

# The Book of Daniel #6

*by: Ronald L. Dart*

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One of the most fascinating prophecies in the book of Daniel, and one that raises as many questions as it answers, is the 70 weeks prophecy at the end of the ninth chapter. Frankly, explaining this section, the implications of this prophecy, will stretch my abilities to the limit, but maybe if you concentrate, we can study this together.

Daniel has been in prayer, a deep repentant prayer, because he had come to the realization he was never going to return to Jerusalem. He would grow old and die in Babylon. He learned that the captivity would last for 70 long years. It was a crushing blow. It underlined for him, how grievous the sins of Judah had been.

## **Another 70 To Be Revealed**

But there was another 70 about to be revealed. The angel Gabriel showed up during Daniel's prayer, and tapped him on the shoulder. He instructed Daniel and he said in Daniel 9 and verse 22, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. {23} As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, because you are highly esteemed." I don't know how Daniel felt about that, but to suddenly have an angel show up on your doorstep and tell you that you are highly esteemed, well, it should feel pretty good.

"Therefore, consider the message, the angel said, and understand the vision. {14} "Seventy 'sevens'." The King James version says '70 weeks,' but that's not the Hebrew, the Hebrew basically is 'seven.' "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy."

Seventy units of 'seven' is the literal Hebrew, and it suggests 490 units of time. As it turns out, it apparently means 490 years, but it isn't that simple. The 490 years are divided into three segments: Look at all that has to be accomplished in this time: to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and prophecy and finally, to anoint the most holy. There are six things here that have to be done. That's a lot and commentators make a good point, when they point out, there has been no end to sin. Transgression is far from finished. We are not suffering from everlasting righteousness, not these days, and since Daniel's prophecies are sealed up until the time of the end, we are not there yet.

The anointing of the most holy, some commentators see as the last Temple, the most holy place. The Hebrew used here is never used in anointing a person, so the suggestion is, this thing runs all the way down, finally, to the anointing of the most holy place in the final Temple.

### **490 Years**

So what are we poor students supposed to make of all this? Well, Gabriel proceeds to divide this time up into three parts. He says this, in Daniel 9 and verse 25, "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble."

Okay, there will be seven 'sevens', that's 49 years, then there will be 62 'sevens' and that's 434 years. Now doing a little quick math,  $49+434$  that's 483 years. Well we are seven years short of the 490 that he started with. It is right here that we run into trouble.

But before we get into that trouble, the first 49 years appear to be the time of the rebuilding of the Temple and the city walls under Ezra and Nehemiah. If you enjoy this sort of study you'll find plenty written on the subject and plenty of scholarly discussion, but be sure and contact your local librarian about this for help.

In various ways, scholars find a date for this time of the command going forward to rebuild the Temple and the city walls and they bring us forward 434 years to, no less than, the Messiah, Not only that, they're bringing us to a Messiah who is cut off, and depending on which scholar you consult, you will find that the 483 years ends with the death of Jesus.

And sure enough, verse 26 of Daniel's ninth chapter tells us, quote, "After the 62 'sevens' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing." So the Messiah is cut off and Jesus was indeed in poverty at his death, and not only that, but all of His disciples had left him and forsook Him. He didn't even have his clothes.

### **What About The Last 7 Years?**

And now we come to something completely different. Continuing in verse 26, "The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed." But wait, what about that last seven years that we haven't dealt with from 483 to 490? We started out expecting to follow 490 consecutive years and we did right up through 483, until Jesus was crucified, the Messiah cut off, but there is nothing in the next seven years after Jesus crucifixion that remotely fits Daniel's prophecy. The destruction of Jerusalem didn't take place until 70 A.D. and is much too late and it's certainly not in the time frame. It just doesn't fit.

Here's what the angel said again. "The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end and desolations have been decreed. {27} He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'. In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the Temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

### **Jesus Was Cut Off in the Middle of the Week**

At this point we have another problem. I'll tell you what the scholars say and you can decide. Some scholars conclude that the 'he' in this passage, "He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven'." They conclude that 'he' is Jesus and that he died in the middle of the last 'seven'. Three and one half years into His ministry. This probably arises from the King James version. The King James reads this way, "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate." It was the death of Jesus, after 3 1/2 years of His ministry, that put an end to any need for sacrifices, and thus, He has the other half of the seven to finish which he will do at his return.

Of course scholars are like city buses, if you don't like where this one is going, hang on and wait a while, there will be another one along shortly that will take you somewhere else.

### **Prince Will Confirm Covenant For 7 Years**

Other scholars conclude that 'he' in this passage is not the Messiah, but the 'prince that shall come'. Let me put it back in context for you again, "The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood, war will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed." "He," that is the ruler who will come to destroy the city and the sanctuary, "will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.'" "In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the Temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him." Now the idea is that this Prince is the Antichrist, the man of sin, the antitype of Antiochus Epiphanies. He's the ruler of the world at the end time, or at least the dominant power.

Now for some reason he is seen to cut a seven-year deal with the Jews, allowing them to continue to worship. The reason why we come to that conclusion is because something like this happened originally with Antiochus Epiphanies. He made certain arrangements and he cut certain deals with them and they even supported him in some of his wars. So for a period of time he allowed that, but this man cuts a seven-year deal with the Jews, allowing them to continue to worship, but in the fourth year, he breaks the deal and puts an end to Jewish worship. He stops it, cuts off all of it, in fact, he then defiles the Temple, sets up the abomination of desolation and stops all sacrifice and all offering.

Now this has interesting implications for the rebuilding of the Temple at sometime in the future, that a powerful figure, the King of the North, for reasons of his own, cuts a deal with the Jews, and allows them to resume worship, only to cut it off 3 1/2 years later.

Now the case seems strongest when you look at all this, that the last seven years of this prophecy concerns the last seven years before the return of the Messiah. But we don't have to decide that today, do we? We can file all of this away in our memory and keep our eyes open. Who knows, what we are going to see in years to come, or for that matter, what we are going to see in the chapters of Daniel that are yet to come.

### **Daniel Has Another Vision**

Daniel chapter 10, "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel. His message was true and it concerned great conflict. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision. {2} At that time I, Daniel, had been mourning for three weeks. {3} I ate no choice food, no meat or wine touched my lips. I used no lotions, until the three weeks were over. {4} On the 24th day of the first month, I was standing along the banks of the great river, the Tigris, {5} And I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with the belt of the finest gold around his waist. {6} His body was like olivine, a greenish crystal, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, his voice was like the sound of a great multitude." This was an incredible sight.

"I, Daniel, (verse 7) was the only one who saw the vision, the men who were with me at the time didn't see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they ran away and hid themselves. {8} So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision, I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless." I should think so. If I saw what he saw, I don't think I could stand up either.

"I heard (verse 9) him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. {10} A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and my knees. {11} He said, "Daniel, You who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I'm about to tell you, stand up, because I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling." If you have never been there or if you never felt that way, it's hard to imagine exactly how this was, but poor Daniel, he could hardly stand.

### **What Did It Take To Answer ?**

Continuing in verse 12 of Daniel 10, "Then he continued, "Don't be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to understand and gain understanding and to humble yourself before God, your words were heard, and I came in response to them." Now to me, this is really fascinating because, you can sort of assume that it took three weeks of prayer for Daniel to bring this vision to himself. No! No it didn't. It was sent to him the first day he asked. Well, why three weeks? Gabriel has the answer.

Gabriel says, in verse 13, "The Prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me for 21 days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the King of Persia." Now this is a hair-raising story, after reading Daniel's description of this angel, who is surely Gabriel, we are left to wonder what in the world was this person like, who could withstand him and fight him off and what would their battle have been like? I don't know of any way we could even describe it or imagine what it would have been like, and it actually took another great archangel to come and to overcome the Prince of Persia, that was trying to keep him out of the territory. It is a staggering picture to present.

Now he said in verse 14, "I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come." {15} Daniel said, "While he was saying this to me, I bowed my face toward the ground and I was speechless. {16} Then the one who looked like a man touched my lips and I opened my mouth and I began to speak, and I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I am helpless. {17} How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone. I can hardly breathe." {18} and again the one who looks like a man touched me and gave me strength. {19} "Don't be afraid old man highly esteemed, peace! Be strong now, be strong." And when he spoke to me, I was strengthened and I said, "Speak my Lord, since you have given me strength." {20} So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I'll have to return to fight against the Prince of Persia, and when I go, the Prince of Greece will come, {21} but first I have to tell you what is written in the Book of the Truth, (No one, by the way, supports me against these other princes except Michael, your prince. {11:1} Also, I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and strengthened Michael.)"

### **A Glimpse Into The Spirit World**

Now the strange thing about all this is, that we are given a glimpse into a world that you and I can never see. We cannot experience it in the flesh, and it's really an aside from the main story. You kind of wonder why in the world did Gabriel feel it necessary to tell Daniel all this, because what he is telling him is fairly simply this, they are in Persia, the kingdom of Persia, actually is in what is now Iraq. This Prince of Persia, I gather, had control of that piece of real estate and ingress and egress was not automatic. These beings didn't just beam in and beam out. They had to fight their way in and fight their way out again. And this whole thing, it's almost as though Gabriel says, "I really want you to understand and there's something going on out here and that's the reason why it took me three weeks to get here." There is a world out there, parallel with our own, populated with creatures like this one talking with Daniel, who can be locked in combat at one time or another and when you think about the fact that the territory of the Prince of Persia would've included what we today call Iran and Iraq. Maybe there are some things going on down in that part of the world which would make a little bit more sense if you understand there is a spirit world, that's almost headquartered down there. That's where Daniel was and even the angels of God did not have automatic ingress and egress. It seems impossible, but what can I tell you, this is what the

one who looks like a man, told Daniel. He seems to say "Well, enough of that, let's get on with why I am here."

### **Middle East in Prophecy**

Daniel 11 verse two, "Now then, I tell you the truth," said Gabriel, "Three more Kings are going to appear in Persia, and then a fourth, who will be far richer than all the others. When he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece." Now with all that we have read before in Daniel, we realize that we stepped back into a crucial time in history, or have we? It seems the Persians got a little too big for their britches and provoked Alexander. We already know this from earlier visions, but we are not stopping there.

Verse three, "Then a mighty king will appear who will rule with great power and do all as he pleases. {4} After he has appeared, his empire will be broken up and parceled out to the four winds of heaven. It will not go to his descendants, (he doesn't have any) nor will it have the power he exercised, because his empire will be uprooted and given to others." Right! We know that after Alexander's untimely death his kingdom was divided into four kingdoms under his generals.

Now I am not going to bore you with their names because there is not going to be a test after this and you don't have to worry about that. But visualize one of the generals over Greece, another over Asia minor, or Turkey, another over Syria, perhaps headquartered in Damascus and another over Egypt and Palestine. Now that gives you the picture as the scene begins to develop.

### **King of the South and the King of the North**

Gabriel dismisses the two generals in the West as of little interest and focuses on the other two. They are referred to as the King of the South and the King of the North.

Let's continue in Daniel 11 and verse 5, "The King of the South will become strong, but one of his commanders will become stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom with great power. {6} After some years, they will become allies. The daughter of the King of the South will go to the King of the North to make an alliance but she will not retain her power, and he and his power will not last either. In those days, she will be handed over, together with her royal escort and her father and the one who supported her."

Now all of this is just a very brief history of the wars between these two rival Kings and it reads painfully like so much of ancient history. People cut alliances and deals and they made marriages with other Kings and other families and people got their throats cut in the night. Deals were made and deals were broken and the poor little people across the countryside got beat up and rolled over and crushed by these great wars.

Verse 7, "One from her family line will arise to take her place. He will attack the forces of the King of the North and enter his fortress, he'll fight against them and be victorious. {8} He will seize their gods, their metal images and their valuable articles of silver and gold and carry them off to Egypt. For some years he will leave the King of the North alone. {9} Then the King of the North will invade the realm of the King of the South but will have to retreat to his own country."

Nobody can leave well enough alone. You really wonder sometimes. They had peace, everything was okay. Farmers were tilling their land, people were eating their food, marrying and giving in marriage and having kids and the King of the South left the King of the North alone, but the King of the North couldn't stand it. He had to do something.

Let's continue in verse 10, "His sons will prepare for war and assemble a great army, which will sweep like an irresistible flood and carry the battle as far as his fortress. {11} "Then the King of the South will march out in a rage and fight against the King of the North, who will raise a large army, but it will be defeated." Now I know you're probably lost by now. Scholars have done a lot of work on this period and if you ask your librarian she can point you to all the sources and you can read through this. It's fascinating. You'll find the names, dates, descriptions of the history of this turbulent time because it has been well and thoroughly studied.

"Now (verse 12) when the northern army is carried off, the King of the South will be filled with pride and will slaughter many thousands, but he will not remain triumphant." Of course not. It never works that way. You can kill all kinds of people but it's not going to last. {13} "The King of the North will muster yet another Army, bigger than the other one, and after several years, he will advance with a huge army fully equipped. {14} In those times, many will rise against the King of the South. The violent man among your own people, Daniel, will rebel in fulfillment of the vision, but without success." It sounds very much like there will be a coalition against the King of the South. And the coalition will involve Jewish fighters who attempt to fulfill the vision of restoration, but it fails.

"Then {15} the King of the North will come and build up siege ramps and will capture a fortified city. The forces of the South will be powerless to resist, even their best troops will not have the strength to stand. {16} The invader will do as he pleases; no one will be able to stand against him. He will establish himself in the Beautiful Land and will have the power to destroy it." But he won't! Not immediately. He took reprisals against the Egyptian sympathizers, but was overall welcomed warmly by the Jews in Jerusalem. They had been a part of his coalition against the King of the South. Most scholars attribute this time to one Antiochus who took the holy land away from the Egyptian king who had dominated it for so very long.

## Overtones of the Future

Now, if you're a Bible reader, you're probably beginning already to hear overtones of the future. Overtones about some of these events that we read here that are going to be repeated at the time of the return of Jesus Christ.

Daniel 11 and Verse 17, "He will determine to come with the might of his entire kingdom and he'll make an alliance with the King of the South. He will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plans will not succeed and they won't really help him. {18} Then he will turn his attention to the coast lands and take many of them, but a commander will put an end to his insolence and will turn his insolence back upon him. {19} After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country but will stumble and fall, to be seen no more. {20} Then comes a successor who sends out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendor. But in a few years, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle."

Now the fellow that follows is the key player, not only in the historic fulfillment, but in the last days, as well. He will be succeeded, it says, by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty. This evil man will form the prototype for the 'man of sin' in the very last days.

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