



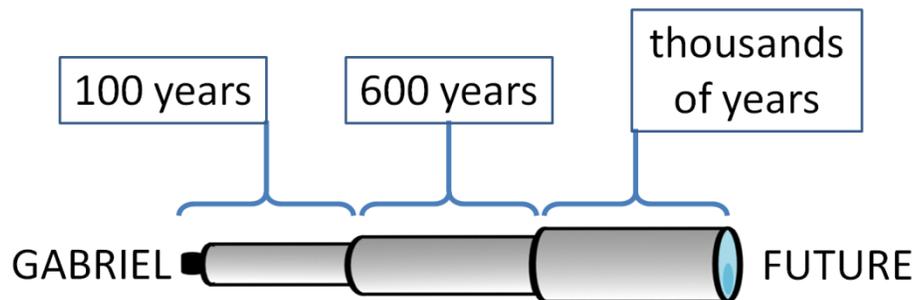
**Daniel 9:20-27**

Even though as parents, we do our best to teach our children the true meaning of Christmas, there seems to be no getting around the excitement our kids have when it comes to opening gifts. Nowadays, electronics and electronic toys tend to dominate but I remember one of my favorite gifts as a child was a telescope. Looking back, I know it was one of those Walmart specials (or Sears—or wherever they bought it) but I was delighted with my telescope. It wasn't good enough to see the rings of Saturn or the man on the moon, but I could read my neighbor's license plate across the street.



The Gran Telescopio CANARIAS is the world's largest reflecting telescope with an aperture of 410 inches. This behemoth sits atop a mountain in the Canary Islands and can look deep into space. A telescope can look near and far, or should I say, far and further. The best telescopes can look a few light years away or millions of light years away. When the angel Gabriel spoke his prophecy to Daniel in chapter nine, he was using a kind of prophetic telescope that saw into the near and far future.

This prophecy saw into future events about 100 years away, 600 years away and thousands of years away, and Gabriel predicted each with perfect accuracy.



*While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God, **21** while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. **22** He 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.*

***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.”*

If you recall, this is the second visit that Daniel received from the angel Gabriel but the difference is that in chapter eight it Daniel saw a vision of Gabriel but here Gabriel appeared as a man while Daniel was praying. This means that Gabriel appeared to Daniel in the exact same way that he appeared to Zechariah to announce the birth of John the Baptist and to Mary, to announce the virgin birth of Jesus. What is more, these are the only three appearances of Gabriel in the whole Bible. Obviously, his appearance to Zechariah and Mary was to announce the first advent of Jesus but it is fascinating to see that his appearance to Daniel announced the first and second advent of Jesus. Among other things, this passage predicts the coming of Christ, the death of Christ, the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ at the end of days. In other words, we see Christmas, the cross and the consummation all in these few verses. Please follow along carefully as we see the sovereign plan of God for human history predicted long before it happened.

The first thing I want to highlight is *why* Gabriel appeared as well as the *manner* in which he addressed Daniel. In verse 23, Gabriel spoke, saying, *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.* First we see that Gabriel came in response to Daniel’s prayer. Last week we saw that Daniel prayed a magnificent and detailed prayer of repentance on behalf of the entire history of the nation of Israel. Not only did Gabriel come in response to Daniel’s prayer but he was dispatched before the prayer was even finished. Gabriel left “at the beginning of your pleas for mercy.” Have you ever received an answer to prayer that quickly?

Furthermore, Gabriel addressed Daniel as one who was “greatly loved.” The term is used to speak of the value of gold (Ezra 8:27) and costly garments (Gen 27:15) <sup>1</sup> and carries the meaning of “treasured possession.” Taken together we see that God viewed Daniel as his treasured possession and he answered his prayer before he even finished praying.

This is the same God whom we serve today. To him, we, his children, are more precious than gold, silver and costly garments. You and I are his treasured possession and our Father knows what we need before we ask him. And because he knows, every prayer is answered before we have finished praying. A great many of these answers are a resounding NO. Some are “no” because they are simply outside of his will but others are “no” due to our carelessness and callousness, but either way, we see both the Lord’s desire and his power to answer prayer literally in the blink of an eye.

**Seventy sevens and six purposes**

The content of the prophecy is not as simple as some but a little effort will produce much fruit here. First, Daniel was told, *Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city.* The word translated as “week” is also translated a “seven.” In other words, it literally means not 70 weeks but 70 sevens. Therefore, every number is to be multiplied by seven.

- 7 sevens = 49 years
- 62 sevens = 434 years
- 1 seven = 7 years

TOTAL 70 sevens = 490 years

These are the number of years we will be working with throughout this passage.

Gabriel went on to list six purposes for these seventy years.

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<i>to finish the transgression</i>	second advent
<i>to put an end to sin</i>	second advent
<i>to atone for iniquity</i>	first advent
<i>to bring in everlasting righteousness</i>	second advent
<i>to seal both vision and prophet</i>	second advent
<i>to anoint a most holy place</i>	second advent

This is my interpretation of the timing of these six purposes. Atonement was obviously accomplished through the death and resurrection of Christ but the remainder seem to be better associated with Christ’s second coming.

Verse 25 tells us the starting point and ending point of 69 of the sevens. But for the sake of clarity, I am going to insert the NASB translation here. I have been using the ESV for about a year and this is the first time I have been disappointed in the translation.

*So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. (NASB)*

The decree to rebuild Jerusalem came in 458 BC and was given by King Artaxerxes to Ezra the priest. This first 7 sevens—49 years—went until the end of Nehemiah's reign in 409 BC. The end of verse 25 states that Jerusalem was to be rebuilt during a time "distress." You may remember the immense opposition that Nehemiah experienced while trying to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. It truly was a time of "distress" for the Jewish people.

The next sixty two sevens—434 years—started in 409 BC and went to 26 AD. This period of 69 sevens goes "until the Messiah, the prince." This is quite obviously Jesus Christ and 26 AD would have been the year of his baptism and start of his public ministry. I said before that Daniel 9 predicts the birth of Christ. Technically, it does not predict Jesus' birth but it does assume it in all that it says.

When Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well, he affirmed to her that he was indeed the Messiah and when Jesus appeared before Pilate at his trial he confirmed that he was indeed the king of the Jews. Jesus was Messiah and prince, the exact designation given to him by Gabriel over 500 years prior to his birth.

A former Orthodox Jewish man, Harold Sevens, became a Christian by studying Daniel 9. Sevens served for a time as president of Chosen People Ministries, a ministry similar to Jews for Jesus. In one of his books, Sevens stated, "Only one person in all of Jewish history, or for that matter in all of world history, could have fulfilled this prophecy in every detail. That person was Yeshua of Nazareth. Daniel is told, and we can calculate, exactly when the Messiah, whom God promised to send to Israel would be cut off."<sup>2</sup>

These kinds of Old Testament prophecies continue to lead to conversions of Jewish people every day throughout the world and it is these very same prophecies which will lead to a powerful revival among the Jews in the last days. The apostle Paul predicted this in Romans 11. "Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:25-26).

Surely this does not mean that every Jewish man, woman and child will be saved but that an outpouring of genuine repentance will occur among the true Israel. It can be discouraging to see millions of Jews refusing to see the long awaited Messiah in the person of Jesus but it is a delight to know that God has a plan of redemption after the present season of hardening. Don't fail to notice the purpose for the temporary hardening—"Until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in." That's you and me.

Related to the topic, I'd like to show you a "formula for evangelism" from Bill Hybels. I have found this to be a very helpful overview of our responsibility as believers.

$$HP + CC + CP = MI$$

HP = HIGH POTENCY

CC = CLEAR COMMUNICATION

CP = CLOSE PROXIMITY

MI = MAXIMUM IMPACT

We need all three things on the left side of this equation in order to have a maximum impact upon lost people. High potency refers to our character and personal witness. If our personal lives are a mess, the message of the gospel will not be heard by others.

We also need clear communication. We need to be able to clearly communicate the gospel.

Close proximity is an area when many of us struggle. If we are not in close proximity to unbelievers, it does not matter how great our personal witness of ability to share the gospel.

I have a suggestion that can help with this area. John and Virginia Goeke have been running a Community Meal for the past year and a half on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. This past Thursday was a record attendance with over 100 people at this free meal. It is an amazing opportunity to have conversations with people. Not only that, but the Goekes could really use help as they spend about eight hours between cooking and clean up.

I think in the past I have mentioned the secret of the Christmas angel that's part of the Maurer Christmas tradition. Each year an angel is placed at the top of the Christmas tree and when the kids were young, they always wanted to know how the angel held a lighted candle in his hands. Karen and I always told them that was the secret of the Christmas Angel. Gabriel could rightly be called the Christmas Angel because he seems to have had a unique and special role—to tell of the coming of the Jesus the Messiah. Daniel, Zechariah and Mary were all special recipients of his visitations and announcements. Gabriel spoke clearly of the first advent of Jesus. In the season of Christmas, we look back to his first advent for the same reason we celebrate communion—it is a remembrance of the God of the universe taking on human flesh.

Two momentous occasions occur in verse 26. The first is the death of Jesus. "After the sixty two sevens, the Messiah will be cut off." The Messiah is born and the Messiah is cut off. Jesus was born for the purpose of dying. Jesus was...

Born that man no more may die.

Born to raise the sons of earth.

Born to give them second birth.

Christmas was always meant to end on Easter. Jesus birth moved in a single direction—to his death and resurrection.

The second event in verse 26 is the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. *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. The people of the prince who is to come requires a little explanation.<sup>3</sup>



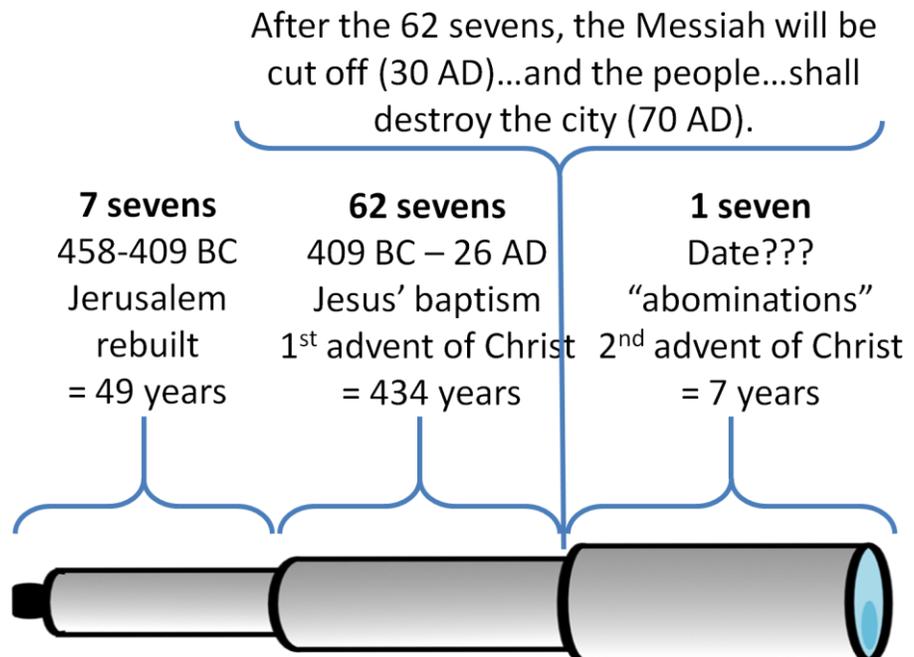
If you recall from previous chapters in Daniel, the kingdom of the antichrist is represented by feet of iron mixed with clay. This symbolism was repeated in chapter seven with the unnamed beast symbolizing the Roman Empire and the antichrist represented by the horns arising from the unnamed beast. Both of these symbols mean the same thing—that the kingdom of the antichrist will arise in some as yet revealed way out of the old Roman Empire. “The people of the prince,” therefore, means the Roman Empire who did in fact

utterly destroy Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD.

This was also prophesied forty years in advance by Jesus in Luke 19.

*And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, “Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation (Luke 19:41-44).*

As we have seen thus far, sixty nine sevens—or 483 years—occur consecutively beginning in 458 BC and ending in 26 AD. But then the periods of sevens has a break in it. We have already seen what happens “after the sixty two weeks”—the death of Christ and the fall of Jerusalem. But there is still one period of seven years that is not accounted for. This



period is described in verse 27.

*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.”*

This is what is known as the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel which is the seven years of tribulation described in Revelation. We have already seen that other parts of Daniel matches up perfectly with the prophecies in Revelation and this is probably the most famous section of prophecy in the book of Daniel.

The covenant of the antichrist will last for one half of the seven, which equals three and a half years. Then the second half of the tribulation, called the Great Tribulation (cf. 7:25; Rev 11:2; 12:14; 13:5) is when “the Antichrist persecutes believers and commits other atrocities.”<sup>4</sup> “Antichrist’s incredible atrocities against his fellow human beings and his attacks upon God himself (cf. 7:21–25) will include even the idolatrous claim that he is deity with an attempt at forced worship of himself (cf. 2 Thes. 2:4; Rev 13:8, 14–17).”<sup>5</sup>

Tribulation will continue until *the decreed end is poured out on the desolator*. Tell me—who was active on Friday morning in Newtown Connecticut? The desolator was active bringing death and destruction to defenseless children. Last night, a fifteen year old girl from Viroqua posted the following on her facebook page.

People do stupid, crazy, mean, horrible, etc. things. No one has ever been able to give me a good reason why. (hint: the answer 'because we're human' is NOT a good answer.)

I simply posted Romans 3:23—“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Obviously, the disturbed and sinful nature caused Adam Lanza to pull the trigger, but the desolator was behind it all.

But are we any better? We all know that Jesus equates anger with our brother with murder, but let me explain why. The reason we get angry but do not act on them is because there are so many restraints in place to prevent us. There are legal, moral, Biblical, emotional, familial and other types of societal restraints acting upon us. But what would happen if you removed all of those? What if there were no consequences for our actions, no guilt feelings, no moral guilt before God. If all restraints were taken away, the murder in our hearts would work its way out to actual murder. We could be just like Adam Lanza.

But we see once again that Jesus will bring an end to the rule and bloodshed of the desolator. Gabriel predicted the second and final advent of Christ.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be

no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” Revelation 21:3-5.

These words are trustworthy and true. Evil will prevail for a season longer, but Jesus, the Sovereign Conqueror, will destroy death and sorrow forever.

Rich Maurer  
December 16, 2012

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<sup>1</sup> Miller, S. R. (1994). *Vol. 18: Daniel*. The New American Commentary (251–252). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Harold Sevens, *Daniel: God’s Man in Babylon*, p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> This is obviously not the same “prince” in verse 25. Prince can just mean a “ruler” but the Prince in v, 25 is also the messiah, the anointed one. This “prince” is the antichrist, the human agent of the devil, appointed to accomplish his evil purposes.

<sup>4</sup> Miller, S. R. (1994). *Vol. 18: Daniel*. The New American Commentary (271). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>5</sup> Miller, S. R. (1994). *Vol. 18: Daniel*. The New American Commentary (273). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.