

Gospel Gleanings, "...especially the parchments"

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A Remarkable Prophecy

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. (Daniel 9:24)

We see in the closing verses of the ninth chapter of Daniel one of the most remarkable prophecies to be found in the Old Testament. Bible scholars suggest that the Old Testament contains over two hundred fifty prophecies of Jesus' coming, of God Incarnate. Of that number, whatever it really is, this prophecy stands alone in its specific reference to the time when He would come. Other prophecies refer to what He would do, just as this passage outlines His work in atoning for the sins of His people, but they do not measure the precise time of that coming as this passage does.

Occasionally Old Testament Biblical prophecy measures years by a reference to days. For example, when Israel refused to enter the land of Canaan for forty days, God warned them that their forty day rebellion had resulted in forty years of wilderness wandering, a judgment against their stubborn refusal to obey Him. (Numbers 32:13) Further, in Daniel 10:3 Daniel writes of a three week fast, using a different Hebrew word that literally means "weeks of days." If the seventy week prophecy we now study refers only to literal weeks, why did Daniel choose a different Hebrew word and not the literal "weeks of days" word? The simplest translation of the Hebrew word in Daniel 9:24 is "sevens;" "Seventy sevens..."

A time sensitive prophecy must respect the whole measure of time prophesied, or it loses its integrity, a point typically overlooked and violated by contemporary theologians who embrace dispensational theology.¹ To separate any of the

¹ Dispensational theology refers to the teachings of John Nelson Darby who started teaching these ideas around 1827. Darby's ideas were unknown at the time in historical theological beliefs and were largely either ignored or rejected by subsequent nineteenth century Christian scholars. Eventually, around 1909, C. I. Scofield embraced Darby's beliefs and published the first edition of his "Scofield Bible." The twentieth century witnessed a broad acceptance of the new, non-historical views of eschatology (doctrine of end times) that Darby first advocated.

seventy weeks from the whole is to compromise and to wholly corrupt the integrity of the prophecy. It would be no different than me claiming to be six feet six inches tall, when people who know me know well that I stand at around five feet seven inches tall. How could I claim to be six feet six inches tall? I could use the same illogical rationale as the dispensationalists use when interpreting this seventy week prophecy when they disjoint the seventieth week from the first sixty nine. I could claim to be five feet six inches tall, but then disconnect the last inch of my height from the tape measure and reconnect it at the six-six point on the measure.

Before we explore the details of the prophecy, including the point at which the prophetic clock begins and ends as stated in the angel's revelation to Daniel, we need to fully examine the specific accomplishments that "Messiah the Prince" shall accomplish according to the prophecy.

Gabriel reveals six specific things that are to be accomplished before the end of the seventy week time of this prophecy.

1. ...to finish the transgression
2. ...and to make an end of sins
3. ...and to make reconciliation for iniquity
4. ...and to bring in everlasting righteousness
5. ...and to seal up the vision and prophecy

If we accept the simple and literal meaning of Jude 1:3, particularly Jude's reference to the "...faith which was once delivered to the saints..." literally "once for all time," Darby's views were over eighteen hundred years too late—too new—to receive serious consideration as Biblical truth. While historical premillennialism (belief in a literal thousand years of spiritual success and world-wide victory before the end of the natural universe as we know it) traces its earliest belief to the second or third century, Darby's views did not exist prior to 1827. As we develop the details of Daniel's prophecy, we shall explore this errant view in greater detail.

6. ...and to anoint the most Holy.

The prophecy naturally groups into three unifying categories.

1. Eliminate the sin problem.
2. Establish righteous peace between God and His people.
3. Finish OT prophecies regarding the nation of Israel and the finished work of Jesus.

Commentaries vary widely in their interpretation of these six accomplishments. Some commentaries indicate by "...to finish the transgression..." Gabriel intended to tell Daniel that his own beloved people would so offend God and reject His Son, God Incarnate, that God would forever turn from them and reject them from future blessings. They would cease to enjoy the privileges of God's favored nation and fall under severe divine judgment. In fact this occurred with their rejection of Jesus whether this prophecy indicated that point or not. Matthew 23:34-39 affirms this point in Jesus' own words; Paul corroborates the point in the eleventh chapter of Romans.

I prefer an interpretation of the six accomplishments that unite in the finished—successful—work of the Lord Jesus Christ in atoning for the sins of His people. Let's examine each point.

1. **...to finish the transgression.** John Gill explains this phrase as follows:
"... **to finish the transgression**; not the transgression of Adam, or original sin, which, though took away by Christ from his people, yet not from all men; nor the actual transgression of man in general, which never more abounded than in the age in which Christ lived; but rather the transgressions of his people he undertook to satisfy for, and which were laid on him, and bore by him, and carried away, so as not to be seen more, or to have no damning power over them."
Gill's interpretation follows the overarching theme of the six attainments, focusing on the impact of Jesus' death for the sins of His people. Once the Father accepted Jesus' sacrificial death for our sins, all the transgressions of God's chosen people could no longer force a guilty distance between them and God. "...he is our peace...." (Ephesians 2:14)
2. **...and to make an end of sins.** This point follows closely upon the first. Again I quote from Gill.

"... **and to make an end of sins**; so that they shall be no more, but put away and abolished by the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ for them, as to guilt and punishment; so that those, for whose sins satisfaction is made, no charge can be brought against them, nor the curse of the law reach them, nor any sentence of it be executed, or any punishment inflicted on them; but are entirely and completely saved from all their sins, and the sad effects of them. Our version follows the marginal reading; but the textual writing is, "to seal up sins"⁴; which is expressive of the pardon of them procured by Christ; for things sealed are hid and covered, and so are sins forgiven."²

3. **...and to make reconciliation for iniquity.** How can sin be finished and ended when people, even God's own beloved children, continue to sin? (1 John 2:1-2) How can we be reconciled to God while yet living in our sinful flesh? The answer cannot be found in us or in anything we think or do. It can be seen only in the finished and victorious work of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. (Romans 5:6-10)
4. **...and to bring in everlasting righteousness.** When we appear in heaven in our resurrected, sinless, and glorified bodies, we shall understand and enjoy "everlasting righteousness." Until then our experience of righteousness is temporary. While John (1 John 2:1-2) admonishes us to "...sin not..." he also addresses the obvious point. Try as we might, reach whatever goals we might, in the end we shall sin. Our righteousness shall never be all-encompassing and everlasting. Only the imputed righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ so endures that we may rightly describe it as "everlasting."
5. **...and to seal up the vision and prophecy.** The primary focus of Old Testament prophecy was on the coming Messiah, God Incarnate. (Isaiah 7:14) "Immanuel" means "God with us." All of those prophecies find their fulfillment in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His coming, His first coming. John the

² All the quotes from Gill in this study are from John Gill's commentary on the whole Bible, copied from the electronic edition of this work, SwordSearcher Bible software.

baptist is described as the last prophet in Scripture. Though in a limited sense gospel ministers may be viewed as prophets, they are so in a restricted sense, not in the same sense as the Old Testament prophets. Once the primary object of their prophecies comes in fulfillment of their prophecies there is no longer a reason for their existence and ministry.

6. ...and to anoint the most Holy.

Dominant contemporary commentaries interpret this phrase as a reference to the most holy place, the temple in Jerusalem. In this interpretation they ignore Jesus, the "most Holy" Person to ever inhabit Planet Earth. Once more I cite Gill's views as affirming a more central and obvious truth in the passage. "...or it may be best of all to understand this of the Messiah, as Aben Ezra and others do; who is holy in his person, in both his natures, human and divine; sanctified and set apart to his office, and holy in the execution of it; equal in holiness to the Father and the Spirit; superior in it to angels and men, who have all their holiness from him, and by whom they are sanctified; and of whom the sanctuary or temple was a type; and who was anointed with the Holy Ghost as man, at his incarnation, baptism, and ascension to heaven; and Abarbinel owns it may be interpreted of the Messiah, who may be called the Holy of holies, because he is holier than all other Israelites."

The accomplishments set forth in these six prophecies are not presented as desirable or as possible, but as certain completed works. All six works must be completed within the seventy consecutive weeks, or the prophecy loses all its integrity. We can no more dissect one of the weeks from the other sixty nine than we can claim that five of the six prophecies were fulfilled, but not all six. For the prophecy to maintain its integrity, its distinct supernatural character, all six events must be accomplished within the consecutive seventy weeks. We shall examine the prophecy and historical records to see how these events and the time prophesied were fulfilled.

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Worship service each Sunday
Joseph R. Holder

10:30 A. M.
Pastor