

Daniel's Prayer and Gabriel's Explanation of Daniel 9 Hebrew¹

Dan. 9:1 This occurred in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans.²

Dan. 9:2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books (בְּסֵפֶרֶימ) (ἐν ταῖς βίβλοις) the number of the years which according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem (לְמַלְאוֹת לְחַרְבּוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם) (εἰς ἀναπλήρωσιν ὀνειδισμοῦ Ἱερουσαλημ), i.e., seventy years.³

¹ Daniel 1:1-2:4 is written in Hebrew, along with 8:1-12:13. The rest of Daniel, 2:5-7:28 is written in Aramaic.

² This is not the same as Darius the Great, i.e., Darius Hystaspis, who ruled Persia from 522-485 B.C. Apparently, there is no explicit evidence outside the Bible for this man, but he is most likely a “king” of Median descent, who was appointed ruler of the Babylonian region by Cyrus the Great, much like Herod the Great and his sons who were appointed by the Roman Senate and Emperors as rulers of the area of Israel and granted the title “king.” The word *dara* means king in Avestan Persian, allowing us to conclude that Darius was an honorific title much like even the Hebrew Messiah.

[Interesting comments by Expositor's Bible Commentary – “It is significant that [Daniel] included the written prophecies of Jeremiah as inspired Holy Scripture, even though Jeremiah had died only a few decades before (probably as a martyr in the Jewish refugee colony at Tahpanhes, Egypt). Even before any formal ecclesiastical endorsement had been accorded the Book of Jeremiah by an official council, Daniel recognized that Jeremiah's writings were inspired of God and therefore inherently trustworthy and dependable.” This comment demonstrates that the author relies on “official” and “church” meetings of purportedly leaders of Judaism and/or Christianity to make his decisions for him about what documents are biblical, thus also implying that a church council in the early centuries of Christianity was necessary to choose which documents are apostolic and deserve to be in the NT. There is no rational basis to conclude that “an official council” is necessary to determine whether or not a document is from God. Any individual can and should do this for himself. In fact, this is what Daniel is doing, and we should all follow his lead and do our own homework and due diligence to decide which written documents in human history are from God as inerrant truth.]

³ Cf. Jeremiah 25:11-13, “This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,’ declares the Lord, ‘for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation. I will bring upon that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book which Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations.”

Cf. Jeremiah 29:10,11, “For thus says the Lord, ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans that have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.’”

It is probably appropriate to take the year 604 B.C. as the starting point of the 70 years. It was this year in which Nebuchadnezzar first invaded Israel and when Daniel himself was taken captive and led into exile to Babylon. This is in contrast to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. and the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C.

cf. Isaiah 44:28 – “It is I who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.’ And he declares of Jerusalem, ‘She will be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation will be laid.’”

cf. Isaiah 45:1-7, 1 “Thus says the Lord to Cyrus His anointed (לְמַלְאוֹת יְהוָה) (ὁ χριστὸς μου), whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him and to loose the loins of kings, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: 2 ‘I will go before you and make the rough places smooth. I will shatter the doors of bronze and cut through their iron bars. 3 I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden wealth of secret places, so that you may know that it is I, The Lord, the God of Israel, who calls you by your name. 4 For the sake of Jacob My servant, and Israel My chosen one, I have also called you by your name. I have given you a title of honor though you have not known Me. 5 I am the Lord, and there is no other. Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me, 6 that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other, 7 the One forming light and creating darkness (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי כָל הָעוֹלָם) (ἐγὼ ὁ κατασκευάσας φῶς καὶ ποιήσας σκότος), causing well-being and creating calamity (עֲשֵׂה שְׁלֹמֶה וְעֲשֵׂה חָרָב) (ὁ ποιῶν εἰρήνην καὶ κτιζὼν κακά). I am the Lord who does all these.”

Darius the Mede⁴

Jeremiah, prophet to the Kingdom of Judah

539-530 B.C.

627-586 B.C.

Dan. 9:3 So I gave my attention to the Adonai God to seek Him by prayer and asking, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

Dan. 9:4 I prayed to Yahweh my God and confessed and said, “Alas, Adonai, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,⁵

Dan. 9:5 we have committed immorality, committed evil, acted wickedly, and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances.

Dan. 9:6 “Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, our fathers, and all the people of the land.⁶

Dan. 9:7 “Morality (הַצְדִּיקוּת) (ή δικαιοσύνη) belongs to You, Adonai, but to us belongs open shame, as it is this day — to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the violations of their legal obligations, which they have committed against You.⁷

Dan. 9:8 “Open shame belongs to us, Yahweh, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have committed immorality against You (אֲשֶׁר הִטְאֵנוּ לָךְ) (ὅτι ἡμάρτομέν σοι).

Dan. 9:9 “To Adonai our God belong compassion and forgiveness (הַרְחִמֵנוּ וְהַסְלִיחוּנוּ) (ή δικαιοσύνη και τὸ ἔλεος), but we have rebelled against Him.

Dan. 9:10 We have not obeyed the voice of Yahweh our God, to walk in His teachings (בְּדַרְשֵׁי) (τῷ νόμῳ σου), which He set before us through His servants the prophets.⁸

Dan. 9:11 “Indeed, all Israel has transgressed Your law (אֶת־תּוֹרַתְךָ) (τὸν νόμον σου) and turned aside, not obeying Your voice. Therefore, the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses (בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה) (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ Μωσῆ), the servant of God, for we have committed immorality against Him.⁹

Dan. 9:12 “As a result, He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity (רַעָה גְדוֹלָה) (κακὰ μεγάλη), because, under the whole heaven, there has not been done anything like what was done to Jerusalem.

Dan. 9:13 “As it is written in the law of Moses (בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה) (ἐν διαθήκῃ Μωσῆ), all this calamity (כָּל־הָרַעָה הַזֶּה) (πάντα τὰ κακὰ) has come on us. However, we have not sought the face of the Yahweh our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Your truth (וְלֹא־שָׁפַל בְּאַמְתָּךְ) (διανοηθῆναι τὴν δικαιοσύνην σου).

⁴ Babylonian Persian (Mede) Greek Syrian Greek Egyptian Greek Roman M.E. Messianic

⁵ cf. Genesis 12 regarding God’s expressing His promises, i.e., His lovingkindness, towards Abraham and his descendants. Cf. Exodus-Deuteronomy regarding God’s commandments that He gave to the Jews via the Mosaic Covenant.

⁶ cf. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Amos, et al.

⁷ Daniel is referring to the Jews of both the Assyrian exile (722 B.C.) from the northern kingdom of Israel and Babylonian exile (605-586 B.C.). Their legal obligation was to obey the Mosaic Covenant with proper inwardness, i.e., circumcised hearts, and yet they rebelled against God instead.

⁸ The most important of these servants and prophets was Moses. Thus, Daniel is speaking of the Mosaic Covenant.

⁹ cf. Deuteronomy 28 where God promises to curse the people of Israel, even exile them from the land of Israel, if they disobey the Mosaic Covenant. God has followed through on His threat via both the Assyrian exile of the 8th century B.C. and the Babylonian exile of the 7th/6th century B.C.

Dan. 9:14 “Therefore, Yahweh has kept the calamity in store (וַיִּשְׁקֹר יְהוָה עַל-הַרְעָה) (καὶ ἠγγρύπνησε κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ τὰ κακὰ) and brought it on us, because Yahweh our God is morally perfect (וַיִּצְדֵּק) (δίκαιος) with respect to all His actions which He has performed, and we have not obeyed His voice.¹⁰

Dan. 9:15 “Now, Adonai our God, You who have brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and have made a name for Yourself, as it is this day, we have committed immorality. We have been evil.

Dan. 9:16 “Adonai, in accordance with all Your morally perfect actions (וְכָל-צְדָקֹתֶיךָ) (κατὰ τὴν δικαιοσύνην σου), let now Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain. Because of our immoral and the evil actions of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a disgrace to all those around us.

Dan. 9:17 “Consequently, now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his requests, and for Your sake, Adonai, let Your face shine on Your desolate holy place.

Dan. 9:18 “O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city, which is called by Your name. We are not presenting our requests before You on account of any merits of our own (עַל-צְדָקֹתֵינוּ אֲנִינִי) (ἐπὶ ταῖς δικαιοσύναις ἡμῶν), but on account of Your great compassion (עַל-רַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּיִּים) (διὰ τὸ σὸν ἔλεος).¹¹

Dan. 9:19 “Adonai, hear! Adonai, forgive! Adonai, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.”¹²

Dan. 9:20 I was still speaking, praying, and confessing my immorality and the evil of my people Israel, thus presenting my request before Yahweh my God on behalf of the holy mountain of my God.

Dan. 9:21 While I was still speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel (וְהָאִישׁ שֵׁשׁ גַּבְרִיאֵל) (Γαβριηλ), whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering.¹³

Dan. 9:22 He gave me instruction, talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding.

Dan. 9:23 “At the beginning of your requests, the command was issued (וַיִּצְוֶה) (ἐξῆλθε πρόσταγμα παρὰ κυρίου), and I have come to tell you, because you are chosen for mercy (וְכִי מְחַנֵּן אֲתָם) (ὅτι ἐλεεινός εἶ). Therefore, give heed to the message, and gain understanding of the vision.”¹⁴

¹⁰ God has brought the disaster of the two Assyrian and Babylonian destructions and exiles on the Jews because of two factors—1) His faithfulness to His own word that He would do so if they disobeyed Him, and 2) their disobedience.

¹¹ Daniel understands properly that it is impossible for morally depraved human beings to earn God’s approval and, certainly, His grace and mercy. By using the plural pronoun “we,” Daniel assumes that his fellow Jews, at least those with changed hearts and proper inwardness, have been and will continue to request of God the same things that he is.

¹² Daniel’s final appeal is based on the fact that the Jews and Jerusalem are so intimately connected to God, because this is what God has chosen from the time of Abraham and the Abrahamic Covenant, that they are His chosen people and city. So, certainly, God will defend His own good reputation and fulfill His promise to the Jews to bring them back from captivity after 70 years.

¹³ Cf. Daniel 8:16ff.

¹⁴ While other commentators state that Daniel is highly esteemed by God because of his faithfulness and commitment to prayer, it makes more sense in the light of the LXX translation of וְכִי מְחַנֵּן אֲתָם with ὅτι ἐλεεινός εἶ to consider Gabriel’s saying that, while Daniel is desirable (חַמֵּד), it is because God has chosen him as someone whom He is using

Dan. 9:24 “Seventy weeks have been specified for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of immorality, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness (וְלִהְיוֹת צְדָקָה עֲלֵמְיָם) (καὶ δοθῆναι δικαιοσύνην αἰώνιον), to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most Holy One (וְלִמְשַׁח שֶׁנֶּשֶׁת קִדְשֵׁנוֹ) (εὐφραναι ἅγιον ἅγιον).¹⁵

Seventy “weeks” = 70x7 years = 490 years

God is giving the Jews 490 years to get their act together and welcome the Messiah

Dan. 9:25 “Therefore, know and discern that, from the issuing of the order to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.”¹⁶

for these very special moments of conveying information through dreams in Babylon at that time. In other words, Daniel’s high esteem is not because of Daniel and his character, but because of God and His sovereign choices.

¹⁵ [EBC – “The culmination of the appointed years will witness the conclusion of man’s “transgression” or “rebellion” (pesa) against God—a development most naturally entered into with the establishment of an entirely new order on earth.”]

I am not sure why the commentator interprets “your people” and “your holy city” (עַל-עַמְּךָ וְעַל-עִיר קִדְשֶׁךָ) (ἐπὶ τὸν λαόν σου καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν Σιών) as all mankind. This does not make sense, especially when speaking directly to Daniel after he has prayed for God’s promise through Jeremiah to the Jewish people to remain faithful to them for their return to the land of Israel after the Babylonian exile.

The commentator also interprets “finish the transgression” (עֲשֵׂה אֵת חַטֹּאתֵינוּ) (συντελεσθῆναι τὴν ἀμαρτίαν) and “make an end of sin” (וְלִהְיוֹת אֵת אֵת חַטֹּאתֵינוּ) (καὶ τὰς ἀδικίας σπανίσαι) as bringing about an end to mankind’s sin and rebellion, which will occur with the arrival of the millennial kingdom of the Messiah near the end of history. Instead, it makes more sense to interpret Gabriel’s speaking of the Jews’ setting aside their own rebellion against God by repenting and committing themselves to following appropriately the Mosaic Covenant *before* the Messiah’s *first* appearance.

Then the commentator interprets “make atonement for iniquity” (וְלִפְדֹּת עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ) (καὶ ἀπαλῆψαι τὰς ἀδικίας) as the crucifixion of the Messiah, instead of the Jews’ humbling themselves properly inwardly and making the appropriate sacrifices to God for their rebellion against Him, even embracing their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, when he first appears.

“Bring in everlasting righteousness” (וְלִהְיוֹת צְדָקָה עֲלֵמְיָם) (καὶ δοθῆναι δικαιοσύνην αἰώνιον) is interpreted as the conformity of society to biblical morality as the opposite situation of brief periods when this has occurred in human history. Instead, it makes more sense that Gabriel is referring to the Jews’ being granted eternal forgiveness and “justification,” i.e., God’s mercy. Thus the LXX understands it, because it translates it “and be given eternal *dikaioSunay*.”

Then, “anoint the most holy place” (וְלִמְשַׁח שֶׁנֶּשֶׁת קִדְשֵׁנוֹ) (εὐφραναι ἅγιον ἅγιον) is interpreted as the consecration of the millennial temple, rather than the Jews’ granting to Jerusalem and the temple that they will build when they return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile the respect that these places deserve because God has instructed them to do so in the Mosaic Covenant, with Jerusalem as the eventual capital of the Messianic Kingdom and the temple as God’s perpetual dwelling place among His people, the Jews.

Therefore, I have interpreted these comments as referring to a period of 490 years, starting with the Jews’ exile in Babylon and during which they have the opportunity to clean up their hearts and obey Yahweh properly according to the Mosaic Covenant. The end of this period will be A.D. 33/34, 3½ years after the crucifixion of the Messiah and 47 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans.

¹⁶ According to 2 Chronicles 36:22,23 & Ezra 1:1-4, Cyrus the Great of Persia (559-529 B.C.) gave the order to rebuild the temple in his first year, which would be his first year in reigning over Babylon after conquering it in 539 B.C. Then, over a hundred years later, it was Artaxerxes I of Persia (464-424 B.C.), according to Ezra 7:12-26 [and interpreted by Ezra in Ezra 9:9, “For we are slaves. Yet, in our slavery, our God has not forsaken us. Instead, He has extended lovingkindness to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us reviving to raise up the house of our God, to restore its ruins, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem.”], who issued the decree so to speak for Jerusalem and its walls to be rebuilt now that its temple was in place.

Ezra had arrived in Jerusalem in 457 B.C., the seventh year of Artaxerxes I, and Nehemiah, cupbearer to Artaxerxes,

Seven “weeks” = 7×7 years = 49 years

Sixty-two “weeks” = 62×7 years = 434 years

Total = 483 years

The order to rebuild Jerusalem, not just the temple, came in 457 B.C. by Artaxerxes (464-424 B.C.) (cf. . The total time between God’s issuing this order and the appearance of the Messiah will be 49 years + 434 years = 483 years, i.e., A.D. 27 [483-457 (+1 for transition from B.C. to A.D.) = 27].

Cyrus the Great ¹⁷	559-529 B.C.
Conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.	
Darius the Mede ¹⁸	539-530 B.C.
Cambyses, Cyrus’ elder son, who conquered Egypt	529-523 B.C.
Guamata, Pseudo Smerdis, Cyrus’ younger son	523-522 B.C.
Darius Hystaspis	522-485 B.C.
Lost the Battle of Marathon (490 B.C.)	
Xerxes, who invaded Greece	485-464 B.C.
Lost the Battles of Salamis and Thermopylae (480 B.C.)	
Artaxerxes I	464-424 B.C.
Darius II	423-404 B.C.
Artaxerxes II	404-359 B.C.
Artaxerxes III	359-338 B.C.
Arses	338-336 B.C.
Darius III	336-331 B.C.

Dan. 9:26 “Then, after the sixty-two weeks, the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the holy place (שְׁדֵרָה) (καὶ τὸ ἅγιον). Its end will come with a flood. Even to the end (עַד) (ἕως καιροῦ συντελείας), there will be war. Desolations are determined (נְהַרְצוּת שְׁמִינִיּוֹת) (ἀπὸ πολέμου πολεμηθήσεται).¹⁹

Sixty-two “weeks” = 62×7 years = 434 years, which follows the first seven “weeks” or years. At the end of the 434 years (total of 483 years) and after the Messiah has come and been crucified

arrived 12-13 years later in 445-444 B.C., so that the walls and moat were completed in 408 B.C., 151 years after Cyrus first announced that the Jews were to return to the land of Israel and rebuild their temple.

¹⁷ **Babylonian Persian (Mede) Greek Syrian Greek Egyptian Greek Roman M.E. Messianic**

¹⁸ This is not the same as Darius the Great, i.e., Darius Hystaspis, who ruled Persia from 522-485 B.C. Apparently, there is no explicit evidence outside the Bible for this man, but he is most likely a “king” of Median descent, who was appointed ruler of the Babylonian region by Cyrus the Great, much like Herod the Great and his sons who were appointed by the Roman Senate and Emperors as rulers of the area of Israel and granted the title “king.” The word *dara* means king in Avestan Persian, allowing us to conclude that Darius was an honorific title much like even the Hebrew Messiah.

¹⁹ [EBC – the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus in A.D. 70, forty-three years after the end of the sixty-ninth “week.”]

But rather than interpret the last sentence of v. 26 as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem, the EBC sees it as referring to what will take place *afterwards*, with the implied seventieth week ushering in the second coming of the Messiah.

In other words, Gabriel is saying that after the coming of the Messiah, he will be “cut off,” i.e., crucified, resulting in the complete destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in A.D. 70. Thus, the “end” (עַד) (συντελείας) in this verse is the end of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The “desolations” that “are determined” will lead up to and include the destruction of both Jerusalem and the temple within it.

(half way into the next seven “weeks” or years), the **Roman Emperor Vespasian** will send his “people” under the command of **General Titus** to destroy Jerusalem and its temple, which took place in A.D. 70.

Dan. 9:27 “He will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a “end” to sacrifice and grain offering. On the wing of abominations there will be a destroying force, right up to a complete destruction. Indeed, it has been ordered. The complete destruction will be poured out on anyone who does appalling things.”²⁰

One “week” = 7 years

God (“He”) will definitely keep His covenant with the Jews for the “7 year” period that constitutes the final period of the 490 years (483 years + 7 years) mentioned in v. 24. The 7 years begins with the public appearance of the Messiah around A.D. 27. Thus, God will give the Jews this long to repent of their rebellion, including crucifying the Messiah half way through this period of 7 years. Then, half-way through this final 7 year period, God will put an “end” so to speak to temple offerings in terms of their still having significance as the only offerings by the Jews to Yahweh, when the Messiah allows himself to be crucified in order to be the one, true propitiatory offering to God on behalf of morally depraved Jews (and Gentiles, too) (cf. Hebrews and Jesus’ being the high priest according to the order of Melchizedek).

Finally, after so many acts of rebellion against God by the Jews, especially the crucifixion of their Messiah, God, “the destroying force,” will completely destroy Jerusalem in both A.D. 70 and A.D. 132.

Consequently, the very last mid-week period (3½ years) becomes a very important time of God’s continuing to look to extend His mercy to the Jews—if they will but repent of crucifying their Messiah and embrace him as such instead. However, they do not, and the result is the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple afterwards in A.D. 70 and A.D. 132.

²⁰ [EBC – In the last days of the present realm, the ruler of the “Roman” people will confirm a covenant with the believing Jews for seven years, permitting them to make sacrifices to God in obedience to the Mosaic Covenant. This same ruler then becomes “the one who makes desolate,” the Antichrist and world dictator, who resorts to violence to carry out his ruthless despotism.]

This interpretation is instead of seeing this verse as referring to God’s faithfulness to His covenant to the Jews in the midst of the death of the Messiah, who properly relativizes the sacrifices of the Mosaic Covenant, until the Jews indicate clearly that they are not going to repent, even of crucifying their Messiah, resulting in the destruction of both Jerusalem and its temple 37 years later in A.D. 70.

Thus, God assures the Jews that during the seven year period from the appearance of the Messiah to even 3½ years after they crucify him, He will be waiting for their heartfelt repentance of all their disobedience, especially that of rejecting their Messiah. Indeed, in the middle of this seven year period, the death of the Messiah will constitute an “end” so to speak of any value of the animal sacrifices in the temple, because Jesus will become the only adequate propitiatory offering for a Jew (or Gentile) in gaining God’s eternal mercy and being granted eternal life. However, on the wing of this abomination of crucifying the Messiah, i.e., as a definite spin off of his crucifixion, God will be a destroying force towards the Jews, right up to the time of the complete destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It has been determined by God that anyone who rejects the Messiah in Jerusalem will encounter God’s judgment in the form of the Romans’ destruction of the city and its temple.