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MINISTRIES

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Brit Hadasha: Daniel 9 – The Timeframe of Messiah’s Coming

In the Book of Daniel, we find an important prophecy concerning an anointed figure—a “Messiah”—who is foretold to come within a specific timeframe and accomplish certain duties. Messianics and Christians have identified this figure as none other than **Yeshua the Messiah**. The anti-missionaries, of course, reject this view. In this teaching, we will make a case from the Scriptures in support of the Messianic and Christian position that this prophecy finds its fulfillment in Yeshua.

This prophecy is significant for several reasons, not the least of which is that it helps us pinpoint the timing of the Messiah’s coming. We believe that this prophecy does, in fact, speak of Yeshua’s fulfillment of the first phase of Messianic prophecy. For more information on the two phases of Messianic prophecy, please see our teachings, [Does the Old Testament Teach a “Second Coming” of Messiah?](#) and [The 4th and 7th Day Parts 1 & 2.](#)

Before we get to the key passage that we’ll be unpacking in this teaching, here’s a quick overview of the context:

- Daniel was a prophet and a Jewish exile in Babylon
- Daniel recalled that in the Book of Jeremiah it was prophesied that the Jewish exile was to last for 70 years. And those 70 years were almost finished (9:1-3)
- Daniel confesses his sin and the sins of his people and prays for God to restore Israel, the Temple, and bring them out of exile and back to the land. (9:4-19)
- While Daniel prays, Gabriel visits him and gives him an angelic revelation concerning God’s plans (9:20-23)
- Gabriel’s revelation to Daniel goes far beyond Daniel’s prayers concerning the restoration of the Temple and the Jewish people, but was a prophecy about another period of time consisting of “70 weeks” (9:24-27)

The fact that this prophecy eclipses Daniel’s prayer concerning the return from exile and the rebuilding of Jerusalem demonstrates how truly significant it is. Gabriel is basically saying to Daniel, “God heard your prayer about the 70 years of exile coming to completion, but I’m here to tell you about something much more important than that.” And this brings us to the passage containing this profound prophecy.

Daniel 9:24-27

“Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed.”

There are several things to consider here. The first thing is that when the passage speaks of “weeks,” it is likely speaking of a week of seven years. So 70 weeks would be a period of *seventy sevens of years*. Virtually all Bible commentators, including Jewish commentators, are in agreement with this fact. So when we add up the “70 weeks” of Daniel, it comes to a time period of 490 years.

So what is the prophecy? Basically what Gabriel is revealing here is that there will be a period of 490 years in which these six things must happen:

- “to finish the transgression”
- “to put an end to sin”
- “to atone for iniquity”
- “to bring in everlasting righteousness”
- “to seal both vision and prophet”
- “to anoint a most holy place”

We will go through each of those later in this teaching, but right now let’s discuss the timeframe of this important prophecy.

Before we begin, it’s important to understand that this is a difficult passage to interpret. There are hundreds of different interpretations from Messianic, Christian, and Jewish commentators that seek to address how the difficulties of how the years are to be divided according to the events mentioned. It’s beyond the scope of this teaching to get into the nitty-gritty of the arguments on all sides. But there are a few significant points that are exceptionally clear from this passage, and those are enough to make a solid case for the purposes of this teaching.

First, when do Daniel’s 70 weeks start? According to the passage, the first seven weeks—that is, the first 49 years of the 490 years—will begin “from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem.” So these 490 years begin with the word to rebuild Jerusalem.

There are several specific dates that have been proposed as the point when “the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem” occurred. Some of those suggestions are:

- The decree of Cyrus in 538 BC. (2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4).
- The decree of Darius in 521 BC. (Ezra 6:1-12)
- The decree of Artaxerxes I in 457 BC. (Ezra 7:12-26)
- The commission of Artaxerxes I in 446 BC (Neh. 2:5-8)

While there are good arguments both for and against each of these suggestions, Daniel 9:25 simply doesn't give us enough information to say for sure which is most accurate.

But we can perhaps come to an answer by determining when the work to rebuild Jerusalem began. According to Ezra and Nehemiah, the actual rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls began around Artaxerxes' decree in 457 BC, so that could perhaps give us an approximate date of when this word to rebuild Jerusalem went out. Again, while the exact date is disputed, it's reasonably understood that this period of 490 years started around the time of the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Second, and more importantly, when do Daniel's 70 weeks come to an end? We think it's clear from a plain reading of the text that this period of 490 years ends at the destruction of Jerusalem: "[The people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.](#)"

Messianic and Christian commentators are in agreement with this view. It's also worth noting that some highly renowned Jewish commentators likewise share this view. Consider Rashi's comments on Daniel 9:26:

The anointed one will be cut off: "Agrippa, the king of Judea, who was ruling at the time of the destruction, will be slain."

And the people of the coming monarch will destroy: "That is Titus and his armies"

Rashi's commentary on Daniel:

https://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/16492#showrashi=true<=primary

The first thing to note here is that Rashi identifies the anointed one as Agrippa who ruled at the time of the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. Second, he interprets the destruction of the city and the sanctuary as a reference to this same event under the Roman general Titus. So while mainstream Jewish commentators obviously don't think that this prophecy has anything to do with Yeshua, they are in agreement with Messianics and Christians concerning two points: The passage has clear Messianic overtones and the 490 years of Daniel conclude at the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D.

But wait! Not only do we have Messianic, Christian, and Jewish commentators agreeing on when the conclusion of this period of seventy weeks occurred, but even the anti-Missionaries say the same thing. Prominent counter-missionary organization, Jews for Judaism, states that the destruction of the city and the Sanctuary in Daniel 9, "refers to the Roman legions of Vespasian and Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem".

Jews for Judaism, "Daniel 9 – A True Biblical Interpretation"

So it's pretty well established on all sides that Daniel's seventy weeks ends at the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D.

Third, some incredibly significant redemptive events take place within this timeframe including acts such as making atonement for sin.

Fourth, according to verse 26, an "anointed one"—that is, a Messiah, or *Mashiach* in Hebrew—will be "cut off," or killed within this time period. Interestingly, throughout the Bible, this phrase not only speaks of death, but conveys the nuance of execution, such as in Exodus 31:14:

Exodus 31:14

“You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be **cut off** from among his people.”

Whatever other interpretive difficulties there are with this passage, at least those four points are clear, and they alone have massive implications. Counter-missionaries might try to distract from these core points with minor theological disagreements about how the years should be divided, etc., but that just would prove how weak their position truly is. They simply can’t argue against the main message of this passage. Semitic language scholar and theologian, Dr. Michael Brown, puts it well:

“All the other questions and issues are somewhat secondary, almost like disputed calls made by a referee in the course of a game that ultimately have no impact on the outcome of that game. The final score is not disputed, nor is it disputed that the better team won. The only thing disputed is whether the referee made some of the minor calls correctly, not the outcome of the game. It’s the same with Daniel 9:24–27. The final outcome is clear: The Messiah came and brought final atonement before the Second Temple was destroyed, regardless of the interpretation of some of the disputed details of textual interpretation.”

Dr. Michael Brown, Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: Vol. 3: Messianic Prophecy Objections (p. 106)

So the timeframe of this prophecy already speaks volumes. A Messianic figure had to accomplish profound acts of redemption and atonement and then be “cut off,” or executed, all before the Second Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. That narrows down the list of possible candidates quite significantly.

The only question left is this: Was this prophecy fulfilled before the Second Temple was destroyed or was Daniel a false prophet?

Obviously we do not think Daniel was a false prophet. But that means that this Messianic figure of whom Daniel spoke must have accomplished these acts of redemption and then was “cut off” before 70 A.D. The only possible candidate who fits all the criteria is Yeshua.

But now that we’ve nailed down the timeframe within which these events had to take place, how exactly was this prophecy fulfilled? Let’s go through the six things Daniel mentioned one by one.

1) “To finish the transgression.”

Clearly transgressions, or sin, has still been occurring since after 70 AD. This doesn’t refer to bringing transgression to an end, as in cessation, but rather bringing “THE transgression” to a climax. It’s similar to Genesis 15 in which God tells Abram that his descendants must wait four hundred years to inherit the land since the sin of the Amorites has not yet “reached its full measure”:

Genesis 15:13-16

“Then the Lord said to him, ‘Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not

[yet reached its full measure.](#)”

That fourth generation was when the sin of the Amorites reached its climax so that God could judge the Amorites and also bring about His purposes for Israel by bringing them out of Egypt and to the land He promised them.

In the same way, the generation that rejected Yeshua is when the transgression was finished, or reached its climax. That is why Yeshua says that his generation will suffer the culmination of the transgressions of the prior generations:

Matthew 23:32-36

[“Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell? Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.”](#)

Please note that we just cited the New Testament. Counter-missionaries love to ridicule any usage of the New Testament.

The citing of the New Testament, or Brit Hadasha, is necessary and relevant as it is the text that details the life and work of Yeshua, and thus it is that text that needs to be compared to the prophecies found in Daniel 9. If it is Yeshua and the NT that we are testing, the NT of course, needs to be cited, otherwise, we have nothing to test back to prophecy.

2) “To put an end to sin”

This speaks of the atoning death of the Messiah, which is God’s means of decisively dealing with mankind’s sin. Consider what the author of Hebrews writes:

Hebrews 10:12-17

[“But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he was perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, ‘This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,’ then he adds, ‘I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.’”](#)

The Messiah’s death and resurrection overcame the power of sin, inaugurating the New Covenant spoken of in Jeremiah 31 by which God’s Torah is written on our hearts. This prophecy will be fully realized at Messiah’s Second Coming, but has no doubt already “broken through” into our reality since Yeshua’s death on the cross. Again, we recommend watching our teaching, [Does the Old Testament Teach a “Second Coming” of Messiah?](#), for more information on the biblical concept of prophecy being fulfilled in phases.

3) “To atone for iniquity”

Yeshua's atoning death on the cross serves as the basis upon which sin and iniquity could be forgiven. Yeshua Himself said that His mission was to "give His life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). That was the primary focus of His ministry. And the New Testament authors, Yeshua's original followers, identified His work with this important redemptive act:

1 Peter 2:24

["He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."](#)

1 John 2:2

["He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."](#)

Hebrews 9:12

["He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption."](#)

So this central prophecy in Daniel was also a central part of Yeshua's ministry, as stated by Yeshua Himself and His original followers. For more information on atonement, see our teaching **Blood and Atonement**.

4) "To bring in everlasting righteousness."

Again, this speaks of Messiah's work on the cross, which is the inauguration of the New Covenant that writes God's Torah on the hearts of His people and thus results in everlasting righteousness:

Romans 5:17

["For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ \(Yeshua HaMashiach\)"](#)

1 Peter 2:24

["He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed"](#)

2 Corinthians 5:21

["For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."](#)

Again, Messiah's death on the cross is the basis upon which these promises break through into our reality, and then they are brought to complete fulfillment when He returns to establish God's righteous kingdom on earth.

5) "To seal both vision and prophet"

To "seal" means to validate or substantiate. Basically this means that Messiah's coming would "seal" or validate the visions and prophecies in the *TANAKH* concerning Him. It also means that if the Messiah didn't come when it was prophesied that He would come, namely before the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D., the visions and prophecies in the *TANAKH* would therefore be *invalidated*. So the

counter-missionaries have a dilemma—either the Messiah arrived before the destruction of the Second Temple or the prophecies concerning the Messiah are invalidated.

6) “to anoint a most holy place”

Christian and Messianic commentators posit two possible interpretations of this. The first is that it refers to a Spiritual Temple. That is to say, followers of Yeshua become a holy dwelling for God. The New Testament authors make allusions to this concept:

Ephesians 2:19-22

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”

While this is possible, others suggest that it refers to the consecration of the future millennial temple on the basis of Yeshua’s death and resurrection. This seems more likely to us (i.e. Ezekiel 40-48). But in either case it points to fulfillment through Yeshua. Again, Dr. Michael Brown puts it well:

“If all the events spoken of in Daniel 9: 24– 27 had to be fulfilled before 70 C.E., then Jesus must be the central, anointed figure involved in their fulfillment, bringing redemption and forgiveness to his people. If the events spoken of in the text were partially fulfilled before 70 C.E. and will only reach their total fulfillment at the end of this age, then this too can only be interpreted with reference to Jesus, since it is only through what he accomplished before 70 C.E. that the culminating events of this age will take place.”

Dr. Michael Brown, Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus: Vol. 3: Messianic Prophecy Objections (p. 99).

In conclusion, while this passage in Daniel 9:24-27 can be difficult and confusing, a few things are clear.

- 1) Christian, Messianic, and Jewish commentators and theologians agree that this passage has Messianic overtones
- 2) A Messianic figure appears and dies before the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D.
- 3) During this time, significant acts of redemption are accomplished
- 4) Everything described in Daniel 9:24-27 fits perfectly with the work of Yeshua and the theology of Yeshua’s original Jewish followers as outlined in the *Brit Chadasha*, or New Testament.
- 5) The counter-missionaries do not have any better candidates that meet the criteria of Daniel 9:24-27. Their only objections are to downplay the meaning of the “anointed one” and quibble over disagreements about how the years should be divided. But even they agree that the timeframe given concludes with the destruction of the Second Temple.

We mentioned earlier that Rashi’s view of this anointed figure in Daniel 9 is King Agrippa who was the last King of Israel and was killed around the time Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. Counter-

missionaries generally tend to side with Rashi's perspective on this. But could this interpretation be a possibility?

First, as we've already stated multiple times, everyone agrees that there are Messianic implications in this passage. The question is simply over who the passage could be referring to.

Second, it should be noted that Messianics and Christians have a clear basis for their interpretation of this passage as applying to Yeshua, as we've demonstrated in this teaching. That is, the Messiah made atonement for human sin—the most monumental redemptive act ever—and He did so within the very timeframe defined by Daniel. Everything makes sense and fits with this interpretation.

In contrast, Rashi and the counter-missionaries merely make an assertion that this passage applies to King Agrippa without really substantiating their claim. They recognize the profound Messianic implications and how monumental this prophecy is, but their interpretation simply comes up short and it doesn't make sense in light of the context.

Indeed, if the passage refers to the death of Agrippa, this is literally the most anti-climactic prophecy of all time. Think about it. God gives this amazing prophecy concerning God's plans for His people and Jerusalem—a prophecy that eclipses Daniel's pleas for Israel's restoration to the land—a prophecy outlining amazing redemptive acts such as making atonement for sin and bringing in everlasting righteousness—and then all of a sudden it is fulfilled...by the death of Agrippa? A person that barely anyone remembers? Someone whose death really has no consequence in terms of God's eternal plans for His people, Jerusalem, and the Temple?

While Rashi and the anti-missionaries are correct concerning the timeframe of this prophecy, they have the wrong "anointed one."

6) Candidates must appear within the timeframe given in Daniel 9:24-27 in order to be considered. The only qualified candidate within that timeframe is Yeshua.

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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