

“The Skill to Understand” 6

Daniel 9:20-27

Hello friend and welcome to *Hope for Today*. My name is J. Mark Horst; I’m your friend and Bible teacher. The program you’re listening to is produced by Heralds of Hope, an international Gospel radio and literature ministry.

For the past few weeks on *Hope for Today* we’ve been studying from the closing verses of Daniel chapter nine. Our study is titled “The Skill to Understand.” As I’ve said before, probably, the most critical information in this section has to do with the meaning and timing of the *seventy weeks* or literally, *the seventy sevens*.

Last week, we had just begun to look at the final verses of our text when we ran out of time. So, we continue today by looking at some of the details about this seventieth week. I hope you can stay with me.

As we begin today’s study, I will read the text, Daniel 9:20 to 27.

Scripture

We now move to the final verses of our text that spell out some of the details of the seventieth week. In verse 26 we note that two princes are mentioned. We have Messiah and we have “*the prince that shall come*.” The people of this coming prince are the ones who will destroy Jerusalem AFTER Messiah is cut off. We know that was the Roman army under Titus in 70 A.D. We also learned in Daniel seven about this “little horn” who arises out of a revised Roman empire at the end of the age and is given almost absolute power over the nations for a brief period of time.

Turning to verse 27, our first challenge is to identify the antecedent of the pronoun *he*. This person is the chief actor and the subject of this verse. So, who is he? Grammatically, it could be either. Most logically, because the prince to come is mentioned after Messiah, it seems to be this coming prince. But let’s look at some other factors in making this determination.

First, this *he* will make a firm covenant with the people of God for one week, or seven years. There is no evidence in Scripture that God, or Jesus, ever made a covenant like this with the people of Israel. The covenants God made with Israel were everlasting! Some interpreters hold that Messiah initiated this covenant, but they can’t point to any Scripture to substantiate their view.

Second, some believe that Jesus initiated this covenant by His birth and His death on the cross ended the daily sacrifice. This is a simple one to refute because the Jewish daily sacrifices continued until the Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. And there is no record of such a covenant in the Gospels. Further, to insist that Messiah is the initiator of this covenant puts the seventieth week in the past, which we've already seen can't be true.

I conclude that the one who makes the seven-year covenant is "the prince who is to come."

I also believe the seventieth week is a seven-year period between the "catching away" of the Church and the return of Christ in glory. During this time, this future prince will have almost absolute control over the nations of the world. Jesus spoke about this in Matthew 4:15 to 30.

The apostle Paul discusses this in Second Thessalonians 2:1-9. According to Paul's divine revelation, the removal of the restraining force from the world is an event that must happen prior to the revealing of "the lawless one." What is this restraining force? Can it be anything other than the true church of Jesus Christ? If so, what? In addition, the revelation of this lawless one must happen very soon, even immediately after the Church leaves the earth. Paul talks about that leaving in First Thessalonians 4, the end of the chapter.

So, it seems logical that the seventieth week cannot begin until the Church is taken out of the way. This coming prince will then be positively identified because he makes this covenant with Daniel's people, the Jewish nation. It also seems clear that this final week of years ends with the return of Christ in power and glory.

Verse 24 mentions specific blessings which will come to Israel at the culmination of this final week. They will be brought by the Messiah, returning with power and great glory. Further, the awful power of this lawless one, this man of sin, this Antichrist, will endure until the end of the seven years and he will be destroyed by the breath of Jesus' mouth and the glorious brightness of His coming. Praise God! The Second Coming of Messiah will end the 70th week.

This seventieth week provides the framework for the events recorded in Revelation chapters six to nineteen. There is a clearly stated timeframe based on a single measure of time. It is expressed in different ways as follows: a time, times, and half a time (Revelation 12:14); forty-two months (Revelation 11:2 and 13:5); and a thousand two-hundred and sixty days (Revelation 11:3 and 12:6). In each and every case this equals three and one-half years!

During the first three and one-half years, Israel will be worshipping in their restored Temple and the "two witnesses" of Revelation 11:2 and 3 will be prophesying freely. When the

Antichrist breaks his covenant with the Jewish people and ends the daily sacrifice, the two witnesses are slain, and the Beast's power becomes absolute. This will usher in "the time of Jacob's trouble," a season of severe persecution on the Jewish nation.

Now we know that the seventieth week must end with the triumphant Second Coming of Christ. We also know the seventieth week begins with the revelation of the coming prince, the Antichrist. If we read Revelation chapters 6 to 19 carefully, we can see a period of seven prophetic years divided into two equal halves by the "sounding of the seventh angel" in Revelation 11:15. Both Daniel and John, were carried along by the same divine inspiration. Daniel provided the framework and John fills in the details.

Questions that arise out of Daniel's prophecy are what is this "firm covenant" and why does the prince who is coming break it after three and one-half years? The details of the covenant aren't spelled out but there are some clues. The breaking of the covenant ends the daily sacrifice, so part of the covenant must allow for the reestablishing of the Temple worship.

Another question that may arise is, "why does this prince 'tear up' his covenant with the Jewish people?" Let me suggest two reasons. First, even today, nations of the world who enter into treaties do not trust the parties to the treaty. Historically, the vast majority of treaties made, have been broken by one or both of the signatories. The desire for power and the deceitfulness of the human heart are prime factors.

There is an additional aspect of this covenant breaking. Second Thessalonians 2:4 tells us that this man of sin "*will [sit] as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*" To any observant Jew this will be the height of blasphemy and they will react violently. That will give the man of sin the pretext he needs to break the covenant and force the end of the daily sacrifice. If you think this worship of a mere man is impossible, you haven't been paying attention to what is happening in our world.

As the end of this final week mercifully comes, the promises outlined by Gabriel to Daniel in verse 24 of this chapter will come to their full and final fulfillment. Let's review them now. "*Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.*"

Today, Christian pilgrims from all over the world visit Israel for an opportunity to walk on the same ground where Jesus walked. How much greater will be our joy to go there when the King Himself is physically present in power and authority!

There are many additional things in the portion of Scripture that we haven't taken time to develop, but I hope that what I've shared will increase your confidence in God, in His Word, and in His promises. Unlike some professing Christians who teach that "God is not sovereign – that is, He can't possibly know all things," I confidently proclaim my belief that the God who brought this world into being by the power of His Word will surely bring it to His preordained conclusion in His perfect timing!

What joy is ours to be given "The Skill to Understand." Even so, come, Lord Jesus!