Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the New Exodus¹

Peter J. Gentry

INTRODUCTION

ANIEL 9 IS famous for the Vision of the "Seventy Weeks." Unfortunately, interpretation Part 1:Six Stories (Chapters 1-6) of this text has been difficult not only for average readers, but for scholars as well. We must not only 2 pay attention to (1) the cultural and historical

PETER J. GENTRY is Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Prior to this, he served on the faculty of Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College for fifteen years and taught at the University of Toronto, Heritage Theological Seminary, and Tyndale Theological Seminary. The author of many articles, Dr. Gentry is currently editing Ecclesiastes and Proverbs for the Göttingen Septuagint Series, and he provides leadership for the Hexapla Institute.

setting, and (2) the linguistic and 3 textual data, but also carefully 4 analyze and consider (3) the liter- 5 ary structures, (4) the apocalyptic 6 genre of the text, (5) the relation of Daniel 9 to other prophetic texts in the Old Testament, and above all (6) the metanarrative or biblicaltheological framework crucial for 8 making sense of any individual text. 9 Lack of understanding as to how apocalyptic and prophetic literature communicates has hindered the church especially in the last hundred years. In addition, a failure

to grasp the larger story that alone makes sense of the details in this text have resulted in imposing on it a framework of understanding foreign to it.

OVERVIEW OF DANIEL

The Stories and Visions of Daniel²

- Daniel and Friends in the Court of Babylon
- King's Dream: A Huge Statue / Small Stone
- Daniel's Friends Rescued from the Furnace
- King's Dream: A Huge Tree
- Belshazzar and the Writing on the Wall
 - Daniel Rescued from the Lion's Den

Part 2: Four Visions (Chapters 7-12)

- A Vision of Daniel: Awful Beasts / Son of Man
- A Vision of Daniel: The Ram and The Goat
 - A Prayer of Daniel and Vision of 70 Weeks
- 10-12 A Vision of Daniel: The Writing of Truth

The book of Daniel consists of twelve chapters which divide equally into six narrative (1-6) and six visionary chapters (7-12). In the Hebrew canon, Daniel follows the poetic section which ends with Lamentations—a book focused on the theme of exile. The narratives of chapters 1-6 of Daniel take up this theme of exile and describe

how faith in the God of Israel, the one true and living God, is to be maintained in the face of defilement, idolatry, and prohibitions of prayer backed up by wild beasts and fire and great persecution. The dreams and visions of chapters 7-12, apocalyptic in nature, give hope to the people of God by showing God in control of history through four periods of domination by foreign nations until a decisive end is made to rebellion and sin, with a renewal of the broken covenant and restoration of the temple and establishment of God's kingdom as eternal and final.

GRASPING THE LITERARY STRUCTURE

Grasping the literary structures of Daniel is crucial for a proper understanding of Chapter 9. Literary structures also aid in dating the work to the sixth century B.C. and seeing it as a unity. Part of the literary artistry of Daniel can be seen in chiastic structures. The word chiasm comes Epilogue from the letter in the Greek alphabet known as chi (χ) , which is shaped like an X. The top half of the letter has a mirror image in the bottom half. If, for example, a literary piece has four distinct units and the first matches the last while the second matches the third, the same kind of mirror image is created in the literary structure and is called a chiasm. The literary structure of Daniel is complex and rich and only partly revealed in the following two charts:3

Chiastic Structures in Daniel - Chart I

1

11:1-12:4

12:5-13

Prologue

Trologue	1
Image of Four Metals: Triumph of	
God's Kingdom	2
Persecution of Daniel's Friends	3
Humbling of Nebuchadnezzar	
before God	4
Humbling of Belshazzar	
before God	5
Persecution of Daniel	6
Vision of Four Beasts:	
Triumph of God's Kingdom	7
Vision of Future History	8
Daniel's Prayer and God's	
Response	9
Daniel's Grief and God's	
Response	10

Note that chiastic structures mark chapters 2-7 and 8:1-12:4 as main sub-units.4 Thus chiasm firmly links the visions to the stories.

Vision of Future History

Chiastic Structures in Daniel - Chart II

DANIEL'S FAITHFULNESS	DANIEL'S FAITHFULNESS	
Ch 1 – Refusal to eat the king's food.	Ch 6 – Refusal to obey king's command.	
Daniel is vindicated.	Daniel is vindicated.	
TWO IMAGES	TWO VISIONS OF BEASTS	
Ch 2 – Nebuchadnezzar's Dream-Image	Ch 7 – The Four Beasts	
Ch 3 – Nebuchadnezzar's Golden Image Ch 8 – The Two Beasts		
TWO KINGS DISCIPLINED	TWO WRITINGS EXPLAINED	
Ch 4 – Discipline of Nebuchadnezzar	Ch 9 – The Prophecy in the Book of Jeremiah	
Ch 5 – Writing on the Wall and Destruction of Chs 10-12 – The Writing of Truth and Destruction		
Belshazzar	the King	

Again, note that parallel literary structures mark chapters 1-5 and 6-12 as main sub-units. Thus literary parallelism firmly links the visions to the stories. The chiasms and parallel structures may be simultaneously valid.

In summary, the literary structure divides the book into halves both between chapters 5 and 6 and between chapters 7 and 8, linking chapters 2 and 7 as dreams referring to the same thing. This interlocks the two halves of the book as determined by stories and visions. What is the significance of this unity? It is just this: the first half of the book establishes and proves that Daniel has a gift of interpreting dreams and visions of events which could be independently verified by the contemporaries of Daniel. Therefore, we must believe and trust the interpretation of the visions in the second half of the book, which deal with the distant future and hence were not open to verification by the audience of Daniel's time.

The literary structures are the key to interpretation. We need a clear view of the whole in order to understand the parts and their relationship to each other.

The dream of Chapter 2 and the vision of Chapter 7 are at the center of the book and communicate in different ways the same thing. In Chapter 2 a gigantic image of man is front and center in the Babylonian king's dream. Its head consists of gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron and feet of iron and clay. It is struck down by a rock—cut without hands from a mountain—which then grows to fill the entire earth. This dream foretells four successive human kingdoms succeeded by the kingdom of God which will endure forever.

Chapter 7 begins the second half of the book in which the Babylonian king's dream is expanded in a series of visions presented like maps provided with blowup inserts. Each successive vision is an enlargement of part of the previous vision, each provides greater and greater detail of the same scene. Daniel replaces the king as dreamer and sees four beasts coming out of the chaotic sea.

Then in a picture of the court of heaven, one like a Son of Man is given the kingdom. This vision again foretells four successive human kingdoms succeeded by the kingdom of God. The vision of chapter 8 expands upon the second and third kingdoms; the vision of chapters 10-12 provides an expanded view of events in the third and fourth kingdoms. We now have a detailed road map through the maze of forces arrayed against the people of God throughout successive human kingdoms.

DETAILED OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER 9

Outline of Daniel 9

1. The Motivation for Prayer	9:1-4a
2. Daniel's Prayer for Favor	9:4b-19
A. Invocation and Confession	9:4b-14
B. Appeal for Favor and Mercy	9:15-19
3. Revelation Through Divine	
Messenger	9:20-27
A. Occasion for Angelic Message	9:20-23
B. Vision of the Seventy Weeks	9:24-27

SETTING OF THE VISION OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS (9:1)

Chapter 9 begins in the typical way by giving a chronological notice. The date is the first year of Darius "who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom" (v. 1). This is significant for this was the year in which the Persians conquered the Babylonians, whose empire, under Nebuchadnezzar, had defeated and exiled Judah some decades earlier. This was also the first year of Cyrus the Great, who gave the decree which permitted the exiles of Judah to return to their homeland.

Nonetheless, Chapter 9 is different in many ways. It begins with an extensive prayer by Daniel—the only major prayer recorded by him in the book (aside from 2:20-23). And although the section includes a vision like chapters 7, 8, and 10-12, this vision is obviously not part of these other "roadmap" visions that proclaim a sequence of four human kingdoms followed by the kingdom

of God. So interretation of the Vision of Seventy Weeks must show how this is related to the other visions.

PRAYER MOTIVATED BY SCRIPTURE (9:2-4A)

Daniel's prayer is motivated by Scripture and based upon Scripture. In verses 2 and 3 Daniel indicates that he understood by the word of the Lord given through the prophet Jeremiah that the length of time to complete and end the divine judgment of the exile is seventy years. Although Daniel could not give a particular reference as to the passage(s) he had in mind as we would do today, clearly he is thinking of Jer 25:1-15 and 29:1-23.

His prayer is also based upon 1 Kgs 8:33-34, 46-51 where Solomon outlines the necessity and possibility of praying towards the Temple when the people sin, and then God will hear and forgive and bring the people back to the land.

The prayer of Solomon is based in turn upon Deut 30:1-10 where Moses promises a restoration after the application of the covenant curse of exile, a restoration contingent upon repentance for sin.

Addressing God (9:4b)

Daniel's prayer does not begin by requesting something. It begins by addressing God properly and by acknowledging his character and person. Daniel speaks of God as "the great and awesome God who keeps the covenant and loyal love (hesed) for those who obey the requirements and terms of the covenant." The focus here is upon God's loyal love within the covenant relationship. He does not quickly punish his people, and he stands ready to bless them when they obey his laws.

Confessing Sin (9:5-10)

The next part of the prayer is devoted to confession of sin. Daniel is not concerned to demonstrate his own personal innocence and piety. Instead, he completely and fully identifies with his

people and acknowledges their sin. He confesses that God's people have not obeyed his commands, but have rebelled against him instead. They have not listened to the warnings of the prophets who were sent to God's people to get them to change their attitudes and behavior to conform to the directions and instructions given by God in the covenant for their lifestyle. The prophets are like the lawyers of the covenant. When the covenant is broken, they appear in order to accuse the people with the ultimate intention of restoring their love and faithfulness to God. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and many others were used by God to carry the message of warning and repentance, but they went largely unheeded.

The prophets were sent, according to Daniel, to all strata of society—from kings to common people. None of them, however, responded. Rather, they persisted in their foolish and dangerous rebellion.

Next Daniel marks a contrast between the sin of the people and the mercy of God: God is faithful; his people are rebellious. The prophet is brutally honest in his acknowledgement of the responsibility of God's people for their present dire condition. They are in exile because they have rebelled against the covenant God made with them through Moses.

God's Punishment (9:11-14)

Then, in verses 11-14 of his prayer, Daniel draws a direct connection between the sin of the people and their present suffering (cf. Lam 2:2-5). The present suffering is due to the curses promised to those who violated the covenant (Deut 28:15-68).

Appealing for Compassion and Mercy (9:15-19)

Finally, Daniel calls upon God as the one who delivered his people out of Egypt to lift the covenantal curse and to restore the city of Jerusalem and its sanctuary. The exodus was a pivotal event in the life of God's people. It defined them as a nation. Through it, God freed them from slavery

and brought them into the Promised Land. The prophets before Daniel saw an analogy between the exodus and the future deliverance that would free them from the shackles of the exile (cf. Isa 40:3-5; Hos 2:14-15). In essence, the return from the exile would be a second exodus, a new exodus.

God's Response: The Vision of Seventy Weeks (9:20-27)

As verses 20-23 show, the brief message supplied by vision in verses 24-27 constitute a direct divine response via an angelic messenger to the appeal and request raised by Daniel on the basis of Jeremiah's prophecy. What follows is a fairly literal translation of the Hebrew text to show how the numerous problems in the text have been understood. Space does not allow all of the exegetical issues to be given full treatment.

20 And I was still speaking and interceding in prayer and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and making my pleading before the LORD my God fall upon the Holy Mountain of my God.

21 I was still speaking in the petition, when the man Gabriel whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning—while I was made weary by fatigue—was touching me about the time of the evening offering.

22 And he explained and spoke with me and said, "Daniel, I have now come to give you clear insight.

23 At the beginning of your supplications a word went out and I came to declare [it] for you are beloved. So pay attention to the word and consider the vision:

24 Seventy sevens are determined for your people and your holy city, to end wrongdoing, and to finish with sin, and to atone for guilt / iniquity, and to bring in eternal righteousness, and to seal up prophetic vision, and to anoint a most holy place,

25 so you must know and understand, from the issuing of a word to rebuild Jerusalem until an

Anointed One, a Leader, are seven sevens and sixty-two sevens. It will be rebuilt in square and trench and in distressing times.

26 And after the sixty-two sevens, an Anointed One will be cut off, but not for himself, and the people of the coming Leader will ruin / spoil the city and the sanctuary, and its end will come with the flood. And until the end war—desolations are what is decided.

27 And he will uphold a covenant with the many for one seven, and at the half of the seven he will cause sacrifice and offering to cease, and upon a wing of abominations is one bringing desolation and until an end and what is decided gushes out on the one being desolated."

Among many difficulties encountered in lexical and syntactic issues facing the translator, the most problematic is the clause division in v. 25. According to the accents in the Masoretic Text, "seven weeks" belongs to the first sentence, while "sixty-two weeks" along with the conjunction preceding this noun phrase (i.e. "and sixty-two weeks") begins a new clause. One could argue that beginning a new sentence with the conjunction and noun phrase before the imperfect verb tāšûb (from the hendiadys for "it will be rebuilt") is a natural reading according to the rules of syntax in Hebrew. Moreover, if the author desired to delineate sixty-nine weeks, why not just say so specifically? Why divide the period into seven and sixty-two weeks? On the other hand, according to the rules of macrosyntax, beginning a clause by tāšûb without a conjunction (asyndeton) would signal a comment or explanation on the previous sentence rather than supply new information.⁶ An explanation for dividing the period into 7 and 62 can be given (see below), but problems of interpretation arising from following the accents in the Masoretic Text are insurmountable. Who is to be identified as the Anointed One after seven weeks? Further, the most natural reading is to identify "Anointed One" and "Leader" in v. 25 with the same terms in v. 26, but this identification is not possible according to the division in the Masoretic Text. In a detailed historical study Roger Beckwith has demonstrated that the clause division represented by the Masoretic Text represents a reaction against messianic interpretation of the text while the clause division accepted in the translation above follows the Septuagint, Theodotion, Symmachus, and the Syriac Peshitta. Thus the clause division adopted here is both strongly and widely supported early in the text tradition.

UNDERSTANDING THE END OF EXILE

In order to grasp properly the request as raised by Daniel and the answer as provided through the Vision of the Seventy Weeks, we need to understand the prophetic teaching concerning the end of the Exile.

According to the context, Daniel is concerned about the end of the exile. God's people had broken the Covenant (Exodus 19-24 / Deuteronomy), and as a result, the covenant curses had fallen upon them. The final curse or judgment was exile (Deut 28:63-68). Nonetheless, exile was not the last word; God had a plan from the start for his people to return (Deut 30:1-10). Isaiah indicates that the return from exile entails two separate stages: (1) return from Babylon to the land of Israel, and (2) return from covenant violation to a right relationship to God so that the covenant relationship is renewed and restored (see Isa 42:18-43:21 and 43:22-44:23 respectively). The first stage is the physical return from exile. But as is often said, "You can get the people out of Babylon, but how do you get Babylon out of the people?" The physical return from exile gets the people out of Babylon, but the problem of getting Babylon out of the people must be dealt with by a second stage. The second stage is the spiritual return from exile: it deals with the problem of sin and brings about forgiveness and reconciliation in a renewed covenant between Yahweh and His people. According to the structure of Isaiah's message, Cyrus is the agent for the return from Babylon, and the Servant of the Lord is the agent for the return from sin. Thus there are two distinct agents and they correspond to the two distinct parts of the redemption which brings about the end of the exile. This can be clearly seen in the structure of Isaiah 38 - 55 as follows:⁸

Overview of Isaiah 38 - 55: The Book of the Servant

A.	Historical Prologue –	
	Hezekiah's Fatal Choice	38:1-39:8
B^1 .	Universal Consolation	40:1-42:17
	1. The Consolation of Israel	40:1-41:20
	2. The Consolation of the	
	Gentiles	41:21-42:17
C^1 .	Promises of Redemption	42:18-44:23
	1. Release	42:18-43:21
	2. Forgiveness	43:22-44:23
C^2 .	Agents of Redemption	44:24-53:12
	1. Cyrus: Liberation	44:24-48:22
	2. Servant: Atonement	49:1-53:12
B^2 .	Universal Proclamation 54:1-55	:13
	1. The Call to Zion	54:1-17
	2. The Call to the World	55:1-13

Daniel's prayer is focused upon the physical return from Babylon—the first stage in redemption, but the angelic message and vision of the Seventy Weeks is focused upon the forgiveness of sins and renewal of covenant and righteousness—the second stage in return from exile. Note the six purposes of the message and vision:

Three Negative Purposes

- 1. to end the rebellion
- 2. to do away with sin
- 3. to atone for guilt/iniquity

Three Positive Purposes

- 4. to bring in everlasting righteousness
- 5. to seal up prophetic vision
- 6. to anoint the most holy place

When one considers the plan of redemption as outlined by Isaiah, clearly the angelic message is concerned principally not with the first stage, but especially with the second stage of return: the forgiveness of sins and renewal of a right relationship to God.

The end of the exile is frequently portrayed in terms of the exodus. Just as God brought his people out of Egypt in that great event known as the exodus, so He will now bring about a new exodus in bringing his people back from exile. In fact, many aspects of the return from exile parallel the original exodus. In Ezek 4:4-6, for example, the prophet is instructed to lie on one side for 390 days for the sin of Israel and on the other side for 40 days for the sin of Judah: in each case a day for each year. The sum of 390 and 40 is 430—exactly the length of the period of bondage in Egypt. What is being portrayed by the drama of Ezekiel is that just as there was a period of bondage in Egypt before God brought about the exodus, so now there will be a long period of foreign overlords before He brings about the new exodus. Outside of Daniel 9, this longer period of subjugation before the new exodus is referred to in 8:19 as the "time of wrath."9

The vision of Daniel 9 communicates the same truth. From the prophecy of Jeremiah, Daniel expects a literal period of seventy years for the Exile to be completed. This seventy-year period apparently begins with the death of Josiah in 608 B.C. and extends to the fall of Babylon to Cyrus the Great in 539 B.C. When Daniel brings this issue to God in prayer, the answer is that this seventy year period only deals with the first stage of the return from exile. Before the new exodus, there will be a longer period of exile. Thus the real return from exile, a return including the forgiveness of sins, renewal of the covenant, and consecration of the temple, will not take just seventy years, but rather seventy "sevens," i.e. a much longer time. This fundamental point of the vision has unfortunately escaped the attention of proponents of both dispensational and non-dispensational treatments in the last one hundred years.

Although the focus of the message is on the city and the people (Jerusalem and Israel), there are broader implications for the nations. This passage must be seen in the light of the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants. The Abrahamic Covenant promised blessings for the nations through the family of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3). The Mosaic Covenant directed and instructed the family of Abraham how to live in a right relationship with God, a right relationship with one another in covenant community, and a right relationship to the earth (as stewards of the creation), so that they could be the blessing to the nations (Exodus 19-24). With the Mosaic Covenant broken, Israel now needs the forgiveness of sins so that the covenant is renewed and the blessings can flow to the nations. Thus, the final and real return from exile is achieved by dealing effectively with Israel's rebellion: the first objective in the list of six is to end "the rebellion," i.e., of Israel. Then the blessing can flow to the nations, and this blessing finds fulfillment in the apostolic preaching of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ when each one turns from their wicked ways (Acts 3:26). In this way, the second stage of return from exile has implications specifically for Israel, but also universally for the nations.

THE ROLE OF THE DAVIDIC KING IN ENDING THE EXILE

The angelic message of Daniel 9 refers to an "anointed one" (māṣʾaḥ) / "leader" or "ruler" (nāgʾa). Various proposals have been made for the identification of this person or persons. The grammar of the apposition in v. 25 requires that both terms refer to one and the same person. And without any grammatical or literary signals to indicate otherwise, the simplest solution is that the same two terms in v. 26 also refer to one and the same person—the same individual referred to in v. 25. Although many scholars identify the "anointed one" as the High Priest Onias III whose murder in 171 B.C. is reported in 2 Macc 4:33-38, Daniel I. Block provides four cogent reasons to reject this

identification: 10 (1) It depends upon dating the composition of the book of Daniel to the second century B.C., a position that is not tenable according to the chronological, linguistic, and literary data.11 (2) The arrival of this person is associated with the rebuilding and restoration of Jerusalem, so that one naturally thinks of a Davidic figure. (3) Although nāgîd, "leader, ruler," is used elsewhere of cultic officials, nāgîd and māšîaḥ are conjoined elsewhere only with reference to an anointed king (1 Sam 9:16; 10:1; 1 Chron 29:22). (4) While the Old Testament speaks of a coming king who will function as a priest, it never speaks of a coming priest in royal terms. In this way the Old Testament consistently distinguishes the Aaronic / Zadokite priesthood from Davidic royalty. As John Oswalt notes, the reference in Daniel 9 is the only unambiguous reference to māšîaḥ (the Messiah) as the eschatological Anointed One, in the entire Old Testament.12

There is a good reason why the future king is referred to in vv. 25 and 26 by the term $n\bar{a}g\hat{\imath}d$, "ruler," rather than by the term melek, the standard word in Hebrew for king. This is revealed by Donald F. Murray, who has provided the most recent and thorough treatment of $n\bar{a}g\hat{\imath}d$, particularly in the context of 2 Sam 5:17-7:29. His conclusion is worth citing:

In our texts the *melek* is one who sees his power from Yahweh as susceptible to his own arbitrary manipulation, who obtrudes himself inappropriately and disproportionately between Yahweh and Israel, and who treats Israel as little more than the subjects of his monarchic power. The *nāgîd*, on the other hand, is positively portrayed as one who sees his power as a sovereign and inviolable devolvement from Yahweh, who acts strictly under the orders of Yahweh for the benefit of Yahweh's people, and holds himself as no more than the willing subject of the divine monarch.¹³

In short, nāgîd communicates kingship according to God's plan and standards whereas melek communicates kingship according to the Canaanite model of absolute despotism and self-aggrandisement. That is why the term nāgîd dominates in the passage on the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7) and is also the term used here.

The Davidic king ruling in Jerusalem was removed from the throne by the exile in 586 B.C. Yet according to the eternal and irrevocable promises of Yahweh to David, the prophets spoke of a coming king from David's line. The message and vision given to Daniel associates the king's return with the end of exile and the climactic purposes for Israel and Jerusalem, but with great personal tragedy: he will be cut off, but not for himself. The coming king will give his life to deliver his people.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

The Hebrew word translated "weeks" is šāvûa'. It may refer to a period of seven days, like the English word for week (Gen 29:27, 28 [cf. Judges 14:12, Tob 11:19]; Deut 16:9 (x 2); Lev 12:5; Jer 5:24; Dan 10:2, 3; Ezek 45:21¹⁴). Still referring to a period of seven days, it occurs in the phrase "Feast of Weeks" (Exod 34:22; Deut 16:10, 16; 2 Chron 8:13; and, without the head-word "feast," Num 28:26). It also occurs in Dan 9:24, 25 (x 2), 26, 27 (x 2), apparently referring to a period of seven, but not seven days. This is clear from the occurrences in Dan 10:2, 3 where we find the phrase "week of days" because the author wants to return to the literal and normal use of the word "week." Daniel 10:2 and 3 are the only instances of the phrase "week of days" in the OT, a phrase required by the context in proximity to chapter 9 where the word has a different sense.

The number seventy is clearly connected by the context (9:2) to Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the end of exile (Jer 25:1-15 and 29:1-23). Chronicles explains the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years as lasting "until the land had enjoyed its sabbaths" (2 Chron 36:20-22).

Chronicles explicitly connects the seventy years of exile to the principle of sabbatical years, although this is not spelled out by Jeremiah. The explanation given in Chronicles is based squarely on Lev 26:34-35: "Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate, while you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall have rest, the rest that it did not have on your sabbaths when you were dwelling in it" (cf. Lev 26:40-45).

Paul Williamson is therefore right on target when he correlates the "seventy sevens" with sabbatical years and the Jubilee:

The "seventy sevens" chronography is probably best understood against the background of Jewish sabbatical years, and the Jubilee year in particular (cf. Lev. 24:8, 25:1-4; 26:43; cf. 2 Chr. 36:21). Thus understood, the seventy sevens constitutes ten jubilee years, the last (the seventieth seven) signifying the ultimate Jubilee (cf. Isa. 61:2). Given the Jeremianic context that prompted this revelation (Dan. 9:2; cf. Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10), some explicit association between this climactic Jubilee and the anticipated new covenant is not unexpected.¹⁵

Thus the "sevens" or "weeks" are periods or units of seven years, i.e., sabbaticals. Understood this way, the "seventy sevens" constitutes ten jubilees, the last (the seventieth seven) signifying the Ultimate Jubilee. In Luke 4 when Jesus reads from the Scroll of Isaiah, he sees the Ultimate Jubilee in 61:2 as fulfilled in his own life and ministry.

Retributive justice, the foundation of divine righteousness in the Mosaic Covenant, requires a symmetry to the experience and history of the nation of Israel. The period of time from the beginning of the Israelite Kingdom to the fall of Jerusalem is essentially seventy sabbaticals. Then come seventy years of exile, a period when the land enjoyed its sabbath rests. This is followed by seventy sabbaticals before the exile is finally over:¹⁶

Seventy	Seventy	Seventy
Sabbaticals	Years of Exile	Sabbaticals
= Causes of	= Sabbaths	= Solution
Exile	for the Land	to Exile

Thus the time required to resolve the problem of Israel's sin is precisely the same time it took to create the problem in the first place.

THE DIVISION OF THE WEEKS AND THE STARTING POINT

A chronology of seventy sabbaticals is required that answers appropriately to the divisions of the seventy "weeks" specified in the text and also allows the details concerning the events and persons predicted for these times to be easily identified. According to verses 25-27, the period of seventy sabbaticals is divided into three parts: seven sabbaticals in which the city of Jerusalem is rebuilt (v. 25), sixty-two sabbaticals in which nothing noteworthy or remarkable happens in relation to the purposes specified in this vision, and the climactic seventieth sabbatical when a covenant is upheld, offerings and sacrifices are ended, somehow in connection with extreme sacrilege to the temple and someone who causes desolation (v. 27). As D. I. Block similarly notes, despite the textual problems raised by these verses, the focus of attention in this seventieth week of years is on an Anointed One, who is "cut off, but not for himself." Ironically, within the very week that the root problem of Israel's exile (sin) is solved through the death of the Messiah, the city of Jerusalem is destroyed.¹⁷

In the history of interpretation, four possible dates for the beginning of the period of seventy weeks have been proposed: 18

- (1) 586 BC = God's Word at the Fall of Jerusalem (Jer 25:11-12, 29:10)
- (2) 537 BC = Cyrus's Word allowing the Return from Exile (2 Chron 36:23, Ezra 1:1-4)
- (3) 457 BC = Artaxerxes's Commission to Ezra (Ezra 7:11-26)¹⁹
- (4) 444 BC = Artaxerxes's Commission to Nehemiah (Neh 2:1-6)²⁰

The first proposal is the least likely. The "word" coming from Jeremiah is actually dated by 25:1 to the fourth year of Jehoiakim, i.e. 605 B.C., and predicts the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Beginning the seventy sabbaticals at either date does not yield a satisfactory solution for the three periods of time or the events occurring in them and the identity of the Anointed One.

Many scholars opt for the fourth proposal because Artaxerxes's commission to Nehemiah specifically entails building the walls and this accounts for the word to rebuild Jerusalem. Yet this proposal faces many problems. It requires that the Messiah be cut off *in* the sixty-ninth sabbatical and leaves the seventieth sabbatical in v. 27 unexplained. This option also simply does not work if we are counting sabbaticals and years in a literal sense. To make this proposal work, H. Hoehner, one of its most able proponents, uses so-called "prophetic years" of 360 days, but with scant support for such a calendrical definition or evidence that this is typical in prophetic predictions.²¹ Scholars who argue that the death of

the Messiah occurs in the sixty-ninth sabbatical explain that "after sixty-nine weeks" really means "in the sixty-ninth week" in ordinary language or reckoning of the time. ²² Such an argument constitutes special pleading.

According to Ezra 1:1-4 and 2 Chron 36:23, the "word" of Cyrus in 537 is focused on building a house for the Lord at Jerusalem. This word matches perfectly the prophecies of Isa 44:28 and 45:13 which predict Cyrus giving leadership to rebuild the city and temple of Jerusalem. Cyrus's divinely appointed purpose (Ezra 1:2) led him to allow the people to return to accomplish this task (Ezra 1:3). After the altar was rebuilt and foundations were laid for the new temple, opposition brought the work to a halt. A decree of Darius allowed it to be finished (Ezra 6) spurred on by the ministries of Haggai and Zechariah. In Ezra 7, the "word" of Artaxerxes (c. 457) is focused on support for the new temple. Yet Ezra 6:14 speaks of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes as though they issued a single decree. Darius's decree (Ezra 6) was based upon the fact that Cyrus had already issued the decree to permit the return and rebuilding of Jerusalem (see Ezra 5:17-6:7). Darius's decree was therefore a renewal (6:6-7) and an expansion (6:8-12) of Cyrus's original decree (6:3-5). Ezra 6:14 shows that Artaxerxes's decree to Ezra (in Ezra 7) is also an extension of Cyrus's original decree. So the decree which Cyrus drafted in 537 to restore the temple is not completed until 457 B.C. under Artaxerxes, which is therefore the date of the "word to rebuild Jerusalem" starting with its sanctuary. Artaxerxes's commission to Nehemiah in 444 B.C. is not connected to Cyrus's decree in Ezra 6:14 because the decree of 6:14 has to do specifically with rebuilding the temple, not the walls of Jerusalem. No doubt the rebuilding of the city was not complete until Nehemiah restored the walls, but rebuilding the city and rebuilding the temple were one and the same thing to the Jewish people (cf. Isa 44:28).23

457 B.C., then, is the correct date to begin marking off the seventy sabbaticals because this

"word" to rebuild the city is associated with the return of Ezra and the re-establishing of the judiciary, central to the concept of a city (Ezra 7:25, 26). Ezra is a central figure in the return. (As already noted, the commission of Artaxerxes to Ezra connects with the earlier contributions of Cyrus and Darius.) In addition, the book of Nehemiah (not separate from Ezra in the Hebrew Canon) is about rebuilding and restoring the city of God. While chapters 1-6 focus on restoring the city in physical terms, chapters 7-13 focus on restoring the city as a group of people devoted to the service and worship of their God. So rebuilding the city for Nehemiah is not merely about bricks and mortar. Daniel had computed the first year of Cyrus (537) as the end of the Exile according to 9:1-2. Ezra 1:1-4 acknowledges Cyrus as the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy. But it seems that the point of the vision of Seventy Weeks is to mark a beginning after the word of Cyrus in 537. Thus, Ezra's return commissioned by Artaxerxes is the next possible point. More importantly, the command in 457 is actually at the beginning of a sabbatical cycle.24 When one begins the computation from this point, the three periods of the Seventy Weeks and the events and personae associated with them fit both precisely and simply. First, the literary structure of the text must be observed; then the explanation of the chronology and events is straightforward.

THE LITERARY STRUCTURE OF VERSES 25-27

Verses 25-27 are not to be read in a linear manner according to the logic of prose in the western world based upon a Greek and Roman heritage. Instead, the approach in ancient Hebrew literature is to take up a topic and develop it from a particular perspective and then to stop and start anew, taking up the same theme again from another point of view. This approach is kaleidoscopic and recursive. It is like hearing music from stereo system speakers sequentially instead of simultaneously. First comes the music of the right speaker; then comes

the music of the left speaker. Then the person hearing (i.e., reading) puts the two together into a three-dimensional stereo whole.

First, v. 25 introduces the first period of seven weeks and the gap of sixty-two weeks to the climactic seventieth week. This last week is described twice in verses 26 and 27. Verses 26a and 27a describe the work of the Messiah in dying vicariously to uphold a covenant with many and deal decisively with sin, thus ending the sacrificial system. Verses 26b and 27b show that ironically, supreme sacrilege against the temple at this time will result in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. Thus verses 26-27 have an A-B-A'-B' structure. This fits the normal patterns in Hebrew literature to deal with a topic recursively. The literary structure can be diagrammed as follows:

A 26a the beneficial work of the Messiah B 26b ruin / spoliation of the city by his people and its desolation by war A' 27a the beneficial work of the Messiah B' 27b abominations resulting in destruction of the city by one causing desolation

Observing this literary structure is crucial because one can explain difficulties in one section using the parallel section. For example, "the people of the coming leader" in v. 26b bring ruin to the reconstructed Jerusalem. Verse 27b provides further details showing that the "one causing desolation" does so in association with abominations. Below we will see how this makes perfect sense of the role played by both Jewish and Roman people in the fall of the temple. The literary structure also clarifies how the terms <code>māšîaḥ</code> and <code>nāgîd</code> in 25 and 26 refer to one and the same individual and moreover makes perfect sense of the "strengthening of a covenant" in v. 27a.

THE FULFILMENT OF THE PROPHECY

Verse 25 speaks of the issuing of a word to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah, the

Ruler, as seven and sixty-two sevens. During the seven weeks, the city is rebuilt fully with plaza and town-moat. The sentence "It will be rebuilt with plaza and trench and in distressing times" has no sentence-connector (asyndeton) and according to discourse grammar markers indicates a comment on the previous statement that specifies the time. This clause adds the comment that the city will be fully restored and the restoration will occur during distressing times. The seven sabbaticals cover the period roughly 457-407 B.C. and include the efforts of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. If one employs either the command of Cyrus in 537 or Artaxerxes in 444, the period of approximately fifty years does not correspond well to our records of the history of Israel and the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Then for sixty-two sevens, there is nothing significant to record as far as God's plan is concerned. There is a *good* reason, then, for dividing the sixty-nine weeks into seven and sixty-two weeks: in the sixty-nine weeks to the time of the Messiah, active reconstruction of the city and temple occupies only the first seven weeks.

Sixty-nine sabbaticals or weeks of years bring the time to 27 A.D. when the "word to restore Jerusalem" is understood to refer to the decree of Artaxerxes in 457 B.C. The calculation of sabbatical years in Israel for antiquity is based upon evidence from Maccabees, Josephus, inscriptions, the Talmud, and Maimonides. The standard treatment derives from Benedict Zuckermann in 1866.26 More recently Ben Zion Wacholder has analysed the data differently and provided a table of sabbatical years from 519 B.C. to 441 A.D.²⁷ Here I follow the standard view of Zuckermann according to the critique of Ben Zion Wacholder by Bob Pickle, although the difference between the chronologies reconstructed by these two scholars is only one year. 28 Thus, the seventieth sabbatical is from 27-34 A.D. following Zuckermann or 28-35 A.D. following Ben Zion Wacholder.

Half way through this time, i.e., 31 A.D., the

Messiah is cut off, but not for himself. Astonishingly he dies, but his death is vicarious. The phrase אין, commonly rendered "and he will have nothing" is better translated "but not for himself." The quasi-verbal אין in Late Biblical Hebrew can function precisely as the Standard Biblical Hebrew negative איל.²⁹ The point in the vision is that the coming king dies vicariously for his people.

Serious students of scripture have not always agreed on the date of the crucifixion. Newman, Bloom, and Gauch have an excellent response for this issue:

In any case, if the traditional scheme for the location of the sabbatical cycles is followed instead of Wacholder's, the 69th cycle shifts by only one year, to AD 27–34, which still fits equally well. Likewise an error by a year or two on either end—for Artaxerxes's 20th year or the date of the crucifixion—would not change the result. The prediction fits Jesus even allowing for the largest possible uncertainties in chronology.³⁰

Thus, by employing sabbaticals, the prophecy remains an astounding prediction finding fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth and yet allows for differences as well in calculating the crucifixion. The crucifixion is almost always dated between A.D. 27 and 34.

If we put verses 26a and 27a together, the vicarious death of the coming king brings about a confirming / strengthening / upholding of a covenant with "the many," almost certainly "the many" referred to in Isa 53:10-12.³¹ Without doubt, Isaiah 53, describing a future Davidic Servant of the Lord, who is also both priest and sacrifice, laying down his life for the many, is the background to the brief comment in Daniel's vision. His death brings an end to the sacrificial system because it is a final solution to the problem of sin. The expression "he will strengthen a covenant" occurs only here in the entire Old Testament. Careful analysis of all constructions involving the term "covenant"

shows that the closest expression to "higbîr berît" in Dan 9:27 is "hêqîm berît", i.e., to confirm or uphold a covenant, an expression which refers to a covenant partner fulfilling the obligation or promise previously enshrined in a covenant so that the other partner experiences in historical reality the fulfilling of this promise, i.e., one comes good on one's promise.³² In Genesis 15 God's promises to Abraham of land and seed are formalized in a covenant. The expression used is kārat berît (15:18). Later in Genesis 17 God upholds his promise and says Sarah will have a baby within a year. The expression consistently used there is heqîm berît (17:7, 19, 21).

In Dan 9:27a the statement "he will uphold a covenant with the many" refers to the work of the Anointed King in effecting the new covenant described by the prophets at different times and in a variety of ways. It is important to note that there are different perspectives in the prophets on the new covenant. Their contributions are not monolithic, but view the gem of God's future covenant renewal from many different facets. Usually the expression is kārat berît—to cut a covenant—to indicate a covenant that did not exist previously and is being initiated now between partners for the first time. Excellent examples are Isa 55:3, Jer 31:31, and Ezek 34:25 and 37:26. Yet Ezek 16:60, 62 employs *heqîm berît* for the new covenant. We should not assume here, against the linguistic use in general, that the expression is now equivalent to kārat berît, but rather looks at the making of the new covenant from a different point of view. Verse 60 speaks of Israel breaking the covenant of Sinai and of God subsequently establishing an everlasting covenant with them. Ezekiel's language indicates that there is a link between the Sinai covenant and the new. He employs the expression "confirm or uphold a covenant" to show that the new covenant establishes effectively what God intended in the Sinai covenant. The point is supported by the fact that the new covenant is called here an everlasting covenant whereas the term "everlasting" is never used of the Sinai covenant. 33

Something similar is probably the thrust of Dan 9:27a. The expression "uphold a covenant" is chosen and used here because the context entails the return from exile and the "renewing" of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel.

Notwithstanding the above explanation, the expression higbîr berît in Dan 9:27, unique in the Old Testament, is difficult. An alternative explanation proposed by Jason Parry may be more satisfactory. He notes that the construction higbîr berît in 9:27 is similar to the Aramaic expression tqp (Pa"el = "strengthen") plus ' $\check{e}s\bar{a}r$ (injunction or prohibition), i.e., "to put in force an injunction." This Aramaic expression occurs in Dan 6:7 (6:8 Heb) when the enemies of Daniel want the king to create a new law that they wish to use to trap Daniel and is parallel to the expression "enact a statute." A cognate adjective of tap in Imperial Aramaic and Nabataean has the meaning "lawful" or "legitimate." Thus, though the basic meaning of tqp in the Pa"el is "strengthen," a meaning like "make lawful" is appropriate, especially when the object is "injunction." The Hebrew expression higbîr berît in 9:27 could be viewed, therefore, as a calque of the Aramaic expression in Dan 6:7 and as a result, would be equivalent in meaning to kārat berît, i.e., initiating a covenant rather than upholding an existing commitment or promise. Whichever explanation of *higbîr berît* is adopted, there is no doubt that the covenant of 9:27 is the new covenant which was effected by the sacrificial death of the Messiah in order to restore the broken covenantal relationship between God and his people

Strangely, at the same time that the Messiah comes and effects a final solution for sin, v. 26b states that the people of the coming ruler will destroy the city and the sanctuary. There is no grammatical issue in identifying object and subject in this sentence. The meaning of the sentence is also straightforward. The coming ruler must be the Messiah of v. 25 according to the context and normal rules of literature. Therefore "the people of the coming ruler" are the Jewish peo-

ple.34 The statement is telling us that it is the Jewish people who will ruin / spoil the restored city and temple at the arrival of their coming King. Historical records confirm that this is precisely right. We have firsthand accounts of the Fall of Jerusalem from the first century in The Wars of the Jews by Josephus. Anyone who has read and studied these texts will understand the author's point. Although the Roman army actually put the torch to Jerusalem, the destruction of the city was blamed squarely on the Jewish people themselves. Josephus wrote his work to try to exonerate the masses by blaming the few, i.e., the Zealots. Thus, he wanted people to believe that the fall of Jerusalem was not the fault of the people as a whole, but rather due to a few extreme rebels who brought down the wrath of Rome upon them. So Josephus is adequate historical proof that the destruction of Jerusalem was entirely the fault of the Jewish people, just as Dan 9:26b predicts. Since few interpreters find it possible to accept the straightforward statement of the text, ingenious alternative proposals are multiplied. These cannot be detailed here except to say that many of them assume rather unnaturally that the "ruler" in v. 26 is different from the one in v. 25, when v. 25 clearly connects the "ruler" with the "anointed one" and no contextual clues exist that this is a different person.

Moreover, the literary structure of verses 26-27 helps to explain the cryptic phrase in v. 26b, since v. 27b returns to the topic of the ruin of the restored Jerusalem and elaborates, providing further details and information. The "people of the coming ruler" who ruin the city and sanctuary (26b) are responsible for the "abominations" (27b), and the "one causing desolation" (27b) is responsible for the "war" in 26b since there it is the war which brings about "desolations," and "desolations" in Daniel's prayer (9:17-18) are the result of a foreign nation brought against Israel for breaking the covenant (e.g., Lev 26:31-35). The "abominations" refer to the sacrilege which resulted from the struggle between John, Simon,

and Eleazar ("people of the coming ruler") for control of Jerusalem, and the "war" to refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and Temple by Vespasian / Titus (the "one causing desolation"). The "one causing desolation" (Titus) comes "on the wing of," i.e., in connection with, those causing "abominations" (Jews), the one (i.e., people) being desolated. Jesus' mention of the "abomination of desolation" in the Olivet Discourse supports this understanding since he is probably speaking of the sacrilege of John of Gischala as the "abomination" which forewarns of the impending "desolation" of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans.³⁵

Verse 27b speaks of the "one causing desolation on the wing of abominations." The term "wing" can mean "edge" or "extremity." The phrase refers to one causing desolation in association with extreme abominations. A similar expression, but not exactly the same, is used to predict the act of Antiochus Epiphanes in Dan 11:31 and 12:11 in desecrating the temple. Here in 9:27b, however, the agent of the abominations is the Jewish people, not a foreign ruler. The Gospels present Jesus as both genuine Messiah and true Temple. The paralytic lowered through the roof by four friends, for example, was not only healed, but forgiven his sins. 36 This angered the leaders because Jesus was claiming to do something that could only happen at the Temple; thus he was claiming to be the true Temple (John 2:18-22). So when the Jewish people rejected Jesus as Anointed One / Messiah and the High Priest blasphemed Jesus, the true Temple, the Herodian temple supported by the Jewish people had to fall and the city had to be destroyed.

According to v. 26b this destruction is something that would happen *after* the sixty-ninth sabbatical. In v. 27b, there is nothing stated that actually requires the desolation of Jerusalem to happen precisely *in* the seventieth week, although this event is associated with the events happening at that time. Thus, the fall of Jerusalem some time later does fit suitably because it is the final working

out of the Jewish response to Jesus in the seventieth week. This situation is similar to God telling Adam that in the day he ate of the forbidden fruit, he would die. In one sense this did happen on the very day, but took time to be worked out. Just so, when the Jewish people rejected the Messiah and the High Priest blasphemed Jesus, the true Temple, the Herodian temple had to fall and the city had to be destroyed. The coming destruction, symbolized by the curtain protecting the Holy of Holies torn in two at the crucifixion, finally came to pass in A.D. 70, i.e., within the time of that generation which committed this sacrilege.

The notion of a person who is both King and true Temple is hinted at by the last of the six purposes in 9:24: "to anoint the Holy of Holies." The verb "to anoint" is normally used of consecrating persons for offices, e.g., priest (Lev 4:3), prophet (Ps 105:15), and most often king (1 Sam 2:35). It can also be used to refer to the consecration of the Mosaic Tabernacle and its holy objects (Ex 29:36; 30:26; 40:9, 10, 11; Lev 8:10, 11). Only in Dan 9:24 do we have the "Holy of Holies" being anointed. This phrase could be construed as "the most holy place" or "the most holy person." The latter meaning would be most unusual. Thus we have a verb that is normally used of a person and an object normally used of the temple. It may suggest that both future king and temple are one and the same. It finds fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth as both Messiah and true Temple.

Some interpreters have opted for a proposal that views $n\bar{a}g\hat{i}d$ in v. 26b as referring to an evil prince, ³⁷ perhaps even the Antichrist, and different from v. 25 where the $n\bar{a}g\hat{i}d$ refers to the Messiah. This is bolstered by interpreting v. 27a as referring to this evil ruler making a false covenant which disrupts sacrifice in a way similar to the abomination causing desolation in 8:12-14, 11:31, and 12:11. A supporting connection may even be drawn between the fact that several texts in Daniel appear to speak of a three and one-half year period (7:25, 12:7, 11, 12; cf. 8:14, 26). All of these texts are fraught with interpretive problems

and associated with them is the identification of the four kingdoms portrayed symbolically in the dream of chapter 2 and the vision of chapter 7 followed by the expansions on these themes in chapters 8 and 10-12.

Space does not permit addressing the difficult exegetical issues pertaining to the connections just outlined. Some good reasons, however, can be provided to show in a general way that these connections are both superficial and leading to faulty interpretation. First, as already pointed out, the context strongly suggests that nāgîd in vv. 25 and 26 refers to the same individual. Second, the literary structure of the text does not suggest connecting v. 27a to v. 26b. Third, the larger literary structure is against this view. Chapter 7 entails a vision of four successive kingdoms that is followed by the Kingdom of God. In the fourth kingdom there is a ruler who is boastful against God (7:8) and oppresses the saints (7:25). In the "blowup maps" of chapters 8 and 10-12 that expand upon the basic vision of chapter 7 there is a ruler who sets himself against the Prince of the Host (8:12-14). This ruler is clearly in the Greek kingdom according to 8:21. The last vision of chapters 10-12 expand further upon 8:12-14 and speak of the abomination causing desolation (11:31 and 12:11), ultimately fulfilled in Antiochus Epiphanes, a ruler within the Greek kingdom. Since I would identify the fourth kingdom as Roman and the third as Greek, it is problematic to relate 7:8, which belongs to the fourth empire, to 11:31 and 12:11 which belong to the third.³⁸ That consideration aside, we can see from the literary structure of the book that the vision of the Seventy Weeks is by virtue of its content not directly related at all to the three visions portraying the sequence of foreign overlords in 7, 8, and 10-12.39 The fact, then, that the vision in chapter 9 is not related to the other three is a powerful reason against connecting 9:26b and 9:27a with 8:12-14, 11:31, and 12:11. The literary structure of the book prevents the reader from connecting them in spite of some superficial similarities.

THE PLACE OF DANIEL 9 WITHIN CHAPTERS 7-12

The question may be raised, quite legitimately: what *is* the relationship of the vision of Seventy Weeks to the other visions? How does it fit into the larger literary structure of the book as a whole? This question urgently needs to be addressed.

As already noted, the visions in chapters 7, 8, and 10-12 focus on a series of four gentile / human kingdoms succeeded finally by the Kingdom of God. I attempted to show in an earlier examination of the issue of the "son of man" in Daniel 7 that the "son of man" represents at the same time a divine figure, a human king, and the constituent people of his kingdom: in the end, the saints of the Most High receive the Kingdom of God (7:18, 22, 27).⁴⁰ These three visions, then, focus on the question: what is happening to God's Kingdom now that Israel is in exile, without an earthly king, and subject to foreign powers? Chapter 9, nicely sandwiched between the second and third of the three visions, deals with a different but closely related issue: how long will Israel be in exile? How long will the kingdom of God suffer at the hands of the foreign nations? The final or real return from exile, equivalent to the forgiveness of sins, is prerequisite to the saints receiving a kingdom, and so the vision of the Seventy Weeks reveals how and when the ultimate jubilee is ushered in.

CONCLUSION

The vision of Daniel's Seventy Weeks, then, can be explained simply. It refers to a period of seventy sabbaticals or periods of seven years required to bring in the ultimate jubilee: release from sin, the establishment of everlasting righteousness and consecration of the temple. During the first seven sabbaticals the city of Jerusalem is restored. Then for sixty-two sabbaticals there is nothing to report. In the climactic seventieth week, Israel's King arrives and dies vicariously for his people. Strangely, desecration of the temple similar to that by Antiochus Epiphanes in the Greek Empire is perpetrated by the Jewish people themselves

resulting in the destruction of Jerusalem. These events are fufilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He is the coming king. His crucifixion is the sacrifice to end all sacrifices and the basis of the New Covenant with the many. His death is "not for himself," but rather vicarious. The rejection of Jesus as Messiah and desecration of him as the true Temple at his trial by the High Priest result in judgment upon the Herodian Temple carried out eventually in A.D. 70. The notion of a gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week is contrary to a vision of chronological sequence. The prophecy is remarkable both for its precision and imprecision as it fits the events concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

ENDNOTES

¹I am grateful to the following for constructive criticism and proofing of my work: Barbara Gentry, Stephen Kempf, and especially Jason T. Parry.

²The "Overview of Daniel" and "Grasping the Literary Structure" are adapted and summarized from Peter J. Gentry, "The Son of Man in Daniel 7: Individual or Corporate?" in Acorns to Oaks: The Primacy and Practice of Biblical Theology, (Toronto: Joshua Press, 2003), 59-75.

³The first is adapted from course notes produced for "Introduction to the Old Testament: Part II, 2003" at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary by Daniel I. Block. The second is adapted from David W. Gooding, "The Literary Structure of the Book of Daniel and its Implications," *Tyndale Bulletin* 32 (1981): 43-79.

⁴Instead of D. I. Block's four-part chiastic structure in chapters 8:1-12:4, the analysis of A. Kuen offers an A –B –A' structure with A = chapter 8, B = chapter 9 and A' = chapters 10-12. Thus A and A' are the "Expansion Visions" on the Basic Vision of chapter 7 with the different "Vision of the Seventy Weeks" sandwiched in between. This is more persuasive and may well give chapter 9 greater prominence. See Alfred Kuen, Soixante-six en un: Introduction aux 66 livres de la Bible (St-Légier: Editions Emmaüs, 2005), 121. I am indebted to Stephen Kempf for drawing my

attention to this.

⁵To be more specific, 11:1-2 provides new details on the second kingdom and 12:1-3 provides new details on the kingdom of God. Thus the vision of 10-12 technically spans all of the still-future kingdoms. Nonetheless, the focus is largely on the Greek Kingdom (11:3-35) with some space devoted to the Roman Kingdom (11:36-45).

⁶Stephen G. Dempster, "Linguistic Features of Hebrew Narrative: A Discourse Analysis of Narrative from the Classical Period" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1985). As an example, see Gen 1:27 where the second and third clauses are asyndetic because they are epexegetical to the first.

⁷Roger T. Beckwith, "Daniel 9 and the Date of Messiah's Coming in Essene, Hellenistic, Pharisaic, Zealot and Early Christian Computation," *Revue de Qumrân* 40 (1981): 521-42.

⁸Adapted from J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah:* An Introduction and Commentary (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 289.

⁹Cf. Zech 1:12 where the seventy years under Babylonian rule is described as a time of wrath.

¹⁰Adapted in part and cited in part from D. I. Block, "Preaching Old Testament Apocalyptic to a New Testament Church," *Calvin Theological Journal* 41 (2006): 17-52.

¹¹I have argued this in Gentry, "The Son of Man in Daniel 7."

¹²J. Oswalt, "תשה", "New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis (ed. Willem A. Van-Gemeren; 5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 2.1126.

¹³Donald F. Murray, Divine Prerogative and Royal Pretension: Pragmatics, Poetics and Polemics in a Narrative Sequence about David (2 Samuel 5.17-7.29) (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 264; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 299.

¹⁴There is a problem in the text at Ezek 45:21.

¹⁵Paul R. Williamson, Sealed With an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose (New Studies in Biblical Theology; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007), 174-75.

¹⁶D. I. Block, "Preaching Old Testament Apocalyptic

to a New Testament Church," 49.

17Ibid.

¹⁸Robert C. Newman, John A. Bloom, and Hugh G. Gauch, Jr., "Public Theology and Prophecy Data: Factual Evidence that Counts for the Biblical World View," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46, no. 1 (2003): 79-110, esp. 104.

¹⁹Newman, Bloom, and Gauch employ the conventional date of 458 B.C. The Fall of 457 B.C. is adopted here based upon the chronological work of Bob Pickle, "An Examination of Anderson's Chronological Errors Regarding Daniel 9's First 69 Weeks" [cited 30 Nov 2009]. Online: http://www.pickle-publishing.com/papers/sir-robert-anderson.htm. Newman, Bloom, and Gauch also erroneously provide Ezra 4:11-12 and 23 as references to Artaxerxes's commission to Ezra.

²⁰Newman, Bloom, and Gauch employ the conventional date of 445 B.C. Again, the date adopted here is based on the work of Pickle, "An Examination of Anderson's Chronological Errors."

²¹Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977).

²²Newman, Bloom, and Gauch, "Public Theology and Prophecy Data," 104.

²³I acknowledge help from Jason Parry for the argument at this point.

²⁴For the calculation of sabbatical years, I follow Benedict Zuckermann rather than Ben Zion Wacholder (see below).

²⁵Williamson acknowledges this A-B-A'-B' structure although he interprets "leader" or "prince" differently; see Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed With an Oath*, 175.

²⁶Benedict Zuckermann, Über Sabbathjahrcyclus und Jubelperiode (Breslau: W. G. Korn, 1866).

²⁷Ben Zion Wacholder, "The Calendar of Sabbatical Cycles During the Second Temple and the Early Rabbinic Period," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 44 (1973): 153-96.

²⁸For the calculation of sabbatical years I follow Benedict Zuckermann rather than Ben Zion Wacholder.
See Bob Pickle, "Daniel 9's Seventy Weeks and the Sabbatical Cycle: When Were the Sabbatical

Years" [cited 9 Nov 2009]. Online: http://www.picklepublishing.com/papers/sabbatical-years.htm. Pickle offers a critical evaluation of all the evidence employed by Wacholder in setting up the table of sabbatical years. In any case the seventieth sabbatical is from A.D. 27-34 (Zuckermann) or 28-35 (Wacholder) and one can find satisfaction in either A.D. 31 or 33 for a crucifixion date.

²⁹See Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (New Studies in Biblical Theology 15; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 218. On the use of 'ên functioning as a simple negation, see HALOT, 42. If expressed by the normal negative, possible aural confusion could and would have resulted: *lō' lô*.

³⁰Robert C. Newman, John A. Bloom, and Hugh G. Gauch, Jr., "Public Theology and Prophecy Data: Factual Evidence that Counts for the Biblical World View," 105.

³¹Meredith Kline, "The Covenant of the Seventieth Week," in *The Law and the Prophets: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Oswald T. Allis* (ed. by J. H. Skilton; Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974), 452-69.

 32 The difference between the expressions *kārat berît* and hêqîm berît was already recognized by Cassuto; see U. Cassuto, The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1941 [Hebrew], 1961 [English]); and idem, La Questione della Genesi (Pubblicazioni della R. Università degli Studi di Firenze, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofica, 3 Serie, Vol. 1, Florence, 1934). Recently, Paul Williamson and Jeffrey J. Niehaus have reacted to the way in which the difference was described by William J. Dumbrell. This is partly due to the inadequate description of Dumbrell and partly to inadequate lexical study on the part of Niehaus and Williamson. See Peter J. Gentry, "Kingdom Through Covenant: Humanity as the Divine Image," The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology 12, no. 1 (2008): 16-42. Exhaustive analysis of berît and constructions therewith will be provided in a forthcoming volume Kingdom through Covenant by Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum (Crossway, 2011).

occurs sixteen times in the Hebrew Old Testament: two times of the covenant with Noah (Gen 9:16, Isa 24:S), four times of the covenant with Abraham (Gen 17:7, 19, Ps 105:10, 1 Chr 16:17), one time of the covenant with David (2 Sam 23:5, cf. 2 Chr 13:S), six times of the new covenant (Isa 55:3, 61:8, Jer 32:40, 50:5, Ezek 16:60, 37:26) and three times of covenant signs (Gen 17:13, Exod 31:16, Lev 24:8). Nowhere is the Sinai covenant called a "permanent" covenant.

The Bound Phrase אמה הבא, the attributive relative participle הבא modifies. Normally, the attributive participle and noun would agree in definiteness, but exceptions are found. See Bruce K. Waltke and Michael P. O'Connor, Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 621-22. The participle "who is to come" does not indicate, then, that another person is intended. The phrase means "the people of the ruler who is to come" and the subject of the verb in the sentence in v. 26b is the leader's own kin; the leader is the Anointed One of v. 26a.

³⁵I acknowledge here the helpful analysis of Jason Parry.

³⁶For more examples, see N. T. Wright, Jesus and the Victory of God (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 432-37.
 ³⁷Cf. Stephen R. Miller, Daniel (New American Commentary; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 271, and Paul R. Williamson, Sealed With an Oath,

³⁸This does not preclude a typical / anti-typical relationship between the two. A typology between Antiochus Epiphanes and the oppressive ruler of 7:8, 25, however, does not necessarily imply that the *nāgîd* of 9:26b refers to the same individual as described in 7:8, 25.

³⁹See paper by Jason Parry, "Desolation of the Temple and Messianic Enthronement in Daniel 11:36-12:3" (Paper presented to Prof. James M. Hamilton in Ph.D. Seminar on Daniel, November, 2009 at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary). He argues that there are allusions in 11:36-45 to 9:26-27 showing that 11:36-45 is the fulfillment of v. 26b and v. 27b, and he shows how 11:36-45 can be understood

as a reference to the events of A.D. 67-70. Nonetheless, chapter 9 does not present a vision showing a sequence of kingdoms followed by the kingdom of God as do the visions in chapters 7, 8, and 10-12.

40 See Peter J. Gentry, "The Son of Man in Daniel 7: Individual or Corporate?"