

**From Judgment to Jubilee: A Redemptive-Historical Approach
To Daniel's Seventy Sevens**

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by

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Dedicated to my wife,

Dawn

In memory of her brother,

Dwight

How blessed I am to have Dawn as my life's partner

How much I appreciated having Dwight for a brother-in-law

I celebrate with Dawn the completion of this thesis

I regret that Dwight cannot share this moment with us

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SUMMARY

The infamous prophecy of the seventy sevens in Daniel 9:24-27 has attracted an impressive amount of scholarly and popular attention over the last two thousand years. The volume of secondary literature is massive, and the quantity is matched by a diversity of interpretive results. The history of interpretation indicates that Daniel 9 has been read in different ways at different times. Though each group of readers had its own situation that affected its appropriation of Daniel 9, something in the text enabled it to speak relevantly and even typologically to successive generations. This thesis endeavors to identify that something with the hope of jubilee.

Many scholars have noticed that the seventy sevens equal ten jubilee cycles. Even so, studies of the seventy sevens often discuss the details of the seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and one seven in isolation from the six objectives of the seventy sevens in Daniel 9:24 and the overarching theme of jubilee. In other words, the six objectives and the jubilee do not factor into the exegesis of verses 25-27. Consequently, the association of the seventy sevens with jubilee, even when mentioned, goes undeveloped. For this reason, this thesis contends that more work needs to be done on the jubilee structure of the seventy sevens and therefore the relationship of the seventy sevens to their stated objectives in Daniel 9:24. This thesis will follow the lead of the aforementioned scholars by interpreting the seventy sevens symbolically with reference to the theme of jubilee. It will also read the seventy sevens in view of their stated purpose in Daniel 9:24, which anticipates the Jubilee of Jubilees in the form of atonement for sin and the establishment of righteousness.

At the same time, this effort at a theology of jubilee in Daniel 9 must take seriously the book's interest in Antiochus IV and the events of his reign. Daniel 9 sits between two visions that discuss the Antiochene crisis. The book of Daniel considers that crisis part of redemptive history and offers a sober but hopeful analysis of it. It makes good exegetical sense, then, to try first to understand the seventy sevens—and their inherent suggestion of a Jubilee of Jubilees—with reference to the Antiochene crisis of the second century.

Moreover, this interest in the Antiochene crisis receives Babylonian and Persian settings that create a typological relationship between events in the sixth and second centuries. The writer of Daniel saw a pattern between the Babylonian exile and the Antiochene crisis. Other Jewish literature (whether biblical or extra-biblical) traces this pattern in events after the Antiochene crisis. This typological hermeneutic explains why the jubilee structure of the seventy sevens can speak in fresh ways to new contexts.

OPSOMMING

Die byna berugte profesie van die sewentig sewes in Daniël 9:24-27 het oor die afgelope tweehonderd jaar 'n baie groot mate van akademiese, asook meer populêre aandag ontlok. Die omvang van die sekondêre literatuur is enorm, terwyl die kwantiteit gekenmerk word deur 'n wye verskeidenheid van verstaansmoontlikhede. Die interpretasiegeskiedenis wys dat Daniël 9 tydens verskillende tye verskillend gelees is. Alhoewel elke groep lesers 'n eie situasie gehad het wat hulle interpretasie van Daniël 9 beïnvloed het, het “iets” in die teks veroorsaak dat hierdie teks op relevante en selfs tipologiese wyse tot opeenvolgende geslagte gespreek het. Hierdie proefskrif poog om daardie “iets” aan te dui as 'n hoop op die jubeljaar.

Vele navorsers het al opgemerk dat die sewentig sewes gelyk is aan tien jubeljaarsiklusse. Desnieteenstaande bespreek studies van die sewentig sewes dikwels die besonderhede van die sewe sewentigs, die twee-en-sestig sewentigs en die een sewe in isolasie van die ses doelwitte van die sewentig sewes in Daniel 9:24 en die oorkoepelende tema van die jubeljaar. Dus, die ses doelwitte en die jubeljaar figureer nie in die eksegeese van verse 25-27 nie. Die gevolg is dat die assosiasie van die sewentig sewes met die jubeljaar, selfs al word daarna verwys, nie verder ontwikkel word nie. Dit is die rede waarom hierdie proefskrif aanvoer dat meer studie nodig is aangaande die jubeljaar-struktuur van die sewentig sewes en daarom ook die verhouding van die sewentig sewes met hulle doelwitte in Daniel 9:24. Hierdie proefskrif volg navorsers na wat die sewentig sewes simbolies verstaan met betrekking tot die tema van die jubeljaar. Die sewentig sewes sal gelees word in die lig van hulle gestelde doel in Daniel 9:24, wat die Groot Jubeljaar met versoening vir sondes en die instelling van geregtigheid verwag.

Terselfdertyd moet hierdie poging tot 'n teologie van die jubeljaar in Daniel 9 ook erns maak met die boek se belangstelling in Antiochus IV en die gebeure tydens sy regering. Daniël 9 is geplaas tussen twee visioene wat die Antiochese krisis bespreek. Die boek Daniël beskou daardie krisis as deel van die heilsgeskiedenis en bied 'n sober, maar hoopvolle ontleding daarvan. Dit maak daarom goeie eksegetiese sin om eerstens die sewentig sewes – asook hulle inherente voorstel van 'n Groot Jubeljaar – te verstaan met verwysing na die Antiochese krisis in die tweede eeu.

Verder word aan hierdie belangstelling in die Antiochese krisis Babiloniese en Persiese kontekste toegeskryf wat 'n tipologiese verwantskap skep tussen gebeure in die sesde en tweede eeu. Die skrywer van Daniël sien 'n verband tussen die Babiloniese ballingskap en die Antiochese krisis. Ander Joodse literatuur (Bybels en buite-Bybels) spoor op soortgelyke wyse hierdie patroon in gebeure voor die Babiloniese ballingskap en na die Antiochese krisis na. Hierdie tipologiese hermeneutiek verduidelik waarom die jubeljaar-struktuur van die sewentig sewes op nuwe maniere tot nuwe kontekste kan spreek.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Problem

The infamous prophecy of the seventy sevens in Daniel 9:24-27 has certainly attracted an impressive amount of scholarly and popular attention over the last two hundred years. The volume of secondary literature is massive, and the quantity is matched by a diversity of interpretive results. More than one scholar has considered Daniel's seventy sevens one of the most challenging portions, if not the most challenging portion, of the Old Testament (Gruenthaner 1939:44; Steinmann 2008:451; Young 1949:191). According to Driver (1900:143), "Probably no passage of the Old Testament has been the subject of so much discussion, or has given rise to so many and such varied interpretations as this." Leupold (1969:403) admits, "This is one of the grandest prophetic passages; and yet, if there ever was an exegetical crux, this is it." More recently, Miller (1994:252) calls Daniel 9:24-27 "four of the most controversial verses in the Bible." Baldwin (1978a:163) says that they "present the most difficult text in the book" of Daniel, and Greidanus (2012:292) adds that "Daniel 9:24-27 is the most controversial passage in Daniel." These observations remain fair assessments of the complexity of Daniel's seventy sevens and the differences of opinion that exist.

Those who join the discussion about the seventy sevens should realize that it has continued for far more than two hundred years. Even in the fifth century C.E., Jerome (Archer 1958:95) could say about the interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27, "I realize that this question has been argued over in various ways by men of great learning, and that each of them has expressed his views according to the capacity of his own genius." Considering that "it is unsafe to pass judgment upon the opinions of the great teachers of the Church and to set one above another,"

Jerome proceeded to summarize the readings of Africanus, Eusebius, Hippolytus, Apollinarius, Clement, Origen, Tertullian, and the Jews without evaluation (Archer 1958:95-110). He would not volunteer his own view. By the sixteenth century, Calvin (1981a:195) seemed to be utterly disheartened by the history of interpretation: “This passage has been variously treated . . . and almost torn to pieces by the various opinions of interpreters, that it might be considered nearly useless on account of its obscurity.” About four hundred years after Calvin, Montgomery (1927:400) referred to the “history of the exegesis of the 70 Weeks” as “the Dismal Swamp of OT criticism.” The swamp has not receded, let alone dried up, in the years since. For all the reflection on this passage, no reading has succeeded in becoming the consensus among scholars of diverse theological starting points.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Collins (2002:2) opined, “In mainline scholarship, however, the great issues that made Daniel the focus of controversy for centuries were laid to rest in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.” Those issues include the “legendary . . . character” of the narratives in Daniel 1-6 and the Antiochene provenance of the visions in Daniel 7-12.¹ Nevertheless, Collins’ use of *however* confirms the persistence of other views. In fact, Collins admits in the same context that “conservative scholars have continued to fight rear-guard actions in defence [*sic*] of the reliability of the book.” Collins’ pejorative reference to those who do not share his viewpoint overstates the case. As one who accepts the Antiochene position, Lucas (2012:120) concedes, “Evidence regarding the date of the final form is not clear-cut. A reasoned, and reasonable, defense can be made of either an early or a late date.” Edlin (2009:27) adds, “Valid points can be made for each theory. Therefore, a person may choose either position and maintain academic integrity. A decision on this matter does not necessarily

¹In the context of discussing Daniel 9, Bergsma (2007:212) supports what Collins says about the visions: “Nearly all contemporary scholarship regards the book of Daniel as having reached its final form during the crisis instigated by Antiochus IV Epiphanes’ persecution of traditional Judaism around 164 B.C.E.”

indicate that one is either conservative or liberal.” So then, it would seem that not everyone agrees with Collins’ assessment of the state of research.

When Collins refers to the conservative defense of the reliability of the book, he seems to have in mind a straightforward reading of the text of Daniel. Such a reading takes the chronological notices (e.g., 7:1) at face value and affirms the historicity of the events that involve Daniel and his friends. In other words, these men actually lived in the sixth century and had the experiences that the text describes. Still, conservatives have long recognized that the visions in chapters 8 and 10-12 have an interest in Antiochus IV. Moreover, if conservatives have tended to read Daniel 9:26-27 with reference to the death of Jesus and Titus Vespasian’s invasion of Jerusalem (or the death of Jesus and a future Antichrist’s persecution of the modern state of Israel), a recent source, *The Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible*, suggests movement toward the Antiochene reading of Daniel 9. Though the identity of the scholar or scholars who wrote the notes for Daniel is not specified, the commentary on Daniel 9:26-27 suggests that the ruler might be Antiochus IV who anticipates Titus Vespasian (Pratt 2003:1394-1395). So then, this conservative reference tool that was not available to Collins in 2002 recognizes the allusions to Antiochus IV not only in Daniel 8 and 10-12 but also in Daniel 9. It makes allowance for more than one reading and thereby gives Daniel 9 “space” to “speak for itself” in its literary and historical context (Hayes and Holladay 2007:182).

Even some who accept an Antiochene date for the final form of the book have other views than Collins on the narratives and visions. For example, Lucas and Collins differ on the geographical provenance of the visions. If Lucas (2002:272) locates the writer of Daniel 7-12 in the eastern diaspora, Collins (1993b:70) says, “It is reasonable to suppose that the circle that produced the visions was in continuity with the authors of the tales, although their setting is quite

different. If, as we have suggested, the authors or tradents of the tales were originally based in the diaspora, then we must suppose that they returned to Jerusalem at some point.”² Moreover, Collins (1993b:1; see also 2004:554-555) may say that “the stories about Daniel and his friends are legendary in character” and that Daniel “probably never existed,” but Grabbe (2002:230) suggests that “the memory of some actual historical figure gave rise to the stories . . . for the simple reason that the pseudepigraphic writer is unlikely to have invented a previously unknown character as the vehicle for his tales.” Meadowcroft and Irwin (2004:10-13) even consider Daniel a historical person who lived in the sixth century and had the visions that the book attributes to him.³ Meanwhile, Bergsma (2008:61) says, “Although extensive work may have been done on the book of Daniel during the tumultuous reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, it seems to me that the core of several chapters of the book may well have arisen already in the Persian period itself. I would place Daniel 9 in that category. . . .”⁴ For Bergsma, the concern of Daniel’s prayer for a restoration after the exile would hardly be read back into the sixth century from the Antiochene era. Moreover, other literature from the sixth century shares this interest in a future in Israel beyond the Babylonian captivity. Bergsma, however, does not indicate what parts of Daniel originated during the Antiochene era and why a chapter from the Persian period

²For a view similar to Collins’, see Goldingay (1989:326-329).

³Cf. Driver (1956:510-511) who says, “Daniel, it cannot be doubted, was a historical person, one of the Jewish exiles in Babylon, who, with his three companions, was noted for his staunch adherence to the principles of his religion, who attained a position of influence at the court of Babylon, who interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams, and foretold, as a seer, something of the future fate of the Chaldean and Persian empires.”

⁴Regarding the reference to several chapters, Bergsma finds support from other scholars. Collins (1998:88) says about Daniel 1-6, “Nothing in these chapters . . . requires a Maccabean date, and it does not appear that they were composed at the time of Antiochus.” According to Frölich (1993:266), “As to the book of Daniel, its final shape known to us may have been compiled around 163 B.C. However, we cannot preclude the possibility that the oracles of the first part of the book (Dan 2, 4, 5) originated from much earlier times. They might have been written—at least in their first account—in Mesopotamia, shortly after the fall of the New-Babylonian kingdom, at the very beginning of the Persian rule in Mesopotamia. Gammie (1976:191) similarly says, “The Maccabean background of the final stage in the composition of the book has been so allowed to dominate its interpretation that a number of features in the book which are uncongenial to such an interpretation have been either overlooked or simply acknowledged and forthwith summarily dismissed.” Lucas (2002:313-314) also assigns the stories in Daniel 1-6 to the early Persian period.

(Daniel 9) would be set between two visions that focus on Antiochus IV (Daniel 8 and 10-12). Nor does he explicitly identify the anointed one and ruler in Daniel 9:26.⁵ He presumably takes the chronological notation in Daniel 9:1 at face value but does not comment on the factuality or fictionality of the notations in Daniel 8:1 and 10:1 that introduce discussions of events after the Persian period. It should be evident, therefore, that mainline scholarship (to use Collins' term) is not as settled as Collins states.

What Davies (1998:11) wrote before Collins' assessment in 2002 still holds true afterwards: "Daniel is a very curious book in many respects. From almost every standpoint it presents a dual character: it contains two kinds of material, apparently intended originally for two different audiences; its contents relate to two different times and places; it has two canonical forms; and it is written in two languages." Drawing attention to some of these same dualities, Lucas (2002:18, 312) calls the book of Daniel "an enigma." This dual and enigmatic feature certainly presents a challenge to every reader of Daniel and admits no easy solution. For this reason, Meadowcroft and Irwin (2004:5-6) make a plea for humility on the part of anyone who studies Daniel and interacts with others who study Daniel. Assertions about a (near) consensus are ill-advised.

Nevertheless, Goldingay (1989:xl) has observed, "Whether the stories are history or fiction, the visions actual prophecy or quasi-prophecy, written by Daniel or someone else, in the sixth century B.C., the second, or somewhere in between, makes surprisingly little difference to the book's exegesis." Baldwin (1997:499), Edlin (2009:37), Longman (1999:24), and Lucas (2002:18) have echoed this claim. At the same time, excessive concern about the historical-

⁵Bergsma (2007:304) does say, "Increasingly in the Second Temple period, the arrival of the eschatological jubilee is associated with the coming of a messianic figure, whether royal (Dan 9), priestly (*T. Levi*), or both (11QMelchizedek)." In contrast to Collins (1993b:356), Bergsma apparently does not consider Onias III the cut-off anointed one in Daniel 9:26.

critical issues that Goldingay mentions has, according to Childs (1979:613), detracted from “theological insights into the book of Daniel.” Hence, he wonders if “an important dimension of the book has been overlooked.”⁶ Agreeing with Childs that more work needs to be done on the theology of Daniel, Vogel (2010:1-3) focuses on cultic themes in Daniel, especially sacred space and time. His discussion of jubilee in connection with the seventy sevens, however, makes no attempt to relate the author’s interest in jubilee to the events of the Antiochene crisis (Vogel 2010:168-180). For this reason, this thesis contends that more work needs to be done on the jubilee structure of the seventy sevens and therefore the relationship of the seventy sevens to their stated objectives in Daniel 9:24. Furthermore, this effort at a theology of jubilee in Daniel 9 must take seriously the book’s interest in Antiochus IV and the events of his reign. Because Daniel’s visions have repeatedly received contemporary interpretations that later proved less than definitive, Goldingay (1989:xxxix) sensibly warns that “it is hazardous to claim that the book directly refers to events of one’s own day, or to the key events on which one’s own faith is based.”⁷ What is uncontroversial, though, is that Daniel 9 sits between two visions that have an interest in the Seleucid Kingdom, especially the reign of Antiochus IV. It makes good exegetical sense, then, to try first to understand the seventy sevens—and their inherent suggestion of a Jubilee of Jubilees—with reference to the Antiochene crisis of the second century.⁸

⁶Edlin (2009:37) lends support: “Questions about original author and audience and compositional development are not overly significant for hearing the theological propositions of Daniel. Constant concern for historical-critical matters tends to hinder commentators from focusing upon the text. Interpreters will gain much more from the book if they can set aside these issues and simply enter the world of the text as it has been given to them. The primary themes of the book resonate with audiences in all ages and communicate truths that do not depend on specific setting of the original audience.”

⁷Olson (2005:67) says, “As the history of interpretation of Daniel’s ‘70 weeks’ demonstrates all too well, people can and do exercise extraordinary ingenuity in order to make prophecies work when they want them to work.”

⁸Collins (1990b:97) says, “Chaps. 7-9 are all very elliptical in what they say about the salvation that is to come, and it would be rash to conclude that each gives a complete account of the author’s beliefs at a given time.” He continues, “As the book stands, in any case, the visions in chaps. 7-12 must be read as complementary, and not as independent compositions.”

Many scholars have noticed that the seventy sevens equal ten jubilee cycles.⁹ Even so, studies of the seventy sevens often discuss the details of the seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and one seven in isolation from the six objectives of the seventy sevens in Daniel 9:24 and the overarching theme of jubilee. In other words, the six objectives and the jubilee do not factor into the exegesis of verses 25-27. Consequently, the association of the seventy sevens with jubilee, even when mentioned, goes undeveloped. This thesis will follow the lead of the aforementioned scholars by interpreting the seventy sevens symbolically with reference to the theme of jubilee. It will also read the seventy sevens in view of their stated purpose in Daniel 9:24, which anticipates the Jubilee of Jubilees in the form of atonement for sin and the establishment of righteousness. As will be seen, this approach identifies why Daniel 9 in general and the seventy sevens in particular can speak in fresh ways to new contexts.¹⁰ It will also account for why Daniel 9:26 has in its sixth-century narrative world (and for some readers, real world) an anointed king (Jehoiakim) in view, in its second-century real world an anointed priest (Onias III) in view, and in much Christian exegesis a priest-king (Jesus) in view.

If the major problem of this thesis has to do with the jubilee theme of the seventy sevens in an Antiochene context, another problem that must be faced is that the seventy sevens of Daniel 9 appear in a book that has so many disputed issues, including those mentioned by Goldingay above. Addressing one issue usually brings others into play at some point or another. Quite frankly, the dual settings in the sixth and second centuries pervade the book, especially chapter 9, and must be kept in mind (cf. Edlin 2009:36; McConville 2002:109-110; Towner 1984:128).

⁹E.g., Bergsma (2007:212), Dimant (1993:61), Gowan (2001:134), Lucas (2002:248), Redditt (1999:151 and 2000:246), Seow (2003a:146-147), VanderKam (2002:526), and Vogel (2010:175).

¹⁰Cf. Collins (1993b:61) who says, "Although the Book of Daniel addressed a specific historical situation, its relevance was not exhausted by that situation. It is characteristic of the apocalyptic style that the specific events are clothed in symbolic language. The same language could be used to describe other analogous situations at a later time."

Otherwise, one century is allowed to dominate the other (cf. Lucas 2002:315), and the book's typologies are not fully appreciated.¹¹ Whether Bergsma and the conservative scholars are right about the Persian origin of Daniel 9, the narrative world of this chapter, as well as the rest of the book, is the sixth century (cf. Athas 2009:3; DiTommaso 2011:83). In the narrative world of Daniel 9:1, the Babylonian exile of the sixth century, and not the Antiochene crisis of the second century, provides the occasion for Daniel's prayer and Gabriel's prophecy. God's people in the second century may have read the prayer and prophecy with reference to the Antiochene crisis, but the Babylonian exile in the narrative world of Daniel 9:1 must be seen as typifying the Antiochene crisis. The narrative world (and for some readers, the real world) of Daniel 9:1 provided a pattern for the world of God's people in the second century.

For the second-century reader, the prayer of confession drew attention to the unfaithfulness of those Jews who had sold out to Hellenism and bought the high priesthood during the reign of Antiochus IV.¹² A prayer set at the end of the Babylonian exile said in effect that the sinful causes of that exile continued up to the Antiochene years. God's people had to repent then too. The visions may ultimately address "the circumstances of the second century BC" (Meadowcroft and Irwin 2004:10), but the final form of the book also wants to be read in view of the sixth-century narrative world of the stories and visions.¹³ This is especially true for the seventy sevens because of the typology of the anointed one and ruler in Daniel 9:26-27.

¹¹Davies (1998:13) says that "the different settings of the two halves of Daniel have a typological as well as a chronological relationship. Nebuchadnezzar and the exiled Jews are both the *predecessors* and the *prototypes* of the persecuting monarch Antiochus IV and the persecuted Jews of Palestine centuries later. Hence what Daniel is shown of the future reflects, and is reflected in, the crisis of his own place and time." As will be seen, there are other typologies as well. Brueggemann and Linfelt (2012:388) support Davies by saying that "Nebuchadnezzar is reread as Antiochus." See also Efron (1987:34).

¹²Cf. Carey (2005:46), McConville (2002:121-122, 128), Redditt (1999:149-150), and van Deventer (2000:70-71). Chapter 3 will say more about the prayer.

¹³Greidanus (2012:8) says, "Even if these commentators [Collins, Montgomery, Porteous, Rowley] are right [about a second-century date of origin], they cannot deny that the '*implied* author' of the book of Daniel is the sixth-century Daniel and that the '*implied* reader' is Israel in exile in Babylon. This means that the 'real author' intends his readers to hear and understand these stories and visions in that sixth-century-B.C. setting."

When Daniel heard in the narrative world of Daniel 9:1 (539 B.C.E.) about a cut-off anointed one and a ruler who performs an abomination of desolation, he would recall Jehoiakim (the Davidic king who was cut off from his throne by being given into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar) and Nebuchadnezzar (the foreign ruler who also deported Daniel and then later destroyed the temple). Both men are mentioned in Daniel 1:1-2. In the narrative world of Daniel 9, the Antiochene crisis of the second century can neither be the precipitating occasion nor the interpreting lens of the prayer and prophecy. While it is true that Daniel 9 is set between two visions that focus on the unnamed Antiochus IV, these visions also share the narrative world of the sixth century. Daniel's prayer and Gabriel's prophecy may have been read in real time with reference to the Antiochene crisis (cf. 1 Macc 1:54), but both also addressed the Babylonian exile in the narrative world (and for some people, the real world) of the book.

At the same time, Daniel 8 and 11 make indirect reference to events of the Antiochene crisis, including the murder of an anointed priest (Onias III) and the desecration of the temple by a Gentile ruler (Antiochus IV). The references to an agreement in 1 Maccabees 1:11 and to an abomination of desolation in 1 Maccabees 1:54 indicate that the second-century writer of that book read Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11 in view of events in his day. So then, the second century also becomes part of the narrative world of Daniel 9, and the perceived allusions to Onias III and Antiochus IV in Daniel 9:26-27 must factor into the interpretation of the seventy sevens.

Moreover, Matthew 24:15 reports Jesus' application of the term *abomination of desolation* to an event in the first century A.D. Here, neither Jehoiakim and Nebuchadnezzar nor Onias III and Antiochus IV can be the cut-off anointed one and the destroying ruler. Jesus and Matthew apply a text that was originally written about the Antiochene crisis to a similar but later

crisis. Given Matthew's typological understanding of fulfillment, which will be discussed in chapters 2 and 11, there is no reason to think that Jesus and Matthew did not know about the earlier reading of Daniel 9 with reference to the Antiochene crisis.

Daniel 9, then, has been read at different times and in different contexts. Though each group of readers had its own situation that affected its appropriation of Daniel 9, something in the text enabled it to speak relevantly and even typologically to successive generations. This thesis will endeavor to identify that something with reference to the hope of jubilee.

Because different readings of Daniel 9 do, in fact, exist throughout the history of exegesis, LaSor et al. (1996:579) can surmise, "Lack of a common result raises doubts about the methods used." Perhaps this evaluation is worded too strongly and minimizes the wealth of insights that generations of readers have gained from their interaction with this text. Even so, a fresh inquiry is warranted in order to rescue this prophecy, especially its emphasis on jubilee, from the "dismal swamp of sameness" and steer the discussion in a new direction. Despite the challenges presented by the text and its history of interpretation, Daniel 9:24-27 does say something, and presumably the Holy Spirit who inspired the human writer (cf. 2 Tim 3:16-17, 2 Pet 1:20-21) expected generations of readers to get the message. Daniel 9:24-27 can make sense when read in the context of the Bible's grand narrative about redemption, which includes not only the so-called tension between the already and the not yet of both Old Testament and New Testament eschatology (Baker 2010:213-215; Hoekema 1979:14, 68-75; Osborne 2006:288) but also a typological or patterned view of history (Osborne 2006:265-266, 328-329, 333-334). Readers do not have to become helplessly mired in the morass of seemingly intractable details and alternative efforts to make them fit into this or that historical context or scheme. In response to Calvin, this prophecy should be considered useful.

1.2 The Method for a New Approach

It is often said that the truth lies somewhere in the middle of multiple, and perhaps irreconcilable, points of view. Each of the major approaches to Daniel 9:24-27 has some insight to contribute to the discussion. Those insights should be recognized and then incorporated into a more encompassing analysis of this prophecy. Such a reading will take into consideration the Bible's presuppositions about divine revelation and Jesus' teaching about his relation to the Old Testament in Luke 24:25-27 and 44-47.¹⁴ Stated differently, this thesis will read Daniel 9:24-27 in view of biblical theology, which, according to Stuhlmacher (1995:1, 64-67, 80, 88), is the way that the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, wants to be read.¹⁵ This method of reading recognizes "*a continuity of God's activity in and through Christ, a continuity of salvation history*" (Stuhlmacher 1995:5). Biblical theology reads all parts of the Bible "in relation to God's final act of salvation in this Christ" (Stuhlmacher 1995:6). Of course, a final act assumes preceding acts that lay the groundwork for the final act. The final act does not occur without preparation; rather, it concludes the story that began in the first act. In fact, skillfully written acts foreshadow the conclusion, but the foreshadowing is often not appreciated until the end when the observer can review the completed story and trace the developing artistry. At this point, the intentional foreshadowing is seen to be prophetic on the part of the author or playwright. He or she knew the outcome from the beginning.

Stuhlmacher (1995:81) summarizes the biblical story as follows: "This way [of God to humanity that biblical theology discusses] begins with the creation, runs through the complete history of Israel's election, reaches its apex in the sending, passion and resurrection of Jesus, and

¹⁴The following words by Lucas (2012:120) deserve respect: "Acceptance of either [date for Daniel] is consonant with belief in the divine inspiration and authority of the book."

¹⁵See also Stuhlmacher (2002:189). Vanhoozer (2000:54) similarly says, "The ultimate goal of biblical theology, of course, is not to impose an alien framework onto Scripture but rather to let the Bible's own theological framework come to light."

leads further to the kingdom of God, which the exalted Christ is to (and will) establish.” Like any other story, the Bible’s story unfolds progressively with the result that each part is related to all the other parts—those that come before and those that come after. From this point of view, the parts cannot properly be understood without taking into account their contribution to the whole. Stuhlmacher maintains that the message of the Bible (i.e., biblical theology) finds its unity in God’s work that climaxes in Jesus.

The centrality of Jesus for the biblical story and the addition of the New Testament to the Old Testament are for some people, according to Dunn (2004:183), the “problem” of biblical theology. He cites Levenson’s book, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism: Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies*, which has a chapter entitled “Why Jews Are Not Interested in Biblical Theology.” Part of Levenson’s (1993:50) answer is as follows: “The study of biblical theology receives much of its energy from the fact that Christians read the Hebrew Bible through a logic of displacement. It is driven by the anxieties of the younger sibling eager to overcome the deficiencies with an affirmation of the supranatural.” Levenson overstates his understanding of why many Christians are interested in biblical theology. As will be seen, this thesis with its commitment to biblical theology does not aim to displace the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament out of any anxiety about its deficiency. The beginning of a story is not deficient, in the sense of inferior, to the middle or the end of the story. On the same page, Levenson more helpfully admits that “what unites Jews and Christians in biblical studies is a common commitment to a nonsupernaturalistic approach to the text. Partnership is possible only on terms that cast the truth claims of both traditions into doubt.”¹⁶ This thesis concurs with Levenson’s candor and will seek to respect the worldview of the biblical writers. At the same

¹⁶Levenson (1993:5) additionally says, “Jews and Christians can participate equally in the Spinozan agenda only because its naturalistic presuppositions negate the theological foundations of both Judaism and Christianity.”

time, this thesis will recognize that Daniel's joint interest in Antiochus IV and jubilee is part of the unfolding of the biblical story.

At this point, Barr's (1999:302) evaluation of Levenson is worth considering: "On the other hand, in a way his position seems to be less one of Judaism against Christianity, more one of traditionalist religion against modernist religion or irreligion."¹⁷ If Barr's analysis is accurate, this thesis, because of its commitment to biblical theology, is again sympathetic to Levenson. Traditionalist religion, however, may come in Jewish and Christian varieties, and the differences between the two, as Dunn (2004:174) observes, cannot be minimized:

Of course, Christians could ignore the fact that their Old Testament is also the Jewish Bible and affirm that their 'biblical theology' is concerned only with their Bible. But that would immediately run counter to central concerns of the New Testament writers themselves, for whom the Jewish Scriptures were the only Bible. It was crucial to earliest Christian self-understanding and to New Testament apologetic generally that the gospel they were proclaiming was in direct continuity with those writings which were already recognized as Scripture by Jews as a whole and not just by Christians.

If Levenson regrets how non-supernatural approaches to the text undermine the truth claims of Judaism and Christianity, then he may commend practitioners of Christian biblical theology for using a hermeneutic that corresponds to what they believe about Jesus and to what Jesus, on the basis of his reported understanding of the Old Testament, believed about himself. Levenson (1993:83-84) seems to do this when he repeats a question by Lurie, "In what way and to what degree are the Jews who meet Christians in biblical studies Jewish? Nor, I might add, does it raise the equally pressing converse of his [Lurie's] question: What is Christian about the premise that the Hebrew Scripture 'speaks from its own complete integrity' over against the New

¹⁷Barr (1999:294-295) also contrasts Levenson's disavowal of biblical theology in *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism* with his practice of something akin to biblical theology in his other writings, such as *The Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48* and *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*. Barr then concludes, "Surely there is an inconsistency here. In this respect, again, he [Levenson] is in good company, for we have seen that many biblical theologians have also set up principles which have not corresponded to the article they have actually produced."

Testament?”¹⁸ Christian biblical theology should not settle for the “lowest common denominator” results of Jewish-Christian non-supernatural biblical scholarship.¹⁹

To return, then, to Stuhlmacher’s notion of a continuity of salvation history, the Bible features the story of God’s redemption of his people and world from sin (cf. Vos 1948:20; 1980b:8). God introduced the plan of redemption in Genesis 3 and explained the plan throughout the Old Testament. Revelation accompanies each saving act in order to clarify its significance.²⁰ From the Christian perspective, the series of redemptive interventions reached its climax, however, not at the end of the Old Testament but in Jesus the anointed one. By itself, the Old Testament is an incomplete story. Its promises and expectations remain unrealized until the fullness of time arrived in Jesus (cf. Bright 1975:138; Goldingay 1994:48; Kuruvilla 2009:110; Wright 2012:66-67). The earlier interventions typified and anticipated Jesus, who is the antitype or fulfillment of God’s redemptive program. Even so, all of the acts contribute to one plan of salvation. Likewise, the stages of revelation explain the advancement of the one plan of God to redeem a people for his name. Stated differently, the stages of revelation tell one story of how God implements the plan. So then, God has acted progressively in history to save his people, and God’s Word has been revealed progressively to explain his acts. Biblical theology focuses on this flowering character of redemption and revelation.

If redemption is progressive, it is also organic.²¹ Each stage is a piece of the whole plan that unfolds gradually through time. Vos (1980b:11) writes, “The Gospel of Paradise is such a germ in which the Gospel of Paul is potentially present; and the Gospel of Abraham, of Moses,

¹⁸Max Lurie is a character in Chaim Potok’s novel, *In the Beginning*.

¹⁹Cf. the conviction of Vos (1980b:20, 22) as well as Baker’s (2010:133-134) critique of Brueggemann’s separation of the Testaments.

²⁰Bright (1975:130-131, 136, 159), Gaffin (1988:178-179), Goldingay (1994:309), Ridderbos (1982:84), and Vos (1948:5-7; 1980b:9-10).

²¹These terms are taken from Vos (1948:7; 1980b:7, 10-11). The rest of this paragraph relies on these pages.

of David, of Isaiah and Jeremiah, are all expansions of this original message of salvation, each pointing forward to the next stage of growth, and bringing the Gospel idea one step nearer to its full realization.” God’s redemptive acts and their revelatory interpretation resemble a small acorn and an immense oak tree. At first glance, the two do not seem to be related, but the oak tree in reality grows out of the acorn. There is an organic relationship between seed and mature plant.²² No other type of organism can grow from an acorn. The same is true for earlier acts of redemption and accompanying revelation on the one hand and later acts of redemption and accompanying revelation on the other. The latter grows out of the former. The seed of redemption that germinates throughout Old Testament history and revelation develops into a spreading shade tree to which Jesus likened the kingdom of God (Matt 13:31-32, Mark 4:30-32, Luke 13:18-19).

Similarly appealing to the plant kingdom, Bright (1975:188) says, “The Old Testament unquestionably provides both the historical background and the theological preparation for the rise of Christianity, and no one would dream of denying it. Christianity did spring, and in the form it took could only have sprung, from the soil of Israel. The Christ of the New Testament could have come only to this Israel.”²³ The reason, explains Bright, is not that the Old Testament gives law that condemns and the New Testament responds with grace that forgives. Rather, “[t]he two Testaments do indeed represent parts of a single redemptive history, and they stand to one another in a relationship of promise and fulfillment: the New Testament itself saw it so” (Bright 1975:193).²⁴ So also does the Old Testament. Goldingay (1990:117-118) says, “The

²²Cf. Beale (2011:955) who uses the image of an apple tree.

²³Bright also uses the analogies of a human that develops from an infant to an adult (1975:123-124) and of a play that has multiple acts (1975:202-203).

²⁴See also Bright (1975:198-199). When Bright (1975:206) says, “It [the Old Testament] points beyond itself, beyond its own possibilities, toward a consummation it could neither see nor produce,” he correctly reflects the horizon of the human author (cf. 1 Pet 1:10-12) but not of the divine. God knows where his story of redemption is going.

theme of promise and fulfillment runs through the OT narrative from Genesis to Kings, as Yahweh keeps declaring his will and fulfilling it. Yet each such event makes Israel look the more to the future for this pattern of experience to continue, so that each fulfillment in the past becomes promise for the future. The OT is thus a book of ever increasing anticipation, a story moving towards a goal which lies beyond itself.”²⁵ Biblical theology, then, is not only read back into the Old Testament from the New Testament but also projected forward from the Old Testament into the New.²⁶

Biblical theology recognizes that God sovereignly rules over history to direct the course of human events to its foreordained denouement. One event leads to another and brings about the final result that God decreed from before the creation. The consummation, however, does not render the beginning inferior or unnecessary. Earlier acts of God and their explanation in the Old Testament are not less efficacious and authoritative than the later acts of God and their explanation in the New Testament. Rather, the earlier acts and explanation receive a fuller understanding from the person and work of Jesus the anointed one to whom they point in expectation by virtue of their inclusion in the chain of redemptive events. At the same time, these earlier acts of God that the Old Testament interprets also shape what comes later.²⁷ Goldingay (1990:44) says about the Old Testament events and their explanation, “It was this story that made Jesus the person he was. A different story would have produced a different Jesus.” To return to Vos and Bright’s botanical imagery, the seed determines what kind of plant

²⁵See also von Rad (1965:319) and Enns (2003:277) who says, “The OT is a story that is going somewhere, which is what the Apostles are at great pains to show. It is the OT as a whole, particularly in its grand themes, that finds its *telos*, its completion, in Christ.”

²⁶Hays (2002:405) says that “*the Gospels teach us how to read the OT, and—at the same time—the OT teaches us how to read the Gospels.*”

²⁷Cf. Moberly (2000:70) who says, “Israel’s scriptures not only prepare the way for Christ, not least by presenting an understanding of God and humanity in which Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection become possible and intelligible in the form they take. There is also a retrospective movement from Jesus back to Israel’s scriptures whereby they are recognized to be what they would not otherwise be recognized to be, that is Old Testament alongside the witness to God in Jesus Christ in the New Testament.”

grows. Given God's activity in history to redeem a people for his name for the exaltation of his Son, the whole Bible is a Christian book that narrates God's plan of salvation in Jesus (cf. Greidanus 1999:44; Rosner 2000:4-5, 10).

Tension, however, runs through Bright's book because of his affirmation of promise-and-fulfillment or unfolding story on the one hand and his view of the Old Testament as a "B.C. word" on the other. Bright (1975:207) says, "The Old Testament, then, stands in discontinuity with the New because it speaks a B.C. word, not an A.D. word." Bright (1975:239, 245) even calls the book of Joshua (because of the wars of the Conquest) and Psalm 137 (because of the killing of children) "sub-Christian."²⁸ Given the strong threats of judgment in the New Testament, Bright's equivocation at this point weakens his affirmation of a progressive and organic relationship between the Testaments. Greidanus (1999:45) more clearly states:

. . . the dilemma of how to get a Christian message out of a "non-Christian" or "pre-Christian" book is a predicament of our own making, for it does not arise out of the Scriptures themselves. Of course, as we move from the Old Testament to the New Testament, we notice progression in redemptive history as well as in revelation. But progression does not make the Old Testament non-Christian or pre-Christian. The headwaters of a river are not "non-river" or "pre-river"; they are an essential part of the river as it flows downstream. Moreover, as a river moves forward even while remaining where it has always been, so the progression in redemptive history and revelation takes place without disqualifying the past. For progression takes place within the larger framework of continuity.²⁹

The continuity is found not just in the unfolding story of the acts of God but also in the theological principles that undergird those acts. For example, Christians may not sacrifice lambs in church, but the principle of substitutionary atonement still holds true. Likewise, God's people today may not kill the enemies of God, but the New Testament, along with heralding the death of

²⁸This thesis will not discuss the ethics of the Conquest, an admittedly difficult subject. See Ulrich (1999:63-64) and Wright (2004:472-480).

²⁹See the critique of Bright in Greidanus (1999:41).

Jesus for the sins of his people, insists on final judgment for those who do not repent. Both Testaments teach that God will eliminate all opposition to his kingdom.

What God has done and is still doing in Jesus is what all parts of the Old Testament are anticipating and foreshadowing. God began to work out his plan of redemption in Old Testament times, but that work did not reach its climax until the first coming of Jesus. Even so, God continues to save his people and restore his creation until the second coming of Jesus. The same God implements and accomplishes his single plan of redemption in the Old Testament era (from Adam's sin to the first coming of Jesus) and in the New Testament era (from the first coming of Jesus to the second).³⁰ The first coming of Jesus is the middle and decisive point of redemptive history when Jesus made the definitive sacrifice for sin and assumed his mediatorial rule over creation. The first coming, however, is not the endpoint of redemptive history. Redemptive history runs until Jesus puts all his enemies under his feet and raises God's people to their glorified inheritance (1 Cor 15:20-28).

Nevertheless, saying that God's redemptive acts and their revelatory interpretation are progressive and organic does not ignore that the plan to reconcile God's fallen creation to his eternal purpose seems to unfold in fits and starts. So often, God's people do not know what God is doing in history in general or in their lives in particular. Events often seem unrelated and arbitrary—even contrary to God's revealed will. Likewise, the Bible (including the book of Daniel) presents the story of redemption in its complexity and untidiness (cf. Bauckham 2003:92-94). Still, the Bible's teaching about God's sovereign and providential direction of world history as well as the personal histories of his people necessitates the use of the word

³⁰Cf. von Rad (1963:36) who says, "This renewed recognition of types in the Old Testament . . . is simply correspondent to the belief that the same God who revealed himself in Christ has also left his footprints in the history of the Old Testament covenant people—that we have to do with *one* divine discourse, here to the fathers through the prophets, there to us through Christ (Heb.1:1)." For more on von Rad, see Baker (2010:139-155).

organic in any discussion of the progress of redemptive history. It is this inexorable movement from paradise lost to paradise restored that biblical theology traces. In so doing, biblical theology both assures Christians of God's faithfulness to his promises and challenges Christians to trust God enough to obey his commands in the situations of their lives—situations that God has foreordained to work out his eternal plan.

Jesus modeled this biblical-theological, redemptive-historical, and Christ-centered hermeneutic in Luke 24 when he encountered the two men on the road to Emmaus and his disciples in Jerusalem. On the day of his resurrection, Jesus taught his followers how to read the Old Testament with reference to his person and work. He instructed his disciples to recognize that the chain of events before him and the accompanying revelation that explains those events progressively and organically led up to him and reached their fulfillment in him. This hermeneutics lesson is applied here in this thesis to Daniel 9:24-27. As part of the Old Testament, Daniel's seventy sevens can also be read in view of the Bible's story of redemption that finds its focus in Jesus.

That said, biblical theology does not pre-empt grammatical-historical exegesis that has to do with understanding the Bible in its literary and temporal contexts. According to Vos (1980b:15), "Biblical theology, rightly defined, is nothing else than *the exhibition of the organic process of supernatural revelation in its historic continuity and multiformity*" (see also Rosner 2000:4). History and genre cannot be ignored. By functioning as controls on the interpretation of an ancient text, they preserve both the human and divine author's intended meaning. Stated more positively, attention to history and genre increases appreciation for the multi-faceted performance and explanation of God's plan of redemption. To quote Vos (1980b:14) again, "Individual coloring, therefore, and a peculiar manner of representation are not only not

detrimental to a full statement of the truth, but directly subservient to it.” In the context, Vos has different literary genres in mind. So then, the timing of the event and the packaging of the explanation are integral to God’s purpose for both. What Vos’ hermeneutic means for this thesis is that Daniel’s utilization of apocalyptic traits and its interest in Antiochus IV must receive due consideration for they reveal how the book wants to be read. If Daniel 9:24-27 can be read with the rest of the Old Testament as part of God’s story that leads to the person and work of Jesus, it also should be read in view of the book’s expressed concern for the Babylonian exile and the Antiochene crisis. In the narrative world (and for some readers, the real world) of Daniel, the seventy sevens are a contextualized word from God to a specific audience in a particular place, but this word also has a far reach because of its contribution to the recurring pattern of God’s solution to his people’s (and world’s) need.

This study will approach Daniel 9:24-27 with the grammatical-historical and redemptive-historical methods of biblical interpretation. It will appreciate the insights that its predecessors have to offer, even if other methods have been employed in the process of gaining those insights. This study will also propose a creative explanation of a familiar telling of the outworking of God’s plan of redemption. Such an explanation will involve interpreting the seventy sevens symbolically with reference to the longitudinal theme of jubilee, which is conveyed by the structure of the seventy sevens.³¹ What makes the seventy sevens jubilant is their stated purpose in Daniel 9:24. Indeed, this verse anticipates the Jubilee of Jubilees in the form of atonement for sin and establishment of righteousness.

As seen by the title “From Judgment to Jubilee,” this thesis will make the jubilee more central and prominent for understanding the seventy sevens. It will contend that the seventy sevens started counting down at the end of the judgment of the exile and continued ticking away

³¹On longitudinal themes, see Greidanus (1999:222-224, 266-268).

until the resolution of the Antiochene crisis, which was a partial, yet jubilant, realization of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. This Jubilee of Jubilees expressed the hope of the writer of Daniel that the demise of Antiochus IV would lead to the full inheritance that God had promised his people. The study begins in the next chapter with a review of the contribution of others to the discussion of the seventy sevens.

1.3 The Direction of the Argument

After the review of previous scholarship in the next chapter, chapter 3 will examine the prayerful context of the prophecy of the seventy sevens. This chapter will contend that the prophecy of the seventy sevens fittingly responds to the penitential concern of the prayer. Chapter 4 will not proceed immediately to an analysis of the Daniel 9:24-27 but will instead consider how literally Jeremiah's seventy years of exile (Jer 25 and 29) should be understood. If Jeremiah's seventy years have symbolic depth, then perhaps the seventy sevens of Daniel 9 do not have mathematical exactness, as some approaches seem to take for granted. Chapter 5 will then discuss each of the six objectives of the seventy sevens in Daniel 9:24. While not always the case, these objectives should control the seventy sevens as a whole and the three divisions of them. Chapters 2-5 offer the preliminary spadework necessary for studying the seventy sevens themselves.

Beginning with chapter 6, the thesis will look at the three divisions of the seventy sevens. Chapter 6 will argue that the seven sevens of Daniel 9:25a cover the post-exilic period that is narrated in Ezra-Nehemiah and not just Ezra 1-6. The implication is that Ezra is the first anointed one of Daniel 9:25a. Chapter 7 will explain the sixty-two sevens of Daniel 9:25b as that portion of the Second Temple period that runs between the close of Ezra-Nehemiah and the murder of Onias III in 171 B.C. Although little information is currently available for these years,

chapter 7 will explore what can be known about the reconstruction, troubles, and piety that affected the accomplishment of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 during this time. Chapter 8 will then take up the seventieth seven (the second half of the reign of Antiochus IV) and relate it to the jubilee theme of the seventy sevens. At this point, the study of the seventy sevens themselves will be complete but not the thesis. Because the vision of the seventy sevens is not the only vision in the book of Daniel, chapter 9 will set Daniel 9 in the larger context of the book and read this vision in view of the others. Then, chapter 10 will survey some of the Second Temple literature that reveals an ongoing concern for the theological issues of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. This is necessary because Jewish writers after Antiochus IV recognized that the six objectives still awaited full realization. Chapter 11 will address Jesus' (and especially Matthew's) typological application of Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11 to events in the first century C.E. and even beyond. Part of doing this will involve summarizing the belief of the New Testament writers that Jesus as an anointed one definitively accomplishes the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 between his first and second comings. As a conclusion, chapter 12 will summarize the argument of the thesis.

1.4 Summary

This chapter has introduced the intention of this thesis to explore the joint interest of Daniel 9 in the Antiochene crisis and the theology of jubilee. This study is necessary because previous scholarship, though recognizing the jubilee structure of the seventy sevens, has not sufficiently made the connection between jubilee and the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. It also has not adequately related the book's interest in Antiochus IV to the hope of jubilee. The next chapter will review and critique the major approaches to the seventy sevens. In the chapters that follow, both the critique of existing approaches and the argument for a new reading will occur

within a use of the grammatical-historical and redemptive-historical methods of biblical interpretation.

CHAPTER 2: PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON DANIEL 9:24-27

2.1 Introduction

Daniel 9:24-27 may have engendered an extensive amount of scholarship, but the exegetical results are, in some sense, surprisingly few. For the most part, they can be grouped into three broad categories that have to do with the supposed, even desired, *terminus ad quem* of the seventy sevens. This chapter will review the major approaches, the possibilities being the reign of Antiochus IV and the Maccabean crisis in the second century B.C.E., the first coming of Jesus and the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in the first century C.E., and the appearance of Antichrist and the second coming of Jesus at the end of the present age. The first possibility is sometimes called the Antiochene, Greek, critical, or liberal view. Roman, evangelical, and conservative are other ways of identifying the second possibility. The third possibility is better known as the dispensational or parenthesis view. Within each of these camps, diversity exists on the interpretation of lesser details. Toward the end of this chapter, a few views that do not fit neatly into the three main categories will be discussed. The chapter will conclude with a brief discussion of the thorny issue of pseudonymity.

2.2 The Greek View

2.2.1. Presuppositions

The Greek approach to Daniel's seventy sevens predominates among scholars in secular universities and mainline seminaries. It is not limited, however, to scholars to whom the term *evangelical* is not applied. This view is typically accompanied by a denial of a sixth-century date for the book of Daniel and an affirmation that Daniel's visions are prophecy after the fact (*vaticinium ex eventu*) or history in the guise of prediction, a standard element of apocalyptic

literature. The man Daniel in the book is often considered a literary fiction necessary for placing the visions within the time of the classical prophets. Some who hold this view express what amounts to an anti-supernatural presupposition.¹ For example, Towner (1984:115) says about the vision of the ram and the goat in Daniel 8, “We need to assume that the vision as a whole is a prophecy after the fact. Why? Because human beings are unable accurately to predict future events centuries in advance and to say that Daniel could do so, even on the basis of a symbolic revelation vouchsafed to him by God and interpreted by an angel, is to fly in the face of the certainties of human nature.”² These thoughts could just as well apply to Towner’s approach to the seventy sevens.

Towner, however, does not speak for every advocate of the Greek approach. For example, Goldingay (1989:xxxix) says,

Critical scholarship has sometimes overtly, sometimes covertly approached the visions with the *a priori* conviction that they cannot be actual prophecies of events to take place long after the seer’s day, because prophecy of that kind is impossible. Conversely, conservative scholarship has sometimes overtly, sometime covertly approached these visions with the *a priori* conviction that they must be actual prophecies because quasi-prophecies issued pseudonymously could not have been inspired by God; it has also approached the stories with the *a priori* conviction that they must be pure history, because fiction or a mixture of fact and fiction could not have been inspired by God. All these convictions seem to me mistaken. I believe that the God of Israel who is also the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is capable of knowing future events and thus of revealing them, and is capable of inspiring people to write both history and fiction, both actual prophecy and quasi-prophecy, in their own name, anonymously, or—in certain circumstances—pseudonymously.”³

¹Porphyry, who lived during the second half of the second century C.E., is the first known person to argue against the authenticity of predictive prophecy in Daniel and attribute the accuracy of Daniel’s visions to prophecy after the fact during the reign of Antiochus IV. His opinion has survived in Jerome’s commentary on Daniel (Archer 1958:15-16).

²See also Towner (1984:4, 108, 165) and Carroll (1979:34-35).

³Goldingay receives support from Sandy (2002:103) who says, “This [acceptance of a sixth-century date for the book of Daniel] is not ruling out the possibility that a human author under divine inspiration could follow a custom of his day and write prophecy after the fact using a pseudonymous name, but we would want clear evidence before coming to that conclusion. Some people think they have that evidence, others do not.”

In an earlier publication, Goldingay (1977:49) distinguishes between two questions: “‘could God [talk about the second century in the sixth century]?’” and “‘would God [talk about the second century in the sixth century]?’”⁴ Goldingay then observes that God usually “does not give signs and reveal dates.” Instead, he usually “calls his people to naked faith and hope in him in the present and does not generally bolster their faith with the kinds of revelations that we are thinking of here.” As seen in chapter 1, Goldingay would affirm that God could predict the future, but his comment about faith deserves consideration. Given the interest of Daniel in Antiochus IV, it is hard not to wonder why someone in the sixth century (or the Holy Spirit inspiring such a person) would be concerned about a Greek king who lived three hundred years later. People do not worry about unnamed oppressors in the distant future. Instead, they struggle to trust God in the midst of current events. So then, concludes Goldingay (1977:49), the book of Daniel would speak more pastorally to people living and suffering in the Antiochene crisis.⁵

They are the *מְשֻׁכְּלִים יֹדְעֵי אֱלֹהֵיוּ* (wise ones who know their God) in Daniel 11:32-33. Even so, they face temptation to quit their faith. To such an audience, the contemporary writer of Daniel maintains that “it is worth holding fast to their faith and enduring persecution [from Jews and Seleucids], because God will finally vindicate them, even after death” (McConville 2002:128; cf. Goldingay 1989:329). Goldingay, Lucas, and McConville hardly repeat the anti-supernaturalism of Towner.

⁴Lucas (2012:120) similarly asks, “Could God do it?” and “Would God do it?”

⁵McConville (2002:128) notes that encouraging oppressed believers to remain faithful could apply to the Babylonian exiles. The narratives in chapters 1-6 could certainly serve that purpose. Still, Daniel 8 and 11 undoubtedly have the Antiochene crisis in view. Meanwhile, Wenham (1977:51) challenges Goldingay’s pastoral argument: “One may ask whether Daniel would have provided much comfort to those suffering Antiochus’ wrath, if it was not believed to be old and authentic. A book of new parables would have carried less conviction.” Perhaps, but the evidence from Second Temple literature does not seem to confirm Wenham’s objection. Second Temple Jews pseudonymously wrote history in the guise of prediction. They also wrote historical fiction.

2.2.2. Chronology

Proponents of the Greek view usually assign the completion of the book of Daniel to the date of the last verifiable event in chapter 11. That Daniel 11:40-45 has no correspondence to known history allegedly offers evidence that the accurate recounting of the past up to the reign of Antiochus IV (but in the form of predictive prophecy) ends in 11:39 and a genuine, but failed, attempt at prediction begins at 11:40. The book is thus dated to the moment when verifiable events give way to unsubstantiated speculation. Each of Daniel's visions (the four metals in chapter 2, the four beasts in chapter 7, the ram and goat in chapter 8, the seventy sevens in chapter 9, and the kings of the north and south in chapter 11) is read with reference to the Antiochene crisis. According to Driver (1956:509), "the interest of the Book [of Daniel] manifestly *culminates* in the relations subsisting between the Jews and Antiochus." Similarly, Lacocque (1979:15) says, "The unity of the book is assured by the omnipresent shadow of Antiochus Epiphanes, as much in the first part as in the second" (see also Niskanen 2004a:379). Such an understanding of the book means that the *terminus ad quem* of the seventy sevens is 164 B.C.E., the year that Judah Maccabee rededicated the temple. Antiochus IV had desecrated it three and a half years earlier in 167 B.C.E.

If proponents of the Greek view agree on the *terminus ad quem* of the seventy sevens, they are divided about the *terminus a quo*. Most think that a portion of Daniel's seventy sevens (i.e., the seven sevens of 9:25) overlaps Jeremiah's seventy years. In other words, the seventy sevens are not a separate period of time that starts when Jeremiah's seventy years end. Instead, the seventy sevens begin with Jeremiah's announcement of the seventy years in 605 B.C.E. (e.g., Dimant 1993:62; Montgomery 1927:391; Porteous 1979:141) or the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. (Collins 1993b:354-355) and run to 164 B.C.E. Aware of Jeremiah's error, the writer of

Daniel recalculated the chronology of the exile from the beginning of the exile. The seven sevens of 9:25 correspond to the length of the exile and the Babylonian Empire. The anointed one of 9:25 may be Cyrus (who is called an anointed one in Isaiah 45:1), Joshua (the first high priest of the post-exilic era), or Zerubbabel (the Davidic scion at the time of Joshua). The sixty-two sevens then run from 539 B.C.E. to 171 B.C.E., when Onias III, the anointed high priest, was murdered by Menelaus (cf. 2 Macc 4:23-28). The seventieth seven (170-164 B.C.E.) includes the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV in 167 B.C.E. and perhaps the rededication of the temple by Judah Maccabee in 164 B.C.E. (see 1 Macc 4:36-59). Antiochus IV is the ruler in 9:26-27. He destroys the city of Jerusalem, makes a covenant with Hellenistic Jews, puts an end to sacrifice, and desecrates the temple. In this understanding of the chronology, the seventy sevens are thought to correct Jeremiah's seventy years by expanding them. The expansion is necessary because of the failure of Isaiah 60's prophecy of a glorious restoration to materialize by the second century B.C.E., when the writer of Daniel lived (Bruce 1959:60; Cook 2003:132; Porteous 1979:141; Redditt 2000:237-239).

Dimant (1993:58-59) suggests, "Dan 9 employs *peshar* procedures in order to interpret the Jeremianic prophecy of seventy years (Jer 25:1-14, 29:10-14). As indicated by the seer (Dan 9:1-3) the aim of the *peshar* is to bridge the gap between the original prophecy and the contemporary reality of the later author." She adds, "Apparently the Maccabean author of Dan 9 could not make any literal sense out from [*sic*] the Jeremianic Seventy Years' period" (Dimant 1993:60-61). So he expanded them. In associating *peshar* exegesis with the seventy sevens, Dimant is joined by Meadowcroft who thinks that the prophecy of the seventy sevens contains its own expectation of reinterpretation. Noting that *peshar* readings characterized not just the Qumran community but the whole Second Temple period, Meadowcroft (2001:433) says, "The

use of symbols [in Daniel 9:24-27] in some way transcends the historical reality [of the Antiochene crisis], just as a transcendent significance has been given to the seventy years of Jeremiah.” As will be seen below, Meadowcroft is not alone in applying typology to the seventy sevens.

More recent advocates of the Greek view consider Jeremiah’s seventy years and Daniel’s seventy sevens separate and consecutive periods of time. If Jeremiah’s seventy years constitute punishment for covenantal unfaithfulness before the exile, Daniel’s seventy sevens judge impenitence during the exile or after. This option involves the relationship of Daniel 9 with Leviticus 25, which will be discussed in the next section. Regardless of the starting point, the seventy sevens find their focus in the reign of Antiochus IV.

If Daniel’s seventy sevens are understood literally as 490 years, then the Greek view has obvious chronological problems. Neither option for the *terminus a quo* allows enough time for the whole or its parts (the seven sevens in the sixth century B.C.E.; the sixty-two sevens of the fifth, fourth, third, and second centuries B.C.E.; or even the seventieth seven).⁶ Some advocates of the Greek view take the numbers literally (believing that the Maccabean writer of Daniel 9 took them literally) and conclude that the writer simply erred because he lived long after the events of the seven sevens and sixty-two sevens (Montgomery 1927:393; Porteous 1979:141). Others cite the challenges to a literal reading of Jeremiah’s seventy years and infer that Daniel’s seventy sevens, like Jeremiah’s seventy years, were not meant to be read literally (Collins 1993b:356; Flesher 2012:586; Gowan 2001:134). It should be pointed out, though, that the second option tries to have it both ways. Whereas the seven sevens and sixty-two sevens are considered non-literal, the seventieth seven is not.

⁶See the discussion in Hasel (1976:11D-14D). In addition to questions about the chronology of the seven sevens and sixty-two sevens, Hasel draws attention to the discrepancy with the *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* of the seventieth seven.

2.2.3. The Seventy Sevens in Relation to Leviticus and Jeremiah

Whether Daniel's seventy sevens begin at the same time as Jeremiah's seventy years or after, advocates of the Greek view often make a connection between the seventy sevens and the threat of a sevenfold extension of judgment in Leviticus 26.⁷ For example, Bergsma (2007:220, 2008:57-60) does not consider Daniel's seventy sevens a reinterpretation of Jeremiah's seventy years but a separate and subsequent penitential period that is necessary because of impenitence during the seventy years of exile. The seventy years, of course, were required because of impenitence before the exile. Though this thesis agrees that the seventy sevens follow the seventy years, Bergsma's reasoning about the tone of the seventy sevens is not convincing. Bergsma (2007:218) describes Daniel's prayer as "a heroic attempt on his part to repent on behalf of his entire nation." Once Daniel repented, the condition for restoration in Leviticus 26 would seem to be met, but Bergsma maintains that the exile continued for seventy sevens more because of a lack of repentance on the part of the other exiles. This reasoning is hard to accept. Seventy sevens of additional punishment incongruously denies Daniel's heroism, or at least its efficacy that Gabriel seems to recognize with his speedy response and favorable greeting.

Having a slightly different view, Redditt (2000:246) thinks that unfaithfulness and impenitence after the exile account for the extension. He says, "With his prayer Daniel had fulfilled the last condition for Jerusalem's restoration." If so, then, restoration should follow. Not so claims Redditt. The exile does not end with Cyrus' decree. Instead, Gabriel supposedly tells Daniel that Jeremiah's seventy years now become seventy sevens. This is "seven times the

⁷E.g., Bergsma (2008:55, 58), Collins (1993b:352), Goldingay (1989:257), Hartman and Di Lella (1978:250), and Redditt (2000:246). This rationale for the seventy sevens also appears in the note on Daniel 9:24 in Pratt (2003:1394). It is true that in Second Temple literature such as *1 Enoch* 93:9, *Testament of Levi* 16, fragment 1 of 4Q387a [4QPseudo-Moses^b], and 4Q390 [4QPseudo-Moses^d] that Second Temple Jews thought of the process of jubilee not just in terms of regaining inheritance but also with an awareness of continuing sin. Nevertheless, the arrival of jubilee still brings relief and so the promise of jubilee offers hope. The process may practically reflect the reality of persistent sin, but the promise of atonement does not constitute an extension of judgment.

judgment Jeremiah had predicted.”⁸ The reason, says Redditt (1999:149, 158), is that the post-exilic community and beyond also neglected faithfulness to God’s commandments.

Boccaccini (2002:186) shares Redditt’s view but develops it more. Drawing attention to the covenantal curses in Leviticus 26, he claims that the references to sevenfold punishment in verses 18, 21, 24, and 28 anticipate the increase of Israel’s seventy years of exile in Jeremiah to seventy sevens of exile in Daniel 9. The increase occurred because Israel did not repent but persisted in the same sinful ways that were originally responsible for the seventy years of exile. The seventy sevens, then, indicate that “for the people of Israel there is no redemption in history. As they broke the covenant and continued to sin even after the Babylonian exile, history is destined to be the time of God’s wrath” (Boccaccini 2002:188). What is more, “Dan 9 . . . has made clear that history degenerates because God has made it the instrument of punishment for the people of Israel who, fully exercising their freedom, failed to meet the commitments of the covenant.” Boccaccini (2002:193-194) adds, “Nothing intervened to modify human ability to choose; human beings were and remain free.” Nevertheless, this history of human stubbornness and divine non-intervention, as Boccaccini understands it, mysteriously ends with God’s forgiveness (Boccaccini 2002:188). Boccaccini, however, offers no textual evidence for how or why God forgives after exhausting his judicial anger and respecting human freedom over the course of seventy sevens. More specifically, he does not explain the significance of the six infinitives in Daniel 9:24 for the seventy sevens.

⁸Cf. Werline (2007:27) who says that Daniel 9:24 “imagines the period of the seventy weeks of years as a period of sin, and its conclusion, as prophetically predicted, will also bring the end to sin.” Wright (1999:258) adds, “Jeremiah’s prophecy has been reinterpreted in precisely the text [i.e., Dan 9] that we have good reason to suppose was a vital one for Jews of Jesus’ day and the next generation; and what it says, beyond all cavil, is that the ‘exile’ is extended beyond the time of Israel’s actual sojourn in Babylon.” Wright, of course, contends that the exile continued through the post-exilic and intertestamental periods into the first century C.E. See also Wright (1992b:268-272 and 1996:126-127). Wright’s thesis about the exile receives support from Evans (1999:77-100) and was anticipated by Knibb (1976:271-272).

This weakness of Boccaccini's view actually begins with his explanation of Leviticus 26. Each of the references in Leviticus 26 to sevenfold punishment has to do with preliminary curses that preceded the final curse of exile. The exile is not mentioned until verse 33. Meanwhile, the threat of sevenfold punishment in connection with the earlier curses informs the Israelites that Yahweh has not yet exhausted his punitive and disciplinary measures with the enactment of each of those curses. If necessary, he can send more judgment before reaching the fullness of his available options. The number seven, of course, can less literally "enhance various aspects of whatever is being counted and express elements of fullness and power" (Otto 2004:346). As the final curse, exile is said to allow the land to enjoy its sabbath years, which is hardly punishment on top of punishment. If anything, the reference to sabbath rests raises expectation of future harvests in the Promised Land. At no point does Leviticus 26 say that exile, like other curses, has the potential to be multiplied seven times, let alone seven times seventy. In fact, Leviticus 26 never says that the exile will last seventy years. Instead, Leviticus 26:40-45 assures the exiles that those who repent will find favor with God. God will remember his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To be more specific, Yahweh will not reject the exiles completely but will remember his covenant with their ancestors whom he brought out of Egypt. The implication of a second Exodus is hard to miss, and, indeed, pre-exilic and exilic prophets did not miss it (Isa 11:11-16, Jer 29:14, Hos 2:14-15, Ezek 20:41-42). So then, Leviticus 26 does not substantiate the Greek view's contention that Daniel's seventy sevens expand Jeremiah's seventy years of exile. Boccaccini has read additional retribution into Leviticus 26 (and also Daniel 9) and ignored the implied promise of a second Exodus. Consequently, Daniel 9:24 receives no explanation, and neither does Jeremiah 29:10-14.

Fishbane points in a more positive direction in his discussion of the relationship between Leviticus, Jeremiah, and Daniel. If Leviticus 26:40-45 holds out hope for God's grace beyond the curse of exile, Jeremiah 29:10-14 announces Yahweh's good intentions for his people after the seventy years in Babylon (Fishbane 1985:488-489).⁹ Aware of both passages, Daniel turned from "reading his Bible" to offering the prayer of confession that both Leviticus and Jeremiah required. By confessing his sins and the sins of his people, Daniel appealed to "the more hopeful side of Lev. 26" (Fishbane 1985:489) and to the comforting words of Jeremiah 29. Through Gabriel, God responded with the prophecy of seventy sevens. According to Fishbane (1985:489), "Gabriel's favourable response to the prayer intimates that the confession was accepted and the end (hitherto esoterically concealed) could now be publically revealed." That end was not more judgment but a gracious turn of fortune that Leviticus and Jeremiah had anticipated. As a supporter of the Greek reading of Daniel 9, Fishbane has appreciably realized that this prophecy, when read with Leviticus and Jeremiah, does not speak only or even principally about a history of more wrath. Whatever must yet be said about the sin of God's people between the end of the Babylonian exile and the reign of Antiochus IV, the structure and content of the seventy sevens convey jubilee.

2.2.4. The Details of Daniel 9:26-27

Given the interest of the book of Daniel in Antiochus IV, the Greek view identifies the cut-off anointed one in Daniel 9:26 with the legitimate high priest, Onias III. He resisted religious compromise with the Seleucids who eagerly promoted Hellenism (2 Macc 3:1-3), but his unwavering orthodoxy cost him dearly. Onias III lost his position to his brother Jason who

⁹Fishbane discusses Jeremiah 25:9-12 instead of 29:10-14. The former passage mentions only the judgment of Babylon after the seventy years. Babylon's accountability, of course, would also be good news for the exiles. Fishbane's fine observations would be strengthened by reading Jeremiah 25:9-12 and 29:10-14 (the two passages that refer to the seventy years) together.

bribed Antiochus IV (2 Macc 4:7-10, 4 Macc. 4:17) and then his life to Menelaus who, after outbidding Jason for the office of high priest, proceeded to eliminate the rightful holder (2 Macc 4:23-34). Menelaus was the brother of Simon who earlier had unjustly accused Onias III of mismanaging temple funds (2 Macc 3:6). In reality, Onias III had allowed a pro-Egyptian man to keep his personal wealth in the temple (2 Macc 3:11), which was a fairly common practice (Gowan 1986:74). Simon, who was pro-Seleucid, was trying to gain access to the temple treasury so that the Seleucid ruler at the time (Seleucus IV who preceded Antiochus IV) could obtain additional funds for Roman tribute. After the death of Seleucus IV, both Jason and Menelaus wanted to cooperate with Antiochus IV in order to receive the economic advantages that came with embracing Hellenism and assimilating into a Greek world (see Bartlett 1998:55-56; Gowan 1986:74-75; Laato:1997:257). Meanwhile, Seleucid rulers gladly accepted bribes because they constantly needed new sources of revenue in order to keep pace with rising expenses (cf. 1 Macc 3:29-31; Bartlett 1998:58). In this grasping situation, political favors were always on sale, and loyalty lasted until a better offer materialized.

The Greek view further considers the בְּרִית (covenant) in Daniel 9:27 an unholy agreement rather than a vehicle of redemption. Antiochus IV, the ruler in Daniel 9:26-27, made an alliance with Hellenizing Jews that proscribed external expressions of Second Temple religion. Indeed, 1 Maccabees 1:11 refers to ὁὶ παράνομοι (lawless members of the covenantal community) who initiated an agreement with Antiochus IV. Goldingay (1989:262) calls these Jews reformist Jews, but Porteous (1979:143) identifies them as “renegade Jews,” which captures the assessment of the writer of 1 Maccabees.¹⁰ While these Hellenized Jews may have considered this alliance politically advantageous, pious Jews suffered persecution. Whether out

¹⁰Seow (2003a:151) also uses the word *renegade*.

of Hellenistic zeal, governmental necessity, or both, Antiochus IV ordered the erection of multiple altars for sacrificing pigs and other unclean animals. He also burned unlawful incense, destroyed copies of the books of law, and killed circumcised babies and their families (1 Macc 1:43-61). To compound the affront to Yahweh and his people, Antiochus IV and his supporters *ῥκοδόμησαν βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως* (built an abomination of desolation), a despicable action that is left unexplained by the writer of 1 Maccabees 1:54.¹¹ Collins (1993b:357) says that 1 Maccabees 1:54 “stands as the earliest interpretation of the phrase in Daniel.” Given Daniel’s interest in Antiochus IV, 1 Maccabees’ reading of Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11 with reference to the Antiochene crisis would seem to be not just the earliest interpretation of these verses but also the original intention of the author of Daniel.

2.2.5. The Six Objectives of Daniel 9:24

Because of the interest of Daniel 8 and 10-12 in Antiochus IV and because of how 1 Maccabees 1 understands the abomination of desolation, the Greek view reads the details of Daniel 9:26-27 with reference to the Antiochene crisis. How, though, does the Maccabean victory realize the six objectives of 9:24? One could perhaps argue that the rededication of the temple in 164 B.C.E., at the very least, constituted a fulfillment of the sixth objective, which is *לְמַשַּׁח קֹדֶשׁ קְדֹשִׁים* (to anoint the most holy). This event represented not only the vindication of Yahweh before the Seleucids but also a merciful sparing of the Jerusalemites who had murdered the high priest, allowed the office of high priest to be put up for sale to the highest bidder, and sold out to Hellenism. The six objectives, however, mention a sealing or fulfillment of prophecy, atonement for sin, an end to sin, and the arrival of everlasting righteousness. None of

¹¹See Collins (1993b:357-358) and Lucas (2002:245) for possible explanations. Lucas admits that “[t]he exact nature of this structure is unclear.” Lust (2002:2.677-678, 683) maintains that *ῥκοῦ* is not a statue of Zeus or any other god but is an idolatrous sacrifice.

these objectives was realized in 164 B.C.E. With reference to the fulfillment of prophecy, Collins (1993b:354) says, “The immediate referent is Jeremiah’s prophecy [of seventy years], but the allusion probably includes all prophecy that is construed as eschatological.” Perhaps, but not all eschatological hopes of Jeremiah—let alone the rest of the Old Testament—were realized by 164 B.C.E. (e.g., the new covenant and the coming of a Davidic king). Moreover, the Greek view claims that the visions in Daniel 2, 7, 8, 9, and 10-12 find a common terminus in the reign and demise of Antiochus IV, after which chapters 2 and 7 expect the arrival of God’s kingdom (2:44-45, 7:21-22).

Bright (1953:185-186), who favors the Maccabean origin of the book of Daniel, articulates the problem with the Antiochene reading of Daniel:

But the Kingdom of God—did they [the Maccabees] produce it? Well, no! They produced the Kingdom of the Hasmonians. And that was not the Kingdom of God; that was a singularly unlovely state, characterized by intrigue, murder, and self-seeking scheming. The end of it would be the tramp of the legions of Cnaeus Pompey, and “that fox” Herod. Still less did the heavens open and the Son of Man come in glory. That hope would have to be deferred for another fruition.¹²

Gurney (1981:31) echoes Bright, “‘Everlasting righteousness’ was certainly not brought in by the Maccabees!” Moreover, if the seven sevens constitute one jubilee cycle (Redditt 1999:159; Seow 2003a:148), how does the outcome of the Maccabean crisis as described by Bright far exceed the decree by Cyrus in 539 B.C.E. or the completion of the temple in 516 B.C.E. (proposed ending points of the first division of seven sevens)? The seventieth seven cannot be considered the grand finale—the Jubilee of Jubilees—that the seven sevens foreshadow.

It might seem, then, that the Greek view cannot account for how the seventy sevens accomplish the six stated objectives of Gabriel’s response to Daniel’s prayer. The realization of the six objectives of 9:24 certainly constitutes the fullness of redemption and the greatest

¹²See also Efron (1987:64), Laato (1997:260), and Wright (1992b:159).

occasion ever for celebration, but Bright is correct. The happy resolution of the Maccabean crisis in 164 B.C.E. hardly compares with what 9:24 has in view. So then, the Greek view apparently must conclude that Daniel's seventy sevens turned out to be mistaken (cf. Goldingay 1977:47; Miller 1994:37; Porteous 1979:144; Redditt 1999:164). At best, the outcome of the seventy sevens is so reduced that Gabriel on behalf of Yahweh seems to set a new standard for grandiloquence. According to Wallace (n.d.:165), "... no satisfactory answer seems to be given to the question of why the writer of a Maccabean tract or any contemporary scribe or reporter would use such extraordinary language even in the expression of their wildest joy." Whatever political victory the Maccabees gained, Wallace is right to notice that the spiritual transformation of Daniel 9:24 remained unrealized. Even taking into account the prophetic penchant for hyperbole (Sandy 2002:41-44, 92-95, 157-160), it is hard to escape the inference that the stated purpose of the seventy sevens exceeds the result of the Maccabean victory.

Perhaps, but Wallace seems to overlook the evidence that some advocates of the Greek view produce in order to give what they consider a satisfactory answer. Bright's reference to another fruition in New Testament times suggests a redemptive-historical approach that can include a Maccabean stage in the overall outlook of not just Daniel 9 but the whole book of Daniel. Even so, he does not explain the hermeneutics of this fruition. According to other advocates of the Greek view, the author of Daniel expressed a hope that began to be realized by the Maccabees but did not reach complete fulfillment until later. In other words, Gabriel's association of Antiochus IV and jubilee involves typology or the repetition of a pattern that begins before events in the second century and runs throughout the Old and New Testaments. What happened during the Antiochene crisis is one instance of the pattern.

For example, Goldingay (1977:47-48) asks, “Were the exilic prophets/Daniel/Jesus/Paul mistaken in suggesting that the eschaton was imminent?” He answers as follows:

If these passages are discussed in isolation from one another, however, the point is missed that they are actually examples of the same recurring phenomenon in the Bible. That phenomenon is, to see each evil, each crisis, each judgment, each victory, each blessing as the embodiment in time of the ultimate struggle between right and wrong, chaos and cosmos, in which evil ever threatens to be victorious, but God wins the actual victory. Biblical theology eventually crystallizes the conviction—how early, opinions will differ—that the ultimate achievement of this victory will only come at the end; though it is at the same time somehow a victory won finally at the beginning, when *tōhû wābōhû* gave way to cosmos and Rahab was cut to pieces. Within history, however, there are recurrent partial realizations of that ultimate achievement—of which the greatest came through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.¹³

Goldingay then relates this typological hermeneutic to Antiochus IV in Daniel, “The Jews’ deliverance from Antiochus—and there was a notable deliverance—was one such realization. It was not the final breaking-in of the eschaton. But it was the breaking-in of the eschatological God. It was not the fulfillment of God’s final purpose but it was an *arrabōn* of that fulfillment, and (we can see with hindsight) pointed forward to it.” Goldingay (1989:261-262) later says about Daniel 9:27, “At the same time, one may grant that the terms used to describe these troubles are theologically freighted. The crisis is an anticipatory embodiment of the last great battle, a historical embodiment of the first great battle between the forces of chaos and the forces of order.” As an advocate of the Greek view, Goldingay considers the crisis the desecration of the temple by Antiochus IV, but he recognizes that Daniel’s interest in this crisis occurs in a larger history with similar instances of opposition to God and his people. Moreover, Daniel’s

¹³Cf. Baker (2010:217) who says, “The basic promise received by Abraham is reaffirmed, partially fulfilled, restated, partially fulfilled and renewed to become further promise.” On page 274, Baker adds, “This promise was partially fulfilled in the early history of Israel, but never completely fulfilled within the Old Testament. Another promise was given to David, which repeated and reinterpreted the essence of the basic promise while adding some new elements. The prophets again took up the earlier promises and supplemented them with new ones. Most of them remained unfulfilled or only partially fulfilled by the end of the Old Testament period.” Regarding Jesus’ relationship to the promises, Baker says that “the New Testament fulfillment goes far beyond the expectations of the Old.” Even so, the complete fulfillment of God’s promises “will take place only at the consummation of history.”

interpretation of the Antiochene crisis has become part of a larger canon that interprets other instances of opposition.

Goldingay is not the lone advocate of the Greek view since Bright to use a redemptive-historical hermeneutic that includes typology. Collins (1984b:39) lends support, “Ultimately the book addresses not only one particular crisis but a recurring type.” Lucas (2002:254) adds, “The language of vv. 26-27 is sufficiently allusive to permit the reapplication of these verses to later situations where the same pattern is appearing in history. . . . It is the recurrence of the pattern of a persecution of God’s people, focused on the temple, that is being highlighted.”¹⁴ Similarly, Meadowcroft and Irwin (2004:201) say: “**War** and **desolations** continuing until the end suggests a much bigger picture. It is here we begin to sense that whatever the historical details, the author wishes to point us beyond them to a wider reality, a reality that deals with the ultimate culmination of things. The possibility remains that there will be other fulfillments and applications of these words.” Wallace and representatives of other views may not consider these answers satisfactory, but fairness requires the recognition that advocates of the Greek view have what can be called a redemptive-historical and typological explanation. In agreement with Daniel and 1 Maccabees, they see the hand of God in the Maccabean resolution (one of Goldingay’s partial realizations), and that hand preserves the faithful Jews through whom God continues to keep his promise to Abraham. If followed into the future, the historical trajectory of Daniel’s visions leads to Jesus, whom Matthew called a son of Abraham (Matt 1:1) and whom Paul identified as the seed of Abraham (Gal 3:16). As complicated, messy, and even incomplete as the Maccabean intervention and Hasmonean kingdom were, they were a chapter in God’s story of redemption. The Greek view rightly recognizes that Daniel sees the progressive and

¹⁴Lucas’ use of the word *allusive* recalls Driver (1900:139) who says about Daniel 9:26, “The language is intentionally allusive and ambiguous.” Allusiveness and ambiguity, however, do not necessarily make a passage incomprehensible. Intentional allusiveness suggests symbolic or typological depth, as Lucas recognizes.

organic unfolding of God's plan during some of the darkest days of the Second Temple period. The writer's hope is that the consummation of that plan (i.e., the Jubilee of Jubilees) is near.

The previous statements of Goldingay, Collins, Lucas, and Meadowcroft and Irwin coincide with Osborne's understanding of typology (2006:328):

Typology differs from direct prophecy in that the latter texts are forward-looking and directly predict the New Testament event, while typology is indirect and analogously relates the Old Testament event to the New Testament event. The early Christians (like the Jews) saw all of salvation history (God working out his plan of salvation in human history) as a single continuous event. Therefore events in the past are linked to those in the present, so that God's mighty deeds like the exodus or the return from exile foreshadow the experiences of God's present community, the church. This does not see a direct prophetic link but rather a correspondence in history, in which the current experience relives the past. God is immutable or consistent and acts today just as he did in the past, so typology seeks to identify the theological correspondence between those salvific actions in the past and present.

Osborne (2006:329) continues, "Still, I wonder if all Old Testament promises are prospective. I do not see that element, for instance, in Jeremiah 31:15 or Hosea 11:1 as fulfilled in Matthew 2:15, 18. Nor do I see a need for a 'deeper sense.' It seems to me that typology is sufficient to explain the use of the Old Testament in the New." Advocates of the Greek view recognize not only that Daniel has an interest in Antiochus IV but also that the Antiochene crisis is one of many historical instances of the pattern of unbelieving hostility toward God and his people. Even so, God incorporates the persecution into his grand purpose for history and accomplishes good through it.

2.2.6. The Typology of the Greek View and Genre Analysis

Other literature applies the language of Daniel to new but similar situations. This literature includes Jewish apocalypses from the Second Temple period. Advocates of the Greek view usually compare the form and content of Daniel with the form and content of apocalypses.¹⁵

¹⁵For a summary of the traits of Jewish apocalypses, see Carey (2005:6-10), Collins (1998:4-12), and Osborne (2006:273-290).

The latter often review periods of history in the guise of predictive prophecy and by the hand of a pseudonymous author. If the former trait (prophecy after the event) conveys God's purposeful control of events, the latter (pseudonymity) provides continuity with the past and authority for the present. Apocalypses typically address God's people in distress and encourage them to persevere in faith and obedience until God sets matters right by a decisive judgment.

Apocalypses do not anticipate the end of the world but the end of an age, viz., this present evil age that mocks God and oppresses his people. For this reason, apocalypses do not despair of relief but hold out hope for God's coming in victory and vindication. History (i.e., humanity's activity on earth) will not end at that time, but God will usher in an age of restoration over which he will reign without rival. Nevertheless, the coming age has not yet arrived, and the realization of the revelation awaits a future day. Advocates of the Greek view notice the traits that Daniel shares with Jewish apocalypses of the Second Temple period and conclude on the basis of literary and ideological comparison that Daniel originated at the same time as they and for similar reasons.

With its observation of the similarity between Daniel and other apocalypses of the Second Temple era, the Greek view fits the findings of recent genre criticism. For example, Longman (1987:77) says, "... a text that bears no similarities of structure, content, or the like with anything previously written cannot be understood by a reader."¹⁶ Such texts, however, do not exist. Authors write and readers read with genre comparison more or less in mind. "An author," says Lucas (2002:23), "who wants to communicate to readers in a particular culture will

¹⁶Cf. Kuruvilla's interaction (2009:36-37) with Longman, "Indeed, for effective communication to be transacted between author and reader, genres are essential, for 'a text which bears no similarities of structure, content, or the like with anything previously written cannot be understood by a reader'. In other words, without the rules of genre a text is incomprehensible. Thus genre is the consummate bridge that links writer to text and text to reader by means of rules derived by convention – the shared expectation of goals and the shared means of achieving those goals." The material in single quotes comes from Longman (1985:50-51) and is repeated in Longman (1987:77).

adopt one of the genres that belong in that culture, or else risk misunderstanding or incomprehension.” If, then, no text is completely unique but shares traits with other texts, the reading strategy for any text must be informed by the texts with which it is similar. Indeed, as Kuruvilla (2009:38-390) explains, comparative genre analysis is part of how the writer tells the reader what he or she intends to communicate:

If texts are the literary products of communicative agents (authors), then the intended response of the communicative subjects (readers) must also be an important consideration in interpretation. The *response of the reader* begins with an expectation of the text-in-its-genre. Indeed, it was in anticipation of what the reader might expect that that genre was chosen by the author in the first place; therefore genre is the cipher key to decoding the text. It is the conventional and institutional system of these rule-bound language-games that leads the reader to peruse expectantly. A text does not make an appearance as an absolutely new entity in an informational vacuum but, predisposing the audience to a particular kind of reception, genre ‘evokes for the reader (listener) the horizon of expectations and rules familiar from earlier texts’. By creating expectations in readers and instructing them how to read, genres shape the response of readers to the text; they are directions for viewing the world.¹⁷

Of course, readers do not come to texts in a vacuum. “Every interpreter,” says Osborne (2006:182), “comes to a text with certain expectations based in part on his or her genre understanding. . . . As readers study a particular text, their expectations are increasingly defined as they narrow the possibilities to identify the proper genre to which the text belongs. The process proceeds by trial and error, as the text progressively revises the reader’s identification.”¹⁸ Part of the trial and error includes discovering and comparing the text of primary interest (e.g., Daniel) with other texts that resemble it.¹⁹

¹⁷The material in single quotes comes from Jauss (1982:23).

¹⁸Cf. Collins (1998:8) who says, “An interpreter always begins with an assumption about the genre of the text. If our expectations are fulfilled, the assumptions will need no revision. If they are not fulfilled, we must revise our idea of the genre or relinquish the attempt to understand. There can be no understanding without at least an implicit notion of genre.”

¹⁹Sparks (2005:241) says, “Because the visions in the book of Daniel represent the only full-scale apocalypses in the Hebrew Bible, our interpretation of these visionary genres depends profoundly on insights gained from comparative material.”

Those who hold the Greek view have done the contemporary genre analysis that Longman, Kuruvilla, and Osborne describe, even if Longman (1999:22-23, 271-272, 281) and Osborne (2006:280) cannot accept some of their conclusions. As one advocate of the Greek view, Lucas (2002:269-272) has argued that the visions in chapters 7-12 resemble Akkadian prophecies that were, in actuality, reviews of history in the guise of prediction.²⁰ Meanwhile, numerous other supporters of the Greek view have compared Daniel with the narratives and apocalypses of Second Temple Judaism and derived their reading strategy from these (Collins 1993b:52-54, 1998:4-9; Sparks 2005:450-451, 2008:223-224).

2.2.7. Summary

The Greek view recognizes the interest of Daniel in the Antiochene crisis and reads the seventy sevens in view of that interest. What happens to the Jews under Antiochus IV is understood in view of other instances of persecution. The Greek view also recognizes the jubilee structure of the seventy sevens. Nevertheless, many advocates of the Greek view lose sight of the jubilee theme by interpreting the seventy sevens as more judgment on top of Jeremiah's seventy years of exile. Future scholarship, including this thesis, must develop the jubilant tone and message of the seventy sevens in connection with the Antiochene crisis that is so central to the visions of Daniel.

²⁰Cf. Duguid (2008:194) who agrees with Lucas that the writer of Daniel not only knew about the Akkadian prophecies but lived in Babylon. Duguid, however, doubts that a second-century Jewish writer would have known Akkadian or would have had access to the Akkadian prophecies. Hence, Duguid uses Lucas' argument as evidence of a sixth-century date of composition. Even so, the question of why a sixth-century writer would have such interest in events at least three hundred years in the future is not settled by Duguid's critique of Lucas. Duguid (2008:204) says that the writer of Daniel uses Antiochus IV in 11:36-45 as a "model" or type of a future king "who will be a larger and more ultimate version of Antiochus." Longman (1999:281) holds a similar position but calls the future king Antichrist. Both Duguid and Longman admit that Daniel 11:36-45 never signals a transition from Antiochus IV to Antichrist who will live at least two thousand years later. Still, this view is not so different from the typology of the Greek view that allows for multiple fulfillments or applications. If Bright (1953:184) calls Antiochus IV "the very prototype of Antichrist," Lucas (2002:198) chooses the word *archetype*. Moreover, Rowley (1961:390) says, "For the author of Daniel, Antiochus Epiphanes was Antichrist, who had a mouth speaking great things, and who exalted himself against the Most High, as well as persecuted the saints. There have been others like him in history, who have believed that they could make God himself tremble in the heavens."

2.3 The Roman View

The Roman view reads Daniel 9:24-27 with reference to the first coming of Jesus in the first century C.E. The Roman Empire had since conquered Greece and become the world's superpower. Roman soldiers would execute Jesus about 30 C.E. and destroy Jerusalem in 70 C.E. For most proponents of the Roman view, these two events have to do with the *terminus ad quem* of the seventieth seven and, therefore, the purpose of the seventy sevens as a whole. As is the case with the Greek view, a literal understanding of the seventy sevens (i.e., 490 years) does not work for the Roman view. For this reason, the seventy sevens are usually, but not always, considered symbolic.

Because of differences among the advocates of the Roman view, it might be better to talk about Roman views. Similar to the Greek view, the *terminus a quo* of the seventy sevens is subject to some debate in the Roman view. That the beginning of the seventy sevens coincides with the beginning of the exile, however, is not a consideration. All advocates of the Roman view believe that the seventy sevens began after Jeremiah's seventy years. The issue is which Persian king gave the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. Was it Cyrus in 539 B.C.E. or Artaxerxes in 458 B.C.E.? The *terminus ad quem* is also a matter of some controversy, as is the identity of the ruler and covenant in Daniel 9:26-27. For these reasons, the Roman view does not come across as being as monolithic as the Greek view. Focusing on individual representatives of the Roman view allows greater respect for their various nuances.

2.3.1. The Roman View of Young, Kline, and Gentry

Young, Kline, and Gentry share a similar enough understanding of the Roman view that they can be reviewed together. These scholars will be discussed in chronological order, starting with Young. They then will be evaluated together.

2.3.1.1. Edward Young

Young (1949:221) admits that “the text is somewhat vague about the *terminus a quo* of the 70 sevens. It speaks merely of the going forth of a word.” Ultimately, the word comes from God and so is “an invisible event” (Young 1949:201). Even so, Young associates the going forth of a word with Cyrus’ edict in 539 B.C.E., “the year in which the effects of the going forth of a word began to appear in history” (Young 1949:203). Young further says that the *terminus ad quem* of the seventy sevens is uncertain. For that matter, so is the *terminus ad quem* of the seven sevens and the sixty-two sevens (Young 1949:206, 220-221).

Concerning the seven sevens, Young suggests that they run the length of the post-exilic period from Cyrus’ decree in Ezra 1 to Nehemiah’s return to Jerusalem in Nehemiah 13. The sixty-two sevens represent the years between the time of Ezra and Nehemiah on the one hand and the time of Jesus on the other (Young 1949:205-206; cf. 1954:68). That said, though, Young does not accept the punctuation of the Masoretic Text (viz., the *’athnah* under שְׁבַעַה) in Daniel 9:25. As it stands, the Masoretic Text punctuates the clauses in verse 25 in such a way that there are two anointed ones—one that comes at the end of the seven sevens and one that is cut off after the sixty-two sevens. The Masoretic scribes read verses 25-26a as follows:

וְתִדַע וְתִשְׁכַּל מִן־מָצָא דָּבָר לְהָשִׁיב וּלְבָנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם עַד־מָשִׁיחַ נָגִיד שְׁבַעַה שְׁבַעַה וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנִים וְשִׁנִּים
תָּשׁוּב וְנִבְנְתָה רְחוֹב וְחָרוֹץ וּבְצוֹק הָעֵתִים: וְאַחֲרֵי הַשְּׁבַעִים שָׁנִים וְשִׁנִּים יָבֹרֵת מָשִׁיחַ וְאֵין לוֹ

Know and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem until an anointed one, a leader, will be seven sevens. Then for sixty-two sevens it will be built with plaza and trench but in troubled times. After sixty-two sevens, an anointed one will be cut off and have nothing.²¹

For Young, there can be only one anointed figure, and that is Jesus. Hence, Young proposes an emendation of the punctuation (i.e., eliminating the *’athnah* under שְׁבַעַה) that then combines the

²¹The ESV and NRSV adopt the Masoretic punctuation.

seven sevens and the sixty-two sevens into a single period of sixty-nine sevens, after which the anointed one comes and is cut off. He translates the relevant parts of 9:25-26a as follows: “And thou shalt know and understand, from the going forth of a word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto an anointed one, a prince (is) seven sevens and sixty two sevens” (Young 1954:60).²²

Young admits that he does not know why the sixty-nine sevens are divided into two unequal periods, though he raises the possibility that the seven sevens have something to do with the completion of the rebuilding of the city and temple by Ezra and Nehemiah. He does not say what that something is, but he does insist that the Masoretic punctuation cannot be accepted. With reference to his own proposal, he offers the following rationale: “The principal reason which leads us to adopt this rendering is that it is most in keeping with the requirements of the context. If this translation is not adopted, the passage does not yield a good sense” (Young 1954:61). Elsewhere, he says that “this violent separation of the two periods is out of harmony with the context” (Young 1949:205). Young is correct, of course, that the Masoretic pointing and punctuation are not inspired (cf. Baldwin 1978a:170; Feinberg 1981:211-212), but perhaps the Masoretic reading does yield a good sense.²³ Young’s suggestion that the seven sevens have to do with Ezra, Nehemiah, and the completion of the rebuilding of Jerusalem offers another way to understand the first section of the seventy sevens. This matter will be taken up again in chapter 6.

What Daniel 9:26 clearly states is that the anointed one is cut off after the sixty-two sevens. For Young, the anointed one is Jesus because he is the only person from a New Testament perspective who can realize the six objectives of 9:24 (Young 1949:199, 201).

²²The NASB, NIV, and NKJV have similar readings. Consciously or not, they follow Theodotion’s Greek translation. See Adler (1996:223-224).

²³Lucas (2005:297) says, “There seems to be no point in saying ‘seven weeks and sixty-two weeks’ unless something is going to happen after the seven.”

Moreover, Jesus as the cut-off anointed one in 9:26 is the subject of הַגִּבֹּר in 9:27 (Young 1949:208). Young says that נָגִיד, which is the absolute noun in a construct chain, is in essence the object of a preposition and so is in a weaker grammatical position to be the subject of הַגִּבֹּר. Perhaps, but the rules of Hebrew grammar do not prohibit an absolute noun (or object of preposition) from becoming the subject of a subsequent verb.

For Young, the subject of הַגִּבֹּר affects the meaning of this verb in this context. הַגִּבֹּר is a Hiphil perfect from the root גָּבַר, which means “to be strong.” In the Hiphil, this word can mean “to make strong” or “to cause to prevail.” In Daniel 9:27, הַגִּבֹּר בְּרִית can mean “he [i.e., Jesus] makes a strong covenant” or “he causes an existing covenant to prevail.” Young (1949:212) favors the latter possibility and relates the existing covenant to what Reformed theology calls God’s eternal covenant of grace that has several stages of implementation in the Old Testament era (Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and new covenants). Stated differently, the covenant of 9:27 is the plan of a gracious redemption that the sacrificial system typified and that the prophets repeatedly announced. Jesus, the anointed one of verse 26, did not make (פָּרַת) this covenant; instead, he confirmed it or fulfilled it within history for many, i.e., for those he came to save. For Young (1949:213), causing a covenant to prevail means making an existing covenant efficacious. The six objectives of 9:24 have to do with this covenant or this plan. Only Jesus, by virtue of his active and passive obedience, accomplished redemption, and he did so in the first century C.E. Jesus’ atoning sacrifice (the antitype) further rendered the Old Testament sacrifices (the type) unnecessary. Titus Vespasian and the Roman army (the prince and his people of 9:26) may have, so far as history is concerned, put an end to temple sacrifices in 70 C.E., but Jesus,

from a theological point of view, had already made them obsolete about forty years earlier (Young 1949:217-218).

Meanwhile, the ruler and his people are Titus Vespasian and the Roman soldiers whom God used to judge the unbelief of Jews who rejected Jesus as the anointed one. For Young, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple does not occur during the seventieth seven. Rather, it is a consequence of the death of the anointed one, which is part of the seventieth seven. The temple, in particular, had become an abomination, not so much because of idolatry within its precincts (cf. Ezek 8) but because of the ongoing ministrations after the tearing of the veil. These, in essence, denied the efficacy of Jesus' death. True worship of Yahweh no longer took place at the temple but wherever people called upon God through Jesus the anointed one (Young 1949:218).

2.3.1.2. Meredith Kline

Kline (1974:463-469) similarly argues that the anointed one of verse 26 is the subject of **לְכָרוֹת בְּרִית** in verse 27. Recalling that the idiom in Hebrew for making a covenant is **לְכָרוֹת בְּרִית** (to cut a covenant), Kline maintains that the occurrence of **יִכָּרֵת** (he will be cut off) in verse 26 refers to the making of the new covenant at the cross.²⁴ **הַגִּבּוֹר** in verse 27 advances the thought by assuring the reader of the anointed one's enforcement of the covenantal blessings and curses. Because the anointed one enforces curses for rebellion, he is also the ruler in verse 26 and the desolator in verse 27 who destroys Jerusalem and the temple. Jesus put an end to the temple practices that had become abominable during the Second Temple period. He did this from the

²⁴Gruenthaner (1939:52) also thinks that **בְּרִית** refers to "the new covenant founded by Christ."

right hand of God in 70 C.E. by sending the Roman army under the leadership of Titus Vespasian.

2.3.1.3. Peter Gentry

More recently, Gentry (2010:38) says that the anointed one in verse 26 “upholds” the covenant in verse 27. He does this by making a new covenant that “establishes effectively what God intended in the Sinai covenant.” Gentry adds, “The expression ‘uphold a covenant’ is chosen and used here because the context entails the return from exile and the ‘renewing’ of the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel.” Gentry also considers Jesus the ruler in verse 26 and the desolator in verse 27. His people, however, are not Christians but Jews. When the latter rejected him as their anointed one, their temple became an abomination. For support, Gentry (2010:39-40) appeals to Josephus who blamed Jewish zealots for arousing the wrath of Rome that resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple.

2.3.1.4. Evaluation of Young, Kline, and Gentry

Young, Kline, and Gentry reflect an unabashedly Christian reading of Daniel’s seventy sevens. For them, the merit of this view is that Jesus, by virtue of his sinless life and vicarious death, realized all six objectives in Daniel 9:24. Young (1949:201) says with reference to Daniel 9:24:

The six items presented in this vs. are all messianic. This fact settles the *terminus ad quem* of the prophecy. The termination of the 70 sevens coincides then, not with the times of Antiochus, nor with the end of the present age, the 2nd Advent of our Lord, but with His 1st Advent. “For when our Lord ascended into heaven and the Holy Spirit descended, there remained not one of the six items of Daniel 9:24 that was not *fully accomplished*” (Mauro).²⁵

²⁵The reference to Mauro is to Mauro (n.d.:53). The preceding sentence in Mauro’s book says, “. . . we have shown—indeed it is so clear as hardly to be open to dispute—that all six items *were* completely fulfilled at the first coming of Christ, and in the ‘week’ of his crucifixion.” Young and Mauro are joined by Allis (1945:113).

Are Young and Mauro (as well as Kline and Gentry) completely correct, though? Jesus may have died for the sins of his people in the first century C.E., but has sin ended? Is there everlasting righteousness among God's people, let alone the whole world? If the six objectives in 9:24 are God's answer to Daniel's prayer, God may have shown mercy to his people (although some have not yet been born to receive that mercy in time), but has he vindicated his name before all nations? Daniel was concerned about how he and others had brought reproach to God's name. Is it not true that God's people still embarrass God by their conduct? They may be forgiven and even wondrously seated with the exalted anointed one in the heavenly places (Eph 2:6), but their lives do not fully conform to the likeness of the righteous Jesus. Their experience lags behind their position. Thus, they do harm to other people and thereby to the reputation of Jesus by whose name they are called. There is an "already-not yet" quality to Christian living that Young and Mauro would surely affirm in other contexts but seems to be absent in their reading of Daniel 9:24-27.²⁶

A particular difficulty with Young's version of the Roman view is that it has no clear answer for when the seventieth seven ends and therefore when the seventy sevens end.²⁷ Young (1949:221) says: "The text says nothing upon the subject. Therefore, we may safely follow the text. When the 70 sevens come to a conclusion, we do not know."²⁸ Young may be technically correct, but 9:27 does say that "he" (Jesus the anointed one according to Young) will make a covenant for one seven. If, as Young believes, this covenant is the covenant of grace, surely Young thinks that this covenant remains in effect beyond the first century C.E. God's plan of redemption did not end with the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 C.E. With their

²⁶Bock (1992:46) similarly observes, "... covenant theologians of the past have tended to overemphasize the 'already' in their critiques of dispensationalism, while underemphasizing the 'not yet.'"

²⁷Dispensationalists also issue this criticism. See Walvoord (1971:217).

²⁸See also Young (1954:82-83).

references to the new covenant, Kline and Gentry suggest that the outlook of God's answer to Daniel's prayer goes beyond the first coming of Jesus and the first century C.E.

One last concern has to do with the seven sevens in 9:25. Young tentatively relates them to the time of Ezra and Nehemiah rather than to that of Joshua and Zerubbabel. If, as Gowan and Seow suggest with reference to Joshua and Zeubbabel, the seven sevens represent a jubilee cycle, how might the jubilee theme apply to the work of Ezra and Nehemiah? Chapter 6 will address this question.

2.3.2. Robert Gurney's Variation of the Roman View

2.3.2.1. Gurney's View Summarized

As seen earlier, Young is reluctant to establish precise dates for the *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* of the seventy sevens. Not all advocates of the Roman view, however, follow his example. Gurney takes the numbers literally and considers Daniel 9:24-27 a precise announcement of the year of Jesus' death. Because Cyrus' decree in 539 B.C.E. obviously precedes the death of Jesus by more than four hundred ninety years, Gurney must identify a different *terminus a quo*. For him, the starting point is Ezra's trip to Jerusalem in 458 B.C.E.

Daniel 9:25 refers to a word to build Jerusalem, which, of course, had been destroyed by the army of Babylon in 586 B.C.E. Gurney distinguishes between rebuilding the temple and rebuilding the city. His basis for doing so is Daniel's prayer, which supposedly separates the request for the temple (9:17) from the request for the city (9:16). "As Daniel made two requests, so God may have given two answers" that had to do with two stages of reconstruction (Gurney 1980:105). Cyrus' decree in 539 B.C.E. pertained to rebuilding the temple, and Artaxerxes is thought to have given Ezra permission in 458 B.C.E. to rebuild the city. Gurney's explanation, however, becomes unclear at this point (Gurney 1980:105-110). Although no extra-biblical

evidence exists as yet for such a decree, Gurney seems to maintain that Artaxerxes' reversal of his earlier decree to stop construction in Jerusalem (Ezra 4:19-21) is the decree to which Daniel 9:25 refers. This second decree is presumably the same as is found in the royal letter that Ezra had with him as he traveled to Jerusalem in 458 B.C.E. (Ezra 7:11-26). The biblical version of the letter, however, says nothing explicit about rescinding the royal decree of Ezra 4:19-21 and ordering work on the city to resume. Gurney ends up assuming that Yahweh must have told Ezra to rebuild the city and that Ezra acted on Yahweh's command. The biblical text, though, does not mention any such revelation to Ezra (but cf. Ezra 9:9), and such revelation would not qualify as a royal decree. The upshot is that the case for a separate Persian decree to rebuild the city in 458 B.C.E. rests on an argument from silence.

Something else should also be noted. Gurney (1980:102) plausibly suggests that Ezra and those who returned with him were the target of the first decree in Ezra 4:21. In other words, Ezra, who went to Jerusalem with Artaxerxes' approval and funding, was soon ordered to stop rebuilding the city. What cannot be denied, of course, is that the work stopped by Artaxerxes' decree in Ezra 4:21 did resume at some point. If Nehemiah 7:4 reports that no houses had been rebuilt even at the time of Nehemiah's arrival, Nehemiah 11 records the names of those returnees who moved into Jerusalem in order to live there. The author of Ezra-Nehemiah seems not to have been concerned to record the precise date of the revocation of the earlier decree that prohibited reconstruction. It seems prudent, then, not to insist that the seventy sevens began in 458 B.C.E. (or any other year) so as to insure that the math works for the desired *terminus ad quem*.

Gurney (1980:110-121) continues with his version of the Roman view. The seven sevens mark the time required to rebuild Jerusalem, and the sixty-two sevens lead to 26 C.E. when Jesus

“about this very time” began his public ministry (Gurney 1980:110). Three and a half years later on April 7, 30 C.E., Jesus was crucified. Gurney agrees with Young that Jesus makes the strong covenant, which is a reference to Jeremiah’s new covenant. He further agrees that the destruction of Jerusalem lies outside the seventy sevens but, nevertheless, visibly marks the end of the old covenant and the inefficacy of the temple sacrifices since the death of Jesus. Like Young, Gurney is not sure if the second half of the seventieth seven has any significance. He suggests that the martyrdom of Stephen and conversion of Saul might have occurred during the second half of the seventieth seven and therefore have relevance in symbolizing the end of the old covenant.

2.3.2.2. Gurney’s View Evaluated

Several questions arise about this version of the Roman view. Perhaps the first is the expectation and demand of an exact chronology that even identifies the day of Jesus’ death. And yet, Gurney must make certain assumptions and, at times, use words like *highly probable*, *most likely*, and *it was about this time*. The fact is that advocates of neither the Greek view nor the Roman view can make the math work for their desired *terminus ad quem*. The death and resurrection of Jesus may be the central events in history for Christians, but no proposed date for them has received universal acceptance. Scholars simply do not know when Jesus was born or when he died.

The *terminus a quo* is also suspect. If Daniel is aware that Jeremiah’s seventy sevens are nearly complete, if God answers his prayer with a prophecy of seventy sevens, and if Cyrus about that same time issues a decree that allows the Jews to return home, then it seems reasonable to conclude that the *terminus a quo* of the seventy sevens follows closely on the heels of the *terminus ad quem* of Jeremiah’s seventy years. But if the seventy sevens do not begin for

another eighty-one years (458 B.C.E.), how do they address Daniel's stated concerns in his prayer (Poythress 1985:134)?²⁹ Moreover, Daniel 9:21 reports how Gabriel raced to Daniel while he was still praying and gave him the seventy sevens prophecy. Why the hurry if the seventy sevens do not start ticking for another eight decades? Daniel will be long dead, and Gabriel is prematurely panting with excitement.

Besides, Isaiah 44:28 attributes the building of the temple and the city to Cyrus, and Haggai 1 addresses the problem of building the city while the temple remained unfinished. The separation of the temple from the city is a false distinction. Cyrus' decree included both. Along this line of evidence, something else must be considered, viz., the relation of Cyrus' decree to the structure and message of the book of Ezra-Nehemiah. This is the subject of chapter 6.

2.3.3. Palmer Robertson's Variation of the Roman View

2.3.3.1 Robertson's View Summarized

Though closer to Young than to Gurney, Robertson (2004:338-346) has yet a third version of the Roman view—what he calls a “chronological/symbolical” approach. The figures have literal value and symbolic depth. Robertson, like advocates of the Greek view, appreciably associates the seventy sevens with the sabbatical years of Leviticus 26. Rejecting a *terminus ad quem* in either 539 or 458 B.C.E., he starts counting the seventy sevens in “approximately” 445 B.C.E. when Nehemiah, at the decree of Artaxerxes, rebuilt not just the wall but also the city of Jerusalem. The first division of seven sevens runs from the decree of Artaxerxes in 445 B.C.E. to “approximately” 400 B.C.E. when “old covenant revelation came to its conclusion.” The middle division of sixty-two sevens extended to “approximately” 30 C.E. when Jesus ministered. The seventieth seven then immediately follows the sixty-ninth, and it is during this seven that Jesus

²⁹Poythress' observations pertain to the dispensationalist approach to the *terminus a quo*, which will be discussed below.

achieves the six objectives of 9:24. Because of how Revelation uses three and a half years for the whole period between the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. and the second coming of Jesus, Robertson sets the second half of the seventieth seven in a category by itself. It is not chronological/symbolical but just symbolical and therefore indefinite in length.

2.3.3.2. Robertson's View Evaluated

This view raises several concerns. First, how many actual years unfold between the *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* of the seventy sevens? Second, how does Robertson know that the Old Testament reached its final form by 400 B.C.E., and why is the completion of the Old Testament canon significant for the accomplishment of the six objectives in 9:24? Third, seven sevens (forty-nine years) plus sixty-two sevens (434 years) equals sixty-nine sevens (or 483 years). Four hundred eighty-three years after 445 B.C.E. is 38 C.E. If the anointed one (Jesus) is cut off after the sixty-nine sevens, no one dates the crucifixion to 38 C.E. Fourth, one more seven puts the *terminus ad quem* of the seventy sevens in 45 C.E. Three and a half years earlier would be 41 or 42 C.E. If “he” puts an end to sacrifice in the middle of the seventieth seven, what happens in 41 or 42 C.E. that constitutes a fulfillment of this prophecy in Daniel 9:27? Once again, the math does not add up.³⁰

Nevertheless, Robertson appreciably takes note of how Revelation interprets the seventieth seven, or, to be more precise, the second half of the seventieth seven. Three and a half years become a symbol of the inter-advent period—the years between the first and second comings of Jesus. Chapter 11 will return to this subject.

³⁰Cf. Leupold (1969:436-437) and Walvoord (1971:232). Their criticism can also apply to Young.

2.3.4. Joyce Baldwin's Variation of the Roman View

2.3.4.1. Baldwin's View Summarized

Baldwin's view is the least Roman of the Roman possibilities, but she does identify the fourth kingdom in Daniel 7 with Rome (Baldwin 1978a:147, 162). Moreover, she argues for a late sixth- or early fifth-century date of composition of the book. Along with Young, Baldwin (1978a:169, 171, 176) believes that the seventy sevens began with Cyrus' decree in 539, but they do not mark a literal period of four hundred ninety years. Baldwin never specifically equates Jesus with the anointed one who is cut off, but she implies as much by saying that the two comings of Jesus accomplish the six objectives of the seventy sevens in 9:24 (Baldwin 1978a:169).

She continues to go her own way by considering נָגִיד in Daniel 9:26 the subject of הַגִּבּוֹר in 9:27 because of its proximity to the verb. This נָגִיד is any leader who sets himself or herself in opposition to "God's people and God's cause" (Baldwin 1978a:172). Therefore, Baldwin does not offer a precise identification of this ruler. She further says (1978a:171), "*The people of the prince who is to come* is a vague reference to enemies who are to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple for a second time, as happened in 70 CE under the Roman general Titus, but the mention of the war *to the end* implies continuing conflict between a powerful enemy and God's cause till the end of the seventy weeks." Along with advocates of the Greek view, Baldwin understands the בְּרִית to be an oppressive decree or, more precisely, decrees that afflict God's people throughout church history. In Daniel 9:27, those who profess biblical religion are the unwilling recipients of the imposed policies of tyrants. For Baldwin, the stoppage of sacrifices more metaphorically means opposition to the religious commitment and expression of God's people.

Baldwin (1978a:171) critiques the Greek view for being “at a loss to account for the fact that [Antiochus IV] destroyed neither the Temple nor the city of Jerusalem, though undoubtedly much damage was done.” At the same time, she also affirms that the Greek view “is surely correct in seeing a primary fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy in the second century B.C.” (Baldwin 1978a:173). Even so, she does not want to restrict the outlook of the seventy sevens to the Antiochene crisis lest she miss “the witness of Jesus and of the New Testament writers in general that it also had a future significance” (Baldwin 1978a:173).

2.3.4.2. Baldwin’s View Critiqued

Baldwin shares the belief of the Greek view that Daniel 9 can have multiple applications. She even concedes that the seventy sevens find their primary fulfillment in the Antiochene crisis. It seems, though, that the New Testament references to the abomination of desolation ultimately control her reading of Daniel. For her, these New Testament citations of the Old make the first coming of Jesus perhaps not the primary fulfillment of the seventy sevens but the ultimate focus. Consequently, the seventy sevens are not first read in their literary context between two visions that have an interest in Antiochus IV. Instead, the New Testament’s re-application of the typology, which the Greek view acknowledges, supplants the original meaning of the typology in a second-century context. Stated differently, Baldwin moves too quickly from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

2.3.5. Additional Evaluation of the Roman View

Because Young, Gurney, and Baldwin wrote commentaries on Daniel, their thoughts on the visions in chapters 8 and 10-12 are available. Each of them recognizes that these visions have an interest in Antiochus IV. They may differ in their understanding of Daniel 11:40-45, but they agree with the Greek view that the visions surrounding Daniel 9 say something about

Antiochus IV. If the writer of 1 Maccabees understood the abomination of desolation with reference to the Antiochene crisis, then it is not clear why the Roman view overlooks this part of the history of interpretation in order to apply Daniel 9:26-27 directly to Jesus and beyond. Perhaps one reason has to do with the perceived apologetic value of predictive prophecy for revealed religion (cf. Young 1949:24, 320), but this way of reading the Old Testament does not fully coincide with how the New Testament authors read the Old Testament. As will be seen later in this chapter and in chapter 11, Matthew's understanding of fulfillment had more to do with typology or the repetition of patterns than with simple prediction.

Modern advocates of the Roman view have what they consider a high view of the Bible. Usually included in this view is a belief in the unity of the Old and New Testaments—what is sometimes called biblical theology or a redemptive-historical hermeneutic. In other words, the Bible progressively explains the outworking of God's single plan of redemption that reaches its climax in the person and work of Jesus. Chapter 1 of this thesis similarly expresses a commitment to a redemptive-historical approach to Daniel 9. Nevertheless, the Roman view seems to sacrifice the grammatical-historical method to the redemptive-historical method. In other words, it too quickly reads the Old Testament in view of the New Testament and does not take the time necessary to understand the Old Testament in its grammatical (or literary) and historical contexts. Such Christocentric hastiness may not only miss the original meaning of an Old Testament passage but also fail to understand why the New Testament writers read the Old Testament in the way that they did. If redemptive-historical exegesis does not give grammatical-historical exegesis its due, then the reader makes the text say what he or she wants it to say and thereby suppresses the intended meaning of the human and divine authors. In short, the book of

Daniel has an interest in the Antiochene crisis, and this interest should be the starting point for interpreting the visions, if not also the narratives.

2.4 The Dispensational View

This third approach to Daniel's seventy sevens emerges from the Roman view but modifies it substantially. Dispensationalists share a concern for exact chronology with Gurney's version of the Roman view. Both suppose that the seventy sevens allow a determination of the date of Jesus' death. Reaching that determination, however, involves different starting points. Dispensationalists also have a more definite understanding of what happens in the second half of the seventieth seven.

2.4.1. The Dispensational View Summarized

Along with Gurney, Dispensationalists establish the *terminus a quo* of the seventy sevens in the middle of the fifth century B.C.E. Not persuaded by Isaiah 44:28 or Haggai 1, they distinguish between the building of the temple in the sixth century and the building of the city in the fifth century. Unlike Gurney for whom the *terminus a quo* was Ezra's return in 458 B.C.E., Dispensationalists usually (but cf. Miller 1994:265-266) set the beginning of the seventy weeks in 445 B.C.E., when Nehemiah made his first trip to Jerusalem. Hoehner points out that Artaxerxes' decree in Ezra 7:11-26 says nothing about building the city but that the decree (or at least Nehemiah's request) in Nehemiah 2:1-8 does. The first period of seven sevens, then, pertains to the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Nehemiah. The more substantial objection to Gurney's position, though, has to do with the presumed death of Jesus in 33 C.E. (specifically Nisan 14). A later date for Jesus' death requires a later beginning for the seventy sevens. To make the math work, Hoehner says that Daniel's years (i.e., the 483 years of the first 69 sevens) have 360 days (Hoehner 1975:55-57, 61-64).

Somewhat surprisingly, Wood offers another perspective seemingly less concerned about the actual year that the seventy sevens began. Recognizing that Roman and Dispensational advocates debate three possible beginning points (539, 458, or 445 B.C.E.), Wood astutely notes that the Bible does not specifically say that Jerusalem was rebuilt at any one of these times. Rather, the king's words and people's activity respectively connected with each of these dates (i.e., building the temple, establishing proper worship, building the wall) contributed to the rebuilding of the city and the fulfilling of Gabriel's announcement. So then, each of these years could lay claim to being the *terminus a quo*. Moreover, "[t]he words 'to restore and build Jerusalem' no doubt carry reference to all that was concerned with the reestablishment of Jerusalem as God's city, with God's people in it, doing the work of God" (Wood 1973:252). This fine observation will receive further discussion in chapter 6. It is, however, not Wood's last word on the subject for he, like other Dispensationalists, remains controlled by the year of Jesus' death. Because Wood puts Jesus' death in 30 C.E., he sets the *terminus ad quem* of the sixty-two sevens at 26 C.E. (when Jesus was baptized) and considers 458 B.C.E. the *terminus a quo* of the seventy sevens (Wood 1973:253).

Similar to the Roman views, the Dispensational view reads Daniel 9:26 with reference to the Roman invasion of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. (Wood 1973:256). What this means is that the events of 9:26 do not fall within the seventy sevens; rather, they come after the sixty-ninth seven and before the seventieth seven that has yet to begin. If Jesus' death occurred after the sixty-ninth seven in 30 or 33 C.E. and if Daniel 9:27 describes the appearance of Antichrist shortly before the second coming of Jesus (see the next paragraph), then the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian in 70 C.E. falls outside the seventy sevens. Dispensationalists depart from their commitment to a literal reckoning of the chronology in order to account for 9:26.

Unlike the Roman views, the Dispensational view does not think that the seventieth seven immediately follows the sixty-ninth seven. Instead, a considerable gap or parenthesis of nearly two thousand years separates the seventieth seven from the other sevens. This is because the seventy sevens are said to pertain to the nation of Israel and not at all to the church of Jesus Christ. While Hoehner appreciably recognizes that the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 have not yet been fully realized, he says that they have not been realized specifically with reference to Israel. Appealing to Luke 4:18-19, which cites Isaiah 61:1-2 but without mentioning “the day of vengeance of our God,” Hoehner considers the seventieth seven another instance of what others have called prophetic telescoping, i.e., seeing two events separated by considerable time as if they are consecutive. In other words, the first sixty-nine sevens run from Nehemiah to the first coming of Jesus, but the seventieth seven has to do with events that are closer to the second coming (Hoehner 1975:59-61). Gabriel did not tell Daniel that nearly two thousand years (and perhaps more) elapse between the sixty-ninth and seventieth seven. In Dispensational theology, this interim is the church age, which ends with the rapture. After Jesus raptures the church out of the world (and the rapture is not the second coming), the seventieth seven will commence. The ruler of Daniel 9:27 is not Antiochus IV (Greek view) or Titus Vespasian (Roman view) but a future Antichrist. Antichrist, pretending to be a friend of a restored nation of Israel, will make a seven-year covenant with Israel and then break it midway (Walvoord 1971:234). As part of breaking the covenant, Antichrist will forbid Jews to offer sacrifices at Ezekiel’s new temple, which will be built at some point in the future near the *terminus a quo* of the seventieth seven. For the remaining three and a half years, Antichrist will persecute Israel. Afterwards, Jesus will return to earth at the end of the seventieth seven, put an end to the madness of Antichrist, and set up his millennial kingdom (Walvoord 1971:236-237; Wood 1973:261-263). So then, seven

years of tribulation with a broken agreement in the middle and intense persecution during the second half will give way to a thousand-year period during which Jews and Christians will see the full realization of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 (Miller 1994:273).

2.4.2. The Dispensational View Evaluated

Some of the difficulties with Gurney's version of the Roman view apply as well to the Dispensational view. Perhaps out of a commitment to a stringent version of either the doctrine of inerrancy or a literal hermeneutic, Dispensationalists manifest a strong desire to pinpoint the exact date of Jesus' death, and the *terminus ad quem* of the sixty-ninth seven then dictates the *terminus a quo* of the seventy sevens. Chapter 4 will address the issue of literal versus symbolic figures. The most serious problem, though, has to do with the seventieth seven. Why is there such a long gap between the second and third divisions of the seventy sevens? This gap is nearly four times as long as the seventy sevens. Dispensationalists do not propose any such gap between the first and second divisions. In fact, they accept Young's alteration of the Masoretic punctuation and so combine the seven sevens and the sixty-two sevens into sixty-nine sevens. What, then, sets the seventieth seven apart from the others? It is hard not to think that something other than grammatical-historical exegesis of Daniel 9, the only passage that mentions the seventy sevens as such, is governing the Dispensational view. Perhaps this separation of the seventieth seven has to do with the stated belief that the six objectives of 9:24 apply only to Israel and not at all to anyone else. Indeed, Miller (1994:269-270) says,

God was answering Daniel's prayer, which specifically concerned the future of the nation Israel. Shortly after Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah (after the sixty-nine sevens), Jerusalem was destroyed, the Jewish people were dispersed throughout the earth, and for almost two thousand years, Israel as a nation did not exist. Therefore this period was omitted from the prophecy. Israel has now been reestablished as a nation (1948), suggesting that the seventieth seven may soon begin.

This belief involves more than exegesis of a difficult passage. What is involved is the Dispensational understanding of the identity of the people of God, the theological unity of the Bible, and the way of salvation.³¹

When Dispensationalists read Daniel 9 with other scripture (e.g., 1 Thess 4:16-17), they conclude that Christians will be raptured off the earth to spend the still future seventieth seven in heaven. To repeat the earlier observation about Dispensationalism, God has one program for non-Christian Jews living at the time of the rapture and another program for Jewish and Gentile believers in Jesus. Nevertheless, Daniel 9:27 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 can be read in other ways that affirm one plan of salvation and one people of God. More to the point of this thesis, Daniel 9:27 should be read contextually with reference to the Antiochene crisis.

Still, the Dispensational belief that the seventy sevens extend beyond the first coming of Jesus to the second coming should be appreciated. Dispensationalists recognize suggestively that the first coming of Jesus (not to mention the Maccabean victory) does not fully account for the six objectives in Daniel 9:24. Moreover, postulating Antichrist as the ruler who destroys the city has the potential to connect with the prevalent biblical theme of recurring embodiments of the spiritual forces of darkness—what might be better called the spirit of antichrist. In other words, Antiochus IV (Greek view) and Titus Vespasian (Roman view) have something in common. A full-orbed understanding of the seventy sevens will have to explore these extensions of the seventy sevens beyond the first coming of Jesus.

2.4.3. Daniel's Interest in Antiochus IV

As a representative of the Dispensational approach, Miller (1994:33-34) addresses what he calls “a legitimate question” about “the prominence of Antiochus IV in a book supposedly

³¹Discussing these issues exceeds the purpose of this thesis. For critiques of Dispensationalism, see Flesher (2012:583-591) and Hoekema (1979:194-222).

written four hundred years prior to his time.” Using the words of Beattie (1988:82), Miller asks, ““What would be the point of revealing to someone in 6th-century Babylon a detailed account of the history of 2nd-century Palestine?”” His answer assumes that “Daniel prophesied many outstanding events affecting the Jews from his own time to the coming of the Messiah.” With such a sweep of time in view, some discussion of Antiochus IV should be expected because “[t]o have omitted this important episode from Daniel’s prophecies of Israel’s history would seem unthinkable.” The Babylonian exiles would be concerned about the future of God’s relationship with his people, and prophecies about the distant future would encourage them to remain faithful (Miller 1994:34). Perhaps, but how 1 Maccabees reads Daniel in view of the Antiochene crisis casts doubt on the assumption that the writer of Daniel 9:26 had the first coming of Jesus in view. The writer of Daniel may talk about the coming of God’s kingdom (Dan 2:44), but the reference to a cut-off anointed one in Daniel 9:26 does not necessarily refer to a king. In the context of the Antiochene interest of chapters 8 and 10-12, Daniel 9:26 makes more sense as a reference to the murder of Onias III by Menelaus, and the book’s discussion of second-century Palestine would be equally relevant, if not more relevant, for a second-century audience.

2.5 Other Approaches to the Seventy Sevens

There are several interpretations of Daniel 9:24-27 that resist categorization. The first one could perhaps be considered a variation of the Greek view, but it would not be reasonable to consider the others variations of the three main approaches. Perhaps they could be called symbolic or non-literal views, but the Greek and Roman views also admit a certain amount of metaphor or symbolism. Nevertheless, some of these views that stand by themselves suggest stimulating alternatives for understanding this passage. A new approach that learns from the strengths of its predecessors needs to be aware of these lesser known possibilities.

2.5.1. Ronald W. Pierce

Though accepting a sixth-century date for Daniel, Pierce (1989:211-222) argued that the seventy sevens have to do not with Antiochus IV but with Aristobulus I and Alexander Jannaeus, two Hasmonean rulers who lived about sixty-five years after Antiochus IV. If the *terminus a quo* of the seventy sevens is 605 B.C.E., when Jeremiah announced seventy years for Israel's exile and Babylon's kingdom, the *terminus ad quem* of the first division of seven sevens is the beginning of Cyrus' reign over Persia in 556 B.C.E. Cyrus is the anointed one of Daniel 9:25. Though the math does not work, Pierce claims that the *terminus a quo* of the second division of sixty-two sevens is Cyrus' decree in 539 B.C.E. This decree had to do with restoring and building Jerusalem. The *terminus ad quem* of the sixty-two sevens becomes the brief reign of Aristobulus I in 104-103 B.C.E. It is at this time, says Pierce, that Israel regained her independence and the exile ended. The seventieth seven, then, pertains to Aristobulus I's half-brother, Alexander Jannaeus, who enlarged the territory of the newly formed kingdom of Israel. Even so, Jannaeus made a covenant with Greek mercenaries in 94 B.C.E. to put down a rebellion by his own subjects. Jannaeus not only stopped temple sacrifices but also massacred thousands of Jews. Perhaps feeling the force of Bright's evaluation of the Hasmonean kingdom, Pierce maintains that the realization of both Jeremiah's announced restoration from exile and the six infinitives in Daniel 9:24 was conditioned on the spiritual vitality of the Jews. That vitality was so low during the Hasmonean kingdom that God graciously suspended the destruction of the city and the sanctuary until another anointed one, Jesus according to Pierce, came. The rejection of the kingdom that he offered resulted in the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. It would seem, then, that the six objectives of 9:24 are never realized.

This version of the Greek view has not won many supporters. It is rarely referenced in scholarly literature (but see Bruce 1959:61-62). Perhaps one reason for the neglect has to do with the importance of Antiochus IV for the visions in chapters 8 and 10-12. Why would chapter 9, which sits between these other visions, shift the focus from the distress of God's people during the reign of a Gentile oppressor (Antiochus IV) to the spiritual torpor of the later Hasmonean (Jewish) rulers? Such a change would detract from the book's purpose, which is "to persuade people who are suffering persecution that it is worth holding fast to their faith and enduring persecution, because God will finally vindicate them, even after death" (McConville 2002:128). Nevertheless, Pierce (1989:222) correctly states, ". . . it is clear that a re-evaluation of the traditional approaches to the prophecy in Dan 9:24-27 is needed." Such a re-thinking, though, must take Bright seriously and conclude that the Greek view too often separates the exegesis of verses 25-27 from the stated and controlling objectives of Daniel 9:24. Moreover, there is no contingency in Yahweh's response to Daniel's prayer. God does not leave his reputation in human hands, and forgiveness does not depend on human performance.

2.5.2. Keil and Delitzsch

2.5.2.1. The View of Keil and Delitzsch Summarized

The older view of Keil and Delitzsch (1996:716-760) proposes that the seventy sevens extend from the end of the exile to the second coming of Jesus. The three divisions of the seventy sevens represent major blocks of time in redemptive history. The seven sevens commence with Cyrus' decree in 539 B.C.E. and end with the ascension of Jesus who is the anointed one in 9:25. The sixty-two sevens run from the ascension to the second coming. If 9:25 says that Jerusalem will be rebuilt during the middle division, this view considers Jerusalem a people rather than a place. In other words, the building of Jerusalem has to do with the

establishment and growth of the New Testament church between the two comings of Jesus.

Daniel 9:25 says that the sixty-two sevens additionally involve trouble. This trouble pertains to the opposition that Jesus promised his followers because of their association with him. The one seven, which is the third division, comes at the very end of the sixty-two sevens and even overlaps them. It is at this time that Antichrist will appear and then be defeated by Jesus at his second coming. Jesus, the anointed one, is cut off in the sense that Antichrist deceives the world and turns all people to false religion. Organized worship of the exalted Jesus ceases, and so he does not have what is rightfully his. The second coming marks the *terminus ad quem* of the seventy sevens.

2.5.2.2. The View of Keil and Delitzsch Evaluated

One attraction of this view is that it does not try to read the details so precisely, as if Daniel 9:24-27 forecasts events to the day. It claims that Gabriel painted the future with broad brush strokes (Hasel 1976:6D). Moreover, this view recognizes that the six objectives in 9:24 were not fully realized at the first coming of Jesus. Yahweh answers Daniel's prayer by saying that the resumption of the outworking of his redemptive plan began with Cyrus' decree and then continues beyond the first coming of Jesus to his second coming. Yet another possible strength is the recognition, along with other views, that the ruler who destroys the city and its people may not be restricted to someone who has already lived and died.

Several difficulties also accompany this view. First, it seems unlikely that the seventieth seven would overlap the tail end of the sixty-two sevens if the seven sevens and sixty-two sevens are discrete units of time. Second, the symbolic depth or spiritualization of Jerusalem may have warrant in other passages, such as Hebrews 12:22, but the case of Daniel 9:25 is not so clear. According to Daniel 9:2, Daniel has been reading Jeremiah regarding the end of the desolations

of Jerusalem. In the narrative world (and for some people, the real world) of the Old Testament, these desolations occurred to an actual city in four stages at the end of the seventh century and beginning of the sixth. Hence, the reference to Jerusalem at the beginning of the chapter cannot be spiritualized too much. While Jerusalem may be the city of the great King (Ps 48:2) or the center of the nations (Ezek 5:5) and so represent God's presence with his people and his intention to redeem, neither Jeremiah nor Daniel has a purely abstract connotation of Jerusalem in mind. They anticipate the physical restoration that Ezra-Nehemiah documents. Third, Revelation's use of half a seven for the time between the two comings of Jesus goes unmentioned. Can the sixty-two sevens encompass the whole inter-advent era? If not, then, fourth, does Daniel 9:27 say that Jesus is cut off shortly before his second coming, or is the reference here still to the first coming? Perhaps the most devastating difficulty is, fifthly, the placement of Daniel 9 between other visions that have the Antiochene crisis in view.

2.5.3. Thomas McComiskey

2.5.3.1. McComiskey's View Summarized

McComiskey (1985:25-35) uniquely proposes that the *terminus ad quem* of the seventy sevens is the future appearance of Antichrist. The *terminus a quo*, however, is said to be the start of Jeremiah's seventy years. Thus, Daniel's seven sevens overlap Jeremiah's seventy years, and the anointed one of 9:25 is said to be Cyrus. The sixty-two sevens, in turn, extend from Cyrus, the anointed one of 9:25 to Antichrist, the supposed anointed one of 9:26-27. The six objectives in 9:24 have no reference to Jesus' atoning sacrifice but to the exile by which Israel expunges the penalty for its apostasy. Not until Antichrist appears and causes Jerusalem to be desolate will the punitive purpose of the exile be complete for Israel.

2.5.3.2. McComiskey's View Evaluated

This view is so singularly different that it is hard to know how to evaluate it. It appears to assume that the seventy sevens are an unfavorable response by Yahweh to Daniel's prayer. Whereas Daniel appeals to God's mercy and forgiveness, the extension of the punishment of the exile until Antichrist constitutes Yahweh's denial of mercy and forgiveness. In fact, Israel will atone for its own sin by suffering punishment for at least two thousand five hundred years. Such an answer would be quite unlike the portrayal of God in the rest of the Bible, including Jeremiah that Daniel was reading. When sinners cry out to God for mercy and grace, he freely and generously bestows them. When sinners do not humble themselves and pray, no amount of time short of eternity is enough to satisfy God's justice.

Moreover, McComiskey maintains that a protracted exile purges the land of Israel from the defilement of Israel's apostasy. The chronicler, who in the narrative world of the Old Testament lived after Daniel, affirmed that the exile allowed the land to catch up on its sabbath rests. Perhaps McComiskey is comfortable pitting Daniel against the chronicler, but the Bible's own testimony is that the land was ready to be inhabited again after the exile. As will be seen in chapter 6, Ezra-Nehemiah describes just such a restoration.

Lastly, other scholars have noted that seven sevens and seventy sevens have to do with the jubilee theme. The very structure of God's response to Daniel conveys joyful news. If McComiskey's reading is faithful to Gabriel's intention, why should Daniel rejoice? How is the jubilee theme seen after seven sevens (one jubilee cycle) and after seventy sevens (ten jubilee cycles)?

2.6 Pseudonymity

During the discussion of the Greek approach, the point was made that the book of Daniel resembles Jewish apocalypses of the Second Temple period. Indeed, Davies (1998:66) observes, “It is common to designate chs. 7-12 as ‘apocalypses,’” and Greidanus (2012:16-17) adds, “The last six chapters [of Daniel] . . . seem more like prophecy and thus would fit better in the ‘Prophets.’ Yet these chapters with Daniel’s four visions are a special kind of prophecy: they are apocalypse. Daniel, therefore, consists of two main literary genres, narrative and apocalypse.”³² One of the standard traits of apocalypses is pseudonymity, and the question of its use in Daniel divides advocates of the Greek view from advocates of the Roman and Dispensational views (cf. Baldwin 1978b:10-12; Baum 2011:68-72; Longman 1999:22-23). The latter tend to consider pseudonymity morally problematic.

Regarding pseudonymity, Collins (1998:40) admits that “the effectiveness of the device presupposed the credulity of the masses.” He later adds in the context of discussing Daniel 11, “We must assume that the immediate circles of the apocalyptic writers were aware of the fiction of pseudonymity, but, although this literature was produced by scribes of considerable learning, it was addressed to the masses at large. Its general effectiveness was undoubtedly enhanced by the willingness of common people to accept the ancient authorship of newly promulgated books” (Collins 1998:111; see also 2005a:29). A question arises, though. If the second-century masses were so gullible, how did the elitist writer of Daniel 9 expect them to make the connection

³²Calling Daniel 7-12 apocalypses does not deny the following observations. Goldingay (1989:59-60), when discussing the concept of God’s kingdom in Daniel 2, says, “Daniel envisages no dissolution of the cosmos or creation of a different world. His understanding of this kingdom is more like the prophetic idea of the Day of Yahweh than that of some later apocalypses. The problems of politics and history can only be resolved by a supernatural intervention that inaugurates a new kingdom, but this involves changing the lordship [*sic*] of this world, not abandoning this world.” Moreover, Collins (1993b:58) acknowledges, “Daniel is one of the earliest exemplars of the apocalyptic genre. Accordingly, its relationship to the genre is rather different than that of later works. . . . The combination of tales and visions does not conform to any clear precedent and, indeed, does not become a recurrent feature of the genre.”

between a prayer of confession set (fictitiously) in the exile and the Maccabean crisis of their own day? After all, Daniel 9:24-27 has no explicit references to events and people of the second century.

One must admit that pseudonymity exists in the literature of Second Temple Judaism. Moreover, Collins is a recognized expert in that literature. While discussing the Book of the Watchers in 1 Enoch 1-36, he says that pseudonymity, in addition to duping ordinary people, more positively had to do with typology or patterns of human and divine conduct in history (Collins 1998:51). In other words, pseudonymity and history in the guise of prediction were twin literary devices that were used to point out historical patterns and thereby convey God's control of history (cf. Hogan 2009:82-83; Niskanen 2004b:46, 88-89; Patte 1975:180, 206). Edlin (2009:23) softens Collins by saying, "The point [of using these literary devices] was not so much to deceive as to enhance the theological message of the book." In apocalyptic literature, the message took the form that it did in order to emphasize "the way that past patterns replay themselves in the future" (Merrill Willis 2010:32). When discussing 1 Enoch 6-11 that is pseudonymously attributed to Enoch, Nickelsburg (2001:29) says, "Its purpose is to expound sacred tradition so that it speaks to contemporary times and issues." In other words, pseudonymity may establish continuity between earlier generations and the present generation. By using Enoch, Ezra, or someone else as a pseudonym, a Second Temple writer could affirm (1) that God continues to work out his plan that he began so long ago and (2) that the contemporaries of the Second Temple writer were participating in this plan. So then, this association of pseudonymity with typology and re-interpretation suggests that common people in the Second Temple period were not so naïve. If they were astute enough to notice typology, then

perhaps pseudonymity did not always depend on deception in order to accomplish its purpose.³³ Given how many pseudonymous apocalypses, testaments, and poems were written during the Second Temple period, it seems more likely that people knew this generic trait of their contemporary literature and readily adjusted their reading strategy when they encountered it (cf. Zahn 2012:280). If modern scholars, for example, can detect the references to Pompey's invasion of Judea in the Psalms of Solomon (Nickelsburg 2005:238-243; Wright 1985:639-641), then surely Second Temple Jews could understand the techniques of their contemporary writers. Second Temple Jews were not the only people in human history to write about the present in terms of the past or under a different name.³⁴ There is, then, no necessary reason to demean their intellectual ability.

With regard to Daniel as a pseudonymous work, something else should be considered. Unlike 1 Enoch, 2 and 3 Baruch, or 4 Ezra, the opening verses of Daniel make no claim about authorship. Therefore, it is more accurate to say that this book is anonymous rather than pseudonymous (cf. Charlesworth 2005:440). Moreover, the unnamed author tells the stories and introduces some of the visions (7:1-2, 10:1) in third-person. Still, Daniel the character claims to receive revelation that he writes down in first-person for later generations. Advocates of the Greek view usually consider these claims fictional because they regard the whole book in its final stage as a work of historical fiction. For example, Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar, and even Daniel may have been real people, but the events associated with them (e.g., exile, madness, and lion's den respectively) may not have happened in real time to them. Likewise, the Ptolemaic

³³Cf. Olson (2004:19) who says, "Perhaps it is wisest to view pseudonymous authorship as a literary device that can be used with equal ease to spout lies or to proclaim truth." See also Metzger (1972:19).

³⁴See Bickerman (1988:202-203), Collins (1977:331), Metzger (1972:5-12), and Perdue (2009:28-49, 57-58). Van De Mieroop (2011:54) says, "Later Egyptians looked back on the Old Kingdom as a grand period of their history and falsified texts to make them sound as if composed then, for example, King Shabako's stone of the eighth century Also Middle Kingdom authors, who composed major works of Egyptian literature, liked to set their stories and instruction texts in Old Kingdom times."

and Seleucid kings in Daniel 11 were real people, but the visionary framework in Daniel 10 and 12 is considered fictional. The Old Testament, of course, contains fictional stories that have a historical core (e.g., Jotham's fable in Judges 9, Ezekiel's fable in Ezekiel 18, and, for some people, Ruth, Esther, and Jonah), and the literature of the Second Temple period has more of the same (e.g., Baruch, Susannah, and 4 Ezra). Deciding whether the book of Daniel presents actual history or historical fiction lies beyond the purpose of this thesis (see Caird 1997:262; Lucas 2002:22-27). Nevertheless, what Collins (1998:86) says is worth considering, "What is at issue in all this [discussion about the historicity of the details of Daniel] is not the veracity of the 'word of God,' as literalists usually construe it, but a question of genre. An assumption that the 'word of God' must be factual historical reporting, and cannot be literary fiction, is theologically unwarranted."³⁵ Whether the book of Daniel is fiction or non-fiction, the message about God's superintendence of human affairs (i.e., history) for the accomplishment of his redemptive plan remains the same either way (cf. Matt 21:33-45). Both fiction and non-fiction can be vehicles for teaching truth.

Edlin (2009:24) admits that pseudonymity and prophecy after the fact "diminish the element of predictive prophecy in the book." Without predictive prophecy in the book of Daniel, God might seem not to be in control of history as the book claims. Could it be, though, that an emphasis on prediction in Daniel makes a genre error for which the writers of the New Testament offer hermeneutical assistance? Their concept of fulfillment has less to do with prediction and almost always involves typology.³⁶ In other words, the New Testament writers

³⁵Elsewhere, Collins (1990a:29) says, "The problem of biblical theology is essentially a problem of genre, in the broad sense, that determines the expectations appropriate to the interpretation of the text. The history of biblical interpretation is marked by the progressive revision of generic expectation." He continues, "The Book of Daniel has often been a lightning rod in the conflict of generic expectations in biblical interpretation."

³⁶Baker (2010:199) cites Smart (1961:102) who says, "What God promises he fulfills, and, because the fulfillment is only partial, it contains within it an unfulfilled promise that points forward to a new fulfillment." In

recognize that the Old Testament does not offer a crystal ball for peering into the future. Instead, the Old Testament addresses its later readers as they trace patterns of divine activity throughout redemptive history.³⁷ For example, Matthew says that Jesus fulfills Old Testament verses that are not predictions in their original context (e.g., Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15) or that are announcing another event in the prophet's time (e.g., Isa 7:14 in Matt 1:23 and Jer 31:15 in Matt 2:18). In the case of Matthew 2:23, the fulfilled words do not even appear in the Old Testament (see France 2007:94-95). So then, fulfillment involves recognizing types or patterns of God's activity in history. Old Testament people, events, or institutions may serve as models for understanding the continuity of God's purpose that reaches its climax in Jesus, but the New Testament writers and their readers detect the pattern by reading the biblical story backwards (cf. Baker 2010:179-181). For example, when Jesus spends forty days in the wilderness, Matthew expects his readers to recall that Israel spent forty years there. His typological point is that Jesus as the new Israel replays the Old Testament story in order to accomplish Israel's mission to the nations. Matthew's understanding of fulfillment tells his readers that God had a plan from the start and knew in advance what he would do. He built the patterns into the outworking of his plan, and they attest to his sovereign control. By recognizing the hand of God in history through types or patterns, Matthew indirectly affirms promise and fulfillment from God's point of view.³⁸ God knew from the start where his story was going, but his people see the connections as time elapses.

other words, God's promises (i.e., predictions of what he will do) usually unfold in stages, and so a pattern exists among the stages. On the previous page, Smart says that patterns in history remind God's people of his character.

³⁷This typology, of course, begins within the Old Testament when the prophets announce a second Exodus as well as new covenant, David, and temple. See Baker (2010:171-172).

³⁸Beale (2012:698-699) says, "Typology can be defined as the study of analogical correspondences between persons, events, institutions, and other things within the historical framework of God's special revelation, which, from a retrospective view, are of a prophetic nature." See also Patte (1975:161-167).

Whether Daniel was written in the sixth century or the second does not affect its message. The reason is that the message does not depend on prediction. Rather, the writer sees a pattern between Israel in the sixth century under Babylon and Israel in the second century under Antiochus IV. Moreover, Jesus and Matthew trace the pattern into the first century C.E. In each case, God remains in control even if his people are unfaithful or if Gentile rulers are oppressive. He will have a people for his name. Even so, the true people of God must identify with him by holding fast to their beliefs when others give up. They must walk by faith in the unseen fulfillment of God's promises rather than by conventional wisdom that is based on observation of present earthly reality. Only in this way can they discover the joy that awaits them at the consummation. The book of Daniel, then, does not intend to satisfy human curiosity about the future. Rather, it calls readers to trust the God who controls history and preserves his people.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has surveyed the various approaches to the book of Daniel in general and Daniel 9:24-27 in particular. All of the views may have something, more or less, to contribute to the interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27. The standard Greek view recognizes the interest of the book of Daniel in the crisis during the reign of Antiochus IV. The Roman and Dispensational views think that Jesus ultimately accomplishes the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. The Dispensational view and the view of Keil and Delitzsch recognize that the first coming of Jesus does not fully accomplish the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. Even so, this thesis maintains that none satisfactorily explains the connection between the Antiochene crisis that runs throughout the visions and the jubilee theme that structures the seventy sevens. The following chapters will say more about this problem. The next chapter will consider if Jeremiah's seventy years and Daniel's seventy sevens should be taken as literal figures or not.

CHAPTER 3: THE PRAYERFUL CONTEXT OF THE SEVENTY SEVENS

3.1 Introduction

The prophecy of the seventy sevens provides a response to Daniel's preceding prayer of confession and request for mercy. The prayer and request grow out of a specific context. This chapter will study that context in order to determine if the prayer and request fit the stated context.

Daniel 9 opens with Daniel's reference to the first year of Darius, son of Xerxes, who reigned over the kingdom of Babylon. Darius is further identified as a Mede. Though the identity of this Darius remains an unresolved crux in the study of the book of Daniel, the date presents little challenge. Whether Darius is another name for King Cyrus (Colless 1992:113-126; Goswell 2012b:512; Lucas 2002:136-137; Wiseman 1982:265) or the name of someone whom Cyrus appointed to govern Babylon (Whitcomb 1959:10), the first year of Darius' reign over Babylon corresponds to the fall of Babylon to Cyrus in 539 B.C.E. (Bergsma 2007:214-216; Longman and Dillard 2006:377-381).

In the narrative world (and for some readers, the real world) of Daniel 9, Daniel went as a young man into exile in 605 B.C.E. (Dan 1:1-4) and is now advanced in age. He has spent most of his life outside the Promised Land. That he is reading Jeremiah's prophecy about Jerusalem's seventy years of desolation (Jer 25:11-12, 29:10) in the same year that Darius became ruler over Babylon suggests that he is full of expectation. He knows that the announced length of both Israel's exile and Babylon's domination has run its course. He may even be reading Jeremiah soon after Cyrus' decree in 539 B.C.E. that permitted the Israelites and other exiles to leave their place of captivity. Whether Daniel is reading Jeremiah shortly before or just after the issuing of

Cyrus' decree, he nonetheless realizes that the time has come for the Israelites to return home to the glorious restoration described not only in other parts of Jeremiah (e.g., 30:18-21, 33:6-22) but also in Isaiah (e.g., 44:24-28 and 60:1-22). In fulfillment of the prophetic word, Yahweh is on the move to advance his plan of redemption not only for the Israelites but also for all peoples. According to Isaiah 60, the nations will stream to a new Jerusalem, bringing their wealth to rebuild Yahweh's temple and worship him there.

Daniel's reading of Jeremiah reminds him of the reason why the Israelites went into exile and how God expects them to respond to judgment. Daniel knows that he must repent. This chapter looks at his prayer to which Gabriel responds with the prophecy of the seventy sevens.

3.2 The "Book of Jeremiah" That Daniel Read

A legitimate question arises at this point. What was the book of Jeremiah that Daniel read? Daniel's version of Jeremiah evidently contained chapters 25 and 29—the two sections in the Masoretic Text of Jeremiah that mention a seventy year exile. Gabriel's announcement of seventy sevens would hardly make much sense if Daniel had not already read about seventy years of captivity. But what about the extent and arrangement of Daniel's Jeremiah? Did Daniel's Jeremiah have the same content in the same order as the much later Masoretic Text of Jeremiah, or did he have some other version of the prophet's material? This question probably has greater significance for those who consider Daniel a real person in the sixth century. If Daniel is a fictional character created by a second-century author, then more time is available for the book of Jeremiah to reach its final form. Still, the available evidence for the textual history of the book of Jeremiah raises questions about what version of Jeremiah a second-century writer of Daniel would have had.

For much of the last two centuries, scholars have often concentrated on reconstructing the compositional history of the biblical books, including Jeremiah. The final form of Jeremiah is especially thought to be the product of a long and complex process of redaction.¹ Indeed, this thinking finds some support from statements within the book. Jeremiah 1:2-3 sets the years of Jeremiah's ministry between the thirteenth year of Josiah (527 B.C.E.) and the eleventh year of Zedekiah (586 B.C.E.). Thus, the opening verses inform the reader that Jeremiah's ministry lasted more than thirty years. How much more cannot be known for certain. Jeremiah 40-44 describes the assassination of Gedaliah and the ensuing flight of some Israelites under the leadership of Johanan to Egypt. Though Jeremiah counseled these people to remain in Jerusalem, they disobeyed and forcibly took him with them. The book of Jeremiah does not say what happened to the prophet in Egypt, but it leaves the impression that he finished his days there. Jeremiah 52, a chapter that does not mention Jeremiah, records two later events. Jeremiah 52:30 says that Nebuchadnezzar ordered another deportation in his twenty-third year (582)—presumably his response to Gedaliah's assassination and its chaotic aftermath.² Jeremiah 52:31 then mentions Evil-Merodach's favor to Jehoiachin in the thirty-seventh year of the latter's exile (562). If, as the book affirms, God granted revelation to Jeremiah, then he could also grant it to some other person who added chapter 52 and perhaps others sections.

One more date is important for the book's internal witness to its origin. Jeremiah 36 opens with a reference to the fourth year of Jehoiakim (605 B.C.E.). God tells Jeremiah to write down all the words that he has revealed since Jeremiah's call to be a prophet in the thirteenth

¹For recent reviews of the criticism of Jeremiah, see Alberty (2003:302-345), Lalleman-de Winkel (2000:19-48), and McConville (2002:47-51).

²The deportations in 605 and 582 were actually the first and fourth deportations. The second and third waves of exile occurred in 597 and 586. The next chapter will look at these stages in connection with the commencement of Jeremiah's seventy years.

year of Josiah's reign. After writing his sermons, Jeremiah was to give them to Jehoiakim. It is reasonable, then, to assume that Jeremiah delivered his messages orally between 627 and 605 and wrote a first draft of his collected sermons in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. Verse 4 indicates that Baruch did the actual writing while Jeremiah dictated the words of God. Upon hearing the first draft of Jeremiah's oracles, Jehoiakim cut the scroll into strips and burned them in a firepot. Jeremiah 36:28-32 then records Yahweh's instruction to preserve the contents of the first scroll on a second scroll. Verse 32 says that new material was added. What cannot be known, of course, are the exact contents of these two editions of Jeremiah's oracles or how much editorial freedom Baruch had. Again, though, the internal evidence of the book reveals a process by which the book may have come into existence. The chronological notations indicate that the book's contents were written over the course of several decades and that Jeremiah received assistance from at least one other person. McConville (1993:23) says about the book, "Complexity is perfectly consistent with its being the deposit of the approximately forty-year ministry of Jeremiah."

Even so, the book's internal evidence does not necessarily reveal a complex process of many hands, as is often stated. For example, McKane (1984:275) says, "We are dealing with a long, complicated, untidy accumulation of material extending over a very long period, to which many people have contributed." But is the book of Jeremiah as untidy as McKane says, or is his diachronic approach responsible for such a judgment? A newer generation of scholars, using synchronic brands of literary criticism, is finding more design.³ Likewise, Carroll (1986:47) asserts, "We have no *reason* to believe the poems of 1-25 to be other than anonymous utterances from a variety of sources." To reverse the question, what concrete reason does Carroll (1986:47)

³See, for example, Diamond (1999:15-32) and Stulman (1998:14-19). Stulman assesses McKane's commentary on pages 26-30.

have to say that “[t]he editors of the book have put [the poems] into the mouth of Jeremiah and we read them as his utterances”?⁴ McKane and Carroll may reflect the consensus of critical scholarship from a generation ago, but their conclusions look more like assumptions. All readers of the book of Jeremiah might wish that the prophet had provided more information about the composition of the book, but he did not. Going beyond the available evidence with unsubstantiated hypotheses does not necessarily clarify what really happened in the production of the book. Carroll (1986:65) is appreciably closer to the mark with the following admission:

A book like that of Jeremiah or Isaiah is the product of lengthy processes of editing and accumulation, and few traces of the history of such processes can be detected clearly from the text itself. Without an acute knowledge of the social and religious background it is difficult to determine why such collections were made or given the shape they possess in the Bible. Nor do we know how such books (once their oral stages have become written documents) functioned in the communities where they were regarded as important or why they should have existed in writing in the first place. If ignorance is stressed here it is because it is important to be aware of how little we really know and how uncertain that little knowledge is. Without such agnosticism too little evidence will have to bear too much weight and the level of claims made for the material will be determined by assumed knowledge rather than controlled by an awareness of our deep-seated ignorance.

These are wise words for anyone (including Carroll himself) who tries to reconstruct what really happened with the barest of evidence.

Also unknown is what Jeremiah may have considered prophetic or oracular material. For the last century, scholars have divided the contents of Jeremiah into four categories: poetic oracles in Jeremiah 1-25 (called Source A), prose narratives (called Source B), prose sermons (called Source C), and poetic oracles of consolation in Jeremiah 30-31 (called source D). B, C, and D materials are not usually assigned to Jeremiah but to others—whether the contemporary Baruch or a later disciple. The deuteronomic flavor of the C material leads some scholars to conclude that the prose sermons originated after Jeremiah’s ministry (i.e., later in the exile) when

⁴See how Leuchter (2006:5-6) turns Carroll’s method against him.

the so-called Deuteronomic Historian is thought to have written Kings (cf. 2 Kgs 25:27) and perhaps Joshua, Judges, and Samuel. That Kings reached its final form during the exile cannot be doubted, but the deuteronomic themes in Kings do not automatically invalidate Jeremiah's authorship of prose sermons with deuteronomic affinity (see Römer 2000:401-402). Just about every book in the Old Testament shares common ground, to some extent or another, with the worldview of Deuteronomy. There is no absolute reason why Jeremiah could not have been influenced by the message of Deuteronomy and dictated prose sermons or even prose narratives to Baruch or someone else (cf. LaSor et al. 1996:340; Leuchter 2006:169). Whoever put poetic oracles, prose narratives, and prose sermons in the same book must have considered all these materials prophetic. Together, the diverse contents of Jeremiah bear witness to the activity of Yahweh in the midst of his people and throughout the world.

Besides wanting more information about the provenance of the book's contents, readers of Jeremiah might also desire to know more about the textual differences between the Hebrew (MT) and Greek (LXX) versions of Jeremiah, but such information is presently spare. Because scribes would tend to expand a text for a later audience rather than abbreviate it, the longer version of the Masoretic Text would seem to have a date of origin later than the shorter Greek text of the Septuagint and the different Hebrew *Vorlage* that is thought to lie behind it. Nevertheless, other factors not yet known might account for the textual differences.⁵ For this reason, McConville's (1993:178) hesitation to assign priority to Jeremiah LXX evidences wisdom, "Where LXX differs from MT on any text . . . it does not follow that it has preserved the

⁵E.g., Longman and Dillard (2006:330-331) raise the possibility that Jeremiah and Baruch produced a second and shorter edition of the book in Egypt. The Egyptian Jeremiah later became the basis for the LXX. See also Holladay (1989:6) and Waltke and O'Connor (1990:17 [1.5.2e]). McConville (1993:24-25) suggests that the redaction of Jeremiah's oracles over the prophet's lifetime may account for the different textual traditions.

more ancient or authentic picture.”⁶ The fact is that no modern scholar has seen a Hebrew manuscript with conclusive proof of this other Hebrew tradition of Jeremiah, and the suggestiveness of Jeremiah LXX, 4QJer^b, 4QJer^d, and 4QJer^e may have another, but as yet unknown, explanation. Moreover, 4QJer^b, 4QJer^d, and 4QJer^e are fragments that contain about three hundred Hebrew letters and no complete verses (Jobes and Silva 2000:174-175). It is impossible to know the full extent of their contents and how they compare with Jeremiah MT and Jeremiah LXX.

That the book of Jeremiah has at least four types of materials (A, B, C, and D) cannot be denied. Who wrote them and when is far more difficult, if not impossible, to determine.⁷ Much scholarship has assumed that getting behind the final form would supposedly explain the book’s textual enigmas. The redactional history, though, remains inaccessible and hypothetical. The reason for this, according to Carroll (1986:38), is that “[d]ata are lacking for direct answers” to questions about composition and redaction. Meanwhile, “there is no lack of speculative theories about the origins and editing of the book of Jeremiah in twentieth-century biblical scholarship” (Carroll 1986:38). Carroll (1986:49) has accurately assessed the results of the endeavor:

The diversity of opinions on the composition and redaction of the book of Jeremiah . . . demonstrates the difficulties inherent in the interpretation of the book. Few exegetes agree on the weight to be given to the role of the editors in the production of the book, and there is no consensus of scholarly opinion on such matters as the extent to which the Deuteronomists worked on the different levels of tradition, the relation between the poetry and the prose, the connections between a ‘historical Jeremiah’ and the tradition, the figure of Baruch as amanuensis, biographer, creator of the tradition or creation of level of tradition, and the dating of the book or its parts. Such a lack of consensus means that disagreements about every aspect of the book are inevitable and no appeal can be made to one dominant line of exegesis. . . .

⁶For a more favorable view of the priority of Jeremiah LXX (but one that does not interact with McConville), see Hays (2004:133-149).

⁷Cf. Longman (2008:5, 9). Kessler (1999:72) goes so far as to say, “Reading numerous commentaries and their judgments about what is ‘authentic’ and what is not, or what could be Jeremiah speaking, and what could not possibly be him, becomes not only tiresome, it provides no help in understanding the text.”

Kessler (2003:202) adds, “Historical criticism is therefore bound to land us in the quagmire of speculation: deciding what is ‘authentic’ and what is not, without ever arriving at a generally acceptable solution.”⁸ At the end of the theorizing, all that any reader of Jeremiah has since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is the final form of Jeremiah MT, Jeremiah LXX, and 4QJer^{b,d,e}. The whole story of their relationship to one another is not known. McLay (2008:297) recognizes, “The first century Jewish Scriptures are characterized by textual pluriformity in many texts, and usually we do not have enough witnesses to make decisions about even insignificant textual variants.”⁹ Indeed, ancient manuscripts for the biblical books have their differences—some substantial. For now, though, there is no indisputable reason why the section of the text of Daniel’s Jeremiah in the narrative world of Daniel 9:1-2 (539 B.C.) or the real world of a second-century author could not have been essentially the same as Jeremiah MT.¹⁰

In Daniel 9:2, Daniel says that he understood from the scriptures (סְפָרִים), especially Yahweh’s revelation (דְּבָר) to Jeremiah, that the devastation (חֲרָבוֹת) of Jerusalem would last seventy years. The plural סְפָרִים may suggest that Daniel had more Old Testament “books” than Jeremiah available to him. Goldingay (1989:240) raises the possibility that סְפָרִים has to do with “an identifiable collection of authoritative religious writings” (see also Baldwin 1978a:164; Lacocque 1979:179; Lucas 2002:235). Because this collection would later grow with the addition of post-exilic literature, the סְפָרִים should not be considered a closed canon in 539. It is

⁸In another place, Kessler (2004:58) recommends “a synchronic path” and justifies it by opining, “After over a century of genetic criticism, it seems reasonable to attempt a different approach, though it is quite understandable that there may still be a few who regard synchronic criticism as an enemy in the camp.”

⁹Elsewhere, McLay (2003:121) says, “Out of the multiple forms of the Hebrew texts for the individual books of Scripture the rabbis chose particular texts that later became standardized into what we now refer to as the MT. Why did they choose to standardize the longer form of Jeremiah or a particular version of Daniel? Who knows?” Rajak (2009:19) also uses the word *pluriform* with reference to the Hebrew text.

¹⁰Cf. Tov (1981:154).

also possible that the individual books in Daniel's סְפָרִים had not yet reached their final form. So then, maybe Daniel's Jeremiah, because of incompleteness, differed from the canonical book. Another possibility is that סְפָרִים refers not to books but to letters. Jeremiah 29:1 calls Jeremiah's written communication to the exiles הֶסְפֵּר. If סְפָרִים refers to letters from Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylon, then Daniel 9:2 may not have the book of Jeremiah in view but the letter in Jeremiah 29 that specifies seventy years of exile (Redditt 1999:152; Seow 2003a:138-139; Wilson 1990:93). Deciding between these different understandings of סְפָרִים is virtually impossible. Still, no hard evidence currently rules out the possibility that Daniel's Jeremiah was essentially the same as Jeremiah MT. It is evident from Daniel 9:2 that Daniel's version of Jeremiah contained the passages about seventy years of exile.¹¹

Perhaps more important than determining the extent of Daniel's Jeremiah is pondering the reason why the author says that Daniel was reading Jeremiah, particularly the sections about seventy years of exile. To be sure, Jeremiah 29:10-14 leads Daniel to make a corporate confession of sin, which is the stated prerequisite for Yahweh's people to find him again and for Yahweh to restore them from captivity. Nevertheless, it is surely more than coincidental that seventy years of exile in Jeremiah give way to seventy sevens of jubilee in Gabriel's response to Daniel's prayer. Jeremiah's seventy years put a temporal limit (about a lifetime) on the exile, but Jeremiah gave no indication about how long Yahweh would take "to give rest to Israel" (Jer 31:2) or "to refresh the weary and satisfy the faint" (Jer 31:25). These would be pressing concerns for people living in the post-exilic period and beyond. Many of them might be living in

¹¹Jeremiah MT and Jeremiah LXX have two references to seventy years but in different places. Both texts have a reference in Jeremiah 25:11-12. The MT has a second reference in Jeremiah 29:10, but the LXX, because of the setting of the oracles against the nations after 25:13, puts this reference in Jeremiah 36:10. The Qumran manuscripts of Jeremiah do not have either of these references to seventy years.

the Promised Land, but Persian, Ptolemaic and Seleucid oversight probably did not feel much different than Assyrian or Babylonian captivity. Gabriel's announcement of seventy sevens, which deliberately recalls Jeremiah's seventy years, not only re-asserts the promised good after the exile (Jer 29:10-14) but also informs Second Temple Jews, including and especially God's people during the Antiochene crisis, that the weal of the restoration would take considerably longer than the woe of the exile. Even so, jubilee would surely come.

3.3 The Placement of Daniel's Prayer in Daniel 9

A more serious matter has to do not with what prompted Daniel's prayer (i.e., reading Jeremiah) but with what followed it. Advocates of the Greek view question the placement of Daniel's prayer of confession before Gabriel's announcement of the seventy sevens. For them, the seventy sevens would more suitably follow a prayer of illumination rather than a prayer of confession. Someone living in the Antiochene crisis would supposedly be more likely to be confused about Israel's suffering at the hands of the evil Antiochus IV than convicted by a long history of Israel's sin before the exile. In other words, the delay of the restoration rather than the Deuteronomic themes of disobedience and retribution would be a greater concern for prayer during the oppression of Antiochus IV (see Collins 1993b:347-348, 359-360; Jones 1968:492).

For example, Hartman and Di Lella (1978:245-254) think that Daniel 9:3 and 9:4 have to do with two different prayers. The former verse supposedly refers to a prayer of illumination for the purpose of understanding Jeremiah's seventy years. Daniel 9, however, does not record the wording of that prayer. Even so, Gabriel responds to that prayer in verses 22-27 by saying that seventy years of punishment will become seventy sevens of punishment. Daniel's alleged request for an explanation of Jeremiah's seventy years is met with the threat of more judgment. At a later time, an unknown redactor inserted the prayer of confession in verses 4-20. Why he

did so is unknown, but Hartman and Di Lella suggest that fasting and repentance were thought in the ancient Near East to prepare people to receive a message from God. The absence of the words to Daniel's prayer for illumination gave this redactor an opportunity to add his or her own words of confession.

The obvious problem with their view is its conjectural nature, as pointed out by other advocates of the Greek view. No textual evidence exists to support it. Goldingay (1989:237) rightly comments, "It is not the case that vv 1-3 make one expect a prayer for illumination rather than a prayer of confession; Daniel in the world of the sixth century B.C. had no reason to be puzzled by the prophecy, and the observances of v 3 are appropriate to penitence." The prayer in verses 4-20 is the prayer that Daniel prayed after reading Jeremiah. Having lived most of his life in exile, Daniel fully understood Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years. In accordance with Jeremiah 29:10-14, Daniel confessed sin and pled for mercy. He did not ask for clarification of Jeremiah's words that already made sense to him.¹²

Collins (1993b:359) may be correct that "the central issue in the contemporary interpretation of Daniel 9 concerns the relationship between Daniel's prayer and the context in which it is placed." He and others rightly notice how this prayer differs markedly from the rest of the book. Whereas the prayer in Daniel 9 acknowledges Israel's sin, other parts of the book highlight the evil perpetrated by Gentile nations against God's people (Collins 1993b:360;

¹²Wilson (1990:97) says, "The prayer is not motivated out of perplexity over the delay of the restoration. This would present no problem for Daniel who is pictured as beginning his prayer toward the end of the seventy years prophesied by Jeremiah (i.e. 538 BCE)." Lucas (2002:233) comments: "There is no hint in v. 2 that Daniel is bewildered by the prophecy [in Jeremiah], and he does not ask for illumination concerning the seventy years. His actions in v. 3 are appropriate for a prayer of penitence, as the parallels in Ezra and Nehemiah show. A reaction of distress to 'the devastation of Jerusalem' and a longing that it should end as soon as possible are fully credible responses to the prophecy in Jeremiah. This is particularly so in the light of Lev. 26:40-42, which contains the promise that if, when Israel finds itself in exile as a result its sins, the people confess their sins and mend their ways, God will remember the covenant and restore them to their land." See also Bergsma (2008:51, 53) and Kline (1974:454).

Davies 1998:60-61; Lucas 2002:232; Meadowcroft and Irwin 2004:175). Collins further suggests that the prophecy of the seventy sevens in particular and the book of Daniel as a whole revise the Deuteronomic view of retribution in the prayer. The rest of the book supposedly features a “deterministic, apocalyptic view of history [that] is in fundamental contrast to the Deuteronomic theology of the prayer” (Collins 1984b:95; cf 2004:567-568). Collins doubts that the Maccabean writer of the book, or even the angel Gabriel, shared the theology of the prayer. So why, then, is the prayer at the beginning of Daniel 9?

According to Collins (1984b:96, 1993b:360), the prayer “is an act of piety, which is appropriate as the prayer of the one who failed to understand at the end of chap. 8.”¹³ The prayer may be an act of piety, but the vision of chapter 8 is not the stated occasion for the prayer. In fact, about a decade separates the vision in chapter 8 and the prayer in chapter 9. At the beginning of chapter 9, Daniel is not confused about rams and goats but concerned about repentance and restoration. He even says in 9:2 that he perceived or understood (בִּינְתִי) from the book of Jeremiah what the length of the exile would be. Again, he does not need information or explanation. Rather, he needs forgiveness, and he knows on the basis of reading Jeremiah that his fellow Israelites need the same. For this reason, he penitently seeks God as Jeremiah 29:12-14 (as well as Lev 26:40 and Deut 30:1-3) exhorted. The pious act of reading Jeremiah at the end of the exile is the stated occasion for the prayer, and the pious act of confessing sin makes perfect sense in this context.¹⁴

In another place, Collins (2004:16) says that “there are many gaps and inconsistencies in the biblical text, and it seems to reflect several different historical settings.” For him, most of the

¹³Collins makes a reference to Towner (1971:212). See also Merrill Willis (2010:124, 129) who reads Daniel’s prayer as the resolution to the defilement of the temple by Antiochus IV in chapter 8. Because the prayer makes no plea for Gentile sins, it makes better sense to read it in relation to the rebellion of God’s people in 8:13, which Merrill Willis does on page 132.

¹⁴Collins (1984b:90-91) seems to agree.

Old Testament books are “composite” works that involved multiple redactors. Perhaps, but someone put Daniel’s prayer of confession before the prophecy of seventy sevens.¹⁵ No manuscript evidence exists for another location. Just as Collins wants his readers to respect his authorial intention, it is reasonable to assume that the person responsible for the final form of Daniel considered the arrangement of the prayer and prophecy logical (cf. Boccaccini 2005:41). It is true that the contents of the book of Daniel address events in the Babylonian, Persian, and Greek Empires. Moreover, the two visions that immediately flank Daniel 9 move from the Persian Empire to the Greek Empire. In between these visions are a prayer and prophecy set at the end of the Babylonian exile. Boccaccini (2002:183; cf. 2005:41) raises a valid question: “Furthermore, Daniel’s prayer occupies a key position at the core of the second section of the book. Why should the author of Daniel have wanted to waste such an important spot to accommodate a literary topos, one that was not even consistent with his own thought?” Rather than conclude that a centrally positioned prayer and prophecy are out of place, perhaps readers of Daniel should give the author the benefit of the doubt and consider why they make sense where they are.

For Boccaccini (2002:183), the prayer contrasts with the worldview of 1 Enoch by holding disobedient humans, rather than rebellious angels, responsible for Israel’s suffering. Such a difference in perspective may exist between the two works, but the stated issue in Daniel 9 is not necessarily Boccaccini’s “third way” between Zadokite and Enochic Judaism. Cast in exilic categories of thought, the issue is closer to the perceived tension between the justice and mercy of God within the context of his covenantal relationship with his people. If God continues to treat his people as their sins deserve, then his redemptive program with them will end with the judgment of the exile. Daniel knows that God must restore his people not because they deserve

¹⁵Cf. Boccaccini (2005:41). Collins replies in the same volume (2005b:61). See also Towner (1971:208).

his favor but because his reputation is at stake. This covenantal context of Daniel's prayer is missing in Boccaccini's analysis.¹⁶ Still, he has appreciably maintained the centrality of Daniel's prayer in chapters 8-12.

A straightforward reading of the text makes good sense. Said to be living in Babylon during the sixth century, Daniel read what is now Jeremiah 25 and Jeremiah 29. Moreover, someone in his situation would surely be aware of Leviticus 26 which lay behind Jeremiah 25 and 29. In fact, the same verb that is translated "I confessed" (אָתְּוֹדָה) in Daniel 9:4 appears in Leviticus 26:40 (וְהִתְוֹדוּ) where it can be translated "if they will confess." These passages reminded Daniel why he and others had spent most of their lives in exile. Israel had violated the stipulations of Yahweh's covenant with Moses and incurred the curses—the last of which was eviction from the Promised Land. If Leviticus 26 offered hope to those who repented in exile, Jeremiah 25 and 29 assured them that Yahweh would not let his redemptive plan expire in Babylon. In concert with the exiles' repentance, Yahweh would judge Babylon and restore his people to the Promised Land. Having read these passages that pertained to his historical moment, Daniel repented and then received the gracious announcement of seventy sevens.¹⁷ God was not yet finished with the descendants of Abraham and the people of Israel. He would transform them in a way that the exile could not, and they would yet be a blessing to the nations around them—all to the glory of God. This is jubilant news.

¹⁶For a refutation of the thesis that some Second Temple Jews assigned greater authority to Enoch than to Moses, see Carey (2005:20-21), Heger (2010:29-62), and Henze (2005:18-19).

¹⁷Seow (2003a:136-137) rightly says that "the prayer is the very sign that Daniel had understood Jeremiah, for the prophet, following the promise of restoration after the seventy years (Jer. 29:10), had urged earnest prayer. . . . The promise of restoration is, indeed, contingent upon the right response to God, a response that Daniel takes up in the prayer. The chapter, thus, cannot be properly understood apart from the prayer of confession and supplication." Towner (1971:209) is mistaken, then, when he says, "The contents of the prayer, including the orthodox retributational scheme which it contains, appear largely to be ignored. The divine word of response goes forth before the supplications are really underway; that word contains little or no direct response to the content of the prayer." Moreover, Towner wrongly denies, in effect, on page 211 that the prophecy of the seventy sevens offers assurance of pardon in response to the prayer of confession. Cf. Lacocque (1976:123).

Whereas Collins (1993b:360) doubts that the Maccabean writer of the book, or even the angel Gabriel, shared the so-called Deuteronomic theology of the prayer because Jews during the Antiochene crisis would supposedly not be praying about their sins but about their suffering, other advocates of the Greek view recognize that a prayer of confession could fit the Maccabean era, especially since Daniel 9 sits between two visions that have an interest in events of the second century. Carey (2005:46), Lucas (2002:251), McConville (2002:121-122, 128), Redditt (1999:149-150), and van Deventer (2000:70-71) maintain that the prayer suitably confesses the capitulation of some Jews to Hellenism during the reign of Antiochus IV. In particular, Carey (2005:46) notes:

Daniel devotes the bulk of the prayer to a lament and confession. God's people have met their "present" crisis on account of their faithlessness. Daniel also presses God to forgive Jerusalem and restore its people. In this way, Daniel adds a particular edge to its interpretation of the Antiochene Crisis. Following the pattern of the biblical Deuteronomic History, Daniel attributes Israel's woes to its collective apostasy. While Antiochus remains the clear villain, Judea must still seek faithfulness for God's blessing to be realized.¹⁸

Similarly, van Deventer (2000:70-71) argues that the prayer of confession addresses the religious and cultural syncretism that occurred during the Seleucid period because of the ready acceptance of Hellenization. The apocalyptic expectation of a divine irruption on behalf of Israel did not apply in this context of covenantal disloyalty, and neither did a prayer for illumination. A prayer of confession did. It is true, of course, that God's people must always seek to be faithful and that many Jews during the reign of Antiochus IV were not. The scholars mentioned above have advanced the discussion about the placement of Daniel's prayer by demonstrating that the author of the book could have shared the theology of the prayer.

¹⁸Cf. Boda (2009:469) who does not specifically set Daniel's prayer during the Seleucid era but says instead that Israel is suffering in Daniel 9 because of "the wickedness of the kingdoms that are to come" and because of "the enduring struggle of Israel with its sin."

Far from being out of place, Daniel's prayer that is set in the sixth century indicates that the sinful causes of the Babylonian exile continued into the Antiochene years and necessitated further repentance.¹⁹ This view receives support from Baruch's prayer of confession (Bar 1:15-3:8) that resembles Daniel's prayer and is sometimes dated to the Antiochene crisis (Harrington 1999:94-96; Nickelsburg 2005:94-97).²⁰ So then, Daniel's prayer of confession and Gabriel's prophecy of seventy sevens connect the Babylonian exile with the Antiochene crisis. On both occasions, God's city and temple underwent profanation and damage by Gentile armies under the command of tyrannical kings whom God used to discipline his unfaithful people (cf. 2 Kgs 25:8-15 and Jer 52:12-19 with 2 Macc 5:15-17 and 4 Macc. 4:15-21). "New disasters occurred," observes Gowan (1998:193), "and 587 became the archetype used to account for them all, as Jews applied to each of them the prophetic message of judgment and hope for salvation." Daniel 9, Baruch 1:15-3:8, and 1 Maccabees 2:7-13 illustrate Gowan's point with reference to the Antiochene crisis, while 2 Baruch, 3 Baruch, and 4 Ezra use the Babylonian exile to make sense of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.

Whatever may need to be said about apocalyptic determinism in the periodization of the seventy sevens, Daniel's prayer of confession affirms both human responsibility for the exile and God's control of history. Divine sovereignty and human responsibility run together throughout the Bible and even in Second Temple literature (cf. Helberg 1995:286). Regarding the latter, Werline (2005:86) says, ". . . it is generally assumed that apocalyptic ideology is deterministic and that one would not expect to find Deuteronomic thought in an apocalypse. Examples from

¹⁹Redditt (2000:245) says that "the second-century author blended the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar into the calamity under Antiochus Epiphanes and applied to his own generation the punishment for apostatizing to the gods of Canaan 'foreseen' by Moses."

²⁰See deSilva (2002:203-205) for other possibilities. Nevertheless, deSilva (2002:202) denies that Baruch wrote the book. He says, "The book's claim to be authored by Baruch, the companion of the prophet Jeremiah, is a literary fiction."

apocalypses demonstrate that this assumption is false, however; apocalypses can be ideologically inconsistent.” The word *inconsistent* is too strong in this context. Deuteronomic History does not feature human responsibility to the exclusion of divine sovereignty (e.g., 2 Kgs 8:16-19), and apocalyptic literature discusses God’s control of history, among other reasons, in order to promote ethics in the present (e.g., 1 En. 91:3-4, 18-19; 94:1-5).²¹ The authors of these works did not consider these themes incompatible.

Regarding the relationship between determinism and ethics in apocalyptic literature, Barton (2002:2.666-667) is worth quoting at length:

It is probably fair to describe Daniel as deterministic in its attitude to history, as is generally the case in apocalyptic writings. The outcome of history does not depend on human decisions, but is already fixed in God’s purposes. But this does not lead to the conclusion that it does not matter what human beings do. On the contrary, there is a clear imperative to co-operate in God’s purposes by submission to his will. For the Jew, submission to God means obedience to the law. . . . For pagan kings, submission to God’s control of history means a recognition that God “changes times and seasons, deposes kings and sets up kings (Dan 2:21). The assumption of total divine control, endemic in apocalypticism, here has clear ethical correlates: everything should be done to stand out of God’s way and to allow his purposes to prevail. Those not doing so risk finding themselves on the wrong side when the end comes.”²²

The message throughout all genres of the Bible is clear: faith without obedience is no faith at all. God will have a people for his name, and those people may come from every tribe, tongue, and nation. What distinguishes the people of God is that they demonstrate their trust in God’s faithfulness to his promises by doing what he commands, even when (or especially when) his commands run against the culture and bring persecution.

²¹Another example of “determinism” in the Deuteronomic History is found in 1 Samuel 8-9. The people of Israel demand a king from Samuel for the wrong reasons, but they do not select Saul. Instead, God directs Samuel to Saul in order to give the people the type of king that they want. God later directs Samuel to David in order to anoint the king of God’s choice. Moreover, Collins (1998:125) says the following about ethics in the Sibylline Oracles, “We have seen that the sibyl, like the apocalypses, uses the eschatological horizon as a frame to lend urgency to an ethical and political message.” The ethics are discussed in more detail on page 123.

²²See also Niskanen (2004b:106-113).

The compatibility of divine sovereignty and human responsibility can apply specifically to Daniel 9. Niskanen (2004b:111) says:

In response to those who regard the Deuteronomic prayer in Daniel 9 as secondary and irreconcilable with the theology of history in the rest of the chapter (and indeed the whole book), two comments are in order. First of all, while it is true that ‘the theology of history in Daniel 9 is very different from the Deuteronomic theology of the prayer’, these two theologies are not diametrically opposed, but rather two sides of the same coin. One emphasizes the human cause of events, the other focuses on the divine. Both are necessary elements of Daniel’s overall theology of history.

Niskanen’s second comment pertains to the presence of the Deuteronomic theme of retribution in other parts of Daniel, particularly 11:21-12:3. There, those who respond wisely to the events of the reign of Antiochus IV by remaining faithful to God’s covenant receive deliverance and eternal life. Those who respond foolishly by forsaking God’s covenant ally themselves with Antiochus IV and so incur judgment along with him. Even then, God uses the lapsing of some as a means of grace to purify them (Dan 11:35), which accords with the stated objectives of the seventy sevens. The twin themes of threats of punishment and promises of restoration occur not just in Daniel 9 but throughout the Bible. Thus, the parts of Daniel 9 cohere with each other, with the rest of the book, and with the rest of the Old Testament.

So then, when the prayer and prophecy of Daniel 9 are read in view of their narrative context at the end of the exile, it is evident that a prayer of confession is the right prayer for the occasion. A prayer for illumination would not be nearly as appropriate in this context or if a second-century writer adopted the prayer because of similar unfaithfulness during the Antiochene crisis. Nevertheless, God was pleased to respond to Daniel’s confession with revelation of his future plan to redeem, and the future according to the seventy sevens began at the end of the exile.

3.4 An Analysis of Daniel's Prayer

In the narrative world of the book of Daniel, the coronation of Darius, son of Xerxes, does not lead Daniel to celebrate the good news of Israel's imminent release from captivity and the eventual rebuilding of both Zion (the city of Yahweh) and the temple (the house of Yahweh). Instead, he offers a prayer of corporate confession.²³ It is evident from the prayer that Daniel has not just focused on what Jeremiah had to say about the relation of the seventy years to Babylon, which will be discussed below. He has also paid attention to what Jeremiah had said should be the impact of the seventy years on Israel (cf. Stone 2011:64). Following Yahweh's promise to give his people a future after the seventy years, Yahweh says through his prophet:

“Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.” (Jer 29:12-14)²⁴

As discussed in chapter 2, Leviticus 26 lies behind Yahweh's invitation to repent in Jeremiah. Daniel's prayer now indicates his sincere desire to seek the covenant God of Israel with all his heart.²⁵ If God had previously announced the limit of the Babylonian Empire and had now made Cyrus king of Persia, then the mighty deed of God's direction of history for the progression of his redemptive plan (the indicative) leads to the wholehearted seeking that Leviticus and Jeremiah expected and that Daniel manifests (the imperative). Human repentance must follow divine activity. It is also mysteriously true that human repentance moves God to be gracious.

²³Whether Daniel composed the prayer or cited an existing prayer is irrelevant for the text's attribution of the prayer to Daniel. The text claims that Daniel prayed these words on this occasion. Cf. Seow (2003a:136): “The author quite conceivably might have drawn substantially on existing prayers or even adapted an older prayer for this context.”

²⁴Unless otherwise noted, English citations of the Bible come from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

²⁵Leupold (1969:382) says, “On the whole, this is really a touching prayer. It breathes a spirit of deep humility, sincere confession, and a true and living faith.”

Perhaps one way to explain the paradox is that God will have a people for his name, but only those who repent will be included.

3.4.1. Daniel's Confession of Corporate Failure

As seen in Daniel's prayer, a sincere heart is characterized by an honest appraisal of how it has fallen short of God's will. Given the punitive purpose of the exile, which is all too clear in Jeremiah, Daniel appropriately humbles himself before the God whom he and his people have offended by their covenantal unfaithfulness. His prayer indicates that he and undoubtedly others on whose behalf he prays realize and rue the enormity of what they and their forbears have done to bring on eviction from Canaan—the last of the curses in Deuteronomy 28. Daniel presents a stark contrast between Yahweh on the one hand and himself and the Israelites on the other. Whereas Yahweh is said to be righteous because he adhered to the terms of the covenant, even sending prophets to warn and administering curses to judge, Israel disregarded its covenantal commitments.

At the beginning of the prayer, Daniel multiplies terms that are part of the Old Testament's vocabulary of sin. The rhetorical effect indisputably establishes the contrast between God who kept his word and Israel who went into exile for not keeping hers:

O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and obey his commandments, we have sinned [הִטָּאנוּ] and done wrong [עָוִינוּ] and acted wickedly [הִרְשָׁעֵנוּ] and rebelled [מָרְדֵּנוּ] by turning away from your commandments and laws [וּמִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ וּמִמִּשְׁפָּטֶיךָ]. We have not listened [לֹא שָׁמַעְנוּ] to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our officials, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. Righteousness belongs to you, Lord, but shame [literally, shame of face] to us now—to each man of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel near and far in all the lands to which you scattered them because of their unfaithfulness by which they betrayed you. (Dan 9:4-7 [author's translation])

The vocabulary of sin in verses 5-7 assumes a standard of right conduct, viz., Yahweh's revelation through his servants the prophets. Verse 11 adds that Moses also was God's servant and thereby associates the law of Moses and the preaching of the prophets. Hence, Daniel leaves no doubt about what the standard for his confession is. Israel has transgressed the law and the prophets. She disregarded Yahweh's spokesmen and, therefore, Yahweh himself.

When Yahweh made the Sinaitic covenant with his newly constituted kingdom of priests that had been recently rescued from Egypt, he gave specific instruction through Moses about how a redeemed people should live and thereby perform their mission to the nations. Throughout the wilderness years, the Exodus generation had Moses in their midst to give additional instructions. Near the end of his life, Moses told the children of the Exodus generation how they would hear the word of God in his absence. They would not learn the will of God through divination as their neighbors did but through Yahweh's individually sent prophets (Deut 18:9-22). Prophets would remind God's people of God's covenant and God's mission and, if necessary, call them back to obedience. One source of instruction (Moses) was not more authoritative than another (prophets), and Israel would ignore either to its detriment. Daniel's chosen words and phrases for violations of God's revelation offer a rather complete picture of Israel's covenantal negligence. She utterly failed to keep her part of the relationship with Yahweh, and her instances of disobedience added up to insurrection against the Lawgiver. Israel acted treacherously by betraying her promise to do God's will for the promotion of his redemptive mission among the nations. Daniel prayed so bluntly not because of Israel's careless oversight but because of her deliberate rebellion against the suzerain of the covenant of which she was the vassal. She had not been a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. Moreover, those leaders charged with modeling and encouraging covenantal faithfulness—kings, officials, and

fathers—had disregarded God’s messengers to the nation’s peril. They had led God’s people away from their mission. Daniel’s prayer admitted that Israel had received its due recompense and deserved no favor. Meanwhile, Yahweh had faithfully adhered to the terms of the covenant, even in the enactment of the curses. He was indeed righteous.

Israel’s unfaithfulness in the form of transgressing God’s commands and ignoring God’s prophets brought shame on Israel, for Yahweh had done so much on behalf of his people only to be treated with such ingratitude. As his covenant name, Yahweh, implies, God had graciously chosen his people out of all nations, provided for their sustenance and protection, brought them to a land that was a foretaste of Eden restored, revealed laws that would distinguish them as a just and compassionate nation, and made them participants in a mission that involved nothing less than reconciling all creation to his eternal plan. What privileges and blessings were Israel’s, but she, as Daniel candidly admits, did not cherish them and so spurned the One who lovingly bestowed them.

Daniel confesses that he and his people have violated Yahweh’s revealed will and justly incurred the curses of the covenant. Because the Israelites are unrighteous by virtue of their covenantal infractions, they cannot make amends for their transgressions or repair the broken relationship with Yahweh. Gowan (2001:131) rightly says that “there is no human merit that Daniel can offer as a basis for restoration.” Venter (2007:41) ironically adds, “The people’s only ‘credibility’ is their confession of their total failure and entire reliance on God’s clemency.” Any hope for reconciliation, then, must reside with God. For this reason, Daniel appeals to God’s mercy:

The LORD our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him.
(Dan 9:9)

Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. (Dan 9:18)

O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! (Dan 9:19a)

Daniel pleads for mercy because he, on account of Israel's unfaithfulness, has no other recourse.

If righteousness is the condition for communion with God, God alone is righteous, and only he can make matters right. Therefore, Daniel appeals to God's mercy to do what the exiles cannot do, viz., declare and make themselves righteous. Only if God does this will they be suited to live in the Promised Land again. They will be in a right relationship with God and with one another.

3.4.2. The Ultimate Ground for Daniel's Plea

Mercy, however, is not the ultimate reason why God acts. Daniel may appeal to this attribute of God, but he grounds the appeal in the self-interest of God.

O Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, and your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our fathers have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us. (Dan 9:16)

For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. (Dan 9:17b)

Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your name. (Dan 9:18a)

For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name. (Dan 9:19b)

God may show mercy to his people, but he will do so as a means to another end, viz., his own glory. According to Venter (2007:41), "He [Yahweh] can be persuaded only by his own mercy and act for his own sake. The credit can only be his."²⁶ Knowing this, Daniel makes his request

²⁶In an earlier publication, Venter (2004:611) says, "[Yahweh] can only be persuaded by his own mercy and act for his own sake. The credit can only be his. God is the axis of everything. . . . Israel has no credibility or righteousness that could sway him to do what he had promised. Not even Israel's penitence can act as a persuasive power. Their only 'credibility' is their confession of their total failure and entire reliance upon God's clemency. . . . God's redemption is therefore conceptualised not only in terms of God's sovereignty, but also in terms of Israel's

on the basis of God's concern for his reputation among the observing nations. In so doing, he maintains continuity with the Old Testament's consistent witness to God's self-interest.

For example, God delivers his people from Egypt so that Pharaoh and the Egyptians "will know that I am the LORD" (Exod 14:4). Indeed, the plagues had this same purpose (Exod 7:17, 8:10, 8:22). Earlier, Yahweh heard Israel's groans in Egypt and remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exod 2:24). The NIV's rendition of Exodus 2:25 then says, "So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them." The stative translation ("was concerned") of the Hebrew verb (יָדַע) is a secondary or connotative possibility of an active form that more often means "to know." God may have sympathized with his afflicted people, but he also knew them as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were the heirs of the promises that God had made to the patriarchs. As long as they remain in such oppressive circumstances, those promises appear to be in jeopardy, and Pharaoh looks as if he has prevailed over Yahweh. Even so, conditions will become even harsher for the Israelites who are called Yahweh's firstborn son (Exod 4:22). They will have to gather their own straw and still produce the same quota of bricks. To be God's son does not mean a life of ease. Instead, God's son is used for God's glory so that the nations know who he is. The suffering of God's son often provides the stage for God to demonstrate his power.

Similarly, the sixth-century prophet Ezekiel offers the following rationale for the return from exile:

I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, "These are the LORD's people, and yet they had to leave his land." I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone.

unrighteousness. Their penitence confesses to the fact that they are in the wrong and are totally reliant upon God's mercy."

Therefore say to the house of Israel, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.” (Ezek 36:19-23)

These verses immediately precede Ezekiel’s version of what Jeremiah calls a new covenant.

Ezekiel promises that Yahweh will put a new heart in his people and grant his Spirit who will enable them to keep his commands. The verses cited above, though, make it clear that God will not initiate a new covenant because his people deserve it. They do not. If God just wanted to deal with Israel’s flagrant sin, his judgment alone would suffice as a fitting recompense (cf. Ezek 7:4). Mercy is not necessary to treat sinners as their sins deserve. Nevertheless, God’s “dilemma” is that he has linked his holy name with unfaithful Israel and been embarrassed in front of the nations. Moreover, the exile, though necessary, has created an intolerable situation. God’s just judgment has brought dishonor to his name because the nations now doubt his resolve and/or his power to keep his promises.²⁷ They misinterpret Israel’s defeat at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar as evidence of Yahweh’s weakness.²⁸ For Ezekiel, then, the new covenant is not so much about Israel’s salvation as God’s reputation. In other words, Israel’s deliverance is a means to an end. What is curious is that mercy will restore Yahweh’s honor among the watching nations. God’s power that leads people to recognize his holiness is seen not in displays of force (though God has an arsenal of special effects) but in his mercy to Israel. It is mercy that sets him apart from all other would-be rivals. Even so, God’s mercy is theocentric not anthropocentric. He saves Israel for the promotion of his fame. The nations then know what a covenant-making God is in contradistinction to all other gods.

²⁷Cf. Goldingay (1989:255) who says, “Their being desolate brings discredit on him; for his own sake, he should act (vv 17, 18, 19).” See also Merrill Willis (2010:134-135).

²⁸Cf. Miller (1994:249), Redditt (1999:156), and Vogel (2010:38).

The book of Daniel never indicates awareness of Ezekiel's ministry among the exiles of whom Daniel is said to live.²⁹ Even so, Daniel's appeal to God's reputation certainly agrees with the theology of Ezekiel as well as of Exodus. Daniel 9:15 even mentions the Exodus, which prompts Lucas (2002:252) to make the following point about God's self-interest:

. . . Israel had known Yahweh as a God who, from the exodus onwards, has acted to establish his just rule in the world. This is linked to the other basis of the plea, Yahweh's reputation (19). Yahweh had linked his reputation with that of Israel by making the covenant. By living according to the covenant, Israel was meant to exhibit something of the just world order that Yahweh's rule would bring. She had failed in this, but, Daniel implies, if the nations are to be brought to respect that world order and the God who stood behind it, the way forward was not to abandon Israel, but to restore her.

So then, Daniel's prayer finds hope not only in God's mercy but also in God's self-interest that is expressed in Israel's mission. Daniel seems to know that he holds an ace up his sleeve, and he cautiously plays it in this prayer.³⁰ The ace is that God has tied his redemptive program to Israel. If Daniel knows that God's city and God's people bear his name (Dan 9:19), he also knows on the basis of God's earlier revelation that a righteous God will have a righteous city and a righteous people for his name. Having a people for his name, of course, assumes that God keeps his covenant and his love (Dan 9:4). Because of human weakness, God must initiate and sustain his relationship with his people, or else there will be no people. Given that God's reputation (i.e., his integrity) is at stake, the exile cannot be the final word that the nations hear about God's people. A righteous God, who is righteous because he keeps his promises for his name's sake, will have to find a way to preserve his people and move his redemptive program forward (Dan

²⁹Ezekiel 14:14, 14: 20, and 28:3 seem to show Ezekiel's awareness of Daniel, but many scholars have concluded that these references to Daniel do not refer to the sixth-century expatriate in Babylon but to the protagonist of the Aqhat text (Knibb 2002:16-17). Collins (1998:87), Gowan (2001:22), and Seow (2003a:3-4) also mention the Daniel in Jubilees 4:20 as a possibility. This Daniel was Enoch's uncle and father-in-law. Meanwhile, other scholars (Block 1997:447-450 and 1998:96-97, 117-121; Dressler 1979:152-161, especially 159; Miller 1994:41) maintain that Ezekiel's Daniel is the Daniel of the book of Daniel.

³⁰Towner (1984:139) uses a different idiom: "The intention of the appeal [to God to act for his own sake] seems to be to tie God's hands, as it were."

9:16).³¹ Restoring a fallen people so that they can be a blessing to a fallen world is an extraordinary task that only a great (גָּדוֹל) and awesome (אֲזוּל) God can do (Dan 9:4). Ultimately, then, Daniel's prayer asks God to be God and do the impossible. God delights to answer such prayers, and the six infinitives of Daniel 9:24 afford him the supreme opportunity to display his unmatched power and love.

Not to be overlooked is how Leviticus 26:40-45 runs in the background of Daniel's prayer. Of course, the prayer agrees with Leviticus 26 that Israel has disobeyed the terms of the covenant and refused correction. Daniel accepts responsibility for covenantal infractions and the willful stubbornness behind them. Nevertheless, the whole prayer also assumes Yahweh's promise in Leviticus 26:40-42 to remember his covenant with the patriarchs and with those who came out of Egypt. The reference to the Exodus in Daniel 9:15 subtly recalls the insinuation of a second Exodus in Leviticus 26:45. Using what Venter (2007:34) calls "allusive intertextuality," Daniel plays his ace with the reference to the Exodus. As God had delivered his people from Egypt so that Pharaoh knew he was Yahweh, Daniel echoes the implication of a second Exodus in Leviticus 26:44-45. He does this so that the deliverance of God's people who bear his name might add to God's renown.

As implored, God responds graciously in the form of the prophecy of the seventy sevens. It assures Daniel and those for whom he prayed that Yahweh will atone for their sin, impute an alien righteousness to them, and accomplish his original mission that occasioned their election (Dan 9:24). The basis for this grand work of God is not earned merit but sheer mercy. So then, Daniel and God's people for whom he prays do not get seventy sevens of more judgment.

³¹Cf. Wright (2009:63).

Rather, they get Jeremiah's promise of forgiveness of sins and much more, including God's remembrance of his covenants with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses (Lev 26:42, 45).

As the response to Daniel's prayer, the prophecy of seventy sevens may contain good news of mercy for God's people, but it also shares the interest of Exodus and Ezekiel in Yahweh's report among the rulers and peoples of the world. What is pastorally comforting about Yahweh's self-interest is that he does not save his people on the basis of their performance or merit. Rather, he saves them because his honor is at stake. If his reputation is on the line, he will follow through on his promises. It is for this reason that Daniel addresses Yahweh in verse 4 as *הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא שֶׁמֶר הַבְּרִית וְהַחֶסֶד לְאַהֲבָיו וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתָיו* (the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments). It is true that God's people must love him and persevere in obedience to their part of the covenant, but God loves them first and makes the covenantal relationship possible. Yahweh chooses to love in order to promote his own ends and glory. From this aim, he will not be dissuaded, frustrated, or thwarted.

3.5 Daniel's Prayer and the Antiochene Crisis

This chapter has already indicated that Daniel's prayer could apply to those Jews who denied God's covenant in order to embrace Hellenism under Antiochus IV. According to 1 Maccabees 1:11-15, these Jews transgressed the law and made a covenant with the nations. As part of that covenant, they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem and reversed circumcision. Verse 15 summarizes by saying that they apostatized from God's covenant and sold themselves to do evil. If 2 Maccabees 4:13-17 speaks of impiety to the divine laws in the form of priestly malfeasance, 2 Maccabees 6:4-5 adds that prostitution occurred in the temple area (see Doran 2012:135-136; Goldstein 1976:156). As already mentioned in a previous chapter, Jason paid Antiochus IV for

the office of high priest that Onias III, Jason's brother, legitimately held. Later, Menelaus subsequently bought the office of high priest and murdered Onias III. The writers of 1 and 2 Maccabees document the repetition of covenantal unfaithfulness that led to the Babylonian exile and warranted similar confession that Daniel 9 attributes to Daniel.

Even so, 2 Maccabees 6:16-17 says that God never withdraws his mercy from his people. He may discipline them, but he does not forsake them. While this passage might not have the confession of sin that Daniel 9 has, it shares Daniel's belief in divine mercy. During Israel's darkest moments, the faithful appeal to God's mercy on the basis of his promise to have a people for his name. These writers know that the realization of God's will ultimately depends on God's faithfulness to his word. God may not be able to rely on humans to keep his word, but humans have no other hope than God's remembrance of his revelation of his gracious nature. The theme of jubilee in the seventy sevens will reinforce this truth.

3.6 Summary

The imminent expiration of Jeremiah's seventy years prompts Daniel (and perhaps others for whom he prays) to confess his (and their) sins and appeal to God's mercy for the advancement of God's self-interest. Yahweh responds to Daniel's contrition with the prophecy of the seventy sevens. Whatever fascination this prophecy may have for the unfolding of the future (whether Daniel's future, the Second Temple Jew's, or the Christian's), the seventy sevens have to do with Daniel's twofold prayer for mercy for God's people and glory for God. Chapter 4 will look more closely at the relationship between the purpose of Daniel's prayer and the purpose of the seventy sevens as stated in Daniel 9:24. In the next chapter, a hermeneutical issue concerning Jeremiah's seventy sevens will receive warranted attention.

CHAPTER 4: HOW LITERAL ARE JEREMIAH'S SEVENTY YEARS?

4.1 Introduction

Gabriel's announcement of the seventy sevens obviously takes its cue from Jeremiah's seventy years. Whereas the prophecy of seventy years offers something of a timetable for the duration of the exile, the announcement of seventy sevens relatedly discloses that the answer to Daniel's request for forgiveness will involve a more protracted length of time. Protracted may be one thing, but precise is another. Just how precisely or literally should the seventy sevens be taken? Does Gabriel inform Daniel, for example, that forgiveness will come in 49 B.C.E., which is seventy sevens or four hundred ninety years after 539 B.C.E.? If the same question of literalness is first asked of Jeremiah's seventy years, the answer might offer some insight into Daniel's seventy sevens.

Within the Old Testament, Jeremiah's seventy years are subject to multiple perspectives. At issue is when Jeremiah's seventy years commence and conclude. The points of origin and finality of the seventy years are by no means certain. An explanation may be that Jeremiah's seventy years are more symbolic than literal. If they are more symbolic and less literal, then perhaps Daniel's seventy sevens are also more symbolic and less literal. For now, it is enough to observe that Jeremiah's seventy years have to do with multiple developments that encompass more than seven decades.

4.2 Jeremiah's Seventy Years and Judah

4.2.1. When the Seventy Years Begin for Judah

Two factors affect the determination of the *terminus a quo* of Jeremiah's seventy years: first, the multiple stages that Judah went into exile and, second, determining when the seventy

years started ticking for Babylon. Unlike Israel (the northern kingdom) that was deported once by Assyria in 722, Judah (the southern kingdom) went into exile over the course of more than twenty years. There were at least four stages to the exile of Judah. For this reason, it is not entirely clear when Jeremiah's seventy years began for Judah.

4.2.1.1. The First Stage

The first stage is mentioned at the beginning of the book of Daniel but nowhere else. According to Daniel 1:1, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim (605 B.C.E.) and took some members of the upper tier of society, including Daniel and his friends, into exile. This first stage of exile coincided with Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of Egypt at Carchemish that Jeremiah 46:2 assigns to the fourth year of Jehoiakim.¹ With the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C.E. and the last gasp of the Assyrian Empire at Haran in 609 B.C.E., Babylon on the eastern end of the Assyrian Empire and Egypt on the western end vied for supremacy in the Near East. Judah and its neighboring states found themselves caught in the middle, unsure of which contender would emerge as the next superpower. For a few years, Egypt wielded more influence over Judah. Pharaoh Neco quickly removed Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, from the throne and made his brother, Jehoiakim, king instead. Neco imposed heavy tribute payments on Jehoiakim who was little more than a puppet (2 Kgs 23:31-35). When Nebuchadnezzar defeated Neco at Carchemish, Jehoiakim was apparently released from his obligations to Egypt but became subservient to Babylon (2 Kgs 24:1). Even so, Nebuchadnezzar's father, Nabopolassar, died about the same time, and Nebuchadnezzar had to hurry back to Babylon to claim the throne. For a show of strength not only to Jehoiakim but also to the influential people back home,

¹The discrepancy between the third year in Daniel 1:1 and the fourth year in Jeremiah 46:2 may be explained by the two ancient Near Eastern methods of reckoning the first year of a king's reign. Whereas Israel (where Jeremiah was) considered the first twelve months the first year of a reign, Babylon (where Daniel was) considered the first twelve months an accession year. The first year then began after the accession year. See Baldwin (1978a:20-21), Goldingay (1989:14), and Longman (1999:44-45).

Nebuchadnezzar must have taken some of the cream of Judah's populace, including Daniel, to Babylon. Such is the implication of Daniel 1:1-2.

Little information is available about the exile in 605 B.C.E., and many scholars consider it unhistorical. Several reasons are then offered to account for its inclusion in the book of Daniel. First, Porteous (1979:25-26) regards Daniel 1:1 and the narrative that it introduces as historical fiction with a didactic purpose. Because precise attention to historical details is not so important for this genre, the author has more freedom to shape the narrative for the sake of his moral lesson. Second, Hartman and Di Lella (1978:128-129) opine that the "author merely followed an earlier folk legend without being concerned about the accuracy of the date." Third, Goldingay (1989:14) and Seow (2003a:21) suggest that the writer merged events from 605, 597, and 586 B.C.E. into a single account. Though unconvinced of the historicity of Daniel 1:1-2, Gowan (2001:43) admits, "Evaluating the evidence, the most one can say is that Dan 1:1-2 is not completely impossible; but there is nothing positive to support it anywhere, and the other texts suggest it speaks of an exile to Babylonia earlier than any event that really happened."

Meanwhile, Meadowcroft and Irwin (2004:24) are not so sure of these judgments: "At the end of the day, although the problem has been well canvassed, there is no simple harmonisation. We do not need to be hustled by some commentators into doubt as to the writer of Daniel's historical competence; rather, we acknowledge that from this distance there are inevitable gaps in our historical knowledge." The problem, then, exists for later scholars who are temporally removed from the writer's context. Original readers may have felt no discrepancy. It seems unwarranted, then, to accuse the author of Daniel of being an uninformed or incompetent historian. Even so, the fact that different opinions exist attests to the inadequacy of the present evidence to resolve the question.

Later readers, though, do not necessarily have to feel a strong discrepancy either. Gowan is not quite correct that there is no support anywhere else. While 2 Kings does not mention an exile in 605 B.C.E., 2 Kings 24:1 reports action of Nebuchadnezzar against Jehoiakim three years before the latter rebelled in 601 B.C.E., and 2 Chronicles 36:6 adds that Nebuchadnezzar bound Jehoiakim in order to deport him to Babylon. Verse 7 even says that Nebuchadnezzar took some of the temple vessels at that time. Perhaps no extra-biblical source attests to this first stage of exile, but Daniel 1:1 is not the only biblical witness to it.

If the commencement of Jeremiah's seventy years was in 605 B.C.E., then the conclusion, by a literal counting, would be in 535 B.C.E.. Persia had conquered Babylon four years earlier, and the first wave of Jewish exiles had already returned to Judea. In fact, they had laid the foundation of the second temple (Ezra 3:8-11).

4.2.1.2. The Second Stage

The second stage of the exile occurred in 597 B.C.E. when Jehoiakim aroused Nebuchadnezzar's ire after the latter was rebuffed by Egypt in 601 B.C.E. Chafing under the demands of a new overlord, Jehoiakim apparently made a play for independence when he perceived weakness in Nebuchadnezzar. Before Nebuchadnezzar could reach Jerusalem to suppress the rebellion, Jehoiakim died and left his son, Jehoiachin, to face the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar, who deported Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24:8-16), Ezekiel (Ezek 1:2-3), and most of Judah's cognoscenti. Nebuchadnezzar then installed Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, as king in Jerusalem.

If Jeremiah's seventy years began in 597 B.C.E., seventy years later would be 527 B.C.E. Babylon had disappeared from history's stage twelve years earlier, and Cyrus was no longer king of Persia. Moreover, work on the temple in Jerusalem had stopped several years earlier.

4.2.1.3. The Third Stage

Although Zedekiah's reign notably lasted eleven years, he was relentlessly pressured by pro-Babylonian and pro-Egyptian parties. In a no-win situation, he apparently tried to appease both groups (Jer 27:3, 29:3) but with little success. His fear of public opinion and consequent hesitation to follow Jeremiah's directives to remain loyal to Babylon (Jer 27:12-15, 38:14-26) cost him dearly as he eventually sided with a western coalition and then incurred the force of the Babylonian army. Captured in an attempt to flee Jerusalem and blinded after witnessing the execution of his sons, Zedekiah went to Babylon in chains and died in ignominy. Meanwhile, Nebuchadnezzar ordered the destruction of Jerusalem and a third wave of deportees in 586 B.C.E. Because of the burning of Solomon's temple, this third stage was arguably the most crushing to the spirits of the Israelites, for it created a theological crisis. In contrast to the popular theology of Jeremiah 7:4, Yahweh's city and temple turned out not to be inviolable. Could it be that Babylon's god, Marduk, was stronger than Israel's God, Yahweh? Isaiah 46-47 answers emphatically in the negative, as does Jeremiah 50-51. Nevertheless, a third instance of Israelite hostages marching to Babylon occurred.

If the *terminus a quo* of Jeremiah's seventy years was 587 B.C.E., then the *terminus ad quem* would be 516 B.C.E. Babylon's conquest by Persia was twenty-three years earlier. The first wave of returnees had lived in Judea for about the same amount of time. Work on the temple, which resumed in 520 B.C.E., finished in 516 B.C.E.

4.2.1.4. The Fourth Stage

Jeremiah 52:30 mentions a fourth stage of exile in Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-third year (582 B.C.E.). No reason is given, and next to nothing is known about this event. Perhaps the

assassination of Gedaliah and the flight of some Israelites to Egypt (Jer 41) made Nebuchadnezzar suspicious of a growing pro-Egyptian faction in the western part of his empire.

If Jeremiah's seventy years started counting down in 582 B.C.E., then they reached their conclusion in 512 B.C.E. Persia had conquered Babylon twenty-seven years earlier, and the first wave of returnees had lived in Judea for nearly three decades. The rebuilt temple was four years old.

4.2.1.5. Assessment

Which of the four stages, then, marks the beginning of the seventy years in the narrative world, if not the real world, of the Old Testament? Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years is dated to the fourth year of Jehoiakim and the first year of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 25:1). The year is 605 B.C.E. In other words, when Jeremiah was announcing a seventy year exile, Daniel was going to Babylon. Still, Jeremiah does not mention Daniel's deportation and instead seems to link the start of the seventy years with a comprehensive destruction of Judah (Jer 25:9-11). It would appear, then, that he has in mind the events of the third stage of exile in 586 B.C.E. Nevertheless, Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Jeremiah 29 was sent sometime during Zedekiah's reign, i.e., before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. That letter associates the seventy years with the length of the Babylonian Empire. Given that Babylon is clearly the dominant force in the ancient Near East during Zedekiah's reign, the seventy years seem to be under way before 586 B.C.E. According to Hill (1999:151), "Nebuchadnezzar is even more so the ruler of Judah than is Zedekiah." The upshot, then, is that the book of Jeremiah does not clearly establish when, in Jeremiah's estimation, the seventy years as related to Israel's exile began.

This conclusion has relevance for the occasion of Daniel's prayer. Daniel may have known when Babylon's exile began but not when Judah's began. He knew, of course, when he

went to Babylon. He might have been unclear, however, about when Jeremiah's seventy years started counting down and how much time was left. Lucas (2002:249) says:

Someone reading Jeremiah's prophecies at the time of the fall of Babylon would no doubt take them to mean that the end of the exile was near. However, unless they took the seventy years literally, and had an exact knowledge of the date from which to reckon them, they would be uncertain as to exactly when the exile would end. Hence the need for prayer.

The prayer may be a confession of sin, which would be appropriate at any time during the exile, but perhaps it also has a cloaked request for illumination. Similar to a psalm of lament, this prayer may combine confession of sin with an implied plea for an answer to the question, "How much longer?"

4.2.2. When the Seventy Years End for Judah

4.2.2.1. According to Jeremiah and Chronicles

Jeremiah relates the seventy years to Israel's exile and to Babylon's supremacy. In other words, at the end of seventy years, Israel's exile concludes, and Babylon's exile begins.

Jeremiah starts with the implication of the seventy years for Israel:

Therefore the LORD Almighty says this: "Because you have not listened to my words, I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon," declares the LORD, "and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sounds of millstones and the light of the lamp. This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years." (Jer 25:8-11)

Jeremiah then applies the seventy years to Babylon:

But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt," declares the LORD, "and will make it desolate forever. I will bring upon that land all the things I have spoken against it, all that are written in this book and prophesied by Jeremiah against all the nations. They themselves will be enslaved by many nations and great kings; I will repay them according to their deeds and the work of their hands. (Jer 25:12-14)

In a letter to the Jewish exiles, Jeremiah reinforces the punitive significance of the seventy years for Babylon: “This is what the LORD says: ‘When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place’” (Jer 29:10). Here there is no explicit reference to the seventy years as a time of punishment for Israel. It is true, of course, that Jeremiah’s preceding counsel to the exiles to put down roots in Babylon because they are not coming home soon recalls the reason why they are there. Even so, the seventy years in this context mark the duration of the Babylonian Empire. The implication of all these verses together is that Yahweh has reserved a period of seventy years for both Israel and Babylon. Moreover, the seventy years in Jeremiah 25 and 29 seem to end at the same time as the seventy years in Daniel 9—viz., Cyrus’ conquest of Babylon and edict of liberation in 539 B.C.E.

The post-exilic writer of 2 Chronicles shares this same understanding of the *terminus ad quem* of Jeremiah’s seven sevens. In 2 Chronicles 36:20-23, the chronicler writes:

[Nebuchadnezzar] carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing: “This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you—may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.’”

Having begun with Nebuchadnezzar’s destruction of the temple in 586 B.C.E. (the chronicler’s *terminus a quo*), the seventy years allowed the land to catch up on its sabbath rests. Each year in exile represented an unobserved sabbath year. According to Leviticus 25:1-7, sabbath years were to be observed every seventh year. In the context of discussing the curses of the covenant, Leviticus 26:34-35 says that the final curse—exile—will allow the land to enjoy rest. The

implication is that Yahweh, who is speaking to Moses (Lev 25:1), does not expect Israel to observe the special seasons of rest. The chronicler's point is that Jeremiah's seventy years of heretofore unobserved sabbath years have allowed a prepared people to return to a prepared land (Dillard 1987:302). Not to be overlooked is that seventy years equal ten sabbath cycles (Fishbane 1985:482). Of note, though, is the chronicler's lack of concern for a literal seventy-year period of exile or a correct total of missed sabbath years. The time between the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. and Cyrus' decree in 539 B.C.E. is considerably less than seventy years. Moreover, the twelve tribes during the judges period and the two kingdoms during the divided monarchy must surely have failed to observe more than ten sabbatical years. The Old Testament never records an observance of even one sabbath year. The number seventy, then, is theologically symbolic, not historically precise.

4.2.2.2. According to Zechariah

The post-exilic prophet Zechariah offers a different view on the *terminus ad quem* of Jeremiah's seventy years. He mentions a period of seventy years in Zechariah 1:12 and 7:5. In both cases, Jeremiah's stated length of the exile is surely in view.

During Zechariah's first of eight night visions, the angel of Yahweh asks Yahweh, "How long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah, which you have been angry with these seventy years?" (Zech 1:12). Zechariah received his eight night visions on the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month in the second year of Darius (Zech 1:7). This Darius is not the as yet unknown Darius son of Xerxes in Daniel 9:1 but the well-known Darius I Hystaspes, who ruled the Persian Empire from 522 to 486 B.C.E. The date of the night visions is February 15, 519 B.C.E. From the angel's point of view, Yahweh is still angry with Israel in 519 B.C.E., and Jeremiah's seventy years have not yet expired.

Zechariah 7 begins with a reference to the fourth day of the ninth month of the fourth year of King Darius, which would be December 7, 518 B.C.E. On that day, a delegation from the town of Bethel approached Zechariah with a question: “Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month as I have done for so many years?” (Zech 7:3). Yahweh’s less than pleased response begins as follows: “Ask all the people of the land and the priests, ‘When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted?’” (Zech 7:5). Zechariah 7:5 and 8:19 indicate that not two but four annual periods of fasting were in view. These fasts began during the exile (i.e., Jeremiah’s seventy years) presumably to remember the following sad moments: Nebuchadnezzar’s breach of the wall in the fourth month (Jer 39:2), Nebuzaradan’s burning of the temple in the fifth month (Jer 52:12), Gedaliah’s assassination in the seventh month (Jer 41:1), and the beginning of Jerusalem’s siege in the tenth month (Jer 39:1). That the delegation is still observing the fasts and inquiring about whether they should continue suggests that they are not sure in 518 B.C.E. whether Jeremiah’s seventy years have reached completion.

4.2.2.3. Assessment

Again, the observation being made is that Jeremiah, Daniel, and the chronicler on the one hand and Zechariah on the other appear to mark the end of Jeremiah’s seventy years at least twenty years apart (Grabbe 1987:67). These different ways of reckoning the *terminus ad quem* of Jeremiah’s seventy years lead to an observation about the *terminus a quo*. If Jeremiah’s figure is taken literally, seventy years before Cyrus’ defeat of Babylon in 539 B.C.E. is 609 B.C.E., and seventy years before Darius I’s second year in 519 B.C.E. is 589 B.C.E. It would seem as if the Old Testament also does not give a consistent answer to the question of when the seventy years began. The *terminus a quo* necessarily varies as much as the *terminus ad quem*.

With regard to the seventy years of Judah's exile, one other matter should receive consideration. If, as Daniel 9:1 suggests, the seventy years end in 539 B.C.E., none of the stages of the exile allows for a full seventy years. Even Daniel's exile in 605 B.C.E. falls short by four years. If the exile, by Zechariah's reckoning, has not ended in early 518 B.C.E., perhaps he considers the completion of the second temple in 516 B.C.E. the *terminus ad quem*. The *terminus a quo*, in this case, could plausibly be the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C.E., which again is the chronicler's view. The difficulty with this otherwise attractive possibility is that the numbers do not work for the length of the Babylonian Empire. Cyrus eliminated the Babylonian Empire from the stage of history in 539 B.C.E., twenty-three years before the completion of the second temple.

4.3 Jeremiah's Seventy Years and Babylon

The end of the seventy years is easier to determine for Babylon. The Persian Empire under King Cyrus invaded Babylon and conquered it with little resistance in 539 B.C.E. It never revived. Seventy years earlier would be 609 B.C.E., the year that Babylon defeated the last Assyrian king, Asshur-uballit, at Haran. Babylon effectively became Assyria's successor as the next ancient Near Eastern empire, and Jeremiah's seventy years for Babylon could have begun then (see Gurney 1980:97, 1981:30; Winkle 1987:289-299). The challenge to this view is that no case can be made for the commencement of Judah's exile in 609 B.C.E. To be sure, Josiah, his reform, and Judah's hope (cf. Zech 12:11) died on the plain of Megiddo in 609 B.C.E., but three of Josiah's sons and a grandson still ruled in Jerusalem for another twenty-three years as the legitimate heirs of David's throne. Moreover, Jeremiah issued the prophecy of the seventy years four years after 609 B.C.E. Perhaps his hearers in 605 B.C.E. were supposed to understand that the start of the seventy years was retroactive to 609 B.C.E., but Jeremiah 25:9 places Yahweh's

summoning of Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem in the future. Even in 605 B.C.E., the countdown to the end of Jeremiah's seventy years had yet to begin. So then, the *terminus a quo* of the seventy years for Babylon is not nearly as obvious as the *terminus ad quem*.²

What seems evident from the discussion of the *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* of Jeremiah's seventy years is that different times for both were recognized. Stated differently, the beginning and end of the seventy years could be reckoned in more than one way. Applegate (1997:93) says, "As to which period of seventy years is in view, this varies from writer to writer." Daniel is the only book that records a deportation in 605 B.C. If Daniel the man was praying in 539 B.C.E. about Jeremiah's seventy years, perhaps he considered 605 B.C.E. the *terminus a quo* and was confessing sin in preparation for the impending *terminus ad quem*—especially if Babylon had already fallen to Persia.

4.4. Seventy Years as a Symbol

In view of these variables that make the *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* of Jeremiah's seventy years less than absolutely fixed, it seems advisable not to insist on taking Jeremiah's figure literally. As in the Bible so in other ancient Near Eastern literature, the number seven could convey completeness or fullness without necessarily specifying an exact amount (see McComiskey 1985:37-40; Otto 2004:344-351). This metaphorical usage of seven made it "appropriate for temporal divisions and periodization" (Otto 2004:345). As a multiple of seven and ten, seventy expands the notion of completeness (Otto 2004:350). According to Kugel (2007:590), "The number seventy is something of a conventional number in Hebrew and other Semitic languages, a bit like one hundred in English: it means 'a lot.'"

²Bergsma (2007:216) says, "The 'seventy years' of Babylon were definitely over in the first year of Darius the Mede (Dan 5:30-6:1), regardless of when one might place the *terminus a quo* of Jeremiah's prophecy."

Seventy years may represent a lifetime (cf. Ps 90:10, Isa 23:15).³ Regardless of a person's age at the time or the actual length of the exile, an Israelite who went to Babylon could expect to live out the rest of his or her days there.⁴ For that reason, he or she should heed Jeremiah's instruction to put down roots in Babylon (Jer 29:5-7). Contrary to Hananiah's false prediction that the exile would last less than two years (Jer 28:2-4), Jeremiah's figure indicated that the exile would not end any time soon.

It would seem, though, that seventy years could mean more than just a long stretch of time or even a lifetime. This figure could also represent a thorough enactment of judgment. According to Fishbane (1985:480), "a seventy-year period of destruction or subjugation was an established typological motif in the ancient Near East."⁵ Seventy years may indicate the length of time that a city suffers the consequences of arousing a god's anger (Edelman 2005:93; Miller and Hayes 2006:464). For example, the Assyrian king, Esarhaddon, used the figure of seventy years with reference to the length of Marduk's displeasure with Babylon. Because of Marduk's mercy, however, the judgment lasted only eleven years (Luckenbill 1989:242-243; Hallo 1997:306). So then, Grabbe (2009:118) says about the seventy years in Zechariah 7 that they are "clearly a round number—probably a stereotyped figure for the period of punishment." Grabbe (2009:119) adds, "... although the figure is stereotyped, it is not completely imaginary. That is, 70 years is not 150 years. We are dealing with a time period of approximately seventy years, not approximately twice that length." What Grabbe observes about the seventy years in Zechariah could apply to the seventy years in Jeremiah. Jeremiah may have thought that Israel's exile and

³Goldingay (1989:239), Gowan (2001:128), Holladay (1986:669), and Seow (2003a:139).

⁴According to Neusner (2002:60), "most of those who went into exile died in Babylonia, and most of those who returned to Zion were born in Babylonia. . . . Few Jews after 586 actually experienced what in the aggregate Scripture says happened as the norm of Israel's experience."

⁵Applegate (1997:93) adds that "the current consensus on Jeremiah's use appears to be that, by convention, ancient near eastern peoples anticipated seventy years of divine displeasure for a city or land that fell foul of its god, and that an actual period of seventy years may also be in view."

Babylon's empire would last about seven decades. Babylon, the fierce foe from the north, would terrorize the ancient Near East in general and Israel in particular for an average lifetime, but no longer than that.

Even so, both the Old Testament and the ancient Near East give evidence for a more symbolic value to Jeremiah's seventy years. There is no need, then, for readers of Jeremiah 25 and Daniel 9 to insist on identifying a *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quem* that are precisely seventy years apart. Such a literal understanding of seventy overlooks the metaphorical usage that Jeremiah and Daniel expected their readers to take for granted. Baldwin (1978a:171) rightly says, "The numbers are symbolic and not arithmetical."

If there is good reason not to insist on a literal seventy years in Jeremiah, then maybe Daniel's seventy sevens also have more symbolic depth than literal length (cf. Edlin 2009:217). As seventy years constitute ten sabbatical cycles, so seventy sevens form ten jubilee periods.⁶ Ten, according to Bergsma (2007:227), can also have symbolic depth, "Ten jubilees constitute a period of quintessential completeness: ten, somewhat like the number seven, symbolizes wholeness, completeness, integrity." To be more specific, jubilee has to do with forgiveness of debt and restoration to land from which one has been alienated because of the debt. Ten jubilee cycles would bring the fullness and permanence of inheritance. So then, seventy sevens do not necessarily mean a literal four hundred ninety years. Rather, they represent the imprecise period in which God gloriously works out his plan of redemption in the form of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 and thereby grants his people their inheritance, especially possession of the

⁶Although Goldingay (1989:267) considers the seven sevens a jubilee period, he denies that the seventy sevens are ten jubilee cycles. See arguments against Goldingay in Bergsma (2007:225-227) and Redditt (2000:248).

Promised Land.⁷ As already seen in chapter two, though, not everyone agrees that the numbers in Daniel 9 should be taken less literally and more symbolically. The issue will receive further clarification by seeing it in relation to the purpose of the seventy sevens as stated in Daniel 9:24—the subject of the next chapter.

4.5. Summary

The second chapter noted that a literal calculation of Daniel's seventy sevens as four hundred ninety years did not work precisely for any of the approaches. Rather obviously, though, Daniel 9 associates Jeremiah's seventy years with another period of seventy sevens. By considering how literally Jeremiah's seventy years should be understood, this chapter has concluded that the Old Testament does not give an absolute beginning or end for them. The implication, then, is that Daniel's seventy sevens might also have more symbolic value than literal amount. The next chapter will begin to explore the symbolism.

⁷Henze (2009:65) says, "For the author of Daniel, who looked to the future, the heptadic calculation was an ideal vehicle to make his apocalyptic promise that history is unfolding according to a preordained divine plan and that the eschatological salvation will bring freedom and restoration as it was foreshadowed already in Lev 25."

CHAPTER 5: THE STATED PURPOSE FOR THE SEVENTY SEVENS

5.1. Introduction

One question that emerges out of the earlier review of previous scholarship has to do with the tone of the seventy sevens. In response to Daniel's plea for mercy, do the seventy sevens extend Jeremiah's seventy years of exile or mark the beginning of a new period of time? Was Daniel supposed to smile in relief or feel even more overwhelmed by guilt and judgment? Did Gabriel hurry to Daniel because he could not wait to announce more retribution or deliver good news? This chapter will explore the possibility that the stated purpose for the seventy sevens in Daniel 9:24 gives a more positive outlook to the prophecy.

5.2. The Perspective of Daniel 9:20-23

Beckwith (1981:521) maintains that one's approach to the seventy sevens determines one's answer to the above questions. Instead of identifying Greek, Roman, and Dispensational approaches, he refers to messianic and non-messianic:

The Messianic interpretation of the prophecy of the 70 weeks, whether Jewish or Christian, proceeds from the fact that the summary in verse 24 shows it to be a prophecy of hope. Though it foretells great calamities, its overall message is gloriously hopeful. The non-Messianic interpretation, by contrast, tones down the promises and concentrates on the calamities.

Stated differently, messianic readings consider the seventy sevens a new era after the end of the seventy years. The seventy sevens do not overlap or prolong the seventy years (cf. Vogel 2010:176). Rather, they have a different purpose, which corresponds to their recollection of the year of jubilee. They announce the end of slavery (whether economic, political, or spiritual) and give hope for an open future (Vogel 2010:179). To the contrary, non-messianic readings regard

the seventy sevens as a continuation of the seventy years and their judgmental purpose—whether because of impenitence during the exile or after.¹

This view of judgment on top of judgment, however, diverges from what the text actually says, and Collins (1984b:95) concludes, “The inference that the whole postexilic period is an age of wrath is scarcely warranted.”² According to Daniel 9:20-23, God issued a response as soon as Daniel started to plead for mercy. That plea, as already noted, consisted of a heartfelt prayer of confession in accordance with Jeremiah 29:13 and Leviticus 26:40-45. Daniel 9:21 reports that Gabriel immediately left God’s presence and reached Daniel before he had finished praying. Gabriel then informed Daniel that a word had gone out. In other words, Yahweh had issued a decree. He wanted Daniel to know that he was *קִמְדוּת*, which, when used adjectivally, can mean “precious,” “choice,” “desirable,” “excellent,” or “treasured.” This word and others from the same root are used of children (Hos 9:16), a wife (Ezek 24:16), a husband (Song 5:16), God’s temple (Ezek 24:21), the Word of God (Ps 19:10), and treasure (Prov 21:20). If Gabriel hastened to Daniel because Daniel was so beloved by Yahweh, it seems hard to accept that the purpose of the seventy sevens was to pile more grief on someone who had already endured seventy years of it and thought, on the basis of earlier revelation, that deliverance was imminent. Jeremiah had said sometime after Jehoiachin’s deportment in 597 B.C.E.:

This is what the LORD says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all

¹Lucas (2002:246) prefers *Antiochene* to *non-messianic*, but this alternative may not be much better if *messianic* is still used for the other option. As already seen in chapter 1, the Greek view considers the Antiochene crisis part of redemptive history that runs into the New Testament period and beyond. Maybe *judgmental* and *jubilant* would be a more balanced pair of terms.

²Nevertheless, Collins (1984b:92) says about the seventy sevens, “Daniel extends the period of the ‘desolations of Jerusalem’ enormously.”

your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.” (Jer 29:10-14)

Daniel had read earlier scripture, believed its promises, and followed its instruction. In other words, he “did what exilic Jews were instructed to do during the Exile” (Boda 2009:465). For Yahweh to send Gabriel with an unfavorable announcement of seventy sevens of more punishment constitutes the rescinding of an earlier promise without reason. The God of the Bible keeps his promises (Feinberg 1981:190). The seventy sevens were God’s assurance that he would, as Daniel prayed, show mercy and bring honor to his name.³ This prophecy “looks forward to a much greater period, of seventy *weeks* (of years), which will bring in a much greater consolation than the end of the Exile” (Beckwith 2001:306). In both the Babylonian and Antiochene contexts, the restoration of Israel’s inheritance (i.e., her covenantal life in the Promised Land) is in view.

The seventy sevens, however, let Daniel know that God would not fulfill his promise of a brighter future immediately or all at once. He would start fulfilling it with the commencement of the seventy sevens. However literal or symbolic the seventy sevens might be, they are at the very least a process that will take years—whether centuries (Greek and Roman views) or millennia (other views)—to run their course (cf. Bergsma 2008:60). Gabriel informed Daniel that God was about to begin a work in the aftermath of the exile, but it would take him seventy sevens or ten jubilee cycles to bring it to completion (cf. Bergsma 2007:225).⁴ This work would be nothing short of “an unfolding of God’s program for the ages” (Leupold 1969:396) or what

³Contrast Balentine (1993:108) who says, “I have previously noted that the prayer is not acknowledged in Gabriel’s revelation. Indeed, before Daniel has completed his plea the divine revelation is already on its way; it does not come in response to anything Daniel said. . . . Further, the prayer does not secure divine forgiveness; the text does not mention it.” If Gabriel’s visit was not a response to Daniel’s prayer, then what was its purpose? Cf. Lucas (2002:241).

⁴Towner (1984:141) says, “Such a comprehensive program requires time.”

Collins (1993b:353) calls “an eschatological ideal.” Perhaps the shortness of the exile in contrast to the length of the work that follows said something about how much God cared about what he was about to begin. And if what God was about to do next had to do with Daniel’s request for mercy and forgiveness, then the unfolding of the seventy sevens, far from crushing people with the weight of their guilt and shame, should move them to relief, wonder, love, and praise. Moreover, if Daniel relatedly implored God to act for the honor of his name, then the exhibition of divine grace ought to be nothing short of spectacular. Leupold (1969:409) recognized as much, “‘Seventy’ contains seven multiplied by ten, which, being a round number, signifies perfection, completion. Therefore, ‘seventy heptads’— $7 \times 7 \times 10$ —is the period in which the divine work of greatest moment is brought to perfection.” What was it, then, that God was about to do?

In Daniel 9:24, Gabriel informs Daniel that seventy sevens are decreed for “your people and your holy city.” Given that Gabriel has come swiftly from the heavenly throne room of God, divine authority and agency lie behind the decree. The decision that God has handed down will be carried out. There will be results, and those results will have to do with the two foci of Daniel’s prayer. “Your” people, who are also God’s people (9:15, 16, 19), will be the object of God’s mercy and forgiveness on the one hand, and “your” holy city, which is also the place that God has set apart or made holy by choosing to put his name there (9:16, 17, 18, 19), will be the target of God’s jealousy for his honor on the other. For the sake of his people (mercy) and his city (honor), God will, over the course of seventy sevens, accomplish six objectives that are stated in the form of six infinitives in 9:24.

Scholars sometimes divide the six infinitives into two equal halves. The first three infinitives address the sin which Daniel confessed in his prayer, and the last three infinitives look

beyond the sin to the establishment of God's eternal purpose (Baldwin 1978a:168; Goldingay 1989:258-259; Longman 1999:226; Lucas 2002:241; Young 1949:197). Leupold (1969:411) says that the first three infinitives pertain to "things that are to be removed," and the last three infinitives have to do with "those [things] that are to be attained." Together, these two sets of infinitives let Daniel know that God will grant forgiveness and vindicate his (God's) name. Daniel receives a wholly positive answer to his prayer. He could not have asked for a more favorable response than these six infinitives. Moreover, the structure of ten jubilee cycles further adds to the good news. Not to be overlooked is the contrast provided by the honesty of Daniel's prayer. God's grace in the six infinitives shines all the brighter in the bleak context of a confession of Israel's abject failure.

These six objectives require explanation, especially as they relate to the two foci of Daniel's prayer and Gabriel's response. Each objective will be discussed separately, and the analysis will begin by considering the objective's relation to Daniel's prayer. Because Daniel's reading of Jeremiah occasioned his prayer, it is not unreasonable to think that the six objectives also have connections to Jeremiah, but some of these, as will be seen, are more evident and/or significant than others. So then, the analysis of each objective will move from its context in the sixth-century narrative world of Daniel 9 to possible intertextual relations with Jeremiah and even other books. Those relations, of course, recall the setting of the Babylonian exile, but Daniel 9 sits between two visions (Dan 8 and 10-12) that focus on Antiochus IV. Moreover, Daniel 9:24 introduces the seventy sevens that reach their climax in the Antiochene crisis. For this reason, the discussion of the objectives must also relate them to this second context.

5.3. The First Infinitive

5.3.1. In the Context of Daniel 9

The first objective of the seventy sevens is **לְכַלֵּא הַפֶּשַׁע**, translated in the NIV as “to finish transgression” and in the NRSV as “to finish the transgression.” While *transgression* is a suitable translation of **פֶּשַׁע**, Carpenter and Grisanti (1997:707) appeal to the covenantal association of this word in order to say that more than a “legal offense” is in view: “The idea of a covenant deepens the concept of legal offense. *peša‘* does not simply involve external disobedience or breaking a law, but entails the violation of a sacred covenant, i.e., revolt (a deliberate act of disloyalty and disobedience).” In the only section of the book that mentions the covenantal name for God, Daniel’s prayer describes Israel as a disloyal vassal who has violated the stipulations of the covenantal relationship. Gabriel’s use of **הַפֶּשַׁע** signals Yahweh’s agreement with Daniel’s assessment.

Because **הַפֶּשַׁע** is definite, a legitimate question to ask is: “Which or whose particular transgression is in view?” **הַפֶּשַׁע** also appears in Daniel 8:13 and refers back to the indefinite **פֶּשַׁע** in verse 12. Because **הַפֶּשַׁע** occurs in Daniel 8:13 and 9:24 but not in Daniel’s prayer, Gowan (2001:133) and Collins (1993b:354) read verses 12 and 13 with reference to the sacrilegious activity of the little horn (Antiochus IV) in 8:9. Collins also includes the sins of the Hellenistic Jews in **הַפֶּשַׁע**, and this observation should receive greater emphasis.⁵ Because **הַפֶּשַׁע** can be understood in more than one way here, the precise referent (Jews, Antiochus IV, or both) is ambiguous. Even so, attributing **הַפֶּשַׁע** to Antiochus IV seems to miss the instrumental

⁵Merrill Willis (2010:140) also thinks that **הַפֶּשַׁע** encompasses the sins of Jews and Antiochus IV.

function of Antiochus IV in 8:12. He does not cause the הִפְשֵׁעַ ; rather, he puts an end to it. $\text{פְּשָׁעַ$ refers to Jewish violations of God's law, especially with reference to activity at the temple (Edlin 2009:201). Because of $\text{פְּשָׁעַ$, a host of God's people is given to Antiochus IV, and the daily sacrifice stops. Moreover, Jewish violations of cultic law lead to the desecration (trampling) of God's sanctuary by Seleucid soldiers. Stated differently, God uses Antiochene sacrilege to stop Jewish transgressions.

Similar to Gowan and Collins, Seow (2003a:147) tries to make a distinction between the transgression and sin (the first two infinitives in 9:24) of Antiochus IV on the one hand and the iniquity (the third infinitive) of the Jews on the other (see also Gowan 2001:133). Daniel's prayer, however, does not make this distinction. It never expresses concern about the sins of the nations in general or the blasphemy of a Gentile king in particular. More to the point is Goldingay's (1989:258) observation that the first three infinitives are "near synonyms: wickedness is characterized as rebellion, failure and waywardness. . . ." The prayer is concerned with the sins of God's people that justifiably necessitated the exile and occasioned the reproach of the nations in the midst of whom the Israelites now lived. For this reason, the following statement by Lacocque (1979:177) is baffling:

But in the time of Daniel, the Seer no longer addresses reproaches to the community—for meanwhile the people had become a church—but only consolations and promises. Evil is no longer in Israel's heart, but in the heart of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The confession of sin is still present, to be sure, but it has acquired a supplementary character, something like the prerequisite for the presentation of divine secrets, a sort of initiation rite.

How does one reconcile the claim of no evil in Israel's heart with the penitential language in Second Temple literature (e.g., Bar 1:15-3:7, Tobit 3:2-6) or Jewish denunciations of shameful behavior by fellow Jews (e.g., 1 Macc 1:11-15, 2 Macc 4:7-17)? Nevertheless, the difficulty

with Seow's view applies to Lacocque's. Daniel's prayer of confession simply does not address the impiety and persecution of Gentile rulers. It is concerned about the sins of God's people.

So then, Gowan (2001:126-127) is closer to the truth when he admits that Daniel's prayer "blames the continuing desolation of Jerusalem entirely on Israel's sinfulness." Daniel was not concerned about the arrogance of a Seleucid (or Babylonian) ruler. It was Israel's rebellion against her covenant suzerain that was on his mind, and Gabriel's message from God had to do with that. Daniel's prayer clearly states that Israel overstepped her boundaries by sinning repeatedly against Yahweh. The transgression is covenantal disloyalty on the part of God's people. Strictly speaking, Daniel did not pray about the Antiochene crisis in the second century B.C.E. but about Israelite unfaithfulness before the exile.⁶ Nevertheless, his prayer sits among three visions about the Antiochene crisis (Dan 8, 9, and 11, and some scholars would count Dan 7 as the fourth). This placement indicates that the prayer addresses a history of sin that did not stop at the exile but went beyond it into the second century.

The definite article prefixed to עֲשֵׂה in 9:24 might seem to require a definite act of transgression, but the definite article does not rule out a general or collective understanding of the noun. In his prayer, Daniel did not confess a specific transgression but a long history, even a pattern, of disregarding God's commandments. If עֲשֵׂה is understood more as an abstraction that refers to Israel's state of being in rebellion (which, of course, consists of individual transgressions), then the article is used generically as an article of class or collective singular. On this generic use of the article, Waltke and O'Connor (1990:244-246 [§13.5.1f-g]) say: "The use of the article to mark out the particular and unique . . . is balanced by the *generic* use. The

⁶Cf. Venter (2007:39) who says, "The prayer is in essence an exilic prayer." Goldingay (1989:251) agrees, "The prayer is prayed as out of the situation of exile." Davies (1998:62) adds "that the prayer stems originally from the liturgy of the exiled community (where it probably remained even after the so-called 'Restoration')"

article of class marks out not a particular single person or thing but a class of persons, things, or qualities that are unique and determined in themselves” (cf. Kautzsch 1910:406 [§§126l-m] and Williams and Beckman 2007:39 [§92]). So then, עֲשֵׂה can refer to a specific transgression (i.e., the transgression) as well as a collection of transgressions that indicates a mindset of rejection of authority (i.e., rebellion). That the first objective of the seventy sevens mentions violations of God’s covenant indicates that Gabriel (and Yahweh) agrees with Daniel’s prayer of confession. Israel has disobeyed, even rebelled.

This first objective of the seventy sevens, however, informs Daniel that God has determined to put an end to the rebellion of his people. The root of לָבֵלַע, the first infinitive, is בָּלַע, which in the Qal means “to restrain” or “to prevent.” The stem of the verb in Daniel 9:24 is Piel. So then, the seventy sevens will definitely or firmly prevent (further) transgression. Daniel 9:24, however, has the only occurrence of this verb in the Piel. Perhaps for this reason, the Masoretes understood the root to be בָּלָה, which in the Piel can be translated “to make an end,” “to finish,” or “to destroy.” In contrast to בָּלַע (the *ketiv* reading), Piel forms for בָּלָה (the *qere* reading) are well-attested. Other more recent authorities also accept the *qere* (Brown, Driver, and Briggs 1907:478; Koehler and Baumgartner 2001:477). Kautzsch (1910:216 [§75nn]) adds support: “The close relation existing between verbs לָבַע and לָבַל is shown in Hebrew by the fact that the verbs of one class often borrow forms from the other, especially in the later writers and poets.” Perhaps it is enough to say that the sense of both verbs can fit the context. By means of the seventy sevens, God will ultimately prevent and eliminate rebellion.

The verb כָּלָה, if adopted, could mean that God, the covenant Lord, will leave the hearts of hardened covenant-breakers as they are and stop the rebellion by destroying the vassals (cf. Josh 24:20). One way to put an end to sin is to destroy the sinners. This course of action would hardly be the solution for which Daniel had prayed, and annihilation was not what Daniel expected from his reading of Jeremiah—more on this in the next section. For now, the first infinitive assures Daniel that God will address the proclivity of his people to stray from his revealed will. If, as all parts of the Old Testament agree, willfully departing from God's instruction puts one on the road to death (i.e., separation from God's favorable presence), then the first infinitive of Daniel 9:24 announces God will graciously rescue his people from the deleterious effects of their covenantal infractions. He will put an end to sin so that his people become unable to sin.

Gentry (2010:32) considers this first objective the efficacious cure for the cause of the exile: "Before the new exodus, there will be a longer period of exile. Thus the real return from exile, a return including the forgiveness of sins, renewal of the covenant, and consecration of the temple, will not take just seventy years, but rather seventy 'sevens,' i.e. a much longer time." Though Gentry seems to regard the seventy sevens as additional punishment beyond the seventy years of Jeremiah (he equates them with the time of wrath in Daniel 8:19), he rightly recognizes that the Babylonian exile by itself did not change Israel's heart. The more positive purpose of the seventy sevens is to stop rebellion by forgiving it and changing the heart—the stated purposes of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:33-34. Forgiveness and regeneration, however, hardly seem like evidence of more wrath and judgment. They are the manifestations of God's mercy that Daniel sought in prayer. Stopping rebellion by forgiving sin and renewing the

covenant may take time, but the first objective has to do with grace not retribution. Grace that brings an end to sin is a reason to be jubilant.

5.3.2. Connections to Jeremiah

The noun, **עֲשָׂה**, occurs only once in Jeremiah (5:6). The verb, **עָשָׂה**, occurs four times (2:8, 2:29, 3:13, 33:8). Each occurrence has to do with Israel's willful disregard of Yahweh's covenant that necessitated the exile. If Daniel had been reading Jeremiah, he knew how that prophet, similar to Hosea, exposed Israel and Judah's rebellion by using the metaphor of adultery. Israel violated the trust that partners in an exclusive relationship have toward one another. The exile, as the final curse of the covenant, was justified, and yet exile would not be the last word in God's relationship with his people. After seventy years, Yahweh would bring back the captives and restore them to the Promised Land (33:7). He would forgive and cleanse their iniquity (**יָצָה**) that was evidence of their sinning (**עָשָׂה**) and rebelling (**עָשָׂה**) against him (33:8). These same words that comprise some of Jeremiah's vocabulary of sin appear not only in Daniel's prayer but also in Gabriel's response. Daniel has already prayed for forgiveness in light of the hopeful promises of Jeremiah. The first objective of the seventy sevens (as well as the other five) informs Daniel that he has read Jeremiah and the times correctly. God will do something to eliminate Israel's sin problem.

The previous section ended by stating that one way to put an end to sin is by destroying the sinners. It is true that Jeremiah sometimes spoke as if God wanted to end the rebellion by eliminating the rebels (cf. Jer 9:16, 16:4, 44:27), but Jeremiah also declared God's intention to stop short of making a complete end of his people. For example,

This is what the LORD says:
The whole land will be ruined,
though I will not destroy it completely. (Jer 4:27)

Go through her vineyards and ravage them,
but do not destroy them completely.
Strip off her branches,
for these people do not belong to the LORD. (Jer 5:10)

“Yet even in those days,” declares the LORD, “I will not destroy you completely.” (Jer 5:18)

“I am with you and will save you,”
declares the LORD.
“Though I completely destroy all the nations
among which I scatter you,
I will not completely destroy you.
I will discipline you but only with justice;
I will not let you go entirely unpunished.” (Jer 30:11)

“Do not fear, O Jacob my servant,
for I am with you,” declares the LORD.
“Though I completely destroy all the nations
among which I scatter you,
I will not completely destroy you.
I will discipline you but only with justice;
I will not let you go entirely unpunished.” (Jer 46:28)

Moreover, Jeremiah’s purchase of his cousin’s field looked ahead to a future beyond the exile (Jer 32). Jeremiah redeemed the property in a time of war because Yahweh had said, “Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land” (Jer 32:15). Jeremiah invested in a future that he may not have lived to see but that he, on the strength of God’s promise, believed would eventuate. God would give his people an inheritance, which is the essence of jubilee.

As is evident from the stated occasion of Daniel’s prayer, Daniel was familiar with Jeremiah’s preaching. When Gabriel said that the seventy sevens would make an end of Israel’s rebellion, Daniel surely heard these words in the context of Yahweh’s promise through Jeremiah to stop short of wiping out his people for good. How Yahweh would transform the heart from hardened rebellion to cheerful obedience is not yet stated, but Daniel has assurance that Yahweh will do what the Israelites and all humankind cannot do for themselves. He will reverse the

direction of an obstinate people—something every bit as difficult to do as changing the Ethiopian’s skin or the leopard’s spots (Jer 13:23). A people cleansed by the grace of God would then inherit the Promised Land that the bad figs had forfeited by their rejection of Jeremiah’s preaching (Jer 24).

5.3.3. The Antiochene Context

The setting of Daniel’s prayer and Gabriel’s prophecy is the end of the exile, but the exile, as the post-exilic books establish, did not eliminate sin. Jeremiah may have preached judgment and restoration, but judgment did not change the human heart. Consequently, God’s people, whether back in the Promised Land (e.g., Malachi) or scattered throughout the Persian Empire (e.g., Esther), still struggled to trust God and obey his commands. The first objective of the seventy sevens starkly affirms this reality. There is no illusion of imminent utopia here. God’s people will continue to sin for seventy sevens. “The idea [of the first objective],” says Collins (1993b:354), “is that evil must run its course until the appointed time.” God will not transform the human heart all at once in 539 B.C.E. Rather, he will, for reasons known only to him, use seventy sevens to reverse the effects of sin’s curse.

What the post-exilic community soon discovered, God’s people by the time of the Antiochene crisis had known for centuries: the end of the exile did not change much. While some Jews acted on Cyrus’ decree by returning to Judea, the new location did not prevent them from sinning against God and neighbor. When their circumstances became more real than God’s promises and their love for God concomitantly grew cold, they abandoned their faith and embraced Hellenism. As already noted, Jason illegitimately bought the office of high priest and then corrupted it by, among other ways, slaughtering those who resisted his progressive policy (2 Macc 5:6). Menelaus then offered a larger price to Antiochus IV and murdered Onias III.

Before that, Simon had falsely accused Onias III (2 Macc 4:1-2) in an effort to gain access to the temple treasury. In various ways, these men idolatrously wanted political power at the expense of obedience to God and spiritual care of God's people. Consequently, the people who were supposed to be served by their leaders suffered neglect and wandered from the faith (1 Macc 1:52). Bright (1981:422) says that "the Temple ceased to be the property of the Jewish people as such and became the shrine of the polis, which in turn meant . . . that all barriers to the thoroughgoing Hellenization of the Jewish religion were removed." Yahweh was either worshiped alongside of Zeus or identified with him. All of this disregard for God's Word, according to Daniel 8:12-13, made the Promised Land a spiritually desolate place and climaxed in Antiochus IV's desecration of the temple. It is hard not to think that the situation would have been different if Jason and others had honored the priestly labors of the evidently more devout Onias III. Nevertheless, he too seemed to have political connections with Egypt (2 Macc 3:11), and perhaps the favorable view of him in 1 and 2 Maccabees fails to tell the whole story.

Sin in the forms of false religion and uncharitable conduct characterized God's people just as much in the second century as in the sixth. The writer of Daniel brings these periods together in order to give a realistic assessment of his or her reader's situation. People living in dark days may want a quick resolution, but God does not wave a magic wand in order to make everything better immediately. Still, the first objective of the seventy sevens gives assurance that sin has a limit. God will not tolerate it forever.

5.4. The Second Infinitive

5.4.1. In the Context of Daniel 9

The second objective of the seventy sevens is **לְחַתֵּם חַטָּאוֹת**, which literally means "to seal up sins." As with the first infinitive, there is uncertainty about the form of the second infinitive.

סָתַם (Qal infinitive construct of סָתַם⁷) is the *ketiv* reading, and it appears to lie behind the Septuagint's σφραγίσαι. The *qere* reading suggests that סָתַם (Hiphil infinitive construct of סָתַם) is to be preferred. Both verbs can make sense in the context, for both have to do with bringing an end to sin. If the *ketiv* is retained, then סָתַם is used metaphorically. Sin, as it were, is put in some container that is never to be opened (cf. Job 14:17). Sin is locked up and kept out of the reach of humans. If the *qere* is preferred, then sin comes to an end by being put to an end—an affirmation not too dissimilar from the first infinitival expression. סָתַם occurs again in 9:24 with reference to prophecy, and this objective of the seventy sevens will be discussed below.

סָתַם appears to be an incomplete spelling of סָתַם, the plural of סָתַם.⁸ Plural number in Hebrew can either indicate more than one of an object or express fullness or intensity of an abstraction (Kautzsch 1910:396-397 [§124a]; Williams and Beckman 2007:2-2 [§§7-8]). Either option conveys the proper sense here. Regarding what they call the plural of abstraction, Joüon and Muraoka (2008:471 [§136g]) say, “An abstract noun is quite often expressed by a plural, which properly speaking aims at the various concrete manifestations of a quality or state.” The root idea of סָתַם has to do with missing a mark (cf. Judg 20:16). Various instances of missing the mark abound. Nevertheless, each violation of the revealed will of God—whether in thought, word, or deed—partakes of the more abstract notion of being a sinner. Sinners are in a

⁷The expected pointing would be סָתַם. The Masoretes put the vowels of the *qere* on the *ketiv*. See Kelley, Mynatt, and Crawford (1998:11).

⁸The *qere* removes the *waw* to convey singular number. Singular number could refer to one specific instance of breaking God's law or more abstractly to all violations of God's law or even to a habitual state of violating God's law.

state of sin or sinfulness. They sin not only because they want to but also because they have to. Sinning is their nature or predisposition. Sinners are born in sin (Ps 51:5), and it is this sinful state as well as specific sins generated by the state that misses God's intention for humanity.

Humanity was made as the image of God and so should reflect divine character and conduct. Yahweh called the descendants of Abraham and those Gentiles that came out of Egypt with them to be a kingdom of priests to the nations. As they obeyed God's laws, they would model the justice and goodness of God as a redeemed alternative to the injustice and unkindness that too often are business as usual. But they did not always obey, and Daniel's contemporaries, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, preached the need for a new heart (intellect and volition) that only God's grace could produce. Such a heart would not be predisposed to sin. It would be released from that bondage even as the state of being in sin would metaphorically be sealed up, i.e., eliminated.

The point of the second infinitive is, of course, related to the first. God will do something remedial about Israel's violations of his commandments. According to Van Groningen (1990:832), "Daniel is informed that Yahweh, having heard his intercession, will again finish the matter and close up the entire situation of Israel's sins." As was the case with the first infinitive, the second infinitive does not indicate how God will act constructively, but it offers hope to Daniel nonetheless. God will have mercy on a sinful and rebellious people, and he will prevent them from profaning his name.

5.4.2. Connections to Jeremiah

The verb **סָתַר** also occurs in Jeremiah 32 but not in the context of hiding something away. Instead, a legal transaction is in view. In accordance with the law of redemption in Leviticus 25, all land belonged to Yahweh who graciously gave each Israelite a share. When someone's patrimony was jeopardized by economic distress, a kinsman had the opportunity (and

privilege) to buy back the land and restore it to his relative. Jeremiah redeemed the property of his cousin, signed the deed, and sealed it in front of witnesses. The deed was then put in a clay jar to preserve it. Acting as the kinsman-redeemer, Jeremiah kept property in the family (even if during an invasion) and attested to his conviction that his prophecies of restoration would come true and that his relative would retain his inheritance. In this context, then, **מָחַיָּה** conveys hope that God will not only tear down and uproot in judgment but also restore and rebuild in mercy.

As for the other variant, Jeremiah uses **מָחַיָּה** with a negative connotation of being finished or destroyed (24:10, 27:8, 36:23, 44:12). Yahweh, Nebuchadnezzar, or Jehoiakim can be the subject. The Israelites, false prophets, or Jeremiah's scroll can be the object. If the *qere* is preferred in Daniel 9:24, then Gabriel informs Daniel that sin will reach an end—a suitable and welcome answer to Daniel's prayer.

תַּאֲחִיזָה occurs thirteen times in Jeremiah. Because it appears so frequently in the rest of the Old Testament, it cannot be considered part of the special vocabulary of Jeremiah. For nine of the thirteen occurrences, however, Jeremiah pairs **תַּאֲחִיזָה** with **עֵינִי**, the object of the third infinitive that will be discussed next.⁹ **עֵינִי** occurs twenty-two times in Jeremiah—also a small fraction of its total usage by the other writers of the Old Testament. Much of the time, **תַּאֲחִיזָה** and **עֵינִי** are interchangeable terms. The combination of these words functions as a merism that encompasses all the violations of God's revealed will for his people.

⁹Jeremiah 5:25, 14:10, 16:10, 16:18, 18:23, 30:14, 31:34, 26:3, and 50:20.

5.4.3. The Antiochene Context

If the first objective emphasizes the limit of sin, the second similarly announces the end of sin. Sin, however, does not merely run its course after which there is no more sin. Someone, (viz., God) has to stop it, or it will continue. In the Antiochene context, the sin of God's people did not come to a complete end, but false worship ceased for a time. Mattathias and his sons (the Maccabees) took a stand that eventually led to the defeat of Antiochus IV (1 Macc 2:42-48) and the restoration of proper worship (1 Macc 4:36-58). The writer of 1 Maccabees saw the hand of God at work in these events (1 Macc 3:19, 4:55) and compared them with the Exodus from Egypt (1 Macc 4:8-9), the victories of David (1 Macc 4:30), and the deliverance of Hezekiah (1 Macc 7:41). The Maccabean victory may not have been the final defeat of evil, but it was one of Goldingay's partial realizations in the long sweep of redemptive history. It removed the disgrace brought by the Gentiles (1 Macc 4:58), but, of course, the Gentiles had the cooperation of Hellenized Jews. If "all the house of Jacob was clothed with shame" (1 Macc 1:28), Antiochus IV's persecution was not solely responsible for the Jews' humiliation. The Jews were not pure victims (Bright 1981:419). They "had joined with the Gentiles and sold themselves to do evil" (1 Macc 1:15), but God, to use the words of Mattathias, would not allow "the ruin of my people, the ruin of the holy city" (1 Macc 2:7). According to 2 Maccabees 5:17 and 6:12-16, Antiochus IV was actually God's agent of discipline but not of annihilation. The Jews were still God's people—wayward as they might be—and God used the impiety of Antiochus IV to get the attention of some (Harrington 1999:149; Nickelsburg 2005:107).

5.5. The Third Infinitive

5.5.1. In the Context of Daniel 9

The third objective of the seventy sevens is לְכַפֵּר עֲוֹן (to cover or atone for iniquity). A common word in the Pentateuch, especially Leviticus, the verb כָּפַר usually has to do with making atonement for sin, which constitutes a violation of the revealed will of God. In Leviticus 1:4 and 4:4, a person bringing a burnt or sin offering was supposed to lay his hand on the lamb thereby transferring his guilt and punishment to the animal. The animal would then die in his place to pay the penalty. The effect of substitutionary atonement is forgiveness and reconciliation (e.g., Lev 4:26).¹⁰ It is evident from Daniel's prayer, which speaks of rebelling, that Israel was estranged from Yahweh. Repeated and hardened disobedience was Jeremiah's stated reason for the seventy years of exile (Jer 25:3). Gabriel assures Daniel that a history of sin will not continue to alienate Israel from Yahweh. God, not Israel, will act over the course of seventy sevens to expiate or make amends for Israel's deviant conduct, as well as her proneness to act deviantly. He will propitiate his anger and reconcile his estranged people to himself (Leupold 1969:413; Van Groningen 1990:832).

With this third infinitive, Gabriel informs Daniel how the seventy sevens will put an end to sin. At first glance, the reference to atonement gives the impression that God will re-instate the sacrificial system and go back to what was the status quo before the exile. The sacrificial system, however, did not and could not put an end to sin. It was unable to change the heart. As other prophets complained (e.g., Jer 6:20, Amos 5:22), the sacrificial system was subject to abuse in the form of perfunctory and even disobedient performance. On the one hand, Isaiah told Israel to stop bringing a multitude of heartless and therefore meaningless sacrifices (Isa 1:11).

¹⁰See Driver (1900:136) and Young (1949:199).

On the other hand, Malachi criticized the priests for accepting blemished animals from apathetic and poorly instructed offerers (Mal 1:10). In combination with the threefold announcement to do away with rebellion, sin, and iniquity, the sheer length of the seventy sevens, when compared with Jeremiah's seventy years, arouses the expectation that God is about to take definitive steps to address the problem that has kept his people from presenting a faithful witness to the surrounding nations.

5.5.2. Connections to Jeremiah

כָּפַר appears only once in Jeremiah, and this single occurrence may not have influenced Daniel's understanding of the third infinitive. As Yahweh had told Jeremiah not to pray for the people of Judah (7:16, 11:14, 14:11), so Jeremiah asked God not to atone for the iniquity (עֲוֹן) of his people (18:23). When God differentiated between those who were his and those who were not, Jeremiah properly asked that those who had confirmed their hatred of God by persecuting his prophet be eliminated. Those who love Yahweh do not take vengeance into their own hands. Rather, they approach him in prayer and ask him to remove those who set themselves in opposition to his kingdom.

Daniel's prayer of confession does not ask for mercy upon the likes of Jehoiakim and other residents of Jerusalem for whom Yahweh had no words of comfort. Rather, it was concerned about those who were alive at the time that he was reading Jeremiah. At the dawn of restoration, Gabriel offers a promise of atonement, forgiveness, and reconciliation. God will have a people for his name, and he will take whatever steps are necessary to create them. That said, the mystery of divine providence allowed for many of Jeremiah's contemporaries to cut themselves off from the future that Jeremiah offered on condition of repentance.

As mentioned earlier, עָוֹן and חַטָּאת are synonyms, and both can refer to sin generally. עָוֹן is etymologically related to עָוָה, which can mean to pervert, twist, or go astray. If חַטָּאות has to do with missing the mark, עָוֹן means that one has veered off course by departing from the prescribed way. In Jeremiah, עָוֹן, can refer to infractions of God's law (e.g., 5:25, 14:7, 18:23) or to the guilt that results from disobedience (e.g., 2:22, 3:13). The two meanings, of course, are closely related, and individual instances of עָוֹן can include both senses.

Baldwin (1978a:169) says about the third objective of the seventy sevens, "God has found a way of forgiving sin without being untrue to His own righteousness." Jeremiah 31:34 and 50:20 anticipate a time when God would forgive both חַטָּאת and עָוֹן. The seventy sevens indicate that this program of salvation will be a lengthy one. God might be able to deal with sin all at once, but he has chosen to restore his people and his world over a prolonged period. The next infinitive says more about righteousness, which the seventy sevens link to atonement. Atonement is necessary for making the righteousness of God's people possible.

5.5.3. The Antiochene Context

. If the third objective speaks of making atonement, 1 Maccabees 4:52-58 describes the resumption of sacrificial offerings at the temple refurbished by the Maccabees. Following the law of Moses, the Maccabees and their supporters built a new altar out of uncut stones. This altar replaced the one defiled by Antiochus IV's abomination of desolation. Judah Maccabee found faithful and legitimate priests to serve at the altar and in the temple. After dedicating the altar for eight days, the people sacrificed burnt offerings whose purpose, of course, was to expiate sin and propitiate God's anger. Second Maccabees 10:4 adds further evidence of true

repentance. The people asked God to keep them from future sin and, if necessary, to use discipline for this purpose.

The third objective of the seventy sevens assures Daniel that God will provide atonement for sin. Daniel would presumably think of atonement in terms of the sacrificial system. Though 1 Maccabees is reserved in its use of direct reference to God (cf. Bartlett 1998:30; Collins 2004:579; Harrington 1999:133-134), the reports of atoning sacrifice correspond to pentateuchal instruction. The Maccabees made use of the Old Testament's means of grace, and God continued to grant forgiveness and cleansing through the death of an unblemished substitute.

5.6. Interlude: The First Three Objectives and Jubilee

As noted above, the first three objectives focus on the removal of sin that Daniel confessed in his prayer. How the jubilee structure of the seventy sevens pertains to them might not be readily apparent. The year of jubilee, of course, fell every fifty years. Except for sabbatical years every seven years, God allowed sowing and reaping and buying and selling to occur for forty-nine years. During that time, each Israelite faced the vagaries of an agrarian economy. Weather and pestilence could account for misfortune, but so also could poor decisions. The jubilee offered not only rest for land, animals, and people but also forgiveness in the form of debt release. It canceled all outstanding obligations and returned all land to its rightful heirs. Moreover, it reminded the Israelites and their observing neighbors that Yahweh owns the land and guarantees an inheritance for all his people.¹¹ The vicissitudes of life could not separate God's people from his love or disinherit them from the riches of his grace.

The provision of the year of jubilee, of course, appears in the Pentateuch, and the Pentateuch teaches that the Promised Land was the stage on which Israel performed her mission as a kingdom of priests to the nations (Exod 19:6). Economics in these nations tended to provide

¹¹Bergsma (2007:63) says, "The inalienability of the land flowed from its sacrality."

wealth for a few at the expense of many (Fager 1993:88). Kings owned most property and leased it to subjects who labored on behalf of the state and its gods (Ahlström 2000:591-592, 598-599; Leprohon 2000:286; O'Connor 2000:320). The distinctiveness of Israel's mission is seen in the Pentateuch's disavowal of a top-down approach to economics. Israel's law protected private property, and her society was designed to be de-centralized and non-hierarchical so as to promote the social health and economic viability of families. More land and wealth for families enabled them to have a meaningful share in the national mission. Each family could work its patrimony to supply its needs, but the land, positioned between three continents, also gave opportunities to meet travelers. A people redeemed from Egypt were supposed to treat each other and outsiders with justice and compassion, thereby modeling a redeemed society and serving as a down-payment on creation restored. God's new community offered hope to the rest of the world.

The year of jubilee should be further understood in the context of other legislation designed to check poverty.¹² The Pentateuch banned interest on loans and put limits on collateral (Exod 22:25-27, Deut 24:6). Wages were supposed to be paid promptly (Lev 19:13, Deut 24:14-15). Although slavery was permitted for a maximum of six years (Exod 21:2), its purpose was to help a disadvantaged person work off his debt, not trap him in economic bondage. When a slave was released, the slave owner was supposed to send him away with a generous amount of supplies so that he could make a new start (Deut 15:12-14). These measures were designed not only to protect the family's participation in the national mission but also to maintain the integrity of the national mission. A kingdom of priests that abuse one another can hardly model a redeemed alternative to others.

¹²Much of this paragraph and the next depends on Wright (2004:76-99, 146-180).

The year of jubilee, however, indicates that God is a realist. It is one thing to rescue people and give them land of their own. It is another to keep them from exploiting one another. Some people, of course, have more business savvy than others, but all property owners are subject to the effects of destructive weather and bad harvests. Such setbacks offered wealthy kinsmen the opportunity to redeem mortgaged land and build huge estates for themselves. Though land might remain within an extended family, individual families could become serfs. Generational debt and slavery could and did result. Deuteronomy 15:4-6 may present God's ideal of a redeemed community without poverty, but God knew that redeemed sinners are still sinners who can be ruthless. By breaking the downward spiral of misfortune, debt, and bondage, the year of jubilee was supposed to prevent poverty and peasantry from taking hold permanently. It protected the inalienability of family land and preserved each family's participation in the mission of God's people.

Sadly, the Old Testament never records the observance of the jubilee, but it is aware of injustice among God's people. In a book that promotes the benefits of hard work and prudent choices, Proverbs 13:23 says, "A poor man's field may produce abundant food, but injustice sweeps it away." Though the farmer worked hard, forces beyond his control—a thief, broker, or politician—robbed him of the fruits of his labor. Isaiah 5 and Micah 2 further report how greedy leaders dispossessed average Israelites of their land. After a few generations, entrenched corruption would have prevented the restoration of property. Samuel had warned that kingship would make Israel a top-down society (1 Sam 8), and it did. The intrusion of the monarchy into private life and the concomitant neglect of the jubilee created unmitigated misery and disinheritance among the people who were supposed to counter the business-as-usual of the

ancient Near East. A verse like Proverbs 13:23 recognizes that not everyone in Israel feared Yahweh and did right by his or her neighbor.

Whether Daniel was familiar with Proverbs 13:23 or not, he knew the truth and reality of it. His prayer of confession may focus on how Israel's transgressions of the law of Moses constituted rebellion against God, but those same transgressions also hurt people in many instances. The prophets mentioned in Daniel 9:6 unfailingly drew attention to the Israelites' uncharitable treatment of one another. Gabriel was also aware of the social consequences of sin. He not only announced three times that Yahweh would remove sin but also employed the structure of the seventy sevens in order to offer assurance of complete deliverance from sin and its material effects. Ultimate and lasting jubilee requires the absence of both. If Daniel's prayer recalls the prophetic threats of judgment and loss, the jubilee format of Gabriel's response reinforces prophetic promises of return and inheritance. Ten jubilee cycles implicitly convey the cancellation of debts and the restoration of property—both of which would be necessary because of the unscrupulous conduct that had led to exile.

As will be seen in chapter 10, the book of *Jubilees* responded to the feeling of alienation that faithful Jews felt in the second century. They may have lived in the Promised Land, but they were hardly free of oppressors. They had a tenuous hold on their inheritance. Because Jews during the Antiochene crisis and Hasmonean Kingdom knew about sin and the socio-economic misery that it created, the jubilee structure of the six objectives of the seventy sevens would have resonated with them. It offered hope for a future deliverance from the consequences of sin.

5.7. The Fourth Infinitive

5.7.1. In the Context of Daniel 9

The fourth objective of the seventy sevens is **לְהַבִּיאַ צֶדֶק עַל־מִיָּם** (to bring everlasting righteousness). Daniel's prayer of confession acknowledges in 9:7 that God is righteous (**צֶדֶקָה**) and that his people, in effect, are unrighteous (9:18). In fact, they are covered with shame because of their willful violations of God's commands. If 9:15 mentions God's redemption through the Exodus events, then the references to infractions of the law of Moses and the enactment of its curses implicitly recall the reasons why God redeemed a people for his name. After the Israelites evidenced their faith in the words of God's prophet (Moses) by putting the blood of the Passover lambs on their doorposts, God delivered them from Egyptian injustice and gave them a standard of right thinking and conduct. That standard, which reflected God's own attributes and character, taught them how to live as his covenant people and thereby present a distinct witness to the nations around them. Moreover, the righteousness of God in the Exodus was the rationale and motivation for Israel's mission. As God treated the Israelites, so they should treat one another and outsiders. The righteous person seeks the well-being of his or her neighbor and works for a society that is systemically just.

In the narrative world (and for some people, the real world) of the Old Testament, Egyptian injustice took various forms (Wright 2006:268-272). Political injustice appeared as discrimination against boys with a view to ultimate genocide. Economic injustice occurred through the slave labor of an ethnic minority for the benefit of the ruling class. The social injustice of the genocidal policy violated the right to life of some of Egypt's most helpless victims. Religious injustice denied the Israelites the freedom to worship their God and forced them, instead, to serve an oppressive state. Mosaic law provided correctives to these instances of

injustice so that the Israelites would have a form of justice and compassion different from the Egyptians and other peoples. The law was given to Israel so that she might model a redeemed community. If she lived as God intended, the nations would notice. They might not see Yahweh because he is invisible, but they would see the practical evidence of a society built on his laws. They would then know who he is and possibly desire to be like him.

Deuteronomy 6:25 says that the Israelites would have righteousness if they adhered to God's commandment to observe all of the Mosaic law. Obeying Moses was the way to being like God who is the standard of righteousness. Being like God, in turn, is the way to have a righteous society that contrasts with the imbalanced statism of Egypt (cf. Deut 6:20-23). Of course, Daniel acknowledged in his prayer that the Israelites had not obeyed God and so were not like him. Consequently, disregard for the law sabotaged their mission. Gabriel's promise of everlasting righteousness assured Daniel that a time was coming when God's people would bear the stamp of his character. They would then fulfill their mission of modeling a redeemed and righteous community. Daniel's prayer repeatedly acknowledged the righteousness of God, and so the fourth objective assures Daniel that "[t]he righteousness of God . . . reflects God's will to do what is right for humanity, whatever the cost may be (compare Rom. 3:21-26)" (Seow 2003a:143). How the God of Daniel would make an unrighteous people righteous is a subject that Jeremiah addressed in more detail.

5.7.2. Connections to Jeremiah

Daniel knew not only from his own experience but also from Jeremiah that the Israelites had failed to model a righteous society. The book of Jeremiah abounds with evidence of unrighteous activity on the part of God's people. For example, the temple sermon in Jeremiah 7 draws attention to oppression, theft, murder, adultery, perjury, and idolatry—all of which constituted violations of

God's law and invalidated the sincerity of temple rituals. Jeremiah 34 records how slave owners in Jerusalem reneged on their decision to release their slaves in accordance with the law of manumission in Exodus 21:2 and Deuteronomy 15:12. The Israelites, sadly, exploited one another to the same degree as any pagan tyrant. This decision to release slaves was based on a royal edict by Zedekiah, but Zedekiah, who seemed to know what was right despite conflicting advice from his officials, fearfully waffled in his commitment to do it. What happened in Jeremiah 34 was at least the second time that Zedekiah had acted in bad faith. Earlier, Zedekiah did not keep his word to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kgs 24:20, Ezek 17:11-18). Now Zedekiah was allowing certain Israelites not to keep faith with each other. Zedekiah neither modeled nor promoted righteousness, i.e., adherence to God's commandments. In this regard, he imitated his younger brother, Jehoiakim, who had occupied the throne of Judah before him.

Jeremiah had specifically indicted Jehoiakim for foolishly building a new palace without righteousness (Jer 22:13). This project was foolish because Jehoiakim, a puppet of Egypt and then Babylon, hardly deserved a splendid palace in the twilight of the southern kingdom. This royal house was an ostentatious display of imagined greatness and power. Even worse, though, was the absence of righteousness in its construction. Jehoiakim did not pay the builders of his new mansion a fair wage. In fact, he did not pay them any wage. Skilled members of the covenant community worked as slaves for a Davidic descendant. Kings in Israel were supposed to consider themselves exemplars of godly conduct for their fellow Israelites, not elitists who enjoyed luxury at the expense of others. Is it any wonder that Jeremiah called the king and his officials in 22:3 to govern with an eye to justice (מִשְׁפָּט) and righteousness (צְדָקָה) and contrasted Jehoiakim with his father, Josiah, who did right by others (22:15)? Of course, Jeremiah was hardly an exception among the prophets who regularly condemned the abuse of power and

highlighted the perpetration of injustice (e.g., Isa 5:22-23, Mic 3:1-2, Hab 1:2-4). Not to be forgotten, though, is the reference to Jehoiakim in Daniel 1:1. In the narrative world of the book of Daniel (and for some readers, the real world), Daniel went into exile because of the unrighteousness of Jehoiakim. If Jeremiah 25 gave Daniel a reason to think that the exile was almost over, Jeremiah 22 reminded him why he had spent much of his life in Babylon.

Nevertheless, not all prophets were cut from the same cloth as Jeremiah. Jeremiah 6:13-15 and 23:11-14 criticize certain prophets (and priests) for letting the status quo of social rottenness go unchallenged and thereby becoming co-conspirators in evil. Too many prophets overlooked entrenched forms of economic oppression and judicial corruption. So as not to jeopardize their own security, they said what power holders, especially kings, wanted to hear. They lacked courage to call for repentance and so allowed theological error and gross misconduct to multiply. By telling people that God wanted what they wanted, the false prophets promoted unrighteousness rather than confront it.

God sent prophets to remind kings and other leaders of a different reality than *Realpolitik*. Although God had chosen David and his descendants to be his vice-regents, kingship had gone awry and become an avenue for political favors and personal enrichment. Prophets were supposed to critique the religion of statism and its politics of oppression. They called kings and commoners back to the worship of Yahweh and the practice of his justice. Meanwhile, tension exists in the prophetic books between calls to repentance and announcements of judgment. The prophets seemed to know that kings especially would not listen. For this reason, the prophets also forecasted the eventual doom of statism and promised the coming of a righteous kingdom and king.

Having read Jeremiah, Daniel would surely contrast the צֶדֶק עֲלָמִים (everlasting righteousness) with his compatriots who lack it and for whom he has prayed. Gabriel announces the good news that God would graciously give them the righteousness that they so desperately need but cannot obtain in their own strength. Because Daniel says that he had been reading Jeremiah, it is hard not to associate lasting righteousness with the new covenant that featured the internalization of God's law. The old covenant, which provided the standard of righteousness, was not able to write the law of God on the heart and so make people righteous. It was, in fact, never intended to have this capability (cf. Ridderbos 1975:153; Williams 2005:151; Wright 2004:27-29, 52-54, 64-65). After the redemptive event of the Exodus, the Mosaic covenant presupposed regeneration made possible by faith in the blood of the Passover lamb. The Mosaic covenant, then, had to do with the sanctification and mission of an already redeemed people. It told them how to live righteously in response to God's preliminary and anticipatory provision of redemption in the Exodus (cf. Baker 2010:74). Of course, much of Israel's story after the revelation of the law consisted of covenantal infractions that necessitated the enactment of covenantal curses—the burden of Daniel's prayer. The fourth objective of the seventy sevens announces the antitypical source of righteousness. Because the blood of animals can neither atone for sin nor change the heart, God will provide a typologically related means to resolve the problem of unrighteousness.

Jeremiah not only lamented the absence of righteousness from Israel's public life but also announced in 23:5-6 the coming of a righteous king who would do justice and righteousness. His name would be Yahweh Is Our Righteousness (יְהוָה צְדִיקֵנוּ), and he would be a righteous branch (צֶמַח צְדִיק) for David. This person would embody the character of God and bring change

to the business-as-usual of Israel's corrupt government and society. The name Yahweh Is Our Righteousness appears to play on the name of Judah's last king Zedekiah (צִדְקִיָּהוּ). This name in Hebrew means "My righteousness is Yahweh." As one who seemed to know that Jeremiah spoke the truth but nevertheless feared public opinion, Zedekiah lacked the courage to obey God's prophet and so never lived up to his name. Jeremiah leaves little doubt that Zedekiah's successor on the throne of David, Yahweh Is Our Righteousness, would not only embody the meaning of his name but would also somehow change God's people into the likeness of his character (cf. Selman 1995:291).

Daniel could hardly learn of coming righteousness and not also remember Jeremiah's righteous descendant of David who would act righteously and establish righteousness.¹³ While Daniel might not be able to link this king with an imputed righteousness, he would surely believe that this king would model the rules for kingship in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 and so be involved in turning the hearts of Daniel's people toward the justice and righteousness that God wanted the Israelites to exhibit to each other and before the nations. It is not known whether Jeremiah thought that King Yahweh Is Our Righteousness would be Yahweh incarnate or a human king like Josiah who modeled Yahweh's righteousness. Selman (1995:295) says:

Unfortunately, the psalmists and prophets of the Old Testament make no attempt to explain any further the meaning of the close relationship between God and the anointed king, whether they thought in terms of a relationship between father and son or the apparent contradiction that a person could be both human and divine. The Israelite authors were content to describe matters as far as they were able, but they left a question mark about whether the relevant passages were to be interpreted as hyperbole or as part of a genuine hope which had not yet found fulfillment.

¹³Cf. Roberts (1992:44) who says, "Sometimes this [royal] figure is not described as a descendant from the Davidic line, but simply as David himself. Nonetheless, it is extremely doubtful that this usage should be pressed to imply that the long-dead king would return to life to assume the throne again. It is more likely that the usage simply implies a new embodiment of the Davidic ideal, a new David. As the founder of the dynasty, creator of the Israelite empire, and dominant influence in the creation of the national cultus in Jerusalem, David was the model of the ideal king, and a new embodiment of that ideal could be called David for short."

Either way, though, Jeremiah (and Daniel) would understand that God would work through this king to transform his people, their society, and even the world (cf. Ps 72). In contrast to the righteous Josiah, whose reforms were shallow and short-lived, the coming king would establish righteousness forever. No longer would God's people keep drifting back into old sinful ways that created overbearing conditions in Israel's cities. An eternal righteousness would transform the hearts of individuals with the result that a just and compassionate community would arise with no threat from within.

If Daniel 9 is read alongside of Jeremiah 23, one reasonably sees that God will provide righteousness, not through an animal that has no justifying and transforming capability, but through a righteous king. Jeremiah and Daniel knew that this coming king would somehow be involved in the restoration of God's people to an individual and corporate lifestyle of righteousness. Through this future descendant of David, God would answer Daniel's prayer and turn away his anger in accordance with his righteousness (Dan 9:16).¹⁴ Daniel's plea for propitiation depends on God's satisfaction of his demand for righteousness. God will have to provide what sinful humans cannot. Daniel already knows that Jeremiah had promised to supply such a need through a future king.

5.7.3. The Fourth Objective and Other Parts of Daniel

The name of David, however, never occurs in the book of Daniel. Collins (1987:99) observes, "The problem with the messianic interpretation is that Daniel never refers explicitly to a Davidic Messiah or indicates any interest in the restoration of the dynasty."¹⁵ The problem, however, is not necessarily insurmountable. Daniel expects the coming of the kingdom of God,

¹⁴The Hebrew word for *righteousness* in Daniel 9:16 has a feminine plural form (צִדְקָתָהּ) with a 2ms pronominal suffix that refers back to יְהוָה. The plural could refer to multiple acts of righteousness performed by the Lord or, more abstractly, to the Lord's full possession and embodiment of righteousness. The latter makes better sense here.

¹⁵In its immediate context, the quotation refers to the messianic interpretation of the one like a son of man in Daniel 7. Even so, the observation can apply to the whole book of Daniel.

which will topple the statue of four metals in chapter 2 and displace the little horn in chapter 7. If it is reasonable to assume that a kingdom has a king, Daniel identifies the king as “one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven” (Dan 7:13). Riding the clouds, of course, is the activity of Yahweh (e.g., Ps 97:2, 104:3).¹⁶ In Daniel 7:14, this one like a son of man receives dominion (שָׁרָה), majesty (יָקָר), and a kingdom (מְלָכוּת) from the Ancient of Days. One who receives dominion, majesty, and a kingdom is by definition a king,¹⁷ and the Ancient of Days in the larger context of Daniel (Dan 9:2, 4, 10, 13, 14) and the rest of the Old Testament can be none other than Yahweh. What original reader of Daniel would hear of God’s kingdom and God’s king (i.e., the one like a son of man who receives dominion, majesty, and a kingdom) and think only of the so-called creation mandate in Genesis 1 and not of God’s promise to David? Lacocque (2002:1.126-127) says, “In the background is King David (cf. Psalms 2 and 110, texts that show the Davidic king enthroned alongside with YHWH).” Throughout the Old Testament, Davidic kingship is integrally involved with the conquest of evil, the restoration of creation, the universality of worship, and the establishment of righteousness. Davidic kingship may have often created more problems than it resolved, and books like Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah could anticipate the conquest of evil, the restoration of creation, the universality of worship, and the establishment of righteousness without explicit reference to Davidic kingship (Robertson 1990:17-20). Nevertheless, the Old Testament as a whole expects these future blessings in connection with Davidic kingship. Certainly Jeremiah, whom Daniel had been reading, did.

Daniel 2 and 7 echo both creational and royal themes—not one to the exclusion of the other. Nebuchadnezzar’s image and the four beasts parody the image of God in humans and the

¹⁶Beale (2011:192, 396). Wright (1996:527) says, “Clouds . . . signify theophany.”

¹⁷Theophilus (2012:172) says that “any figure who liberates Israel from her political enemies and is described as having ‘dominion’, ‘glory’, and ‘kingship’ (Dan. 7.14) has clear messianic overtones.” See also Albani (2005:48).

creation of animals according to kind in Genesis 1 (cf. Theophilos 2012:172). Daniel 2:35 also says that the rock that struck the image became a great mountain that filled the earth. This rock that represents God's kingdom "echoes Gen. 1:26, 28, where God commissions Adam to 'fill the earth' and to 'rule . . . over all the earth'" (Beale 2011:111). Meanwhile, the one like a son of man (or human being) differs from the beasts and regains humanity's divinely given dominion over the earth. In Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar embodies royal power that becomes deluded by its presumption of invincibility. Whereas the beasts in Daniel 7 represent inhumane and oppressive regimes, the one like a son of man represents a kingdom that benefits the governed and so reflects the goodness of the Ancient of Days (Schreiner 2008:214-215). Moreover, the rock in Daniel 2 becomes a mountain that fills the earth, thus recalling how Mount Zion, where God and his king reign, becomes the highest mountain (Beale 2011:108-109; Dempster 2003:214; Lucas 2002:74; Seow 2003b:370).¹⁸ This rock in Daniel 2:44 and God's anointed king (Solomon) in Psalm 72:4 crush (Aram. דַּקַּק in Dan 2 and Heb. דָּבַא in Ps 72) the enemies of God and his people.¹⁹ If Psalm 72:8 prays for dominion (Heb. יָרַד) for the Davidic king, Daniel 7:14 says that the one like a son of man receives dominion (Aram. שָׁלִטָן). Just as God promised David an eternal dynasty (2 Sam 7:13-16, Ps 89:28-29), so God's kingdom lasts forever (Dan 2:44), and the one like a son of man has never-ending dominion (Dan 7:14). So then, the one like a son of man echoes the Davidic covenant and realizes God's purpose for having a human vice-regent rule over his creation for his glory.

¹⁸Dempster (2003:214) and Oegema (1998:58-60) see a parallel between the rock that strikes Nebuchadnezzar's statue (Dan 2:34, 45) and the stone that David used to slay Goliath. Goliath, of course, represented a kingdom that had set itself in opposition to Yahweh and his king (first Saul and then David).

¹⁹Cf. כָּתוּתִי in Psalm 89:24 (Eng. 23).

Another echo of the Davidic covenant is found within Daniel's prayer. Daniel implores Yahweh to divert his anger away from "your city, Jerusalem, your holy mountain" (Dan 9:16). Verse 18 then identifies Jerusalem as "the city that is called by your name." The original readers of Daniel could hardly read about Yahweh's election of Jerusalem and not also recall his election of David who had moved the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem and made plans to build the Jerusalem temple. Meadowcroft (2001:434) says, "The pray-er [*sic*] of Dan 9 echoes the two covenants made with Daniel's people, the one with Moses that established Israel as a 'people' and the one with David that established Jerusalem as the holy mountain." Daniel knows that Yahweh has tied his redemptive program to Davidic kingship that is centered in Jerusalem. A desolate sanctuary and an empty throne (Dan 1:1-2) go together and witness against Yahweh before the nations. Yahweh cannot turn his anger away from Jerusalem without also restoring the house of David. Yahweh reigns through David's descendants. He subdues arrogant rulers through his anointed king on Zion, his holy mountain (Ps 2). He establishes righteousness in Israel and to the ends of the earth by means of a righteous descendant of David (Ps 72).

Meanwhile, the one like a son of man seems to be both an individual in Daniel 7:13-14 and a group in Daniel 7:27. A close relationship between an individual (one who leads) and a group (those who are led) is hardly unique to Daniel 7 in the Old Testament. In fact, kings in Israel were supposed to represent God's people and model covenantal piety for them (Beale 2011:395; Beasley-Murray 1983:55; Grant 2004: 206-210, 212-213, 283-284, 291-294). Not to be overlooked at this point is the explicit identification of the four beasts as four kings rather than four kingdoms (Dan 7:17). These kings may represent empires, but they nonetheless retain their individuality. The same can be true of the one like a son of man who does not have to be only a symbol of the saints of the Most High. In fact, the close relationship between the one like

a son of man and the Ancient of Days argues against a strictly corporate understanding of the one like a son of man (Beale 2011:395; Ridderbos 1962:347; Wright 1992a:152). If Yahweh rides the clouds (Ps 104:3, Nah 1:3), the Old Testament never says that his people ride them with him, but Daniel 7:13 assigns this privilege to the one like a son of man.

In sum, the fourth objective of Daniel 9:24 may not explicitly link everlasting righteousness with Davidic kingship or even with King Yahweh Is Our Righteousness, but one wonders how Daniel in the narrative world (and for some readers, the real world) of the sixth century could hear Gabriel at this point and not draw these strands (son of man and son of David) together, especially since Daniel, according to Daniel 1:1, went into exile with Jehoiakim. The opening verse of the book implicitly recalls God's promise to David along with the more explicit reminder of the failure of one of David's descendants. Daniel 9:26 then mentions a cut-off anointed one and a ruler who destroys God's city and temple. Again, in the narrative world of the book of Daniel (and for some readers, the real world), Daniel would not think of Onias III and Antiochus IV but of Jehoiakim and Nebuchadnezzar. Having read Jeremiah's announcement of the coming of King Yahweh Is Our Righteousness, Daniel would associate the fourth objective of the seventy sevens with a Davidic descendant.

5.7.4. The Antiochene Context

The writer of 1 Maccabees was alarmed by the loss of righteousness among God's people in Judea. He noted in 1:11 how some Jews who transgressed the law convinced other Jews to make an agreement with Antiochus IV. This agreement led to the shedding of innocent blood and the defiling of the temple (1 Macc 1:37). Filled with zeal for the law of God (1 Macc 2:20-22), the Maccabees defeated the army of Antiochus IV and then restored the temple. When describing the renovation of the temple, the writer of 1 Maccabees made a point of saying that

everything was done according to the law, i.e., righteously (4:42, 47, 53). On his deathbed, Mattathias had instructed his sons to be zealous for the law and to give their lives for the covenant of their fathers (1 Macc 2:50). The evident aim of the Maccabees was to establish righteousness again among God's people in God's land. The writer of 1 Maccabees reports that they did (cf. 2 Macc 2:22).

The Maccabees, of course, were not Davidic descendants (cf. Laato 1997:260). Even so, Mattathias recalled God's eternal covenant with David (1 Macc 2:57) in the context of encouraging his sons to finish the faithful resistance that he had started. Mattathias also mentioned Abraham, Joseph, Phineas, and others including Daniel and his three friends. The purpose of 1 Maccabees may not be to elaborate on the messianic expectation of faithful Jews during the Antiochene crisis, but this verse indicates that the hope was far from forgotten or ignored.²⁰ Mattathias wanted his sons to overturn evil and establish righteousness because of an eschatological expectation of the full realization of God's promise to David. Faith in God's promise to David was supposed to produce faithful living now in the absence of a Davidic king. During this interim, the writer of 1 Maccabees saw the continuation of God's plan of redemption in the activity of the Maccabees (deSilva 2002:249; Harrington 1999:123; Laato 1997:276-277). Later generations apparently learned from Mattathias and his sons. "The ideology of 1 Maccabees," says deSilva (2002:244), "was to shape Jewish nationalism and political messianic hopes through the next three centuries." It is evident, though, that the Maccabees and the writer

²⁰Cf. Collins (1987:104), Efron (1987:233), and Laato (1997:277-278). For a different understanding of 1 Maccabees 2:57, see Goldstein (1987:74-81), Hjelm (2004:268), and Pomykala (1995:152-159). Pomykala (2004:36-37) later appears to reverse direction when he discusses 1 Maccabees 2:57 in a section on "David as Ideal Ruler and King." In response to the suggestion that Hasmonean rule had supplanted Davidic kingship, Laato (1997:289) says, "The messianic expectation that the eschatological king would come from the House of David was self-evident in Judaism and it was emphasized only after some had called it into question. The historical evidence suggests that the Hasmoneans sought to supplant the Davidides in this connection and that they were, as a result, subjected to criticisms and refutations from their contemporaries who were familiar with the biblical tradition."

of 1 Maccabees cared about more than politics. Like Daniel, they were zealous for God's reputation during days of compromise.

That said, the Maccabees in their second-century context, however strong their Davidic hope might be, would surely read Daniel 9:26 differently than Daniel in the sixth century. The cut-off anointed one would not be Jehoiakim, a king, but Onias III, a priest. The ruler who destroys the city and the temple would be Antiochus IV instead of Nebuchadnezzar.

Apocalyptic language, which is often historically non-specific, can allow for more than one application. Still, a sixth-century narrative world (and for some readers, a sixth-century real world) and a second-century real world can be typologically related. In both cases, anointed leaders fail to perform their duties with a concern for God's honor and God's people.

Consequently, many of God's people lose sight of their identity and mission and become unrighteous. Even so, God uses a Gentile king to discipline his people and restore a commitment to righteousness. The Gentile king, of course, is not aware of his instrumental function. So far as he knows or cares, his activity promotes his imperialist interests.

5.8. The Fifth Infinitive

5.8.1. In the Context of Daniel 9

The fifth objective of the seventy sevens is **לְחַתֵּם חִזּוֹן וְנְבִיא** (to seal vision and prophet).

Hebrew often conveys an idea through two nouns joined by a conjunction. The grammatical term for this construction is hendiadys, i.e., one meaning though two words (Williams and Beckman 2007:29-30 [§72]). For a smooth English translation, the second noun is treated as an adjective that modifies the first noun. In this fifth infinitival clause, *to seal vision and prophet* becomes *to seal prophetic vision*. One could possibly identify the prophet as Jeremiah whom Daniel was quoting and say that the seventy sevens will seal or authenticate Jeremiah as a true

prophet by verifying his words, especially his prophecies about the restoration (Goldingay 1989:260; Gowan 2001:133; Longman 1999:226-227). These still await fulfillment from Daniel's vantage point. Perhaps, though, it is better in view of the hendiadys and Daniel's earlier reference to prophets (9:6) not to restrict the word *prophet* or *prophetic* to a single individual.

Daniel's prayer mentioned how God's people had ignored the prophets (9:6). The exile, of course, confirmed the prophetic threats of judgment for covenantal disloyalty. Daniel had spent most of his life outside the Promised Land because Yahweh had remained faithful to the terms of the covenant and stood behind his prosecuting messengers. As Israel rebelled, he progressively enacted the curses until reaching the last one—eviction from Canaan. It would seem as if the exile marked the end of God's dealings with Israel. The prophets had performed their duty, and now their books could be closed. In a sad way, the prophetic movement had met with stunning success. The prophets had forecasted the death of Israel (Gowan 1998:7-10). Amos likened what was left of Israel to two leg bones and an ear of a lamb that has been mauled by a lion (Amos 3:12). In other words, the victim did not survive. Jeremiah similarly used the image of a lion when describing the coming disaster from the north (Jer 4:7, 5:6). The effect would be cities without inhabitants. When asked by God if the dry bones in the valley could live again (Ezek 37:3), Jeremiah's contemporary, Ezekiel, hesitated to venture an affirmative response—so utterly wiped out were the northern and southern kingdoms. Earlier, Ezekiel had asked God if he would completely destroy Israel (Ezek 9:8). The valley of bones left no other impression than that God had.

Even so, the prophets (both pre-exilic and exilic) had looked beyond the exile to a restoration, as improbable as that might seem to the survivors and their descendants who were scattered throughout the ancient Near East. God had made eternal promises to the patriarchs and

to David. God's honor was at stake in covenantal history, and the reality of human unreliability could not ultimately frustrate God's sovereign plan, which from the start was designed to overcome such unfaithfulness. How then could unconditional election end in banishment?²¹ God could not abandon a people who demonstrated a need of grace that he had promised. He also could not let his temple and city lie in ruins; otherwise, the nations would conclude that he was less than the omnipotent God that he claimed to be.

Daniel's prayer may delicately and reverently approach this subject of God's honor, but Daniel nevertheless holds a trump card. He knows that Moses and the prophets who had threatened exile also announced a future beyond the exile. Because God's eternal purpose could not end with human failure, the prophets promised a new covenant, a new heart, a new Exodus, a new settlement, a new temple, a new David, and a new earth. All of these would have to be God's doing. Only he could restore his reputation that his people had tarnished. Perhaps out of contrition along with a conscious effort to avoid self-interest, Daniel may not have appealed to the prophetic announcements of a new work of God, but his references to the fulfillment of the prophets imply that all of their words will come true. They must, or God's name will remain discredited among the nations. With this fifth objective of the seventy sevens, Gabriel indicates that God agrees. Not one prophetic announcement will fail.

5.8.2. Connections to Other Books, Including Jeremiah

For all their discussion of judgment, the former and latter prophets also remained optimistic about the eventual realization of God's promises. The writer of the book of Kings retained hope that God would forever maintain a lamp for David (2 Kgs 8:19), even as he kept

²¹Unconditional election of David's line and eternal promises of Davidic rule did not eliminate the responsibility and accountability of individual kings with regard to Mosaic law. God would work out his plan of redemption through the house of David, but each king had to decide through faith and obedience if he wanted to support God's plan. A similar observation more broadly applies to Abraham's descendants who also had individual choices to make (Josh 24:14-15). See Knoppers (1998:91-118), Pratt (2007:137-167), and Waltke (1988:130-132).

showing compassion for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (2 Kgs 13:23). Isaiah 41:8-10 refers to Abraham as God's friend and tells Abraham's descendants not to be afraid because he had chosen them to be his servant. Isaiah 55:3 adds that God had also made a covenant with David. As night follows day, God told Jeremiah that he would surely set a son of David over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Jer 33:25-26). God had assured Hosea that he still loved unfaithful Israel and would betroth her to him forever. A valley of trouble would become a door of hope as God led his people back to their home with him (Hos 2:11, 15). God had informed Ezekiel that, though his people had embarrassed him before the nations (Ezek 36:20-21), he would bring them back from captivity for the honor of his name and breathe new life into those dry bones (Ezek 37:4-14).

A point to be made now in connection with the fifth objective of Daniel 9:24 is that some of the prophetic oracles remained unfulfilled at the time of Daniel's prayer. The exile had not exhausted the application of the prophets' words. In fact, more prophets would come with instruction for the post-exilic community and beyond. The prophets as a whole still had something to say.

For this reason, Gabriel directs Daniel's attention into the distant future. Some time, as much as seventy sevens, will pass before anyone can "close the book" on the prophets, including Daniel's own visions. Daniel is later told to close or seal a scroll until the time of the end (12:4) when the events foretold come to pass. Here, the seal authenticates and preserves a prophetic message for another day. Similarly (but possibly not a connection that Daniel made), Jeremiah sealed a deed to a field that he had purchased during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. Seemingly a foolish gamble, because location is everything with real estate, Jeremiah's land deal

demonstrated his confidence in God's promise of a restoration. The seal preserved the document and represented Jeremiah's wise bet on the future.

The fifth infinitive in Daniel 9:24 informs Daniel that God will make good on all his words to the prophets. For the next seventy sevens, God will carry out his promises to his people. He will make atonement for sin and eliminate sin. He will restore a sinful world and establish righteousness in all the earth. Not one of his messages through his prophets will fail. Daniel, of course, will not live long enough to see every word fulfilled, but he has Gabriel's pledge that all of what the prophets said will come true.

5.8.3. The Antiochene Context

The writer of 1 Maccabees was also concerned about prophecy. In the context of the reconstruction of the temple altar, 1 Maccabees 4:46 refers to a coming prophet who will explain what to do with the defiled stones. Moreover, 1 Maccabees 14:41, while speaking favorably of Simon Maccabee's priestly leadership, also expresses the expectation of a coming prophet who presumably would reveal what would happen after the interim rule of the Hasmoneans (Laato 1997:277). Meanwhile, 1 Maccabees 9:27 suggests that a prophetic voice had not been heard for a while. Neither the identity of the last prophet nor the length of the prophetic silence is specified. While it is not the purpose of this thesis to discuss the boundaries or closure of the Old Testament canon, it is evident that the writer of 1 Maccabees expected more revelation.²² As of the dedication of the renovated temple, a prophet had not yet appeared.

Still, comparing Daniel 9 and 1 Maccabees reveals the interest of both in the Antiochene period. First Maccabees may not say that Daniel's seventy sevens ended with the resolution of the Antiochene crisis at the death of Antiochus IV or the dedication of the temple, but 1:54 calls

²²Efron (1987:51) says, "A profound feeling prevails (IV 46; IX 27), as in the Book of Daniel, that prophecy was not yet restored since the spirit of God departed from Israel. The signs and portents of the yearned for end had not yet appeared."

Antiochus IV's action at the temple altar an abomination of desolation. The writer of 1 Maccabees considers the Antiochene crisis the fulfillment—whether predictively or typologically—of Daniel's prophecies about the disruption of the temple services. Even so, the discussion of the abomination of desolation and the report of the temple's restoration come early in 1 Maccabees. In fact, the book ends with the high priesthood of Simon Maccabee about twenty years after the Maccabean war with Antiochus IV. Simon became high priest after the murder of his brother, Jonathan, who was high priest at the time (1 Macc 13:23). Later, Simon was murdered by his son-in-law (1 Macc 14:11-16). It is evident from 1 Maccabees alone—not to mention other Second Temple literature—that not all prophecy or even the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 reached complete realization at the resolution of the Antiochene crisis. World and redemptive history continued, and sin remained very much a part of both. So also did the hope for righteousness.

The writer of 1 Maccabees did not necessarily think that Daniel 8, 9, or 11 predicted the Antiochene crisis. More often than not, the Old Testament announces fulfillment in terms of analogy or typology (Osborne 2006:266). The biblical writers noticed patterns to divine and human activity in history. Any given instance of the pattern, however, does not constitute a once-for-all or final occurrence. Nor does the resolution mark the end of God's plan for history. The writer of Daniel in particular seems to have hoped for six objectives that, from his perspective, began to be realized in 539 with Cyrus' decree. He traced the realization of that hope from Cyrus to Antiochus IV, but the hope did not reach complete fulfillment in the effort of the Maccabees. Perhaps the writer thought that the kingdom of God had advanced in the military victory and temple restoration of the Maccabees, but he surely knew that the next installment of God's covenant with David (1 Macc 2:57) remained outstanding. Daniel 12:4 may even contain

a hint of autobiographical reality. The author knew that the death of Antiochus IV and the victory of the Maccabees did not mark the full accomplishment of the six objectives of the seventy sevens. God's redemptive work that commenced in a new way in 539 (cf. Isa 43:14-21) noticeably advanced during the Antiochene crisis, but more redemption must occur before anyone could talk about consummation. Daniel seals the book because the writer will not live long enough to see the kingdom of God in its fullness.

Though history seems to continue without end, biblical prophecies such as the seventy sevens might lead readers to expect a certain outcome to be a definitive or final fulfillment of a linear process. Why does biblical prophecy do this? Roberts (1979:250) appeals to the difference between divine and human perspectives on history. If a thousand years are like a day to God (2 Pet 3:8), most humans live less than a tenth of God's day. They cannot see the beginning and the end as God can—only their brief moment in the middle. From this limited vantage point, the repetition of patterns suggests that history moves in circles without forward progress. For this reason, God makes prophecies seem absolute (Roberts says that God foreshortens prophetic time) in order to encourage his people to persevere.

5.9. The Sixth Infinitive

5.9.1. In the Context of Daniel 9

The sixth objective of the seventy sevens is **לְמַשַּׁח קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים** (to anoint a Holy of Holies). This expression occurs only here in the Old Testament, but **מָשַׁח** and **קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים** by themselves are certainly familiar words. Their meaning in Daniel 9:24, however, is subject to more than one interpretation.

The verb מָשַׁח can take either objects or people for a direct object. Exodus 30:26-28 refers to the anointing of the tabernacle and its furniture. Exodus 29:7 gives instructions for anointing Aaron as high priest. Various verses (e.g., 1 Sam 9:16) use מָשַׁח with reference to a king. Someone who is anointed is called a מָשִׁיחַ (messiah or anointed one), a word that occurs in Daniel 9:25 and 9:26 and will be discussed later. Though מָשִׁיחַ tends to be reserved for royal figures, it is used in apposition to כֹּהֵן (priest) in Leviticus 4:3, 4:5, 4:16, and 6:15. According to Collins (2010:18), “it should be clear . . . that ‘messiah,’ even as an eschatological term, can refer to different kinds of figures, and that to speak of ‘the messiah’ without further qualification is to speak ambiguously.” The next chapter will say more about a priest as a מָשִׁיחַ.

קֹדֶשׁ קִדְּשִׁים often, but not always, identifies the inner, square chamber of the tabernacle and temple (e.g., Exod 26:33, 1 Kgs 6:16, Ezek 41:4). The ark of the covenant sat in the קֹדֶשׁ קִדְּשִׁים, and the high priest would enter this area only on the Day of Atonement. The other room in the tabernacle or temple is called הַקֹּדֶשׁ (the Holy Place). קֹדֶשׁ קִדְּשִׁים can also describe the furniture in both rooms of the tabernacle (Exod 30:29) and the sacrifices made at the altar of burnt offering (e.g., Lev 2:3, 6:10 [Eng. 6:17]). This altar, of course, sat outside the tabernacle and temple. Because קֹדֶשׁ קִדְּשִׁים never refers to a person, it would seem that the sixth objective of the seventy sevens has to do with anointing an object and not a person.

Daniel 9:17 strengthens this observation. As part of Daniel’s prayer, this verse urges God, הָאֵל פְּנֵיךָ עַל־מִקְדָּשְׁךָ (make your face shine upon your sanctuary). This request recalls the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C.E., when God, in effect, turned his face away from his

temple and deserted it. God also turned his face from those who worshiped at the temple (Jer 7:15, Ezek 7:22). God withdrew not only from his temple but also from the city in which it sat (cf. Dan 9:16). Because of the transgressions that Daniel's prayer bewails, the whole environment of God's residence defiled his name. It was most unholy. Venter (2007:47) observes, "The city became a disgrace among all those around it because its devastation was indicative of the displeasure of Israel's God with [the city's inhabitants] (9:16)." Daniel, however, pleaded with God both to look favorably again on his house, which currently lay in ruins, and presumably to fulfill his implicit promise to Jeremiah and explicit promise to Ezekiel to build a new temple.²³ A rebuilt house of God would signify the end of an unholy atmosphere and provide the center from which holiness could radiate outward to God's city and beyond. God's people could then be a channel of redeeming grace to the nations.

5.9.2. Connections with Jeremiah and Other Books

While Gabriel's words **קִדְּשׁ קְדָשִׁים** do not appear at all in Jeremiah, Daniel's word **מִקְדָּשׁ** occurs in Jeremiah 17:12 and 51:51, the latter verse being especially relevant for Daniel's prayer. In the context of an oracle against Babylon, Jeremiah remembers how **זָרִים** (foreigners) entered the **מִקְדָּשֵׁי בֵּית יְהוָה** (the sacred places of the house of Yahweh) and defiled them. Daniel also shared Jeremiah's concern for God's reputation. A city and temple torn apart by war did not suitably bear witness to a great God, who had given his people many victories over his and their enemies.

²³Jeremiah, of course, says nothing specific about a new temple. He even makes the remarkable comment that the ark of the covenant will be forgotten in the restoration (3:16). Still, Jeremiah 33:18 promises that the Levites will always minister in God's presence by offering sacrifices. Surely any of Jeremiah's contemporaries would associate sacrifices with an altar and temple. Hebrews 9 may speak of a heavenly reality that replaces the earthly copy, but the original hearers and/or readers of Jeremiah 33 probably thought more terrestrially. Still, Spatafora (1997:41) suggests that the ark as the symbol of God's presence is considered unnecessary in Jeremiah because of "a desire not to bind God's presence to an object whereby its possession would be an automatic guarantee of the divine presence and protection."

Ezekiel, a contemporary of Jeremiah and Daniel in the narrative world (and for some people, the real world) of the Old Testament, attributed the defilement of God's *מִקְדָּשׁ* not so much to the Babylonian soldiers but to the false religion of the residents of Jerusalem (Ezek 5:11). The idolatrous images and practices, further described in Ezekiel 8, forced God to abandon his *מִקְדָּשׁ* (Ezek 8:6), not because of God's inability to defend his space but because of his refusal to share it with rivals who represented the antithesis of his character.²⁴ God simply would not remain present for despicable conduct and thereby offer tacit legitimacy to variations of abominable worship. Ezekiel 10 records the departure of God's *כְּבוֹד* (glory) from the temple, thereby making it ripe for invasion and destruction.

Both Daniel and Ezekiel shared a concern about God's temple, and both offer revelation about the future of God's residence on earth.²⁵ Ezekiel's revelation was more specific, and reviewing it briefly leads to an observation about the *קִדְשׁ קִדְשִׁים* in Daniel's sixth infinitival clause. In particular, Ezekiel 40-48 features the vision of a new temple. Unlike the blueprints for the tabernacle in Exodus and first temple in 1 Kings, Ezekiel 40-43 contains only a floor plan. There is no description of the walls or roof. Moreover, Ezekiel saw a unique river flowing with increasing width and depth from the temple through the wilderness to the Dead Sea (Ezek 47). This river fructified the desert and desalinated the Dead Sea. Ezekiel says that his interpretive guide throughout the vision also showed him the return of God's glory from the east (Ezek 43:1-5). It is hard to know if Ezekiel actually thought that this temple would be built and that the other details (e.g., desalinating the Dead Sea, the twelve patrimonies on the west side of

²⁴Spatafora (1997:25) says, "God was not bound to the building. Instead, he chose to leave because of the overwhelming sins of the people."

²⁵Gruenthaner (1939:47) also reads the sixth objective of Daniel 9:24 in view of Ezekiel's vision of a new temple.

the Jordan River, and the square perimeter of Jerusalem) would occur.²⁶ The Old Testament has no record of the return of God's glory to the second temple that was completed in 516 B.C.E. or of the topographical changes in Ezekiel 47 (cf. Cohen 1987:131; Wright 1992b:269, 1996:621).

Ezekiel's vision of a new temple and city includes a replay of the distribution of the land in Joshua 13-19. This time, though, all the tribes live on the same side of the Jordan River with the royal figure in the center. Using the word נָשִׂיא (tribal ruler) instead of מֶלֶךְ (king), Ezekiel's vision curtails the power of the royal figure and presents him as one who leads God's people in the proper worship of God. The royal figure meets the criteria and performs the responsibilities of the rules for kingship in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. The redistribution of the land represents the healing of old wounds among the tribes. The house of David will no longer exploit God's people, and all Israel will unite behind a Davidic king to worship God at the place where he has chosen to dwell, viz., a new Jerusalem that has become the קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים.

In Ezekiel 48, however, the new temple expands to fill Jerusalem, square the perimeter, and transform the city into a Holy of Holies so that God's people once again have unimpeded communion with him. Anticipating what Ezekiel 48 says about the new Jerusalem, Ezekiel 43:12 refers to the mountain on which the temple and city sit as קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים.²⁷ Ezekiel 45:3 and 48:12 also use the expression קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים to identify something other than the inner chamber of

²⁶Spatafora (1997:45-46) denies that Ezekiel, his contemporaries, or post-exilic readers considered the new temple vision a blueprint for an actual building. Instead, "Ezekiel is describing the ideal state in the future where, in the renewed covenant, the people will be turned completely to God. It [the new temple vision] is a depiction of that future time when God would take the heart of stone from his people and give them a heart of flesh, when he would put his spirit within them and they would observe all his statutes (36,22-32). The prophet is using words and images familiar to him, borrowed from the cultic world, to reaffirm God's promise that he would restore Israel."

²⁷More precisely, Ezekiel 43:12 says that קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים קְדָשׁ סָבִיב סָבִיב ("on top of the mountain all the surrounding territory will be most holy").

the temple or implements used by the priests in the temple. Meadowcroft (2001:437-438)

elaborates:

In each case the concept of a most holy place is extended to include land that is also most holy. In 43:12 this is the mountain on which the temple is to be sited, and in 45:3 and 48:12 it is a portion of territory to be allotted to the priesthood. This is significant for our argument, as it indicates a growth in thought that reconceptualizes קדש קדשים and begins to think of it as something that is bigger than the temple but represented by the temple.²⁸

That something bigger pertains to the dwelling of God with a glorified humanity in a new and expanded sanctuary. At this point, Bergsma (2007:229) makes the connection between Ezekiel and Daniel: “. . . the author of Daniel—like Ezekiel before him—envisions the holiness of the sanctuary encompassing the entire ‘Holy City’ of Jerusalem. Whereas previously the Name dwelt in the temple (e.g. 1 Kgs 8:16-18 *et passim*), for Daniel the name is attached to the entire city (Dan 9:19).” There are now no more barriers anywhere to direct communion between God and his people. With the elimination of the curse, not just a new temple but even a new city and a new earth have become the קדש קדשים. All creation is filled with the unshielded presence and glory of God. Such was Ezekiel’s expectation for the restoration of Yahweh’s desolate sanctuary, and Daniel’s prayer, whether familiar with Ezekiel’s new temple vision or not, shares a similar hope.

About fifty years after Ezekiel’s vision of a new temple, Haggai prophesied that the glory of the second temple would exceed the splendor of the first (Hag 2:9). It is debatable whether the design and materials of the second temple ever surpassed Solomon’s magnificent edifice. The post-exilic temple certainly did not. Haggai alludes to the unfavorable comparison of the second temple with the first (Hag 2:3). Compared to Solomon’s temple, the second temple was a

²⁸Beale (2004:23-25) makes a similar observation about the expansion of the temple, but not in connection with Daniel 9:24. With a footnote reference to Ezekiel 40-48, Wright (1992b:227) says, “But the holiness of the ‘holy Land’ spread out in concentric circles, from the Holy of Holies to the rest of the Temple (itself divided into concentric areas), thence to the rest of Jerusalem, and thence to the whole Land.”

“shed” (Calvin 1981c:357), and unfavorable comparison undermined incentive to persevere. Moreover, the reduced magnificence of the second temple also had a political dimension. Solomon’s temple attested to Yahweh’s election of David. At that time, Israel enjoyed its golden age. The second temple, however, did not symbolize political autonomy. Because Zerubbabel, the Davidic scion, answered to Persia, the second temple symbolized the identity crisis of post-exilic Judaism. Who were these people in relation to pre-exilic Israel? Had a second Exodus occurred or just a political favor? What about God’s promises to David?

Haggai said that the glory of the second temple would exceed that of the first. What the post-exilic community was doing might not seem like much, and hardship awaited them at every turn. Still, Haggai promised that God would redeem the labor of their hands in a grand way. He also likened Zerubbabel, the Davidic scion, to a signet ring, which was used to seal official documents. Like a signature, it guaranteed the authenticity of the contents. So then, Zerubbabel was God’s signature guaranteeing a future for the house of David and the people of God.

5.9.3. The Antiochene Context

According to 1 Maccabees 4:42, Judah Maccabee appointed priests who could purify the temple. Verse 56 then singles out the dedication of the altar. Though there is no explicit reference to anointing something or someone most holy, 1 Maccabees 4 indicates that God’s temple was re-consecrated for worship according to the law. Similar to the wall around the post-exilic temple, verses 60-61 record the construction of a wall and the stationing of guards. The purpose of these was symbolically if not literally to preserve the sanctity of God’s house by keeping out those who did not wish to honor the God for whom the edifice was built. Sadly, neither the literal nor symbolic protection worked for long. As will be discussed in chapter 7, the following decades brought more damage and defilement to God’s house.

Herod the Great began a major renovation of the second temple in the second half of the first century B.C.E., and the work continued until 63 C.E. Herod's temple stood completed for about seven years until the Romans destroyed it in 70 C.E. This edifice was larger than Solomon's and was, perhaps, more stunning for that reason. Of course, no one who saw Solomon's temple lived long enough to see Haggai's or Herod's temple and draw a comparison. The remains of these temples are now inaccessible to archaeologists. Because the second temple, which was finished in 516 B.C.E., underwent destruction and reconstruction several times before Herod started his renovation, the sixth objective of Daniel 9:24 went unfulfilled in any final sense during the Second Temple period. Without everlasting righteousness, God's house could not remain holy.

5.10. Summary

As a result of reading Jeremiah, Daniel made corporate confession of sin and received a six-fold promise of corporate atonement and restoration. This chapter has considered each of these objectives in the sixth-century narrative world (for some people, real world) of Daniel and the real world of God's people during the Antiochene crisis. It has noted that the objectives were realized to some extent or another by the Maccabees. The accomplishment of these objectives within a framework of seventy sevens constitutes progress from the judgment of the exile to the experience of jubilee. Jubilee involves the spiritual transformation of God's people and the restoration of their inheritance now under the control of Gentile rulers. Both outcomes display God's mercy and vindicate his name. Because sin remains after the death of Antiochus IV and the achievement of the Maccabees, what has been said about typology needs to be recalled. The seventy sevens do not offer a simple prediction but the repetition of a pattern in the long sweep

of redemptive history. The pattern has to do with God's gradual but progressive victory over evil. This victory results in the glory of God and the inheritance of God's people.

The six objectives of the seventy sevens should control the interpretation of the details of the seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and one seven. The details of these three sections admittedly seem to lose sight of the six objectives, but this study will keep them in mind. The following chapters will read the three sections of the seventy sevens in view of these six objectives.

CHAPTER 6: THE SEVEN SEVENS OF DANIEL 9:25a

6.1. Introduction

Whether the Masoretic punctuation in Daniel 9:25 is accepted or not, Gabriel divided the seventy sevens into three sections: seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and one seven. As seen in chapter 2, proponents of the Roman view tend to reject the Masoretic punctuation and combine the seven sevens and sixty-two sevens into one period of sixty-nine sevens. The result is that the anointed one of 9:25 and the anointed one of verse 26 are the same individual, viz., Jesus. He appears at the end of sixty-nine sevens. In contrast to the Masoretic reading, no anointed one appears during the seven sevens. Proponents of the Roman view are then at a loss to explain why Gabriel divided the sixty-nine sevens into two unequal sections of seven sevens and sixty-two sevens. As noted in chapter two, Young raised the possibility that the seven sevens have something to do with the years between Cyrus' decree in the middle of the sixth century B.C.E. and the work of Ezra and Nehemiah in the middle of the fifth century B.C.E. Even so, he did not pursue that suggestion and theorize about why Ezra and Nehemiah would be of interest to Gabriel.

Young's assignment of the seven sevens to the period between Cyrus and Nehemiah receives support from more recent scholars. Beckwith (1981:541) says that the seven sevens, a "period of rebuilding," run from "about 537 to about 445 B.C.E." Meadowcroft and Irwin (2004:198) raise the possibility that "the first 'seven sevens' culminate in the completion of the rebuilding work undertaken by the returning exiles led first by Zerubbabel and Joshua . . . and later by Ezra and Nehemiah." According to Waltke and Yu (2007:552), "The initial 'seven sevens' probably refers [*sic*] to the 'troubled times' of the founding of the second Jewish

commonwealth, during which Jerusalem with its altar, temple, and walls are rebuilt.” Steinmann (2008:472) specifically says that the seven sevens run from Cyrus’ decree to Nehemiah’s completion of the wall. Like Young, these scholars do not explain the significance of the seven sevens for the six objectives in Daniel 9:24 or the seventy sevens as a whole.

Meanwhile, many advocates of the Greek view have noted that seventy sevens equal ten Jubilee periods, and all advocates of the Greek view accept the Masoretic punctuation in Daniel 9:25. This means that there are two anointed ones: one toward the end of the seven sevens and a second at the end of the sixty-two sevens. The first anointed one is either Cyrus or Joshua. The second is always Onias III. Redditt (1999:159) and Seow (2003a:148) point out that seven sevens constitute one jubilee period. Even so, supporters of the Greek view do not make any connection between the seven sevens and the work of Ezra and Nehemiah. For them, the seven sevens run from the start of the exile to the ministry of Joshua or from Cyrus’ decree to the ministry of Joshua. In other words, the seven sevens are confined to the sixth century B.C.E.

What if the insights of the aforementioned scholars are combined? Then the seven sevens lead to a jubilee celebration during the ministry of Ezra, who, of course, was an anointed priest. In some sense, then, the years between Cyrus’ decree and the end of Ezra’s ministry contribute to the realization of the six objectives in Daniel 9:24. How might this be? The answer must take into account the structure and message of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which are counted as one book in the Hebrew Bible.¹ Then the structure and message of Ezra-Nehemiah must be related to what Daniel 9:25 says about the seven sevens, viz., that they will involve the reconstruction of Jerusalem and the appearance of an anointed one. Both of these topics contribute to an interest in jubilee.

¹The Masoretic notes at the end of Nehemiah identify Nehemiah 3:32 as the center of the book. Given that no notes follow Ezra 10, the book of Ezra evidently factors into the count for Nehemiah. See Williamson (1985:xxi).

6.2. The Structure and Message of Ezra-Nehemiah

Ezra-Nehemiah begins with Cyrus' decree to rebuild Yahweh's temple and concludes with a jubilant dedication of the wall of Jerusalem.² By making Cyrus' decree the opening section of the book, the author signals to the reader that the execution of this decree lies at the center of the book's purpose. Tracing the theme through the book, however, can exasperate the reader. Because the book has diverse components, an initial reading does not give the impression of coherence. Both Ezra (Ezra 8:15-9:15) and Nehemiah (Neh 1:1-7:5, 12:27-43, 13:6-31) speak in first-person singular, giving the book two first-person voices or what are often called memoirs. Moreover, a third-person voice reports the first return from Babylon (Ezra 1-6), Ezra's return (Ezra 7:1-8:14), Ezra's handling of the problem of mixed marriages (Ezra 10), Ezra's reading of the law (Neh 8), the priest's confession of sin (Neh 9), and the people's repentance (Neh 10). Aramaic sections, numerous lists, and dischronologization in Ezra 4 add to the confusion and make it hard to get a sense of the whole.

Even so, Ezra-Nehemiah has demonstrable unity and structure. The lists, as uninviting as they may be, are the key to the structure and message of the book (Eskenazi 1988a:37, 1988b:644-646).³ One list, a list of returnees, appears twice in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7. From a literary point of view, this repetition signals artistry and theme. Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 divide the book into three major sections: Ezra 1, Ezra 2-Nehemiah 7, and Nehemiah 8-13. Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 frame the middle section, which has three sub-sections. Each of the sub-sections involves a return of exiles under a named leader (Waltke and Yu 2007:775). The sub-sections will receive further comment below. Throughout the book, some of the names in Ezra 2 and

²Ezra-Nehemiah, of course, does not end with the worship service in Nehemiah 12 but with Nehemiah's report of troubling developments in Nehemiah 13. The significance of Nehemiah 13 for the message of Ezra-Nehemiah will be discussed later.

³Much of the following material in this section reflects the results of Eskenazi's research.

Nehemiah 7 appear in other contexts, such as the account of intermarriage in Ezra 10 and the pledge of repentance in Nehemiah 10. The names, then, unify the events that occur between the return from Babylon in 539 B.C.E. and the dedication of the wall in 445 B.C.E. A near century's worth of descendants and events participated in a continuous effort to implement Cyrus' decree (Eskenazi 1988a:45, 1988b:647, 655; cf. Williamson 1985:376). Several generations of descendants of those listed in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 contributed to the grand project of rebuilding the new Jerusalem, which as the site of Yahweh's temple was a most holy place.

Ezra 4:6-23 and 6:14 add support to this generational understanding of the execution of Cyrus' decree. Ezra 4:6-23 falls between references to Darius in Ezra 4:5 and 4:24 and so seems to introduce historical confusion into the account of rebuilding the temple. Both Xerxes (Ahasuerus) and Artaxerxes reigned after Darius. A question arises about why the writer would interrupt the narrative about opposition to rebuilding the temple during Darius' reign in order to talk about events during the reigns of his two successors?⁴ Moreover, Ezra 6:15 reports the completion of the temple in the sixth year of Darius' reign, prompting another question. If the temple was completed before the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes, why introduce extraneous information about a later period? At first glance, then, Ezra 4:6-23 seems to be out of place in a section of the book that describes events toward the end of the sixth century B.C.E. and not events in the middle of the fifth century B.C.E. Because Ezra 7-Nehemiah 13 deals with this later time period, Ezra 4:6-23 would seem to belong somewhere in this part of the book. Ezra 4:1-5, however, mentions the opposition to the reconstruction of Yahweh's house and city. Verses 6-23 may seem to be premature and intrusive, but they make sense in view of Ezra 6:14. This verse understands that the implementation of Cyrus' decree, which is equated with God's decree,

⁴Ezra-Nehemiah, for some unknown reason, does not report any building activity during the reign of Xerxes, who ruled after Darius and before Artaxerxes.

occurred over a span of time that went beyond the reign of Cyrus. In actuality, the post-exilic community rebuilt Yahweh's house and city during the reigns of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes (cf. Duggan 2001:43). Over the course of those three reigns, the post-exilic community faced not just the instance of adversity in Ezra 4:4-5 but other cases that are detailed in Ezra 4:6-23 and Nehemiah 4-6. It is as if the writer of Ezra-Nehemiah, knowing what will come later in the book, says in Ezra 4:6, "While we are on the subject of opposition, let me suspend the narrative for a moment and give some other examples of enmity. From start to finish, the whole project met with resistance and setbacks" (cf. Williamson 1985:57). Ezra 4:6-23 and 6:14 let the reader know that the completion of the temple during Darius' reign did not exhaust the intention of Cyrus' decree (or God's). Rebuilding the temple constituted the first stage of a larger undertaking.

Returning now to the structure of the book, the first section in Ezra 1 announces the theme as the carrying out of Cyrus' decree to rebuild the Jerusalem temple. This edict included not only the permission to rebuild but also the provision of supplies. What is more, Cyrus returned the sacred vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had triumphantly removed from the first temple and that Belshazzar had handled disrespectfully on the night of his death (Dan 5). Ezra 1:9-10 gives an itemized list of these articles that represented not only continuity with the worship of pre-exilic Israel but also discontinuity from the shame of the exile. The return of the vessels to Yahweh's temple draws attention to his saving power and presence again in the midst of his people—truths that were not so evident when these implements were in the temple of another god (Ackroyd 1987:57-58; Fried 2003:40). This material link to the past assured the post-exilic community that God's promises to Abraham and David were still in effect. These promises, which had underlain Israel's praise and prayer before the exile, now gave hope of an open future

to those returning from exile. From a theological point of view, the execution of Cyrus' decree would remain incomplete without the restoration of these implements of worship. Cyrus surely had a political reason for issuing his edict, but Yahweh used it as a means to reinstate proper worship in the Promised Land. Not even the exile could change (or thwart) God's intention since the Exodus to have a people for his name—a people who declare his praise to the ends of the earth.

The human writer of Ezra-Nehemiah links Cyrus' decree to Jeremiah. Unlike Isaiah 44:28 that specifically names Cyrus as the builder of God's city and house, Jeremiah never mentions Cyrus or his decree. Instead, Ezra 1:1 refers more broadly to Jeremiah's promise of restoration after seventy years of exile (Jer 29:10). With the passage of time, the writer of Ezra-Nehemiah now knows some historical details about the restoration that Jeremiah did not. Even so, the writer of Ezra-Nehemiah finds hope for a future beyond exile in Jeremiah's oracles.⁵ The attribution of Cyrus' decree to the inciting of Yahweh in Ezra 1:1 agrees with Jeremiah's God-centered announcement of the return from exile. In Jeremiah 29:14, Yahweh leaves no doubt that he will be the primary agent in bringing his people back from captivity. Indeed, historical factors were involved with this event, but the hand of providence worked behind the scenes to fulfill earlier prophecy.

The second section of the book, Ezra 2-Nehemiah 7, describes the performance of Cyrus' decree in three stages that encompass about a hundred years from the issue of the decree in 538 B.C.E. to the completion of the wall in 445 B.C.E.⁶ First, the returnees under Zerubbabel, Joshua, Haggai, and Zechariah rebuilt the temple, dedicating it in 516 B.C.E. Ezra 3-6 describes this stage. Ezra 1:8 mentions Sheshbazzar who presumably led a first wave of returnees in 538 B.C.E.

⁵For a discussion of vocabulary and themes shared by Jeremiah and Ezra-Nehemiah, see McConville (1986:214-223).

⁶On the three stages, cf. Venema (2004:163-164).

Zerubbabel, his descendant (1 Chr 3:18-19), may have led a second wave later. Almost nothing is known about these members of the royal line. Haggai's criticism of the returnees' spiritual apathy (Hag 1:2-11) indicates that restored worship requires more than a refurbished building; therefore, second, Ezra returned in 458 B.C.E. to rebuild the people on the law of Moses. If Solomon's temple had been defiled by all sorts of abominable practices (Ezek 8), a new temple required a properly taught community that would singularly and fervently honor Yahweh with their worship and lifestyle. It is one thing to have a new building and another to have proper worship within the building. Green (1993:207, 209-210) insightfully suggests that two walls are built in Ezra-Nehemiah: Ezra's wall and Nehemiah's wall.⁷ He refers to Ezra's teaching as an "invisible, spiritual wall of obedience to the Law, by which Israel was to 'separate themselves' from the unclean Gentiles." Moreover, "'the house of God' will never be fully complete until a qualified people—separated from the foreign nations—is found to inhabit it."⁸ Ezra 7-10 describes this stage, or at least the beginning of it. More instruction at a later time followed the third stage and is reported in Nehemiah 8.⁹ Third, Nehemiah supervised the rebuilding of the

⁷Cf. Esler (2003:425) who distinguishes between the physical boundary of the wall and the symbolic boundary of the law. See also Wolak (2012:102) who refers to Ezra's wall as "an ethnic boundary." Moreover, Brant (2004:50) says, "Building walls of identity became an integral part of the rebuilding of the physical walls of the temple and the city," and Eskenazi (2006:511) adds, "The earlier returnees had built the temple and recreated a context as well as a focus for renewed identity and worship for the people of Israel. . . . But under Ezra's guidance, Judahites and exiles become Jews. . . ."

⁸Venema (2004:145) similarly says, "[Ezra] returns to Jerusalem in order to restore the temple cult, for which the starting-point is to be 'the *torah* of Moses'."

⁹Some scholars (e.g., Duggan 2001:2-6; Grabbe 2001:94-97; Reinmuth 2008:242-243, 251-256) wonder why Ezra supposedly waited thirteen years to teach the law (cf. Ezra 7:7 with Neh 2:1, 6:15, and 8:2). Ezra 9 gives the impression that he did not. Ezra's prayer of confession, in response to a report of intermarriage, alludes to previous revelation. Based substantially on scripture, the prayer itself is didactic, but surely Ezra's listeners were not hearing these references to the law for the first time in this prayer (cf. Breneman (1993:44). Historians, of course, select the facts that they want to discuss and then present those facts in a way that serves their purpose for doing historiography. That Ezra 7-10 does not explicitly say that Ezra taught the law does not preclude the likelihood that he did (cf. Karrer-Grube 2008:141; Min 2008:168; Williamson 1985:129, 150). If the listeners of the prayer were scripturally literate enough to understand the prayer, it is not unreasonable to think that Ezra's instruction lay behind their confession of intermarriage, their intelligent hearing of the prayer, and their repentance in accordance with the law (Ezra 10:3). Ezra 9-10, in keeping with the book of Ezra-Nehemiah, may want to emphasize the initiative that laypeople took to promote their relationship with Yahweh (Duggan 2001:87, 121, 144-145, 155-156, 243; Eskenazi 1988a:1, 47-53, 62-70 and 1988b:648; Karrer-Grube 2008:139-141), but they approached a superbly learned priest

wall, the purpose of which was not so much to keep foreign generals out of Yahweh's city as to protect the sanctity of the temple from spiritually unfit people, whether Jew or Gentile.

According to Eskenazi (1988a:83, 86), "the building of the wall is an extension of building the temple." The wall gives "temple-like sanctity to the city as a whole." If the city is understood not only as a place but also as a people who worship at the temple, then the enlargement of holy space that Ezekiel envisioned makes sense.¹⁰ Within that sacred space, the people who worship at the temple must obey God's law that Ezra taught (Oeming 2012:149). Nehemiah 1-6 describes this third stage. Only when these three stages were complete had the generations of descendants of those listed in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 fully executed Cyrus' decree (Venema 2004:163-164).

At this point, one should recall Wood's (1973:252) recognition that the Bible does not specifically say that Jerusalem was rebuilt at any one of these times. Rather, the king's words and people's activity that are connected with each of these stages (i.e., building the temple, establishing proper worship, and building the wall) contributed to the reconstruction of the city, the realization of Cyrus' original edict, and the fulfillment of Gabriel's announcement to Daniel. In other words, Ezra-Nehemiah discusses the building of Yahweh's temple and city.¹¹ A more theological way of identifying the theme is to say that Ezra-Nehemiah issues a call to build and inhabit the new Jerusalem, even the Most Holy Place. The words *לְמִשְׁכָּן קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים* may not appear in Ezra's version of Cyrus' decree, but Ezra-Nehemiah, nonetheless, has to do with

(Ezra 7:6) at their moment of conviction. Why? The theological answer is that the Holy Spirit worked in concert with the teaching of God's Word to transform hearts. The exegetical answer must be that Nehemiah 8:1-8 does not record the first instance of Ezra's teaching. Nehemiah 8:9, which places Ezra and Nehemiah together in Jerusalem for the events of Nehemiah 8-10, rules out postulations of editorial dischronologization that would relocate Ezra's teaching in Nehemiah 8 to the time period of Ezra 9-10. Cf. LaSor et al. (1996:564).

¹⁰For Ezekiel's influence on Ezra-Nehemiah, see Fried (2008:75-97). Blenkinsopp (2008:307, 314) endorses Fried's essay in the same volume.

¹¹Therefore, attempts to separate the two for the purpose of deciding when Daniel's seventy sevens begin are misguided.

realizing the sixth objective of Daniel 9:24. Eskenazi (1988a:57) notices that the dimensions of the temple in Ezra 6:3-5 are the same for height and width. Both are sixty cubits. Perhaps width also includes length, making the rebuilt temple a perfect cube. Eskenazi suggests, though, that the verse intentionally omits the length in order to convey the possibility of expansion.¹² Indeed, the rest of Ezra-Nehemiah supports Ezekiel's vision of a קִדְשׁ קִדְשִׁים that expands to encompass all the area within the rebuilt wall. Eskenazi (1988a:86, 1988b:655) particularly notes how Nehemiah 7:1-3 mentions the gatekeepers along with the singers and Levites (cf. 1 Chr 24-26), but now they stand at the wall around the city and not a wall around the temple. Moreover, Nehemiah 11:1 and 11:18 call Jerusalem, after the completion of the three stages of Cyrus' edict, עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ (the holy city). A temple rebuilt toward the end of the sixth century has spread its sanctifying influence over a city by the middle of the fifth. A people made holy by Ezra's teaching are prepared to live and worship in a holy place (Green 1993:209). Jerusalem "was not so much a city with a temple in it; more like a temple with a small city round it" (Wright 1992b:225). The city has, in effect, become קִדְשׁ קִדְשִׁים.

The third section of Ezra-Nehemiah, Nehemiah 8-13, celebrates the completion of the building project. More teaching, confessing, and repenting occur in preparation for inhabiting the new Jerusalem and worshiping Yahweh. The specific commitments of the people in Nehemiah 10:30-39 tailor repentance to the circumstances of the post-exilic community. Nehemiah 12:1-26 then lists the religious personnel who ministered at the temple during the nine decades between Cyrus' decree and Nehemiah's labor. The names of Zerubbabel and Jeshua in verse 1 (cf. Ezra 3:8-9) and Ezra and Nehemiah in verse 26 frame the multi-generational list.

¹²See also Van Wijk-Bos (1998:8). The reader should also recall earlier references to Beale (2004:23-25), Meadowcroft (2001:437-438), and Wright (1992b:227).

Like Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7, Nehemiah 12 makes all names listed participants in one work of restoration that climaxes in verses 27-47 with jubilant dedication of the finished project. The celebration of the temple's completion and installation of priests in Ezra 6:16-18 anticipate the installation and worship in Nehemiah 12 (Eskenazi 1988a:57; 1988b:647). Even so, Eskenazi possibly overstates the case when she says that the "ceremony celebrating the completion of the temple [in Ezra 6] is so cursorily described because only a certain stage has concluded. The house of God is not yet finished. . . . It is too early for the 'grand opening' ceremonies" (Eskenazi (1988a:56-57). To be sure, Nehemiah 12 describes the grand opening or, perhaps, grand finale that marks the full execution of Cyrus' decree, but, as Williamson (1985:85) advises, the "unaffected note of joy that accompanied the resumption of temple worship [in Ezra 6] . . . should not be overlooked." Ezra 6 may celebrate a small beginning (Zech 4:10), but those who participated in it, as well as the author of Ezra-Nehemiah who recorded it, considered the completion of the temple, installation of priests, and observance of the Passover a momentous and joyous occasion in its own right. God had begun a new work that, along with the temple vessels, signaled the participation of the post-exilic community in the continuing unfolding of God's redemptive plan (Williamson 1985:87).¹³ The returnees were heirs of the promises made to Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets. They could affirm with David that Yahweh is good to them because his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel (Ezra 3:11; cf. 1 Chr 16:34). Indeed, they were the continuation of Israel.

6.3. Reconstruction and Jubilee

Daniel 9:25 says that the first period of seven sevens will feature the reconstruction of Jerusalem. As already seen, several scholars have understood these sevens as a jubilee period, and others have associated them with the events of Ezra-Nehemiah. The contention of this thesis

¹³See also Koch (1974:188-189, 196) and McConville (1986:206-207).

is that the seven sevens began with Cyrus' decree and ran until the full implementation of that decree by means of building the temple, community, and walls. In other words, the book of Ezra-Nehemiah (from the initial effort to lay the foundation of the temple in Ezra 3 to the climaxing dedication of the wall in Nehemiah 12) describes the seven sevens. More, however, needs to be said about the relation of Ezra-Nehemiah to Daniel 9:25. Put as a question, "How does the building activity of the post-exilic community involve jubilee?"

Ezra-Nehemiah's report of the building project (temple, community, and wall) has a jubilant frame. Ezra 3:10 says that the first wave of returnees, after laying the foundation for the temple, worshiped in the manner of David. Nehemiah 12:27-47 then links the worship after the completion of the wall (and thus the full execution of Cyrus' decree) with David's preparation for the first temple in 1 Chronicles 22-29.¹⁴ The writer of Ezra-Nehemiah views the post-exilic worship at the completion of the temple project as the continuation of the true worship prescribed by David (cf. Japhet 1993:628; Wright 1991:236-237). He agreed with the chronicler that David "brought the worship of Yahweh to its highest perfection and its true fulfillment" (De Vries 1988:639).¹⁵ These scenes in Ezra 3 and Nehemiah 12 burst with joy because of God's goodness and the people's gratitude.

The post-exilic community of Ezra-Nehemiah could identify with the promise of restoration and jubilee in Isaiah 60-61. Ezra and Nehemiah acknowledged God's guidance, protection, and blessing (Ezra 7:27, 8:18; Neh 2:8, 4:15, 6:16). God had remarkably moved

¹⁴More recent scholarship on Ezra-Nehemiah (e.g., Duggan 2001:22-30; Eskenazi 1988a:22-23; Japhet 2009:385; Newsome 1975:213-214; Williamson 1977:66) denies common authorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah but ignores the similarity between the David in Ezra 3:10 and Nehemiah 12:45-46 on the one hand and the David of 1 Chronicles 22-29 on the other. Whether the author of Ezra-Nehemiah wrote 1 Chronicles, read 1 Chronicles, or drew this view of David as the patron of the temple from another source is, of course, much harder to decide.

¹⁵Besides being mentioned with the building of the temple in Ezra 3 and the celebration after the completion of the wall in Nehemiah 12, David is also mentioned in Ezra 8:20 in association with the Levites who assisted Ezra. In other words, David is mentioned in connection with each stage of the performance of Cyrus' decree.

Gentile kings to treat a subjugated people benevolently (Ezra 1:1, 6:3-12, 7:27; Neh 2:8). Due in no small part to Persian funding, the post-exilic community was able to rebuild God's city and house. Especially in contrast to the exile, God's favor rested upon the post-exilic community (Satterthwaite and McConville 2007:254), and Ezra-Nehemiah records this community's jubilant acknowledgement of God's goodness.

Nevertheless, the returnees, though back in the Promised Land, experienced hard economic times—some of which they rapaciously brought on themselves and some of which they were politically helpless to prevent. Nehemiah 5:1-5 describes the economic hardship that forced some landowners to mortgage land or sell children into slavery in order to buy food. As summarized by Halligan (1991:147), “The people, unable to feed their children, mortgage their property; unable to meet their mortgage, they forfeit their property; still unable to satisfy continuing debt, they forfeit their collateral, their sons and daughters. The lenders, in order to recover their investment, sell off the collateral either to fellow Judean creditors or foreign parties.” So then, the exacerbating problem was usury within the post-exilic community. Certain returnees were taking advantage of their fellow returnees by charging interest on loans and seizing property from those who defaulted on their loans. Meanwhile, the poorer folks fighting for economic survival had less time to work on the wall and carry out Cyrus' decree. Nehemiah appealed to the well-off residents of the post-exilic community to live by what amounted to jubilee theology and immediately return property and interest to its poorer yet rightful owners.¹⁶ The creditors were to do this out of fear of God and as a witness to the

¹⁶Bergsma (2007:205) says, “Nehemiah's reform resembles an impromptu proclamation of jubilee, but the jubilee legislation is never mentioned by the text.” Bergsma (2007:227) adds that “the jubilee was the socio-economic expression of the Day of Atonement. . . . Just as the Day of Atonement re-establishes wholeness in the cultic and spiritual realm, the jubilee re-establishes it in the social and economic realms.” Not coincidentally, the year of jubilee began on the Day of Atonement (Bergsma 2007:91-92). Though Ezra-Nehemiah records two celebrations of the Feast of Tabernacles that followed the Day of Atonement (Ezra 3:4, Neh 8:13-18), it curiously does not mention the Day of Atonement itself. The reason why is hard to explain. Still, Ezra-Nehemiah joins the

Gentiles. For God's people, fear of God begins with knowledge of his revealed will (Deut 4:10, Ps 19:9, Prov 2:1-6) and then moves to obeying his commands (Deut 10:12-13; cf. Prov 3:7). Such obedience, which in the case of debt forgiveness may be counter-cultural and seem imprudently disadvantageous to one's portfolio, could only proceed from a heart that submitted to God's authority and trusted him to make good on his promises (Deut 8:7-9; Prov 15:33, 22:4). God's will, of course, includes treating the less fortunate as graciously as God has treated the redeemed. One way that God's people acted like God toward one another was the periodic forgiveness of debts.

Nehemiah 5:12 records the compliance of the creditors. Such compassion toward compatriots in distress would also present a distinct picture of a redeemed community to those observing on the outside. They would see how faith in a covenant-making and covenant-keeping God made a practical difference in daily living. Nehemiah did not forget that those who worked on the wall with him were part of a kingdom of priests to the nations. How they treated one another had as much to do with this mission as carrying out Cyrus' decree. Later, Nehemiah 10:31 reports that the post-exilic community, after confessing their history of unfaithfulness, included the observance of sabbatical years among their concrete steps of repentance. Perhaps they also intended to set aside the fiftieth year for a jubilee, but the text is silent on this matter.

In the narrative world of the Old Testament, what Nehemiah ordered had precedent in the Pentateuch's provision of jubilee, which was discussed in the preceding chapter. How much of this jubilee theology affected Nehemiah's decision in Nehemiah 5 is hard to establish, but it seems unlikely that Nehemiah would be ignorant of Israel's story that was taught by Ezra and the Levites in Nehemiah 8 and then reviewed in the corporate prayer of confession in Nehemiah 9.

themes of atonement sin (Ezra 8:35, 9:4) and jubilee in the forms of return from exile (Ezra 1) and release of debt (Neh 5).

In fact, Nehemiah's own prayer of confession in Nehemiah 1:5-11 indicates familiarity with that story. Nehemiah understood that love of God entails love of neighbor and that true religion, therefore, includes justice and compassion. Moreover, Nehemiah was aware of the watching world (Neh 5:9). He knew that true religion also involves practicing justice and compassion for the sake of mission. The surrounding nations would not be attracted to Israel's God if the people of this God took advantage of one another.

So then, Ezra-Nehemiah relates the building activity of the post-exilic community to the theme of jubilee. As these people labored on God's house and city, they contributed to the accomplishment of his eternal purpose of redeeming a people who declare his praise. The jubilee of the seven sevens, however, was not empty or hypocritical. It became quite practical when some members of the post-exilic community were willing to forgive the debt of others. Love of God at the temple on the sabbath led to love of neighbor in the city during the rest of the week. The people of a righteous God showed righteousness (obedience to God's law and spokesman) to one another.

6.4. The Anointed One in Daniel 9:25

Daniel 9:25 also announces the coming of a מָשִׁיחַ נָגִיד (anointed one who is a leader).

The Greek view divides over the identity of this person. He is either Cyrus (a Gentile king), Zerubbabel (a descendant of David), or Joshua (the high priest). The latter two are mentioned in the early chapters of Ezra. The Greek view rightly understands that kings and priests qualify as anointed ones and leaders. More often than not in the Old Testament, kings are said to be anointed, and נָגִיד (leader) refers to political or military leaders. נָגִיד could serve as a synonym of מֶלֶךְ (king) to identify a member of David's royal house (e.g. 1 Kgs 1:35), but Jeremiah 20:1 and

Nehemiah 11:11 use **נָגִיד** of priests, who, of course, were also anointed (Exod 28:41, Lev 4:3, Num 35:25). Chronicles also uses **נָגִיד** with reference to Levites (e.g., 1 Chr 9:11, 2 Chr 35:8). Given the versatile application of **נָגִיד**, some proponents of the Greek view identify the anointed one of Daniel 9:25 with a royal person and others with a priestly person. Prophets typically anointed kings in Israel, but Yahweh called Cyrus his **מָשִׁיחַ** (anointed one) because he would carry out Yahweh's will of rebuilding his city and house (Isa 44:28-45:1). **מָשִׁיחַ**, thus, was not restricted to Israelite officers of Yahweh's covenant with his people.

Because Roman and Dispensational readings combine the seven sevens and sixty-two sevens, Daniel 9:25-26 describes the same anointed one, Jesus, whom the New Testament regards as both a king and a priest. The Roman and Dispensational views do not have to decide if the anointed one in Daniel 9:25 is a Gentile king, Davidic scion, or Levitical priest. The Roman and Dispensational views, however, must ignore the Masoretic punctuation that separates the seven sevens from the sixty-two sevens and distinguishes the anointed one of Daniel 9:25 from the anointed one of Daniel 9:26. Roman and Dispensational advocates typically do not try to account for the seven sevens. It is enough for them to count down the sixty-nine sevens to the first coming of Jesus. Still, Gabriel sectioned off seven sevens that stand as a jubilee cycle, and Young suggested, if only in passing, that the seven sevens represent the time covered by Ezra-Nehemiah. Who then is the anointed one of the seven sevens, and how does he bring jubilee?

Several anointed ones played some role in the carrying out of Cyrus' decree. Isaiah 45:1, of course, called Cyrus an anointed one. Joshua the high priest also would have been anointed. As Davidic descendants, Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel may have been anointed, but this possibility has so little evidence (cf. Lewis 2005:301-314). The post-exilic literature never says

that a prophet anointed them, and neither one of them ever sat on David's throne in Jerusalem (cf. Boccaccini 2002:57-580).¹⁷ While 1 Chronicles 3:19 lists Zerubbabel among the descendants of King Jehoiachin who was the grandson of King Josiah, the books of Ezra-Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah never mention the Davidic ancestry of Zerubbabel. Miller and Hayes (2006:518) make a valid observation, "If Zerubbabel had been a member of the Davidic family line, it seems almost unbelievable that neither Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, nor Zechariah noted this."¹⁸ Evidence of royal blood is even less available for Sheshbazzar whose name does not appear as such in 1 Chronicles 3. Perhaps Shenazzar in 1 Chronicles 3:18 is a variant spelling of Sheshbazzar, but no confirmation exists (cf. Goswell 2012a:19-20). Because Ezra 1:8 refers to Sheshbazzar as הַנָּשִׂיא לַיהוּדָה (the leader of Judah) and Ezra 5:14 additionally says that Cyrus made him פָּקִיד (governor), considering Sheshbazzar a Davidic descendant seems to be a reasonable conclusion. Still, נָשִׂיא does not always indicate a royal position (Duguid 1994:12-18; Provan et al. 2003:289; Williamson 1985:17-18). Moreover, Judah may refer not to the tribe of David but to a province in the western part of the Persian Empire (Japhet 1982:97-98).

For another reason, though, the Davidic descent of these men is a moot point. What makes them unlikely candidates to fulfill Daniel 9:25 is not their uncertain royal status but their leadership toward the beginning of the seven sevens. Daniel 9:25 seems to use Cyrus' decree and the anointed one's arrival as the two ends of the seven sevens. The seven sevens run from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the anointed one. With the exception of Hattush in Ezra 8:2, Ezra-Nehemiah does not name a member of the royal house during the time that

¹⁷It is true, of course, that Zechariah 4:14 identifies Zerubbabel as one of two anointed individuals.

¹⁸See also Pomykala (1995:46).

Ezra and Nehemiah worked in Jerusalem.¹⁹ In fact, Nehemiah 12:1-26 is curiously silent on this matter. Nehemiah 12 lists the priests who ministered in Jerusalem during the decades between Cyrus' decree and Nehemiah's completion of the wall. Verse 1 names Zerubbabel and Joshua as the royal and priestly representatives at the beginning of the work. Verse 26 names Ezra as the priestly representative at the end of the work but gives no Davidic descendant. Instead, verse 26 names Nehemiah as the governor. Neither Ezra-Nehemiah nor any other part of the Old Testament identifies Nehemiah as a member of the royal line of David.²⁰ If the anointed one of Daniel 9:25 marks the end of the seven sevens, then a priest rather than a royal figure seems to be a more likely candidate (cf. Boccaccini 2002:56; Collins 2010:42). Nehemiah 13:4 mentions Eliashib the priest, but he allowed Tobiah, who had opposed Nehemiah, to move into the temple while Nehemiah was back in Susa. He hardly qualifies as the expected anointed one. The most likely candidate, then, is Ezra (see also Greidanus 2012:303, 332), but what does Ezra have to do with jubilee or the six objectives of Daniel 9:24?

Ezra, of course, is a bit of a mystery in Ezra-Nehemiah and the rest of the Bible.²¹ Ezra 7:1-6 introduces him so impressively that the reader expects him to dominate the rest of the book, but he does not. Instead, he seems to remain in the background much of the time and even out of view (cf. Eskenazi 1988:62-63; Karrer-Grube 2008:139-141). Still, what Ezra-Nehemiah says about Ezra indicates that God used him to begin the realization of the six objectives in Daniel 9:24.

¹⁹According to Laato (1997:223), "Ezra may have regarded [Hattush's] exodus to Jerusalem as a decisive turning point in Israel's history which would begin the new epoch in Israel and finally bring back the glory of the times of David and Solomon." Perhaps, but one unexceptional reference can hardly bear the weight of so much freight.

²⁰Nehemiah 2:3 identifies Jerusalem as the burial place of Nehemiah's ancestors. This bit of information by itself does not establish the royal lineage of Nehemiah. See Goswell (2012a:24-25) and Williamson (1985:179).

²¹Grabbe (2010:4) calls Ezra a "puzzle."

The first three objectives of Daniel's seventy sevens have to do with making provision for sin. As a priest newly arrived in the Persian province Beyond the River, Ezra immediately found himself ministering to people in need of instruction, confession, forgiveness, and repentance. While the sin of intermarriage seems to have taken Ezra by surprise, Ezra's earlier concern about the initial absence of Levitical recruits for the long trip back to Palestine (Ezra 8:15) suggests that he expected an intercessory ministry in addition to his instructional responsibility. After David's revision of their duties, Levites supported the priests by guarding the temple precinct, preparing food for the offerings, cleaning the temple furnishings and implements, and handling the temple's finances (1 Chr 23:24-32, 26:20-28; cf. Num 18). Ezra knew that he needed the Levites to assist him in making intercession for the sins of the post-exilic community and building the members of the community into a godly people. Ezra 8:35 records the making of burnt offerings and sin offerings upon arrival in Jerusalem. Ezra evidently wasted no time in addressing the sins of God's people and their need for atonement.

Curiously, Ezra 9-10 says little about specific offerings for the sin of intermarriage. Hogewood (2006:79), drawing on recent scholarship about performative speech, argues that "[t]he speech act of confession in Ezra functions to modify the Israelite behavior of intermarriage." Contrasting Ezra 9 with Leviticus 16, he says that "the liturgy of repentance [in Ezra 9] . . . separates sin from the postexilic congregation (Hogewood 2006:80)" Even though the rebuilt temple was standing in Jerusalem, words now apparently performed the expiatory function of animal sacrifices. Hogewood (2006:74) appreciably recognizes that confession of sin in Leviticus 16 was a part of transferring Israel's sin to the goats and bull on the Day of Atonement, but sacrificial animals were nevertheless involved. Words alone could not pay the penalty for sin. Death had to occur.

Falk (2007:136) denies that penitential prayer became a substitute for sacrifice in Ezra's Jerusalem. Though allowing that confession, of necessity, may have taken on an atoning function during the exile, Falk (2007:138) says with reference to Ezra 9-10, "One should assume that if there were an altar the response would be to confess *and* make sacrifice." Ezra 9:4-5 mentions the evening sacrifice as the occasion for Ezra's prayer of confession. Morning and evening, day after day, the Israelites offered burnt sacrifices to expiate their sin and propitiate the wrath of God against sinners (Exod 29:28-42; Lev 1:4, 9; Num 28:1-8). With the malodorous reminder of the stench of sin and the cost of atonement hanging in the air, Ezra publicly pleaded for God's mercy to spare him and the community from the deserved consequences of their disobedience. Ezra may not have known about Gabriel's word to Daniel regarding the removal of sin, but Ezra's prayer is as honest, sorrowful, and poignant as Daniel's. Whereas Daniel explicitly showed apprehension about God's reputation among the nations, Ezra's concern for the survival of the remnant implicitly shared Daniel's agitation. If God's anger consumed the post-exilic community, the unexpressed outcome would be derision among the nations and further setback to, if not dissolution of, the plan of redemption.

Ezra 10:19 also mentions a guilt offering in conjunction with a pledge to separate from foreign wives. The law of Moses, of course, allowed Israelite soldiers to marry female captives (Deut 21:10-14), and the book of Ruth celebrates not only Ruth's commitment to the God of Naomi but also her marriage to Boaz, an Israelite *אִישׁ גִּבּוֹר חַיִל* (man of strength and substance). If Ezra 9-10 is read in view of Israel's calling as a kingdom of priests to the nations (and Ezra 1:1 indicates that Ezra wants to be read in continuity with Jeremiah who, according to Jeremiah 1:10, was a prophet to the nations), then the nationality of the women by itself had no bearing on their

status in the post-exilic community.²² According to Japhet (2006:113), “the problem is not one of mixed marriages themselves but the significance of such in a theological context.” The dismissed women, who like Solomon’s wives (1 Kgs 1:11) are called נָשִׁים נִכְרִיּוֹת (alien women), presumably did not share the covenant community’s faith in Yahweh and, hence, showed no interest in joining that community (cf. Brown 2005:449-450, 457 note 65).²³ Their unbelief adversely affected a holy community by presumably leading the husbands astray as the idolatry of Solomon’s wives had done to him (cf. Neh 13:26). The husbands had to offer a guilt offering because they, out of religious indifference, had married women for the wrong reason and thereby brought unholy people into a sacred place. God had apparently used Ezra’s teaching to convict the men of their covenantal apathy and lead them to repentance. Perhaps some of the foreign women also embraced Ezra’s teaching, became part of the covenant community, and remained married to their husbands as insiders by faith. Ezra 9-10 may not explicitly discuss this possibility, but the God of the Old Testament, as seen in the examples of Rahab and Ruth, does not turn away anyone who believes in him (Beckwith 2001:187-188). Moreover, Ezra 6:21 and Nehemiah 10:29 (Eng. 28) make allowance for the conversion of foreigners and their participation in the covenant community (Japhet 2006:115).

Following the completion of the wall (and the full realization of Cyrus’ decree), Nehemiah 8-10 presents a communal season of teaching, confession, and repentance. As would

²²Williamson (1985:161) and Wolak (2012:93-104) understand the prohibition against intermarriage in Ezra 9-10 in terms of race, not religion. The text, however, does not explicitly say that race was the determining factor. Williamson and Wolak assume that Ezra and the people made the Pentateuch’s policy on intermarriage stricter. Milgrom (1976:71) similarly says, “This verse [Ezra 10:19] reveals Ezra’s line of reasoning. Israel is a ‘sacred seed’ whose admixture with foreigners is *maal* [sacrilege]. The syllogism is clear: if Israel is holy then the adulteration of its blood constitutes *maal*.” Milgrom has also assumed that זֶרַע הַקֹּדֶשׁ (holy seed) in Ezra 9:2 refers to a pure blood line. If Ezra 9-10 is read in the context of the rest of the Old Testament, racial purity is not the concern. A holy seed and racial purity are not the same thing.

²³First Kings 11:1 is the only appearance of the term נָשִׁים נִכְרִיּוֹת outside of Ezra-Nehemiah. The term occurs nine times in Ezra-Nehemiah (Ezra 10:2, 10-11, 14, 17-18, 44; Neh 13:26-27).

be expected, Ezra took the lead in reading the Book of the Law of Moses.²⁴ The Levites assisted him in explaining the meaning of the law to the people and making a corporate prayer of confession. Repentance took the form, among other changes of conduct, of a vow by the people to make regular sacrifices for atonement (Neh 10:33). Ezra presumably was the first priest in charge of these sacrifices, and his thorough teaching of God's Word was the means by which God's Spirit brought these people to this decision. Reading and explaining the law reminded the Israelites, not only in Nehemiah 8 but also in Ezra 9, of what God had done for them and how they had responded improperly. This conviction of sin made the post-exilic community aware of its need of righteousness (the fourth objective of Daniel 9:24) and caused it to put its hope in the prophetic promise of a remnant (Ezra 9:8). The fulfillment of prophecy (the fifth objective of Daniel 9:24) depended not so much on the people's faithfulness but on God's grace. Ezra-Nehemiah continually documents the feeble perseverance of the post-exilic community in its profession of allegiance to God's Word, as taught by Ezra. God's willingness to forgive his people and persevere with them is a major theme in Ezra-Nehemiah. It is not a perfect people who live in the new Jerusalem of Nehemiah 11 but a forgiven people. Even so, an imperfect yet forgiven people, over the course of a century, remarkably rebuilt God's house and city (the sixth objective of Daniel 9:24) out of obedience to God's prophets and in testimony to their hope in God's promises through his prophets. Again, Ezra may or may not have been familiar with

²⁴The Septuagint's rendition of Nehemiah 9:6 also attributes the prayer of confession in Nehemiah 9:6-38 to Ezra. This interpretive translation seems reasonable in view of Ezra's prayer in Ezra 9. Still, no textual evidence confirms the inference of the translators. The Hebrew text attributes the prayer to the Levites. The Septuagint strengthens what the Hebrew text says both explicitly in Nehemiah 8 and implicitly in Nehemiah 9: viz., Ezra was there, and his priestly activity had a redeeming effect on the post-exilic generation that finished the second and third stages of Cyrus' decree. For a different view, see Williamson (2004:282 note 3) who thinks that "the evidence of the LXX is worthless."

Daniel's vision of seventy sevens, but God worked through his priestly activity nonetheless to reconcile sinners to himself, fulfill prophecy, and restore the קֹדֶשׁ קֳדָשִׁים (holy of holies).

More than anyone else in the Old Testament's account of the post-exilic era, Ezra was the anointed leader of Daniel 9:25 who presided over the beginning realization of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 during the seven sevens. If the seven sevens constitute one jubilee period, then the festive entrance into the new Jerusalem (a holy of holies) and the jubilant practice of Davidic worship bring this first period of the seventy sevens to a rousing climax. Even so, what Eskenazi said about a cursory description of the temple dedication in Ezra 6 and a grand opening of the completed project in Nehemiah 12 suitably describes the jubilee of the seven sevens and the Jubilee of Jubilees of the seventy sevens. So far as the seventy sevens are concerned, the jubilee in Nehemiah 12 represents a beginning, not a conclusion, and so anticipates something greater in the future.²⁵

6.5. Tension between the Already and the Not Yet in Ezra-Nehemiah

Gabriel divided the seventy sevens into three unequal periods of seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and one seven. Daniel 9:25 says that the first period of seven sevens will feature the reconstruction of Jerusalem and the appearance of an anointed one. As already seen, several scholars have understood the sevens in Daniel 9 as a jubilee period, and others have associated the seven sevens with the events of Ezra-Nehemiah. The contention of this thesis is that the seven sevens began with Cyrus' decree and ran until the full implementation of that decree by means of building the temple, community, and walls. In other words, the book of Ezra-Nehemiah (from the initial effort to lay the foundation of the temple in Ezra 3 to the climaxing

²⁵Koch (1974:189) says, "So the return could not be the perfection of the eschaton, but only one pre-eschatological step, a sign of a coming fulfillment and not the eschatological fulfillment itself. It seems to me that Ezra was thinking of just this stage between the abandoned past and the outstanding salvation in the future when he prayed (Ezra ix. 8f.): 'Our God . . . has given us a little renewal (*mihyā me'at*). For slaves we are.'" Koch adds, "The little renewal presupposed in Ezra's mind a great renewal in the future."

dedication of the wall in Nehemiah 12) describes the seven sevens. During these years, Ezra was the anointed priest who taught God's Word, prayed for the post-exilic community, and made atonement for their sins. In other words, he presided over the realization of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. Even so, his work accomplished a partial realization, and the writer of Ezra-Nehemiah points out the limit of the post-exilic achievement.

6.5.1. The Public Prayers of Confession in Ezra-Nehemiah

Both prayers of confession in Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 9 complain that the exile has not fully ended because God's people, though back in the Promised Land, are subservient to Gentile rulers. These prayers include Israelite kings in the list of those still in bondage (Ezra 9:7, Neh 9:32). To be sure, no Davidic descendant was ruling in Jerusalem over an independent state. Still, these acknowledgements of the current status of the royal house implicitly express a Davidic hope.²⁶ For all that God had already done for the post-exilic community, something vitally important was still missing. Davidic kingship may have been absent from the post-exilic period, but it was not forgotten. Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel are mentioned in Haggai, Zechariah, and Ezra-Nehemiah because they served "as a token of the future of the Davidic dynasty." They "became God's signature guaranteeing the full redemption of his people, the

²⁶Goswell (2012a:27) argues that Ezra-Nehemiah's David is a liturgist but not a king. Therefore, Ezra-Nehemiah has no messianic expectation. Goswell receives support from Eskenazi (1988a:33, 36), Japhet (1982:76), Karrer-Grube (2008:155, 159), and Williamson (1982:9-10). It is doubtful, though, that anyone in the post-exilic community heard David's name and thought only of his revision of worship, as if Davidic worship could be isolated from the Davidic covenant. Davidic worship involved both David's organizational skill and David's theological significance. The returnees who celebrated the laying of the second temple's foundation in Ezra 3:10-11 had 1 Chronicles 16:34 on their lips: "Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever." This verse is part of a song that David gave to Asaph when the ark entered Jerusalem (1 Chr 16:7). David's transfer of the ark to Jerusalem with Yahweh's approval gave theological legitimacy to his kingship. Yahweh had linked his redemptive program with Davidic kingship (cf. Ps 89:19-29, 49). God's people sang these words at three crucial moments in their history: the entrance of the ark into Jerusalem, the entrance of the ark into the first temple (2 Chr 5:13), and the completion of the foundation for the second temple (Ezra 3:11). Each of these events represented advances in God's plan of redemption that is tied not only to the people of Israel but also to the house of David. So then, Ezra-Nehemiah's David is a royal liturgist who gives worshipers a redemptive-historical hope about which to sing.

messianic kingdom, and the new heaven and new earth” (VanGemeren 1990:192; cf. Petterson 2009:65 and Webb 2003:42).

Again, not to be overlooked at this point is Ezra 1:1, which recalls Jeremiah’s oracles of restoration and thereby provides the theological context for reading Ezra-Nehemiah. That context includes an announcement of the coming of a Davidic descendant named Yahweh Is Our Righteousness. Even so, Ezra-Nehemiah describes events during the first period of Daniel’s seventy sevens. Daniel’s seventy sevens may have to do with God’s goodness after the exile, but the seven sevens feature tension between the already and the not yet. The prayers in Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 9 give evidence that the post-exilic community and even Ezra felt the tension. McConville (1986:213) observes, “There is a mood of thankfulness, related to a belief that prophecy has been fulfilled in the return from exile (Ezra i 1), together with a strong feeling that the present circumstances of the community cannot represent God’s full purposes for it.” God had begun a good work with Cyrus’ decree, but the completion of Nehemiah’s wall did not exhaust the vision of redemption in the seventy sevens or in Jeremiah’s prophecies. Moreover, Isaiah 61’s expectation of a year of Yahweh’s favor also did not fully materialize in the post-exilic era. The worship and celebration of Nehemiah 12, while no doubt jubilant and satisfying in themselves, typified something greater in the future. Sixty-three of Daniel’s seventy sevens had yet to run their course, but seven already had.

The post-exilic community also faced external causes of hardship that hindered their rebuilding effort. The prayers of confession in Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 9 complained of ongoing slavery to foreign kings (Ezra 9:8-9, Neh 9:36-37). What Persia gave for the support of the temple it took back in the form of taxes. In the words of Van Wijk-Bos (1998:63), “Large empires are expensive. All the administrative courts needed to be financed, and large sums had

to be raised from the communities in the provinces.” Besides being burdensome, taxes represent servitude. The one who coercively collects the taxes is in control. In some sense, then, Cyrus’ decree did not mark the end of the exile. Though Jeremiah had correctly predicted that the elapsing of the seventy years would bring restoration to the Promised Land and dissolution of the Babylonian Empire, Daniel’s seventy sevens began with a new regime (Persia) in charge of the political fortunes of God’s people.

Wright (1996:248-249) says, “The whole point of passages like Daniel 9, Ezra 9 or Nehemiah 9 is that these great prayers of repentance . . . are prayers precisely designed to bring about the return from exile.” Boda (2006:1.45) has similarly assessed the motivation of these prayers: “These prayers [Dan 9, Ezra 9, Neh 9, and Ps 106] reveal the deep struggle of a people in the process of defining themselves in the wake of the loss of political independence in the new world order. Even when they see signs of God’s grace and discipline in the actions of the nations, they remain transfixed upon the goal of a pure community free from outside intervention.” Wright and Boda have particularly read the prayers in Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 9 with reference to political reality. There is, of course, a certain amount of truth to their observation. Especially in Nehemiah 9:36-37, those praying complain about slavery to kings who have the power to tax. Even so, Wright (1992b:268-270, 1996:xvii-xviii, 126-127, 203-204, 248-250, 1999:258-261) may overstate his well-known thesis about the ongoing exile.²⁷ He is joined in this regard by Beale (2011:388) who says that “the physical return of some from Judah

²⁷Pitre (2005:35) also seems to overstate his critique of Wright when he says in reference to the Assyrian exile of the northern kingdom in the eighth century that “Wright has the *right insight* [about the Jewish hope for the end of the exile] but the *wrong exile* [i.e., the deportation of the southern kingdom in the sixth century].” Pitre thinks that the northern tribes never returned from exile; hence, the Assyrian exile, in contrast to the Babylonian exile, never ended. While Pitre may be correct that most Jews (northerners and southerners) remained outside the Promised Land, this ongoing exile was self-imposed. The Persian Empire included the geographical limits of the Assyrian Empire. When Cyrus issued his edict in 539, any Jew throughout the Persian Empire (whether a member of a northern tribe or a southern tribe) could return to Judea.

and Benjamin, though prophesied by Jeremiah, was ultimately a hollow eschatological restoration fulfillment.”

Hollow does not seem to be the right word in this context. Something salvific did happen in 539 B.C.E. The restoration began, Daniel’s seventy sevens started counting down, and God inaugurated Isaiah’s new thing. Like the psalmist, those living in the Second Temple era may have thought that God had deserted them and wondered when he would come to their defense.²⁸ Their view, whatever pastoral sensitivity it may require, did not correspond to God’s view in Daniel’s seventy sevens or in much post-exilic literature of the Old Testament. Haggai, Zechariah, and the writer of Ezra 1:1 affirmed the renewed activity of God during the post-exilic period. God was neither silent nor distant. He was “on site” in the post-exilic community to begin the long process of restoring his people and accomplishing his eternal plan that ultimately involved a Davidic scion. Beale’s (2011:388) seems to recognize this truth when he says that an “incipient fulfillment” is not “ultimately a hollow . . . fulfillment.” Faith was required to see the hand of God in these early events of the seventy sevens, but faith and faithfulness are what the post-exilic literature asks of its readers, even in the face of contrary evidence. To recall Boda’s words, “remaining transfixed upon the goal of a pure community free from outside intervention” did not necessarily reflect an accurate understanding of earlier prophecy (including Daniel’s seventy sevens) about God’s purposes beyond the exile. The six objectives of Daniel 9:24 say nothing about political independence and economic prosperity.

The seven sevens of Daniel 9:25, which cover the period of Ezra-Nehemiah, did not measure forty-nine years exactly, and they did not end with a literal blowing of a jubilee trumpet

²⁸Cf. Wright (2009:60-61). VanderKam (1984b:521) adds, “Writers who contributed to the Enochic tradition(s) did not think that the exile had ended with the modest restoration under Sheshbazzar, Zerubbabel, Joshua, etc.; nor did the writer of Daniel 9. The standard practice of such scholars seems to have been to interpret the exile as the time from the destruction of Jerusalem to their day and to predict that a spectacular end to this bondage would occur in the immediate future.”

(Lev 25:9 but cf. Neh 12:35). Nevertheless, the tripartite division of the seventy sevens with a first section of seven sevens alludes to the theology of jubilee and so asks Daniel and subsequent readers to consider Cyrus' decree the beginning of a great work of God that anticipates another jubilee.²⁹ Moreover, the return of property at Nehemiah's insistence echoes Pentateuchal legislation on the jubilee and provides a preliminary realization of this hope. So then, the seven sevens in Daniel 9:25 constitute a jubilee period that ends with great celebration.

As seen in chapter 2, proponents of the Greek view suggest that the seven sevens have to do with the reconstruction of the temple in Ezra 1-6. The dedication of the temple and the observance of Passover supposedly mark the end of this first jubilee cycle. While this view appreciably associates the seven sevens with jubilee and draws the book of Ezra-Nehemiah into the discussion of Daniel 9:25, it problematically limits Daniel 9:25 to the reconstruction of the temple. The verse, however, expects more than a single building. It announces the reconstruction of a city. Both Ezekiel and Ezra-Nehemiah describe the expansion of the temple so that it encompasses Jerusalem. The Greek view, then, does not take into account how Ezra-Nehemiah actually explains the execution of Cyrus' decree. Cyrus' decree was not completely carried out at the end of Ezra 6, which falls between the similar lists of names in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7. Building the temple was only the first of three stages. Building the community and the wall were the second and third. Moreover, Ezra 4:6-23 and 6:14 inform the reader that developments during the reigns of Cyrus' successors were also involved with performing Cyrus' edict. By not fitting Ezra 1-6 into the structure of Ezra-Nehemiah, the Greek reading of Daniel 9:25 does not extend the *terminus ad quem* of the seven sevens far enough.

²⁹Cf. Fishbane (1985:483) who says, "It is quite striking that Dan. 9:25 apportioned one entire jubilee cycle to the period from the assumed effective onset of the Jeremian oracle to the end of the exile and Cyrus' decree (the years 587-38). This period thus marks the first of ten jubilees, and so the first stage of release from foreign hegemony." This chapter, of course, suggests other dates for the beginning and end of the seven sevens.

6.5.2. The Significance of Nehemiah 13

The writer of Ezra-Nehemiah might have wished that he or she could have ended the book at Nehemiah 12:47. This stopping point would say in effect that the post-exilic community continued to worship Yahweh and evidence the fruit of repentance. But Ezra-Nehemiah does not end with Nehemiah 12. Even as Gabriel's response to Daniel's prayer does not consist only of seven sevens, so Ezra-Nehemiah has Nehemiah 13. The jubilation of Nehemiah 12 is not the last word in the book.

The jubilee of the seven sevens does not mark the full realization of the six objectives in Daniel 9:24 or even of Cyrus' decree (and God's) in Ezra 1 (and Ezra 6:14). Nehemiah 13 demonstrates how the post-exilic community failed to make good on its pledge of repentance in Nehemiah 10 (cf. Goswell 2012a:28). Though Ezra tried so valiantly to prepare a holy people to live in a holy city and worship at a holy temple, he would surely share Nehemiah's frustration and prayer in Nehemiah 13:14, 22, 29, and 31. For everything that the descendants of those listed in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 had accomplished (and who cannot marvel at what God did through these ordinary people?), they did not build the New Jerusalem. They built a foretaste of it and experienced the beginning of all that Gabriel had announced to Daniel.³⁰ Zechariah referred to this beginning as a day of small things (Zech 4:10). Those who lived in Ezra-Nehemiah's Jerusalem may have tasted the city of God, but they fell short of the eventual perfection of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem.³¹ They even went so far as to defile

³⁰Hill (2004:160) says, "In Daniel 9 the return to the land and the rebuilding of the city are a prelude to the coming of a new age whose advent is shrouded in mystery." *Prelude* may not be the best word. The return and reconstruction were the beginning of a new age—the age of the seventy sevens. The return and reconstruction did not precede the new age but comprised the initial stage of it. Bergsma (2007: 225) calls the seventy sevens "a 'liminal' time, in which the city, sanctuary, and people experience a partial fulfillment of the divine promises and live in anticipation of the final fulfillment to come." What he says about the seventy sevens pertains to the seven sevens.

³¹Cf. Bergsma (2008:60) who says that "the initial return of the exiles was at best a partial fulfillment of prophecy." See also Beale (2011:894-895).

Yahweh's temple yet again by allowing Tobiah, the enemy, to live within God's house (cf. Neh 13:9). Moreover, Nehemiah 13:26 records how the post-exilic community repeated its earlier sin of intermarriage, which the writer of Ezra-Nehemiah compares to the disastrous marriages of Solomon and thereby recalls the failures of Davidic kingship. Who could imagine that all the pure joy of Nehemiah 12 could revert so quickly to the "same old same old" of Nehemiah 13? Bergsma (2008:60-61) says that "Ezra-Nehemiah ends on a distinctly melancholy note" What's more, the "same old same old" in Nehemiah 13 was not a momentary relapse. It continued into the Second Temple period and prompted the founding of diverse communities in Judaism. Later, Luke's account of John the Baptist's ministry in the first century C.E. drew attention to continuing economic oppression (Luke 3:12-14).

As Zechariah opened his book with a call to repentance and so recognized the inability of the exile to change the human heart, so Ezra-Nehemiah closes not with utopia but with prayer in the face of bitter reality. More than the jubilee of the seven sevens is needed to answer Nehemiah's prayer—and Daniel's. Likewise, Ezra may have been an anointed priest who facilitated the incipient realization of the six objectives in Daniel 9:24, but he did not make the definitive atonement for sin. This and lasting righteousness awaited another day.

6.6. Summary

This chapter has focused on what Daniel 9:25 says about the seven sevens, the first section of the seventy sevens. It has argued that rebuilding the city involved rebuilding the temple, the people that worshiped at the temple, and the wall that surrounded the temple. Each act of rebuilding played a part in restoring the proper worship of God. So then, the seven sevens include not just the events of Ezra 1-6 but all of the activity in Ezra-Nehemiah. Moreover, this chapter demonstrated how the seven sevens contributed to the realization of the six objectives of

the seventy sevens, especially through the ministry of an anointed one, Ezra the priest. He prepared God's people to approach God at the renovated temple. He also received assistance from Levites who taught the law and from Nehemiah who ordered the forgiveness of debt—what amounted to a year of jubilee. The book climaxes with jubilant worship that celebrates the execution of Cyrus' decree. In so describing the seven sevens, Ezra-Nehemiah demonstrates that the seventy sevens do not constitute more judgment on top of Jeremiah's seventy years of exile.

This chapter also dealt with the tension between the already and the not yet in the seven sevens. For all the good that God did through the post-exilic community, the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 were only partially accomplished. No Davidic king ruled righteously over God's people, and, in fact, God's people remained subject to the dictates of Gentile rulers. Moreover, God's people struggled to keep the teaching of Ezra the anointed priest. So then, Ezra-Nehemiah offers a foretaste of what God has in store for his people, but it leaves the reader wanting more. Sixty-three more sevens must still run their course.

CHAPTER 7: THE SIXTY-TWO SEVENS OF DANIEL 9:25b

7.1. Introduction

Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra, and Nehemiah oversaw the rebuilding of God's house, God's city, and God's people in the second half of the sixth century B.C.E. and the first half of the fifth century. According to Peters (1985:41), "By 400 B.C.E., then, Jerusalem was the slowly reviving center of a modest Jewish temple-state in Judea." As seen in the previous chapter, the first half of Daniel 9:25 summarizes this period that receives more detailed explanation in Ezra-Nehemiah. The years between 539 and about 430 (Neh 13:6) correspond to the seven sevens of Daniel's seventy sevens. The second half of Daniel 9:25 says that Jerusalem will continue to undergo construction during the second period of sixty-two sevens. It also adds that צֹרָק (trouble, oppression, or distress) will mark these years. The trouble will presumably bear some responsibility for the continual work of rebuilding. The sixty-two sevens run from the time of the first anointed one in the fifth century B.C.E. to the time of the second anointed one in the second first century B.C.E. This chapter will discuss this second section of the seventy sevens.

7.2. Daniel 9:25b and Events of the Second Temple Period

7.2.1. The Rebuilding

During the centuries after Ezra, Jerusalem and its temple remained works in progress. While the post-exilic community had carried out Cyrus' decree to rebuild God's city and house, time did not stand still. Later generations saw changes and made changes to Jerusalem and the second temple.¹ Some of these new developments were welcomed by the residents of Jerusalem

¹Frölich (1996:156) says, "The rebuilding of squares and walls [in Daniel 9:25] unequivocally refers to the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Persian dominion." Advocates of the Roman and Dispensational views also concur with this statement. The evidence presented in this chapter does not support this claim.

and Judea, and others were not. To be more accurate, some residents of Jerusalem and Judea appreciated the changes, and other residents opposed them. These developments caused no small amount of trouble, and some changes came as a result of war.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, historians lack sources for fourth- and third-century Jerusalem and so know next to nothing about events and conditions there. Hengel (1989b:49) observed, “As with the historians of Alexander, so too in the history of the Diadochi [Alexander’s successors] the Greek writers scarcely refer to the Jews.” Moreover, Flavius Josephus, the primary source for Jewish affairs during this period, apparently had limited material available. His account of the fourth and third centuries, “far from being continuous, is episodic in the extreme” (VanderKam 2004:112). What is known is that Alexander the Great died in 323. His generals then divided his empire four ways. Palestine was first assigned to the Seleucids of Syria, but Ptolemy I of Egypt (304-282) seized it by the beginning of the third century. Three sources provide limited, but suggestive, details about Jerusalem before 199 B.C.E.

First, Flavius Josephus in *Against Apion* (1.22 §§197-198) quoted a lost work of Hecateus who lived about 300 B.C.E. (Hengel 1989b:42-43). According to Hecateus, Judea had many fortresses, but Jerusalem was the only fortified city. It had 120,000 residents who lived within a circumference of 50 furlongs (5½ miles or 9 kilometers). Hecateus further observed a stone wall in the center of the city and estimated that it was about 500 feet (152 meters) long and 150 feet (46 meters) wide. The wall enclosed a stone altar. Nearby was a building that housed a golden altar and lamp stand. It is hard to say from this description how much Jerusalem had changed since the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Second, the *Letter of Aristeas* to Philocrates, better known for its account of the formation of the Septuagint for the library in Alexandria, offers a look at Jerusalem during the

reign of Ptolemy II (285-246) over Egypt.² Verses 83-120 describe Jerusalem and its surroundings. According to verse 84, three walls now encircled the temple. Verses 84-85 further say about the temple, “. . . everything was built with a magnificence and expense which excelled in every respect. It was obvious that the expenditure of money had been unrestricted upon the door, the fastenings upon it by the doorposts, and the strength of the lintels.” Verses 100-101 mention the towers, catapults, and engines that protected the temple. Verses 107-115 describe the abundant agriculture in the Judean countryside and the profitable commerce in the city. To recall Peters’ words, the slowly reviving center of the fifth century had become a prosperous and bustling city by the middle of the third century. Ezra and Nehemiah, let alone Haggai and Zechariah, may no longer have recognized Jerusalem as the place that they had rebuilt.

Third, Flavius Josephus (*Ant.* 12.3.3 §§138-144) mentioned a letter from Antiochus III (223-187) to Ptolemy IV (221-203) or Ptolemy V (203-181). Antiochus III had recently warred with Ptolemy IV and sent a letter to Egypt regarding the Jews in Jerusalem. Since the division of Alexander’s empire among his generals, Egypt had controlled Jerusalem, but Antiochus III, a Seleucid, reported how the Jews had supported him in the war with Ptolemy IV. As a reward to the Jews, Antiochus III announced in this letter that he would rebuild Jerusalem which had suffered damage during the fighting.

The point to be made now is that the anointed one of Daniel 9:26 did not live in Ezra and Nehemiah’s Jerusalem. The building did not stop with the execution of Cyrus’ decree. Daniel 9:25b mentions further construction during the sixty-two sevens. The *Letter of Aristeas* and

²Regarding what the *Letter of Aristeas* says about the origin of the Septuagint, VanderKam (2004:163) asserts, “Scholars are unanimous in dismissing the account from the realm of historical writing, though many admit that a Greek translation of the Torah must have been made in the third century. . . .” Wasserstein and Wasserstein (2006:25-26, 270) similarly deny any historical truth to the account, and Nickelsburg (2005:196) considers the *Letter* a piece of fiction. Jobs and Silva (2000:34-37) offer a more nuanced assessment.

Josephus' citation of Hecateus indicate that Jerusalem had become "a large and populous and prosperous city" (Hengel 1989b:49). References in Daniel 9:25b to רְחוֹב (open space or plaza) and a חֲרוֹץ (trench) suggests "a complete restoration of the city proper—its socioeconomic infrastructures and defensive system" (Seow 2003a:149). The חֲרוֹץ might also serve a sanitation purpose (Edlin 2009:231). Redditt (1999:162) adds that רְחוֹב denotes the inside of the city and חֲרוֹץ the outside. Together, the two terms indicate that "Jerusalem would be built again 'inside and out.'" Additional sources from the second and first centuries describe further construction.³

7.2.2. The Trouble

Trouble began when Alexander the Great swept through western Asia, and then Ptolemy I (323-285) fought for control of Palestine and the ports of Phoenicia (Gowan 1986:62).⁴ In the process, he took Jews to Egypt (Collins 2000:66; Hengel 1981:14), 100,000 according to the *Letter of Aristeas* (v.12). Foreign influence began to be felt, especially in the form of heavy taxes (Gowan 1986:62-63; Hengel 1981:21-23). Josephus (*Ant.* 12.4.1-5 §§158-185) reports that the high priest, Onias II, withheld a tribute payment of twenty talents of silver and consequently incurred the threats of Ptolemy III (246-222). Onias II, whom Josephus called "a great lover of money," evidently did not like the tax policy of the Ptolemies, but Judea would have seen more trouble in the form of invasion if not for the diplomatic intervention of Onias' nephew whose name was Joseph. This person, whether he favored the taxes or not, must have realized that pacifying Ptolemy III was preferable to facing his army. He also seized an opportunity to win

³For example, Josephus describes the rebuilding efforts of Simon and Jonathan Maccabee (*Ant.* 13.5.11 §§181-183). Later, Herod the Great renovated the temple and built, among other projects, Fortress Antonio. In the first century C.E., Pontius Pilate ordered the construction of aqueducts (*J.W.* 2.9.4 §175).

⁴According to Grabbe (1992:211; cf. 2008:278), "During the wars of the Diadochi, Palestine was fought in and over many times. We have no details for the most part, but the fighting may at times have had a devastating effect on the population and economy of the country."

the favor of the king and advance his wealth and status. Not to be overlooked is that Josephus cast a high priest in a poor light in order to contrast the political cooperation of the nephew.

Daniel 11:5-20 further documents the trouble during the sixty-two sevens. More specifically, these verses describe the hostile interaction between the Ptolemies (king of the south) and Seleucids (king of the north). They took turns invading and being invaded as well as laying claim to Judea that lay between them. Meanwhile, their troops continually trampled that land, wreaking havoc on property and keeping the Jewish residents in a constant state of unrest.

Antiochus III fought against Egypt again in 199 B.C.E. The battle took place at Paneas in Phoenicia. Josephus (*Ant.* 12.3.3. §§129-131) likens the Jews at this time to a ship that a storm tosses one way and then another. Because Antiochus III won the battle, Phoenicia and Palestine reverted to Seleucid control, but fear of Rome prevented Antiochus III from marching on Egypt. Instead, he gave his daughter in marriage to Ptolemy V and turned his attention to Asia Minor. The Romans, who were coming to the defense of the Attalids in Pergamum, met Antiochus III at Magnesia near Ephesus in 190 B.C.E. They soundly defeated Antiochus III, imposed a crushing indemnity of 10,000 talents, and took one of his sons, Antiochus IV, to Rome as a hostage. Meanwhile, the other son of Antiochus III, Seleucus IV (187-175), had to raise taxes to pay the indemnity. He sent his son (Demetrius) to Rome in place of his brother (Antiochus IV). When Seleucus IV was murdered in 175 B.C.E., Antiochus IV became king instead of Demetrius. Whereas Seleucus IV, like his father, showed favor to the Jews (cf. 2 Macc 3:3), Antiochus IV did not, and his intolerance took a toll on the city and people of Jerusalem—the subject of the next chapter on the seventieth seven.

Gowan (1986:63) also draws attention to the military bases that were established in Palestine. Because soldiers would typically receive a plot of land for their support, they lived

among the local residents. Gowan infers, “Under such conditions there was bound to be intermarriage and so another factor contributing to the opening of Palestine to the Hellenistic world was introduced.” The trouble of the sixty-two sevens no doubt included mixed marriages, the offspring of such unions, and the necessary compromises to accommodate the diverse ideas and expectations of the parents and grandparents. Even so, other Jews and Gentiles not drawn together by marriage were living in close proximity and had to find ways to get along in society. For their part, Jews “highlighted the aspects of Judaism which were most acceptable to cultured Gentiles and to Jews who had absorbed Hellenistic culture, for example, by representing Judaism as a philosophy, while playing down the more peculiar customs and rituals” (Collins 2000:15). Of course, Jews inevitably had disagreements about which parts of their worldview were negotiable and which were not. These disagreements climaxed in the Maccabean revolt.

7.3. The Six Objectives of Daniel 9:24 in the Sixty-two Sevens

If little is known about Jewish activity during the sixty-two sevens, no literature from the time explicitly mentions the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 or the seventy sevens. In fact, it is uncertain what apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books may have been written during the sixty-two sevens. One work, the *Letter of Aristeas*, claims to have originated during the time of the sixty-two sevens, and its contents address issues of the third century.

When approaching the literature of the Second Temple period, something to keep in mind is the sagacious advice of Nickelsburg (2003:5) about expecting more from this literature than it can provide. He (2001:3) says in the context of a major study of *1 Enoch*, “Our textual and material evidence is fragmentary and our possession of it is fortuitous; much of it is obscure, vague, and ambiguous. We see darkly in a tarnished and scratched mirror, and our interpretations of the images often present only one of several possibilities.” Collins (2005b:66)

similarly says about a work like *I Enoch*, “Much remains obscure about the precise social settings of the apocalyptic writings, and this will probably remain the case unless new evidence becomes available.” If Montgomery (1927:400) could describe the interpretation of Daniel 9 as “a dismal swamp” that raised so many questions and engendered so many answers, Nickelsburg and Collins have appreciably reminded anyone who reads Second Temple literature that unanswered questions abound and few certain answers exist. Still, the humble effort to answer the questions is necessary and worthwhile.

7.3.1. The *Letter of Aristeas*

This purported letter from Aristeas to Philocrates describes events during the reign of Ptolemy II in the first half of the third century—in particular his effort to get a translation of the Hebrew Bible (or at least the Pentateuch) for his library. The *Letter* may not have been written then (see Collins 2000:98-101) or by a Greek (see Tcherikover 1958:66-68), but the third-century world can be helpful for understanding the concerns of both its narrative and real audiences. If the narrative audience is Egyptians in a Greek world, the real audience is disputed—whether Egyptians, Jews in Egypt, or both (see Tcherikover 1958:59-63, 83-84).⁵ On the basis of linguistic factors, Nickelsburg (2005:198) favors a provenance during the reign of Ptolemy VIII between 138 and 130. Shutt (1985:8-9), while acknowledging that most scholars favor a date during the second half of the second century, joins Jellicoe (1993:49) in assigning the book to 170 B.C.E. when Antiochus IV had begun persecuting Jews. Wasserstein and Wasserstein (2006:20) suggest a time before the Seleucids took control of Judea in 198 B.C.E. Whatever possibility is preferred, the *Letter of Aristeas* stands out among Second Temple literature because it “presents the most positive estimate of the Greeks and Greek culture and of

⁵Howard (1971:341, 348) argues that the real audience was Palestinian Jews who wrongly accused Alexandrian Jews of being compromised because of where they lived (outside the Promised Land) and what version of the law they read (a Greek translation).

the possibility for peaceful and productive coexistence between Jews and Greeks” (Nickelsburg 2005:196). In so doing, it aims to identify common ground, assure the Ptolemies of Jewish loyalty (Collins 2000:103), and even recommend Jewish beliefs for Gentile consideration.

The *Letter of Aristeas* shows interest in righteousness—the fourth objective of Daniel 9:24. After affirming the qualifications of the translators of a Greek version of the Pentateuch, Aristeas records a speech on the law by Eleazar the high priest (vv. 130-171). Eleazar explains that the purpose of the purity laws is to remind the Jews of their distinct identity as God’s people (v. 142).⁶ Such people should have a commitment to righteousness (vv. 144, 147, 151, 169). Besides observing cultic regulations, righteousness includes not bullying people into submission (v. 147) or hurting them in any way (v. 168). Stated differently, righteousness involves loving one’s neighbor. Where righteousness is lacking, atonement is available through sacrifice of an approved animal (v. 170). The writer of the *Letter of Aristeas* admittedly does not mention the atoning function of Jewish sacrifices. Rather, he refers only to the symbolic meaning of the lawgiver and the inner moods of the worshiper. The writer knew that Gentiles were unfamiliar with the technical expressions of Jews, and so he used language that would appeal more to his readers (Charles 2009:253-254; Shutt 1985:11). Speaking about the Mosaic law as a whole, Collins (2000:155) adds, “In fact, while the Mosaic law always retained an authoritative position in Jewish life in the Diaspora, its role was by no means a simple one. It could be treated selectively, by highlighting some laws and neglecting others, and it could be buttressed with philosophical and religious foundations that were remote from the original Torah.” Though in a very different situation than their pre-exilic forebears—a situation that required creativity and

⁶VanderKam (2004:161) says that the “regulations about food and contact with persons and objects point to larger issues of human relationships.” Those issues include the mission of God’s people as a kingdom of priests. The *Letter’s* interest in the food laws leads Tcherikover (1958:62) to consider Jews in Egypt the primary audience.

improvisation—many Jews during the sixty-two sevens shared Gabriel’s announced concern for lasting righteousness, and they tried to be righteous in two worlds.

The *Letter of Aristeas* does not explicitly interact with Daniel 9. Instead, it has a propagandistic purpose of promoting a good relationship between Jews and Gentiles by presenting both in a favorable light (Charles 2009:244; Wasserstein and Wasserstein 2006:25). The dialogue between the translators and the king (vv. 187-300) reveals common ground between Jews and Gentiles and thus establishes the credibility of the translators. More than grammarians and linguists, they are learned citizens in a Greek world (cf. Tcherikover 1958:83-84). Bickerman (1988:175) describes what he calls “a new portrait [in the *Letter*] of the ideal intellectual of Jerusalem.” This person “not only knows the Torah and lives according to its precepts, but also knows how to draw applause from the Greek philosophers at the royal table by virtue of his knowledge of the best way of life and the best manner of government.” Bickerman (1988:18) adds, though, that there was more to the Greek and Egyptian interest in sophisticated Jews:

The ideal commonwealth conceived by the philosophers was based on a pure religion. Amid a decaying polytheism, Plato and Aristotle propagated the idea that the perfect order of the heavenly bodies proves the existence of a Supreme Being who governs the universe. Unfortunately, not only the corrupt Greeks but also the wise Egyptians and the virtuous Indians worshipped idols. It was a windfall to discover a people who rejected false gods and adored the God of Heaven alone.

“It appears, then,” says Collins (2000:13) in agreement with Bickerman, “that there was a dimension of Judaism which was quite attractive to some people in the Hellenistic world. This was its philosophical dimension, its ethical code, and aniconic God.” The Jewish writer of the *Letter of Aristeas* capitalized on this situation. As a result of such recognized excellence, he, like the author of Daniel, put the praise of the Jewish God on Gentile lips (Rajak 2009:62-63, 255-256).

The *Letter of Aristeas* shares the concern of Daniel 9:24 for righteousness and recognizes that Jews (and Gentiles) living under Gentile rule need atonement. It details proper worship at the Jerusalem temple and explains what measures have been taken to ensure the sanctity of God's house. In other words, the *Letter* argues against assimilating completely into Greek culture (cf. Hengel 1989a:204). It demonstrates the accuracy of Wright's observation (1992b:247) about "fixed points" of Jewish belief: e.g., "No Jew imagined that the Egyptians [or the Greeks] were the chosen people of YHWH." Consequently, the *Letter* retains a commitment to Old Testament religion. Even so, these points about divine holiness are made in the context of a narrated tour of God's city and house. In other words, the Jewish writer who adopts a Gentile persona (Nickelsburg 2005:198; Shutt 1985:9; Wasserstein and Wasserstein 2006:19) invites Gentiles to the "center of the nations" (Ezek 5:5) where they can see the superiority of the one true God (vv. 138-153).⁷ There is an echo or an anticipation of Daniel 9:16 here. For those who have ears to hear, the *Letter of Aristeas* becomes a winsomely contextualized effort at mission.⁸

Along this line of thinking, the *Letter* begins with a recollection of the Exodus (see Hacham 2005:4-7). Aristeas asks Ptolemy II to release Jewish prisoners, which he does (verses 12-27). In contrast to the Israelites in the book of Exodus, the liberated Jews in the *Letter of Aristeas* remain in Egypt. Even so, Ptolemy II sends gifts in support of the temple to the high

⁷Tcherikover (1958:78-79) maintains that the *Letter* contrasts the idealized Jerusalem of the Old Testament with the Hellenized Jerusalem of the author's time in order to remind Jewish readers (wherever they might currently live) of their true home.

⁸Hengel (1989b:184) says, "We must not overlook the fact that in this controversy the Greek feeling of superiority based on the distinction between Greeks and barbarians was countered from the Jewish side by a consciousness of election which was unique in the ancient world, and which was manifested in the distinction between Israel and the peoples of the world." Hengel may state the truth but not the whole truth. God's people at their best understand election not in terms of privilege but of responsibility. The Old Testament teaches that Israel was elected for the salvation of the world (e.g., Gen 12:3, Exod 19:6; see Tcherikover 1958:80; Wright 1992b:247, 267). By its respect for the Ptolemaic king, the *Letter of Aristeas* conveys understanding of this outward calling of God's people. Bickerman (1988:101) captures the missional purpose of the Septuagint when he calls it "the most important translation ever made: it opened the Bible to the world and the world to the Word of God." Collins (2000:271) also recognizes the missional impulse, secondary as it might be, in the literature of Hellenistic Judaism. The first impulse of these Jews was to define who they were in a Greek world.

priest in Jerusalem (v. 33), thus recalling Egyptian donations before the Exodus (Exod 12:36). Ptolemy II's generosity accompanies his request for a translation of the Law of Moses (vv. 38-39), which, of course, was given after the Exodus. Calling the *Letter of Aristeas* a "foundation story" of Hellenistic Jews in general and Alexandrian Jews in particular, Hacham (2005:18) says that "this story of the new exodus eliminates any residue of hostility and creates an atmosphere of intimacy and cooperation between Jews and their Gentile environment." That may be, but the *Letter's* interest in mission also coincides with the Exodus story (Exod 19:6, Josh 2:10). Moreover, Daniel's prayer recalled the Exodus and pleaded with God on the basis of Leviticus 26:40-45 to perform another Exodus. Though Daniel's prayer may not have the missional emphasis of Exodus 19:6 or the *Letter of Aristeas*, it preserves God's interest in his reputation among the nations (Dan 9:16). In addition, Daniel 2:44 and 7:27 announce God's kingdom that will take the place of human kingdoms. If Daniel is read in tandem with Psalm 72, God's kingdom and God's king bring good to all people. The *Letter of Aristeas* shares this concern for the well-being of Jews and Gentiles.

The *Letter of Aristeas* also offers what amounts to a hope of jubilee (cf. vv. 322-323). The prophetic vision of jubilee includes the participation of the nations in the worship of Yahweh (Isa 60-61). Without saying that a Davidic king will rule over the world, the *Letter* asserts the universal kingship of Israel's God (vv. 132, 139) and includes an Egyptian king under God's dominion (vv. 195, 234; cf. Isa 19:23-25).⁹ In fact, the more the translators express their theocentric worldview in answer to the king's questions, the more the king shows his admiration (vv. 182-294). Not to be overlooked is that the king will not have to go to Mount Zion to hear

⁹Charles (2009:249) says that the author of the *Letter of Aristeas*, by acknowledging the king's learning, "is very prudent in how he constructs the relationship with the kingly figure in his text." Even so, "the king [gradually] moves from the position of the powerful monarch who is praised and prayed for (45, 185) to that of one who did obeisance to the translator-philosophers (177) for their surpassing knowledge and wisdom, and of one who is urged to follow God (255)."

the law of God (Isa 2:3; Micah 4:2). At the end of the *Letter*, he has a translation in his library (cf. v. 312). Whether the *Letter of Aristeas* originated before or after the Antiochene crisis that interests the writer of Daniel, it shares Daniel's hope for a people and world founded on the righteousness of God's law.

That said, the author of the *Letter of Aristeas* went too far in his effort to find common ground between the Jewish and Hellenistic worldviews. In verses 15-16, Aristeas says to Ptolemy II in the course of pleading for the release of Jewish captives, “. . . the (same) God who appointed them their Law prospers your kingdom as I have been at pains to show. These people worship God the overseer and creator of all, whom all men worship including ourselves, O King, except that we have a different name. Their name for him is Zeus and Jove. The primitive men, consistently with this, demonstrated that the one by whom all live and are created is the master and Lord of all.” Perhaps the Jewish author did not intend to equate Yahweh and Zeus but meant only to say that Jews and Greeks share a belief in a Supreme Being (Collins 2000:192). Even so, the Old Testament condemns such favorable comparisons between the God of Israel and the gods of the nations. The reason has to do with the ontological contrast between the two (Wenham 1976:51).¹⁰ The gods of the nations existed only in the minds of their adherents, and so their being and power were derived from the trust that people invested in them. They did not have independent being and power. Moreover, ancient Near Eastern people considered their gods

¹⁰Regarding Nebuchadnezzar's test of his advisors in Daniel 2, Gladd (2008:46-47) says, “Babylonian deities simply do not divulge such information [i.e., the content of dreams] to the wise men. But Daniel's God is not like other gods; he is characterized by revealing. . . . Therefore, these two passages (2:10-11; 2:27-28) are significant for one's overall interpretation of the book, for they establish the polemic between Daniel and Babylon's wise men.” Lawson (1997:75), however, maintains, “The difference between the two traditions [Mesopotamian divination and Hebrew prophecy] is not one of kind but *quality*. Any attempt to characterize the Mesopotamian tradition as non-revelatory is patently wrong and can only rest upon a false distinction between biblical and non-biblical views of revelation.” Perhaps, but what Lawson says next is telling, “The only real distinction in Daniel is the *identity* and competence of the deity doing the revealing, not any doctrine of revelation itself; for in the final analysis, the effective ingredient in Daniel's dream interpretations was divinity, just as it was and always has been in the oneiromancy and other mantic arts of Mesopotamia.” In other words, Yahweh actually reveals because Yahweh has independent existence.

personifications of the forces of nature. In other words, the gods did not transcend the natural world. Instead, they had births and deaths and so were locked into the cycles of nature (Walton 2006:87-92, 97-99).¹¹ In short, they were not holy or different. By contrast, the Old Testament claims that Yahweh is holy, meaning that he is separate or distinct from all that he has made (cf. Merrill Willis 2010:23). Yahweh is different from everything else, including humans, because he is self-existent and eternal. He depends on nothing outside of himself. Everything else is created by, derived from, and dependent on him. Stated differently, everything else, including other gods, has limits. If the Jewish writer of the *Letter of Aristeas* wanted to say that the Jewish and Hellenistic worldviews similarly recognize a Supreme Being, then he departed from Old Testament revelation by compromising the holiness of Yahweh. Yahweh and Zeus were not Supreme Beings in any comparable sense.

Whether the *Letter of Aristeas* was written before or after the Antiochene crisis, this unfortunate step among Hellenistic Jews caused much trouble toward the end of the sixty-two sevens and into the seventieth seven. “The conflict that was to follow,” says Russell (1965:27), “was not simply a matter of ‘Jews versus Syrians’, but ‘Jews versus Jews’; for, over against the Hellenizing party in Jerusalem, the vast majority of the Jews in the surrounding country were lined up in opposition to any policy of Hellenization.” Consequently, the trouble in Daniel 9:25 involved ideological and armed conflict. Both contributed to Jerusalem’s changing face and led to the events of the seventieth seven in Daniel 9:26-27.

7.3.2. The Feeling of Continuing Exile

As positive as the *Letter of Aristeas* may come across, other literature of the Second Temple era has a more uncertain outlook about Jewish relations not only with Gentiles but also

¹¹See also the discussion of continuity in the ancient Near Eastern worldview and transcendence in the biblical worldview in Oswalt (2009:47-84) and the discussion of idolatry in Wright (2006:136-188).

with God. These writings explore the continuing implications of the Babylonian exile, especially the perceived absence of God and the undeniable suffering of his people. Bickerman (1988:293) says, “Discussion of the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. was no antiquarian pastime even as late as 200 B.C.E., four centuries later. . . . The people of God was [*sic*] still scattered, the restored Jerusalem was forced to obey a pagan sovereign, and Israel, God’s own portion, still waited for the Lord to exalt it.” Wright (1992b:268-269) more famously has added:

Most Jews in this period, it seems, would have answered the question ‘where are we?’ in language which, reduced to its simplest form, meant: we are still in exile. They believed that, in all the senses which mattered, Israel’s exile was still in progress. Although she had come back from Babylon, the glorious message of the prophets remained unfulfilled. Israel still remained in thrall to foreigners; worse, Israel’s god had not returned to Zion.

For evidence, Wright cites several passages including Tobit 14:5-7, which he assigns to the third century.¹² These verses announce restoration in the form of return from exile, reconstruction of the temple and Jerusalem, conversion of the nations, and re-gathering of all Jews to the Promised Land. Some of these expectations may have more or less come true during the post-exilic period, but the last two remained largely outstanding throughout the Second Temple period (cf. 2 Macc 2:17-18, 4 *Ezra* 6:55-59). It is hard to know how much Second Temple Jews remembered that God had begun a good work in 539 B.C.E. and so saw themselves on a continuum between the already and the not yet. The literature suggests an acute feeling of the not yet that receives little comfort from the already.

7.3.2.1. Baruch

Wright (1992b:270-271) further says about the feeling of a continuing exile, “No faithful Jew could believe that Israel’s god would allow her to languish for ever [*sic*] under pagan oppressors. If he did, the taunts of the nations would after all be correct: he was only a tribal

¹²Nickelsburg (2005:35) places the composition of Tobit before the Antiochene crisis. DeSilva (2002:69) Fitzmyer (2003:51-52), and Harrington (1999:11) agree and even suggest the third century as the earliest possibility.

god, in competition with other tribal gods, and moreover losing the battle.” Perhaps, but Baruch’s prayer of confession makes the Jews responsible for their present plight. This prayer resembles Daniel’s prayer by referring to exiled Israel as a disgrace (Bar 2:4). In contrast to their God who possesses righteousness, the Second Temple readers of Baruch have shame (Bar 1:15), and they are in this state because of covenantal unfaithfulness. In other words, the sin that is the concern of the first three objectives of Daniel 9:24 runs rampant during the sixty-two sevens. Moreover, Baruch 2:14-15 asks God to deliver his people for his sake because they bear his name. As in Daniel 9, the implication in Baruch 2 is that a justly chastened and humbled people diminish God’s reputation among the nations. God must act out of self-interest and restore the dignity of the people to whom he tied his plan of redemption. He will do this by making them righteous as he is righteous (Bar 5:1-4). Whether the writer of Baruch influenced the writer of Daniel or drew from Daniel, he shared Daniel’s concern about willful infractions of God’s word and Daniel’s hope for divine mercy.

7.3.2.2. Tobit

Bickerman and Wright may be correct about a general sense of liminality among Second Temple Jews, but a book like Tobit presents a more optimistic assessment. It begins, though, by narrating the suffering of both the righteous Tobit, who loses his eyesight because of a freak accident of nature, and the falsely accused Sarah, who loses seven husbands because of the lust of the demon Asmodeus. While Harrington (1999:11-12) may say that Tobit “illustrates how Jews living in the Diaspora can remain faithful (against all odds) to the ideals presented in the book of Deuteronomy,” the book of Tobit, despite its instances of innocent suffering, hardly urges its readers “to grin and bear it” or “to keep a stiff upper lip.”¹³ Similar to Old Testament

¹³McCracken (1995:401) considers the book of Tobit a comedy by which he means that Tobit the man, “although pious, embodies the ludicrous through his limited perspective, a perspective that the third-person narrator

prophecy, Tobit has an eschatological hope that focuses on Jerusalem (13:16-17), and this hope is evidenced by righteousness in the present (1:6-8, 1:16-17, 4:5-19, 14:5-7).¹⁴ The main characters in the book exhibit a desire to walk in the ways of the Lord (e.g., Tob 1:3; cf. deSilva 2002:74; Harrington 1999:24). Moreover, their conversations with God and each other manifest a genuine piety that rises above cynicism and truly enjoys the blessings (such as marriage, family, and friendship) that God gives in the present. The world may have injustice (2:7-10, 3:7-9), but the book of Tobit portrays godly people who delight to live uprightly and thereby do right by their fellow humans. They overcome the effects of evil and bring good into one another's lives. Stated another way, God takes care of these committed believers who endeavor to be godly by adhering to his instruction (Otzen 2002:27). He can do this because he remains in control despite the sometimes contrary evidence of circumstances that he never fully explains to humans (Kiel 2011:291-298; Schellenberg 2011:315, 320, 324, 326-327).

Whether Daniel 9 influenced Tobit or was influenced by Tobit, the latter's window into the spirituality of Second Temple Jews shows that some people during the sixty-two sevens cared deeply about the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. They confessed their sins and appealed to God's mercy for forgiveness. They showed their appreciation for God's grace by imitating his righteous character. They looked to the future for the fulfillment of prophecy (Tob 14:5). Repulsed by the desecration of God's house, they awaited the restoration of the most holy places on earth: God's temple and city. In the narrative world of Daniel 9 (and for some people, the real world), Gabriel announced that God over the course of seventy sevens would accomplish the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. The writer of Daniel believed that God had resumed working out

and the reader transcend." Comic elements in Tobit also include unlikely events (blindness from bird droppings and seven husbands) and the happy ending (McCracken 1995:418). Even so, "Reading the book of Tobit as comedy ought not trivialize the suffering of [Tobit's] four years of blindness. Comedy does not dwell on the pathos of suffering, but it does not necessarily deny it" (McCracken 1995:417).

¹⁴Cf. Hicks-Keeton (2013:114-116).

his plan of redemption in 539 B.C.E., and the book of Tobit, possibly written during the sixty-two sevens, shows progress toward that goal. To recall Goldingay, Tobit describes a partial realization of the six objectives of the seventy sevens.¹⁵

7.3.2.3. *1 Enoch*

Some of the book of *1 Enoch* originated during the period of the sixty-two sevens, and other parts were written later. Nickelsburg (2001:7; 2005:46) says that the Book of the Watchers (*1 En.* 1-36) reached its final form during the third century B.C.E. Meanwhile, the Book of Parables (*1 En.* 37-71), to which Nickelsburg (2001:7; 2005:254-255) assigns a date during the first century B.C.E., was the last section composed. The Book of the Luminaries (*1 En.* 72-82), in Nickelsburg's estimate (2001:7; 2005:44), goes back as far as the Persian period and so is the oldest section of the book. Because the Dream Visions and Animal Apocalypse (*1 En.* 83-90) trace history from creation to the Maccabean war, Nickelsburg (2001:8, 361; 2005:86) dates this section to that latter moment. Enoch then addresses an Epistle (*1 En.* 92-105) to his children. The Epistle contains the Apocalypse of Weeks (*1 En.* 93:1-10 and 91:11-17) that will be discussed below. Nickelsburg (2001:427; 2005:114) assigns the Epistle to the middle of the second century B.C.E. but is unable to be more precise.¹⁶ Chapters 106-108 comprise two appendices that reinforce the book's emphasis on fair recompense. The five major divisions of the book may not come from the same hand in the same situation, but they all develop the book's overarching theme of divine judgment that will redress all manner of evil and vindicate the righteous (Nickelsburg 2001:37).

This eschatological focus includes application for the writer's present. He announces coming judgment in order to call sinners to repentance and encourage the penitent to persevere in

¹⁵Cf. Hicks-Keeton (2013:97-117) who discusses the tension between the already and the not yet in Tobit.

¹⁶Carey (2005:20) shares this understanding of *1 Enoch's* structure and dating.

faith and obedience (Heger 2010:57). Along this line of thinking, Hartman (1976:12) proposes that the apocalyptic timetable in *1 Enoch* 93 and 91 (and in other places such as Daniel 9) does not intend to provide a precise chronology but rather “has a practical function in terms of comfort and encouragement.” A crisis will not last forever (comfort), but God’s people must persevere in faithfulness until its resolution (encouragement).

Due to the highly metaphorical style of the book, determining which parts of *1 Enoch* preceded the Antiochene crisis offers a significant challenge. Collins (1998:51) talks about a typological view of history in *1 Enoch*, especially the Book of the Watchers that focuses “not on the uniqueness of historical events but on recurring patterns.” Because of this typology, the Book of the Watchers “provides a lens through which any crisis can be viewed,” including the Antiochene crisis (Collins 1998:59, 70). Still, the Book of Watchers and the Dream Visions offer commentary on conditions before the Antiochene crisis.

If the first three objectives of Daniel 9:24 pertain to sin, *1 Enoch* also thunders against celestial and terrestrial evil (cf. Nickelsburg 2001:46).¹⁷ The former takes the form of angelic promiscuity (*1 En.* 6:1-2, 9:8, 12:4, 14:3), and the latter features human pride (*1 En.* 2:9), disobedience (*1 En.* 5:4), worldliness (*1 En.* 8:1-2), deception (*1 En.* 94:6, 95:6, 96:7, 99:12), oppression (*1 En.* 94:7, 95:5, 96:5, 96:8, 97:8-9, 98:4, 99:13), and violence (*1 En.* 7:4, 9:9, 99:15). In any case, false worship results (*1 En.* 7:1) and leads others astray (*1 En.* 99:1-2). As seen in *1 Enoch* 98:4, humans may not claim to be victims of the spiritual forces of darkness because they willfully make their own choices. Enoch then anticipates the elimination of sin, the establishment of righteousness, and the restoration of pure worship (*1 En.* 10:16-22). This worship, though, does not occur at a temple in Jerusalem. Because the whole world has been

¹⁷Collins (1998:52) says that “the Book of Watchers “provides a paradigm for the origin of sin and evil. The distinctive aspect of this paradigm lies in the role of supernatural agents, in this case, the fallen angels.”

cleansed (*1 En.* 10:20), the most holy place has expanded to the farthest reaches of the earth that has changed into a garden (*1 En.* 10:18-19).¹⁸ Chapters 28-36 develop the theme of earth's restoration by describing the transformation of desolate land into fertile orchards. This change happens as righteousness radiates outward from the Tree of Knowledge on God's mountain in the center of the earth (*1 En.* 26:1). The site of the Tree of Knowledge is further called the Paradise of Righteousness (*1 En.* 32:3). God now dwells with righteous humans in unimpeded communion. Having seen such a glorious and hopeful vision, Enoch closes the Book of Watchers with jubilant praise (*1 En.* 36:4). The equivalent of the six objectives of Daniel 9:26 has come to fruition, and so has other Old Testament prophecy that *1 Enoch's* imagery recalls.

Historical typology characterizes this section of the book. If the book of Daniel recognizes a typological relationship between Nebuchadnezzar and Antiochus IV, *1 Enoch* 1-36 sees a pattern between the antediluvian period and the Hellenistic age (Collins 1998:51). All three eras (antediluvian, late pre-exilic, and pre-Antiochene) are marked by rebellion against God and the trouble that ensues, but all three also end with the promise of God's transforming grace. The Book of Watchers offered encouragement to its original readers during the sixty-two sevens. The faithful may have started to doubt God's remembrance of his promises or his power to make good on them, but Enoch assured his readers that God remained in control. Their perseverance in the face of contrary evidence would result in vindication (*1 En.* 1:1, 5:6-9). God's people would yet inherit the land over which Gentile rulers presently exercised hegemony for their ungodly designs.

Similarly, the Animal Apocalypse in *1 Enoch* 85-90, though thought to be a product of the seventieth seven, reviews history from creation to the Antiochene crisis. Like Daniel, the

¹⁸Cf. Knibb (2005:404-405), Nickelsburg (2001:55, 227), and Olson (2004:40). Olson (2004:62) further says that the author of *1 Enoch* could not refer to God's mountain as Zion without speaking anachronistically from his pseudonym's perspective.

Animal Apocalypse uses animals allegorically to represent empires. It further says that seventy shepherds and four kingdoms (Babylon, Persia, Ptolemies, and Seleucids) rule over the sheep, which are God's people (*1 En.* 89:59-90:19; cf. Collins 1998:69, Knibb 2005:406, Olson 2005:65-66). In the process, the Animal Apocalypse offers additional commentary on the events of the sixty-two sevens.¹⁹ The relevant verses are *1 Enoch* 89:72-90:5, which metaphorically describe events between the end of the Babylonian exile and the rise of Antiochus IV. As seen in *1 Enoch* 89:73 that speaks of defiled bread, Enoch had a less than favorable assessment of the worship that occurred at the second temple, called a tower. Moreover, God's people failed to exercise spiritual discernment as the Second Temple leaders continued playing the ancient Near Eastern game of power politics and so did not promote faithfulness to God's word through Moses and the prophets. In other words, the exile had not changed anyone's heart; consequently, God's people relapsed into former patterns of belief and conduct (Nickelsburg 2001:394-395). While the sixty-two sevens elapsed, the condition of God's people worsened as they took advantage of each other and as Gentile rulers oppressed them (*1 En.* 90:2-4).

Enoch further says that fifty-eight shepherds ruled over God's people during the Babylonian, Persian, and Ptolemaic eras (*1 En.* 90:1, 5). Another twelve shepherds during the Seleucid years (*1 En.* 90:17) brings the total to seventy (cf. Collins 1998:69). Such periodization of history characterizes apocalyptic literature and affirms God's sovereignty (Collins 1998:63-64; Grabbe 1987:70-71; Nickelsburg 2001:440). However the writers of *1 Enoch* and Daniel may have influenced each other, their use of seventy attested to their belief that the sordid chain of events during Gabriel's sixty-two sevens had a limit and would even serve God's ultimate plan for jubilee. According to *1 Enoch* 90:22, the seventy shepherds were God's instruments of

¹⁹Worth keeping in mind is Olson's (2005:68) frank admission, "Most of *1 En.* 89.59-90.19 is discouragingly vague, making it difficult to pinpoint events that can be securely dated."

discipline whether they knew it or not. With the passage of the seventieth shepherd, God gives all humans their just deserts at the final judgment (*1 En.* 90:20-27) and then reveals the new Jerusalem in the form of a house (*1 En.* 90:28-36). Before entering the house, all sheep (the Jews) and animals (the rest of humanity) become white (i.e., righteous) by means of a white bull (the Messiah).²⁰ The Lord of the sheep then rejoices over all the animals that have been transformed (*1 En.* 90:37-38). The sixty-two sevens in Daniel 9 and the seventy shepherds in *1 Enoch* 90 may have been bleak years for God's people, but they were part of a stretch of time that God had determined to judge the wicked and vindicate the righteous. He advanced his will for his glory and for the good of his people and world.

As seen in *1 Enoch* 90:9-12, which depicts Judah Maccabee as a ram (Nickelsburg 2001:396; Tiller 1993:355-357), God used the Maccabees to defend his people against the Seleucid army of Antiochus IV. Even so, the ram in these verses is not the same as the white bull in 90:37. Enoch does not consider Judah Maccabee the ultimate savior. The latter may have been used of God to bring temporary relief (cf. Dan 11:34), but *1 Enoch* arguably expects someone greater than Judah Maccabee, even a descendant of David who would act as the good shepherd of Ezekiel 34 (Goldstein 1987:73, 91 note 22; Laato 1997:261-262).

Unlike Daniel 9, the Apocalypse of Weeks (*1 En.* 93:1-10 and 91:11-17) does not discuss seventy weeks or sevens. Instead, it counts ten weeks that are followed by an eternity of weeks with unspoiled righteousness (*1 En.* 91:17). Like the Animal Apocalypse, the ten weeks review biblical history from the birth of Enoch to a final judgment of sin at the nadir of history, which is arguably the Antiochene crisis (Nickelsburg 2001:441; VanderKam 1984a:147-149, 1984b:521-

²⁰Nickelsburg (2001:407) says, "The soteriological imagery of this author is daring and perhaps without parallel in pre-Christian Jewish literature. . . . But the present text alone juxtaposes the transformation [of the human race] with the birth of a figure, into whose image, so to speak, the human race is transformed. The closest analogy is in the two-Adams theology of the apostle Paul." See also Tiller (1993:383).

522).²¹ Recognizing that the ten weeks reach a “turning point” in the seventh week, Bergsma (2007:239-240) points out that the first seven weeks are a jubilee period that anticipate the eternity of weeks after the tenth week (see also VanderKam 1995:70). Evil, however, does not disappear after the seventh week; hence, there is tension within the ten weeks between the already and the not yet. Bergsma refers to the eighth, ninth, and tenth weeks as “‘mopping up’ operations in which righteousness vanquishes evil and the eschatological age arrives.” Nevertheless, the seventh week features the decisive moment in the history of redemption with the result that God’s victory is never in doubt during weeks 8-10. Similar, then, to Daniel’s seventy sevens, the Apocalypse of Weeks offers hope that God will eliminate sin and establish righteousness but over a long stretch of time. God’s people during the sixty-two sevens needed this assurance. So also do people who live at other times.

7.4. Summary

This chapter has examined the sixty-two sevens in Daniel 9:25b. They were by no reckoning a quiet, uneventful interlude between the seven sevens and the last seven. As Gabriel announced, there were building projects, and there were troubles. Like the seven sevens, the sixty-two sevens did not bring the full realization of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. Nevertheless, the placement of the sixty-two sevens within the seventy sevens means that progress toward the realization of the six objectives occurred. Gentry’s (2010:37) claim—“Then for sixty-two sevens, there is nothing significant to record as far as God’s plan is concerned”—implies that the execution of the six objectives was suspended. This evaluation of the sixty-two

²¹For discussions of the historical details of the first six weeks (creation to the exile), see Collins (1998:64-65) and Nickelsburg (2001:443-447).

sevens ignores the testimony of God's people who lived during those long years. Even then, God continued to work out his hopeful response to Daniel's prayer of confession.²²

The literature of the sixty-two sevens indicates that God's people faced challenges to trusting and obeying him during these centuries. But they did not shirk the challenge. Collins (2000:152) says, "Despite the persistent concern with matters of political allegiance and civil status, the dominant locus of Jewish identity was in the area of ethics and piety." God had his people who wanted to be marked by righteousness in thought, word, and deed. Indeed, every generation of God's people can identify with the struggle to persevere in faith and obedience that Second Temple literature addresses. It is this pattern of being committed to an unseen and inscrutable God that allows this literature typologically to speak with relevance and conviction to new audiences in new situations.

²²Baker (2010:221) says about the Second Temple era that "we should not conclude from the historical gap between the Old and New Testament books that there is a gap in salvation history." In the context, he compares what he calls the intertestamental period with the long years in Egypt before the Exodus. During both times, God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still in effect, and, therefore, so was his mission to the nations.

CHAPTER 8: DANIEL 9:26-27 AND THE SEVENTIETH SEVEN

8.1. Introduction

Because Gabriel does not clearly state when the seventieth seven begins, what happens after the sixty-two sevens and during the seventieth seven seems to run together. Lacocque (1979:195) goes so far as to say, “The text of this verse [Dan 9:26] is almost impossible to understand, its style being so truncated.” This assessment overstates the hermeneutical challenge. Readers of Daniel might wish that Gabriel’s reference to the seventieth seven occurred in 9:26 instead of 9:27, but there are references nonetheless to the end of the sixty-two sevens and the seventieth seven. Because these verses are part of a vision set between two other visions about the Antiochene crisis, the truncated style is not so difficult to figure out. The events of that crisis are known well enough that readers can make sense of the text as it stands. This chapter will exegete the Hebrew text of Daniel 9:26-27, explain these verses in terms of the book’s interest in Antiochus IV, and then relate the meaning of these verses to the jubilee structure of the seventy sevens.

8.2. Exegesis of Daniel 9:26-27

Verse 26 announces that another anointed one is cut off (יִכָּרֵת) after the sixty-two sevens. If verse 25 identifies the first anointed one of the seven sevens as a נָגִיד (leader), verse 26 similarly mentions another נָגִיד in conjunction with the second anointed one. Because נָגִיד in verse 26 is not in apposition to מָשִׁיחַ (anointed one) as it is in verse 25, the second leader is not necessarily the same individual as the second anointed one. In fact, the leader in verse 26 is said to have a people who will destroy הָעִיר (the city) and הַקֹּדֶשׁ (the holy one, whether a place or a

person). In other words, the leader seems to oppose God. If the second anointed one, like the first, is involved with accomplishing the six objectives of 9:24, it seems unlikely that he and the second leader are the same person.¹

Meanwhile, the second half of verse 26 says that וְקִצּוֹ בַשָּׁטָף וְעַד קֵץ מְלָחָמָה (his end will be with a flood, and there will be war until the end). If the pronominal suffix on the first occurrence of קֵץ has the nearest masculine singular noun for its antecedent, then the end of the second leader is in view.² The second occurrence of קֵץ could refer to war until the end of the second leader or until the end of the seventy sevens. Both ends may occur at the same time, but not necessarily. What is evident is that the trouble of the sixty-two sevens does not end with the sixty-two sevens. It extends beyond them into the seventieth seven and remains part of the historical process by which God accomplishes the six objectives of Daniel 9:24.

The second half of Daniel 9:26 presents other challenges to the translator and interpreter, and these challenges continue into verse 27. Determining the syntax of the words (how they relate to one another to create meaning) is by no means straightforward. A survey of translations in versions and commentaries will reveal a variety of possibilities that are allowable by the rules of Hebrew grammar and syntax. This chapter will not perform that survey as such, but it will work directly with the Hebrew text to demonstrate why different translations are possible.

The Masoretic punctuation understands לוֹ וְאֵין לוֹ (he has nothing) to refer back to מְשִׁיחַ (the anointed one who is cut off). מְשִׁיחַ is the antecedent of the third masculine singular pronominal

¹Pitre (2005:57 footnote 51) suggests that they are but does not explain why.

²Because דָּגָל is the absolute noun in a construct chain, the construct noun, עַם, might be the antecedent. Another possibility is הַקֶּדֶשׁ, but it is part of a compound direct object with הָעִיר, a feminine noun. Even though Hebrew often uses a 3ms pronominal suffix for plural antecedents, נָגִיד or עַם is the likelier antecedent.

suffix on the preposition לְ. The point is that וְהָעִיר וְהַקֹּדֶשׁ (both the city and the holy place) is the direct object of יִשְׁחִית (he will destroy both the city and the holy place) and not of וְאֵין לוֹ (he has no city or holy place). The subject of יִשְׁחִית (he will destroy) is עַם נֹגֵיד הַבָּא (a people of a coming ruler). So then, וְהָעִיר וְהַקֹּדֶשׁ יִשְׁחִית עַם נֹגֵיד הַבָּא can be translated as “a people of a coming ruler will destroy both the city and the holy place.” The people, of course, are an army.

The next clause says וְקֵצוֹ בְּשֹׁטֶף. The antecedent of the third masculine singular pronominal suffix on קֵץ is not obvious (cf. Lucas 2002:244). It can refer back to עַם (the construct noun) or נֹגֵיד (the absolute noun). These nouns that comprise the subject of יִשְׁחִית are closest to the pronominal suffix on קֵץ. The clause can be translated as either “their [the people’s] end will be in the flood” or “his [the ruler’s] end will be in the flood.” Perhaps there is, in effect, little difference between the ruler and his people, especially if both share a common purpose of resisting God’s anointed one and the six objectives of verse 24. The pronominal suffix on קֵץ could also refer back to the direct object of יִשְׁחִית, which is וְהָעִיר וְהַקֹּדֶשׁ. The translation would be “their end [i.e., the end of the city and holy place] will be in the flood.” שֹׁטֶף metaphorically describes the decisive and overwhelming character of the end (cf. Prov 27:4; Young 1949:207). A literal and specific deluge is not necessarily in view. Making a decision about these possible antecedents for the pronominal suffix on קֵץ almost defies certainty, but the proximity of נֹגֵיד and what verse 27 says about this נֹגֵיד suggest that his end is in view. He will not interminably oppose the accomplishment of God’s announced purpose.

Following this line of thought into verse 27, the subject of the verbs in verse 27 is the oppressive ruler, not the anointed one. Because נָגִיד in verse 26 is the closer antecedent to the understood pronouns in verse 27, the subject of the verbs in verse 27 cannot be the anointed one. What this means is that verse 27 reads more negatively than positively. Instead of the anointed one confirming God's covenant, the ruler הַגִּבִּיר בְּרִית לְרַבִּים (imposes an obligation on many). History's rulers have the power to make autocratic decisions and force their will on others.³ In so doing, they can demonstrate that they are no friend of God's anointed one or those whom he redeems in fulfillment of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. The rulers in Daniel 1-6 illustrate the point. Whereas Nebuchadnezzar required everyone in his kingdom to bow before his statue, Darius the Mede forbade prayer. Meanwhile, Belshazzar who was deluded by an imagined sense of greatness toasted his gods with the sacred vessels of Yahweh. God's people before and since have similarly suffered at the hands of intolerant governors and megalomaniacs who considered the state the singular object of human loyalty and devotion.

Verse 27 adds that the ruler וְחָצִי הַשְּׁבוּעַ יִשְׁבִּית זֶבַח וּמִנְחָה (will stop sacrifice and offering in the middle of the last seven). If the second anointed one of verse 26 dies after the sixty-ninth seven, the seventieth seven seems to begin with or after the death of the anointed one. So then, the death of the anointed one does not put an end to sacrifice and offering in the middle of the seventieth seven. יִשְׁבִּית must have a different subject, viz., the ruler who imposes his restrictive policy on God's people and thereby interferes with their worship and service of Yahweh.

³Regarding the translation of הַגִּבִּיר, van der Kooij (1993:500) says, "Antiochus IV shall make strong, in the negative sense of 'dominating,' the cult with respect to the many who remain faithful to the law."

Representatives of the Greek, Roman, and Dispensational views have read **עַל כְּנָף שְׁקוּצִים** (upon the wing or edge of abominations) with reference to the temple in the Maccabean, Roman, or tribulation era. The **כְּנָף** is thought to be some part of the temple that the ruler defiles.⁴

Indeed, Daniel 11:31 and 12:11, along with the Olivet Discourse, would seem to confirm “that the ‘abomination of desolation,’ despite the fact that it is witnessed in several contexts in Daniel, *always refers to a profanation of the Jerusalem Temple.*” This profanation, in turn, “leads to the cessation of sacrifice” and “to the destruction of the sanctuary and the holy city that accompanies it” (Pitre 2005:304-305). In Daniel 9:17 and 9:26, God’s house fares poorly at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar before the seventy sevens and then by the agency of the ruler during the seventieth seven. Although the abomination of desolation occurred at the temple, **כְּנָף** does not necessarily refer to some portion of the temple.

The syntax of **וְעַל כְּנָף שְׁקוּצִים מְשַׁמֵּם** is challenging in this context. **שְׁקוּצִים** is the absolute noun in a construct chain for which **כְּנָף** is the construct noun. These two words comprise the object of the preposition **עַל**. The Poel participle **מְשַׁמֵּם** (one who devastates) appears to be the subject of a verbless clause that can be translated as “one who devastates will be (or come) on the wing (or extremity) of abominations.” If so, then Daniel 9:27 further identifies the ruler of verse 26 as **מְשַׁמֵּם** (one who devastates). This oppressive leader will turn God’s house and city

⁴Unlike the Septuagint (both Old Greek and Theodotion) and some English translations (e.g., NAB, NIV, TEV, TNIV), the Masoretic Text does not explicitly mention the temple in verse 27. The Tanakh translation in *The Jewish Study Bible* (2004) has “At the corner [of the altar].” It apparently adopts the view that **כְּנָף** refers not to the pinnacle of the temple but to the horns of the altar of burnt sacrifice. See Goldingay (1989: 263), Lacocque (1979:198-199), and Lucas (2002: 245). Collins (1993b:358) dismisses this suggestion by saying that “this meaning is not otherwise attested.”

into an economic, social, and spiritual wasteland. Israel's prophets, especially Jeremiah, used the root שׁמם to describe the deleterious effects of covenantal disloyalty and moral autonomy on the part of Israel and the nations alike. Pride and disobedience turn fruitful land into a barren desert (cf. Jer 4:26-27). A thriving community once based on trust, justice, and compassion can be torn apart by corruption and selfishness. If Daniel 9:27 makes the ruler responsible for the devastation, Daniel's prayer reminds the reader that God's people in the sixth and second centuries contributed to the problem.

שְׁקוּצִים (abominations or horrors) emphasizes the pagan practices of the ruler who devastates. This word appears elsewhere with reference to Solomon's support of the worship of Milcom (or Molech), Chemosh, and Ashtoreth (1 Kgs 11:5-7, 2 Kgs 23:13). שְׁקוּצִים can also be used to identify false objects of trust and worship in general (e.g., 2 Kgs 23:24, 2 Chr 15:8, Ezek 5:11). It is part of the Old Testament's vocabulary of idolatry. If an idol is what people want so much that they are willing to disregard God's commandments in order to get it, then anything that competes with loyalty to Yahweh is both an idol and an abomination (שְׁקוּץ). For the writers of the Old Testament, all of life is religion, and a person acts in order to serve Yahweh or false gods. The latter inevitably reduce to some form of selfishness. False gods supposedly give the worshiper what he or she wants.

If Daniel's reading of Jeremiah is recalled, שְׁקוּצִים appears five times in that book (Jer 4:1, 7:30, 13:27, 16:18, 32:34). Each of these verses mentions the religious aberrations of God's people that necessitated the exile. Whereas Jeremiah 7:30 and 32:34 place the שְׁקוּצִים inside Yahweh's temple, 13:27 indicates that abominable objects and conduct could be found outside as

well. The contexts of Jeremiah 4:1 and 7:30 also discuss שְׁקוּצִים in connection with ethics. The former verse introduces a call to repentance that involves religious reform accompanied by amendment of life (truth, justice, and righteousness) and revitalization of mission (the nations will be blessed). The latter verse, as part of Jeremiah's famous temple sermon, links moral treatment of one's neighbor with sincere (i.e., exclusive and proper) worship of Yahweh. Old Testament prophets usually make a connection between apostasy and injustice on the one hand and worship and justice on the other. A poor or absent relationship with Yahweh in king and commoner alike inevitably leads to lack of love for one's neighbor and the breakdown of relationships at all levels of society. Daniel's prayer may focus exclusively on how Israel's violations of the covenant have alienated its relationship with Yahweh and, thus, say nothing explicit about the social effects of Israel's behavior. Even so, Daniel's reading of Jeremiah and Gabriel's promise of everlasting righteousness keep the horizontal implications of God's covenant in view.

The ruler who devastates in Daniel 9:27 is said to be or come עַל כְּנֶף שְׁקוּצִים (on the wing or extremity of abominations or horrors). If עַל is translated with what Williams and Beckman (2007:113 [§290]) call the "עַל of norm," then the ruler who devastates comes in accordance with the extremity of abominations. Stated differently, he acts excessively and irreverently like any other ancient Near Eastern despot. Along with war and conquest, desecrating and suppressing biblical religion are parts of the expected means by which he, in both biblical and ancient Near Eastern thinking, shames Yahweh and honors his god (Dalley 1995:414, 416; Nemet-Nejat 2002:227-228; von Soden 1994:85-86). It is in this sense of עַל that Theophilos (2012:198) can

say, “Antiochus IV Epiphanes is the abomination *and* inflicts the desolation.” His irreverent conduct at Yahweh’s temple violated its sanctity.

Other ways of understanding the syntax are possible. First, על can be translated causally (Williams and Beckman 2007:114 [§291]). So then, the one who devastates comes because of the extremity of abominations. The one who devastates is not so much the cause of the abominations as he is the consequence of them. The abominations have caused or occasioned his coming. Second but not too dissimilar from the previous option, בְּנֶגְדוֹ can convey progression and result. In this case, על has the sense of “on” (Williams and Beckman 2007:112 [§286]).

English-speakers would say “on the heels” instead of “on the wing” of abominations. So then, the ruler who devastates follows or accompanies the abominations. He comes as a result of them and so is not responsible for all of them. Moreover, בְּנֶגְדוֹ as a symbol of speed (Steinmann 2008:475) conveys how suddenly and perhaps unexpectedly the מְשֻׁמְמִים can appear in the midst of spiritual decline and wreak further havoc (Dommershausen 1995:230-231). This way of reading על בְּנֶגְדוֹ שְׂקוּצִים is reflected in the renderings of the NAB, NEB, and the NLT. The first two have “in the train of these abominations,” and the third says “as a climax to all his terrible deeds.” The terrible deeds, though, need not belong to the ruler alone, and the NLT has, in fact, added the pronoun *his*. Leaders who are hostile to biblical religion typically arise in a climate of systemic corruption and shameful behavior (or at least deep-seated apathy) that encourages them to be that way. So then, people get the leaders that they deserve, and they reap the ugly consequences of their ungodly or indifferent preferences.

It is hard to decide which of these options was intended by Gabriel. Perhaps he deliberately exploited the versatility of **ל** so that Daniel and his readers would consider each possibility. What is evident is that the seventy sevens do not describe the achievement of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 in ideal conditions. Just as God's people veered from the covenant before the exile, so they will have their struggles and failures during the seventy sevens. Moreover, the political process in which they live will not promote the six objectives—a mistaken hope that God's people have repeatedly entertained before, during, and since the course of the seventy sevens. As redemptive history plays out on the stage of world history, God's program and God's people regularly encounter opposition.

The final clause in Daniel 9:27 offers hope and provides the basis for jubilee. It speaks of a decreed end for the ruler who causes spiritual devastation. Gabriel, however, changes the participle from Poel (**פועל**) to Qal (**פעל**). The one who causes devastation (Poel) for others is himself devastated (Qal) by Yahweh as he works out the six objectives of verse 24 (cf. Goldingay 1989:263).⁵ God's enemies cannot prevail against him. The seventy sevens assure God's people that God will have mercy on them and bring glory to his name by eliminating evil within them and beyond them. He will reconcile his sinful creation to his eternal plan and establish a people for his name. God wins in the end. The biblical theology of which the book of Daniel is a part knows of no greater reason to be jubilant.

8.3. Daniel 9:26-27 and the Antiochene Crisis

Verse 26 introduces a second anointed one and a second ruler. The interest of Daniel in the Antiochene crisis clarifies the identity of these individuals (cf. Edlin 2009:239). Onias III is

⁵On the causative or factitive use of the Piel and Polel, see Theophilos (2012:162-163) and Williams and Beckman (2007:59 [§141]).

the anointed one. His murder in 171 B.C.E. marks the end of the sixty-two sevens and the beginning of the seventieth seven. The ruler and his people who destroy the city and its temple are Antiochus IV and his army. Both Jews and Seleucids added to the trouble during the sixty-two sevens with the result that the trouble continued and intensified during the seventieth seven. Chapter 1 has already discussed the details of Menelaus' murder of Onias III, and these details need not be repeated here.

According to 1 Maccabees 1:11-14, some Jews with the support of Jason the high priest approached Antiochus IV in order to improve relations with the Seleucid kingdom. Pleased with their initiative, Antiochus IV authorized them to build, among other things, a Greek gymnasium, and Jerusalem began to look like a Greek *polis*. Later, however, Antiochus IV perpetrated violence against Jerusalem. He had campaigned against Egypt for the second time in 168. There, the Romans met him and rebuffed him (Dan 11:30). In fact, the Roman general drew a circle around Antiochus IV and prevented him from stepping out until he pledged to leave Egypt. Antiochus IV now had a desperate political problem. Because Pergamum to the north and Egypt to the south were Roman allies, Antiochus IV was sandwiched between his adversaries. At this time, some Jews rioted, thinking that Antiochus IV had died. He rushed to Jerusalem, suppressed the riot, and proscribed Judaism (Dan 9:27, 11:31). While Antiochus IV, like Alexander, wanted to spread Greek culture, his action at this time certainly had political motivation.⁶ Given the divided Jewish population, Antiochus IV could not allow the Jewish

⁶Bright (1953:181) emphasizes the cultural and religious zeal of Antiochus IV when he says, "A more fanatical Hellenizer there never was." Meanwhile, Grabbe stresses the political incentive almost to the exclusion of any ideological agenda. According to him, Antiochus IV had no interest in culture or religion; he simply was a typical politician who wanted money and power (1992:256 and 2010:10). Therefore, the Jewish sources (Daniel, 1 and 2 Maccabees) distort the record of Antiochus IV in order to present the Maccabees in a favorable light (Grabbe 1992:223, 2010:67). Collins (2001:51-52), however, appeals to a letter of Antiochus V in 2 Maccabees 11:22-26 as well as the testimony of Diodorus (34-35.1) and Tacitus (*Histories* 5.8) for confirmation of Antiochus IV's forceful promotion of Hellenism. More recently, Collins (2012:468) has supported Grabbe by saying, "Antiochus, no doubt,

conservatives any advantage. He had to use force to keep the city under control. According to 1 Maccabees 1:31 and 33, “He plundered the city, burned it with fire, and tore down its houses and its surrounding walls. . . . Then they fortified the city of David with a great strong wall and strong towers, and it became their citadel.” The writer of 1 Maccabees says that these events occurred in the one hundred forty-fifth year of the Seleucid kingdom (167 B.C.E.). Two years earlier, Antiochus had stripped the temple of its furnishings and ornamentation (1 Macc 1:20-28).⁷ The glory of Jerusalem in the time of Aristaeas was gone.

Antiochus IV’s persecution of the Jews reached its climax in 167 with the abomination of desolation on the altar of the Jerusalem temple and the erection of pagan altars throughout Judea (1 Macc 1:54-60). According to Flavius Josephus, Antiochus IV built “an idol altar on God’s altar . . . and slew swine on it” (*Ant.* 12.5.4 §253). Antiochus IV dedicated the Jerusalem temple to Zeus (2 Macc 6:1-7) and broke down the walls that separated sacred space within the temple precinct from common space outside (1 Macc 4:38). As in the days of Ezekiel, debauchery filled the temple (2 Macc 6:4) and mocked the holiness of the God to whom it belonged. Outside the temple, Antiochus IV massacred thousands of Jews (2 Macc 5:11-14, 23-26) and forbade the survivors under penalty of death to practice their religion. As explained by Wheaton (2012:254-255; cf. Edlin 2009:268), more than political expediency motivated Antiochus IV: “Antiochus’s oppression of Judaism . . . was [also] bound up with his claim to deity and worthiness of worship. From a Jewish perspective, the pagan king did not merely repress Jewish religious expression, he blasphemously reoriented it toward himself. He replaced the true God as the object of the people’s worship.” Daniel 11:36-37, 2 Maccabees 9:8, and 2 Maccabees 9:28

did not have a concept of ‘Jewish religion.’ What he wanted to break down was the ancestral law of Judea and thereby the distinctive identity of the rebellious people.”

⁷Josephus (*Ant.* 12.5.4 §§248-252) dates the despoliation of the temple to the one hundred forty-fifth year.

would concur.⁸ Moreover, Antiochus IV stationed troops within Jerusalem (1 Macc 1:34-40). These soldiers dispossessed people of their homes, took women and children captive, presumably had their way with the women, and plundered the material goods.

War followed as Judah Maccabee led the armed rebellion that attempted to drive out the Seleucid forces and purge Jerusalem of Antiochus IV's Hellenistic zeal. While committed Jews could accept a certain amount of Hellenistic culture, they drew a line at the proscription of their religion and the enforcement of another (Collins 2001:52; Grabbe 1992:169-170, 2004:164-165). Judah and his force succeeded and re-dedicated the Jerusalem altar in 164. According to 1 Maccabees 4:36-55, the temple was in ruins and required reconstruction inside and out. Meanwhile, Antiochus IV had set his sights on plundering other temples in Persia (now Parthia) and so had left Jerusalem. Having paid the indemnity to Rome, Antiochus IV needed money from the eastern region of the Seleucid Empire for his "own grandiose projects" (Goldstein 1989:298).⁹ He also had to check the westward advancement of Mithridates I of Parthia and regain control of a trade route to India. Mithridates had taken advantage of the Maccabean distraction to make his own imperialistic play in the eastern part of the Seleucid kingdom. In late 164, Antiochus IV met an untimely death at the Parthian city of Tabea (Lucas 2002:291).

A perceived historical discrepancy leads Lucas (2002:244) to admit, "The middle part of this verse [9:26] is difficult to construe." The discrepancy is that "Antiochus IV did not destroy Jerusalem and the temple." Collins (1993b:357) acknowledges the discrepancy but offers an explanation, "The Syrians did not demolish Jerusalem, but they made it desolate by the corruption of the cult." Gowan (2001:135) resolves the difficulty in a different way: "The city

⁸So also does Efron (1987:141) who says, "Antiochus Epiphanes deifies and aggrandizes himself, according to the concepts of apotheosis current among Hellenistic kings which raises them in ritual and ceremony to the rank of sons of gods." See also Collins and Collins (2008:50-54) and Horbury (1998:69-70).

⁹See also Polybius, *Histories* 31.9; Collins (1993b:389-390); Lucas (2002:291).

was not destroyed, as the verb *yašhîṭ* has been translated, but the word can sometimes mean “damage” (1 Sam 8:5 [*sic*]; 2 Kgs 18:25), and that is appropriate here (1 Macc 1:20-35; 2 Macc 5:11-21).”¹⁰ Given Gowan’s linguistic clarification or the possibility of hyperbole for effect, Pitre (2005:304 footnote 188) goes too far by calling the historical discrepancy the “Achilles’ heel” of the Greek reading of Daniel’s seventy sevens. Even without Gowan’s clarification, Daniel 9 still sits between two visions that focus on the Antiochene crisis.

8.4. The Seventieth Seven and Jubilee

As already noted, the Bible’s story of redemption features typology or patterns. This typology provides the basis for the emphasis of the seventy sevens on jubilee. In other words, the pattern of jubilee runs throughout the Bible and has different stages to its full realization in redemptive history. The seventy sevens constitute one of the stages. This pattern of jubilee, however, does not develop in isolation from other patterns.

8.4.1. The Typology of the Hostile Ruler

With reference to the ruler in Daniel 9:26, the typology has to do with the proud and hostile king that is found earlier in Daniel and throughout the Old Testament. The New Testament also carries the typology forward. History has seen many terrestrial embodiments of the spiritual forces of darkness (see Caragounis 1993:396; Collins 1993b:61; Efron 1987:260; Wright 2012:206). Each has acted impiously and oppressed God’s people. In so doing, they have threatened the progress of God’s redemptive program. Daniel 7 speaks of a terrifying fourth kingdom that surpasses the ferocity of other kingdoms. Its success comes from intimidation and strength. Daniel 8, 9, and 11 cryptically single out Antiochus IV as an example of hostile insolence in high places. Meanwhile, the New Testament, especially the book of

¹⁰The verb *שָׁחַת* does not occur in 1 Samuel 8:5. The intended reference in 1 Samuel may be 6:5. The ESV’s use of *ravage* seems to support Gowan’s point. The reference in 2 Kings 18 is not so convincing. Assyrian kings hardly distinguished between destroying and damaging.

Revelation, considers Rome the epitome of all that sets itself against God. Moreover, Matthew 2 presents Herod the Great as a second Pharaoh (Matt 2), and 2 Thessalonians 2 expects a man of lawlessness who resembles Antiochus IV. People and empires like Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus IV, Herod the Great, and Rome put their trust in their ideas, accomplishments, and resources. They soon consider themselves invincible and entitled. Inevitably, though, they exploit others and reach for too much control. Hence, they become diabolical—filled with what 1 John 4:3 calls the spirit of antichrist that sets itself against God’s purposes for his world. Human history is littered with the carnage of their arrogance as well as the reports of their collapse. Judgment in history falls heaviest on those kings that think too highly of themselves and on those empires that become overextended by conquest.

Redemptive history, of which the seventy sevens are a chapter, has seen constant conflict between the kingdom of God and his anointed ones on the one hand and the kingdoms of unbelieving rulers and their minions on the other. As was mentioned in chapter 2, Baldwin and advocates of the Greek view agree that the language of Daniel 9:26-27 allows for multiple applications during the reigns of various rulers throughout history. Perhaps it is better to preserve the Antiochene context of these verses and consider them a recurrence (or an instance) of the ongoing resistance to God’s program of redemption that will nevertheless end in jubilee. The names of the rulers may change; the rulers may live in different centuries; and they may rule different empires. Even so, they are manifestations of the same constant spirit of hostility toward God and his people. What unites them is opposition to God’s will. They also share in an ultimate demise. None of them succeeds for long against the Ancient of Days and his anointed ones (cf. Ps 2). The transience of the wicked gives the righteous a reason to rejoice. At the core of jubilee is the triumph of God.

8.4.2. The Typology of Sin among God's People

The typology of the hostile ruler and of God's triumph involves the pattern of human sin. Daniel, 1 Maccabees, and 2 Maccabees certainly draw attention to the evil perpetrated by Gentile rulers, but they also document the disobedience of God's people. The Israelites proved to be unfaithful before the exile and afterwards. They feared the rulers of the nations, wanted to win their favor, and coveted the material benefits. God's people consistently demonstrated an inability and unwillingness to love God, each other, and Gentiles. Before and after the exile, they too often behaved like the nations around them and so failed more often than not to perform their mission as a kingdom of priests (cf. Bright 1953:160-162). A history of sin might not in itself be a reason for joy, but Daniel's dual focus on the sixth and second centuries offers the hope of jubilee. God remains faithful not only to his threat of judgment but also to his promise of forgiveness. He keeps talking to his people even when they ignore him. When he talks, he speaks as much about what he will do for them as about what they have done against him. Daniel assures people of the Babylonian exile and of the Antiochene crisis that their unbelief and disobedience cannot deter God from redeeming them or the rest of his world. Jubilee includes the realization that God's performance repeatedly trumps human performance not just by crushing sinners but especially by saving them.

8.4.3. The Typology of Righteous Suffering

Daniel 9:26-27 also features the typology of the righteous sufferer. Not to be missed in this regard is what the Greek, Roman, and Dispensational views have in common. They all say that an anointed one dies unjustly at the hands of a Gentile ruler and his army. Stated differently, the three approaches agree that the anointed one becomes a victim of the trouble during the sixty-two sevens. The terminology for this trouble may vary (messianic woes, birth pangs, or great

tribulation), but the idea is the same: the anointed one of Daniel 9:26 meets with hostility, suffering, and death. Here too is the recurrence of a pattern.

Generally speaking, God's servants (whether anointed or not) suffer throughout the Old Testament, and, thus, a pattern emerges (see Litwak 2005:133-136). Joseph suffered unjust imprisonment but later saved his family from famine. Moses had to flee from Egypt but later returned to liberate the Israelites. Called God's son (Exod 4:22), the Israelites as a whole were enslaved and mistreated by Pharaoh but emerged from Egypt to become a kingdom of priests—a channel of redemptive blessing—for the nations. David was chased by Saul but received a royal covenant that involved blessing for the whole world. Job lost nearly everything because of God's deal with the satan but then made intercession for his friends who misunderstood what had happened. Isaiah 53 speaks of a suffering servant and Zechariah 13 of a smitten shepherd—both of whom were involved with atonement for sin. Lamentations 3 mentions a vindicated man who identifies with fallen Jerusalem but comes to a fresh appreciation of God's compassion. Daniel's colleagues—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—were thrown into a fiery furnace for refusing to bow before Nebuchadnezzar's image, but their God preserved them to the utter surprise and momentary humbling of Nebuchadnezzar. All of these righteous individuals suffered and even interceded for others. The pattern is that God uses the suffering of the righteous to advance his redemptive plan (Wright 1996:591). Suffering is a major means of mission.

Daniel's reading of Jeremiah should be recalled at this point. Commonly known as the weeping prophet, Jeremiah was another of God's servants who suffered. Although Jeremiah suffered in part because he empathized with those to whom he ministered and even acted out the consequences of judgment that they would soon endure, he also faced persecution. The people of Judah did not want to hear what he had to say. Other "prophets" offered a more positive

message, and so the people of Judah tried to silence Jeremiah. Nevertheless, God used him in difficult circumstances not only to interpret the exile as the penalty for covenantal unfaithfulness but also to promise grace in the form of a new covenant beyond the exile. In Jeremiah 30:5-9, Jeremiah associates tribulation with a future Davidic king, who, of course, would qualify as an anointed one. Jeremiah may not say that this future anointed one will suffer, but he links this king in Jeremiah 33:14-18 with the types of outcomes (especially atonement and righteousness) that are described in Daniel 9:24. Meanwhile, Gabriel tells Daniel during the course of his reading of Jeremiah that a future anointed one, who will live during a time of distress perpetrated by a ruler and his army, will be cut off in the context of realizing the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. In his sixth-century context, Daniel would not think of Onias III (a priest) but of Jehoiakim (a king). Jehoiakim, of course, was not righteous. Even so, Daniel would hear of another cut-off anointed one and think that the suffering of a Davidic king would somehow factor into the accomplishment of the six objectives of the seventy sevens. God's people during and after the Antiochene crisis in the second-century might understand Daniel 9:26 with reference to Daniel 1:1-2 and Jeremiah's prophecy of a righteous descendant of David, but the murder of Onias III would also be fresh in their memory. Daniel 9:26 would additionally assure them that the untimely death of Onias III fell within God's providence. Onias III was not just a tragic figure who died in vain. He was a righteous son of Abraham who suffered unjustly at the hands of unrighteous sons of Abraham and an unrighteous king of Seleucia. The latter predictably put the high priesthood up for sale, and the former shamefully ignored the priestly regulations of the Pentateuch. Nevertheless, God used the injustice that occasioned the murder of Onias III to arouse the Maccabees and advance his purpose within the seventy sevens. What humans meant

for evil, God again used for good. God has consistently used suffering, especially unjust suffering, to advance his plan of redemption.

Moreover, Daniel hears Gabriel not only in the context of reading Jeremiah but also after receiving an explanation of Nebuchadnezzar's vision of metals in Daniel 2 and his own vision of beasts in Daniel 7. If a stone representing the kingdom of God topples a statue of kings in the former chapter, one like a son of man receives a kingdom from God in the latter chapter and implicitly subjugates the beasts.¹¹ In both cases, God's royal design unfolds in the midst of regimes that cause distress for God's people. In its sixth-century prophetic context, Daniel 9:26 adds that God's anointed one will suffer along with his people. This suffering unto death, though, will be an instrument by which God performs the six objectives of the seventy sevens and thus ushers in his kingdom.

Concerning the death of the anointed one in Daniel 9:26, Pitre (2005:57) observes: "In this regard, it appears that the theme of the persecution and martyrdom of the saints that we saw earlier has been picked up and applied to the Messiah himself." What Gabriel said about a suffering anointed one would have made good sense to Daniel in his Old Testament context. It also made sense to faithful Jews (the wise people who know their God in Daniel 11:32-33) during and after the Antiochene crisis. Although speculative, the possibility of reading Daniel 9:26 with reference to a king or priest may partially explain why the Qumran community expected royal and priestly messiahs and why the history of interpretation since has been so divided. When read from different scriptural angles and in different historical contexts, this verse suggests more than one identity for the cut-off anointed one. A king or a priest may be an instrument of jubilee.

¹¹Daniel 7:14 says that the dominion of the one like a son of man lasts forever and that all nations worship him.

Something else that verse 27 conveys is that all seventy sevens must elapse before the Jubilee of Jubilees. There are no shortcuts to restoration. In fact, God's people will encounter adversity throughout the period within their own ranks and from outsiders. For this reason, Daniel 9:27 may seem to be a long way from the six objectives of verse 24. Even so, it honestly describes the circumstances in which God works out the realization of his redemptive program. In the narrative world (and for some people, the real world) of Daniel 9, Daniel and his contemporaries need to know that conditions after the exile would not differ much from the status quo before the exile. God's people during and after the Antiochene crisis surely benefited from this reminder too. There is no respite before the Jubilee of Jubilees. There may be moments of celebrating God's faithfulness like the end of Ezra-Nehemiah, but God has always redeemed his people in a world full of sin and tears. Sin is the reason that God has to redeem at all, and much sin occurs during the seventy sevens. It creates the tension between the already and the not yet that runs throughout the seventy sevens.

The same is true before and after the seventy sevens. The fortunes of God's people may rise and fall as hostile rulers come and go and as they (God's people) falter or succeed in doing his will. Even so, God is in control to accomplish the six objectives through his anointed ones. Conflict and persecution may tempt God's people to doubt the realization of the six objectives, but they cannot thwart God's announced plan. God works through the messiness of human history to redeem his people and world. Even God's foes can unwittingly serve his purpose.

As seen in chapter 2, Wallace (n.d.: 165) critiqued the Greek view's alleged sensationalism. It supposedly uses superlatives such as Jubilee of Jubilees for a historical outcome (i.e., the Maccabean victory) that brought short-lived spiritual improvement. In fact, the Qumran community developed a few decades later because of disgust with the worldly

Hasmonean (i.e., Maccabean) priests in Jerusalem. What answer can be given to Wallace?

Merrill Willis (2010:179) appeals to genre:

Indeed, the great paradox of apocalyptic visions is that although they assert ultimate and permanent endings, the contradictions they mediate and the closure that they do give is meaningful for its reading community in that moment, although it is never more than penultimate and temporary. The most that one can affirm at the close of any apocalyptic imagining is—"here is the end of the matter," *for now*.

Recognizing the primary audience or historical context of a text is certainly a sound principle of hermeneutics. Nevertheless, the use of *penultimate* recalls what Goldingay said about partial realizations.¹² Goldingay along with other advocates of the Greek view recognizes that God's Word, especially the apocalyptic sections, has typological depth that can address new but similar situations. The Antiochene crisis was not the end of redemptive history. The prophecy of the seventy sevens may have the Antiochene crisis as its primary focus, but redemptive history has seen other challenges to God's plan. Because the same spirit of rebellion influences the human actors in each of these instances of hostility, what God says about evil and its solution on one occasion can paradigmatically apply to another. The reason is that God is progressively and organically working out one plan of redemption throughout the long course of history. The resolution of each apocalyptic imagining (to use Merrill Willis' term) contributes to the advancement of God's kingdom on earth and the telling of his metanarrative.

8.5. Summary

This chapter has looked at the seventieth seven in Daniel 9:26-27 and understood it with reference to the second half of the reign of Antiochus IV. Evil escalated during those years and threatened to eliminate God's people. The demise of Antiochus IV and the restoration of true worship provided another occasion to rejoice. God had not only cared for his people in the midst

¹²Cf. Bergsma (2007:225) who says, "Therefore, the 490-year period is a 'liminal' time, in which the city, sanctuary, and people experience a partial fulfillment of the divine promises and live in anticipation of the final fulfillment to come."

of a pagan empire as during the seven sevens but also rescued them from a diabolical king who was set on exterminating them. The stakes were higher in the seventieth seven. Lucas (2002:254) says, “The desperate nature of the situation called for a great deliverance.” By dividing the centuries between the Babylonian exile and the Antiochene crisis into ten jubilee cycles, the writer of Daniel emphasized how serious the Antiochene threat was and how great God’s deliverance would be.

Just as God was in control during the first sixty-nine sevens, so he rules sovereignly over the seventieth seven. Conflict and persecution during the seventy sevens may tempt God’s people to despair, but the seventy sevens move inexorably to their denouement. Nothing can thwart God’s realization of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. He works through the muddle of human history to redeem his people and world.

Along with the other sevens, the seventieth seven prevents a simplistic reading of Jeremiah. The pastoral problem of the post-exilic period that began in 539 B.C.E. was disillusionment (cf. Bright 1953:159). Jeremiah 30-33 and passages like it did not become a complete reality in the decades after 539. Though fulfillments to God’s promises often seem so meager, Daniel 9:24-27 indicates that God’s unstoppable plan of redemption will involve a lengthy process—at least from a human perspective. Cyrus’ edict in 539 was just the beginning, but it demonstrated how God controls the decisions of leaders for his own purpose. The contents of Ezra-Nehemiah give a glimpse of the glory that God has in store for his people. The Antiochene crisis and the Maccabean victory assure them that God will not allow evil to prevail. All the sevens, but especially the seventieth, display God’s power to work redemptively through the evil intentions of deceived and wicked people. The sevens elapse with the assurance that

God is working throughout redemptive history to prepare the ultimate celebration—the Jubilee of Jubilees—for those who persevere in faith and repentance.

CHAPTER 9: THE SEVENTY SEVENS AND THE REST OF THE BOOK

9.1. Introduction

So far, much of this thesis has focused on reading Daniel 9:24-27 in view of Daniel's prayer and the book of Jeremiah that Daniel was reading. Only a few connections to other parts of Daniel have been made, and yet "[t]he angelic message of 'seventy weeks' (Dan 9:24-27) is obviously related to the other prophetic visions of the book (chs. 2, 7, 8, 10-12)" because of the common interest in "the ushering in of the eschatological kingdom after a long time period" (Bergsma 2007:214). This chapter will discuss the place of the seventy sevens in the rest of the book. A key concept for doing this is the mystery of Daniel's visions to himself and to others.

The Aramaic word ܡܝܫܬܪܐ (mystery) occurs eight times in Daniel 2 and one time in Daniel 4.¹³

The restriction of ܡܝܫܬܪܐ to these chapters might suggest that the concept of mystery will not be helpful for understanding the relationship of the seventy sevens to the rest of the book.

Caragounis (1977:123) offers another way of looking at the evidence:

. . . the term ܡܝܫܬܪܐ, used of the dream in ch. 2, could as well have been applied to the vision of the beasts of ch. 7 and to the vision of the ram and the he-goat of ch. 8. This means that the role of the Son of Man is easily brought into connection with God's *basileia* in ch. 2. Indeed, a NT author might easily pass from ch. 2 on to chs. 7 and 8, not to speak of chs. 9 and 11. Since these chs. deal with the same theme an important detail of one ch. might easily be associated with the data of another ch. The point I am driving at is that the Danielic ܡܝܫܬܪܐ is not to be associated solely with the image, but that rather all those passages dealing with the same theme of world history may be said to be considered as a ܡܝܫܬܪܐ by the author, although not called so expressly.¹⁴

Caragounis makes a valid point about the mysterious character of all of the visions in the book of Daniel, not just the vision of metals in chapter 2. The book of Daniel as a whole features

¹³Daniel 2:18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47 (2x); 4:6 (Eng. 4:9).

¹⁴See also Gladd (2008:31-33).

symbolic depth that someone living during the Babylonian Empire (or even since) could not fully understand. Daniel makes this admission more than once. When asked by Nebuchadnezzar if he could interpret the vision of the metals, Daniel expressed inability to do so without revelation (Dan 2:27-28). After the vision of the four beasts, Daniel said that he was troubled (Dan 7:28). The angelic interpretation left him with more questions than answers so that the meaning, in effect, remained mysterious to him (cf. Goldingay 1989:182, 193). Daniel similarly said that he could not understand the vision of the ram and goat (Dan 8:27). Even though Daniel was told to consider the final vision (Dan 10:11), he failed to understand and asked for help, only to be told that the realization of the vision awaits the time of the end (Dan 12:8-9). In other words, the meaning of this vision, like the meaning of the others, was a mystery to him.

9.2. Mystery in Daniel 1

If, as Caragounis says, the mystery that runs throughout the book pertains to the irruption of God's kingdom into world history, then the mystery is arguably introduced in Daniel 1. While no vision occurs in this chapter, Kings Jehoiakim of Judah and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who are both mentioned in Daniel 1:1, have symbolic depth that contributes to the book's mystery. They represent two kingdoms or stories of kingdoms. Fewell (1988:34) insightfully observes about the opening verses of Daniel that the writer of Daniel "ends a story to begin a story." Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem abruptly terminates the political independence of Israel in general and David's throne in particular. Though a new story about life in Babylon begins, it is subordinated to the old story because understanding the new story requires familiarity with the old story. At the end of the old story, God and Nebuchadnezzar want the destruction of Jerusalem and so appear as allies (Fewell 1988:35). Nebuchadnezzar might think that capturing the temple vessels represents Yahweh's defeat, and so also might Daniel and his friends (cf.

Vogel 2010:75-77). Daniel 1:2, however, attributes the exile to God's initiative, not to Nebuchadnezzar's. Despite appearances, God is more powerful than human rulers because he gives them their dominion for a time and then takes it away (see Niskanen 2004b:55-59). Chapter 1 ends with a reference to Cyrus who conquered Babylon in 539, less than twenty-five years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar. Kings come and go, but Yahweh and his purposes outlast them. Even Daniel outlives the Babylonian Empire. The new story, then, does not completely replace the old story. God still has his people in the new story, and the new story, as seen in other chapters of Daniel, involves the irruption of God's kingdom that the old story promised. Part of the mystery of the kingdom of God, as Jesus would later teach (Matt 13:33), is its imperceptible advancement among the world's empires (cf. Ladd 1974a:225).

The reference to Shinar in Daniel 1:2 also keeps the old story in view. Shinar, or Babylon, represents the world in rebellion against God (cf. Baldwin 1978a:78; Efron 1987:85, 121; Goldingay 1989:15). At Shinar, humanity tried to realize the humanistic dream of moral independence (Gen 11:2). Zechariah 5:11 later speaks of a house or a temple in Shinar. Shinar, then, symbolizes the worship of sin for the sake of human autonomy. In response to what happened at the Tower of Babel, God called Abraham to leave Babylon and go to Canaan, which represents the restoration of a fallen world. Daniel 1 informs the reader that some descendants of Abraham are no longer in Canaan. In other words, something has gone awry with the old story—something that anticipates Daniel 9. At the end of the Babylonian Empire, Daniel reads Jeremiah and confesses the sins of his people that have occasioned the exile, i.e., the end of the old story. His prayer, however, implicitly expects God to reverse the fortunes of his deported people. Besides being aware of Jeremiah's condemnation of Israel's sins and announcement of exile, Daniel has also read Jeremiah's prophecies of restoration. He knows that the old story,

which is about how God accomplishes his plan of redemption through the flawed descendants of Abraham, never really ends. God must redeem the old story so as to save his world.

For Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar was more than an instrument in God's hands. He also embodied the *typhon*, the mythological serpent or sea monster that symbolizes evil (Jer 51:34) and appears fourfold in Daniel 7 (cf. Bauckham 1993:186-187). As God's juridical agent, Nebuchadnezzar may have, like a giant sea monster, swallowed the inhabitants of Zion, but Jeremiah's oracles against Babylon also announce both the eventual destruction of Babylon and the future deliverance of Israel. During the first half of the sixth century, Nebuchadnezzar was a terrestrial manifestation of the spiritual forces of darkness to which God briefly gave free reign in the ancient Near East and against Judah. Nebuchadnezzar's diabolical identity is seen in his arrogance and statism in Daniel 3-4.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Daniel also knows from Jeremiah that Yahweh has more chapters in Israel's story, and the new material still involves Jerusalem, the temple, and a Davidic descendant—all three of which are mentioned in the opening verses of Daniel 1. For this reason, Daniel asks God in chapter 9 to act on his promises for the sake of his city, people, and name. The new story, then, is better understood as the continuation of the old story of God's plan of redemption. The new story brings the old story to completion, but in unexpected ways—hence the mystery surrounding the fulfillment of God's revelation to his prophets (Beale 1998:272; Pennington 2009:322; Wright 2012:72-81). Those who retain a

¹⁵Contrasts between the supposedly more genial kings of the narratives in Daniel 1-6 and the more hostile kings of the visions in Daniel 7-12 (e.g., Collins 1984b:58, 72; Gowan 2001:21; Longman and Dillard 2006:392) seem to overlook the terror of Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace in chapter 3 and of the lions' den of Darius the Mede in chapter 6. A person would not want to cross Nebuchadnezzar or Darius the Mede any more than Antiochus IV. In fact, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius the Mede ruled the superpower of their day—something that cannot be said of Antiochus IV who always had to take Rome into account. Niskanen (2004b:120) says, "Antiochus and his measures against the Jews are seen as the culmination of a pattern begun with Nebuchadnezzar." Moreover, "his menace is no different in kind from those who came before him." Albani (2005:50) adds, "In the book of Daniel the succession of monarchies is a history of growing sin and iniquity culminating in the rule of King Antiochus IV (cf. Dan 7:2-8)." What did this pattern mean for God's people? "The stories," according to Davies (1998:55), "tell us that the Diaspora Jew felt keenly the threat of persecution, and saw himself as defenceless [*sic*] against it." See also Smith-Christopher (1996:26-30).

commitment to the old story must exercise faith in God's promises despite the contrary and mysterious evidence of their moment in history or even history at large.

For second-century readers of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar is no longer the serpent or sea monster. Babylon has long since departed from history's stage, and now Greece (or to be more precise, Seleucia) in the person of Antiochus IV controls Judea. Antiochus IV represents a second Nebuchadnezzar who has desecrated God's temple and oppressed God's people. Nebuchadnezzar's decree regarding the indoctrination of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah anticipates "the deluge of Hellenistic culture, the Hellenization trends in Jerusalem, and the oppressive decrees of Antiochus Epiphanes" (Efron 1987:97; see also pp. 102-103). At the same time, Antiochus IV was also a disciplinary instrument that God used to chasten his people for abandoning the covenant and embracing Hellenism to excess. As seen in the Maccabean reaction, some Jews remembered their special calling, and God used them to preserve what he and they regarded as true religion.

The time between Nebuchadnezzar and Antiochus IV tried the faith and perseverance of the true people of God. They did not fully understand what God was doing or why he seemed to take so long to do it. It often seemed as if God's people were simply a political football that Gentile rulers kicked around. Moreover, God's people had to juggle the near impossible task of trying to be good citizens in two kingdoms: the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of Gentile rulers. Chapter 1 ends with the vindication and promotion of Daniel and his friends. It teaches that God can grant success to his people when they desire to remain faithful to his kingdom. Such good providence may not constitute ultimate jubilee in the form of a world fully submitted to God's will, but it allows God's people to find satisfaction in fulfilling their reason for being, viz., service to God and his world.

9.3. Mystery in Daniel 2-7

Daniel 2 and 4, in which רָ appears, feature Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams. In the dream in Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar sees a statue made of four metals and a rock cut from a mountain. Daniel informs Nebuchadnezzar that the four metals represent four kings. Although Daniel identifies the gold head as Nebuchadnezzar, he does not say who the silver arms and chest, bronze abdomen, or iron legs are. Meanwhile, the rock that symbolizes the kingdom of God topples the statue. The rock at this point represents God's kingdom, not an anointed king, though the two are certainly related.¹⁶ The stated point of the vision is that God who reveals mysteries has made known to Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the future (Dan 2:28). What will be is the accomplishment of "God's hidden purpose at work in history despite its sin" (Goldingay 1989:47). More to the point, the kingdom of a righteous God will prevail over earthly kingdoms that perpetrate violence for the sake of unjust gain and then boast about their achievements. The harsh imperialism of these kingdoms contrasts with the just rule and worldwide blessing that God's kingdom will bring. Much of the mystery has to do with how God will replace corruption and oppression with justice and altruism. Stated differently, the mystery concerns the means by which God will transform human hearts so as to restore a sinful creation under his good government. For Daniel and his contemporaries, the means is mysterious because the means "is that which has not yet appeared, that which still exists in the counsel of God and has not yet been realized in history as fulfillment of that counsel" (Ridderbos 1975:46-47).¹⁷ The means, however, is known to God, and he will reveal it at the appropriate

¹⁶Vogel (2010:44) says, "If the mountain represents the center of Yahweh's reign, namely his heavenly abode, the stone would signify the judgment that is executed over all those who oppose the true cult of Yahweh."

¹⁷Bornkamm (1967:814) adds support, "In *Da. μυστήριον* takes on for the first time a sense which is important for the further development of the word, namely, that of an eschatological mystery, a concealed intimation of divinely ordained future events whose disclosure and interpretation is reserved for God alone . . . and for those inspired by his Spirit. . . ."

time—the latter days of 2:28 and the time of the end of 12:4 and 9. God’s people might often wonder how much longer God will allow evil to run rampant in his world, but the assurance of a limit is a source of joy.

Daniel 7 features Daniel’s vision of four beasts that along with Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of four metals in chapter 2 frames the Aramaic section. Except to say that the four beasts represent four kingdoms (Dan 7:17), the heavenly interpreter does not give the specific identity of any of the beasts. Although Daniel 7 does not say that the heavenly interpreter reveals a ܠܐ ܕܝܢܐ (mystery), the similarity of the two visions is evidence that Daniel, like Nebuchadnezzar, received privileged information about God’s eventual triumph over organized and entrenched evil. Moreover, the angelic interpretation left Daniel with more questions than answers (Dan 7:28). Rather than being full of joy and confidence, Daniel is said to be deeply troubled. Part of the reason may have been his lack of understanding, but it is obvious from verse 19 that the fourth beast disturbed him. This vision, for all its obscurity, unmistakably holds out more persecution for God’s people, and Daniel, who had lived most of his life in exile, had seen plenty of adversity. Daniel surely knew about Nebuchadnezzar’s fiery furnace, but the fourth beast seems to scare him more. Goldingay (1989:193) says, “When God acts, it is commonly in ways other than his people anticipate.” Though Daniel may have realized from this vision that God wins in the end, much of its detail remained mysterious to him, as it has for others.

Advocates of the Greek, Roman, and Dispensational views take the identification of the gold head in Daniel 2 as their cue to determine the other metals and beasts. Each view assumes that the first beast, like the first metal, is Nebuchadnezzar or Babylon. For the Greek approach, Media, Persia, and Greece are often the other metals and beasts. Antiochus IV is the little horn of Daniel 7:8. For the Roman and Dispensational approaches, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome

are the other metals and beasts. The little horn of Daniel 7:8 is usually said to be Antichrist who eventually arises out of the break-up of the Roman Empire into smaller states. These three views also try to harmonize the visions in Daniel 2 and 7 with the vision in Daniel 8 that identifies a ram with Media-Persia and a goat with Greece. For the Greek view, the little horns in Daniel 7 and 8 are the same—Antiochus IV. The Roman and Dispensational views, however, distinguish between Antichrist in Daniel 7 and Antiochus IV in Daniel 8. When Daniel 9 is drawn into the discussion, the Greek approach identifies the ruler in Daniel 9:26-27 with the little horns in Daniel 7 and 8. The Roman view may identify Jesus or Titus Vespasian as the ruler. Dispensationalists typically consider Antichrist the ruler. It should be evident that these views take great care to match the symbolic details of the visions with known events and people of history.

Some advocates of the Greek view propose a different way of identifying the metals and beasts. Goldingay (1989:51, 174) and Seow (2003a:45) suggest that the metals correspond to the kings who are named in Daniel 1-6. If Nebuchadnezzar is the gold head, Belshazzar is the silver torso, Darius the Mede is the bronze abdomen, and Cyrus is the iron legs. Goldingay (1989:57-58) admits, though, that Daniel 2 does not make these associations and then says, “People miss the point when they spend time arguing over who the empires were.”¹⁸ The variability of the metals in Daniel 2, however, does not necessarily apply to the beasts in Daniel 7. While Goldingay (1989:173-174) again acknowledges the writer’s reluctance to identify the beasts and even makes allowance for Rome to be the fourth beast, he maintains that Daniel 7, because of the interest of chapters 8-12 in the period between the Babylonian and Greek empires, begins with

¹⁸Lucas (2002:79) similarly says, “All too often, readers of Dan. 2 get so caught up in trying to interpret the details of the dream that they more or less ignore the point of it. The ‘mystery’ it reveals is not the details of the course of events in history, but the fact that history is under the control of God and that it has a purpose, which will be achieved.”

Babylon and ends with Greece.¹⁹ Therefore, the fourth beast symbolizes Greece, and the little horn is Antiochus IV.

Meanwhile, Frölich (1996:31-34, 197) suggests that the four metals and beasts are kings of Babylon, i.e., descendants of Nebuchadnezzar. This identification makes Cyrus of Persia the stone in Daniel 2. So then, “[t]he first form of the vision of Daniel 2 [during the Persian period and before the Maccabean period] does not yet express a world historical schema, but merely presents the retaliation against the Babylonian empire as punishment for the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem” (Frölich 1996:47). Frölich stops short of identifying Cyrus (or anyone else) as the one like a son of man in Daniel 7 and instead equates the fourth beast with the Seleucids. If Daniel 2 originated in the Persian period, Daniel 7 is a product of the Maccabean era (Frölich 1996:73, 75).²⁰

The various ways of interpreting the four metals and beasts have led Longman to suggest, in agreement with Goldingay and Lucas, that precisely identifying them (and reaching different results) overlooks the main idea of both visions.²¹ Equating the gold head with Nebuchadnezzar may situate the vision of Daniel 2 at the time of the current ruler (in either the narrative or real world) whose dream is being interpreted, but the uncertainty about the other metals and all the beasts makes both visions more symbolic than precise. The symbolism conveys the rise and fall of countless kingdoms throughout history.²² For this reason, the imagery in Daniel 2 and 7 can be applied (1) to Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece or (2) to Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece,

¹⁹When comparing chapters 7 and 8, however, Goldingay (1989:201) says, “Chap. 7 is an impressionist painting open to several interpretations. . . .”

²⁰Meade (1986:89-90) adds that “the whole focus of Chapter 7 is to reinterpret Chapter 2 in light of a new *Sitz im Leben*, the terrible persecution of the mid-second century.”

²¹Much of the content of this paragraph depends on Longman (1999:82, 184-186, 190). See also Edlin (2009:82, 181).

²²Similar to Longman, Collins (1984b:82) says, “The vision [in Daniel 7] is deliberately presented in symbolic language which never mentions explicitly the historical referents. Consequently, it could be easily reapplied to new historical situations.”

and Rome or (3) to Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius the Mede, and Cyrus or (4) to other kingdoms. Moreover, the declining value of the metals puts the lie to any notion of substantial moral progress in political history.²³ The fourth kingdom may be the most powerful but certainly not the most just or compassionate. Also, the statue's feet of clay draw attention to the inherent weakness of the whole succession of human kingdoms. Both visions unmistakably portray God, whether as a rock or as the Ancient of Days, as being infinitely stronger than any human institution or ruler.

Longman's insight raises the possibility that the visions in Daniel 2 and 7 are not restricted in outlook to the reign of Antiochus IV (cf. Collins 1984b:32; McConville 2002:109). The horizon of these visions, given their historical non-specificity, could stretch beyond the second century B.C.E.²⁴ Resistance to God's kingdom by no means ended at that time, and the Hasmoneans hardly embodied Jeremiah's King Yahweh Is Our Righteousness or Gabriel's promise of everlasting righteousness (Dan 9:24). If Daniel 8, 9, and 10-12 focus on the Antiochene crisis, Daniel 2 and 7 set that crisis in a larger context. The number four could symbolize an unspecified number of kingdoms that are united in their pursuit of national glory and opposition to God's glory.²⁵ Moreover, the little horn in chapter 7 is not necessarily one person in particular (i.e., Antiochus IV) but the spirit of antichrist that has numerous historical manifestations. The point is that history is characterized by the rise and fall of oppressive leaders

²³Newsom (2012:563) adds that "the declining value of the metals suggests a sequence that cannot go on indefinitely."

²⁴On the non-referential and impressionistic purpose of apocalyptic language, see Collins (1998:17), Sandy and Abegg (1995:189), and Wright (1992b:282-286).

²⁵Cf. Edlin (2009:82, 87). Lacocque (1979:51) says, "There is no place here for speculation on the fact that the four empires did not really succeed one another since they are all rolled up into one. There is really just one long idolatrous kingdom and 'four' reigns. . . ." Efron (1987:40) adds, "Despite boundaries and oppositions, they are all merged in the same image symbolizing the idolatry prevailing in the world, which for the Jewish righteous and faithful Hasid is the root of evils and catastrophes." The visions in Daniel 2 and 7 contain both succession and synchrony. One kingdom follows another, but the rock in chapter 2 topples the whole statue at once. As individual manifestations of humanism, each kingdom represents something bigger and more nefarious than itself.

and regimes. The rejection of God's righteous reign over his creation is seen in each of them. These visions in chapters 2 and 7 describe the succession of human kingdoms from the exile (Daniel's moment in history) to the time when God's kingdom arrives in its fullness (cf. Greidanus 2012:201, 250). These more universal visions assure God's people at any time that God's purpose for history will prevail and that competing purposes will fail. Again, God's ultimate victory (as well as smaller victories that anticipate the ultimate victory) makes joy possible.

The Aramaic section of Daniel, especially chapters 2 and 7, announces the coming of God's kingdom into this present evil age. The kings of this age try vainly to unite the world under their rule. Their rhetoric and propaganda promise nothing short of paradise restored, but the consequences of their self-aggrandizing policies are often misery increased. If chapter 2 announces the irruption of God's kingdom into this present evil age, it says little if anything about the role of suffering for the coming of God's kingdom (cf. Bergsma 2007:214). Even so, suffering appears in the following chapters under the direction of Nebuchadnezzar (the fiery furnace) and Darius the Mede (the lion's den). Chapter 7 adds that the king of God's kingdom (the one like a son of man who receives authority, glory, and dominion from the Ancient of Days) is closely identified with the saints of the Most High who suffer at the hands of the fourth beast before receiving the power and greatness of the defeated kingdoms. The implication is that the saints reign with the one like a son of man. While chapter 7 never explicitly says that the one like a son of man also suffers (but see Beale 2011:193-197), Daniel 9:26 mentions an anointed one who suffers from being cut off. In the sixth-century narrative world of Daniel, the cut-off anointed one in 9:26 is hardly Onias III. Daniel would more likely recall what happened to Jehoiakim in Daniel 1:1-2 and so think in terms of another Davidic king—a royal anointed one

that suffers along with God's people and somehow is used of God for the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. Second-century readers of Daniel would likely recall the murder of Onias III and think of a priestly anointed one or, in the case of the Qumran community, two anointed ones. Hope for lasting joy was invested in them. Regardless of whether Daniel 9:26 is read in a royal or priestly way, the jubilee structure of the seventy sevens conveys the faithfulness of God to his people in the midst of trouble and suffering. In spite of the suffering or even because of it, God will mysteriously accomplish the six objectives and establish his kingdom. In the New Testament, of course, the offices of king and priest converge on one man, Jesus (who called himself the Son of Man), and the tension between the sixth- and second-century worlds of Daniel is resolved by his suffering and exaltation.

Between the framing visions in Daniel 2 and 7, the author inserted narratives about Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius the Mede. Each of these kings, full of self-importance, illustrates how the continuation of God's story unfolds during the course of the business-as-usual of world history. World history is the ambiguous stage on which God mysteriously answers Daniel's prayer to vindicate his name and show mercy to his people. How people and events contribute to the arrival of God's kingdom and the accomplishment of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 is rarely obvious to the contemporary observer. Even so, Daniel 3-6 maintains the book's emphasis on God's control of history and gives God's people a reason to rejoice during sinister times.

This control typically involves mystery and requires faith. First, an unexplained fourth person whom Nebuchadnezzar called בְּרִאֲמֹלֵיחַן (son of God/gods) comes to the aid of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace (Dan 3:25), thus reminding the Babylonian tyrant and the three Israelites of an unseen realm that can irresistibly intrude into human affairs.

Second, Nebuchadnezzar encounters this realm again in chapter 4 during a dream in which he as a tall spreading tree is cut down until he acknowledges the superior power of the Most High. If Daniel 3 presents God as the one who defends his people from his and their enemies, Daniel 4 teaches that God also humbles the proud who resist him and threaten his people.²⁶ Third, God interrupts the celebration of a drunken and blasphemous Belshazzar in chapter 5 to announce by a mysterious writing on the wall that Belshazzar's reign would end imminently. Fourth, God delivers Daniel from the lions of a self-absorbed Darius who had been tricked by jealous officials into issuing a blasphemous and statist decree. In each of these cases, God unexpectedly and suddenly (i.e., mysteriously) came to the defense of his people and humbled the hubris of human rulers. Humans may not fully understand how God exercises control in given situations, but these chapters leave no doubt that his purpose ultimately prevails.

In these chapters, Nebuchadnezzar especially anticipates Antiochus IV, who is part of the mystery of the four kingdoms. By ordering his subjects in chapter 3 to bow before the symbol of his authority and then boasting in chapter 4 about his accomplishments, Nebuchadnezzar thought too highly of himself. The dream in chapter 4 indicates how ambition and success had gone to his head. On the way to the top, Nebuchadnezzar had lost his way as a human, and verse 27 offers a window into his mind. He came to think that other people existed for his glory and not for God's. Consequently, God humbled him by causing him to have the mind of a beast. It may not be advisable to give a clinical diagnosis of what happened to Nebuchadnezzar, but a theological analysis is possible. From a biblical point of view, all sin is insanity, and nothing is

²⁶Collins (1993a:107) recognizes a deliberate contrast between the tree of the proud Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 and the slowly developing mustard tree in Matthew 13:32. Identifying the mystery in Jesus' parable, she says, "The contrast between the mustard shrub and the great world tree . . . was probably deliberate in the teaching of Jesus: the kingdom will be manifested in the social order but not in the way his audience expected. It will not be a mighty international empire, but nevertheless it will provide a home for its members." Regarding God's control of his world, there is always more than meets the eye.

more bizarre or dehumanizing than sin. No one in his or her right mind would defy the Ancient of Days. People have to be crazy to shake their fist and assert their will before so great a God. So then, sinners may be clinically sane but spiritually deluded. The New Testament mentions the blinding effects of sin (2 Cor 4:4) and says that God gives idolaters over to a depraved mind and futile thinking (Rom 1:21-28). At bottom, then, disobeying God's expressed will and setting one's self up as the measure of reality is irrational. If the book of Daniel considers Nebuchadnezzar the "prototype" of Antiochus IV (Davies 1998:13), then Nebuchadnezzar and Antiochus IV share more than their mistreatment of an anointed one and their desecration of God's temple. They also embody the flight from reality. Whereas Nebuchadnezzar forced people to worship his image and then praised his achievements, Antiochus IV proscribed Jewish religion and proclaimed himself Epiphanes (the manifest god). Meanwhile, others dubbed him Epimanes (the madman) because of his personal eccentricity and fanatical hostility toward the Jews (Polybius, *Histories* 26.1; Gowan 1986:77-78; Lucas 2002:289). Daniel 4:34 says that, when Nebuchadnezzar repented (raised his eyes toward heaven), his reason returned to him with the result that he praised God instead of himself. Nothing could be saner, healthier, or more joyous than worshiping God instead of self. However sincere or lasting Nebuchadnezzar's repentance was, no record of repentance exists for Antiochus IV. Like the seventy sevens that end with the demise of the ruler (Antiochus IV), chapter 3-6 encourage God's people to believe that God runs a just universe by putting arrogant, evil people in their place. There would be no rejoicing without appropriate recompense.

Meanwhile, Belshazzar's disregard for the sacred vessels of Yahweh's temple also typifies Antiochus IV. Efron (1987:87-88) says, "His act and its results are a precedent and sign of the sins of Antiochus Epiphanes, who defiles the sanctities of Israel and is punished by a

decisive defeat that will sweep the last pagan kingdom to the depths of ruin.” Both rulers arrogated divine prerogatives to themselves and underestimated the God of Israel. The same observation also applies to Darius the Mede who vainly allowed his officials to talk him into being the focus of people’s prayers (Dan 6:7). God, who will not be mocked by mere mortals, humbles each of these divine pretenders along with Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 3-6 calls for faith in a God who mysteriously orders events for his own purpose and praise. So often, though, the mystery allows the pretenders to look more powerful than they really are.

9.4. Mystery in Daniel 8

Everyone seems to agree that Greece in general and Antiochus IV in particular are the interests of the visions in chapters 8 and 11.²⁷ These visions immediately flank the prophecy of the seventy sevens in chapter 9 and, for that reason, limit the seventy sevens to an Antiochene context. Even so, the addition of Daniel 10:1-11:1 and 12:1-4 gives the final vision an outlook that extends beyond the reign of Antiochus IV. The vision in chapter 8 may not have a section that corresponds to 10:1-11:1 and 12:1-4, but chapter 8’s placement (1) after chapter 7 that speaks of the coming of God’s kingdom and God’s king, (2) before chapter 9 that speaks of the six objectives of the seventy sevens, (3) before 10:1-11:1 that speaks of another realm beyond this earth, and (4) before 12:1-4 that speaks of a resurrection provides a broader context for the cosmic battle between the little horn and the prince of the host. The little horn in chapter 8 may be the historical Antiochus IV, but Antiochus IV participates in a spiritual reality that goes beyond his moment in history. Like others before him and after him, he is a terrestrial

²⁷Regarding the relationship between chapters 7 and 8, Edlin (2009:193) suggests that the two named kingdoms in chapter 8 illustrate the quality of the unnamed kingdoms in chapter 7. Efron (1987:43) says with reference to Daniel 7, “In his dream, Daniel observes the fall of Antiochus Epiphanes and the collapse of his evil kingdom as the first decisive step toward the desired redemption.” If Daniel 7 uses the number four symbolically to describe an unspecified number of kingdoms, then Efron’s observation fits Daniel 8’s paradigmatic use of Antiochus IV for all regimes that oppose God’s kingdom.

manifestation of the spiritual forces of darkness that set themselves in opposition to God. For this reason, the writer and reader of Daniel can attribute symbolic depth to him (cf. Collins 1993b:343; Goldingay 1989:205, 221; Lucas 2002:224; Seow 2003a:11, 17).

Daniel 8:10-11 can hardly be read literally. Antiochus IV did not ascend into heaven, pull down stars, and stomp on them. Rather, such metaphors depict the hubris of an earthling who vainly imagined that he could stamp out the kingdom and plan of Yahweh (cf. 2 Macc 9:10; Edlin 2009:200; Merrill Willis 2010:100-101).²⁸ Isaiah 14:13 attributes a similar attempt to “reach for the stars” to the king of Babylon—again, a figurative way of describing a presumptuous evaluation of one’s abilities and/or accomplishments. It is true, of course, that Antiochus IV did damage to God’s people and God’s house—so much so that God’s supporters could wonder how much longer God would permit his cause to suffer such setbacks (Dan 8:13). The reference to 2,300 mornings and evenings, which symbolizes a limited amount of time (either 2,300 days or 1,150 days), offers encouragement to those who cannot yet see the dawn during the midst of a long and terrifying night.²⁹ The prince of princes may be Yahweh or his anointed king (i.e., the one like a son of man), but Antiochus IV cannot ultimately succeed in his war against them and biblical religion.³⁰ More than two thousand years after the death of

²⁸Nickelsburg (2007:86) states further that “the events of human history are said to be the counterparts of events that take place on the heavenly realm.” Kratz (2002:107) adds, “Not only Antiochus IV but also the combined world powers wage war on two levels: in heaven and on earth, against God and against the people of God.” Although Daniel does not say much about the intersection of the terrestrial and celestial realms, nevertheless the little that he does say indicates that resistance to God happens on two levels that are mysteriously related.

²⁹Cf. Hartman (1976:4) and Merrill Willis (2010:109). Regarding the figures, Redditt (1999:146) says, “To be sure, Daniel 8 was mistaken that the death of Antiochus would usher in the kingdom of God, but it was not wrong in its prediction of the end of the hegemony of Antiochus.” This attribution of error seems unwarranted in an apocalyptic book that uses numbers symbolically (cf. Collins 1984a:1244; Goldingay 1989:213; Greidanus 2012:261-263; Longman 1999:207-208).

³⁰Newsom (2012:566) says, “Gentile powers are ultimately self-destructive forces, because they are intrinsically incapable of self-limitation and humility. Hubris is intractable—and ultimately fatal.”

Antiochus IV, no one fears him, but millions worship Yahweh because of the atoning death of the anointed one who called himself the son of man.³¹

Antiochus IV lived during the sixty-two sevens and seventieth seven. He may have caused some of the trouble to which Daniel 9:25 refers, but he did not cause all of it. Other troublemakers—some Jewish, some Gentile—came before him and then after him. Many power-holders have shaken their fist at the biblical God and beat up his people. All but the current ones have died, and God is still accomplishing the six objectives of 9:24 wherever sinners call out to him in repentance. The interest of Daniel 8 in Antiochus IV as an example of short-lived hubris reinforces the point that the seventy sevens make. God works out the six objectives of 9:24 in the midst of resistance and hostility. In fact, the resistance and hostility make the six objectives necessary and thereby afford God the opportunity to vindicate his name and showcase his mercy. The assured destruction of Antiochus IV in 8:25 gives hope that God will perform the six objectives of the seventy sevens and establish his kingdom.

9.5. Mystery in Daniel 10-12

The final vision in 11:2-12:3 covers the same ground as chapter 8 but with more historical and interpretive detail. Whereas 8:9 skips two centuries of Seleucid history and jumps from the division of Alexander's empire among his generals to the rise of Antiochus IV, 11:5-20 discusses the Ptolemies (kings of the south) and Seleucids (kings of the north). Verses 21-39 then focus on the reign of Antiochus IV in greater detail than does chapter 8. Chapter 11 nuances the megalomania of Antiochus IV by demonstrating its political motivation. When Rome came to Egypt's defense and forced Antiochus IV to leave Egypt in 168 (Dan 11:30), he had a growing

³¹Rowley (1961:390) says, "Here history bears out the message of this book. God in his heaven holds the tyrants in derision, and though they work havoc in this world and among the saints, when he pleases they are tossed aside and remembered only with contempt. Antiochus came to a swift and ignoble end soon after the Book of Daniel was written, and the arrogant enemies of God down the centuries cut a pitiful figure by their boasting when we see them in retrospect."

political problem. Not only did Roman allies lie to the north (Pergamum) and south (Egypt), but also the Jews divided into Egyptian and Seleucid loyalists. A rumor about Antiochus IV's death incited some anti-Seleucid Jews to riot, and Antiochus IV responded by outlawing Judaism on the one hand and erecting pagan altars in and around the temple on the other. From a political point of view, Antiochus IV could not allow the Jewish conservatives to consider him vulnerable. Still, 11:36-39 offers an assessment of his character. Antiochus IV was as proud as Nebuchadnezzar or Belshazzar, if not prouder, and his ego could not tolerate recognition of any power or authority but his own. For this reason, he gave himself the name Epiphanes (the manifest or incarnate god).

Nevertheless, the identity of the king of the north in Daniel 11:40-45 remains a matter of debate (either Antiochus IV or Antichrist) because of the lack of correspondence with known history.³² Perhaps Baldwin's postulation of multiple fulfillments for the ruler in Daniel 9:26-27 also applies to Daniel 11:40-45, or maybe the following explanation has merit. In Daniel 11:36 the writer begins a theological assessment of Antiochus IV. Thus, the recording of historical events stops after verse 35. If Daniel 11:40-45 does not offer straightforward historiography, these verses also do not contain fantasy and/or error. Verse 40 may summarize the relation between Antiochus IV and Egypt, or Egypt along with Antiochus IV may function typologically as an embodiment of evil and hostility (cf. Mittmann-Richert 2005:105). The time of the end does not necessarily mean an absolute end of human history but can refer to the temporal limit of Antiochus IV (Edlin 2009:270). Here then is an interpretive portrait that is painted with archetypes. As noted earlier, the motif of a tyrant bent on self-deification runs throughout the

³²Gurney (1980:148-149) argues that the two *hims* in Daniel 11:40 refer to the last Seleucid king and that the king of the north is no longer a Seleucid but a Roman. For Gurney, verses 40-43 refer to Pompey who captured Jerusalem in 63, and verses 44-45 refer to Crassus who died in a campaign against Parthia. This interpretation has not won many supporters. Daniel 11:40 offers no clue that the king of the north is now a Roman instead of a Seleucid.

Bible and appears here and elsewhere in the book of Daniel. In particular, Antiochus IV tried to undo the inheritance and distribution of the Promised Land in Joshua 13-19. He wrongly thought that the land belonged to him and so was his to sell (Dan 11:39). Ahab made this same mistake (1 Kgs 21), and so also did Edom (Oba 11-14, Ezek 35). The land belongs to Yahweh, and he gives it as an inheritance to his people. Moreover, death in Palestine recalls Psalm 48:5-8 (Eng. 4-7), Isaiah 14:25, Ezekiel 38-39, and Zechariah 14:12-15. These passages metaphorically describe thwarted invasions of the Holy Land or, more generally, thwarted opposition to God (cf. Clifford 1975:25-26). The nations in Daniel 11:41-43 are the oppressed witnesses that watch the downfall of a tyrant in relief and horror (cf. Ezek 26:15-18). Antiochus IV may not have literally died in Palestine, but Daniel 11:45 does not specifically say where he died. Other views seem to read too much into verse 45. Nevertheless, Antiochus IV set himself against Yahweh and Yahweh's people.

Niskanen (2004a:381) observes, "The author of Daniel . . . is not simply guessing at a possible scenario whereby Antiochus will soon die; rather, he is construing an account of the death of an impious king in which the divine retribution that overtakes him is directly related to his unholy crime." That construal may anticipate the demise of Antiochus IV as another example of divine judgment of hubris, but the anticipation involves just as much typology as prediction. Throughout the Bible, God comes to the defense of his people so that his enemies and their enemies fail to meet their objectives. Daniel 11:40-45 typologically affirms that conviction and thereby puts Antiochus IV in the company of other fools who have met a similar fate.

At the end of Daniel 11, Antiochus IV is the terrestrial embodiment of the spiritual forces of evil.³³ Even so, Daniel's final vision does not end with Daniel 11:45. Michael may have

³³Niskanen (2004b:120) says, "Antiochus, as the culmination of all the evil kings and kingdoms that preceded him, becomes the symbol and standard bearer for evil." Davies (1998:97) further associates Antiochus IV as the

saved Daniel's people as a whole from Antiochus IV (Dan 12:1a), but Daniel 12:1b mentions more trouble. Daniel 12 does not specify when the trouble will come, but the typologies of the hostile ruler, sinful people, and righteous sufferer offer an indication. The full accomplishment of the six objectives in Daniel 9:24 takes a long time that stretches beyond the partial realization during the Antiochene crisis. God alone knows when the full accomplishment will come, and all he will tell Daniel in response to his questions is to seal the prophecy for the time of the end (12:4, 9). From a New Testament perspective (to skip ahead for a moment), the last days run from the first coming of Jesus to the second coming, and they are characterized by tribulation for God's people (e.g., John 16:33, Acts 14:22, 1 Pet 4:12). Even so, hardship and trouble before the first coming and between the two comings should not cause God's people to despair. God remains in control, and he remains faithful to his promises. The wise affirm God's purpose even in the chaos of history, and Daniel 12:2-3 offers assurance of resurrection and vindication to those wise people who trusted God to the point of death during the Antiochene crisis and later (Edlin 2009:274-275; Gowan 2001:122; Lindenberger 1985:184). Because the righteous and the unrighteous will be raised, the resurrection guarantees justice for all. Justice for the wise who promote righteousness, says verse 3, will take the form of glorification of both body and spirit.

The bodily resurrection of God's people has not yet happened, but the bodily resurrection of Jesus, according to the testimony of the New Testament, has. Moreover, the human nature of Jesus achieved glorification at his resurrection. Paul argues in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 that Jesus' resurrection is a first-fruit that guarantees the future resurrection of God's people. His resurrection is the proof of God's satisfaction with the active and passive obedience of Jesus that are the basis of the justification, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification of God's people.

king of the north in Daniel 11 with Gog from the far north in Ezekiel 39:2. He says, "Antiochus becomes, then, more than a Gentile monarch who challenges God: he is the arch-foe, the personification of all rebellion."

Because God no longer counts their sins against them, death as the punishment for sin no longer has a claim on them. Even so, regeneration of the spirit and resurrection of the body presently occur in stages that may be separated by thousands of years. The tension between the already and the not yet does not deny that Jesus makes both stages possible; rather, it gives God's people confidence that their trust in the promises of God will not end in the grave. God will redeem the work of their hands done in faith in the efficacy of the redeeming work of the now risen and exalted Jesus. Moreover, those like Antiochus IV who kill the body cannot kill the spirit or prevent resurrection. They arrogantly reach for the stars but come away with nothing but shame. Meanwhile, those who humbly trust God receive the privilege of shining like the stars (Dan 12:3; cf. 1 En. 104:2). If Antiochus IV pulled down the stars and exalted himself (Dan 8:10), God (or Michael whose name means "Who is like God") demonstrated his incomparability by humbling the usurper Epiphanes and raising the wise ones to a position of influence. Now after the resurrection of Jesus who called himself the light of the world, those who are united to him by faith reflect the light of God's truth among people whose hearts are darkened by sin (cf. Phil 2:14-16).³⁴

9.6. Summary

This chapter has attempted to understand the setting of Daniel 9 among the other visions and narratives of the book. The author of the book of Daniel placed Daniel's prayer of confession and Gabriel's promise of seventy sevens between two Hebrew descriptions of the rise and fall of ungodly kingdoms in chapters 8 and 10-12. If the two languages of the book are momentarily ignored, chapter 9 is still centrally located between the beastly visions in chapters 7 and 8 on the one hand and the final vision in chapters 10-12 on the other. The stories in chapters

³⁴Edlin (2009:274) says, "Perhaps shining **like the stars** indicates witness to the world that comes when God's people are vindicated (Ezek 39:27-28)."

1-6 illustrate and reinforce the teaching of the visions about God's control of history. All of this material that surrounds chapter 9 could give the impression that God's people suffer because of the sins of others, but Daniel's prayer of confession reminds God's people that they sometimes bring trouble in the form of God's anger and judgment on themselves (Edlin 2009:239).

Nevertheless, Gabriel's promise of a history with a jubilee structure gives readers of the book a reason to hope for a better outcome and therefore, in keeping with biblical eschatology, impetus to obey God's revealed will now. The jubilee structure of the seventy sevens assures readers of the book of Daniel that God superintends the movement of history for an ultimately happy future. This future does not depend so much on human performance as on God's faithfulness. He will redeem a people for his name and restore a sinful world.

To be sure, mystery enshrouds the purpose of God so that readers of Daniel may wonder why some people repent (e.g., Daniel in chapter 9) and others do not (e.g., Belshazzar in chapter 5 and Antiochus IV in chapter 8). The Bible, including Daniel, never explains the mystery of God's prevenient grace—why he gives some and not others the gifts of faith and repentance. Instead, it assures its readers that God's promises depend on God's performance and then calls for faith in God's faithfulness—faith that is manifested in obedience. Daniel obeyed what Jeremiah 29 and Leviticus 26 said about repentance, and God through the prophecy of the seventy sevens assured him of the eventual prevailing of God's kingdom over all others. That kingdom involves the realization of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24, which are the consummation of the Bible's message of redemption and the greatest occasion ever to rejoice.

CHAPTER 10: THE SEVENTY SEVENS BEYOND THE ANTIOCHENE CRISIS

10.1 Introduction

Jewish writers after the Antiochene crisis recognized that the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 still awaited full realization. The available Second Temple literature may not explicitly refer to Daniel 9:24, but the themes of sin, atonement, righteousness, fulfillment of prophecy, and sanctity occur frequently. This is so because the years after the seventieth seven were also full of trouble and troublemakers. Other pagan rulers wreaked havoc on God's city, God's house, and God's people. Moreover, members of the visible people of God behaved badly toward one another and the Gentiles. God's people often did not look like a kingdom of priests to the nations. People labored with different motives to the glory of God and to themselves. So then, Second Temple literature after the Antiochene crisis reveals an ongoing concern for the theological issues of the six objectives of the seventy sevens. This chapter, after reviewing the history of the Hasmonean kingdom and beyond, will trace that concern through some of the literature of the time.

10.2. Events after the Death of Antiochus IV

After the death of Antiochus IV, Demetrius I (the son of Seleucus IV and the nephew of Antiochus IV) overthrew Antiochus V (the young son of Antiochus IV) and became the next Seleucid king. Needing Judea as a loyal buffer between him and Egypt, Demetrius acted as something of a new Cyrus by promising Jonathan (the high priest and brother of Judah Maccabee) that the Seleucids would finance the rebuilding of the temple and city (1 Macc 10:18-45). Jonathan Maccabee, however, chose to support Alexander Balas, who was Demetrius' rival. More trouble followed in Judea, and more construction took place on the temple. Civil war

within the Seleucid kingdom between the supporters of Antiochus VI (the infant son of Alexander Balas) and Demetrius II spilled over into Judea and Jerusalem. Josephus describes the rebuilding efforts of Simon and Jonathan Maccabee, younger brothers of Judah (*Ant.* 13.5.11 §§181-183). Later, Antiochus VII (the son of Demetrius I and brother of Demetrius II) ravaged Judea and besieged Jerusalem during the high priesthood of John Hyrcanus, the son of Simon Maccabee.

As mentioned in chapter 2, Bright (1953:185) described the Hasmonean kingdom as “a singularly unlovely state, characterized by intrigue, murder, and self-seeking scheming.” The corruption and instability continued until the invasion of Rome under Pompey in 63 B.C.E. At that time, John Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, the two sons of Alexander Jannaeus (son of John Hyrcanus I) and Alexandra Salome, fought over who would follow Alexandra Salome as ruler of Jerusalem and Judea. Although Alexandra Salome had named John Hyrcanus II as her successor, Aristobulus II, the younger but stronger brother, rebelled and forced John Hyrcanus II to abdicate. Soon thereafter, the Roman general Pompey captured Syria and intervened in the civil war between John Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II. The latter prudently, even if resentfully, submitted to Pompey, but his soldiers refused to honor his pledge of surrender. Pompey then imprisoned Aristobulus II, besieged Jerusalem, and badly damaged the Holy City once again.

After the murder of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C.E., Rome experienced internal weakness, which allowed the Parthians to take possession of Syria and Palestine, including Jerusalem. Two years later, Rome expelled the Parthians and eventually put Herod the Great in charge of Judea. Herod the Great reigned for thirty-three years and maintained a stable relationship between the Romans and the Jews. Though a colorful and controversial individual who had a rocky

relationship with the Jews, Herod the Great made his mark as a builder. His grand project was rebuilding the Jerusalem temple. Gowan (1986:100) explains:

The building was 500 years old, had been damaged and repaired numerous times, and must have seemed out of place amid the grandeur of the rest of Herod's Jerusalem. So he tore down the old one and had a new building constructed, showing the influence of Hellenistic architecture, but he took great care not to do anything in the process that would offend the Jews. Priests were trained to do all the construction work so that the holiness of the site might not be violated.

According to Josephus (*Ant.* 15.11.1-2 §§380-388), Herod's announcement of the magnificent project met with incredulity on the part of some Jews. They had doubts about whether he could or would succeed at replacing the second temple with a larger and more ornamentally splendid third temple that included gates, courtyards, and other buildings. Indeed, this project that began in 19 B.C.E. reached completion in 63 C.E., sixty-seven years after Herod's death and six years before its destruction at the hands of the Romans (*Ant.* 20.9.7 §219; VanderKam 2004:483-484). Even so, Josephus (*Ant.* 15.11.6 §421) reports that the temple was finished in eighteen months.

About fifteen years after the beginning of Herod's reconstruction of the temple, Jesus was born. Called Christ or anointed one, he was cut off unjustly when he was about thirty years of age. Throughout the years between Antiochus IV and Jesus, redemptive history continued as God saved his people from their sins, progressively made them righteous, and used them to advance his mission in the world. These people attested to their faith, whether weak or strong, through the written word.

10.3. The Literature

Chapter 7 has already examined some of the literature of the Second Temple period. What was surveyed there were works that shed light on the sixty-two sevens. This chapter will now discuss writings that are thought to have originated during the seventieth seven or beyond.

10.3.1. Daniel in the Septuagint

The translation of Daniel 9:24-27 in the Septuagint may be the earliest known version of the prophecy of the seventy sevens (cf. Grabbe 1997:596-597). Although much of the Septuagint originated during the third century B.C.E., the date for the translation of Daniel is uncertain. Moreover, the earliest known manuscripts of the whole Septuagint come from the fourth century C.E. Given the possibility of textual changes because of scribal errors or ideology, the content of the original translation of each Old Testament book is by no means sure. For the book of Daniel, two different versions, known as the Old Greek and Theodotion, are available. They appear juxtaposed in Rahlfs' (1979) edition of the Septuagint and in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Pietersma and Wright 2007). The Old Greek, or what Jerome called the Septuagint (Collins 1993b:3-4), appears to be more dynamic and interpretive than Theodotion's translation. Though the latter was made in the second century C.E., it may correspond more closely to the Masoretic Text because of an interest in conforming the Greek translation of the Old Testament to a standardized Hebrew text that lay behind and eventually became the Masoretic Text (Waltke and O'Connor 1990:20-21 [§1.5.4a-c]; Jobes and Silva 2000:38). By the fourth century, Theodotion's version had supplanted the Old Greek version in Codex Vaticanus, but exactly when the Old Greek version started falling out of favor is not known (Jellicoe 1993:86).

Jobes and Silva (2000:89-90) remind their readers that the Septuagint was a product of its time when Jews found themselves at the mercy of Ptolemies in Egypt and Seleucids in Syria. Jews had divided loyalties and read their Bible in view of the political and cultural issues that pressed upon them and came between them. Translations, of course, are an early stage of interpretation. Because the Old Testament books in the Septuagint were not translated at the

same time by the same people, varying circumstances and concerns shaped the translators' understanding of the Hebrew text. One issue of the Hellenistic period had to do with the royal hope of the Old Testament, specifically how to hold that hope and express it in politically tenuous times. Regarding messianism in the Septuagint, Fabry (2006:197) says:

There is no homogenous image of the Messiah to be found in the Septuagint. It is noteworthy, on the one hand, that we can observe a suppression of messianic expectations in the Hellenistic Diaspora, whereas in Palestine messianism was strongly articulated. The favorite proof texts employed in the development of the portrayal of the Messiah in the Old Testament were in part suppressed in the Septuagint.

The translation of Daniel 9:26 seems to support this evaluation. Both the Old Greek and Theodotion translate מָשַׁח in Daniel 9:26 with χρίσμα (anointing) rather than χριστός (anointed one). The identity of the anointing is not clear, but, whatever it is, it will not last.¹ The Old Greek says that ἀποσταθήσεται χρίσμα καὶ οὐκ ἔσται (the anointing will be removed and not be). Theodotion has ἐξολεθρευθήσεται χρίσμα, καὶ κρίμα οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν αὐτῷ (the anointing will be destroyed and there is no judgment in it). Theodotion alone has a reference to an anointed one who leads (χριστοῦ ἡγουμένου) in Daniel 9:25.

Jobes and Silva (2000:99) note, “The Greek-speaking Jews who translated the Hebrew Bible were not only members of God’s covenant people, they were also citizens of Greek cities living in politically volatile times. The translations they produced reflect sensitivity to those who ruled them and determined the quality of their lives.” Regarding messianism in this context, Jobes and Silva (1990:100) add, “The cherished promises of a national leader of a united people were preserved in the Greek version, but a sensitivity to the political situation of the Jews is also evident.” The translation of Daniel 9:24-27 seems delicately to maintain a messianic hope

¹Adler (1996:208) opines that “the translators clearly did not envisage here the removal of a messianic figure, but rather the cessation of a ritual function or office.”

without raising too much fervor on the part of Jews living in foreign lands or too much suspicion on the part of the rulers under whose authority they live (cf. Adler 1996:207-208).²

Nevertheless, the six objectives pertaining to the removal of sin and the establishment of righteousness remain and bear witness to the hope of the translators. The Old Greek renders the sixth objective as εὐφραῖναι ἅγιον ἁγίων (to gladden a holy of holies) instead of χρίσαι ἅγιον ἁγίων (to anoint a holy of holies). The translator or an earlier copyist may have mistakenly transposed two Hebrew letters and read מְשִׁי (to bring joy) instead of מָשַׁח (to anoint).³ Still, εὐφραῖναι conveys the jubilant purpose of the seventy sevens. Perhaps the translator deliberately made a play on the Hebrew words in order to express his confidence that the desecration of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar and Antiochus IV would not be the last memory of God's house. During the course of the seventy sevens, sorrow will turn to joy as the temple becomes a place that the righteous God of Israel (Dan 9:14) can inhabit again. Knowingly or not, the translator or copyist captured the jubilee theme of the seventy sevens.

Nevertheless, verses 26-27 in the Old Greek and Theodotion anticipate more defilement and destruction. Both versions add the word ἱερόν (temple) before βδέλυγμα τῶν ἐρημώσεων (abomination of desolations) and thus make an explicit association of the desolations with the temple. References to τέλους πολέμου συντετμημένου (an end of a shortened war) in verse 26 of Theodotion and to συντέλειαν καιρῶν (a consummation of a season) in verse 27 of the Old Greek further express hope that the stress of the times (though verse 25 in either version does not

²Spangenberg (2006:434-435, 440) suggests instead that the Septuagint translator of Daniel 9 lived after Antiochus IV and no longer felt threatened by him. For this reason, he altered the numbers of the seventy sevens and muted the apocalyptic messianism of the original writer who did live during the Maccabean crisis. Perhaps, but hard evidence is lacking for reconstructing the historical and ideological context of the translator. See Knibb (2006:19).

³See Grabbe (1997:598-599) and Jeansonne (1988:24-25, 125-126).

specifically translate צֹק הָעֵתִים (will not prevent the ultimate realization of the six objectives of verse 24.

One last matter pertains to the additional seventy years in verses 26 and 27 of the Old Greek version (7+70+62). Along with Montgomery (1927:380) and Adler (1996:207), Grabbe (1997:599) suggests that a translator or copyist read שְׁבַעִים (seventy) instead of שָׁבָעִים (weeks). He admits, though, that the Old Greek version at this point and, indeed, for much of Daniel 9:24-27 presents challenges that currently defy satisfactory explanation. Meanwhile, Rösel (2013:216) proposes that the Old Greek's translation reflects a theological reading after the Antiochene crisis. The additional seventy years push the realization of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 into the more distant future. For the translator, the Antiochene crisis has become a "prelude" to or a type of the end of sin and the establishment of righteousness. This translation invites application of the seventy sevens to later events. It is hard to say whether Grabbe or Rösel has the better explanation, but the history of interpretation after the Maccabees indicates that the Antiochene crisis was not always considered the sole referent of the prophecy.

10.3.2. *Jubilees*

The book of *Jubilees* purports to be revelation that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. In reality, the book is an example of what has been called the rewritten Bible.⁴ Zahn (2012:286) defines this literary phenomenon as follows:

I propose that we could profitably think of Rewritten Scripture as a genre that functions interpretively to renew (update, correct) specific earlier traditions by recasting a substantial portion of those traditions in the context of a new work that locates itself in the same discourse as the scriptural work it rewrites. From a rhetorical point of view, what these texts do is provide a version of past tradition that better reflects the concerns and ideology of their community. The genre, so defined, enables authoritative tradition

⁴Segal (2009:25) says, "Such rewritten texts were common in Jewish literature in antiquity, as exemplified by compositions such as 1 Enoch, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, and the Genesis Apocryphon."

to continue to speak to the present community directly; it provides a lens for reading existing tradition by expanding the contents of that tradition.

According to VanderKam (2002:297), “Works of this kind are very closely related to the biblical text which they represent, but they do not explain it (at least not in most cases) in commentary fashion—that is, by clearly separating the biblical text from its exposition.” As rewritten scripture, *Jubilees* retells the early history of the world and of Israel in Genesis 1-Exodus 12 by omitting, condensing, and expanding the biblical material (see Helyer 2002:121-124). The book is called *Jubilees* because it divides this stretch of history before the Exodus into forty-nine jubilee cycles. The fiftieth jubilee, which is indirectly mentioned in Jubilees 50:2-3, has to do with the return of God’s people to the Promised Land (cf. Bergsma 2007:235; Segal 2007:324).⁵ So then, *Jubilees* asserts that the purpose of God’s creative activity is his people’s inheritance of the Promised Land where they may live in righteous communion with him (cf. Scott 2005:81-82; VanderKam 1997:22 and 2001:131). The author made editorial decisions and adopted the jubilee structure because of the needs of his readers whose situation had something in common with the message of Genesis 1-Exodus 12.⁶ That situation had to do with a feeling of alienation from the Promised Land (cf. Jub. 49:18-22, 50:5).

In the narrative world of Genesis 1-Exodus 12, God’s people do not possess the Promised Land. In fact, they spend much of their time outside it. Even when Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob live in Canaan, they share it uneasily with Gentile neighbors. Abraham at the time of his death owned only Sarah’s burial plot that he had purchased from Ephron (Gen 23, Jub. 19). Not until after the Exodus do the descendants of Abraham take possession of Canaan and receive their

⁵Fragment 12 of 4Q379 [4QPsalms of Joshua^b] also likens the entrance into Canaan to a jubilee. See Bergsma (2007:252-253).

⁶After drawing attention to “analogies between the different periods of history,” Patte (1975:160-161) says, “The preceding remarks help us to understand that in the the *Book of Jubilees* as well as in other Apocalyptic books the Creation, the Flood, and the events of the Exodus-Sinai were considered as *types* of the eschatological events which either were happening in the Apocalyptists’ time or would happen in the near future.”

patrimonies. Only then are they no longer alienated from the Promised Land. Neither are they supposed to share it with the Canaanites who, according to *Jubilees* 10:27-34, had improperly resided in it (cf. Bergsma 2007:235; Scott 2005:177; VanderKam 2001:96). This opening portion of the Old Testament would speak to Jews living during the Second Temple era.

Whether they lived in Judea or away from it, they could feel alienated from their land because someone else (the Ptolemies, the Seleucids, or the Hasmoneans) controlled it and them. Jubilee represented a return to the land from which one had been estranged. Even so, living in the land did not necessarily constitute jubilee. God's people also longed to be independent and faithful in their land. A Hellenized Jewish leader who disregarded God's law was no better or preferable than a Seleucid ruler who persecuted those who kept the law (cf. Endres 1987:236-238, 244; VanderKam 1997:20-22 and 2001:139-141). Both could be instruments of Satan (cf. Jub. 23:29, 50:5). Under either of them, the alienation persisted, and jubilee remained an ideal. Henze (2009:65) may say that the writer of *Jubilees*, in contrast to the writer of Daniel, "looked to the past" and employed "the heptadic chronology" in order "to prove that the events of Genesis-Exodus were all in compliance with the sabbatical calendar," but this conclusion ignores the future orientation of the jubilee. While the year of jubilee certainly involved the calendar, its greater significance pertained to the restoration of lost inheritance.

Henze (2009:52), Nickelsburg (2005:73), and Wintermute (1985:44) may date *Jubilees* to the period between the death of Antiochus IV and the rise of the Hasmonean kingdom. Even so, *Jubilees* could also address the second half of the second century (Helyer 2002:120-121). The Hasmoneans were every bit as worldly and corrupt as the Seleucids.⁷ "Many Jews," suggests

⁷Segal (2007:39-40) says, "If the composition reflects a pro-Hasmonean approach, it is hard to understand why so many copies of *Jubilees* were preserved in the Qumran Scrolls, as well as the many links between the two." Davenport (1971:77) clarifies, "Earlier, it appeared that the Maccabean warriors were the hope of Israel, but as it turned out, they became corrupted themselves and have defiled even the Holy of Holies." When discussing *Jubilees*

Grabbe (1992:273), “evidently regarded their [i.e., the Hasmonean] claim on the high priestly office as usurpation.” During these years, the primary readers of *Jubilees* may have been living in Judea, but they presumably felt like strangers and aliens in their homeland.⁸ Apostasy and injustice ran rampant at the highest levels of government and discouraged the general populace from remaining faithful to God’s law (cf. *Jub.* 23:16-21). If the editorial frame in *Jubilees* 1 and 50 and the eschatological section in *Jubilees* 23:24-31 hold out the promise of jubilee (i.e., regaining inheritance), the main body indicates that keeping the law (halakah) is the proper way to live out that hope. In this way, *Jubilees* resembles the message of the prophets. Eschatology and ethics (i.e., perseverance in obedience to God’s law) go together (cf. Endres 2009:336-337).

Both Daniel 9 and the book of *Jubilees* manifest a concern for keeping the law, but they also recognize that God’s people have lost their inheritance. In the narrative world of *Jubilees*, God’s people are in Egypt on the eve of the first Exodus. In Daniel 9, Daniel is in Babylon on the eve of the second Exodus. If the writer of *Jubilees* believes that God must heal his servants (*Jub.* 23:30), Daniel puts his trust in Yahweh’s mercy and self-interest. In both books, the Jubilee of *Jubilees* will be marked by a return to the Promised Land, the establishment of

23, Davenport (1971:45-46) adds, “Vss. 22-23 interpret the Gentile oppression of vs. 24 as the consequence of the wickedness of Israel. . . . The Seleucids whom God has brought against Israel are portrayed in violent terms not only because of their wickedness, that is, but primarily because their violence is a sign of God’s own violent displeasure. Their lack of mercy and compassion is a sign that God’s own mercy and compassion are absent for the moment. This function of the verses means that we must not be concerned with whether the Seleucids truly were the most vicious nation or whether there literally was no one to bury the dead. This is hyperbole. Its intention is to produce a shock of recognition in the readers, a shock out of which they will confess their guilt and return to covenant faithfulness.”

⁸Cf. Carey (2005:75) who says, “Increasing Greek cultural influence (i.e., Hellenization), combined with innovations (some would call them idolatrous) in the Jerusalem cult had [*sic*] created a defining moment in the development of Judaism. With the land of Israel no longer representing a fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham, *Jubilees* turned to fulfillment through Abraham’s descendants, the people of Israel. *Jubilees* responds by designing boundaries to protect Judean culture and identity. This cultural pressure created an impossible dilemma, a tension between two competing sets of values: protection of a small regional culture versus toleration and openness within that culture. *Jubilees* chooses the first option at the expense of the second.” What Athas (2009:17) says about Daniel 9 could apply to *Jubilees*, “The author evidently felt that the repatriation of Jews under foreign overlords was not theologically satisfying, for it fell short of a true restoration which entailed the end of foreign rule over the Jews. Repatriation to the land, therefore, was not enough.”

righteousness, and the restoration of sincere worship. Not until then will the alienation end.

Both books inform Jews in the second century that they must return in faith to the promises of God and in obedience to the commandments of God (cf. Gilders 2009:180).

10.3.3. The Dead Sea Scrolls

Chapter 7 cited the caution of Collins and Nickelsburg with regard to trying to obtain too much information about the Second Temple period from its literature. Nickelsburg (2003:5) reiterates his warning with reference to the Dead Sea scrolls in particular:

The purely accidental discovery of the Qumran Scrolls has taught us historians something that we neglect at our own professional peril. Our evidence is spotty, and the preservation and recovery of much of it are the result of accident and serendipity. . . . We are at the mercy of weather, worms, invading armies, and the zeal of the self-defined righteous and orthodox long since dead. The discovery of the Scrolls has helped us to see this with a clarity that was hitherto not possible.

Yet how much have we really learned? Although the evidence from the Scrolls has shown us how little we really knew before, the influx of new evidence tempts us to the conclusion that now we know much better how things really were, what the grand shape of reality was. But the nature of the new evidence—which constitutes a window onto a hitherto unimagined complexity—warns us against facile conclusions and invites us to scholarly humility and honest tentativeness about our historical conclusions.

The Dead Sea scrolls and other literature from the Second Temple era may raise more questions than they answer, but the questions should not be avoided for that reason. Still, Nickelsburg wisely urges all who work with this material to hold their conclusions loosely.

The Qumran community and the Dead Sea scrolls, according to a prevalent theory, originated in the middle of the second century B.C.E. during the aftermath of the Maccabean crisis.⁹ The members of the community had withdrawn into the desert in order to practice their Torah faithfulness without interference from Hellenized Jews. These Essenes considered the high priest in Jerusalem—whether Jonathan Maccabee in particular (Laato 1997:285) or a series

⁹See VanderKam (1999:2.487-533). VanderKam explains that *Essene* may come from the Aramaic ܥܫܝܢ, meaning “holy ones.” VanderKam’s summary of the history of Qumran appears more recently in VanderKam (2010:128-136).

of high priests in general—a wicked priest who had abandoned true religion for political and cultural expediency. As seen in 11QMelchizedek, the Qumran sectarians hoped for atonement for sin at the end of ten jubilee periods (Beckwith 1980:171; Collins 1998:155-156; Grabbe 1997:603) with which the anointed one in Daniel seems to be associated, but the broken state of the text prevents better understanding (cf. Fitzmyer 1967:40). They also anticipated the restoration of David’s throne, which would play a role in the salvation of Israel from her enemies (e.g., 4QFlor).¹⁰ Bergsma (2007:283) links these twin hopes of atonement and kingship with Melchizedek. First, “[s]ince the high priest had a major role in the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement, one can see how he could be associated with the jubilee as well.” In Genesis 14 and Psalm 110, Melchizedek intercedes, like a priest, between God and humans and thereby represents the restoration of lost communion—the spiritual side of jubilee. Second, the biblical Melchizedek restores people to their property and so like a good king establishes justice among people—the economic side of jubilee (Bergsma 2007:284). As was mentioned above in connection with *Jubilees*, God’s faithful people, including members of the Qumran community, already lived in the Promised Land, but they felt alienated from it not only because of the Antiochene crisis but also because of Jewish Hellenization during and after that crisis. The interest of 11QMelchizedek in jubilee suggests that the Qumran community wanted full control of the Promised Land in order to establish widespread faithfulness to God’s covenant.¹¹ So then, jubilee at Qumran had vertical and horizontal implications.¹²

Before these blessings could arrive, however, repentance was necessary. Members of the Qumran community were aware of how Jews, and not just Gentiles, were responsible for the

¹⁰See the discussion in Pomykala (1995:171-216).

¹¹Collins (1984a:1235) says, “The use of the jubilee [in 11QMelchizedek] introduces the idea of the repossession of the land.”

¹²For more on the theme of jubilee in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Bergsma (2007:251-294).

trouble during and after the seventy sevens.¹³ God's own people needed to assume their responsibility for that trouble and look to God for atonement.

According to Nitzan (1999:146-147), "it was the Community's aim to realize the eschatological repentance expected in the historiographic and prophetic biblical books." Consequently, "repentance was the first and most basic regulation which a member of the Community was obliged to undertake." Repentance included admissions of guilt (e.g., 1QS 1.24-26) but went beyond penitential prayer to rigorous observance of rules as evidence of godly character and conduct (1QS 6-7). The Qumranic emphasis on deeds is perhaps understandable in a separatist community that rejected the syncretism and corruption of the Hasmonean kingdom. Having witnessed too much empty confession and worship in wider Judean society, the Qumran community thought that religion without scriptural commitment and practical righteousness is dead. The Old Testament, of course, agreed. The prophets regularly indicted the Israelites for straying from previous revelation and concomitantly perpetrating injustice. Lack of love for God as he had revealed himself led to a lack of love for one's neighbor as the law of Moses defined love. What Bockmuehl (2001:397) says about the Qumran community also applies to Old Testament saints: "The covenanters do not know themselves elect by their works but, on the contrary, their works bear witness to their election." Jesus would later agree with the Qumran community that the Jerusalem temple—its personnel and activities—was corrupt (Wright 1996:353, 501).

Arnold (2007:165) has argued on the basis of 1QS that repentance in the Qumran community was considered a preparatory step toward perfection. Not so much a feature of daily piety, "repentance represents a change in loyalty regarding the direction of one's life, turning

¹³Grabbe (1997:602) says, "Although Daniel 9 is not explicitly discussed anywhere in the published scrolls, there are other passages which suggest that it was quite important to the exegesis of the sect." Cf. the absence of references to Daniel 9:24-27 in Washburn (2002:138).

from the path of wickedness (i.e., following the law as interpreted by the wicked priests in Jerusalem) to the path of righteousness (following the laws as interpreted by the *yahad* [Qumran community]).” Stated differently, “Repentance no longer serves merely to repair and maintain relationship with God in the covenant with Israel, but serves as a formulaic part of an exclusive rite of passage into the sectarian community” (Falk 2001:15). This turning or rite involved a process of two years before a candidate was admitted into full membership of the Qumran community (1QS 6.13-23). At this point, the veteran residents of the community expected perfection from their new member. According to Arnold (2007:174), “These texts [1QS and CD] show that perfection was not just an ideal to be strived for by the members of the community; it was the law.”¹⁴ The logical conclusion might be that repentance as confession of sin would no longer be considered a part of daily piety, but some nuancing of this observation is necessary. Any transgression of the law of Moses or the law of the community would result in a temporary or permanent separation from the community (1QS 8.22-24). At this point, a fallen member would have to repeat the steps of repentance and demonstrate the fruit of repentance.

So then, 1QS is aware of the possibility of relapsing into sin. The Qumran community may have been able, in some cases, to attribute that sin to having never been truly a son of justice, but the other “perfect” members of the community had nevertheless been fooled by external appearance and verbal confession. Moreover, the other “perfect” members were not sinlessly perfect either. Falk (2001:31) observes, “Life in the covenant [at Qumran] requires continued commitment to observe the law, to resist sin by God’s help, and to atone for sins committed. . . .” Deasley (2000:210-211), in a chapter about perfection as a means and end, says, “Indeed, it is not too much to say that at Qumran perfection is a synonym for soteriology when that term is taken in its widest sense to denote why salvation is necessary, who are its

¹⁴See also Deasley (2000:216-217).

objects, how it is effected and what is its scope.”¹⁵ Deasley goes on to explain that perfection can have several meanings in 1QS. First, perfection may have a corporate sense that applied to the whole community. For example, 1QS 8:9 refers to the Qumran community as the house of perfection, and 1QS 9:8 mentions the holy men who walk in perfection. This corporate ideal did not necessarily mean that each individual was sinless from the moment of admission onwards. As already noted, 1QS made provision for members who fell short of the community’s standard. Second, perfection could be “dynamic” and “measurable.” In other words, members could make progress in perfection. This was true of initiates (1QS 5:24) as well as veterans who had inadvertently sinned (1QS 8:24-25). Deasley says that perfection could vary among the perfect. Some members were always more perfect than others. Third, perfection had an eschatological expectation. Whatever spiritual achievements had occurred at Qumran, God had not yet made the whole world perfect. In fact, 1QS 4:20-24a seems to recall Ezekiel 36:

Meanwhile, God will refine, with his truth, all man’s deeds, and will purify for himself the configuration of man, ripping out all spirit of deceit from the innermost part of his flesh, and cleansing him with the spirit of holiness from irreverent deed. He will sprinkle over him the spirit of truth like lustral water (in order to cleanse him) from all the abhorrences of deceit and from the defilement of the unclean spirit. . . . There will be no more injustice and all the deeds of trickery will be a dishonour. Until now the spirits of truth and of injustice feud in the heart of man and they walk in wisdom or in folly.¹⁶

Verse 25 speaks of the “appointed end” and “new creation,” which, from the writer’s point of view, have not become a reality. God has not yet eliminated all deceit or given a new spirit. Qumran perfection clearly has an already/not yet quality.

Perfection in the first and second senses would look like observance of the law of God and law of the community. That the Qumran community had a high estimation of its ability to keep these laws cannot be denied. The danger, of course, with religion that puts so much

¹⁵The rest of this paragraph relies substantially on Deasley (2000:211-214).

¹⁶All citations of the Qumran literature come from Garcia Martínez (1996).

emphasis on performance is that striving to keep laws can easily degenerate into legalism, formalism, and hypocrisy. That the Qumran community also attributed atonement and purification to God, even the spirit of holiness (e.g., 1QS 3:7-8), should not go unnoticed. These people believed that God's spirit was active in their midst (Deasley 2000:216-217, 218-219, 230-231). What God had already done for them was part of an as yet unfinished program to redeem them and the whole world. By way of summary, Deasley (2000:240, 246) says that Qumran perfection consisted of obedience to the community's laws, transformation of a willful heart to a submissive heart by the spirit of God, and an anticipation of heaven through worship. Because heaven and earth now meet in worship, perfection in the present is experienced most when God's people gather for praise and prayer.

Perfection, however, led to mission. After discussing the requirement of perfection and the consequences of imperfection, 1QS 9:3-6 speaks of the community's

[atonement] for the fault of the transgression and for the guilt of sin and for the approval for the earth, without the flesh of burnt offerings and without the fats of sacrifice—the offering of the lips in compliance with the decree will be like the pleasant aroma of justice and the correctness of behaviour will be acceptable like a freewill offering—at this moment the men of the Community shall set themselves apart (like) a holy house for Aaron, in order to enter the holy of holies, and (like) a house of the Community for Israel, (for) those who walk in perfection.

Atonement for the members of the Qumran community does not seem to be in view here.

Arnold (2007:175) explains why, though he may overstate his reasoning:

Given that this description of atonement [in 1QS 9:3-4] follows the description that emphasized the perfection of the members, who did not sin even once (even inadvertently), we should imagine that they are not atoning for their own transgressions. Instead, the community's perfect holiness allows them to act as the true priesthood that atones for the sins of the people and for the land itself.

The land required atonement because of the defiling activities of those Jews who lived in it but were not part of the Qumran community (Sanders 1977:303).¹⁷ This remnant of God's people in the desert considered itself, to use the language of Exodus 19:6, a kingdom of priests that mediated salvation to the rest of the world. These priests made atonement not by offering sacrifices for others but by "living . . . in community according to the law" (Deasley 2000:220). They understood their mission as faithfully keeping God's counter-cultural commands and thereby presenting a redeemed alternative that much of Israel, before and after the exile, had rejected. If the Hasmonean kingdom in the hands of compromised priests looked no different than the Seleucid kingdom, the Qumran community would model the beauty of Torah-keeping holiness for Jews and Gentiles. By preserving and embodying true religion, the faithful remnant would show others the way to be right with God. According to Bockmuehl (2001:393), "Far from seeking to *replace* the "true" historic Israel, the sect saw itself as the vanguard of its final redemption, 'the house of truth in Israel' (1QS 5:6) which would one day encompass all the sons of light." God could then use the witness of this kingdom of priests to call the sons of light to himself.

Even so, 1QS 8:6-7 had already introduced the mission of the community, and its definition included a second aim. These verses say that the members were "chosen by the will (of God) to atone for the earth and to render the wicked their retribution." According to Deasley (2000:220), "The community evidently saw its atoning mission as saving the land of Israel from utter destruction by their own perfect obedience to the law and by their readiness (in the eschatological war?) to exterminate the wicked." 1QS does not explicitly say how the Qumran

¹⁷Cf. Lichtenberger (1980:163) who, after saying that "the entire community may exercise an atoning function" for the land, observes, "Each and every individual in the Qumran community, whether priest or layman, was obligated to perform this 'temple service,' and as a sort of full-time 'priest on duty,' was to adhere to the strict purification codes." See also Garnet (1977:72).

sectarians would eliminate evil in the wider world. Though 1QM envisions physical combat, the method for saving the land in 1QS (i.e., perfect obedience) seems also to be the method for eliminating evil. God, of course, had recourse to other means for defeating his enemies, and the inscriptions on the banners in 1QM 4 suggest some of these options: e.g., God's truth, God's justice, God's judgment, God's glory, God's joy, God's thanksgiving, God's praise, and God's peace. These alternatives to standard warfare do not necessarily require bloodshed; rather, they seem to target the heart (i.e., the intellect and the will). The residents of Qumran may have expected an imminently decisive moment in the terrestrial front of the cosmic battle between God and evil, but the language of warfare between the sons of light and sons of darkness seems to have been more metaphorical or spiritual.¹⁸ Archaeologists have not found a stockpile of weapons and armor at Qumran.¹⁹

Not to be overlooked is Pitre's (2005:91-130) discussion of how Second Temple Judaism expected a final period of tribulation and suffering before the arrival of the messianic age of restoration. Perhaps more than most Jews of the time, the Qumran covenanters considered themselves as being in a time of climactic distress and testing. Their suffering as a righteous remnant would somehow play a role in atoning for the sin of the nation and hastening the arrival of the anointed king (and priest). For all the martial language in the Qumran literature, redemption and deliverance involved the suffering of the faithful.

Daniel's prayer of confession pleaded for mercy. Despite the interest in perfection and warfare in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the emphasis on mercy in 1QS warrants more attention. The

¹⁸Deasley (2000:269) writes, "It is a real war fought in the real world, but it is also a spiritual war fought on the spiritual plane: it is both historical and transcendental." Aune (1999:643) suggests that the toponyms in 1QM 1:1-7 and 2:10-14 are "ciphers for the enemies of Israel during the Greco-Roman period."

¹⁹Cf. the contrast that Collins (1985:140-143) draws between the quietism of the *maskilim* in Daniel and the activism of the Maccabees in 1 Maccabees. See also Lacocque (1988:46-47). VanderKam (2010:27-28) evaluates Golb's theory that the Qumran site was a fortress.

writer of 1QS obviously considered himself one of the sons of justice whom God had predestined to walk on the path of light (1QS 3.20), but he was not beyond an honest self-evaluation, even after the section on punishments for imperfection. Too often, he behaved like the sons of deceit that walk on the path of darkness:

. . . I belong to evil humankind
to the assembly of wicked flesh;
my failings, my transgressions, my sins, { . . . }
with the depravities of my heart,
belong to the assembly of worms
and of those who walk in darkness. (1QS 11.9-10a)

Writing on behalf of the Qumran community, this member found relief not in his own deeds but in God's character:

As for me, if I stumble,
the mercies of God shall be my salvation always;
and if I fall in the sin of the flesh,
in the justice of God, which endures eternally, shall my judgment be;
if my grief commences,
he will free my soul from the pit
and make my steps steady on the path;
he will draw me near in his mercies,
and by kindnesses set in motion my judgment;
he will judge me in the justice of his truth,
and in his plentiful goodness
always atone for all my sins;
in his justice he will cleanse me
from the uncleanness of the human being
and from the sins of the sons of man,
so that I can extol God for his justice
and the Highest for his mercy. (1QS 11.11b-15a)

Tension between divine justice and mercy may exist here, and the writer never explains how God's justice will cleanse him. Perhaps the earlier portions of 1QS answer this question in terms of faithfulness to the law of God and the law of the community, but column 11 seems to affirm that only "the mercies of God" and "God's plentiful goodness" can overcome the sinful proclivity of a son of justice. The writer of column 11 seems to understand that his attempts at

purity, whether in word or deed, cannot atone for his sins. He is not a son of justice because of inherent righteousness or moral resoluteness. If not for God's intervention, he would keep committing the sins of the sons of man.

It is hard to say whether the poetry in 1QS 10-11 describes spirituality before full admission to the Qumran community or after. Did the members really expect perfection of one another? Did they ever really think that they had achieved it, or did they always know that perfection in thought, word, and deed is not possible in this life before the coming of God? Whatever perfection the community required, the reference to possible stumbling in the future indicates that the writer does not think that he has achieved a permanent inability to sin (cf. Baumgarten 1999:210; Nitzan 1999:167). He is aware of his weakness. The final poetic section of 1QS begins with a reference to "the constellation of the years up to their seven-year periods" (1QS 10.7-8). Whether or not the writer had Daniel's seventy sevens in mind is not clear, but the Qumran community, judging from 11QMelchizedek, evidently understood its moment in time in relation to the theology of jubilee. Given the stated dependence on God for atonement, the writer of 1QS 10 may have thought that the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 were about to be realized in his day. He was certainly right, from Daniel's point of view, to put his hope in God's character and action, rather than his own.

This same hope can be found in the hymns of 1QH. 1QH 6.17-18a might suggest that the hymnist has reached perfection:

But I,
I have known, thanks to the wealth of your goodness,
and with an oath I have enjoined my soul
not to sin against you
and not to do anything which is evil in your eyes.

Also, the hymnist says in 1QH 17.13,

I delight in forgiveness,
I console myself for former sin.

The hymnist obviously does not claim sinless perfection from birth, and he finds relief for past sin in God's forgiveness. But what about consolation for present sin? The hymnist seems to recognize in 1QH 15.16-18, though the text is broken, that he still needs God's grace:

And you, you know the inclination of your servant,
that I [. . .] not [. . .]
uplifting the heart and seeking shelter in strength;
I do not have the defenses of flesh,
[. . .] there is no justice,
to be saved [from sin, except] through forgiveness.
And lean on [. . .]
[. . .] and hope in your kindness,
to make salvation thrive,
and make the shoot grow;
to seek refuge in strength
and [. . .] in your justice.

Moreover, he says in 1QH 18.16, "I will delight in your forg[iveness]," and in 1QH 18.21, I "hope in your forgiveness." For all the hymnist's affirmation of his moral purity, he seems to know that his standing before God depends on God's prior grace and not his moral performance. According to Holm-Nielsen (1960:283), "man [in 1QH] has no chance, and yet he has a chance: through the revelation of God."²⁰ Along with the reference to God's goodness above in 1QH 6.17, 1QS 12.35-37 recognizes that God's activity is prior to human performance:

I said "For my sin I have been barred from your covenant."
But when I remembered the strength of your hand
and the abundance of your compassion
I remained resolute and stood up;
my spirit kept firmly in place
in the face of my distress.
For you have supported me by your kindnesses
and by your abundant compassion.
Because you atone for sin and cle[anse man] of his fault though your justice.

²⁰For more on the anthropology of 1QH, see Holm-Nielsen (1960:274-277).

God must satisfy his justice by making atonement for sin. Even the residents of the Qumran community do not atone for their sins. Sanders (1977:266-267, 292), however, notices a different accent in the language of worship in 1QH and the language of discipleship in 1QS. Whereas the former emphasizes the grace of God and the dependence of the sinner, the latter stresses the commandments of God and the responsibilities of converts. Even so, the indicative and the imperative—divine grace and human obedience—do not contradict each other. They are related as root and fruit (Sanders 1977:295-297, 320).²¹

At this point, the messianic expectation of the Qumran community comes into play. The Qumran community seemed to expect two anointed ones along with a prophet (Collins 1998:160-162 and 2010:80-83, 108-109; Talmon 1987:122-126). According to 1QS 9:9b-11, “They should not depart from any counsel of the law in order to walk in complete stubbornness of their heart, but instead shall be ruled by the first directives which the men of the Community began to be taught until the prophet comes, and the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel.” Interestingly, CD 12:23, 14:19, 19:10, and 20:1 mention a coming Messiah of Aaron and Israel.²² Whether the community anticipated one or two anointed ones, it evidently included priestly and royal responsibilities in its messianic hope. Laato (1997:279, 289) suggests that the Qumran community emphasized Davidic kingship in reaction to the presumptuous claims of the Hasmonean rulers. A future descendant of David would deliver Israel from her external foes and address instances of internal unfaithfulness to God’s law (Laato 1997:294-299). Meanwhile, the priestly anointed one would oversee the sacrificial system that provided atonement for God’s people (Laato 1997:299-304).

²¹Sanders (1977) uses the words *indicative* and *imperative* on pages 178-179.

²²Knibb (1999:386) says, “. . . it has increasingly been recognized that the phrase משיח אהרן וישראל should be translated “the messiah of Aaron and (the one) of Israel.”

The extant scrolls may not explicitly cite Daniel 9, but Garnet (1977:97) associates CD 14:18-19 with the six objectives of the seventy sevens:

The Old Testament background is clearly Dan. 9:24, where there is a combination of the rare construction of כפר without a following preposition and the concept of anointing. Qumran probably understood this passage to mean that after a period of 490 years Israel's iniquity would be forgiven and she would be delivered from her oppressors with the coming of the Messiah. In the present passage the coming of the Messiah and the eschatological forgiveness are so closely linked that the latter can be spoken of as the purpose of the former. This passage does not imply that the Messiah will make atonement, but only that his coming is God's final act in forgiving Israel.²³

Garnet (1977:99) later says: "God is the subject of the atoning action throughout [CD], except for 14:19, where it is the Messiah. Even here, however, the Messianic atonement seems to mean only that the coming of the Messiah is a sign that God has forgiven Israel in accordance with the programme outlined in Dan. 9:24." Garnet may be right that the Qumran community did not expect the anointed one to make atonement by dying for its sins. Nevertheless, CD 14 more strongly says that the anointed one will atone for sin. It does not more weakly say that the anointed one will be a sign of God's forgiveness. In Garnet's own words, the "purpose" of the anointed one's coming is to bring about the forgiveness of sin promised in Daniel 9. The anointed one's coming is "God's final act in forgiving." The earlier acts of forgiveness in the Old Testament always involved the atoning death of a substitute. The Qumran community awaited the provision of atonement that Daniel's seventy sevens had announced. In some sense, they believed that they could experience atonement in their day. In another sense, they knew that atonement would come in the future and somehow be connected with an anointed one.

A final observation about Qumran theology seems advisable. According to Deasley (2000:158), "What seems difficult to deny is that, however much the sectaries believed in divine grace and forgiveness—and there can be no doubt that they believed in both—that is not where

²³Cf. Beckwith (2001:223).

the accent fell in their understanding of covenant law.” Deasley (2000:157) further states: “Forgiveness was not good enough. There must be fidelity to the covenant requirements.” For the residents of Qumran, avoiding the mistakes of those from whom they had withdrawn required scrupulous attention to God’s revealed will. So did the Qumran community think that God would accomplish the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 or that they would? Deasley (2000:139) continues to offer a helpful perspective: “. . . the Qumran sectaries were apparently able to tolerate a high degree of unresolved tension in their thought. This does not mean that they threw consistency to the winds, but it does mean that they were ready to affirm positions which commended themselves to them as real and true, whether or not they were able to reconcile them.”²⁴ Bockmuehl (2001:412-413) lends support: “. . . the texts themselves manifest a number of fundamentally unresolved tensions. As it stands, salvation is on the one hand ‘legalistic’ both in its individualistic voluntarism and in its closely regimented corporate life; and yet it is the gift of divine grace alone, both objectively in regard to predestination and subjectively in the experience of the believer.” Deasley and Bockmuehl confirm the earlier observation of Sanders (1977:265): “The Qumran sectarians, like other Palestinian Jews of the period, were not systematic theologians. Various answers to various questions would be regarded as true, without examining whether or not the various answers cohered with one another.” When read in view of the complex and dangerous events of the Maccabean war and Hasmonean kingdom, the tension in Qumran theology can certainly be appreciated. Perhaps the Qumran sectarians felt the tension too, but their desire to remain faithful should not go unnoticed. If their theology was imbalanced, they were neither the first nor the last people to do theology in a crisis and over-

²⁴Cf. Carson (2001:5) who says, “. . . the literature of Second Temple Judaism reflects patterns of belief and religion too diverse to subsume under one label. The results are messy.”

emphasize a crucial point of doctrine. They also were not the first or last believers to wrestle with doctrinal antinomies.

The members of the Qumran community were part of the history of doctrine. They may not have the last word on any point of theology, but they have a word worth considering. Their word indicates that some people, consciously or not, took the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 seriously after the seventy sevens. They had concern for sin, atonement, righteousness, holiness, and fulfillment of prophecy. To state the obvious, they knew that the resolution of the Antiochene crisis had not eliminated all sin or brought full inheritance. Like Daniel 9, the Qumran community expressed its hope for the future in terms of jubilee periods. Whether explicitly stated or not, these periods would usher in what amounted to the realization of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24.

10.3.4. *Psalms of Solomon*

From the Pseudepigrapha, the eighteen *Psalms of Solomon* responded to Pompey's capture of Jerusalem in 63 B.C.E. (cf. Embry 2002:109). The first two psalms refer to the Romans as sinners who trampled and defiled the courts of God's temple. According to *Psalms of Solomon* 1:8, Pompey's "lawless actions surpassed the gentiles before [him]"—an apparent reference to the Greeks and Babylonians.²⁵ Moreover, *Psalms of Solomon* 2:25 calls Pompey the dragon, thus putting him in the same category as Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 51:34) and other terrestrial manifestations of the spiritual forces of evil (e.g., Ps 74:14, Isa 27:1, Ezek 29:3, Rev 12:3). Werline (2005:76) says, "The *Psalms of Solomon* interprets Pompey as another oppressive and imperial chaos dragon that God humbles and dishonors like all preceding monsters" (see also Atkinson 2004b:36). The *Psalms of Solomon*, however, do not demonize the Romans alone; they also condemn "those who live in hypocrisy," "those who please men, who

²⁵Citations of the *Psalms of Solomon* come from Wright (1985:639-670).

deceitfully quote the Law,” and “those who arrogantly commit all (kinds of) unrighteousness” (*Pss. Sol.* 4:6, 8, 24). If the “sinners” (i.e., the Romans) trampled God’s house, “the sons of Jerusalem defiled the sanctuary of the Lord . . . [and profaned] the offerings of God with lawless acts” (*Pss. Sol.* 2:3). Pomykala (1995:161) identifies three targets of the psalmist’s criticism: first, the Hasmoneans who misused political office within Jerusalem and its surroundings; second, Pompey and the Romans who oppressed the Jews for their own imperialistic goals; and, third, “impious Jews” who disregarded God’s law in order to enjoy the favor of unscrupulous Gentiles.²⁶ So then, according to Sanders (1977:400), “The Roman invasion . . . was a punishment for the sins of Israel” (see also Atkinson 2004b:29-30). Mack (1987:33) agrees, “It was in any case not Rome, but the Jerusalem establishment that bore the brunt of the psalmist’s wrath.” Whether a particular passage has the Romans or the Jews in view, the *Psalms of Solomon* as a whole describe more trouble after the seventy sevens.

The devout psalmist distinguished himself from those Jews who, in his opinion, had forgotten their holy identity and adopted pagan approaches to life (cf. *Pss. Sol.* 17:16-17).²⁷ The psalmist, however, did not claim sinless perfection. *Psalms of Solomon* 17:5 nuances the earlier view of the Romans, “But (because of) our sins, sinners rose up against us, they set upon us and drove us out.” God had used the “sinners” to discipline his people who had fallen into sin.²⁸ According to *Psalms of Solomon* 3:7-8, the sins of the psalmist may be committed without intention or in ignorance, but they make a person guilty of breaking the will of God nonetheless.

²⁶Regarding the third category, Willitts (2012:39) says, “The *Psalms of Solomon* make clear that the poor condition of Israel as a political entity is precipitated by the spiritual condition of the people (*Pss. Sol.* 17:5).”

²⁷Falk (2001:1.50) says, “. . . Israel is not coterminous with the devout in *Psalms of Solomon*. The devout are in Israel, but Israel also contains sinners who will be judged by the standards of the covenant and excluded from the eschatological blessings.” Cf. Bockmuehl (2001:392): “. . . the very fact that there are those ‘in Israel’ (e.g. 1QS 6:13) or ‘of Israel’ (e.g. CD 4:2; 6:4-5; 8:16) who repent implies without doubt that ‘Israel’ must also include others who do not (or not yet)—and who are by the same token clearly regarded as outsiders or even adversaries.”

²⁸The sinners here could be the Romans or the Hasmoneans. Perhaps the psalmist is not concerned at this point to make a distinction. Cf. Collins (2010:54), Tromp (1993:344-361), and Werline (2005:77-78).

Psalms of Solomon 16:5-11 thanks God for delivering the psalmist from his own sin and prays for the Lord's mercy and discipline at future occasions of temptation. This psalm appreciably recognizes that no one has yet achieved perfection. Everyone still falls short of God's will and needs mercy. Even so, Falk (2001:40) recognizes "a fundamental group distinction" in *Psalms of Solomon*. God destroys the sinners in judgment but disciplines the righteous in mercy. "The righteous are not those who by their effort have avoided sin, but those who confess their sins and seek God's mercy" (Falk 2001:42-43). Rather than getting angry at God in times of adversity, the righteous person accepts hardship as evidence of God's discipline (*Pss. Sol.* 3:4-5).²⁹

Similar to Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9, the psalmist pleads for mercy on God's people or at least the righteous (*Pss. Sol.* 4:25, 9:8, 9:11) and shows concern for God's purposes. While he, unlike Daniel, may not explicitly pray about the restoration of God's reputation among the nations, he links the fortune of Israel with the realization of God's plan (*Pss. Sol.* 5:5) and God's holiness (*Pss. Sol.* 7:2). After *Psalms of Solomon* 8:29 acknowledges, "For we stiffened our necks, but you are the one who disciplines us," verse 30 seems to be aware of a larger purpose for God's discipline, "Do not neglect us, our God, lest the gentiles devour us as if there were no redeemer." Moreover, *Psalms of Solomon* 17:5, after admitting that the "sinners" served God's disciplinary need, reminds God that his agent "did not glorify your honorable name." The psalmist seems to know that God has tied his redemptive plan to Israel. If God does not come to Israel's defense, then God's plan fails, and God's name suffers further reproach. God has to show mercy for the honor of his name; otherwise, to recall Ezekiel's signature phrase, the nations will not know who he is.

According to the first half of *Psalms of Solomon* 3:8, the righteous person atones for his or her sins by fasting and humility. This affirmation might seem to make humans responsible for

²⁹See also Nickelsburg (2003:43).

expiating their sins, and, indeed, the *Psalms of Solomon* stress righteous deeds. The second half of the verse, however, says that “the Lord will cleanse every devout person and his house.” Given the emphasis on divine mercy in the *Psalms of Solomon*, the first half of 3:8 does not have to be read as the cause of the second half of 3:8. If words have meaning, mercy by definition cannot be a reward for human performance. Mercy originates in the compassion of the giver not the merit of the recipient. *Psalms of Solomon* 3 seems to preserve the mystery between the indicative (what God does to make faith and repentance possible) and the imperative (how humans respond to God’s initiative). Clearly, though, the one cannot occur without the other. Like Daniel 9, the Psalms of Solomon state the human need for atonement and look to God’s mercy to eliminate sin.

According to *Psalms of Solomon* 17:26, God makes his people holy and leads them in righteousness. The psalm may not clearly explain how, but a king is involved—not an unrighteous king like the Hasmonean rulers but a Davidic descendant who would embody the royal ideals of the Old Testament.³⁰ Similar to Jeremiah 23 and 33, the hope of the psalm is that a Davidic king will lead God’s people in righteousness (*Pss. Sol.* 17:21). Verse 29 says, “He will judge people and nations in the wisdom of his righteousness,” which is due to the fact that “he himself (will be) free from sin” (*Pss. Sol.* 17:36). This righteous king is further identified as the Lord’s Anointed One (*Pss. Sol.* 17:32). The psalm identifies the king as the Lord and yet distinguishes him from the Lord. The Lord’s blessing is upon this king who puts his hope in the Lord (*Pss. Sol.* 17:38-39). Moreover, the king receives credit for performing the divine task of

³⁰Rooke (1998:207) considers the affirmation of Davidic election in *Pss. Sol.* 17:5-8 a response to the non-Davidic kingship of the Hasmoneans who traced their ancestry to Aaron and Levi, not to David and Judah. See also Atkinson (2004b:133), Collins (1998:143, 158), Laato (1997:280-281), Werline (2005:78), Willits (2012:39-40), and Wright (1996:482).

making the unholy holy.³¹ He leads God's people, both Jew and Gentile, in faithfulness to God's commands and so oversees the establishment and maintenance of a righteous society. Like Jeremiah, *Psalms of Solomon* 17 stops short of saying that the righteous king will make others holy by substitutionary atonement, but he is nonetheless closely related to God's saving activity.

Not to be overlooked is the relation of the anointed one to the trouble caused by the Jews and Romans. *Psalms of Solomon* 17 introduces the anointed one after mentioning the trouble caused first by unfaithful leaders among the Jews (the Hasmoneans) and then by "a man that was alien to our race" (Pompey). Pitre (2005:81) notes, "Although a great deal of attention has been paid to the Davidic Messiah in *Psalms of Solomon* 17-18, overall, scholars have failed to focus on the significance of the fact that the advent of this Messiah is preceded by a period of tribulation." Pitre (2005:83) further says that "the text appears to be using images of the eschatological tyrant as found in Daniel 7-12." Because no one reads the *Psalms of Solomon* with reference to Antiochus IV (cf. Efron 1987:222-223), the recollection of the tyrant indicates that others after the seventy sevens will wreak havoc on God's city and the sanctuary (Dan 9:26) and recapitulate the Antiochene crisis to some degree or another.

Something else that is clear throughout the *Psalms of Solomon* is the continuing devotion of the author to the Lord, even in the midst of the trouble beyond that to which Daniel 9:25b refers. Along these lines, *Psalms of Solomon* 18:5-9 brings the book to a close by praying:

May God cleanse Israel for the day of mercy in blessing,
for the appointed day when his Messiah will reign.
Blessed are those born in those days,
to see the good things of the Lord
which he will do for the coming generation;
(which will be) under the rod of discipline of the Lord Messiah,
in the fear of his God,
in wisdom of spirit,

³¹Embry (2002:109-110, 115, 133) has argued that the anointed one in *Psalms of Solomon* performs his messianic duty chiefly by purifying people from sin.

and of righteousness and of strength,
to direct people in righteous acts, in the fear of God,
to set them all in the fear of the Lord,
A good generation (living) in the fear of God,
in the days of mercy.

The psalmist may not have consciously had in mind the six objectives of Daniel 9:24, but this prayer after the seventy sevens echoes some of the themes of Gabriel's response to Daniel's prayer. If the objectives of Daniel 9:24 are partially realized over the course of seventy sevens, *Psalms of Solomon* 18 is aware that God has not finished putting an end to sin or bringing in everlasting righteousness. God still had his people during these years after the seventy sevens, and he used these experiences to increase their faith and wisdom (cf. Dan 11:33-35). Consciously recalling Daniel 9:24 or not, God's people after the Antiochene crisis held out hope for the full realization of the objectives of the seventy sevens. They did not lose heart and give up (cf. Embry 2002:111, 132, 134-136).

10.3.5. Josephus

Flavius Josephus may have lived after the seventy sevens, but his writings have been a major source of knowledge about Judaism during the whole Second Temple era. Wright (1996:514) observes that some Jews in the first century C.E., which is usually considered part of the Second Temple era, understood the one like a son of man in Daniel 7 as a messianic figure. Indeed, evidence for a messianic reading of Daniel 2 and 7 exists in the *Jewish Antiquities*.³² This evidence, however, is muted because Josephus did not explain the stone in Daniel 2 or the one like a son of man in Daniel 7. Both, of course, defeated the fourth kingdom, which Josephus identified with Rome.

Readers of Josephus have to keep in mind that he wrote to two audiences—one Jewish and the other Roman—and that he wanted to convince both of his loyalty (cf. *Ant.* 16.6.8 §§174-

³²See Feldman (1998:153-154, 650-652).

178; Yamauchi 1980:45).³³ Though concerned not to upset his Roman patrons (cf. Adler 1996:213-214; Vermes 1991:165), Josephus must have read Daniel 2 with reference to a coming Jewish kingdom and king.

Daniel did also declare the meaning of the stone to the king [Nebuchadnezzar]; but I do not think proper to relate it, since I have only undertaken to describe things past or things present, but not things that are future: yet if any one be so desirous of knowing truth, as not to waive such points of curiosity, and cannot curb his inclination for understanding the uncertainties of futurity, and whether they will happen or not, let him be diligent in reading the book of Daniel, which he will find among the sacred writings. (*Ant.* 10.10.4 §210)

Readers cannot help but notice how carefully Josephus indicates that more could be said (for the sake of his Jewish readers) but avoids saying it (for the sake of his Roman readers and himself).³⁴ That Josephus considered Rome, and not Greece, the fourth metal and the fourth beast receives further support in his explanation of Daniel 8: “And indeed it so came to pass, that our nation suffered these things under Antiochus Epiphanes, according to Daniel’s vision, and what he wrote many years before they came to pass. In the very same manner Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them” (*Ant.* 10.11.7 §276). The reference to desolation would seem to have Daniel 9:27 in view, but Josephus offers no explanation of Daniel 9 to his Roman readers (but cf. Beckwith 1981:535-536; Vermes 1991:160 footnote 20). What is evident, though, is Josephus’ typological understanding of the abomination of desolation. He thought that both Antiochus IV and the Romans had desecrated God’s temple. The original meaning of Daniel’s prophecies pertained to the former, but the passage of time allowed Josephus to see recapitulation in the latter. Van Kooten (2009:296) may say, “How exactly Josephus understood the qualifier ‘in the same

³³See Mason (2007:119-123) for a discussion of the Roman rhetoric that shaped Josephus’ historiography.

³⁴Cf. Adler (1996:212-217), Bruce (1965:159-160), Jeremias (1967:4:273), Wright (1996:500 note 83), and Yamauchi (1980:49).

manner' remains unclear," but typology seems to be a part of the explanation just as much as prediction.

Although Josephus could mention Roman conquest, he dared not say that biblical prophecy announced the eventual triumph of God's kingdom over all others.³⁵ He must have felt confident that his Roman readers would not consult the book of Daniel and discover the unfavorable revelation that an Israelite prophet received about the kingdoms of the world, including Rome. Still, Josephus reflects what must have been a common, or at least an accepted, interpretation of Daniel 2 and 7 among his Jewish readers.³⁶ First century Jews hoped that a king, even a descendant of David, would deliver them from the Romans. Reactions to Jesus in the Gospels (e.g., John 6:15) support this observation.

Charlesworth (1992:6) would seem to disagree. He says, "There is a deeply seated and widely assumed contention that the Jews during the time of Jesus were expecting a Messiah, and that they had some agreement on the basic function he would perform. Yet this contention is assumed; it is not researched." Charlesworth (1992:35) further states, "One can no longer claim that most Jews were looking for the coming of the Messiah." In the same volume, however (and the volume is edited by Charlesworth), Dunn (1992:367) appears to take the opposite position:

We may conclude that these passages [and Dunn lists Daniel 9:25-26 among them] must have nurtured a fairly vigorous and sustained hope of a royal messiah within several at least of the various subgroups of Israel at the time of Jesus, and that that hope was probably fairly widespread at a popular level (such being the symbolic power of kingship in most societies then and since). Talk of an expected 'coming of the Messiah' would have been meaningful to first-century Jews and represented a major strand of Jewish eschatological expectations.

³⁵Davies (1978:17) says, "Josephus was therefore interested in the question of the contemporary relevance of Biblical prophecy, but he repudiated the interpretation of it which deduced that the rebellion against the Romans would be successful."

³⁶Wright (1996:519) says, "Thus Daniel 2, 7 and 9, taken together, provided the messianic prophecy that, 'more than anything else, incited the Jews to revolt'" in the first century C.E.

The debate involves stances on the historical accuracy of the New Testament books.

Charlesworth (1992:35) has one opinion: “The gospels and Paul must not be read as if they are reliable sources for pre-70 Jewish beliefs in the Messiah.” Perhaps this assessment includes Jesus’ belief about the anointed one, but Charlesworth does not specifically say that the New Testament misrepresents Jesus’ messianic views. Again, Dunn (1992:371-372) seems to look at the matter differently:

In short I see the earliest traditions within the Christian churches as preservers more than innovators, as seeking to transmit, retell, explain, interpret, elaborate, but not to create *de nova*. All of which means that I approach the Synoptic tradition with a good deal more confidence than many of my New Testament colleagues. Through the main body of the Synoptic tradition, I believe, we have in most cases direct access to the teaching and ministry of Jesus as it was remembered from the beginning of the transmission process (which often predates Easter), and so also fairly direct access to the ministry and teaching of Jesus through the eyes and ears of those who went about with him.

Perhaps Dunn’s confidence applies only to the Gospels’ representation of Jesus and not to their representation of others. Even so, the discussion then shifts to the self-identity of Jesus in his historical context. Did he know who he was, and did he fairly distinguish himself from others?

Before Josephus wrote *Jewish Antiquities*, Jesus had applied the stone image of Daniel 2 to himself. He said that those who reject him will have no share in God’s kingdom. Instead, King Jesus, like the stone in Daniel 2, will crush them (Matt 21:44; Luke 20:18).³⁷ Jesus could read Daniel in this way because of the history of interpretation that his contemporaries knew (Wright 1992b:304, 308; 1996:500). His contemporaries also knew that “the great story of the Hebrew scriptures was . . . a story in search of a conclusion” (Wright 1992b:217). Wright (1992b:219) adds, “On virtually all sides there is a sense that the history of the creator, his world and his covenant people is going somewhere, but that it has not yet arrived. The creator will act

³⁷In Luke 20:18b, Jesus associates the rock of Daniel 2:45 with his person and work. He uses the same verb (λικάω) that means “to crush.” This verb does not occur in Psalm 118:22 that Luke 20:17 cites or in Isaiah 8:15 that Luke 20:18a cites. See Bock (1996:1605), France (1971:98-99), Jeremias (1967:275), Kimball (1994:159-161), and Wright (1996:500).

again, as he did in the past, to deliver Israel from her plight and to deal with the evil in the world.” The pressing issue, of course, had to do with the veracity of Jesus’ claims. Was he who he claimed to be, and could he conclude the story? The purpose of this thesis does not include defending an answer to the former question, but the next chapter will say more about Jesus and the book of Daniel, especially Jesus’ relationship to the six objectives of Daniel 9:24.

10.4. Summary

This chapter did not examine the seventy sevens per se. Instead, it considered echoes of them in literature after the Antiochene crisis. That literature preserves the faith and hope of God’s people for the Jubilee of Jubilees. Stated differently, God’s people still waited for their full inheritance in the Promised Land. They knew that the death of Antiochus IV had not eliminated all sin or established righteousness throughout the world. Some prophecy still awaited fulfillment, and the Most Holy Place in God’s house had not yet expanded to encompass and sanctify the Promised Land. In fact, God’s glory had yet to return to the temple and take up residence there. In these trying times, God’s people clung to their belief that God would keep his word to Daniel and all the prophets.

CHAPTER 11: THE SEVENTY SEVENS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

11.1. Introduction

Aside from references to the abomination of desolation in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14, the New Testament never explicitly cites Daniel 9:24-27 to say that Jesus fulfills the prophecy of the seventy sevens. Nevertheless, many of Jesus' followers have read this portion of scripture with reference to his first and second comings.¹ Some of these efforts are more convincing than others. This chapter will consider how Jesus is another anointed one that replays the sixth-and second-century worlds of Daniel 9 and thereby accomplishes the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. In so doing, it will also discuss how the person and work of Jesus advances the typology of the hostile ruler and the theme of jubilee.

11.2. Jesus as Another Anointed One

11.2.1. In Life and Death

The first verse of Matthew and, hence, of the New Testament identifies Jesus as the anointed one. This fact should not go unnoticed, especially because Daniel 9:24-27 is the only passage in the Old Testament that, in its narrative world (and for some people, real world), explicitly expects a future anointed one (cf. Oswalt 1997:1126). Other passages, of course, anticipate a future king or priest who would presumably be anointed, but they do not specifically call this individual a מָשִׁיחַ. Moreover, Daniel 9:26 adds that the coming anointed one will die as part of the realization of Gabriel's six objectives. Is it by coincidence, then, that the first verse of the New Testament names Jesus, a descendant of David, as the anointed one and then the first

¹For surveys of the early church, see Adler (1996:218-238), Beckwith (1981:539-541), Grabbe (2002:239-243), Hess (2011:320-321), Knowles (1944:136-160), Tanner (2009:185-198), and van Kooten (2009:297-316). Grabbe (1997:596) says, "Not unexpectedly, most early Christian writers give a Christological interpretation, ending the 70 weeks with the coming of Jesus."

book of the New Testament describes his ministry, hardships, and death?² Furthermore, a few hours after telling the high priest that he is both the anointed one and the son of man who will come on the clouds of heaven (Matt 26:63-64), Jesus dies under a sign that calls him the King of the Jews (Matt 27:36). The first book of the New Testament may not be alone in describing the anointed one, but it certainly focuses on him immediately and continually.³ Matthew may not employ his signature phrase to indicate that the word of God to Daniel in 9:24-27 was fulfilled at Golgotha, but the echo of these verses (especially 9:26) in their narrative world has nevertheless been heard by many Christian readers.

That said, an earlier observation should be recalled at this point. Other Old Testament verses that Matthew says were fulfilled by Jesus were not necessarily predictions (e.g., Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15) and/or may have initially pertained to an event closer to the prophet's time (e.g., Jer 31:15 in Matt 2:18). France (2007:11) explains,

Matthew's presentation of the story of Jesus . . . is designed to bring to mind OT people, events, or institutions which may serve as models for understanding the continuity of God's purpose as now supremely focused in the coming of Jesus. . . . It is thus for Matthew not only the explicitly predictive portions of the OT that can be seen to be "fulfilled" in Jesus, but also its historical characters, its narratives, and its cultic patterns, even the law itself (5:17; 11:13).

From a human perspective, the typology that France recognizes in Matthew may detect patterns to history only by looking backwards. Still, humans who read history backwards realize, so claim the biblical writers, that God had a plan from the start and knew ahead of time what he would do. By recognizing the hand of God in history, typology indirectly affirms promise and

²Along with Eusebius (Adler 2006:232-236), Willits (2012:34-35) suggests that Matthew 1:1 obliquely contrasts Jesus and Herod the Great. If Herod is a Gentile, Jesus as a descendant of Abraham and David has a legitimate claim to be ruler of Israel. Moreover, Jesus does not share Herod's penchant for brutality. As argued by Atkinson (2004a:134-149), precedent for comparing Antiochus IV and Herod the Great exists in the *Testament of Moses* 8-9. Matthew may not liken Herod to Antiochus IV, but Herod's foreignness and cruelty certainly fit the Bible's typology of a hostile ruler and could arouse in God's people a longing for jubilee.

³Cf. Davies and Allison (1988:156) who say, "Of all the NT writers, Matthew lays the most stress on the Davidic ancestry of Jesus."

fulfillment from God's point of view (cf. France 1989:183, 185, 205; von Rad 1965:323).

Matthew presents Jesus as the new Israel that replays Old Testament history by taking up the mission of old Israel and bringing both the history and the mission to God's desired conclusion.⁴ Perhaps Daniel 9:26, though not cited by Matthew, falls into this category. If so, then Jesus must recapitulate the sixth- and second-century worlds that Daniel brings together.

As a descendant of David, Jesus recalls the sixth-century narrative world of Daniel 9 by replaying Jehoiakim's reign that was cut off by exile. Jesus, of course, did not disobey God like Jehoiakim, but "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us" (2 Cor 5:21), including David and his successors. Jesus was efficaciously cut off for sinners—something that cannot be said about Jehoiakim or any other Davidic king. By delivering both Jews and Gentiles from bondage to sin, Jesus then redefines his people's understanding of exile.⁵ Exile is not so much a political event or a geographical place as it is a spiritual state. People are alienated from God's favorable presence because of sin. They live in self-imposed exile that the political and economic consequences of sin merely exacerbate. For this reason, Wright (1996:268) states, "*Forgiveness of sins is another way of saying 'return from exile'.*" The exile, however, is not the Assyrian exile of Israel or the Babylonian exile of Judah. It is separation from God's favorable presence due to violations of God's law and rejection of God's mission.⁶ Jesus reconciles sinners to God both by making atonement for sin and by propitiating God's just wrath. He does not, however, bring them back to the Promised Land.⁷ Consequently, redeemed sinners, wherever they may

⁴Wright (1996:597) more pointedly says that Jesus had this sense of mission. See also Beale (2011:416-418), Kennedy (2008:23-24, 154-155, 219), McCartney and Enns (2001:103), and Meyer (1979:240-241).

⁵Cf. Wright (1996:309) who says, "When YHWH finally acted for Israel, the Gentiles would be blessed as well."

⁶Wright (1996:308-309) says, "In particular, we have seen that Jesus was challenging Israel to *be* Israel; that is, to be the light of the world, the salt of the earth. He was, that is, criticizing his contemporaries for being more concerned for victory over the gentile world than for bringing god's [*sic*] healing and salvation to it."

⁷Beale (2011:750-751) says that the spiritual exile from which Jesus rescues his people includes their eventual inheritance of a new earth. So then, the Promised Land expands to encompass the whole earth. This universal scope of God's saving activity was announced, for example, in Genesis 12:3 and Psalm 2:8. Wright (1996:445-446)

happen to live on earth, may enjoy unimpeded communion with God (cf. John 4:21-24). Their spiritual exile has ended. Jubilee has arrived.

Moreover, Jesus recalls the second-century world of the Antiochene crisis that was just as important to the writer of Daniel. Wright (1996:493) says, “Jesus’ symbolic actions [at the temple] inevitably invoked this entire wider context [of the Maccabean response to Antiochus IV]. Jesus was performing *Maccabaeian* actions, albeit with some radical differences.” In other words, he did not make literal war when he cleansed the temple. Maybe not, but the Antiochene crisis included the murder of a high priest that Jesus replayed. Unlike the writer of Hebrews, Matthew may not call Jesus a priest like Melchizedek, but Matthew makes a point of explaining the redemptive significance of Jesus’ name (Matt 1:21). He then presents Jesus as the one who can forgive sin (Matt 9:2) because he, by dying on a cross, paid the penalty for sin (Matt 20:28). Jesus was the definitive priest because he offered himself as the atoning substitute. In so doing, Jesus was involved in a war that others brought to him and that he took to them. This war, about which more will be said below, began long before his death.

In its narrative world (and for some readers, real world), Daniel 9:26 forecasts trouble and deprivation for the second anointed one of the seventy sevens, and both certainly found their way to Onias III. The same can be said about Jesus. Herod the Great tried to kill Jesus in infancy, and the trouble only continued after that. The Jewish religious leaders debated Jesus and tried to trap him with his words so that they could kill him. Jesus, however, was not surprised by the opposition. In fact, he seemed to initiate it by his supposedly blasphemous claims and upsetting activities—both of which challenged the entrenched power of the religious establishment. Saying that he came to bring a sword instead of peace, he certainly divided

similarly says, “He [Jesus] had not come to rehabilitate the symbol of holy land, but to subsume it within a different fulfillment of the kingdom, which would embrace the whole creation. . . .”

families, neighbors, and patriots over his identity (Matt 10:34-35). In some sense, then, he caused the trouble that eventually put him on the cross. Moreover, Jesus even announced his death. No sooner had Peter called Jesus the anointed one than Jesus predicted his impending suffering and death at the hands of Jewish religious leaders (Matt 16:21). Sure enough, they eventually succeeded in having him executed. The anointed one was cut off, seemingly with nothing. In fact, he never seemed to have much. While alive, the anointed one had no place of sleeping to call his own (Matt 8:20, Luke 9:58). When he died, his friends deserted him out of fear of being guilty by association (Matt 26:56, Mark 14:50), and the Roman soldiers cast lots for his clothes that they had taken away from him (Matt 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34, John 19:23). After being cut off (יָכַרַת), which can entail exclusion and/or extermination (and both happened to Jesus outside Jerusalem), Jesus was even buried in someone else's tomb (Matt 27:60). Maybe worst of all, he had even been disowned by God (Matt 27:46).

At first glance, Jesus did not look like an anointed one who would accomplish the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 and thereby answer Daniel's prayer about mercy for Israel and glory for God (cf. Wright 2003:557-558). His sinless life surely did not go unnoticed by his contemporaries, but his humble beginnings hardly aroused expectations of royal destiny or priestly intercession. He seemed to come to a tragic end like Onias III. Even so, all of this trouble was God's means of inaugurating his kingdom of redemption (cf. Matt 11:12, 20:28), and the Gospels suggest that Jesus spent most of his life intentionally looking ahead to his death.

If Jesus was another anointed one, he somewhat surprisingly tended to avoid using that title with reference to himself, but not because he rejected it. He told the Samaritan woman and the high priest that he was the anointed one (John 4:26, Mark 14:62) and admitted to Pilate that he was the king of the Jews (Mark 15:2). He also agreed with Simon Peter that he was the

anointed one (Matt 16:16). When others called him the anointed one, he did not deny their claim. He did, however, instruct those whom he had healed not to tell others who he was (e.g., Matt 9:27-30). Why? Jesus knew that his healings and resurrections temporarily reversed sin's curse for some people but not all people. Jesus neither healed everybody nor eliminated all infirmities at his first coming. Everyone whom he restored eventually died. Too much trumpeting of the miracles would have eventually met with indifference or scorn. After his resurrection, Jesus instructed his followers to go to the ends of the earth with the message of his saving death. His work on the cross and his resurrection from the dead are the enduring deeds about which humanity needs to hear. They forever rescue believers from physical and spiritual death. Jesus may have been cut off without anything for himself, but his death, according to the New Testament, secured eternal life for those who trust him for forgiveness of sins. He prevents them from being cut off from God's favorable presence (Walvoord 1971:229-230).

Another reason for downplaying his anointed status also seems to account for Jesus' command not to publicize his miracles. Because the term *anointed one* in popular parlance carried political expectations, Jesus did not want people to get the wrong idea about who he was. He may have been an anointed one who would conquer sin by suffering its penalty for his people, but he was not a royal and military champion who would restore the glory days of David and Solomon. If he made a point of calling himself the anointed one in the highly charged atmosphere of first-century Judea, too many listeners would be predisposed to interpret his claim in a way that he did not intend. So, he used the term sparingly.⁸ It was only after his resurrection that Jesus offered a full explanation of what it meant for him to be an anointed one.

⁸See Dunn (1992:375-376), Ladd (1974b:139-140), Marshall (2007:124-125), Schreiner (2008:206-207, 231), Wright (1992a:144-146), and Wright (1996:495-496).

11.2.2. Life after Death

11.2.2.1. The Risen Jesus in Matthew

After his resurrection, Matthew's Jesus claims to have received all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt 28:18). Whether he is speaking retrospectively about entering God's presence between his death and resurrection or proleptically about entering God's presence after his ascension, the anointed one again likens himself to Daniel's one like a son of man (cf. Beale 2011:390; France 1989:315; Sparks 2006:662). As the one like a son of man receives authority in Daniel 7:14, so the risen Jesus claims in Matthew 28:18 that all authority has been given to him. Having died to save his people from sin, he becomes king to subdue all of God's enemies and to give his people (the saints of the Most High) possession of the earth.

Because the anointed one's kingdom has no territorial limits, his people can never leave his domain and live in exile. Nevertheless, the anointed one's domain has pockets of resistance—hence, the so-called tension between the already and the not yet. The anointed one authoritatively sends his people to all nations so that they might make new disciples. They do this not by brandishing metal swords in the name of King Jesus but by calling others to faith in Jesus and then teaching believers to observe his commandments (cf. Levine 2006:148; Sparks 2006:661). They use what Ephesians 6:17 calls the sword of the Spirit, viz., the word of God. If faith in God's word brings about the transformation of the heart that makes obedience possible, obedience to God's word spreads the anointed one's righteousness and thereby establishes his reign over all that belongs to him. The anointed one who dies with nothing, as in Daniel 9:26, is exalted at his resurrection in Matthew 28 and thereby becomes ruler over everything.

11.2.2.2. The Risen Jesus in Luke

Meanwhile, the risen Jesus in Luke teaches his disciples how to read the Old Testament. In that lesson, given twice on the first Easter Sunday, Jesus explains his understanding of what it means to be an anointed one. The account in Luke 24 begins with two men walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They were discussing the news of the day: Jesus' tomb was empty. Some women had claimed to have seen angels who said that Jesus was alive. Even though the walkers recalled what Jesus had said about rising on the third day, they were still discouraged. They had not yet seen Jesus, and resurrections do not happen every day. Their dream of Israel's redemption, which they had associated with Jesus, was evaporating with each passing day since his death.

Jesus joins these two men and catches up on their discussion. They are discouraged because they had hoped that Jesus would redeem Israel—a yearning that may have been partially inspired by Zechariah's prophecy in Luke 1:68-79. After learning of their dashed hope, Jesus rebukes them for not knowing how to read what Christians call the Old Testament. From his point of view, they misunderstand God's redemption in terms of political triumph and economic prosperity for them (cf. Maxey 2005:115-118). They seemed to have overlooked the pattern of righteous and redemptive suffering that runs throughout the Old Testament. Consequently, they do not know how to fit a crucified anointed one into their worldview (Litwak 2005:119,121, 130; Strauss 1995:256-258). Moreover, they probably do not think that their relationship with the anointed one will involve suffering. So then, it is unlikely that they have any concept of carrying out a mission to the nations in the midst of suffering because of their association with the anointed one. Jesus then gives them an on-the-spot lesson in hermeneutics. If they know how to read the Old Testament, they will have a proper understanding of not only why God elected and

redeemed them but also who the anointed king will be. They will recognize that they are part of something bigger than their this-worldly dreams, and that something has to do with the salvific reign of an anointed one who participates in the Old Testament pattern of redemptive suffering.

Later in the day, the two men tell the disciples that Jesus has appeared to them. The disciples have the same misconception about God's redemption. They think that God's program is all about them and their dream of national restoration. Suddenly, Jesus arrives and repeats the lesson on how to read the Old Testament. Both times, Jesus refers to what is written about him in the Law, Prophets, and Psalms—the three parts of the Hebrew Bible. Jesus does not think that he fulfills a few proof texts such as Isaiah 53 (cf. Hays 2002:416; Litwak 2005:118, 120).⁹ Rather, he thinks that the whole Old Testament anticipates him and so is about him for that reason. Put differently, “The point of Jesus's words is not that such-and-such a verse has now come true but that the truth to which all of the Scriptures point has now been realized” (Green 1997:857; cf. McCartney and Enns 2001:103-104). Jesus is the climax of an unfolding story about redemption through unlikely means. The story involves a suffering anointed one, an exalted anointed one, and a heralded anointed one.

Jesus says, first, in Luke 24 that the anointed one must suffer. His contemporaries may not have expected the anointed one to suffer (cf. Matt 16:21-22), but Jesus the anointed one did expect to suffer. Why? A previous chapter has already discussed the Old Testament's repeated association of God's servants, including anointed ones, with suffering (see further Selman 1995:297-300). As seen in his references to the violent treatment of the prophets (Luke 6:22-23, 11:47-51, 13:34), Jesus knew about this prominent theme in his Bible and applied it to himself

⁹Tannehill (1986:286) says, “This sweeping language [in Luke 24:27, 44] seems to point beyond a limited number of scriptural predictions to something that is central to scripture as such.” That something, according to page 287, is “the pattern of prophetic destiny” that involves suffering. This pattern “links Jesus both with those who preceded him and those who follow him.”

(cf. Doble 2006:270-271, 275, 281; Laytham 2007:104, 107). God's servants, however, do not suffer only because of their allegiance to God. Suffering also has an instructional and refining purpose. Similar to Luke 2:40 and 52, Hebrews 5:7-10 remarkably says that Jesus (called the anointed one in 5:5) had to learn obedience from his suffering. The incarnate Son of God identified with humans who live in this fallen world. He experienced all the brokenness, misery, and stress of this life, but he never became discontent, impulsive, or disobedient. This unblemished character and conduct were not due to his divine nature that gave him an advantage over other people. Rather, he in his humanity progressively learned both how to submit to his Father's will in any and all situations and how to resist temptation in those same settings. As was true for Old Testament saints, God redeemed Jesus' suffering to advance his purpose. Jesus suffers, shows himself righteous, and lays down his righteous life as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of his people, and the obedient suffering of the anointed one becomes the source of salvation for those who put their trust in him. Jesus the anointed one took up the mission of Israel and completed it for the redemptive blessing of the world. So then, others could explain his sufferings in view of the Old Testament pattern and make the case that he was not some anomaly of history. Nor was he unfortunate or misguided in his zeal to right wrongs. The Old Testament tells the story of suffering servants and the suffering servant. The New Testament writers (and even Jesus himself) understood that story to reach its climax in him who, because of his righteous life, made vicarious atonement through his sufferings.

Jesus says, secondly, in Luke 24 that the anointed one must be vindicated and exalted. As seen in God's defense of David against Saul or the Queen of Sheba's praise of Solomon or the victories of Asa, Jehoshaphat, and others, God blessed his anointed kings before a watching world. At the same time, Books 1-3 of Psalms present David as a king who suffers because of

the hostility (sins) of others and because of his own sin. Still, Psalm 2 at the beginning of Book 1 and Psalm 72 at the end of Book 2 anticipate an ideal king who will rule justly, kindly, and supremely over the earth. As David's prayer for Solomon, Psalm 72 implicitly recognizes that the ideal of kingship has not reached fruition during David's reign. Moreover, Psalm 89 at the end of Book 3 states that the ideal of kingship did not find fulfillment in Solomon or any other scion of David. These psalms, especially when read as part of the book of Psalms that reached its final form no earlier than the post-exilic period, thrust the royal ideal into the future (cf. Grant 2004:3, 9-10, 33, 221). Even when there is no Davidic king in Jerusalem, these psalms affirm the expectation that God and his king will put down all evil and restore creation. The nations will gladly submit to God's rule through his king, and that king will be a worthy recipient of adulation. After his resurrection, Jesus taught his disciples to read this messianic expectation with reference to him. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus represent his vindication and exaltation as the anointed one, as the king of the Jews (Wright 2003:583). The resurrection is the proof of God's satisfaction with the righteous life and atoning sacrifice. The Old Testament anticipates the reign of God, and that reign, according to the New Testament, occurs presently through the exalted Jesus.

So then, Jesus taught his disciples to read the Old Testament messianically with reference to him.¹⁰ In his understanding, his person and work are the climax of the story of God's plan of redemption. Put differently, Jesus and the writers of the New Testament believed that Jesus takes up Israel's mission and gets it right this time (cf. Hagner 1993:62; Kennedy 2008:224-225). He completes God's redemptive program that includes all who believe in him—both Jew and Gentile.

¹⁰Laytham (2007:108) says, "In short, Jesus does not just know where the story goes, does not just take the story in its proper direction; he is where the story goes. . . . The contrast between the two disciples and Jesus is thus not only noetic but ontic: he not only knows but is what they are meant to learn and become."

Jesus says, thirdly, in Luke 24 that the work of the anointed one brings about world evangelization through the preaching of repentance and forgiveness among all nations.

Tannehill (1986:294) observes, “The Lukan narrative does not stop where Matthew and John stop, with the resurrection of Jesus and his commission to his disciples.” The reason is that Luke-Acts is “not just the story of Jesus. It is the story of a purpose of God that is being realized both through Jesus and his witnesses.” The disciples, says Latham (2007:108), “are called to a continued performance of the scriptural story.” The purpose of God in both Testaments involves a mission that includes the salvation of all nations by their repentance and God’s forgiveness.

The Old Testament may narrow its focus to one man and his family, but it never forgets the nations (cf. Baker 2010:120). God told Abram that his descendants would bless others (Gen 12:3). For this reason, he moved Abram from Ur to Canaan, which sits between three continents at the crossroads of civilization. On that land bridge, Abram’s descendants were supposed to model a redeemed society for all who passed through for one reason or another. If Abraham and his descendants are the channel of redemptive blessing, Luke 3:34 identifies Jesus as the seed of Abraham (cf. Gal 3:16). Jesus is the new Israel who performs the mission of old Israel as originally given to Abraham. As Simeon had announced during Jesus’ infancy, he would be a light to the Gentiles in addition to being the glory of Israel. Those who believe that Jesus is the anointed one inherit the promises to Abraham. In other words, they become a kingdom of priests to the nations and receive the same mission as Israel to witness in word and deed to the greatness and goodness of God in his anointed one (1 Pet 2:9, Rev 1:6). Jesus the anointed one said that repentance and forgiveness will be preached in his name. These twin themes of evangelism are made possible among the nations when Jesus’ disciples herald his life, death, and exaltation.

A reasonable question to ask is why Jesus waited until the first Easter Sunday to give his hermeneutics lesson. Why did he not give it at the beginning of his ministry and so clarify from the start who he understood himself to be? Litwak (2005:140 footnote 84) offers an insightful answer: “It may be that Jesus did not seek to interpret the Scriptures in this new ‘messianic’ way until after the resurrection because the disciples needed to see the patterns actually played out in his experience before an explanation of these patterns in the Scriptures vis-à-vis Jesus’ experience would truly make some sense for the disciples.” Although the Old Testament had numerous examples of redemptive suffering, the literary and political climate in first-century Judea had people thinking along different lines. Once Jesus modeled and performed the sacrificial ministry that the Old Testament foreshadowed, then his hermeneutics lesson could “tie up the loose ends” left over from his teaching before his death. At this point, the fresh and even surprising ways that Jesus embodied the Old Testament trajectory would make sense. Instead of scratching their heads in bewilderment, his disciples would see how God wove all the threads together to produce a stunning tapestry of their redemption.

11.2.3. The War that Jesus Fought

All of this is to say that Jesus, the anointed one, fought a different war than many of his contemporaries expected to wage. Regarding the incident about paying taxes to Caesar (Matt 22:15-22, Mark 12:13-17, Luke 20:19-26), Wright (1996:505) says, “Jesus the Galilean envisaged a different sort of revolution from that of Judah the Galilean. He was not advocating compromise with Rome; but nor was he advocating straightforward resistance of the sort that refuses to pay the tax today and sharpens its swords for battle tomorrow.” Wright (1996:564) later adds, “But the enemy against whom the battle would be fought would not be the pagan occupying forces. It would be the real enemy that stood behind them; the accuser, the satan, that

had duped YHWH's people into themselves taking the pagan route, seeking to bring YHWH's kingdom by force of arms and military revolt." Jesus conquered the power of sin not by destroying the sinners but by absorbing the punishment for their sins. Because his righteous and unjust suffering became vicariously redemptive, he, indeed, lived up to the meaning that the angel had assigned to his name (Matt 1:21). He saved his people from their sin and reconciled them to God. In some mysterious way, he thereby stripped the spiritual forces of evil of their power to captivate people in rebellion—an outcome that his exorcisms had foreshadowed (see Meyer 1979:155-156; Ridderbos 1962:61-64; Tannehill 1986:88-89). Just as mysterious, he later sent his Spirit to transform his people's predisposition so that they might cease being enslaved to sin and instead become practitioners of the heavenly King's law. Jesus and his Spirit create the righteous society for which the Old Testament prophets and intertestamental literature longed. They realize the fourth objective of Daniel 9:24 (righteousness) and so inaugurate the kingdom of God (Ridderbos 1962:290-292).

11.3. Jesus and the Six Objectives of Daniel 9:24

Studies of the seventy sevens often discuss the details of the seven sevens, sixty-two sevens, and seventieth seven in isolation from the six objectives in Daniel 9:24. In other words, the six objectives do not factor into the exegesis of verses 25-27. Previous chapters related the six objectives to Ezra the anointed one of verse 25 and also to the Antiochene crisis of verses 26-27. What, then, is Jesus' relation to the six objectives?

Some scholars may hesitate to answer this question. It is true that the New Testament never explicitly cites Daniel 9:24, but explicit quotations are not the only way that the writers of the New Testament interacted with the Old Testament. Its categories of thought almost unconsciously shaped their view of the world and especially their view of Jesus. This was

certainly true of the book of Daniel.¹¹ When Jesus called himself the son of man, he did not have to mention Daniel by name as the source of the title. Everybody knew what text was in view. The same could be said about the six objectives of Daniel 9:24. Sin, atonement, righteousness, fulfillment of prophecy, and temple were woven into the fabric of the New Testament world. After Jesus' hermeneutics lesson on Easter Sunday (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47), the New Testament writers instinctively related these topics to the person and work of Jesus.

Something else bears mentioning. Just as a mathematics textbook does not give the solution to every problem in the back, so the New Testament does not cite every Old Testament verse and explain its relation to Jesus. Nevertheless, because the writers of the New Testament sufficiently model the redemptive-historical hermeneutic that Jesus taught them on the first Easter Sunday, their readers can "work new problems" by applying apostolic hermeneutics to those verses that are not specifically mentioned in the New Testament.¹² The six objectives of the seventy sevens are among the new problems, but the solutions, for the most part, are fairly straightforward.

11.3.1. The First Three Objectives

Because the first three objectives concern the problem of sin, they can be grouped together here. It is hardly controversial to say that the New Testament considers the death of Jesus the definitive solution to sin. The New Testament begins with an angelic explanation of Jesus' name in terms of salvation from sin (Matt 1:21), and then the first four books devote considerable attention to narrating Jesus' death. Jesus in Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 describes his impending death as a ransom for many. Calling himself the good shepherd in John

¹¹Pennington (2009:286) says, "It is clear that Daniel formed an important conceptual context for Jesus and the authors of the NT." Evans (2002:521) adds, "In short, much of Jesus' eschatology is influenced by themes and images found in the book of Daniel." According to Wright (1996:598), "Jesus made the book of Daniel thematic for his whole vocation."

¹²The analogy comes from a recorded lecture by Edmund P. Clowney.

10:11, Jesus says that he willingly lays down his life for the sheep. He later announces in John 12:23, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” in death. When these passages and others are read with recollection of the meaning of Jesus’ name, it is evident that Jesus was aware of the atoning purpose of his first coming.

The rest of the New Testament, in one way or another, agrees with Jesus’ self-evaluation. After mentioning the crucifixion of Jesus, Paul says in Acts 13:38, “Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.” Paul’s letters abound with references to the redemptive death of Jesus. For example, Galatians 1:4 says that Jesus “gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age.” The Pastoral Epistles, whether written by Paul or not, also claim that Jesus “gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness” (Titus 2:14). Hebrews 9:15 refers to Jesus’ death as a ransom for sins committed under the first covenant, and 9:28 says that “Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people.” According to 1 Peter 2:24, Jesus “bore our sins in his body on the tree,” and 3:18 adds, “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.” First John 2:2 and 4:10 call Jesus’ death a propitiation for the estranged relationship with God that sin causes. Revelation 5:9 identifies the exalted Jesus as a lamb who is worthy to take the scroll because “you were slain and with your blood you purchased [people] for God.” More examples, of course, could be adduced. Not to be overlooked is the worshipful context of Revelation 5:9. The writers of the New Testament praise God for what he has done in Jesus.

Daniel 9:26 may not specifically say that the anointed one’s death atoned for sin. Even so, one is not being unreasonable to ask why the death of the second anointed one is mentioned if it has nothing to do with the accomplishing of the six objectives, especially the first three. Moreover, Daniel’s prayer has implored God to provide a merciful solution to the sins of his

people, and the first three objectives of the seventy sevens indicate that God wills to do so. In this atoning context, Gabriel then informs Daniel that an anointed one will be cut off. Meanwhile, Daniel has been reading the book of Jeremiah, which expects an anointed king of exceptional righteousness. This king's reign will be accompanied by the priestly performance of atoning sacrifice (Jer 33:18). Daniel has also handled visions (Nebuchadnezzar's and his) that announce the conquest of human evil by a coming kingdom and king. Furthermore, Daniel and his companions have experienced suffering because of their commitment to the God of Israel, and the God of Israel has used this suffering as a witness to Gentile kings and others. In other words, the Old Testament's pattern of righteous and redemptive suffering occurs in the book of Daniel. So then, linking the death of the anointed one in Daniel 9:26 with the realization of the six objectives in Daniel 9:24 hardly strains the rules of sound hermeneutics.

As already mentioned, Jesus taught his disciples to read the Old Testament in view of God's program of redemption that reaches its climax in his person and work. The apostles and others did just this in the books of the New Testament. They may not cite every Old Testament verse and explain how it is fulfilled in Jesus. Instead, they assumed that their readers knew Jesus' hermeneutic, could understand their Christ-centered reading of the Old Testament, and could handle the rest of the Old Testament in a similar way on their own. If associating the anointed one in Daniel 9:26 with the six objectives in Daniel 9:24, especially the first three, makes good hermeneutical sense without Jesus' lesson in Luke 24, that association makes perfect sense with Jesus' Easter teaching. God uses his anointed ones to address the problem of sin.

The New Testament demonstrates that God answered the two requests of Daniel's prayer. First, God in Jesus treated his people mercifully by providing atonement at great cost to himself. In so doing, he diverted his wrath onto Jesus who absorbed it along with sin's just penalty. A

righteous God propitiated his righteous anger and expiated the consequence of sin without destroying the sinners (Dan 9:16). Second, God brought glory to his name through his chosen means of redemption. Humans might not pursue glory through redemptive suffering, but Daniel's God is great and awesome. He exists in a league by himself and answers prayers in ways that exceed human expectation. Humans can only marvel at "the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (Rom 11:33) that regenerates through death.

11.3.2. The Fourth Objective

The discussion of the fourth objective in chapter 5 introduced the connection between lasting righteousness and Jeremiah's new covenant. What distinguished the new covenant from the old covenant is the internalization of God's law. The old covenant may have provided the standard of righteous conduct for a people already redeemed by putting their faith in the blood of the Passover lamb; nevertheless, the old covenant did not have the power of regeneration within it. The blood of animals can neither atone for sin nor change the heart (Heb 10:1-4). Instead, the blood of the Passover lamb typologically anticipated the blood of the Lamb of God that efficaciously takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29, 1 Cor 5:7). The power to transform the heart belongs exclusively to the new covenant in Jesus' blood (cf. John 1:17), and Old Testament saints experienced that power proleptically by believing God's promise regarding the blood of animal sacrifices (cf. Ferguson 2002:15-17).

Calvin (1981b:131), as seen in his comments on Jeremiah 31:33, recognized this truth. He said: "... the Fathers [Old Testament saints], who were formerly regenerated, obtained this favor through Christ, so that we may say, that it was as it were transferred to them from another source. The power, then, to penetrate into the heart was not inherent in the law, but it was a benefit transferred to the law from the Gospel." God's grace comes ultimately through Jesus the

anointed one. Only the Spirit of Jesus can apply the benefits of Jesus' active and passive obedience to believers and thereby regenerate and transform their hearts. From a historical point of view, Old Testament saints experienced this work of Jesus' Spirit proleptically, and New Testament saints receive it retrospectively.

Transforming grace is the basis for everlasting righteousness. Jesus as the new Israel recapitulated the mission of old Israel and performed it (see Beale 2011:406; Wright 1996:608-609). Because he kept the law of God without infraction, he is the righteous one who can satisfy the justice of God by paying sin's penalty. The resurrection proves God's acceptance of Jesus' work. Not only does the resurrection vindicate Jesus as the Righteous One (Acts 2:24, 33; Rom 1:4; 1 Tim 3:16) but it also makes him able to share his righteousness with those who believe in him.¹³ The Spirit of Jesus applies the righteousness of Jesus to believers so that they become positionally and progressively conformed to his likeness through justification, sanctification, and glorification. As they reflect his righteousness in character and conduct, righteousness spreads throughout their areas of influence. Stated differently, the kingdom of God advances on earth as God's people exhibit the righteousness of Jesus that the Spirit of Jesus imputes to and grows in them.

As was said in chapter 5, the Mosaic covenant had to do with the sanctification and mission of an already redeemed people. It told them how to live righteously in response to God's preliminary and anticipatory provision of redemption in the Exodus. As seen, for example, in Paul's association of the law with love (Rom 13:8-10), Mosaic instruction continues to have the same role in the lives of New Testament saints. It defines how a royal priesthood carries out its mission to model a redeemed and righteous alternative to the disobedience of

¹³See Beale (2011:253-254, 262-263, 473-477, 493-498, 575-588), Gaffin (1987:89-92, 114-117, 120-129), and Vos (1980a:107, 109-114 and 1986:151).

God's revealed will that characterizes this present evil age. The observance of dietary, sacrificial, and other laws may require adjustment because of the movement of redemptive history, but the abiding truths behind these laws remain in effect.

Chapter 5 also suggested that Daniel's reading of Jeremiah would have led him to associate the fourth objective of everlasting righteousness with Jeremiah's expectation of a future king named Yahweh Is Our Righteousness. Jesus claimed to be Daniel's son of man who had received dominion, majesty, and a kingdom. As such, he inherited and realized the royal commission given to Adam. He, having received all authority, rules over creation for God's glory. Jesus was also a son of David who, like David, suffered in his capacity as God's anointed king. Unlike David's sufferings, however, Jesus' sufferings save his people from sin by paying sin's penalty and breaking sin's power. If Daniel's one like a son of man corporately represents the saints of the Most High by identifying with them in their suffering, Jesus similarly represents God's people (both Jew and Gentile) by defeating their enemies—internal and external, earthly and spiritual, human and demonic, seen and unseen. Jesus rules over creation for the benefit of his people in a way that Adam and David, because of their sin, could not.

Daniel may not have been so readily able to combine the son of man and a suffering anointed one, but Jesus did. Moreover, the anointed one who is cut off in Daniel 9:26 certainly fits Jesus' understanding of his mission. According to Ridderbos (1962:461),

In the eschatological prophecies about the Son of Man, the motif of the passion, death and resurrection is absent. And conversely, what is said about the passion, death and exaltation of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53 is of a different nature than the divine transfer of power to the Son of Man. Jesus connected these two figures in the paradoxical, mysterious words that the Son of Man (Dan. 7) must be "rejected," "suffer a great deal," "be killed" (Isaiah 53) and rise from the dead after three days. This was the new, the "revolutionary" element in his messianic self-revelation.

Pitre (2005:403) further argues that Jesus did not have to go outside the book of Daniel in order to claim that the son of man would suffer. Daniel 9:26 makes that connection within the narrative world of the book. Pitre's insight strengthens Ridderbos' argument.

By saying that Jesus was "creative and original in his thinking, his reading of scripture, and his use of imagery," Wright (1996:519) supports Ridderbos (see also Dunn 1992:380-381, 2002:546-547). As seen at the end of the previous chapter, some of Jesus' contemporaries considered Daniel's son of man a messianic figure. Jesus, then, was not completely original in his understanding of the term. His combination of the son of man, son of David, and suffering servant may have been new and perhaps upsetting but not impossible. He, the Righteous One, made everlasting righteousness possible for God's people and God's world. His self-reference as the one like a son of man and his agreement with others that he was the anointed one signaled his identity as the promised righteous king who would establish the fourth objective of Daniel 9:24. The expectations of the Old Testament found greater fulfillment in him.

One other point should be made. Daniel 2:37 says that the God of heaven gives dominion to Nebuchadnezzar, but not forever. Three other kingdoms follow his. Moreover, verse 38 limits Nebuchadnezzar's rule to humans, beasts, and birds—creatures that dwell on earth. Verse 39 even explicitly says that the third kingdom will rule over all the earth. None of the four kingdoms, however, rules over heaven. So then, Daniel 2 contrasts the human kingdoms of earth and God's kingdom of heaven. Pennington (2009:272) observes that Daniel 2-7 "go[es] to great lengths to describe God as the Most High, heavenly God in contrast to and reigning over all the kingdoms and potentates of the human and earthly realm. This . . . proves to be a key idea in Daniel 2-7 and points forward to a similar focus in the Gospel of Matthew." That focus is especially seen in Matthew's preference for the phrase *kingdom of heaven* instead of *kingdom of*

God.¹⁴ Mark 1:15 reports that Jesus began his ministry during the Roman Empire by proclaiming, “The time has come; the kingdom of God is at hand.” Curiously, Matthew 4:17 (a parallel verse) and other verses in Matthew refer to the kingdom of God as the kingdom of heaven. According to Pennington (2009:289-290, 320-321), the writer of Matthew has not used a “reverential circumlocution” to avoid direct reference to God (as was done in the literature of Second Temple Judaism) but has, instead, applied to Jesus the contrast in Daniel 2 between the human kingdoms of earth and the divine kingdom of heaven (see also Schreiner 2008:46-47). This contrast involves not only ontology (Jesus in contrast to the kings in Daniel 2 is more than human) but also ethics. Pennington (2009:209) says, “He [Matthew] is crafting a sharp distinction between two realms: one represented by the earthly world and its unrighteous inhabitants and the other by God,” who, of course, embodies righteousness and sends his eternal Son in human dress. The Son in his deity shares the attribute of righteousness and then reflects it as the image of God in his humanity. Pennington adds, “*Matthew uses the heaven and earth pair as a rubric to organize and explain this kind of dualistic thinking which is widespread throughout his Gospel.*” As Matthew 6:24 states, each person has to make a decision about serving one of two possible masters, and the outcomes in terms of conduct and consequences could not be starker (Pennington 2009:247).

At this point, it is hard not to think that Matthew’s contrast between heaven and earth constitutes his way of distinguishing between the two ages that characterize New Testament eschatology as a whole.¹⁵ Although Pennington (2009:334) prefers to speak of two realms—an earthly realm (characterized by disobedience to God’s commands) and a heavenly realm

¹⁴The phrase *kingdom of God* is not completely absent in Matthew. It occurs in Matthew 12:28, 19:24, 21:31, 21:43, and perhaps 6:33. See the discussion of these verses in Pennington (2009:299-310).

¹⁵On the two ages in New Testament eschatology, see Hoekema (1979:13-75), Ladd (1974b:68-69; 302-303, 329, 364-365, 550-552, 573-577, 591, 595-597), Ridderbos (1957:63-70 and 1975:44-53, 91-93), and Vos (1986:1-41).

(characterized by willing submission to King Jesus) that remain in tension until the eschaton—he recognizes that “Matthew’s bipartite *Weltanschauung*” includes “moral duality (good versus evil) and an eschatological duality (this age and the age to come).” Whereas human kingdoms represent this present evil age that lives without reference to God and so suffers the deleterious consequences of unrighteous thought and conduct, the kingdom of heaven has to do with the age to come that irrupts into this present evil age through the person and work of God’s incarnate Son. These two incompatible ages run concurrently between the first and second comings of Jesus until God’s kingdom and king overthrow the evil regimes of human history and cause righteousness to prevail in human hearts and upon the earth—the fourth objective of Daniel 9:24.

11.3.3. The Fifth Objective

The seventy sevens disclose what God will do in the future in order to answer Daniel’s twofold prayer for mercy for Israel and glory for God. Stated differently, the seventy sevens announce God’s promises and state his intention to fulfill those promises. Sealing prophetic vision, the fifth objective, has to do with promise and fulfillment. Promise and fulfillment assume God’s continued activity in history to work out his plan of redemption. Gabriel assures Daniel that God’s purpose for his people did not end in exile. God still has more in store for them, and he will finish what he has announced. The seventy sevens, of course, do not constitute the first promise of God in the Old Testament. By the time that Gabriel appeared to Daniel, Yahweh already had an established track record of announcing his intention and then performing his word. Still, the Old Testament ends with an incomplete story and some promises unfulfilled.

Not surprisingly, then, the New Testament opens with Matthew's announcements of fulfillment. While it is true that some of the Old Testament citations were not predictions in their Old Testament context, Wright (1992a:63) insightfully comments,

Matthew sees the whole Old Testament as the embodiment of promise—in the sense of presenting to us a God of gracious and saving purpose, liberating action, and covenantal faithfulness to his people. That generates a tremendous sense of expectation and hope, reflected in all parts of the Hebrew canon. Hence, all kinds of Old Testament writing (not just prophecies) can be drawn on in relating that promise to Jesus.

What Wright says about Matthew could apply also to the other writers of the New Testament. Jesus changed the way that they read the Old Testament. After Jesus' hermeneutics lesson on Easter Sunday, the disciples realized that the Spirit who inspired the prophets was talking about something or someone that the prophets could not fully comprehend at the time (1 Pet 1:10-12). The authors of the New Testament drew the strands of Old Testament theology together so that they converged on Jesus, as God had intended. Jesus fit the pattern that the Old Testament introduced and developed. He was the climax and fulfillment of God's eternal plan.

Daniel 9:24 is not the only reference to sealing in Daniel. Daniel is also told to seal a vision (8:26) and a book (12:4) until the time of the end. The contents of both are a mystery that only Jesus, according to the New Testament, can disclose. As both the message and the messenger of God, Jesus comes in the fullness of time to inaugurate God's kingdom of redemption. He alone, by virtue of his death for sin, has the right to open the seals on the revelation of God's salvation of his world and people (Rev 5:9-10). Moreover, Jesus alone, by virtue of his resurrection that attests to the satisfaction of divine justice, guarantees the announcement of God's victory over evil and God's vindication of those for whom Jesus died.

11.3.4. The Sixth Objective

Gabriel informed Daniel that the seventy sevens would anoint the most holy one (either a place or a person). Given Daniel's plea for the restoration of God's desolate sanctuary (Dan 9:17), the sixth objective would seem to have a building and not a person in view. The Old Testament and intertestamental literature may never record the return of God's glory to the second temple, but the Gospel of John does. John 1:14 says that the Word, earlier identified as God, took a human nature and lived on earth among "us" people. The Greek verb *σκηνώ* that is translated *lived* more literally means "to live in a tent." The nominal form of the verb, *σκηνή* (tent), is regularly used in the Septuagint for the Hebrew *מִשְׁכָּן* (tabernacle). John¹⁶ says that "we" have seen in Jesus the glory of the one and only (*μονογενής*) who has come from God. Moreover, John 2 records Jesus' cleansing of the temple. When confronted by the Jews about his authority, Jesus said that he would destroy the temple and raise it in three days (2:19). John adds that Jesus had the temple of his body in mind, not Herod's temple. The first two chapters of John, then, associate Jesus with the tabernacle and temple. The glory of God has returned to take up residence not in the *קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים* of Herod's temple but in a new *קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים*, viz., Jesus' body.¹⁷ As Immanuel, which means "God with us" (Matt 1:23), Jesus is Daniel's anointed *קֹדֶשׁ* and Ezekiel's new temple (cf. Gruenthaner 1939:47-48).

The parallels between Ezekiel 40-48 and Jesus continue in John. In John 4, Jesus meets a Samaritan woman at a well and strikes up a conversation with her by asking for a drink. Astonished that a Jewish man would pay attention to her, she asks why he is talking to her. Jesus

¹⁶Because the identity of the author of the Johannine literature is not significant for this study, the traditional attribution of the Gospel and the Apocalypse to the Apostle John will be retained for convenience.

¹⁷Cf. Meadowcroft (2001:448). Spatafora (1997:294) says, "It [God's glory] is no longer found in a geographical or material place, in a building, but in the God made man."

responds by saying that she, if she knew who he was, would ask him for a drink and would receive living water. Confused and even offended, she asks how Jesus can give her water. Jesus says that his water relieves thirst forever and produces a spring of eternal life within those who drink it. If John has already identified Jesus as the new temple, this conversation with the Samaritan woman further establishes him as the source of the river of God's redeeming grace that flows from Ezekiel's new temple.¹⁸ Jesus will do no less than transform creation, not by literally desalinating the Dead Sea but by reversing the curse and restoring paradise. Moreover, the river of God's grace that runs from Jesus into the woman makes her a temple of the Holy Spirit. The glory of God now dwells in her, and she, in Christ, becomes Ezekiel's new temple and Daniel's **קִדְשׁ קִדְשִׁים**. All who believe in Jesus, not just the Samaritan woman, drink of his river and become temples of the Spirit of Jesus (John 7:37-39, 1 Cor 3:16, Eph 2:22, and 1 Pet 2:5).

Revelation 21:22 goes so far as to say that no temple is in the New Jerusalem. This observation might initially seem to contradict Daniel and Ezekiel, but not really. As seen in chapter 5, Ezekiel 48 expands the most holy place to include the new city (cf. Briggs 1999:104-108, 221-223; Mathewson 2003:111-115, 223-224). John recognizes this truth and combines it with his belief that the glory of God took up residence in Jesus. Jesus and those who believe in him become the most holy one. For this reason, Revelation 21:18 reports that the New Jerusalem is made of pure gold. Gold in the city recalls the gold interior of Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:21-22, 2 Chr 3:4-9). The whole city becomes a **קִדְשׁ קִדְשִׁים** (cf. Beale 2011:553-554, 640;

¹⁸Spatafora (1997:114) says, "Living water is clearly an OT image for spiritual realities associated with the temple. . . . That fulness [*sic*] of grace that was associated with the temple is now found in Christ: 'Jesus' claim to supply living water could not fail to challenge Jewish readers. It meant that the centre and source of the world's life was no longer the temple of Jerusalem, but himself, the new temple.'" Spatafora cites McKelvey (1969:81). Only the Gospel of John records that blood and water flowed from Jesus' side when pierced by the soldier's spear (John 19:34).

Mathewson 2003:153-154). No temple is necessary because God through Jesus resides without impediment in the midst of his people (cf. Spatafora 1997:237, 239). They are the temple that has become a people in an unbounded place (i.e., everywhere) rather than a circumscribed place among a multitude of people (cf. Gundry 1987:254-264).

Daniel may not have been able to make all of these connections, and one wonders how much the writer of *1 Enoch* 24-36 understood of his geographical discussion of radiating righteousness. In fact, 1 Peter 1:10-12 says that the prophets of the Old Testament struggled to understand what they were saying but, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, wrote better than they knew. With the benefit of Jesus' teaching in Luke 24, the apostles could say without doubt that what the prophets had announced was being realized in Jesus. Jesus is the new temple, the Holy of Holies, Immanuel, and the glory of God. He puts an end to sin by atoning for it. He establishes righteousness in his people and throughout the world by imputing his righteousness to his people and satisfying the justice of God by his vicarious death for the sins of his people. Moreover, his Spirit conforms his people to his likeness. He restores communion between God and his creation. In sum, Jesus can be viewed as the answer to Daniel's prayer for the mercy and glory of God. He accomplishes the six objectives of the seventy sevens and thereby ushers in the Jubilee of Jubilees.

11.4. Jesus and Jubilee

The Gospels never report that Jesus read Gabriel's announcement of seventy sevens (or ten jubilees) in the synagogue. Instead, Luke 4:18-19 says that Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2, which anticipates a favorable year of liberation from various causes of poverty and bondage. That this favorable year is the year of jubilee finds support, among other reasons, in the similarity of

וְקִרְאתֶם דְּרוֹר (and you will proclaim emancipation [at the beginning of the fiftieth year]) in

Leviticus 25:10 with לְקַרְא לְשִׁבּוּיִם דְּרוֹר (to proclaim emancipation to the captives) in Isaiah 61:1.

That the one making this announcement in Isaiah 61 is Isaiah's (suffering) servant finds support in the references to the Spirit of God in Isaiah 61:1 and Isaiah 42:1 (Webb 1996:233-234; see also Ringe 1985:31). Anointed by the Spirit of God at his baptism, Jesus read Isaiah 61 with reference to his person and ministry and then expanded the jubilee concept to include more than economic redemption.¹⁹ By his own life and death, Jesus would pay the penalty for the sinful selfishness that always lies behind a lack of charity and an acceptance of injustice. His death and resurrection, according to the New Testament, release people from the destructive patterns of thinking and behaving—whether individual, corporate, or systemic—that are the deleterious consequences of unbelief and rebellion.

Two scholars are worth quoting at length on this subject. First, Oswalt (1998:565) asks, “Who are the poor [in Isaiah 61:1]?” He pastorally answers:

“Those who are so broken by life that they have no more heart to try; those who are so bound up in their various addictions that liberty and release are a cruel mirage; those who think that they will never again experience the favor of the Lord, or see his just vengeance meted out against those who have misused them; those who think that their lives hold nothing more than ashes, sackcloth, and the fainting heaviness of despair. These are they to whom the Servant/Messiah shouts, ‘Good news!’”

Similarly, Ringe (1985:66), in the context of discussing how the Greek verb ἀφίημι comprises part of the vocabulary of jubilee in the Gospels, says:

Indeed, ethical and cultic concerns in general can be distinguished but not separated in Gospel usage [of ἀφίημι]. Both are means of talking about the effect of the advent of God's reign in breaking the tyranny of evil in all of its forms. In that context, “release” is

¹⁹See Strauss (1995:226-249) for a discussion of whether Luke 4:18-19 cites Isaiah 61:1-2 with reference to Jesus being anointed as a prophet, priest, or king. The New Testament, of course, teaches that Jesus performs the duties of all three offices. The results of the speaker's ministry in Isaiah 61:1-2 may involve the overlapping of offices.

more than a metaphor for God's work of redemption and reconciliation, and the economic image of the cancellation of debts is not simply another way to speak of God's forgiveness of humankind. Rather, "forgiveness" or "release" in all arenas of human life is portrayed as one of the principal characteristics of humankind's encounter with God's reign. Building on the background of that term in the Jubilee traditions, one can see that it is in social, political, and economic arenas that the sovereignty of God finds its primary expression, breaking the stranglehold of the old order on those we have come to recognize as "the poor."

Oswalt and Ringe appreciably recognize that sin alienates people not only from God but also from each other. Sin is far more than what individuals think and do privately. It spreads horizontally within society and vertically between generations so that sinful ways of life become rationalized, normalized, and institutionalized. Consequently, the whole human race suffers from addiction to evil. God in Jesus ministers to the needs of whole people by rescuing them from the deleterious effects of their lack of love for him and the equally harmful effects of their lack of love for each other.

Isaiah 61 may not identify the Spirit-endowed liberator as an anointed one, but Luke 4:41 does. The same Jesus who read Isaiah 61 in the synagogue later healed people of various infirmities. In other words, he set them free from the effects of Adam's original sin (Beale 2011:423; Ridderbos 1962:65, 115). When he cast out evil spirits, he forbade them to call him the son/Son of God because they knew that he was the anointed one. The two designations—son/Son of God and anointed one—are nearly synonymous on one level. The New Testament, of course, considers Jesus the divine Son of God, but this title also has royal implications that do not necessarily entail divine identity. According to Psalm 2:7, God's king is his son, and God's king is also David or David's son (cf. Luke 1:32). In Jesus, God irrupted into this present evil age to restore David's throne and establish God's kingdom of redemption. Jesus entered what was currently enemy territory in order to reclaim what rightfully belonged to God. As the son of David (Luke 1:32, 3:31) and the son/Son of God (Luke 3:38), Jesus defeated the kingdom of

darkness that holds God's people and God's world captive in sin and its misery. The reconciliation of a fallen world to God's eternal purpose is no longer future only. It is also now (cf. Ridderbos 1962:61-64).

Even so, Jesus stopped short of announcing the arrival of the day of vengeance in Isaiah 61:2. During his first coming, he addressed the physical and spiritual needs of people but did not settle all accounts by eliminating the impenitent enemies of God and God's people. Just as much sin occurred during the seventy sevens, so it continues unabated between the two comings of Jesus. "Therefore," says Bruno (2010:98), "it seems that the fulfillment of the Jubilee through Jesus' ministry was an inauguration, but not completion, of the eschatological Jubilee." Jesus began at his first coming to remove sin by paying its penalty, securing forgiveness, and transforming the heart by his Spirit. This work, however, remains in process until the second coming. Consequently, the jubilee that Jesus brings has, like the rest of redemptive history, a progressive and organic quality.

Luke 4:34 uses yet another title for Jesus, viz., the Holy One of God. Though this designation comes on the lips of a demon-possessed man, the author of Luke agreed that Jesus was the Holy One of God. In this capacity, Jesus expelled the demon from the man and so also from God's world. In so doing, the Holy One was at work to extend the Most Holy Place beyond the temple of his body to the world around him. If Ezekiel expected the city of God to be square like the Most Holy Place, Jesus in whom a holy God resided was ridding God's world of uncleanness and thereby making it fit for God once again to dwell among humans in unimpeded communion. He was accomplishing the sixth objective of Daniel 9:24. More will be said about this point in the next section. For now, it is enough to say that the New Testament considers the work of Jesus the definitive source of jubilee. In the last book of the New

Testament (and therefore the Christian Bible), every creature jubilantly celebrates what Jesus has accomplished (Rev 5).

One other passage should be noted for it seems to describe an event not long after the synagogue scene in Luke 4. Matthew 11:4-6 reports Jesus' response to a question from John the Baptist who was in prison and not so sure if Jesus was who he (John) had said he (Jesus) would be. Perhaps John expected Jesus to decry irreligion and injustice more forcefully. As Herod's prisoner, John may have hoped for liberation by the true king of Israel. It is also not unreasonable to think that John expected a different outcome to his ministry. Having baptized the Lord's anointed one, John must have thought that the victory and vindication of God's people were imminent. Jesus, however, was not acting like the anointed one that John expected; therefore, a confused John sent messengers to Jesus. Through John's messengers, Jesus made John aware of his ministry through deed (healings) and word (preaching). In other words, the jubilee had already begun but had not yet arrived in its fullness (Barry 2011:890). As the last of the prophets, John had the great privilege of seeing the anointed one of prophetic expectation and witnessing the arrival of God's kingdom. Nevertheless, Jesus informed the watching crowd that suffering and rejection were part of the coming of the kingdom. Jubilee came through a protracted and painful process.

11.5. The Six Objectives and Eschatology

Gabriel informs Daniel that the objectives of the six infinitives will take seventy sevens to reach realization. Whether seventy sevens are understood more literally as four hundred ninety years or less literally as a long period of indefinite length, no approach that was reviewed in chapter 2 can escape the reality that arguably five of the six objectives have yet to achieve complete fulfillment. The one exception is the third objective. Jesus has already made the final

and definitive sacrifice for sin. His atoning death paid the penalty for the sins of his people, regardless of their place in history. Jesus died once for all (Heb 9:12, 24-28). That the Holy Spirit applies the benefits of Jesus' work down through history to individual believers so as to regenerate and sanctify them does not detract from Jesus' affirmation on the cross, "It is finished." The ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit, both before the cross and after, is made possible by the finished work of Jesus.

As for the other objectives in Daniel 9:24, they have an "already-not yet" quality to them. Regarding the first two objectives, neither the Maccabean crisis nor the first coming of Jesus put an end to sin.²⁰ People, whether Christian or not, still sin by breaking the Ten Commandments. Even Paul, who told the Romans that sin would no longer master them (Rom 6:14), admitted that he did not always do the good that he wanted or avoid the evil that he loathed (Rom 7:19). Moreover, Paul had to reprimand Peter for reverting to his former Jewish exclusivism and shunning Gentile Christians out of fear of a small group of Judaizers (Gal 2:11-14). The apostles did not achieve perfection in this life, and neither does anyone else. Since Daniel received a visit from Gabriel, the human race in general and God's people in particular persist in failing to love one another in thought, word, and deed. Children still disobey and dishonor their parents. Couples still cheat on one another and steal from someone else what is not theirs by right of marriage. People still misrepresent the truth to protect themselves or to gain some advantage. God's world has not yet been fully reconciled to his eternal plan, and evidence abounds that the world is not yet the way it is supposed to be. It still labors under the effects of the fall and the curse in Genesis 3.

²⁰In characteristically quotable fashion, Wright (1996:659) remarks, "Jesus interpreted his coming death, and the vindication that he expected after that death, as the defeat of evil; but on the first Easter Monday evil still stalked the earth from Jerusalem to Gibraltar and beyond, and stalks it still." See also Kaiser (2011:105-106) and Robertson (2004:343).

The presence of sin in the world, of course, means that the fourth objective (everlasting righteousness) awaits full realization. As Jeremiah's righteous king, the sinless Jesus may impute his righteousness to those who trust in him for justification, but every Christian's experience lags behind his or her position. Paul remarkably claims that Christians are now seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph 2:6), but the same letter tells its recipients to get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, and slander (Eph 4:31). The imperative would not be necessary if none of this unrighteous behavior existed among the Ephesian Christians.

As for the fifth and sixth objectives, they, too, await complete fulfillment. Not all prophecy has yet come to pass—the fifth objective. For example, Isaiah's expectation of a new heavens and earth, purged of the effects of the curse, is not yet a reality. Nor are the prophetic threats against the enemies of God and his people. Jesus, for example, stopped short of saying that the day of vengeance in Isaiah 61:2 found fulfillment "today" in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:19). Instead, he mentioned a future time when he would come in glory to judge the sheep and the goats (Matt 25:31-46). Referring to the same event, Paul said that Jesus would inflict vengeance on those who neither know God nor obey the gospel (2 Thess 1:8). If anointing the **קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים**, the sixth objective, involves expanding the perimeter of the Most Holy Place so that it fills the earth, then God's creation has yet to become a sanctuary of pure worship. From a biblical point of view, much false and abominable worship still occurs in God's world. Moreover, those who believe in Jesus may be temples of the Holy Spirit, but the Corinthian Christians to whom Paul first applied the description kept him busy with pastoral care. Similarly, church history up to the present offers a steady stream of unchristian conduct.

So then, what the prophets in general expected after the exile and what Gabriel in particular announced for the seventy sevens has progressively but partially materialized in

history. Some difference, though, exists between the future outlook of the prophets (including Daniel) on the one hand and the New Testament on the other (see also Beale 2011:161-162; Hoekema 1979:12-22). The prophets looked ahead to one coming of God that would set matters right in a fallen world. God would judge the wicked and vindicate the righteous. He would save his people from their sins and restore his creation that now labors under a curse. For Daniel, the future began in 539 B.C.E. when the seventy sevens started counting down. At the end of these in the second century, God had not come, and the six objectives of the seventy sevens had not reached fruition. The New Testament then reports the first coming of God in Jesus. It looks not only back at what God began to do at the first coming of Jesus but also forward to what he will finish at the second coming of Jesus. It recognizes that not everything for which the Old Testament hoped became reality in the first century C.E. Whereas the Old Testament expected one coming of God, the New Testament informs its readers that there will be two. The period in between the two comings provides the stage on which God continues to fulfill his promises. The second coming of Jesus will mark the full realization of the six objectives of the seventy sevens.

Recognizing the difference between Old Testament eschatology and New Testament eschatology helps to explain how each of the major approaches to the seventy sevens has something to contribute to the discussion. In other words, each option makes valid observations. The Greek view focuses on the period before the first coming of Jesus. The Roman view tends to emphasize the first coming. The Dispensational view, while concerned about the exact time of Jesus' death, considers events closer to the second coming of Jesus the real interest of the vision. What seems to get lost in the discussion, though, is how the seventy sevens, which run from the end of the Babylonian exile to the end of Antiochus IV (cf. Henze 2009:65) contribute to a pattern that appears throughout the Christian Bible. That pattern has to do with God's

progressive and organic accomplishment of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 throughout the events of redemptive history. Stated differently, jubilee comes in stages.

For this reason, both Old Testament eschatology and New Testament eschatology feature tension between what God has already done in fulfillment of his promises and what still awaits realization. The so-called tension between the already and the not yet does not characterize New Testament eschatology alone. Post-exilic literature is especially aware of the poignancy of an incomplete, but not wholly future, restoration (cf. Bright 1975:206-208). God did start to do Isaiah's new thing (Isa 43:19) in 539 B.C.E. Daniel's seventy sevens also began counting down at that same time. But God did not finish Isaiah's new thing or the six objectives of Daniel's seventy sevens by the completion of the second temple in 516 B.C.E., the erection of Nehemiah's wall in 445 B.C.E., the Maccabean victory in 164 B.C.E., the death of Jesus about 30 C.E., or the destruction of Herod's temple in 70 C.E. Two millennia later, he is still ushering in Isaiah's new thing and accomplishing the six objectives of Daniel's seventy sevens (though the sevens are no longer counting down). From 539 B.C.E. to the present, God's people have been united by their experience of tension between what God has promised and what God has so far done. If the seventy sevens prophecy is read with this tension in mind, then one can learn from the major approaches and yet recognize that none has adequately explained the tension.

Meanwhile, the New Testament emphasizes the tension by referring to followers of Jesus as aliens and strangers in this present evil age (1 Pet 2:11). Like the Israelites in Egypt, in Babylon, and under the rule of Antiochus IV and Hellenized Jews, Christians await the Jubilee of Jubilees. They may have experienced a foretaste of jubilee by means of what Jesus accomplished at his first coming, but the fullness of jubilee (i.e., the complete enjoyment of the six objectives of Daniel 9:24) remains a future event for which Christians wait with longing as

well as joy (1 Pet 1:6-9). While one could read Daniel 9:24-27 with cynicism and say that jubilee never came in the second century and has not come since, Antiochus IV did die and so also did the Hasmonean rulers. Moreover, none of them came back to life. By contrast, Jesus demonstrated righteousness in life and then willingly laid down his righteous life as an atoning sacrifice for sin. As proof of God's satisfaction with his redemptive work, Jesus rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and promised to return in majesty. Whether the New Testament conviction about Jesus the anointed one is a fairy tale or not is not for this thesis to decide. What this thesis can observe is the New Testament's witness to the integrity of Jesus. Jesus, according to the New Testament, is an anointed one who exercises the offices of king and priest by conquering evil through personal sacrifice. Antiochus IV and the Hasmonean rulers knew nothing of such unselfish ministry for others.

11.6. The Abomination of Desolation in Matthew 24:15

In the narrative world of Matthew, Jesus' final week before his death involves, among other events, clearing the temple, cursing a fig tree that serves as a symbol of Israel, telling parables about Jewish unbelief, pronouncing woes on the Pharisees, and announcing Jerusalem's doom in response to the disciples' questions about the future. Jesus repeatedly tells his Jewish audience that many of them (especially the leaders) have rejected God's plan that is now culminating in Jesus' person and work (cf. Hagner 1995:610-652). Moreover, many have misunderstood the book of Exodus by using the law for justification instead of sanctification and mission. In the process, their religiosity has masked a lack of charity toward God and humans. The proof is their treatment of prophets, including John the Baptist and Jesus. Because of their rejection of Jesus especially, they cannot be a part of his new community of saints, both Jew and Gentile, that are being redeemed by his work of vicarious atonement.

In the narrative world of Matthew, the Olivet Discourse in chapters 24-25 follows the denunciation of the Pharisees in chapter 23. Matthew 24:1-2 provides the context for the discourse. These verses say that Jesus was leaving the temple. What is not known is if the woes in chapter 23 occurred at the temple or if the conversation at the beginning of chapter 24 immediately follows the woes in real time. Still, Matthew's juxtaposition of these pericopes brings them into close relationship with each other, and so it is hard not to think that what happens between Matthew 21:18 and 23:39 influences Jesus' response to his disciples in 24:1-3. As Jesus left the temple, the disciples expressed their wonder at Herod's renovation that had begun in 19 B.C.E. and remained in progress as Jesus and his disciples conversed. Although the splendor of Herod's remodeling impressed the disciples, Jesus seemed to be unaffected. He even spoiled the moment by announcing the impending destruction of the building. The disciples then asked when the destruction of the temple and the coming of the son of man would occur. Because of the reference to the abomination of desolation in Matthew 24:15, this thesis is more concerned with the first question.

Advocates of the Roman view of the seventy sevens usually identify the abomination of desolation in Daniel 9:27 with Titus Vespasian's desecration and destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 C.E. Whether he or Jesus is the ruler of Daniel 9:26, the Roman view considers Titus Vespasian God's human agent of judgment against Jewish rebellion that climaxed in the rejection of Jesus as the anointed one. The Roman view receives backing, perhaps unintentionally, from Wright (1996:333-365). Though Wright accepts the Greek interpretation of the seventy sevens, he restricts Jesus' application of Daniel 9:27 in the Olivet Discourse to events in the first century C.E. only. At no point, according to Wright, does the Olivet Discourse move its focus from the first century to the second coming that will occur separately and later.

Wright's agreement with Roman advocates such as Young, Kline, and Gentry pertains to divine judgment on the temple that vindicates Jesus not only as a prophet but also as the true temple of God.

For Wright, much of the language of the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 comes from Old Testament announcements of judgment against foreign nations.²¹ The darkening of heavenly luminaries is a metaphorical way of describing a cataclysmic event for which English-speakers might use the term *earth-shattering*. In none of these instances, however, is the end of human history or the dissolution of the physical universe in view (Wright 1996:345). Instead, Jesus shocks his listeners by applying this language to Jerusalem. His point is that Jerusalem has become like the nations in its opposition toward God. More specifically, it is the new Babylon. Like the Old Testament prophets, Jesus announced the doom of Jerusalem and the judgment of its residents because the people had rejected him as the anointed one in whom God uniquely made his presence known. Consequently, they had become the enemy of Yahweh, and their temple symbolized the hypocrisy of their claim of devotion to him. The whole temple system was now so compromised and corrupt that it needed to be destroyed. Besides, the glory of Yahweh that had abandoned the first temple and had never returned to the second temple resided in Jesus who, according to Matthew, is Immanuel. For this reason, Jesus told his disciples (i.e., the true people of God) to flee from Jerusalem and regroup as his new community (Wright 1996:353; cf. Ridderbos 1962:489). Because Jerusalem was no longer the city of God, the new Israel in Jesus should not stay in Jerusalem and fight for it against the Romans. This teaching, of course, led to Jesus' arrest and crucifixion.

²¹ Cf. Isa 13:6-19, 14:4-15, 34:3-4, 48:20, 52:11-12; Jer 50:6-8, 50:28, 51:6-10, 51:45-46; Ezek 32:5-8; Joel 2:10-11, 2:30-32, 3:14-15; Zech 2:6-8, 14:2-9.

Theophilos (2009:157, 2012:152) also reads Matthew 24 with reference to events in the first century C.E. For him (2012:122-123, 230), the abomination of desolation in Matthew 24:15 refers not so much to the despoiling activity of Titus Vespasian and his soldiers (cf. Luke 21:20) but to Jewish unfaithfulness. By their false worship and unlawful behavior, Jews committed abomination, and the desolation of the temple constitutes God's punishment. Titus Vespasian may have trampled God's courts, but he served God's purpose against his people who had long since defiled the sacred space of God's house. Theophilos finds precedent for this interpretation in Old Testament prophecies such as Jeremiah 44:22 and Ezekiel 33:29—verses that threaten desolation of the Promised Land because of abominable conduct by the Israelites.

The book of Daniel would concur. While the abomination of desolation in Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11 pertains to the sacrilegious activity of Antiochus IV, Daniel 8:13 attributes desolation to *עֲשֵׂת הַפֶּשַׁע* (the transgression or rebellion). Despite his interest in Antiochus IV, the writer of Daniel would hardly condemn him for rebellion. Yahweh had never made a covenant with him as he (Yahweh) had with Israel. Given Daniel's prayer of confession that follows in chapter 9, *עֲשֵׂת הַפֶּשַׁע* belongs to Israel and is the reason from God's point of view that Antiochus IV has desecrated the temple, just as Nebuchadnezzar had in 586 B.C.E.²² Like the earlier kings of Assyria and Babylon, Antiochus IV may have behaved oppressively as a typical ancient Near Eastern tyrant, but he was also unwittingly an instrument in Yahweh's hand. God worked behind the scenes through Antiochus IV to accomplish his own agenda with his people.

Neither Jesus nor Matthew thought that the verses in Daniel about the abomination of desolation directly predicted the Roman razing of the Jerusalem temple. They knew that the

²²Cf. *Testament of Levi* 15:1 that says, "Therefore the sanctuary which the Lord chose shall become desolate through your uncleanness, and you will be captives in all the nations."

writer of Daniel was talking about the Antiochene crisis. Nevertheless, both read the Old Testament typologically and saw in their day a repetition of the pattern of unbelief and worldliness that the book of Daniel had applied to Hellenistic Jews during the reign of Antiochus IV (cf. France 2007:911-912; Hagner 1995:700; Wright 1996:351). Stated differently, they expected a replay of the Antiochene crisis.²³ Desolation of God's temple would occur again at the hands of a Gentile army—this time, Rome. The Seleucids and Romans represented historically independent but typologically related administrations of divine judgment. It is this typology that Jesus and Matthew (see France 2007:911 note 50; Ridderbos 1987:443) want the reader of Daniel and Matthew to understand.

Recalling Goldingay's discussion of partial realizations, abominations of desolation can occur beyond the first century C.E.²⁴ Whenever people deny the grace of God that is ultimately rooted in the performance of Jesus and rely instead on something else, then the pattern of false religion repeats itself. Judgment in some form or another becomes a likely possibility that God sovereignly enacts. Moreover, God still raises up rulers, uses them to advance his will in some way or another, and deposes them. The seventy sevens may have run their course long ago, but the typologies of which they were an instance continue to have manifestations in subsequent history. For Christian theology, though, what is different after the first century C.E. is that no more anointed ones appear. Jesus is the final king, priest, and prophet. No more revelation (prophetic activity) is needed to explain God's salvific acts because Jesus has performed all that

²³Vos (1986:95) says, "The Daniel-context refers proximately to a desecration of the sanctuary expected, it seems, from the sacrilegious hand of Antiochus Epiphanes. That Jesus shaped the matter in his mind after the same fashion is plain; only he projects the horrible event from the past in which it had once taken place into a future beyond his own point of speaking."

²⁴After conceding that Mathew 24:15 could refer to the Roman destruction of the temple in 70 C.E., Davies and Allison (1997:346) say, "But it is no less likely that our evangelist had in mind some future, eschatological defilement and destruction, and perhaps even activities of an anti-Christ." They suggest that 2 Thessalonians 2:2-4 addresses this possibility. Discussing the typological relationship between Antiochus IV in Daniel and the man of lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians exceeds the purpose of this thesis, but see Bruce (1982:168, 177, 179-188), Ridderbos (1975:512-521), Shogren (2012:281-285), Thielman (2005:255 note 15), and Vos (1986:104-112).

is necessary to save people from sin (priestly activity) and reconcile a rebellious creation to God's eternal purpose (kingly activity). New Testament revelation has sufficiently interpreted what God has done, is doing, and will do in Jesus. Moreover, Jesus has sent his Spirit to apply his work to the individual and corporate lives of his people.²⁵ This Spirit works in concert with the written word to make Jesus the incarnate word pre-eminent over all creation, thereby accomplishing God's ultimate purpose for creating anything at all. This exaltation of Jesus that brings lasting healing to the world is the Jubilee of Jubilees. In view of what God has done in Jesus, God's people cannot help but worship eternally with unbounded joy.

11.7. Summary

This chapter has focused on what Daniel 9:24-27 means in the New Testament period and beyond. It is true that the New Testament never explicitly cites Daniel 9:24. Still, Jesus is another anointed one and the final anointed one. The New Testament considers the death of Jesus the definitive solution to sin (the first three objectives). Jesus makes believers in him righteous so that they can act righteously (the fourth objective). He fulfills prophecy (the fifth objective) by bringing redemptive history to its goal, which is his exaltation through the salvation of his people. Moreover, he, as Immanuel, is the Holy of Holies that sanctifies the whole world (the sixth objective). By finishing the accomplishment of the six objectives of the seventy sevens, Jesus brings the fullness of jubilee.

For the writers of the New Testament, God may not have answered every question in Jesus the anointed one, but Jesus nevertheless clarifies much of what is veiled in the Old Testament. He defeats sin in the lives of his people and rules over their enemies (and his) for the ultimate restoration and reconciliation of creation to the eternal purpose of God. That purpose is

²⁵Cf. Vos' distinction (1948:6) between "objective-central acts" of redemption and "subjective-individual acts." Jesus performed the former once at his first coming, and the Holy Spirit performs the latter repeatedly throughout redemptive history.

to exalt his Son as head over all, and it is achieved, as just mentioned, through the Son's incarnation that involves suffering for the sins of his people. The Old Testament in general and Daniel in particular present a sovereign God who works through sin and suffering. The New Testament similarly links sin and suffering with God's will.

Perhaps the greatest mystery in biblical theology and biblical living is how God uses sin and suffering to accomplish his grand purpose for creation and history. The jubilee structure of the seventy sevens gives assurance that redemption and joy, and not suffering and despair, will have the last word in God's world. That structure attests to God's redemptive-historical intention of exalting a humiliated anointed one, even Jesus. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus provide the ultimate guarantee of the full realization of God's six-fold promise to Daniel.

CHAPTER 12: CONCLUSION

In response to Daniel's prayer of confession in Daniel 9, God sent the angel Gabriel with the prophecy of the seventy sevens. Though this part of God's Word has engendered a voluminous amount of scholarship (and this thesis now adds to it), a fresh examination with a redemptive-historical hermeneutic is necessary because of the inadequacy of previous research—as stimulating as it might otherwise be. Neither the Maccabean period nor the first coming of Jesus fully realized the six objectives of the seventy sevens in Daniel 9:24. For this reason, this thesis has tried to steer a middle course that appreciates how different readings recognize the various nuances of the seventy sevens.

The title of this thesis affirms a commitment to a redemptive-historical hermeneutic that traces the unfolding of God's plan of redemption through the Old and New Testaments. Such a reading strategy, however, can move too quickly from the Old Testament to the New Testament and so come close to an allegorical hermeneutic that disregards the historical context of the human author. In the case of Daniel's seventy sevens, a redemptive-historical reading must respect the interest of the surrounding visions in the Antiochene crisis. The book of Daniel considers that crisis part of redemptive history and offers a sober but hopeful analysis of it. Consequently, the prophecy of the seventy sevens is not a direct prediction of the first and second comings of Jesus. Rather, it addresses God's people in the second century B.C.E. They had to contend with both an evil Seleucid ruler who wanted to stamp out the Jewish faith and fellow Jews who wanted to curry his favor at the price of covenantal fidelity. This interest in the Antiochene crisis receives a Babylonian and Persian setting that creates a typological relationship between events in the sixth and second centuries. The writer of Daniel saw a pattern

between the Babylonian exile and the Antiochene crisis—a pattern that other Jewish literature (whether biblical or extra-biblical) traces in events before the Babylonian exile and after the Antiochene crisis. This literature is united in its intention to encourage God’s people to trust in God’s sovereignty during bleak seasons and manifest that trust by persevering in faithfulness to God’s word. At the same time, it reminds God of his promises and pleads with him to keep them for the sake of his reputation. It is God’s concern for his reputation that leads him to maintain justice, show mercy, and give his people an inheritance.

The jubilee structure of the seventy sevens (ten jubilee cycles) culminates in the Jubilee of Jubilees and so imbues the prophecy with a hopeful and even cheerful outlook. Though the seventy sevens commence at the end of seventy years of judgment and exile, Gabriel meant to give Daniel and his readers a reason to feel relief and joy because Yahweh mercifully forgives covenantal infractions and remains faithful to his gracious promises. The latter reflect his character that he can neither alter nor disown. If Yahweh has tied his reputation to his plan of redemption, then he must save people from their sins and restore a fallen world. According to biblical thinking, there is no other way to eliminate the problem of sin and/or uphold the will of God. Stated differently, the realization of the stated objectives of the seventy sevens depends on God’s performance rather than humanity’s. The seventy sevens agree with Jeremiah that God alone can change the human heart and so make individual and corporate righteousness possible. Therefore, the seventy sevens do not, as is so often said, add more judgment to Jeremiah’s seventy years. They are part of the long process of redemptive history during which Yahweh does what humans cannot do. He reconciles a sinful world to his eternal purpose and gives it an open future. This happens as he satisfies his justice by expiating human sin and restores communion by propitiating his wrath. He changes the human heart, establishes righteousness,

fulfills prophecy, and expands the Holy of Holies so that it encompasses the whole earth to create a new and bigger Garden of Eden. From these ambitious and breathtaking objectives, God cannot be deterred or dissuaded by human failure—joyful news if ever there was any.

From a New Testament point of view, the age of salvation irrupted into this present evil age at Jesus' first coming and runs concurrently with it until the second coming of Jesus. During this time, Jesus rules over creation for God's glory, and the Spirit of Jesus applies the work of Jesus at his first coming. As was the case between the Babylonian exile and Antiochene crisis, the six objectives of Daniel 9:24 progressively come to fruition between the two comings of God's anointed one and in the midst of ongoing resistance to God's purpose and people. Gabriel lets Daniel and his readers know that God has not seen fit to redeem all at once. He will repeat the Old Testament pattern of suffering before glory. Nevertheless, the jubilee format assures the ultimate achievement of the six objectives.

The book of Daniel presents a God who rules sovereignly over creation and history. Even unbelieving kings contribute unwittingly to the outworking of his purpose. God's purpose may be understood in terms of glorifying his name, exalting Jesus as the firstborn of creation, restoring creation from the effects of sin, and saving his people from sin. Each of these aims of God's activity in history may seem straightforward enough in theory, but the complexity of history (not to mention the teaching of Scripture) indicates that God's ways often exceed humanity's comprehension. God is both self-revealing and inscrutable. He feels no compulsion to explain his every motive and move. Still, the revelation of the seventy sevens in the context of the rest of Daniel and of scripture conveys God's intention to glorify his name and show mercy to his people on the stage of human history with all of its perplexity. Redemptive history inexorably unfolds within world history and brings the latter to a jubilant outcome.

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