

## The sermon

### Intro

In life, the future is basically hidden from us. We don't know what we're going to go through, whether good or bad. And we don't know how everything is going to turn out.

We didn't know, or we don't know how high school is going to turn out. Will I have friends? Will I fit in? Cool or uncool? Will I do well enough for college?

We didn't know, or we don't know, how our career is going to turn out. What will I do? Where am I going to do it? Will I do well enough to succeed? Will I enjoy it? Will I make enough money?

We didn't know, or we don't know, how retirement was going to turn out. Will I live long enough? Will I have enough money? Will the house be paid off? What will my health be like?

Daniel 9:24-27 is kind of like our journey spelled out in significant detail beforehand. Here's some major events you're going to have to go through. Here's a really significant event that ties everything together. Here's what happens right before the end. Here's where you're going to end up.

### READ PASSAGE

### Body

#### Passage Focus

We'll cover 9:24 and draw some brief applications. This week we'll see the end. Next week we'll see what happens before the end.

**BIG IDEA: The end is really good.**

#### Point 1: Why is God sharing this with Daniel?

Last week in Sunday school Ralph raised a good question. Why did the Jews in Isaiah's day need to know about Babylon when Babylon wouldn't be a thing in their lifetime?

That's like asking why does Daniel need to know what's going to transpire in the next 600 years and beyond? Good question.

Note Daniel got the vision in 539 BC (9:1; the vision came while he was praying). Note there's a particular focus on Israel's history. ***"Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city"*** (9:24).

Here's some answers:

- 1) God will bring his plan to completion.

God is directing history in spite of appearances.

- 2) God will bring an end to the sin problem.

Atonement will be made. Righteousness will reign.

- 3) God wins.

You haven't attached yourselves to a loser. You'll be rewarded.

4) But there's a long and hard road ahead.

God's people will face opposition till the very end. No instant relief.

Note that Israel's history becomes our history. Daniel 7:13-14 speaks of a son of man coming on the clouds of heaven and being "*given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.*" In other words, Gentiles will experience "*everlasting righteousness*" in the eternal kingdom.

The atonement for iniquity accomplished by the Jewish Messiah, Jesus Christ, was atonement for our sins, if we believe.

War on the saints by little horn Antichrists is the church's story yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

God's merciful answer to Daniel becomes merciful insight and understanding for us. God's great love for Daniel carries on to those who trust God in like fashion. Daniel's promises become our promises when we come to Jesus Christ in faith and repentance.

## **Point 2: The 70 weeks bring us to the finish line (9:24)**

When the 70 weeks are complete, all six of these events are accomplished.

### **“to finish the transgression”**

*Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the one who spoke, "For how long is the vision concerning the regular burnt offering, the transgression that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and host to be trampled underfoot?" – 8:13*

Does this language sound familiar? It should. We find these concepts in 9:24-27.

8:13 references what “little horn” Antiochus IV Epiphanes did in 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. Recall the nature of Antiochus' transgression. He interrupted the temple offering by entering the sanctuary (1 Macc 1:21) and turning the sanctuary into a temple for Zeus (2 Macc 6:1-2). The desolating transgression involved stopping offerings and defiling the temple.

8:13 links "*the transgression*" with Antiochus. The nature of Antiochus' transgression links it to the abomination of desolation, a concept repeated more than once in Daniel (8:13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11).

What I'm getting at is the abomination of desolation occurs more than once. It happened in 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC with Antiochus. It happened again in the events surrounding 70 AD. In 68 AD, Zealots unlawfully entered the most holy place and installed their own high priests with Josephus noting “they came into the sanctuary with polluted feet” (Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, 4.147-150). And, in 70 AD, the Romans burned the temple and offered sacrifices to their images in it (Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, 6.316).

Jesus saw these events surrounding 70 AD as fulfilling Daniel.

*"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), <sup>16</sup> then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. – Matthew 24:15-16*

In *Ecclesiastical History* 3.5.3, Eusebius of Caesarea noted that the early church heeded Jesus' warning by leaving “the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella.”

**Mark 13:14** indicates the “*abomination of desolation*” is a person:

*"But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.*

Antiochus Epiphanes in 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. Likely Roman military commander Titus in 70 AD. The end time “little horn” in Daniel 7 who’s destroyed when the kingdom comes (7:25-27; see also 2 Thess 2:3-4; Rev 13:5-6, 14).

My point is “the transgression” relates to a particular transgression: the abomination of desolation. The abomination of desolation is a pattern that is repeated at multiple points in history.

When the 70<sup>th</sup> week is complete, the abomination of desolation pattern is a thing of the past.

### **“to put an end to sin”**

By sin I mean any word, thought, attitude, or action that fails to conform to God’s law. Sin will end. Sin will be a thing of the past. When the 70<sup>th</sup> week is completed, sin will be no more.

On the other hand, sin will be a problem up until the very end.

### **“to atone for iniquity”**

Iniquity refers to a bending, twisting, distorting of God’s law. Crooked behavior that doesn’t line up with God’s law. Iniquity refers to sin. When the 70<sup>th</sup> week is complete, sin will have been atoned for.

What is atonement? Atonement involves the concepts of **substitution, appeasement, removal**.

A substitute takes the place of the sinner by absorbing their punishment, resulting in God’s wrath being appeased/satisfied and the removal of the sinner’s guilt. The result for the sinner is forgiveness of sins a reconciled relationship with God.

Because God is holy and his nature is settled opposition against sin of any form, sin must be punished. The only way God’s wrath against our sins can be appeased is if a substitute takes the punishment in our place. In that way God is both just and merciful.

Note appeasement and removal does not come by good works. In God’s economy volunteering at an Exchange Shop or attending a Sunday morning service or giving to the church doesn’t appease God’s wrath and remove our guilt.

There’s nothing wrong with these things. I want you serving in this church and here every Sunday and giving regularly. But these things can’t remove our sin. Then why do we do these things? Because, having trusted God and experienced God’s mercy, we love him and long to please him. **We do good works from faith, not for appeasement of wrath and removal of sin.**

The one and only substitute for sin acceptable to God is Jesus Christ. Jesus died on the cross to save a people from their sins. He invites you to become one of his people and experience total forgiveness of sins.

If we trust Jesus we experience forgiveness of sins. If we don’t trust in Jesus we will bear the weight of God’s wrath against our sins.

How do I trust Jesus? Confess your sins to God. Say something like, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” I understand why Jesus died. For my sins. I believe and receive your promise of forgiveness of sins. Help me to follow you.

Jesus makes atonement for sin during the 70 week period.

### **“to bring in everlasting righteousness”**

That’s righteousness will never come to an end. Righteousness refers to ethical conduct that conforms to God’s character. Mankind will no longer deal with one another in crooked ways. Beastly rule will come to an end. No more injustice. No more war on the saints. Righteousness will reign because sin has been ended.

*And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, – 2:44*

When the 70<sup>th</sup> week is completed, righteousness arrives with God's eternal, unending kingdom.

On the other hand, injustice and beastly rule will be a problem up until the very end.

### **“to seal both vision and prophet”**

Seal could mean to lock up and hide a document or to authenticate a document by giving one's seal of approval. Seal of approval fits the context.

When the 70<sup>th</sup> week is completed, God will have authenticated both vision and prophet. Meaning by the end of the 70 weeks, God will have authenticated every vision and prophet by bringing what was foretold to pass.

In other words, when the 70<sup>th</sup> week is completed, God will have brought every promise to pass.

### **“to anoint a most holy place”**

Anoint is the verbal form of Messiah. Individuals and things were anointed with oil when oil was rubbed or poured on them. People were anointed in that they were consecrated for a task such as prophet or priest.

Literally, the phrase could be translated *“to anoint the holy of holies,”* indicating a place. We shouldn't think this was the rebuilt temple completed in 515 BC (Ezra 6:14-15), which was destroyed in 70 AD. It would be odd to make a big deal about a destroyed temple and place that alongside these other final salvation realities.

Given the fact that each of these other events is something that happens at the conclusion of the 70 weeks, with the exception of atonement for iniquity, this anointing of *“a most holy place”* is an end-time reality.

Jerusalem and its temple foreshadowed a future holy city, the new Jerusalem, which arrives at the end of time, God's final dwelling place with his people. God changes the way he dwells with his people throughout history.

In Exodus 25:8, the original tabernacle was a place where God dwelt with Israel.

*And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. – Exodus 25:8*

This was before Solomon's temple was completed in 960/959 BC (1 Kgs 6:1, 37-38). Solomon's temple was God's house, the place where God dwelt.

*How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! <sup>2</sup> My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. <sup>3</sup> Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God. <sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise! – Psalm 84:1-4*

Early in his ministry Jesus cleared the temple. When the Jews questioned him, he made a remarkable claim.

*Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup> But he was speaking about the temple of his body. – John 2:19-21*

Jesus, God the Son from all eternity, taking on human flesh was God dwelling in the midst of humanity.

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. – John 1:14*

In the New Testament, the church and individual Christians are God's temple. God dwells inside those who believe.

*Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? <sup>17</sup> If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. – 1 Corinthians 3:16-17*

Those who harm the church will be harmed by God because the church is God's dwelling place.

*Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. – 1 Corinthians 6:19-20*

Seeing that God lives inside us, we are a holy of holies ourselves. Being a dwelling place of God, we must flee from sexual immorality (1 Cor 6:18).

What I'm saying is this "most holy place" Daniel speaks of is the new heavens and new earth, AKA "the holy city, new Jerusalem," God's final dwelling place with man.

The temple was God's dwelling place with man for a time. This "most holy place" is God's final dwelling place with mankind.

*And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." – 21:2-4*

*And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. – Revelation 21:22*

When the 70<sup>th</sup> week is complete, God will dwell with his people in a new way.

## Applications

- 1) The atonement makes all these other realities possible.

God can put an end to sin without excluding all sinners from his coming kingdom because Jesus died on the cross. The wrath of God is satisfied for all for believe. The guilt of sin is removed for all who believe. We will live in a place of everlasting righteousness because Jesus died for our sins. We will dwell forever and ever in the presence of God because Jesus died for our sins.

In other words, all God's promises, whether forgiveness of sins or relief from suffering or whatever else, funnel through the atonement. All honor and praise belong to Jesus!

- 2) We have hope.

The path is hard. The path is long. Most of the path is hidden from us. God's shared a few highlights. But we know how it ends. God will end the sin problem! That's our hope.

Every pain we will ever experience in this life boils down to the sin problem. Decaying body. Being hurt by the words of another. Suffering self-inflicted consequences of our own sins. Sin will end!