

DAY 8 - JANUARY 15, 2026

Daniel's Vision of the Seventy Weeks (Daniel 9:20-27)

Verse 24 tells us that six purposes will be completed over this whole Seventy Sevens time period.

1. To finish transgression. The word suggests restricting or restraining sin.
2. To put an end to sin. One of the words points to sealing to designate that something is securely closed (Matthew 1:21; 1 John 3:8).
3. To atone for wickedness, that is, to forgive (John 1:29; 1 John 2:2)
4. To bring in everlasting righteousness. Our righteousness does not depend on us, but on Jesus who justifies us, that is, declares us righteous (Isaiah 53:11; Habakkuk 2:14; Isaiah 11:9b).
5. To seal up the vision and prophecy.
6. To anoint the most holy. This could refer to anointing the temple when it is rebuilt, but probably points to the anointing of the Anointed One, Jesus the Messiah (Matthew 12:6).

Q1. (Daniel 9:24) In what ways can we find in Jesus the fulfillment of the six tasks found in verse 24?

Literal years (Lev 25:8) would be expected. However, no view of the literal numbers interpretations allows you take the numbers at face value without further explanation. Symbolic numbers is another approach, since 7 and 10 are used symbolically (Gen 10; Luke 10; Matt 18:20-21; Rev 7:4; 14:1, 3).

The Anointed One could refer to a king, high priest, or Messiah (1 Samuel 2:10; 2 Samuel 22:51; Psalm 2:2; 18:50; Exodus 40:13; Leviticus 16:32; Isaiah 45:1). Some take the “anointed one” to be Onias III, the last high priest of the line of Zadok. Those with a messianic interpretation take him to refer to Jesus of Nazareth.

The beginning point, “issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem” could refer to Cyrus’s decree in 538 BC or a decree by King Artaxerxes to Nehemiah and Ezra about 445 BC.

Counting the years is also controversial. The Maccabean/non-messianic interpreters believe that Daniel was confused about the years. Those with a messianic interpretation note that Jesus’ death probably took place on Passover of 30 AD or of 33 AD. Some take the 483 years as so-called “prophetic years” with only 360 days, not 365 day years as were used by the Jews with 445/444 BC as a starting point, pointing to Jesus’ death in 32/33 AD. Other see 458 BC as a starting point, which takes you to the beginning Jesus’ ministry in 26 AD, with the stopping of sacrifices coinciding with Jesus’ death 3-1/2 years later. Both of these Messianic interpretations posit a “gap” or “parenthesis” to take up the space between Christ’s death and Christ’s Second Coming.

The Final “Seven” (9:26-27). Those with a Maccabean interpretation, see the following events as fulfilled by Onias III and “the ruler who will come” as Antiochus Epiphanes. Those with a messianic interpretation see the events fulfilled by Jesus Christ and a future Antichrist.

1. “The Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing (26a). “Cut off” means here, “to destroy by a violent act of man or nature,” that is, be killed.
2. “The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary” (26b). Does this speak of the destruction of Jerusalem in 168 BC, 70 AD, or by a future Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2; 1 John 2:18; 4:3; Revelation 13).
3. “The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed” (9:26c). See Matthew 24:6-8; Revelation 16:14-16; 19:11-21; 20:7-10.

4. “He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven’” (9:27a). See 2 Thessalonians 2, Revelation 13:16-17.
5. “In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering” (9:27b). According to Revelation, the Antichrist, the “beast rising out of the sea,” will exercise authority and persecute God’s people for 42 months (one half of seven years), demanding exclusive worship (Revelation 13:5-8).
6. “And on a wing [of the temple]¹ he will set up an abomination that causes desolation” (9:27c). Also Daniel 11:31; 12:11. This was literally fulfilled by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 BC (1 Maccabees 1:54), but could refer to the fall of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14), or a future Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:4).
7. “The end that is decreed is poured out on him” (9:27d). See Revelation 19:20.

A Synopsis of the Major Interpretations of the Seventy “Sevens”

- 1. Literal time periods with Antiochus Epiphanes as the end-point.*** This Maccabean interpretation begins the 490 years at the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC, and the termination as Antiochus’s persecution (164/163 BC). But this is only 422 years, so these interpreters assume that Daniel was mistaken about chronology and the coming of the kingdom. This view sometimes takes the “anointed one, the ruler” in verse 25 as Cyrus II (or Zerubbabel or Joshua, Zechariah 4:14), and the “anointed one” in verse 26 to refer to Onias III, the last legitimate high priest of the descendants of Zadok, deposed in 175 BC and murdered in 171 BC. However, its proponents generally interpret Daniel’s visions as historical narratives written after the fact as if they were predictive prophecy.
- 2. Symbolic time periods with the first century AD as the end-point.*** A second view sees the time periods as symbolic, not literal. Seven Sevens cover the period from the decree of Cyrus until the completion of the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, approximately 440 to 400 BC. Sixty-two Sevens from about 400 BC to the first advent of Christ. During this time the city is completely rebuilt, though in stressful times. The final Seven encompasses Christ’s First Advent to sometime after Christ’s death, but before 70 AD.
- 3. Literal time periods with Christ’s Second Coming as the end-point.*** Typically held by premillennialist and dispensational interpreters, this view sees the 70 Sevens as literal time periods - years - with Christ’s Coming as the end-point. The seven Sevens extend from command to rebuild Jerusalem (Ezra, 458 BC or Nehemiah, 445 BC) to the completion of work, 49 years later. The sixty-two Sevens (434 years) extend either to Christ’s baptism (about 26 AD) or his presentation of himself as Messiah on Palm Sunday (32/33 AD). Key to this view is that you stop counting for “the time of the Gentiles.” That whole period is skipped. The final Seven years begin at the end of present age, with terrible tribulation for Israel and the world, during which the majority of Israel will be saved. The final Seven is terminated by Christ’s coming and Kingdom, which will last 1,000 years. One obvious weakness of this view is that it uses 360-day “prophetic years” rather than 365-day years as did the Jews. Also it arbitrarily skips counting years during the Church Age.
- 4. Symbolic time periods with Christ’s Second Coming as the end-point.*** A fourth view believes that the 70 Sevens are symbolic periods of time and are a prophecy of Old and New Testament church history from Cyrus’ decree (538 BC) until Christ’s return. The details may vary, but this view typically holds that seven Sevens extend from Cyrus’ decree until the coming of Christ, about 550 years. The sixty-two Sevens extend from Christ’s coming to persecution of the church by Antichrist (at least 2,000 years). The final Seven seems to include the Great Tribulation and ends with Christ’s advent. Keil and Baldwin hold this view. Baldwin sees the last Seven beginning with the first coming of Christ and extending until his Second Coming.

Q2. (Daniel 9:24-27) Why do you think people fight with each other over the interpretation of difficult Bible passages? According to Romans 14:1-5, what should be our attitude towards those who disagree with us on the non-essentials of the faith?

Q3. (Daniel 9:24-27) Why do you think there are so many interpretations of Daniel's vision of the Seventy Sevens? What is your interpretation of the various key parts of the vision?

Lessons for Disciples:

This is a difficult passage. Nevertheless, it has several lessons for us disciples.

1. Prayer and fasting touch the heart of God. Verse 23 reminds us that God sent an answer to Daniel as soon as he had begun to pray.
2. Humility. Over the many centuries, there have been a great many different interpretations of Daniel's vision. We ought to approach every interpretation with a bit of skepticism - and humility. 3. Jesus is the fulfillment of God's plan for mankind. Verse 24 can't be fulfilled by man without God. But this is what Jesus our Messiah came to do!
4. It's going to get worse before it gets better. Verses 26 and 27 foresee war, destruction, desolation, and persecution (also seen in Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation). But at the end, the destroyer will be destroyed. We must prepare ourselves to endure over a considerable period of time.
5. God will deliver his people. Daniel's vision has often been an encouragement to saints undergoing persecution. He knows the pain of the persecution his people endure. And that persecution will not last forever. The Redeemer will end it all with his Second Coming.

Q4. Why do you think Daniel's visions and prophecies have been an encouragement to Christians throughout the centuries when they are undergoing severe persecution?