

Dr. Wendy L. Widder, Daniel, Session 14

Daniel 9:20-27, Revelation of Restoration

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This is Dr. Wendy Widder in her teaching on the book of Daniel. This is session 14, Daniel 9:20-27, Revelation of Restoration.

This is our second lecture on Daniel 9. In the first lecture, we specifically focused on the first two sections, which is really the bulk of the chapter, taking us all the way up through verse 19.

That was setting Daniel's context, the time and place where he was, and then also recording his marvelous prayer of confession and supplication. His prayer prompts an answer, and that's what we come to in this last section, verses 20 through 27. We're going to have a revelation of restoration in these verses, but it's not quite the restoration that Daniel had in mind.

Let me read this section for us, and then we will dive into what has been called the dismal swamp of Old Testament scholarship. The text isn't dismal; it's the scholarship that's dismal. All right, verse 20.

While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the Lord my God for the holy hill of my God, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. At the beginning of your pleas for mercy, a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved.

Therefore, consider the word and understand the vision. Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. Know, therefore, and understand that from the going out of a word to restore and build Jerusalem, to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks.

Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and a moat, but in a troubled time. And after the sixty-two weeks an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week.

And for half of the week, he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

Alright, so this is the response to Daniel's prayer. And it starts with Gabriel coming, but there's this long lead-in to Gabriel actually appearing.

So, he says, while I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people, and presenting my plea before the Lord God for the holy hill of my God, while I was speaking and praying, the man Gabriel came. So, what does he preface it with, with all that restatement of what he's just said, a summary of what he's just said? I think part of the point is to bring back to our mind the main themes of Daniel's prayer. So, Daniel has been praying, confessing, and pleading with God.

For what? For the holy hill of Jerusalem, God's holy hill, for the holy hill. So, Gabriel comes, and it happens while Daniel's praying, which kind of suggests to us that this might be a response, an answer to Daniel's prayer. And Gabriel himself will actually say that.

And then he gives us the timing. This happens, oh, he identifies that Gabriel is the one he had seen in the vision at the first, or seen in an earlier vision. And Gabriel was specifically named in the chapter 8 vision.

Some people think he might be referring back to chapter 7, where Gabriel's not named, but it's up for debate. But he specifies that Gabriel comes at the time of the evening sacrifice. This is a reference to that second sacrifice, the evening sacrifice that would have been offered daily in the temple.

So that reference to this evening sacrifice actually links us back to chapter 8. It joins this revelation to the vision that Daniel had, the vision of the evenings and the mornings in Daniel 8. Both of them involve the desecration or the removal of the daily sacrifice, the desecration of the temple. It also recalls the focus of this text and of really these four visions of Yahweh's city, Jerusalem, the holy mountain, the temple, and the sanctuary. So that's where we are, but we're also in the context of the larger chapter.

So, remember, we're still in this first year of Darius. We're on the verge of restoration of the land. So, Gabriel appears, and he explains why he's there.

He says I'm here to instruct you in understanding. That's what he also did in chapter 8. He had been told to explain the vision.

So, he's coming to explain something, but we might sort of say, well, what's there to explain? Daniel was just praying. He wasn't asking for understanding. He wasn't asking for an explanation of anything.

He was asking for God to restore them. So, it's not obvious yet what Gabriel is going to be explaining. He says, at the beginning of your supplication, which might mean the beginning of his prayer, or it might mean the beginning of that second section.

He does say supplication. A word went out, and I, even I, came. I'm not sure if the ESV had that emphasis, but it's there in the Hebrew.

I came in answer to your prayer. That's impressive, right? Daniel's praying, and an angel shows up. And Gabriel shows up.

Wow. This must be important, right? Not only must the message be important, but Daniel is important. Specifically, Daniel is treasured.

That's what Gabriel says. So, Daniel prays, and an angel comes to give him understanding. And Gabriel exhorts him.

He says to consider the word and understand the vision. Daniel had just been considering the words of Jeremiah, or the words of the Lord, through Jeremiah the prophet. And now Gabriel says, consider what I'm going to say and understand what I'm going to tell you.

Now we get to the last four verses, verses 24 through 27. These are commonly called the 70 weeks of Daniel. We'll explain that in a minute.

And there are lots of issues in these verses. And once you think you've sorted out one issue, it opens up about four more. There is no way we can cover all these issues in detail.

So, we'll try to work through as many as we can, the ones that I consider most important to interpreting it. But what I really don't want to do is lose sight of the big picture. The tendency when we get to this is you just sort of get lost in the mess of interpretations and ways to find the significance in it.

And we forget the big picture. So, let's remember that Daniel has been confessing and begging God to restore, and Gabriel has come with a response to that. So, there's some restoration, perhaps, ahead that he's going to explain.

Just check something really quick. Are we magnetic? Yes, we are. Okay, good.

I forgot to check that. Okay, so he starts by saying, and 70 weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city. So before we get to the weeks part, Daniel had been reflecting on 70 years, right? 70 years that Jeremiah had prophesied.

Gabriel is coming in response to this reflection on 70 years, and he is going to reinterpret Jeremiah's prophecies. He's going to reinterpret to refer not to just 70 years but to 70 weeks of years. Now, he's not contradicting Jeremiah.

He's disclosing a hidden meaning, which is what we often find in apocalyptic literature. 70 weeks of years. So, we ask, here's our first issue, just to keep things a little more colorful in the dismal swamp.

Here's issue one. What's a week? What is a week? Most scholars understand these weeks to mean weeks of years. So, 70 weeks is going to be equivalent to 70 times 7 years, which is 490 years.

There's general agreement on that. Where this comes from, at least, we see it elsewhere in the Old Testament. So, in Leviticus 25, we have instructions given in the Mosaic Law to the people of Israel, instructions about the Sabbath year, and instructions about the year of Jubilee.

So, the way things were supposed to work in Israel when they lived in the land is that they could work the land for 7 years, but then at the end of 7 years they were supposed to give the land a Sabbath. It was supposed to rest as a Sabbath to the Lord, it says in Leviticus. So every 7 years the land gets a Sabbath.

But then, every seven Sabbath years, 70 weeks or seven weeks of years, they were to celebrate a year of Jubilee. So first, we have the land getting a Sabbath every seven years. That's a Sabbath year.

The land gets a break. But then they were to count 7 of these. And then there was a year of Jubilee.

So, 7 groups of Sabbath years is going to be 49 years. And then that 50th year is the year of Jubilee. What happened in the year of Jubilee is that any debts had to be forgiven, and ancestral land that had needed to be sold to pay off debts had to be returned.

So, it was this leveling of the ground again. The socioeconomic ground was leveled. The slaves were freed and the land was restored to its original owners.

So that's in Leviticus 25. That's where we get this week of years idea. In the next chapter, Leviticus 26, we get reminders of what happened if the people obeyed the covenant and what happened if they disobeyed the covenant.

And if they disobeyed the covenant, there was going to be a 7-fold punishment for their sin. So, the number 7 and weeks of years, they're all floating around in this idea of Leviticus associated with Sabbath and Jubilee. So, Sabbath is every 7 years.

This is every 7 weeks for the year. Okay, is that totally clear? The difference that scholars have is whether or to what extent to take the weeks of years literally. So, if we're talking literal weeks of years, we have 490 years.

So, do we have to somehow work a calculation that fits 490 years? Some people say yes. It's a literal interpretation. Other people say no.

It is 490 years old, but that's also symbolic. It doesn't have to be exact, kind of round numbers. Or you can say it's totally symbolic or primarily symbolic.

And it's a symbolism that rests on this background, this background of Jubilee specifically. So that's the first issue, the first response. How do we deal with the weeks of years? Is it literal? Is it symbolic? I lean towards symbolic.

I'll just show my hand. This is partly because this is apocalyptic literature, and symbolism is all over the place. Secondly, the numbers 7 and 70 are really symbolic and significant in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East.

They are used for fullness, to express totality. In other apocalyptic literature from the Second Temple period, weeks are used to structure history. They are not meant to be a literal counting of years.

It's just a way to organize history in a systematic way. So, in the book of First Enoch, there are 70 generations from the flood, from the time of the flood with Noah to the end of time. A text from Qumran talks about 70 weeks of structuring the same period of time.

And on and on it goes. There are examples of this elsewhere. And because of the background of the Jubilee and Sabbath years and the end of exile, which is in the historical background here, I definitely favor a more symbolic view.

Well then, there's still a question, though. How literal is the symbolism? So, I'll get more to this in a minute. But you end up having three numbers to deal with.

You have a 7, you have a 62, and then you have a final week that's actually divided in half. So, if you're taking it symbolically, should the 62 weeks be significantly longer or does the passage of time not really matter at all? So that's another variance you'll find in scholars who have a symbolic view. Okay, so Gabriel says 70 weeks are decreed for your people.

The end of exile is predicted by Jeremiah. Jeremiah had said 70 years. Gabriel says that 70 years was just the beginning of a greater 70.

This is 70 weeks of years. Okay, so what's going to happen? What's the purpose of these 70 weeks? Gabriel gives six purposes. He says to finish transgression.

There's that transgression word again that we saw three times in chapter 8. To finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. So Gabriel gives six purposes, and these purposes are put at the very beginning of the prophecy. So, before he says anything about what's going to happen, he says, what's going to be the result? This is the end of the 70 weeks.

When they are done, this is what will have happened. A lot of these things, depending on your view of to what extent the 70 weeks have been fulfilled, we'll get there. But a lot of these things can correspond more or less to events that happened during the second century persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes, but they do more than that.

A lot of them, while they might have an initial correspondence, they seem to transcend it in significance. There's something more going on here than just a historical fulfillment in the second century. There seem to be eschatological expectations, which I think we also saw in some of the earlier visions.

So those first three purposes, to finish transgression, put an end to sin, atone for wickedness, all three of those are dealing with sin. The transgression ending, it could be, given the meaning of this word transgression and what it actually refers to in Chapter 8, it could be speaking about this desecration of the temple. All the offenses that Antiochus IV did, they're going to end.

His offenses will end. Make an end of sin, atone for iniquity. That could also involve Antiochus, but given the fact that this revelation is in response to Daniel's prayer, think of what Daniel's just been doing.

He's been confessing sin of every kind of his people. So, it seems like this is probably a reference to at least the Jews' sins. Perhaps it includes Antiochus, but there's more going on here than just that historical reference. Those are the first three purposes.

The second three purposes are more positive in nature. So, to bring in everlasting righteousness. This could have been partially fulfilled in this restoration, making right the temple.

So, to bring in, but that's not everlasting, right? So we have this initial fulfillment, and the temple is made right again, but there's not everlasting rightness yet. To seal up vision and profit. In the ancient Near East, documents are often sealed for preservation and to verify their authenticity.

And then this anointing of a holy of holies. Again, that could be a reference to the restored temple. So, the holy of holies was restored.

There's definitely a focus on Israel, Jerusalem, and the temple. Collins says there's probably a little more going on here, though. He says this seems to be a fulfillment there, but this also just seems to be at least an eschatological ideal, which he calls it.

I don't know that he sees a future fulfillment, but he thinks that it's at least setting forth this hoped-for ideal existence. Joyce Baldwin, whom I've not mentioned before, she's done, I don't know if this has been redone or not, this is Tyndale Old Testament commentaries. Daniel, obviously.

It's short and sweet but very good. So, she doesn't waste a lot of ink covering issues that other commentators have covered. She gets right to the point.

She looks at these, and she thinks that they have an initial fulfillment, but they also likely speak of the accomplishment of God's purposes for history. So, historical reference, yes. Partial fulfillment here.

But there's more going on here. This is cosmic, we could say. It's eschatological.

It's bigger than just the second century. In Lucas's words, this Antiochus is a pale foreshadowing of even worse offenses to come, much greater evil to come. All right, so that's the end of the six purposes.

That was actually kind of the easy part, too. Verse 25, know and understand this. And then what follows Gabriel's words is the actual prophecy.

And he breaks it into three periods of time. Each period of time is associated with an event or a person revolving around the word *mashach* or to anoint, an anointed one, or an anointed place. So, three time periods, and each one is associated with the word anoint.

So, the three time periods are seven weeks, 62 weeks, and then a final week, which has a midpoint, so it's got halves. So, know and understand this. And then he says, from the going out of a word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until an anointed one, the ruler, comes, seven sevens, or seven weeks.

So, seven weeks, and what happens? We have the coming of an anointed one. Okay? For 62 sevens, or 62 weeks, it will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in troubled times. After the 62 sevens, an anointed one will be cut off and have nothing.

The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. So here we have an anointed one cut off. The end will come like a flood.

War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He'll confirm a covenant with many for one seven. In the middle of the seven, he'll put an end to sacrifice and offering.

At the temple, he'll set up a desolating abomination until the end that is decreed is poured out on him. So, this final week talks about this desolation, this covenant, sacrifice and offering, the abomination. But at the end of all that, the 70 weeks are fulfilled, right? So, the fulfillment of the 70 weeks takes us back to where Gabriel started with those purposes.

And what was one of the purposes of the 70 weeks? The last one was to anoint, literally, a most holy or holy of holies. So even though it doesn't follow in verse 27, this is the end of the 70 weeks. So, the end of the 70 weeks will be characterized by this anointing of a holy place.

Now, I have just flown past a whole lot of controversial issues. If you're familiar with the 70 weeks, they're probably going off like alarms in your head. So let me try to explain myself.

So, the first issue was, what's a week? The second issue is, Gabriel says, from the going out of a word to rebuild and restore Jerusalem. What's the word? What's the word that went out? This is the beginning of the 70 weeks, so it's kind of important, right? What's the word that went out? Scholars vary widely in their understanding of what this word is. Sometimes, the version of the Bible that you're reading will reflect the translator's preference.

So, the ESV says, word. A word goes out. That's the Hebrew word, dabar.

The NASB uses the word decree. NRSV uses the word command. And either one of those could reflect a different Hebrew word.

But as I go through what the options are, you might be able to slot what the translator's interpretation is. So, there are three main options, or three main ideas, about what this word could be. The first one, and the one that I usually lean toward.

Although, honestly, every time I study it, I'm like, ah, this one, they both might work. That's how the 70 weeks go. So, the first option is that this word that went out is referring to one of the words or prophecies that Jeremiah gave.

Word, *dabar*, often refers to a prophetic word. And it almost never is used to refer to a decree, like a royal decree. That, we would probably expect to find the word *dot*.

The word, word, the word, word, is in Daniel 9 several times. It starts in verse 2, where he reflects on the word of the Lord to Jeremiah. And then in verse 12, we have the word spoken against Israel by God.

And then, in verse 23, Gabriel talks about a word that went out. And that's what he's coming in response. So all of the occurrences of *dabar*, word, in Daniel, before this verse, are talking about words of Yahweh.

So, it makes good sense contextually just to say, okay, then this is also referring to Yahweh's word. Specifically, the word that he gave to Jeremiah the prophet. So, this is one view.

If you take that view, then you'd probably say we're referring to either that prophecy of the 70 years of exile or we're referring to a prophecy of future restoration. Those are both found in Jeremiah. All right, so that's your first option.

I'm going to move these over a little bit. First option is that it's a Jeremiah prophecy. Second option is that it reflects the decree of a Persian king.

Persian decree. Well, if you take that view, you have four options for what decree we're talking about. You could refer to the decree of Cyrus in 539, a word that went out.

That word was specifically having to do with rebuilding the temple, not Jerusalem. But they are related, so you have a little bit of fudge space there. Because the prophecy says, a word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.

So technically, Cyrus' word was to rebuild the temple. It could have been a decree by Darius I in 521. This is recorded in Ezra 6, which is really a reissuing of the 539 decree that Cyrus had made.

Or it could have been one of two decrees made by Artaxerxes in the 400s BC. So in 458, he made a decree that allowed Ezra and a group to return under Ezra. And Ezra would appoint officials over the people in Judah.

That's in Ezra 7. In 445, Artaxerxes made a decree. This is recorded in Nehemiah 2. And he allowed Nehemiah to go back and rebuild the walls. So actually, none of

those, if people want to be technical, none of them refer to restoring and rebuilding Jerusalem, the city.

But I don't think that's really a big deal, personally. That's your second option. The third option for the word that went forth is that it's the same word as in verse 23.

So that is, it's Gabriel's word. It's Gabriel's word in verse 23. The revelation was given by Gabriel.

So, what he's presently saying right now. Collins takes this view and he argues that the context favors it. Since that's the word that was just referred to, it seems to fit what he's talking about here.

An evangelical scholar, an older one, Young's commentary, sort of takes this view; he kind of does a both-and position that might be attractive. He says, yes, the reference for the word is the same in verses 23 and 25. So it is referring to Gabriel's word.

But it's also a reference to 539. Because he says, when the divine word is issued, when God speaks, no one sees or hears that. But it enacts in history an invisible event.

So, you have the divine word, but it's played out on the pages of history. So, in the case of Daniel 9.25, he says that the divine word became evident in history during the first year of Cyrus. So, it kind of does a little both-and idea.

So those are your three options for what the word might be. Another issue that I skipped right past in my reading of the first part is that there's some disagreement, a fair bit of disagreement, about what to do with the 7 and the 62. So, we have two numbers.

We have 7 and we have 62. And there are two ways that interpreters and translations read these numbers. The first is the way that I didn't read it.

And that is reading them as one unit. So, it's not seven weeks, and then an event, and 62 weeks, and an event. These are going together, 7 and 62 weeks, and then the events.

Let me tell you where that comes from. So, it would read like this. And this is what the NIV has.

It's what New American Standard has. It's also in the King James, and I'm sure it's in lots of other translations, too. So rather than 7 years and 62 years, it's 7 plus 62, which is 69.

So, they would read, From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, until the anointed one, the ruler, comes, there will be 7 sevens and 62 sevens. Period. It will be rebuilt, with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.

The way that the ESV and the New Revised Standard, and me, this is the way I read it, is to read it as two separate units. So, from the going out of the word to the coming of the anointed one, a prince, there shall be 7 weeks. Period.

Then, for 62 weeks, it shall be built again, with squares and moat, etc. Now, you say, how can they be different? Where's the period? Well, that's the question. So, in Hebrew, there's no punctuation, per se, but there's an accentual system that helps readers break clauses.

And figure out from the way the text has traditionally been read where the clauses break. And there is a significant break in the Hebrew accents between 7 and 62. So, the reading that breaks them up is faithful to the Hebrew accents.

Okay? This is the way the Hebrew accents, after 7 weeks, the anointed one comes. 62 weeks, an anointed one cut off. The question is, whether these Hebrew accents, reflect the way the text was read from the time it was written, or, because they were added in much later, and that is true, they were added in much later, whether it reflects Jewish scribes, trying to counter what would have been a Messianic interpretation.

Okay? So, if you read them together, let me clarify that that probably didn't make any sense. If you read them together, it's 69 weeks. And in your chronology, then, your anointed ones are the same figure.

You don't have an anointed one coming after 7 weeks, and an anointed one coming after, or being cut off after 62 weeks. You have, let me read the end of you, just so I don't say it wrong. You have, from the time the word goes out, until the anointed one comes, there will be 7 sevens and 62 sevens.

It'll be rebuilt for 62 weeks. So, these two go together, you have one anointed one, one referent for two different anointed ones in the text. I hope I'm not totally confusing you.

And so the question is whether Jewish scribes who didn't want this to represent Messiah, Jesus, whether they adjusted so that people would read them separately. If you read them separately, you get two different anointed ones, and for most interpreters, neither one is Jesus. We'll get to the anointed ones in a minute.

So, this is a big issue. You can see it has a lot entailed with it. So, the question is whether to read the accents as original, or as later additions, trying to influence or change a Messianic interpretation.

I actually think either is possible. They both have good arguments. I prefer the distinct periods.

But I actually also think, because I like to have my cake and eat it too, I think that the ambiguity might be intentional, and maybe even significant. If we hold, and I hold, that the Bible is written by human authors, but it was superintended by God and the Holy Spirit, I think there could have been an intentional ambiguity here. I'm going to make you wait for that.

If I don't run out of time. Alright, so, issue one, the week. Issue two: what's the word?

Issue three: what do you do with the seven and the 62? The next issue is who the anointed ones are. So, we've got two anointed ones. I'm running out of room.

We've got two anointed ones. First of all, it's not, in the Hebrew, it's not the anointed one. It is an anointed one.

There are several versions and translations that capitalize anointed one, which is a translator's interpretive decision. Or probably a publisher's interpretive decision. By capitalizing anointed one, you're saying that it's Jesus.

You're identifying that this is a definite. It's the anointed one. The text says an anointed one. They're both indefinite.

An anointed one. The King James, the NIV, the NASB all reflect the anointed one. Your view on who these anointed ones are depends on your view of what to do with the seven and the 62.

So, if you read them together for a total of 69 weeks, then most people will see one anointed character, and it's Jesus. That's not true across the board, but that's generally the pattern. So, if you read them together, you have one anointed one, and it's Jesus.

He is the one who comes after the 69 weeks, and he's also the one who's cut off. A reference to his death. If you read them separately, seven weeks and then an anointed one, and then 62 weeks and an anointed one is cut off; then your first anointed one is somebody associated with the return from exile.

So, after seven weeks, well, that's 49, seven times seven, 49, 50 years. It could be either Cyrus, who's actually called the anointed, or his anointed in Isaiah. Or it could be Zerubbabel, who was one of the returnees.

He's called a son of oil in Zechariah. Or it could be Joshua, the high priest, who's also called a son of oil. All three of those are associated in some way with the return from exile.

The second one, the anointed one who's cut off, is typically understood to be a Jewish high priest who was assassinated in 171 BC, just before things all went really badly. Onias III is the last legitimate Zaddikite high priest in Jerusalem. So that's typically the identity of the second anointed one, the one who's cut off.

I want to pause here and say, more importantly, with respect to these numbers, however exactly you interpret them, don't miss the symbolism of Sabbath and Jubilee. We've got the seven sevens. Seven sevens in Daniel 9 is likely an allusion to the instructions about Jubilee in Leviticus 25, where they were to count off seven Sabbaths.

In Old Testament law, that's seven times seven years or 49 years. That was the, who am I quoting here, this is John Collins, that was the maximum period that land could be alienated from its ancestral heirs or that a person could be kept in indentured slavery. And then they had to be freed.

So, think of that just in terms of where Daniel is and what Gabriel's telling him. The maximum period of time that a land could be alienated from its ancestral heirs. That sure sounds like the end of exile to me.

Israel has been exiled from its ancestral land. The chronicler talks about the years of exile, which was 70 years so that the land could have the Sabbaths the people robbed it of. So, it makes that explicit connection.

So, I think this idea is relevant in Daniel 9 because Daniel's been reflecting on the years of exile and the alienation that the people have from the land of promise. So I think that this symbolism in the background of Daniel 9 it leads me to expect that this first anointed one, the one that comes after seven weeks I think that we should expect that one to be associated with the end of exile. Play a significant part in Israel's restoration to the land.

What's the significance of the 62 weeks? I don't think it actually has one. It's the time to fill in between what is really of importance in this prophecy. This matters.

That's a significant symbolic number associated with return and restoration from exile. And this last week, the 70th week, for sure, matters. I think it's got two whole verses devoted to it.

62 is the filler so that we can get to the ultimate fullness, 70. These 62 sevens are times of distress. So even though the land has been restored, it's not really the glorious restoration that the prophets had said.

The coming of everlasting righteousness didn't happen with the coming of the first anointed one. The restored people were still living under the rule of Gentile kings. They were still vassal states.

During the Hellenistic era, the Jews are caught between the power struggles of the warring Seleucids and the Ptolemies. They don't have their own king. So, the person with the most power in Jerusalem, the most local power, is the Jewish high priest.

But he has to answer to whichever king or whichever empire is in charge. Then late in these last 62 weeks, that last legitimate high priest is assassinated. The 62 weeks come to an end, and the 70th week begins.

Okay. No idea how long I've been talking. The 70th week has a whole series of events in it.

We're not going to go through the details of them. I know they're really important for people's interpretations of how this works out in time. I will say that the grammar and the syntax is very difficult and different commentators arrange clauses and sentences differently.

It's just very difficult. The holy city and the holy place will be destroyed. The end is going to come with a flood.

There's going to be a covenant made. There's going to be a violation of that covenant and a stopping of the temple rituals and a desolating abomination in the temple. And then finally, the destruction of the desolator.

We could fill in historical details of what happened specifically during the years of Antiochus IV. He devastated worship in the temple. He placed some kind of abomination.

I'm not exactly sure what it was. It was possibly a Greek statue. A statue of a Greek god.

He had priests offer pigs on the altar. It's an atrocious week. Atrocious time.

And it effectively destroys the temple. Now, the temple is still standing when he's done. But it's been defiled, desecrated.

It can't be used. It's effectively been destroyed. And then that's the end of it.

It's this abrupt ending. However, it's really not the end of the 70 weeks. The end of the 70 weeks was told to us at the very beginning.

That everlasting righteousness that's going to come. At the end of the day, I think the events described in the 70 weeks are symbolic and elusive enough to be repeatedly applied during similar patterns of sin, suffering, and despotism in history. So, those are the issues.

What I haven't done is organize them yet into different views. I think I'm going to hold and come back to that. Because I want to at least end this part of the discussion revisiting the big picture.

So, remember I said Jubilee. The year of Jubilee is in the background of this 70 weeks. The fourth, or sorry, the seven times seven weeks to the year of Jubilee.

I think that despite all the difficulties of the 70 weeks, one of the overriding themes is that God is in control of history, and he's ultimately going to fulfill his promises. So, in terms of the six, sorry, the seven. The seven and the 62 and the anointed ones.

And how you want to read those numbers. Remember I said I think you can defend reading them together. You can defend reading them separately.

It's hard to make, in my opinion, a definitive argument. If you read them together, the anointed one is Jesus. If there's one, it's Jesus.

If you read them separately, the anointed ones are related to, at least, the second one related to this Antiochian persecution. I think both are possible readings. And I also think both might even be plausible readings.

Now, I prefer to separate them. But I do think the ambiguity might be part of the message. Inspiration of the spirit, superintending human authors, perhaps in God's control, both are plausible and possible because both are part of the prophecy.

What do I mean? Daniel's earlier visions dealt immediately with the 2nd century BC, but they went beyond. I mean, we've got hosts of heaven being pulled down. There was some eschatological language in there.

They went beyond, foretelling in some way the work of Jesus. Why? Because everything in the Old Testament is related in some way to its destination, Jesus. And we didn't talk about those things specifically, but those earlier visions go beyond.

They foretell in some way God's plan to come. The 70 weeks also foretells these events that happened during the time of Antiochus, but it goes beyond to involve Jesus. I think one hint here, and as I said, this is only a hint, so I don't want to stand too hard on this one, is the use of the word Messiah or Mashiach, this anointing word.

It's not a code word in the Old Testament for Jesus. You want to be careful when you see Messiah and think, well, that means Jesus. It's used for all kinds of anointed figures.

But this is the only use of the word in the Book of Daniel, and it occurs three different times in this short prophecy. So, at the very least, that should give us pause. Maybe there's more going on.

And the fact that one of these anointed ones is cut off. There's more going on here. I also think about the use of these symbolic numbers in the structure of the 70 weeks, the seven and the 70, and the weeks of years.

I think that intends to take us back to Leviticus, to these ideas of Sabbath year and Jubilee. And those events in Leviticus, those things encoded in the law, were shadows of Jesus' work to come. They have fulfillment in Jesus.

Jesus himself kind of makes that clear when he introduces himself in Luke 4. He inaugurates the coming of the kingdom in Luke 4, and he quotes, or he reads, actually, in the synagogue, he reads Isaiah 61's promise that there would be one anointed by God, empowered by the Spirit, who would bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty for the captives, et cetera, et cetera. He is announcing the fulfillment of Jubilee, and he's it. Jesus is the Jubilee.

So, the 70 weeks are showing the end of the 70-year exile, and they're showing that that 70-year exile is just a shadow of a bigger exile, a greater exile to come, that would one day end, and the fulfillment, the one to bring it to an end, to fulfill it, would be that anointed one. The anointed one at the end of the Babylonian exile, whether it was Cyrus or Joshua or Zerubbabel, their mission was temporary, and it was even partial. The end of exile that's brought by Jesus, the end of exile to sin, is permanent, though not in its fullness yet.

The anointed one cut off. If it's Onias III, that's the first historical referent, the immediate historical referent. Onias III was a priest.

He was performing sacrificial duties on behalf of the people, bringing their sins before God, but he had an ongoing duty. The people were dependent on the high priest and the priest doing their duties. Jesus, as the anointed one cut off, takes care of that once and for all.

So, I think part of the point of the 70 weeks for New Testament believers is that Jesus is the Jubilee. The seven sevens jubilee of the Mosaic Law, 49 years, has a tenfold fulfillment in 490 years. That's the fullness of it.

And that fulfillment comes in Jesus' death, resurrection, ascension, and ultimate return, which is the day we wait for. I think we're going to squeeze one more lecture in here in which we go over the views of the 70 weeks.

This is Dr. Wendy Widder in her teaching on the book of Daniel. This is session 14, Daniel 9:20-27, Revelation of Restoration.