



**Issues, Etc.**<sup>TM</sup>  
*Christ-Centered Cross-Focused Talk Radio*

## TRANSCRIPT

*Rev. Todd Wilken, Host*

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### "The 70 Weeks in Daniel 9"

**Guest:**

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**AUDIO CLIP:** How can you, assuming you're somebody in Judea, see this going on? How do you see that? On CNN. [Laughter from crowd] And I'm not being facetious. In other words, this is a major political event that happens in the holy of holies, inside the holy place, inside the temple – that's how we know there will be a temple standing for this to happen.

**WILKEN:** Well, that's Bible teacher Chuck Missler talking about "the abomination of desolation," a phrase that comes from Daniel chapter 9 in the famous 70 weeks passages that are, well, difficult to

understand, difficult to sort out, and many have tried, Chuck Missler among them, many others. Some believe that it is the End Times scenario. It is basically kind of the "game plan" for the rise of the anti-Christ. Is that how we ought to be reading these cryptic passages in Daniel chapter 9, the 70 weeks there in that chapter of Daniel's book in the Old Testament?

Greetings and welcome to *Issues, Etc.* I'm Todd Wilken. Thanks for tuning us in. Our guest for the next hour to talk about the 70 weeks in Daniel chapter 9: Dr. Andrew Steinmann. He's Professor of Theology at

Concordia University—Chicago and author of the Concordia Commentary on Daniel. Dr. Steinmann, welcome back.

**STEINMANN:** Nice to be back with you, Todd.

**WILKEN:** First of all, why in the world doesn't God just come out and say in Daniel chapter 9, "This is how it's going to go" – whatever He's referring to. Why the cryptic language? Why the veiled references to things that are difficult to put your finger on?

**STEINMANN:** Well, I think this is done for several reasons. I mean we're not told; so we can only speculate. But I think there are several reasons. One is: He's revealing things to Daniel about what for Daniel are the distant future. This is four hundred plus years away if we just talk about the parts that are fulfilled in Christ. It's hard to tell somebody what it's going to be like four hundred years from now without using language that appears cryptic. How can you describe.... You know, if you could get in a time machine and go back four hundred years to sixteen hundred something and describe to somebody there microwave ovens and automobiles and all the internet stuff we have, it would be very difficult without trying to use their language but it's going to end up being kind of cryptic to them. So I think just the distance in time in itself demands some of that.

But more importantly I think God uses this type of language both to catch our attention and to keep us from being too focused on the wrong things. I mean, that clip you played at the beginning I think is a good illustration of this. People want to focus on all kinds of other things, like the time when this is going to be fulfilled, as if we can set our watches or mark our calendars, and that's the most important thing. What God wants us to focus on here, as He wants us to focus on everywhere in Scripture, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And if He gives just kind of "This is what's going to happen in

the future" in a kind of a calendar sense, we have a tendency anyway to go to that, because we kind of are uncertain and our sinful flesh wants to kind of have certainties other than the certainties we have in the Gospel. And so I think part of this is to catch our attention and try to focus us on the Gospel. Of course our sinful flesh always gets in the way of that.

**WILKEN:** Well, the passage in question begins, and it has a lot in itself in just this one verse, "Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place" (Daniel 9:24). That's just the first verse, and one wonders, aside from the seventy weeks – we'll get to that – what does this refer to, Dr. Steinmann?

**STEINMANN:** Well, I think that's the key to really understanding this passage. In various ways this first verse tells us what this is all about: to put an end to sin, to bring in righteousness, and I would, by the way, translate that "to anoint a most holy *One*." I don't think it's talking about the holy place in the temple, but the most holy *One*. And, of course, the Anointed One in Greek is "Christ" and Hebrew, "Messiah." This is about the coming of Christ and what He accomplishes in His redemption. This is a prophecy centered on Jesus and His work, not a prophecy centered on apocalyptic things that people see nowadays, but it's an apocalypse about the coming of Jesus and His work to bring an end to sin through His death and resurrection.

I think one of the interesting things noted there is it says, "to seal up prophecies," and that's going to come to an end. I think it's interesting to note that in the New Testament prophecy is really rare. You have it in the early church in a couple of instances, but by the time you get to the end

of the book of Acts, prophecy is not happening anymore. And although there have been Christians who have claimed to be prophets from time to time, what this is really talking about is sealing up the prophets who pointed forward to Christ. That no longer has to happen anymore. John the Baptist is the last one who points forward to Christ because Christ comes. And so we don't have prophecies pointing forward to the coming of the Messiah anymore. And I think this is exactly what Daniel is talking about that this all culminates in the coming of Jesus, and this is a prophecy about what happens in and around the time of Jesus and His ministry.

**WILKEN:** So contrary to what virtually everyone who writes popularly on this – Chuck Missler and all the others – contrary to that, this refers primarily to the Christ and not to the anti-Christ?

**STEINMANN:** Exactly. And I think the idea of bringing this into talking about the anti-Christ is to miss the point. It's to twist it to fit other things in the New Testament which it was never intended to fit. Now the New Testament, I think, itself is not trying to say this is fulfilling Daniel chapter 9 at all. And so I think it's actually a misuse of certain New Testament motifs by imposing them back on Daniel 9 for various motives.

**WILKEN:** Okay, then were going to have to rethink this pretty much entirely and dispense with all the other timelines that are spun out of these seventy weeks. Can you help us understand the motif here, if you would: seventy weeks. Is there anything like this elsewhere in Scripture to which we can kind of point and say, "All right, we at least kind of know the lay of the land"?

**STEINMANN:** Yeah, there are other visions, and what confuses the whole matter is, of course, the book of Revelation picks up a lot of the imagery of Daniel and reuses it. But the question of whether it's actually talking about Daniel or reusing the imagery of

Daniel is an important distinction. So, I mean, yeah, Revelation uses language like this and it's specifically based on Daniel. But if we look at things in Daniel's day, we can see that Old Testament prophets did some similar types of things at times where they would talk about the future in highly symbolic and figurative terms. And so we can see the prophets talking about the coming of the Gospel and in figurative terms they talk about, for instance, all Gentiles coming to Jerusalem, not meaning that all Gentiles physically would get to Jerusalem, all Gentile believers. If that would ever happen, there'd not be enough room in Jerusalem. But of course it's a figure of speech talking about how in faith we come to Christ. The major things in His ministry happened in and around Jerusalem, right? His crucifixion, His resurrection. And so they will talk in figurative terms like this. Now of course they won't use the term seventy weeks that we have here in Daniel, which is, of course, a starting out point for people trying to do some type of calculated timeline. But nevertheless they will use figurative language like this to talk about the New Testament era. They will talk about creation rejoicing at what God's going to do when He redeems the world. And they'll talk about things like hills clapping their hands, which very clearly has to be figurative language. And so when we look at Daniel in this prophecy, we should be alert to the fact that the prophets often times use language that is mixed in with figures of speech, that is not meant to be taken literally – literally, for instance, with the hills clapping their hands like the hills are going to sprout hands and start clapping. But of course intended to be understood as a literary device to make vivid the message that the prophet has received from God.

**WILKEN:** Well, when we come back from the break, we'll continue our conversation, for this entire hour, by the way, on this Friday afternoon, March 12, with Dr. Andrew Steinmann, talking about the seventy weeks

in Daniel chapter 9, trying to sort them out. When we come back we'll talk about the context in which Daniel received this vision. Does it help us understand the vision itself? And then we have one week, we have sixty-two weeks, we start adding them all up. If it is all centered on Christ, if these seventy weeks really are about Christ's ministry, His saving work, His death, His resurrection, the atonement for our sins, and not about the anti-Christ, if they are about events that have already happened, that Christ has already brought to pass and fulfilled, then maybe there's more comfort in the seventy weeks that I first thought. Usually if you read it the way that the popular teachers read it, it'll scare the heck out of you. "Here comes the anti-Christ!" they say, rather than, "Here comes Christ." Be right back.

**[BREAK]**

**WILKEN:** Welcome back to *Issues, Etc.* We're talking about the 70 weeks in Daniel chapter 9. Dr. Andrew Steinmann is our guest on this Friday afternoon, March 12. He's Professor of Theology at Concordia University—Chicago and author of the Concordia Commentary on the book of Daniel.

We kind of sorted out the main direction of this vision that Daniel has. What is the context in which Daniel receives this vision and does it help in any way to understand what's being revealed?

**STEINMANN:** Yeah, I think it is a tremendous help. The ninth chapter of Daniel takes place I believe in the reign of Cyrus the Great. I believe that's who's referred to as Darius the Mede here in the first verse of the chapter. And this is right after Babylon has fallen to Cyrus. Now Daniel has read the book of Jeremiah. In fact, he tells us he's reading the book of Jeremiah and he sees that Jeremiah prophesied that the Babylonian captivity would happen for 70 years. He realizes it's been about 70 years. He's an old man. He

was taken into captivity early on. He realizes: "It's about time for Jeremiah's prophecy to come true." And so the first part of the chapter is a long prayer to God about God and His promise to forgive His people and bring them back to Jerusalem as prophesied by Jeremiah. And so he has this long prayer where he confesses his sin and the sins of his people and asks God to remember His promise to forgive them. And so he's thinking, you know, this is about the time this is going to happen and this is what prompts him to pray. And he's thinking about Jeremiah's prophecy.

Now the interesting thing about Jeremiah's prophecy is: the restoration of Jerusalem is linked, especially in Jeremiah 31 – and I think this is a key passage in Jeremiah – is linked with the new covenant that God will make with His people. "The days are coming when I will make a new covenant," Jeremiah prophesies for God, "not like the old covenant when I took them out of Egypt, but the new covenant where I will forgive their sins and remember iniquities no more." (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-34) And Jeremiah has promised this, and Daniel is looking forward to this time that Jeremiah prophesied of the new covenant that, of course, we know was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. I think it's no accident that Jesus mirrors the words of Jeremiah 31 when He institutes the Lord's Supper on the night when He was betrayed, and He says, "This cup is the new covenant, or testament, in My blood." He's very clearly saying, "What I'm about to do here in instituting the Lord's Supper and then going to My death on the cross and My resurrection is to fulfill that prophecy of Jeremiah."

And so put in that context with Daniel having read Jeremiah, had read about the 70 years, knowing what Jeremiah prophesied in Jeremiah 31, he wants to see the people restored to Jerusalem precisely because of the Messianic hope that he has. This is all about the Messianic hope when

he's praying God to forgive His people, because he knows that this part of God's plan to bring forth the redemption of the world as Jeremiah revealed it.

As he prays this God sends him this vision from the angel Gabriel who comes to him and reveals this prophecy of the 70 weeks. And so the prophecy of 70 weeks is a response to his prayer about the restoration of Jerusalem and the coming of the Messiah that's implicit in everything that Daniel prays.

**WILKEN:** The 70 weeks themselves seem to be broken up into 7, 62, and then two halves of one week, making the last week, which would come out to 70 full weeks. The first seven weeks, it is said – and here we're in verse 25 of Daniel 9 – “Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks.” Now is he saying here, when Jerusalem, proximate here in time to Daniel, people returning to Jerusalem after exile, when Jerusalem begins to be rebuilt, when the decree is made to rebuild, a certain period of time is going to pass until Christ's coming and it is symbolized by seven weeks? Is that as simple as it is here?

**STEINMANN:** Well, no, not quite, because he says seven weeks and 62 weeks. And so I think it's actually the total is 69 most of the period of time before Christ comes. And the first seven weeks he goes on to describe as Jerusalem being rebuilt. And so I think the first seven weeks are the rebuilding of Jerusalem, this period of time it will take until Jerusalem is restored as a whole city. And then the 62 weeks are between that period of time and the coming of Christ. And so the seven weeks I would say probably terminate with the rebuilding activity of Nehemiah. Cyrus issues the decree: “Go back, you can go back to Jerusalem, especially rebuild the temple.” And any

prominent city in the ancient near east had a temple in it. You know, rebuilding the temple is tantamount to rebuilding the city because it has to have people living around it to support the temple and so the city's going to be rebuilt too. So the going forth of the decree, I believe, is Cyrus' decree in 538 B.C. – the Jews can go back. And as we read in the book of Ezra, they do go back. Eventually they get the temple rebuilt. Ezra eventually returns, and about 13 years after that Nehemiah comes back and kind of completes the process of making Jerusalem a whole city by building the walls around the city again. And so I believe that's the seven weeks that are symbolized here.

**WILKEN:** And it seems obvious, but if you add up years, actual chronological, calendar years, you're not going to get a multiple of seven. It's not going to be that easy to say, “Ah, he's talking here about something like, you know, 449 years,” or something along those lines.

**STEINMANN:** Right. Yeah. It's symbolic, and this is, I think, one of the mistakes that many of the popular writers make, is they think they can get some kind of formula that you multiply, you know, seven weeks, each week is seven years and so seven times seven would give you 49, for instance, years, or some formula like that. The problem is, understanding exactly what's being revealed to Daniel and how it's revealed. And I think it's interesting that this is called “70 weeks,” and the periods within it are called “weeks,” but we're never told what the “weeks” are equated to. We're not told weeks of years. That in itself should make us a little cautious about doing any kind of equation math as if this is some type of algebraic formula.

And we should also note that, you know, this isn't the first time in the book of Daniel that numbers have been used symbolically. For instance, when Daniel and his buddies, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, in

chapter 1 are found to be “seven times” more intelligent than their contemporaries who are also being trained in Babylon with them. It doesn’t mean that they gave them the SAT and they scored seven times more points on the SAT than the other guys. It’s obviously a figure of speech. Later on, with the famous story of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego in the fiery furnace (cf. Daniel 3), before they’re thrown in the fiery furnace Nebuchadnezzar says, “Heat the furnace ten times hotter than normal.” Well, again, we shouldn’t think that they were doing some type of modern thermal dynamics and they were testing the heat in the furnace and it was, you know, ten times hotter. It’s a figure of speech to say, “Make it as hot as possible.”

So Daniel already has recorded times when numbers were used symbolically, and the fact that he doesn’t say “seven weeks of years” or something like that should clue us off, especially later on in the book in chapter 10, when he talks about a week and then he specifically says, “a week of days.” So we know we’re talking about a normal week again. He can do that when he wants us to know that he’s talking about literal periods of time. Here he doesn’t do it, and I think that is a huge clue that is often overlooked by popular writers on this chapter.

**WILKEN:** So what do we make of the – I mean how do we parse the numbers. We have seven that is implied in the term week – that would be seven days. We have seven weeks. We have a multiple there of ten. Those seem to be the primary numbers that are working here. How would you parse – we’ve only got about a minute and a half before we take a break – parse the symbolism of seven and ten?

**STEINMANN:** Well, seven is built off, of course, God’s creation. He completes everything in seven days. I think that’s the reason that seven is used here. And the ten is often used for completion, as we’ve

already talked about, or the ultimate, just as we saw with Nebuchadnezzar. And so the reason seventy, I think, is probably chosen here is God is recreating, as it were, Jerusalem. This is the complete time for the rest of Jerusalem’s history and what He’s really intent on recreating, of course, is not the city of Jerusalem, but recreating a people who have fallen into sin and then making them a new creation through the work of Jesus Christ. And so, again, this symbolism kind of leads us back to Jesus.

**WILKEN:** Dr. Andrew Steinmann is our guest on this Friday afternoon, the 12<sup>th</sup> of March. We’re talking about the 70 weeks in Daniel chapter 9, sorting them out, and showing how they really are, in fact, a prophecy pertaining to Christ, the sum and substance of all Biblical prophecy, and they are, in fact, both Christ-centered and cross-focused. More on Daniel chapter 9 after this.

**[BREAK]**

**AUDIO CLIP:** The rapture precedes the tribulation. How do we know? From 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. The seventh week is defined by covenant and enforced by a world leader. That’s defined. The great tribulation is the last half of that week. The leader cannot be revealed until after the rapture according to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, and let me show you that.

**WILKEN:** That again is Chuck Missler, Bible teacher, parsing out the 70 weeks, the last weeks of the 70 weeks in Daniel chapter 9 and putting at its center the anti-Christ, not in fact the Christ. Now you see how wrong you can go if you misinterpret something like the 70 weeks in Daniel chapter 9. I’m Todd Wilken. This is *Issues, Etc.* Dr. Andrew Steinmann is our guest. We’re trying to read these things in a Christ-centered and cross-focused way instead. Dr. Steinmann is Professor of Theology at Concordia University—Chicago, author of the Concordia Commentary on Daniel.

Dr. Steinmann, let's go to, let's see, verse 26, and this is after the 62 weeks plus the seven weeks, so this would be, if I'm correct and doing my math correctly, the 69<sup>th</sup> week. It says in verse 26: "And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed." Here the navigation gets a little difficult. Who's who?

**STEINMANN:** Yeah. Well, the "anointed one." The Hebrew word for this is "Messiah." This is the Messiah, the Christ. After the 69 weeks Christ will be cut off. This is a prophecy relating to, of course, the death and eventual resurrection three days later of Jesus. What's interesting here is the translation you read, which is very common in English translations. I'm going to get a little technical on your audience here, and I'm going to try to take it slow and hope they can follow.

I would translate the next sentence as "both the city and the holy place will be destroyed with the leader who is coming." It's a little bit different than what you read, and the reason for that difference has to do with the vowels in Hebrew. Originally, Hebrew, and this includes Daniel's day, was written without any signs for vowels; they only wrote the consonants. For most Hebrew they still do this today. In newspapers in Israel – you pick up a newspaper – all they write is the consonants. For most Hebrew that's never a problem, or seldom a problem, because of context and everything else and the vowel patterns that we have in Hebrew. A good Hebrew speaker, Hebrew reader, knows what vowels to fill in. And, in fact, I even try to teach my students, if they take a second year of Hebrew with me, how to read ancient Hebrew that we have, came down to us, without any vowels in it.

The question is: what vowels do you put in? Well, some manuscripts read, many manuscripts read the way the translation you read reads. But some manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible have a different set of vowels that read the way I had them read. And I believe this is the way that they were intended to be read. Keep in mind the vowels are not part of the inspired text. The vowel marks that we now have in the text are not part of the inspired text, because Daniel would have not written them.

So I think what he's saying is the city and the holy place will be destroyed with the leader who is coming. And I understand the leader here to be another word – leader or prince – to be another word for the Messiah. When the Messiah comes, He's the prince, because He's of course from the royal line of David. He's coming and, it said, will be with a flood. This is the flood, figuratively speaking, of Roman troops that's going to come and destroy Jerusalem, A.D. 70. And we're told until the end, that is, until the end of the city, there's going to be wars and desolations have been determined. This, of course, is the word that comes up later in this phrase "abomination of desolation."

Now I think it's interesting here. This verse and, of course, in the next verse, the last verse in the chapter, talk about in some ways Jerusalem being destroyed. And we would note that Jesus during the week before His crucifixion is in the temple, and when He leaves the temple He tells the disciples, "Not one stone is going to be left here upon another." He's picking up on this desolation that Daniel talks about. And He goes out on the Mt. of Olives and His disciples say, "Explain this to us." And He talks about the "abomination of desolation as spoken of by the prophet Daniel." And when you see this happening, He says to His disciples, get out of Jerusalem. Now it's interesting, in Luke, which is written for a Gentile audience, He doesn't say, "When you see the abomination of desolation."

Luke interprets Jesus' words for his reader, and He says in the parallel in Luke, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies" (cf. Luke 21:20) And of course this happens in A.D. 70 when the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea rebel against the Romans, and the Romans come up and besiege the city of Jerusalem, and in A.D. 70 it falls to the troops of Titus who would become Roman emperor. And so Jesus is prophesying. Things are going to happen within four years of His crucifixion – not things are going to happen with the anti-Christ. He's the leader here that is coming and that will be cut off and have nothing, because His own people are going to reject Him here and have nothing among them. But of course He has something among those who believe, but politically speaking Jesus is kind of a nothing with His crucifixion. He has no power in Jerusalem in a political sense anymore. He's not part of the rest of the city's history. It's going to be destroyed in 40 years. Instead, His mission is to do something else, and that's described in the next verse.

**WILKEN:** Is this tied in with, again, another event near the end of Jesus' ministry, edging up toward His sacrificial death on the cross, where He mourns over Jerusalem and says, "Look," in essence, kind of from the divine perspective, "how many times have I called you to repent and you remain rebellious, so your house is left to you desolate?" (cf. Matthew 23:37-39)

**STEINMANN:** That's exactly what it's referring to. You know, "I wanted to gather you together like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not. And so your house is left desolate." This is exactly what He's talking about. He's reaffirming what Daniel prophesied, and as He's looking to Jerusalem, as He's looking to His suffering and death and knowing what is coming, and He's mourning over Jerusalem because, you know, Jerusalem had every advantage. The Jews in Jerusalem had

every advantage. They had the prophecy of all the prophets, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, all the Old Testament prophets. They should have been aware of what was coming, and they reject the Christ when He comes. And, unfortunately, Jesus knows that the prophecy of Daniel is going to be fulfilled and it is not going to happen way later, 2000 years later. He's talking about what's going to happen within a lifetime of His crucifixion.

**WILKEN:** So, I'm seeing something here that I don't think I've seen before. Or perhaps I saw it before but I've forgotten. And that is, as a matter of history the crucifixion of Jesus at Jerusalem seals the fate of Jerusalem as a city, literally seals the fate of that city.

**STEINMANN:** Yes, and it seals the fate of that city as a place where the temple of God is. The temple of God is destroyed in A.D. 70, and then the Romans have to conquer Jerusalem twice. Again in A.D. 135 the Roman emperor Hadrian conquers it, and at that point he kicks all the Jews out of the city and forbids them to come in. And on the site of the temple he sets up worship to Jupiter instead of to Israel's God. It's the end of sacrifice. One of the things that's going to be stopped here, according to Daniel's prophecy, is "no more sacrifice." The sacrifices that are on the altar in Jerusalem are done with the crucifixion as far as God's concerned. They may sew up the curtain in the temple that was torn in two and they may go on offering sacrifices, but as far as God's concerned *the* sacrifice that all those sacrifices in Jerusalem in the Old Testament were pointing to has been done, and there is no more sacrifice. And to ensure that the temple's going to be wiped out within a lifetime.

**WILKEN:** With only one minute, reading this as something that has yet to take place, with an emphasis on the anti-Christ, it strikes me here there's just absolute



confusion. You have to start making stuff up to fit what will happen according to that reading of Daniel chapter 9, don't you?

**STEINMANN:** Yeah, you have to make up all kinds of things, and you have to start twisting passages in the New Testament. That clip about Hal Lindsey and the rapture and so forth—that involves twisting all kinds of passages in the New Testament to kind of make them fit. It's kind of like you have a jigsaw puzzle you're trying to put it together, the pieces don't fit, you get out your scissors and cut the pieces to make them fit into where you want, and, of course, then you're left with left over pieces that don't quite fit. Instead of they all fit together in Jesus Christ.

**WILKEN:** Dr. Andrew Steinmann is our guest. When we come back, verse 27, which is a toughie in and of itself, talking there about two half weeks, obviously symbolic language, and a strong covenant, and then of course, the phrase for which this chapter is best known: “the abomination that makes desolation” or “the abomination of desolation” or “an abomination.” Is it a person, is it a thing, who makes desolate? That's a toughie. We'll find out more about that on the other side of the break. Dr. Andrew Steinmann is our guest. This is *Issues, Etc.* I'm Todd Wilken. It's Friday, March 12.

**[BREAK]**

**WILKEN:** Welcome back. Ten more minutes with Dr. Andrew Steinmann, talking about the 70 weeks in Daniel chapter 9 on this Friday afternoon. Dr. Steinmann, verse 27 is probably the toughest and I imagine that if you're reading it outside of a Christ-centered interpretation it becomes downright scary to read something like this. So first question on v. 27: It says, “And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week.” Before we get to the one week and the half of weeks or any of that kind of stuff, who's “he”?

**STEINMANN:** I believe “he” here is the leader, the Messiah that we've been talking about all along, that this is Jesus. If you'll remember when we talked earlier about putting this in the right context, Jeremiah is the basis of Daniel's prayer and the basis of Gabriel's answer to his prayer, and Jeremiah 31 and the new covenant. This is Jesus confirming the new covenant on the night when He was betrayed, when He brings us the Lord's Supper, His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins, when He goes to the cross to seal that covenant in His blood, and when rises again from the dead to make that covenant effective for all people who trust in Him. That's what is being talked about here. It's the same thing Jeremiah prophesied about 70 years earlier.

**WILKEN:** So He makes a strong covenant. This would be the covenant of which Jesus explicitly talks, the covenant in His blood “with many for one week.” And then it's broken down into half weeks. So why does it refer to that, a covenant for one week?

**STEINMANN:** Well, what he's really saying is this covenant comes. Jerusalem's going to be around for a period of time after that. It's only one week now, though. We've got 69 of the 70. There's not much left for Jerusalem. The many of course are many who believe in Him, starting first with, of course, Jews. All the early Christians in the early chapters of book of Acts until we get to bringing in Samaritans are Christians. He confirms the covenant with many, first among His own people, then among the Samaritans, and then to all the ends of the earth, as we read in Acts chapter 1. This is what's going on, and this covenant is confirmed during this “one week” as the Gospel spreads throughout the ancient world, through the Roman Empire, very rapidly as we read in the book of Acts. And you know this book of Acts will close before this “one week” is over, and by that time the Gospel's already reached to Rome itself. So this is the confirming of the covenant during

this “last week” of Jerusalem’s history as far as God’s concerned, His history of dealing with it as the holy city. And now we of course look for the new Jerusalem instead.

**WILKEN:** So is this one week that’s referred to here then broken down into half weeks so we understand in a little more detail what’s going on?

**STEINMANN:** Yeah. We’re told in the middle of the week “sacrifice and offering will cease.” Well, the middle of the week is A.D. 70. Titus the Roman general and later emperor comes. His troops besiege Jerusalem. They destroy the temple. All this is related to us by the ancient Jewish historian, Josephus. They destroy the temple in the middle of the week. Okay. So that’s kind of half way through the end of Jerusalem’s history.

And then we’re told that a desolator will come until it’s end is poured out. And, of course, the second half of the week leads to another rebellion. Around the year 130, a Messianic pretender among the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea arises. His name was Simon bar Kozibah. One of the famous ancient rabbis declares him to be the Messiah, and they change his name as a play on words from bar Kozibah, son of a man named Kozibah, to bar Kokba, son of the star, referring to Balaam’s prophecy about a star arising from Judah. And so here Simon is supposed to be a rising of the Messiah, and he leads another rebellion against Rome. And once again the Roman troops come in, and in A.D. 135 the Roman emperor Hadrian comes in, conquers Jerusalem, razes everything and, as I mentioned earlier, on the former site of the temple, which hadn’t been around since Titus destroyed it 65 years earlier, he sets up worship of the pagan god Jupiter, the Roman god. He renames Jerusalem “Alia Capitalina,” which is “in honor of Jupiter.” He forbids Jews from being in Jerusalem, and they’re expelled from the city. This is,

you know, the end of the 70 weeks now, when Hadrian comes in. And until relatively recent times Jerusalem was *not* primarily a Jewish city. And, of course, even with the Jews coming back there’s no temple even though there’s lots of agitation among Evangelicals who misread this part of Daniel as if there’s going to be a new temple or something like that. It’s never happened, and if it ever did, boy, I can’t imagine the war that breaks out between Jews and the Muslim nations around, because of course there are holy Muslim sites in the city of Jerusalem nowadays too. It’s not what is being prophesied here. That all ended in A.D. 135.

**WILKEN:** On that point of the insistence among those who misread Daniel chapter 9 and many other passages of Scripture so as to exclude Christ and put Israel at the center of Biblical prophecy instead, the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, you talked about the political ramifications of what it would mean. There are Christians who actually think that it’s a good idea that the temple be rebuilt and that sacrifices be reinstated. What are they failing to understand, both about Daniel chapter 9 and about Christ Himself?

**STEINMANN:** They’re failing to understand the new covenant that Jeremiah prophesied and Daniel prophesies here in this chapter. The new covenant is ushered in with Jesus and it’s not like the old covenant. Jeremiah is absolutely clear on that. The old covenant had sacrifices. And if you read the book of Hebrews, the writer to the Hebrews makes this clear. The old covenant had sacrifices; it had a priesthood; the priest had to offer sacrifice for his own sins before he could offer sacrifice for the sins of the people on the Day of Atonement. This happened, every year in the Old Testament. But with the coming of Christ, Christ has sacrificed Himself once for all. There’s no need for more sacrifices. The writer to the Hebrews in the New Testament makes this clear, and

the prophets in the Old Testament, when they prophesy the coming of the Messiah, make this absolutely clear. And Jeremiah couldn't be clearer on this. It's not like the old covenant.

Instead, through the sacrifice of Christ all sacrifices nowadays are useless and worthless, because those sacrifices in the Old Testament merely pointed forward to Christ. They were the Old Testament sacrifices by which the forgiveness of sins in the coming Savior was applied to the Old Testament people. In the New Testament we don't need those sacrifices anymore, because we have the New Testament sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper to apply the forgiveness of sins to us. We don't need any of that in the old covenant, which was good and pointed the people forward to Christ, but now we have things that point us back to Christ and His sacrifice as we await His coming again.

**WILKEN:** Then, finally, with only about 20 seconds, what comfort can we find reading this as Christ-centered and cross-focused in these confusing passages of the 70 weeks in Daniel chapter 9? About 20 seconds.

**STEINMANN:** The main comfort is exactly where we started. With all these things that Jesus has accomplished, which are done and we can rely on. He has sealed up sin, He has taken care of transgressions, He has brought in righteousness and declared us righteous through His blood, and we get the comfort of knowing that God has accomplished that, it is a done fact, and no matter what happens in the rest of the

history of the world nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

**WILKEN:** Dr. Andrew Steinmann is Professor of Theology at Concordia University—Chicago. He's author of the Concordia Commentary on Daniel. Thank you very much for being our guest.

**STEINMANN:** Thank you, Todd.

**WILKEN:** So, here is, finally, a clear way to understand this confusing set of verses. What is the key to unlocking these cryptic passages that still leave some questions unanswered? Christ Himself. And should that surprise us at all? For Christ is the key to understanding all of Scripture. For as He Himself said, "These Scriptures testify of Me." When Daniel saw this vision, heard this revelation from God there in chapter 9, he was anticipating and waiting for, not just the restoration of a people or a city or a temple; he was waiting for real, final restoration of God's people in Christ, in a new temple, the temple of Christ's body, in a new sacrifice to end all sacrifices, the one He made with His body at the cross, bearing our sins, finally putting an end to them, declaring us to be righteous. That's what Daniel was hoping for. And we live on the other side of that event prophesied by Daniel. But the comfort is undiminished for us, because what Christ has accomplished, He has accomplished for us, for Daniel, for everyone in between and for everyone yet to come. He's the Savior of the whole world. I'm Todd Wilken. Talk with you again Monday. Thanks for listening to *Issues, Etc.*

