

The Goodness and Severity of God

Daniel 9:26-27

June 4, 2023

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The Apostle Paul reminds us that God both reveals His gracious goodness and His just severity in His dealings with people (Romans 11:22). How was God both good and severe according to Paul?

God showed His just severity to Israel as a nation in cutting them off as the natural olive branches from His covenant blessings when Israel crucified and rejected Jesus, the Messiah. And yet God showed His gracious goodness to Gentile nations in grafting them as wild olive branches into His covenant blessings when they received as Savior and Lord the crucified and resurrected Jesus as the Messiah.

That is who the one true eternal God declares Himself to be in the Bible. When God is portrayed only as filled with anger or only as filled with love, that is a false image and not the God of the Bible. The scriptural view of God may not be good marketing (according to our culture), but it is good theology (according to Scripture). God is not interested in us making Him marketable (as if He is a product to be sold). He is only interested in us declaring Him to be who He truly is according to the Bible (Romans 3:4).

From our text today in Daniel 9:26-27, we see revealed both the gracious goodness of God and the just severity of God. Let us be humbled and flee to His gracious goodness, and be warned and flee from His just severity. The main points from our text are these: (1) Behold the Gracious Goodness of God; (2) Behold the Just Severity of God.

I. Behold the Gracious Goodness of God.

A. Let me give first a brief review.

1. The angel, Gabriel, revealed in Daniel 9:24 that God had determined 70 weeks of years (490 consecutive years) to come upon His people, Israel, and upon Jerusalem (no gaps).

2. God purposed six events to occur in the 70 weeks (Daniel 9:24). All of these events were realized at the first coming of Jesus.

3. The 70 weeks (490 years) are broken up into three periods (Daniel 9:25,27): 7 weeks (49 years), 62 weeks (434 years), 1 week (7 years). Just as there was no gap between the 7 weeks and the 62 weeks, so there is no gap between the 69 weeks and the 1 week.

4. The 70 weeks most likely begin in 458/457 B.C. with the edict by King Artaxerxes to Ezra (Ezra 7:11-26). The 7 weeks (49 years) include the years of restoration of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. The next 62 weeks (434 years) include Jerusalem being under Persian rule, Greek/Syrian rule, and Roman rule. The 70th week (last 7 years) begin with Messiah the Prince, Jesus Christ, being anointed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism by John (26/27 A.D.).

5. In this 70th week God's gracious goodness is revealed in Jesus Christ (Daniel 9:26-27; Daniel 9:24).

6. From beginning to end, the 70 weeks as a whole is about Messiah the Prince who is the only hope of Israel's forgiveness (and ours), reconciliation to God, and righteous standing before God (that's the gracious goodness of God). But as we will see, when God's gracious goodness in Messiah the Prince is rejected, God brings forth His consuming judgment (the second main point—a warning to us as well).

B. The angel, Gabriel, continues his prophecy in focusing now upon what happens in the 70th week (in the last 7 years). What is prophesied in Daniel 9:27 does not follow chronologically after what is prophesied in Daniel 9:26; but rather Daniel 9:27 is giving parallel information that occurred at the same time to what is stated in Daniel 9:26.

1. There is a parallel time period given in Daniel 9:26 and in Daniel 9:27. Both of these

verses take us to the 70th week (the last 7 years).

2. There is also a parallel gracious event given in both verses: the sacrificial death of Messiah the Prince.

3. Finally, there is a parallel judgment event given in both verses: the desolation of the temple and of Jerusalem for the rejection and crucifixion of Messiah the Prince.

C. Let's consider more closely the time period in view.

1. **Daniel 9:26:** "And AFTER threescore and two weeks" (i.e. 62 weeks). After the second time period of 62 weeks which followed the 7 weeks (which total 69 weeks), that brings us to what week? The 70th week. The 70th week consecutively follows the 69th week, thus the cutting off the Messiah occurs in the 70th week (last 7 years). **Objection:** Is this verse begin a long extended gap or is it the 70th week? It doesn't say explicitly that it is the 70th week. The 70th week follows consecutively after the 69 weeks (no gaps—Scripture interprets Scripture). If I said, "For the next 4 days, I will be out of town, and AFTER the 4 days I will be in town, one would rightly assume that on the 5th day I would be in town (without some gap occurring between the 4th and the 5th days).

2. **Daniel 9:27:** "for one week" (i.e. for 7 years). This clearly is referring to the last week of the 70 weeks. Thus, Daniel 9:27 does not chronologically follow Daniel 9:26, but is parallel to it in time.

D. Let us consider more closely the gracious goodness of Christ's sacrificial death that is parallel in Daniel 9:26 and Daniel 9:27.

1. **Daniel 9:26** (the cutting off of Messiah).

a. The language used here describes Christ's death as that of a condemned criminal (Leviticus 18:29; Isaiah 53:8). He was cut off by a violent death upon the cross not for Himself, but for the sake of His beloved bride.

b. He hung upon that cross between two criminals as the One who was cursed by God for us who deserved to be there (Galatians 3:13). He who was absolutely righteous and without any blemish of sin was judged by God as the greatest criminal that ever lived because all of the sins of His people that were put to His account. He was cut off unjustly by man, but He was cut off justly by God (Daniel 9:24).

2. **Daniel 9:27** (here are two aspects of God's gracious goodness that occurred at the time of Christ's death in the 70th week).

a. First, Messiah the Prince confirmed the covenant with many for one week.

(1) Did the death of Messiah the Prince confirm (or make strong) a covenant? Certainly! It was the New Covenant in Christ's blood that was confirmed, ratified, and made strong through Christ's death (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 13:20). Christ's last will and testament was ratified by His death and blood—all blessings in Christ are now ours.

(2) What does it mean "for one week"? The last week (70th week, last 7 years) began with the baptism of Jesus by John when He was anointed by the Holy Spirit (26/27 A.D.). Then 3 ½ years later ("in the midst of the week'), Jesus was crucified bringing an end to all Old Testament sacrifices for sin. Then for the next 3 ½ years, Jesus confirmed this New Covenant with many in Israel through the preaching of the apostles (3,000 Acts 2; 5,000 in Acts 4; and ever growing—then with the martyrdom of Stephen began the great persecution of Christians by the Jewish leaders that scattered many of the saints in Acts 8:1 bringing the 70th week came to an end in which the New Covenant was confirmed exclusively with Israel and then began to go out to the Samaritans in Acts 8 and to the Gentiles in Acts 10).

b. Second, Messiah the Prince caused the sacrifice and oblation of the Old Testament (all bloody and unbloody sacrifices) to legally cease in the midst of that 70th week, for His sacrifice was the sacrifice to end all sacrifices, and it put an end to the divine warrant to continue sacrifices for sin thereafter (Hebrews 10:1,4,9-12). The veil was torn into two parts from the top to the bottom in the midst of the 70th week (Mark 15:38). We now have access to the Holy of Holies through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

c. The historic Protestant position does not interpret Daniel 9:27 as referring to a

yet future antichrist or world leader that will make a 7-year covenant with Israel, but will break that covenant in the midst of the 70th week and will cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease being offered in a rebuilt temple. Where does antichrist come into the picture?

(1) It is claimed that he comes into the picture from Daniel 9:26 (“the people of the prince that shall come”). Futurists rightly identify “the people” as the Roman legions that destroyed the temple and Jerusalem in 70 A.D., but wrongly separate the prince from the people of the prince by thousands of years so that this Roman prince then becomes the one that will confirm a covenant with Israel for 7 years.

(2) To the contrary, the historic Protestant interpretation does not separate the people of the prince and the prince who is to come. They both came at the same time in 70 A.D. to destroy the temple and Jerusalem (no gap in time between the people of the prince and the prince). That Roman prince was Titus, the son of Emperor Vespasian that led the siege and desolation of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

II. Behold the Just Severity of God.

A. In Daniel 9:26 and Daniel 9:27 God’s severe judgment and the desolation that He would bring upon Israel by Titus and the Roman legions because they despised and rejected the gracious goodness of Christ in the New Covenant. This severe judgment is not within in the period of the 70 weeks, but is the result of rejecting in the 70th week the gracious goodness of Christ in the New Covenant.

1. Jesus prophesied this severe judgment in relation to the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem and the abomination of desolation that would be brought upon Israel as God’s severe judgment (Matthew 24:15; Luke 21:20-24,32). The Jewish historian, Josephus, who lived through this terrible desolation records this very abomination of desolation in the holy place prophesied by Daniel and Christ:

And now the Romans, upon the flight of the seditious [Jews] into the city, and upon the burning of the holy house itself, and of all the buildings lying round about it, brought their ensigns to the temple, and set them over against its eastern gate; and there did they offer sacrifices to them (*Wars of the Jews*, Book vi, Chapter vi, Section 1).

2. Futurists interpret the severe judgment in Daniel 9:26 to be in 70 A.D. and the severe judgment in Daniel 9:27 to be yet in the future led by the prince mentioned in Daniel 9:26 (Titus not Antichrist). This is claimed by the nearness of “prince” (Daniel 9:26), and yet as has been shown all along, this prophecy is all about Messiah the Prince—not about Antichrist (especially with New Testament confirmation).

B. Application

1. This scripture shows the coming of the Messiah in this prophecy so clearly—His sufferings for His people, and the wrath of God so severely upon the Jews for their rejection. This prophecy thoroughly confutes the unbelief of the Jews and anyone else; and fully confirms our faith in Jesus Christ.

2. Unbelievers (even professors like Israel of old) must not flatter themselves that God’s severe judgment will not follow them. It shall follow them as did God’s righteous judgment upon Israel (though delayed 40 years).

3. Forget not the gracious goodness of Jesus Christ, who will graft Israel AS A NATION back into covenant faithfulness even after thousands of years of apostasy and unbelief, and He will do so on the basis of covenant promises made to Abraham some four thousand years ago and confirmed by Christ in the New Covenant (Romans 11). Is He not able to also graft our children back into the Kingdom of Christ from which they have turned to go in their own way through apostasy and unbelief? And just as God has not forgotten His Covenant of Grace with Israel, so he will not forget His Covenant with any Nation (including the Solemn League and Covenant made with Britain and all her dominions). Let us always pray according to God’s gracious covenant with us and our children. He delights to hear us plead His covenant faithfulness.

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