

## **Dr. Wendy L. Widder, Daniel, Session 15, Daniel 9:20-27, Perspectives on the 70 Weeks**

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This is Dr. Wendy Widder in her teaching on the book of Daniel. This is session 15, Daniel 9:20-27, Perspectives on the 70 Weeks.

This is the third and final lecture on Daniel 9. And what I want to do in this lecture is talk through some of the different perspectives that people have on interpreting the 70 weeks.

So, in the last lecture, we talked about the issues, or at least some of the issues, that are involved in the interpretation of the 70 weeks. There are a couple more that I did not address, but for the most part, one's perspective on these issues will also determine then their view on the 70 weeks. So let me lay out the chart for you before we dive into filling it in.

So, the issues are over here. The first issue has to do with what a person understands the word that went out to be. What's the beginning point of the 70 weeks? What was that word? The second issue is the identity of this first anointed one, who's also called Messiah the Prince.

By the way, I'm using a chart based on John Walton's book on Old Testament charts. So, I've kind of doctored it up to make it my own, but this is the basis of what I'm using. Then, this third issue is how to read the 62 weeks.

And I don't have enough space here, but some of it has to do with whether you read just 62 or whether you add 7 to it. So that's going to be this row. Then, this issue is the identity of the second anointed one, that second Messiah, the one who's cut off.

And then there's a question about who is the covenant maker that verse 27 refers to, the one who makes a covenant for the one week. We did not talk about that in the last lecture, but I will at least identify the options for you here. And then there's a question of the 70th week.

When is the 70th week finished? When are those prophecies fulfilled? Another thing that we didn't discuss is that some scholars will read the 70th week as progressing from start to finish; it's all done. But then there's a group of scholars, one of the views here, that will see there being a gap between the 70 weeks. So, they start, but then there's this undetermined gap of time before the week finishes.

So, the prophecy itself does talk about the midpoint. And so, for these scholars, the midpoint, then there's also a gap after it. So that's what that final issue is.

So, let's jump in. The first view that I'm going to go through is the Maccabean view. This is sometimes also called the Antiochian view.

This is a historical view, and it reflects the idea that the entire prophecy was fulfilled during the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. So, in this case, the word that went out happened in 605 or 586, depending on which exact word you want to pick. And it's one of Jeremiah's words, probably.

And again, this is not the final word on all these views. There are variations in every one of them. So, I'm just going to give you the gist of it.

But be assured if you were to take this chart to commentaries, you would find variations in just about every one of them. So, one of Jeremiah's words, one of Jeremiah's prophecies about the return from exile. The first anointed one is one of three figures associated with the return from exile.

So that would either be Cyrus, who issued the decree that they could return, or it would be Zerubbabel. I always have to look how to spell Zerubbabel. Who accompanied the people on one of the returns.

Or it would be Joshua, the high priest at the time. In defense of using the word Messiah for each of these, Cyrus is referred to as Yahweh's anointed in Isaiah. So, Zerubbabel and Joshua are both sons of oil, which would be the son of an anointing.

Alright. The 62 weeks, the span of time covered during the 62 weeks, so after the first 7 weeks are finished here, is from 538-539 to 170. I'll let you do the math on it; it's not actually 490 years; it's 367 literal years, in case you care.

This is the period of time from Cyrus until Antiochus IV. And then the anointed one, the identity of the second anointed one, that's the one who's cut off at the end of the 62 weeks, is Onias III, who was the last legitimate Zadokite high priest during the second temple period. He is assassinated in 171.

The covenant maker, let me just read that verse for you. So, after the 62 weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and have nothing. The people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.

There are different ideas of who exactly that is also, but that's not an issue we're going to get to. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end, there shall be war. Desolations are decreed.

And then verse 27 says, and he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week. The question is, who is this he? It's unclear in the syntax and grammar. So, in

this view, he is Antiochus IV, and he makes a covenant with apostate or renegade Jews.

These would typically be the Jews who were strongly in favor of the Hellenization of Jerusalem and Judea. Alright, then the 70th week, the events of the 70th week, those include the persecution by Antiochus during the 2nd century BC. So, this is going to be from 171, which is the date that Onias III is cut off, until 164, which is when the Maccabean Revolt occurs and the temple is restored.

I also want to identify for you as I go some commentators who hold these views. I think it might be helpful for you. So, this is generally the critical view.

Commentators like John Collins of the Hermeneia series, Carol Newsome, and basically any commentary you pick up that is not overtly evangelical, or Christian will have this perspective. It's all been fulfilled during the 2nd century BC. However, there are evangelical scholars who hold this view but say there's typology here. There's this pattern of behavior.

Even though these events fulfilled in the 2nd century, it's only partial, and this pattern is going to repeat itself until the end of time in some way, shape, or form. Scholars who hold that view—me, John Goldingay, I think Heather Appel here, Ernest Lucas—take the more typological approach. They start with an initial fulfillment but then see continuing significance in the Bible and continuing into history.

All right, the second view is the Roman view, which is also sometimes called, or what I call, the historic messianic view. And the reason I call it this is it's historic or historical in the sense that it's referring to fulfillment in history. Just like this one, this is also a historic or historical, get those confused view.

The messianic label that I've given it means that at least one of the anointed ones is considered to be Jesus. That's what the messianic label means. At least one, probably both, of the anointed ones is considered to be Jesus.

So, in this view, typically the word that went out is seen to be one of the four Persian decrees. So, we talked about four decrees by Persian kings. There was one by Cyrus in 539, then a follow-up by Darius I in 522, I think, and then Artaxerxes had a couple in here.

They're all recounted in scripture somewhere, a Persian decree. So, it could be any one of those that would be the decree to the word that went out to rebuild and restore Jerusalem. Messiah the Prince is Jesus from this perspective, and he's also the second anointed one.

So, what they do here with these 62 weeks is you have to add the 62 plus 7. You read them as one unit equaling 69, and that spans the time from the decree until some point in the life of Jesus. So, Jesus is the second anointed one who is cut off. He is the one who makes a covenant.

So, he's the one who makes a covenant, the new covenant, in fact, is the one that this view refers to. Then, the 70th week culminated with the Roman destruction of the temple. So, everything in the 70 weeks has been fulfilled by the time the Romans destroyed the temple, or with the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

So, it's historic, historical in that it's all fulfilled. It's messianic in that Jesus is one of the anointed ones. To get there, you have to read these as one unit.

All right, so that's that view. Oh, some commentators. Actually, the commentators that I have that hold this view have an adapted view of it.

So, they'll see this initial fulfillment, but actually, one of them sees some typological fulfillment yet to come. So, Joyce Baldwin holds this view, but she's modified it. So, she says, yes, it was fulfilled, but that's not the whole story.

There's a pattern here. There's prophecy that's still to come. So, she's one.

Young holds this view, and I cannot actually remember if he modifies it and sees additional fulfillment. But I know he holds the Roman view up to this point. Whether he goes beyond it, I cannot remember.

I think he does. Okay, so that's the Roman view, the historic messianic view. Then we have views that are eschatological.

This is in contrast to those that have already been fulfilled in history. They had complete fulfillment. Now, we're looking at views that cast fulfillment into the future and don't actually see fulfillment.

They don't see total fulfillment in history at all. It's still awaiting fulfillment. These two views will say there's an initial fulfillment.

It's been done. For some of us, there's more to come. There's a pattern that's going on.

These folks say, no, it wasn't all fulfilled in the first place. We're still awaiting even the initial fulfillment. So, this category breaks into two.

You have the symbolic, and then you have the interval. So, let's deal with the symbolic first. And there are variations on this, of course, because that makes it more fun.

The word that goes out is the Decree of Cyrus, so 539 BC. The first anointed one and the second anointed one are Jesus. So, you have to add, well, actually, you don't add the two together here.

This is Jesus. You do add the two together. And then there's a gap here, Church Age.

And then the second Messiah, it's the same person, but it's a different point in history. It's during the Tribulation. I shrug my shoulders a little bit because this view is on the chart, and I've looked at it repeatedly.

I have yet to find a commentator who I think reflects this view. So, I'm not exactly sure of all the nuances of it because I haven't been able to find a commentator who goes this direction. I'm sure there is one or it wouldn't be on the chart.

So, Jesus at the Tribulation. Then, the covenant maker in this view is Antichrist. So, Antichrist makes a covenant with national Israel; I'm presuming that is how this view would take it.

The 70th week is the Tribulation, and the rest of the Tribulation is symbolic. All right, the other symbolic view: This word is Jeremiah's prophetic word. It specifies his word in 597 or 4, but I think you could probably say either one.

And let me pause a second here. The reason there are two dates here is to remember Jeremiah has two different prophecies. We have different Persian decrees.

Well, how does someone decide which of these they hold? Well, it has to do with how they're going to do the math. So, if they're going to work 490 years, then they would choose one beginning point over, you know, it's trying to make, if you take the 490 years to be fairly literal, then you have to somehow get the math to work. This would determine which of the Persian decrees was in view and which of Jeremiah's prophecies was in view.

Then that would sort of nuance the rest of how the math works to get to approximately 490 years. And the symbolic view, we're not terribly concerned about 490 years exactly, because things are understood to be symbolic. So, it doesn't really matter if the math doesn't work.

Okay, the second symbolic view is what I'm working on here. Our anointed one is Cyrus, associated with the exile. Then, these 62 weeks are understood to be some indefinite time from Cyrus until the end, like the end of time.

So, this is an indefinite period of time that's still in progress. So, then everything from here down is the future fulfillment that's awaited. In this view, the second anointed one is actually Antichrist.

This view is held by Thomas McComiskey, who's written an article, I guess, from the 80s in Westminster Theological Journal, where he talks about the different views and details why he goes this way. He says this seems counterintuitive, but he claims that in the book of Daniel, the way this figure is portrayed, it actually seems to fit. So, he says this is Antichrist.

He says the covenant maker is Antichrist. And then the 70 weeks or the 70th week is the tribulation. In terms of which of these views is messianic, this one is.

This first one is. It's messianic because Jesus is the anointed one or at least one of the anointed ones. This view, even though it's eschatological and it's awaiting fulfillment, it's not considered messianic because Jesus is neither one of the anointed ones.

Then, we get to the interval perspective. Thomas McComiskey doesn't have a commentary on Daniel that I know of, but he puts forth this argument for this position in that article in Westminster Theological Journal. I don't know of any other commentators who hold it.

This interval perspective, the word that goes out is one of the decrees of a Persian king, but specifically one of Artaxerxes' decrees. So, Artaxerxes has two decrees in the 400s, 458 or 445 Artaxerxes. And those show up in the Bible in Ezra and Nehemiah.

The first anointed one is Jesus. This view adds the 62 plus the 7 to have one period of time, 69 weeks. There's also in some variations of this view a discussion of prophetic years and how that might factor into the 490 years.

It gets really quite confusing, but if you're reading a commentary and they make an argument for years being a different length of time than a traditional year, you might understand they're probably talking about what they call a prophetic year. This time period ends with the triumphal entry of Jesus in the Gospels. The Messiah cut off is Jesus at the crucifixion.

Then the covenant maker is Antichrist. This is happening during the 70th week here, so this view sees a gap in the 70th week for sure. The 70th week is the tribulation.

So, there's a significant gap here in this view. This view is pretty typical of the dispensational view. So, the commentary that I have that expounds it pretty clearly is the NAC commentary by Stephen Miller.

This is a really popular series. Actually, Miller does a good job of outlining the issues and presenting different views. I found that true of Miller.

He's a great commentator. He's a great commentator. So that's the dispensational view reflected there.

This view is also messianic, right? Because Jesus is both of the anointed ones. So this is eschatological and messianic. This is eschatological non-messianic.

This is eschatological messianic. Neither of these are technically eschatological, although there are scholars in both columns who allow for typological fulfillment somewhere down the road. So, this is just the tip of the iceberg.

I assure you, if you're interested in the 70 weeks, you can find plenty of reading material and lots of different issues to pursue if you're interested. Every one of these issues, plus several that I didn't even talk about. Most commentators take some sort of view on each or try to fit the puzzle together in such a way as to make sense of difficult syntax, ambiguity, or issues that we just don't have the right context to understand.

But that hopefully gives you a little bit of sense of how different traditions and different commentators, different scholars approach understanding the 70 weeks. So good luck. This is Dr. Wendy Whitter, Inner Teaching on the book of Daniel.

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