

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

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, Daniel 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, Daniel 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 Daniel 5:31.

Verse 2

I Daniel understood by books - The prophecy referred to here is found Jeremiah 25:12; Jeremiah 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.

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 1 Kings 8:47, 1 Kings 8:48.

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.

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.

Verse 9

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

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 *tittach*. it is poured out, like melted metal, for this is the proper meaning of the root *nathach*.

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.

Verse 17

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

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.

Verse 21

The man Gabriel - Or the angel Gabriel, who had appeared to me as a man. 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.

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, Leviticus 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 Daniel 9:24 there are six events mentioned which should be the consequences of the incarnation of our Lord:

- I. To finish (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 (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 (ulechapper), to make atonement or expiation for iniquity; which he did by the once offering up of himself.
- IV. To bring in everlasting righteousness, (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 (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, (kodesh kodashim), the Holy of holies, to anoint, (from which comes (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.

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 Ezra 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 Ezra 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.

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 Daniel 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.

Daniel 9:24

x@x'xçx™x° x@x'xçx™x° x x—x²xš xçxœ xçxžxš x°xçxœ xçx™x° xšx"x@xš
xœx)xœx° x"xçxç x°xœx—x²x° x—x~x°x²
x°xœx)xçx° xçx° x°xœx"x'x™x° x|x"xš xçxœxžx™x°
x°x'x|xœx—x²x° x—x-x° x°x x'x™x° x°xœxžxçx— xšx"x@ xšx"x@x™x°xf

Daniel 9:25

x°x²x"xç x°x²xçx)xœ
xžxÿ xžx|x° x"x'x" xœx"xçx™x' x°xœx'x x°x² x™x"x°xçxœx°
xçx"xžxçx™x— x x'x™x"xçx' xçx'xçx™x° x@x'xçx"
x°xçx'xçx™x° xçxçx™x° x°xçx x™x° x²xçx°x'
x°x x'x x²x" x"x—x°x' x°x—x"x°x¥ x°x'x|x°xš x"xçx²x™x°xf

Daniel 9:26

x°x°x—x"x™ x"xçx'xçx™x° xçxçx™x° x°xçx x™x°
x™x)x"x² xžxçx™x— x°x°x™xÿ xœx°
x°x"xçx™x"x° x°x"xšx"xç x™xçx—x™x² xçx° x x'x™x"x x"x'x°
x°xšx|x° x'xçx~x£
x°xçx"xšx¥ xžxœx—xžx" x x—x"x|x² xçxžxžx°x²xf

Daniel 9:27

x°x"x'x'x™x"x x'x"x™x² xœx"x'x™x° xçx'x°xç x°x—x"
x°x—x|x™ x"xçx'x°xç x™xçx'x™x² x—x'x— x°xžx x—x"
x°xçxœ x|x x£ xçxšx°x|x™x° xžxçxžx°
x°xçx"x|xœx" x°x x—x"x|x" x²x²xš xçxœ xçx°xžx°xf

Houbigant's Translation of Daniel 9:24-27

Of the whole passage Houbigant gives the following translation: -

Daniel 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.

Daniel 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.

â€œsix;â€ and another x@x'xçx™x• â€œseventy.â€ Wherever this word signifies weeks, two of my oldest MSS. write it full x@x'x•xçx™x•. In one of my MSS. x"x@x'x•xçx™x• x@x@x™x• are omitted in the text, but added by a later hand in the margin.

x•x—x"x•x¥ â€œand the ditch.â€ One MS. has x"xçx™x" â€œthe city.â€ And for x"x—x' â€œstreet,â€ one of mine has x"x—x• of the same meaning, but more full.

x•x'x!x•x§ â€œand in straits,â€ or anxiety. One MS. without and, as the Vulgate and Septuagint.

Daniel 9:26

x•x"x§x"x@ â€œand the holy place or sanctuary.â€ But two of my most ancient MSS., and four of Kennicottâ€™s, leave out the x• (vau), and read x"x§x"x@ x•x"xçx™x" â€œand the holy city,â€ or â€œcity of holiness,â€ instead of â€œthe city and sanctuary.â€ In one MS. x• is omitted in x•x"xçx™x".

x•x§x!x• â€œand its end.â€ One MS. omits the conjunction x• and; one omits the following x§x¥ â€œthe end;â€ reading thus:â€ and unto the war.â€ But a more singular reading is that of one of my own MSS. written about a.d. 1136, which has x•x§x™x!x• â€œand its summer.â€

x@x@x™x• â€œsixty.â€ But one of Kennicottâ€™s MSS. has x@x@x™x• x@x'xçx™x• â€œsixty weeks;â€ and another adds the conjunction, And sixty.

x™x@x—x™xª shall destroy.â€ But one of De Rossiâ€™s has x™x@x—xª â€œshall be destroyed.â€

xçx• â€œthe people.â€ xçx• (im), â€œwith,â€ is the reading of one of Kennicottâ€™s, with the Septuagint, Theodotion, Syriac, Hexapla, Vulgate, and Arabic.

x'x@x x£ â€œwith a flood.â€ One MS. has x"x@x~x£ â€œthe flood.â€

x•xçxœ x!x x£ â€œand upon the wing.â€ Nearly twenty MSS. have x•xçx" â€œand unto,â€ etc.

Daniel 9:27

x•xçx" x§x¥ â€œand unto the end.â€ xçx"Ö¾ â€œto the end;â€ and one has x•xçxœ â€œand upon.â€

x§x¥ â€œthe end.â€ One has xçxª â€œthe time;â€ and another both, xçxª x§x¥ â€œthe time of the end.â€

x•xçxœ x!x x£ x@x§x•x!x™x• â€œand upon the wing (or battlement) abomination.â€ Instead of this, one of the Parisian MSS. numbered three hundred and thirteen in Kennicottâ€™s, has x•x'x"x™x!xœ x™x"x™x"x™x" x@x™x§x•x¥ â€œand in the temple there shall be abomination.â€ 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, Matthew 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.

x@x§x•x!x™x• â€œabominations.â€ One of mine has less fully x@x§x!x™x•.

xžx@xžx• â€œdesolation.â€ One of mine has more fully xžx@x™xžx•.

x•xçx" â€œand unto,â€ is wanting in one of mine;

x•xçxœ â€œand uponâ€ is the reading in one other.

xçxœ x@x•xžx• â€œuntil the desolation.â€ x@x•xžx• â€œthe desolation.â€ One of mine has x@xžx• without the x• (vau). xçxœ 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.