

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DAN 9: AN EXEGETICAL STUDY*

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The problems regarding the exegesis of Dan 9: 24-27 are of two kinds. They have to do with (1) the difficulty of the text and (2) the multiplicity of the interpretations raised.

As for the first problem, the density of the passage, the extreme singularity of its words and expressions, and the complexity of its syntax constitute rather serious obstacles. Moreover, the important divergences between the two basic versions as represented in the LXX and Theodotion do not permit us to draw any definitive conclusions regarding the text. The Theodotion version is clearer here, and its text tends to support the MT; yet where it diverges from the latter (e.g., in the punctuation regarding the counting of the weeks), it is the *only* witness in opposition to the MT. As for the Peshitta, it seems to have been revised on the basis of the LXX at many points, and I hesitate therefore to consider it as an independent witness along with the LXX. (At any rate, the text appears to be altered in this particular passage of the Peshitta, for we can note differences from both the LXX and the MT.)

Regarding the second kind of problem, the variety of theological applications may be roughly divided into three categories:¹

1. *The Symbolical Interpretation.* Primarily because of the references in the passage to the particular numbers 7, 3, 70, etc., the prophecy has been viewed by some scholars as being a mere poem mainly concerned with a *Heilsgeschichte* divided into three steps. The first part (7

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¹For a survey of these interpretations see J. A. Montgomery, "A Commentary on Daniel," *ICC*, pp. 390-401; and G. F. Hasel, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9: 24-27," *Ministry*, May 1976, pp. 1D-21D.

heptads²) starts at the coming of Cyrus (538 B.C.) and leads to the first Advent; the second part (62 heptads) leads to the second Advent and covers the history of the visible Church; and the last part (1 heptad) covers the time of tribulation and is concerned with the invisible church.

2. *The Dispensationalist Interpretation.* Dispensationalist theologians have also viewed the prophecy as a salvation history divided into three parts. Their first part comprises 69 weeks which are understood as weeks of years. Some interpret this to mean a period of 476 years from the second decree of Artaxerxes in 445 B.C. to A.D. 32, alleged as the year of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and of his death.³ Others, with a different beginning point, suggest a period of 483 years terminating in A.D. 26, the date accepted for Jesus' baptism.⁴ In either case, the last week has been moved ahead to the end-time, in conjunction with Christ's second advent. The church era comes in between.

3. *The Historical-Critical Interpretation.* Adherents of this position hold that Daniel's prophecies describe the events of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and were written after the events as a record, not as a prediction. The time span covered by this "prophecy" is reckoned in terms of weeks of years and is divided into three parts. A typical example of the chronology in this view is that the first 7 weeks (49 years) start at the fall of Jerusalem (587/6 B.C.) and lead to the fall of Babylon at the decree of the "Messiah" Cyrus (539/8 B.C.); then follow the 62 weeks (434 years), which reach to the murder of Onias III (171/0 B.C.); and finally comes the last week (7 years), which is concluded by the rededication of the Temple desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes at the middle of this week.

4. *The Historical-Messianic Interpretation.* This is considered as the traditional Christian interpretation. It has been advocated by the Church fathers and is still supported today by Protestant and Catholic scholars.⁵ The first two divisions of the seventy weeks (7 + 62) start in the 7th year of Artaxerxes and terminate in the year of the baptism of Jesus. The last week is divided into two parts, the first one ending at Christ's

²So, on the basis of the LXX, which uses the word *hebdomades*—perceived as pointing to the symbolism of the number 7 and not to a real week—, and also on account of the use of the plural masculine form of *šābu 'īm* instead of the feminine *šābu 'ōt* (the regular plural for "weeks").

³See R. Anderson, *The Coming Prince* (London, 1895), pp. 119-122.

⁴See L. Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1976), p. 253.

⁵See the list of Hasel, p. 20D, nn. 126-132.

crucifixion and the last one at the stoning of Stephen. (Dates given by some scholars for these events are 457 B.C. and A.D. 27, 31, and 34, respectively.)

This situation of a complicated text, plus such a diversity of interpretations, has led me to a new investigation which utilizes recent advances in the study of ancient literary forms. In this investigation I pay close attention to the literary data of the text itself.

In the present analysis, I shall proceed from within the text, first taking into account the *contextual setting* or situation of the entire book of Daniel as well as chap. 9. Next I shall analyze the *literary structure* in order to follow the flow of the discourse and to grasp the specific nuances of thought. Then I shall note and discuss some of the most significant *words and expressions*. And finally, I shall attempt to draw out some of the *theological dimensions* of this 70-week passage of Dan 9. Along the way, I shall occasionally allude to the interpretations that have been mentioned above, in order to indicate the extent to which they are related to the exegesis that textual analysis has allowed us to build. Yet these references will usually be only incidental, permitting the reader to draw the specific inferences.

1. *The Contextual Setting*

From a theological, literary, and even linguistic point of view, this prophecy is one of the most important foci in the book of Daniel. The passage echoes many themes scattered throughout the book, yet it has its own immediate context within chap. 9.

The Setting in the Book of Daniel

In looking at the book of Daniel—at least the prophetic part concerned with a distant future—we are struck by the number of common patterns. The connections between chaps. 2, 7, 8, 10 and 11 are immediately evident. That they deal with the same concerns can be seen by identifying their similar motifs: the four kingdoms—the first (2: 32a, 37, 38; 7: 3-4), the second (2: 32b, 39a; 7: 5; 8: 3, 20; 11: 2a), the third (2: 32c, 39b; 7: 6; 8: 5, 21-22; 11: 3-15), and the fourth (2: 33, 40; 7: 7, 19; 8: 23-25; 11: 16-22)—followed by persecution of the people of God (7: 25; 8: 24; 11: 31-34, 35), a time of end (2: 45; 7: 26; 8: 19, 25; 11: 35, 45), etc. Referring to similar motifs as these chapters do, we may expect them to employ similar language. This phenomenon gives evidence of the strong unity of the book and the

interrelationship between its parts,⁶ and it provides a point of reference from which to conduct exegesis.

Dan 9:24-27 is connected with the rest of the book most directly through its relationship to Dan 8. Chap. 8 is, in fact, the only chapter which partakes of patterns common to all the visions of Daniel, including those of chaps. 9 and 12. (Compare, e.g., 8:3, 20 with 2:32b, 2:39a, 7:5 and 11:2a; 8:5, 21-22 with 2:32c, 2:39b, 7:6, and 11:3-15; 8:23-25 with 2:33, 2:40, 7:7, 7:19, and 11:16-22; 8:25 with 11:22; 8:11 with 11:32 and 12:11; 8:13 with 12:7; 8:24 with 12:8; 8:26 with 12:9; etc.)

It is significant that most of the words and expressions in our passage which occur elsewhere in Daniel are found only in chaps. 8, 10, 11 and 12; this is an indication that these chapters constitute a specific unit. Besides the common wording and motifs, we may also notice an internal and significant bridge between chaps. 8 and 9. One of the most remarkable and characteristic expressions in this part of the book appears through the use of the verb *bîn* and its derived form *hēbîn* ("to understand" and "to cause to understand"). It occurs for the first time in chap. 1, regarding the ability of Daniel to "understand" the vision.⁷ Then we must wait until chap. 8 for its next occurrences. From that point on, it is used repeatedly until the end of the book.

But the way this word is used in chaps. 8 and 9 is striking: It appears first as a participle in 8:5, just before the mention of the goat, where it has a positive connotation since Daniel understands the meaning. It occurs next as a noun in vs. 15 as part of a question, where Daniel asks for understanding (*bînāh*). The next two uses belong to the same event. A voice calls out to Gabriel: "Make this man understand" (*hābēn*), in vs. 16. Then as an echo, Gabriel addresses Daniel with the same imperative form (*hābēn*): "Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the

⁶ For the unity of the book of Daniel, see A. Jeffery, "Daniel: Introduction," *IB* 6: 346; R. D. Wilson, "Book of Daniel," *ISBE* 2: 784-786; and H. H. Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays on the Old Testament* (London, 1952), pp. 237-268.

⁷ Vss. 4, 17, 20; in vss. 4 and 20 Daniel and his fellows are included, and the word means here the general ability to understand. But when the verb is applied only to Daniel (vs. 17), it is directly related to "vision" (*hāzôn*). It is not accidental that this word patterns exactly the same as *hēbîn* (it occurs for the first time in chap. 1 and reappears only from chap. 8 on). Nor is it accidental that these two words are two key-words of chap. 8 (seven occurrences of *hāzôn* and six of *hēbîn* in that chapter). Thus the shift of the language (Hebrew to Aramaic) is not the main reason for this linguistic phenomenon. The sudden shift from no appearances of these two words in chaps. 2-7 to their greatest frequency in chap. 8 cannot be interpreted as an accident.

time of the end.” Thus the answer of the angel is limited. Daniel asks to understand the *vision*. And the angel says: “Understand [only] that this vision is for the time of the end.” But the key to the vision is not given. The vision is a riddle (*hîdāh*). Is it accidental that the following use of *hēbîn* (see 8:23) is related to this very word “riddle”? This particular association here seems significant.

In view of the foregoing, it is not surprising that the next, and final, use of *mēbîn* in chap. 8 is a negative one: “I do not understand.” Chap. 8 closes with these words.

The Setting in Dan 9

The way Dan 9:1 uses the same word is also significant: “In the first year . . . I Daniel understood [*bîn*].” In this way the thread of thought is taken over from chap. 8, with the last verb of chap. 8 being also the first one in chap. 9. But chap. 8 finishes with a negative tone—“I did not understand,” hence in expectation. Now the tone is positive—“Daniel understood,” as if what will be dealt with in Dan 9 has to be placed in conjunction with Dan 8 as its continuation, i.e., its answer.

This first occurrence of *hēbîn* or *bîn* in chap. 9 is used to show that Daniel was seeking in the books to “understand” the prophecy of the 70 years of Jeremiah. Then the next use comes in vs. 22, announcing the revelation of the 70 weeks. This usage suggests a kind of internal bridge, not only between the two prophecies mentioned in Dan 9 (70 years and 70 weeks⁸), but also with Dan 8. Moreover, it is significant that the last verb which is used by the angel in 9:23 to introduce the prophecy of the 70 weeks is the same imperative form (*hābēn*) as in 8:17, where the angel introduces his answer to the question of Daniel concerning the precise time of the 2300 evenings and mornings.⁹ It is as if the use in reference to the 70 weeks intentionally places that prophecy of the 70 weeks directly into the same perspective and context as Daniel’s preceding and “incomplete” revelation, the prophecy of the 2300 evenings and mornings in chap. 8.

If the first revelation (the *hābēn* of 8:17) points to the time of the end of this particular period, then *hābēn* (vs. 23), which introduces the

⁸This phenomenon of echo between the introduction and the conclusion of Dan 9 will be treated below.

⁹Daniel’s question arises immediately after the mention of this time. The way the dialogue is articulated prepares for the question: “wayyōmer” (“and he said”); the angel turns towards Daniel and gives him the period of time, “wayehi”; and “then [waw consecutive] as Daniel saw that . . . he asked to understand.”

prophecy of the 70 weeks,¹⁰ suggests the idea of a complementary datum which was missing in chap. 8 and which left Daniel *’ên mēbîn* (“not understanding”)—namely, the *starting point* of this period.

If the prophecy of Dan 8 (*hāzōn*) points to a time of end, and if the prophecy of the 70 weeks indicates its starting point, then the period of the 70 weeks—which does not reach the end—must be understood as a smaller segment than the first one. In this way we may interpret the *hapax legomenon* *hṭk* as a cutting off, a portion from something else.¹¹ Thus the period in Dan 9 is part of a whole. In this way the contextual data must be taken into consideration here.

The first words in Dan 9 point to a historical context which is quite precise: namely, the first year of Darius, 538 to 537 B.C. At that time Daniel is concerned with the end of the captivity, which appears to be at hand. He consults the books and seizes upon the fact that according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah “seventy years must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem” (Dan 9:2).¹² The end of this period is near and one can understand, therefore, Daniel’s tension and interest in this subject.

The introduction and conclusion to this chapter (vss. 1-4 and 20-27) relate to the same inquiry: The first is concerned with the time involved, and the other deals with the same number, “70.” The fact that this same number is used at the beginning and at the end of the chapter is striking. One may see an internal relation between the two in this usage, as does the French exegete P. Grelot, who understands the number as

¹⁰ 8:27 also places the mention of the 2300 evenings and mornings far in the future. As for the expression of vs. 19, it refers to a “relative” end—i.e., the end of the *mō’ēd* (a specific time, namely the period of the indignation; cf. 11: 27).

¹¹ This meaning is supported by rabbinic literature which uses the word in the *niph’al* with the sense of “amputated” (cf. *m. Hul.* 4: 6). Moreover, most of the rabbinic usages of this root express this idea of amputation, related to slaughtering, etc. The denominative *ḥaṭikāh* from the verb means only piece, portion (cf. *b. Hul.* 31b, *b. Ker.* 17b, etc.). See also the cognate Hebrew words *hṭr* (Ezek 8: 8) and *hṭh* (Ps 52: 7), which contain the same connotation of cutting off, piercing, etc.

In cognate languages, the situation is not clear. Akkadian attests *hatakum*, translated “entscheiden” in *AHW*, s.v. “*hatakum*,” 1: 335. Ugaritic attests the form *hṭk* in the sense of father and son (see C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* [Rome, 1965], s.v. “*hṭk*,” p. 399, no. 911). In Arabic, we find the most interesting witness in connection with our concern: *hatak*, “to walk fast, with short steps; to cut off, scrape or shave off; emaciated, slender” (see W. Lane, ed., *Arabic-English Lexicon* [New York, 1956], s.v. “*hatak*,” bk. 1, pt. 2, p. 510, col. 3).

¹² Cf. Jer. 25: 11 and 29: 10. The period may be reckoned from 605 B.C. to 536 B.C. inclusively. (See, e.g., *SDA Bible Commentary*, 3: 90-92, 94-97, for a discussion of this 70-year period.)

referring to the sabbatical year (7×10) and to the Jubilee ($7 \times 7 \times 10$), respectively.¹³

Grelot bases his interpretation upon 2 Chr 36:20-22, where the 70-year prophecy of Jeremiah is interpreted in terms of the levitical principle of the sabbatical year. This passage quotes Lev 26:34, 43, the common theme word being *šmm* ("desolate"). It is also significant that this word is one of the key words of Dan 9, appearing five times in the chapter (once each in vss. 17, 18, 26; twice in vs. 27).

Up to this point, Grelot's exegesis is sound. The three passages of Chronicles, Jeremiah, and Daniel clarify each other. But when Grelot comes to the interpretation of the 70 years, he stumbles on the number 70 itself, or 7×10 . The symbolic meaning leads him to an exclusively symbolic interpretation.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Grelot is right, I believe, in pointing out the profound meaning hidden in the use of this particular number, namely 7×10 as a reference to the sabbatical year.¹⁵

If the introduction and conclusion of Dan 9 deal with the same

¹³ Cf. "Soixante-dix semaines d'années," *Bib* 50 (1969): 169. Cf. also J. Steinmann, *Daniel, Témoins de Dieu*, 12 (Paris, 1950), pp. 133-135; and A. A. Bevan, *A Short Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (London, 1892), p. 146.

¹⁴ Here we diverge from Grelot, who understands the reference to 70 as symbolical. For him this number expresses the idea of a certain time of desolation followed by the visitation of God. This interpretation, however, is hardly supported by the Bible and the ancient Near Eastern literature as well. Indeed, the only passages to which Grelot refers, namely, Zech 1: 12 and Isa 23: 15-17, might in fact be concerned with the same historical period as the one which is mentioned in the prophecy of Jeremiah. They cannot therefore be used as distinctive indications of the general symbolic usage of the number 70 (see D. Winton Thomas, "Exegesis of Isa 23: 15-17," *IB* 5: 1062; G. W. Wade, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah* [London, 1911], p. 155; and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, BCOT [Grand Rapids, Mich., 1960], 1: 414).

The argument Grelot draws from the only witness of the inscription of Esarhaddon is not decisive at all. This document alludes to an oracle of Marduk pronounced against Babylon when Sennacherib destroyed it in 689 B.C.: "Having (on the tables of the destiny) written 70 ($\text{𐎶} \text{𐎠$) years of desolation [for Babylon], suddenly the god Marduk became quiet and reversed [the numbers]; hence 11 ($\text{𐎠} \text{𐎶}$) years" (J. Nougayrol, "Textes hépatoscopiques d'époque ancienne," *RA* 40 [1945]: 65). Now if Esarhaddon indeed rebuilt the city of Babylon 11 years after its destruction by Sennacherib, as is attested by history and as Grelot recognizes (cf. Nougayrol, p. 70, and Grelot, p. 174), there is strong reason to think that the number 70, which is obtained by reversing the cuneiform sign of the number 11, is purely accidental. It would scarcely have been chosen intentionally on account of its symbolism.

¹⁵ Noldeke and Bevan think that Jeremiah is a midrash of Lev 26:34-35; notice the "7 times" of vs. 28 (cf. Montgomery, p. 360; see also Bevan, *Commentary on Daniel*, p. 146). This reference to the number 7 as a key to the 70 weeks may also explain the distribution into weeks (62 weeks), 1 week (= 7 days). The number 7 is cut off at the beginning and at the end of the period. The fact that the system is applicable to any number shows that the number 70 has been chosen on account of its reality, not merely on account of its symbolic content.

concerns—the salvation of Israel and the number 70—it follows that the two periods of time (70 years in the introduction, and 70 weeks in the conclusion) must belong to the same essence. Both are historical, and both point to the levitical principle. The second one refers to the Jubilee ($7 \times 7 \times 10$), as the first refers to the sabbatical year (7×10).

Furthermore, the use of the unit “weeks” in Dan 9 supports this indirect reference to the levitical principle. “The notion of a ‘week’ seems to have been suggested implicitly on the basis of the seven-day and seven-year periods culminating in a ‘Sabbath’ (Lev 25:2-4; 26:33ff.).”¹⁶ It follows that just as Jeremiah predicted the 70 years of desolation from the perspective of the sabbatical year, Daniel sets forth his prophecy from the perspective of the Jubilee. Moreover, since Daniel places his prophecy in the perspective of an extension of Jeremiah’s historical prophecy, it means that Daniel also refers to an historical event.

This conclusion has important implications in terms of history and theology: (1) The seventy weeks’ prophecy must be interpreted with regard to *history* in as realistic a way as Daniel did for the prophecy of Jeremiah.¹⁷ (2) The event to which the 70 weeks point receives a *theological* dimension; it has something to do with the Jubilee, just as the prophecy of Jeremiah had something to do with the sabbatical year.¹⁸

Thus, the introduction and conclusion of chap. 9 express the same basic concern, relating to the levitical meaning of the number 7. Between the two, however, the author places a prayer which reveals his main thought.¹⁹ Daniel is concerned about the sin of his people, which he relates to the exile (Dan 9:5, 7, 16). He cries out to God and asks him to intervene in his mercy and to forgive. He prays for Jerusalem—hence for the Sanctuary—that it may recover its meaning and its glory of old (9:17-19).

¹⁶ Hasel, “Seventy Weeks of Daniel,” p. 6. See also R. H. Charles, *The Book of Daniel* (Edinburgh, n.d.), p. 104; Montgomery, p. 373.

¹⁷ This stands against the symbolical interpretation.

¹⁸ This stands against the historical-critical interpretation.

¹⁹ Many commentators have argued that Dan 9: 4-20 was a late interpolation; for the unity of chap. 9, including the prayer and the prophecy of the 70 weeks together, see the excellent article of B. W. Jones, “The Prayer in Daniel 9,” *VT* 18 (1968): 488; see also O. Plöger, *Das Buch Daniel* (Gütersloh, 1965), p. 135; A. Jeffery, “Daniel: Exegesis,” *IB* 6: 484; N. W. Porteous, *Daniel: A Commentary* (Philadelphia, 1965), p. 136.

This prayer of "confession" and "supplication" (9:20) God answers by means of Gabriel: "At the beginning of your supplications a word went forth, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the word and understand the vision" (9:23).

Thus the elements in God's answer come as a direct response to Daniel's particular sorrow. Is Daniel concerned with the sin of the people? God makes known to him that within a certain time sin will be atoned for and justice will be brought in forever (9:24). Is Daniel concerned with the destiny of Jerusalem? God answers that within a certain time a word will be pronounced on behalf of the erection of the City and that afterwards it will be destroyed and devastated by a war (vss. 25, 26).

If the coming of a Messiah, an anointed one, is perceived in the same vision, it is because he has something to do with those two answers: (1) The role he plays in the atonement of sins is referred to in a very significant way: He appears directly in the first act of the vision, which concerns the atonement; and thus the coming of the Messiah elucidates the reference in vs. 24 to the atonement of the sin and to everlasting justice. (2) Regarding the destiny of Jerusalem, the question becomes one of providing an indication by which the dates of the Messiah's coming and of his death in history can be determined. The destiny of Jerusalem is used in this connection as a point of reference (vss. 25-26).

It is in this context that one should understand the first words of the prophecy: "70 weeks are decreed concerning your people and your holy city." The vision has two sides: The first concerns the people; it is on the level of man, and it will speak of atonement and salvation. The second concerns the holy city, Jerusalem; it is on the level of space and history, and it will speak of building and destruction. Both have something to do with the same measure of time: 70 weeks.

Moreover, the prayer of Daniel was concerned with the people and Jerusalem. It is to be expected, therefore, that the message of Gabriel sent by God should be related to them. This leads us next to a consideration of the literary structure in Dan 9:24-27.

2. The Literary Structure

From a literary point of view, one is struck by the fact that there is in this passage a seesaw between two poles—namely, (1) the people and their sins, and (2) Jerusalem with its sanctuary. This twofold nature of

this prophecy is apparent in the prelude (vs. 24), as well as in the body of the vision itself (vss. 25-27).

The Prelude

The dual nature of the subject of this prophecy is suggested in the prelude by the following combinations as determined by their parallelism:

A Totality of 70 Weeks is Separated²⁰

Concerning your people <i>'al- 'ammekā</i> (2 words)	Concerning your holy city <i>we'al 'ir qoḏšekā</i> (3 words)
(1) to finish the transgression <i>lekallē' happeša'</i> (2 words)	(1) to bring in everlasting righteousness ²¹ <i>ūlehāḫī šeḏeq 'ōlāmim</i> (3 words)
(2) to seal (<i>ḥtm</i>) sins <i>ūlehātēm hattā'ōt</i> (2 words)	(2) to seal (<i>ḥtm</i>) both vision and prophet <i>welaḥtōm hāzōn</i> ²² <i>wenāḫī'</i> (3 words)
(3) to atone for iniquity <i>ūlekappēr 'āwōn</i> (2 words)	(3) to anoint holy of holies <i>welimšōaḥ qōḏeš qoḏāšim</i> (3 words)

The two themes of the poem are first stated: "Concerning your people and concerning your holy city." The first three stichs come in the rhythm of two words each.²³ The thought is concerned with the sin and the forgiveness, notions which Daniel related to the people (vss. 5, 7, 17). Then the following three stichs are developed in the rhythm of three words each. The thought here is concerned with the theme of the holy city and hence with the sanctuary; the thought is cultic, involving

²⁰ Cf. p. 6, above.

²¹ The relationship "finish-everlasting" should be noted.

²² The word *hāzōn* is here placed in the same cultic perspective as in Dan 8:13-14. There, this word is indeed used in association with the significant motifs of *šdq* ("righteousness"), *qḏš* ("holy"), *tāmīd* ("perpetual"), *pš'* ("sin"), *šmm* ("desolation"), which undoubtedly belong to the Jerusalem sanctuary terminology.

²³ Our observation takes into account the number of words rather than their accents (meter) for two main reasons: (1) Because of the nature of the accent and the role it plays in the recitation, only the word is sure. (2) The consideration of accent as a means of expression of the Hebrew rhythm comes from premises which are mainly rooted in the confusion that in a "primitive" expression Hebrew poetry stresses rhythm; that is, the rhythm precedes the conscious thought. In fact, in Hebrew poetry, word and meaning precede the rhythm, for poetry is above all a message. In addition, "It must always be borne in mind that there is no intrinsic evidence for meter in the Hebrew of the Old Testament" (R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids, Mich., 1969], p. 971; cf. also for the same opinion R. C. Culley, "Metrical Analysis of Classical Hebrew Poetry," *Essays on the Ancient Semitic World*, ed. J. W. Wevers and D. B. Redford [Toronto, 1970], pp. 12-28).

the specific ideas of everlasting righteousness,²⁴ anointing holy of holies, etc.

It can be seen that there is a synthetic parallelism between the stichs themselves, in that the second element completes the first: The first part has a negative connotation; the second has a positive connotation. Thus:

1. "To finish the transgression" is in parallelism with "to bring in everlasting righteousness." The transgression is finished or "closed," and there follows an everlasting righteousness.

2. "To seal [*htm*] sins" is in parallelism with "to seal [*htm*] both vision and prophet," with *htm* being common to the two stichs.²⁵ Thus, the seal of the prophecy—i.e., its fulfillment—is related to the seal of the sins—i.e., their forgiveness.

3. "To atone for iniquity" is in parallelism with anointing a holy of holies. Here the relation is not evident from the outset. Moreover, the expression "holy of holies" is obscure. Does it refer to the most holy place or to a person? The position of this stich—i.e., on the side of Jerusalem/Sanctuary—excludes the latter possibility. On the other hand, the absence of the article before "holy of holies" does not yield the interpretation "most holy place" (in the Sanctuary), which occurs regularly with an article in the OT. Yet, it may designate the holy things which belong to the Sanctuary service, or the whole Temple.²⁶ However, this usage of the expression "holy of holies" does not help us to understand the meaning intended in the present parallelism.

It is highly significant that the same association of these three notions—atonement (*kpr*), anointing (*mšh*), and holy of holies (*qōdeš qodāšim*)—is found in Exod 29:36-37, the *only* other biblical reference to use these expressions in conjunction. This passage deals with the consecration of Aaron and his sons to their high priesthood (the earliest consecration of an Israelite priesthood). It is significant that this ceremony consisted of an anointing of a "holy of holies" which was marked by the number 7: The ceremony was to last 7 days.

²⁴For the association *sdq* and the sanctuary, see esp. Dan 8: 14 and Ps 4: 6; Ps 51: 21; Ps 132: 9; Isa 61: 3. This notion is also commonly associated with the city of Jerusalem (cf. Isa 1: 26; and see F. L. Horton, Jr., *The Melchizedek Tradition* [London, 1976], p. 42-45).

²⁵In fact, the *qerē* indicates for the first stich *htm*, not *htm* as it is in the text. Whatever it is, the meaning is slightly nuanced ("to bring to an end"), and the play on words is conserved.

²⁶Cf. Exod 29: 37; Ezek 43: 12. The expression occurs 39 times, always in reference to the whole Tabernacle or Temple.

The accumulation of common patterns and wording between the prophecy of 70 weeks and this passage in Exodus is most striking indeed. We may now see the relationship expressed in the parallelism between atonement and the anointment of a "holy of holies," i.e., the consecration of a new high-priesthood.

The Vision

In Dan 9:25, the angel goes on: "Know therefore and understand." In Hebrew, these two words stress the importance of the passage which follows, and they introduce the explanation. According to the same principle of parallelism, the message is developed in three phases. The next three verses can be organized as in Diagram 1 (p. 13) so that we may grasp their symmetrical character.

The same twofold picture is present here also. But the extension of the theme "people" is discerned in the figure of a Messiah, while in the line of the theme "Jerusalem" the historical destiny of the city is described in more precise detail as to its end and the end of its sanctuary.

The distribution depicted here is not artificial but is required on account of the double current which crosses the whole chapter: (1) people-sin, and (2) Jerusalem-Sanctuary. It is also justified by identifying each stich addressed to its fellow member by means of a common expression: Thus the 3 stichs concerned with Jerusalem (B_1 , B_2 , B_3) have the word *hrš* in common, whereas the 3 stichs concerned with the Messiah (A_1 , A_2 , A_3) refer regularly to a time expressed in terms of weeks. This regularity of using a common key-expression, three times on each side of the prophetic outline, indicates strongly that the 62 weeks (of A) should be connected with the Messiah rather than with Jerusalem. Thus, the break should take place *after* 62 weeks, not before it as the MT has suggested, but rather in the way it has been punctuated in the LXX, in the Peshitta,²⁷ and at Qumran.²⁸

²⁷ The state of these sources allows us to use them only as a support and not as a direct argument (cf. my Introduction).

²⁸ Qumran attests only the exegesis of the Essenes and does not ascertain the existence of the present punctuation (see "Exhortation, *Damascus Document*, MS A, 1: 4-11; cf. also A. Dupont-Sommer, *Les Ecrits esséniens découverts près de la Mer Morte* [Paris, 1968], p. 137).

Diagram 1. Chiasmic Structure in Dan 9:25-27.

A₁ (vs 25a) *construction of the city*
(From the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem)¹ to the coming of "the"² Messiah Prince there shall be 7 weeks, 62 weeks;

A₂ (vs. 26a) *destruction of the Messiah Prince*

After the 62 weeks, "the" Messiah shall be cut off without any help,⁴

A₃ (vs 27a) *cessation of sacrifice and offering*

And he shall have success⁷ with the covenant with many⁸ for one week; and in the midst⁹ of the week, he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease forever;¹⁰

B₁ (vs. 25b) *construction of the city*
it shall be restored and built, with squares and moat (*hrs*), but in a troubled time.

B₂ (vs. 26b) *destruction of the city and the sanctuary*

and the people of the Prince³ the aggressor⁵ shall destroy⁶ the city and the sanctuary. Its end will be in a flood, and until the end of a decree (*hrs*) there will be war; it will be a desolation.

B₃ (vs. 27b) *destruction of the People of the Prince*

and on the side of abominations, desolation will be until the end, [until] what is decreed (*hrs*) will be poured out on the desolation.

¹ Dealing with the motif of Jerusalem, this sentence should be classified on the other side. And the repetition of its two words "restore and build" in B shows that it belongs in fact to the same phase of action, hence to the same literary portion. I have put it in A in parentheses for the sake of clarity.

² Cf. p. 18.

³ Cf. p. 16.

⁴ Cf. pp. 18-19.

⁵ I think that this present use of *habbā'* ("the coming") has to be understood in the sense that it receives in chap. 11. There the word is always used to describe an army in aggression, with no time reference to the future. Chap. 11 uses this verb seventeen times, always with that particular connotation. See esp. the same form *habbā'* in 11:16; also similar usage of the same verb in the book of Ezekiel (cf. 1:4; 7:5; 20:29; 30:9; 33:3, 6; etc.).

⁶ The subject of *yašbīt* ("destroy") is undoubtedly '*am nāgīd*' ("people of the Prince") in the light of Dan 8:24, which is concerned with the same problem, which uses the same form, and which has as its subject not the saints but the evil power (the little horn).

⁷ The *higbīr* ("success") does not merely imply the idea of strength, but above all it implies the idea of struggle and of victory (the *gibbōr* is the hero who has succeeded in the war). Dan 11:32-33, which deals with the same concern, clearly suggests this struggle by opposing the *mašī'ē berīt* ("the wicked ones of the covenant") and the *maškīlē' am* ("the instructors of the people") who make the *rabbīm* ("many") understand (the two words *berīt* ["covenant"] and *rabbīm* are common with Dan 9:7).

⁸ We may notice here that the *rabbīm* has in a messianic passage a universal dimension (see Isa 53:12). It is significant that it is used by the prophets mostly for peoples or nations in reference to worship towards God. In Dan 11:2 the connotation of universality is clear; in this verse both the good and the wicked are included.

⁹ When *hāsf* ("midst") is in *status constructus* with a period of time (here weeks), it means always "midst" and not "half" (see Exod 12:29; Josh 10:13; Judg 16:3; Jer 17:11; Ps 102:25; Ruth 3:8). The context of our passage does not yield the meaning of "half." It is concerned with a definite action (*yašbīt* ["cause to cease"] in the imperfect). This is, according to the structure, related to *yikkārēt* ("cut off"), implying the idea of suddenness. The nature of this act (sudden destruction) points therefore to a specific moment in time (midst of the week) rather than to a duration of time (half of the week).

¹⁰ The word *yašbīt* implies a definitive effect (cf. Deut 32:26). It is significant that this word is used mostly to designate an eschatological cessation (see esp. its usage in the book of Ezekiel, which contains most of the biblical occurrences (cf. Ezek 7:24; 12:23; 16:41; 23:27; 23:48; 26:13; 30:50; 34:10; 34:25; etc.).

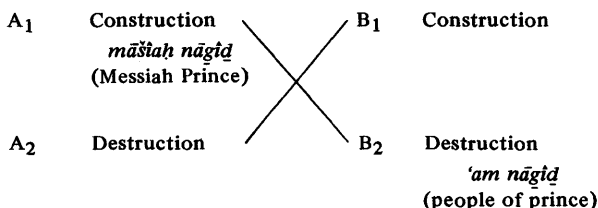
The two motifs of *Messiah* and *Jerusalem* are used alternately, giving this section its interwoven composition:

A ₁	Messiah
B ₁	Jerusalem
A ₂	Messiah
B ₂	Jerusalem
A ₃	Messiah (here implied) ²⁹
B ₃	Jerusalem

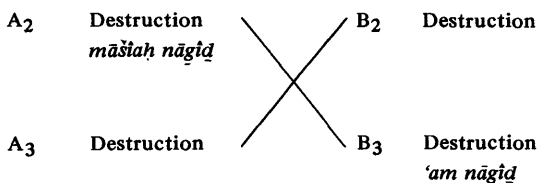
We may notice also the beautiful thematic chiasmus between the members. This structure points out a remarkable dialectic in terms of construction-destruction, as indicated in Diagram 2:

Diagram 2. The "Construction-Destruction" Dialectic in Dan 9:25-27.

The first chiasm:



The second chiasm:



²⁹ This small paragraph must be related to the Messiah on account of the following observations: (1) the presence of the theme of the weeks, the key-word related to the Messiah; (2) the principle of the interwoven composition (Messiah-Jerusalem-Messiah-Jerusalem-Messiah-Jerusalem); and (3) the notions of covenant and of cessation of the offerings which borrow the notions expressed in the verb *krt* (cut off) of the preceding messianic paragraph (A₁). These last are one more token according to which A₂ lies on the same level as A₁ and follows it. Indeed, the word *krt* is an allusion both to a covenant (*krt* is the technical term which expresses the process of the covenant; cf. Exod 24:8; 34:27; Jos 9:15; Hos 2:20; Jer 34:13; etc.) and to a cessation. The word *krt* conveys already in A₁ the two theological meanings of the death of the Messiah which we find again explicitly mentioned in A₂—namely, the *covenant* by his sacrifice, hence the *end* of the sacrifices.

The prophet wanted to communicate his message through the beauty of poetic structure. Martin Buber is right in noticing that in Hebrew here the *Wie* ("How") and the *Was* ("What") are confused.³⁰

3. Words and Expressions

The words and expressions which will be treated here have been selected especially because of the important role they play in the interpretation of the passage and because their meanings are still debated on account of their obscurity.

Min mōšā' dābār, "from the going forth of the word"

Min mōšā' dābār may refer to the *yāšā' dābār* ("went forth a word") of Dan 9:23, as though there is an internal relationship between them. In fact, the first *dābār* ("word") is undoubtedly from God; it belongs to the vision. In the same verse it is in parallelism with vision:³¹ *bîn baddābār* ("understand the word") and *wehābēn bammar'eh* ("and understand the vision").

The first *dābār* is the word in heaven, while the second *dābār* stands out from an objective point of view as the word on earth, the historical event corresponding to the word of God. This echo expresses the idea of the direct intervention of God with regard to the word of the building and restoration of Jerusalem.

The emphasis that is thus given points directly to the decree of Artaxerxes over against the decrees of Cyrus and Darius,³² for Artaxerxes' decree is not merely the third and last decree (hence the only one to be complete (it concerns the building of the Temple as well as of the political and administrative city of Jerusalem), but is also the only

³⁰ *Schriften zur Bibel*, Werke, Bd. 2 (München, 1964), p. 1112. I have explored this particular interrelationship between the Hebrew language in its expression and the content it conveys, in my doctoral dissertation ("L'Hébreu en vie: Langue hébraïque et civilisation prophétique. Etude structurale" [Hebrew in Life: Hebrew language and prophetic civilization. Structural study.] [Ph.D. dissertation, University of Strasbourg, 1973]).

³¹ On the basis of its relationship to *hābēn*, *min mōšā' dābār* refers, therefore, to the vision. This connection is supported by the fact that the expression is introduced by "know therefore and understand" (*škl*), which belongs to the same category of thought as *hābēn*.

³² With regard to the building and restoration of Jerusalem, the Bible records only those three decrees (cf. Ezra 6:14). See 2 Chr 36:22-23 and Ezra 1:1-4 for the decree of Cyrus; Ezra 6: 6-12 for the decree of Darius; and Ezra 7: 12-26 for the decree of Artaxerxes.

decree which is followed by a blessing and praise towards God, and indeed the only decree which alludes to the intervention of God: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of our fathers, who put such a thing as this into the heart of the king, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 7:27-28).

It is significant, moreover, that from this blessing and praise—this reaction of Ezra towards the action of God—the text passes from the Aramaic language to the Hebrew language. The decree of Artaxerxes has generated this shift, suggesting that only from here began the national restoration.³³

'Am nāgîd, "people of Prince"

The structure of the passage suggests a relationship between the two *nāgîds* present in it, as Diagram 2 on p. 14, above, indicates. This chiasm points to a constant opposition between the *māšîaḥ nāgîd* ("Messiah Prince") and the 'am nāgîd ("people of a Prince"³⁴): A₁: B₂; A₂: B₃. In fact, the second *nāgîd* (or "prince") comes against the first one—as his adversary, and also as his usurper. Indeed, he bears the same name and claims the same honor. It is significant that the term *nāgîd* is applied to the leader of Tyre in Ezek 23:2,³⁵ the context of which partakes much in common wording and patterns of thought with Dan 9:24-27.³⁶ The passage in Ezekiel is the only other biblical reference carrying this association with the concept of *mšḥ*, "to anoint" (23:14).

In fact, the motif of a great conflict in Dan 9 between the two "princes" pervades the whole book of Daniel and belongs to its basic theology.

³³This is against the dispensationalist view.

³⁴Status constructus; people of a *nāgîd* ("prince").

³⁵The fact is striking that this is the only time that Ezekiel uses this term *nāgîd*; elsewhere he always uses *nāšî'* (in fact, most of the OT occurrences of *nāšî'* are found in Ezekiel). This sudden unique and irregular shift of *nāšî'* to *nāgîd* must therefore be intentional.

³⁶*šḥt*, "destruction, corruption" (28:8, 17); *yammîm*, "sea" (28:8; cf. 27:34). The idea of end is here also associated with water (in Daniel *štf* = "inundation"). Other common terms are *ḥtm*, "seal" (28: 12); *mimšah*, "anointed cherubim" (28:14); *behar qōdeš 'elōhîm*, "holy mountain of God" (28:14, 16); *ḥt*, "sin" (28: 16); *ʾwōn*, "iniquity" (28: 18); *miqdāš*, "sanctuary" (28: 18); *šmm*, "desolate" (28: 19; cf. 27: 35).

šābu'īm, "weeks"

That the 70 weeks have to be interpreted in terms of years is indicated by the text itself. The bridge we noticed between the 70 weeks and the 70 years deciphers the word "week." The two expressions, šib'īm šānāh in vs. 2 and šābu'īm šib'īm in vs. 24, point to each other by the means of the following chiasmus:

šib'īm (70)	X	šānāh (year)
šābu'īm (weeks)		šib'īm (70)

This chiasmus elucidates the nature of the weeks; as šib'īm is equivalent to šib'īm, so šābu'īm is equivalent to šānāh.

This scheme is paralleled outside of the book of Daniel,³⁷ in Ezek 4:4-7. The prophet Ezekiel, in exile in Babylon, has a vision concerning the destruction of Jerusalem in relation to the sins of the people. The theological context (the sins of the people³⁸), the historical setting (destruction of Jerusalem), and geographical locale (exile at Babylon) recall the situation in Daniel. And to Ezekiel, as to Daniel, the divine word appoints a time. This time is specified in days, and to Ezekiel the order of conversion is given explicitly: one day = one year. This key was surely well known by Daniel; and on account of the similarities between the two situations, we are led to think that our 70 weeks in Dan 9 refer also to years.

If we adopt the MT punctuation here ("to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be 7 weeks . . . after those 62 weeks an anointed one shall be cut off") it is difficult to see how the Messiah who appeared after the first 7 weeks (49 years) would be killed 62 weeks later, namely 434 years later. Of course, one could argue that two different Messiahs are represented, especially in that the person of the Messiah is referred to differently in the two passages: The first time he is māšīah nāgīd, while the second time he is merely designated as māšīah. We have already seen, however, that the structure of the passage could hardly support this shift since it suggests the reverse effect on the same person.³⁹

³⁷ The Jewish tradition (*B. Nazir* 32b, *Yoma* 54a; the *Midrash Rabbah*, *Eikah* Pg 34; etc.) and Qumran literature (see above, n. 28) attest moreover the strength of this interpretation (see on this, J. Doukhan, *Boire aux Sources* [Dammarie-les-Lys, France, 1977], p. 93).

³⁸ The term 'āwōn ("sin") occurs five times in vss. 4 to 6.

³⁹ Cf. above, p. 14.

The way this expression passes from the definite (*māšīah nāgīd*) to the indefinite (*māšīah*) has a symmetrical correspondence regarding the city of Jerusalem: In vs. 25, in connection with *māšīah nāgīd*, we find the city explicitly designated as "Jerusalem"; but in vs. 26, in connection with *māšīah*, we find it simply referred to as "the city." Thus, for the city as well as for the Messiah we pass from the definite to the indefinite. As it is the same city Jerusalem, we would conclude that it must be also the same Messiah.

There are strong reasons, therefore, to think that the original break between the number segments in the text was after the expression "62 weeks," not before it. Thus, the death of the Messiah would follow closely upon his appearance.

We'ên lô, "and he has no . . ." ⁴⁰

The expression 'ên lô is never used elsewhere in the Bible in this absolute form. It is always used with an accusative, implicitly or not, in the sense of "there is no [something] for him" or "he has no [something]" (see Exod 22:2; Lev 11:10, 12; etc.; and cf. 'ên yešû'ātāh lô, "there is no salvation for him" in Ps 3:3). That is the reason why it should be a contracted form of a longer and more complete expression. It should be observed that Daniel uses the more complete form only once, in 11:45: 'ên 'ôzēr lô. There is strong reason, then, to think that the 'ên lô of Dan 9 is in fact the contracted form of the 'ên 'ôzēr lô of Dan 11.

This conclusion is strengthened when we consider the striking similarity of the concern between the two passages. In Dan 11:45 somebody (the evil power) comes to an end when facing the victorious appearance of Michael, who then takes charge of his people. In Dan 9:26 the Messiah comes to an end while facing the victorious murderer who destroys the city and its sanctuary. Both are 'ên ['ôzēr] lô, without any help. The symmetrical character of the situations is particularly suggestive; they echo each other.

It is interesting to notice that the expression 'ên 'ôzēr lô ("no help for him") or its abbreviated form 'ên 'ôzēr ("no help") occurs six times outside of the book of Daniel—always in a similar context of despair and with a similar perspective of salvation. ⁴¹

⁴⁰ The translation is literal.

⁴¹ 2 Kgs 14: 26; Isa 63: 5; Lam 1: 7; Ps 72: 12; 107: 12; 22: 12 (vs. 11 in the English version).

One of these occurrences draws our attention on account of its particular connotation: Ps 22:12, which attests the abbreviated form 'ên 'ôzēr ("no help").⁴²

In this Psalm the word 'zr ("help") is used twice, in vss. 12 and 20; and each time it is in association with rhq ("to be far"). But rhq occurs a total of three times. It is also used in vs. 1, where it is associated with 'zb ("to forsake").⁴³ We have, then, the following pattern of association:

rhq — 'zb	(vs. 1)
rhq — 'zr	(vs. 12)
rhq — 'zr	(vs. 20)

This stylistic device reveals that the author intended to suggest a connection between the three verses, and by the same token to bring out the particular affinity between vs. 1 and vs. 12: 'ên 'zr, "no help," which is the perfect semantic equivalent of 'zb, "forsake." Both expressions are associated with rhq.

This play on words may well have been intentional, then, tracing a connection between the 'ên 'ôzēr of vs. 12 and 'ēlī 'ēlī lāmāh 'āzāḥtānī ("my God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?") of vs. 1. Moreover, could not the prayer of the Lord on the cross, 'ēlī 'ēlī lāmāh šābaqtānī⁴⁴ (Ps 22:2 [22:1 in Eng.]), be taken as well, as referring indirectly to the expression of Dan 9, 'ên 'ôzēr lô?⁴⁵

4. Theological Dimensions

It would be impossible to state in a few words all of the theological implications involved in this prophecy. Yet, the main concepts seem to crystallize into three basic lines of thought that are closely related: levitism, universalism, and eschatology.

⁴² Vs. 11 in the English version.

⁴³ It is noteworthy that the same connection of ideas is attested elsewhere in the Bible; see 2 Kgs 14: 26, where 'zb is directly associated in parallelism with 'ên 'ôzēr leyīsrā'el ("no help for Israel"); the expression is used here in its complete and unabbreviated form.

⁴⁴ The shift by the Lord from 'āzāḥtānī unto šābaqtānī, I believe, is intentional and has theological reasons. Exposition of this matter would, however, go beyond the scope of this study.

⁴⁵ And this in the following way: 'ēlī 'ēlī lāmāh šābaqtānī ("my God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me") → 'ên 'ôzēr ("no help") → 'ên 'ôzēr lô ("no help for him") → 'ên lô ("no for him").

Levitism

Behind the 70-weeks' prophecy we may discern a strong levitical background. This is evident from the outset in the specific terms which are used—"sin," "holy of holies," "righteousness," "Holy," "the City," "Jerusalem," "offering," "sacrifice."

The association of 70 years with 70 weeks makes clear that our text points to the levitical principles of the Jubilee. By placing his prophecy in this perspective, Daniel reveals its theological background.⁴⁶ A certain number of the ideas of the Jubilee should be pointed out. The Jubilee brings a renewal; it is a new creation. Everything returns or comes back⁴⁷ to its original state. Land reverts to its original owner (Lev 25:24-28), and Hebrew slaves are to be freed (Lev 25:10). Then liberty is proclaimed throughout the land to all its inhabitants. But the levitical economy is especially involved, as our passage points out, with the ultimate consecration of the high-priesthood.

Liberty, atonement of sins, high-priesthood, sanctuary, Jerusalem—these motifs are familiar to the levitical world. This particularism is not the only feature of the prophecy, however; it is balanced by the universalistic dimension.

Universalism

The universalistic dimension of Dan 9:24-27 becomes evident when we pay attention to the way certain words of our passage are used in the rest of the chapter. Thus, the word *ḥaṭṭā'ôl* ("sins"), which is used in 9:24-27 in an indefinite sense pointing to a universalism, is always used in vss. 1-23 in a relative sense (particularism): *our* sins (vs. 16), *sin of the people* (vs. 20), *my* sin (vs. 20), *we* have sinned (vss. 5, 8, 16). The same thing can be said for the word *'āwōn* ("iniquity"), which is also used in the preceding verses in a relative sense: *we* did iniquity (vs. 5), *our* iniquities (vs. 13), *the iniquities of our fathers* (vs. 16). This is also the case with the word *ṣedeq* ("justice"), which is used in the preceding verses only in reference to God: vss. 7, 14, 16, 18.⁴⁸ The word *hāzōn* ("vision"), which is used in the preceding verses only one time—*hahāzōn* ("the vision") in vs. 21—points here to a particular and definite vision. The word *nābî* ("prophet") also occurs in a definite sense in vss. 2, 6, 11.

⁴⁶ In the prayer, Daniel refers explicitly to the Law of Moses in vs. 11.

⁴⁷ The Hebrew word *yôḥēl* ("jubilee") suggests this idea of bringing back.

⁴⁸ This is the only passage which relates *ṣedāqāh* ("justice") to men, but it is in a negative way—to point out that *ṣedāqāh* is not human but belongs to God.

The fact is striking: *All those words which are used in the prayer in a definite sense expressing a particularist view ("our," "my," "of the people," "of God," etc.) are suddenly, as soon as they appear in the context of the 70 weeks, used in an indefinite sense expressing a universalistic point of view.*

We may now understand why the *māšīah*, "Messiah," is indefinite—an absolutely exceptional case in OT usage—:⁴⁹ In the light of what precedes and on account of its particularity,⁵⁰ the term *māšīah* does not mean a particular Messiah among others holding a certain mission, but he is indeed *the* Messiah *par excellence*.⁵¹ Consequently, it is not surprising that this Messiah has something to do with the *rabbîm*, a word which has a strong universalistic connotation.⁵² He is the Messiah of all the peoples. This latter theological aspect in association with the former one, which points to the Jubilee, introduces the eschatological dimension of our prophecy.

Eschatology

The text is indeed imbued with eschatology. The four main patterns which characterize eschatological texts are present here:

First, the idea of an *eschaton* is explicitly indicated at the last step or stage of the prophecy (vss. 26-27)—in the terminology *qēš* ("end"), *yašbît* ("cause to cease"), and *kālāh* ("end"). It is implicit in the prelude—in reference to the "finishing" of the transgression and to the "sealing" of the vision. The preposition '*ad*', which occurs once in each verse (vss. 25, 26, 27), also suggests the idea of the end of a time—"until."

⁴⁹ Throughout the OT, *māšīah* is always used with an article or in status constructus relatively to a particular, specific, common Messiah. As for 2 Sam 1: 21, it is evidently a textual corruption and must be read according to the context *māšūah* ("anointment"), which is supported by a number of manuscripts (see the apparatus of *Biblica Hebraica*, ed. R. Kittel [Stuttgart, 1937]).

⁵⁰ The paucity of articles in the book of Daniel does not undermine this observation. (1) This case is noteworthy *within* the striking shift of "determined" into "undetermined" and includes the observation of the shift from the *status constructus* into the *status absolutus*. (2) The word *māšīah* is consistently used in a determined sense even in poetic contexts, though the latter are sparing in articles (see Ps 2:2; 20:7; 28:8; Isa 45:1, etc.).

⁵¹ This is against the historical-critical approach.

⁵² Cf. n. 8 to the table on p. 13.

Along with this *eschaton* element comes the classical concept of "appointed." We have already noticed that regarding the destiny of the city, the prophecy is rhythmed upon the word *hṛṣ*.

This appointing aspect is supported in addition by the time element of the prophecy. The numbering in weeks (70, 7, 62, 1, and ½), the words *sābu'im* ("weeks") and *ittim* ("times"), and the preposition *'aharê* give strong support to this and express the philosophy of history which pervades the whole book of Daniel.

As a final eschatological aspect, the passage resounds also of the great conflict: The *māšīaḥ nāgīd* ("Messiah Prince") is opposed to the *'am nāgīd* ("people of the Prince"), and the "restore and build Jerusalem" is done in a troubled time. The words *milḥāmāh* ("war"), *štf* ("inundation"), and *ttk* ("poured out") are particularly suggestive of the "violence" of the actual conflict which emerges in a brutal slain *yekārēt*,⁵³ and in desolation: *šômēm*, *šômēmôt*, *mešômēm*.

Levitism, universality, and eschatology constitute the three main aspects of the theology of Dan 9:24-27 emphasized here. They are at the same time tokens which may help us in the decipherment of the meaning of the 70-weeks' prophecy with respect to its fulfillment.

⁵³The word occurs in the Bible to designate capital punishment (cf. Num 15: 31; Lev 20: 17).