

Excerpts of Archived Lecture:

The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9: 24-27

by Phil Roberts

In the aftermath of the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C., Daniel, who had lived through the entire captivity, began to reflect on Jeremiah's prophecy that the Jews would serve the king of Babylon for seventy years (Jer. 25:11). Perceiving that the seventy years was nearly up, and that Babylon had already fallen to Cyrus and the Persians, Daniel prayed that God would remember his covenant and restore his people to their land. As he was praying, the angel Gabriel was sent to him with this message:

(24) "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy *place*.

(25) "So, you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

(26) "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

(27) "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate." (Dan. 9:24-27, NASV)

Though the grammar is difficult and many details are obscure, the gist of this answer to Daniel's prayer is clear: God is about to begin a new age for his people. It will be seventy "weeks" in duration (probably to be understood as **weeks of years**, or 490 years) and will see not only the restoration of the temple and the city of Jerusalem but also forgiveness of sin, the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, the sealing up of vision and prophecy, and the anointing of the most holy. Moreover, near the end of this period, the Messiah will appear. But he will be rejected and desolation will follow, resulting once again in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

Montgomery refers to the history of the interpretation of this passage as the “dismal swamp” of OT criticism (Young, *Daniel*, 191). But four major approaches to the passage have emerged, and most of the remaining multitude of interpretations are but variations on one of these four. They are as follows:

1. *The Traditional Messianic Interpretation.* According to this view, the 490 years are symbolic but generally correspond to the period extending from the time of Daniel down through the first coming of Christ. The “decree to restore and rebuild the city of Jerusalem” (v. 25) is equated with the decree of Cyrus in 539/8 B.C. permitting the Jews to return to their homes and marks the beginning of the 490 years. The first seven weeks will see the rebuilding of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. The sixty-ninth week (seven weeks plus sixty-two weeks) ends with the coming of Jesus as the Messiah. The end of the seventieth week is identified with some NT event that marks a rejection of the Jewish people—usually the stoning of Stephen or the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. This interpretation is held by many amillennialists and some historic premillennialists. E.J. Young is an excellent representative of this approach.

2. *The Church Age Interpretation.* According to this view, the 490 years are entirely symbolic. The first seven weeks refer to the period from the decree of Cyrus to the first coming of Christ. The sixty-two weeks refer to the present church age. The seventieth week refers to the period just before the final judgment. Some variation of this view has been held by both amillennialists and historic premillennialists. C. F. Keil presents this view.

3. *The Maccabean Interpretation.* Those who hold this view approach the Bible from a humanistic viewpoint. To them there is no such thing as genuinely predictive prophecy. And since so many of Daniel’s prophecies accurately depict the events of the Maccabean age (168/7–165/4), they assume that the book must actually date from that period. An anonymous second century author thought the Messiah was about to appear, so he wrote up the book as though a sixth century Daniel had prophesied the appearance of the Messiah during the Maccabean age. But he was wrong; the Messiah did not appear. The current terminology for this interpretation is “failed apocalyptic.” The 490 years are to be taken literally, with the first seven weeks referring to the period between the captivity and the Maccabean age, and the final week referring to the Maccabean age itself. J. A. Montgomery and virtually all liberal critics hold some variation of this view.

4. *The Dispensational Interpretation.* Dispensationalism claims that all prophecy must be fulfilled with the utmost literal detail, and that it must be fulfilled in terms of the literal, physical nation of Israel.

Accordingly, the first sixty-nine weeks refers to the period from Artaxerxes' decree in 445/4 BC (permitting Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, Neh. 2:4–8) to the Triumphal Entry of Christ in AD 30 or 33. But the seventieth week has been postponed. A gap of what is now nearly 2,000 years has arisen between the sixty-ninth and the still-awaited seventieth week. The seventieth week will be the Great Tribulation and will begin with the Rapture and end with the battle of Armageddon. There is no explanation of the first seven weeks in the dispensational system.

This interpretation of the seventy weeks was popularized by Robert Anderson and has recently been refined by Harold Hoehner. It is based on a number of curious assumptions, the most striking of which is that a “prophetic year” is actually 360 days, not 365. Therefore, the seventy weeks is not really 490 years but a few days shy of 483 years. And the sixty-nine weeks is not really 483 years, but 476 years. This interpretation also assumes that the decree of Artaxerxes was given in 444 BC and not 445 and that the crucifixion of Christ was not in AD 30 but in 33. These last two are plausible assumptions.

But all this is to overlook from the outset the implausibility of the assumption that the decree referred to is that of Artaxerxes in 445/4 BC. It was only the effort to reduce a literal fulfillment that initially drove the dispensational school to resort to calculations based on 360 day years and the decree of Artaxerxes. As we will illustrate below, a proper understanding of the numerical symbolism of the seventy weeks will enable us to interpret the passage without resorting to such numerical gymnastics.

We should also note that others (not necessarily premillennialists) have also tried out a literal fulfillment using a 365 day year, a 458/7 BC beginning date (Artaxerxes' decree granting Ezra permission to return, Ezra 7:11–28) and an AD 26 end date (Halley, 313). But this, too, collapses because the return of Ezra had nothing to do with the rebuilding of either the temple or the city and also because it is well-nigh impossible to date the beginning of Jesus' ministry as early as AD 26.

It's not my purpose to provide a full refutation of the dispensational interpretation of this vision. Rather, I want to concentrate on the three factors upon which, I believe, any correct interpretation must be based.

I. The Context of the Covenant Prayer

The first step to a correct understanding of the seventy weeks prophecy is to see it in its proper *context* as God's answer to Daniel's prayer (Dan. 9:4–19) and to see how the offering of that prayer relates to the covenant between God and Israel. Remember that Daniel's prayer had been prompted by his reading of Jeremiah's prophecy that Israel would spend seventy years in Babylon (Jer. 25:11; 29:10).

That was not just some random punishment selected by God. It was the specific punishment legally demanded by the terms of the Mosaic covenant between God and Israel. Leviticus 26:34 specified captivity in a foreign land as the ultimate penalty for violation of the covenant: “You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste.” Daniel would, of course, have been well aware of the legal, covenantal basis of the punishment his nation had just endured.

But that same covenant also made legal provision for restoration. “If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers ... then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Issac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land” (Lev. 26:40, 42). In other words, just as sin had resulted in captivity under the legal terms of the covenant, so also repentance and prayer of confession could bring restoration under the terms of the same covenant. Now Daniel’s prayer is precisely the type of prayer demanded by the terms of the covenant. He realizes that the end of the seventy years is near. And yet that restoration, according to the terms of the covenant, is conditioned on the nation praying and confessing their iniquity and asking God’s forgiveness. Thus, when Daniel begins to pray in 9:4, we immediately see that it is a prayer of repentance and confession of sin on behalf of the whole nation, and that it was intended to meet the specific legal terms of the covenant and thus trigger the restoration of the nation:

... Indeed, all Israel has transgressed Thy law and turned aside, not obeying Thy voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him. (v. 11)

... As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to thy truth. (v. 13)

... O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For thine own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Thy people and Thy city are called by Thy name. (v. 19)

And before Daniel could complete the prayer, Gabriel appeared with the answer Daniel sought. Moreover, the angel told Daniel that at the very beginning of his prayer “the command was issued” (v. 23). In this context the command could hardly be any other than the divine command to restore the nation and the city of Jerusalem, just as God has promised to do under the terms of the covenant. The earthly counterpart would be the decree of Cyrus for the Jews to return. And since the issuing of this decree is said to mark the beginning of the seventy weeks, we have thus nailed down one peg in the interpretation of the vision.

Any sound interpretation must reckon the beginning of the seventy weeks in the year of the vision itself, 539/8 BC, the year of Cyrus' decree permitting the Jews to return from their captivity and rebuild their city and their sanctuary. If this is not true, then God delays for almost 100 years in keeping his part of the covenant to restore the nation when they pray. And note that Daniel in his prayer specifically asks God not to "delay" (v. 19) in his restoration of the nation. The picture is clearly that of a gracious God who is so ready to forgive that no sooner does Daniel begin his prayer than God issues the decree with which the program of restoration begins.

Some have objected to this interpretation by saying that Cyrus' decree said nothing about the rebuilding of the city, and they have thus argued that we must seek a later decree, namely, that of Artaxerxes to Nehemiah 445/4 BC. It is true that Ezra 1:2-4 does not specifically mention the rebuilding of the city. But the prophetic description of Cyrus' role in Isaiah 44:28 is precisely that of the one who decrees the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem: "He (Cyrus) will perform all My desire. And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,' And of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.' "

Again, we are driven to the conclusion that the only decree that fits the context as the beginning of the seventy week is that of Cyrus in 539/8 BC. On the other hand, interpretations that postpone the beginning of the seventy weeks to a point in time almost 100 years later create a situation in which some of the most important elements of the restoration—the return to the land, the rebuilding of the temple, and the inhabiting of the city of Jerusalem (the very things for which Daniel had prayed)—had already happened even before the seventy weeks began. In other words, we end up with the vision of the seventy weeks not really answering to Daniel's prayer for the restoration of the nations at all, but, rather, revealing what would happen to the nation long after the first basic steps of restoration had already taken place. This view virtually denies the relevance of the context to the vision and leaves Daniel's prayer without a direct answer.

II. The Goal of the Seventy Weeks

The second determinative factor for understanding the prophecy is to note carefully the *goal* of the seventy weeks, i.e., what specific things are to be accomplished within the period. This factor will give us a sound basis for seeking the end point of the 490 years. The prophecy opens by declaring six goals to be accomplished:

1. The first is to finish (or, perhaps, "restrain") transgression. This finish, or restraint, of transgression seems to refer to the continual transgression of the Jewish people which had led to the destruction of the temple in the first place. Just how this check on sin was to be accomplished is not here specified. It could come either through repentance and forgiveness or through judgment and destruction of the sinners. Perhaps the ambiguity is intentional.

2. The second is to make an end of (or, perhaps, “to seal up”) sin. Again, it is not clear just how this end was to be accomplished. Either forgiveness or judgment could be the means of bringing about an end to sin. Or, if the translation “to seal up” is taken, the sense could be that of reserving sin for judgment.

3. The third is to make atonement for sin. There is only one definitive atonement for sin to which this can refer: the sacrificial death of Christ.

4. The fourth goal is the bringing in of everlasting righteousness. This goal should be understood as the righteousness that would come through faith in Christ in contrast to the condemnation that had come on them and their nation in Daniel’s day because of their failure to keep the law of Moses.

5. The fifth goal is the sealing up of vision and prophecy. This goal has been taken by some as a reference to the cessation of vision and prophecy. But in this context it seems rather to refer to the validation of vision and prophecy by fulfillment. In other words, the seventy weeks will see the fulfillment of the visions and prophecies in which God had revealed his plans for the city of Jerusalem and the Jewish people—plans which, according to this prophecy, would culminate in a second destruction of their city and sanctuary (v. 26).

6. The sixth and final goal will be the anointing of the most holy. The grammar is ambiguous and could refer to the anointing either of a person or of a place. And both temple and Messiah are part of the context of this passage. It is my belief that the reference is to Jesus as the Messiah, but with the realization that he is also the true temple or “Most Holy” who would, in his own person, replace the physical temple of the Jews (cf. John 2:19–21).

Beyond these six fundamental goals, we further learn that the seventy weeks will see the rebuilding of the city and temple of Jerusalem, the appearance and cutting off of the Messiah (surely a reference to his crucifixion), the cessation of the sacrificial system, and the destruction of the city and sanctuary once again. Likewise, the seventy weeks will see the confirmation of a covenant with the Jewish people. This could be taken either as the establishment of the New Covenant in Christ or as the confirmation of an already existing covenant, namely, the confirmation of God’s covenant with Abraham.

The point is, however, that there is not one thing named as a goal of, or said to happen in, this seventy weeks that had not occurred by the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in the first century. Therefore, to seek to extend the seventy weeks beyond the first century is without warrant. To put it another way, the stated goals of the vision fix the end point of the seventy weeks at some point in the first century AD. And if we feel some hesitation at not being able to identify some precise NT event as marking the end of the seventy weeks, we should remember that the vision itself does not specify any particular event as marking the end of the seventy weeks. It is apparently not the precise date of the end of the seventy weeks that the vision is intended to communicate, but the objectives to be accomplished within the seventy weeks.

III. The Numerical Symbolism of the Seventy Weeks

The third, and most neglected, key to understanding this prophecy is the numerical symbolism of the seventy weeks. If the context establishes the beginning of the seventy weeks at the decree of Cyrus in 539/8 BC, and if the stated goals of the seventy weeks fix the end of the period in the first century AD, then why is it designated as a period of seventy weeks, or 490 years, when, in fact, it is somewhere between 500 and 600 years? The answer lies in the fact that the numbers are symbolic and were never intended to be taken literally.

In order to understand the symbolism, let us begin with the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity, which form the backdrop to this vision of seventy weeks. Why was this period designated as seventy years when, in fact, it was only about 66 or 67 years? (Old commentaries often get the seventy years by figuring the captivity from 606 BC to 536 BC, but the dates of the first deportation and the fall of Babylon are now well established at 605 BC and 539 BC.) We could say the seventy is only a round figure. But that would miss the real meaning of the captivity for the Jewish people.

The Babylonian captivity, as an instrument for punishment, was rooted in the sabbath law of the OT. It was based on the special status of the sabbath as a sign of the covenant relationship between God and Israel. “You shall surely observe my Sabbaths; for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you” (Exod. 31:13). And remember that this sabbath law also included the sabbath year, requiring that the land “rest” from cultivation every seventh year, and the Jubilee celebration of a “double sabbath” every forty-nine years (the sabbath of sabbaths) (Lev. 25:1–34). This whole complex of sabbath keeping—days, years, and Jubilees—was especially well-suited to be a sign of the covenant because of the faith it demanded on the part of the Israelites. Consider the faith required for the people of an agricultural economy to go without cultivating their land for an entire year, not to mention the two years of the Jubilee. Surely one of the first laws to be ignored during periods of unfaithfulness would be the sabbath, and especially the seventh-year sabbaths.

The importance of the sabbath law to the legal stipulations of the covenant is especially apparent in Leviticus 26. This chapter summarizes the entire covenant relationship in terms of the blessings that would come upon the nation if they were faithful and the curses that would come if they were unfaithful. In specifying the curses, God decreed that the ultimate penalty for unfaithfulness would be for the Israelites to be stripped away from their land and carried into captivity.

Now this was not just some random form of punishment. It was based on the role of the sabbath as the sign of the covenant. **It was specifically designed to allow the land to enjoy an extended sabbath rest to make up for sabbath years not observed during the period of unfaithfulness.** “Then the land will enjoy its sabbaths all the days of the desolation, while you are in your enemies’ land; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths” (Lev. 26:34). And note that this twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus immediately follows the twenty-fifth chapter that had initially spelled out all the sabbath laws.

Thus, when the Chronicler finally tells of the carrying away of the children of Israel into the Babylonian captivity, he explains that captivity not simply as punishment but as a time for the land to make up for lost sabbath rest: “The land ... enjoyed its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it kept sabbath until seventy years were complete” (2 Chron. 36:21). It is our contention, then, that the seventy years of captivity is a symbolic number highlighting their full sabbath rest due the land because of the fulness of their iniquity. By using a multiple of seven (the sabbath number) and ten (symbolizing fulness or completion), God was trying to get the Israelites to see the meaning—not the length—of the captivity. Although the number 70 approximates the actual length of the captivity, that is secondary. It was far more important for the Jews to know *why* they were going into captivity than it was for them to know the exact length of the captivity.

Now if this explanation is correct, further implications immediately arise. A seventy-year captivity would imply an epoch of 490 (70×7) years of unfaithfulness to accumulate a “debt” of seventy unobserved sabbath years. So, the seventy years of captivity is the culmination of a 490-year epoch of unfaithfulness. (Again, we should not press for an exact 490 years of unfaithfulness. But just as the seventy years of captivity approximates the historical reality, so may the 490.) This, then, suddenly illuminates the announcement to Daniel of the coming of a *new* epoch of 490, or 70×7 , years.

Just as the preceding epoch of Israelite history had culminated in failure and captivity because of the *unfaithfulness of Israel*, now a new epoch of seventy times seven will begin which will culminate in salvation and redemption because of the *faithfulness of God* to his part in the covenant.

But why God would choose 490 years to represent the past period of unfaithfulness as well as the new period of salvation? Again, the answer is found in the symbolism of the number, and that symbolism is rooted even more deeply in the sabbath law. We readily note that the number is $7 \times 10 \times 7$, and thus inherently symbolic to the Jewish mind. Remember Jesus’ charge to Peter to forgive his brother seventy times seven (Matt. 18:22). But, more importantly, it is not only seven times seven; it is also a period of ten Jubilees ($7 \times 7 = 49$, a Jubilee).

It is true that the Jubilee was the fiftieth year. But, while some rabbis reckoned Jubilees in fifty-year cycles, others reckoned the fiftieth year as overlapping with the first year of the next forty-nine-year cycle, thus keeping the entire cycle to forty-nine years.⁷ It seems clear that a forty-nine-year cycle for the Jubilee is being assumed here in Daniel. Compare also the Pentecost, which was the fiftieth day after a week of weeks yet which did not break the weekly cycle but was merely the first day of the eighth week.

So, ten Jubilees were appointed to accomplish the six things enumerated in verse 24 of our prophecy. But why ten Jubilees? And what did the Jubilee itself represent, to make it such an important symbol for the accomplishment of the goals of salvation defined in verse 24?

In the OT the sabbath (including days, years, and Jubilees) is associated with the commemoration of two things. First, in the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai, it is identified as a day of *rest*, commemorating the rest into which God entered when he had completed his work of creation (Exod. 20:11). This association is universally recognized. But, in the repetition of the Ten Commandments forty years later, Moses also says that it was a commemoration of the Israelites' *deliverance from bondage* in Egypt (Deut. 5:15).

Now these two concepts of *rest* and *deliverance* are closely connected. Israel is delivered out of bondage in order that she might enter into Canaan as the land of rest that God has prepared for her (Deut. 12:9–10). And that land of rest is but a type of God's own rest, which he entered after he had completed the creation and into which all who are delivered from the bondage of sin will ultimately enter (Heb. 4:1–11; see especially vv. 1, 3–4, and 10). This understanding of the sabbath as a sign of the rest and the deliverance that God was preparing for his people also helps us to understand the miracles that Jesus performed on the sabbath. He was not trying to prove that he could break the sabbath. He was trying to get the Jews to see the real meaning of the sabbath. Note his response to the Pharisees who had criticized him for healing a crippled woman on the sabbath: "Should not this woman, whom Satan has kept *bound* for eighteen long years, *be set free* on the Sabbath day from what bound her" (Luke 13:16). He was saying, in effect, that her deliverance from bondage and the rest she would now enjoy in her healing were what the sabbath was really all about: deliverance and rest from the ravages of sin and the power of Satan. And both the OT sabbath and her healing on the sabbath were signs of the rest & deliverance Christ was about to bring to mankind.

It is, in fact, the whole Messianic age that fulfills the promised rest and deliverance of the OT sabbath. This is the point of Hebrews 4:3 when the writer says that "we who have believed enter that rest." The "Sabbath rest" that "remains" for the people of God (v. 9) is the rest and deliverance that we have in Christ from the bondage of sin. That deliverance from sin is what the OT sabbath was all about. Indeed, our entrance into God's rest is now by *faith* in Christ, but in the final stage of God's redemptive history we will enter by *sight* into God's sabbath.

Every sabbath observance of the Israelites was intended as a reminder that God was preparing for his people a true and eternal rest. The fallow ground of every seventh-year observance was a reminder that, in that future rest, God would provide for their every need and that the curse of sin which made it necessary to till the ground (Gen. 3:17) would be no more. And every sabbath year observance that required the releasing of slaves and the remission of debts (Deut. 15:1–18) was a sign that in that day of future rest God would truly deliver his people from the bondage and debt of sin.

And the grand culmination of the OT sabbath law, the Jubilee, which would normally occur once in the life of every Israelite, was the occasion when the whole meaning of the sabbath law was summed up in the command to “consecrate the fiftieth year and *proclaim liberty throughout the land* to all its inhabitants” (Lev. 25:10).

Now, to return to the 490 years of Daniel, if one Jubilee is an occasion to “proclaim liberty throughout the land,” how much more the tenth Jubilee! Indeed, the tenth Jubilee would naturally symbolize to the Jewish mind the appropriate time for the proclamation of full and complete liberty and rest for the people of God. And that is exactly the point of the usage here in Daniel. Because of sin, the preceding epoch of ten Jubilees had not brought liberty, but a return to bondage—the very antithesis of what the sabbath law stood for. So now the angel announces to Daniel a new epoch of ten Jubilees to bring in the true salvation and deliverance from bondage that God was preparing for his people.

Note that this explanation also helps us to understand why the seventy weeks is broken up into the pattern of 7–62–1. The first seven is the first of the ten Jubilees. It represents the period of time during which the first stage of restoration is to be accomplished—the rebuilding of the physical temple and city of Jerusalem. That physical restoration would then serve as a sort of down payment or guarantee of the full deliverance to come at the end of the tenth Jubilee. Such is often the case in fulfilment of Messianic prophecy; the first stage of fulfilment is physical and typical, whereas the final stage is antitypical and spiritual. Compare the promise to David of a son that would build the house of God, fulfilled literally in Solomon and then spiritually in Christ (2 Sam. 7:11–16).

It is true that the rebuilding of the temple and the city did not occur exactly forty-nine years after the release from captivity. The release was in 539/8 BC and the temple was rebuilt by 516/5 BC, or twenty-three years later. The city walls were not rebuilt until 445/4 BC, some 94 years later, though some rebuilding of dwellings within the city precincts had no doubt taken place in the meantime. But we must remember that the significance of these numbers is symbolic and that they are not intended to predict exact dates. Indeed, the whole of the seventy weeks does not represent 490 literal years, but only symbolizes the period necessary for the full accomplishment of God’s plan to bring a true sabbath rest and a true Jubilee—true rest and deliverance from sin—to his people.

Conclusions

Our analysis thus far has strong implications for all four of the major schools of interpretation described at the beginning of this paper. The symbolism of the seventy weeks obviously harmonizes well with either the Traditional Messianic Interpretation or the Church Age Interpretation. The Traditional Messianic Interpretation seems to correspond best to the stated goals of the seventy weeks and to allow for the obvious correspondence of the destruction of the city and sanctuary (v. 26) with the destruction brought by the Romans in AD 70. It is also preferable on a grammatical basis since it locates the **appearance of the Messiah at the end of the sixty-ninth week** instead of at the end of the seventh week.

On the other hand, a correct understanding of the symbolism of the seventy weeks seriously undermines both the Maccabean Interpretation and the Dispensational Interpretation. Both of these interpretations assume (for different reasons) that there must be a literal correspondence between the seventy week and the events of history. Both engage in numerical gymnastics and contorted exegesis to make their respective schemes work out. But in these unnecessary exercises, both also miss the essential point of the symbolism and the essential point of the prophecy.¹

¹ Halbrook, R. (1986). [Eternal Punishment](#). In M. D. Curry (Ed.), *The Doctrine of Last Things* (pp. 97–114). Temple Terrace, FL: Florida College Bookstore.