



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 XVIII

Daniel 9: 24 – 27

Eschatology Doctrinal Studies “Concluding Thoughts on Daniel”

TRANSCRIPT

I mentioned that Horace Wood’s brother had died yesterday. Was it Howard?

So the subject for tonight is “Concluding Thoughts on Daniel Chapter 9.” And I know that some of you are probably happy because we spent a good bit of time on this particular section, but it is a very important prophecy and for that reason I wanted to spend a bit more time on it. And tonight we’re going to continue with Daniel 9:24 through 27.

But let’s begin with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the word of God and for the opportunity again to turn to one of the prophets, one of the great prophets, Daniel, the man greatly beloved. And we thank Thee for the section that we are looking at because we know that it has great significance with regard to the coming of our Lord, both in his first coming and also in his second coming. And again we ask for diligence and for enlightenment and understanding as we seek to follow the words of the prophet given to him by Gabriel And, thus, understand more about the divine purpose in history and

prophecy. We ask, Lord, for Thy blessing upon each one present; for the needs that we all have personally and privately and our families and otherwise.

We ask for comfort for Horace Wood and his family as well. We commit them to Thee and pray Thy blessing upon them. We remember the Scriptures, “It’s imported unto men; once to die, and after this, the judgment, and if our Lord does not come, that is our earthly end as well.” We thank Thee, however, for the hope of eternal life. We look forward, Lord, to the enjoyment of Thy presence throughout the ages of eternity; how grateful we are for what Daniel writes about here, the everlasting righteousness, the gift to those who have been brought by divine grace to the knowledge of our great Savior.

In whose name we pray. Amen.

[Message] I’ve been very impressed as I’ve been reading Daniel chapter 9, not only with the prophecy but, I must say, with the great prayer that has preceded it. When you think of the fact that Daniel was a busy statesman, and realized that this man could take the time out to pray, as he did take the time out to pray, and pray in the way in which he has prayed, well surely, it’s a testimony to the greatness of the Prophet Daniel. And, furthermore, when you think of him as a great statesman, and then realize the great interest that he took in prophecy, that too is extremely encouraging, and I think significant because the tendency in our day is to discount prophecy; to think that anyone who talks about the prophetic word is really engaging primarily in speculation, but if you’ll reflect on the men of the Scriptures, the prophets and the apostles, I think, you’ll realize that that is entirely false. Some questions that arise too arise out of Daniel’s prayer, such as, if someone had asked him why he was still praying for the deliverance, he would have answered that, “The Lord always fulfills his promises in the way of prayer.” And so he found no problem in praying when he was confident that God would answer the petitions that he had raised. But over and over, he asks for them because he knows that God has said in his word that he responds to prayer and, consequently, those promises

that we bring back to the Lord God are promises that are part of the way by which and the means by which the Lord brings them to their fulfillment.

There’s another thing that is particularly significant with reference to the “seventy sevens” and it’s this; that Daniel in the prayer talks about how God has literally fulfilled the judgments that he had set forth in Old Testament times that would fall upon Israel if they engaged in a certain kind of activity. And it’s clear when he talks about them that he recognizes that those judgments have literally fallen upon them, and, in fact, relates them to the things that the Lord had said in other earlier parts of Scripture. Now, that itself should be instructive to us and should instruct us along the line of the truth that when God fulfills his word, he fulfills his word in literal or normal fashion; verbally as it is written in the word of God. So we can also look to the promises of the word of God, and expect that they will be responded to by the Lord God in the way of faithfulness, and they will be carried out.

The purpose of the “seventy sevens” is to show what will take place before Israel is restored to her status in God’s plan. “Seventy sevens” or four hundred and ninety years Daniel is told must elapse before Israel is to enter into the promises that belong to them. They have four hundred and ninety years of discipline to undergo, and four hundred and ninety years of discipline to undergo within the broader amount of time of the times of the Gentiles, which began in six hundred and five BC when Nebuchadnezzar took the city of Jerusalem, and will continue according to earlier prophecies in the Book of Daniel, such as chapter 2, until the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who will establish the kingdom of God upon the earth.

But four hundred and ninety years are taken out of the times of the Gentiles in order to accomplish certain things for, as Daniel is told, “your people and your Holy City.” So the four hundred and ninety years are carved out, so to speak, of the times of the Gentiles, which now have been going on for twenty-five hundred plus years, but the four

hundred and ninety years are designed to deal with Israel and the Holy City. As he says in verse 24, Gabriel speaking to him.

“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, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.”

Now in verse 25 continuing.

“Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. The streets shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times.”

Let me stop for just a moment to remind you who have been here that we talked about the weeks. We discussed what that term probably signified, and came to the conclusion, that it referred to weeks of years. It refers to weeks of years probably, because Daniel is talking about years in verse 2, and then in chapter 10 when he talks about weeks again, but this time weeks of days, he adds the word “days” after the term “weeks.” So, I think, we’re on safe ground and solid ground to say the seventy weeks are seventy weeks of years, and thus, four hundred and ninety years in all. Now verse 26.

“And after the sixty-two weeks.”

Now this would, of course, be after the sixty-nine weeks because he’s already mentioned seven weeks in the preceding verse.

“After the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself, 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, and till the end of the war, desolations are determined.”

Now, I would like to be able to say to you, having looked at this a number of times in the original text, that the last few lines of verse 26 could be confidently translated, but I don't know of anyone who can confidently do that among the scholars of the Old Testament text and, consequently, we are shut up to different possibilities. Some of them are in the marginal notes of your Bible. I read here, “The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war.” But it could be translated “until the end, war and desolations are determined.” So whether it's “the end of the war” or “war and desolations are determined,” it's practically impossible to be sure about.

Then verse 27, and that is a particle that is literally, simply “and.” The translators have translated it “then” because they think that's the sense of the “and,” but it's literally “and.” “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.” Now, if they are weeks of years then one week is seven years, so the covenant is a seven-year covenant. “But in the middle of the week,” and when I was going to school, the middle of seven, half of seven, was three and a half. Is that right? You all know that. So in the middle of the week is at the three and a half year period of time. “He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.” Of course, the question is, who is the he? But the text says, “He shall bring an end to the sacrifice and offering.” And this remainder of verse 27 is even more difficult to translate than that little section in verse 26. My text reads, “And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate.” That is a desolator, one who will execute judgment. “Even until the consummation which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.” But “desolate” can also be “desolator.” I'm going to think of it that way. “Until the consummation which is determined is poured out on the desolator.” The word

can be rendered “desolate” or “desolator” but I’m taking that second as the likely meaning.

Now, remember, this prophecy is the answer to the petitions of the prophet. Daniel had prayed in verse 16 through verse 19 of chapter 9 these words, “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.” Incidentally, “holy mountain” in ecclesiastical language of a large part of the Christian church for centuries, has been a reference to the church, but, I think you, can see, there isn’t anything in the context that would justify this. This is a reference to Jerusalem, which sits upon a bit of a mountain, particularly Mount Zion. “Your holy mountain, because of 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, that’s a very interesting statement. You looked at it carefully? Notice what he says, “Now, therefore, our God, hear the prayer of your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake.” Well, who is the Lord if he’s praying to God? “For the Lord’s sake, cause your face to shine on your sanctuary which is desolate.” I think that’s very striking.

You know, we’re often told that the doctrine of the Trinity is not found in the Old Testament, and basically, that’s correct. It’s not spelled out. There are intimations and allusions to plurality in the Godhead in the Old Testament, but the doctrine of the Trinity, one God subsisting in three persons, is not plainly taught in the Old Testament. That’s true in the progress of divine revelation, but there’re indications of plurality. “Let us make man in our image” in Genesis chapter 1, for example. In Isaiah chapter 48, we have a special place where plurality appears, but here he says, “Now, therefore, our God, hear the prayer of your servant, and his supplications, and cause your face to shine on your sanctuary for the Lord’s sake.” Now, I’m not the first one, of course, who has ever noticed this. As a matter of fact, Calvin himself noticed it. “This verse contains the name

of the Lord twice” he pointed out. And many other expositors with him thought that this was an illusion to the second person of the Trinity, but the details are not spelled in, and so we have to leave it at that, as an anticipation of what would come to full understanding with the New Testament times. Now, read on, verse 18.

“O my God, incline your ear and hear, open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city (Notice how large the city looms in Daniel’s thought.) which is called by your name, for we do not present our supplication before you because of our righteous deeds but because of your great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, listen and act.”

Now, what would you think if I were to read this? “O Lord Father, hear; O Lord Son, forgive; O Lord Spirit, listen and act.” Three times the term “Lord” is on the lips of Daniel. Again, I’m not the first person who’s noticed this in connection with the doctrine of the Trinity, but there may be here many exegetes and some dogmaticians have suggested, that there is an illusion to the mystery of the Holy Trinity even in this verse as well.

Now, we won’t bring the changes on that because it’s not that important for us tonight, but I want you to notice in verse 19 and verse 24, that when Daniel talks about the “city,” he calls it “your city, your people,” verse 19. But then in verse 24, Gabriel says, “Seventy weeks are determined for your people and your holy city.” In other words, Daniel says the city and the people belong to the Lord. The Lord through Gabriel says, “It’s your people and your holy city.” Well, Israel is abiding in disobedience at this time, and even in that, we see some of the expression of it. We find that in the prophets too. God occasionally reverses things, and lets them know that he’s not really happy with what is going on in the nation Israel and so Gabriel reflects that there in his response.

Now, we said the purpose was to show what will take place before Israel is restored to her status in God’s plan; that is, at the coming of the Lord and the

establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth. Seventy Sevens, four hundred and ninety years, must elapse within the Gentile times before the restoration. Now, this is a very difficult passage, and I want to acknowledge it right at the beginning. It's very difficult. One of the greatest of the students of the Hebrew text of the Book of Daniel says, “The history of the exegesis of the seventy weeks is the dismal swamp of Old Testament criticism.” And so I don't want you to get lost in the swamp, but you should know, this is not easy in interpretation.

Now, what I want to do tonight since we've gone over this generally, I'm just going to pick out some things and talk about them as over against other interpretations of this passage, and particularly, I want to have in mind amillennial interpretation. Remember, there are three great approaches to the prophetic word. There are pre-millennialists. There are post-millennialists. There are amillennialists. Those three terms are terms that are constructed against the hope of the kingdom of God upon the earth, a thousand years. For example, the Book of Revelation states that specifically.

Now, a person who is a pre-millennialist is a person who believes that the Lord is going to come before, pre, before the thousand year reign upon the earth. “Millennium” comes from two Latin words; *mille* plus *annus*. “Mille” a thousand a numeral. *Annus*, a year. And so pre-millennial means the Lord will come before the kingdom of God, before the kingdom of God upon the earth. In fact, he will come, as Daniel points out in several places, to establish that kingdom. We saw that in Daniel chapter 2. Those who are post-millennialists, “post” is the Latin preposition that means “after,” also is used as a prefix. So a post-millennialist is a person who believes that the preaching of the Gospel will be so fruitful that the kingdom of God will be brought upon the earth by the preaching of the Gospel, and the Lord will return after the thousand-year reign upon the earth. Some very fine evangelical men believed that viewpoint.

Now, amillennialism is derived from a slightly different prefix. “A” is a Greek prefix, and it means “no.” It's a negative prefix. It's like “un” before “known,”

“unknown,” not known, “known,” known, “unknown”, not known. Amillennialists believe there will not be any kingdom of God upon the earth at all, and so they look to explain the thousand years of the Book of Revelation in different ways. Sometimes it’s explained as being a kingdom that’s in existence at the present time because our Lord has died upon Calvary’s Cross for sin, and he is now seated on the throne of David above and reigning as king in the kingdom. All amillennialists that I know about have abandoned the idea of a thousand years, and so now they think of round numbers. Until the year one thousand, there were those that looked forward to a thousand-year reign, but when the thousand years was passed, naturally, they had to turn to other viewpoints. So amillennialists engage in a great deal of symbolism; they have to, right from the beginning. We’re going to see in the things we take up that they engage in symbolism in understanding our prophecy here in Daniel 9:24 through verse 27.

So first of all, I want to take up and say a few words about the amillennial claim concerning symbolism itself. I want you to know, I’m following a simple, normal, it has been called “verbal,” but I don’t think that’s too clarified, a simple, normal hermeneutics, or simple, normal principles of interpretation. We take words at their common sense, unless there’re specifically things in the context that indicate that we are to take them figuratively or symbolically. There are figures of speech in the Bible, of course, and there are passages and even books in which symbolism assumes a large part of the interpretation, but the basic approach is the taking of words at the common ordinary sense. When we turn to the Book of Revelation, there will be more symbolism there, and John tells us right in the first chapter, that you may expect to have symbolism because he said that, “The revelation was signified to him” using the term from which we get the word “sign,” which is used so often in the Gospel of John. Those miracles our Lord performed which were designed to teach further facts about him.

Now, symbolism itself. The amillennial hermeneutic. Amillennials interpret this passage generally, as having a great deal of symbolism in it. In fact, the weeks are not

weeks of years, or weeks of days. The weeks represent periods of indefinite lengths, so the weeks cannot be defined specifically. There are indefinite periods of time. Pre-millennialists on the other hand, take those words at their normal senses. They look at “week” in the light of the context, a unit of seven, and since the context has to do with years that is interpreted as weeks of years, and so the “week” represents a week of years, or seven years; seventy of them; four hundred and ninety years. One of the reasons that pre-millennialists feel that amillennialism errs at this point is this; if the lengths of time are indefinite, why use definite numbers to refer to them? Why use seventy weeks of years, if the weeks don’t mean something definite? In other words, the very hermeneutic itself has difficulties. In addition, disproportionism appears when one works it out with them; with the seven, the sixty-two, and the one. Okay, and don’t have time to engage in the arithmetic of it. It’s not mathematics. It’s simple arithmetic, but this is a disproportion. They assign a different period of time than one might expect proportionately. So the pre-millennialists feel that their approach has a great deal more credibility.

Now, a second question is the amillennial interpretation of verse 24. Verse 24 remember says that seventy weeks or four hundred and ninety years are determined for the people and for the city to accomplish six things; finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, to anoint the most holy. Amillennialists say that all of those six things were accomplished at the first advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now I should say, there are some amillennialists who don’t, but the vast majority of the ones with which we contend, evangelical ones, have taken that viewpoint. All of the six things take place at the first advent of the Lord, and so we do not look for further years of the four hundred and ninety to be accomplished before the second coming of the Lord Jesus. All six of these things have already come to pass. Pre-millennialists say that the four hundred and ninety years reach all the way to the second advent.

I'll give you an illustration of what a pre-millennialist would say. He would say, “It's very difficult to see that Jerusalem has been delivered physically from transgression and from sins because the prophecy has to do with Jerusalem, your people, and your holy city.” If you look at Jerusalem today, you would not think at all that it had been delivered from transgression and sin. That seems very strange. Would you also think that everlasting righteousness has come to pass, and that we are living in the age of everlasting righteousness? Would you think that everlasting righteousness has been brought in? I wouldn't think so. Now, we can have different opinions about those. We could say, “Well, it hasn't come in really fully yet, but in principle it's come in because Christ died on the Cross.” Well that would be a possible interpretation. To my mind, that's not as likely as a more common sense, what I'd call a common sense, kind of interpretation.

But what about the fifth and the sixth of them? “To seal up vision and prophecy.” Has vision and prophecy been sealed up in Daniel's day or at the time of our Lord, as our amillennial friends said? The Book of Revelation, of course, is filled with just that; vision and prophecy. The apostles' epistles tell us that they were prophets in the early church, so to say that vision and prophecy had been sealed up at the first coming of our Lord, does not seem to follow.

But the last thing is the most significant, “To anoint the most holy.” Now, the most holy is a reference to the Temple complex. We know it's a reference to the Temple complex because this particular kind of construction is used about forty times in the Old Testament and one can tell, generally, what is meant by whether an article is found with it. If the article is found with the holy of holies, then the reference is to the most holy place within the tabernacle, or it could refer to the holy clothes with which the priests ministered their work. But here we do not have the article and the article in the usage of the expression, *codesh badasheme* in the Old Testament, always refers to the Temple complex. Now, to say that the Temple complex has been anointed, just seems to be absolutely impossible, so, consequently, pre-millennialists feel they have followed

grammatically and simply the language of Scripture. And what their conclusion is, that is that the six things are not yet completed is more harmonious with Holy Scripture. In fact, some pre-millennialists, in order to yield as much as possible to their opponents may say, “The first four have been fulfilled in principle, but the last two await the future.” And so, consequently, will not take place until the four hundred and ninety years comes to an end.

Thirdly, another difference of opinion. Now, we read in verse 25, “Know, therefore, and understand that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.” Or sixty-nine weeks. Amillennialists prefer the date five hundred and thirty-eight or five hundred and thirty-seven AD, as the time when the command to restore and build Jerusalem arose, and they take the reference to be to that particular period of time. Pre-millennialists on the other hand, prefer the date four hundred and forty-five to four hundred and forty-four BC and base it on Nehemiah chapter 2.

Now, if you have your Bibles and you can find Nehemiah, then turn there. We’ll just read these verses, because it’s good to read them, and to know the ground on which the conclusion is based. Nehemiah chapter 2 in verse 1 we read.

“And it came to pass.”

Remember, Nehemiah has asked the Lord, asked the king, I should say, he asked the Lord, and then he’s going to ask the king for permission to go to Jerusalem and do some work on the city.

“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 had 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 (Notice, 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, 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 might, 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 me, according to the good hand of my God upon me. Then.”

And I wanted to, I guess, we’ll maybe stop at that point for the sake of time.

Now that is, so far as I know, the only reference to the city among the possibilities of the “terminus a quo.” That is, the end in the past from which the four hundred and ninety years may be counted. So far as I know, this is the only place where the city, specifically, is mentioned. Now, there are some other things that are mentioned that might lead you to think they could be the place which the four hundred and ninety years follow. There is a debate among Old Testament and New Testament scholars over the point, but this is the only specific reference to the city, and it makes good sense because the four hundred and eighty-three years from this period of time four hundred and forty-four, four hundred and forty-five, around there what at three hundred and sixty day years, as the New Testament appears to indicate are biblical years, those years come to an end

with the triumphal entry of the Lord Jesus Christ into the city of Jerusalem. So here is another way in which amillennialists differ from pre-millennialists.

A fourth way, this is even more important. Among pre-millennialists, it is the conviction of them that between the time of the cutting off of the Messiah in his crucifixion, and the last of the weeks, the seventieth week which is described in verse 27, there is an unknown, you can call it parenthesis, you can call it gap or you can call it interlude. Anyway, at the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, the years stop at four hundred and eighty-three. The last week is to be fulfilled in the future. We drew a little simple chart, I've revised the chart already. It's not inspired, and probably by the time I put it together, it will have to be revised again, but the basic idea was on the chart.

And so now, we want to deal with the question of a gap or an interlude or an interval or parenthesis after the sixty-ninth week. Is there such? Now, amillennialists generally deny that there is any such gap, and they tried to make the seventy weeks of years run consecutively on through. But notice. Obviously, I am prejudiced. I tell you now, I'm prejudiced. This is why I'm prejudiced. In the first place, we read in verse 26, “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself, 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.”

Now, you can see that, if the four hundred and eighty-third year ends with the crucifixion of Christ, it's forty years later when Rome is destroyed, approximately forty, at seventy AD. So right at the beginning, let me say this; the Scriptures treat the seventieth week apart from the sixty-nine. Now, if you say to me, “Oh, but doesn't he say seven weeks and then sixty-two.” Yes, he does mention it, but he doesn't say anything that would indicate they are treated apart. He says simply in verse 25, “There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks” or sixty-nine weeks, but nothing is said about any interval between the seven and the sixty-two. But here we read, “After the sixty-two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off. The people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city,”

and it's not until verse 27 that we have reference to the last week. So the seventieth week is treated apart from sixty-ninth.

Now, if it were really true, if my friends among the amillennialists were really right, that the seventy years, consecutive and follow one after another, and therefore, the years, the seven follow the sixty-nine, where would we put a seven-year period in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ? There is no way in which such a seven year period can be put in his life. If he is cut off at the end of the sixty-ninth, what about the seven years? What shall we do with them? The Cross and the destruction of Jerusalem are placed between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks in the telling of the prophecy. At least forty years intervene there, it would seem.

This idea of an interval is not something that is found just here. We haven't expounded the Book of Daniel, of course, through. We looked at chapter 2, and we saw that the image, the great image, that was seen by Nebuchadnezzar, which Daniel was enabled by God to interpret, was an image in which there was a giant figure like Vulcan in the city of Birmingham, overlooking the city and a great image of four different kinds of metals. And they were identified except for the fourth one which was not identified, but then in the image, Daniel is told about the toes of the image. And we pointed out that in that there, apparently, was an interval between the first part of the image vision and the end of it in which there might be placed just such an interlude as we are talking about. But in chapter 7, in the prophecy there, the same thing is found. Here's the prophecy of the four great beasts, which parallel the four different kinds of metal on the image of chapter 2. But then when we read in verse 23 of Daniel chapter 7, “The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all other kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces.” Almost all interpreters refer this to the Roman Empire. Then we read in verse 24, “The ten horns are ten kings who shall arise from this kingdom and another shall rise after them. He shall be different from the first ones and shall subdue three kings.” In other words, there is within

the vision of chapter 7, a gap in the telling of the vision of the four wild beasts. The same thing is true in chapter 8, and in chapter 11 there is something that follows along the same line.

What also is significant is that the Lord Jesus in Matthew chapter 24 in verse 15, apparently refers to the desolation, the abomination of desolation, and refers it to the future, when he is talking about things that have to do with the future. You'll remember in the Olivet Discourse in Matthew chapter 24, the apostles ask him, “Tell us, when shall these things be? What will be the sign of your coming in the end of the age?” He's talked about the fact, that not one stone shall be left upon another, and so they ask the question, “When is Jerusalem going to be destroyed?” In other words, well, in chapter 24, verse 15, in the midst of his description of what is to follow he says, “Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.” In other words, our Lord appears to regard the abomination of desolation, which Daniel speaks about in this prophecy, as something in the future; future from the standpoint of the telling of the things that are going to happen in the future. So I'm afraid that amillennialists would have serious difficulty with that.

The time gap in the word of God between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week, I think, is satisfactorily established. Much more could be said about this, maybe some time we will, but it's not necessary now. I need to be sure and finish what we're talking about tonight.

Now, another question is the identity of the “prince that shall come.” We read in verse 26, “After the sixty-two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off.” That is, after the sixty-nine because the seven are already referred to. “Messiah shall be cut off.” We pointed out, of course, there's no question about that. That's a reference to the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. “But not for himself” or have nothing for himself, or there is nothingness to him. He's going to die, and he's going to have the kind of death that a Jewish man would

never want to have. He’s going to die without a family, and without children, which meant so much to them. So “not for himself” or nothingness to him. “The people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood.”

Amillennialists differ over who the “prince that shall come” is. Some do affirm it is the anti-Christ. I would agree with them. But others, who are individuals thought highly by evangelical Calvinists, such as Edward J. Young of Westminster Theological Seminary, argued strongly for this being a reference to Titus; that is, the Roman general Titus Vespasian who is responsible for the overthrow of Jerusalem. Pre-millennialists on the other hand, have it referred it to the anti-Christ. Since he is yet to come after Messiah’s death just mentioned, “Messiah shall be cut off.” Then we read about a “prince who is to come,” then one would think that this would be a priest, that is, a prince who is going to come later on. We do know this. This prince is a Roman or from Rome because he could be someone who is not a Roman, but, nevertheless, identified with a revived Roman Empire. That wouldn’t be unusual at all. We might have as president of the United States, someone who actually might, well, I don’t want to argue too much about the United States, but there could be individuals who had a background that’s not the same background as others, but they might still be in leadership in this country. And so the individual referred to is identified with Rome because he’s the prince that comes from the people who shall destroy the city, so we can say that much. But I don’t want to identify precisely who it is because there’s a good chance on the ground of Daniel 7 and 8 that he is a Greek, but who happens to be at the head of the Roman, revived Roman Empire. That’s a bit speculative, but we’ll leave it at that.

At any rate, what we read then here is that this prince is one who is identified with Rome, but notice that he is preceded by the people. We read, “And the people of the prince who is to come.” So he is someone who is future from the standpoint of the Romans who destroyed the city, so you can see how it’s not likely then that everything is

fulfilled at the first coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. So the identity, well at the pre-millennialists, then have very good reason for identifying the “he” as a reference to, I’m sorry, identifying the prince who is to come as a reference to the anti-Christ.

In addition, notice this. It says, “The people of the prince who is to come.” Not “a” prince, “the” prince. That article suggests that “he” in the light of the Book of Daniel, is something that one might anticipate or might even know about. “The prince who is to come.” Who could that be? Well, it could be one of the “toes” of the image, but even more specifically, it could be the “little horn” of the ten horns who rises up, destroys three of them. And so “the” prince suggests that he has been defined to some extent in the preceding context.

Now, let’s come to the confirmation of the covenant. I’ve got to finish this. The first thing that we have to wonder about is in verse 27 is, “Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.” Now, this is rather important. Professor Young of Westminster Seminary, who wrote a book on the Book of Daniel, has a lengthy exposition of this particular section, has said that this is Christ. “Then he,” that is Christ, “shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.” Pre-millennialists and some who are not pre-millennialists have argued that this is a reference to the anti-Christ.

Now, just think of what we have here. We have in verse 25, “to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince,” and then in verse 26, “Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself, and the people of the prince who is to come.” Now, I suggest to you that if this were really a reference to the Prince Messiah then it’d be no point in saying, “the people of the prince who is to come.” Why say that? It’s not necessary. Just say, “and the people of the prince,” the one mentioned in the preceding context. That would make it very plain. So the addition of the words, “who is to come” are designed to distinguish a second prince from the first prince.

Furthermore, those of you who know anything about grammar, know that pronouns are to agree with antecedents, particularly if the language is a kind of language

in which there is a great deal of such going on; like Greek and Latin, languages like that. In other words, the pronoun should agree in gender, number, case, generally speaking, with the preceding.

Now, also, another rule of grammar is that a pronoun normally refers to the nearest possible antecedent. If it doesn't, it's hard to make sense talking to someone or I should say, it's hard to understand people who talk like that; who use a lot of “he's” and “she's” but then a “she” appears, and it's a “she” back about five minutes ago that happened to be part of the conversation, instead of the immediately preceding “she” that we've been talking about at that time. I have known some people who talk like that. It's very difficult to understand them. You have to constantly say, “Who do you mean by the ‘she’? Which ‘she’? Which ‘he’?” You have to do that, don't you? I see some of you are smiling. You have the same difficulty I have. You know that, that is characteristic of some of us. So grammarians have laid down a principle which we ought to follow; that if we use a pronoun, we should, if possible, use it in a way that will not cause confusion, and the rule grammarians follow is that the pronoun normally refers to the nearest antecedent. What's the nearest antecedent? “Then he.” Is it Messiah the Prince? No. Verse 26 says, “And after the sixty-two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself, and the people of the prince who is to come.” That's the nearest antecedent. And so in verse 27, the normal way of interpreting verse 27 would be, “Then he, the prince that is to come, shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.” So we differ. We differ grammatically and we differ on sound grounds. The “he” of verse 27 is a reference to the anti-Christ, not the Christ. It makes a great deal of difference. “He shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.”

This term “to make a covenant” is a term that means to make a strong covenant with the implication of forcing agreement by superior force. We don't have time to talk about this, but, I think, this is probably a reference to Isaiah 28, where we have Israel, by the prophet, said to be making a covenant with death and Hades; speaking of their

disobedience and rebellion against the Lord God. “But he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.” Now ask yourself a question. Suppose that “he” is a reference to Christ. What seven-year covenant is referred to in Scripture with reference to our Lord? He confirms everlasting covenants by his sacrifice. He ratifies the eternal covenant by his sacrifice. But does he make a seven-year covenant? And, furthermore, does he break it after three and a half years? You see what this text says? “Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week, but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to the sacrifice and offering.”

Now, if I took that, “he shall make an end to sacrifice and offering” out of its context, I could make sense with it. I could say, “When he died on the cross at Calvary, the Levitical sacrifices were done away with.” But then I cannot make sense in context. Furthermore, if someone were to take that interpretation, I would say, “But wait a minute. He did not cause sacrifice and offering to come to an end. They sacrificed for forty years after our Lord died on Calvary’s cross.” So the only thing that makes good sense in my opinion is then he, the anti-Christ, shall confirm a covenant; that is, he shall make a strong covenant with many; that is, with many disobedient ones in Israel for a seven-year period of time. Why? Well, it may be that they felt they were in danger, and he, a strong person, promises to protect them, and so they make an agreement with him. And, as a matter of fact, he permits them, if they have not before exercised their temple worship. We know from the fact that when he breaks it, he brings an end to sacrifice and offering, that sacrifice and offering had been restored, and in the Temple itself. That’s why biblical students feel that the Old Testament does give them reason, and the New Testament as well; places like our Lord’s Olivet Discourse, 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, Paul talks about the same thing believe that the Temple area will be restored to Israel. A Temple will be erected in unbelief.

One last thing, because we have three minutes left. We read here, “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 upon the desolate.”

The amillennialists affirm this occurred at the time of the Cross. Obviously that is wrong if the “he” is anti-Christ, as we have sought to show. However, as I mentioned, if “he” were our Lord, it would be still untrue because the sacrifices do continue for forty more years. Pre-millennialists affirm that at the mid-point of the last of the four hundred and ninety year seventy weeks, the last week, at that point, evidently, Temple sacrifices will have been re-instituted. At that point the anti-Christ will break an agreement, which he has had with them and shall bring desolation upon the city of Jerusalem.

Now, there are other passages of Scripture that speak about this. Matthew chapter 24, verse 15, our Lord’s statement is certainly to the point. Let me read it again. I think we’ve got time to read it. Matthew 24 in verse 15 where we read, “Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken out by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place.” In other words, evidently, the anti-Christ is going to set up the worship of himself in the Temple of Israel. That would be the greatest desolation that one could think of. Suppose that we were to set up in Believers Chapel, on the counter here, the worship well, you pick out the political figure that you want to. I don’t want to offend anyone who may have voted for Clinton, but anybody else; any human being. What an abomination that would be in Believers Chapel.

Now, turn over to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, just have to read this and finish. You know Revelation chapter 13, gives even more details, but Paul says in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 in verse 3 and verse 4, “Let no one 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 as God in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”

You know, it’s been an interesting thing. I made reference to this the other day, but I’ve read something even since that time; that some Jewish rabbis, Orthodox, were

disturbed enough about the prophecy of Daniel 9, to make statements to the affect that a prolonged and thorough-going study of that prophecy might result in all Jews becoming Christians because it so plainly and clearly states that the Messiah has already come. They take refuge in the fact it doesn't say that Jesus is the Messiah, but, nevertheless, that the Messiah has come. Rabbi Simon Luzotto, a famous rabbi, gave as his opinion that, “A prolonged and thorough-going study of this prophecy might result in all Jews becoming Christians” as it was his view. “That it could not be denied, on the basis of Daniel's chronology that the Messiah had already appeared.” Whether Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah, he dared not say with certainty.

You know, there is that statement in here, I'll just close on this, that it says, “When our Lord died on Calvary's cross, there is nothing for him.” It was from a human standpoint, a terrible way to die, for a Jewish man to die. No family. No wife. No children. No name, which meant so much to Israelites. But is it true that there is nothing to him? Oh no. What a progeny. What a progeny the Lord Jesus Christ has; the race of the believing family of God. From the beginning, from Adam in the beginning, all the way through till the last saint called by God the Holy Spirit into fellowship with him, the Lord's family. What a magnificent progeny he does have. If you're a believer in him, you're in that family, Son of God, joint heir with Christ. If you're not, hasten to come to him. Trust him. Believe in him. Come. Within your own heart, give him thanks for what he's done in having been “cut off” for you, that you might have life. What better time to be saved than right now.

Let's bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are so thankful to Thee for the prophecies of the word of God. We're not embarrassed to study them. We're not ashamed of them. They throw light on the divine purpose in history and prophecy. We know, Lord, we've not

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exhausted this great prophecy, and perhaps have erred here or there. Give us, Lord,
diligence to continue to study that we might know Thy word better.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.