

## THE COVENANT OF THE SEVENTIETH WEEK

By MEREDITH G. KLINE

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In quick succession in the early forties, O. T. Allis published two major studies. In the first, he took up the cudgels against the modern critical assault on the Pentateuch; in the second, he dealt with a problem besetting the church from quite a different quarter. Like *The Five Books of Moses* (1943), *Prophecy and the Church* (1945) was a masterful critique. In part, surely, as a result of Allis's expose, dispensationalism does not seem to be quite as influential a movement in conservative churches as it was a generation or so ago. But the interpretation of Old Testament prophecies involved in the assessment of this evangelical heresy is as important and timely today as Allis found it to be then.

By way of tribute to Dr. Allis I would turn to this second area of his publication interests, offering a study of the seventy weeks prophecy in Daniel 9, a passage which plays a dominant role in dispensationalism's futuristic charting. [1] Attention will focus particularly on the covenant mentioned in Daniel 9:27, for a proper understanding of this covenant speaks decisively against the peculiar concept of the "Great Tribulation" which dispensationalism derives from this verse and with which dispensationalism's identity is inseparably conjoined.

### *The Unity of Daniel 9*

If satisfactory results are to be achieved in the interpretation of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9, we will have to keep in mind that there is the closest relationship between Gabriel's prophecy (vss. 20-27) and Daniel's prayer (vss. 1-19).

In modern higher criticism the unity of Daniel 9 is by no means unanimously acknowledged. Among those who reject the sixth century provenance of the book as a whole in favor of the theory of a second century origin, the prayer of Daniel often is regarded as an interpolation in chapter 9. Even in these ranks, however, the authenticity of the prayer is not without supporters.

In a recent survey of the matter, B. C. Jones seeks to strengthen the case for viewing the prayer as an original part of the chapter. [2] Of the several objections to this position [3] the most significant is the alleged lack of correspondence between the subject of the prayer and Gabriel's response. Jones counters this with the observation that Gabriel does provide assurances (vs. 24) which answer to Daniel's plea for forgiveness. Positive evidence of the unity of Daniel 9 is also found in the way the response repeats or plays on the sound of various words in the prayer. [4] It has been noted too that both parts of the chapter share certain expressions not found elsewhere in the book. [5]

Unfortunately, Jones does grant after all that there is a difference in viewpoint in the two parts of this chapter. He would explain this as an intentional device designed to convey the deterministic idea that calamity happens at the decreed time, and prayers, like Daniel's, make little difference to God. [6] This radical distortion of the meaning of the episode is a consequence of Jones's acceptance of the critical late dating of the book and the related interpretation of the climax of the seventy weeks in terms of the crisis undergone by the Jews in the second century B.C. If the messianic rather than Maccabean interpretation of the seventy weeks is followed, unity of theme and consistency of viewpoint can be demonstrated throughout Daniel 9, as we shall try to show below, and a satisfactory reply thus provided for the main critical objection to the unity of this chapter.

Apropos of this, one point may be made at once: there is no justification for the assumption that the seventy weeks prophecy was produced to clarify the meaning of or to reinterpret Jeremiah's prophecy of the seventy years, study of which had led to Daniel's prayer (Dan. 9:2 f.). On the basis of that false assumption it has been argued that Daniel's prayer should be a petition for illumination and that since it is not, it does not correspond to the following prophecy and must be an interpolation in this context.

Daniel's prayer does not, indeed, express perplexity, but importunity. There was no need for perplexity over the plain words of Jeremiah that the end of Israel's seventy years exile would be closely associated with the fall of Babylon (Jer. 25:11 ff.). Daniel's sense of urgency is understandable because within the year Babylon had fallen (539 B.C.; cf. Dan. 9:1), and it was close to a round seventy years since the exile of Judah had begun in 605, Daniel himself having been among those carried away to Babylon at that time. [7] The clear meaning of Daniel 9:2 ff. is that Daniel prayed for the timely fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophetic promise. And soon the restoration was actually under way; there was no failure in the historical realization of the terms of the prophecy that called for embarrassed reinterpretation of its simple sense. Moreover, it is perfectly clear from the account of Gabriel's mission (Dan. 9:20 ff.) that his purpose was not to interpret or reinterpret Jeremiah's prophecy but to assure Daniel that the promise of restoration was about to be fulfilled. In short, it is only by obscuring the obvious that one can fail to see that Daniel's prayer and Gabriel's response suit each other very well.

The common focus of the prayer and the prophetic response, the theme that pervades the entire chapter, is Yahweh's covenant with Israel, particularly the actualization of the covenant sanctions through the faithfulness of God. This central theme emerges at once in the opening words of Daniel's prayer. Setting his face toward God, he describes Him as the Lord who "keeps the covenant" (vs. 4). That is both the ground of Daniel's confidence and the subject of his plea. His prayer is that God would bring to realization the mercies of His covenant, as He had its curses. And the message of Gabriel's prophecy, answering to Daniel's prayer, is that God would straightway prove himself anew the keeper of the covenant, fulfilling the ancient Mosaic promise of restoration after exile (Lev. 26:42 ff.; Deut. 30:3 ff.) according to the specific terms of that promise as it had been reissued by Jeremiah (Jer. 29:10). Then in its revelation of the future of the covenant, Gabriel's answer moves on beyond the horizon of the prayer, disclosing that the ultimate purpose of the seventy weeks program was that the divine covenant keeper should not merely restore but consummate the covenant order He had given to Israel through Moses.

Due recognition and appreciation of this pervasive concentration on the theme of covenant confirmation is important for both the higher criticism and the exegesis of Daniel 9. On the one hand, this covenant theme evidences the integrity of the chapter as a whole. On the other, it illuminates the interconnections of the various strands and details in the prophecy, making it possible to carry forward the basically sound exegesis of the traditional messianic interpretation of the seventy weeks and to sharpen the critique of the dispensational construction.

### *The Covenant Theme in Daniel's Prayer*

Having begun his prayer with the acknowledgment of God as the one who keeps the covenant (vs. 4), Daniel continued with this theme, interpreting Israel's present desolate condition and the entire history leading to it by explicit reference to the realities of the covenant. Israel's history had been a long course of continual violation of the written stipulations of God's covenant (vs. 5) and repudiation of God's emissaries, the prophets, as they had come administering the covenant lawsuit (vss. 6, 10). The inevitable result of this covenant breaking had been that the curse invoked by Israel in their oath of covenant ratification had overtaken the nation (vss. 11 ff.). God had carried out His threats, bringing on His disobedient vassal- people the very evils delineated in the curse sanctions of the original treaties (vss. 12 ff.). Daniel's appeal for mercy and restoration had in view the honor of God's name, which was bound up with the fate of Israel since He had become identified as the covenantal Protector of this vassal-nation (vss. 15-19).

The covenantal orientation of Daniel's prayer is underscored by its vocabulary, for it is replete with treaty terminology. As already noted, Daniel 9 is the only chapter in the book to use the divine name Yahweh (vss. 2,4, 10, 13, 14,20). This striking use of the peculiarly covenantal name of God in this chapter is a plain index to its major theme. Equally appropriate to the covenantal context is the repeated use of 'adonay, "Lord," characteristic designation of the dominant party in the covenant. The usage here is the more significant since this is again the only chapter in the book (except for Dan. 1:2) where the term appears. Other words found here in their specialized treaty meanings are 'ahab, "love" (vs. 4), hesed, "covenant loyalty" (vs. 4), sub, "turn" (vss. 13,16), and hata, "sin" (vss. 5,8, 11, 15). The prayer is indeed saturated with formulaic expressions drawn from the Mosaic treaties, particularly from the Deuteronomic treaty. [8]

Form-critical analysis has made an interesting contribution to our understanding of the covenantal nature of the prayer in Daniel 9 by ascertaining the specific function a prayer of this type performed in covenant administration.

Analyzing a series of post-exilic prayers with identical structures, including Daniel 9:4-19, J. Harvey identifies them as belonging to the Todah genre. [9] He notes that the verb from which the noun todah derives is used for the act of offering these prayers. [10]

D. W. Kerr, in his study of the element in Israel's religious praxis which the Old Testament denoted by the term todah, concludes that it was "the public act of acknowledging the glory of God in his attributes and the grace of God in his actions toward the people whom he has chosen in solemn covenant." [11] He draws attention to the recitation of the Todah-prayer confessing God's gracious acts in connection with the sellamim, Israel's covenant-offerings.

[12] He further notes that previous studies had observed that Todah-confession includes Israel's confession of her sins as well as the acknowledgment of God's just acts. [13] It will be seen that Daniel 9:4 ff. and the similar prayers in Ezra and Nehemiah consist of precisely these two types of confession characteristic of the Todah.

Harvey observes that the common concern of these prayers is the broken covenant, and further that they are followed by acts of covenant renewal (Ezra 10:3 ff.; Neh. 10:1 ff.). [14] He then suggests that such Todah-prayers performed a special judicial function in the process of the rib, the covenant lawsuit, which the Lord prosecuted through His prophets against His people when they broke His covenant. The Todah-prayer was a response by the condemned vassal-people to the indictment of the Lord, admitting the justice of the sentence. This procedure was in keeping with ancient Near Eastern legal practice as attested particularly by the Babylonian "tablets of no-complaint."

The covenant lawsuit process, with the special role played in it by the Todah, is delineated in the covenant sanctions passage in Leviticus 26. There, following a description of the breaking of the covenant (vss. 14 f.) and of the infliction of the covenant curses on Israel, climactically the curse of exile (vss. 16-39), it is stated that the Todah-confession by the exiles (vss. 40 f.) would be prerequisite to God's renewing of the covenant and restoring its blessings (vss. 42 ff.). [15] Again, in the sanctions of the Deuteronomic treaty Moses presents such a prophetic overview of the covenant relation of Yahweh and Israel down to the exile and assigns to the act of Israel's repentant turning the same essential role as prelude to the restoration of the covenant (Deut. 30: 1 fl., especially 2 and 10). [16] Similarly, Solomon, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple (I Kings 8: 23 ff.), requests that when, because of their transgressions, the covenant people found themselves exiled captives and then confessed their sins (vss. 47 ff.), God would forgive and restore them.

Here then in this tradition of Todah-prayers is where Daniel 9:4-19 clearly fits, with its acknowledgment of Yahweh's righteousness and Israel's guilt, and with its plea for deliverance from the justly inflicted curses of the ancient covenant oath. [17] Daniel's prayer corresponds to, we might say fulfills, the Todah requirement stipulated in the pattern of covenant lawsuit administration in Leviticus 26:40, 41. [18] We are thus led to expect that God's response to Daniel's prayer through His angel Gabriel will correspond to the promise of covenant remembrance and renewal which forms the sequel to the Todah in Leviticus 26:42-45. "If they shall confess their iniquity (vs. 40a) . . . then I will remember my covenant (vs. 42a) . . . the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God (vs. 45)."

### *The Covenant Theme in Gabriel's Prophecy*

The validity of that expectation is confirmed by an examination of Daniel 9:20-27 itself.

The covenantal theme emerges in the very structure of Gabriel's revelation -- the structure of the seventy weeks (or sevens). This chronological mold in which the prophecy is cast is obviously sabbatical. The basic unit, the sabua', "heptad, period of seven," refers to the seven-year period the seventh year of which was a sabbatical year of rest for the land (Lev. 25:2 ff.). [19] The first of the major sections into which the seventy weeks are subdivided comprises seven of these sabbatical years (Dan. 9:25), and so constitutes the forty-nine-

year period that issued in the heightened sabbath of the jubilee (Lev. 25: 8 ff.), the year of redemption, release, and restoration. The total period of seventy sevens of years thus constituted ten of these jubilee eras, [20] an intensification of the jubilee concept pointing to the ultimate, antitypical jubilee. Such a pattern of ten jubilees or ten weeks, the tenth of which is climactic, is found in "The Apocalypse of Weeks" [21] and in the Qumran composition, 11QMelch(izedek). The latter is fragmentary but it evidently identifies "the tenth jubilee" and "the last jubilee." [22]

Now the sabbatical pattern is a covenantal pattern. For the Lord declared the sabbath to be a perpetual sign of the covenant between Him and His people (Ex. 31:13-17; Ezek. 20:12,20). Indeed, from its original appointment as a creation ordinance (Gen. 2: 3) the sabbath has functioned as a sign of the covenant relationship and program, and particularly as a prophetic symbol of the consummation of the covenant order. As elaborated in the Mosaic covenants in a calendar of sabbatical and jubilee years, the sabbath served as a sign of the messianic age of redemptive liberation, restitution, and rest. Therefore, the placing of Gabriel's response to Daniel's prayer in a sabbatical-jubilee framework tells us at once that this prophecy is fundamentally concerned with God's covenant with Israel, and especially with the consummation of that covenant.

The conclusion that the seventy weeks framework is sabbatical, naturally suggested by the numerical features of the passage, is confirmed by the relationship of this seventy weeks prophecy to the seventy years prophecy of Jeremiah. Though the former is not an interpretation, and certainly not a corrective reinterpretation, of the latter, it was given in response to a prayer that was prompted by the reading of Jeremiah's prophecy and, as we shall see, it employs the same symbolic model as that prophecy.

Expounding the seventy years of exile in terms of the explanation of the exile given in Leviticus 26:43, the Chronicler depicts it as a time of sabbatical rest for the land: "To fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years" (II Chron. 36:21). Here each of the seventy years is seen as functioning as a sabbatical year so that the seventy years are the equivalent of seventy weeks of years. Under the exile's condition of continuing desolation, 490 years were telescoped into 70 because the desolate land leaped without the normal six-year intervals of labor from one seventh year of rest immediately to its next sabbatical year. Thus, Gabriel's seventy weeks prophecy actually made use of the very same symbol as the seventy years prophecy of Jeremiah -- and that symbol is explained in II Chronicles 36:21 as sabbatical.

Early adoption of a sabbatical interpretation of the seventy weeks prophecy of Daniel 9 is attested by 11QMelch, which, as noted above, equates the tenth and last jubilees. This composition is a midrashic development of the Leviticus 25 year of jubilee. Into this development it works the seventy weeks of Daniel 9 and so provides an interpretation of that prophecy at the same time. [23] In this interpretive text, coming perhaps from about the time of our Lord, the seventy weeks of Daniel 9 are seen as a series of ten jubilees culminating in a proclamation of deliverance, atonement, vengeance on Zion's enemies, and the establishing of God's covenant among His people.

It has become increasingly clear that Leviticus 25 and 26 is an important source standing behind Daniel 9:24 ff. The seventy weeks prophecy is built on the sabbath-jubilee structure of Leviticus 25 (cf. 26:43). Daniel 9 as a whole follows the covenant administration pattern of Leviticus 26. The prayer (vss. 4 ff.) corresponds to the Todah-confession of Leviticus 26:40 f., and the prophecy (vss. 24 ff.) corresponds to the covenant restitution and renewal of Leviticus 26:42 ff. This last equivalence is reinforced by the connection made between the seventy weeks and Leviticus 26:43 in II Chronicles 36:21.

The seventy weeks prophecy of Daniel 9 reflects yet another aspect of the Leviticus 26 forecast of covenant restoration after covenant breaking as that forecast is taken up and developed in II Chronicles 36. Immediately after the Chronicler has referred to the period of the exile as seventy sabbatical years (II Chron. 36:21), he makes mention of the decree of Cyrus issued in the first year of his reign, officially ending Israel's exile. In these closing words of his historical work the Chronicler points to the figure of the restorer who accomplished the Lord's word by Jeremiah concerning the divine visitation after seventy sabbath years (Jer. 29: 10) and introduced the post-exilic jubilee-restoration (II Chron. 36:22 f.; cf. Ezra 1:1 ff.). The Chronicler was at the same time recording the fulfillment of another prophetic word of God. Isaiah too had spoken of the one who should command the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple, even Cyrus, whom Isaiah designated as the Lord's "anointed" (Isa. 44:28; 45:1).

It was in the very year Cyrus issued his decree of restoration that Gabriel declared to Daniel that the decree of Cyrus terminating the period of Jeremiah's seventy sabbatical years also signaled the beginning of a new seventy weeks. According to Gabriel's prophecy, at the climax of this new seventy weeks there was to arise the figure of another anointed prince, after the order of Cyrus, but the true and final Messiah. [24] It would be his mission to bring in the true and final jubilee, to establish the new and everlasting covenant announced as the goal of the seventy weeks in the opening verse of the prophecy. [25] In the course of His mission He must undergo the violence of death, suffering in behalf of the "many." [26] Isaiah had prophesied of this anointed one too, the one anointed with the Spirit to proclaim the jubilee release and renewal (Isa. 61: 1 ff.), [27] the prince whom God would give when He made the everlasting covenant (Isa. 55: 3 f.), [28] the servant of the Lord who was a covenant mediator like unto Moses and would himself be the covenant (Isa. 42:6; 49:8), the servant who must be cut off out of the land of the living in order to provide justification for "the many" (Isa. 53:10-12). If the Mosaic treaties provided the framework of administrative rubrics for the covenant theme in Daniel 9, the Isaianic servant figure was the source for the personal mediator of the covenant of the seventieth week.

### *The Covenant in Daniel 9:27*

As we come to the closing verses of Gabriel's prophecy, both the form and content of Daniel 9 have prepared us for a decisive final word about the messianic consummation of God's covenant with Israel in the last of the seventy weeks. [29] When, therefore, we find a covenant mentioned in verse 27, there should be no doubt as to its identity. [30] The whole context speaks against the supposition that an altogether different covenant from the

divine covenant which is the central theme throughout Daniel 9 is abruptly introduced here at the climax of it all.

Nor need there be any question as to the identity of the one who makes this covenant prevail. It is of course that anointed prince whose presence was said to mark the beginning of the seventieth week (vs. 25). There is an interesting link between the Messiah and the covenant in verse 26. His death is there described by the verb *karat*, the verb regularly employed for the act of ratifying a covenant by a cutting ritual which portrayed the curse of the covenant oath. The statement about the covenant in verse 27 is then in clear continuity with the covenantal allusion in verse 26. Gabriel here assures Daniel that the cutting off of the anointed one (vs. 26) would not mean the failure of His mission but, on the contrary, its accomplishment. "In the course of the one week he will make the covenant prevail (*higbir*) in behalf of the many" (vs. 27a). [31] It was by His death for the iniquity of His people that the Lord's anointed servant ratified the new covenant in which God's old covenant with Israel is confirmed and finds its consummation.

In verse 27 the petition of Daniel's prayer receives its most direct response. Precisely here the prophetic assurance of a divine confirmation of the covenant is explicitly stated.

The fact should not be ignored that in this crucial statement the verb employed is not a verb for the initial making of a covenant. [32] As noted above, the usual verb for making a covenant (*karat*) was used in verse 26a to intimate that according to God's redemptive counsel the slaying of the Messiah was the ratificatory sacrifice of the new covenant. In verse 27 (and already in verse 26b) the prophecy proceeds from the ratification of God's covenant to the powerful and ultimate execution of the sanctions of the covenant, both blessing and curse.

This idea might have been expressed by the verb *heqim*, "cause to stand." [33] Daniel used that verb in his prayer, acknowledging that through the judgment of exile God had confirmed or carried out His words against Israel (Dan. 9:12), the words of the oath-curse of the covenant (cf. vs. 11). Jeremiah used *heqim* in his seventy years prophecy to say that God would carry out His promise of covenant blessing (Jer. 29: 10). [34] When Gabriel tells Daniel that God will bring the blessing sanctions of the ancient covenant to realization -- in dimensions far beyond Daniel's immediate level of concern, he expresses the idea of fulfillment by an equivalent of *heqim*, the even more emphatic verb *higbir*, "make strong, cause to prevail." [35]

The force of this verb *higbir* excludes the notion that the covenant referred to in Daniel 9:27a is some arrangement imposed by a future antichrist, whether conceived of within a dispensational or other eschatological framework. According to these futurist reconstructions, antichrist enters into some pact at the beginning of the seventieth week and then what he succeeds in doing in the course of that week is to break his covenant. Such a situation, it must be insisted, would be the diametrical opposite of what verse 27 describes. The evidence on the usage of *higbir* indicates that verse 27 has in view the enforcing of the terms of a covenant previously granted. If so, it can only refer to God's faithful fulfillment of the covenant He has given to His people. [36]

Elsewhere in the Old Testament the Hiph'il form of the verb *gabar* appears only in Psalm 12:5(4), where it means "be strong" or "prevail." But it is also found in one of the Qumran Thanksgiving Hymns (1QH II, 24). The author uses it in this hymn to express the idea that through him and his persecutions God demonstrates His power, or prevails. This idea is expounded in the immediate context, where the psalmist offers praise that by the divine faithfulness (*hesed*) he has been enabled to hold firmly to God's covenant while his mighty persecutors have been judged. Here then is a covenantal passage in which the Hiph'il of *gabar* denotes God's faithful and powerful enforcement of the blessing and curse sanctions of His covenant.

Certain biblical passages where *gabar* is used in the Qal stem [37] are distinctly covenantal and illuminate the force of this verb in Daniel 9:27. In Psalm 103:11, where the language of the covenant formulary is especially conspicuous, and again in Psalm 117:2, the subject of *gabar* is God's *hesed*. This noun is a virtual synonym for *berit*, "covenant," but more particularly *hesed* is the covenant faithfulness by which God maintains and fulfills the order of beatitude He has established. [38] It was to the covenant keeping and *hesed* of God that Daniel appealed at the start of his prayer (Dan. 9:4), so setting the theme to which both his prayer and Gabriel's response closely adhered. In both Psalm 103 and 117 the idea of God's making the covenant blessing prevail (*gabar*) comes to parallel expression in a declaration that some element of the covenant, like righteousness or truth, will endure unto children's children or will be everlasting (in Psalm 103 see verse 17). Similarly in the prophecy of the seventy weeks the statement in the closing verse that the covenant will be made to prevail answers to the "everlasting righteousness" and to the consummatory aspect in general of the purpose of the seventy weeks as stated in the opening verse (Dan. 9:24).

The evidence of the usage of *gabar* thus refutes conclusively those interpretations of Daniel 9: 27 that would find a reference to the mere initiation of a covenant relation, and indeed of a covenant that is supposed to fail through perfidy. For the covenantal associations of *gabar* are God's *hesed*. This noun is a virtual synonym for *berit*, perpetuity. [39]

One further line of investigation related to the verb *gabar* proves illuminating for Daniel 9: 27. The kind of action denoted by *gabar* is performed by a *gibbor*, "a mighty one, a hero." [40] This term is used as an epithet of God in a covenant-preamble type of formula that appears in shorter and longer forms in the Deuteronomic treaty (Deut. 7:9,21; 10:17) and in covenant renewal prayers of the *Todah*-confession genre, including Daniel's (Dan. 9:4; Neh. 1:5; 9:32; cf. Jer. 32: 18). The formula describes God as the great, the mighty (*haggibbor*), the fearful God ('*el*), the one who keeps *berit* and *hesed* to a thousand generations and recompenses the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.

Particularly significant for the meaning of *gibbor* in Daniel 9:27 is the use of *gibbor* in Isaiah 9 and 10. Isaiah identified the Messiah, the Son of David, as "the mighty God" of the covenant formula by declaring His name to be '*el gibbor* (Isa. 9:5, [6]. Then in Isaiah 10 this messianic '*el gibbor* is mentioned again in the very passage from which Daniel 9:27 derives its thought and wording alike (see verses 21-23). Isaiah spoke there of God's mighty messianic fulfillment of covenant blessing and curse: a remnant of Jacob would return unto '*el gibbor*, but in overflowing (*sotep*) judicial righteousness the annihilation (*kalah*) that was determined (*neherasah*) would befall the land. Daniel 9:26b, 27 echoes Isaiah's



prophecy: the covenant would be made to prevail (higbir), as a blessing for the many who were the faithful remnant, but as a curse in the form of the determined annihilation (kalah weneherasah) which would be poured out on the abominations of apostate Israel like a flood (setep). [41] The unmistakable dependence of Daniel 9:27 on Isaiah 10:21 ff. points directly to the 'el gibbor of Isaiah 10:21 as the inspiration for the higbir of Daniel 9:27. This confirms the conclusions that the subject of higbir is not antichrist or any other than the anointed one whose name is 'el gibbor [42] and that the object of higbir, the covenant made to prevail, is the redemptive covenant sealed by the reconciling blood of Christ.

### *Conclusion*

Daniel had prayed for the restoration of the Jerusalem temple, the paramount sacramental symbol of Israel's covenant relation to Yahweh. The prophecy of the seventy weeks assured him that his prayer would begin to be answered at once and that the restoration of the covenant community would be completed in what is portrayed as a jubilee period. Then the prophecy went on to disclose the ultimate unfolding of the covenant and the paradoxical prospects that lay in store for the temple at that later time. After being restored, the Jerusalem temple would again be made a den of abomination, evoking another and final desolation. Israel's Lord would pour out on the rebellious vassal-nation the full vengeance of His broken covenant. But though the curse would be executed to the uttermost, the blessing of the covenant would be secured for the many who were the elect and true Israel. Before the curse terminated the old Mosaic order, Messiah would institute the new covenant order, in which the old people and city and temple would find continuity and consummation. Before the Jerusalem temple was levelled, the foundations of the everlasting temple of the Spirit, which is Christ and His church, would be laid. This new, anti typical restoration of God's temple would be the achievement of what is portrayed as ten jubilee periods.

In the course of the climactic seventieth week, masiah nagid, the anointed priest-king, would make the covenant prevail both in renewal and in judgment. Cut off in death, Messiah would make priestly reconciliation for iniquity, so perfecting sacrifice forever and instituting the new covenant. Then exercising His royal heavenly rule over all the nations, Messiah in the midst of the seventieth week would send forces of destruction against the Jerusalem temple, so making the old ritual system cease [43] and bringing the old covenant to its end. [44]

When we survey the fulfillment of Gabriel's prophecy from our vantage point, it appears that the last half of the seventieth week is the age of the community of the new covenant, disengaged from the old covenant order with whose closing days its own beginnings overlapped for a generation. In the imagery of the New Testament Apocalypse, the last half week is the age of the church in the wilderness of the nations for a time, and times, and half a time (Rev. 12:14). Since the seventy weeks are ten jubilee eras that issue in the last jubilee, the seventieth week closes with the angelic trumpeting of the earth's redemption and the glorious liberty of the children of God. The acceptable year of the Lord which came with Christ will then have fully come. Then the new Jerusalem whose temple is the Lord and the Lamb will descend from heaven (Rev. 21:10,22) and the ark of the covenant will be

seen (Rev. 11:19), the covenant the Lamb has made to prevail and the Lord has remembered.

## Endnotes

1. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1945), pp. 111 f.: "The importance of the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks in Dispensational teaching can hardly be exaggerated. It is often appealed to as the conspicuous proof that the entire Church age is a parenthesis in the prophetic program which is to be discovered between vss. 26 and 27 of Dan. ix."

2. "The Prayer in Daniel IX," *Vetus Testamentum* 18, 4 (1968), 488-493.

3. Jones (*ibid.*, 489) answers the objection that the tetragram is used in the prayer but not elsewhere in the book by appeal to the sound principle that the choice of a divine name in particular passages may be determined by idiom and considerations of contextual appropriateness. Cf. Allis, *The Five Books of Moses* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1943), pp. 24 f. and 35 ff. On the significance of the choice of the designations for God in this chapter, see further below.

4. For example (and modifying Jones's presentation), the prayer says the oath-curse, 'alah and sebu'ah, was poured out, wattittak (vs. 11); while the prophecy says the weeks, sabu'im, are decreed, nehtak (vs. 24), and the determined end, kalah, will be poured out, tittak (vs. 27). The prayer refers to the desolate, samem, sanctuary (vs. 17); the response, to the desolate, or desolating (cf. Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, 52s) somem and mesomem, sanctuary (vs. 27).

Incidentally, if, as many believe, the siqqus (me)somem, of Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 (cf. 9:27) is a contemptuous pun on ba'al samem, "lord of heaven," it is to be noted, that that cult is attested long before the sixth century B.C. See W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (New York: Doubleday, 1969), pp. 227 ff. Cf. Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 491.

5. For example, tabanunim (vss. 3, 17 f., 23); nabi' (vss. 2, 6, 10, 24).

6. *Op cit.*, pp. 492 ff.

7. Daniel 1:1 ff. Cf. my observations on this in the *Westminster Theological Journal* 20, 2 (1958), 215 f.

8. Compare verse 4 with Deuteronomy 7:9, 21; 10:17; verse 5 with Deuteronomy 17:20; verse 10 with Deuteronomy 4:8, 30; 11:32; verse 11 with Deuteronomy 29:20; 33:1; 34:5; verse 12 with Deuteronomy 2:25; 4:19; 9:5; verse 15 with Deuteronomy 6:21; and verse 18 with Deuteronomy 28:10.

9. *Le plaidoyer prophétique contre Israël après la rupture de l'alliance* (Montreal: Bellarmin, 1967), pp. 157 ff. Harvey also deals with the biblical prayers in Ezra 9:6ff.; Nehemiah 1:5ff.; 9:6ff.; and with later, non-canonical prayers. Isaiah 63:7-64:12 also exhibits the pattern.

10. The Hithpa'el of yadah is used in Ezra 10:1 (cf. the noun todah in Ezra 10:11); Nehemiah 1:6; 9:2f.; and Daniel 9:4, 20.

11. The Meaning of the Words Hodah and Todah in the Old Testament (1966; unpublished Harvard doctoral dissertation), p. 180.

12. Ibid., pp. 66 f. and 167-171.

13. Ibid., pp. 68 f., referring particularly to the work of H. Grimme, A. Bentzen, F. Mand, and F. Horst.

14. Op. cit., p. 158. From among Gunkel's "Communal Laments" K. Baltzer, *Das Bundesformular* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1964), pp. 64 f., notes a series of passages, including the prayers under discussion by Harvey, which contain confession of sin, and he comments on how many of these deal with covenant renewal.

15. Harvey, op. cit., pp. 160 f., note 4, cites Psalm 50 as another especially clear witness to the rib-todah structure; for the todah see verses 14 and 23. Unfortunately, Harvey's late critical datings, particularly of Leviticus, prevent his tracing the pattern with confidence into pre-exilic times. M. O. Boyle in an analysis of the rib pattern in Amos 3:1-4:13, "The Covenant Lawsuit of the Prophet Amos: III I-IV 13," *Vetus Testamentum* 21, 3 (1971), 358-360, finds that the final step in the litigation is the "Recognition," acknowledging the justice of the judgment (4:13).

16. See too Deuteronomy 4:25 ff., especially 29 f. When those curses short of exile that were threatened in the Mosaic treaties overtook Israel, godly kings like Hezekiah and Josiah brought the people to renew the covenant through a process in which confession of sin was prominent. See II Chronicles 15: 1-15; 29:5 ff.; 34:19 ff. (cf. II Kings 22 and 23, especially 22:13, 19).

17. For further points of contact between Daniel's prayer and the rib and treaty formularies, see Harvey, op. cit., p. 160.

18. Daniel 9 and Leviticus 26 are interlocked by the Jeremianic prophecy of the seventy years exile and desolation of the land (Jer. 25:11f.; 29:10). That prophecy prompted the prayer of Daniel 9 (Dan. 9:2) and it is connected by II Chronicles 36:21 with the explanation Leviticus 26 gives of the exile as a time for the desolate land to enjoy its sabbaths (Lev. 26: 43). See further below.

19. To identify the "sevens" as weeks of years (which the Hebrew text does not explicitly do) is not necessarily to conclude that the prophecy speaks of a literal 490-year period. In fact, if attention is paid to the unity of this chapter, particularly, if there is due regard for the appropriateness of the response to the urgency of the plea that the divine word through Jeremiah be speedily fulfilled as the passage of the years now demanded (i.e., the seventy years spanned by the date formulae in Dan. 1:1 and 9:1), one can only conclude that the beginning of the seventy weeks coincided with the ending of the seventy years at the time of Daniel's prayer. All the relevant evidence cannot be discussed here, but in my judgment it all points to the first year of Cyrus as the start of the seventy weeks. It is then quite impossible to work out the fulfillment in a literal 490-year period. The seventy weeks must be understood symbolically, and it is their sabbatical structure that indicates their specific symbolical significance. Even those who believe this prophecy deals with a literal 490-year period might simultaneously recognize the sabbatical pattern and the symbolic message inherent in it; compare the treatment of Jeremiah's seventy years in II Chronicles 36:21.

20. The Book of Jubilees reckons in jubilee cycles of forty-nine years each. A minority opinion recorded in the Babylonian Talmud, 'Arakhin 12b and parallels, does likewise, explaining that the fiftieth year, the jubilee year of one cycle, is also the first year of the next jubilee cycle. Cf. E. Wiesenber, "The Jubilee of Jubilees," *Revue de Qumran* 3, 1 (1961), 16 f.
21. See I Enoch 93:1-10 and 91:12-17. Cf. J. P. Thorndike, "The Apocalypse of Weeks and the Qumran Sect," *Revue de Qumran* 3, 2 (1961), 163-184.
22. See line 7. Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, "Further Light on Melchizedek from Qumran Cave II," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 86, 1 (1967), 25-41, especially 29 f., 35, 40; J. Carmignac, "Le document de Qumran sur Melkisedeq," *Revue de Qumran* 7, 3 (1970), 348f. Further, the jubilee pattern culminating in a jubilee of jubilees in which individual restoration is lifted to the national level is prominent in Jubilees, The Assumption of Moses, and in the Pseudo-Jonathan targum on the Pentateuch. Cf. Wiesenber, op. cit., and G. W. Buchanan, *The Consequences of the Covenant* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), p. 11.
23. Cf. Fitzmyer, *ibid.*; Carmignac, op. cit., 357.
24. The first sixty-nine weeks lead to masiah nagid (Dan. 9:25); he introduces the seventieth week of eschatological achievement (Dan. 9:26,27).
25. The goal of the seventy weeks as described in Daniel 9:24 is an ultimate age of fulfillment and completion. Its accomplishments are those found elsewhere in prophecies of God's new and everlasting covenant and of the eschatological jubilee. See, for example, Isaiah 60:21; 61:1 ff.; Jeremiah 31:34; 32:40; Ezekiel 16:60-63; 20:37f.; 37:26. The final item listed in Daniel 9:24 is an anointing, which must surely be related to the anointed one of Daniel 9:25.
26. Daniel 9:27. These are the elect within the covenant; cf. Daniel 11:33; 12:3.
27. In 11QMelch, Isaiah 61:1 is incorporated along with Daniel 9:24 ff. in the pesher on Leviticus 25.
28. The broken line 18 in 11QMelch apparently refers to "the anointed one of whom Daniel spoke," identifying him as one who proclaims salvation at the tenth and last jubilee. Sanhedrin 97b says that the son of David will come in the last jubilee.
29. The Testament of Levi 16 (perhaps a Christian interpolation in this Jewish document) represents an early interpretation of the seventy weeks. It finds at the climax a renewal of the covenant order of the law: "And a man who renews the law in the power of the Most High ye shall . . . slay" (16: 3). 11QMelch refers to establishers of God's covenant (line 25) in a context dealing with Daniel 9 and the renewal effected at the tenth and last jubilee. Cf. F. F. Bruce, "The Book of Daniel and the Qumran Community," *Neotestamentica et Semitica*, eds. E. E. Ellis and M. Wilcox (Edinburgh: Clark, 1969), pp. 230-233.
30. On the absence of the article with berit, compare the same usage in Daniel 11:28, 30, 32, where the reference is clearly to God's holy covenant.
31. The Messiah is the subject of verse 26a, and the temple and its end by overwhelming judgment is the real subject of verse 26b. Note the emphatic position of the city and the sanctuary at the beginning of the clause. Also, the temple is evidently the antecedent of the

pronominal suffix in qisso. It must then be the Messiah who is the understood subject of hibir (9:27). This is supported by the relationship noted above between the verbs for covenant action in verse 26a (karat) and verse 27a (hibir). As for the prince of verse 26b, whose army is said to advance against the temple-city, he is in any case thematically subordinated to the fate of the temple. Therefore, even if he were to be identified as the head of some foreign nation, he ought not be preferred over Messiah as the subject of hibir. Actually this nagid is in all likelihood the Messiah. After referring to Messiah as masiah nagid in verse 25, Gabriel divides the expression in the description of the two stages of his career in verse 26. There certainly would have been no need to confuse the matter by using this same title, nagid, rather than a different, more common title, if some foreign king had been intended. As for the thought, Jesus himself depicted the destruction of Jerusalem as the work of a "divine army in the parable of Matthew 22:2 ff. (see especially vs. 7). Thus, the nagid of verse 26b is a further link between the masiah of verse 26a and hibir in verse 27a. The identification of the nagid of verse 26b with the masiah of verse 26a also obtains if, with some support in the versions, we read 'im, "with," for 'am, "army."

32. This point is stressed by Allis, *Prophecy and the Church*, p. 122, and by E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), p. 209.

33. For the use of heqim to denote a stage in covenant administration subsequent to the covenant-making denoted by karat, see especially Jeremiah 34:18. It is used for the confirming of the covenant by enforcement of the divine word either of promise (e.g., Deut. 8: 18; Neh. 9:8) or of threat (e.g., II Chron. 10:15).

34. In the Leviticus 26 background of Daniel 9, enforcement of the covenant is expressed by heqim (26:9) and, referring to the post-exilic covenant renewal (26:42-45), by zakar, a technical covenantal term found elsewhere as a parallel to heqim (Gen. 9:9,11,15-17; Ex. 6:4,5). In Isaiah's Cyrus prophecy (44:26-28), heqim parallels hislim. Ezekiel uses heq'im and zakar to describe the confirmation of the same everlasting covenant that is in view in Daniel 9:27 (Ezek. 16:60,62).

35. Gabriel's choice for this key word reflects his own name. Compare Psalm 103:20. Cf. H. Kosmala, "The term geber in the Old Testament and in the Scrolls," *Congress Volume*, Rome, 1968 (Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* 17) (Leiden: Brill, 1969), pp. 159-169.

36. This conclusion would stand even if the grammatical subject of hibir were taken to be the covenant or the one week.

37. The flood narrative illustrates the Qal meaning, "prevail (over)," (Gen. 7:18 ff.). In the Pi'el, gabar means "make strong or heroic"; see, for example, Zechariah 10:6, which develops the idea of the previous verse: "they shall be like heroes (gibborim)." Similarly, in the Hithpa'el usage in Isaiah 42:13 the Lord's prevailing (yitgabbar) over His enemies is paralleled by His going forth to war like a gibbor, "mighty hero."

38. See Psalm 89:3, 4, 29, 34, 35 (Hebrew); Isaiah 55:3; Jeremiah 33:11.

39. The use of a semantic equivalent of hibir is attested in extra-biblical treaty terminology. When Esarhaddon wanted to settle the dynastic succession he made his vassals confirm their continuing allegiance to him by swearing loyalty to the crown prince. This firm imposition of the renewal treaty is described by the Assyrian verb meaning

"strengthen, increase, reinforce, make valid" (dananu, D-stem); see the Ramataia treaty, lines 23, 65, 286. Similarly in the historical records, Ashurbanipal's reestablishment of covenant relations with Necho of Egypt after the latter's rebellion is said to have been accomplished by increasing the oaths beyond those in the former treaty (Rassam Cylinder, II, 8). In this extra-biblical usage, strengthening the treaty refers to a reenforcing of the vassal's obligations in renewal of the covenant relationship. The stress in the covenantal usage of gabar in the Bible is on the Lord's enforcement of the covenant sanctions.

40. See note 37 above. M. Dahood, commenting on the nagbir of Psalm 12:5(4), says it is denominative from geber, "man, hero," and compares nazkir (Ps. 20:8[7]), which he takes as a denominative from zakar, "male," translating it, "we are strong"; cf. *Biblica* 45, 3 (1964), 396.

41. The correspondence between the passages extends further to the repetition of the judgment threat in each case with duplication of some of the key words (see Isa. 10:22b, 23 and Dan. 9:26b, 27).

42. See too Isaiah 42: 13, cf. 6; Psalm 45:3; 89: 19.

43. There may be a pun on the sabbatical scheme of the prophecy in the use of the verb *sabat* here.

44. If making sacrifice cease in the midst of the seventieth week (Dan. 9:27) refers to Christ's perfecting of Old Testament sacrifice by the sacrifice of himself, rather than to His judgment on the Jerusalem temple in A.D. 70, it would then be possible to regard the latter event as marking the end of the seventy weeks.