

Daniel 4

Lions, Tigers, and Bears, Oh My

Thus far in Daniel we have covered some pretty disturbing sights and images. We've witnessed (1) Daniel and his friends tried and tested on multiple occasions (King's Table; Golden Statue; Fiery Furnace; Lions Den). All served a great purpose: to establish Daniel as God's apocalyptic prophet. We've also witnessed that (2) much of the prophecy we've looked at thus far builds on the Prophecy of the Statue in Daniel 2 in terms of kingdoms rising and falling (Babylon; Media-Persia; Greece; Rome). Last week, we read through the great prophecy of Daniel 8, which (a) further expounds how the Greece Empire will rise and fall and (b) predicts the rise of the Anti-Christ we identified as Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Tonight, we dive into chapters 9-10. In these chapters the tone is *hopeful* because these chapters are designed to let us know (a) *what God is going to do about the haunting images we've seen* in the prophecies before chapter 9 and (b) *what he is going to do about the haunting final vision we see in chapter 11*. The answer is Jesus. As such, Daniel 9 contains a *detailed prophecy pertaining to the timing of the coming of the Christ* and Daniel 10 contains a *detailed vision of the Son of Man*. Together both chapters form a provident anchor of sorts in light of what has gone on before these chapters and what will come after.

Daniel 9: The Great Seventy Weeks Prophecy Background

1. It Came After Daniel Sought the Lord in His Word.

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years (9:1-2)

**Of particular importance here is the play on 70. Israel is in captivity for 70 years. Yet the language of the prophecy is 70 weeks

2. It Came After Daniel Sought the Lord in His Prayers

³ Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes...¹⁹ O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name." (9:3-19)

3. It Came Through Gabriel

²² He (Gabriel) made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. ²³ At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision. (9:20-23)

**Gabriel is important to the narrative because He is the angel often "dispatched" by God to disclose "the grander scheme unfolding" to the vessels he chooses. He appeared to Zechariah to announce to foretell the birth of John the Baptist (Lk 1:19). He appeared to Mary to announce the miraculous nature of the birth of Jesus (Lk 1:26-38). He is the angel who told Mary to call him Jesus (Lk 1:31). Here, he appears to Daniel. All of these occasions are the only times Gabriel appears and they are all connected to Jesus, in Daniel and in Luke's

Daniel 9: The Great Seventy Weeks Prophecy Revealed

²⁴ "Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. ²⁵ Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. ²⁶ And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. ²⁷ And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator." (9:24-27)

Daniel 9: The Great Seventy Weeks Prophecy Explained

²⁴ *“Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city,*

Most commentators agree that “seventy weeks (literally: seventy sevens) should be understood as weeks of years. Thus 70 x 7 is 490 years. Think of these years as a prophetic clock. The question is: when does the clock start ticking. Gabriel tells us:

²⁵from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time.²⁶ And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing.

Now the 490 years gets divided to seven weeks (49 years) and sixty-two weeks (434 years) = 483 years

Gabriel says, essentially, that the prophetic clock would start at the time a decree was issued to rebuild Jerusalem. And from the date of that decree to the time of the Messiah would be 483 years.

We know from history that the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was given by King Artaxerxes of Persia in 444 BC.

The first unit of 49 years (seven sevens/weeks) covers the time it took to rebuild Jerusalem (see Nehemiah). The second unit of 434 years (62 sevens/weeks) covers the time after the rebuilding of Jerusalem until the time of the coming of the Messiah.

When we start doing the math, we are inclined to say 444 BC when the decree was given to Jesus' death in 33 AD would only give us 476 years, not 483. But we have to adjust to the 360 day year calendar used by the ancient Jews. When we do, 483 years becomes 476 on our calendar. Consequently, from the time of the rebuilding of Jerusalem to Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem we get, like Gabriel said to Daniel 49 sevens/weeks and 62 sevens/weeks. Amazing.

But it's still not over... We've only covered 69 of the 70 weeks, totaling a period of 483 years. What about the other week. Gabriel tells us:

²⁷And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.” (9:24-27)

This has not been fulfilled yet. Think of the prophetic clock as being paused. It denotes a period of one seven/week (7 years) that's coming in the future. Notice that Gabriel divides this in half. “For one half of the week” (3 ½ years) he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering.” That means for the other half, the first half (3 ½ years), we have to go back to the image in Rev 8 of Antiochus IV Epiphanes to know how that will go. In other words, for 3 ½ years the Anti-Christ Antiochus figure will wage war and then for 3 ½ years the Messiah will take the battle to him and bring an end to sacrifice and offering. That's also argue for mid-tribulation, not pre-trib or post-trib. It's right here in the text and makes the most sense of biblical suffering for God's people (i.e., God sparing Israel from certain plagues).

Who is the Figure Who Will Make This Possible? It's the Man Daniel Saw in Daniel 10

How Daniel Describes the Terrifying Vision of a Man (ch. 10)

1. Man in linen (10:5)
2. Waist girded with gold (10:5)
3. Face like lightning (10:6)
4. Eyes like torches of fire (10:6)
5. Feet like polished bronze (10:6)
6. Words like the voice of a multitude (10:6)

How John Describes Jesus (Revelation 1)

1. Clothed in a garment (1:13)
2. Girded with a gold band (1:13)
3. Countenance like the sun in it's strength (1:16)
4. Eyes like flames of fire (1:14)
5. Feet like fine brass (1:15)
6. Voice like a sound of many waters

= Jesus is Going to Take Care of All This.