



The Doctrine of the End Times

WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

The history of the church is littered with those who, though well intentioned and sincere in their belief that they had found the key to the timing of end-time events, were proved wrong. Assembling the puzzle of apocalyptic pieces is a difficult interpretative exercise, since it involves making judgments about many difficult and variously interpreted texts.

—Darrell L. Bock

ARE WE LIVING IN THE LAST DAYS?

Biblically-speaking, the answer is “yes.” From the time of Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension, we have been living in the “last days” since Christ could return at any moment (Heb. 1:1-2; Rom. 13:11-12; James 5:8; 1 Pet. 4:7).

So are we living in the “last days” of the last days? There are signs which certainly point to Christ’s imminent return but we must always approach the subject of biblical prophecy with humility, expectancy, and a level of sanity (1 Pet. 4:7). Prophecy is to fuel hope, joy, purity, and perseverance in us (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Pet. 3:14; 1 Jn. 3:3) not fear and speculation.

“THE BACKBONE OF PROPHECY”

In understanding Daniel 9, we gain an outline of future events. We also gain an understanding of the attitude and heart we should have in approaching biblical prophecy.

Daniel 9 takes place in 538 BC, a year after the Babylonian empire was defeated by the Medo-Persian empire. At this time, Daniel has been in captivity for 67 years in Babylon.

- He saw the greatness of God’s _____.
- He saw the greatness of his nation’s _____.
- He saw the greatness of God’s _____.

The prophecy revealed to Daniel points to the REST of the story....Rapture of the church, Emergence of the Antichrist, Second coming of Christ, and Throne judgment of God.

Daniel 9 is the backbone of prophecy. —Sir Edward Denny

Biblical prophecy should bring us to our knees, as it did Daniel.

—John Feinberg

These verses show Daniel as a diligent student of Scripture who built his prayer life on the Word of God. —Gleason Archer

Daniel’s prayer is prompted by his reading of Jeremiah 25:11-12 in which God stated that Israel’s captivity in Babylon would last 70 years. Daniel had been taken into captivity in 605 BC. Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 BC.

This is where Daniel’s prayer is so jarring. Instead of recoiling from the wickedness he sees around him, he places himself squarely in the middle of other people’s sin in addition to his own. There is no daylight between his personal failings and those of the larger community... What makes his choice so profound and beautiful is what it foreshadows: We have our own Daniel in Jesus. Christ steps in on our behalf and picks up all the guilt that isn’t his. Isaiah 53:12 says he was counted as a sinner, and he bore the sins of many, and he pled with God for sinners.

—Jeff Peabody

Daniel 9:24-27 is an interpretative lens for understanding the book of Revelation, as well as Jesus' words in Matthew 24-25.

²⁴ "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.

²⁵ "Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem
Until Messiah the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The street shall be built again, and the wall,
Even in troublesome times.

²⁶ "And after the sixty-two weeks
Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;
And the people of the prince who is to come
Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it *shall be* with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate
Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the [one who makes] desolate."

The prophetic clock of the 490 years begins in 444 BC and stops in AD 33 when Messiah is "cut off" (483 years). The final seven years await a future time when a "coming ruler" will confirm a treaty with Israel and then break it after 3 ½ years (cf. 7:25; Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14; 2 Thess. 2:3-4; Rev. 13:1-10).

Daniel's prophecy, revealed in 538 BC, perfectly predicts the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the exact time frame in which Messiah would come, the violent death of the Messiah, the destruction of Jerusalem again, and a future re-gathering of Israel.

*God is sovereign over human history, so _____ in Him!
Jesus is coming to reign over the earth, so _____ in Him!*

In the predictions of the 70 weeks, we have the indispensable chronological key to all NT prophecy. —Alva McClain

Daniel 9:24 is speaking of the accomplishment of God's purpose for all history.
—Joyce Baldwin

Weeks. Heb., *shabuwa*, "seven, heptad." 70 groups of 7 years or 490 years (cf. 2 Chron. 36:21), based on lunar years of 360 days (cf. Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5).

The prophetic clock starts with the "word" to restore and build Jerusalem (i.e., 538, 520, 457, or 444 BC, cf. Ezra 1, 6-7; Neh. 1).

The angel instructs us to take from the going forth of the commandment to answer and to build Jerusalem. And this happened in the 20th year of the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia [Neh. 1-2]. For Nehemiah his cupbearer besought him and received the answer that Jerusalem should be built. And the word went forth commanding these things; for up to that time the city was desolate.

—Julius Africanus (AD 160-240)

483 years of 360 days amount to 173,880 days...or 476 solar years + 24.7 days. Using the familiar Gregorian calendar, if we start from the beginning of the month of Nisan in 444 BC and add 476 years plus 25 days, then we get to the month Nisan in AD 33.

—John C. Lennox

King Frederick the Great [1712-86] once asked his physician, "Can you name me a single proof of the existence of God?" The physician replied, "Your majesty, the Jews." (Cited by Paul Johnson)