Kingdom of Israel. We should pray with similar patriotism for the Kingdom of God. "Let it never be said that the Church of God has no feeling of patriotism for the Holy City, for the Heavenly Land and for her glorious King enthroned above. To us, Christian patriotism means love to the Church of God." (Spurgeon)

ii. Daniel asks for all this **according to all Your righteousness**. It is as if Daniel prayed, "Lord, I'm not asking You to do anything against Your righteousness. I'm praying this to advance Your righteous glory."

b. **Cause your face to shine**: This is the heart of Daniel's plea. He knows that God's people need so much, but all their need can be summed up in this: *they need God's face to shine upon them*.

i. "Oh, that we might learn how to pray so that God should be the subject as well as the object of our supplications! O God, thy Church needs thee above everything else! A poor, little, sick, neglected child needs fifty things; but you can put all those needs into one if you say that the child needs its mother. So, the Church, of God needs a thousand things, but you can put them all into one if you say, 'The Church of God needs her God.' " (Spurgeon)

c. **For the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate . . . Do not delay for Your own sake**: Daniel's prayer is consumed with the glory of God, not primarily the benefit of man. His purpose in prayer was to see God's work accomplished and His cause glorified.

i. It isn't wrong to pray for our own needs. Jesus invited us to ask, *give us this day our daily bread*. At the same time, we need to have an even greater passion for the glory and benefit of God.

ii. We should pray with the same passion and concern for the work of God in our congregations and communities. We can pray the prayer of Psalm 85:6: *Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?* Alone and in groups we can pray for God to pour out the Holy Spirit, to bring repentance and revival among His people, and to awaken the unconverted.

iii. This also speaks to *purity of motive* in Daniel's prayer. Sometimes we pray for God to do a great work so we can be known as great workers for God. We need to pray for the sake of the Lord's cause, both in our words and heart.

d. **We do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies**: Here Daniel prays on firm New Testament ground. His confidence isn't in *his* goodness, but in *God's* goodness.

i. This is what it means to pray *in the name of Jesus*. Those aren't words we tack on to the end of a prayer, but they should express the fact we are praying in merits and righteousness of Jesus, not our own.

ii. Daniel was not great because he prayed. He was great because in prayer he expressed great trust and dependence on God. Many religious people spend countless hours in prayer but it achieves *nothing* because it is not rooted in the goodness and righteousness of God. *Self righteous* or *self trusting* prayer is of no power before God. A subtle delusion is to trust in prayer, apart from faith in the shed blood of Jesus.

e. **O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act!** Sometimes we talk about "wrestling in prayer" and here Daniel prays like a great wrestler. He follows up one victory with another request with rapid movement.

i. "Follow up your advantage; build another prayer or the answer that you have. If you have received a great blessing, say, 'Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him; because he has heard me once, therefore will I call again.' " (Spurgeon)

ii. "Cold prayers ask God to deny them: only importunate prayers will be replied to. When the Church of God cannot take 'No' for an answer, she shall not have 'No' for an answer. When a pleading soul must have it; when the Spirit of God works mightily in him so that he cannot let the angel go without a blessing, the angel shall not go till he has given the blessing to such a pleading one. Brethren, if there be only one among us that can pray as Daniel did, with intensity, the blessing will come." (Spurgeon)

B. Gabriel brings the answer to Daniel's prayer.

1. (20-21) Daniel's prayer is interrupted by an angelic visit.

Now while I *was* speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God, yes, while I *was* speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

a. **While I was speaking in prayer**: The answer to prayer came even as Daniel prayed. Jesus said, *your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him* (Matthew 6:8). Whenever there seems to be a delay in answer to prayer, there is reason for the delay. When it is right to do it, God can answer prayer immediately.

i. Sometimes God answers prayer *before* we even pray! *It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear*. (Isaiah 65:24)

b. **Being caused to fly swiftly**: This is one of the few places in the Bible where we are told that angels fly. Gabriel came quickly

Is there a great distance between heaven and earth?

c. **The time of the evening offering**: This was a special time, when Moses offered the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:6) and when Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27:45).

i. As a young man in Jerusalem, Daniel often saw the smoke rising from the temple at the time of the evening sacrifice.

2. (22-23) Gabriel announces that he has come to bring Daniel an answer to his prayer.

And he informed *me,* and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell *you,* for you *are* greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:"

a. **I have now come forth to give you skill to understand**: In his prayer, Daniel didn't ask for understanding. His prayer demonstrated that his heart was close to God's heart, so God will reveal much to Daniel as His friend (John 15:15).

i. Daniel studied the passage in Jeremiah, but still didn't understand much. In this case, understanding came more through *prayer*. "All students of the word will tell you that when the hammers of learning and biblical criticism have failed to break open a flinty text, oftentimes prayer has done it, and nuggets of gold have been found concealed therein. To every student of the word of God who would become a well-instructed scribe we would say, with all the means which you employ, with all your searchings of the commentaries, with all your diggings into the original, with all your researches among learned divines, mingle much fervent prayer." (Spurgeon)

ii. "Luther affirmeth that he oft got more spiritual light by ardent prayer than ever he could do by the reading of many books, or by the most accurate meditation

b. **For you are greatly beloved**: Both Daniel and the Apostle John (John 13:23) were noted for their love-relationship with God. Both Daniel and John were also noted for receiving amazing prophetic messages.

i. Daniel had just considered a set of "sevens" upon the nation of Israel - the 70 years of promised captivity prophesied by Jeremiah.

ii. When we seek God diligently, we often receive more than we ask for.

C. The prophecy of the Seventy Weeks.

1. (24a) *Seventy weeks* are determined for the Jews and Jerusalem.

Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city,

a. **Seventy weeks are determined**: There is almost universal agreement among Bible scholars and commentators that this refers to **seventy** sets of seven years, or "weeks of years."

i. In ancient Hebrew, **weeks** simply refers to a unit of seven. The Hebrew word here is often used to mean a unit of seven days, but it may also be used for a unit of seven years.

ii. "The Jews had *Sabbatic years*, by which their years were divided into weeks of years, as in this important prophecy, each week containing *seven* years." (Clarke)

iii. Genesis 29:15-28 is an example of using this ancient Hebrew word (*shabuwa'*) for both "seven days" and "seven years" in the same context.

b. **For your people and for your holy city**: The seventy weeks are focused upon Daniel's **people** (the Jews) and his **holy city** (Jerusalem).

1. The church has become Israel,

Gal. 6:16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

2. (24b) What will be accomplished in the seventy weeks.

To finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.

a. **To finish the transgression**: This means that transgression itself will be finished. Taken literally this means establishing an entirely new order on earth, with an end to man's rebellion against God.

i. "The culmination of appointed years will witness the conclusion of man's 'transgression' or 'rebellion' against God

b. **To make an end of sins**: Taking these words at face value, this means not only the **end** of the guilt of sin, but an **end** of sin itself. It means to "seal up" or "restrain" sins. This looks to a new, redeemed world.

c. **To make reconciliation for iniquity**: Man's **iniquity** must be reconciled to God's justice and holiness. This work was clearly accomplished at the cross.

d. **To bring in everlasting righteousness**: One might take this in an individual sense, but there have always been righteous *individuals*. Taking the statement at face value, this means a new order of society brought in by the Messiah.

e. **To seal up vision and prophecy**: This speaks of both the ending and fulfillment of prophecy, concluding the final stage of human history and culminating with the reign of the Son of God.

i. "It must include his enthronement."

f. **To anoint the most holy**: Taken at its simple, literal meaning, this refers to a place, not a person. There is a **most holy** place - the **most holy** place of the temple - that will be anointed and blessed.

g. Taken as a whole, Gabriel made a remarkable announcement to Daniel. He told him that each of these amazing things would happen within the period of **seventy weeks**.

i. Looking back in history, we can only say this things have each been fulfilled if we ignore their plain, literal meaning and give them a "spiritual" meaning that ignores their plain meaning. Some like to say that these promises are fulfilled generally in the spread of the gospel over the centuries, but this ignores the plain and simple meaning of these words.

3. (25) The course and dividing of the seventy weeks.

Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, *there shall be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.

a. **From the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem**: Here Gabriel reveals to Daniel the *starting point* for the seventy-weeks prophecy. There was a **command to restore and build Jerusalem** in history that began this specific time period.

i. The Bible presents four possible decrees that might fulfill this description:

*         Cyrus made a decree giving Ezra and the Babylonian captives the right to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple in 538 b.c. (Ezra in 1:1-4 and 5:13-17)

*         Darius made a decree giving Ezra the right to rebuild the temple in 517 b.c. (Ezra 6:6-12)

*         Artaxerxes made a decree giving Ezra permission, safe passage, and supplies to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple in 458 b.c. (Ezra 7:11-26)

*         Artaxerxes made a decree giving Nehemiah permission, safe passage and supplies to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and the walls in 445 b.c. (Nehemiah 2:1-8)

ii. Only the last of these four decrees was a **command to restore and build Jerusalem**. The first three each focused on the *temple*, not on **the street** or on **the wall**.

b. **Until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks**: Gabriel's message to Daniel is simple and striking. 483 years - that is, 69 units of seven years - would pass from the time of the command recorded in Nehemiah 2:1-8 until the appearance of **Messiah the Prince**.

i. Some say the 483 years were completed at Jesus' birth (5 or 4 b.c.). There is little chronological support for this date.

ii. Some say the 483 years were completed at His baptism, at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (if dated at 26 a.d.). This is possible if one begins with the earlier decree of Artaxerxes, and figures with our present measurement for years instead of the ancient measurement of years (360 days).

iii. Some say the 483 years were completed at the triumphal entry of Jesus (if dated at 32 a.d.).

using a 360-day year (which Israel used in Daniel's day), calculates 173,880 days from the decree to the triumphal entry, fulfilling the prophecy *to the day*. "It is customary for the Jews to have twelve months of 360 days each

* The year 32 a.d. (based on Luke 3:1) for Jesus' death is controversial (most chronologists favor 30 or 33 a.d.).

iv. Some say the 483 years were completed at the exact time of the crucifixion.

c. **Until Messiah the Prince**: Taking Anderson's calculations as reliable, we see a *remarkable* fulfillment of prophecy. A Gentile king made a decree and 483 years later *to the day*, Jesus presented Himself as **Messiah the Prince** to Israel.

i. In our mind a **Prince** is a good step lower than a *king*. In the Hebrew vocabulary, "**Prince**" has more the idea of "strong, mighty ruler" than "son of a king and heir to the throne."

ii. "There was only one occasion in our Lord's earthly ministry on which He is depicted as presenting Himself openly as Zion's King, the so-called 'Triumphal Entry,' recorded in each one of the Gospels and fulfilling Zechariah 9:9 and Psalm 118:26." (Newell)

*         On that day, Jesus *deliberately* arranged the event to present Himself as Messiah (Mark 11:1-10)
*         On that day, Jesus welcomed praise (Luke 19:38-40) instead of quieting it (Luke 5:14 and 8:56)
*         On that day, Jesus made special reference to the importance of that day (Luke 19:41-42)

iii. This prophecy is so specifically fulfilled that it has been a significant testimony to many. "Others of the Jewish [scholars], by the evidence of these words, have been compelled to confess that Messiah is already come, and that he was that Jesus whom their forefathers crucified." (Trapp)

d. **The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times**: This indicates that the rebuilding of the streets and wall of Jerusalem would happen in the first **seven weeks** mentioned. Then would follow another 62 weeks of years until the coming of **Messiah the Prince**.

i. The seventy weeks are divided into three parts:

*         Seven weeks - 49 years, until the city and its walls are rebuilt
*         69 weeks (7 plus 62), 483 years from the decree, until Messiah the Prince appears
*         A final 70th week to complete the prophecy

4. (26) What happens after the first sixty-nine weeks.

And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it *shall be* with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined.

a. **After the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off**: The Biblical term **cut off** is sometimes used to describe execution (see Genesis 9:11 and Exodus 31:14). The Messiah will **be cut off** for the sake of others, **not for Himself**.

i. "Able chronologists have shown that the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ occurred immediately after the expiration of 483 prophetic years, of 360 days each, from the time of Artaxerxes' order." (Ironside)

ii. Strangely, many able commentators simply ignore these numbers. "The numbers are symbolic and not arithmetical." (Baldwin)

iii. **Cut off** is a poignant description of Jesus' earthly life up to and including the cross. "Born in another man's stable, cradled in another man's manger with nowhere to lay his head during his life on earth, and buried in another man's tomb after dying on a cursed cross, the Christ of God and the Friend of the friendless was indeed cut off and had nothing." (Heslop)

b. **Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary**: After the Messiah is **cut off**, Jerusalem and her temple would be destroyed *again* by an overwhelming army (**with a flood**). Most all Bible scholars and commentators agree that this was fulfilled in the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 a.d.

c. **The people of the prince who is to come shall destroy**: The destroying army is made up of the **people of the prince who is to come**. This *coming prince* is described more in Daniel 9:26.

6. (27) The events of the seventieth week.

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

a. **He shall confirm a covenant**: The "**he**" Gabriel mentions is the *prince who is to come* mentioned in the previous verse. If we know that the prince's *people* destroyed Jerusalem in 70 a.d., then we know this coming prince has his ancestral roots in the soil of the ancient Roman Empire.

i. Therefore, the *prince who is to come* will in some way be an heir to the Romans, even as the final world government is an heir to the Roman Empire (Daniel 7).

b. **He shall confirm a covenant with many for one week**: The coming prince will make a **covenant** with Israel for the final unit of seven years, completing the seventy weeks prophesied for the Jewish people and Jerusalem.

i. **Covenant with many**: The word **many** here is a *specific* reference to Israel, not a *general* reference to a group. The ancient Hebrew says, "*covenant with the many*."

ii. With this **covenant** Israel will embrace the Antichrist as a political messiah, if not the literal Messiah. Jesus predicted this in John 5:43: *I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive*.

iii. Taking the description of what would be accomplished in the 70 Weeks from Daniel 9:24, we know that the 70 Weeks are not yet complete. Yet the events promised in the first 69 weeks are fulfilled, indicated that there is a lengthy "pause" in the 70 Weeks, between the 69th week and the 70th week. The 70th week will begin when the coming prince **shall confirm a covenant** with the Jewish people. These "gaps" or "pauses" in prophecy may seem strange to us, but they are common. Comparing Isaiah 9:6 and Luke 1:31-33 shows another significant "pause" or "gap" in prophecy regarding the coming of the Messiah.

iv. We can think of it in this way: God has appointed 490 years of special focus on Israel in His redemptive plan. The years were "paused" by Israel's rejection of Jesus. Now, there is no *special* focus on Israel in God's redemptive plan because this is the time of the church. God's focus will return to Israel when the church is taken away (at the rapture) and the last seven years of man's rule on this earth begin.

v. "The 70th week will begin when the Jewish people are restored in unbelief to their land and city; and among them will be found a faithful remnant, owning their sin, and seeking Jehovah's face." (Henry Ironside writing in 1911)

c. **In the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering**: The coming prince will break the covenant with Israel in the **middle** of the seven years, the final "week."

i. The Book of Revelation sees this seven year period with both its halves as yet future (Revelation 12:6, 13-14; 13:5-9, 14-15). The **middle of the week** and the **end of sacrifice** had not yet happened in 90 a.d.

d. **On the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate**: The ending of sacrifice will come with **abominations**, followed by tremendous *desolation*.

i. **Abominations** translates an ancient Hebrew word (*shiqquwts*) that is connected to horrific idolatry (Deuteronomy 29:17, 1 Kings 11:5-7, 2 Kings 23:13). The idea is that the coming prince breaks the covenant and brings an end to sacrifice and offering by desecrating the holy place of the temple with a horrific idolatry.

ii. Jesus called this the *abomination of desolation* (Matthew 24:15) and indicated that it would be a pivotal sign in the Great Tribulation. Paul referred to the idolatry of the coming prince in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.

e. **Until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate**: This breaking of the covenant and abomination of desolation has a promised **consummation**. Before the 70th week is completed, each of the things described in Daniel 9:24 will be accomplished and everlasting righteousness will reign.

**The Seventy Weeks of Daniel**

**As Understood by Sir Robert Anderson in *The Coming Prince***

Daniel 9:24-25 says that from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the Messiah there will be 483 years.

7 + 62 "weeks" = 69 groups of seven years. 7 x 69 = 483 years

Anderson sees a prophetic year as 360 days. This is based both on ancient history and on Revelation 11:2, 13:5, 11:3, and 12:6 which indicate that 42 months 3 ½ years are equal to 1,260 days.

Therefore, 483 years x 360 days = 173,880 days

Artaxerxes started his reign in 465 b.c. The decree to rebuild Jerusalem was given on the first day of Nisan, in the 20th year of Artaxerxes. In our calendar system (the Julian calendar) that date is March 14, 445 b.c. (Nehemiah 2:1)

Jesus started His ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius (see Luke 3:1). Tiberius started his reign in 14 a.d., so Jesus' ministry started in 29 a.d. Anderson believes that Jesus celebrated four Passovers during His ministry, one each in 29, 30, 31 and His final Passover in 32. With the help of lunar charts, we can calculate the exact date of ancient Passovers, so it is possible to calculate the exact day of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem as April 6, 32 a.d.

From 445 b.c. to 32 a.d. there are 476 years on the Julian calendar

(not 477 years, because there is no year zero)

476 years x 365 days = 173,740 days

Adjusting for the difference between March 14 and April 6 adds 24 days

Adjusting for leap years over a period of 476 years adds 116 days

The total number of days from March 14, 445 b.c. to April 6, 32 a.d.

173,740 + 24 + 116 = 173,880 days

According to his calendar, Daniel told us there would be 173,880 days between the decree and the arrival of Messiah the Prince.

Jesus said to the Jews of this day: *If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace!* (Luke 19:42) David said of this day in Psalm 118:24: *This is the day which the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it*.