
DANIEL 9: 1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans,

Daniel, understanding from the prophecies of Jeremiah that the seventy years' captivity was now terminating, pours out his soul in fervent prayer to God, and earnestly supplicates pardon and restoration for his captive people, Dan 9:1-12. When thus supplicating God in behalf of Israel, the angel Gabriel is sent to inform him of the seventy prophetic weeks, or four hundred and ninety natural years, which should elapse from the date of the edict to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple to the death of the Messiah, Dan 9:20-27; a prophecy most exactly fulfilled by the event, according to the computation of the best chronologers. Dean Prideaux states the commencement of these seventy prophetic weeks to have been in the month Nisan, in the year of the Julian period 4256, which corresponds with A.M. 3546, b.c. 458, according to the Usherian account. How awfully are the Jews blinded, who, in contradiction to so clear a prophecy, still expect the Messiah who was cut off, and, after suffering, is entered into his glory!

Verse 1

In the first year on Darius - This is the same Darius the Mede, spoken of before, who succeeded Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans. See Dan 5:31.

DANIEL 9: 2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years about which the LORD's word came to Jeremiah the prophet, for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem, even seventy years.

Verse 2

I Daniel understood by books - The prophecy referred to here is found Jer 25:12; Jer 29:10. The people must have been satisfied of the Divine inspiration of Jeremiah, or his prophecies would not have been so speedily collected nor so carefully preserved. It appears that there was a copy of them then in Daniel's hands.

DANIEL 9: 3 I set my face to the Lord God, to seek by prayer and petitions, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

Verse 3

I set my face - to seek by prayer - He found that the time of the promised deliverance could not be at any great distance; and as he saw nothing that indicated a speedy termination of their oppressive captivity, he was very much afflicted, and earnestly besought God to put a speedy end to it; and how earnestly he seeks, his own words show. He prayed, he supplicated, he fasted, he put sackcloth upon his body, and he put ashes upon his head. He uses that kind of prayer prescribed by Solomon in his prayer at the dedication of the temple. See 1Kgs 8:47, 1Kgs 8:48.

DANIEL 9: 4 I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, Oh, Lord, the great and dreadful God, who keeps covenant and loving kindness with those who love him and keep his commandments,

Verse 4

Keeping the covenant - Fidelity and truth are characteristics of God. He had never yet broken his engagements to his followers, and was ever showing mercy to men.

DANIEL 9: 5 we have sinned, and have dealt perversely, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even turning aside from your precepts and from your ordinances;

DANIEL 9: 6 neither have we listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

DANIEL 9: 7 Lord, righteousness belongs to you, but to us confusion of face, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, who are near, and who are far off, through all the countries where you have driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against you.

Verse 7

All Israel, that are near, and that are far off - He prays both for Judah and Israel. The latter were more dispersed, and had been much longer in captivity.

DANIEL 9: 8 Lord, to us belongs confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you.

DANIEL 9: 9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness; for we have rebelled against him;

Verse 9

Mercies and forgivenesses - From God's goodness flow God's mercies; from his mercies, forgivenesses.

DANIEL 9: 10 neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

DANIEL 9: 11 Yes, all Israel have transgressed your law, turning aside, that they should not obey your voice: therefore the curse and the oath written in the law of Moses the servant of God has been poured out on us; for we have sinned against him.

Verse 11

Therefore the curse is poured upon us - It is probable that he alludes here to the punishment of certain criminals by pouring melted metal upon them; therefore he uses the word תִּתַּח tittach. it is poured out, like melted metal, for this is the proper meaning of the root נָתַח nathach.

DANIEL 9: 12 He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us, and against our judges who judged us, by bringing on us a great evil; for under the whole sky, such has not been done as has been done to Jerusalem.

DANIEL 9: 13 As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil has come on us: yet have we not entreated the favour of the LORD our God, that we should turn from our iniquities, and have discernment in your truth.

DANIEL 9: 14 Therefore has the LORD watched over the evil, and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he does, and we have not obeyed his voice.

Verse 14

The Lord watched upon the evil - In consequence of our manifold rebellions he hath now watched for an opportunity to bring these calamities upon us.

DANIEL 9: 15 Now, Lord our God, who has brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have gotten yourself renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

DANIEL 9: 16 Lord, according to all your righteousness, let your anger and please let your wrath be turned away from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a reproach to all who are around us.

DANIEL 9: 17 Now therefore, our God, listen to the prayer of your servant, and to his petitions, and cause your face to shine on your sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

Verse 17

And cause thy face to shine - Give us proof that thou art reconciled to us.

DANIEL 9: 18 My God, turn your ear, and hear; open your eyes, and see our desolations, and the city which is called by your name: for we do not present our petitions before you for our righteousness, but for your great mercies' sake.

DANIEL 9: 19 Lord, hear; Lord, forgive; Lord, listen and do; don't defer, for your own sake, my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.

Verse 19

Thy city and thy people are called by thy name - The holy city, the city of the great King. I think it scarcely possible for any serious man to read these impressive and pleading words without feeling a measure of the prophet's earnestness.

DANIEL 9: 20 While I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

DANIEL 9: 21 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening offering.

Verse 21

The man Gabriel - Or the angel Gabriel, who had appeared to me as a man. **ישא** ish is the same here as person - the person Gabriel.

Being caused to fly swiftly - God hears with delight such earnest, humble, urgent prayers; and sends the speediest answer. Gabriel himself was ordered on this occasion to make more than usual speed.

DANIEL 9: 22 He instructed me, and talked with me, and said, Daniel, I have now come to give you wisdom and understanding.

DANIEL 9: 23 At the beginning of your petitions the commandment went out, and I have come to tell you; for you are greatly beloved: therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision.

DANIEL 9: 24 Seventy weeks are decreed on your people and on your holy city, to finish disobedience, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.

Verse 24

Seventy weeks are determined - 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.

Of all the writers I have consulted on this most noble prophecy, Dean Prideaux appears to me the most clear and satisfactory. I shall therefore follow his method in my explanation, and often borrow his words.

Seventy weeks are determined - The Jews had Sabbatic years, Lev 25:8, by which their years were divided into weeks of years, as in this important prophecy, each week containing seven years. The seventy weeks therefore here spoken of amount to four hundred and ninety years.

In Dan 9:24 there are six events mentioned which should be the consequences of the incarnation of our Lord: -

I. To finish (לכלא lechalle, to restrain), the transgression which was effected by the preaching of the Gospel, and pouring out of the Holy Ghost among men.

II. To make an end of sins; rather ולהתם חטאות ulehathem chataoth, "to make an end of sin-offerings," which our Lord did when he offered his spotless soul and body on the cross once for all.

III. To make reconciliation (ולכפר ulechapper, "to make atonement or expiation") for iniquity; which he did by the once offering up of himself.

IV. To bring in everlasting righteousness, צדק עלמים tsedek olamim, that is, "the righteousness, or righteous One, of ages;" that person who had been the object of the faith of mankind, and the subject of the predictions of the prophets through all the ages of the world.

V. To seal up (ולחתם velachtom, "to finish or complete") the vision and prophecy; that is, to put an end to the necessity of any farther revelations, by completing the canon of Scripture, and fulfilling the prophecies which related to his person, sacrifice, and the glory that should follow.

VI. And to anoint the Most Holy, קדוש קדשים kodesh kodashim, "the Holy of holies." משיח mashach, to anoint, (from which comes משיח mashiach, the Messiah, the anointed one), signifies in general, to consecrate or appoint to some special office. Here it means the consecration or appointment of our blessed Lord, the Holy One of Israel, to be the Prophet, Priest, and King of mankind.

DANIEL 9: 25 Know therefore and discern, that from the going out of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem to the Anointed One, the prince, shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks: it shall be built again, with street and moat, even in troubled times.

Verse 25

From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem - The foregoing events being all accomplished by Jesus Christ, they of course determine the prophecy to him. And if we reckon back four hundred and ninety years, we shall find the time of the going forth of this command.

Most learned men agree that the death of Christ happened at the passover in the month Nisan, in the four thousand seven hundred and forty-sixth year of the Julian period. Four hundred and ninety years, reckoned back from the above year, leads us directly to the month Nisan in the four thousand two hundred and fifty-sixth year of the same period; the very month and year in which Ezra had his commission from Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, (see Ezr 7:9), to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. See the commission in Ezra 7:11-26 (note), and Prideaux's Connexions, vol. 2 p. 380.

The above seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, are divided, in Ezr 7:25, into three distinct periods, to each of which particular events are assigned. The three periods are: -

- I. Seven weeks, that is, forty-nine years.
- II. Sixty-two weeks, that is, four hundred and thirty-four years.
- III. One week, that is, seven years.

To the first period of seven weeks the restoration and repairing of Jerusalem are referred; and so long were Ezra and Nehemiah employed in restoring the sacred constitutions and civil establishments of the Jews, for this work lasted forty-nine years after the commission was given by Artaxerxes.

From the above seven weeks the second period of sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and thirty-four years more, commences, at the end of which the prophecy says, Messiah the Prince should come, that is, seven weeks, or forty-nine years, should be allowed for the restoration of the Jewish state; from which time till the public entrance of the Messiah on the work of the ministry should be sixty-two weeks, or four hundred and thirty-four years, in all four hundred and eighty-three years.

From the coming of our Lord, the third period is to be dated, viz., "He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week," that is seven years, Dan 9:27.

This confirmation of the covenant must take in the ministry of John the Baptist with that of our Lord, comprehending the term of seven years, during the whole of which he might be well said to confirm or ratify the new covenant with mankind. Our Lord says, "The law was until John;" but from his first public preaching the kingdom of God, or Gospel dispensation, commenced.

These seven years, added to the four hundred and eighty-three, complete the four hundred and ninety years, or seventy prophetic weeks; so that the whole of this prophecy, from the times and corresponding events, has been fulfilled to the very letter.

Some imagine that the half of the last seven years is to be referred to the total destruction of the Jews by Titus, when the daily sacrifice for ever ceased to be offered; and that the intermediate space of thirty-seven years, from our Lord's death till the destruction of the city, is passed over as being of no account in relation to the prophecy, and that it was on this account that the last seven years are divided. But Dean Prideaux thinks that the whole refers to our Lord's preaching connected with that of the Baptist. וַחֲצִי vachatsi, says he, signifies in the half part of the week; that is, in the latter three years and a half in which he exercised himself in the public ministry, he caused, by the sacrifice of himself, all other sacrifices and oblations to cease, which were instituted to signify his.

In the latter parts of Dan 9:26 and Dan 9:27 we find the Third Part of this great prophecy, which refers to what should be done after the completion of these seventy weeks.

DANIEL 9: 26 After the sixty-two weeks the Anointed One shall be cut off, and shall have nothing: and the people of the prince who shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and its end shall be with a flood, and even to the end shall be war; desolations are determined.

And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary - By the "prince" Titus, the son of Vespasian, is plainly intended; and "the people of that prince" are no other than the Romans, who, according to the prophecy, destroyed the sanctuary, שֶׁקֶדֶשׁ hakkodesh, the holy place or temple, and, as a flood, swept away all, till the total destruction of that obstinate people finished the war.

DANIEL 9: 27 He shall make a firm covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the offering to cease; and on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate; and even to the full end, and that determined, shall wrath be poured out on the desolate.

Verse 27

And for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate - This clause is remarkably obscure. כִּנְף שִׁקּוּצִים מְשׁוּמֵם kenaph shikkutsim meshomem, "And upon the wing of abominations causing amazement." This is a literal translation of the place; but still there is no determinate sense. A Hebrews MS., written in the thirteenth century, has preserved a very remarkable reading here, which frees the place from all embarrassment. Instead of the above reading, this valuable MS. has וּבֵהֵיכָל יְהוָה שִׁקּוּץ ubeheychal yihyey shikkuts; that is, "And in the temple (of the Lord) there shall be abomination." This makes the passage plain, and is strictly conformable to the facts themselves, for the temple was profaned; and it agrees with the prediction of our Lord, who said that the abomination that maketh desolate should stand in the holy place, Mat 24:15, and quotes the words as spoken δια Δανιηλ του προφητου, by Daniel the prophet. That the above reading gives the true sense, there can be little doubt, because it is countenanced by the most eminent ancient versions.

The Vulgate reads, Et erit in templo abominatio, "And in the temple there shall be abomination."

The Septuagint, Και επι το ιερον βδελυγμα των ερημωσεων, "And upon the temple there shall be the abomination of desolation."

The Arabic, "And upon the sanctuary there shall be the abomination of ruin."

The above reading is celebrated by J. D. Michaelis, Epist. De Ebdom. Dan., p. 120: Vix insignius exemplum reperiri posse autumem, ostensuro in codicibus Hebraeis latere lectiones dignissimas quae eruantur, etc. "A more illustrious example can, I think, hardly be found, to show that various readings lie hid in Hebrew MSS., which are most worthy of being exhibited." Vid. Bib. Hebrews Kennicott, Dis. Gen.

I have only to add that this mode of reckoning years and periods by weeks is not solely Jewish. Macrobius, in his book on Scipio's dream, has these remarkable words: Sed a sexta usque ad septimam septimanam fit quidem diminutio, sed occulta, et quae detrimentum suum aperta defectione non prodat: ideo nonnullarum rerumpublicarum hic mos est, ut post sextam ad militiam nemo cogatur; Somn. Scip., lib. 1 c. vi., in fine. "From the sixth to the seventh week, there is a diminution of strength; but it is hidden, and does not manifest itself by any outward defect. Hence it was the custom in some republics not to oblige a man to go to the wars after the sixth week, i.e., after forty-two years of age."

Various Readings of Dan 9:24-27

Having now gone through the whole of this important prophecy, and given that interpretation which the original seemed best to warrant, I shall next proceed to notice the principal various readings found in the Collections of Kennicott and De Rossi, with those from my own MSS., which the reader may collate with the words of the common printed text. Dan 9:24 על שבעים נחתך על עמך ועל עיר קדשך לכלא הפשע ולחתם חטאות ולכפר עו ולהביא צדק עלמים ובצלחתם חזו ונביא ולמשח קדש ותדע ותשכל מן מצא דבר להשיב ולבנות ירושלם עד משיח נגיד שבעים שבעה ושבעים Dan 9:25 קדשים: ואחרי השבעים ששים ושנים יכרת משיח ואין Dan 9:26 ששים ושנים תשוב ונבנתה רחוב וחרוץ ובצוק העתים: והגביר ברית Dan 9:27 לו והעיר והקדש ישחית עם נגיד הבא וקצו בשטף ועד קץ מלחמה נחרצת שממות: לרבים שבוע אחד וחצי השבוע ישבית זבח ומנחה ועל כנף שקוצים משמם ועד כלה ונחרצה תתך על שומם:

Houbigant's Translation of Dan 9:24-27

Of the whole passage Houbigant gives the following translation: - Dan 9:24

Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and the city of thy sanctuary:

That sin may be restrained, and transgressions have an end;

That iniquity may be expiated, and an everlasting righteousness brought in;

That visions and prophecies may be sealed up, and the Holy of holies anointed. Dan 9:25

Know therefore and understand: -

From the edict which shall be promulgated, to return and rebuild Jerusalem, there shall be seven weeks.

Then it shall be fully rebuilt, with anxiety, in difficult times.

Thence, to the Prince Messiah, there shall be sixty-two weeks. Dan 9:26

And after sixty-two weeks the Messiah shall be slain, and have no justice.

Afterwards he shall waste the city and the sanctuary, by the prince that is to come.

And his end shall be in straits; and to the end of the war desolation is appointed. Dan 9:27

And for one week he shall confirm a covenant with many;

And in the middle of the week he shall abrogate sacrifice and offering; And in the temple there shall be the abomination of desolation,

Until the ruin which is decreed rush on after the desolation.

In this translation there are some peculiarities.

Instead of "the street shall be built again, and the wall," Dan 9:26, he translates רחוב וחרוץ (with the prefix ב beth instead of ו vau in the latter word), "it shall be fully (the city and all its walls) rebuilt with anxiety."

Instead of "but not for himself," he translates, "Nor shall justice be done him;" supposing that די "justice" was originally in the verse.

Instead of "the people of the prince," Dan 9:26, he translates "by the prince," using עמ im as a preposition, instead of עם am, "the people."

Instead of "and for the overspreading," he translates ועל כנף "in the temple;" following the Septuagint, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερόν. This rendering is at least as good as ours: but see the marginal readings here, and the preceding notes.

Houbigant contends also that the arrangement of the several members in these passages is confused. He proposes one alteration, which is important, viz., From the promulgation of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem shall be seven weeks; and unto Messiah the prince, sixty-two weeks. All these alterations he vindicates in his notes at the end of this chapter. In the text I have inserted Houbigant's dots, or marks of distinction between the different members of the verses.

Various Readings Dan 9:24 שבועים שבעים weeks written full, so to prevent mistakes, in thirteen of Kennicott's, four of De Rossi's, and one ancient of my own. Seventy-one of Kennicott's, and one of De Rossi's, have שבועים "weeks, weeks, weeks;" that is, "many weeks:" but this is a mere mistake. לכלא "to restrain." לכלח "to consume," is the reading of twenty-nine of Kennicott's, thirteen of De Rossi's, and one ancient of my own. ולחתם "and to seal up." Forty-three of Kennicott's, twelve of De Rossi's, and one of my own, have ולחתם "to make an end." One reads ולחתום, more full. חטאות "sins." חטאת "sin," in the singular, is the reading of twenty-six of De Rossi's; and so, in the second instance where this word occurs, two of my MSS. עלמים "everlasting." Two of my oldest MSS read שלמים, and so in the next instance. ונביא "and the prophet." The conjunction is omitted by two of Kennicott's. ותשכל "and understand." One of my MSS. has ותשכיל. Dan 9:25 מן מוצא "from the publication." One MS. of De Rossi's omits the מן "from," and instead of either, one of my oldest MSS. has למוצא "to the publication." משיה "Messiah." Nine MSS. read the word with the point sheva, which makes it read, in regimine, "the anointed of the prince." But this is evidently the effect of carelessness, or rather design. שבעה "seven." Two MSS. add the conjunction ו vau, "and." ולבנות "and to build." One of mine omits the conjunction. שבעים שבעה "seven weeks." One of Kennicott's has שבעים שבה "seventy years." ושבעים "and weeks." One of Kennicott's has ושבעה and a week." sixty." A few add the conjunction ו vau, "and sixty;" and another has ששה "six;" and another שבעים "seventy." Wherever this word signifies weeks, two of my oldest MSS. write it full שבועים. In one of my MSS. השבועים are omitted in the text, but added by a later hand in the margin. וחרוץ "and the ditch." One MS. has העיר "the city." And for רחב "street," one of mine has רחוב of the same meaning, but more full. ובצוק "and in straits," or anxiety. One MS. without and, as the Vulgate and Septuagint. Dan 9:26 והקדש "and the holy place or sanctuary." But two of my most ancient MSS., and four of Kennicott's, leave out the ו vau, and read הקדש והעיר "and the holy city," or "city of holiness," instead of "the city and sanctuary." In one MS. ו is omitted וקצו "and its end." One MS. omits the conjunction ו and; one omits the following קץ "the end;" reading thus: "and unto the war." But a more singular reading is that of one of my own MSS. written about a.d. 1136, which has וקיצו "and its summer." sixty." But one of Kennicott's MSS. has ששים שבעים "sixty weeks;" and another adds the conjunction, And sixty. ישחית shall destroy." But one of De Rossi's has ישחת "shall be destroyed." עם "the people." עם im, "with," is the reading of one of Kennicott's, with the Septuagint, Theodotion, Syriac, Hexapla, Vulgate, and Arabic. בשטף "with a flood." One MS. has השטף "the flood." ועל כנף "and upon the wing." Nearly twenty MSS. have ועד "and unto," etc. Dan 9:27 ועד קץ "and unto the end." עד "to the end;" and one has ועל "and upon." קץ "the end." One has עת "the time;" and another both, עת קץ "the time of the end." ועל כנף שקוצים "and upon the wing (or battlement) abomination." Instead of this, one of the Parisian MSS. numbered three hundred and thirteen in Kennicott's, has ובהיכל יהיה שיקוץ "and in the temple there shall be abomination." See the preceding notes. This is a similar reading to Theodotion, the Vulgate, Septuagint, Syriac, Hexapla, and the Arabic; and is countenanced by our Lord, Mat 24:15. After all that has been said on this reading, (which may be genuine, but is less liable to suspicion, as the MS. appears to be the work of some Christian; it is written from the left to the right hand, and is accompanied by the Vulgate Latin),

if this be an attempt to accommodate the Hebrew to the Vulgate, it should be stated that they who have examined this MS. closely, have asserted that there is no evidence that the writer has endeavored to conform the Hebrew to the Latin text, unless this be accounted such. The ancient versions give this reading great credit. שקוצים "abominations." One of mine has less fully שקוצים משמם "desolation." One of mine has more fully ועד משימם "and unto," is wanting in one of mine; ועל "and upon" is the reading in one other. על שומם "until the desolation." שומם "the desolation." One of mine has שמם without the ו vau. על is wanting; but is added in the margin, by a later hand, in another of these ancient MSS.

I have thus set down almost all the variations mentioned by Kennicott and De Rossi, and those furnished by three ancient MSS. of my own, that the learned reader may avail himself of every help to examine thoroughly this important prophecy. Upwards of thirty various readings in the compass of four verses, and several of them of great moment.