

# The Future of the World in Just Four Verses

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

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I want to encourage you to open to the book of Daniel 9, and speaking of keeping in the moment, this is one of those in the moment kind of messages. This is one of those studies from God's word that we want him to keep us in, in fact, you and I are about to embark on a journey of one of the most debated, most disputed, most questionable passages in all of the Bible. This is one of those moments.

Let's pray to make sure our heart is ready for this very brief yet powerful journey.

*Heavenly Father, tonight not just as we open the words from your prophet Daniel but, Lord, as we study these verses that have been so typical and troublesome for so many for so many years, Lord, it is our simple desire just for clarity, just for clarity of your word and clarity of what it means for our lives. Lord, as we have heard the entire story, Lord, of your crucifixion until your return tonight, as we've heard the challenge about staying in the moment with you, God, I pray that you would bring all those things to fruition from the reading, the preaching and eventually the doing of your word. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

As I mentioned, tonight we're in Daniel 9. The book of Daniel, you may not be aware of this, is actually one of the most questioned, the most disputed, the most debated portions of the entirety of your Bible, and you may wonder why. It's got some of the great classic stories, it's got the story of the fiery furnace, it's got the famous lions' den, the writing on the wall. Why is it that a book of the Bible that actually makes it into so many children's books would be so debated? It's because some people claim it's too accurate. You say, "Too accurate?" In fact, the prophecies of Daniel particularly when you get into chapter 7, are so accurate that many people questioned there's no way that anything written that far in advance could actually be that specific, most importantly because what we know as the people of, the entity of the Grecians, particularly the person of Alexander the Great, is spoken of hundreds of years not just before they came to power but before they even existed, and so the questioning of the book of Daniel is not its accuracy but the fact that they believe, those being skeptics, that there is no way that it could have actually been written in advance. It's "too good." But here's the advantage that we have. In a moment, we are about to read a passage from the book of Jeremiah and Jeremiah actually confirms that Daniel was a contemporary of his. Jeremiah claims that Daniel was the one who

walked alongside of him in Ezekiel in the Babylonian captivity, you guessed it, half a millennia before the coming of Jesus Christ.

Now that being said, tonight we're going to go into chapter 9, four verses that give us the future of the world. That's right, you can quit reading the headlines, quit listening to the news. Everything you need to know about what's about to happen is in these four verses. Now I know that all Scripture is inspired by God but these could be four of the most critical verses in the Bible for you and I's life. So we pick it up in verse 24 of chapter 9 of Daniel. It says,

24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and 62 weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after 62 weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 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.

Now if you've done any study in the book of Daniel, particularly chapter 9, these are those four critical verses. In fact, I would claim that what we know as probably the most, shall we say, detailed prophecy that we have not just regarding Jesus Christ but the entirety of the prophetic Scriptures is contained in these four verses. Let me say from the very beginning, if I were a skeptic, if I were one who didn't want anything to do with the Bible, anything to do with Jesus, these four verses alone would be the ones that could get my attention, these are the ones that if I questioned the validity of Scripture, if I questioned the validity of Jesus Christ, these four verses if read, understood and looked at honestly change everything.

So there are four verses that I simply want to look at from four very simplistic perspectives. Verse 24 gives us an overview and we've got to ask the question who are we dealing with here, who is being spoken about? Notice what it says, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people." Who are these people? This is unquestionably who we commonly refer to as the people of God in the Old Testament, the Jewish people. So we've got to go back to Genesis 12 where Abram was called out from the Ur of Chaldees where the Messiah as we addressed here in verse 26, was spoken would come from his lineage, that famous vision of the stars and multiplicity of his descendants that would come through whom we know as Isaac and Jacob, the 12 tribes, eventually Jesus Christ from the tribe of Judah. Why is this important? This prophecy is not about the church. It's

not about the church. It's not about the body of Christ. This is about those people who the Lord initiated his plan, yes, of redemption, but his plan for the ages beginning in Genesis 12. One of the greatest faults we have when it comes to looking at prophecy 2,000 years since the empty tomb is we want to make it about us, do we not? We want to look at our lives and go, "Oh, I can see that in my life." This is not about you and it's not about me. Everything we're reading tonight is about that which he established and that which he's going to bring to fruition regarding whom we know as the Jewish people, the people of God.

Why? Why is this passage even being written? Why does the Lord prophesy, why does he go into such detail? Notice right there in the middle of verse 24, "to finish the transgression." In fact, there are five different things that are spoken there, "finish the transgression, make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and the prophecy, to anoint the most Holy." If you were to take those statements that are made, you have the entire picture of who Jesus Christ, the Messiah, would be from his incarnation to his life, to his death, his resurrection, but what I want to focus on tonight is that last statement, "to anoint the most Holy." What we have in these four verses, the "why" factor, is what we commonly refer to as the second coming, what we know as the eventual physical return of Jesus Christ where he is, yes, anointed King of kings and Lord of lords. So even though we're going to look at a little bit of the story that deals with what we know as the first coming, the primary context is being spoken to the people of God, the Jewish people, regarding what we refer to as the second coming.

What is going to be addressed? Go back to the very first statement in verse 24: seventy weeks. Now this phrase "seventy weeks," the passage from Jeremiah 25:10 and 11 is that critical passage, this is that passage that not only parallels and shows us evidence that he and Daniel and even Ezekiel were contemporaries, but that the timeframe that I'm about to share with you is not one that myself or others fabricated but can actually be cross-referenced throughout other passages in the Bible. What we discover from the book of Jeremiah obviously spoken here in the prophecy of Daniel, is that every one of the "days" of the week is actually representative as a year. So when it speaks of seven weeks, that would be 49 years. When it speaks of a totality of 70 weeks, it would be 490 years. So thanks to the book of Jeremiah, the timeframe that we're dealing with here is a totality of 490 years.

Now just as an aside, does not directly relate to this passage but just to give you one of those biblical theological nuggets, remember in Matthew 18 when Peter came up to Jesus and said, "How many times do I need to forgive my brother? How many times do I need to do that? 7×7 maybe?" Remember what Jesus said? "70×7," 490. That was not just some random number that Jesus picked out of the air, that was not just happenstance of, "Oh, that sounds pretty good." What was Jesus Christ doing? He was actually reaching back to the prophet Daniel, he was reaching back to Jeremiah and he was speaking about this judgment, this culmination, this finishing of the transgressions that the Lord had spoken of hundreds of years before. The simple message that Jesus was giving Peter was

to the extent of the transgressions should be the extent of the forgiveness, just like is spoken of here in Daniel 9.

Well, that's kind of the overview. Verses 25, 26 and 27 give us what I'm going to address tonight three phases of this incredible prophecy. We're going to deal with the actual temple that would be built there in Jerusalem, we're going to deal with whom we know as the Messiah Jesus Christ, and we're going to deal with that character that we commonly refer to as the antichrist and that period known as the great tribulation. Now I've told you that's a whole lot of material all in a very short span.

So let's begin with that first phase, verse 25. Again, let me ask the question: who is being spoken of? Remember these are the Jewish people as referred to in the Old Testament, the people of God, but more specifically what you see happening here in verse 25 is an event that takes place in Jerusalem. Do you find it somewhat ironic that the name Jerusalem means "place of peace" when it is a place of so much discord and dissension and debate? And yet we discover that, again, this is not about you, this is not about me, it is about what God has initiated and started years ago that he's going to bring to culmination.

There is the question of "when." Now earlier when I read about all these different weeks, it can easily get confusing and here in verse 25 it segments or separates that there is a seven-week time period, then there is a 62 week time period, then when we get to verse 27, there is going to be a one-week time period that obviously makes itself into a total of 70. But in the "phase 1" of this in regards to the temple and in regards to the events following the Babylonian captivity leading up to the coming of Jesus Christ, two divisions. There is a 49 year time period and then there is the 62 week or elongated period.

Now what is critical about this is that in John 2 when Jesus made this statement about tearing down the temple and that he would rebuild it in three days, his very apostles questioned the validity based on this prophecy. They actually gave the timeframe and said, "In this amount of time we built it, how are you going to raise it in three days?" And I know, please note my gift of sarcasm, it's going to surprise you that the timeframe that they alluded to matches the prophecy of Daniel. And we'll see in just a moment more specifically but this prophecy was from the edict or the declaration that they can return back to Jerusalem to the rebuilding of the temple, and then there would be this timeframe of which from that point up until whom we know as Jesus Christ would come, give of his life, and that famous passage in Matthew 27 where the veil would be torn that we even heard some about by the children tonight. So the "when" here is when will the temple be rebuilt and when will the Messiah come?

Now in simplistic math, what Daniel shares with us from the Babylonian exile is that from the time that we're able to go back, for seven weeks or 49 years, you can set your clock, that's when we'll dedicate the temple, and once we dedicate the second temple, from that point until the Messiah will be 62 weeks. That's the "when." The important question is the "why." Why? Notice what it says at the end of verse 25, "to restore and to

rebuild." You do realize that what we know as that famous temple was a restoration project. The first one was built by Solomon and it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in the Babylonian captivity. The second temple we collectively call Herod's Temple because in the second century BC Herod paid the money to have it physically restored because it was in a dilapidated condition. But the building of that temple when they came back when Ezra and Nehemiah and those descendants of the captivity, when they came back to Jerusalem they were not building the temple in its, shall we say, initial phase, they were doing a restoration project, they were restoring it. But notice in verse 25, it talks about restoration, it talks about building. What we see through the person of Jesus Christ, the tearing of the veil, the sacrifice of his blood, him becoming the mercy seat for us, was not just the third phase or the "third temple," it was building that which was completely new even though it was an extension thereof.

So verse 25, the first phase of this great prophecy is that they would come out of Babylon, it will take them seven weeks to build the famous temple, then there will be 62 weeks until the Messiah arrives on the scene. It is phase 2 in verse 26 where it goes even deeper. It says, "And after 62 weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." Who is this verse about? This is probably the easiest part of the whole study: this is Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the anointed one, the one that was spoken of all the way back in Genesis 12 and addressed all the way throughout the entire Old Testament record. Everything in verse 26 is about Jesus Christ. Verse 25 is about the temple and then the time until the Messiah, verse 26 is about the Messiah proper.

Now this statement, 62 weeks, last time I checked, if you take 62 and you add seven to it, you get 69. You multiply that number times seven, you get 483, all right? So the totality of this prophecy is that from the point of which they go back to start building the temple until the point of the Messiah will be 483 years. Now that temple was dedicated based on the best calendar we've got, about 445 or 444 BC. So if you go back 49 years, you get the initiation of the temple, the construction of the temple, all the formalities thereof. But for the purpose of verse 26, I want to talk about those 62 weeks, that time period from about 444-445 BC until the time of Christ. Now there have been a lot of people who have tried to do a lot of fancy math when it comes to this, and many times they just kind of, they wring their hands in frustration because how is it that you can get this time period and how can you go from here to there, and they start matching Jewish numbers and what we know as Gentile and Roman dates and Gregorian calendars and such, but the key is there in the first sentence, "until the Messiah shall be cut off." The dating of Daniel's prophecy, the "when" here is not his birth, it's his crucifixion. Often times we try to say, "Well, we know Jesus was born at least probably 2-4 BC because Herod was still alive. How can you get this timeframe in just that small amount of time?" According to verse 26, the timeframe that God gave was not to his birth but it would be until his death.

Again, somewhat of an aside, not the focus of tonight's message, now do you understand why the Magi were looking for him? You do realize that Daniel was in Babylon, the wisemen were from the east in Babylon. They had access to these prophecies. They knew

the dates of all these events and they were looking for his star. They were looking because they knew that for him to give of his life and be cut off like the prophecy said he would, then he had to be born approximately in this timeframe before. That's why, because have you ever thought why were they even looking for it? Why were they even interested in it? Because of Daniel's prophecy. Again, if I were a skeptic, if I were a doubter, if I were one of those who questioned everything about Scripture, verse 26 alone would do it for me. How does a guy in the sixth century BC actually know the timeframe of the date and the year of the death of the Messiah who hadn't even been born yet? And yet if you crunch the numbers not to his birth but to his death, it all works out. That's what's critical about the "when" here, when the Messiah is cut off. It's not the Christmas story, it's the resurrection story that fulfills the prophecy.

Then there's the "why." The destruction and the desolation. Remember the week of Jesus Christ's crucifixion, he's on the Mount of Olives, he's on the eastern side of the Temple Mount. He and the disciples are looking down, they're talking about what we know as end time scenarios, this is Matthew 24 and 25, this is Luke 21, Mark 13, all these great second coming passages. And when he begins these great teachings, he begins by saying that the temple will be destroyed. He says that the temple will become desolate. You know what's interesting about verse 26 is often times we get frustrated with this passage because we look at even the death and the cutting off of Jesus Christ the Messiah, that took place 40 years before that building actually came down as Jesus said it would, but in verse 26 the purpose of it, the end of it according to Matthew 27:51 through 53, when Jesus Christ breathed his last breath and said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit," and that veil was torn from the top to the bottom, the purpose of that building had ceased. It was no more. So why this great prophecy, why the intricacies thereof is because the destruction, the desolation, yes, that would come 40 years later but actually the purpose of that place, the purpose of that Holy of Holies, the purpose of all that had been rebuilt would no longer be valid for these people.

So the first phase is the temple being built in a certain timeframe and then this waiting for the Messiah. The second phase would be the coming, the life, the death, the resurrection of the Messiah. But it's phase 3 that lies before us. You see, all up until this point this is history. We can look back at the dates, we can look back at the prophecies, we can put everything intricately together and it all makes sense if you have the time and the breadth of energy. But it's verse 27 that is all about the future. Verse 27 says, "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." The big question is who is this, who is the "he" here? Who is it that will make a covenant with the people of God for one week? Who is it that will come and join forces with them to promote them? Well, if you've read the last book in your Bible, you know that this is whom we know as the antichrist. By the way, the book of Revelation doesn't call him the antichrist, he is called the beast for a reason. And so the "who" factor here is that one who imitates Christ, pretends to be Christ, comes like Christ. If you read Revelation 11, he comes with miracles and with signs and with wonders. He woos the world for all that he has purposed.

When? Notice it says in the middle of the week. So let's do our timeframe for a moment. We've got 490 years that we're dealing with. We've got the first 483 years that are from the initiation of the building of the temple all the way until the time that the Messiah Jesus Christ is crucified on Mount Calvary. This last week, this last seven years, Jesus Christ referred to himself in Matthew 24 as the "great tribulation." This "when," the middle of the week. The Bible is declaring here in Daniel 9 that there is a time period that is coming, there is a period that literally according to Scripture is seven years in length described very much in detail in the book of Revelation 6 through 19, of which the people of God much like we saw in verse 24 for the purpose of ending the transgressions, will face this time period and its culmination. But in the middle of the week, 3 1/2 years into the rain of the Antichrist, 3 1/2 years after he "takes over the world," three and half years after he signs an agreement with the people of God to be "allies with them," what happens, or more importantly why? It says here that in the middle, "the sacrifice and the oblations cease, for the overspreading of abominations." When you get to Revelation 11, it does speak that in days future whom we know as the people of God and the place of God, the city of Jerusalem, that what we know as that famous temple will be "reconstructed again." It speaks of an angel coming with the measurement, the reed, that of a man measuring here and there and all the sacrifices and such. Notice it says in the middle of the week, 3 1/2 years into this, that's all going to cease. Why? The abominations.

Let me take you back to Matthew 24:15. Jesus is talking about all the second coming scenarios and he says, "When you see the abomination of desolation," listen to this, "as spoken by the prophet Daniel." Those are the words of Jesus Christ, not the words of a theologian or a denomination. He says, "When you see this happen, run, run for the hills because there has never been a time like this since the creation of the world," and Jesus refers to it as the great tribulation.

What is this famous abomination of desolation? In 2 Thessalonians 2 it says that this antichrist figure goes into the temple of God, which was built in Revelation 11, listen to this one, he claims to be God. He actually declares that he is God. This makes what happened during the Maccabean revolt and Antiochus Epiphanies child's play. This antichrist figure who claimed to be an ally of the Jewish people, who claimed to be a friend to them actually goes in and commits the sin of all sins, he claims to be God.

Now allow me to briefly summarize 2,500 years of history in just a few moments. While being captive in Babylon, the Lord comes to Daniel with a very specific timeframe. He says, "The time is coming where you will go back home, the temple will be rebuilt and it will be rebuilt in this timely fashion. Then there is going to be this large span of time, the Messiah is going to come and he's going to come, he's going to live, he's going to die, he is going to raise from the dead in the timeframe that I gave you. That temple that was initiated all the way back in the days of David and Solomon will cease to have its function as it originally had. But then in days future, there's one last time period, seven years. One is going to come and he is going to have the world transfixed under his gaze of power and authority and everybody is going to buy into it. But halfway through, 3 1/2

years into it, you're going to see him for who he truly is. Then after 3 1/2 years, I will return."

Now everything that I've shared with you tonight can be found in other passages of Scripture. There is nothing revolutionary about these concepts but what is it about Daniel that is so critical? It's not necessarily what is communicated, it's when. He nailed the timeframe exactly on the first coming. You say, "Well, what about the second coming?" Unfortunately I can't give you a date. I can't give you a time. He doesn't say that after a certain amount of time than the 70th week, in fact, we're kind of just left hanging there, in fact, if we're going to be honest, there's just a semicolon there, that you and I now are in the days of 2 Peter 3 when it says a year is as if a day, a day as if a year, the Lord is long-suffering, not like humanity, desiring that all come to repentance and that none should perish.

The purpose of tonight's message is to let you know that everything Daniel said about the first coming came to fruition just as it was spoken. We would be foolish not to believe the same about the second coming. So, yes, as we sang soon and very soon we're going to see the King. We shall behold him as he is. That is why as we conclude tonight, in Titus 2 it says look continually for that blessed hope, the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for as we sang tonight, as we were challenged tonight, that those who are dead in Christ, those who are alive in Christ meet together in the air, when that event commences, verse 27 will take place. I'm not one to give dates, I'm not one to establish timelines but I am one to speak emphatically that we are closer today to the return of Jesus than we were yesterday, and if tomorrow comes, we will be one day closer. Our eyes need to be fixed on the eastern sky. History shows that the Lord had all the dates right, we would be foolish to ignore what he proclaims is going to happen days ahead.