

Gabriel's Prophecy of the 70 Weeks: A Prophecy of the Christ!

(Daniel 9:24-27)

Part Two

Presented by Murray McLellan, an unworthy sinner upon whom grace unimaginable has been poured by the kindest of Kings. I do not claim to be, nor seek to be original in the following manuscript. I seek to magnify and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Unto him belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Editor's Note: In Part One of this series, we examined the time frame and the setting of this prophecy. We now turn our attention to the prophecy as an answer to Daniel's prayer for Israel, and the six things that must be accomplished for the prophecy to be fulfilled.

4. God's Response to Daniel's Prayer

Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city..." (Dan. 9:20-24a)

God's response to Daniel's prayer was in the form of a revelation brought to him by the angel, Gabriel. Gabriel stated that the period of seventy years of captivity were to be followed by a period of seventy *sevens* (or *weeks* of years). The command or decree of Cyrus which was to bring the captivity to an end – freeing the Jews and granting them liberty to return to their own land and rebuild the city and sanctuary – was also the **starting point** of the "*determined*" period of seventy weeks of years: "*Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem ...*" (v. 25).

Scripture clearly establishes that command as having been made by Cyrus. It was a command that originated with God. God stirred him to give this proclamation and even had it put in writing. This then is given as the starting point of Gabriel's seventy weeks of

years. The decree of Cyrus in the first year of his reign – in which the city and temple were rebuilt under Zerubbabel and Joshua – signaled both the termination of the seventy years of captivity and also the starting point for the prophetic period of seventy weeks that had been “*determined*” or measured out in the council of heaven upon the people and the holy city. Where the one period ended, the other – just seven times longer – was to begin.

One of the key features of the revelation Gabriel brought to Daniel was the precise measure of time (sixty-nine weeks; i.e. $69 = 7 + 62$) to “*Messiah, the Prince*” and the time when Messiah would be “*cut off*.”

It is interesting to note that the angel Gabriel, who brought these marvelous predictions to Daniel, is the same angel who announced the coming of their fulfillment to Zacharias and Mary (See Luke 1:11-17, 19-20, 26-33).

5. Six Things to be Accomplished (9:24)

I. “to finish the transgression”

Daniel, in his prayer, confessed the sins of his people – the sins for which God had brought upon them the desolation of their city and sanctuary. However, the sins of Daniel’s people were not yet finished. In fact, in this prophecy, the angel Gabriel revealed to Daniel that a far more terrible sin – the very culmination of the sins of the people – was yet to be committed by them. This was to happen within the period “*determined*” by the prophecy. The consequence of this sin would be a judgment far more severe than that wrought by Nebuchadnezzar. It would lead to the utter destruction of the city, the sanctuary, and the sweeping away of the nation as “*with a flood*” (v. 26). A greater transgression was yet to be committed which would lead to an even greater desolation. This desolation would be of age-long duration.

The definitions of the phrase “*to finish*” are: “to bring an end to,” “to complete,” “to fulfill,” or “to fill up.” In Numbers 7:1, it is used to refer to Moses having “*fully* set up the tabernacle.” The same root word is used in 1 Kings 7:51 to indicate that Solomon had “*finished* the building of the tabernacle.”

For Daniel, it was disturbing news that the full measure of Israel’s transgression was yet to be completed. In his prayer, he had acknowledged, “*Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him*” (Dan. 9:11). Their transgression had brought about this present desolation. Imagine Daniel’s grief now upon hearing this news. He had just finished pouring out his heart in confession and he is told that his people are not done their transgressing. The transgression is yet to be “filled up” or “finished” and, according to verses 26-27, the consequences of this completed transgression would be a far greater desolation than what they were presently experiencing.

In Matthew 23:31-32, Jesus makes reference to this as he speaks to Daniel’s people in his day: “*Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt.*”

Their fathers (Israel of old) transgressed against the covenant established at Mount Sinai and thus received the curses promised to those who disobeyed (See Lev. 26 and Deut. 28). In the context of Matthew 23, Jesus has been giving the Jewish leaders a pronouncement of woes. The word *woe* means *to be cursed*.

When Israel of old transgressed, they were warned by the prophets. The prophets called them to turn from their idolatry and the sin of forsaking their God. What was the nation's response to the prophets and their message from God himself? They sawed some in two. They threw some in pits. The prophets were stoned. They were slain with the sword. The Israelites refused to listen to the prophets. Thus, the predicted curses came upon them – the desolations.

Jesus, in Mathew 23, tells the Jewish leaders that they are proving to be sons of their fathers. *“Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.”* Jesus Christ has now come! God had sent his servants, but now God has sent his own Son – the Heir!

The phrase *“fill up”* used in verse 32 of Matthew 23, is a synonym for the Hebrew word translated *“finish”* in Daniel 9:24. When Jesus says, *“Fill up, then, the measure of your father's guilt,”* he is telling them to bring their transgression to its complete fulfillment – its complete end (i.e. Finish the transgression begun by your fathers, who killed the prophets). They did complete the transgression. How? By rejecting and killing the ultimate prophet; the Son, Jesus Christ!

Their fathers had added to their transgression by refusing to hear and then by killing the prophets. Now, Israel did not receive God's own Son. In fact, they performed the worst transgression imaginable – they crucified the Son of God. The creature demonstrated its hatred and self-exaltation in killing the Creator. What an abomination!

A few chapters earlier in Matthew, Jesus related a parable that set forth the entire story for those who had eyes to see.

“Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent them other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?” They said to Him, *“He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.”* Jesus said to them, *“Have you never read in the Scriptures:*

‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

This was the LORD'S doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?

Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.”(Matt. 21:33-44)

According to this parable, when they killed the heir, that did it – that finished it! That filled up the transgression and there was to be no more transgressing against this

landowner. Now he would destroy them and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who would render to him the fruits in their seasons.

In Matthew chapter 23, we see Jesus telling the Israelites of his day that they are about to fulfill this parable of the vinedressers:

“Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See your house is left to you desolate.” (Matt. 23:31-38)

Israel has continued to transgress and finishes the transgression (fills the cup, so to speak) by crucifying the Son himself. Chapter 24 of Matthew continues: *“Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down’”* (Matt. 24:1-2).

Jesus speaks of a coming desolation that will be the result of the killing of the Heir – the finishing of the transgression of Israel against their God (See also Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24; Acts 7:51-52).

Gabriel tells Daniel that this finishing of the transgression will be within the seventy weeks prophesied. In fact, that transgression and all the other promises will occur as a result of the Messiah’s being *“cut off”* (Dan. 9:26), which occurs during the seventieth or last week of the prophecy. This, of course, makes sense. If I said that seventy weeks are determined to accomplish something, and then I accomplished it in the first week, I would have been more accurate had I said that one week is determined to accomplish it. I wouldn’t say forty days are determined, if I was going to do it in ten; I would say ten. The finishing of the transgression, along with all the rest of the six things stated by Gabriel will occur in the seventieth week.

II. “to make an end of sins”

The meaning of the phrase *to make an end of* is: *to put away* or *abolish*. Where but by the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ was an end made of sins?

*He [Jesus – our great High Priest] then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to **put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself**.* (Heb. 9:26, emphasis added)

The marvelous working of God’s wisdom is impressive and amazing; the extreme sin of man serves to provide a complete remedy for sin!

Gabriel tells Daniel that seventy weeks are determined and then one will come who can and will take away sins. The Levitical system provided a temporary cover, but never took sin away. “*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin*” (Heb. 10:4). That is not possible. But when Messiah comes, he will make an end of sins.

And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God...” (Heb. 10:11-12)

Jesus sits down because he makes an end of sins through his sacrifice on the Cross. The ultimate transgression of Daniel’s people will be used by our glorious God to take away sins. What wisdom!

III. “to make reconciliation for iniquity”

The word “reconciliation” here is almost always translated “atonement” in other passages. For example, Psalm 79:9 reads: “*Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; and deliver us and provide atonement for our sins, for Your name’s sake!*” The word “atonement” in this verse is the same Hebrew word that is translated “reconciliation” in Daniel 9:24.

Atonement for iniquity is promised to take place within the “*determined*” seventy weeks. Atonement and reconciliation are made by means of a propitiatory sacrifice. How did Christ, in his death, placate the wrath and fury of God against iniquity?

But He [Messiah the Prince] was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace [i.e. reconciliation] was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isa. 53:5-6)

The promised atonement occurred when “the LORD ... laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us [Messiah was cut off], that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. 5:21)

*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we **were reconciled through the death of His Son**, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.* (Rom. 5:8-11, emphasis added)

What sweet promises for those who believe!

This atonement and reconciliation were to be accomplished, and indeed were accomplished, within the seventy weeks “*from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem*” by Cyrus.

IV. “to bring in everlasting righteousness”

This refers to the righteousness of God that comes from God. It is being made right with God forever. This would also occur within the time period of the seventy weeks. Where does Scripture teach that the righteousness of God is to be discovered?

For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith’ (Rom. 1:17).

The gospel is said to reveal the righteousness of God. Psalm 98:2 also teaches this truth: *“The LORD has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.”*

What really revealed the righteousness of God? What explained *how* God was just in justifying sinners? For example, how could God maintain his integrity and accept David? How can our holy God be just and righteous and receive a sinner like David – an adulterer and a murderer? On what basis can David be received? The only ground is by the Cross of Christ – where Messiah was cut off. This was where mercy and truth met together. This is where righteousness and peace kissed. The Cross! It is there that justice is satisfied; and because justice is perfectly satisfied, God is right to forgive David. He did not overlook David’s sin. David’s sin was paid in full by his Redeemer. God’s righteousness in receiving sinners into his kingdom of light is revealed in the Cross.

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified [declared righteous and treated as such] freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness [now and forever], that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Rom. 3:21-26)

Righteousness is the most prominent feature of the kingdom of God.

...for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 14:17)

A work was to be done, and indeed has been done, which was to bring in everlasting righteousness.

For the moth will eat them up like a garment. And the worm will eat them like wool; but My righteousness will be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation. (Isa. 51:8)

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption --- (1 Cor. 1:30)

If you stand righteous before God in Christ, it is forever – it is everlasting.

V. “to seal up vision and prophecy”

The term “vision” is a term used of Old Testament prophecies. It was one of the ways that God spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets in the giving of the Old Testament Scriptures. For example, Isaiah starts out his prophetic writings: “*The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz...*” Old Testament prophecies were preparatory and typical in nature. These prophecies then, with their fulfillment in Christ, have served their purpose (i.e. Acts 26:22-23; Heb. 1:1-2; Matt. 11:13). Therefore they are “sealed up.” This is one possible explanation for this phrase.

The other possible interpretation of this part of the prophecy is that it refers not to the closing up of the prophetic books, but to a closing up of the minds of the people to the actual spiritual reality found in Christ. Their eyes were blind to the fulfillment of these things (Acts 13:27-30; 1 Cor. 2:7-16; Matt. 13:10-17).

We know from the Scriptures that both of the above are true (although we are not sure which explanation best recovers the author’s intent---maybe both!), and both occurred in the seventieth week.

VI. “to anoint the Most Holy”

Literally this text says, “to anoint a holy of holies.” This language would most certainly have brought specific images to mind for the Jewish reader. First of all, he would have thought of the little room within the anointed tabernacle (Ex. 30:22-33) and later within the temple. The tabernacle, all its holy utensils, including the ark of the covenant, and even the high priest were anointed with a special oil (Lev. 8:10-12). This anointing set apart the tabernacle as holy - the place where God would manifest his glorious presence. In light of where the New Testament Scriptures take us, it seems clear that this anointing with oil prefigures an anointing by the Holy Spirit. In John 1:32-33, we see the Christ (the Anointed One) anointed by the Spirit. This same event may well be what is referred to in a similar way in Dan. 9:25, with its reference to the anointing of the Prince.

When was there an anointing of a holy of holies; a most holy place for the manifest presence of God? When was the Holy Spirit poured out to anoint a temple for God’s glory? First and foremost, the anointed holy place was the true tabernacle - Christ himself in human flesh (see John 1:14 where the word “dwelt” is literally “tabernacled” to show Jesus Christ’s fulfillment of the type). Jesus is the true temple. Not only does the entire temple point to Christ, but each of its parts also. In particular, the most holy place, that little room where the annual sacrifice and sprinkling of blood on the mercy seat for sin was made, provides an incredible picture of Christ as the “place” (his flesh) where a once-for-all sacrifice was made. As such, Jesus makes reference to his death and resurrection as a destruction and resurrection of the true temple of God, which is his body (John 2:19-22; Rev. 21:22).

Secondly, the church is identified as the temple of God through her union with Christ. He is the true temple and we, as his body, are also the true temple. In the New Covenant, beginning at Pentecost, the church is anointed by the Spirit as the new holy of holies. We are the anointed. We are the temple. God is in his people (Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Cor. 3:16-17).

Pentecost occurred fifty days after the resurrection. On that feast day, the Holy Spirit anointed a new holy thing --- the church --- to be the new holy of holies.

Who sent the Spirit? Jesus Christ. The resurrected and ascended Jesus, now seated on his throne, begins building a house for God (Acts 2:29-36; 2 Sam. 7:11-13; 1 Chron. 17:10-14; John 7:39). The Old Covenant was finished. The veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom as the old holy of holies was finished as the place of the manifest presence of God. At Pentecost, the anointing of the new holy of holies came – as the Spirit was poured out upon the church of God – to be his new temple.

These glorious events must be accomplished within the seventy-week period established by God and foretold by Gabriel. They all must happen within seventy weeks from the time of the decree by Cyrus.

All of these six predicted events were to be accomplished within the determined or marked-off period – and God did fulfill his promises! All of these things were accomplished in the final or seventieth week, which began with the anointing of the Prince, his being “cut off”, his resurrection and ascension, and the giving of the Holy Spirit to anoint a new holy of holies – the church of Jesus Christ. All has been accomplished!

To be continued next issue.