

An Exegetical and Biblical-Theological Case for Prophetic Foreshortening between Daniel 9:26 and 9:27

By John J. Yeo

I. Introduction

The notion of a parenthesis between Daniel 9:26 and 9:27 has been perennially denied and even mocked among evangelicals. For instance, Michael Horton states, “In classical Dispensationalism, God's ultimate program involves the nation Israel. The Church is a ‘parenthesis’ (Chafer), a sort of footnote or sidetrack in contrast to God's main mission to save ethnic, national Israel. We believe that this position gravely misunderstands the plan of God and the clear teaching of the Scriptures.”¹ Yet the notion of a parenthesis—especially in prophetic texts—is an established hermeneutical feature known as “prophetic foreshortening.” Robert Plummer defines it in the following manner: “The technical term for a variety of future events being viewed together (without strict chronological sequencing) is *prophetic foreshortening*.”² He further notes, “It has been pointed out that the first and second comings of Jesus are described in the Old Testament with prophetic foreshortening. That is, only with the completion of the first coming of Jesus are we able to see clearly that the Messiah’s visible and universal reign (the consummated kingdom) will come after a gap of time.”³ As an example, Plummer uses the “virgin prophecy” of Isaiah 7:14 where he interprets the prophesied child “to be applied to the setting in his own day [Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz], as well as to some other promised child in the distant future [Christ].”⁴ Plummer then employs the illustration of the two mountain peaks:

It is possible that Isaiah had a prophetic vision of two children in much the same way that we see two mountains from a distance. Viewed from far away, the two mountains appear side by side as one monolithic structure. One cannot tell how far apart they are or even if they are distinct formations. Only as we draw closer to the initial mountain do we see that the other mountain is actually separated from it by some distance. Similarly, it has been argued, some ancient prophets had visions of multiple forthcoming events in such a way that they could not distinguish the chronological distance between them.⁵

Randall Price provides an alternative technical expression for prophetic foreshortening which is derived from “the Greek verb *apotelō* meaning ‘to bring to completion, finish.’ This *apotelesmatic* interpretation recognizes that in Old Testament texts that present the messianic program as a single event, a near and far historical fulfillment is intended, separated by an indeterminate period of time.”⁶ Although he recognizes that older dispensationalists have used words like “intercalation” and “gap,” Price prefers the phrase, “prophetic postponement,”

¹ Michael S. Horton, “The Church and Israel,” Westminster Seminary California, December 31, 2008, <https://wscal.edu/resource-center/the-church-and-israel>.

² Robert L. Plummer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2010), 140.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ J. Randall Price, “Prophetic Postponement in Daniel 9 and Other Texts,” in *Issues in Dispensationalism*, ed. Wesley R. Willis & John R. Master (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 136.

because “it retains the original idea of an interruption in fulfillment, while supplementing it with the notion that such a delay is temporary, and *prophetic*, because we understand a purposeful, preordained act in the divine program.”⁷ Moreover, Price explains how the familiar example of Luke 4:17-21 and Isaiah 61:1-2 points to prophetic postponement between 61:2a and 61:2b:

In the Lukan narrative, Jesus, applying the Old Testament text to Himself in terms of fulfillment (Luke 4:21), abruptly ended His selected passage (Isa. 61:1-2) in mid-sentence with the words, “to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” (Isa. 61:2a). The completion of this sentence in Isaiah 61:2b reads, “and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.” If the Lord’s purpose as the first advent was to redeem rather than to reign, then we can understand why the second half of the verse, which focuses on the second advent (with its attendant judgments on the nations), was omitted.⁸

Even among evangelicals, we find claims of parentheses in the works of Reformed and covenant theologians.⁹ Therefore, the debate is not whether parentheses exist in Scripture and redemptive history, but if the presence of an interval or gap is justified. Therefore, this paper will demonstrate that a parenthesis exists between Daniel 9:26 and 9:27. Although this has been acknowledged among dispensationalists for decades, there is a dearth of works that have highlighted and brought to the fore the exegetical and biblical-theological connections that support and firm up previously held views regarding an interval between the 69th and 70th weeks in Daniel 9. To that end, Romans 11:17-24 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8 will be employed in support of the view that a parenthesis has occurred between Daniel 9:26 and 9:27.

II. Prophetic Foreshortening in the Book of Daniel

The Context of Daniel 2 and 7: The Identity of the Four Kingdoms

In Daniel 2, God gave King Nebuchadnezzar a dream of a colossus image which had a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, and legs of iron with its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. A stone from a mountain hit the image at its feet and it was demolished to pieces, but the stone filled the entire earth. Later in Daniel 7, Daniel himself was given a dream-vision from God of four beasts: a lion with eagles’ wings, a bear, a leopard with four wings, and a terrifying and powerful beast with ten horns. The last beast was defeated and destroyed by the messianic Son of Man whose kingdom will endure forever. The two dreams overlap in terms of the four identical kingdoms as well as the parallel accounts of the forthcoming millennial reign of Christ Jesus, the King of kings. Yet, they are also different in that Daniel 7 adds greater detail to the future events regarding the fourth kingdom of Rome and of the Antichrist.

⁷ Plummer, *Interpreting the Bible*, 140.

⁸ Price, “Prophetic Postponement in Daniel 9 and Other Texts,” 141.

⁹ Cf. Lee Irons, “Works in the Mosaic Covenant: A Survey of Major Covenant Theologians,” *The Upper Register*, 2007, 18, https://www.upper-register.com/papers/works_in_mosaic_cov.pdf; Meredith G. Kline, “Gospel Until the Law: Romans 5:13-14 and the Old Covenant,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34, no. 4 (December 1991): 436.

Liberal and a minority of evangelical scholars have assumed the four kingdoms in Daniel 2 and 7 to be Babylon, Persia, Media, and Greece.¹⁰ However, early Jewish interpreters held that the four kingdoms were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. For example, Dean Ulrich claims that Flavius Josephus—while being cautious not to offend his Roman audience—surreptitiously implied that the fourth kingdom was Rome:¹¹

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 anyone 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.¹²

Ulrich continues, “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). 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.”¹³ Moreover, Randall Price notes regarding the prophesied fate of Rome, “For this reason the Jewish commentator Rashi says that ‘the end of the Romans who destroyed Jerusalem will be total destruction through the promised Messiah’ and that the ‘desolation decreed’ for the City is ‘after the final wars waged by the Messianic king and the war of Gog and Magog.’”¹⁴

The Christian interpreters during the first three centuries also understood the four kingdoms to be Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome including Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Aphraates.¹⁵ Similarly, among contemporary interpreters, the vast majority of conservative, evangelical scholars have believed and continue to identify the four kingdoms to be Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. For instance, Eugene Merrill unequivocally argues that the traditional identification is the only historically sound interpretation of the four kingdoms:

Daniel identified Nebuchadnezzar himself as the head of gold, that is, his kingdom was at the very top and appeared first in the unfolding of human history from that time forward. There can be no questions that that kingdom is Babylonia. Next in order and inferior to

¹⁰ Cf., James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1927), 59-63. Evangelicals who have adopted a form of this view include Robert J. M. Gurney, “The Four Kingdoms of Daniel 2 and 7,” *Themelios* 2, no. 2 (1977): 39–45; and Ronald W. Pierce, “Spiritual Failure, Postponement, and Daniel 9,” *Trinity Journal* 10 (Fall 1989): 211–22. John Walton’s understanding of the four kingdoms is a variation of Gurney’s: Assyrian, Median, Medo-Persian, and Greek empires (John H. Walton, “The Four Kingdoms of Daniel,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 29, no. 1 [March 1986]: 25-36).

¹¹ Dean R. Ulrich, “How Early Judaism Read Daniel 9:24-27,” *Old Testament Essays* 27, no. 4 (2014): 1073.

¹² Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, 10.104 §210 as cited by Ulrich, “How Early Judaism Read Daniel 9:24-27,” 1073. Cf. Flavius Josephus and William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), 280.

¹³ Ulrich, “How Early Judaism Read Daniel 9:24-27,” 1073.

¹⁴ Price, “Prophetic Postponement in Daniel 9 and Other Texts,” 163 footnote 20.

¹⁵ Gerhard Pfandl, “Interpretations of the Kingdom of God in Daniel 2:44,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 34, no. 2 (Autumn 1996): 250 footnote 6.

the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar is the silver kingdom. Though many scholars, for reasons other than objective historical necessity, identify this as the kingdom of the Medes, that is impossible on historical grounds, for the Median kingdom had ceased to function as an independent entity by 539 B.C., the date of the fall of Babylon. The silver kingdom can only be that of Persia, which prevailed from 539-331 B.C. The only possible interpretation of the third kingdom, the even more inferior bronze, is that it is Greece, for Persian domination of the Near Eastern world was wrested from her violently by Alexander of Macedon. The fourth kingdom, that of iron, is Rome, for only Rome can in any valid historical sense be the successor to Greece. Though inferior to the other metals in intrinsic terms, iron is incomparably stronger and so, Daniel predicts, this fourth kingdom will “crush and break all these in pieces” (2:40).¹⁶

The Parenthesis in Daniel 2 and 7

In Daniel 2:28, the interpretation of the prophecy given to King Nebuchadnezzar concerning the colossus image concerned “what will take place in the latter days” (NASB). Daniel revealed that the head of gold was Nebuchadnezzar who represented the Babylonian empire. The other kingdoms were not identified as these remained future from Daniel’s vantage point.

However, in Daniel 2:33, two phases in the fourth kingdom are distinguishable. The first phase is represented by the “legs of iron” (2:33a), and the second phase is represented by the feet made “partly of iron and partly of baked clay” (2:33b). In Daniel’s interpretation, he again presents a two-phase distinction. The first-phase describes the fourth kingdom as “strong as iron inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces” (2:40 NASB), while the second phase refers to the feet and toes made up of part clay and part iron which “will be a divided kingdom” (2:41 NASB), “so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle” (2:42b NASB). Thus, there is a clear two-phase appearance to the fourth kingdom: one that will be strong like iron, and another that will be strong, yet brittle. Gleason Archer notes, “Verse 41 deals with a later phase or outgrowth of this fourth empire, symbolized by the feet and ten toes—made up of iron and earthenware, a fragile base for the huge monument. The text clearly implies that this final phase will be marked by some sort of federation rather than by a powerful single realm.”¹⁷

The four beasts in Daniel 7 represent the same kingdoms as the ones given in Daniel 2. The first beast was like lion with wings of an eagle, the second best resembled a bear, the third was like a leopard with four wings of a bird, and the fourth was dreadful and extremely strong with large iron teeth. The description of the fourth beast matches the strength and fearsomeness of the first phase of the Roman empire until the ten horns are mentioned. The major difference between the first-phase description of the fourth beast (7:7) to its second phase is the mention of the little horn which extracts three of the ten horns before it (7:8).

¹⁶ Eugene Merrill, “Daniel as Contribution to Kingdom Theology,” in *Essays in Honor of J. Dwight Pentecost*, ed. Stanley D. Toussaint & Charles H. Dyer (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 221. Cf. Robert Chisholm, *Handbook on the Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 297-299.

¹⁷ Gleason L. Archer Jr., “Daniel,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Daniel and the Minor Prophets*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 7:47.

The similarity between the two visions are the ten toes of the clay-iron feet and the ten horns. The symbolism of the feet with ten toes resembles the fragile unity among the ten horns which are ten kings. There is a noticeable difference between the unity of the ten kings in their first phase as opposed to the second phase where the Antichrist will dominate three of the ten kings in order to rise above the other six (7:24-25). In agreement, Archer avers, “Verse 8 introduces a new feature concerning this latter-day ten-state federation—namely, the emergence of one of the smaller horns as the largest of them all. This ‘little horn’ becomes dominant by uprooting and destroying three of its adjacent horns (resulting apparently in the survival of the remaining six as vassal powers under the overlordship of the enlarged horn).”¹⁸

Therefore, the two phases of the Roman kingdom are apparently separated by a parenthesis of an unspecified period of time. Michael Rydelnik states, “A more likely explanation is to recognize a prophetic gap, beginning with the fall of the Roman Empire (Rome I) and lasting through the establishment of a revived Roman Empire at the end of days (Rome II). The leader of this kingdom will be the little horn of Dn 7:8, 24–25. The destruction of this last phase of the Roman Empire will come with the establishment of the kingdom of God.”¹⁹ The interval between the two Roman phases is not exactly co-terminous with the intercalation between the 69th and 70th weeks since the first Roman phase continued after the 69th week had come to an end and the second phase will begin with the rise of the Antichrist as detailed in Daniel 7:8 and Revelation 13:1-8. This will occur at the beginning of the 70th week and, thus, marking the closure of the parenthesis known as the Church Age.

III. Prophetic Foreshortening in Daniel 9

The Context of Daniel 9

At the outset of Daniel 9, during the first year of the reign of Darius the Mede, Daniel understood that Jerusalem’s desolation was going to come to end according to Jeremiah 25:11-12 and 29:10-14 since Israel’s seventy-year captivity was nearing its completion. Daniel turned to the Lord in fasting and prayer as he repented on behalf of the people of Israel for their sins in not keeping the Law of Moses.²⁰ According to 2 Chronicles 36:21, the Israelites were carried off to Babylon until the rule of the Persian king, Cyrus, due to their lack of obedience in regard to allowing the land to lie fallow every sabbatical/seventh year (Lev 25:2-4; 26:34-35, 43). Thus, the number of times the Israelites disobeyed God regarding the Sabbath rest was 70 weeks of years which lasted for 490 years (70 x 7 = 490 years). God, therefore, sent them captive to Babylon for 70 years.

As Daniel prayed, God sent forth Gabriel to grant Daniel insight and understanding. Gabriel declared that the 70-weeks prophecy in 9:24-27 was in response to his prayer in 9:3-23. Price provides the following connections between the prophecy and his prayer:

¹⁸ Archer, “Daniel,” 7:87.

¹⁹ Michael A. Rydelnik, “Daniel,” in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1288.

²⁰ Daniel is also praying according to Solomon’s prayer when he dedicated the Temple. Solomon specifically requested God to be merciful to the Israelites when held captive in a foreign land and they pray and confess their sins towards the Temple (cf. 1 Kings 8:46-53).

1. Daniel's primary petition is for divine clemency toward the desolated Temple (v. 17), the people, and the City (vv. 18-19).
2. Daniel uses a number of terms that will be later developed in the prophetic response in verses 24-27 ["E.g., *hashomem* ('desolations'), verses 17-18; *marad* ('transgression'), verse 9; *avin* ('iniquity'), verses 5, 13, 16; *chata* ('sin'), verses 5, 8, 11, 20; *miqedash* ('Sanctuary'), verse 17 (cf. v. 20); *ir* ('city'), verse 19; *am* ('people'), verses 19-20; and *torat Moshe* ('law of Moses'), verses 11, 13."]²¹
3. The prayer contains vocabulary similar to the desecration terminology of Jeremiah and Ezekiel: (a) the departure of Israel from covenant (vv. 5, 10-11, 13, 14-15), (b) the judgment of the curses written in the Law (vv. 11-13), (c) the refusal to hear the prophets (vv. 6, 10), (d) the sins of the fathers (vv. 6, 8, 16), (e) identification with holy Name (v. 19), (f) exile due to cultic rebellion (v. 7), and (g) the reproach from the nations caused by Israel's exile (v. 16).²²

However, rather than telling Daniel that the exile was now over, Gabriel informed him that there would be another 70 weeks of years for yet another 490-year period. Kevin Zuber states, "Just as one 490-year period of time for Israel was ending, another 490-year period of time for the nation was prophetically revealed."²³ The overall structure of Daniel 9 may be presented as a chiasm:

70 Years	A	(vv. 1, 2)
	Daniel's Prayer	B
		(vv. 3-19)
70 Weeks	A ¹	(vv. 24-27) ²⁴

Randall Price insightfully notes that prophetic postponement "was implied in Old Testament texts concerned with Israel's hardening (Isa. 6:9-13; Zech. 7:11-12) and judicial exile (Deut. 4:27-30; 28:36-37, 49-50, 64-68), yet not fully revealed until the New Testament revelation (John 12:37-40; Acts 28:25-28; Rom. 11:25-26)."²⁵ Applying this principle to the Babylonian exile, Price states, "This postponement in Israelite history is not so much an interruption of redemption as an *extension* of predicted hardening (Rom. 11:7-10). The Exile, which was a punishment for national disobedience, has therefore been prolonged during the present age until the appointed time for Israel's national (and spiritual) restoration (Acts 1:7; 3:21; Rom. 11:25-27)."²⁶ In general agreement, Stephen Dempster affirms the notion that post-exilic Israel returned physically to the land, but continued to suffer from "exilic conditions":

Malachi closes the prophetic corpus appropriately. Like Haggai and Zechariah, the book is written in the postexilic period. Israel has returned to the land, but this return has not been accompanied by the prophetic glory predicted for Jerusalem during the exile.

²¹ Price, "Prophetic Postponement in Daniel 9 and Other Texts," 163 footnote 25.

²² Ibid., 147.

²³ Kevin D. Zuber, "Daniel 9:24-27: When Will Messiah Come?," in *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy: Studies and Expositions of the Messiah in the Old Testament*, ed. Michael Rydelnik and Edwin Blum (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2019), 1141.

²⁴ Brempong Owusu-Antwi, "An Investigation of the Chronology of Daniel 9:24-27" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 1993), 73. The chiasm has been slightly modified from the original.

²⁵ Price, "Prophetic Postponement in Daniel 9 and Other Texts," 136.

²⁶ Ibid.

Jerusalem is certainly not the centre of the earth, nor does there seem to be any leader on the immediate horizon who can change Israel's condition, let alone bring justice to the ends of the earth. The people have lapsed spiritually (1:2, 6–8, 12–14; 2:1–17). As in Zechariah and Haggai, the returnees are described as living in exilic conditions (Hag. 1:6–11; Zech. 2:6–7). Although they have returned to the land, they are still in exile.²⁷

Therefore, according to Price, the apostelesmatic approach includes the extension of the exile which makes way for a parenthetical period: “The apostelesmatic approach includes both an extension of Israel's exilic condition and a *postponement* of Israel's restoration, with a *parenthetical* period incorporated to fulfill the messianic redemptive promises for those (whether Jew or Gentile) who have accepted Israel's Messiah (John 1:11-12; 1 Cor. 1:24). Since Israel's hardening did not permit the promise of national repentance toward Messiah at the first advent (John 12:37-40), this will be fulfilled at the second advent (Rom. 11:25; cf. Ezek. 36:26-27).²⁸

Four Different Views of Daniel 9:24-27

Anyone who has done any cursory work on Daniel 9:24-27 will find a plethora of different interpretations regarding the *terminus a quo* (i.e., the starting point) and *terminus ad quem* (i.e., the end point) of the 70-weeks prophecy. The main views that have been proposed are summed up by Price:

1. *Maccabean Interpretation* [“The Historical-Critical View”], with the *terminus a quo* in 605 or 586 B.C. (either the first Babylonian deportation or destruction of Temple) and the *terminus ad quem* in 167-165 B.C. (when the Temple was purified or with Antiochus Epiphanes' desecration).²⁹
2. *Roman Interpretation*, with *terminus a quo* in the Persian period—either Cyrus (538 B.C.), Darius (519 B.C.), or Artaxerxes (either 458 or 445 B.C.)—and the *terminus ad quem* in A.D. 70 (with the destruction of the Temple by Titus).³⁰

²⁷ Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 187.

²⁸ Price, “Prophetic Postponement in Daniel 9 and Other Texts,” 139.

²⁹ André Lacocque, representative of the critical position, claims the book of Daniel was written between 166-164 B.C. (André Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel*, 2nd ed. [Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018], 2). Gordon Hugenberger summarizes the critical view: “There are many significant variations among those who follow this general approach, but all agree that the last of Daniel's 70 weeks refers to the momentous seven year period between 171 BC and 164 BC. This period concerns the events surrounding the murder of the anointed legitimate high priest Onias III in 171 BC, the desecration of the temple by the Greek tyrant, Antiochus Epiphanes, in 167 BC, and finally the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabaeus in 164 BC, which event is celebrated in the Jewish feast of Hanukkah” (G. P. Hugenberger, “The Seventy ‘Weeks’ Prophecy of Daniel 9: A Comparison of Major Views” [Unpublished paper, Park Street Church, December 10, 2004], 1, https://www.parkstreet.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/70weeks_danielprophecy.pdf). In addition, there are two “anointed ones” in the critical view: “According to this view, ‘the Anointed One, the Ruler’ in verse 25 is a reference to the high priest Joshua, while ‘the Anointed One’ in verse 26 is Onias III, and ‘the Ruler’ of verse 26b and the ‘he’ of verse 27 is Antiochus Epiphanes” (Ibid., 2).

³⁰ Edward J. Young is representative of a messianic, evangelical form of the Roman Interpretation: “The first period of seven sevens is evidently intended to include the time from the first year of Cyrus to the completion of the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the second that from the completion of the work of Ezra and Nehemiah unto the first

3. *Hasmonean Interpretation*, with the *terminus a quo* as the time of the issuance of Jeremiah's prophecy of the seventy years (605 B.C.), and the *terminus ad quem* as the end of the Hasmonean dynasty under Alexander Jannaeus (88 B.C.).³¹
4. *Eschatological Interpretation*, with the *terminus a quo* in the Persian period (Artaxerxes in 457 or 445 B.C.), and the *terminus ad quem* in the end times (at the midpoint of the seventieth week with the desecration of the Temple by Antichrist). The eschatological interpretation is sometimes combined with both the Maccabean and Roman interpretations by those who view the passage as having a dual reference and fulfillment.³²

The Use of *Athnach* in Daniel 9:25 and Its Implications

According to McComiskey, the Massorettes placed the disjunctive accent, *athnach* (Heb. אֲתַנַּח), between the words "seven weeks and sixty-two weeks" (Heb. שִׁבְעִים שָׁבָעָה וְשִׁבְעִים וָשָׁנִים) in 9:25 that should not be disregarded.³³ He believes that the punctuation of the text should follow the RSV version: "there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks" as opposed to the NASB which states, "there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks."³⁴ The importance of the issue contextually is whether "the Messiah, the Prince" will come at the end of the first seven weeks or at the end of the sixty-nine weeks respectively.³⁵

McComiskey duly cites the objections to following the accent: (1) the Massoretic accentuation is late, (2) earlier text traditions including the Theodotian version of the LXX, the Latin Vulgate, and Syriac combine the numerals seven and sixty-two, and (3) the Massoretic tradition may reflect an anti-Christian bias. However, McComiskey notes that in spite of the lateness of the accentuation of the Massoretic Text (MT), "it may be noted that interpretation

advent of Christ who alone can be described as an anointed one, a prince. During this entire period the city will be completely rebuilt, although this will be accomplished during times of distress and affliction. ... For the period of the 70th seven the Messiah causes a covenant to prevail for many, and in the half of this seven by His death He causes the Jewish sacrifices and oblation to cease. His death is thus seen to belong within the 70th seven. Consequent upon this causing the sacrifices and oblation to cease is the appearance of a desolator over the pinnacle of the Temple, which has now become an abomination" (Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980], 220). According to Young, there was no clear mention of a *terminus ad quem* for the 70th week in the text, but he believes it ended before the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 (Ibid.).

³¹ Ronald Pierce is representative of this view: "In summary, the period of the seventy weeks of years finds a reasonable and literal fulfillment in the 'anointed rulers' Cyrus (seven weeks), Aristobulus I (sixty-two weeks), and Alexander Jan-naeus (the final week). Thus, once again there is no need to emend the text or to read into the context a reference either to Antiochus Epiphanes or to the ministry of our Lord" (Ronald W. Pierce, "Spiritual Failure, Postponement, and Daniel 9," *Trinity Journal* 10 [Fall 1989]: 218).

³² Price, "Prophetic Postponement in Daniel 9 and Other Texts," 144. Price summarizes the salient points of the four views presented by Paul D. Feinberg, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24-27," in *Tradition & Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 195-216.

³³ Thomas Edward McComiskey, "The Seventy 'Weeks' of Daniel Against the Background of Ancient Near Eastern Literature," *Westminster Theological Journal* 47, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 19.

³⁴ The NIV, NET, KJV, NKJV, CSB, and NASB ignore the *athnach*, while the following translations separate the 7 and 62 weeks: ESV (with a period), JPS (with a semicolon), RSV (with a period) and NRSV (with a comma).

³⁵ Owusu-Antwi, "An Investigation of the Chronology of Daniel 9:24-27," 276-277.

reflected in the accentuation of the Massoretic tradition may be found centuries earlier in Christian thought.”³⁶

However, McComiskey overstates his case regarding the *athnach* having a full disjunctive value in 9:25 as if it always functions in this manner. The *athnach* is “a distinguishing feature that the Hebrew verse is divided into two parts, termed ‘dichotomy,’ for the purposes of chanting.”³⁷ According to William Wickes, “The accentuators did not hesitate to make the strict rules for logical (or syntactical) division give way, when they wished to express emphasis. or otherwise give effect to the reading.”³⁸ Thus, the *athnach* could express different emphases when reciting the Hebrew text that are similar to our punctuation marks in English grammar.

In particular, the various uses of the *athnach* when used with numbers include: (1) a pausal effect similar to a colon or semicolon, (2) a pause similar to a comma, or (3) no disjunctive value at all.³⁹ Brempong Owusu-Antwi provides three examples from the Book of Daniel itself that demonstrate that the *athnach* does not always have a full disjunctive value:

- Daniel 1:6 *And there was among them from the sons of Judah: [athnach: the accent is not a full disjunctive stop, but functions here like a colon] Daniel, Hananiah and Azariah.*
- Daniel 8:20 *The ram which you saw with two horns [athnach: it cannot be a full disjunctive here due to the two clauses needing the connecting verb “is” or as a colon] the kings of Media and Persia.*
- Daniel 9:2 *In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by the books [athnach: it is not a full disjunctive here, but functioning like a comma] the number of years which came by the word of God to Jeremiah the prophet that He would accomplish for the desolations of Jerusalem seventy years.*

How then should the *athnach* in Daniel 9:25 be understood? Owusu-Antwi presents five reasons as to why the accent should not be a full disjunctive stop (congruent to the English period):

- (1) The MT employs the conjunctive *waw* as a co-ordinative conjunction between the “seven weeks and sixty-two weeks” displaying a close connection between the two sets of weeks.
- (2) There is poetic parallelism in 9:25 that connects “Jerusalem” to the “seven weeks” and “until Messiah the Prince” to the “sixty-two weeks.”

A: Jerusalem	//	B: <i>until</i> the Messiah, the Prince
A ¹ : seven weeks	//	B ¹ : <i>and</i> sixty-two weeks
- (3) “The function of the *athnach* after the ‘seven weeks’ is to emphasize the seven-week period for the restoration and building of Jerusalem, and thereby project the coming of the long-expected Messiah further into the future.”

³⁶ McComiskey, “The Seventy ‘Weeks’ of Daniel Against the Background of Ancient Near Eastern Literature,” 20.

³⁷ Owusu-Antwi, “An Investigation of the Chronology of Daniel 9:24-27,” 280.

³⁸ William Wickes, *Two Treatises on the Accentuation of the Old Testament* (New York: Ktav Publications, 1970), parts I: 24; II:29 as cited by Owusu-Antwi, “An Investigation of the Chronology,” 280 footnote 3.

³⁹ Owusu-Antwi, “An Investigation of the Chronology,” 283-286.

- (4) “None of the ancient versions—LXX, Theodotian, Syriac, or Vulgate—puts a full disjunctive between the ‘seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks’ of Dan 9:25.”
- (5) “The Qumran texts that relate to Dan 9:24-27, and Rabbinic interpretations, support a nondisjunctive value of the *athnach* in Dan 9:25.”⁴⁰

As a result, the *athnach* in 9:25 should not be understood as a full disjunctive. Otherwise, if the *athnach* is used to separate the seven weeks from the sixty-two weeks, then the sixty-two weeks would be connected to the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Accordingly, the prophecy then would require 434 years for the rebuilding of Jerusalem for which there is no historical support.⁴¹ Thus, Owusu-Antwi concludes, “while the emphatic nature of *athnach* of Dan 9:25 must be recognized, the seven and sixty-two weeks must be seen as one period of sixty-nine weeks (483 years) starting from the ‘word to restore and build Jerusalem’ to the appearance of ‘the Messiah, the Prince.’”⁴²

Early Christian Interpreters Read Sixty-Nine Weeks

Moreover, McComiskey’s claim that the *athnach* was heeded by the early Christian exegetes such as Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, and Eusebius—even though they had the Theodotianic text before them (which ignored the *athnach*)—is a mischaracterization of the evidence regarding the early Christian interpretation of Daniel 9:25. Roger Beckwith contradicts him by asserting that before the third century A.D., every Christian interpreter and translator in actuality understood that the seven and sixty-two weeks belonged together as a unit:

All interpreters and translators until Clement of Alexandria and Hippolytus, at the beginning of the third century A.D., understand the seven weeks and sixty two weeks of verse 25 to be a combined period of sixty nine weeks, at the end of which a single anointed one comes (even the Old Septuagint agrees on this); the Massoretic punctuation, which separates the seven weeks from the sixty two, and gives the impression that a different anointed one comes at the end of each, cannot be traced until after the Jewish rejection of Jesus and the disappointment of the Jewish messianic expectations of the first and second centuries A.D. Nevertheless, it is by this change of punctuation, which has influenced most modern translation of Daniel and commentaries on Daniel, that the prophecy has come to be regarded as non-messianic. A non-messianic interpretation would have been quite eccentric in the first century A.D.⁴³

⁴⁰ Owusu-Antwi, “An Investigation of the Chronology,” 288-292 *passim*.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 293. The chiasm has been slightly modified.

⁴³ Roger T. Beckwith, *Calendar and Chronology, Jewish and Christian: Biblical Intertestamental and Patristic Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 306-307. See also John Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 221-222, where he warns that in one case the Massoretic accent was used in such a way as to “represent a fundamentally different reading of this passage [Isaiah 9:5 MT//9:6 English Bible] than in the NT (Luke 1:32-33)” (221).

Thomas McComiskey's Non-messianic View

As a result of McComiskey's insistence on granting the *athnach* a full disjunctive value, he too ends up with a non-messianic interpretation. The *terminus a quo* for the first seven weeks, according to McComiskey, should not be aligned with a Persian king's decree, but rather a prophetic prediction. Hence, he sees that Jeremiah 29 fulfills "the going forth of the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the appearance of *māšīaḥ nāgīd*" which is dated to about 594 B.C.⁴⁴ The major problem, however, with this date is that it is too early. The year that the message is given to Daniel was "in the first year of Darius" who began to reign in 538 B.C. The Hebrew text in 9:25 uses two imperfect verbs "you shall know" (יָדַעְתָּ) and "you shall understand" (וְיָבִינְתָּ) which are clearly future tense in the context. The prophecy of Jeremiah 29, however, was given in 594 B.C. which had already been announced before 538 B.C.

McComiskey's *terminus ad quem* for the first seven weeks is then associated with the decree of Cyrus which is actually fifty-six or fifty-seven years and not forty-nine. To justify this inconsistency, he claims that the numbers are symbolic and not to be taken literally due to the text belonging to the apocalyptic literary genre.⁴⁵ In addition, the period of the sixty-nine weeks spans from Cyrus to the Antichrist. McComiskey believes that the Antichrist is the Messiah who was "cut off" (9:26) and the one who "makes a firm covenant" (9:27).⁴⁶ Because of the enormous amount of time between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth week, he admits that a literal interpretation of 9:27 requires a gap in order for it to be feasible.⁴⁷ This is a clear concession that a parenthesis is not unreasonable, but necessary for a literal interpretation. Once again, however, instead of taking the numbers literally, McComiskey must resort to the use of symbolic numbers, although this time from an ancient Near Eastern perspective.⁴⁸ Unexpectedly, Robert Chisholm supports McComiskey's symbolic arrangement for Daniel 9:24-27:

It is quite natural that the ultimate consummation of God's program would be concentrated in a single seventieth week. The intermediate sixty-two weeks designate the long period between Cyrus and the beginning of this culminating week. Though this period of sixty-two weeks may be disproportionate to the first period of seven weeks, this is only problematic for those who demand mathematical precision. However, such precision may be foreign to the apocalyptic literary genre.⁴⁹

The weeks, however, should not be taken symbolically, but literally.⁵⁰ Doukhan asserts, "The seventy week's prophecy must be interpreted with regard to *history* in as realistic a way as Daniel did for the prophecy of Jeremiah." He then adds, "This stands against the symbolical

⁴⁴ McComiskey, "The Seventy 'Weeks' of Daniel Against the Background of Ancient Near Eastern Literature," 5, 11.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 36-45.

⁴⁹ Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *Handbook on the Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Minor Prophets* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 317.

⁵⁰ On the length of a "week" according to Daniel 9, cf. Alva J. McClain, *Daniel's Prophecy of the 70 Weeks* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 2007), 15-18; and Harold Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977), 116-119.

interpretation.”⁵¹ Thus, in response to Chisholm’s defense of McComiskey’s symbolical view, Thomas McCall aptly concludes, “For Chisholm, there is no clear schedule for the coming of the Messiah in this prophecy, but only mysterious symbolism.”⁵²

The Six Infinitives in Daniel 9:24 and Their Significance

The six infinitives found in Daniel 9:24 are: (1) “to bring transgression to an end” (לְכַלֵּא הַפְּשָׁעַ),⁵³ (2) “in order to seal up sins” (וּלְכַפֵּר עָוֹן),⁵⁴ (3) “to atone for iniquity” (וּלְכַפֵּר עָוֹן),⁵⁵ (4) “to bring in everlasting righteousness” (וּלְהַבְיִיא צְדָקָה עֲלָמִית),⁵⁶ (5) “to seal up vision and prophecy” (וּלְחַתֵּם חֶזְוֵן וְנְבִיאָה),⁵⁷ and (6) “and to anoint the holy of holies” (וּלְמַשֵּׁחַ קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים).⁵⁸ Jacques Doukhan divides the six infinitives under the two headings “concerning your people” and “concerning your holy city.” The major criterion for the separation of the two titles and their corresponding infinitival phrases is whether they contain two or three words respectively. Note Doukhan’s structural layout below:⁵⁹

A Totality of 70 Weeks is Separated

Concerning your people <i>‘al-‘ammekā</i> (2 words)	Concerning your holy city <i>we‘al ‘ir qodšekā</i> (3 words)
(1) to finish the transgression <i>lekallē‘ happeša‘</i> (2 words)	(1) to bring in everlasting righteousness <i>ûlehābī šedeq ‘olāmim</i> (3 words)
(2) to seal (htm) sins <i>ûlehātēm haṭṭā‘ôl’</i> (2 words)	(2) to seal (btm) both vision and prophet <i>welaḥtôm hāzôn wenābī‘</i> (3 words)
(3) to atone for iniquity <i>ûlekappēr ‘āwōn</i> (2 words)	(3) to anoint holy of holies <i>welimsōah qōdeš‘ qodāšim</i> (3 words)

⁵¹ Jacques R. Doukhan, “The Seventy Week of Dan 9: An Exegetical Study,” *Faculty Publications*, Paper 79, 1979, 8, <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/old-testament-pubs/79>.

⁵² Thomas S. McCall, “Dallas Seminary’s Chisholm Wanders Off Trail,” *Conservative Theological Journal* 8, no. 25 (December 2004): 324.

⁵³ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, “כלה,” in *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. and ed. M. E. J. Richardson (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2000), 476, Accordance Bible Software. The first gloss under the Piel stem is defined, “to complete, bring to an end,” however, *HALOT* lists Daniel 9:24 under gloss 4, section c as “to destroy.”

⁵⁴ “תמם,” *HALOT*, 1754. The second gloss under the Hiphil stem has the definition, “to come up to size, reach full measure, bring to an end.”

⁵⁵ “כפר,” *HALOT*, 494. The first two glosses under the Piel stem relate to making atonement, however, *HALOT* lists Daniel 9:24 under the third gloss with the definition, “to make good by punishment.”

⁵⁶ “בוא,” *HALOT*, 114. The first gloss under the Hiphil stem is defined, “to bring, lead in.”

⁵⁷ “חתם,” *HALOT*, 364. The first gloss under the Qal stem is defined, “to seal (up),” but lists Daniel 9:24 under the second gloss defined, “confirm.”

⁵⁸ “משח,” *HALOT*, 644. The first gloss under the Qal stem lists Daniel 9:24 and is defined, “to anoint cultic objects.”

⁵⁹ Doukhan, “The Seventy Week of Dan 9: An Exegetical Study,” 10.

The completion of the six infinitives is universal in scope and future in fulfillment. They could not be fulfilled within the period of the seventy weeks due to their comprehensive nature to finish sin and to seal up vision and prophecy. However, E. J. Young believed Christ fulfilled all six infinitives at His first advent: “The six items presented in this vs. [9:24] 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.”⁶⁰ In order to support his view, however, it was necessary for Young to modify the verbs found in 9:24. For example, instead of “to finish the transgression,” he assumed that the verb “to finish or complete” was unjustifiable, and asserted that a more accurate rendering of the infinitival phrase should be “to restrain the transgression.”⁶¹ However, none of the standard Hebrew lexicons such as Brown, Driver, and Briggs (*BDB*) or *HALOT* employ “restrain” as a gloss for the Hebrew verb, כָּלַף. It is evident, therefore, that Young, as an amillennialist, was attempting to curtail the comprehensive nature of the virtual eradication of sin that will occur only in the millennial kingdom and not during the present Church age nor the future Tribulation period.

Regarding the first three goals, Kenneth Barker appropriately notes, “It has long been held among conservatives that the *initial three goals* decreed in 9:24 were fulfilled at least in part by the vicarious, substitutionary, atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ.” For the second three infinitives, however, interpreters have had differing opinions as to the times of their completion, but Barker believes that only the millennial period does justice to the interpretation of the text and its relation to history. Particularly in regard to the sixth infinitive, Barker notes,

If the anointing of a holy of holies in Daniel 9:24 refers to a temple, its provenance must be earthly, inasmuch as there is no temple in the New Jerusalem (cf. Rev. 21:22). The only possible point in time for the anointing of an earthly temple must be late in the Great Tribulation or early in a millennial kingdom for the following reasons. First, if the terminus a quo for the 490 years is Nisan 444 B.C., any anointing of the most holy place in 520 B.C. (Zerubbabel’s Temple) would have preceded that of 9:24. Second, the reanointing of the altar after the desecration by Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 165 B.C. precedes the atoning work of Christ; the passage sequence suggests that this anointing follows that work. Third, to my knowledge, the most holy place was not anointed from that time until the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. That leaves only a yet future temple to be anointed. If the Temple of Ezekiel 43 is to be taken as millennial, it becomes a likely candidate for this event.⁶²

In agreement, Randall Price states, “Since Daniel’s primary concern in his prophecy is the restoration of the Temple, this eschatological goal, standing at the end of the series of [six] goals, may well determine the focus of fulfillment for the whole.”⁶³

⁶⁰ Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 201.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁶² Kenneth L. Barker, “Evidence from Daniel,” in *A Case for Premillennialism: A New Consensus*, ed. Donald K. Campbell & Jeffrey L. Townsend (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 145-146.

⁶³ Price, “Prophetic Postponement in Daniel 9 and Other Texts,” 150.

The Parenthesis in Daniel 9:25-27

Daniel 9:25-27 may be divided and structured in the following manner, as both Doukhan and Owusu-Antwi have done:⁶⁴

A¹: (25a) From the going forth of a decree to restore and to build **Jerusalem** until **Messiah the Prince** there shall be *seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks*

B¹: (25b) **It shall be restored and built** with “squares and moat” but in troublous times

A²: (26a) And after the *sixty-two weeks* **Messiah** shall be cut off and without any help

B²: (26b) and the people of **the prince** who shall come shall destroy the city and **the sanctuary**. And its end shall come with a flood, and unto the end there shall be war; desolations are determined.

A³: (27a) And **he shall make strong a covenant** with many for *one week*: and in the *middle of the week*, he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease

B³: (27b) and upon **the wing of abominations** shall come one who makes desolate until the decreed end is poured out on **the desolator**.

The valuable aspect of the structuring device is that it isolates the clauses that refer to the Messiah and the ones that correspond to the city of Jerusalem. Owusu-Antwi notes, “The details of the prophecy are arranged in the A:B form with the two motifs of Messiah and Jerusalem in all the verses. The time elements are consistently connected with the Messiah portions.”⁶⁵

Regarding A¹ and A², the structure shows that the “Messiah the Prince” (25a) will come after seven and sixty-two weeks or a 483-year period. The first seven-year period may refer then to the completion of the city as Robert Newman tentatively proposes: “Perhaps the first seven weeks, if one may hazard a guess, involve the actual rebuilding of the city.”⁶⁶ What is certain, however, is that the only reference to Jesus as the Messiah-Prince comes at 9:25a and 9:26a. Therefore, all subsequent references to “the prince” in 9:26b and the “he who shall makes a strong covenant” in 9:27a must refer to another person since the first Messiah-Prince had been “cut off” after the sixty-weeks. The juxtaposition of the “Messiah the Prince” in A¹ (9:25a) and “Messiah” in A² (9:26a) versus “the prince” in B² (9:26b) and the “he” in A³ (p:27a) whose nearest antecedent points back to “the prince” in B² demonstrates that he is a false prince and a false Messiah, i.e., the Antichrist.

Thus, the reference to “the prince” in 9:26b, must be to the Antichrist whom we know is connected to the “little horn” of Daniel 7:8 and 7:20. Interestingly, the word “prince” is fitting within the context of Daniel since the fourth kingdom of Rome was described as consisting of

⁶⁴ Doukhan, “The Seventy Week of Dan 9: An Exegetical Study,” 14; Owusu-Antwi, “An Investigation of the Chronology,” 79. The structure has been slightly modified.

⁶⁵ Owusu-Antwi, “An Investigation of the Chronology,” 79.

⁶⁶ Robert C. Newman, “Daniel’s Seventy Weeks and the Old Testament Sabbath-Year Cycle,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 16, no. 4 (Fall 1973): 232.

“ten horns,” but then a “little horn” rises in their midst. The interpretation given in Daniel 7:24-25 relates the symbolism of the ten horns to being “ten kings” and the “little horn” as being “another” without using the word “king,” though the royal nature of the “little horn” is clear. Therefore, the “little horn” is a “little king” and a fitting description of “the prince who is to come.” Charles Feinberg notes, “Interestingly enough, ‘the people’—the Romans—have already come, yet the ‘the prince’ is still to come. This ‘prince’ cannot refer to ‘Messiah the Prince’ (9:25), since the date of His coming was already so carefully determined. Rather, this refers to a future prince from Rome, who was referred to in chapter 7 as the ‘little horn’ (7:8, 19-25).”⁶⁷

The implications of Daniel 9:26 regarding the death of the Messiah and the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple “after the sixty-two weeks” requires a parenthesis between the sixty-nine and the seventieth weeks. John Walvoord notes,

The intervention of two events after the sixty-ninth seven which in their historic fulfillment occupied almost forty years makes necessary a gap between the sixty-ninth seven and the beginning of the seventieth seven of at-least this length of time. Those referred to as “the people of the prince that shall come” are obviously the Roman people and in no sense do these people belong to Messiah the Prince. Hence it follows that there are two princes: (1) the Messiah of verses 25 and 26, and (2) “the prince that shall come” who is related to the Roman people. That a second prince is required who is Roman in character and destructive to the Jewish people is confirmed in verse 27 (see following exegesis), which the New Testament declares to be fulfilled in relation to the second coming of Christ (Mt 24:15).⁶⁸

E. J. Young, however, assumes that both the death of the Messiah and the destructions of Jerusalem and the Temple occur during the 70th Week and not before it, thus, eliminating the need for a parenthesis. Young states,

It is true that the two events of vs. 26 are said to take place after the sixty and two sevens. However, *it is not said* that the events of vs. 27 occur *after* those of vs. 26. This is mere assumption. The exposition has already shown that the whole picture of a coming Roman prince who makes a covenant for one week with the Jews is based upon an incorrect interpretation of the Heb. Since vs. 26 declares that the Messiah is cut off (i.e., by death), He must cause the covenant to prevail *before* he dies or at least at the same time that He dies. The action of causing the covenant to prevail, therefore, belongs to the 70th seven and is contemporaneous with the death of the Messiah (vs. 26); which is to be placed in that 70th seven. If this be so, there certainly is no reason for assuming that the 70th seven does not immediately follow the sixty-two.⁶⁹

In response, Walvoord astutely avers,

Historically the destruction of Jerusalem occurred in A.D. 70 almost forty years after the death of Christ. Although some expositors, like Young, hold that the sacrifices are caused

⁶⁷ Charles Lee Feinberg, *A Commentary on Daniel: The Kingdom of the Lord* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1981), 132-133.

⁶⁸ John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Garland, TX: Galaxie Software, 2008), 230–231.

⁶⁹ Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, 215.

to cease by Christ in His death which they consider fulfilled in the middle of the last seven years, it is clear that this does not provide in any way for the fulfillment of an event thirty-eight years or more after the end of the sixty-ninth seven. Young and others who follow the continuous fulfillment theory are left without any explanation adequate for interposing an event as occurring after the sixty-ninth seven by some thirty-eight years—which, in their thinking, would actually occur after the seventieth week. In a word, their theory does not provide any normal or literal interpretation of the text and its chronology.⁷⁰

For Daniel 9:27, the identification of the antecedent to the third person “he” in the verb, וְהִגְבִּיר, should be to its nearest antecedent which is “the prince” of 9:26.⁷¹ The verb, גָּבַר, is defined by *HALOT* as “to be strong” in the Hiphil stem.⁷² Since the Hiphil stem is usually causative, the verb may be translated “he will cause to make [something] strong” or as in 9:27, “he will make a strong covenant.” Meredith G. Kline, however, believes that the verb should be translated “to prevail” which would render 9:27 in the following way: “In the course of the one week he will make the covenant prevail (*higbîr*) in behalf of the many.”⁷³ Paul Feinberg explicates Kline’s reason for doing so: “Kline distinguishes between the ‘making’ of a covenant and the ‘ratifying’ of a covenant. It is the latter that is in view here. A new covenant is not inaugurated here [by Antichrist], but an already existing covenant is cause to prevail. The former would be indicative of an agreement between the Antichrist and his followers, whereas the latter fits the Messiah and His redemptive covenant.”⁷⁴ Michael Rydelnik counters Kline’s view by stating:

The third part of the prophecy is the prediction of the final seven-year period, or the 70th week, which will begin when **he** (the coming prince or the antichrist) **will make a firm covenant** of peace **with the many** in the leadership of Israel. Although some consider this prince to be Christ, establishing the new covenant and ending the OT sacrificial system, it is inconceivable that Messiah would be the one who would commit the abomination of desolation. Therefore, he is more accurately identified as the antichrist, who will desecrate the future temple and stop worship in it. This covenant is yet future and will mark the beginning of a time of oppression of the Jewish people called “the time of Jacob’s distress” (Jr 30:7) or the tribulation period (Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24).⁷⁵

In addition, Feinberg takes Kline to task in terms of Christ’s non-fulfillment regarding the rest of the events in 9:27: “Although Christ’s death did make sacrifice unnecessary, it did not cause it to cease, as is required by 9:27. Sacrifice and offering did not cease until the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, about forty years later.”⁷⁶ Also, if Christ was the one who made the covenant to prevail during the seventieth week, then He must have sent His people to destroy

⁷⁰ Walvoord, *Daniel*, 230.

⁷¹ The verb is parsed as Hiphil, Waw-Consecutive Perfect, third person, masculine, singular from the root, גָּבַר.

⁷² “גָּבַר,” *HALOT*, 175.

⁷³ Meredith G. Kline, “The Covenant of the Seventieth Week,” in *The Law and the Prophets*, ed. John H. Skilton (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1974), 463-465.

⁷⁴ Feinberg, “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24–27,” 203.

⁷⁵ Michael A. Rydelnik, “Daniel,” in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1307–1308.

⁷⁶ Feinberg, “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24–27,” 206.

the city and the Temple (9:26) during that final week. However, “neither he nor his people destroyed the city and the Temple in any physical sense. To claim that the Jews destroyed the city by their disobedience is to attempt to avoid the obvious meaning of the text.”⁷⁷ Thus, the entire period prophesied in 9:26-27 regarding the Antichrist must still be future.

Noneschatological views must find an end to exile in temporary Jewish revolts, all of which were unsuccessful and ultimately led to the destruction of the City, the Temple, and further exile. This, of course, offers no solution to Daniel’s specific petition for his people’s restoration (which concerned a return to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Temple, Dan. 9:16-19). However, what we do find in verse 27 are eschatological time markers, such as *qetz* (“end”), *yashbit* (“cause to cease”), and *kalah* (“end”), *ad* (“until”), and *nech ratzah tittak* (“to an appointed end”). These terms indicate that this section belongs to the eschatological period, qualified later in Daniel as the “the end time” (cf. Dan. 12:4, 9, 13).⁷⁸

IV. Biblical-Theological Connections Between Daniel 9 and the New Testament

Most dispensational interpreters have readily acknowledged the connection between Daniel 9 and Jesus’ Olivet Discourse found in Matthew 24.⁷⁹ They typically divide the two halves of the 70th week from Daniel 9 into the corresponding sections in Matthew 24. They also place the events of the 70th week of Daniel in the book of Revelation. Therefore, among dispensational interpreters, Matthew 24 is not a controversial passage in relation to the rapture of the Church and the subsequent events of Daniel 9. Robert L. Thomas notes, “The signs given in Matthew 24:4-28 are within Daniel’s Seventieth Week (Dan. 9:24-27) and indicate the nearness of Jesus’ return to earth as described in Matthew 24:29-31.”⁸⁰ Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock assert, “The Tribulation is a label which most often designates the seven year period seen in Daniel 9:27, including the events associated with it—events which receive further elaboration in Daniel’s vision. In the Olivet discourse, Jesus synthesizes or conflates Daniel’s visions of trouble with the prophetic theme of the Day of the Lord.”⁸¹ Moreover, John McLean asserts, “[One] principle for understanding the structure of Revelation is the correlation of the seventieth week of Daniel 9:27 with the synoptic eschatological discourses of Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, and Revelation 4-19.”⁸² However, prophetic passages such as 2 Thessalonians 2 are less acceptable in terms of their relationship to Daniel 9 and the beginning of the 70th week.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Price, “Prophetic Postponement in Daniel 9 and Other Texts,” 145.

⁷⁹ The Olivet Discourse is also found in Mark 13 and Luke 21.

⁸⁰ Robert L. Thomas, “The Rapture and the Biblical Teaching of Imminency,” in *Evidence for the Rapture: A Biblical Case for Pretribulationism*, ed. John F. Hart (Chicago: Moody, 2015), 25.

⁸¹ Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Wheaton, IL: BridgePoint, 1993), 317 note 15.

⁸² John McLean, “Chronology and Sequential Structure of John’s Revelation,” in *When the Trumpet Sounds*, ed. Thomas Ice & Timothy Demy (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1995), 321. Moreover, John Hart provides a distinctively dispensational analysis of the Olivet Discourse and its relation to Daniel 9:27: “From the inception of the Discourse at 24:4, Matthew depicts the Seventieth Week (or seventieth ‘seven’) describe in Daniel 9:24-27” (John F. Hart, “Jesus and the Rapture: Matthew 24,” in *Evidence for the Rapture: A Biblical Case for Pretribulationism*, ed. John F. Hart [Chicago: Moody, 2015], 48. Hart then draws out the correspondences between Matthew 24 and Revelation 6:3-14 (Ibid., 49). Cf. also Stanley D. Toussaint, “Are the Church and the Rapture in

The Parenthesis in Romans 11

Among Reformed, covenant theologians, O. Palmer Robertson's book, *The Israel of God*, represents a contemporary response to dispensational interpretations to Romans 11.⁸³ In it, Robertson attempts to deny a future salvation for the Jewish nation:

The third major paragraph of Romans 11 (vv. 17–24) also presents the expectation of Israel's positive response to the present preaching of the gospel. Paul's kinsmen will be "grafted in" just like the Gentiles. "If they do not continue in unbelief" (NKJV) they will participate in the promises. **This participation by being "grafted in" cannot be postponed to some future time, while Gentile believers immediately experience the blessing of the covenant** [emphasis mine]. Just like every present Gentile believer, every present Jewish believer will be grafted in. Like the previous sections of Romans 11, this paragraph emphasizes the present significance of the Jews in fulfilling God's purposes of salvation.⁸⁴

Robertson emphasizes the present condition of the Jews so that Romans 11:17-24 should not be taken to mean that ethnic Israel will not be saved in some future sense, but that Paul is emphasizing "the present significance of the Jews in fulfilling God's purposes of salvation" (170). Therefore, Romans 11:30-31 is understood to mean that every use of the three appearances of the adverb "now," is restricted only to the present time and not the future: "For just as you once were disobedient to God, but **now** have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also **now** have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may **now** be shown mercy" (NASB).

Israel "Will Be Grafted In" the Future

Robertson continues to claim that Romans 11:17-24 does not refer to a distinctive future for ethnic Israel. Instead, he notes that "the argumentation of Paul specifically parallels the experience of Israelite believers with that of contemporary Gentile believers. Gentiles currently are being 'grafted in' among the people of God to receive the blessings of redemption as they believe (v. 20). Ingrafting occurs when they exercise faith. Nothing in this figure of ingrafting communicates the idea of a distinctive and corporate inclusion of the Jews at some future date" (176). Robertson, however, provides no exegetical analysis for vv. 23-24.

In these two significant verses, Paul plainly asserts that ethnic Israel will be grafted in again: "And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the

Matthew 24?," in *When the Trumpet Sounds*, ed. Thomas Ice & Timothy Demy (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1995), 249-250.

⁸³ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Israel of God: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2000), back cover.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 170.

natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?” The verb, ἐγκεντρισθήσονται, is found twice in vv. 23-24. They should be translated respectively “they/the natural branches will be grafted in” and should be parsed “future, passive, indicative, third person, plural.” Verse 23 also contains a conditional sentence based upon Israel’s repentance. If Israel does not continue in their unbelief, God is able to graft them in again where Paul uses another form of the ἐγκεντρίζω (aorist, active, infinitive). It is important to note that the adverb “again” (πάλιν) is syntactically modifying the infinitive and should be rendered, “to graft in again.” When will this regrafting occur? This is not something that is currently happening as Paul stated in vv. 17-22 describing that most of the natural branches of Israel have been severed. Either Robertson is unaware of the exegetical significance of the future, passive use of ἐγκεντρίζω or he is intentionally ignoring it. The reality, however, is that the three future tense uses of ἐγκεντρίζω clearly demonstrates that there will be a future period when ethnic Israel will be grafted again into the olive tree.

The Temporal Use of “Until”

Another integral aspect of Robertson’s argument is the use of the adverb, “until” (ἄχρι οὗ),⁸⁵ in Romans 11:25. He provocatively asks: “But what about the future? Does not the apostle say explicitly that hardening will continue ‘until’ a certain point in time? Does not this assertion imply an end to the hardening?” Robertson’s answer is a resounding “no,” and declares that the use of “until” is “essentially terminative” in character “without stressing the reversal of prevailing circumstances afterwards” (179). He declares,

In the same manner, Romans 11:25 speaks of eschatological termination. Throughout the present age, until the final return of Christ, hardening will continue among part of Israel. Too often “until” has been understood as marking the beginning of a new state of things with regard to Israel. It has hardly been considered that “until” more naturally should be interpreted as reaching an eschatological termination point. The phrase implies not a new beginning after a termination, but the continuation of a circumstance until the end of time.⁸⁶

While Robertson is correct to emphasize that “until” in 11:25 does refer “to acts or conditions that prevail up to a certain point” [BDAG, 160], his understanding that it does not refer to “a new beginning after a termination” is overstated.

By contrast, Leon Morris, a Reformed, Calvinist theologian in his own right, understands the Greek phrase, ἄχρι οὗ, translated “until,” with a temporal nuance which refers to the reversal of the God’s partial hardening of Israel. He notes, “This adds to the point that the hardening is partial (vv. 5, 7, 17), the thought that it is temporary. It is limited in time as well as extent.”⁸⁷ Morris goes on to state,

This is a temporary hardening, taking place while God’s purpose is worked out among the Gentiles or, as Paul puts it, *until the full number of the Gentiles has come in*. The

⁸⁵ The adverb “until” is functioning as a subordinating conjunction (see BDAG pp. 160-161].

⁸⁶ Robertson, *The Israel of God*, 180.

⁸⁷ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 420 footnote 113.

word NIV renders *full number* is that rendered “fullness” in verse 12. NIV may well be right in seeing a reference to number. In that case a certain number of Gentiles are to be saved, and God is waiting until that number has been reached before taking action for Israel.⁸⁸

Thus, Morris intentionally emphasizes the temporal nature of the divine hardening which will occur until “the full number of the Gentiles has come in.” F. F. Bruce, in agreement, states, “The bringing in of ‘the full number of the Gentiles’ is to be followed by the ‘full inclusion’ (lit. ‘fullness’) of the Jews (verse 12).”⁸⁹ C. E. B. Cranfield similarly asserts, “The temporal conjunction ἄχρι οὗ must here mean ‘until’ Paul’s meaning is not that Israel is in part hardened during the time in which the fullness of the Gentiles is coming in, but that the hardening will last until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in. The entry of the fullness of the Gentiles will be the event which will mark the end of Israel’s hardening.”⁹⁰

Regarding v. 26, Morris reaches the same conclusion as dispensational interpreters regarding the clause, “and so all Israel will be saved,” as referring to Israel’s future salvation as opposed to Robertson who curiously interprets “Israel” as the Church.⁹¹ Robertson asserts, “The full number that are the product of God’s electing grace, coming from both the Jewish and the Gentile communities, will constitute the final Israel of God. ‘All Israel,’ then, consists of the entire body of God’s elect from among both Jews and Gentiles.”⁹²

The Meaning of “All Israel”

Robertson justifies his interpretation by translating the Greek phrase, καὶ οὕτως, modally not as “then” or “so,” but as “and in this manner” or “in this way,” thus removing any temporal significance of the phrase. He asserts, “Of the approximately 205 times in which the word *houtos* occurs in the New Testament, not once does it have a temporal significance.”⁹³ However, James Dunn notes that “Following the ἄχρι οὗ, some temporal weight cannot be excluded from καὶ οὕτως; but the basic sense of οὕτως is ‘thus, in this manner,’ referring to Paul’s conviction that conversion of the Gentiles will be the means of provoking Israel to jealously and converting them.”⁹⁴ F. F. Bruce also sees some temporal significance of the phrase: “The connecting words ‘and so’ (cf. 5:12) say more than ‘and then’: they imply that ‘in this way’—by the operation of the divine purpose that the gospel should be received by the Gentile first, and then also by the Jew—the salvation of ‘all Israel’ will come about.”⁹⁵ Colin Kruse declares, “Although *kai houtos*

⁸⁸ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 420. The italics are original.

⁸⁹ F. F. Bruce, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 6 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 218.

⁹⁰ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 575.

⁹¹ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 421.

⁹² Robertson, *The Israel of God*, 188. Similarly, Robert Gundry argues, “The tribulation knows only one group of redeemed people, the Church. The regenerate Jewish remnant will belong to the Church then as now (Rom. 11:5) and will be raptured at the posttribulational advent of Christ” (Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 1973, chap. 2, Scribd edition.).

⁹³ Robertson, *The Israel of God*, 181. For a defense of Robertson’s modal interpretation of καὶ οὕτως, cf. Ben L. Merkle, “Romans 11 and the Future of Ethnic Israel,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43, no. 4 (December 2000): 716.

⁹⁴ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, 1988), 681.

⁹⁵ Bruce, *Romans*, 218.

is here understood as logical, it will also inevitably carry a temporal sense.”⁹⁶ Morris also notes, “Paul’s *so* is usually taken to refer to what precedes, in which case it surely means ‘in this way,’ that is, through the divinely appointed process whereby the hardening of part of Israel brought salvation to the Gentiles, a temporary hardening effective only until ‘the fullness of the Gentiles’ has come in.”⁹⁷

More specifically, Douglas Moo contends for a “temporal reference” with regard to the process of Israel’s salvation in spite of the modal meaning of καὶ οὕτως:

The “manner” of Israel’s salvation is the process that Paul has outlined in vv. 11–24 and summarized in v. 25b: God imposes a hardening on most of Israel while Gentiles come into the messianic salvation, with the Gentiles’ salvation leading in turn to Israel’s jealousy and her own salvation. But this means that *houtōs*, while not having a temporal *meaning*, has a temporal *reference*: for the manner in which all Israel is saved involves a process that unfolds in definite stages.⁹⁸

In agreement, Reformed scholar Cornelis Venema notes: “The context of verse 26 simply shows that temporal sequencing is embedded in the way Paul has described the manner in which God will fulfill his purpose for Israel.”⁹⁹ John Goodrich helpfully summarizes: “Accordingly, whenever Paul believed the salvation of ‘all Israel’ would occur and for whatever length of time, the interdependency sketched in 11:11–14 and 11:30–32 requires at least a three-phase sequence; οὕτως must therefore have at least a partial temporal force derived from the context.”¹⁰⁰ It is apparent, therefore, that though many biblical interpreters prefer the modal translation, “in this manner,” for καὶ οὕτως, they explicitly give the expression a temporal nuance unlike Robertson who claims that it rules out any subsequent salvific action by God upon the nation of Israel.¹⁰¹

Robertson’s denial of a temporal nuance for καὶ οὕτως is directly related to his interpretation regarding the nature of the “mystery” and its connection to the identity of “Israel”:

The full inclusion of the Gentiles into Israel is the other side of the mystery about which Paul speaks (Rom. 11:25; cf. Eph. 3:6). On the one hand, the mystery is that God in the sovereign dispensing of his grace has hardened some in Israel and has saved others. On the other hand, the mystery is that God has incorporated Gentile believers fully into Israel. It is in this context that “all Israel” in Romans 11:26 reaches its final definition. According to Paul, “Hardness has happened to part of Israel until the full number of the

⁹⁶ Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 443.

⁹⁷ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 420.

⁹⁸ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 735.

⁹⁹ Cornelis P. Venema, “‘In This Way All Israel Will Be Saved’: A Study of Romans 11:26,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 22 (2011): 37–38.

¹⁰⁰ John K. Goodrich, “Until the Fullness of the Gentiles Comes In: A Critical Review of Recent Scholarship on the Salvation of ‘All Israel’ (Romans 11:26),” *Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 28.

¹⁰¹ See also Charles M. Horne, “The Meaning of the Phrase ‘And Thus All Israel Will Be Saved’ (Romans 11:26),” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21, no. 4 (December 1978): 332; Craig S. Keener, *Romans*, New Covenant Commentary Series (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009), 136–138; Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 305 footnote *; Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, New American Commentary 27 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 224.

Gentiles has come in [to Israel], and in this manner all Israel shall be saved.” The full number that are the product of God’s electing grace, coming from both the Jewish and the Gentile communities, will constitute the final Israel of God. “All Israel,” then, consists of the entire body of God’s elect from among both Jews and Gentiles.¹⁰²

For Robertson, therefore, “all Israel” constitutes Gentile believers who have been fully incorporated into Israel or, more specifically, “spiritual Israel” which would include every elect Jew and Gentile.

Once again, however, most biblical commentators oppose Robertson’s view. Morris insightfully writes,

But what seems decisive is the fact that “Israel” in verse 25 plainly means the nation (it is physical Israel, not spiritual Israel, that is hardened in part), and it is not easy to understand why in the next line it should have a different meaning (Hodge has a strong argument for this position). A further strong argument is that Paul has just said that this is a “mystery.” Now it is no “mystery” that all the elect, Jews as well as Gentiles, will be saved. Nor is the conversion of a few Jews in each generation such as has happened until now the kind of thing that needs to be the subject of a special revelation. That looks for a very different kind of happening. It may also be argued that Paul is looking for the restoration of the Jews in the sense in which they had been rejected, that is, the nation generally. Paul then is affirming that the nation of Israel as a whole will ultimately have its place in God’s salvation.¹⁰³

Cranfield contends, “It is not feasible to understand Ἰσραὴλ in v. 26 in a different sense from that which it has in v. 25, especially in view of the sustained contrast between Israel and the Gentiles throughout vv. 11–32. That πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ here does not include Gentiles is virtually certain.”¹⁰⁴ Moo states, “Paul has used the term ‘Israel’ ten times so far in Rom. 9–11, and each (with the possible exception of one occurrence in 9:6) refers to ethnic Israel. This clearly is the meaning of the term in v. 25b, and a shift from this ethnic denotation to a purely religious one [i.e., the church generally] in v. 26a—despite the ‘all’—is unlikely.”¹⁰⁵ Mounce also avers, “Earlier commentators tended to take ‘all Israel’ to mean ‘spiritual Israel,’ that is, all believers, Jew and Gentile alike. But throughout this entire section Paul had been comparing Gentile and Jew as separate ethnic groups. It would have been highly unlikely for him to have blurred this crucial distinction when it came time for a summarizing conclusion.”¹⁰⁶ Moreover, Paul used the pronoun “they” in v. 28 as a pronominal reference pointing back to the identity of “all Israel” in v. 26: “The idea of the first half of v. 28 is this: ‘From the standpoint of the gospel they [ethnic Jews] are enemies for the sake of you [Gentiles].’ The ‘all Israel’ of v. 26, in turn, must also be

¹⁰² Robertson, *The Israel of God*, 188.

¹⁰³ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 421.

¹⁰⁴ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 576.

¹⁰⁵ Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 736.

¹⁰⁶ Mounce, *Romans*, 224–225.

exclusively Jewish, which precludes the interpretation that equates ‘all Israel’ with the church, for the church obviously contains Gentiles.”¹⁰⁷

Three Phases in Romans 11 and Their Parenthetical Implications

The exegetical data demonstrates that God will sovereignly remove His divine judgment of partial hardening and bring salvation to national Israel after “the fullness of the Gentiles” has come in. This is clearly the overall message of Romans 11. In chart form, John Goodrich cogently presents the three phases of salvation history revealed in Romans 11:¹⁰⁸

	<i>Phase 1</i>	<i>Phase 2</i>	<i>Phase 3</i>
11:11	Israel’s misstep	salvation for Gentiles	Israel made jealous
11:12	Israel’s misstep/failure	riches for the world/Gentiles	Israel’s fullness
11:13–14		Paul’s Gentile ministry magnified	Israel made jealous/saved
11:15	Israel’s rejection	the world’s reconciliation	Israel’s acceptance/life from the dead
11:16	holy firstfruits		holy lump
11:17–24	Israel fallen through unbelief; natural branches broken off	Gentiles stand through faith; olive shoot engrafted	natural branches regrafted
11:25–27	Israel partially hardened	fullness of the Gentiles enters	all Israel’s salvation; Jacob’s ungodliness banished/sins removed
11:30–31	Israel disobedient	Gentiles obedient/shown mercy	Israel shown mercy

Moreover, Paul’s entire argument is summarized within the three phases found in Romans 11:25–27: **phase 1:** Israel partially hardened, **phase 2:** fullness of the Gentiles enters, and **phase 3:** all Israel’s salvation; Jacob’s ungodliness banished/sins removed.

The temporal sequence found in these three phases matches dispensationalism’s understanding regarding the postponement of the kingdom. Phase 1 corresponds to Israel’s rejection of Jesus as the Messiah; phase 2 corresponds to the intercalation of time when God would implement His plan of redemption for the Gentiles throughout the Church Age/Dispensation of Grace; and phase 3 corresponds to God’s gracious work of salvation upon the entire nation Israel when He removes their sins during the 70th Week of Daniel.

Regarding those interpreters who deny a mass-conversion of the Jews after the “fullness of the Gentiles” due to the latter coming at the very end of the age, Romans 11:25–27 does not

¹⁰⁷ Matt Waymeyer, “The Dual Status of Israel in Romans 11:28,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 16, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 62.

¹⁰⁸ Goodrich, “Until the Fullness of the Gentiles Comes In,” 29.

bear this out.¹⁰⁹ In fact, Goodrich notes, “There is no reason to assume ... that the moment when the fullness of the Gentiles comes in is indeed the very end of the age. Paul does not say as much when he easily could have (cf. ‘until the Lord comes,’ 1 Cor 4:5; 11:26).”¹¹⁰ This fact proffers the likely possibility that the completion of the period known as “the fullness of the Gentiles” takes place before God begins dealing with Israel again during the 70th Week of Daniel. At the end of which, He will save the Jewish nation *en masse*. “The best reading of Rom 11:26, then, still understands ‘all Israel’ as comprising some totality of the Jewish people and involving a mass-conversion of Jews at or just prior to the parousia.”¹¹¹ John Darby also had this same three phase progression: [Phase 1] Many of the Israelite branches, the natural heirs of the promises, had been cut off because of their unbelief; for when the fulfilment of the promises was offered them, they rejected it ... [Phase 2] Thus the Gentiles, made partakers of the promises, stood on the principle of faith. ... But there was a positive counsel of God accomplished in that which took place, namely, the partial blinding of Israel (for they were not rejected) until all the Gentiles who were to have part in the blessing of these days should have come in. [Phase 3] After this Israel should be saved as a whole; it should not be individuals spared and added to the assembly, in which Israel had no longer any place as a nation; they should be saved as a whole, as Israel. Christ shall come forth from Sion as the seat of His power, and shall turn away iniquity from Jacob, God pardoning them all transgressions.¹¹²

A distinction, however, must be made between the “fullness of the Gentiles” and the “times of the Gentiles.” The latter phrase describes the four empires that will endure until the return of Christ corresponding to Daniel 2 and 7. Jesus Himself coined the phrase noting that the Gentiles would trample down Jerusalem until the end. By contrast, the former phrase, deals with God’s plan related to the salvation of the Gentiles due to the rejection of Israel’s Messiah by the Jewish people and His subsequent salvation of Israel. Furthermore, on the one hand, the “times of the Gentiles” began with Babylon and will end with judgment of Antichrist and his forces at the end of the 70th week of Daniel.¹¹³ On the other hand, the “fullness of the Gentiles” began at the salvation of Samaritans and will continue until the rapture of the Church. H.A. Ironside aptly states, “‘The fullness of the Gentiles,’ has to do with God’s present work of grace. When He has taken out from among the Gentiles a people for His Name, when the last soul who is to be saved in this age has come to Christ, the Church will be completed and the ‘fullness of the Gentiles’ will have come in. Then the Church will be caught up to be with the Lord before the seventieth week of Daniel begins.”¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Goodrich, “Until the Fullness of the Gentiles Comes In,” 31.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 32.

¹¹² J. N. Darby, *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible: Acts to Philippians* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 207.

¹¹³ Paige Patterson appears to conflate “the times of the Gentiles” with the “fullness of the Gentiles”: “Thus the prophecy of the seventieth week concerns ethnic Israel and is broken from the sixty-ninth week by an interval of time (the times of the Gentiles or the church age, Jer 30:4–7)” (Paige Patterson, *Revelation*, The New American Commentary 39 [Nashville, TN: B&H, 2012], 44). Cf. J. Randall Price, “Prophetic Postponement in Daniel 9 and Other Texts,” in *Issues in Dispensationalism*, ed. Wesley R. Willis & John R. Master (Chicago: Moody, 1994), 137.

¹¹⁴ H. A. Ironside, *The Great Parenthesis* (Las Vegas, NV: Solid Christian Books, 2022), 71.

The Parenthesis in 2 Thessalonians 2

Second Thessalonians 2 is an important chapter because it addresses the time of the rapture just before the day of the Lord and the 70th week of Daniel. Not all dispensationalists, however, agree that 2 Thessalonians 2 deals with the timing of the pretribulation rapture. For example, Glenn Kreider cavalierly dismisses any reference to the rapture in 2 Thessalonians 2: “Paul does not say anything about the rapture here, explicitly or implicitly.”¹¹⁵ Richard Mayhue incorrectly assumes that “2 Thessalonians is not a primary determinative passage with which to decide the rapture timing issue.”¹¹⁶ Thus, it is to this issue that we shall now turn.

The Context

In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul’s overall objective was to quell the fears of the believers in Thessalonica (modern-day Thessaloniki) over the false teaching that the day of the Lord had already arrived (v. 2). The apostle forthrightly declared that the Day of the Lord would not come unless the apostasy came first and the “man of lawlessness” (i.e., the Antichrist) was revealed (v. 3). John Walvoord clarified,

There are indications that between 1 and 2 Thessalonians false teachers came into the Thessalonian church when it was experiencing terrible persecution. These false teachers said that their sufferings were the sufferings of the day of the Lord. This alarmed the Thessalonians however because it was not what Paul taught, even though the false teachers claimed that Paul had taught this (2 Thess 2:2–5). It raised the question, first of all, whether they would have to go through the day of the Lord which they had not anticipated. Second, the question was whether the Rapture itself had occurred and they had missed it.¹¹⁷

By contrast, Gundry insists that the false teaching included the notion that: (1) “they erroneously thought that the day of the Lord will include the tribulation,” and (2) “the Thessalonians erroneously thought that they had entered the tribulation.”¹¹⁸ In other words, Gundry identifies the beginning of the day of the Lord with the Second Coming of Christ after the seven-year tribulation period. The difference, therefore, between the pretribulation and posttribulation views is based on whether the day of the Lord is co-extensive with the tribulation (pretribulation view) or is associated with Christ’s Second Coming (posttribulation view).¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ Glenn R. Kreider, “The Rapture and the Day of the Lord,” in *Evidence for the Rapture: A Biblical Case for Pretribulationism*, ed. John F. Hart (Chicago: Moody, 2015), 87.

¹¹⁶ Richard Mayhue, *1 & 2 Thessalonians: Triumphs and Trials of a Consecrated Church*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 1999), 181.

¹¹⁷ John F. Walvoord, “The Day of the Lord,” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 13.

¹¹⁸ Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 1973), chap. 8, Scribd edition.

¹¹⁹ Holsteen succinctly summarizes Gundry’s overall position regarding 2 Thessalonians 2: “To simplify, his [Gundry’s] position becomes this: the rebellion against God led by the Antichrist during the tribulation (that is, the *apostasia*) will precede the second coming (i.e., will precede the day of the Lord)” (Nathan Holsteen, “Paul and the Rapture: 2 Thessalonians 2,” in *Evidence for the Rapture: A Biblical Case for Pretribulationism*, ed. John F. Hart [Chicago: Moody, 2015], 185).

A preliminary answer to this quandary, however, is tied up in the two expressions given by Paul in 2:1, “Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him” (NASB). Robert Thomas notes that,

He [Paul] must explain what he means by “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him” or else the solution to the problem cannot be grasped. *Episynagōgēs* (“being gathered”) defines what part of the *parousias* (“coming”) Paul has in mind. This is the great event he has described more fully in 1 Thessalonians 4:14–17—i.e., the gathering of those in Christ to meet him in the air en route to the Father in heaven. This begins the day of the Lord. What relationship this happening bears to the tribulation phase of the day of the Lord so frequently mentioned in these Epistles is important.¹²⁰

In other words, Paul explains that “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” refers to the Second Coming while “our gathering together to Him” refers to the rapture that he had taught in 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17.¹²¹

Thomas then directs his remarks to those who believe that both expressions refer to the same event, i.e., the Second Coming: “Some limit the *parousia* to a single event and insist that it comes after the tribulation (Morris, pp. 151, 152; Gundry, pp. 113, 114). It is hardly possible, though, to explain the variety of relationships belonging to *parousia* in these Epistles if it is understood only as a single event. Even the meaning of the word suggests a longer duration.”¹²² Though not all dispensationalists agree on the beginning or duration of the day of the Lord, most would agree that it involves more than a single event.¹²³ In addition, if the Second Coming of Christ initiates the day of the Lord following the tribulation, then “the false claim that the day of the Lord was already present could hardly have alarmed these Christians. According to this scheme, the day of the Lord could not begin without Christ’s personal appearance. His continued absence was obvious to all.”¹²⁴ Therefore, this, in Thomas’s mind, proves that there must have been more than a single-event return:

This implies Paul had not taught that a one-phase *parousia* after the period of wrath will begin the day of the Lord. He had told them that the coming of the Lord to gather his saints into heaven would initiate both the tribulation and the day of the Lord. They were promised immediate “rest” (1:7) and glorification with Christ (1:10), not increased persecution. The false instruction had, however, denied them an imminent “rest.” They would first have to undergo the severe persecution of the tribulation and possibly even

¹²⁰ Robert L. Thomas, “2 Thessalonians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians through Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 11:318.

¹²¹ Holsteen, “Paul and the Rapture: 2 Thessalonians 2,” 180.

¹²² Thomas, “2 Thessalonians,” 11:318.

¹²³ For the view that the day of the Lord comes at the end of the tribulation and the millennium, cf. Richard Mayhue, “The Bible’s Watchword: Day of the Lord,” *Master’s Seminary Journal* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 83. For the view that the day of the Lord begins with the rapture or shortly after it, cf. Craig Blaising, “A Case for the Pretribulation Rapture,” in *Three Views on the Rapture: Pretribulation, Prewrath, or Posttribulation*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry and Alan Hultberg, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010): 58; Robert L. Thomas, “The Rapture and the Biblical Teaching of Imminency,” in *Evidence for the Rapture: A Biblical Case for Pretribulationism*, ed. John F. Hart (Chicago: Moody, 2015), 37; John F. Walvoord, “The Day of the Lord,” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 13.

¹²⁴ Thomas, “2 Thessalonians,” 11:318.

suffer martyrdom before Christ's coming, according to these misrepresentations. They were even told that their current suffering indicated the arrival of the expected tribulation.¹²⁵

Holsteen, in agreement, convincingly argues, "They had been told 'the day of the Lord has come.' But if the day of the Lord *is identified as* a posttribulation rapture at the second coming (as Gundry suggests), the fact that the day of the Lord had already come could hardly be believed by the Thessalonians. They could certainly know they were not raptured and resurrected yet."¹²⁶

Instead, Paul states that the day of the Lord "[it] will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed" (v. 3b-c NASB).¹²⁷ Thomas notes that the ellipsis found in v. 3b translated, "it will not come," which is absent in the Greek text and italicized in NASB, is an elliptical repetition from the verb in v. 2 translated "[the day of the Lord] has come" (Gk. ἐνέστηκεν). The resultant translation, in Thomas' mind, adds confusion to the text:

Most give the supplied verb a future sense, such as, "The day of the Lord will not come," a change that misses Paul's point. The issue involved in his correction of the false information to which the readers had been exposed is not the future coming of the day of the Lord; it is rather the current non-presence of that day at the time he writes and they read his words. If that day were not present, then they could not be in that day.¹²⁸

While posttribulationists, like Gundry, understand the passage to mean that the apostasy and the revelation of the man of lawlessness come before the day of the Lord,¹²⁹ Thomas states, "They base this on the mistranslation of an implied *enestēken* in various English versions of 2:3b."¹³⁰ Rather, Thomas opts for the translation in 2:2b as "...the day of the Lord *is now present*" and for 2:3b as "The day of the Lord *is not present* unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed" [emphasis mine].¹³¹ Thus, Thomas rightly concludes, "Rather than the two events preceding the day of the Lord as has often been suggested, these are happening that comprise conspicuous stages of that day after it has begun. By observing the nonoccurrence of these, the Thessalonian readers could rest assured that the day whose leading events will be so characterized was not yet present."¹³²

¹²⁵ Thomas, "2 Thessalonians," 11: 318.

¹²⁶ Holsteen, "Paul and the Rapture: 2 Thessalonians 2," 181.

¹²⁷ Due to the parameters and limitations of this paper, the controversial issue related to the meaning of the word "apostasy" (Gk. ἡ ἀποστασία) as either: (1) a reference to the "spatial departure"/rapture of the Church, or (2) a reference to some sort of religious defection or rebellion—will not be addressed in order to highlight the identity of the Restrainer and its relation to Daniel 9:27. For an exegetical case for ἡ ἀποστασία as the rapture of the Church, cf. H. Wayne House, "Apostasia in 2 Thessalonians 2:3: Apostasy or Rapture?," in *When the Trumpet Sounds*, ed. Thomas Ice & Timothy Demy (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1995), 261-296.

¹²⁸ Thomas, "The Rapture and the Biblical Teaching of Imminency," 38.

¹²⁹ Cf. Robert Gundry, *First the Antichrist* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997), 20 as cited in Thomas, "The Rapture and the Biblical Teaching of Imminency," 39.

¹³⁰ Thomas, "The Rapture and the Biblical Teaching of Imminency," 39.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

The Restrainer

Although many theories as to the identity of “what restrains” (2:6) and “he who now restrains” (2:7) abound within biblical scholarship in general,¹³³ the identity of the Restrainer as the Holy Spirit within the Church has reached virtual consensus among dispensationalists. Yet, there are those within the tradition who appear timid about such an identification. For example, Craig Blaising and Nathan Holsteen do not mention the identity of the Restrainer in their respective analyses of 2 Thessalonians 2.¹³⁴ But this sort of intentional dismissal of significant exegetical data weakens the overall case for a pretribulation rapture in 2 Thessalonians 2 and it implicitly ignores the contextual relevance of Daniel 9:27.

Before addressing the legitimacy of the Restrainer as the Holy Spirit working within the Church, G. K. Beale notes an exegetical problem that must be resolved at the outset: “Any identification faces the problem of explaining the change from referring to the ‘restrainer’ with the neuter gender in 2:6 (*to katechon*) to the masculine gender in 2:7 (*ho katechōn*). Most of the proposed solutions attempt to isolate an impersonal force in 2:6 and then link it with a personal one in 2:7.”¹³⁵

In relation to the Holy Spirit, there are New Testament passages that refer to Him using both neuter and masculine nouns.¹³⁶ For example, in John 15:26, Jesus declares, “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me” (NASB). The two nouns that refer to the Holy Spirit are: (1) the Helper/*Paraclete* (Gk. ὁ παράκλητος) parsed nominative, singular, masculine, and (2) the Spirit (of truth) (Gk. τὸ πνεῦμα) parsed nominative, singular, neuter.¹³⁷ The demonstrative pronoun translated “He” (Gk. ἐκεῖνος) is parsed nominative, singular, masculine. Although the pronoun is typically rendered “that one,” a legitimate gloss for the word is “he, she, or it” depending on the context.¹³⁸ It is interesting to note, therefore, that though the masculine noun, “Helper” is the obvious antecedent to the pronoun “He,” the neuter noun “Spirit” is the closer antecedent to the masculine pronoun. Gerald Borchert correctly states, “The pronoun used of the Spirit here is the masculine case (*ekeinos*), which might normally seem to be unusual because its referent noun, *pneuma*, ‘spirit,’ is neuter. But John undoubtedly considered the Spirit

¹³³ For an extensive treatment on this issue, cf. G. K. Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians*, IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 213-217.

¹³⁴ Craig Blaising, “A Case for the Pretribulation Rapture,” in *Three Views on the Rapture: Pretribulation, Prewrath, or Posttribulation*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry and Alan Hultberg, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 52-58;

Holsteen, “Paul and the Rapture: 2 Thessalonians 2,” 173-194.

¹³⁵ G. K. Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians*, IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 213.

¹³⁶ Hiebert notes, “See John 15:26; 16:13–14; Ephesians 1:13–14 for the use of the masculine pronoun with the neuter noun ‘Spirit’ to bring out the personality of the Holy Spirit” (D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, rev. ed. [Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1996], 339 footnote 58).

¹³⁷ The phrase, “the Spirit of truth,” is an example of an attributive genitive. Cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 86-87.

¹³⁸ Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “ἐκεῖνος.”

as a personal being and not as something impersonal, a mere force.”¹³⁹ Moreover, the noun, “Helper,” and the nominal phrase, “the Spirit of truth,” are clearly referring to the same Person.

In a similar manner, there are two words that refer to the Holy Spirit in 2 Thessalonians 2:6–7—one that is neuter and the other masculine. In 2 Thessalonians 2:6a, Paul uses the neuter participle “what restrains” (Gk. τὸ κατέχον) in the clause, “and you know what restrains him now” (Gk. καὶ νῦν τὸ κατέχον οἴδατε) as a reference to the *activity* and *power* of the Holy Spirit in restraining the revelation of the Antichrist (2:6b).¹⁴⁰ Then in 2 Thessalonians 2:7b, Paul uses the substantival participle, “he who restrains” (Gk. ὁ κατέχων), as a reference to the *Person* of the Holy Spirit as the Restrainer.¹⁴¹ The masculine gender is further emphasized in 2:7b by the verb phrase, “he is taken” (NASB) or “he leaves” (BDAG; Gk. γένηται), which is parsed aorist, middle, subjunctive, third person, singular from γίνομαι.¹⁴² Since the third person verb in Greek depends upon the context for its gender, the verb, γένηται, is clearly third person, masculine, singular following the masculine participle, “he who now restrains,” ὁ κατέχων. Thus, there is more than sufficient exegetical warrant to claim that the Holy Spirit is the Agent working in and through the Church who is restraining the Antichrist from making his appearance on the world scene. Even Reformed scholar, G. K. Beale, concedes, “A better, though not ultimately sufficient, response in favor of the pretribulational rapture view is that the Spirit’s work of restraining through the church would end and then continue through the ministry of the ‘two [individual] witnesses’ of Revelation 11.”¹⁴³

The Timing of the Rapture

In contrast to those who claim that 2 Thessalonians 2 does not address the rapture explicitly or implicitly such as the one noted earlier by Glenn Kreider, the pretribulational rapture is clearly taught in 2 Thessalonians 2.¹⁴⁴ However, in order to correctly ascertain the timing of the rapture in terms of its relation to the tribulation period, one must carefully compare 2 Thessalonians 2 with Daniel 9:27. In the chart below, Mike Stallard has helpfully correlated the events of 2 Thessalonians 2:3–8 with the 70th week of Daniel 9:27:

¹³⁹ Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12–21*, New American Commentary 25B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 159. Although Wallace claims that the antecedent of the masculine pronoun cannot be neuter, he duly notes the following sources that disagree: “Young, *Intermediate Greek*, 78. Similarly, G. B. Stevens, *The Johannine Theology* (New York: Scribner’s, 1899) 196; L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (NICNT) 656. The view is especially popular among theologians, not infrequently becoming the mainstay in their argument for the personality of the Spirit (cf., e.g., J. I. Packer, *Keep In Step With the Spirit* [Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1984] 61; C. C. Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit* [Chicago: Moody, 1965] 14; R. C. Sproul, *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit* [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1990] 17–18)” (Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 331 footnote 42).

¹⁴⁰ τὸ κατέχον is parsed present, active, participle, singular, accusative, neuter. According to Wallace, the substantive use of the participle may be translated, “...you know that which is presently restraining [him]...” (Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond Basics*, 620).

¹⁴¹ ὁ κατέχων is parsed present, active, participle, masculine, nominative, singular.

¹⁴² BDAG, s.v. “γίνομαι.” Note that the 6th gloss has the definition, “to make a change of location in space, *move*” (198). Second Thessalonians 2:7 is then listed under subsection “b” and given the translation, “to leave the scene” (199).

¹⁴³ Beale, *1–2 Thessalonians*, 215.

¹⁴⁴ Kreider, “The Rapture and the Day of the Lord,” 87.

The Antichrist—1 John 2:18–22¹⁴⁵

Designation and Passage	Exalts Himself as God	Jewish Temple and Law	Deception	His Destruction
Prince to Come Dan. 9:24–27		Puts a stop to sacrifice and grain offering (v. 27)	Breaks his treaty with Israel (v. 27)	Complete destruction ... poured out on the one who makes desolate
Man of Lawlessness, Son of Destruction 2 Thess. 2:3–8	Opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship; displays himself to be God (v. 4)	He takes his seat in the temple of God (v. 4)	With all power and signs and false wonders, and with all deception (vv. 9–10)	The Lord will slay ... and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming (v. 8)

It is interesting to note that the missing link between both passages is the absence of the Antichrist making “a firm covenant” with the nation of Israel in Daniel 9:27a. Most interpreters would agree that the first part of 9:27 marks the beginning of the 70th week. If this is true, then Paul says that the apostasy and the initial rise of the Antichrist will happen towards the beginning of the day of the Lord (2 Thess 2:3) and within the 70th week period. Richard Mayhue, however, contends that the apostasy takes place in the middle of the week and coincides with the disclosure of the Antichrist’s true identity when he breaks the covenant with Israel and sets himself up as God (2:4) in the temple.¹⁴⁶ By contrast, the temporal markers, as given by Paul in 2:7b–8a, reveal the events in successive progression: “only he who **now** [ἄρτι] restrains will do so **until** [ἕως] he is taken out of the way. **Then** [τότε] that lawless one will be revealed....” (NASB). Accordingly, Paul’s statement may be interpreted in the following manner: (1) the Holy Spirit’s restraining power is now at work in and through the Church, (2) this will end at the time of the rapture when the Holy Spirit’s work through the Church is taken away, and (3) then the Antichrist will be revealed onto the world’s stage. Jeffrey Weima, although a Reformed New Testament scholar, agrees with the overall progression:

The verse [2:7] closes with the [verbal] clause “is out of the way” (*ek mesou genētai*). Although this expression does not occur in the same form anywhere else in the NT, close parallels in two of Paul’s other letters (1 Cor. 5:2; Col. 2:14) refer to the act of removing something and thus lead to the translation given above. The subject of the verb almost certainly is “the one who is restraining now,” and so the temporal clause refers to a future time when this figure will be removed and his present-day work of restraint will come to an end, thereby allowing the man of lawlessness to make his grand appearance.¹⁴⁷

The revelation of the Antichrist could not be referring to a mid-week event since the Holy Spirit’s ministry through the Church prevents him from making his initial appearance. John Walvoord maintains,

¹⁴⁵ Mike Stallard, *1 & 2 Thessalonians: Living for Christ’s Return*, Twenty-First Century Biblical Commentary Series (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2009), 175. This is a truncated and modified version of Stallard’s chart.

¹⁴⁶ Richard Mayhue, *1 & 2 Thessalonians: Triumphs and Trials of a Consecrated Church*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 1999), 188.

¹⁴⁷ Jeffrey A. D. Weima, *1-2 Thessalonians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 531. Note that Weima does not believe that the Restraint is the Holy Spirit, but Michael the Archangel.

The Antichrist, of course, will be revealed in part as soon as he conquers the ten countries of the revived Roman empire. He will be further confirmed when he then makes the seven-year covenant of Daniel 9:27. But the major events that will expose him as the one who claims to be God and who is the Antichrist do not occur until the great Tribulation begins. Then the day of the Lord fully comes as a series of events. What Paul is saying is that they are not in the day of the Lord because the Antichrist has not been revealed. None of the events identifying the Antichrist will have occurred. As indicated he will be revealed in part more than seven years before the Second Coming, but the full revelation will occur at the beginning of the Great Tribulation three-and-a-half years before the Second Coming.¹⁴⁸

Charles Ryrie, in agreement, also avers,

That pretribulation argument is simply this: The restrainer is God, and the instrument of restraint is the God-indwelt church (cf. Eph. 4:6 for God indwelling; Gal. 2:20 for Christ indwelling; 1 Cor. 6:19 for the Spirit indwelling). It should be remembered Christ said of the divinely indwelt and empowered church that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18 KJV), so we can say that this indwelt, empowered church is an adequate restraining instrument against the forces of darkness. The church will not go through any of the Tribulation because the restrainer will be removed before the Lawless One is revealed, which revelation by signing the covenant with the Jews (Dan. 9:27) begins the Tribulation period.¹⁴⁹

This interpretation harmonizes 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8 with Daniel 9:27 so that the rapture of the Church comes before the 70th week and the time of great apostasy with the initial appearance of the Antichrist onto the world scene. It, thus, figures that there was a parenthesis between the 69th and the 70th weeks in which the Holy Spirit had descended at Pentecost and had given birth to the Church. The Holy Spirit will continue His work through the Church up until the time of the pretribulation rapture.

V. Conclusion

Prophetic foreshortening is an important hermeneutical feature of prophetic texts. Though non-dispensational interpreters deny that a parenthesis exists between Daniel 9:26 and 9:27, the exegetical evidence taken from Daniel 2, 7, and 9 has shown that prophetic foreshortening is a common feature in Daniel’s prophecies. The Maccabean and Roman have been shown to be unfaithful to the grammatical-historical interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27, while the dispensational eschatological—adhering to a literal hermeneutic—makes the best sense from a textual and historical perspective. Moreover, biblical-theologically, the New Testament in Matthew 24, Romans 11, and 2 Thessalonians 2 makes implicit, but clear references to a parenthesis from the

¹⁴⁸ John F. Walvoord, “The Day of the Lord,” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 14-15.

¹⁴⁹ Charles C. Ryrie, *First & Second Thessalonians*, Everyman’s Bible Commentary (Chicago: Moody, 2001), chap. 7, ebook. See also McClain, *Daniel’s Prophecy of the 70*, 53-54.

beginning of the Church to her rapture with a parenthesis separating the two points which is commonly referred to among dispensationalists as the Church age.