

“Understand the Matter”

Daniel 9:20-27

Although we included verses 20-21 in the past study of Daniel 9, we will look at them in more detail here as they are more connected with this text than the previous, which was explained in our study of those previous verses.

The text before us is one of the most controversial in its interpretation as any in the Bible. There seems to be almost as many varied views on this as there are people that write concerning it. The problem seems to stem from one’s preconceived viewpoint of prophecy – their prophetic worldview, if you would. That is a truth that can be said of any passage of Scripture, for that matter, and it truly is a primary factor in how we understand the Bible. Since I, and conservative, fundamental/orthodox, evangelicals like me, interpret the Bible in its literal, historically accurate, contextually relevant manner, the same approach will be taken here. We will look at this text as we would any other, and interpret it in light of its historical context, its relevant scriptural context, and how it fits with the rest of prophetic teachings in the Bible.

All that said, this will by no means be an exhaustive study where we look at all opposing views and dissect every minutia of detail. Our intent in the study of Daniel has been, and will continue to be, how this relates to us today, and what we can do with it to better our walk with Christ, and advance the cause of Christ in the world around us.

Five times in this text the word for “understand” (“understanding,” “informed,” “consider”) is used. This doesn’t necessarily give us a breakdown or

outline of the verses, but it does show how important it was for Daniel (and us) to understand what was happening and what was being said.

There is an important point to make here: God wrote the Bible with the intention of it being understood. He didn't intend for it to be complicated or difficult, but because we are still sinful man in our natural flesh, some of it will be difficult to understand.

There are two Hebrew words translated "understand" in this text. One (vs. 25) is uncommonly translated "understand" – אָחַז – while the other one (used four times in various ways) is the more common word for "understand" – בִּין. We will look at these words in their context as we study this passage but the point to be made here in the introduction is that God intended for Daniel to have as clear an understanding based upon the information he had, or could comprehend, as was possible for him at the time. Considering we have "greater light" today, with a finished Scripture, the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer, and millennia of history to sift through, it is even more befitting for the church today to "understand" what is meant in this text and how it applies to our lives and ministry.

I. THE DETAILS PRECEDING THE PROPHECY – VS. 20-22 – THE OCCASION

A. Verse 20-21 point back to the beginning of the prayer Daniel was praying when Gabriel appeared to him with the answer. Some believe there was more to this prayer than what is recorded here (Dr. Walvoord for one) because of the mention of "the evening oblation" in verse 21. I don't think that in and of itself necessitates this prayer being longer

than what is recorded. What the context does show is that Daniel was in a state of meditation that ended in the content of this prayer.

1. "Whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication..." – we looked at most of these points in the previous text in the content of the actual prayer.
 - a) One thing to note is the word "speaking" (used twice in these two verses). The word used here is one that means to say something out loud. Daniel's prayer, as has been mentioned before, was prayed out loud, and for all that wanted to hear.
 - b) This gives us reason to pray in public and to voice our prayers out loud, even in our private devotional times. This isn't a proof text for that, nor is to be true in every case, for Hannah (1 Samuel 1) prayed without saying anything out loud and God heard her prayers. But here, in the situation Daniel was in, praying as a representative for others, praying in an audible voice was necessary.
 - c) Another comment on this portion – "presenting my supplication" is what prayer is.
2. "Before the LORD my God" – again, points to whom it is we are to pray.
 - a) The word for "before" (לְפָנַי) comes from two words, or parts of speech:

(1) The inseparable preposition לְ and the noun for "face" – פָּנֶה

(2) The definition of the preposition is "to, into, for"

b) Literally, the word means "to the face." In relation to Daniel's prayer, it was done "to the face" of the LORD his God – points to the direction of our prayer, the Person of whose attention one is seeking.

3. "For the holy mountain of my God" – another way of saying Jerusalem – it was the "holy mountain" of which Daniel was referring. As was pointed out earlier in our study of Daniel, he never forgot who he was, where he came from, and who his God was. Daniel referred to it as the "holy mountain" in verse 16 of chapter nine.

Daniel 9:16

¹⁶ O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

Zechariah 8:3

³ Thus saith the LORD; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the LORD of hosts the holy mountain.

4. "Even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning"

a) "The man Gabriel"

(1) "The man" – אִישׁ – *this is not a generic term as some see it but is specifically male in gender.*

(2) "Gabriel" – from two Hebrew words: גַּבְרִיֵּל, meaning valiant man or warrior, mighty man; and the general word for God – אֱלֹהִים.

(3) So, the mention of who it was that brought Daniel the prophecy is to emphasize the importance of the message as well as the Person from which it came and by whom it was delivered – the man, the mighty man of God.

b) "In the vision at the beginning"

(1) This isn't speaking about the current time or event. Once the prayer is over it is a prophecy that Gabriel gave to Daniel in a real-time, live, in-person, conversation in a woke state.

(2) The word for "beginning" is the issue that needs resolved. Since it isn't speaking of this event then it must be speaking of something else – the "beginning" of what is the question. The only other time Gabriel is mentioned by name in Daniel (in fact, in the entire Old Testament) is in Dan. 8:16 in relation to the ram and rough goat vision that he received some fifteen years prior to this prayer and prophecy.

Daniel 8:15–18

¹⁵ And it came to pass, when I, even

I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man.

16 And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision.

17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.

18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright.

(3) *The Hebrew word (בְּתַחֲלֵהָ - תַּחֲלֵהָ), in this context, as the Bishop's Bible and the Geneva Bible have it, is to be understood as an event that happened before, not specifically at the beginning of an event as we would understand it today. The same word is used in verse 23 but there it has a time qualifier that specifies what exactly is referenced.*

(Bishops) Yea, while I was yet speaking in my prayer, the man Gabriel (whom I had seen afore in the vision) came fleeing, & touched me about the time of the evening oblation:

(Geneva) Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen before in the vision, came flying, and touched mee about the time of the

evening oblation.

5. "Being caused to fly swiftly" – this is one of the more peculiar phrases in this text and is one of the places in the Bible from which we get the idea that angels have wings and fly (angels other than the cherubim/seraphim since they are defined as having wings).

a) The verb translated here for "being caused to fly" is in the participle form of אָנַח , which means to be weary or faint from exhaustion or exertion; and the noun that follows is the same root word as used for the verb and means the same – to be weary, or utterly weary.

b) The literal translation of this would be "to be weary in weariness." "The expression is an anthropomorphism of sorts to indicate the dramatic swiftness with which Gabriel was sent. His coming is full of significance" (The Preacher's Commentary). "[H]aving an order from the Lord, and being strengthened by him to make quick dispatch to Daniel, which is signified by flying swiftly; and for which reason angels are represented as having wings, to denote their celerity and quick dispatch of business: or "flying with weariness" (m), as some render it; he made such haste as to be weary with it; as he appeared in the form of a man, he looked like one out of breath, and panting for it, occasioned by his swift flight; and which expresses the haste he made, according to his orders, and his eagerness to bring to Daniel the welcome tidings of the coming of the Messiah, and the time of it, which angels desired to look into..." (John Gill)

- c) Some translations have this phrase pointing to Daniel rather than Gabriel, and put it this way:

(BBE)...whom I had seen in the vision at first when my weariness was great...

(MKJV)...touched me in my severe exhaustion...

(CSB)...reached me in my extreme weariness...

(NASB)...came to me in my extreme weariness...

- d) The placement in the sentence structure would seem to point to Gabriel being the one that is spoken of and not Daniel. The Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) has the word as πέτομαι – a word meaning to fly – which would indicate that that’s the application of the word in Hebrew. There is a Hebrew word specifically for “fly” but the issue in the verse under review is the swiftness (and apparent weariness it would show) by which Gabriel came, not just that he “flew.”

6. “Touched me about the time of the evening oblation”

- a) The word for “touched” (participle form of the verb נָגַע) has the primary meaning as it is translated in the KJV as “to touch,” which is how it is meant to be viewed in this context. Daniel was praying, in a state of meditation, when Gabriel came to him and he simply touched him to get his attention.
- b) “Evening oblation” – “[T]he ninth hour,

three o'clock (compare 1Ki_18:36). As formerly, when the temple stood, this hour was devoted to sacrifices, so now to prayer. Daniel, during the whole captivity to the very last, with pious patriotism never forgot God's temple-worship, but speaks of its rites long abolished, as if still in use." (J-F-B)

1 Kings 18:36

³⁶ And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

B. Verse 22 continues with the aspect of Gabriel's arrival and what followed, after he got Daniel's attention.

1. "And he informed me"
 - a) This is the first use of the Hebrew word translated in other portions of this text as the word "understand."
 - b) This clause, and the next, are more of a generalization of what was about to be revealed. Gabriel is declaring to Daniel that he was there to help him understand how the fall of Jerusalem, and its restoration seventy years later, fit into what Daniel was about to receive in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. He was there to help him understand, or, more specifically, to make him understand.
2. "And talked with me"

- a) The word used – דָּבַר, וַיְדַבֵּר – in its simplest form means to speak, and that's how it is used here.
- b) Again, a generalized statement that Daniel would receive what Gabriel was about to say directly from his mouth to Daniel's ears.
3. "I am now come forth" – the word order shows, again, the urgency and importance of "the matter."
4. "To give thee skill and understanding"
- a) "To give thee skill" - לְהַשְׁפִּילָהּ (hifil infinitive construct with lammed preposition [to, into, for] and the 2ms [you] ending) of שָׂכַל – in this context it means "to cause to consider, give insight, teach" (B-D-B).
- b) "And understand" – literally, "to understand"
- (1) *The definite article הַ is not present in the word for "understand" – it was translated this way because of the implication for it in the text. B-D-B has it as "to instruct thee in knowledge."*
- (2) *The word for "understand" is the noun בִּינָה – a word meaning understanding, comprehension, discernment, etc. It is a common word in the book of Proverbs and is seen there as the ability to put into practice the wisdom and knowledge that one has.*
- (3) *The most literal way of seeing this is helpful – "to make thee skillful of*

understanding” – to be able to apply what he was about to hear in this prophecy.

II. THE DETAILS OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE PROPHECY – VS. 23-24 – THE OVERVIEW

A. The first part of verse 23 points back to the beginning of the prayer of Daniel as recorded in this chapter and is the Lord’s answer by way of the prophecy (“vision”) that Gabriel brought.

1. “The commandment came forth”

- a) The word for “commandment” here – דְּבַר – is a very common word, used some 1446 times in the Old Testament and only 20 times is it translated “commandment(s).” The vast majority of the times it is used it is simply speaking of words, speech, matter, things, etc. When Gabriel references a “commandment” it was the word from the Lord that he was bringing, the answer to the prayer. He considered it a “command” because it seems he associated anything from the Lord as possessing the attribute of a command (as should we, for that matter). Even the Ten Commandments were literally considered the “ten words” of the Lord, showing this principle.
- b) “Came forth” – “went out” (the Hebrew word order is, “At the beginning of your supplications went out the command”) – at the beginning of this prayer of Daniel’s Gabriel was dispatched to bring him both the answer to the prayer of seeing the fulfillment of the promise of restoration to the land of Israel as well as to bring the

“word,” the prophecy from the Lord about what was yet to come.

“This evidently means, in heaven; and the idea is, that as soon as he began to pray a command was issued from God to Gabriel that he should visit Daniel, and convey to him the important message respecting future events. It is fair to conclude that he had at once left heaven in obedience to the order, and on this high embassy, and that he had passed over the amazing distance between heaven and earth in the short time during which Daniel was engaged in prayer. If so, and if heaven - the peculiar seat of God, the dwelling-place of angels and of the just - is beyond the region of the fixed stars, some central place in this vast universe, then this may give us some idea of the amazing rapidity with which celestial beings may move. It is calculated that there are stars so remote from our earth, that their light would not travel down to us for many thousand years. If so, how much more rapid may be the movements of celestial beings than even light...” (Albert Barnes – written circa 1850)

2. “And I am come to shew thee” – “to shew” (לְהַגִּיד - נָגַד, hiphil infinitive) is a verb meaning to tell, to make known, to explain. “The root idea of the word and the causative form in which it is used is to declare something” (Zodhiates). Gabriel was sent to declare the prophecy, the vision he received from the Lord to convey to Daniel. The translation in the KJV is a good one in that it demonstrates not just that Gabriel came to simply tell Daniel the prophecy, but he also came to help him

understand it in relation to the prayer he was praying.

B. The middle part of the verse shows a wonderful truth both about Daniel and about those that follow the Lord with all their heart – “for thou art greatly beloved.”

1. One thing to note about this phrase is this is the reason given by Gabriel for him being sent to reveal the answer and the prophecy to Daniel – “for” – primary meaning of this demonstrative particle in the Hebrew is “because.”
2. The Hebrew word used here is in an adjective form – **נִדְמָדָה** – of a root stem that is used as a verb, a noun, or as an adjective. The root stem – **דָּמָה** – at its basic meaning has the definition of taking pleasure in, to desire, as well as several that are used in a negative sense – to lust, to covet, etc.

“Margin, as in Hebrew, ‘a man of desires.’ That is, he was one whose happiness was greatly desired by God; or, a man of God’s delight; that is, as in our version, greatly beloved. It was on this account that his prayer was heard, and that God sent to him this important message respecting what was to come.” (Barnes)

3. This is said of Daniel two more times in chapter 10, indicating what the Lord felt for him, and showing what kind of relationship He wants to have with His

children, even today.

Daniel 10:11

¹¹ And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

Daniel 10:19

¹⁹ And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

C. The final portion of verse 23 is a combination conditional clause to show that, because Daniel was "greatly beloved" by the Lord, and because he had prayed for a specific answer, Gabriel was sent to reveal the answer and expound on that answer in the prophecy of "The Seventy Weeks." There are two parts to this portion: the first clause deals with the answer to the prayer and the second one deals with the prophecy that Gabriel brought for Daniel.

1. "Therefore understand the matter"
 - a) "Understand" - same Hebrew word translated "informed" in verse 22, and the same as the word "consider" in the next clause.
 - b) The Hebrew word for "the matter" is the same as the word for "commandment" earlier in the verse, so the connection is made in this clause to what preceded - the reason for Gabriel's coming to Daniel was,

first, to answer the prayer as to when the events would unfold and, as found in verses 16-18, to restore the people of Israel to the land. That's the "matter" at hand.

2. "And consider the vision"

- a) The second part deals with the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, as it is called – how the events that began with the restoration of the Israel to the land and will be concluded in a yet-future time will unfold.
- b) "And consider" – another way of saying Daniel is meant to understand what is being said.
- c) "The vision"

(1) *The word for "vision" here – בַּמְרֹאָה from the root מֵרָאָה – is not the same as the word for "vision" in the next verse – הִזּוֹן.*

(2) *This word comes from a root stem רָאָה which is a verb meaning simply to see. The word as a noun means sight, an appearance, a physical vision (visible appearance) of something or someone.*

(3) *In this case, the vision, as was pointed out previously, was not the same type of vision that Daniel had received while he was in a trance, or while he was asleep. This is one that he was fully aware of, fully awake, and something that Gabriel was there to make known to him, to make him see (both literally and figuratively), and to understand.*

(4) As we will see in our study of verse 24, the word for "vision" there - רָאוּן - is the more common one for a dream or vision.

Conclusion to this point: What is said about Daniel's prayer life and his urgency in prayer, and the urgency in the Lord's response to his prayer is still true for us today. It's the same God that Daniel had that we had. The Lord may not send an angel to talk to us directly, but we have something even better – a finished Scripture and the Holy Spirit (God Himself) indwelling us, guiding us in our life. The problem is we don't listen. Daniel's walk with the Lord, and the Lord's response to him demonstrates for us today how much the Lord wants to fellowship with us and talk with us – why don't we let Him?

Are we demonstrating in our life the attributes that Daniel did that attracted, as it were, the desire of God to consider Him "greatly beloved"? God loved the world enough to give His only begotten Son, so all of mankind can see the love of God, but it's only when we draw close to Him that we will truly comprehend that love on a personal level. That's what Daniel had – that kind of relationship.

D. Verse 24 gives a series of events that Gabriel gives as to the purpose of the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. Before we look at that purpose, we must first determine the interpretation of the overview itself.

1. "Seventy weeks"

a) Before anyone can determine what is meant by this prophecy as a whole, the most important part to consider is what is meant by "seventy weeks."

b) Adam Clarke: This is a most important prophecy, and has given rise to a variety of opinions relative to the proper mode of explanation; but the chief difficulty, if not the only one, is to find out the time from which these seventy weeks should be dated. What is here said by the angel is not a direct answer to Daniel's prayer. He prays to know when the seventy weeks of the captivity are to end. Gabriel shows him that there are seventy weeks determined relative to a redemption from another sort of captivity, which shall commence with the going forth of the edict to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, and shall terminate with the death of Messiah the Prince, and the total abolition of the Jewish sacrifices. In the four following verses he enters into the particulars of this most important determination, and leaves them with Daniel for his comfort, who has left them to the Church of God for the confirmation of its faith, and a testimony to the truth of Divine revelation. They contain the fullest confirmation of Christianity, and a complete refutation of the Jewish cavils and blasphemies on this subject.

- c) Some simply consider it seventy periods of time, without determining a length. This is the view of Dr. Sinclair Ferguson: "These are to be thought of as two periods, one of seven sevens and another of sixty-two sevens (v. 25) ...The period of sixty-two sevens will be followed by the last week when 'Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself' (vs. 26)"

That is not the view that pre-tribulation rapturists hold (of which I am one). We hold to an understanding of this prophecy, as well as those related to the end-time events (such as Matthew 24 and 25, and parts of the book of Revelation), to be pointing to a specific period of time in their conclusion. From this interpretive method, and from this biblical worldview, the "seventy weeks" are to be understood as "weeks of years." One of the foremost scholars from the pre-millennial, pre-tribulation rapture viewpoint, and one of the leading biblical scholars on all things prophetic is Dr. John Walvoord, former president of Dallas Theological Seminary from 1952-1986, in his work on the book of Daniel says this:

In the Christological interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27, it is generally assumed that the time units indicated are years. The English word "weeks" is misleading as the Hebrew is actually the plural of the word for seven [שָׁבָעִים], without specifying whether it is days, months, or years [literally, the two words are "seventy sevens" - שִׁבְעִים שָׁבָעִים]. The only system of interpretation, however, that gives any literal meaning to this prophecy is to regard the time units as

prophetic years of 360 days each according to the Jewish custom of having years of 360 days with an occasional extra month inserted to correct the calendar as needed. The seventy times seven is, therefore, 490 years with the beginning at the time of "the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem" found in verse 25 and the culmination 490 years later in verse 27. Before detailing the events to be found in the first 483 years (sixty-nine times seven), the events between the sixty-ninth seven and the seventieth seven, and the final seven years, Daniel gives the overall picture in verse 24. Careful attention must be given to the precise character of this important foundational prophecy.

- d) "Week," while generally a week of days (Dan. 10:2), was occasionally week of years, as Gen. 29:27, "fulfil the week of this," i.e. the seven years of service. Among the later Jews this became a recognized mode of reckoning, as in the Book of Jubilees, each jubilee in divided into successive weeks. From what follows it is necessary that the weeks here are sevens of years. (Pulpit Commentary)

Daniel 10:2

² In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

Genesis 29:27

²⁷ Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.

- e) Seventy sevens: i.e. of years. Not on any "yearday" theory. If "days" had been

intended, it would be so expressed, as in Dan. 10:3 (compare Lev. 25:8). Moreover, "years" had been the subject of Daniel's prayer (Dan. 9:2). The last "seven" is "one", and it is divided in half in Dan. 9:27, and the half is three and a half years (Dan. 7:25; Compare Dan. 8:11-14; Dan. 11:33). In Rev_11:2 this half is expressed by "forty-two months"; and in the next verse as "1,260 days". The whole period is therefore 490 years. (Bullinger)

2. "Are determined"

- a) The verb for this (דָּרַשׁ) only appears here in the Old Testament. Because of that infrequency of use, there is no other text to help in understanding the word. It is translated in the KJV and NKJV as "are determined," in most other good translations it is translated as "are decreed." There is a difference in English definitions between "determined" and "decreed."

(1) "Determined" is defined in Webster's 1828 Dictionary as "ended; concluded; decided; limited; fixed; settled; resolved; directed."

(2) "Decreed" is defined as "determined judicially; resolved; appointed; established in purpose."

- b) The Hebrew word used here has a meaning in Chaldee (the language spoken by the Chaldeans in Babylon – similar to Aramaic, in which the first seven chapters of Daniel was written) of "to cut off, cut up into pieces." "[C]ut off: i.e. divided off from all other years. The verb is in the singular to

indicate the unity of the whole period, however it may be divided up (Bullinger).

- c) In rabbinic Hebrew the root חִטָּק basically means "cut," hence the translation "decreed" in most versions. (TWOT)
- d) Literally, "cut out," namely, from the whole course of time, for God to deal in a particular manner with Jerusalem (J-F-B).
- e) All of that said, Gabriel has come to give this prophecy to Daniel to conclude, as it were, the Lord's dealings with His people.

3. "Upon thy people and upon thy holy city"

- a) Let me say at this point that this prophecy is clearly stated as dealing with Daniel's people – Israel – and, even though we can see the "signs of the times," so to speak, all around us, the signs (or decrees) here are for Israel in particular – they don't involve Gentiles nor the Church, as it were. "Therefore, none of these things have yet been fulfilled with respect to the nation of Israel, Daniel's people and city. The six named events will be fulfilled during or at the end of the Seventieth Week" (UCRT Cross Reference).

Although this may not deal with the church, in a general sense (the one right interpretation principle), it does have some relation in that there is an application to be made in these six things for the hope we have in Christ – something seen in the verses to come in our study of Daniel nine.

- b) "Upon thy people"

(1) Second person personal pronoun (thy,

your) is used by Gabriel because they're not his people. The Lord could have said they were His, and Daniel can say they are his, but Gabriel could not.

(2) This prophecy is, again, clearly stated as dealing with, in a primary sense, Israel only.

c) "And upon thy holy city"

(1) The pronoun's use here is not just restating from its use in the previous phrase, it is also showing the connection that Daniel would have still had with the city of Jerusalem itself.

(2) Not only is that a point to be made, but the fact that Gabriel doesn't refer to the people and the city as the Lord's, as does Daniel earlier in his prayer.

Daniel 9:16

16 O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

Daniel had in his prayer often spoken of Israel as "Thy people, Thy holy city"; but Gabriel, in reply, speaks of them as Daniel's ("thy ... thy") people and city, God thus intimating that until the "everlasting righteousness" should be brought in by Messiah, He could not fully own them as His [Tregelles] (compare Ex. 32:7). Rather, as God is wishing to console Daniel and the godly

Jews, "the people whom thou art so anxiously praying for"; such weight does God give to the intercessions of the righteous (James 5:16-18). (J-F-B)

Exodus 32:7

7 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:

James 5:16-18

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

17 Elias [Elijah] was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Conclusion to this point: I understand that this has been some technical information under review in this message but it's important we understand it. Remember, that issue of "understanding" is the basis for this entire text – Daniel was meant to understand it, and so are we today. The difference is Daniel was given the prophecy in his language and culture and some of the details didn't need explained as they do today – but some of it did, and, as we will find later in our study, Daniel didn't understand it all because part of the interpretation of some the prophecies were intentionally hidden from him.

If nothing else is gained from this portion of the text, understand that God has a precise plan for His people (both Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church) and that plan will, ultimately and completely, come to pass.

The next portion of verse 24 lists six things that will result from the finishing of the “seventy weeks” (or, literally, seventy sevens – seen in this context as seventy weeks of years – 490 years). Although the work to accomplish these things began with the redemptive work of Christ on the cross, it will not be finally completed until He returns to establish His kingdom on earth at the close of the Tribulation Period.

These six infinitive clauses are to be seen as two sets of three (some scholars say that the Hebrew actually has them separated as such). “This appears evident from the arrangement of the six statements; i.e., that the first three statements treat of the taking away of sin, and thus of the negative side of the deliverance; the three last treat of the bringing in of everlasting righteousness with its consequences, and thus of the positive deliverance, and in such a manner that in both classes the three members stand in reciprocal relation to each other: the fourth statement corresponds to the first, the fifth to the second, the sixth to the third - the second and the fifth present even the same verb **אָתָּה**.”

Keep in mind that this prophecy was for Israel, Daniel’s people, and that was what he was focused on. But, as is the case with much of the prophecy of the Old Testament, there are stages to its fulfillment and even though Daniel would

have been mystified by some of what was given, we have a finished Scripture and we can see more of what was meant than Daniel.

4. "To finish the transgression"

- a) The Hebrew word translated "to finish" here – אָלַץ – "means to hold back, to hold in, to arrest, to hold in prison, to shut in or shut up; hence אֲלָצָה – a prison, jail. To arrest the wickedness or shut it up does not mean to pardon it, but to hem it in, to hinder it so that it can no longer spread about (Hofm.) – K&D.

The word is in the Piel stem, which has the primary purpose of intensifying the idea of the word.

- b) "To finish" is not so much to complete, as we think of it, but to cause an end to come to it by restraining its power and hold.
- c) "The transgression" - מַשְׁעַת (transgression, rebellion, crime) – the verb form of this noun means to revolt, rebel against. The use of the word for "finish" being to hold in prison is connected with this word to emphasize the meaning – the prophecy given here was for a time (begun with the word of Christ on the cross) when both the transgression and the transgressor would be "finished" – confined to a prison, no longer able to work their sinfulness.

Revelation 20:1-3

¹ And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

² And he laid hold on the dragon, that old

serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan,
and bound him a thousand years,

³ And cast him into the bottomless pit,
and shut him up, and set a seal upon him,
that he should deceive the nations no
more, till the thousand years should be
fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed
a little season.

- d) Daniel would not have had a complete understanding of this but he would have understood the prophecy to mean that there would be a time when the influence of the transgressor (the sinner) would no longer be seen in the world, neither by his people, Israel, or by the populace in general. He was looking for the time when Israel would dwell in peace and that time, ultimately, will come in the Millennial reign of Christ. When Christ ascended back to heaven (Acts 2), and the church began, as we know it today, there has been a restraining force in place in the work of the Holy Spirit and the influence of the church on society, so the beginning of this prophecy's fulfillment happened then, but the final fulfillment will not come until the man of sin (the Antichrist), as well as the dragon, Satan himself, is bound (restrained) and imprisoned in hell for good. Sin doesn't cease – it continues in hell for eternity – but it is contained and removed out of the believer's life forever.

2 Thessalonians 2:7-10

⁷ For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let,
until he be taken out of the way.

⁸ And then shall that Wicked be revealed,
whom the Lord shall consume with the
spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with

the brightness of his coming:

⁹ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

5. "To make an end of sins" – or, as some have it, in its literal sense, to seal up sins (some have it, to put an end to sin).

a) "To make an end" – וּלְקַדְּמָם, וּלְקַדְּמָם – used 27 times in the Old Testament and in all but two of those it is translated by the principle of to seal up (the noun form of the word means to seal as with a signet ring).

The idea here is, similar to the first clause, that sin will not be annihilated or destroyed from existence but would rather be sealed up somewhere with an impregnable seal that cannot be broken. It will come to an end with regenerated mankind – and that is the point of the prophecy.

b) "Of sins" – חַטָּאוֹת (חַטָּאת) (the text the Jewish scribes used has this as plural but when they copied it the Masorites inserted in the marginal notes the singular form, intending for that to be read (Qere) rather than what was written (Kethiv)) – in the first clause, it was the worker of the sins that was in view more than the sin itself; in this one it is the sins more than the sinner. This word for "sin" is one that means to miss something, or to fail at carrying out one's duty. This is the principle behind the Greek word translated "sin" in the New

Testament (ἀμαρτάνω).

Romans 3:23

²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

The work of Christ on the cross, as our Redeemer is the picture to be seen by this point. He came to bring an end of the bondage to sin under which mankind lived, and to provide victory for that sin. “[S]o that they shall be no more, but put away and abolished by the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ for them, as to guilt and punishment; so that those, for whose sins satisfaction is made, no charge can be brought against them, nor the curse of the law reach them, nor any sentence of it be executed, or any punishment inflicted on them; but are entirely and completely saved from all their sins, and the sad effects of them.” (John Gill)

In the final fulfillment of this, when Christ establishes His kingdom, sin no longer reigns in mortal man’s body. Mankind is still born in sin but sin will not be tolerated and once the devil is loosed that one last time and then forever cast into the lake of fire, and after the Great White Throne judgment and the lost are condemned to the same fate, sin is never to be known by any of creation outside of hell.

Revelation 20:7–10

⁷ And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

⁸ And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them

together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

⁹ And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

¹⁰ And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

6. "To make reconciliation for iniquity"

- a) The Hebrew word for "reconciliation" – **וְלִכְפֹּר, כָּפַר** – means, in its basic form, to cover. This is precisely what the high priest did on The Day of Atonement, when he entered the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the blood on The Mercy Seat – he made atonement to cover the sins of the people for another year. This was done, in type, until the finished work of the Redeemer was completed.

"[T]o pardon, to blot out by means of a sin-offering, i.e., to forgive" (K&D).

- b) A verb meaning to cover, to forgive, to expiate, to reconcile. This word is of supreme theological importance in the Old Testament as it is central to an Old Testament understanding of the remission of sin. At its most basic level, the word conveys the notion of covering but not in the sense of merely concealing. Rather, it suggests the imposing of something to change its appearance or nature. It is therefore employed to signify the

cancellation or "writing over" of a contract (Isa. 28:18); the appeasing of anger (Gen. 32:20 [21]; Prov. 16:14); and the overlaying of wood with pitch so as to make it waterproof (Gen. 6:14). The word also communicates God's covering of sin. Persons made reconciliation with God for their sins by imposing something that would appease the offended party (in this case the Lord) and cover the sinners with righteousness (Exo. 32:30; Eze. 45:17; cf. Dan. 9:24). In the Old Testament, the blood of sacrifices was most notably imposed (Exo_30:10). By this imposition, sin was purged (Psa_79:9; Isa_6:7) and forgiven (Psa_78:38). The offenses were removed, leaving the sinners clothed in righteousness (cf. Zec_3:3-4). Of course, the imposition of the blood of bulls and of goats could never fully cover our sin (see Heb_10:4), but with the coming of Christ and the imposition of His shed blood, a perfect atonement was made (Rom_5:9-11). (Zodhiates)

Exodus 32:30

³⁰ And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.

Psalms 79:9

⁹ Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.

Isaiah 6:7

⁷ And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

Psalm 78:38

38 But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

Zechariah 3:3-4

3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.

4 And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

Hebrews 10:4

4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

Romans 5:9-11

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

c) "For iniquity" – רָעָה – perversity, moral evil

This word indicates sin that is particularly evil, since it strongly conveys the idea of twisting or perverting deliberately. The noun carries along with it the idea of guilt from conscious wrongdoing (Gen_44:16;

Jer_2:22). The punishment that goes with this deliberate act as a consequence is indicated by the word also (Gen_4:13; Isa_53:11). (Zodhiates)

7. "To bring in everlasting righteousness"

- a) As was pointed out earlier, these six infinitive clauses can be seen as paired and corresponding – the first with the fourth, the second with the fifth, and the third with the sixth.

"This fourth expression forms the positive supplement of the first: in the place of the absolutely removed transgression is the perfected righteousness." (K&D)

- b) "To bring in" – וּלְהָבִיא – the infinitive stem of Hiphil would make this literally read, "to cause to come" – "refers to some direct agency by which the righteousness would be introduced into the world" (Barnes).
- c) "Everlasting righteousness" – צְדָקָה עֲלָמִים – the order in Hebrew is reversed – righteousness everlasting.

(1) The word for "righteousness" is a common word, used 117 times in the Hebrew. It means "a right relation to an ethical or legal standard" (Zodhiates). In the case of scriptural righteousness on the part of mankind, it is that which puts us in right standing with what God has declared in His word as the standard for life. "The fair meaning would be, that some method would be introduced by which men would become 'righteous'" (Barnes).

(2) "Everlasting" – עֲלָמִים – this noun is plural in Hebrew, but since the English word "everlasting" is already plural, in essence, the plural is lost. This phrase would literally read, "righteousness of ages." The use of "everlasting" is to show that this righteousness would endure for eternity, forever. But, the use of the word in plural shows that it began in one age and will last through them all on into eternity. In other words, the fulfillment of this prophecy for Israel (considering that's the direct context here), and then for Gentiles (as all, in Christ, are of Abraham's seed) ultimately began with the work of Christ on the cross and will finally be fulfilled when all events of prophecy are fulfilled.

Galatians 3:29

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Although the fulfillment of the prophecy began with Christ, the principle of righteousness has always been the same. "[T]he righteousness by which the saints in all ages from the beginning of the world are justified; and which endures, and will endure, throughout all ages, to the justification of all that believe; it is a robe of righteousness that will never wear out; its virtue to justify will ever continue, being perfect; it will answer for the justified ones in a time to come, and has eternal life connected with it..." (Gill)

"We first perceive how joyful a message is brought forward concerning the

reconciliation of the people with God; and next, something promised far better and more excellent than anything which had been granted under the law, and even under the flourishing times of the Jews under David and Solomon. The angel here encourages the faithful to expect something better than what their fathers, whom God had adopted, had experienced. There is a kind of contrast between the expiation's under the law and this which the angel announces, and also between the pardon here promised and that which God had always given to his ancient people; and there is also the same contrast between the eternal righteousness and that which flourished under the law." (Calvin)

(3) All that said, the prophecy here is given so that Daniel, and all of Israel, and all believers of ages since, will have the assurance from God Himself that there will only be absolute, perfect righteousness for all eternity in all of creation, even that part of creation that has yet to be created ("Behold, I make all things new").

Isaiah 51:6

6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

Jeremiah 23:5-6

5 Behold, the days come, saith the

LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

⁶ In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

- (4) *"It would place righteousness on a permanent and enduring foundation; introduce that which would endure through all changes, and exist when the heavens would be no more. In the plan itself there would be no change; in the righteousness which anyone would possess under that system there would be perpetual duration - it would exist forever and ever. This is the nature of that righteousness by which men are now justified; this is what all who are interested in the scheme of redemption actually possess. The 'way' in which this 'everlasting righteousness' would be introduced is not stated here, but is reserved for future revelations. Probably all that the words would convey to Daniel would be, that there would be some method disclosed by which men would become righteous, and that this would not be temporary or changing, but would be permanent and eternal. It is not improper that 'we' should understand it, as it is explained by the subsequent revelations in the New Testament, as to the method by which sinners are justified before God."*
(Barnes)

This, we know, was what Christ came to do - to provide a way for us to be

right with God.

Romans 3:20–22

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

²² Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

2 Corinthians 5:21

²¹ For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

8. “To seal up the vision and prophecy”

- a) The words “to seal up” are from the same Hebrew word as found in the second of these infinitive clauses – “to make an end.” As you recall from the earlier text, the use of this word is to demonstrate something (or someone) has been confined and sealed underneath the seal of the king’s signet ring. Sins will be eventually eliminated from the righteous and will be forever under the “seal” of God Himself, confined to the prison of hell.

“When the sins are sealed, the prophecy is also sealed, for prophecy is needed in the war against sin; when sin is thus so placed that it can no longer operate, then prophecy also may come to a state of rest;

when sin comes to an end in its place, prophecy can come to an end also by its fulfilment, there being no place for it after the setting aside of sin. And when the apostasy is shut up, so that it can no more spread about, then righteousness will be brought, that it may possess the earth, now freed from sin, shut up in its own place" (Kliefoth – as found in K&D).

- b) Again, as has been the case thus far, the fulfilment of this prophecy began with the work of Christ, and will finally and ultimately be fulfilled, finished, when eternity begins.

Luke 24:44–45

44 And he said unto them, **These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.**

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

John 19:28–30

28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, **I thirst.**

29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished:** and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

- c) "The vision and prophecy"

- (1) *There is no definite article in the Hebrew, indicating this is not referencing any particular prophecy, including this particular one (of the Seventy Weeks) as some interpret it. This is covering all prophetic utterances, and all visions.*
- (2) *When the final stage of the fulfillment of these prophecies (all of them), there would be an end to the need for them and they would be sealed for all eternity. The Word of God is eternal – never ending – but the need of the prophet and the prophecy will not be needed in eternity future because they will all have been fulfilled. They don't cease to be, they're just sealed – the work is done.*
- (3) *The word for "prophecy" here – נְבִיאָה – is the word for "prophet." So, not just the prophecies themselves will be sealed, but the purpose of the prophet will be as well.*

Not only the prophecy, but the prophet who gives it, i.e., not merely the prophecy, but also the calling of the prophet, must be sealed. Prophecies and prophets are sealed, when by the full realization of all prophecies prophecy ceases, no prophets any more appear. The extinction of prophecy in consequence of its fulfillment is not, however (with Hengstenberg), to be sought in the time of the manifestation of Christ in the flesh; for then only the prophecy of the Old Covenant reached its end (cf. Matt. 11:13; Luke 22:37; John 1:46), and its place is occupied by the prophecy of the N.T., the fulfilling

of which is still in the future, and which will not come to an end and terminate (καταργηθήσεται, 1 Cor. 13:8) till the kingdom of God is perfected in glory at the termination of the present course of the world's history, at the same time with the full conclusive fulfilment of the O.T. prophecy; cf. Acts 3:21. (K&D)

9. "To anoint the most Holy"

- a) The word for "to anoint" – מָשַׁח, וּלְמַשְׁחָה – "If the verb is used in association with a religious ceremony, it connotes the sanctification of things or people for divine service. Once the Tabernacle was erected, it and all its furnishings were anointed with oil to consecrate them (Exo. 40:9-11). The most common usage of this verb is the ritual of divine installation of individuals into positions of leadership by the pouring oil on their heads." (Zodhiates)
- b) The words for "the most Holy" - קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים – are literally "holy of holies" (used some forty times in Scripture) – note, there is no definite article in the original. There is a wide variety of interpretations on this (more so than any of the others, it seems). Some versions of the Bible (the ESV, ASV, etc.) have this as anointing "a most holy place." Some translate it literally as "the holy of holies." The issue is, is this speaking of a place or a person, and if a place, what place and when? If a person, the context (vs. 25-26) would seem to indicate clearly who that would be.
- c) Considering the most common use of the holy anointing oil, and the most common use of the Hebrew word for "anoint" being

the ritual of divine installation of individuals into positions of leadership, I take this to mean, as several versions of the Bible indicate, speaking of a Person, and the Person being that of the Messiah – the very name meaning “the anointed one.” The problem is the words themselves are the same as used for the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament Tabernacle, but, as a study of the Tabernacle will show, every part pointed to Christ, especially that of the “Most Holy” – He IS the Most Holy Place. (In fact, we will see all of this in our study of the Old Testament Tabernacle in the not-so-distant future.)

Exodus 26:33

33 And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony: and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy *place* and the most holy. [The word “place” was inserted by the translators for clarity but isn’t in the original.]

“The act of anointing as a sign of consecration, though applied to the tabernacle (Ex. 30:26; 40:9), to the altar (Ex. 40:10), the laver (Ex. 40:11), is never applied to the holy of holies [the most Holy]. It is applied most frequently to persons; as to Aaron (Ex. 40:13), to Saul (1 Sam. 10:1), to David (1 Sam. 16:3). The words of Gabriel thus point forward to a time when all iniquity shall be restrained, sin atoned for, and a priest anointed.” (Pulpit Commentary)

- d) Some consider the “most Holy” to be the church, the people of God; many consider it the future temple of the Millennium

(which will pass away from view when that time is completed); some (including myself) consider it to be the Messiah, standing in apposition to the Temple and the Tabernacle, and particularly The Most Holy place where the Mercy Seat was.

“[O]r it may be best of all to understand this of the Messiah, as Aben Ezra and others do; who is holy in his person, in both his natures, human and divine; sanctified and set apart to his office, and holy in the execution of it; equal in holiness to the Father and the Spirit; superior in it to angels and men, who have all their holiness from him, and by whom they are sanctified; and of whom the sanctuary or temple was a type; and who was anointed with the Holy Ghost as man, at his incarnation, baptism, and ascension to heaven; and Abarbinel owns it may be interpreted of the Messiah, who may be called the Holy of holies, because he is holier than all other Israelites.” (Gill)

Conclusion to this point: The wonder of all this is that it describes for us today, in six clauses, six statements, all that Jesus came to do. He did it all for us – but He’s not done yet. There’s coming a time when it will be completely, and forever done.

III. THE DETAILS OF THE PROCESS OF THE PROPHECY – VS. 25-27 – THE OUTCOME