



Prophetic Observer

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Keeping Time On God's Prophetic Clock

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Seventy Prophetic Weeks of Daniel

by Noah W. Hutchings

Note: This month we are featuring several programs and books by Noah Hutchings. Our upcoming 2021 calendar is from a script written by Bro. Hutchings in 1999 titled "Prophecies of Daniel." This *Prophetic Observer* by Bro. Hutchings, written in 1998, is still timely and relevant.

Chapter 9 of the book of Daniel stands as the paragon of Bible prophecy. This single chapter of 27 verses proves beyond doubt that God revealed the future course of world events to faithful men of God, and they wrote about events to come as they were led by the Holy Spirit. This was declared by the apostle in 2 Peter 1:19–21: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The prophecy recorded in this chapter proves that Jesus Christ is the Messiah of Israel. Chapter 8 tells about a little horn, the Antichrist, who will rise up in the last days to challenge the Christ. The little horn will magnify himself and will command that millions be killed for failing to worship him as God. He will rule over a ten-nation kingdom and gain control of the whole earth. The prophecy about the little horn began in chapter 7 where his kingdom is described, and the chronological appearance is given. Chapter 8 describes his evil nature and great power. Chapter 9 tells about his deceitful dealings with the nation of Israel. Chapter 9 also tells us about Great Horn. This Great Horn will be from the horn of David so described in Psalm 132:17–18: "There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish." The prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9 tells us how the horn of David, the Messiah of Israel, would be cut off from His people until the abomination of the little horn had run its course.

The reason the ninth chapter of Daniel is the proof test of Bible prophecy is that it tells the exact date when the restoration of Jerusalem would begin after the Babylonian captivity, and how long it would take. It informs us of the crucifixion of Jesus, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the seven years preceding His coming again. All these things were written over five hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ. It still stands as the cornerstone of Bible prophecy,

proof that God knows all things from beginning to end.

The setting in time for chapter 9 was in the first year of the reign of Darius over the province of Babylon. At this time, Babylon had fallen to the Medes and Persians. After the defeat of Babylon and the institution of a new government, Daniel began to contemplate the effect this turn of events would have on the status of the Jews in that country. The prophet began by studying the books of Jeremiah. Daniel probably read first from Jeremiah 25:11: "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." Searching further concerning what would happen to the Jews after the seventy years had expired, he read from Jeremiah 29:10: "For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place."

As Daniel read the books by Jeremiah, he understood his fellow prophet wrote only as he did—by the Word of the Lord: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). Daniel was not so vain as to believe he had cornered the market on prophetic revelations. He accepted the prophecies of Jeremiah as also coming from the Lord; and according to the prophecies of Jeremiah, the time for God to look again upon His people, hear their cries, and deliver them from bondage had arrived. This promise of God is given in 2 Chronicles 7:14: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

When Daniel understood by the Word of the Lord by Jeremiah that God would again look upon His people from whom He had turned His face, their seventy years of bondage would end. So Daniel began to fast in sackcloth and ashes, an outward manifestation of extreme self-abasement. After Daniel had emptied himself of all self-glory and self-righteousness, he sought the face of the Lord God by prayer. From the record, we know that he ran after the Lord in prayer. He pursued the Lord to get His attention.

At the beginning of his prayer, Daniel made his own confession, asking God to forgive him of his own sins. Although there is not a single sin mentioned against Daniel in the Bible, the prophet was careful to avoid the error of self-righteousness. He claimed only the righteousness of God which is imputed by faith. Next, Daniel

claimed the promises of God to forgive those who confessed Him, turned from their wicked ways, and sought His face.

After Daniel had pursued the Lord in prayer until he was assured of an audience, he submitted his petition. In his prayer, we find the basis for Christian patriotism (vv. 5–14).

There are three main divisions in Daniel's prayer. The first part concerns the reasons for Israel's trouble. God already knew all about it, but Daniel revealed to the Lord that he himself knew why his nation had been conquered by a foreign aggressor, hundreds of thousands killed, the young men made eunuchs, the women raped, and the cities plundered. Let us now consider these reasons for Israel's judgments which Daniel gave.

1. As a nation, Israel sinned and committed iniquity—adultery, fornication, sexual perversion, and idolatry.
2. Israel mocked and killed the prophets who attempted to warn them to turn from their sins.
3. Israel rebelled against God, departed from the precepts of God upon which the nation was founded, and said, "We will not be judged of the Lord"—meaning they would not abide by God's ordinances for human government.
4. Because of the people's transgressions, they had become confused as to their national mission.
5. The king, the governors, and the mayors became confused because the people were confused. It was war one day and peace the next. When Babylon invaded Israel, the king would agree to a peace treaty one day, but would break it the next.
6. According to verse 12, the greatest evil perpetrated upon the nation was by the judges from the high court right on down to the lower courts. They no longer judged according to God's moral law, but rather according to political expedience and their own greed. The law breakers were not prosecuted, and the victims were ignored.
7. Because the nation failed to heed the warnings of the prophets to repent, God brought judgment upon all Israel, and Daniel declared that the nation deserved no less than it received.

The second part of Daniel's prayer for his nation is found in verse 15: "And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly." Throughout Scripture Israel is reminded of their deliverance by God out of the hands of their oppressors in Egypt. They are continually reminded of this because God has a plan and purpose for saving them from bondage. For this reason, He saved them with mighty signs and wonders, so their children and their children's children would never forget to uphold that mission for which God saved them. God delivered Israel to form a holy and righteous nation so they might testify of Him to the whole world and be a blessing to all people.

The third part of the prophet's prayer is recorded in Daniel 9:16–19. Over and over in the petition division of his prayer, Daniel pursued the Lord. Some might wonder why this old Jew was so bothered. He was in his mid-eighties; he was prime minister to King Darius; he had a fine place with servants; he had honor and the best physical comforts the kingdom could provide. Why didn't he just relax and enjoy retirement? The reason is that he loved his nation, and he loved his people. Like all Jews, in general, he had an

inherent, restless awareness of a plan and purpose for them. This sense of destiny is stated in Isaiah 43:5-6: "Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth."

Daniel's prayer of confession for his people is important to our understanding of the remainder of the chapter. Daniel knew from the prophecy of Jeremiah that God had promised that the duration of Israel's captivity in Babylon would be seventy years. The seventy years had expired, so Daniel was seeking in prayer the answer to the question that concerns every religious Jew: Would this be the time God would bring in the kingdom and send the Messiah?

The power of Daniel's prayer is witnessed by the fact that God heard him at the very beginning, and He knew exactly what Daniel would say (vv. 20–23). Before Daniel had finished his prayer, the archangel Gabriel tapped him on the shoulder to inform the prophet that he had been commanded to fly swiftly to him. How fast is swiftly in the heavenly realm? We have no idea, except that it must be faster than light. Gabriel's flight to Daniel could not have taken over an hour, because the Jewish oblation lasted from three to four in the afternoon. This was the period the priests in the temple offered the sacrifice on the altar. It is called the ninth hour in Scripture. The reason the sacrifice had to be offered during the ninth hour was that the offering of an animal looked forward to the eternal sacrifice, Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. It was in the ninth hour after Jesus finished His atoning work on the cross where He died for the sins of the world (Matt. 27:45–50).

As the sacrifice was being offered, the priest prayed for the acceptance of the sacrifice for the sins of Israel, and he prayed again for Israel to become holy and righteous in God's sight so that Messiah would come and bring in the kingdom promised in the covenants. Therefore, it was according to biblical instruction and Jewish tradition for Daniel to be praying at oblation time toward Jerusalem for God to forgive the sins of Israel and fulfill His promise in the covenants. We are informed that Gabriel told Daniel that he was sent to give him skill and understanding. This knowledge was what all the prophets had wanted to know—the time when God would take away Israel's transgression and fulfill the kingdom covenant. Gabriel said he would give this information to Daniel because Daniel was greatly beloved, meaning he was loved greatly by the Lord. Gabriel is the messenger of the Messiah's coming. We read in Luke 1:26–32 that Gabriel was sent by God to inform Mary that she would give birth to Jesus, the Son of the Highest.

The message God gave Gabriel to deliver to Daniel concerning the taking away of Israel's transgressions, the coming of Messiah, and the bringing in of the kingdom, is given in Daniel 9:24–27. Gabriel informed Daniel that concerning the bringing in of the kingdom of God to Israel, a seventy-week plan was in operation. During this period, Daniel's prayers would be answered. This plan involved the following things which Daniel prayed for:

1. Finish the transgression;
2. Make an end of sin;
3. Make reconciliation for iniquity;
4. Bring in everlasting righteousness;
5. Seal up the vision and prophecy; and
6. Anoint the Most Holy.

In considering the meaning of the six things which Gabriel prophesied, let us keep in mind that, according to verse 24, they concern Israel as a race, the holy city Jerusalem, the land of Palestine, the temple, and the Messiah. The prophecy is Jewish from beginning to end. Gentiles are not even referred to in an indirect way, and the dispensation of grace is completely hidden from view. The single reference to any gentile says “the people of the prince that shall come.” This is a prince and a people who are not of Israel, and this single reference proves the Antichrist will not be an Israeli. Now we will consider the six things Gabriel promised Daniel relating to the kingdom over which the Messiah will reign:

Finish the Transgression: “Finish the transgression” means that the transgression of Israel against the law and commandments of God will be brought to an end when Christ returns to rule on David’s throne (Ezek. 39:24–25).

Make an End of Sin: The end of sin is when the sinner accepts Jesus Christ as the One who died for sin. The sin mentioned by Gabriel meant the sins of Israel. Israel, as a nation, has not up to this time accepted Jesus Christ as the Messiah; therefore, the nation as a whole continues in sin. Israel will be saved from their sins by receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord when He appears to the nation in all His glory (Rom. 11:26–27).

Make Reconciliation for Iniquity: Iniquity means wickedness and a sinful condition—lost in sin. Today, moral conditions in Israel are about the same as they are in the U.S., but when Jesus Christ returns as King of Israel and the law goes forth from Jerusalem, the iniquity of Israel will be taken away. Every living Jew will look upon Him whom they pierced and mourn for Him as the only Son. As promised, they will become a nation of priests for God to all the world (Zech. 12:10–12; Rev. 1:5–7).

Bring in Everlasting Righteousness: No individual, including the Jew, has any righteousness of his own. The only righteousness that man can attain is that righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ, and that is in imputed righteousness. Righteousness shall prevail over all Israel when Jesus Christ is received as the Messiah. This truth is declared in Jeremiah 23:6.

Seal Up the Vision and the Prophecy: This does not mean the particular vision and prophecy which God delivered to Daniel. It means all visions and all prophecies recorded in the Bible. All the prophecies recorded in the Bible were revealed to Israelites, and all prophecy is sealed up in Israel. Daniel was commanded to seal up the book of his prophecy until the time of the end, meaning when the Jews began to return to the land. And only when the Jews began to return to their land did men begin to understand the prophecies that applied to the last days. Gentile ministers today expound the prophecies that were given to the Jews, but the time is coming when Christ returns that the gift of prophecy and visions will again be sealed up in God’s covenant people (Joel 2:27–28).

Anoint the Most Holy: This anointing of the Most Holy, or Holy of Holies, means the sanctification of the temple with the presence of Messiah. This will not occur until the Lord comes to His millennial temple. We read of this glorious event in Ezekiel 43:2, 4–5.

All of the things Daniel prayed for Israel will be fulfilled when Israel looks upon the One whom the nation nailed to a cross and receives Him as the Messiah. The hope of those things promised by God in the covenants lies in a Savior, a Redeemer, a Deliverer, the One whom the New Testament reveals as the Lord Jesus Christ. The Messiah, according to Gabriel, would come to Israel at the end

of the sixty-nine prophetic weeks, only to be cut off. But there is still one week left—the seventieth week, and it is the last day of this week that holds the prophecy of His coming again.

So far in our study of the ninth chapter of Daniel, we have discussed the first sixty-nine of the seventy prophetic weeks, a period of 483 years. According to Gabriel, the period was to begin with the signing of a decree to rebuild Jerusalem. It is agreed by the vast majority of biblical authorities that Christ was crucified at the age of 33½ years. Therefore, it occurred in A.D. 34. It has been discovered, and widely reported in thousands of reliable publications, that an error was made by the Romans of four years in setting up their calendar, the same calendar we use today. This was a plus factor, therefore we have to add to the 34 years—4 more years. We then subtract from the 69 weeks, 483 years, the sum of 34 years and 4 years, and we arrive at 445 years. Artaxerxes signed the decree to rebuild Jerusalem in 445 B.C., proving beyond any reasonable doubt that Jesus Christ is the Messiah of Israel. The Messiah had to be cut off in A.D. 34, and Christ is the only person that history records as claiming to be this Promised One.

Gabriel also prophesied that after the Messiah was cut off that Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed. This happened. And so we read again in Daniel 9:26, “... and the end thereof shall be with a flood.” What end? The end of the seventy weeks, the last week, a period of seven years known as the Great Tribulation. The prophecy of Gabriel indicated that between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks there would be a breach, and we know this breach as the diaspora of the Jews, and the dispensation of grace for the gentiles. This breach has now lasted for almost two thousand years. We read again in Daniel 9:26, “... and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.” So we know that the seventieth week will be a time of desolations—war, pestilences, and famine. Jesus Himself referred to the final week of Daniel in Matthew 24:15–16, 21–22.

Let us now continue and read more about this last week in Daniel 9:27: “And 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, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

Who is the “he” that is going to confirm the covenant with “many” in Israel for one week, or seven years? What is the covenant he is going to confirm? What is this person going to do in the temple in the middle of the seventieth week? And what is determined to be poured upon the desolate?

There are some who teach that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, confirmed the covenant with Israel. However, there is no evidence that Jesus confirmed any covenant with Israel. Also, there is certainly no evidence that Jesus anointed the Most Holy, restored the kingdom of Israel at that time, took away ungodliness from Jacob, or brought in everlasting righteousness. Quite the contrary is true. In reality, there is only one possible antecedent to the pronoun “he.” That person is the prince described in the previous verse, the prince of the Roman Empire. Just as Titus was a prince of the Roman Empire, even so the Antichrist will be a prince of the revived Roman Empire. The dispensation of grace is not in view. It exists only as the times of the gentiles referred to by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse.

The prophecy process from the cutting off of the Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem that was to occur after the fulfillment of the sixty-ninth week leads right into the Tribulation period.

Certainly, Titus made no covenant or treaty, nor confirmed any agreement with the Jews. He was the absolute victor. Titus did attempt to negotiate a cessation of hostilities with Josephus, but the Jews refused. The reason they refused to agree to a peace treaty was that until the very end they were expecting the Messiah to come and save them. This was also recorded by Josephus. The Messiah did not come because they did not cry out to God to send Jesus back. The Jews have yet to repent for killing the Messiah; they have not as a race been converted through faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah; they have not as yet cried out to God to send Jesus back. Only when the Jews believe in Jesus and cry for Him to return will the Deliverer roar out of Zion; and all Israel will be saved.

As declared at the beginning of Daniel 9:27, the minute the prince of the revived Roman Empire affixes his signature to a treaty with the government of Israel, confirming the covenant, the seventieth week will begin. Since 1948 there have been numerous attempts to bring peace between Israel and the surrounding Arab nations, but to date all such attempts have failed.

Now we notice in verse 27 that the treaty that will be entered into between Israel and the Antichrist will not be just any ordinary treaty. We are told it will be “the covenant.” We understand that God confirmed many covenants with Israel, but when the Scriptures refer to “the covenant,” there is only one covenant in consideration. It is the first covenant God made with Abraham—an agreement entered into between Abraham and God to the effect that the land of Palestine be given to the patriarch’s seed for a future mighty nation, an everlasting inheritance (Gen. 12:1–2).

At this moment, the U.S. and Israel are trying once more to get the Arab nations to recognize Israel’s right to exist as a nation on the land covered in God’s covenant with Abraham. This in itself is an important sign that the seventieth prophetic week of Daniel is about to begin, and the coming of Jesus Christ is even at the door. One day, soon, these peace negotiations will succeed. There will be a treaty between Israel and the Arab nations.

It is evident from the prophecies associated with the seventieth week that once the Antichrist signs the covenant, Israel will receive the right to resume sacrificial worship on the Temple Mount. Jews from the tribes of Levi and descendants of Aaron are being trained in temple worship today, so this could occur quite rapidly. But we read in Daniel 9:27 that in the middle of the week (the middle of the Tribulation) the man of sin will cause the sacrifice in the temple to cease. The covenant is broken.

Matthew 24:15–21 reveals that when Antichrist stops the sacrifice, the Jews are to flee to the mountains; and we believe the place to which they will go will be Petra. According to Revelation 12:6, 14, those Jews that escape will be hidden for 1,260 days, or a time, times, and a half a time. A “time” in Jewish reckoning was one year, from one Passover to the next. A “time” would be one year; “times”—two years; “half a time”—one-half a year.

The Antichrist will confirm the covenant in Israel with many. Not all the Jews will be deceived; some will oppose it. The Antichrist will not initiate this covenant; he will simply agree to honor the covenant God made with Abraham concerning the land of Canaan. The peace treaty confirming the covenant, which entails Israel’s right to the land, will hold for three and a half years. It appears from prophecy that the first three and a half years of Daniel’s seventieth week will witness a turbulent political and religious world adjustment. These changes will lead up to the projection of the revived

Roman Empire of Europe as a world power. The little horn of this European federation will rise to a position of world leadership, and we are told that by peace he will deceive many. Paul indicates that all the world will be deceived by him.

The Abomination of Desolation by the Antichrist will usher in a period of three and a half years of desolation. Gabriel informed Daniel that the last half of the seventieth week will be a time of war, and the end will come with a flood. This will evidently not be a flood of water, but a flood of Tribulation judgments. It will not rain for the second half of the Tribulation; therefore, the flood is to be understood symbolically—a judgment of fire and desolation comparable to the destruction left by the flood of Noah’s day.

From the book of Revelation we know that universal judgment will come, and the pale horse of death will claim hundreds of millions. The desolation the Antichrist will cause is mentioned in four places in Daniel and many places in other prophecies. For example, we read of this time in Ezekiel 29:10–12: “Behold, therefore I am against thee, and against thy rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even unto the border of Ethiopia. No foot of man shall pass through it, nor foot of beast shall pass through it, neither shall it be inhabited forty years. And I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries that are desolate, and her cities among the cities that are laid waste shall be desolate forty years.”

So the desolation that will be brought upon Egypt will be widespread over the earth. Egypt will be made desolate by the Abomination of Desolation, in the midst of the nations that will be desolated. The end of the carnage and desolation is described in Revelation 19. Jesus Christ will return with the armies of heaven; and the little horn, the Antichrist, will be defeated as he attempts to bring all the armies of the world against Jerusalem to prevent the second coming of Israel’s Messiah. At the conclusion of the three and a half years of desolation, Jesus Christ will return to judge the nations with a rod of iron and fulfill God’s promise to Israel.

The anointing of the Temple with the Messiah’s presence will signify that the Lord is dwelling among His covenant people, and all the promises made to Israel will have been consummated. The last promise to be taken care of is described in Ezekiel 44:1–4. Jesus Christ will stand upon Mt. Olivet. He left from Mt. Olivet; He will come back to Mt. Olivet. He will cross the Kidron Valley and enter the Golden Gate, also called the Eastern Gate. This gate is now sealed, as the prophecy states, but it will be opened for the Messiah. He will go into the Millennial Temple, and it will be filled with His glory. This glorious sight, as described by Ezekiel, will bring to a victorious end the 490 years of prophecy committed to Daniel by Gabriel. At this time, we need only to look to Israel to know that the appearing of Jesus Christ in all His glory as Lord of Lords and King of Kings is very near.

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