

## Daniel 9:27a: A Key for Understanding the Law's End in the New Testament

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The interpretation of Daniel 9 has generated a large body of scholarship in modern times.<sup>1</sup> This essay attempts an exegetical investigation of Dan 9:27, us-

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<sup>1</sup>E. König, "The 'Weeks' of Daniel," *ExpTim* 13 (1902): 468–70; S. R. Driver, *The Book of Daniel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1922); J. A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. T. Clark, 1927); D. L. Cooper, *The 70 Weeks of Daniel* (Los Angeles: Biblical Research Society, 1941); O. T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1945); R. D. Culver, *Basis for the Premillennial Interpretation of the Book of Daniel* (Th.D. Dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1952); G. W. Shunk, *The Seventieth Week of Daniel* (Th.D. Dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1953); E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949); idem., *The Messianic Prophecies of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954); Ch. Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963); H. W. Hoehner, *Chronology of the Apostolic Age* (Th.D. Dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1965); N. W. Porteous, *Daniel, A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965); H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1969); J. F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971); L. Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973); F. Zimmermann, *Daniel in Babylon* (Broadview, IL: Gibbs, 1974); J. C. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1978); J. B. Payne, "The Goal of Daniel's Seventy Weeks," *JETS* 21 (1978): 97–115; L. F. Hartman and A. A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, Anchor Bible 23 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978); G. C. Archer, "Modern Rationalism and the Book of Daniel," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136 (1979): 129–47; A. Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel*, trans. D. Pellauer (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979); R. M. Gurney, *God in Control* (Worthing: H. E. Walter, 1980); idem., "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9:24–27," *EvQ* 53 (1981): 29–36; J. C. Whitcomb, "Daniel's Great Seventy-Weeks Prophecy: An Exegetical Insight," *GTJ* 2 (1981): 259–63; J. Doukhan, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel: An Exegetical Study," in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, ed. A. V. Wallenkampf and W. R. Leshner (Washington: Review & Herald, 1981), 251–76; idem., *Drinking at the Sources* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1981); idem., *Daniel: The Vision of the End* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews UP, 1987); J. J. Collins, *Daniel, First Maccabees, Second Maccabees, with an Excursus on the Apocalyptic Genre*, OTM 16 (Wilmington, DE: M. Glazier, 1981); idem., *Daniel with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature*, FOTL 20 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984); G. F. Hasel, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9:24–27," *Ministry Insert*

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ing textual, linguistic, literary, structural, and contextual study of major terms and expressions. I will examine the literary structure of Dan 9:27a in the Hebrew Bible and analyze the contribution this prophetic text makes to our understanding of the law's end—the end of the sacrificial ritual system of the OT, as revealed in the NT. This text is the key to understanding such NT texts as Eph 2:13–16 and Col 2:14–17 and to understanding how the law was abolished by the Messiah, Jesus Christ, in the NT.

**The Context of the Book of Daniel**

The book of Daniel, especially the prophetic part, has many common patterns. The connections between chapters 2 and 7–12 in the book of Daniel are evident. They deal with similar motifs and employ similar language. Eschatological themes which occur in these chapters include: (1) the idea of an end of sin and the establishment of everlasting righteousness; (2) the role of Messiah, the coming of “one like a son of man,” and the Michael figure; (3) the concept of judgment; (4) apocalyptic woes, deliverance, and the resurrection; and (5) the end of the age and the eschatological kingdom.<sup>2</sup> These themes give evidence of the strong unity of the book, of the interrelationship among its parts.

Daniel 9:27 is connected with the rest of the book most directly through its relationship to Dan 8. It is significant that most of the words in our text occur-

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(May, 1976); Idem., “The Book of Daniel: Evidences Relating to Persons and Chronology,” *AUSS* 19 (1981): 47–49; idem., “Interpretations of the Chronology of the Seventy Weeks,” in *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy*, F. B. Holbrook (ed.), Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 3 (Washington: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 3–63; idem., “The Hebrew Masculine Plural for Weeks in the Expression ‘Seventy Weeks’ in Daniel 9:24,” *AUSS* 31 (1993): 107–20; W. H. Shea, “The Relationship between the Prophecies of Daniel 8 and Daniel 9,” in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, A. V. Wallenkampf and W. R. Leshner (eds.) (Washington: Review & Herald, 1981), 228–50; idem., “Poetic Relations of the Time Periods in Daniel 9:25,” in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, ed. A. V. Wallenkampf and W. R. Leshner (Washington: Review & Herald, 1981), 277–82; idem., *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 1 (Washington: Review & Herald Pub., 1982); idem., “The Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27,” in *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy*, F. B. Holbrook (ed.), Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 3 (Washington: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 75–118; idem., “Unity of Daniel” in *Symposium on Daniel*, F. B. Holbrook (ed.), Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 2 (Washington: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 165–255; J. C. Jeske, *Daniel* (Milwaukee, Northwestern, 1985); H. Bultema, *Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Pub., 1988); M. Kalafian, *The Impact of the Book of Daniel on Christology: A Critical Review of the Prophecy of the ‘Seventy Weeks’ of the Book of Daniel* (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1988); J. E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1989); M. H. Farris, *The Formative Interpretations of the Seventy Weeks of Daniel* (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1990); D. H. Lurie, “A New Interpretation of Daniel’s ‘Sevens’ and the Chronology of the Seventy ‘Sevens,’” *JETS* 33 (1990): 303–09; B. Owusu-Antwi, *The Chronology of Daniel 9:24–27*, ATSDS 2 (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Adventist Theological Society Pub., 1995).

<sup>2</sup>For a detailed analysis of these eschatological motifs see A. J. Ferch, “Authorship, Theology, and Purpose of Daniel,” in *Symposium on Daniel*, ed. F. B. Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 2 (Washington: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 71–81.

ring elsewhere in Daniel are found only in chapters 8 or 10–12. This indicates that these chapters constitute a specific unit.

### The Context of Daniel 9

One of the most remarkable and characteristic expressions in Dan 9 appears through the use of the verb *bîn* and its derived form *hēbîn* (“to understand” and “to cause to understand”). In Dan 9:2 appears the word *bîn*: “In the first year . . . I Daniel understood [*bîn*]” used to show that Daniel was seeking in the books to “understand” the prophecy of the 70 years of Jeremiah. The next use of this word comes in Dan 9:22, announcing the revelation of the 70 weeks. Doukhan comments that this usage suggests a kind of internal bridge between the two prophecies mentioned in Dan 9 (70 years and 70 weeks), and also with Dan 8 (vs. 5, 15, 16, 17, 19, 23, 27). Moreover, he points that it is significant that the last verb used by the angel in 9:23 to introduce the prophecy of the 70 weeks is the same imperative form *hābēn* as in Dan 8:17, where the angel introduces his answer to the question of Daniel concerning the precise time of the 2300 evenings and mornings.<sup>3</sup>

The introduction and conclusion of Dan 9 (vs. 1–4 and 20–27) deal with the same concerns (the salvation of Israel and the number 70). That this same number is used at the beginning and end of the chapter indicates a strong internal relationship within Dan 9. It follows that the two periods of time (70 years in the introduction, and 70 weeks in the conclusion) are historical events, and they have theological implications. Between the introduction and conclusion of the chapter, the author places a prayer that reveals his main thought (Dan 9:5–19).

Daniel is concerned about the sin of his people, which he relates to the exile (Dan 9:5, 7, 16). He cries out to God and asks Him to intervene in His mercy and to forgive. He prays for Jerusalem—for the sanctuary—that it may recover its meaning and its glory of old (9:17–19). This prayer of “confession” and “supplication” (9:20) God answers by means of Gabriel: “as soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision” (9:23).<sup>4</sup> God makes known to him that within a certain time sin will be atoned for and justice will be brought in forever (9:24). God answers that within a certain time a word will be pronounced on behalf of the erection of the city but that afterwards the city will be devastated by a war and destroyed (9:25–26).

In Dan 9:17, 26 appear the noun masculine with suffix *miq<sup>e</sup>dāškā* (“on your sanctuary”) and *w<sup>e</sup>haqqōdeš* (“and the sanctuary”) to establish the theological focus of Dan 9, and especially of Dan 9:27a: the sanctuary, i.e., the sanctuary and its sacrificial system theology. Finally, in Dan 9:21 occur the noun feminine construct and the noun masculine *minḥat āreb* (“the evening sacrifice”) with the

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<sup>3</sup>Doukhan, 255.

<sup>4</sup>NIV.

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Hebrew word *minḥaṭ*, one of key words of Dan 9:27a. These have important implications for the fate of sacrificial theology.

**The Literary Structure of Dan 9:27a**

The literary structure of Daniel 9—especially vs. 24–27—has been analyzed by many scholars.<sup>5</sup> The literary structure of Dan 9:27a presents three microstructures or microsections in antithetical chiasm: A, B, C // C', B', A'. After examining this chiasm, we will study each microstructure in turn.

**A** Then he shall confirm (make strong) *w<sup>e</sup>higbîr*

**B** a covenant with many *b<sup>e</sup>rît lārābîm*

**C** for one week *šābūa' eḥād*

**C'** But in the middle of the week *waḥ<sup>a</sup>šî haššābūa'*

**B'** to sacrifice and offering *zebaḥ ûminḥâ*

**A'** he shall bring an end.<sup>6</sup> *yašbîṭ*

**A || A': Then He Shall Confirm (Make Strong) ||  
He Shall Bring an End**

First, we will consider the antithetical microsections A//A'. In the microsection A there are three antecedents that have been suggested as likely antecedents of the pronoun “he,” the “he” who confirms a covenant, namely, “the Messiah, the Prince” (v. 25),<sup>7</sup> “Messiah” (v. 26a),<sup>8</sup> and “Prince” (v. 26b).<sup>9</sup> Syntactically, the nearest antecedent usually is the subject. However, the Prince of v. 26b cannot be the antecedent because it is neither the subject nor the object of the preceding clause, “and the people of the prince who shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” The “Prince” is subordinated to the subject of the clause “the people.” Nevertheless, “the people” is plural in sense, though grammatically singular in Hebrew, and thus cannot be the antecedent of the “he” in v. 27.

“The Messiah, the Prince” (v. 25) is farther away from the “he” (v. 27) than the “Messiah” in the previous verse (v. 26a). Therefore, taking into consideration the syntax of the passage, the “Messiah” (v. 26a) is most naturally the ante-

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<sup>5</sup>For example, Doukhan, 251–76; Owusu-Antwi, 79–88, 173–78; Shea, “Poetic Relations,” 277–82; idem., “Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27,” 75–118; idem., “Unity of Daniel,” 165–255.

<sup>6</sup>NKJV.

<sup>7</sup>Gurney, *God in Control*, 114; Shea, “Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27,” 95.

<sup>8</sup>Young, *Prophecy of Daniel*, 209; Allis, 122.

<sup>9</sup>Driver, 141; Lacocque, 197–98; Hartman and Di Lella, 252; Archer, “Modern Rationalism,” 129–47; Walvoord, 233–34; Wood, 257; Baldwin, 171.

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cedent of the “he” in v. 27.<sup>10</sup> Thus, it is “the Messiah” of v. 26 who is cut off “in the middle of the week” who is the “he” who is the subject of v. 27a, the “he” who shall make strong a covenant for the many.

The noun *māšîaḥ* comes from *mšḥ*, which means “to smear, anoint.”<sup>11</sup> *Māšîaḥ* is a noun of the *qāṭîl* formation. It is assigned the same meaning as the Qal passive participle, “anointed,”<sup>12</sup> except that when it is used as a noun it is assigned the meaning “anointed one.”<sup>13</sup> This noun is used thirty-eight times in the OT for different persons.<sup>14</sup> The term is used mostly in the OT for kings (Saul, David, Cyrus, and others) who are respectively “the Anointed.”<sup>15</sup> It is also used to refer to a High Priest,<sup>16</sup> and with reference to fathers (that is, the patriarchs).<sup>17</sup> In the book of Daniel the term *māšîaḥ* appears only twice.<sup>18</sup> In Dan 9:25–26, we find the only absolute use of *māšîaḥ* in the OT. Here it is a noun without any article or suffix—it is used as a proper name.<sup>19</sup>

The Niphal imperfect *yikkārēṭ* (“cut off”) in the phrase “the Messiah shall be cut off” (v. 26), designates a violent death of the Messiah.<sup>20</sup> The Niphal Hebrew verbal form is usually used in the sense of “be cut off, be removed, be destroyed,”<sup>21</sup> and intensively in the sense of “exterminate.”<sup>22</sup> This formula is

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<sup>10</sup>Young, *Prophecy of Daniel*, 208.

<sup>11</sup>BDB, 602; W. L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1971), 218, “spread a liquid (oil, paint) over, anoint”; E. Jenni and C. Westermann (eds.), *Diccionario Teológico del Antiguo Testamento* (Madrid: Cristianidad, 1978), 1:1243–44, “anointed”; KBL, 573; E. Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English* (Jerusalem: U of Haifa, 1987), 391; G. J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, and H. Fabry (eds.) *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (TDOT), trans. D. E. Green and D. W. Stott (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 9:44; R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer and B. K. Waltke (eds.) *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (TWOT) (Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1:530, “anoint, spread a liquid.”

<sup>12</sup>See W. Gesenius–E. Kautzsch, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, trans. A. E. Cowley (GKC) (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), 50a–f; see also P. Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, Subsidia Biblica 14 (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1996), 1:147; B. K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ill.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 88; C. H. J. van der Merwe, J. A. Naudé and J. H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 162–63.

<sup>13</sup>BDB, 603; D. J. A. Clines (ed.) *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (DCH) (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 4:466; Holladay, 218; Jenni and Westermann, 1:1243–44; KBL, 574; Klein, 391; TDOT, 9:44; TWOT, 1:530.

<sup>14</sup>A. Even-Shoshan (ed.) *A New Concordance of the Old Testament* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1989), 717.

<sup>15</sup>30 times.

<sup>16</sup>KBL, 574 (6 times).

<sup>17</sup>1 Chron 16:22; Ps 105:15 (twice).

<sup>18</sup>Dan 9:25, 26.

<sup>19</sup>GKC, 131a; Joüon and Muraoka, 2:477–78; Waltke and O’Connor, 229; Van der Merwe, Naudé and Kroeze, 228.

<sup>20</sup>Cf. Gen 9:11; Lev 7:20; Jer 11:19; Ps 37:9; Prov 2:22.

<sup>21</sup>BDB, 503–04; DCH, 4:465; Holladay, 165; Jenni and Westermann, 1:1171–76; Klein, 288; TDOT, 7:339–52; TWOT, 1:456–57.

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commonly called an “extermination formula” or “excommunication formula.”<sup>23</sup> The Niphal is found 24 times in connection with this formula.<sup>24</sup>

The structure of the passage, as analyzed by J. Doukhan<sup>25</sup> and W. H. Shea,<sup>26</sup> indicates that the same Messiah is meant in vs. 25 and 26. According to the structure, *yikkārēṭ* (“cut off”) implies the idea of suddenness. The nature of this act (sudden destruction) points, therefore, to a specific moment in time (midst of the week), rather than to a duration of time (half of the week).<sup>27</sup>

The OT concept of a future figure, the Suffering Servant, includes a violent death of that figure. “He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people He was stricken, and they made His grave with the wicked.”<sup>28</sup> This passage in the book of Isaiah (Isa 53:6–12) has thematic and terminological connections with Dan 9:26–27: (1) the atoning death (Isa 53:6, 8, 12 // Dan 9:27), and (2) *gāzar* (“cut,” Isa 53:8),<sup>29</sup> is synonymous with *kāraṭ* (“cut,” [Dan 9:26]).

Many scholars identify the Messiah as Jesus Christ.<sup>30</sup> The designation “Messiah” in Dan 9:25 and 26 in its absolute usage without the article seems to imply that “the Messiah” must be known. This absolute usage of the Messianic title, coupled with the Messianic nature of Dan 9:24–27, seems to fit the OT Messianic expectation and appropriately points to Jesus Christ as the referent in Dan 9:27.

The verb *higbîr* is a Hiphil perfect form used in the regular verb position. The Hiphil *waw* consecutive verb *higbîr* is causative, a construction in which a cause produces an event. The Hiphil *waw* consecutive verb *higbîr* must then be translated “and he shall make strong.” Thus the object, “covenant,” receives the action of the verb. Therefore, the proper translation should be “and he shall make strong a covenant.”<sup>31</sup> The root *gbr* of the Hiphil verb *higbîr* and its derivatives appear 328 times in the OT.<sup>32</sup> The verb occurs about 25 times.<sup>33</sup> The verb

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<sup>22</sup>TDOT, 7:342.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 347.

<sup>24</sup>Gen 17:14; Exod 12:15, 19; 30:33, 38; 31:14; Lev 7:20, 21, 25, 27; 17:4, 9, 14; 18:29; 19:8; 20:17, 18; 22:3; 23:29; Num 9:13; 15:30, 31; 19:13, 20. The *kāraṭ* verb appears 73 times in the Niphal of 288 times that it occurs in the OT (see Even-Shoshan, 563–64).

<sup>25</sup>See Doukhan, 260–62.

<sup>26</sup>See Shea, “Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27,” 90–92.

<sup>27</sup>Doukhan, 262.

<sup>28</sup>Isa 53:8–9, NKJV.

<sup>29</sup>See BDB, 160; DCH, 2:341; Holladay, I 59; Jenni and Westermann, 1:1173; Klein, 96; TDOT, 2:459–61; TWOT, 1:158.

<sup>30</sup>Archer, 113; Boutflower, 191; Bultema, 286; Gurney, “The Seventy Weeks,” 31; Jeske, 181; Shea, “Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27,” 89; Wood, 251; Young, *Prophecy of Daniel*, 203; Zimmermann, 137.

<sup>31</sup>See Shea, “Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27,” 95: “The translation sometimes given—“he shall make a strong covenant”—would have been more naturally expressed by an adjectival construction.”

<sup>32</sup>TWOT, 1:148.

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has been defined as “be strong, mighty,”<sup>34</sup> “be mighty,”<sup>35</sup> “to be strong,”<sup>36</sup> “prevail, be mighty, have strength, be great,”<sup>37</sup> “be superior, prevail, succeed increase,”<sup>38</sup> “be superior, strong.”<sup>39</sup> Apart from Dan 9:27, the Hiphil form, which denotes “be strong,”<sup>40</sup> “make strong, cause to prevail,”<sup>41</sup> occurs in only one place in the OT, Ps 12:5[4].

The term *higbîr* suggests that the covenant to be made strong was already in existence.<sup>42</sup> The typical word used for the making of new covenants is *kārat*.<sup>43</sup> The term was used of covenants because in the process of making a covenant, an animal was cut off or cut in two and the parties passed between as a ratification of the covenant.<sup>44</sup> In Dan 9:24–27 the verb has connotations relating to atonement (v. 24), the covenant (v. 27), and the ceasing of the sacrificial system (v. 27). B. Owusu-Antwi has suggested that “cut off” is used in Dan 9:26 in a cultic sense, indicating covenantal connotations that include atoning and sacrificial aspects, as well as covenant-making and covenant-ratifying overtones.<sup>45</sup>

In microsection A', a clear antithetical parallelism appears because the verb *yašbîr*, a Hiphil imperfect form used in the regular verb position, is antithetical to the verb *higbîr* (“shall confirm [make strong]”)<sup>46</sup> of microsection A.<sup>47</sup> Besides, the Hiphil verb *yašbîr* is causative, a construction in which a cause produces an event. The Hiphil verb *yašbîr*, then, must be translated, “he shall cause to cease (bring an end).” Thus, the object, “sacrifice and offering,” receives the action of the verb. The word *yašbîr* implies a definitive effect.<sup>48</sup> It is significant that this word is used mostly to designate an eschatological cessation.<sup>49</sup>

**B || B': A Covenant with Many || To Sacrifice and Offering**

Now let us analyze microsections B/B'. Microsection B presents *b'ôrîr*, a noun feminine singular and the direct object of the verb *higbîr*. The term *b'ôrîr*

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<sup>33</sup> Even-Shoshan, 221; Jenni and Westermann, 1:569; TDOT, 2:367, has 24 times; TWOT, 1:148 has 26.

<sup>34</sup>BDB, 149.

<sup>35</sup>DCH, 2:312.

<sup>36</sup>TDOT, 2:368.

<sup>37</sup>TWOT, 1:148.

<sup>38</sup>KBL, 167.

<sup>39</sup>Jenni and Westermann, 1:569

<sup>40</sup>Holladay, 54.

<sup>41</sup>TDOT, 2:368.

<sup>42</sup>Shea, “Prophecy of Daniel 9:24–27,” 95.

<sup>43</sup>See for example, TDOT, 7:339–52; TWOT, 1:456–57.

<sup>44</sup>See G. F. Hasel, “The Meaning of the Animal Rite in Gen 15,” *JSOT* 19 (1981): 61–78; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, Anchor Bible 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), 112.

<sup>45</sup>Owusu-Antwi, 167.

<sup>46</sup>Hiphil perfect.

<sup>47</sup>BDB, 991.

<sup>48</sup>Cf. Deut 32:26.

<sup>49</sup>See especially Ezek 7:24; 12:23; 16:41; 23:27, 48; 26:13; 30:50; 34:10, 25; etc.

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appears in Dan 9:27a in the statement: “Then he shall confirm a covenant [*b<sup>e</sup>rît*] with many for one week; but in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.”<sup>50</sup> Both the LXX and Theodotion render *b<sup>e</sup>rît* with *diathēkēn*, “will or testament,”<sup>51</sup> while the Vulgate has *pactum*. All the major English versions translate *b<sup>e</sup>rît* with “covenant.”<sup>52</sup>

*Lārabîm* (noun masculine plural) is a prepositional phrase acting as the indirect object of the verb *higbîr*.<sup>53</sup> *Rabîm* (“many”) occurs 13 times in the book of Daniel.<sup>54</sup> In Daniel it always refers to people, except in Dan 9:18, where it refers to God. For instance, in Dan 8:25 “many,” not all, are destroyed by the “little horn.”<sup>55</sup> In Dan 12:2: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.”<sup>56</sup> There the many is partitive from “those who sleep in the dust of the earth.” In Dan 9:27, “the many” is used in contrast to those who do not benefit from the “making strong of the covenant.” In Dan 12:10, a parallel usage can be found: “Many will be purged, purified and refined; but the wicked will act wickedly, and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.”<sup>57</sup> Here “many” is used in contradiction to “the wicked.” The same meaning is found in Isa 53:11: “As a result of the anguish of His soul, he will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities.”<sup>58</sup> In both Isa 53:11 and Dan 9:27 the same term and form, *lārabîm*, is used. In Isa 53:11 *lārabîm* specifies those who are “justified” through the ministry and death of the Suffering Servant. The partitive nature of the “many” in Dan 9:27, the Messianic nature of the passage, the significance of the verb *higbîr*, and the covenantal implications of the passage point to the meaning of “the many” in Dan 9:27 as it is found in Isa 53:11.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, “the many” in Dan 9:27 refers to the faithful ones of Israel for whom “the Messiah” fulfilled the covenant.

***B<sup>e</sup>rît in the Old Testament.*** The basic terms for “covenant” used in Hebrew are *ʾalah* (“oath”) and *b<sup>e</sup>rît* (“covenant”). In Akkadian the words *riksu* and *māmitu* and in Hittite *išiu* and *lingai* express pledge and commitment, which actually create the covenant.<sup>60</sup> The word *b<sup>e</sup>rît* appears 283 times in the OT.<sup>61</sup> The

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<sup>50</sup>NKJV.

<sup>51</sup>A. Rahlfs (ed.), *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1949).

<sup>52</sup>KJV; NKJV; RSV; NRSV; JB; NIV.

<sup>53</sup>BDB, I 912; Holladay, I 330; Jenni and Westermann, 2:900–14; Klein, 601; TWOT, 2:827.

<sup>54</sup>Dan 8:25; 9:18, 27; 11:10, 14, 18, 26, 33, 39; 12:2, 3, 4, 10.

<sup>55</sup>Dan 11:14, 26, where not everybody but “many fall down slain” (NASB). In Dan 11:18, 39, the implication seems to be great numbers. It always functions with a partitive connotation.

<sup>56</sup>NKJV.

<sup>57</sup>NASB. Cf. Dan 11:33; 12:3.

<sup>58</sup>NASB.

<sup>59</sup>Owusu-Antwi, 184.

<sup>60</sup>See TDOT, 2:253–79.

<sup>61</sup>See Even-Shoshan, 205–06.



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first occurrence of the term “covenant” is found in Gen 6:18, where God established a covenantal relationship with Noah. The objective of this covenant, initiated by God, is the redemption of Noah and those who would enter the ark with him according to the directions of God.<sup>62</sup> In Gen 9:8–17, the Noachic covenant is expanded by God after the deluge to become the only covenant in the Bible that is universal in scope. In Gen 15:18 God makes a covenant with Abraham. This covenant is also mentioned in Gen 17. Like the Noachic covenant, the Abrahamic covenant is initiated by God. The Abrahamic covenant seems to have bilateral obligations. *Bʿrît* is used in connection with a treaty or agreement between equal parties like Abraham and the Amorites,<sup>63</sup> unequal parties like Israel and the Gibeonites,<sup>64</sup> between states and their representatives,<sup>65</sup> kings and their subjects,<sup>66</sup> two households like Jacob’s and Laban’s,<sup>67</sup> individuals like David and Jonathan,<sup>68</sup> and between God and his people.<sup>69</sup>

***Bʿrît* in the Book of Daniel.** The author of Dan 9:4–14 points to unfaithfulness to the covenant stipulations as the cause of the exile to Babylon and the faithfulness of Yahweh to the covenant as the basis for this petition (Dan 9:4, 15–16).

The term *bʿrît* occurs 7 times in the book of Daniel. All seven occurrences are concentrated in chaps. 9 and 11.<sup>70</sup> Daniel 11:22 mentions a “prince of the covenant.” Scholars generally identify “the prince of the covenant” in Dan 11:22 with the “Messiah” who is cut off in Dan 9:26.<sup>71</sup> This identification is to be supported since the term rendered “prince” is *nāgid*, the same term used in Dan 9:26.

In Dan 9:4, where the word *bʿrît* first appears in the book of Daniel, the covenant is definitely the covenant of God with His people, for Daniel states in his prayer: “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his *covenant* [*bʿrît*] of love with all who love him and obey his commands.” The passage containing

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<sup>62</sup>The reports concerning such commitments normally start from a relationship. They normally include a record of negotiations, formulation of terms, and a statement that the act of making *bʿrît* was actually performed. Thus the negotiations end with a solemn ratification of the terms. The terms normally apply to both parties, and the act is commonly the work of both. Indeed, even unilateral terms (i.e., they empower or tie one party, e.g., 2 Sam 5:3; Ezek 17:11–21) could depend on a common act. It is tied up with a complex of recognized relationships, negotiations, terms which relate one party to another, and a common act. The word *bʿrît* carries these overtones. It is relational.

<sup>63</sup>Gen 14:13.

<sup>64</sup>Josh 9.

<sup>65</sup>1 Kgs 5:12; 15:19; 20:34.

<sup>66</sup>2 Sam 5:3; 2 Kgs 11:17.

<sup>67</sup>Gen 31:44–47.

<sup>68</sup>1 Sam 18:3; 20:8.

<sup>69</sup>E.g., Gen 6:18; 9:8–17; 15:18; 17:1–14; Exod 19:5; 24:7; Deut 7:1–8; 2 Sam 7:12–16; 23:5. See TWOT, 1:128–29.

<sup>70</sup>Dan 9:4, 27; 11:22, 28, 30 (2x), 32.

<sup>71</sup>See Hartman and Di Lella, 252, 295; Lacocque, 226; Porteous, 142, 166; Montgomery, 381, 451.

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the prayer of Daniel is filled with covenant terminology. For example, Dan 9 is the only chapter in the book of Daniel where the covenant name Yahweh appears.<sup>72</sup>

Microsection B' presents the terms *zebah* ("sacrifice") and *minhâ* ("offering"), appearing in parallelism with *b'rit* ("covenant"). We will now analyze these terms, for they serve as a key to understanding the relationship between the covenant and the law's end in the NT.

***Zebah in Ancient Near Eastern Literature.*** The root *zbh* is found in all Semitic languages. The Akkadian noun *zibu(m)* I means "food offering."<sup>73</sup> Elsewhere it is a general term for sacrifice, so that a priestly title can also be derived from it. The Ugaritic *zbh* is very similar to Hebrew *zbh*. Both the verb and the noun refer to a sacrificial ritual comprising slaughtering, a libation, and a meal or a festival meal at which meat was consumed. Moreover, Hebrew and Ugaritic also share corresponding word pairs, such as *dbh/šrt = zbh-mšr*. Also similar to the Hebrew *zbh* are Old South Arabic *dbh* ("offer animal sacrifice"), Ethiopic *zabha* ("slaughter, sacrifice") and Arabic *dabaḥa* ("slaughter, sacrifice").<sup>74</sup>

***Zebah in the Old Testament.*** The noun *zebah* appears 160 times in the OT.<sup>75</sup> The word *zebah* is the name of a specific ritual, namely, *animal sacrifice*, but it can refer also to the celebration of the ritual (sacrificial festival or meal) or the animal sacrificed (or its flesh). Everywhere else the notion of sacrifice is expressed by a series of specific rituals comprising at least two members<sup>76</sup>; in particular, the doublet *šlāh-zebah* occurs frequently.<sup>77</sup> The following doublets also occur: *zebah-š'lamîm* ("peace offering"),<sup>78</sup> *zebah-tôdhāh* ("thank-offering"),<sup>79</sup> *zebah-hayyāmîm* ("yearly sacrifice"),<sup>80</sup> etc.<sup>81</sup> It is assigned the general meaning "sacrifice."<sup>82</sup>

***Minhâ in Ancient Near Eastern Literature.*** The term *minhâ* is only infrequently attested outside the Hebrew Bible. The earliest extant occurrences point to Ugarit, where *mnḥ* occurs with the general meaning "gift, tribute,"<sup>83</sup> whereas the meaning "sacrifice, offering" posited by Cyrus Gordon cannot be derived

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<sup>72</sup>Vs. 2, 4, 10, 13, 14, 20.

<sup>73</sup>J. Black, A. George and N. Postgate (eds.) *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (CDA), SAN-TAG 5 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 447.

<sup>74</sup>TDOT, 4:10–11.

<sup>75</sup>53 times are in legal contexts, including 34 in Leviticus.

<sup>76</sup>Lev 7:37; Deut 12:6; Isa 1:11; Prov 15:8; etc.

<sup>77</sup>Ex 10:25; Deut 12:6; 1 S 15:22; Hos 6:6; etc.

<sup>78</sup>48 times (the sacrificial list in Num 7 uses *zebah-š'lamîm* 13 times).

<sup>79</sup>6 times.

<sup>80</sup>3 times.

<sup>81</sup>TDOT, 4:12.

<sup>82</sup>BDB, 257; DCH, 3:78–80; Holladay, 86; Klein, 193; TWOT, 1:233.

<sup>83</sup>TDOT, 8:409.

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from these few occurrences.<sup>84</sup> Late Egyptian attests *mnḥt* with the meaning “gift of homage.” *Mnḥt* II (“sacrifice, offering”), in the form of a stela, a temple, or a vegetable gift, is profusely attested both in the Elephantine Aramaic papyri and in Phoenician-Punic and Neo-Punic inscriptions. Finally, the root is also attested in the Arabic *manaḥa* (“to give, loan”) and *minḥat* (“gift”). Rabbinic literature attests only the noun *minḥa*, in the Targumim *minḥātā*, with the meanings “gifts, sacrificial offering, especially cereal offering,”<sup>85</sup> and figuratively, “the time of the afternoon sacrifice.”<sup>86</sup>

***Minḥâ in the Old Testament.*** The noun *minḥâ* occurs 211 times in the OT, and twice in the Aramaic sections (Ezra 7:17; Dan 2:46).<sup>87</sup> In half of its occurrences it appears undeclined in the singular absolute state with<sup>88</sup> or without<sup>89</sup> the article, and it also occurs in the singular construct state.<sup>90</sup> The LXX renders *minḥâ* with *thusia*,<sup>91</sup> *thusiasma*,<sup>92</sup> *holokautōma*, and *prosphora*.<sup>93</sup> In language related to sacrifice and offering it does not differentiate between *minḥâ* and *zebah*, rendering both terms with *thusia*.<sup>94</sup>

It is assigned the meaning “gift, tribute, offering, sacrifice.”<sup>95</sup> The term *minḥâ* acquired the specialized meaning of a sacrifice or offering which was to be a “pleasing odor” to the deity. The *minḥâ* constitutes the high point of the sacrificial ritual, since it insures that God is able to smell the pleasing fragrance of the offering. The term *minḥâ* frequently occurs in connection with or parallel to *zebah* and *ôlâ*.<sup>96</sup> In the official cult, the *minḥâ* was normally connected with animal sacrifice.<sup>97</sup> The *minḥâ* is used commonly to refer to cereal offerings (flour, fruits, grain, etc.). Together these two words *zebah* (“sacrifice”) and *minḥâ* (“offering”) encompass all animal and nonanimal sacrifices—the sacrificial system as a whole.

In the writings of Qumran the term *minḥâ* appears concerned with the community rule and is picked up in a few fragments from 4Q with clear invocation of OT sacrificial terminology.<sup>98</sup> The Temple scroll also uses it.<sup>99</sup> The Ara-

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<sup>84</sup>C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, AnOr 38 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965, 1967), n° 1500.

<sup>85</sup>TDOT, 8:410.

<sup>86</sup>Cf. 1 Kgs 18:29, 36; 2 Kgs 3:20; 16:13, 15; Isa 43:23; Mal 1:10, 11.

<sup>87</sup>Even-Shoshan, 680–81.

<sup>88</sup>40 times.

<sup>89</sup>73 times.

<sup>90</sup>23 times.

<sup>91</sup>142 times.

<sup>92</sup>Twice.

<sup>93</sup>Once each.

<sup>94</sup>TDOT, 8:411.

<sup>95</sup>BDB, 585; Holladay, 202; Klein, 357; TWOT, 1:514.

<sup>96</sup>TDOT, 8:417.

<sup>97</sup>Jgs 6:19; 13:19; 1 Sam 1:24.

<sup>98</sup>4 times.

<sup>99</sup>40 times.

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maic 1QapGen contains two occurrences referring to Abraham's sacrifices. Qumran attests both "morning" (11QT 13:15) and "evening" *minhâ* (17:7).<sup>100</sup>

***Sacrifice, Offering, Isaiah 53 and the New Testament.*** In Isaiah 53 the Servant of Yahweh suffers vicariously and is made an offering for sin (v. 10). The word used here is *ʿāšām* ("guilt offering")<sup>101</sup> In Isa 53 the sacrifices find their fulfillment in the Servant of Yahweh. The substitutionary nature of the sacrifice of the Servant of Yahweh is emphasized in Isa 53:5<sup>102</sup>: "But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed."<sup>103</sup> In Isa 53 the animal sacrifice is replaced by the ultimate sacrifice of the Servant of Yahweh, who bears the sins and the punishment of sin for humankind. He is "stricken" and "afflicted" (v. 4), "pierced through for our transgressions" and "crushed for our iniquities" (v. 5), "led to slaughter like a lamb" (v. 7), "cut off" (v. 8), and "assigned a grave to be with wicked men" (v. 9).

Jesus applied the prophecy of Isa 53 to Himself in Mark 10:45 and by so doing declared His death as the antitypical fulfillment of Israelite sacrifices. The two passages are connected by common expressions, as is evident in the LXX of Isa 53 and the Greek of Mark 10:45: (*para*)*didonai* ("to give"), *psuchē autou* ("his life/soul"), and *polloi* ("many"). This suggests that Jesus is alluding to the prophecy of Isaiah. Furthermore, the substitutionary theme that pervades Isa 53 is also evident in Mark 10:45 in the use of the preposition *anti* "for," which has the meaning of "in place of."<sup>104</sup> The concept of ransom, *lutron*, which denotes the price that Christ pays on behalf of many,<sup>105</sup> also refers back to Isa 53. It is evident that Christ fulfills the role of "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Other sayings of Jesus that allude to Isa 53 and depict Jesus' understanding of Himself as the sacrificial lamb are the Last Supper sayings recorded in Matt 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:15–20.

In these texts Jesus makes the statement: "This is My blood of the covenant [*diathēkēs*], which is to be shed on behalf of many [*pollon*] for forgiveness of sins."<sup>106</sup> This is the same covenantal language one finds in Dan 9:27a. Jesus' blood is shed, like the OT sacrifices, for the forgiveness of sins, and thus for the restoration of the covenant relationship. Paul also understood the death of Christ in terms of the Israelite sacrificial system. In Eph 5:2 Paul refers to the death of Christ with the terminology of accepted sacrifice used in the OT.<sup>107</sup> Christ "gave

<sup>100</sup>TDOT, 8:420–21.

<sup>101</sup>BDB, 79–80: "The Messianic servant offers himself as an *ʿāšām* in compensation for the sins of the people, interposing for them as their substitute Isa 53:10;" DCH, 1:415; Holladay, 29–30; Jenni and Westermann, 1:375–83; Klein, 58; TDOT, 1:429–37; TWOT, 1:78–79.

<sup>102</sup>See also vs. 6 and 10.

<sup>103</sup>NASB.

<sup>104</sup>TDNT, 4:342.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., 4:340–43.

<sup>106</sup>Matt 26:28, NASB; cf. Mark 14:24; Luke 22:19.

<sup>107</sup>See Gen 8:21; Exod 29:18, 25, 41; Lev 1:9, 13, 17; 2:9; 4:31; Num 15:3, 7.

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up himself on our behalf as an offering [*prosporan*] and a sacrifice [*thusian*],” which he describes as “an odor of sweet smell” (*osmēn euōdias*).

The book of Hebrews addresses the typological nature of the OT sacrifices and offerings that meet their antitype in the sacrifice of Jesus. The author is obviously concerned to emphasize the sufficiency of the one-time sacrifice of Jesus Christ in contrast to the repetitious offerings of the Levitical system. This is evident in the original language by the tenses the author employs in Heb 8:3: “Every high priest is appointed to offer [*prosperein*, present infinitive] gifts and sacrifices [*thusias*, noun accusative]; hence it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer [*prosenegkē*, aorist subjunctive].” The first “to offer” in the present tense denotes the continual, repetitive sacrificing of the earthly high priests. The second “to offer” in the aorist tense indicates the once-for-all-time nature of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.<sup>108</sup>

In Heb 9:13–14, the blood of the animal sacrifices is contrasted with the blood of Christ, and He is presented as the unblemished and sufficient sacrifice. The better blood of Christ, more efficacious than all sacrifices, able to provide thoroughgoing cleansing and access to the very presence of God—this is the author’s leading point. The “blood” is the chief theme of the sustained theological argument of Heb 9:1–10:18. We find also mentioned daily sacrifices (9:9–10), the sacrifice of the red heifer (9:13), the sacrifices at the inauguration of the covenant with Israel (9:18–20), and the generalized “sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (10:8, 11). In Heb 10:1–18, the old sacrifices are characterized as the shadow of the antitypical sacrifice of Christ that caused the old sacrifices to cease.<sup>109</sup> The intent of the author is to show that Calvary is the antitype of all the sacrifices of the OT.

Since the OT in anticipation, saw the sacrifice of the Servant of Yahweh as vicarious and final (Isa 53), and the NT interprets only the death of Christ as ending the OT sacrifices (Heb 10), then the event of Christ’s death must be the event that would cause sacrifices and offerings to cease, as mentioned in Dan 9:27a. It is tenable, then, to conclude that the event that would happen in the midst of the seventieth week to cause the ceasing of sacrifice and offering was the cutting off of the Messiah mentioned in Dan 9:26a.

**C || C’: For One Week || But in the Middle of the Week**

To conclude this analysis, we will consider the central microsections C/C’ of the chiasmic structure of Dan 9:27a. In microsection C appears *šābûa’ eḥād*, “for one week” an adverbial phrase showing the time for the confirmation process. The terms *šābûa’* and *eḥād* are the noun masculine singular<sup>110</sup> and numeral

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<sup>108</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 164.

<sup>109</sup>Outside chapters 9 and 10, we find other references to sacrifice: “gifts and sacrifices for sins (5:1–3); daily sacrifices for sins (7:27); “the blood of the covenant” (10:29); Abel’s sacrifice (11:4); the blood of the Passover (11:28); and the blood of the new covenant (12:24).

<sup>110</sup>BDB, 988.

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masculine singular forms,<sup>111</sup> respectively. Both LXX and Theodotion render the Hebrew term *šābūaʿ* in Dan 9:27 with the Greek term *hebdomas*. The term *hebdomas* occurs 10 times in the LXX outside of the book of Daniel.<sup>112</sup> The Greek versions consistently use the term *hebdomas* outside the book of Daniel to designate the regular “week.” In the book of Daniel, the term *hebdomas* in Dan 10:2, 3 also means regular weeks of seven full days. In the Greek versions of the LXX and Theodotion the rendering of *šābūaʿ* in Dan 9:24–27 means “seventy weeks, week.”

*Šābūaʿ* has the basic meaning of “unit (period) of seven,”<sup>113</sup> or a “week.”<sup>114</sup> However, scholars list the first meaning of *šābūaʿ* as “a period of seven days, week.”<sup>115</sup> The second meaning listed is usually in reference to only Dan 9:24–27, which is seen as “seven periods of years.”<sup>116</sup> This seems to indicate that the word *šābūaʿ* has a special meaning in Dan 9:24–27 different from the ordinary primary meaning attached to the term in the OT.<sup>117</sup>

The various forms of *šābūaʿ* appear 19 times in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>118</sup> Eleven of the 19 occurrences are outside the book of Daniel.<sup>119</sup> Outside Daniel each occurrence of *šābūaʿ* (“week”) has the meaning of a regular week, a period of seven days.<sup>120</sup> The term *šābūaʿ* occurs 8 times in the Book of Daniel.<sup>121</sup> Six of the 8 occurrences are in Dan 9:24–27. Two occurrences outside Dan 9:24–27 are present in Dan 10:2, 3. In all the 19 cases *šābūaʿ* is consistently used in a temporal sense to signify “week” in the sense of a regular, literal seven-day period.

The study of the usage of *šābūaʿ* in the OT and in the book of Daniel, as well as the interpretation of the Greek versions, shows that the biblical usage is consistently in reference to the regular seven-day week.

The noun *šābūaʿ* in Dan 9:24–27 means regular “week(s),” as has been established, but interpreters accept unanimously that the events outlined in Dan

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<sup>111</sup>BDB, 25.

<sup>112</sup>Exod 34:22; Lev 23:15, 16; 25:8; Num 28:26; Deut 16:9 (2x), 10, 16; 2 Chron 8:13.

<sup>113</sup>BDB, 988; Holladay, 358; KBL, 940.

<sup>114</sup>BDB, 988; Holladay, 358; KBL, 940; Klein, 635; TWOT, 2:899.

<sup>115</sup>BDB, 988; Holladay, 358; KBL, 940; Klein, 635; TWOT, 2:899.

<sup>116</sup>See BDB, 989; Klein, 635.

<sup>117</sup>For an analysis of the different suggestions about the meaning of the term *šābūaʿ*, see Hartman and Di Lella, 244; Lacocque, 191; Montgomery, 373; Porteous, 140; Hasel, “Hebrew Masculine Plural,” 107–20; König, “Weeks of Daniel,” 468–70; Lurie, 303–09; Whitcomb, 259–63; Wood, 247; Young, *Prophecy of Daniel*, 195.

<sup>118</sup>Even-Shoshan, 1103.

<sup>119</sup>Gen 29:27, 28 (singular construct forms); Exod 34:22 (feminine plural form); Lev 12:5 (dual form); Num 28:26 (feminine plural construct with suffix); Deut 16:9 (2x), 10, 16 (feminine plural forms); 2 Chron 8:13 (feminine plural form); Jer 5:24 (feminine plural construct).

<sup>120</sup>For an analysis of the meaning of word *šābūaʿ* outside of the book of Daniel see Owusu-Antwi, 93–98.

<sup>121</sup>Dan 9:24 (masculine plural form), 25 (2x, masculine plural forms); 26 (masculine plural form); 27 (2x, singular form); Dan 10:2 (masculine plural form), 3 (masculine plural form).

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9:24–27 cannot be fulfilled within seventy regular weeks.<sup>122</sup> Accordingly, scholars from throughout the entire spectrum of interpretation have advanced contextual arguments to show that the “weeks” must be chronologically interpreted in terms of years.<sup>123</sup> Thus, both “seventy weeks” of Dan 9:24–26 and *šābûa* ‘*eḥād* “one week” of Dan 9:27 have been generally interpreted by scholars to be chronologically 490 regular years and 7 years, respectively.<sup>124</sup>

On the other hand, microsection C’ presents an antithetical parallelism, because the term *ḥ<sup>a</sup>ṣṭ*<sup>125</sup> used in Dan 9:27a—“Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle [*ḥ<sup>a</sup>ṣṭ*] of the week he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering,”<sup>126</sup>—denotes a point in time. The term *ḥ<sup>a</sup>ṣṭ* has been used in the OT in the sense of “half” when used with units of measure like cubits<sup>127</sup> or acre.<sup>128</sup> It is mostly used in the sense of “half” with people,<sup>129</sup> especially when it describes half of a tribe.<sup>130</sup> However, when *ḥ<sup>a</sup>ṣṭ* is in construct relationship with a period of time (here “week”), it always means “midst” and not “half.”<sup>131</sup> The context of Dan 9:27a is concerned with a definite action, *yašbîṭ* (“cause to cease”) in the imperfect.

While Dan 9:26 is not definite in fixing the specific point when Messiah shall be cut off in the seventieth week, this point in time is specifically fixed in v. 27 as “the middle of the week.” The temporal expression “in the middle” means a specific point (i.e., midpoint) in the last week.<sup>132</sup>

### The Theological Meaning of Dan 9:27a

The sanctuary-sacrificial system, messianism-christology, Mosaic law, and eschatology constitute the four main aspects of the theology of Dan 9:27a.

**Sanctuary-Sacrificial System.** We may observe a strong sanctuarial and sacrificial ritual system background. This is evident in the specific terms used: *zebah* (“sacrifice”), *minḥâ* (“offering”) *miq<sup>e</sup>dāškâ* (“on your sanctuary”), and *w<sup>e</sup>haqqōdes* (“and the sanctuary”) (Dan 9:17, 26).

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<sup>122</sup>Young, *Prophecy of Daniel*, 196, sustains: “The brief period of 490 days would not serve to meet the needs of the prophecy, upon any view. Hence, as far as the present writer knows, this view is almost universally rejected.” See also Wood, 247, states that “a total of only 490 days (seventy such weeks) would be meaningless in the context. In contrast, a week of years does fit the context.”

<sup>123</sup>See for instance Doukhan, 265; Shea, *Selected Studies*, 77–78; Lurie, 305; Montgomery, 373; Walvoord, 218; Goldingay, 257.

<sup>124</sup>For an analysis of the prophetic principle of “a day equals a year,” see Shea, *Selected Studies*, 56–88.

<sup>125</sup>BDB, 345; DCH, 3:294–95; Holladay, 113; Klein, 229.

<sup>126</sup>Dan 9:27a, NKJV.

<sup>127</sup>E.g., Exod 25:10; 1 Kgs 7:31.

<sup>128</sup>1 Sam 14:14.

<sup>129</sup>1 Sam 19:41 [40].

<sup>130</sup>Num 32:33; 34:13, 14, 15; Josh 1:12; 4:12; 1 Chron 5:26.

<sup>131</sup>Exod 12:29; Josh 10:13; Judg 16:3 (2x); Ruth 3:8; Ps 102:25 [24]; Jer 17:11.

<sup>132</sup>For an analysis of the main interpretations for the chronological stipulations regarding the Messiah’s being cut off “in the middle of the week,” see Owusu-Antwi, 309, 311, 316–17.

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**Messianism-Christology.** The second main aspect of the theology of Dan 9:27a is a strong messianic and christological background. This is evident in the specific terms used: “He” (2 times) and *māšîaḥ* “Messiah” (Dan 9:25, 26a).

**Mosaic Law.** Daniel reveals the theological background of Dan 9:27a’s prophecy in the prayer, where he refers explicitly to the law of Moses (9:11, 13). This is evident in the specific terms used: *b’rît* (“covenant”), *zebaḥ* (“sacrifice”), and *minḥâ* (“offering”)—terms related to sacrificial laws.

This theological meaning is the most important for our analysis of Dan 9:27a. This theological aspect is the key for understanding the law’s end in the NT. The prophetic meaning of Dan 9:27a enables us make sense of the most significant texts on the question of the law’s end, such as Eph 2:13–16 and Col 2:14–17.

It has been observed that there are many similarities between the apostle Paul’s letters to the Ephesians and Colossians. Ephesians 2:13–16 says: “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.”<sup>133</sup>

These verses refer to the blood of Christ, consequently, to His sacrifice. Christ has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances. “The law of commandments contained in ordinances” is generally understood to refer to the ritual or ceremonial precepts that regulated sanctuary-temple worship. By removing this, Jesus removed that which had become the occasion of bitter feelings between Jews and Gentiles. Here the author of the epistle is making an evident reference to the Messiah’s prophetic mission in Dan 9:27a, where He puts an end to the system of sacrifices and to the blood of the animals of the OT, replacing them with His own sacrifice and blood.<sup>134</sup>

Colossians 2:14–17 says: “having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”<sup>135</sup>

These verses have even more evident prophetic references to Dan 9:27a because they include aspects of sacrificial ritual system in food, in drink, and re-

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<sup>133</sup>NKJV.

<sup>134</sup>For a detailed analysis of these verses see R. Ouro, “The Chiasmic Structure of Ephesians 2:11–22,” *Enfoques* 9/2 (1997): 38–49 (Spanish).

<sup>135</sup>NKJV.



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garding festivals of the OT prescribed by the laws of Moses. The religious activities listed in verse 16 are similar in order and content to those mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures, where the sacrifices and festivals of the ceremonial law are set forth.<sup>136</sup>

Both the larger context and the immediate context strongly suggest that Paul was referring primarily to the festivals and ordinances of the ceremonial law. Throughout Colossians 1 and in the early part of chapter 2 Paul extols Christ as the Son of God, the Creator, the One who deserves worship and honor, the One who provides forgiveness and redemption, the One all should accept as Lord. He emphasizes one of his favorite themes—that to be “in Christ” is the *summum bonum* of religious experience. He sets forth Christ as the One who on the cross reconciled the world to God, the One who is Head of the church. Paul is determined to make clear that only that faith which focuses on Christ is of value. Neither thrones, dominions, principalities, nor powers (1:16 and 2:15) are to be feared or venerated, for they are under the authority of Christ, having been created by Him. Thus, while the immediate context of verse 16 speaks of the complete forgiveness offered by Christ to believers (verses 13, 14), the larger context, the main theme of Paul’s message, is the greatness of Christ and the importance of being “in Him,” adhering to His teachings and recognizing that circumcision and ceremonial meats, drinks, holy days, new moons, and sabbaths have no value for salvation.

Logically, then, Paul would have set forth the truth that to perform ceremonial rites as a means of salvation was not only futile but an implicit denial of the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, the One who, by fulfilling the types, made them meaningless. And to help the Colossians identify the parts of the Torah that no longer were binding, he mentioned several rituals and festivals prescribed in the sacrificial and ceremonial law.

Verse 17 is the key to the passage, inasmuch as it identifies the nature of “the handwriting of requirements.” According to this verse, “the handwriting of requirements” dealt with the sacrificial and ceremonial system. In other words, the apostle Paul is speaking of typical eating/drinking—such as the Passover meal, the typical feasts/festivals and new moon feasts, and the seven annual ceremonial sabbaths (see Lev 23).<sup>137</sup> All these items had their part in the system to foreshadow the coming Messiah and aspects of His death and priesthood.

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<sup>136</sup> See for instance, Ezek 45:17; 2 Chron 2:4; 8:13; Hosea 2:11.

<sup>137</sup> The Adventist historic position on Col 2:16 is that the “sabbath days” mentioned in this verse are festival sabbaths prescribed by the laws of Moses (Lev 23:32, 37–39), not the seventh-day Sabbath of the fourth commandment of the Decalogue. Among the references in Adventist literature that discuss Col 2:16 see: W. H. Branson, *Drama of the Ages* (Nashville, TN: 1950); E. Hilgert, “‘Sabbath Days’ in Colossians 2:16,” *Ministry*, February 1952, 42–43; W. E. Howell, “‘Sabbath’ in Colossians 2:16,” *Ministry*, September 1934, 10; id., “Anent Colossians 2:16,” *Ministry*, April 1936: 18; A. E. Lickey, *God Speaks to Modern Man* (Washington, DC: 1952); F. D. Nichol, *Answers to Objections* (Washington, DC: 1932); id., *Problems in Bible Translation* (Washington, DC: 1954); id., *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: 1957), 7:205–6; K. A. Strand

### *OURO: DANIEL 9:27A: A KEY FOR UNDERSTANDING THE LAW'S END*

The key word in the passage, the word that argues strongly that the law of verse 16 is sacrificial and ceremonial law, is *skia* (“shadow”) a word used in a similar way in Hebrews 8:5 and 10:1. Paul says that the meat, drink, holy days, new moons, and sabbath days “are a shadow [*skia*] of things to come . . . the substance is Christ” (Col 2:17). A shadow ends when it reaches the reality. Thus “shadow” describes well the various elements of the sacrificial and ceremonial law, including the annual sabbaths, for they pointed forward to Christ as the reality.

The Colossians and the community of believers apparently understood that Paul was speaking of the rites and ceremonies connected with the Jewish faith. They understood him to mean that the cross abolished the ritual sacrifices, festivals, regulations involving meats and drinks, ceremonial sabbaths, special days governed by the new moon, and even the ceremonies that had been performed on the seventh-day Sabbath—for example, the daily burnt offering was doubled on that day.<sup>138</sup>

These two Pauline passages (Eph 2:13–16; Col 2:14–17) plainly teach that the sacrificial and ceremonial system of Israel (which included all the rituals, festivals, and feasts that centered in the sanctuary-temple) was abolished and blotted out by the atoning death of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we think that Dan 9:27a is a prophetic, exegetical, and theological key to explaining the law’s end in the NT.

**Eschatology.** The text of Dan 9:27a is also imbued with eschatology. The idea of an *eschaton* is explicitly indicated at the last step or stage of the prophecy in the term *yašbîṭ* (“cause to cease [bring an end]”) In addition, the numbering in weeks (1 and 1/2), and the word *šābûaʿ* (“week”) give strong support to this eschatological idea by the time element of the prophecy.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis that we have carried out of the antithetical chiasmic structure of Dan 9:27a, we have shown the structural, literary, and linguistic unity of the microsections of this text. Also, we have shown by means of an exegetical and theological study that this verse is key to explaining and understanding the end of the typologically significant laws of the system of ritual sacrifice in the NT.

As we have seen, the study of the text and context of Dan 9:27a and of the most important Hebrew terms—*higbîr* (“he shall confirm [make strong]”), *bʿrît* (“covenant”), *šābûaʿ* (“week”), *zēbaḥ* (“sacrifice”), *minḥâ* (“offering”), and *yašbîṭ* (“he shall bring an end”)—indicates that the Messiah’s prophetic mission would be putting an end, in the middle of the week, to the OT system of sacri-

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(ed.), *The Sabbath in Scripture and History* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 338–42; M. C. Wilcox, *Questions and Answers* (Mountain View, CA: 1911); id., *Questions Answered* (Mountain View, CA: 1938).

<sup>138</sup>Num 28:3–10.

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fices and offerings. Therefore, this text is key to understanding such NT texts as Eph 2:13–16 and Col 2:14–17 and how the typological law was abolished by the Messiah, that is to say, Jesus Christ, in the NT. Even though at stake in Christ's mission of salvation and obedience was another law besides the abolished law regarding sacrifices and offerings, the law regarding the ritual system of sacrifices of animals was now replaced by Christ's atoning sacrifice by means of His blood and death on the cross.

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