

05–23–2020 Daniel 9.20–27 Bible Study

Read Daniel 9:20–27 in your favorite translation. I will print the NET–2 translation.

20 While I was still speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and presenting my request before the Lord my God concerning his holy mountain— 21 yes, while I was still praying, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen previously in a vision, was approaching me in my state of extreme weariness, around the time of the evening offering. 22 He spoke with me, instructing me as follows: “Daniel, I have now come to impart understanding to you. 23 At the beginning of your requests a message went out, and I have come to convey it to you, for you are of great value in God’s sight. Therefore consider the message and understand the vision:

24 “Seventy weeks have been determined concerning your people and your holy city to put an end to rebellion, to bring sin to completion, to atone for iniquity, to bring in perpetual righteousness, to seal up the prophetic vision, and to anoint a Most Holy Place.

25 So know and understand:

From the issuing of the command to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until an anointed one, a prince arrives, there will be a period of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It will again be built, with plaza and moat, but in distressful times.

26 Now after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one will be cut off and have nothing. As for the city and the sanctuary, the people of the coming prince will destroy them. But his end will come speedily like a flood. Until the end of the war that has been decreed there will be destruction.

27 He will confirm a covenant with many for one week. But in the middle of that week he will bring sacrifices and offerings to a halt. On the wing of abominations will come one who destroys, until the decreed end is poured out on the one who destroys.”

COMMENTS:

Notice how Daniel maintains his sense of community sin as he tells us he confessed his sin and the sin of my people Israel. Once again the angel Gabriel appears. The phrase in the middle of v. 21, “... was approaching me in my state of Extreme weariness...” is difficult to translate. As can easily happen in Hebrew which had no written vowels until sometime in A.D. 600.

The issue is whether the verb derives from “to fly” or from “to be weary.” Many ancient versions and modern commentators take the first of these possibilities and understand the reference to be to the swift flight of the angel Gabriel in his coming to Daniel. The words more likely refer to the extreme weariness, not of the angel, but of Daniel (the NET–2 & NASB95 made that choice).

Gabriel says in vs. 22 & 23 that he will explain the meaning of the vision so Daniel can understand the message. He also shares the important message with Daniel that he of great value (or highly esteemed) by God. Isn’t that a powerful message to a man who spent the majority of his life in service to other nations than his own, but he always served God, no matter what! Now comes the well known 70 weeks prophecy of Daniel which has been the source of much discussion by the people of God. Elsewhere the term is used of a literal week (a period of seven days); cf. Gen 29:27-28; Exod 34:22; Lev 12:5; Num 28:26; Deut 16:9-10; 2 Chr 8:13; Jer 5:24; Dan 10:2-3.

Gabriel unfolds the future as if it were a calendar of successive weeks. Most millennials understand the reference here as seventy “sevens” of years, or a total of 490 years. The traditional Lutheran Christian interpretation of 9:24–27 is that the Messiah in 9:25–26 is Jesus Christ and that the seventy weeks culminate in the first advent of Christ.

A typological messianic interpretation was held by notable Lutherans of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Klieforth, Keil, Leupold) is that the vision covers the entire time between the time of Daniel and the second coming of Christ.

I believe both of these are possible, but my preference is to see it as the second coming of Jesus when time will end and all is accomplished. Notice the phrase, “until the decreed end is poured out on the one who destroys.” That sounds to me like God is now saying, “everything I promised is signed, sealed and delivered.”

REFLECTION QUESTION: There is one thing I want to draw to your attention, Daniel’s prayer for understanding the vision. I believe every Christian should be praying for the Spirit’s help in understanding the Scriptures. Daniel’s experience is proof of how God honors such prayers. But we also need to remember the words of Jesus as he prepares to ascend back into heaven. In Acts 1:6–7 So when they (the disciples) had come together, they asked him (Jesus), “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. There are some things that are none of our business in God’s eyes. Be ready to let him tell you that as well.