

The Prince Who Is to Come, Part 1

Part of the God Over the Nations series

❖ Scripture – Daniel 9:20-24

❖ Prayer

❖ Introduction

- Have you ever wanted a good thing but not the best thing?
 - You asked to go to MacDonaldis when you could have had Outback Steakhouse
 - You asked for a Pinto when you could have had a Mercedes
 - You asked to go to the beaches of Percy Priest Lake when you could have gone to the beaches of Hawaii
 - You get the drift
 - In all of these examples, good things were asked for, but they were not the best things
 - ◆ Maybe in your real life case, you simply didn't know to ask for the best thing
 - ◆ The best thing wasn't even on your radar
- That's really the situation with Daniel here in chapter 9
 - He's pouring his heart out to God in prayer
 - He's moved by the Word of God; he's serious physically about prayer; he's praising God, confessing his unworthiness, and appealing to God's glory
 - He wants more than anything to have God turn from His wrath against the people Israel and restore the covenant blessings to that them
 - ◆ He longs for the temple and the city of Jerusalem to be rebuilt
 - ◆ He was asking for a good thing, but he wasn't asking for the best thing
 - The best thing wasn't even on his radar
 - Praise God that He often surpasses what we ask for by giving us the best when we've asked for less
- So what is this best thing that Daniel didn't have in mind?
 - Redemption through the Messiah Jesus
 - Daniel was thinking outward (Jerusalem, the Temple, religion), and what he and all of mankind really needs is inward (Jesus, the Cross,

forgiveness, rebirth)

- Daniel was thinking about good stuff but was missing out on the best, namely Jesus Christ
- **BIG IDEA: Jesus Christ is the ultimate answer to Daniel's prayer**
 - You say, "Bro Ben, how can that be? Daniel was praying about returning to the land of Israel"
 - Look back at what Daniel actually asked for in Daniel 9:16, *O Lord...let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain...because... Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those around us*
 - ◆ "Let Your anger and wrath turn"
 - ◆ Why was God angry? Because Israel was full of sinners and covenant breakers
 - Sin cannot simply be forgotten or neglected or passed over
 - It must be paid for and punished
 - But you and I can never pay for it
 - That's why Hell is forevermore
 - If we are to have any hope of God's wrath being turned from us as Daniel is asking for, then the cross must happen
 - Therefore, the answer to Daniel's prayer—*O Lord...let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away*—is answered only in the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and return of Jesus Christ
 - And that's what Daniel 9:20-27 is all about
- Let me say upfront that the way I approach this text is most likely different from how you've been taught
 - Why is that?
 - That's because the vast majority of interpretations are coming from a viewpoint that God has two peoples (Israel and the Church) and two plans (an earthly plan for Israel and a heavenly plan for the Church)
 - That is the crux of what is called Dispensationalism
 - ◆ I am not a Dispensationalist because I believe the Bible teaches one people of God and one plan, but many people who love God and love the Bible do believe that the Bible teaches two peoples and two plans
 - ◆ That's why my approach very well might be different from what you've been taught
- So again, our **BIG IDEA: Jesus Christ is the ultimate answer to Daniel's prayer**

TRANSITION: First here in our text, we see that...

❖ **Gabriel comes with an answer**

- *v20-23, Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, ²¹ while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. ²² He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. ²³ "At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision.*
- Church, don't you wish that God would so clearly answer your prayers like this from time to time?
 - You're on your knees in prayer begging God for something and then all of a sudden, SHAZAM, there's an angel with your answer
 - That would be pretty cool, wouldn't it?
- The angel coming to Daniel is Gabriel
 - The same angel who had spoken to Daniel over a decade earlier in Daniel 8
 - The same angel who spoke to Zacharias and Mary 5 centuries later in Luke 1
- By this time, Daniel was plumb worn out
 - He'd been fasting and praying all day, and it was now around 3 in the afternoon, which is when the evening offering would have been made in Jerusalem
 - Of course, there was no sacrifice going on in either Babylon or Jerusalem at this time, but this time of day had become a common time for prayer among the Jews of Daniel's day
- Gabriel tells us there in v22 that he had been sent to provide Daniel insight with understanding
 - In fact, God had dispatched Gabriel the moment Daniel began praying and had a very important prophetic message that Daniel needed to hear

TRANSITION: We get that prophetic message or vision in v24-27. Now, what we are about to look at is an incredibly difficult passage and has baffled many. It was

actually this passage that prompted me to preach the book of Daniel. What you have before you is one of the most beautiful messianic prophecies of Jesus Christ. I'm going to do my very best to explain it and to do so in a simple, understandable manner. Let's get into it. This week, we'll look at the summary statement of the vision in v24, and then next week we'll look at v25-27 where the vision is broken down into three stages. So, first, we see that:

❖ **70 sevens were decreed to achieve God's plan**

- v24, *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 prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.*
- First, let's just get out of the way here that the word "weeks" is a very misleading translation
 - The Hebrew here is literally "sevens," 70 sevens
 - The NIV is the only translation of my top 5 translations that uses the word *sevens* instead of *weeks*
 - ◆ What are my top 5 translations?
 - The NASB (New American Standard Version), the ESV (English Standard Version), the NIV (New International Version), the HCSB (Holman Christian Standard Bible), and the KJV (King James Version)
 - ◆ As I was saying, the word *weeks* is actually *sevens*
 - As we'll see here in a moment, Jew were familiar with only two groups of 7 in their calendars: 7 days in a week and 7 years in a Sabbatical
 - Look at the math on the screen
 - So, 70 sevens is either 70 x 7 days, which is 490 days, or 70 x 7 years, which is 490 years
 - I believe that 490 years is what's in view here for two reasons:
 1. What the angel says here is in response to Daniel praying about the 70 years of exile
 - So, we're already dealing in years
 2. Hindsight is 20/20
 - Historically speaking, we see nothing really happening 490 days from the angel's reference point, but we see some really major, gigantic, cosmic things happening 490 years from the angel's reference point

- So, when our translation says “weeks,” it’s talking about a week of years or 7 years
 - $70 \text{ weeks} = 70 \times 7 \text{ years} = 490 \text{ years}$
- It’s important for me to say at this point that I believe 490 years to literally equal 490 years the way we understand years
 - There are plenty who do not
 - They try to do basically two things with 490 years
 - ◆ Some try to say that 490 is simply a symbolic number, especially the last 7 years, primarily because they can’t get their interpretation and the timetable to work out literally
 - So in their understanding 490 years equals the time from the angels reference point to end of the age when Christ returns, which would be more than 2,000 years now
 - I believe this approach to be wrong because the catalyst of Daniel 9 is Jeremiah’s prophecy of 70 years of exile, which is a literal 70 years
 - We’re already dealing with literal numbers here
 - ◆ The other group tries to say that 490 years in Daniel’s calendar actually equals 483 years in our calendar because Daniel was using either a Jewish lunar year or a prophetic year which equal 360 days instead of 365 days
 - I really don’t want to confuse you because this can be confusing
 - It’s confused me, but I think I’ve finally cleared the fog
 - If you want to know more about this line of thinking, ask me after the service, and I’ll do my best to explain it for you, and we can discuss all of this in detail
 - Now, the Jewish lunar year angle is just wrong, but I have to admit that there is some precedent for the prophetic year angle from Revelation 11 to equate a year to 360 days
 - But we have to be careful applying that one text to every prophecy of time in the Bible
 - Furthermore, when we go converting calendar years to prophetic years, I believe that’s doing things with the numbers that God never intended for us to do
 - It’s pressing the numbers too far and taking them in way they weren’t meant to be taken
- So, as I said 490 years literally equals 490 years the way we understand

years

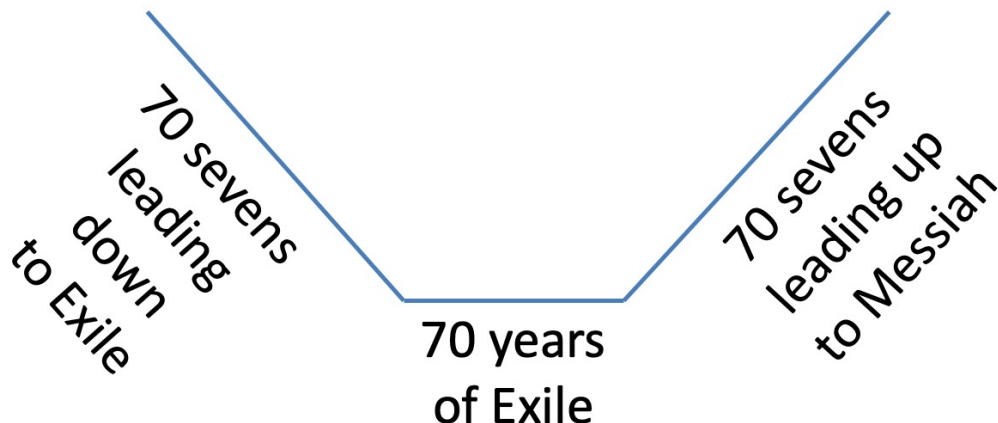
- Now, as I alluded to a moment ago, it's important to remember here what got Daniel all jazzed up here in Daniel 9
 - Look back at Daniel 9:2, *in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.*
 - If you'll remember, Daniel was reading his Bible and ran across Jeremiah's prophecy saying that the Babylonian exile would last 70 years
 - That got Daniel really excited because he had just witnessed Babylon fall to Medo-Persia, and the 70 years were just about over
 - But why 70 years? Why did God set that number?
 - This is very important
 - Well, we find our answer in 2 Chronicles 36:15-21: *The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; ¹⁶ but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy. ¹⁷ Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand. ¹⁸ All the articles of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officers, he brought them all to Babylon. ¹⁹ Then they burned the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burned all its fortified buildings with fire and destroyed all its valuable articles. ²⁰ Those who had escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and to his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, ²¹ to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete.*
 - ◆ So, the 70 years is tied to the idea of Sabbath years
 - When we think of Sabbath, we usually only think in terms of days and weeks
 - 6 days of work and 1 Sabbath day of rest make up a Jewish week

- But Jewish years worked the same way
 - We group our years in 10s, in decades
 - God led the Jews to group their years in 7s, in Sabbaticals
 - So, the land would have 6 years of work and 1 Sabbath year of rest = Leviticus 25:1-5: *The LORD then spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai, saying, ² "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you come into the land which I shall give you, then the land shall have a sabbath to the LORD. ³ ~'Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its crop, ⁴ but during the seventh year the land shall have a sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD; you shall not sow your field nor prune your vineyard. ⁵ ~'Your harvest's aftergrowth you shall not reap, and your grapes of untrimmed vines you shall not gather; the land shall have a sabbatical year.*
 - ◆ So 7 years equals one Sabbatical
 - Then after 7 Sabbaticals came the year of Jubilee
 - 7 x 7 years = 49 years
 - The next year, the 50th year was the Jubilee = Leviticus 25:8,11: *You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, namely, forty-nine years. ¹¹ 'You shall have the fiftieth year as a jubilee; you shall not sow, nor reap its aftergrowth, nor gather in from its untrimmed vines.*
 - The year of Jubilee was a very important time: slaves were set free, land was returned to its original owner, debts were forgiven
 - God promised a curse for disobedience in Leviticus 26:33-35: The context here is “If you disobey God”...*You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste. ³⁴ 'Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. ³⁵ ~'All the days of its desolation it will observe the rest which it did not observe on your sabbaths, while you were living on it.*
 - ◆ So basically, the curse is a year of desolation for every

unobserved Sabbath

- ◆ Now, watch this:
 - Israel became a kingdom under Saul around 1050 BC
 - We know that Babylon defeated the southern kingdom of Israel, which was called Judah, in 605 BC
 - By this time the northern kingdom had been defeated by the Assyrians for well over a century
 - So, by 605 BC, both the northern and the southern kingdom had been fallen
 - That means that kingdom of Israel from its first king to the Babylonian Exile stood approximately 490 years or 70 sevens or 70 Sabbaticals
 - That's why 70 years of exile in Babylon had been decreed for Israel
 - They had been in the land as a kingdom for approximately 70 Sabbaticals
 - So, 70 Sabbaticals of disobedience requires 70 years of exile so that the land could enjoy its Sabbaths
- ◆ Now, notice the symmetry of God's timetable here
 - 70 sevens or 490 years leading down to exile
 - 70 years of exile
 - 70 sevens or 490 years leading up to the work of the Messiah
 - Isn't that amazing?!

The Symmetry of God's Timetable



- So, what I am I saying here?
 - I'm saying that this prophetic timetable has as its backdrop the idea of sabbatical years and the Jubilee
 - The prophecy from the angel of 70 sevens I believe is meant to point to the Ultimate Jubilee found in Jesus Christ
 - We know that this prophecy concerns Jesus Christ because v25-27 tell us it has to do with the Messiah, the Prince who is to come
 - Now, remember what I said happened during the regular Jubilee in Israel
 - ◆ slaves were set free, land was returned to its original owner, debts were forgiven
 - This happens in the Ultimate Jubilee in Jesus Christ
 - ◆ Slaves to sin are set free, the land of earth is reclaimed for the children of God, the debt to God caused by sin is forgiven
 - ◆ Honestly, that's what we see lined out in v24
 - That's God's plan, and from the angels reference point to the Ultimate Jubilee, 70 sevens were decreed

TRANSITION: But the angel doesn't just tell us a timetable of 70 sevens. He tells us in detail what is going to be the fruit seeing these 70 sevens come to pass. So, let's answer this significant question:

❖ **What's to be accomplished in these 70 sevens?**

- Gabriel lines out 6 things in v24 that will be accomplished through these 70 weeks, and I would argue that every one of these is accomplished in the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and return of Jesus Christ
 - Again, Jesus Christ is the ultimate answer to Daniel's prayer
- v24, *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 prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.*
 - Some would take the angel's words here and say that this prophetic timetable has only to do with the nation of Israel since he says that *Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people (the Jews) and your holy city (Jerusalem)*
 - This causes them to come up with a huge gap of time between the 69th and 70th week

- ◆ Almost 2,000 years at this point
- But again, this idea comes from a Dispensational understanding that God has two peoples with different plans
- When the angel says that *Seventy weeks have been decreed for [Daniel's] people and [Daniel's] holy city*, he's pointing to the fact that Messiah would come through Israel and that the Messianic work would be done in Israel, particularly Jerusalem, but the things accomplished here are not just for the Jews
 - Jesus is not just a tribal savior for the Jewish nation
 - ◆ He is the Savior of people from every tribe, nation, and tongue, all who will repent of their sin and believe on Jesus
- So, let's look at the 6 things the angel says will be accomplished at the conclusion of these 70 weeks
 1. Transgression will be finished
 - In the life of Jesus, we see the greatest transgression history will ever know
 - ◆ God certainly was right in condemning humanity at rebellion of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden
 - The Garden Rebellion is sufficient enough a transgression to damn all of humanity to hell, but the height our rebellion, the capstone, the finishing of our rebellion, our transgression was at the cross of Calvary when Jew and Gentile alike crucified Jesus Christ, the Son of God
 - In that sense, transgression was filled up and finished in Jesus Christ
 2. Sin will be ended
 - In the life of Jesus, sin and its power was crushed at the cross and blown away at the Resurrection
 - ◆ Through Jesus, victory over sin was assured
 - ◆ Victory is already ours, just not yet reality
 - Like a snake still squirms after its been beheaded, so it is with sin and the devil
 - They are mortally wounded and as good as ended
 - In this sense, sin was ended in Jesus Christ
 3. Iniquity will be atoned for
 - The sacrifice of Christ certainly was an atonement for sin, a covering for sin

- Through his sacrifice, the distance between God and man is erased because sin is paid for
 - ◆ The blood of Jesus was sufficient, it was enough, to cover the sin of every person who has or will live, but it was efficient or effective to only those who place their faith in the Messiah/Christ Jesus
 - ◆ In other words, your sin was atoned for if you believe on Jesus
4. Everlasting righteousness will be brought in
- In Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God has come
 - ◆ It's already here but fully here yet
 - ◆ And with God's kingdom comes everlasting righteousness
 - That'll be a sweet day when at the return of Jesus, the kingdom will be fully realized
 - Sin will be completely erased from our persons and from the universe
 - And that righteousness will have no end
 - This everlasting righteousness has its beginning in Jesus Christ
5. Vision and prophecy will be sealed up
- Jesus Christ is the end, the climax, the culmination of all prophecy
 - In Him, every prophecy finds its fulfillment
 - ◆ Therefore, at His revelation, vision and prophecy was sealed up
6. The most holy place will be anointed
- The most holy place here cannot be speaking about the temple itself
 - ◆ The temple was rebuilt coming out of Babylonian captivity after the Babylonians destroyed it in 586 BC, but the rebuilding happened around 516 BC
 - ◆ But as we'll see next week, this date doesn't fall within the 70 weeks prophesied here in Daniel 9
 - So, what most holy place is the angel talking about
 - ◆ I believe he's pointing us to Jesus Christ
 - ◆ The earthly temple was simply a type of Christ, it prepared us for Jesus
 - Jesus is the ultimate temple, the sacrifice, and the priest
 - Therefore, in the life of Jesus, the most holy place was anointed, namely Jesus Christ himself
 - That's Jesus hear Jesus refer to himself as the temple in John 2:18-22: *The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us*

as your authority for doing these things?"¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."²⁰ The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body.²² So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

- That's why the curtain was torn on the day of His crucifixion
- That's why God in His providence had the temple destroyed in AD 70
- That's why the temple is now null and void and will be forevermore
 - There's no temple in Heaven
 - ◆ Revelation 21:22, *I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*
- Jesus Christ is the most holy place, the most holy one who was anointed
 - ◆ Friends, every one of these things, all 6, spoken of by the angel is accomplished in Jesus Christ
 - ◆ Again, Jesus Christ the ultimate answer to Daniel's prayer
 - God said, "Daniel, you simply wanted the earthly land and temple. You wanted a good thing, but I want to give you and all creation the best thing, which is Jesus Christ and all His benefits

❖ Conclusion

- Friend, I wonder this morning, do you know Him?
 - Do you know Jesus?
 - He's the only way for your transgression, your sin, your rebellion to be forgiven
 - He's the only way that God's anger and wrath toward your sin is extinguished
 - He's the only way for you to made righteous before God so that you can enter into heaven forevermore
 - He's the fulfillment of all of God's prophetic and covenantal promises
 - He is the holy of holies, the place where you are brought to God
 - ◆ I beg you this morning to turn from your sins and believe on Jesus

Christ as your Savior and Lord

- And if you do know Jesus, is your joy being made full in Him?
 - Are you boasting in Him?
 - Are you amazed that out of all the people in the world, He died for you; He saved you?
 - Are you leading others to Him?
- May our hearts be filled with awe at this prophecy and with gratitude to God that He answered Daniel's prayer with Jesus Christ