SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



VERSE-BY-VERSE MIDWEEK STUDY

Daniel

Chapter Nine

The Seventy Weeks — God's Calendar for Israel

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | THREE VOICES

A single chapter, read through three teachers — **Amir Tsarfati**, **John MacArthur**, and **David Guzik**.

THE PASSAGE

Daniel 9:1–27

Twenty-seven verses

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Daniel 9 — the prophecy Sir Isaac Newton called the cornerstone of the Christian faith

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"Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city…" — Daniel 9:24

SECTION I · THE CHAPTER

Daniel 9

The Seventy Weeks — God's Calendar for Israel

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Daniel 9 verse by verse. At each movement you will hear the same three teachers, and each one is marked in his own color — a highlighter for the ear as much as the eye. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle. Where they overlap, the truth is underlined; where they differ, the chapter opens wider.

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

JOHN MACARTHUR · Daniel

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

† Before the Chapter

Daniel is in his mid-eighties. Babylon has fallen; Darius the Mede now rules the city that once ruled the world. And an old man opens a scroll of Jeremiah and counts on his fingers: the seventy years of exile are nearly spent. What follows is one of the greatest prayers in the Bible — and one of the greatest answers. Daniel asks God about seventy *years*; heaven answers with seventy *sevens* — a 490-year calendar reaching from a Persian king's decree to the crowning of everlasting righteousness, with the arrival of the Messiah dated inside it.

Guzik calls this one of the most amazing and significant prophetic passages in all of Scripture. **MacArthur** presses its foundation: Daniel took Jeremiah's seventy years as *literal* years — and the seventy sevens that answer them must be read the same way. **Tsarfati** frames the whole: this is God's calendar for Israel — "your people and your holy city" — a timeline whose first sixty-nine weeks have already been kept to the day, and whose seventieth week is still to come.

I
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 9:1-3

The Books and the Burden

Prophecy read rightly drives a man to his knees

> *"In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans— 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. 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

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Watch what Daniel does with prophecy: he reads it, takes it literally, locates his own moment on God's calendar — and then *prays*. He does not speculate, and he does not shrug. Jeremiah had named seventy years (Jeremiah 25:11–12; 29:10), Babylon had just fallen exactly as Isaiah foretold, and a king aligned with the name Cyrus was rising exactly as Isaiah had named him two centuries early (Isaiah 44:28–45:1). Prophecy is given to be understood — and understood prophecy produces watchfulness and prayer, never date-setting and never apathy.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Daniel

Daniel's prayer life was built on the Word of God — he prayed *because* he believed the promise, not in spite of it. God's sovereign decree did not cancel supplication; it ignited it. God's promises invite our participation — they never exclude it. And note well: Daniel read Jeremiah's seventy years as real, literal years. That single interpretive decision governs the whole chapter — the seventy sevens that answer this prayer must be measured with the same yardstick.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

"Understood by the books" — Daniel was a diligent student of Scripture who built his prayer on the written Word. There had been three waves of captivity — 605, 597, and 587 B.C. — and Daniel, praying three or four years before the earliest deadline, pleaded that God would count from the *earliest* start, that mercy might come eighteen years sooner rather than later. Spurgeon loved this scene: it is grand praying when our mouth is full of God's Word, for nothing prevails with Him like His own promise. The fasting, sackcloth and ashes show a man determined to be denied nothing.

II
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 9:4-15

The Great Confession

"We have sinned" — a righteous man prays from a low place

> *"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, we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances... Righteousness belongs to You, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day... To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him... 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.'"*
>
> DANIEL 9:4-15 · SELECTED

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Daniel was among the most blameless men of his generation — yet he prays "*we* have sinned," folding himself into his nation's guilt. That is the heart of a true intercessor for Israel. The exile itself was covenant faithfulness: God doing exactly what He warned in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. And the same pattern still stands — one day national confession will again precede national restoration, when Israel looks on Him whom they pierced and mourns (Zechariah 12:10; Hosea 5:15).

JOHN MACARTHUR · Daniel

This is confession as Scripture defines it: no excuses, no blame-shifting, full agreement with God against ourselves. Daniel vindicates God's righteousness at every turn — "righteousness belongs to You" — and locates every failure on Israel's side. Even the disaster proved God's truthfulness, for He had "confirmed His words" spoken through Moses. A right view of God's holiness always produces this kind of praying; a low view of sin never does.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

This is a "we" prayer, not a "they" prayer — and "they" prayers never really reach God. Daniel's confession was sincere, specific, and thorough, and it even confessed *prayerlessness*: all this calamity came, "yet we have not made our prayer." There is leverage in coming to God low — like a lineman winning by getting under the block. Understanding and earnestness together make prayer powerful; Daniel had both.

III
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 9:16-19

For Your Own Sake, O My God

A plea built on mercy, aimed at the glory of God

"'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… for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion. 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 9:17-19

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Hear what Daniel calls Jerusalem: *Your* city, *Your* holy mountain, *Your* people, called by *Your* name. Jerusalem is not incidental real estate; it is the city God has attached His own reputation to — which is why it sits at the center of this prophecy, of the Lord's return, and of the world's rage to this hour. Daniel prays for Jerusalem's restoration because God's glory and Israel's hope are bound together, and they still are.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Daniel

"Not on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion" — centuries before the New Testament, Daniel prays on New Testament ground. That is what praying in Jesus' name actually means: approaching God on borrowed righteousness, never our own. Self-trusting prayer has no power with God, however long or loud. And the petitions come like hammer blows — hear, forgive, listen, act, do not delay — because the man praying is certain of the character of the God he is addressing.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

The heart of the plea is "cause Your face to shine" — a church, a nation, a man may need a thousand things, but every need is contained in this one: they need their God. Daniel prayed consumed with God's glory rather than man's comfort — "for Your own sake, my God." And he pressed his advantage like a wrestler: rapid, importunate requests from a soul that could not take no for an answer. Cold prayers, Spurgeon said, ask God to deny them.

IV
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 9:20-23

Gabriel, Swiftly

The answer outruns the prayer

"Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel… 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. He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, 'O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding. 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 · SELECTED

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

"At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued" — heaven moved at Daniel's first word. The same Gabriel who explained the ram and goat in chapter 8 now brings Israel's timeline; the same Gabriel will one day stand before Mary to announce the Child who fulfills it (Luke 1:26–33). And Daniel is called "highly esteemed" — beloved in heaven. God tells His secrets to those who love Him and tremble at His word.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Daniel

Notice that the answer far exceeds the request. Daniel asked about the end of seventy years; God answered with the plan of the ages — four hundred ninety more, reaching to everlasting righteousness. God is never stingy with those who seek Him with all their heart. Understanding, too, came not by study alone but by study joined to prayer — the pattern for every student of prophecy since.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

God answered while Daniel was still speaking — as Isaiah promised: "before they call, I will answer" (Isaiah 65:24). The timing is tender: the evening offering — the hour Moses' Passover lamb was slain, and the hour Jesus hung dying centuries later (Exodus 12:6; Matthew 27:45–46). Daniel had been meditating on one set of sevens — Jeremiah's seventy years. It is as if God said through Gabriel: now let Me show you some sevens that will truly amaze you.

V
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 9:24

Six Things in Seventy Sevens

The scope of the whole prophecy, stated first

> *"'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

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Read the address on the envelope: "your people and your holy city" — Israel and Jerusalem. This is God's calendar for *Israel*; the church is nowhere in it, which is exactly why the church's age fits in the pause between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks. Three of the six purposes were purchased at the cross; three await the King's return — transgression finished, prophecy sealed, and the most holy anointed when Messiah reigns from Jerusalem.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Daniel

"To make atonement for iniquity" — there is Calvary, decreed and dated from Daniel's day. But take the remaining clauses at face value: an *end* of sin, *everlasting* righteousness, a most holy place anointed. Nothing in the last twenty centuries answers to that language. Either these words mean what they say — and demand a literal kingdom still to come — or they must be spiritualized into something the text never says. The plain meaning requires nothing less than the enthronement of the Son of God.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

"Weeks" here is the Hebrew *shabuwa* — simply a unit of seven, used of days or years; Jacob served a "week" of years for Rachel (Genesis 29:27–28), and Israel kept sabbatic *years*, not just days. Nearly all commentators agree: seventy sevens of years — 490 years. Talbot called it "God's calendar for Israel." And looking back, we can only call these six purposes already fulfilled by ignoring their plain, literal meaning — the seventy weeks are not yet complete.

VI
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 9:25-26

To the Day: Messiah the Prince

Sixty-nine weeks, counted and kept — then the Messiah cut off

> *"'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. 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 9:25-26

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

Israel was told the timetable of her Messiah's arrival — which is why Jesus wept over Jerusalem with these words: "If you had known, even you, especially in *this your day*... because you did not know the time of your visitation" (Luke 19:42–44). He held them accountable to Daniel 9. After the sixty-ninth week Messiah was cut off — crucified — and in A.D. 70 "the people of the prince who is to come," the Romans, burned city and sanctuary, exactly as written. The "prince who is to come" himself, rising from that world, has not yet appeared — and that is where chapter 7's little horn and Revelation's beast take up the story.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Daniel

"Cut off" is covenant language for execution — and "and have nothing" is the Messiah's biography in three words: born in a borrowed stable, buried in a borrowed tomb, dying not for Himself but for others (Isaiah 53:8). Mark the order the text fixes: Messiah appears *after* sixty-nine weeks and is cut off *before* the temple falls. Whatever chronology one prefers, the Messiah had to come and die before A.D. 70. To Israel that argument has never been answered; many a Jewish scholar has been compelled by this passage alone to confess that Messiah has already come.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Four decrees are candidates for the starting gun, but only one commanded the rebuilding of the *city* and its wall — Artaxerxes to Nehemiah, the first of Nisan, 445 B.C. (Nehemiah 2:1–8). Sir Robert Anderson, taking the prophetic year of 360 days that Revelation itself confirms, counted 69 × 7 × 360 = 173,880 days — and landed on April 6, A.D. 32: the day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the colt, the one day He welcomed royal praise and said the very stones would cry out. A Gentile king signed a decree, and 483 years later *to the day*, Messiah the Prince presented Himself. No one has shown Anderson's computation impossible.

VII
MOVEMENT

DANIEL 9:27

The Seventieth Week

A covenant, a betrayal, and a decreed consummation

> *"'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

AMIR TSARFATI · Discovering Daniel

The "he" is the prince who is to come — not Christ but the Antichrist. He will confirm a covenant with "the many," Israel, for seven years — the tribulation, Israel's unfinished seventieth week. Jesus warned of exactly this embrace: "if another comes in his own name, him you will receive" (John 5:43). At the midpoint he breaks it — sacrifice stopped, the abomination set up — the very sign Jesus told Israel to flee from (Matthew 24:15–16). The clock that paused at Calvary's generation resumes the moment this covenant is signed; the church is caught up before that final week of God's dealings with Israel runs its course.

JOHN MACARTHUR · Daniel

The gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks is not an embarrassment; it is in the text. Verse 26 places two events *after* week sixty-nine and *before* week seventy: Messiah cut off, and Jerusalem destroyed — events separated by decades, with the seventieth week still unspent. Scripture knows this pattern well: in the Nazareth synagogue Jesus stopped reading Isaiah 61 mid-sentence — "the favorable year of the LORD" — and closed the book before "the day of vengeance," because a whole age lives inside that comma (Luke 4:18–21). And the end is "decreed": the desolator himself is finally destroyed, and everything verse 24 promised comes to pass.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

The covenant-maker's people destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70 — so the coming prince has his roots in the soil of the old Roman Empire, heir of the fourth beast of Daniel 7. The Hebrew reads "covenant with *the* many" — Israel specifically. Revelation, written a generation *after* A.D. 70, still treats both halves of this week as future (Revelation 12:6, 14; 13:5). And writing in 1911 — thirty-seven years before 1948 — Ironside said the seventieth week would begin when the Jewish people are restored *in unbelief* to their land and city. We watched that restoration happen.

† The Alignment of the Prophets

No prophet worked alone. Pull one thread of Daniel 9 and half the Bible moves with it — written across a thousand years, by men who never met, agreeing to the day.

Behind the prophecy: Moses set the terms — exile for covenant-breaking (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28) — and 2 Chronicles 36:21 counts the seventy years as the land's unkept sabbaths repaid. Jeremiah named the number (Jeremiah 25:11–12; 29:10). Isaiah named the liberator — Cyrus, by name, two centuries early (Isaiah 44:28). Daniel read them all, and prayed.

Inside the prophecy: the decree of Nehemiah 2 starts the clock; Zechariah 9:9 puts the King on a colt at its sixty-ninth-week terminus; Psalm 118:24–26 supplies the very words the crowds sang — "this is the day" — and Luke 19:41–44 records Jesus weeping that Jerusalem did not know "this your day." Isaiah

53:8 had already said Messiah would be “cut off out of the land of the living… for the transgression of my people” — Daniel dates it: after the sixty-ninth week, before the temple fell.

Ahead of the prophecy: Jesus plants Daniel’s “abomination of desolation” in the future tense (Matthew 24:15); Paul describes the man who sits in God’s temple displaying himself as God (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4); and Revelation — written after A.D. 70 — measures the last half-week three ways: 1,260 days, 42 months, “time, times and half a time” (Revelation 11:2–3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). Three and a half years of 360 days — Daniel’s prophetic calendar, confirmed six centuries later by the last book of the Bible. One Author, many pens, no contradictions.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Three voices, one chapter

The same chapter, read three ways. Tsarfati listens for prophecy and the place of Israel; MacArthur presses conviction and the sovereignty of God; Guzik walks the history and the pastoral application. Together they keep Daniel 9 from ever sounding thin.

THE MOMENT	TSARFATI · prophecy	MACARTHUR · conviction	GUZIK · history & heart
The books (9:1–3)	Prophecy read literally locates the hour — and drives to prayer.	God's promise ignites prayer; seventy literal years set the yardstick.	Three waves of captivity; Daniel pleads the earliest, most merciful count.
The confession (9:4–15)	The intercessor owns his nation's sin; confession will precede restoration.	No excuses — God vindicated, Israel guilty, Moses proven true.	"We," never "they"; even prayerlessness confessed.
The plea (9:16–19)	Your city, Your people — Jerusalem bound to God's own name.	Mercy, not merit — New Testament ground before the New Testament.	"Cause Your face to shine" — every need in one.
The messenger (9:20–23)	Answered at the first word; Gabriel serves Daniel, then Mary.	The answer exceeds the ask — seventy years become 490.	The evening offering: the Passover hour, the crucifixion hour.
The scope (9:24)	Israel's calendar, not the church's; three done, three to come.	Atonement decreed and dated; the rest demands a literal kingdom.	*Shabuwa* — sevens of years; 490 years, God's calendar.
The countdown (9:25–26)	Jesus wept over the day Israel missed — Luke 19 quotes Daniel's clock.	Cut off, having nothing — and provably before A.D. 70.	445 B.C. + 173,880 days = the triumphal entry, to the day.
The last week (9:27)	Antichrist's covenant with Israel; the tribulation; the church caught up first.	The gap is in the text; Jesus closed the book mid-verse at Nazareth.	Rome's heir; Ironside saw restored-in-unbelief Israel in 1911.

DANIEL 9 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Facts to Carry

- **Four decrees, one fits.** Cyrus (538), Darius (517), and Artaxerxes-to-Ezra (458) all concern the temple; only Artaxerxes-to-Nehemiah, Nisan 445 B.C., commands the rebuilding of the city and wall. GUZIK

- **173,880 days.** 69 weeks × 7 years × 360 days. From March 14, 445 B.C. to April 6, A.D. 32 — Sir Robert Anderson's count from decree to triumphal entry, exact to the day. ANDERSON
- **The 360-day year is biblical.** Revelation equates 3½ years with 42 months and 1,260 days — Daniel's prophetic calendar, confirmed by John six centuries later. ALIGNMENT
- **"This your day."** Jesus wept over Jerusalem for missing a *day* it could have known — He held Israel accountable to Daniel 9. TSARFATI
- **The order proves the Messiah.** Verse 26 requires Messiah to appear and die *after* week 69 and *before* the temple fell in A.D. 70. MACARTHUR
- **The gap has precedent.** Isaiah 9:6 joins first and second comings in one breath; Jesus stopped Isaiah 61 mid-sentence — whole ages live between prophetic clauses. MACARTHUR
- **Ironside, 1911.** The 70th week begins "when the Jewish people are restored in unbelief to their land and city" — written 37 years before 1948. GUZIK

† Questions for the Table

1. **Daniel read Jeremiah's seventy years and responded with prayer and fasting. What does your study of prophecy produce in you?**

   Understood prophecy leads to intercession and holiness, never to speculation or shrugging.

   DANIEL 9:2-3

2. **Daniel prayed "we have sinned," though he was among the most faithful men alive. Whose sins do you find easier to confess — yours, or "theirs"?**

   "They" prayers never reach God; intercessors stand inside the guilt they confess.

   DANIEL 9:5

3. **If the first sixty-nine weeks were fulfilled literally and to the day, what does that require of our reading of the seventieth?**

   The same literal yardstick — a real covenant, a real abomination, a real consummation still ahead.

   DANIEL 9:27

4. **Jesus wept because Jerusalem did not know "this your day." What has God given us the means to know that we treat as unknowable?**

   He faults us only for light refused — the times and the Word are given to be watched.

   LUKE 19:41-44

5 **The prophecy dates the Messiah's atonement 500 years in advance. What does that certainty mean for the promises still outstanding?**

The God who kept 483 years to the day will keep the seventieth week — and the Kingdom after it.

DANIEL 9:24

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Daniel 9 is prayer and prophecy in one chapter: a man on his knees over an open Bible, and a God who answers with a calendar He has kept to the day. The sixty-nine weeks are history; the seventieth is certain. Read the books. Watch the times. And pray like Daniel prayed.

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 David Guzik (Enduring Word), John MacArthur, and Amir Tsarfati (Discovering Daniel) on Daniel 9, with chronological material after Sir Robert Anderson, The Coming Prince. Consult each author's own work for his exact words. · Smith For Christ midweek study series.