

The Kingdom

Purpose of the Series

Even though I did not map out ahead of time the various series I was going to do, I now see they are working in concert with each other to develop the meaning of the New Covenant. I believe this is the Holy Spirit while someone else might call it “dumb luck”.

- The first series, “The Era of the Spirit”, sought to describe the Gospel of first importance, namely, that the restoration of the Holy Spirit within humans was God’s goal since the failure of Adam and Eve in the Garden. Nevertheless, their failure was inevitable and necessary in order to mankind to see the pointlessness in relating to God through adherence to Good and Evil.
- The second series, “The Pharisaical Lens”, shows how to interpret the interactions between Jesus and the Pharisees to understand how Jesus was condemning the choice made in the Garden and restoring the possibility of God’s Spirit dwelling within mankind. In addition, without the lens, contrary and incongruous doctrines are developed.
- The third series, “The Church”, sought to show that, while the first century church did understand a lot about the Gospel, it also missed some important things which God worked miracles to rectify. Ultimately, God’s miracles with Peter and Paul and the destruction of the temple communicated that the Law was no longer in effect; however, mankind’s affinity towards laws and rules replaced the Mosaic Law with a “Christ Law”. This seemingly small crack developed into huge faults especially when Christianity became the state religion of Rome. Further schisms and reformations of the church only created different Christ Laws.
- This series seeks to reinforce the prior three series’ claims that the restoration of the Holy Spirit in humans is the point of the New Covenant. It will do this by interpreting prophecies from the Old Testament and showing how they were fulfilled in the New Covenant.

Part 1: What on earth is the Kingdom?

It’s a bit difficult to determine, so let’s try to define some boundaries.

- I. When didn’t it start and when *could* it start?
 - a. Did John the Baptist’s ministry? Mat 3:2, John the Baptist says: it’s near. Nope.
 - b. Mat 4:17 Jesus: it’s near. This is after Jesus’ birth, his baptism, the Spirit descending on him, his temptation in the wilderness, and the beginning of his ministry.
 - c. Mark 9:1 Jesus: within the lifetime of **some** of those standing there. Some of whom? At a minimum the 12 Apostles, but in verse 8:34, it’s a crowd and his disciples.

- d. Mat 16:28 and Luke 9:27 Jesus: within the lifetime of some of the 12 apostles.
Some means not all and not none; therefore, at least one of the 12 would have to taste death, but not all of them could taste death.
- II. Why is the word “repent” used to “kick off” the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus?
 - a. The Hebrew word for “repent” is “teshuvah”. Teshuvah means “to return” and conveys the idea of changing one’s mindset to commit to turning away from law-breaking (sin) and toward obedience (righteousness).
 - b. When the Hebrew Bible (the Tanakh or, for us, the Old Testament) was translated into Greek by the 2nd century BC. It started with the Torah (first 5 books) in the 3rd century BC and then the other books followed.
 - c. Teshuvah doesn’t appear in the Torah, but appears in the other two sections, the Ketuvim or Writings and the Nevi’im or Prophecies, 24 different times.
 - d. Teshuvah is a comprehensive and complicated word, but the Greek word “metanoia” was chosen as the closest in meaning.
 - e. The word "metanoia" is derived from "meta" (literal “after” which implies a before which denotes change as in metamorphosis) and "nous" (mind). It literally means a change of mind or thinking.
 - f. Nevertheless, there are differences, and it’s impossible to know which version of metanoia (the Hebrew-leaning or the Greek-leaning) a NT speaker is using.
 - i. "Metanoia" emphasizes an *inner* transformation of mind and heart. It is about a fundamental change in one’s way of thinking and perceiving life, leading to a change in behavior.
 - ii. "Teshuvah" encompasses both the internal change, and the external actions required to make things right.
 - iii. The concept of "teshuvah" is deeply embedded in Jewish ritual and practice, especially around the High Holy Days (such as Yom Kippur), whereas with "metanoia" the Greek emphasis is placed on an inner transformation of mind and heart and thus a fundamental change in one’s perception of life.
 - g. In my opinion, both meanings are present in the NT. When a Jewish person said or heard the word, they thought Teshuvah, but when Jesus or the Spirit says it, they mean Metanoia.
 - h. This is a lot about a word, but like the Pharisaical Lens, a misunderstanding of the word can derail a person’s theology, while the correct understanding carries them to the Gospel.
- III. Where is the Kingdom?
 - a. Dan 2:44 – part of it is on earth
 - b. Luke 17:20 – in your midst or within you.
 - c. Heb 8:5 – things on earth are a shadow of what is in heaven
 - d. So really it’s on earth and in heaven.

Next week we'll start to go through the prophecies in the Old Testament that speak about the Kingdom and what they say about reality.

Part 2: Protology and Eschatology

Review from last week:

- What the earthly Kingdom of God and the heavenly Kingdom of God are is difficult to describe; therefore, we started with boundaries around the Kingdom.
- Firstly, it didn't exist in the beginning, therefore it had a start. What are some important events that might have been its start?
 - Using verses Mat 3:2 and 4:17, we ruled out the birth of Jesus, the start of John the Baptist's ministry, and the start of Jesus' ministry.
 - Using verses Mark 9:1, Mat 16:28, and Luke 9:27, we determined it had to start within the lifetimes of *some* of the 12 Apostles. This means at least one had to die before it could start but at least one still had to be alive when it started.
- Secondly, we talked at length about why John the Baptist and Jesus would both start their ministries with the phrase, "Repent of the kingdom of heaven is near".
 - The English word for "repent" has the Greek root "metanoia" and Hebrew root "teshuvah". Metanoia was the best Greek word to represent teshuvah but brought along some meaning from teshuvah which was not originally in metanoia. Namely, the deeply embedded Jewish ritual and practice of wiping out one's past sins and recommitting to following the Law of Moses.
 - John the Baptist was referring to teshuvah, because people had to recommit to the Law to appreciate the Gospel of Jesus. Jesus meant both: teshuvah for the same reason as John the Baptist, but metanoia because people would have to open their minds to the concept of the New Covenant.
- Thirdly, where is the Kingdom? It's on earth inside of people and it's in heaven where Christ reigns with all authority.

Today's topic is a little different. It builds on The Church series Part 8, "a model of God". There I was talking about how everyone has a model of God if they don't know it, and how that model dictates their thoughts of the meaning behind the evolution of the Church and how many people will be saved. Here we'll zoom out even further to examine one's model of reality itself.

- I. **What are Protology and Eschatology and what do they have to do with the Kingdom?**
 - a. Protology is the study of beginning times or origins (protos means "first" in Greek), and Eschatology is the study of end times (eschatos means "last" in Greek). There are theological and scientific versions of both. What comes between the beginning and end is explored through various fields within science and theology.
 - b. The Kingdom on earth is set up by events that happened at the beginning, is prophesied about, starts (at some point), and ends with the end of earth.

Therefore, with such a span of time, in order to understand it fully, one must know protological and eschatological premises on which it stands.

- c. Whether we like it or not, reality is filled mostly with mystery and the unknown. We are left to piece together as much as we can from the few facts and clues that we have. The Kingdom is one such piece of the puzzle—but a very important one missing from the theology of most Christians.

II. **Our reality is crazy no matter which explanation you prescribe to.**

- a. Occam's Razor: The simplest, most elegant explanation which makes the fewest assumptions is usually the one closest to the truth. Many thinkers attempt to apply this philosophy to reality itself. This is fine as long as one admits all explanations make huge assumptions.
- b. Here's what we know:
 - i. There was a creation event.
 - 1. Either something came from nothing or something already existed. Neither of these make sense. You can say we're limited by our minds and the technology we've accumulated thus far, but it doesn't seem like this could ever make sense no matter how smart a species is.
 - 2. Just today a video was recommended to me, ["How the universe unfolded from randomness"](#). In it the person says, "So how does something come from nothing is quite simpler than I thought possible: Random processes occasionally particles and those particles with the attribute of replication will go on to produce the universe." What processes, what particles?? No matter what you imagine, there is always something that it came from.
 - 3. Even I have a theory of the universe on my blog, [spacetimecells.com](#) (please go have a look). But it starts out with a universe-sized cell, and I admit I have no idea where it came from.
 - 4. So, this is where the craziness originates.
 - ii. The universe, the galaxy, the solar system, the Earth, life and humans came about.
 - 1. Here science and theology have more to go from in that information about how this happened is contained within the universe itself.
 - 2. For the scientist, elementary observables like the Cosmic Microwave background, electromagnetic radiation, and gravitational waves (this one is new), fossils, and the ability to observe the current state of things give us a vast number of clues to work from.
 - 3. The theologian draws from everything the scientist has, but then adds ancient religious stories and books which give a huge missing

element of science: *meaning*. For Jews, Christians and Muslims, the Old Testament is the starting place.

- iii. Then we have our experiences. There are many ways to live our lives and many choices we make (at least seemingly).
 - 1. As Des Cartes determined, we can only stand on “I think therefore I am”.
 - 2. I would add, there must be at least one other thing, a creator entity, as I have no knowledge as to how I became a thinking being.
 - 3. Most of us will never see something supernatural or a miracle. Those who do can only recently record it; however, those recordings are filled with doubt as the ability to hoax or mistake something grows at the same rate as our ability to record it.
 - 4. Therefore, we are left to our own experiences and the choices and interpretations we make.
- c. There are a lot of unknowns for which we only have sparse, irreproducible evidence:
 - i. Is there a spiritual reality?
 - ii. Are there aliens?
 - iii. What are near-death experiences?
 - iv. Is this all a simulation?
 - v. Is reincarnation possible?
 - vi. What happens when die? Do we cease to exist? Do we go to heaven or hell or some sort of spiritual plane?

III. To what model does the Kingdom give rise?

- a. In the upcoming episodes, we’re going to look at prophecies about the messiah and kingdom.
 - i. Those who have already concluded that God exists and authored the Bible will listen to my interpretations and adopt them if they conform to or add conformance to their models of reality.
 - ii. Those who are on the fence may be pushed over the fence into the camp of believers based on the accuracy of the prophecies and the idea that predicting the future should not exist in nature, especially centuries in advance.
 - iii. Those who don’t believe will have to somehow fit what the Bible says and how I’m interpreting it into their model. It won’t fit into a natural model; therefore, they will have to force it to become natural in some manner. There is a chance that the dissonance this causes will cause them to open their idea of what is possible and investigate further. This is a metanoia, and it’s my prayer that some people are brought to this.

- b. To believe the Kingdom, you have to prescribe to a model something like the following:
- i. There is a spiritual reality above our physical reality that is even more “real”.
 - ii. God lives in that reality, in fact, he created it and has always existed (somehow).
 - iii. God created our physical reality. It therefore had a beginning, and, as it is a physical form, will have an ending.
 - iv. Within this physical reality, God created or caused to arise the vast universe in which we find ourselves. We don’t even know how big it is! The diameter of the observable universe is 93 billion light years. Given the “flatness” of the measurements we’ve made of the observable universe, the universe is at least 23 trillion light years. We have no idea why it needs to be this large (or at least appear to be this large) other than to show God’s greatness and glory.
 - v. Within this unfathomably big universe, God made or caused to exist our galaxy, solar system, and earth.
 - vi. On the earth, God created or caused to exist simple single-celled life. Furthermore, he created, caused to exist, or helped to exist, multi-cellular life. Furthermore, he created, caused to exist, or helped to exist, complex lifeform up to human life.
 - vii. God created or caused to exist within human life consciousness—an ability to be aware of itself and to question reality and meaning.
 - viii. God is a loving god in that he created humans for a purpose and stayed with them and worked supernaturally himself and through a few humans to cultivate whatever end he has in mind. As a loving God, there is no other way that the end he has in mind for humanity could be achieved.
 - ix. As a loving God, he wants mankind to know about him and have a relationship with him, although he does this (for whatever reason) through subtle way that he believes are sufficient, but nevertheless are missed by most of humanity.
 - x. Part of the way for humanity to learn about him is through a book that he has authored or caused to be authored through over 40 individuals over a period of some two thousand years. Of the vast number of books that claim to be by or about Him, He caused or allowed humanity to choose 66 books to encompass the Bible. 39 in the OT and 27 in the NT (or possibly more in the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches)
 - xi. Within the Bible are stories and histories of humanity including a hand-picked nation called Israel. God performed a number of miracles to or through the Israelites and he prophesied through a small number of Israelites which are written and included in the Bible.

- xii. Among those prophecies are many about a Messiah who would come and start a kingdom-like nation.
- xiii. The Bible also contains as-yet unfulfilled prophecies about how the earthly Kingdom and the earth itself will end and what will happen to the souls of all the humans who had ever lived on the earth.

IV. Summary

- a. This is a lot to believe but remember that any model you choose will contain a few large crazy premises.
- b. I believe the model which best fits what we observe in reality is one that includes a loving God who gave us a book about him and his interactions with humanity.

Part 3: The Mountain of the Lord's Temple

Review from last week:

- We expanded on the idea of “a model of God” from Part 8 of The Church series.
- That model primarily dealt with what type of God does your model indicate regarding the number of people saved over time. This more complete model fills in gaps of how the universe came to be, how the solar system and earth came to be, and how simple life and conscious humans came to be. Furthermore, in models the contain a loving God, how the God would communicate to his creation through a book authored by him, and that book would contain stories of when he supernaturally intervened and prophecies about when and how he would intervene in the future.
- This is a crazy-sounding model, but every model will contain a few crazy, unprovable, immeasurable premises, and the one with a loving God best describes the reality in which we find ourselves (in my humble opinion).

I. A Word about prophecies

- a. They're written in enigmatic prose that is cryptic and difficult to interpret.
- b. I would say it's impossible to interpret prophecies about the future with any certainty, but it is possible to interpret prophecies for events that have already come to pass. When the event is in the past, one can match historical aspects to parts of the prophecy. The more matching that can be done, the more certain one can be.
- c. Also true is that occasionally, God or and angel will interpret a prophecy just given. This interpretation is also enigmatic, but much less so, and also gives a sort of key or cipher for other prophecies for which an interpretation is not given.
- d. Prophecies in the Bible often have two temporally separated fulfillments. I'm not sure why this is, but perhaps more so with prophecies about the Messiah.
- e. You'll also find two different types of theologians: ones that believe in God and ones that do not.
 - i. This may be surprising, but they're definitely out there and go through the same college courses as the faithful.
 - ii. It's really a problem when non-believing theologians begin to teach the courses, as they tend to put a subtle nuance to lessons with the intent of breaking down the “naïve” faith of the students. Over time it seems these non-believing professors replace the faithful ones, likely because most of the faithful students want to use their knowledge in the mission field, while non-believing students are purely academic.
 - iii. You'll find that theologians question parts of the Bible that would seem to prove its inspiration. Prophecies definitely fall into this category: if there

- is supernatural intervention where God gives knowledge about the future to one of the human authors, this would crush non-believing theologians.
- iv. They have at least one consistent method to work around this “problem”: To say the so-called prophecy was actually written at a later time (at or after the event it claims to prophesy about).
 - v. They also like to cast doubt onto verses but claiming one or more other individuals other than the traditional author wrote the piece.
 - vi. The main books used by this series are Isaiah and Daniel and, sure enough, theologians apply their methodologies here. With Isaiah they say two to four individuals wrote the book up to two centuries later. Note that it’s totally acceptable for one or more writers besides the prophet to write down the prophet’s words. What is important is that the prophet spoke the words of God during the prophet’s lifetime (naturally).

II. Interpreting Isaiah 2 considering the Kingdom

- a. Let’s start by reading the passage, Isaiah 2:1-4.
- b. The first thing we’re confronted with is the *time of the fulfillment*: In the last days. This is vague, but does not mean, “at the end of the earth”. In Jewish texts, the idiom often means the end of an age or era.
 - i. It’s the same meaning in which I used “era” in my first series, “The Era of the Spirit”. And, as we’ll see, there’s a relationship between the era of the Spirit and the Kingdom.
 - ii. Here I believe this is referring to the end of the Mosaic Law (aka the Old Covenant). Note: I’ll give some of my ideas about the interpretations, but rest assured I’ll give more support later.
- c. Next, we read, “the mountain of the Lord’s temple will be established as the highest of mountains.” What does a mountain have to do with the Kingdom?
 - i. Recall that “kingdom” is a metaphor. God isn’t starting an actual kingdom on earth with land that is protected and serfs and nobles, etc.
 - ii. Mountain is another metaphor. It plays off the characteristics of a mountain like its majesty and huge, formidable, immovable size.
 - iii. God’s mountain will be the tallest. In comparison, the others will be like hills. Therefore, if mountain is equivalent to kingdom, God is saying the kingdom God starts will be far superior to all other human kingdoms.
 - iv. Other passages about mountains: In Genesis 22:2 God tells Abraham to go to the region of Moriah. In v14 Abraham names the place where he was to sacrifice Isaac “The Lord Will Provide” (Jehovah Jireh). In 2Chron 3:1, we find the Temple was in fact built on Mount Moriah. It’s likely that the place where Abraham nearly sacrificed his son it precisely the place where God later sacrificed his son (as Gol Gotha was outside the temple mount area). In Exodus 15:17, after the crossing of the Red Sea, in the Song of Moses, the people sing about the future dwelling place of God:

"You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance—the place, Lord, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, Lord, your hands established." There's also Mount Horeb/Sinai where Moses meets God and is later given the Law. Therefore, mountains are big deal to God.

- d. "All nations will stream to it". The Jews weren't particularly evangelistic, but they were good at getting exiled and dispersed into the surrounding nations. As Jews males needed go to Jerusalem three different times of the year, this passage could be referring to this.
 - e. Verse 3: "Many peoples will say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord...'" In the near term, this would be the exiled Jews being able to go to the second temple, but in the far term, this would be people coming to learn about the Kingdom of God.
 - f. Verse 4a: "He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples." In the near term, this would be God dealing with those who exile and oppress the Jews, but in the far term this could be the unifying affect of the Kingdom. For example, Gal 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
 - g. Verse 4b: "They will beat...nor will the train for war anymore". Up until this time, the Israelites were used to fighting for the promises of God; namely, the Promised Land and keeping it. Here God is saying that won't be the case for the Kingdom he will start.
- III. **Summary** - You can see how difficult it can be to interpret prophesy and known that you've got it right. Next week we'll start looking at Daniel. We'll see that the prophesies about the Kingdom are much clearer and much more to the point.

Part 4: When was the Book of Daniel Written?

Review from last week:

- Biblical prophecy is written in enigmatic prose that is cryptic and difficult to interpret, but sometimes an interpretation is given in the text and those passages should really be scoured.
- Theologians often don't believe in God and/or the Biblical prophecies and therefore try to date them later in time to eliminate or reduce the time between authorship and fulfillment. If there's evidence that calls into question the date of authorship, great, let's look at it, but often the intention is to create doubt.
- I believe Isaiah 2:1-4 is a prophecy written around 750 BC which prophecies the kingdom that God would later start: it would be in the last days, it would start in Jerusalem, all nations would stream to it, the New Covenant would go out from there, and that it would not come about through war.

Let's start talking about Daniel. The number of prophecies in Daniel about the kingdom and their specificity is astonishing. I plan on spending three episodes talking about them starting next week. This week, though, we need to talk about the date of Daniel. We'll see that regardless of the dating, it still contains several centuries of prophecies, but whether the book was written by a historical figure, Daniel, in the 6th century BC or by a person posing as Daniel in the 2nd century BC is very important.

I wrote an article on this topic on my blog, *The Withered Fig Tree*, and I'll be referencing that extensively today.

The traditional date given to Daniel is during the sixth century BC when Daniel himself said it was written. He writes in the present tense that he lived during the Babylonian and Persian empires, during the reigns of such historical figures as King Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus the Great.

I. Evidence for 2nd Century BC Dating

- a. It is true that the majority of theologians nowadays believe Daniel was written by someone well-removed from Daniel and his contemporaries by four hundred years in the second century BC.
 - b. Search the internet for "book of Daniel written", and all the top hits say the second century BC. It's not until further down that one finds hits which discuss the second versus sixth century BC, akin to this article.
 - c. The following are the evidence cited for 2nd century BC authorship:
- 1) Two kings of the mentioned in Daniel, Cyrus and Belshazzar, do not align with history. If true, this would be unlikely mistakes if the book were written in the 6th century during

the time of those kings—but would be more understandable were it written 400 years after the fact.

- a. The rule of Cyrus was placed after Darius in the order of kings, which is a clear inconsistency.
 - b. Belshazzar is not even on the accepted historical list of kings.
- 2) There's no evidence of severe religious persecution of the exiled Jews in Babylon, whereas there was such persecution in the second century BC under the Seleucid Empire. Therefore, it makes more sense if a 2nd century author modified a real 6th century account of Daniel—but rewrote history in an apocalyptic, prophetic style and incorporated 2nd century details into the prophecies.
- 3) Book of Daniel was never in the prophet's section of the Hebrew Bible (Nevi'im) but always belonged in writing's section (Ketuvim). If the Hebrews saw Daniel as a major prophet, they would have put the book with the other major prophets.
- 4) The Apocalyptic style of writing used in Daniel was not developed until the 2nd century BC.
- 5) The apocalyptic style of writing allows the author a lot of freedom to tell their story, therefore things like intertwining history and pseudo-prophecy into one narrative are expected.

II. Rebuttal of 2nd Century BC Dating

- 1) The king line of Babylon to the Medo-Persian Empire is not as clear-cut as one might think.
 - a. Daniel refers to Darius as "Darius the Mede", not as Darius I. This is because he is a different person from Darius I. Darius I *did* come after Cyrus, was a Persian, and his father was Hystaspes. Darius the Mede, on the other hand, was a Mede (obviously), came before Cyrus, and his father was a man named Xerxes (Dan 9:1). There are several possibilities as to who Darius was. He may have been Gubaru, the general of Cyrus, who defeated Babylon on October 12, 539 BC, and then would have ruled it until Cyrus took leadership in 530 BC. He may also have been Astyages, the king of Media. Whoever he was, one can see listing the leaders in a distant age isn't as simple as looking up a list of kings Google; rather, the list of kings and rulers in Daniel *is evidence* that the writer had intimate knowledge of the times.
 - b. Like Darius the Mede, Belshazzar (Dan 5) is not on the standard kings list either. However, a recent discovery on the Ziggurat of Ur says that Belshazzar was a co-regent under Nabonidus, who had stolen the kingship from Nebuchadnezzar's son Evil-merodach. It seems Nabonidus was into the occult and became

disinterested in leading Babylon. Therefore, he appointed Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, and he did the actual ruling.

- 2) Who gets to define "severe persecution"? Remember Nebuchadnezzar was ready to kill all of his seers and their families in Dan 2 just for not being able to do the impossible: interpret a dream hadn't told them. Daniel does not describe systemic persecution against the Jews because they were Jews—more so general harshness and tyrannical tribalism of the time.
- 3) It is true that Daniel is grouped with Ketuvim, which contains other books like Psalms, Proverbs, and Job. The idea is that since it's not grouped with the prophetic like Isaiah and Jeremiah, the Jews understood it to be a story and not real prophecy. There are several reasons why this is a weak argument: 1) In early Greek manuscripts, Daniel *was* grouped with the prophets, but so were the historical books Chronicles 1 and 2; therefore, the grouping is somewhat arbitrary. 2) Psalms contain some of the most poignant prophecies about the Messiah yet has never been grouped with prophetic books. 3) Daniel does differ from the other major and minor prophets in his prophecies are not judgments against Israel and he did not prophecy from Israel. This could have affected its categorization.
- 4) It is difficult to know when the Apocalyptic style was developed. One thing is certain: it did not happen in a day or even a generation. Another thing to remember is that the modern definition of apocalypse, "the destruction of civilization at the end of days", is not the same as apocalyptic style. Although the style is often associated with the end of an era and destruction, the Greek word from which it is transliterated means, "a revelation or to unveil". Therefore, the apocalyptic style is more about prophecy. The books of Joel, Zechariah and several sections of Isaiah are written in the style. These books were written in the seventh through fifth centuries BC; therefore, Daniel's mature apocalyptic form should not exclude it from 6th century authorship.
- 5) The Apocalyptic style does give the author a lot of freedom to tell his story by way of drama, symbols, and vivid imagery; but does that give the author of Daniel (were it not Daniel himself) the freedom to pretend to be someone else from past claiming known history to be revelations from God? To be clear, what theologians are claiming is that a second-century author with knowledge of the prior four hundred years wrote as if he were Daniel in the sixth century—writing history as if it were prophecy. There's no doubt of its prophetic intent as it uses phrases such as: "will take place in the future", "for it concerns the distant future", and "to seal up vision and prophecy". Most theologians will say that Daniel was a real historical figure, and perhaps that a pre-Daniel book existed; but then some unnamed second century author took the story and adapted it to the persecution and suffering of the second century Jews under Antiochus IV. This stretches Biblical authenticity too far, and given the counter arguments, is unneeded.

III. Evidence for 6th century authorship

- a. As mentioned earlier, that fact that the author included obscure elements like little-known leaders lends credence to sixth century authorship. However, in my opinion, it's not the reasons listed and rebutted above; instead, theologians doubt the date of authorship because of the accuracy of the prophecies and the implications thereof.
- b. While there are many interpretations of the later prophecies of Daniel (who lived from around 620 BC to 538 BC), there is decent consensus on the first four hundred years (539 BC to 146 BC). This is why I believe many argue for second century authorship: the accuracy of the prophecies between the sixth and second centuries is uncanny. They correctly predicted the fall of Babylonian empire (539 BC), the rise and fall of the Medo-Persian empire (539 BC to 334 BC) and rise and fall the Greek empire (334 BC to 146 BC).
- c. Jesus refers to Daniel. In Mat 24:15-17, Jesus references Daniel's prophecy about the "abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel", which can be found in Dan 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11. For myself, this ends the debate.
 - i. First of all, Jesus explicitly uses the words, "spoken of through the prophet Daniel". Jesus says Daniel is a prophet, and the book the Jews had for Daniel was the same book we have today. There's no evidence the first-century Jews had some other book from the sixth-century historical Daniel which is lost to us today, leaving only a rewritten account from the second century. Therefore, Jesus is referring to and quoting from the book of Daniel that is in our modern Bible.
 - ii. Jesus says, "when you see..." This means Daniel's prediction of the desolation of the Temple has not yet occurred. This is very significance because the Temple had been severely desecrated by Antiochus IV in 168 BC, cooking pork on the alter and turning it into a brothel, and this could very well have been what Daniel's prophecy/historic account (depending on the date of authorship one accepts) was referring to. Since Jesus confirms it is not the 168 BC event and that the event still had not occurred at around 30 AD, this leaves only one other possibility: the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD by Rome.

IV. Summary

- a. All of these facts mean Daniel's prophecies extended over two centuries past the second century.
- b. It makes no sense that a bona fide prophet of God writing in the 2nd century BC would write the history of the four hundred years prior to his authoring as if it were prophecy, and then write true prophecies for the next two hundred years.

Now that we've established Daniel's 6th century date, we'll dive into the prophecies of Daniel chapters 2, 7, 8, and 9 over the next three episodes.

Part 5: Nebuchadnezzar's and Daniel's Visions of Many Parts

Review from last week:

- Many theologians attempt to date Daniel to the 2nd century BC giving the evidence that 1) There are errors in of two of the kings (Darius I did not come before Cyrus and Belshazzar is not listed at all), 2) There's no evidence of severe religious persecution of the exiled Jews in Babylon, 3) Daniel was not in the prophet's section of the Hebrew Bible, and 4) The Apocalyptic style of writing used in Daniel was not developed until the 2nd century BC.
- However, this evidence can be rebutted: 1) Daniel spoke of Darius the Mead not Darius I and Belshazzar was later found to be a replacement for king Nabonidus, 2) There is evidence of exiles of Babylon being treated poorly and the persecution of the 2nd century was far worse than what is found in Daniel, 3) The sections of the Hebrew Bible were not intended to limit prophecy to just that section, and 4) The Apocalyptic style of writing evolved over several centuries and versions of it can be found in Daniel's predecessors such as Joel and Ezekial.
- Furthermore, there is evidence that Daniel was written in the 6th century BC: 1) The extra-historical references show a detailed knowledge of the era, and 2) Jesus refers to Daniel as a prophet some of whose prophecies are yet to be fulfilled.

I'm going to cover Daniel a little differently than I have done in the past. In the past I covered the three kingdom-prophetic chapters 2, 7 and 8 individually. Today I'm going to talk about the dream and visions and angelic interpretations (which are prophesies as well) themselves together and crosslinked. Next time I'll talk about what I think the historically fulfilled interpretations are.

Apocalyptic Key:

Beast = nation/empire

Horn = king/emperor

Sea = sea of humanity

Mountain = God/God's power and dominion

Four winds = universal/cosmic power

Ancient of days = God

Blazing fire = judgment, destruction

Son of man = a human

The number 7 = God's number of perfection

The number 6 = one short of perfection and, thus, evil

Time, times and a half a time/42 months/3 ½ years = a period of instability and persecution (it's half of 7)

Holy/Beautiful Land = Israel or God's people

Daniel 2: [earthly empire v31-33] Statue of gold, silver, bronze, and iron and iron and baked clay.
=> [God's interpretation v37-43] One empire that is, Babylon, and three that are to come. => [future fulfillment] Medo-Persia (Dan 8:20), Greece (Dan 8:21), and Rome (my interpretation).

Daniel 2: [God's kingdom v34-35] - mountain where non-human hands cut out a small rock that rolls down the mountain and hits the statue in its feet and itself grows and becomes a mountain that fills the earth. [God's interpretation v44-45] => In the time of those kings, God will set of a kingdom that will never be destroyed and will endure forever

Daniel 7: [earthly empire v2-12] 4 great beasts lion with wings, bear with 3 ribs in its mouth, leopard with four wings and 4 heads, and unnamed terrifying beast with iron teeth (and apparently bronze claws) and ten horns and a little horn that uproots three horns from the first set which has eyes and speaks boastfully => [God's interpretation v17] four great beasts are four kings (kingdoms, see 7:23) that will rise from the earth.

Daniel 7: [God's kingdom v13-14] one like the son a man coming in the clouds, approaches the ancient of days and is led to him, he is given authority, glory, and sovereign power and all nations of every language worshipped him; his dominion and kingdom will not end => [God's interpretation v18] the Saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever!

Daniel 7: [earthly empire v19-21] fourth beast with iron teeth and bronze claws that crushed whatever was left, with ten horns and an eleventh horn before which three horns fall and which was more imposing than the others and had eyes and a mouth which spoke boastfully => [God's interpretation v23-26] Fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will devour the earth; the 10 horns are 10 kings of that kingdom. An 11th king will come and will subdue 3 kings.

Daniel 7: [v22] the last horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the holy people and the time came when they possessed the kingdom => [God's interpretation v27] All the power of the kingdoms will be handed over to the holy people of the most high.

- Interestingly, more detail is given about the most distant empire (e.g. feet with ten toes made of iron and baked clay and ten horns where three join and form a little horn that speaks boastfully), and even though its name is not given. If this were a human prediction, the opposite would be true.
- Also note the structure of pairs, where the first is human reality and the second is the earthly and spiritual kingdom.

Part 6: Interpreting the Visions of the Book of Daniel

Note: I keep forgetting to mention the source of a lot of my material here and a great reference to Daniel in general, Daniel – Prophet to the Nations, available on [Amazon](#).

Review from last week and a bit more detail as well:

- We talked about some of the big symbols and numbers of the Apocalyptic writing style. Apocalypse means “unveiling of secrets” in Greek. I missed the number 4 which is also important: It is the number of “cosmic completeness” and symbolizes the completeness of creation and the physical world like the four cardinal directions and four cosmic elements, earth, air, fire, and water.
- Daniel contains four separate visions which explicitly refer to future and which also contain interpretations from God:
 1. Chapter 2: Nebuchadnezzar’s dream from God of a statue with four parts and a rock cut out of a mountain that hits the statue. The interpretation says that the four parts of the statue are the current kingdom and three kingdoms to come and gives some qualities of those future kingdoms, especially the fourth one. It goes on to say the rock that hit the statue in the feet represents a kingdom that God will set up—a kingdom that will never be destroyed or usurped but will endure forever.
 2. Chapter 7: Daniel’s dream of four beasts. The first beast was like a lion with the wings of an eagle. The second beast looked like a bear and had three ribs in its mouth. The third beast looked like a leopard and had four wings and four heads. The fourth beast is not a known animal but a terrifying creature. It had iron teeth and ten horns. The vision continues with a second part in which an eleventh little horn emerges from among the ten horns and uproots the three of the first horns. This eleventh horn had the eyes of a human and a mouth that spoke boastfully. Then God shows up on his throne of fire with a river of fire flowing from it and tens of thousands of angels around it. It’s a dramatic court scene where the court is seated and books of judgment are opened.
 3. Chapter 8: Daniel’s vision from Gabriel of the ram and goat.
 4. Chapter 9: Daniel’s vision from Gabriel of the seventy “sevens” (next week’s talk).

I. Three Different Camps of Interpretation

- a. I wish I could say the interpretation of the visions in Daniel all coalesce into one unified interpretation, but it’s not the case.
- b. Theologians like use the terms preterist (before some time point), historicist (around some time point), and futurist (beyond some time point) to categorize

different camps of interpretation. Often the present is chosen for the time point, but there are many pivotal points in the Bible history can also be used.

- c. Daniel's prophecies are sets of prophecies occurring over a long period of time, regardless of one's camp, which makes using temporal terms like preterist difficult and confusing to apply. Therefore, I have chosen *not* to use them. I also had difficulty coming up with good labels for the camps, so I'm just going to use the labels A, B, and C. Nevertheless, they are time-ordered where A's prophecies culminated the earliest, then B's, and finally C's.
- d. Here's an overview of the three camps.
 - i. The Camp A is primary from theologians who believe Daniel was written in the 2nd century BC and contains no supernatural aspects (see Part 3 for details). Therefore, its prophecies were "fulfilled" (occurred might be a better word) before the writer wrote them down around 160 to 130 BC.
 - ii. Camp B believes that the visions are completely fulfilled and culminate with the coming of Jesus and the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.
 - iii. Camp C believes that the visions are not completely fulfilled but still have parts that culminate with the 2nd coming of Christ.
 - iv. Regarding the statue of four parts (Daniel 2), all three camps agree Babylon and Medo-Persia are the first and second kingdoms. Camp A believes the third empire is Greece up to the death of Alexander, and that the fourth kingdom is post-Alexander Greece. Camps B and C agree that the third kingdom is Greece but disagree about the fourth kingdom.
 - v. Remember that the book of Revelation is connected to Daniel. At a minimum it shares the same imagery and style, but it also could coincide with the end of Daniel's visions and possibly extend them further.

II. **Camp A: Daniel Culminates with the post-Alexander Hellenistic Empire.**

- a. According to Dan 2, there will be a fourth kingdom after the Greek Empire. Historians would say that is the Roman Empire, but God and the Bible are not concerned about human textbooks or maps and about historians categorize things.
- b. This view claims that the third kingdom ended at the death of Alexander and the fourth kingdom is the post-Alexander empire, sometimes referred to as the Kingdoms of the Diadochi (Diadochi means "the successors"). Greece was immediately divided into four main sub-kingdoms assigned to Alexander's four generals (there were a few other smaller sub-kingdoms).
- c. Human history would say this was a continuation of the Hellenistic Empire, but one can see how God might consider this a separate kingdom as it differed greatly from Alexander's empire of conquest.
- d. Going with this view, important symbols can be interpreted thusly:

The Statue (Daniel 2):

Gold head = Babylonian Empire (Nebuchadnezzar's rule).

Silver chest and arms = Medo-Persian Empire.

Bronze belly and thighs = Greek Empire under Alexander the Great.

Iron legs and feet of iron mixed with clay = post-Alexander Hellenistic kingdoms. The "iron mixed with clay" depicts the fractured nature of the Hellenistic kingdoms that arose after the death of Alexander the Great and the weakening of these kingdoms as they became more unstable and less unified. The ten toes are a reference to the Seleucid Empire's internal struggles, as well as the broader divisions among the Hellenistic rulers.

Ten Horns of Daniel 7: The ten horns on the fourth beast are often interpreted as a series of rulers from the Seleucid Empire or the various successor states of Alexander's empire. These horns are not necessarily seen as exactly ten kings but represent the multiple kings or factions vying for power. Some interpretations focus specifically on the Seleucid line of rulers, including prominent kings like Seleucus I and Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who figure heavily in this view of Daniel.

The Little Horn (Daniel 7): The "Little horn" that rises from the fourth beast is Antiochus (an-tie-ah-kus) IV Epiphanes. Antiochus was known for persecuting the Jews and desecrating the Temple in Jerusalem, which led to the Maccabean revolt. The little horn that speaks arrogantly and wages war on the saints is often seen as a symbol of Antiochus' tyrannical reign.

The Stone Cut Out of the Mountain (Isa 2 and Daniel 2): This interpreted as a divine intervention, something not created by human means but directly by God. This stone strikes the statue and destroys it, representing the ultimate end of all earthly kingdoms, including the oppressive Seleucid Empire. For 2nd-century interpreters, this stone could be understood as symbolizing the Maccabean revolt itself—an uprising that, though small and seemingly insignificant, led to the defeat of the Seleucid forces in Israel.

The Kingdom Set Up by God: This is interpreted as God's sovereign rule over the world, which will follow the downfall of oppressive earthly kingdoms. For 2nd-century interpreters, this may have been seen in the hope for a restored Israel, free from the tyranny of foreign rulers, particularly Antiochus IV. The kingdom is often identified with the ideal of God's messianic reign, where justice and peace would prevail, replacing the current suffering under foreign dominion.

III. Camp B: Daniel Culminates with Jesus and the Destruction of the Temple.

The various symbols and images in the book of Daniel are seen as largely fulfilled in the events surrounding the first coming of Christ, His ministry, and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This interpretation focuses on how Daniel's prophecies align with the culmination of the Old Covenant and the establishment of the New Covenant in Christ.

The Statue (Daniel 2):

Gold head = Babylonian Empire (Nebuchadnezzar's rule).

Silver chest and arms = Medo-Persian Empire.

Bronze belly and thighs = Greek Empire (Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic kingdoms).

Iron legs and iron mixed with clay = Rome. The iron legs represent the strength of Rome in the taking the empire and maintaining/defending it with their army. The feet, however, depict the divided state of the Roman Empire, during the time of Christ, with its internal instability despite its military strength. The clay represents the human frailty and the weakness of the empire's control.

The Stone Cut Out Without Hands (Daniel 2:34-35):

This represents Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who was not established by human authority but by God Himself. The stone striking the feet of the statue and shattering it is interpreted as the coming of Christ, whose kingdom would ultimately overthrow the Roman Empire (and all earthly kingdoms past and present) through spiritual means and *not by political force*. The destruction of the statue symbolizes the end of the old-world order and the establishment of God's earthly kingdom through Christ.

The Stone growing into a Large Mountain (Daniel 2:35f):

This signifies the growth of the Christian Church and the spread of God's kingdom on earth through the gospel, beginning with Christ's first coming and continuing through history. Some may interpret the size of the mountain to be akin to the number of members in the church, but more likely it signifies the awesome nature of the Church whose members go on to live for eternity in God's eternal, spiritual kingdom and are never at risk of being destroyed or consumed by another earthly or demonic kingdom.

The Four Beasts (Daniel 7):

The four beasts are again seen as symbolizing the same empires as the statue, with a focus on their historical and symbolic significance in relation to the coming of Christ.

First beast (lion with eagle's wings) = Babylonian Empire.

Second beast (bear) = Medo-Persian Empire.

Third beast (leopard) = Greek Empire and especially the rapid conquests of Alexander the Great.

Fourth beast (terrifying and strong) = Roman Empire. The fourth beast represents the power and dominance of Rome, which was ruling during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry.

The Ten Horns (Daniel 7:7):

The ten horns of the fourth beast are typically seen as emperors within the Roman Empire or as symbols of the various subdivisions and rulers of the empire (sometimes there were simultaneous rulers) leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem.

The Little Horn (Daniel 7:8):

The little horn that rises up among the ten horns is often interpreted as a symbol of Roman emperors who persecuted Christians and Jews, possibly Nero, Domitian or another Roman leader responsible for the persecution of the early Christian church and for events leading up to the Jewish-Roman War which culminated in the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. The horn's arrogant words and persecution of the saints are taken to represent the imperial power's opposition to God's people (both Jews and early Christians), many of whom were killed during the sacking of Jerusalem and Masada.

The Judgment Scene (Daniel 7:9-14):

The scene of the Ancient of Days and the coming of the Son of Man is interpreted in this context as the enthronement of Christ following His death, resurrection, and ascension. When Jesus refers to Himself as the Son of Man in the Gospels, He is explicitly connecting this imagery to His role as the Messiah who would be given authority, glory, and a kingdom.

In this view, the judgment represents God's judgment against the Old Covenant order (specifically Jerusalem and the Temple), with Christ now reigning in heaven, receiving dominion over all nations (Mat 28). This interpretation sees this vision as fulfilled in Christ's ascension and the spread of His kingdom through the Church.

The Kingdom That God Will Set Up (Daniel 2:44-45 and Daniel 7:27):

The kingdom that God establishes on earth is referred in Scripture as the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, or simply the Kingdom. It was initiated by Jesus Christ during His ministry and continuing through the growth of the Church. It is not primarily a political or earthly kingdom, but a *spiritual kingdom* that spreads through the hearts of believers and will endure forever.

This kingdom, begun at the first coming of Christ, grows like the stone cut out of the mountain until it fills the earth. While the Roman Empire is seen as the final human empire in Daniel's sequence, its fall and the destruction of the Temple mark the definitive end of the old order, and the new order (the New Covenant) is fully established through Christ's reign.

IV. Camp C: Daniel Culminates with the Second Coming of Christ

Those of this camp interpret the Book of Daniel's visions as culminating with the second coming of Christ, aka the end of the world. The view is often referred to as an apocalyptic or eschatological interpretation with the various symbols and images taking on a more cosmic and final significance. This view is common among traditional Christian and Jewish interpretations

that see Daniel's prophecies as reaching beyond the immediate historical context and pointing to the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom at the end of human history.

The Statue (Daniel 2):

Gold head = Babylonian Empire (Nebuchadnezzar's rule).

Silver chest and arms = Medo-Persian Empire.

Bronze belly and thighs = Greek Empire (Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic kingdoms).

Iron legs = Rome.

Feet of iron mixed with clay = The extended, symbolic Roman Empire, which many traditional interpreters see as the continuing influence of Roman culture, that is divided and weakened versions of Rome up to modern world powers like Europe. The fragile, divided state of human kingdoms in the last days represent governments and alliances that are unable to hold together effectively.

The Stone Cut Out Without Hands (Daniel 2:34-35):

The stone that destroys the statue is interpreted as Jesus Christ or the Messianic Kingdom. This stone, not made by human hands, symbolizes a divine kingdom that is established directly by God. In Christian interpretations, the stone is typically seen as Christ's first coming, which begins the overthrow of earthly powers, and ultimately points to His second coming when all human kingdoms will be fully destroyed, and God's eternal kingdom will be established. This kingdom of God is envisioned as the final, everlasting rule of God over all creation.

The Four Beasts (Daniel 7):

First beast (lion with eagle's wings) = Babylonian Empire.

Second beast (bear) = Medo-Persian Empire.

Third beast (leopard with four wings) = Greek Empire, particularly under Alexander the Great, with the four wings symbolizing the swiftness of his conquests.

Fourth beast (terrifying and strong) = This is generally interpreted as the Roman Empire or a final world empire that will arise in the last days. This beast is distinct because of its ten horns, symbolizing its extraordinary power and its role in the final events of history.

The Ten Horns (Daniel 7:7):

The ten horns are usually interpreted as ten nations that will rise in the final world empire, often seen as a future political alliance or coalition of nations during the end times. Some interpreters see this as a revived form of the Roman Empire, while others view it as a future global confederation of rulers.

The Little Horn (Daniel 7:8):

The little horn that rises among the ten horns is commonly interpreted as the *Antichrist*—a future world ruler who will emerge during the end times. This horn's arrogance and blasphemy against God are taken as signs of the Antichrist's rebellion against divine authority, and his persecution of the saints represents the *great tribulation* described in later prophetic texts, such as in Revelation.

The Judgment Scene (Daniel 7:9-14):

The vision of the Ancient of Days sitting on His throne and the court being seated represents the final judgment of the world. God is seen as the supreme judge who will pass judgment on the nations and rulers, including the Antichrist. The destruction of the fourth beast and the little horn (Antichrist) symbolizes the defeat of evil at the end of time.

The Son of Man coming on the clouds (Daniel 7:13-14):

A reference to the Messiah, whom Christians identify as Jesus Christ. This passage is seen as a prophecy of Christ's second coming, when He will receive all authority and establish God's eternal kingdom on earth.

The Kingdom That God Will Set Up (Daniel 2:44-45 and Daniel 7:27):

The kingdom that God will set up is universally understood in this view as God's eternal kingdom. It will be established after the defeat of the final world powers and the Antichrist. This kingdom will never be destroyed and will be ruled by God's chosen one, the Messiah. In Christian eschatology, this is often linked with the millennial reign of Christ described in Revelation 20, followed by the new heaven and new earth.

Part 7: The Seventy “Sevens”

Today we’ll examine that last part of Daniel chapter 9 through the lens of the three camps of interpretation defined last week.

Review from last week (and some clearing up of terms):

- Last week I explained three different versions of interpretation of Daniel’s prophecies from chapters 2, 7, and 8.
- Theologians like to use terms like preterist and futurist, but in retrospect, they aren’t clear and can even cause confusion.
- Therefore, I will simply use the terms Camp A, B, and C.
 - Camp A – those who say the book of Daniel was written in the 2nd century BC and interpret Daniel’s prophecies as being fulfilled in the 2nd century BC.
 - Camp B – those who believe Daniel’s visions culminate with Jesus and the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.
 - Camp C – those who believe Daniel’s visions culminate with the Second Coming and the end of the world.
- I have rewritten and posted those notes which can be found on my website, TheWitheredFigTree.com.

I. The Components of Daniel’s Vision (Daniel 9:20-27)

- Gabriel comes to Daniel as he was in prayer in the evening and explains the vision Daniel received during his prayer. Note that the vision itself is not given as it was in chapters 7 and 8. Here are Gabriel’s points:
- 70 “weeks” are decreed for Israel and Jerusalem. The Hebrew “shabuah” means week or seven days.
- By the end of this period, transgression/sin will end and be atoned for, everlasting righteousness will be brought in, vision and prophecy will be sealed up, and a “very holy thing” will be anointed. The Hebrew word here is “kodesh” which means “holy or sacred thing”.
- The starting of the 70 weeks is when the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. [Perspective Digest : The Decree to Restore and Build Jerusalem](#)
- The ending of the 70 weeks is when the Anointed One (Messiah), the ruler, comes.
- The first 69 weeks are divided into two periods of 7 weeks followed by 62 weeks.
- After the 62 weeks, the anointed one will be put to death.
- The City and temple will be destroyed by a ruler.
- He will confirm a covenant with many for one week.

II. Camp A

For the theologians who say the book of Daniel was written in the 2nd century BC and interpret Daniel's prophecies as being fulfilled in the 2nd century BC, how do they interpret the various symbols and images of Daniel's 70 7s?

They view the prophecy of the 70 sevens (weeks) as a symbolic or historical prediction tied to the events surrounding the Maccabean period, especially the persecution of the Jews under Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the eventual rededication of the Temple.

The 70 weeks are said to be 490 years (70×7), are understood not as literal years, but as a symbolic time frame that encompasses the period from the *rebuilding of Jerusalem* after the Babylonian exile to the events of the *Maccabean revolt*.

The prophecy is interpreted as focusing on the renewal of the Jewish people and the atonement for their sins, culminating in the struggles against *Antiochus IV Epiphanes*, who is seen as the oppressor referenced in the prophecy.

Seven Weeks and Sixty-Two Weeks (Daniel 9:25):

The seven weeks (49 years) are associated with the time it took to rebuild Jerusalem after the return from exile, following decrees by Persian kings like Cyrus or Artaxerxes.

The sixty-two weeks (434 years) are seen as the long period of waiting and oppression that followed the rebuilding of the city and Temple, during which the Jewish people continued to face threats from foreign empires (Persians, Greeks) and internal strife.

Together, these 69 weeks ($7 + 62$) symbolize the time from the restoration of Jerusalem until the appearance of a time of severe trial and oppression.

The "Anointed One" (Daniel 9:25-26):

The anointed one (the *Messiah*) mentioned in verses 25 and 26 is interpreted as a significant Jewish leader. Some scholars identify this figure as Onias III, the high priest of the Jews, who was deposed and eventually killed around 171 BC, shortly before Antiochus IV's rise to power. Onias' death is seen as a key event that leads to the persecution of the Jews under Antiochus.

In this interpretation, the "cutting off" of the anointed one refers to Onias III's assassination, a pivotal moment that triggered the subsequent desecration of the Temple and persecution of faithful Jews.

The People of the Ruler Who Will Come (Daniel 9:26):

The people of the ruler who will come and destroy the city and sanctuary are interpreted as the forces of Antiochus.

III. Camp B

The Seventy Sevens (Daniel 9:24):

The “seventy sevens” (often translated as *seventy weeks*) represent a period of 490 years (since a “week” symbolizes seven years). This time period is understood as the time decreed by God to bring about the fulfillment of Israel’s redemptive history, ending with the coming of the Messiah and the judgment of Israel (i.e., the destruction of the temple).

These 490 years are broken into three segments: 7 sevens (49 years), 62 sevens (434 years), and 1 seven (7 years).

The Anointed One (Daniel 9:25-26):

Preterists typically identify the “Anointed One” as Jesus Christ. His coming “after the sixty-two sevens” (i.e., after 434 years) is interpreted as the time of His public ministry, which many calculate to have begun around AD 27-30.

The reference to the Messiah being “cut off” refers to the crucifixion of Jesus. His death is seen as a key event marking the fulfillment of Israel’s redemptive history, securing atonement and fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel 9:24 (“to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness”).

The People of the Ruler to Come (Daniel 9:26):

The “people of the ruler to come” are often identified as the Romans, led by their military rulers (such as Titus). The destruction of the city and the sanctuary (temple) is linked to the Roman siege and destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

Some preterists interpret the “ruler” as referring to Roman emperors or generals who led the campaigns against Jerusalem, rather than a future Antichrist figure as some futurists propose.

The Covenant and the Final Seven (Daniel 9:27):

The “he” who makes a covenant with “many” for one week (seven years) is typically seen as Christ, who inaugurated the New Covenant during His earthly ministry. The covenant’s emphasis on “the many” recalls Jesus’ words at the Last Supper when He described His blood being poured out for “many” (Mark 14:24).

The “middle of the week,” in which sacrifices and offerings are ended, is interpreted as the time of Jesus’ crucifixion (around AD 30), which preterists believe effectively rendered the temple sacrifices obsolete.

The “abomination that causes desolation” is seen as the Roman armies surrounding and ultimately destroying the temple in AD 70, fulfilling Jesus’ prediction in Matthew 24:15 and the prophecy in Daniel.

In summary, preterists interpret Daniel's seventy sevens as culminating in the ministry of Jesus Christ and the judgment of Jerusalem through the destruction of the temple in AD 70. They see the prophecy as symbolic of both the coming of the Messiah and the end of the old covenantal system, with Jesus' death and the temple's destruction marking the shift to the New Covenant.

IV. Camp C

For those who believe that Daniel's visions, particularly the prophecy of the *seventy sevens* (Daniel 9:24-27), culminate with the end of the world, their interpretation aligns with a *futurist* perspective. This school of thought views the prophecy as having both a partial fulfillment in the past and a final fulfillment in the future, particularly in the events leading up to Christ's second coming. Here's how they interpret the key symbols and images:

The Seventy Sevens (Daniel 9:24):

The *seventy sevens* (or *seventy weeks*) are seen as 490 years in total, with each "week" representing a period of seven years. Futurists believe that 69 of the 70 weeks have already been fulfilled, ending with Jesus' first coming, but the final, 70th week is yet to occur and will unfold in the future during a period of tribulation before the end of the world.

The six purposes listed in Daniel 9:24—"to finish transgression, put an end to sin, atone for wickedness, bring in everlasting righteousness, seal up vision and prophecy, and anoint the Most Holy"—are viewed as being only partially fulfilled at Christ's first coming and will be fully completed in His second coming.

The Anointed One (Daniel 9:25-26):

The *Anointed One* is identified as Jesus Christ, whose first coming is viewed as taking place after the 69th week (7 + 62 sevens). His crucifixion is seen as fulfilling the prophecy that the *Anointed One* would be "cut off" (v. 26), marking the conclusion of the 69th week.

Many futurists interpret the phrase "cut off and will have nothing" as referring to Jesus' rejection by Israel and His death without establishing the Messianic kingdom at that time.

The People of the Ruler to Come (Daniel 9:26):

The "people of the ruler to come" are often seen as the Roman Empire, whose armies destroyed the city and temple in AD 70. However, futurists believe this verse also points to a future ruler, commonly understood to be the *Antichrist*, who will arise in the end times.

The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70 is viewed as a foreshadowing of a greater destruction and desolation that will occur during the final tribulation period.

The Covenant and the Final Seven (Daniel 9:27):

The 70th week (the final “seven” of years) is separated from the first 69 weeks and is believed to represent a future seven-year period known as the *Great Tribulation*, leading to the end of the world.

The “ruler who will come” (commonly understood to be the Antichrist) is believed to confirm a covenant with many for one “week” (seven years), which will begin the tribulation period.

In the middle of the seven years (after 3.5 years), the Antichrist will break this covenant, putting an end to sacrifices and offerings. This event is often associated with the “abomination that causes desolation” (v. 27), which many futurists interpret as the Antichrist desecrating a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem.

The final judgment and destruction of the Antichrist are expected to occur at the end of the 70th week, culminating in the second coming of Christ, the defeat of evil, and the establishment of God’s eternal kingdom.

Key Aspects of Futurist Interpretation:

Gap Theory: Futurists often propose a *gap* between the 69th and 70th weeks. They believe the prophetic clock paused after Jesus’ crucifixion and will resume during the end times with the rise of the Antichrist.

Tribulation and Second Coming: The 70th week is understood to describe a future seven-year tribulation period marked by the Antichrist’s deception, followed by Jesus’ return at the end of this period to defeat evil, judge the world, and establish His millennial reign.

Abomination of Desolation: Futurists see the “abomination of desolation” as a future event where the Antichrist will desecrate a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, fulfilling Jesus’ reference to this prophecy in Matthew 24:15.

In summary, for those with a futurist perspective, the *seventy sevens* of Daniel represent a prophecy that spans from the time of Daniel through the first coming of Christ, but it will find its ultimate fulfillment in the end times, particularly in the events surrounding the Great Tribulation and the return of Jesus to establish His eternal kingdom. The final seven years (the 70th week) are reserved for the future and will culminate in the end of the world.

Part 8: The Kingdom Begins

Whew! It's been quite a ride looking at all the kingdom-related prophecies in the book of Daniel and how the three major camps of interpretation. Today I'm going to show why I think Camp B is the correct view by showing how all the prophecies culminate in one place in the Bible.

Review from last week:

- Last week I explained how the three camps view the seventy weeks in Daniel chapter 9. While chapter 9 is like chapters 2, 7, and 8 in that it makes prophecies about the kingdom that God will start, it differs from the others in that:
 - The vision given to Daniel is not provided. Therefore, there's no mention of symbolic beasts or vivid images of fire and wars.
 - It gives timed-prophecies relative to a specific future event: the order going out to rebuild Jerusalem.
 - It specifically refers to a new covenant that will be confirmed and how the current covenant will end.
- Camp A believes the seventy weeks are symbolic and point to a time around 160 BC when Antiochus IV invaded Jerusalem on the Sabbath, killing 40k people and enslaving another 40k, cooked a pig on the temple's alter, and turned the temple into a pagan brothel. The view the Jewish high priest, Onias III, as the "Anointed One".
- Camp B believes the seventy weeks point to the coming of the Messiah, his execution around 30 AD, and the destruction of the temple by the Roman general Titus under emperor Vespasian in 70 AD. The decree to rebuild Jerusalem is thought to be the one given by Artaxerxes in 457 BC. If Jesus' crucifixion at the age of 33 happened around 27 AD, this would be about 483 years after 457 BC. Note that there's some play in Artaxerxes' order from when it was given and when it was received in Jerusalem. There's also some wiggle room in when the 483-year period ended, in that it happened sometime in the year following the 483-year period. The seventieth week is viewed as symbol being around 42 years instead of just 7. 70 AD would be in the year following the 42 years Jesus' death, and 42 is associated with a time of unrest in that it equates to 3.5 years and "a time, times, and a half a time".
- Camp C is similar to Camp B but extends the final symbolic week all the way to the present, with the "middle of the seventieth week" being the coming of the Antichrist and the week of the week being the second coming of Christ. They often view the destruction of the temple in 70 AD as a foreshadowing of a greater period of destruction in the 7-year Tribulation.

- I. Was anyone waiting for the Kingdom of God?
 - a. The last prophet of the Old Testament is Malachi around 430 BC. Malachi made several prophecies about one who would prepare the way for the Lord and about

the Messiah (i.e. John the Baptist and Jesus). He also prophesied about “the day of the Lord”, likely the start of the Kingdom of God. So it’s been over four hundred years when the Gospels start. Is anyone still waiting? The answer is yes!

- b. Josephus writes about Alexander the Great sparing Jerusalem in 332 BC. The story is the high priest Jaddua met with Alexander and showed him Daniel 8:5-8 and 8:21. Historians question Josephus but the fact remains that Jerusalem was spared by Alexander and the Jews knew Greece was the third empire according to Daniel. Therefore, the Jews were “counting empires”.
- c. Simeon (Luke 2:25-32) and Anna (Luke 2:36-38).
- d. The disciples of John the Baptist (Luke 3:15).
- e. Nicodemus (John 3:1-21). How do we know? Because Jesus knew his thoughts in verse 3, “no one can see the kingdom”, therefore, Nicodemus was wanting to “see” the kingdom of God.
- f. The Pharisees (Luke 17:20-21). If the Pharisees were willing to ask Jesus, they were definitely thinking about this.

II. When *didn’t* the Kingdom of God start?

- a. Can the start of the Kingdom even be known? If it were up to human guesses, no. But if God revealed it in the Bible, yes!
- b. One might expect such an amazing thing to coincide with an important event.
 - i. How about the desolation of the Temple in 160 BC or the birth of Christ in 7 to 4 BC? Mat 3:2 – John the Baptist says the kingdom is near, and this is after those two events.
 - ii. How about when Jesus started his ministry? Mat 4:17 Jesus himself says the kingdom is near and therefore has not yet started.
 - iii. How about Jesus’ death on the cross? Luke 23:50 Joseph of Arimathea is still waiting for it after Jesus’ death.
 - iv. How about Jesus’ resurrection? Luke 24:49 – Jesus, after his resurrection, tells his disciples, “I am going to send you what my Father has promised” aka the Kingdom. So still not yet.
 - v. How about Jesus’ ascension? Luke 24:49 says “stay in the city until you’ve been clothed with power from on high”. Just down from there in verses 50-52, Jesus takes them two miles outside of Jerusalem to Bethany where he ascends into heaven. Then they returned to Jerusalem because they still haven’t been “clothed with power”.

III. Besides “near”, are any clues given about when it would start?

- a. “Near” is much better than “several empires” or “69 weeks” (483 years).
- b. From Part 1: As we read in Mat 3 and 4, John the Baptist and Jesus say it’s near. That’s great but “near” from God’s perspective could be different from humans.
- c. Also from Part 1: In Mat 16:28/Mark 9:1/Luke 9:27, Jesus limits the start of the kingdom to within the lifetime of his disciples.

- d. Mat 16:13-20. Verse 18: Jesus gives Peter the keys to open the Kingdom. So look for Peter to open the Kingdom.
 - e. Mat 26:29/Luke 22:18 – Jesus will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom comes.
 - f. Luke 24:44-49 – when repentance is preached in his name in Jerusalem to all nations.
- IV. When did the Kingdom of God start?
- a. Acts 1:18 – Judas, one of the twelve, is dead.
 - b. Acts 2 – the Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost, which 50 days after Passover, the day on which Jesus was crucified.
 - i. Verses 2-4 – The sound of a violent wind, tongues of fire on their heads, and speaking languages they haven't been taught—I'd say that's being clothed with power.
 - ii. Verse 5 – where are they? Jerusalem. Why are there Jews from every nation there? The holiday, Pentecost. Recall from Part 3, Isaiah 2:1-4: established as the greatest kingdom, all nations would stream to it, the word of the lord would go out from Jerusalem, and it would not happen through warfare.
 - iii. Who is speaking? Peter (he has the keys). Look at the prophecies Peter lists as, "fulfilled at this moment" during this "first sermon of the Kingdom": Joel 2:28-32, Psalm 16:8-11, and Psalm 110:1-2. Remember, prophecies whose fulfillment is given by God, an angel, or a spirit-filled person are important and cherished. Peter is saying there's a nexus of prophecies being fulfilled at this very moment.
 - iv. Verse 38 – the culmination – repentance and forgiveness of sins preached to representatives of all nations, water (baptism), and the Holy Spirit received by the people. (Luke 24 and John 3)
- V. Series Summary
- a. I believe the Kingdom of God on earth, where people become citizens by receiving the Holy Spirit, started on Pentecost fifty days after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.
 - b. I believe the sheer number and specificity of all the prophecies that started at least 750 years before Christ, point to the omniscience of God, His powerful love for mankind, and the authority and credibility of the Bible.

Thanks for listening to this series. I recommend re-listening to it to get all the details. Come back next week with a new series, The Nature of Sin.

Daniel's 70 Weeks

