SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Daniel

Chapter Nine

The Prayer & the Seventy Weeks

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | THREE VOICES

An old man opens Jeremiah, counts the years, and falls on his knees — and heaven answers his prayer about seventy *years* with a calendar of seventy *weeks* that runs to the Messiah, to the cross, and to the end — read through three teachers — **Amir Tsarfati**, **John MacArthur**, and **David Guzik** — with the Hebrew behind the prayer and the prophecy.

THE PASSAGE

Daniel 9:1–27

The Book · the prayer · the answer

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Daniel 9 — a man who prays the Word, and the God who answers with a calendar

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"O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay." — Daniel 9:19

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Daniel 9:1–27

A Man Who Prays the Word, and the God Who Answers with a Calendar

† How to Read This Study

This study walks the chapter in four movements — Daniel at the Book (vv. 1–3), the great prayer of confession and plea (vv. 4–19), Gabriel's arrival at the hour of the evening offering (vv. 20–23), and the prophecy of the seventy weeks (vv. 24–27) — then sets the passage inside the whole Bible. At each movement you will hear the same three teachers, each marked in his own color, and you will see the Hebrew Daniel wrote and why it matters. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add his angle. Where they overlap, the truth is underlined; where they differ, the passage opens wider.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel | JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You | DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · DANIEL 9:24

Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place.

† Before the Passage

Chapter 9 opens in the first year of Darius the Mede, 539/538 BC. Babylon has just fallen (chapter 5); the handwriting on the wall is a few months old. Daniel was carried off in 605 BC as a teenager, so he is now in his eighties and has been in exile about sixty-seven years. The visions of chapters 7 and 8 lie behind him — he saw them under Belshazzar — and the last of them left him sick for days and told him the sanctuary would be trampled. Then the empire changed hands overnight, exactly as the Scriptures had said it would.

So Daniel does what a man of the Book does: he opens it. Jeremiah had written that Jerusalem would lie desolate seventy years and that Babylon would be punished when the seventy were complete (Jeremiah 25:11–12; 29:10). From the first deportation in 605 BC the seventy years are almost up, and Babylon has just been punished. Daniel can count. The prophecy is on the verge of fulfillment, and the man who could read it did not sit back to watch it happen — he fasted, put on sackcloth and ashes, and prayed one of the longest and most honest prayers in the Bible. The chapter is two halves: the prayer (vv. 3–19) and the answer (vv.

20–27). The prayer is about seventy *years* and the city; the answer is about seventy *weeks* and the Messiah. God answers more than Daniel asks.

Hold two words over the chapter. **Desolate** (*shamem*) — the ruins of Jerusalem that drove Daniel to prayer (v. 2, a different word, *chorbot*) become the desolate sanctuary he pleads for (vv. 17–18) and the desolations still decreed at the end of the prophecy (vv. 26–27). And **seventy** — Jeremiah's seventy years become Gabriel's seventy sevens. Tsarfati reads the seventy weeks as God's calendar for Israel with a seven-year finale still to come; MacArthur anchors the chapter in the sovereignty that scheduled the Messiah to the day and the prayer that God delights to answer; Guzik walks the arithmetic and the history. All three agree on the sermon: the God who keeps His word to the year keeps it to the day.

I
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 9:1–3

The Book Open, the Knees Bent

A prophecy nearly fulfilled, and the man who read it and prayed

> *"[1] In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans— [2] in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. [3] So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes."*
>
> DANIEL 9:1–3

בִּינֹתִי בַּסְּפָרִים

BINOTI BA-SEPHARIM · "I OBSERVED IN THE BOOKS"

Bin is to discern, to understand with attention. Daniel did not stumble onto Jeremiah; he studied him. "The books" are the scrolls of the prophets, written within Daniel's own lifetime and already received as "the word of the LORD." The chapter begins with a believer reading his Bible, and it will end with an angel telling him to "understand the vision" (v. 23) — the same root, *bin*, at both ends.

שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה

SHIV'IM SHANAH · "SEVENTY YEARS"

Jeremiah's number (25:11–12; 29:10). Measured from the first deportation (605 BC) it runs out at the return under Cyrus (538/537 BC); measured from the temple's destruction (586 BC) it runs to the second temple's completion (516/515 BC). 2 Chronicles 36:21 adds the reason: the land "kept sabbath" for the sabbatical years Israel had ignored. Seventy years of rest for seventy sabbaths missed — 490 years of neglect. Gabriel's answer will use the same multiple.

תַּחֲנוּנִים

TACHANUNIM · "SUPPLICATIONS"

From *chanan*, "to be gracious." A *tachanun* is a plea for grace, a request that has no claim behind it. Daniel will say so outright in verse 18: "not on

account of any merits of our own." The word tells you the posture before the prayer begins — empty hands, open mouth.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Here is a man who takes prophecy literally and lets it move him. Daniel read "seventy years" and understood seventy years — not an era, not a symbol — and because he believed the clock was real he acted on it. Tsarfati's point for today is the same: when the Bible says Israel will be gathered back to the land, scattered no more, it means what it says, and the right response to a promise coming due is not speculation but intercession. Daniel prayed Israel home.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Notice what the knowledge of prophecy produced in Daniel: not a chart, a prayer. He knew God had promised restoration, and he knew God accomplishes His purposes through the prayers of His people — so he prayed the promise back to God. MacArthur presses the point that sovereignty never cancels supplication; it summons it. The man most certain of God's plan is the man on his face asking God to do it. "Fasting, sackcloth and ashes" is the body agreeing with the heart.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik takes the historical question first: "Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent" is not Darius I of Persia (522–486 BC) but the Darius of chapter 6 — most likely Gubaru, the governor Cyrus set over Babylon, or a throne-name for Cyrus himself; "was made king" fits a man installed by another. He then counts with Daniel: from 605 BC the seventy years were nearly complete, and Babylon had just fallen as Jeremiah said. Prophecy, Guzik notes, is meant to be understood — and when it is understood it is meant to be prayed.

II
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 9:4–19

The Prayer: Confession and Plea

"We have sinned" — and "for Your own sake"

"4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, △ the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, 5 ⚠ we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. 6 Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land. 7 △ Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us ⚠ open shame, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against You. 8 Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9 △ To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; 10 nor have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets."

DANIEL 9:4–10

הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא

HA-GADOL VE-HA-NORA · "THE GREAT AND AWESOME GOD"

Nora is from *yare*, "to fear" — the God who is to be feared, before whom one trembles. Daniel's prayer opens the way Nehemiah's (1:5) and Moses' (Deuteronomy 7:21) do: with who God is. The confession that follows is honest because the God it is addressed to is great; you can afford to tell the whole truth to a God that big.

חֶסֶד

CHESED · "LOVINGKINDNESS"

Covenant-loyal love: the steadfast, promise-keeping kindness of a God who has bound Himself and does not let go. "Keeps His covenant and lovingkindness" is Deuteronomy 7:9 word for word. Daniel's whole plea stands on *chesed*. He will ask God to act "for Your own sake" because God's own faithfulness, not Israel's, is the only ground left.

בֹּשֶׁת הַפָּנִים

BOSHET HA-PANIM · "OPEN SHAME"

Literally "shame of face," the hot face of the guilty (KJV, "confusion of faces"). Verses 7 and 8 set it against *tsedaqah*, righteousness: "Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame." That one sentence is the theology of the whole prayer — and of the gospel. God is right; we are ashamed; only mercy bridges the two.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Count the pronouns. “We have sinned … we have not listened … we have rebelled.” Daniel was carried off as a boy and never bowed to an idol, yet he does not pray “they.” Tsarfati sees here the posture Israel will take at the end when they look on Him whom they pierced (Zechariah 12:10): national confession, led by the righteous, for the sake of the nation. And he notes the audience Daniel names — Judah, Jerusalem, “all Israel … far away in all the countries” — the whole diaspora, which is exactly the people God is still gathering.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

This is the anatomy of true confession. It names sin with five verbs and no excuses (v. 5); it admits the sin was against God’s revealed Word, “Your servants the prophets” (v. 6); it agrees with God’s verdict — “Righteousness belongs to You” (v. 7); and it refuses to compare. MacArthur points out that Daniel never once mentions Babylon’s cruelty. The problem with Israel was never the Babylonians; it was Israel. A man is not forgiven for the sins he explains, only for the ones he confesses.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik draws attention to how the prayer describes itself: it is a “confession” by Daniel’s own word (v. 4) before it is a request — the asking does not start until verse 16. And he reads the exile the way Daniel does, as Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 fulfilled to the letter: God had said in advance what disobedience would cost, and the cost came due. The prayer is built out of Scripture, and so is the judgment it confesses.

“11 Indeed all Israel has ⚠ transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so ◷ the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. 12 Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet ⚠ we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth. 14 Therefore the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for △ the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, who have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for Yourself, as it is this day—we have sinned, we have been wicked.”

DANIEL 9:11–15

הָאָלָה

HA-ALAH · “THE CURSE”

An oath-curse, the sworn sanction attached to a covenant (NASB “the curse,” beside *ha-shevuah*, “the oath,” v. 11). Deuteronomy 28–29 lists the curses and Deuteronomy 29:12–21 names the covenant “oath.” Daniel says God “confirmed His words” (v. 12) — the exile is not bad luck but the Lord keeping the dark half of His covenant as faithfully as the bright half. And Leviticus 26:40 told Israel exactly how to pray under that curse — “if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers” — while Solomon prayed for this very moment at the temple’s dedication (1 Kings 8:46–50). Daniel is praying the Bible’s own words back to God.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

“Under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem.” Daniel is not exaggerating; he is reading Deuteronomy 28 fulfilled. Tsarfati keeps the covenant frame: the curses fell because the covenant is real, and the same covenant promises the regathering (Deuteronomy 30:1–5). A Jew in Babylon and a Jew in Tel Aviv are standing in the same chapter — one under the curse, one under the beginning of the restoration.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Verse 13 is the sharpest line in the prayer: all this came on us, “yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God.” Judgment did not produce repentance; it produced complaint. MacArthur calls that the most damning confession a people can make — that even God’s discipline did not turn them. And then verse 14: “the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds.” Daniel does not accuse God of being harsh. He vindicates God against himself. That is what repentance sounds like.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes the pivot at verse 15: “And now.” Daniel reaches back to the Exodus — “brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand” — because that is the God he is asking to do it again. The argument of the prayer is God’s own history and God’s own name. He has acted for His people before, publicly, and “made a name for Yourself”; that name is now at stake in Jerusalem’s rubble.

> *“16 O Lord, in accordance with all Your righteous acts, let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a reproach to all those around us. 17 So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary. 18 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 are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion. 19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.””*
>
> DANIEL 9:16–19

רַחֲמִים

RACHAMIM · “COMPASSION”

Plural of *rechem*, “womb.” It is the tender, visceral mercy of a mother for her child, and the plural intensifies it: “great compassions.” Daniel uses it in verse 9 and verse 18, and in verse 18 it is the stated ground of the whole request: “not on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion.” Mercy, not merit — the gospel in Hebrew.

לְמַעַנְךָ

LEMA’ANKHA · “FOR YOUR OWN SAKE”

Verse 17: “for Your sake, O Lord”; verse 19: “for Your own sake, O my God.” The deepest appeal in prayer is not our need but God’s glory. Jerusalem is “Your city,” the people are “Your people,” the sanctuary is “Your sanctuary,” and the city “is called by Your name.” Daniel is reminding God that God’s reputation is bound up with God’s people — and God loves to be reminded.

שָׁמֵם

SHAMEM · “DESOLATE”

To be appalled, deserted, laid waste. The root runs through the chapter like a scar: the desolate sanctuary (v. 17), “our desolations” (v. 18), and then in the prophecy the desolations determined and the one who makes desolate (vv. 26–27). (Verse 2 uses a different word for Jerusalem’s ruins, *chorbot*.) The word Daniel prayed with becomes the word Gabriel prophesies with. The answer speaks the language of the question.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Look at what Daniel is actually asking for: Jerusalem, the holy mountain, the sanctuary, the people — the land and the temple. He does not ask for a comfortable exile. Tsarfati reads this as the heart of every true prayer for Israel: the city and the sanctuary matter to God because He put His name there, and Daniel knows it. Verse 19 is a man pounding on heaven’s door — hear, forgive, act, do not delay — and heaven, as the next verse shows, was already open.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Here is the climax of the prayer, and it has not a word of merit in it. "Not on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion." MacArthur: every acceptable prayer ever prayed stands on that sentence. We do not approach God on the basis of our performance but on the basis of His mercy — which is precisely what praying in Jesus' name means. And the four imperatives of verse 19, from a man who has just confessed national guilt, are not presumption; they are faith. Confession and boldness belong together.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes how the petitions pile up in verse 19 — hear, forgive, listen, take action, do not delay — the words of a man who will not be put off, who has stopped explaining and started pleading. He quotes Spurgeon's longing for prayer that moves from praying to *agonizing*. And he observes the final ground: "Your city and Your people are called by Your name." Daniel's last argument is not Israel's worthiness but God's ownership. What bears His name He will not abandon.

III
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 9:20–23

Gabriel at the Evening Offering

An answer already on its way, at the hour of the sacrifice

"[20] Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, [21] while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. [22] He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. [23] At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision."

DANIEL 9:20–23

מִנְחַת־עֶרֶב

MINCHAT-EREV · "THE EVENING OFFERING"

The afternoon sacrifice, about the ninth hour, three o'clock (Exodus 29:39; compare Acts 3:1). There had been no altar for nearly fifty years; Daniel had last seen its smoke as a boy in Jerusalem, yet he still kept its hour. The Jewish day of prayer was shaped by a sacrifice he could not offer. And at that hour, in that same city, the Messiah would one day cry out and die (Matthew 27:46). Daniel prayed at three in the afternoon; so, centuries later, did the darkened sky.

גַּבְרִיאֵל

GAVRI'EL · "GABRIEL"

"Man of God," *gever* + *El*. The angel who interpreted the ram and the goat (8:16) is "the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously." He appears twice more in Scripture, to Zacharias and to Mary (Luke 1:19, 26), announcing the forerunner and the Messiah — the very Messiah he is about to put on the calendar here. Gabriel's whole recorded ministry is the coming of Christ.

חֲמוּדוֹת

CHAMUDOT · "HIGHLY ESTEEMED"

Precious things, treasures — the plural of *chamud*, desirable (the root of "covet" in the tenth commandment). KJV: "greatly beloved." Heaven's name for Daniel, given three times (9:23; 10:11, 19). The man who has just confessed "we have been wicked" is told, in the same hour, that he is treasured. That is how grace works: the honest confessor is the beloved.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

The command went out "at the beginning of your supplications." Before Daniel got past "Alas, O Lord," the answer was dispatched. Tsarfati loves this verse for Israel: God is not slow to hear the cry of His people; the delay is on our end, not His. And the answer comes about the holy mountain, the city and the people — the very things Daniel prayed for — but it is bigger than the return from Babylon. Daniel asked for a restoration; God gave him the whole road to the Messiah and the end.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Three things about how God answers prayer. First, immediately: "at the beginning of your supplications the command was issued" (compare Isaiah 65:24). Second, through His Word: Gabriel comes to give "insight with understanding," not a feeling but revelation. Third, more than was asked: Daniel prayed about Jerusalem's seventy years and received God's plan for Israel through the age. MacArthur adds the tenderness of "highly esteemed." God does not merely answer the man; He honors him.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that Daniel was "still speaking" when the answer came — a reminder that God sometimes interrupts prayer with the answer. He draws out the evening offering: as a young man in Jerusalem Daniel had watched the smoke rise from the temple, and nearly fifty years after that altar was destroyed he still kept its hour — the hour Guzik connects to the darkness over the cross (Matthew 27:45). He also observes that "the vision" (v. 23) Daniel is told to understand had not yet been given; Gabriel is telling him to pay attention to what follows — the most precise prophecy of the Messiah in the Old Testament.

IV
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 9:24–27

The Seventy Weeks

God's calendar for Israel — to the Messiah, to the cross, and to the end

> *24 "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place."*
>
> DANIEL 9:24–24

שָׁבֻעִים שִׁבְעִים

SHAVU'IM SHIV'IM · "SEVENTY WEEKS"

Shavua is simply "a seven," a heptad — like our "dozen." Context decides the unit. Jacob served a "week" of years for Rachel (Genesis 29:27), and Israel kept sabbatical *years* every seventh year (Leviticus 25:1–7). Daniel has just been thinking in sabbatical years (2 Chronicles 36:21), so "seventy sevens" are seventy sevens of years: 490. Jeremiah's seventy years answered seventy neglected sabbaths; now seventy more sevens are laid out for Israel's future.

נֶחְתַּךְ

NECHTAK · "HAVE BEEN DECREED"

From *chatak*, "to cut, to cut off, to determine." It occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible. The 490 years are *cut out* of history and marked off for "your people and your holy city" — Israel and Jerusalem. The decree is as fixed as a cut in stone; the church is not the subject, Israel is.

לְכַפֵּר עָוֹן

LEKHAPPER AVON · "TO MAKE ATONEMENT FOR INIQUITY"

Kaphar: to cover, to purge by a substitute — the verb of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). Six purposes are listed: finish transgression, end sin, atone for iniquity, bring everlasting righteousness, seal up vision and prophecy, anoint the most holy. The first three are about sin and were paid for at the cross; the last three are about the kingdom and await the King. The seventy weeks run from Persia to the end of the age.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

"Your people and your holy city." The calendar is addressed to Israel and Jerusalem; it is not about the church, which did not yet exist and is nowhere in Daniel. Tsarfati reads the six purposes literally and asks the simple question: has sin ended in Jerusalem? Is everlasting righteousness ruling there? Is the most holy place anointed? Then the seventy weeks are not finished. The first sixty-nine were kept to the day; the seventieth is Israel's future, and it is the seven-year Tribulation of Revelation.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

This verse is the backbone of biblical chronology. God gives His people a timetable, and He gives it in units they understand — sevens of years. MacArthur stresses the sovereignty in *decreed*: history is not drifting toward an end; it is *cut* to a length. And he stresses the gospel in the six purposes — transgression finished, sin ended, iniquity atoned. Everything Israel's long sin had broken, God has scheduled to repair, and the repair runs through a Messiah who dies.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik lays the arithmetic plainly: a week is seven; seventy weeks are 490; and because Daniel was praying about years, these are years. He notes the common pattern in Daniel of prophecy stacking a near fulfillment under a far one, and takes the six purposes at face value: atonement was accomplished at Calvary, but the end of sin and everlasting righteousness are visibly not yet here, so the seventieth week waits. God's calendar for Israel has a pause in it — the age we live in.

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

DANIEL 9:25–25

מָשִׁיחַ נָגִיד

MASHIACH NAGID · "MESSIAH THE PRINCE"

Mashiach, "anointed one" — used of priests and kings throughout the Old Testament, but only here (vv. 25–26) does the KJV and NASB render it "Messiah," because only here is it plainly *the* Anointed One, dated. *Nagid* is a leader, a ruler — the word for David (1 Samuel 13:14). The Anointed Ruler, Priest and King, will arrive at a fixed point on the calendar.

רְחוֹב וְחָרוּץ

RECHOV VE-CHARUTS · "PLAZA AND MOAT"

An open square and a cut trench — the civic center and the defensive ditch. The decree in view is one to rebuild the *city* as a fortified city, not merely the temple. "In times of distress" is Nehemiah's story exactly: a trowel in one hand and a weapon in the other (Nehemiah 4:17).

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Sixty-nine sevens — 483 years — from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to Messiah the Prince. Tsarfati stands with the reading that the decree is Artaxerxes' word to Nehemiah in 445/444 BC, the only one that authorized the city and its wall, and that the 483 years land on the week Jesus rode into Jerusalem as King. God told Israel the day her King would come. Jesus wept over the city because it "did not recognize the time of your visitation" (Luke 19:44) — it was knowable, and it was missed.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Note the two stages: seven weeks (49 years) and sixty-two weeks (434 years). The first forty-nine fit the rebuilding of the city under Nehemiah and the close of the Old Testament canon; the next 434 run through the silent centuries to Christ. MacArthur's emphasis falls on precision: God does not give approximate prophecy. He named the empire in chapter 8; here He dates the Messiah. The Jewish leaders of Jesus' day had this text and should have been counting.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik weighs the four candidate decrees — Cyrus (Ezra 1, 538 BC), Darius (Ezra 6, c. 520), Artaxerxes to Ezra (Ezra 7, 458), and Artaxerxes to Nehemiah (Nehemiah 2, 445/444) — and argues only the last authorized rebuilding the city and wall. He then sets out Sir Robert Anderson's classic calculation: 483 prophetic years of 360 days (compare Revelation 12:6 with 13:5) = 173,880 days, from Nisan 1, 445 BC to the Triumphal Entry, AD 32 — while noting that most chronologists favor AD 30 or 33 for the crucifixion. Either way, Guzik says, the Messiah arrived on schedule. (Harold Hoehner's later revision of Anderson — 444 BC to AD 33 — reaches the same 173,880 days by different dates.)

"[26] Then ◷ after the sixty-two weeks △ the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; ⟲ desolations are determined."

DANIEL 9:26–26

יִכָּרֵת מָשִׁיחַ

YIKKARET MASHIACH · "THE MESSIAH WILL BE CUT OFF"

Karat: to cut down, to cut off — the verb for a death sentence (Genesis 9:11; Exodus 31:14) and, strikingly, the verb for *cutting* a covenant. Isaiah 53:8 uses the same picture: "cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people." The Anointed One is not merely rejected; He is executed — and the execution is how the new covenant is cut.

וְאֵין לוֹ

VE-EIN LO · "AND HAVE NOTHING"

Literally "and there is nothing to Him / no one for Him." The KJV reads "but not for himself." Both are true: He dies with nothing — no throne, no crowd, no clothes — and He dies not for Himself but for others. Then "the people of the prince who is to come" destroy city and sanctuary: Rome under Titus, AD 70, within a generation of the cross, exactly in that order.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

"After the sixty-two weeks" — after the sixty-ninth, not inside the seventieth — the Messiah is cut off. Then a people destroys the city, and *their* prince "is to come." Tsarfati reads the grammar carefully: the people are first-century Rome; the prince is a future ruler who rises from that same Roman world — the little horn of chapter 7, the Antichrist. The cross, then AD 70, then a gap, then the prince. Daniel's calendar leaves the space where the church age sits, and then resumes.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

The Messiah comes and is killed. That is the prophecy, dated, five centuries ahead. MacArthur presses the apologetic weight: the Jews of the first century had a prophecy that their Messiah would arrive after 483 years and *die* before the second temple fell, and both happened within forty years of each other. Then the sovereignty: "desolations are determined." Even the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 was not Rome's doing finally but God's decree, executed by Rome. Nothing in the story is out of His hand — not even the murder of His Son.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik walks the fulfillment: Jesus crucified about AD 32/33; Jerusalem and the temple destroyed by Titus in AD 70, the sanctuary burned and leveled, as Jesus had foretold — "not one stone upon another" (Luke 19:44). He draws out the order the verse fixes — the Messiah had to come *and be cut off* before the second temple fell — which means any Messiah still expected cannot be the one of Daniel 9. The Messiah has already come; the question is whether we recognized Him.

"[27] And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of ⚠ abominations will come ⚠ one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.""

DANIEL 9:27–27

הִגְבִּיר בְּרִית

HIGBIR BERIT · "MAKE A FIRM COVENANT"

Gabar, "to be strong," in the causative: to make strong, to enforce. Not "make a covenant" (*karat berit*) but "make a covenant strong" — an arrangement imposed and guaranteed by a strong man. "The many" (*ha-rabbim*) is Israel's majority. The nearest antecedent of "he" is "the prince who is to come" (v. 26), not the Messiah: the Messiah was cut off and has no covenant left to break.

שִׁקּוּצִים מְשֹׁמֵם

SHIQQUTSIM MESHOMEM · "ABOMINATIONS ... ONE WHO MAKES DESOLATE"

Shiqquts: a detestable thing, an idol (1 Kings 11:5–7; 2 Kings 23:13). *Meshomem* is *shamem* again — the desolating one. Together they are the "abomination of desolation" (11:31; 12:11) that Antiochus rehearsed in 167 BC and that Jesus said was still ahead (Matthew 24:15). The chapter that began with the desolations of Jerusalem ends with the desolator — and with his destruction, "decreed."

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

This is the seventieth week, and it is still future. A prince confirms a seven-year covenant with Israel, breaks it at the midpoint by stopping the sacrifice — which means a temple with sacrifices will stand again — and sets up the abomination Jesus warned of. Three and a half years, the "time, times, and half a time" of 7:25, the forty-two months of Revelation 13:5. Tsarfati: everything after the cross in this verse is Israel's unfinished future, and Israel is back in the land so that it can happen. Then the one who makes desolate has his own end "poured out" on him. God finishes the sentence.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

The clock stopped at the cross and will restart at a covenant. MacArthur reads the gap the way the New Testament does: Jesus (Matthew 24:15) and Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4) both place the abomination and the man who commits it in the future, which means verse 27 did not happen in AD 70 and did not happen under Antiochus. And the last clause is the comfort of the whole book in one line: the desolator meets a destruction "one that is decreed." God has already written the end of the Antichrist. The seventieth week is severe, measured, and already judged.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik takes "he" as the coming prince, notes the covenant is "with the many" for one week — seven years — and that the break comes "in the middle," which gives the three-and-a-half-year figure Revelation repeats so often. The text itself rules out the usual alternatives: Antiochus did not come after the Messiah was cut off, Titus made no covenant, and Jesus put the event ahead of His own day. Guzik lands where the chapter lands: the "complete destruction" is for the desolator, not for the people of God.

V

MOVEMENT

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

The seventy years behind the prayer, and the Messiah and the end ahead of it

> *""For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place."*
>
> JEREMIAH 29:10

> *"to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete."*
>
> 2 CHRONICLES 36:21

> *"'If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me— I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land."*
>
> LEVITICUS 26:40-42

> *"I said to the king, "If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it.""*
>
> NEHEMIAH 2:5

> *"By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?"*
>
> ISAIAH 53:8

> *"saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.""*
>
> LUKE 19:42-44

> *"Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),"*
>
> MATTHEW 24:15

> *"Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months."*
>
> REVELATION 11:2

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Read the chain forward. Jeremiah's seventy years end exactly as written; Nehemiah's decree starts the sixty-nine weeks; Isaiah 53:8 and Daniel 9:26 paint the same picture of the same death — cut off for the transgression of the people; and Jesus weeps over a city that missed "the time of your visitation" — a time that was on the calendar. Then He points past AD 70 to an abomination still ahead, and John gives it forty-two months. Tsarfati's rule from chapter 8 holds here too: the near fulfillment proves the far one. Sixty-nine weeks kept to the day guarantees the seventieth.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Grace to You

Leviticus 26:40–42 is the key to the prayer and 2 Chronicles 36:21 is the key to the number. God told Israel how exile would end — confession — and Daniel confessed; God explained the seventy years as sabbaths — sevens — and Gabriel answered in sevens. MacArthur draws the lesson: God's answers are always consistent with God's Word. He does not improvise. The Messiah dated in Daniel 9 is the Servant cut off in Isaiah 53 and the King who rode in on the day in Luke 19; one plan, one Author.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik's conclusion is that this chapter is about Jesus, and the cross-references bear him out: the "cut off" of Isaiah 53:8, the exact-day arrival implied by Luke 19:42–44, the destruction of the temple foretold in the same breath, and the abomination Jesus still placed in the future in Matthew 24:15 — four texts from two Testaments reading Daniel 9 the same way. Guzik adds that the second temple's construction, finished about 516 BC, closed Jeremiah's seventy years from the destruction of the first; God kept both ways of counting.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Three voices, one chapter

The same chapter, read three ways. Tsarfati listens for Israel and the end of the age; MacArthur presses the sovereignty of God and the prayer and confession it calls for; Guzik walks the history, the arithmetic, and the text. Together they keep Daniel 9 from becoming either a math puzzle or a vague hope.

THE MOMENT	TSARFATI · the times	MACARTHUR · sovereignty	GUZIK · text & history
The Book (9:1–3)	Seventy literal years; a promise coming due calls for intercession.	Prophecy produced a prayer, not a chart.	Darius the Mede = Gubaru or Cyrus's throne-name; count from 605 BC.
Confession (9:4–15)	"We," not "they" — the posture of Zechariah 12:10.	Five verbs, no excuses, no mention of Babylon.	Built from Leviticus 26 and 1 Kings 8.
Plea (9:16–19)	The city, the mountain, the sanctuary — the land matters to God.	"Not on account of any merits of our own."	Hear, forgive, listen, act, do not delay — agonizing prayer.
Gabriel (9:20–23)	God is not slow; the delay is ours.	Answered at once, by the Word, more than asked.	The evening offering — the hour Jesus died.
Seventy weeks (9:24–26)	Israel's calendar; sixty-nine kept to the day.	God dates the Messiah and His death.	Nehemiah's decree; 173,880 days (Anderson/Hoehner).
The last week (9:27)	Future covenant, a temple, the Antichrist, 3½ years.	Clock stopped at the cross; the desolator's end decreed.	"He" = the coming prince, the Antichrist, with Roman roots.

DANIEL 9 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **The chapter is a prayer before it is a prophecy.** Nineteen verses before the calendar begins, sixteen of them prayer; four verses of calendar. Daniel read Jeremiah, believed it literally, and fell on his knees (vv. 2–3). Prophecy understood is prophecy prayed. GUZIK
- **"Righteousness belongs to You … to us open shame."** The whole theology of confession in one sentence (v. 7). Daniel names sin with five verbs, never mentions Babylon, and vindicates God against himself (v. 14). MACARTHUR
- **Mercy, not merit.** "Not on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion" (v. 18). *Rachamim* — womb-mercy — is the only ground of prayer; that is what praying in Jesus' name means. MACARTHUR

- **The answer left heaven at Daniel's first word.** "At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued" (v. 23; Isaiah 65:24) — and it came at the hour of the evening offering, the ninth hour, the hour the Messiah would die. TEXT

- **Seventy years answered with seventy sevens.** Jeremiah's seventy years paid for 490 years of missed sabbaths (2 Chronicles 36:21); Gabriel lays out 490 more, *decreed* (*nechtak*, cut) for "your people and your holy city" — Israel. TEXT

- **Sixty-nine weeks landed on the Messiah to the day.** From Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah (445/444 BC) 483 years run to the Triumphal Entry; Jesus held Jerusalem accountable for not knowing it (Luke 19:44). GUZIK

- **The Messiah is cut off before the temple falls.** *Yikkaret* — executed, and the verb for cutting a covenant (v. 26); Isaiah 53:8 paints the same death. Cross c. AD 32/33, temple AD 70. Any Messiah still awaited is too late. TSARFATI

- **The seventieth week is still future, and the desolator's end is already decreed.** Jesus (Matthew 24:15) and Paul (2 Thessalonians 2) put the covenant-breaker ahead; his seven years are bounded, his destruction "poured out." God finishes the sentence (v. 27). TSARFATI

† Questions for the Table

1 **Daniel read a promise that was about to be fulfilled and responded with fasting and prayer, not with a chart. When God's Word shows you what He is going to do, what does it usually produce in you — and what would it look like to pray the promise instead of only studying it?**

A promise understood is a promise to be prayed; I will take what God has said and ask Him to do it.

DANIEL 9:2-3

2 **Daniel, who never bowed to an idol, prayed "we have sinned." Where are you praying "they" prayers — about the culture, the church, the men who fall — when God is waiting for a "we"?**

Confession that points at others is not confession; I own my part in the sin of my people.

DANIEL 9:5-8

3 **"Not on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion." What are you quietly bringing to God as merit, and how would your praying change if you came on mercy alone?**

I have nothing to bring but my need; mercy is the only ground I stand on, and it is enough.

DANIEL 9:18

4 **The answer was dispatched at the beginning of Daniel's prayer and arrived at the evening offering. What are you waiting on that may already be on its way — and does believing that change how you keep praying?**

God hears at the first word; I will keep praying as a man whose answer is already moving.

DANIEL 9:20-23

5 **Sixty-nine weeks were kept to the day and Jerusalem "did not recognize the time of your visitation." Where might you be missing what God is plainly doing because you were not expecting Him to keep His Word so exactly?**

God keeps His calendar precisely; I want to be a man who is watching when He moves.

DANIEL 9:25-26; LUKE 19:44

6 **The desolator's seven years are bounded and his end is "decreed." What evil around you feels open-ended, and how does a pre-written ending for the worst man in history steady you for the ordinary hard things in yours?**

If God has already written the end of the Antichrist, He has measured whatever I am facing too.

DANIEL 9:27

❖

An old man opened the Book, counted the years, and prayed "for Your own sake" — and before he finished, heaven had sent the calendar: seventy sevens to the Messiah, to the cross, and to the end. Sixty-nine have been kept to the day. The God who keeps His word to the year keeps it to the day.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Scripture: New American Standard Bible (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. The teacher sections are the study author's faithful summaries — not verbatim quotations — of Amir Tsarfati (*Discovering Daniel*, Behold Israel), John MacArthur (Grace to You) and David Guzik (Enduring Word) on Daniel 9; consult each author's own work for his exact words. Chronology follows the standard dates (Daniel deported 605 BC; Babylon fell 539 BC; Artaxerxes' twentieth year 445/444 BC; Jerusalem destroyed AD 70); the 173,880-day computation is Sir Robert Anderson's (*The Coming Prince*) as revised by Harold Hoehner. Hebrew: Masoretic Text. Smith For Christ Deep Dive series.