

I. Introduction.

- A. We have come to one of the most difficult and controversial passages in the Bible.
- B. This vision (revelation) is given in response to Daniel's prayer to the LORD. 9:1-19
 - 1. Daniel humbly asks forgiveness for the transgressions of God's people. v. 5-14
 - 2. Daniel pleads for the restoration of God's people to Jerusalem after the seventy year period of desolation predicted by Jeremiah. v. 2, 15-19 Jer. 25:11-12 29:10
 - 3. Daniel's prayer is rooted in God's covenant with Israel. v. 4,11-13
 - 4. God sends Gabriel with the answer. v. 20-23
- C. An overview of the passage.
 - 1. God has ordained period of seventy sevens in which six things will happen. v. 24
 - 2. During the first seven God's people will return and rebuild Jerusalem. v. 25a
 - 3. Then there will be sixty-two sevens leading up to the coming of Messiah. v. 25b
 - 4. Then there will be a final seven. v. 26-27

II. There are two primary approaches taken to Daniel 9:24-27 by Bible-believing Christians.

- A. Liberals believe that this passage is history masquerading as prophecy (written in and about the 2nd century BC).
- B. Some (dispensationalists) believe that Daniel 9:24-27 primarily speaks of God's plan and promises for ethnic Israel which are to be fulfilled at the end of this age
 - 1. The vision is for Israel alone (not the gentile church) and will not be fulfilled until Jesus' second coming and the millennial kingdom. v. 24
 - 2. The seventy sevens are weeks of years -- literally 490 years. v. 24a,25
 - 3. After the sixty-ninth week (483 years) the prophetic clock stops for an indefinite period of time of parenthesis in God's dealing with Israel -- the church age. v. 26
 - 4. The seventieth seven (week of years) occurs at the end of the age, during which time God will resume His dealings with a renewed Israel. v. 27
- C. The messianic (covenantal) interpretation teaches that Daniel 9:24-27 refers primarily to the work Christ achieved in His first coming.
 - 1. The accomplishment of the goals of the seventy weeks is inaugurated in the first coming of Christ. v. 24
 - 2. These covenant blessings are for all of God's people, including gentile Christians who are sons of Abraham by faith. Eph. 2:11ff Gal. 3:29 I Pe. 2:5-9
 - 3. There is no gap or parenthesis between the 69th and 70th seven. v. 25-27
- D. There are many varieties among both dispensational and messianic interpreters.
- E. Bible-believing interpreters agree on many important issues.
 - 1. God will fulfill every one of His promises and prophecies.
 - 2. In the end Christ shall reign over a new heaven and new earth. Rev. 21:1-2
 - 3. We will be raised in glory with Christ and will be with Him forever. Phil. 3:20-21
 - 4. These truths motivate us to obedience and endurance during this age. I Jo. 3:2-3

III. Seventy sevens have been decreed by the LORD. v. 24

A. What are the seventy sevens?

1. They are a definite period of time during which God will accomplish His purposes.
2. The seventy sevens have symbolic and theological significance.
 - a. The land in Israel was to enjoy a Sabbath rest every seven years. Lev. 25:2-7
 - b. The seventy year exile symbolized making up for the lost Sabbath years (490 years of disobedience). v. 2 9:13 Lev. 26:33-35,43 II Chr. 36:20-21 Zec. 1:12
 - c. After seven sevens of years Israel was to celebrate a jubilee. Lev. 25:8ff
 - d. The 490 year period encompasses ten jubilees.
3. Interpreters differ as to whether the text refers to exactly 490 years, or whether the numbers are approximate (symbolic). Mt. 18:22

B. When will the six goals of the seventy sevens (weeks) be achieved? v. 24b

1. Dispensationalists claim that these goals will only be fulfilled in the glorious millennial kingdom after the 70th week. II Pe. 3:13
2. Those taking the messianic interpretation believe that these goals are achieved in Jesus' first coming – and will be fully realized at His return.

C. For whom (which people) will these goals be accomplished?

1. Dispensationalists say that this work is exclusively for the Jews.
2. The New Testament teaches that all who believe are God's people. Eph. 2:11ff I Pe. 2:5-9 Rom. 11:17ff 9:23-26 15:8-12 Ga. 3:7,29 Titus 2:14

D. Jesus fulfills Daniel's prayer for the forgiveness of the sins of God's people. v. 4-11

1. Through His work, transgressions have been shut up once and for all. Ro. 4:25 5:16 Eph. 2:5 Col. 2:13 Heb. 9:15 I Jo. 3:8 Col. 2:15 Mt. 12:29
2. He has made an end to our sin. 9:20 Mt. 1:21 Ro. 6:10-11,18 Heb. 9:26 2:15 Col. 2:13-15 John 19:20 I Pe. 3:18
3. He has made atonement for our iniquity. 9:13,16 I Pe. 3:18 I Jo. 4:10 He. 9:26,28

E. Jesus brings the everlasting righteousness for which Daniel longed.

1. We are now righteous in Christ. Ro. 3:21-26 5:21 1:16-17 Ps. 119:142 II Co. 5:21
2. Vision and prophecy have been sealed up – Jesus is God's last word. Lu. 18:31 24:28 II Co. 1:20 Gen. 3:15 I Pe. 1:10-13 Heb. 1:1-3 Dt. 18:15ff Heb. 1:1-3
3. The Most Holy has been anointed. Isa. 61:1-3 Luke 4:16-21,34,41 Mark 14:18 Mt. 12:6 Acts 4:27 10:38 Heb. 9:11-14,23-24 10:10,14 Rev. 21:10,22
 - a. Dispensationalists take this to be a reference to a new temple in the last days.
 - b. Jesus is the Messiah, God's anointed Priest and King. Lu. 4:16-21 Acts 10:38
 - c. Jesus is the new temple, the holiest place. Jo. 2:19-22 Mt. 12:6 Rev. 21:10,22
 - d. Jesus fulfills all that the temple represented. Heb. 9:11-14,23-24,26 10:10,14

F. The great work which Jesus inaugurated in His first coming will be completely realized when He returns to establish His perfect kingdom.

IV. Concluding applications.

Discussion questions

1. What should our attitude be towards those with whom we differ on eschatological issues?
2. Summarize the dispensational and covenantal interpretations of Daniel 9:24-27.
3. What is the symbolic significance of the seventy sevens?
4. How does verse 24 point to the work of Christ?
5. What is the practical application of this difficult text?