

Daniel 9

A Pivotal Chapter

Part 1

That Amazing Prophet

Originally, there were twelve tribes in Israel, named after the twelve sons of Jacob. As they were organized under Moses in ~1450 B.C., thirteen were identified.

- The Levites became the spiritual leaders/priests, so they were set apart – physically and spiritually.
- A new lead tribe was named after Joseph’s oldest son, Ephraim.

When they arrived in the Promised Land, Canaan, each tribe was assigned a given area. Sadly, by 722 B.C. the ten *northern* tribes (the Kingdom of Israel) rebelled, and God permitted them to be taken captive by the Assyrian Empire, where they intermarried and basically disappeared.

The two tribes that were left were **Judah** and a small portion of **Benjamin**. Many Levites also remained, scattered throughout both areas.

- Then Judah apostatized. They even worshiped idols! Jeremiah was called by God to bring those people back to repentance. For forty years he ministered to them. **But – his preaching didn’t change their rebellion.**
- **Daniel was born during the latter part of Jeremiah’s work.** He was apparently from the tribe of Judah.



God called the Babylonian pagan king, Nebuchadnezzar, to punish these remaining descendants of Abraham and Jacob. So important was this mission, He even called this king “His servant” (Jeremiah 25:9; 27:6).

Here’s an important lesson that applies to us today: God always gives warnings before He judicially acts!!! Why? So there is never an excuse for sin and rebellion, and mankind will always know why they suffered consequences!

- He also won't hesitate to use unconventional means to punish.
Twice, Jeremiah prophesied that they would be taken captive for **70 years** into a foreign land if they didn't repent (Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10). ***This didn't faze them.***
- God then permitted three attacks against Judah – the first two (605 B.C. and 597 B.C.) as a warning to repent. ***This didn't faze them!***
- In the third attack in 685 B.C. the most beautiful building in the world, Solomon's Temple, was destroyed, along with the city of Jerusalem. Only a few people were left behind in Judah to oversee the land.

Daniel was taken captive to Babylon (605 B.C.) during the first attack (a four-month journey). He rose to be Prime Minister of that great world empire – and – never lost his allegiance to God!



That 70-year captivity “timing prophecy” was given for two reasons!

REASON ONE:

In the second book of Chronicles we're told very important information about God's insights:

“To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years” (II Chronicles 36:21).

What does that all mean? This is vital to understand Daniel 9.

- The Jewish people not only had the seventh day as a Sabbath, but they were required to observe a Sabbath year every seventh year. ***The land was to rest (no farming) during that time.***
- Their failure to observe those Sabbaths was one of the reasons God let Nebuchadnezzar take them captive, which lasted over a generation!
- If they were in captivity that lasted seventy years, how many years had they neglect that Sabbath year? 490 years.

Why is all that important?

- The seven-year Sabbatical cycle relates, in prophecy, to when Jesus will return – and on the “seventh” the land will “rest.”
- That will tie to Revelation 20, which will be studied later.

REASON TWO:

The timing of 70 years gave Daniel and his people **a clock** to know when they would go back home to the promise land – Canaan.

That will tie, as you will later see, to when we will be going “home” to what Jesus called “*my Father’s house*” (John 14:1-3).

We don’t know how Daniel was able to have the Old Testament scrolls there in Babylon, but as the end of that 70 years came to a close, he was studying Jeremiah’s prophecies and, no doubt, Isaiah’s.

- He knew that the clock was about to strike “seventy years.”
- He knew that the first captivity occurred in 605 B.C.
- That would mean that in 536 B.C. some decree would release all of those Jewish people!!!

That is now where our Daniel 9 story begins:

Daniel Reaches Out to God

*“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; 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” (Daniel 9:1-2 – KJV).*

- From the historical events referencing kings and wars we know this was 539 B.C. Sixty-six and a half years have now past since Daniel’s captivity.
- Daniel is not only studying Jeremiah but *he understands the timing prophecy of 70 years* and is aware that it is about to end.
- The “*desolations*” represent the curse of destruction that came because of apostasy – and is what Jesus said would happen to the world **right at the end (Daniel 12:11)!**



How many years are left in that 70-year period? Three and a half.

- That is a period of time mentioned over and over in **end-time prophecy.**

If you knew that a major prophetic event was about to happen, what would you do?

- Daniel began to pray and plead with God. That prayer is recorded in Daniel 9. It is one of the most beautiful prayers in the Bible.
 - ✓ He wanted to make sure that “his people” were right with God so they could go back to Canaan – the “*promised land.*”
 - ✓ He confessed his personal sins.
 - ✓ He confessed the sins of God’s people.
 - ✓ He acknowledged God’s righteousness and His keeping of His part of the covenant – or restoration promises.
 - ✓ He confessed that God had sent teachers, prophets and circumstances to warn them of their plight – and that the message had been rejected.
- The Hebrew word used for Daniel’s “*prayer*” means “intense pleading.” Those words are recorded in Daniel 9:4-19.



Daniel was a praying prophet!

1. Daniel studied the Bible – we are to study the Bible.
2. Daniel studied the prophecies – we are to study the prophecies.
3. Daniel prayed – we are to pray (fervently – opening up our heart to God).
4. Daniel confessed sins – we are to do the same.
5. Daniel acknowledged the goodness of God – we must be so in love with Him that we enjoy thanking and praising Him.



We don’t know how long he prayed, but while he was on his knees Gabriel came to him again with a ***prophetic message*** – for him and the Jewish people, ***and for us today!***

Gabriel’s Stunning Visit

Daniel:

“While I was still speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and presenting my request before the LORD my God concerning his holy mountain.

“Yes, while I was still praying, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen previously in a vision, was approaching me in my state of extreme weariness, around the time of the evening offering.”

Gabriel:

“At the beginning of your requests a message went out, and I have come to convey it to you (Daniel 9:20, 21, 23 – NET) – we’ll go to verse 22 and the rest of 23 later.

- We don't know where heaven is, but this tells us that the angel traversed the "distance" between there and earth from the onset of Daniel's prayer and while he was still praying!
- The "*holy mountain*" – sometimes called "*Mount Zion*" – symbolizes where God's people meet with Him. Literally, it was Jerusalem previously. But Jerusalem lay in ruins. Spiritually, it is God's "church," where He visits His people.
- The previous vision in which he saw Gabriel was in Daniel 8:2-17.
- The "*time*" of the evening offering was likely 3:00 p.m.



A whole generation plus has lived in Babylon. Likely, many who should be going back had never seen Palestine – Canaan. Daniel's burden must be far deeper than what is recorded in the Bible.

- Will the thousands born during captivity return?
- Will they understand that the land of Babylon was "away from home?"
- Will they really be loyal to the Creator God – the One who led His people out of Egypt – the God of Father Abraham?

It really is a solemn time – they are still God's special people. **BUT** – every plan that God has created for them, so far, they have rebelled against!!!

- 217 times He called them "my people."
- God even said He was married to them! (Jeremiah 3:14).
- But they rejected Him.

It is also warning of a solemn time for us. II Timothy 3:1-5 says that at the very end of time those who are seen as wicked, evil and rebellious in God's eyes have a form of godliness – but ***deny the power!!!*** They are "Christians" but are in rebellion also!

- They are not Spirit-driven!
- They cannot relate to God – the avenue has been blocked. They permit Satan to stand in the way!

Gabriel knows all this. Since Daniel is a friend of heaven and the real ambassador of God's people in Babylon, this special angel came with a message to be shared.

- What do you suppose he said?
- "Tell your people, it's almost time to go home, get their hearts ready, clean up those minds, it's time to make everything right with God!" But – there was more – far more!

What you are about to see and hear is also for us, right now, right here. We are about to go home. We are about to go to that heavenly Canaan land. A message has come from heaven, and God wants us to “listen in!”

“He spoke with me, instructing me as follows: ‘Daniel, I have now come to impart understanding to you For you are of great value in God’s sight. Therefore consider the message and understand the vision’ (Daniel 9:22-23b).



Three times the angel Gabriel told Daniel that he was highly esteemed in heaven – meaning that that is how God felt about him! (Daniel 9:22; 10:11, 19).

Stunning! Beautiful!

- Heaven will impart understanding.
- But what is Daniel to do? Same counsel for us!
- “Consider” (*ben – H*) the vision (*mareh – H*). In Daniel 8 that was the 2300-year period (8:14). This means study/discern/ponder with *spiritual insight*.
- That means the analysis must be accompanied by prayer, cleansing our hearts, leaning on the influence of God’s Spirit.



That’s amazing and one of the many areas that have a promise: **“We can understand it!”**

The Message – the Vision – the Prophecy – Beginings

“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 Place” (Daniel 9:24 – NIV).

Seventy “sevens”: The “sevens” relate to the timing prophecy that Daniel has just been studying in Jeremiah. They were in captivity for 70 years for not observing **that many** Sabbatical/seven-year periods. Seventy of those would be 490 years.

- Now a probation of “seventy” (actual number: *shibim – H*) “sevens” (periods of seven, etc.: *shabua – H*) is given.
- That is 70 x 7 (that period of seven). Amazing – 490 years, the same duration that they previously rebelled.

The Jews were permitted to return to Palestine by a decree of the new monarch, Cyrus, in 536 B.C. BUT – God announces through Daniel that His people and church will be on “**probation**” for **490 years** to rectify what they previously had failed in. ***This is a “second chance” to honor God – but it is also the final one!***

A note of orientation – important:

The verb “decreed,” is hatak (H). Many expositors claim that it means “to be severed” or “cut off,” but this is the only place in the Old Testament where it is used passively. It is a verb in the passive tense. Thus, there is a special meaning to this message!

God is giving His people one more chance. “I’m going to give you a 490-year block of time to fully relate to me. It’s up to you what you do with this time.”

- God waits passively.
- But – He sets several conditions and offers promises.¹

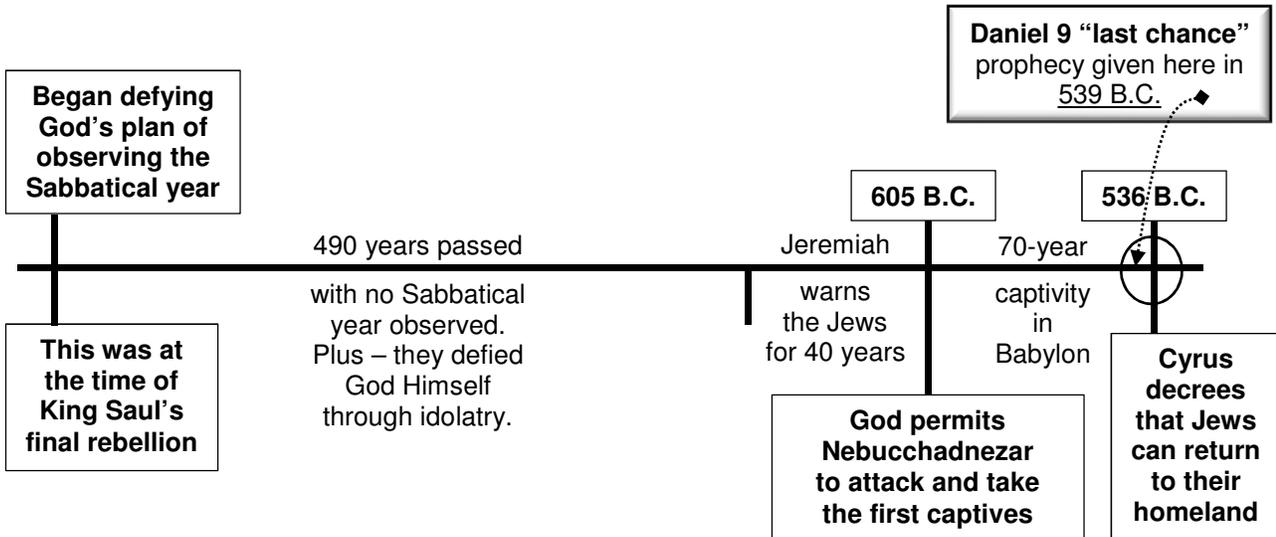
Gabriel had said that the decree was for “your people and your holy city”:

- Immediately, one assumes this is for the Jews – Daniel’s people and Jerusalem.
- But later God says “your people” are ***all those*** found written in the “book” – referring to the Book of Life (***that includes us – as you will see***). “Jerusalem” in prophecy means God’s people.

490 years will be “decreed” or set apart for God’s people. Daniel 9 is a “last-chance prophecy!” Following this period, the end will come!

¹ Steinmann, Andrew E.; *Daniel* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis – 2008), p. 445.

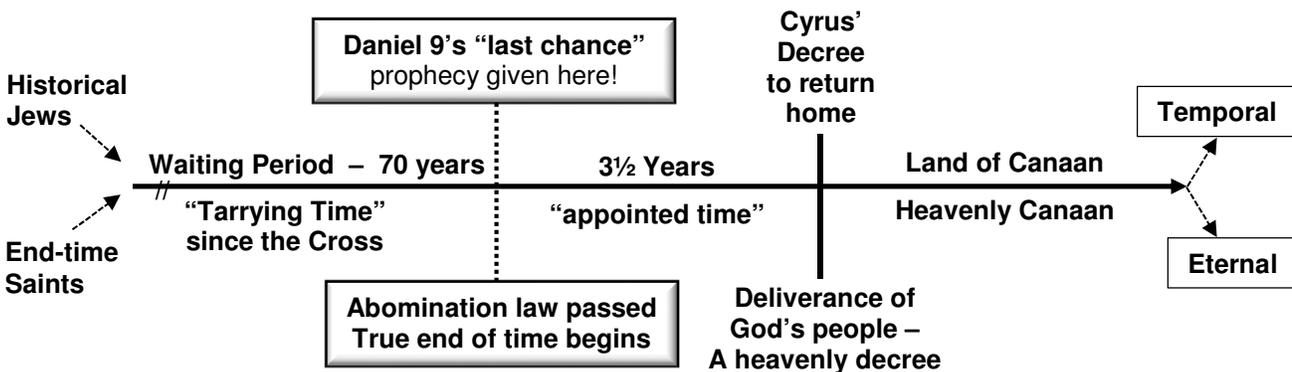
Graphics of the Seventy Years of Captivity – Review



Now we know there will be a "final chance" for God's people.

That final period of 3½ years of their 70-year captivity (circle above) is a model, a template, for the last 3½ years of the new 490-year probation time – and – also the last 3½ years of earth's history!!!

That is a "last chance" period of time before the heavenly "promised land."



Once again: The last part of the 70-year captivity (3½ years) models the last part of the 490 years of probation given to Daniel's people. BUT – God reapplied this to the very end of time (as we will study) when he said that Daniel's people were in the "book," meaning the Lamb's Book of Life.

- How can a 490-year probation extend to our time?
- That will be part of our study.

That means: There will be a 3½-year period right at the end of time just before Jesus returns!

What comes at the end of the 490 years or 3½ years? “Desolation” – total destruction. Nothing is left. And – that is when Jesus comes.

Timed Conditions and Promises

“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 Place” (Daniel 9:24 – NIV).



There are six items listed above: Three are sins that God’s people must give up; three are amazing eternal promises if those sins are given up! Let’s look at each one:

Three sins that must be given up (this refers to us today):

1. To finish “**transgression**” (*pesha* – H)
 - It means **rebellion against God**.
 - The most important area within Daniel regarding this relates to *the Sabbath*.
 - It directly ties to *the first four commandments* in the Decalogue!
2. To put an end to “*sin*” (*hattat* – H). This is actually plural.
 - This mainly refers to **sins against mankind**.
 - It relates especially to the last six commandments in the Decalogue!
3. To atone for “wickedness” or “iniquity” (*awon* – H).
 - “**Atone**” means to “make right,” “apologize,” “make amends.”
 - For what? “Wickedness.”
 - What does that mean? **All past sins**.
 - But it really goes deeper. It means to **repent** of those sins. You not only confess you were wrong but you promise to not do them again!

But – you say – “I just can’t do that!” “I have too many rough edges!” “I just don’t have time for that!” “That’s pushing me – back off a little.”

- Remember – this is really an end-time prophecy. The Jewish people never finished what Gabriel asked!

- This is not even Daniel speaking. It is Gabriel bringing that message right from heaven!

The Apostle Paul, one of the Bible writers, weighed in on this issue!

“No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13 – NIV).

I guess everyone just ran out of excuses!

The amazing promises that remain to be fulfilled!

You are about to see an element of salvation that most Christian churches avoid – even deny.

- God said that those sins must be addressed for these eternal promises to come.
- Many say that all we have to do is “believe” in Jesus – the Son of God. And that is true. But the word “believe” is rarely discussed. It is very important. It implies action.
- Gabriel is now telling us what happens when these sins are addressed (***a message direct from heaven***).

This is now anticipated:

1. “bring in everlasting righteousness” (Daniel 9:24 – NIV)

Righteousness – holiness – will win out over all of Satan’s evil. The word used is *sedeq* (H). It is really a legal term that means “nothing is left to condemn.” Holiness is what is left in God’s last church.



- “**Everlasting**” (*olam* – H) means “for ever and ever” – without end.
- Everything now proceeds into eternity!!!

For the saints – all that occurs at the Second Coming of Jesus, when we are “*changed*” in a “*moment, in a twinkling of an eye*” (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

2. “seal up the vision” (Daniel 9:24 – NIV)

The word for “*vision*” here is *ha·hzon*. It refers to the war between good and evil. It means that Satan’s power will be at an end. It relates to him being “*chained*” for a thousand years in Revelation 20. This prophecy is a Daniel 8 study.



3. “to anoint the most holy” (Daniel 9:24 – NIV)

This is a profound promise. Daniel had prayed for God’s “*face to shine upon thy sanctuary*” (Daniel 9:17). The “*most holy*” place was part of the sanctuary or temple, where the “*ark of the covenant*” was located.

- The temple had been destroyed and God’s presence left those precincts just before that destruction.
- God’s presence never came back into any Jewish temple.
- The promise doesn’t say that ***the sanctuary or temple*** would be once again anointed!

Since all these promises are end-time, then what might this mean?

What took the place in the “*temple*” after Jesus ascended to heaven?

- “*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*” (1 Corinthians 3:16).
- “*“This is the covenant that I will establish with them after those days, says the Lord. I will put my laws on their hearts and I will inscribe them on their minds,’ then he says, ‘Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no longer”*” (Hebrews 10:16-17 – NET).
- They will be like Jesus – in heart and mind.



From eternal ages it appears that God purposed that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator.

- Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God.
- Through the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven could once again be fulfilled through the Holy Spirit.
- Through saving grace, the heart of man becomes again His temple.

“The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.”
(Malachi 3:1-3).

- That is a prophecy when God’s people, His church, that holy group of saints, will be sealed or “*anointed*” as citizens forever in His kingdom!
- Nothing impure will be left!

Now we know the 490-year story. It means that man has a part and God guarantees forever promises. But there are some things that are very important that have just come up:

- What has been given to Daniel ends in eternity.
- When does it begin?
- How can this “time-limited” prophecy touch that far ahead?

We will look at that in Part 2.

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