

The Necessity for the Rapture Before Daniel's Seventieth Week

A. Introduction: Why are we looking at Daniel 9 when we are talking about the Rapture of the Church?

1. This paper connects Daniel 9 and the Rapture of the Church
2. The Rapture of the Church is mentioned only in the New Testament and nowhere in the Old.
 - a. The Rapture is specifically referred to only in the New Testament

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

¹³ But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed -- ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

- b. Timing is an issue
 1. No signs are given that precede the Rapture.
 2. Many signs are given that warn of the Second Coming of Christ.
 3. The time of the Rapture must be determined indirectly.
3. The prophecy in Daniel 9 is specific and may direct our attention to the time of the Church and the Rapture.
4. It is important to understand the flow of Daniel 9 within the Book of Daniel.

5. It is important to understand the setting of Daniel 9 itself.

Outline of Daniel 9

Stimulus for Daniel’s Prayer → completion of the 70 years of captivity	v. 2
Daniel’s Prayer of Supplication for Israel	vv. 4-19
The Answerer, Gabriel	vv. 20-23
The Answer: 70 weeks	vv. 24-27

Question: How does the response Daniel receives to his prayer answer the question he asks in his prayer concerning the end of the 70 years of captivity?

OR

1. What is the nature of the “Question”
2. What is the nature of the “Answer”
3. How are the two related?

B. Why is it important that Daniel 9 is a “Jewish” prophecy?

1. Daniel and the exiles need reassurance.
 - a. The previous prophecies Daniel has been given reveal a time of Gentile domination in world affairs, but the time of the promised Messianic kingdom is left unspecified and remote.
 - b. The nature of the promise to Abraham given in Genesis 12:1-3 of a land, seed and worldwide blessing is still future.
 - c. The promise was given in Deuteronomy 30 that in the last days Israel would be returned to the land is still future.
 - d. The predictions of the seventy year exile in Jeremiah left the expectation of a return after the time of discipline for Israel was finished.
2. How do we know this is a “Jewish” prophecy?
 - a. We look at the terms of the prophecy.
 - b. We look at the participants of the prophecy.
 - c. The beginning and endpoints of the prophecy are specific.
 - d. Those *not* included in the prophecy are noteworthy.

C. Why “priesthood” is important?

1. What is a priest in the biblical sense?
2. Priesthood has always existed in God’s economy, even before Abraham.
3. When God chose Abraham, he began a process of narrowing priesthood down to a specific racial group.
4. Israel was to fulfill the role of priest to the nations, thus fulfilling the third part of the Abrahamic promise, i.e. Exodus 19:6.
5. The language of the prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27 is language that refers to an extant national/covenant/religious Israel that exists in the same priestly sense that Daniel understood it.
6. This is true for the entire 70-week period of the prophecy as Gabriel explains it to Daniel.

D. What happened to the national Israelite priesthood and what is required to restore it?

1. Acts 2 marks the beginning of the Church Age.
2. Believers in Christ are designated as the new “priests” in this age.
3. Jews who become believers in the Church Age are first and foremost members of the Body of Christ regardless of their ethnic affiliation.
4. God still “owes” Israel an entire week (7 years) from the prophecy in Daniel 9 in which Israel will be His primary priestly representative on earth.
5. Somehow the church must be removed so that believers may not be members of the Body of Christ (yet still be saints) in order for God to work out the last week of Daniel’s prophecy.

E. How does all this relate to New Testament prophecy and the Rapture?

1. The only event in the New Testament that allows for the removal of the Church prior to the commencement of Daniel’s seventieth week is the Rapture of the Church.
2. There are no warning events given as to when this event may occur even though there are numerous warning signs for the second coming of Christ.

3. However, if Israel is to be given its full seven years to fulfill Daniel's prophecy, it stands to reason that the Church must be removed prior to the commencement of the seventieth week.
 - a. This is supported by the absence of any mention of the church on earth at any time during the period from Revelation 4-19.
 - b. The Rapture of the Church provides the basis for the Jewish believers mentioned in Revelation to be part of the believing remnant of Israel.