



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Divine Purpose in History and Prophecy, Part XVI

Daniel 9: 24 – 27

Eschatology Doctrinal Studies “The Prophecy of the Seventy Sevens, I”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] corrugation, and so I'd like to give you a word of comfort. Daniel says in chapter 2 in verse 21.

“And he changes the time and seasons. He removes kings, and raises up kings. He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to those who have understanding.”

And then in chapter 4 in verse 35, Daniel also has written.

“All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing. He does according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain his hand or say to him; what have you done?”

So we now know it was God's will for Bill Clinton to be elected president, and those of you who voted against him, you have a spiritual problem. You have now to

adjust, and those of you who voted the other way, why are you here? No, seriously, I think, regardless of how we voted, it's well to remember that it's the Lord who puts up presidents. It's the Lord who removes presidents, and we do not have sufficient information to know why, but we can be sure that, there is some divine justification for it.

One person has been after me to give them the quote from Bishop Ryall, which I cited a few weeks back, and so I'm going to cite it again because I've orders from home to read it again. Bishop Ryall on Luke chapter 21, verse 24 which is remember, “That Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” And Bishop Ryall, an Anglican bishop of the last century, wrote these words. They're very good words. He said, “The subject before us is a very affecting one, and ought to raise within us great searchings of heart. While the nations of Europe are absorbed in political conflicts and worldly business, the sands in their hourglass are ebbing away. While governments are disputing about secular things, and parliaments can hardly condescend to find a place for religion in their discussions, their days are numbered in the sight of God.

Yet a few years, and the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled. Their day of visitation will be passed and gone. Their misused privileges will be taken away. The judgments of God shall fall on them. They shall be cast aside as vessels in which God has no pleasure. Their dominion shall crumble away, and their vaunted institutions shall fall to pieces. The Jews shall be restored. The Lord Jesus shall come again in power and great glory. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, and the times of the Gentiles shall come to an end.” Well, the Lord has told us that that's going to come to pass and so, of course, we really know that it will.

So the election was yesterday, and it's very fitting that our subject should be “The Tribulation” tonight. So we're turning to Daniel chapter 9, and reading verse 24 through verse 27. And, incidentally, I'm going to be spending, I think, three times on this great passage because it's so important, and I hope you will not find it tedious that we're going

to do it in detail, but, I think, it's very important. It's very important for pre-millennialism to understand this passage, and so we're going to spend some time in it; tonight, next Wednesday night, and probably the following Wednesday night also. It's that important to my mind. But let's begin with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks for the opportunity that is ours tonight, to study again the word of God. We praise Thee for the fact that our great God in heaven knows the future. Omniscience belongs to Thy being. It's one of the properties that Thou hast had from eternity past, Lord. And, therefore, we read the Scriptures with the confidence that the things that are set forth in them shall surely come to pass. We thank Thee for the light that Thou hast given to us. We know there are many things that we do not understand, cannot understand, but there are many things that Thou hast revealed to us, and give us diligence to read and ponder them. And to be submissive to the Holy Spirit that we might learn what Thou art doing, and find our place in that which is the will of God for our generation. We pray, particularly, for each one here and ask Thy blessing upon them and upon their families, and for those Lord who are unable to be here, for various reasons, but particularly those who for physical reasons, are unable to be here, we pray for them. Now we ask for Thy presence with us, as we read and study the word of God.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Well, we're turning to Daniel chapter 9, and I'd like to read Daniel chapter 9, verse 1 through verse 27, which is the entire chapter. And beginning at verse 1 the prophet writes.

“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who 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 specified by the word of God through Jeremiah the prophet that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”

Then there follows this marvelous prayer. Pay close attention to it. It's one of the great prayers of the Bible.

“Then I set my face toward the Lord God, to make a request by prayer and supplication, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes. And I prayed to the Lord, my God, and made confession and said, ‘O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps his covenants and mercy with those who love him, and with those who keep his commandments. We have sinned, and committed iniquity. We have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from your precepts and your judgments. Neither have we heeded your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongs to you, but to us shame of face, as it is this day; to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel; those near and those far off in all the countries to which you have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against you. O lord, to us belong shame of face; to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against you. To the Lord, our God, belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him. We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord, our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yes, all Israel has transgressed your law, and has departed so as to 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. And he has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us, and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.’”

Well, of course, Daniel, you’ll remember, is writing from captivity, as a result of the judgment of God; the captivity in Babylon, of which he is a part.

“As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us, yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord, our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand your truth. Therefore, the Lord has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us, for the Lord, our God, is righteous in all the works which he does, though we have not obeyed his voice. And, now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made yourself a name as it is this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all your righteousness I pray; let your anger and your fury be turned away from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people are a reproach to all those around us. Now, therefore, our God, hear the prayer of your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake, cause your face to shine on your sanctuary which is desolate. O my God, incline your ear and hear, open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by your name; for we do not present our supplications before you, because of our righteous deeds, but because of your great mercies. O Lord, hear. O Lord, forgive. O Lord, listen and act. Do not delay for your own sake my God, for your city and your people are called by your name.”

That’s a marvelous prayer. It reminds me of David’s prayer in 2 Samuel chapter 7, which is another marvelous one too.

Now in verse 20. We turn to the prophecy of the seventy weeks.

“Now when I was speaking and 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’ve come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved. Therefore, consider the matter, and understand the vision.’”

Now, here comes the prophecy of the seventy sevens.

“Seventy weeks are determined for your people, and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity.”

Some of you, no doubt, have the word “atonement” instead of “reconciliation”. The word is the common word that means atonement, kaphar, but this translation I’m reading has “reconciliation.”

“To bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy; know, therefore, and understand that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem unto Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.”

You notice some of the marginal readings have “and shall have nothing”. Literally, the Hebrew text and says, “And there shall be nothing to him”. “Shall have nothing” seems to be very good. Then we read, “And the people of the prince who is to come,

shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, until the end of the war desolations are determined. Then he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.” Now, I should say this; that that word translated “then” is the simple conjunction that normally means “and,” but the authors, obviously, are taking it in the sense that they feel the context justifies, and, of course, is a possible rendering. Strictly speaking, it’s literal, literally, “and he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week, but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering, and on the wing of abomination shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation which is determined is poured out on the desolate.”

So the prophecy of the seventy sevens. Incidentally, we call it “The Prophecy of the Seventy Sevens” because in verse 24, the term “seventy weeks” is literally, “seventy sevens,” but that’s characteristic of the language of Hebrew, and the sense of seventy weeks is justifiable, and we’ll say a word about it in a moment.

This prophecy of the seventy sevens brings us to one of the giant subjects of the word of God, and I’m referring to the subject of the tribulation because if you reflect upon your reading of the Bible, you will know that the Scriptures in books such as Daniel, Revelation, the Gospels with their Olivet Discourse of our Lord, the eschatological epistles of the New Testament, not to mention the great prophets of the Old Testament; all of these sources of biblical literature tell us much about the tribulation. So when we think about the tribulation, we’re talking about one of the really significant subjects of the word of God. You’ll be astonished if you think about it, at how much of the Bible relates to the time before our Lord’s second coming, and the great trials that face those upon the earth at that time.

What we’re trying to do, of course, is simply an overview; not studying the whole tribulation, we couldn’t possibly do that. There is an old country saying that says, “You can’t get all the coons up the same tree”, and we’re not going to try to teach everything about the tribulation tonight. What we’ll do is, to give something like a telescopic picture

of what Daniel has to say here about the timing of events that have to do with the tribulation.

And so we'll not give a microscopic approach, but a telescopic approach, and touch the high points. Happily, the major points of the subject are fairly easy to comprehend, but we're going to look at the chronology of the time, then at a few of the features that characterize the period, and finally, the reasons for such a time in the program of God. Now, that's the overall picture that I'm trying to follow, and tonight, of course, we'll pay particular attention to the beginning of that general study.

If we were thinking about studying the tribulation, I couldn't think of a better passage to begin with than Daniel chapter 9, verse 24 through verse 27, because this truly is one of the Bible's greatest and most important prophecies. It gives us at least two things that are extremely important. First of all, it gives us a general outline of God's plan for Israel from Daniel's day on to the end. And then secondly, it gives us significant details on the chronology of this great subject; the great tribulation.

Sir Edward Denny, who was a very well-known student of prophecy once said, “This prophecy is the backbone of prophecy.” In other words, if we understand this one, then we're going to have a good foundation for the study of biblical prophecy. John Owen, one of the greatest of the Puritan theologians said that, “Because this prophecy sets forth the time and coming of the Messiah, it has been quoted, I'm quoting him “Justly esteemed the racks and tortures of the rabbis.” Another older interpreter has said, “It's a passage of great importance containing such a prediction of the time, and purposes and consequences of the coming and death of the Messiah, his rejection by the Jews, and the destruction of their temple, city, and nation, as cannot be equaled in the Old Testament.”

There's a story that Arthur Petrie tells in an exposition that he gives of it that I found very interesting. It's a story that occurred in the eighteenth century, I believe. Well, he was talking from the eighteenth century, but he said, “In the last century, the seventeenth, there was a public dispute in Venice between a Jew and a convert from

Judaism, concerning the sense of this very prophecy. A noted rabbi was chosen as moderator and a great many Jews were present. The Christian urged his arguments against the Jews with such force that at length, the rabbi said, and these are his words, “Let us shut our books, for if we go on examining this prophecy any further, we shall all become Christians. It cannot be denied, that the time of the Messiah’s coming is already past, but whether Jesus of Nazareth be the person, I cannot determine.” That is a very interesting comment because what we do read here is very plainly a prophecy that significantly states that the Messiah must be one who has already come.

Now, I think, it’s true that man might say at that point, “I don’t know yet whether Jesus of Nazareth fits the details, but the Messiah has come.” Of course, I believe, if he went then to the records, he would easily find that our Lord was the one. Well, the consequence of this was that several Jews converted; one of them, a very learned man, wrote a large book against the Jews, in the preface of which, he tells this story that this was the means of his conversion; this public debate over Daniel 9:24 through verse 27.

Now, Daniel has begun this chapter, as we have read, with a word that helps us to understand why he was so concerned about this because he says in the first two verses, “In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who 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 specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”

Now, what Daniel says is that he’s been studying the Book of Jeremiah, and in studying the Book of Jeremiah, he has come to realize that the time of the captivity is drawing near an end. Jeremiah tells in his book that the captivity would last for seventy years. And so Daniel says, “I’ve been studying the books and I’ve come to realize that seventy years is the time of the desolations of Jerusalem.” Then he goes on to pray, and his prayer is, essentially, as you can tell, it’s a prayer that the Lord would forgive. And

you might, if you had talked to Daniel, I feel sure that you would have thought from his prayer that what he is praying is that God would turn back the captivity and bring the children of Israel back into the land; those that he'd driven off into Babylon, and then those into Assyria, for that matter. But he would turn the captivity and bring the people back. So that, obviously, is what Daniel is thinking about in this prayer, it would seem. He's praying, making confession of sins, and asking God to forgive.

Now, after the prayer, of course, there comes the word of God to him, given to him, as we read here, by Gabriel and the message that Gabriel gave him is the answer to the prayer in which Daniel's thoughts are made amenable to the word of God. He thought, I'm sure, at least I think I'm sure, he thought that if he prayed and confessed sins, there was a good chance that everything would come to pass. God would bring the captivity back. The city would be restored. The people would be restored, and the blessings promised in the covenants would be theirs. But Gabriel comes to tell him, “Well, there's going to be a lengthy time before that is to take place.” And so the prophecy of the seventy sevens is an answer from the Lord to calm the spirit and clarify the spirit of Daniel the prophet.

Now, you might ask, “Well, why was Daniel so disturbed? This prayer is a prayer of a person who is truly disturbed. Notice how many times he confesses his sins and Israel's sins. Over and over again, he talks about his sin, and he confesses that sin. Now, I'd like to suggest to you why Daniel was so concerned. Now, you'll have to take my word for this because we haven't been studying the whole Book of Daniel, but we did study Daniel chapter 2, and remember what Daniel chapter 2 says is that there are going to be four great world kingdoms. And after the coming of the four great world kingdoms, the passing of the four kingdoms, there is going to come one final kingdom from heaven, the kingdom of God.

And then the prophecies shall find their culmination. When the stone cut out without hands comes from heaven, strikes the image representative of the four Gentile

world empires, destroys it, scatters the chaff far and wide; the stone then growing to become the kingdom of God upon the earth. Well now, Daniel had more intelligence than we, and he was already told something of the significance of that vision. He was told that the head of the vision, remember, was the king of Babylon. He was told that after that there would come another kingdom, and this second kingdom would be inferior to his. And then he was told that a third kingdom of bronze would come which would rule over the earth. And then the fourth kingdom which was so strong the final form, which evidently in this picture of this last image of many feet high, which the stone would strike in Daniel's thought, there were four great world kingdoms to come and go before the kingdom of God came upon the earth.

Now, in chapter 7 further details were added because in the giving of the image or rather, in the giving of the vision in chapter 7, instead of using a great, impressive figure, the prophet is given a vision of four beasts. And the four wild beasts were first, the lion for Babylon, the bear for Medo-Persia, the leopard for Greece, and then the final wild beast is described this way, “Behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth. It was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.” Now, we commented upon the fact that the ten toes of the first vision in chapter 2 were identified as kings, and here in chapter 7 when he read of the ten horns, we are, of course, probably to speak also of the ten kingdoms, which will be manifest in the latter stages of that fourth kingdom. Now, think about for a moment. Daniel doesn't know what we know. We know world history. He was living in the age of the kingdom of Babylon, so he didn't know anything about Medo-Persia, other than perhaps that it was a kingdom. He didn't know anything about Greece. He didn't know anything about Rome. What he knew was simply, the Babylonian kingdom. He knew about Nebuchadnezzar, and Nebuchadnezzar was identified.

Now, when Daniel wrote this chapter, he was about eighteen months or so from the end of captivity. Now, think about it for a moment. About eighteen months before the end of the captivity, and he's been given these great visions in which it is said to him, there will be four great world empires, and at the destruction of the last, the kingdom of God on the earth, in harmony with the prophecies, as he knew them, of the word of God, would come into being. Think about it. Four great world empires rise and fall within eighteen months? You can see how he was disturbed. As a matter of fact that's expressed by him. Look at the end of chapter 8. While I let you read the last verse of chapter 7, after the image of the wild beasts. This is the end of the account. “As for me Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed, but I kept the matter in my heart.” Four kingdoms to come and go when he's living in the first, and eighteen months? What turmoil would this signify?

Then at the end of chapter 8, when he has the vision of the ram and the male goat, which is further identification of what is going to come to pass, we read in verse 27 of chapter 8, “And I, Daniel, fainted, and was sick for days. Afterward, I rose and went about the king's business. I was astonished at the vision, but no one understood it.” I was not living it then. Well, now you see that you can see why he was disturbed. To think of this turmoil in the nations of the earth as he knew them, all in this short period of time, would have been a disturbing thing, and I think that's why he said, “Gets down upon his knees, he prays about it”, and then God in his wonderful mercy gives him some instruction concerning the times which Daniel, as a human being, did not fully understand. So perhaps in the sixty-ninth year of the captivity or just before it, he learns some things that will help him understand how it's going to be possible for three more world empires to rise and fall and then the kingdom of God coming.

Well, we read a significant thing in verse 21, when Gabriel comes while he was confessing his sins, and you'll notice he comes, and interrupts him in his prayers, “While I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, presenting

my supplication before the Lord, my God, for the holy mountain of my God.” That, of course, is Jerusalem and the people. “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 sacrifice.”

That’s very interesting because so far as we know, Daniel for years had never seen the evening sacrifice, but he remembered it. He’s in captivity. He’s far away from Jerusalem, but the time is still the time of the evening sacrifice. He remembers it as a young boy. About three o’clock in the afternoon when they offered up the lamb and also made another offering or so then, but every afternoon the yearling of the lamb was slain and offered. It’s also suggestive because it seems to suggest that what God does is always done on the ground of sacrifice. So even here, we read that Gabriel came about the time of the evening sacrifice and informed him that he was going to give him skill to understand what God was doing. It also suggests, of course, that everything is, ultimately, related to the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It’s just a suggestion, but it certainly is very significant, I think, that it was the time of the evening sacrifice.

Now, we need to talk about the meaning of some of the terms. We’re just going to look at verse 24, tonight. But some of the terms that need some explication are first of all, the seventy weeks, then the word “decreed”, and we’ll be satisfied with that and go on. But we read, “Seventy weeks are determined for your people, and for your holy city.” Now, we must understand these terms in the light of the usage of the Hebrew language. It could only be understood by the context if you did not understand the Hebrew language, but the “seventy weeks” are to be understood as seventy weeks of years. In other words, all the Hebrew text says is seventy weeks, but the weeks could be of years, or it could be a week of days. We have this same kind of construction in slightly different way when Jacob was dealing with Laban for his wives, and he was told, of course, he was to serve a week for one of them. You read in the text “serve a week,” but it was a week of years or seven years. The “seventy weeks,” we learn from verse 2, are weeks of years

in this context; not weeks of days. In chapter 10 in verse 2 we read, “The message was true, but the appointed time was long, and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks.” Now there, the weeks are weeks of days. You wouldn’t think of Daniel mourning for twenty-one years, would you? Well, you would probably know that from the context, but in the Hebrew text the word “days” is added, so it’s three weeks of days. Whereas here in the “seventy weeks,” we’re dealing with seventy weeks as the context indicates from verse 2, weeks of years.

Now, multiply seventy by seven. Seventy times seven comes to four hundred and ninety years, does it not? So what Daniel is first told then is that four hundred and ninety years are determined for your people, and for your holy city. In other words, “Daniel, you’re looking for all of this to happen in the next eighteen months. No. Four hundred and ninety years are involved.” Now, there are going to be further definitions of this, but we’ll leave it just simply that. We can call this seventy heptads; that is a period of seven years or seventy heptomads to use other terms that we don’t use very much, but that’s the force of it. Four hundred and ninety years.

The New American Standard Bible has a note in its margin, “seventy units of seven.” So units of seven, again, weeks or four hundred and ninety years. If you’re interested in the use of the term in Genesis chapter 29, where Jacob is trying to deal with Laban over his wives, it’s in Genesis 29, verse 27 through verse 30, and then again also, the subject comes up again, grammatically and syntactically with Joseph in chapter 41 in verse 25 through verse 27.

But now, the next word is very important. Seventy weeks are determined. This is a Hebrew word *naqab* that means “severed off” or “ordained.” You could almost call it “cut off” and “decreed” is really the force of it. “Seventy weeks are decreed” or “are determined”. Now, these weeks of years or four hundred and ninety years are “severed off” from what?

Well, what has Daniel been told in chapter 2? He’s been told about four great kingdoms that are going to rise and fall, and then there will come the kingdom of God. So he’s been talking about the times of the Gentiles, and so the seventy years that are “severed” or “decreed” are seventy years that are severed off from the times of the Gentiles. In other words, the times of the Gentiles have become with Jerusalem being trodden down as Babylon took Judah and the remainder into captivity, then began the times of the Gentiles that our Lord talks about, “the times of the Gentiles,” Luke chapter 21 in verse 24. So what Daniel is saying then is that four hundred and ninety years are going to be severed off from the times of the Gentiles, and they apply to Israel alone. Notice how he says, “Seventy weeks are determined or decreed for your people and your holy city.” So when we think of the times of the Gentiles, which began when Nebuchadnezzar took the city of Jerusalem and destroyed things, on to the time when our Lord comes. Well, we know that that’s been nineteen hundred and ninety-two years, add four for Clinton’s presidency, if he lasts the four years, six hundred and five years before the time of our Lord, so we already have over twenty-five hundred years in the times of the Gentiles. But what about Israel because Israel is the ultimate subject of the word of God as you know; our Lord and his people. Well, out of that twenty-five hundred plus years, four hundred and ninety years are severed off to deal particularly with Israel and their future. And so, “Thy people and thy holy city” are still in the mind and heart of God.

Now, let’s spend the remainder of our time talking about the design of the seventy weeks. Verse 24, as you know it says, “Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city,” and here are the things for which the four hundred and ninety years are determined or are severed off.

First, to finish the transgression, by the way, if you look carefully at the six of them, you’ll notice the first three are negative in sense, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make atonement or reconciliation for iniquity. The next three are

positive. These three are, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Now, I've given you a little hand-drawn diagram there, which will help you to understand what we're talking about. Incidentally, the diagram in which I gave you all of, so I would have one that I could look at, but I think I remember. I did it copying some other things that Harold Horner particularly had done.

And the four hundred and ninety years, you'll notice, there are the four hundred and ninety years that relates to the past and four hundred and ninety years as it relates to the future. The reason for that is this; that Israel had for four hundred and ninety years, not observed the Sabbath law. Remember the law in Israel was that every seven years they would not plant. They would have a yearly Sabbath. We know of weekly Sabbaths, but there was a yearly Sabbath and they had not done it. So for seventy years, they had failed to do what they were supposed to do. Now, the seventy years that they did not observe the Sabbath law made up four hundred and ninety years; six years in which they worked; the one year in which they should not have planted and worked, but they did work, and so actually, they owe the Lord four hundred and ninety years, so to speak. They were disobedient for that length of time, and so in the future, the four hundred and ninety years that have to do with the future, are related to the four hundred and ninety, which represent their disobedience.

You know, when you look at verse 24, and you read, “Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city,” that's a very general way of looking at it. I think last time I mentioned that what we have here is a general approach to things, like a person who goes in to buy a Cadillac. I've never had this experience, but nevertheless, I've imagined it a lot; going in to buy a Cadillac. And you can just imagine going in and looking at one of those beautiful automobiles, and walking around and examining it as much as you could, and then the salesman comes up, and he begins to talk to you about the details that make up the beauty of that great automobile. Well, what the first part of this verse does is give us the general picture. “Four hundred and ninety

years are determined for your people and for your holy city.” And now the details will be given in verse 25 through verse 27, but here is the general picture; verse 24. Here are the things that are going to characterize the four hundred and ninety years.

First, to finish the transgression. Incidentally, I need to say something about something that George Laird has said in one of his books called, “The Last Things.” Professor Laird is now with the Lord. He was a Christian man. He was Professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary in California. He put himself forth as a pre-millennialist and defended the doctrine of pre-millennialism, but not dispensational pre-millennialism; historical pre-millennialism. But in a book, a simple little book, that he has written called, “The Last Things,” Professor Laird has said some things that I think it would be pretty good for me to mention. He has, let me see if I can find the place where, what I should point to in talking about this, in this book, “The Last Things,” he’s handled Daniel chapter 9, verse 24 through verse 27, more like a amillenarian than a pre-millenarian. For example, he opts for what he calls a “Messianic interpretation” rather than the eschatological one. Among the ways he differs from his own confession is he says, “To bring in everlasting righteousness is the gift of God through the death of his Son, apparently without any universal sense but just simply the doctrine of justification by faith. To seeable vision and prophecy is to bring the Old Testament era to an end.” The third point, I think, is even less valid. He says, “To anoint the most holy place is to anoint the Messiah with the spirit of God.” And, finally, he translates the words of verse 27, “And he shall make a strong covenant with many for a week,” as “he shall cause the covenant to prevail.”

Now, I’ll talk about that a little later, but the point that I want to make is that what Daniel says is that, “These seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city.” In other words, the subject of this prophecy is not simply Israel, but the subject of this prophecy is Jerusalem also. And so when we talk about the restoration of

Israel, we must also talk about the restoration of the city of Jerusalem. That’s made very plain. Professor Laird misses the point entirely. We’ll talk a little bit more about that later.

But first of all then, “to finish the transgression.” That expression means “to shut up” like shutting up in a prison. The Hebrew verb *kala* means to “to shut up.” So to shut up in a prison, that is, to restrain the transgression. What’s interesting about it is that in the original text, there is an article with “transgression.” The transgression. It’s almost as if there is anticipated in this the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ because that is “the transgression” of the children of Israel. In Hosea chapter 5 in verse 15, you might turn to this if you can find it. Hosea chapter 5, I shouldn’t say that, should I? All of you know how to find Hosea, don’t you? Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah. If I could just know where Obadiah was, I’d know where Hosea was. Anyway, we’ll have to take time out for a cup of tea while you find Hosea. Some of you are not even bothering to look for Hosea. You think I’m going to read the verse and I am, but it’s good for you to be able to find those verses. Hosea chapter 5, verse 15 says, “I will return to my place till they acknowledge their offense, then they will seek my face.” Notice this next expression. “In their affliction.” That’s one of the words used in the Old Testament elsewhere for the “tribulation.” “In their affliction they will earnestly seek me.”

So when we read here, “To finish the transgression,” is to shut up the transgression; that is, Israel’s rebellion against the Lord God will be brought to an end with the four hundred and ninety years. Secondly, “to make an end of sins” probably to be taken as plural. The text can be taken as a singular, but plural is really the force of it, I think. “To make an end of sins” or to seal up sins. The word means “to restrain,” and, thus, to bring to safe custody. It’s to do away with sin for your people and your holy city.

Thirdly, “to make atonement or reconciliation for iniquity,” this is the application of the Cross of Jesus Christ, which is described later on in this passage in verse 26. “And after the sixty-two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off”, and so “to make reconciliation for iniquity” is the application of the Cross to Israel.

There's a marvelous little passage in Zechariah chapter 12 inverse 10 through chapter 13, verse 1. Let me turn to that passage. It's the story of how Israel, in the last days, will come to the knowledge of our Lord, and in chapter 12 in verse 10 the prophet writes, "In the midst of the tribulation, and I will pour on the house of David, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on me whom they pierced." Whom they cut off. Isn't that interesting? We talk about the doctrine of efficacious grace; effectual grace. Well, this is effectual grace with reference to the nation Israel. "I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication." And in response to the efficacious grace of God, Israel in the future will, look on me whom they have pierced. Yes, they will mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for him, as one grieves for a firstborn."

Now, what is also interesting about this is to read verse 13. I didn't read it, and I turned away from it. I've got to find it again. Zechariah chapter 13 in verse 1 says, "In that day, a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness." "In that day, a fountain opened." Why, my Christian's friend wasn't the fountain opened almost two thousand years ago? In what sense can we say, "In that day, the Messianic day, a fountain shall be opened?" Well, we could say it will be opened in the sense that they will enter into the experience of what our Lord provided by virtue of the shedding of his blood on Calvary's cross, so many centuries before.

It's very much like Genesis chapter 21 in verse 19, where Hagar has a similar kind of experience. At least it illustrates the point. You'll remember when the bond woman, Hagar, was cast out by Abraham and Sarah, "She took the bond woman and her son, and they went off early in the morning, took bread and a skin of water, and putting it on her shoulder, he, Abraham, gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. She departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. The water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. Then she went and sat down across from

him at a distance of about a bow shot, for she said to herself; let me not see the death of the boy. So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept, and God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, ‘What ails you Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise. Lift up the lad, and hold him with your hands, for I will make him a great nation.’ Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water.” Now, I suggest to you, the well of water was there all along, but she didn’t see it. Well, it’s like that with Calvary. Calvary’s there. It’s there. It’s been there nineteen hundred plus years. But Israel as a nation has not yet seen it, and so Daniel talks about that when he says, “To make atonement for iniquity.” Atonement has been made but Israel will enter into it then.

The fourth thing; to bring in everlasting righteousness. Now, this is not a reference to justification by faith, though, of course, it’s included. What we’re talking about here is something broader and more universal than that. What we have in mind here is the results of the New Covenant, which the Lord Jesus ratified at the last Passover and first Lord’s Supper, when he took the wine and said, “This cup is the New Covenant in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Everlasting righteousness because the righteousness is a righteousness that is eternal. When a person possesses it, he cannot lose it.

And then fifthly; to seal up vision and prophecy. At that time in the future, when the kingdom of God comes upon the earth, the functions of vision and prophecy are completed. And, finally, he says, “To anoint the most holy.” Now Professor Laird here, as well as a number of amillennialists, do not like the idea of anointing the most holy, for the simple reason that, the most holy is a place identified with a Temple. And if we acknowledge that this is the Temple then we must also acknowledge that the Temple exists in those days. And so a number of the amillennialists have sought to make the “most Holy” here, a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, as Professor Laird, a pre-millennialist does in his book. But that’s impossible. When this expression is used, and

it's used the Holy of the Holies, is used thirty-nine times in the Old Testament; always in reference to the tabernacle or the temple or to the holy articles used in them.

When referring to the “most holy place” where the Ark was kept, you know, in the holiest of all where the mercy seat was, then the article is regularly used with “the most holy place,” the Holy of Holies. But it's not used when it refers to the holy articles that were used within the holy place, nor is it used when the whole temple complex is referred to. In other words, when the temple and all of the things that had to do with the temple were used, the article is not found. The article is not found here. In other words, in view of this, it's highly likely that the phrase refers to the temple, which in view of the context, must be a future temple.

Now, we're told in 2 Thessalonians 2 and other places that there will be a temple in the future, and so this is a confirmation of that fact. And, consequently, amillennialists who reject the idea of a future temple, and who find the fulfillment of this overall passage in Christ's first coming, the anointing of him there, in this instance at least, need to find a more accurate interpretation of these words. So “to anoint the most holy” is a reference to the establishment of the future temple as a place where God is worshipped.

In summary then, the four items were fulfilled in principle at the first coming of our Lord; to finish the transgression, make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness. The last two are fulfilled only at the second coming of our Lord; to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.

Now, I've already done the work for the second message because Martha and I are leaving on Friday morning, and traveling to Edenton, North Carolina, for a couple of days to see four of her many grandchildren, and then we're going down to the Holy City, Charleston, South Carolina, for three nights there, and we're coming back next Wednesday. And so I had to prepare ahead of time for next Wednesday. But next Wednesday, we'll take up the question of, “How are these things, these six things, going to be accomplished?” and deal with the things that Daniel says in verse 25 and verse 26

and verse 27. And I'd like also, when we come to the end, and that's why I said we may have to have three studies, is to deal with the question of this passage, and the relationship that it has to the three great prophetic schemes that have been offered as explanations of the word of God for a long time; post-millennialism, pre-millennialism, and amillennialism. But now we've come to the end of our studies, so let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are thankful for Thee, for the opportunity to study again Thy word. We thank Thee for this great chapter, and we ask, Lord, that as we ponder it, we as Daniel may come to understand it, and not only to understand it, but also to realize its significance, and its significance for us in our daily lives, as well as in our hopes with regard to the future. We thank Thee for this time together. If there should be some here who do not really know our Lord as the one who has made atonement for sin, we ask, Lord, that Thou wilt touch their hearts, cause them to see their need, cause them to flee to him and receive the gift...