



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Divine Purpose in History and Prophecy, Part XVII

Daniel 9: 24-27

Eschatology Doctrinal Studies “The Prophecy of the Seventy Sevens - II”

TRANSCRIPT

Open our class with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the magnificent prophecies that the word of God contains. We thank Thee for the light that they shed upon the future. We thank Thee also for the Holy Spirit who has been given to us to give us understanding, and we thank Thee for the prophecy that we are looking at; Daniel’s great prophecy of the seventy weeks. And again we ask for divine illumination and, Lord, may we also be enabled to understand the place that this prophecy has in the divine purpose, which we are looking into. We again ask for divine help and understanding as we turn to the Scriptures this evening. May our Lord Jesus Christ, may our triune God be exalted in the things that we see from the Scriptures.

We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

[Message] Well, it has been said that no one can fool all the people all the time, but weather forecasters come close, and we are here tonight, and it might be raining

outside, and we're hoping, of course, that they're not right until we at least get home. You also might be able to say, “No one can fool people all the time, but prophecy preachers come close, because there are many who sought to study the Scriptures, and have come to understandings which time has proven to be false.” So I hope you understand that when we are looking at the prophetic word, we are looking at it as God's Word. We are seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in understanding it, but in the final analysis, we are ultimately human beings, and no doubt, mistakes may be made.

We're turning tonight again to one of the most important of the prophecies of the Bible; Daniel chapter 9, verse 24 through verse 27. Don Campbell has written a little book on the Book of Daniel, and in it he made reference to a seminary student, I presume was a student at Dallas Theological Seminary, who was also a pastor while he was going through the seminary. And he stated that, “He did not preach on prophecy because “prophecy distracts people from the present.” One of his professors who heard him say that observed, “There are certainly a lot of distraction in the Scriptures.” Because if you think about it for a moment, all of the Scripture, practically, at one point, was the prophetic Scripture, and as we look at it now, and think of the vast sections of the Old Testament and the New Testament in the eschatological epistles, and the Book of Revelation, as well as other passages scattered through the other parts of the New Testament, I'm sure you'll realize that the Bible contains vast amounts of the prophetic word. So we don't apologize for studying the prophetic word. As a matter of fact, for the Christian, it's one of the greatest motivations for our present living, and so we look at it as not simply something that is concerned with the future, and that's always exciting to a certain extent, but we look at it as something which is designed to stir us to live in a way that will bring honor and glory to our Lord.

Well, the passage we're looking at is concerned with Israel's relation to the times of the Gentiles, and we commented upon the fact, that the Book of Daniel as you know is written in two languages. It's written in Hebrew. It's written in Aramaic. In chapter 2 in

verse 3 or 4, there the Aramaic section begins and continues through the seventh chapter. Now, if you will study those chapters carefully, you will see that they have primarily to do with the Gentile times; the times of the Gentiles. “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled,” the Lord Jesus said. The times of the Gentiles began with six hundred and five BC, when Nebuchadnezzar took Israel captive, destroyed the city, and from that point on to the present time, we are living in the times of the Gentiles. It’s very easy to see that we’re living in the times of the Gentiles because Jerusalem is still “trodden down of the Gentiles.” Israel does not even have access for the worship of their God on the Temple Mount. And so, consequently, we are still living in the times of the Gentiles. And the times of the Gentiles will not come to an end until those four great kingdoms mentioned in Daniel chapter 2 and then in Daniel chapter 7 in a different form, of wild beasts, until those four kingdoms signified in the image vision that Nebuchadnezzar saw, come to their conclusion. When they come to a conclusion, then the kingdom of God is brought supernaturally from heaven itself, the times of the Gentiles end, God’s promises with reference to the nation Israel come to their fruition.

B. W. Newton once said, “The times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled when the times of the four great kingdoms of the Gentiles, according to Daniel’s prophecy, shall be expired, and the fifth kingdom or the kingdom of Christ shall be set up in their place.” Preceding this he had said, “It is still trodden down” referring to Jerusalem. “It is still trodden down by the Gentiles, and consequently, the times of the Gentiles are not yet fulfilled.”

Now, you can see, I think, that it’s most wrong in prophetic study to fail to see that Daniel’s “seventy weeks” have to do with Israel. The person who quoted Mr. Newton said, “The student will readily see the force of this, and how strongly it condemns the misapplication of Daniel’s Messianic kingdom to the church, as now constituted.” What we are talking about in Daniel’s “seventy weeks” as he puts it is, “seventy weeks are

determine for your people, and for your holy city.” So these weeks have to do then, ultimately, with the nation Israel not with the church of Jesus Christ.

We said also, and I’ll repeat it because I think it’s very true, that Sir Edward Denny said with reference to this prophecy, the prophecy of the seventy weeks, that it is “the backbone of prophecy.” It’s so important that we understand this particular section.

Now, the outline of the chapter we commented on last week, Daniel has just received a magnificent vision through Nebuchadnezzar in which, you’ll remember, the vast image was seen with the four different kinds of metals, which were interpreted as being a reference to four great kingdoms, which would come to pass upon the earth, the last of which would be overthrown by the “stone cut out without hands from heaven” and God’s kingdom on the earth would be established. In the seventh chapter, the same thoughts are set forth but this time under the form of four wild beasts; the lion, the leopard, the bear, and then the beast that is indescribable; the fourth and final kingdom set forth. And again, the prophecy concludes with the victory of heaven itself, and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth.

Well now, it’s not surprising that Daniel was very much disturbed as we pointed out when he heard the vision of chapter 7. We read in verse 28 of chapter 7.

“As for me Daniel, my thoughts greatly troubled me, and my countenance changed, but I kept the matter in my heart.”

Incidentally, you can see, Daniel took this very, very seriously. He did not look at it as we tend to look at prophecy, as just a view of the future, but he looked at it as being very, very significant for God’s divine purpose. At the end of chapter 8, when further information has been given to him, we read.

“And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days. Afterward, I arose and went about the king’s business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.”

I suggested last time that the reason Daniel was so upset was that he knew the prophecy of the seventy years of captivity for Israel because our chapter begins with verse 1.

“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, Daniel knew that they were near the end of the seventy years of desolation, but here he is told in the great image vision of chapter 2, and the vision of the beats in chapter 7, that four empires are going to rise and fall. Well, three more besides the Babylonian will rise and fall and then the kingdom of God would come.

Now, he prayed in this prayer. You’ll notice in verse 15, 16, and 17 which followed.

“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, and we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all your righteousness, I pray that 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.” Now, you’ll notice he’s concerned about Israel, the city, and the Temple. “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 who are called by your name.”

So very concerned about what was going to happen in so short a time, Daniel turns to the Lord in prayer and asks for understanding, for forgiveness, and for God to act for the city and for the sanctuary. I can just imagine that to think of three great empires to rise and fall within the period of less than two years, probably, that was a very disturbing thing for the prophet.

Now, we saw that after he had prayed his prayer, Gabriel came to him, and Gabriel said he had come to give him understanding.

“And he talked with Daniel and he said, ‘O Daniel, I’ve now come forth to give you skill to understand. At the beginning of your prayer, the command went out, and I’ve come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved, therefore, consider the matter and understand the vision.’”

And then there comes the great prophecy. Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, number one; to make an end of sins, number two; to make reconciliation for iniquity, number three; to bring in everlasting righteousness, number four; to seal up vision and prophecy, number five; and to anoint the most Holy. Seventy weeks. Now, we pointed out that the terms “seventy weeks” is a term that really means a “unit of seven”. It might refer to days. It might refer to years. The context is the clue to understanding, and the fact that in verse 2, he has been

studying Jeremiah, and he has read the information concerning the seventy years of captivity. We are to understand, most interpreters understand it this way, the seventy weeks to be seventy weeks of years or four hundred and ninety years. The reason for this is that Israel had been disobedient with the Lord and for four hundred and ninety years had failed to observe the Sabbath as they should have observed. You'll remember, six years they were to work, but on the seventh year, Israel was to rest through the whole year. If they failed to do it, then, of course, they would suffer judgment, but they suffered judgment not just for one year, but for the whole cycle. And so, consequently, to have failed for seventy years in the cycle of observing the Sabbath as the word of God had set it forth meant that they must also now suffer four hundred and ninety years of discipline from the Lord God.

These are the four hundred and ninety years, and at the end of that time, Daniel's prayers, in the fullness of them, shall be answered. And the answer in verse 24 is that at the conclusion of the four hundred and ninety years, these six things are going to take place.

Now, last week I tried to illustrate this section by saying that verse 24 is a broad look at what is going to transpire at the end or throughout and then at the end come to its conclusion in the four hundred and ninety years. And I said it was like an individual going in to a Cadillac agency, and looking at the Cadillac, walking around it, and having the agent explain to him a few things about how gloriously beautiful it is.

Now, in riding over to North Carolina and then riding down South Carolina, and then this morning riding from Charleston out to the airport, I noticed there were very few Cadillacs on the road. There were lots of Mercedes on the road. I'm changing my illustration. You're going into the dealer and you're looking at Mercedes. Now of course, after you've had a good look at it, then the agent would be interested in opening up the hood, I presume, opening the doors, showing you how the instrument panel operates, and various other things that a person is interested in when he's buying a car.

So what I'd like to suggest to you that in verse 24 is the broad view.

Now, in verse 25 through verse 27, what we have in effect, is how those things that are set forth in verse 24 are to come to pass. And remember the “week” is a week of seven years, and the total, four hundred and ninety years. At the end of the four hundred and ninety years, we are to have these things: The transgression finished, sins made an end of, iniquity, reconciliation, everlasting righteousness, vision and prophecy sealed up, the most Holy place anointed. These are the things that will come to pass at the end of the four hundred and ninety years. It would be natural for a person to ask, “How is all of this going to come to pass?” And so in verse 25 through verse 27, we have an answer to “how” and you're not surprised, I know, to read verse 25. Gabriel says, “Know therefore and understand.” Now he's going to tell Daniel how these things are going to come to pass.

Now, of course, a question would arise, if you thought about this, might be this question, “When is the beginning of the four hundred and ninety years?” That will give us an idea of when it will end. “When is the end of the four hundred and ninety years?” That will tell us something else that would be very interesting for us. But one of the key questions would be is, “Is the four hundred and ninety years an unbroken string of years? Is it possible that there is an intercalation in the four hundred and ninety years? Is it possible that there is something like a, well, an intercalary period of time?” Now, I don't like to say that, I must confess, I like to say “intercalary” but the dictionaries say that, that's the second most appropriate pronunciation of “intercalary,” intercalary. Now, I looked it up in two dictionaries, because I was sure they were wrong. I'm still not sure, but when you have Webster and another well-known dictionary saying it's “intercalary”, I want you to know I understand that they say it's “intercalary” but if I say “intercalary” you'll understand how stubborn I am. It sounds better. Intercalary. “Intercalation” is proper pronunciation. Why do we say “intercalary?” Because Mr. Webster says so, for one reason.

But anyway, the question would then would be, do these four hundred and ninety years begin at the particular point we'll talk about, and continue in unbroken form for four hundred and ninety years? Or is it possible that there is a break within them? Is it possible another period of time is inserted, something like a leap year, except longer than one year; a leap period of time? Well that's part of the question, and so we're going to look now at the “how.” And first in verse 25 he says, “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks.” Now, sixty-nine weeks, in other words. “The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.” Now, of course, it's very important for us to know when the weeks begin, but let me say one other point before we look at the “terminus a quo;” that is, the place from which the four hundred and ninety years begin.

It's rather interesting that he says, “There shall be seven weeks, and sixty and two weeks.” Why did he not say, “There will be sixty-nine weeks?” Well, that's an interesting question, and no one to my knowledge, has a really, very satisfactory, or completely satisfactory answer to that question. Forty-nine years. What was the significance of the forty-nine years from the time of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem? Well, the only suggestion that seems to command some acceptance is the suggestion that the forty-nine years is the period of time, during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, which has to do with their efforts to re-establish the Judean capital of Jerusalem, and do the rebuilding work. So we'll take it that way. Obviously, it's not important. Later on, nothing is said about it, so we'll just take it that way. There isn't much emphasis upon it, so perhaps the completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem in the period of Ezra and Nehemiah, is what is referred to. It's very close to that period of time, at any rate.

But now he says, “From the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem.” That's when the four hundred and ninety years begin. Well, when is that? Well, we have some clues from the word of God, and so I'm going to ask you to turn to

the Book of Nehemiah, and we're going to read chapter 2 of Nehemiah, and this is the chapter that most of the students of Daniel point to, as the “terminus a quo;” that is, that period, the beginning of the period of time, the end from which the sixty-nine or seventy weeks of years begins. We read in verse 2, you'll remember that Nehemiah's very concerned about the things that are happening in Jerusalem, and prays a marvelous prayer, and then we read in chapter 2, verse 1.

“And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him; that I took the wine, and gave it to the king. Now, I'd never been sad in his presence before. Therefore, the king said to me, ‘Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart.’ So I became dreadfully afraid, and said to the king, ‘May the king live forever. Why should my face not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?’ Then the king said to me, ‘What do you request?’ So I prayed to the God of heaven.”

If you read Nehemiah, you'll notice how many times he does pray. Notable are the times that he turns to the Lord in prayer. Well here, he just prayed silently evidently, and now speaks to the king.

“And I said to the king, ‘If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it.’ Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), ‘How long will your journey be? And when will you return?’ So it pleased the king to send me, and I set him a time. Furthermore, I said to the king, ‘If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the governors of the region beyond the river, that they must permit me to pass through till I come to Judah; and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he

must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel, which pertains to the Temple, for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy.’ And the king granted them to me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.”

Now, commentators of course, have reason for a bit of debate on chronology in the Bible. A lot of the chronology is not absolutely sure and certain, but the debate here is over a very small period of time. The majority of commentators date this particular request of Nehemiah, the permission given to him, as the “going forth of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem”, as four hundred and forty-five BC. Now, there are some who date this four hundred and forty-four BC, and the later maybe right. The difference is very small, really, just a few months, but the different years; four forty-five BC, or perhaps in March of four forty-four BC. So this is the “terminus a quo”. Artaxerxes’ decree was at four forty-four BC, or four forty-five BC. We’ll just say four forty-four BC.

Now, the question then that comes is, “When does the four hundred and ninety years end?” In other words, if that’s the *terminus a quo*, four forty-four BC, what’s the *terminus a quem*? You’re getting a Latin lesson too. Aren’t you thankful? The end for which, in other words, the close of the prophecy. So if the command begins in four forty-four BC, then Messiah the Prince is coming at the end of the sixty-nine weeks. When is that? Now, that would be the *terminus ad quem*.

Well now, in verse 25 we read, “Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command, four hundred and forty-four BC, to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.” In other words, four hundred and eighty-three years. Well, if you think about it, four hundred and forty-four BC to four hundred and eighty-three and add the four hundred and eighty-three years to it, and remember, that in prophetic years, it is most likely that we are to understand them to be three hundred and sixty days in the year.

Now, the reason for that is, that in other books of the Bible that seems to be the way in which the year is understood, as far as the length of time is concerned. For example, in the Book of Revelation we have time, times, and half a time; three and a half years. We have that period of time also called “twelve hundred and sixty days”. Now, if you’ll add it up; three hundred and sixty times three is one thousand and eighty, and then add one-eighty to it, you come to twelve hundred and sixty. So evidently, three hundred and sixty days for the year is the prophetic year. Now, if that is so, then almost precisely, the four hundred and eighty-three years comes to March 30, 33 AD, which is practically precisely, I say practically, because there are debates over this, the triumphal entry of the Lord Jesus Christ into the city of Jerusalem in the last week of his ministry.

So to put it all together then, the *terminus a quo* is four hundred and forty-four BC, when Nehemiah is given the command from Artaxerxes to rebuild the city walls. And then the *terminus ad quem*, the coming of the Lord Jesus on the triumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem. Now that’s so, then the sixty-nine weeks end at that time.

What about the seventieth unit of seven years? Well, we read in verse 26, “And after the sixty-two weeks, “now, that would be, of course, after the seven plus the sixty-two, we could paraphrase that as, “after the sixty-nine weeks” because seven weeks have preceded it, “Messiah shall be cut off but not for himself.” Now, there are three significant statements that are made in verse 26. First of all, as you can see is, “Messiah shall be cut off.” The crucifixion of the Lord Jesus is obviously the reference. After four hundred and eighty-three years, sixty-nine units of years, seven years each of the units, “Messiah shall be cut off.” He shall be crucified. The New Testament goes on to explain.

Now, you may also remember, that in the Book of Isaiah, there is a similar reference in the great prophecy of the “suffering servant of Jehovah”. In Isaiah chapter 53 in verse 8, we read these words, “He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare his generation, for he was cut off from the land of the living for the transgressions of my people. He was stricken.” Now, I don’t know any student of the

word of God who is an evangelical, who does not believe that that is a reference to the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus.

I'd like to make one point, however. I think it's a minor point, but I want to make it. It's true, that here we have the term “Messiah shall be cut off” and there we have the term “Messiah shall be cut off” and it would be nice if I could say to you, “The same Hebrew word is used in both places,” but it is not. The word in Isaiah chapter 53 it's the Hebrew word *gazar*. It means “to cut off” and this word too is the word *karath*, the common word for “cut” in Hebrew and it can mean “cut off.” So two words are used but they both refer to the same thing. There's not any debate that I know of, of any significance over the point, and so we'll take it as established. “Messiah shall be cut off.” That is, he will be crucified, the New Testament explains.

Now, then, the next statement is more interesting, I guess. The others seem so plain. “But not for himself.” Literally, the Hebrew text here reads, “But nothingness for him.” “Nothingness for him.” That's a rather interesting statement. “Messiah shall be cut off” at the end of the four hundred and eighty-three years and “nothingness for him.” Well, what would be the meaning of “nothingness for him?” Well, probably the meaning is that, as you know, he was rejected of men, he had no friends, no honor, even his disciples fled when he was hanging upon the Cross. He was treated like a criminal. He was even – for a moment forsaken by God the Father. And so the idea of our Lord being abandoned is the idea. And the honor of what he was doing was unrecognized, apparently, by all who were there, standing around that Cross. “Messiah shall be cut off, and nothingness for him.” What a marvelous statement. “Nothingness for him.” Now, that's a very literal translation, but I'll stand by it, as expressing essentially what is meant.

Now we read in verse 26, “And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” Nehemiah is given the command to restore the city. He goes. They restore the walls, and now Daniel is told that after the sixty-nine weeks, “Messiah will be cut off. The people of the prince who is to come, shall destroy the city

and the sanctuary, and the end of it shall be with a flood until the end of the war desolations are determined.” Now, that can be rendered differently, and your version may have it. “Till the end shall be war desolations are determined.” Essentially the idea is, desolation and destruction follow, and we’ll leave it at that, because it’s impossible to be absolutely certain.

But now notice, “the people of the prince who is to come.” Well, we just had reference, did we not, to “Messiah the Prince” and now we read, “the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city.” Well now, who destroyed the city of Jerusalem? That’s a well-known historical fact. Who destroyed the city of Jerusalem? The Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem. There’s no debate over that point. Titus Vespasian came with four legions, and the city was destroyed. The Lord Jesus prophesied that the time would come when “stone would not be left upon stone” and in AD seventy that took place. Now, “the people of the prince who is to come” are the people who destroyed the city. What does that tell us? The people, Romans, are the people of the prince who is to come in verse 26. In other words, we have two princes in this prophecy.

Now in my Bible that I’m reading from, the New King James version, they have interpreted that in this case, I think, correctly, by translating “Messiah the Prince” in verse 25 as capital P-R-I-N-C-E, “Messiah the Prince,” the Lord Jesus Christ, but then in verse 26, “and the people of the prince,” they have little “p.” See, even in translation, we are subject to the interpretations of the translators. Well in this case, I think they are right because we know the Romans destroyed the city, and so the “prince” who is referred to here is a Roman prince. We are told immediately a Roman prince. Now remember in chapter 2, Daniel said, “There are going to rise four great world empires; Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Grecian, and then one indescribable.” And in chapter 7, four wild beasts; the lion, the bear, the leopard, and then one indescribable. So it’s clear, these four empires, and incidentally, the four empires are followed in chapter 2 and chapter 7 by the eternal kingdom.

Now, we pointed out when we were looking at Daniel chapter 2, that we could see an intercalation in the prophecy of Daniel chapter 2, although that is the vision that Nebuchadnezzar saw, which is presented as a prophecy, the same thing in chapter 7 with the four beasts. So here is an important point we must keep in mind. The people of the prince who is to come, are the Romans. Now that's very important for us to remember. History, as I said, records that Titus Vespasian led four Roman legions to besiege and destroy Jerusalem in AD seventy, so “the people of the prince that shall come” are the Romans. The identity of the Roman prince will be discussed in the next verse, but we just know there is a prince of a different kind who's coming.

It's very interesting that General Titus Vespasian ordered his soldiers to leave the Temple intact, but Jesus remember, had predicted in the Olivet Discourse, that there, quote, “that there shall not be left here, one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.” And when the Romans came, a Roman soldier on impulse, against Titus' wishes, so we are told, threw a flaming torch through an archway of the Temple, and the rich tapestries of the Temple caught fire, the building became a raging inferno, the decorative gold melted, and ran down into the cracks of the stone floors, and when the remains cooled, the soldiers, they were a bit greedy for the gold, so what did they do, but dig up all the stones looking for the gold, and our Lord's prophecy so we are told was fulfilled perfectly, and there was not a stone that was left unturned over as a result of the destruction by the Romans. And so our Lord's prophecy was, as it has been said “grimly fulfilled.”

Now, that's the second thing in verse 26 that will occur after the four hundred and eighty-three years. Messiah shall be cut off. The city shall be destroyed. And then the third thing in the latter part of verse 26 we read, “The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war, desolations are determined.” I say that's a difficult text to translate and convince everyone of your translation. There are three or four different translations.

Essentially, they all mean the same thing; that there is going to be continuous desolation from that time on.

Now, if you will think about the history of our human society since that time, I think you can see how surely that prophecy has been fulfilled. There has not been one year, so far as we know, without a war since the time of our Lord's crucifixion. Did you know that? Not one year without a war. Someone has drawn up some figures. In the last five hundred years, England has engaged in seventy-eight wars. France, they're not nearly as war-like, seventy-one wars. The Netherlands; twenty-three wars. Spain; sixty-four. Australia; fifty-two. Germany; twenty-three. Italy; twenty-five. China; eleven. Denmark; twenty. Sweden; twenty-six. Poland; thirty. Russia; sixty-one. Turkey; forty-three. Japan; nine. It does make a difference, who's sitting on the throne of a country. In the light of world events, the chances are we'll be involved in some war. These figures were, of course, drawn up long before the United Nations Iraqi War and many of the ones that have happened in the meantime, but you can see that the European nations alone, engaged in seventy-four wars during the lifetime of the first generation born in the twentieth century, and so we can surely expect that, that will continue. And, therefore, Daniel's prophecy, “till the end, wars and desolations are determined” is something that has been fulfilled richly, or grimly, whatever you may prefer.

Now the question is, is there an intercalation between the sixty-ninth week and the seventieth week? In other words, do the seventy years continue without interruption, or is there an interruption? Well, I'm going to suggest to you, of course, that there is an interruption. Now, I think, it might be interesting for you to know that the Bible often does this, and I'm going to take you to an illustration or so first, so you will see. Turn to Zechariah chapter 9 in verse 9 and verse 10, and you'll see how, right in close connection, many years are passed over. Zechariah chapter 9, verse 9 and verse 10. We read these words, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you. He is just, and having salvation, lowly and riding on a

donkey, a colt the foal of a donkey.” And you know that text is cited as being fulfilled by the Gospel writers in the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, on the triumphal entry, actually. But now look at verse 10. “I will cut off the chariots from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem. The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations. His dominion shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.” Think of the hundreds of years, the centuries, that have already transpired since the day of our Lord’s triumphal entry, could call it an untriumphal entry, because, of course, it led to his death, but we say, his triumphal entry, and we still don’t know the precise ending of this period of time. So here between two verses is nineteen hundred plus years, at the present time.

Now, if you look at Isaiah chapter 61, verse 1 and 2, it might be helpful to look at that, you’ll see another one of these places in which there is an intercalation; an intercalary period of time. Chapter 61 in verse 1 and verse 2. Some of you got my sarcasm. Verse 1 of chapter 61 of Isaiah. “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” You’ll remember the Lord Jesus entered the synagogue and gave this particular prophecy, and then said, “This prophecy has been fulfilled today.” You remember it? Three people remember it. Now notice the next, our Lord stopped, but the next clauses are, “and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.” “The day of vengeance.” Now, in other passages of the Old Testament, the tribulation period of time is called “the period of vengeance.” This very word, *zaman* is the word that is used, so here we have also, nineteen hundred plus years, and actually in a sentence. So it’s not surprising that we have a prophecy that touches the first coming, and then immediately following, one that touches the second coming, because remember, the times of the Gentiles intervene. So, anyway, what I’m

going to suggest now, as we turn to verse 27, is that we do have a period of time in which there is an intercalation.

Now, amillennarism, and I've been attacking amillennarism because I do not feel that it is biblical. And I hope you'll understand that I have very good friends who are amillennialists, and we discuss this matter from time to time, and we remain friends, and I hope you'll remain friends with your too, but I think it's an honest thing for us to interpret Scripture and seek to show what Scripture teaches. Now you know, there are three great prophetic viewpoints, as far as they touch the millennium is concerned. Pre-millennialists believe, the term itself is related to the coming of our Lord, second coming. Pre-millennialists believe the Lord will come before the kingdom of God upon the earth, and will set up that kingdom upon the earth. Amillennialists, well, let me try post-millennialists first. Post-millennialists believe the preaching of the Gospel will bring in the kingdom. Can't you tell? It's really happening, isn't it? They would be very discouraged, of course, if they would really look at conditions today, but they have great faith in their scheme of things. The preaching of the Gospel will so result in the salvation of souls that the kingdom will be brought in, and then our Lord will come after the kingdom. “Post” the Latin preposition meaning, “after”. Pre-millennialism, of course, the Latin prefix that means, “before.” Amillennialists deny that there will be any kingdom of God upon the earth. Now, we cannot get too far into this, because amillennialists, like some pre-millennialists and post-millennialists, differ among themselves. They differ more significantly I think, among themselves, but at least they say there is no kingdom of God upon the earth. As a matter of fact, many of them say we're in the kingdom at the present time, and so there is no such thing as a kingdom of God upon the earth, in the sense in which the pre- and the post-millennialists feel it.

Now, amillennarism has a great deal of difficulty with this prophecy. They assume that the seventieth week immediately follows the sixty-ninth week, basically. There are strong reasons against this. Now, I want you to notice, first of all, that we read

in verse 26, “After the sixty-two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off.” And then we read, “After the sixty-two weeks, there is the destruction of Jerusalem” about forty years later. So we have events here that indicate that the sixty-ninth week is not followed immediately by the seventieth week. In fact, the seventieth week is described in verse 27. My translation has, “Then he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.” Now, that “then” translation is debatable. Strictly speaking, it’s literally “and he shall confirm a covenant.”

Now, the prior context contains two possible antecedents of the “he.” For amillennialists believe that “he” is a reference to Christ. “Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.” Now, we don’t know of any prophecy or covenant that our Lord confirmed for a period of seven years in the Bible, so it’s very difficult to establish that. But even more significantly to what does the “he” refer? Now you know, pronouns have antecedents. If you don’t understand an antecedent, and you’re talking about “he” or “she” conversation can become very confusing. And if we say “he” there’s a masculine antecedent. If we say “she” there’s a feminine antecedent. “It” it’s a neuter antecedent, so to speak. Latin and Greek are slightly different for various reasons, but essentially that’s it.

Now, we must ask ourselves then, to whom does the “he” refer in verse 27? Well now, there is a well-established rule of grammar. I don’t know of anyone who debates this; that a pronoun more likely refers to the nearest possible antecedent. Isn’t that right? If it doesn’t, then you’re going to have confusion. If you’re going along and suddenly you say “he”, and you’ve had two or three “he’s” between, but you want to jump four or five back beyond the nearest ones, and refer to someone above, that’s confusing. Now, what is the nearest masculine antecedent? Well if you’ll see, verse 25 says, “to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince.” We all agree that’s the Lord Jesus Christ. Amills and pre-mills agree on something. “Messiah the Prince” is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. But then we read, “And after the sixty-two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off, not for

himself.” That’s the Lord Jesus “Messiah, and the people of the prince who is to come.” Well now, “the prince who is to come”, is the nearest antecedent. Now, “the people of the prince who is to come” are the Romans. The prince belongs to the people, referred to here by “the people who destroy the city”. So “the prince who is to come” is not our Lord Jesus Christ grammatically. He is a Roman prince. Now, we suggested when we did the four great kingdoms that are going to rise and fall before the final kingdom, were Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman, and that we are still living in the Roman kingdom in its essential nature, its culture, its institutions, its legal institutions, and things like that. Many hold to that particular view and, I think, it certainly makes sense. So when we read here, “Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week,” we’re not to think of the Lord Jesus, as our amillennial friends think, but we’re to think of a prince who is to come from the fourth world empire, who will be responsible for “bringing an end to sacrifice and offering, and who will also be responsible for abominations and desolation until that which is determined shall be poured out.” In other words, the prince who is to come is a Roman prince. Later on in the prophetic word, it’s very plain that he is to be identified as the anti-Christ.

Now, we could learn this from other things by turning to passages in chapter 7, verse 8, verse 20, verse 24 and verse 25, particularly, but we don’t have time really to do that. “Then” we’ll say or “And he,” that is, the prince who is to come, “shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.” For seven years; one week. A unit of seven years. Now, if this is the anti-Christ, then we’re looking forward into the future. We already know that there has been, what, nineteen hundred years or so of an intercalation. An intercalary period of time. So that’s hard to pronounce. If you’re an old man, you’ve been doing the other for so many years. So “he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;” for a seven year period of time. “But in the middle of the week, he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.” Now, what does that suggest? If he brings an end to sacrifice and offering that indicates that sacrifices and offerings have been re-instituted for

at least, the three and a half years. So, evidently, a covenant was made between the many and the prince who is to come, to permit sacrifices and offerings to continue. Now, in the light of the context, he's mentioned the most holy. He's talking about Israel, we assume, in Jerusalem in the future. So “he shall confirm the covenant with many for seven years, but in the middle of the week, he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering, and then desolations shall continue until that which has been determined is poured out on the desolate or on the desolator.” There is a doubt, a question, about that.

Now, I've just one minute. I'd like for you to turn to just a few passages real quickly, to show you that at least, and we'll going to spend some more time on this next week, there's a lot of things that can be said about this, and I'd like to untie the knots, and tie them up into an understandable picture next week. Remember in chapter 24 in verse 15 the Lord Jesus said, “Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation spoken out by Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place; whoever reads, let him understand.” In other words, in our Lord's time, the abomination of desolation has not taken place, so the seventieth week of years did not follow the sixty-ninth. According to our Lord's own words, that had not taken place.

Well, 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verses 9 and 10. I think we'll have time to read this, and a couple of other passages. 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 9 through verse 12. The apostle lets us know that he does not think that the abomination of desolation has yet taken place; that is, the fouling of the Holy Place. Verse 9 through verse 12 Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 2, “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. With all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this reason, God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie. That they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Satan's coming with all power, signs, and lying wonders.

And now revelation chapter 13 in verse 15, and I guess we'll have to stop with this. Chapter 13 of the Book of Revelation describes the beast out of the sea, and then the false prophet, and in the course of the events that are related to the future, we read in verse 15 of chapter 13 of the Book of Revelation, “He, that is the prophet, was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.” Now, Paul had stated in 2 Thessalonians, I didn't read all of that, but perhaps I should have. In 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 in verse 3 and 4, “Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition. Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” The abomination of desolation; a reference, of course, to the anti-Christ himself.

So let me sum it up by saying, the four hundred and ninety years are to result in Israel's blessing, according to the prophetic word in Daniel chapter 9. Those six things are to transpire. The last week, the seven years of the program, are still future. The events of chapter 9, verse 24 have not taken place; everlasting righteousness, the vision and prophecies not been sealed up, the holy place, the most holy, has not been anointed, wars until the end. And then the seventieth week is mentioned, as we read in verse 27. And our Lord and Paul regard as future, the seventieth week.

I close by just reminding you of this; that there is a great personal question and that personal question is, “What is your relationship to Messiah the Prince?” If it's not a saving relationship to Messiah the Prince, then of course, it just might be that your relationship ultimately, will be to the prince who is to come.

Well, let's close with a word of prayer. Our time is up.

“Divine Purpose in History and Prophecy, part XVII” by S. Lewis Johnson  
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[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks for the word of God, and we thank Thee for this magnificent prophecy. Give us understanding so that we may fully understand it, and may our lives profit from understanding it.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.