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## DANIEL 9:20-27      ETERNAL PREPAREDNESS

<sup>20</sup> While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill—<sup>21</sup> while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. <sup>22</sup> He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. <sup>23</sup> 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:

<sup>24</sup> “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.

<sup>25</sup> “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. <sup>26</sup> After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. <sup>27</sup> He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

When dealing with the eternal will of God, it is the event and not the timing that is important. Gabriel reveals to Daniel what is going to occur, but uses Hebrew “placeholders” when it comes to the schedule of events. One way we can interpret “seventy ‘sevens’” is that it stands for a very long time. However, it might be better to understand seven as the number of completion in the Hebrew mind, so “seven ‘sevens’” would mean “complete completion” and “seventy ‘sevens’” ultimate completion. We would say, “when the time comes” or “at the appointed hour” this or that will happen. Here the time is determined by God according to his eternal and sovereign will.

The promises of God have been revealed to us, but the timing of their fulfillment is hidden from us by the shroud of eternity and the inscrutability of the will of God. In this manner we are able to exercise our faith in the Giver of the Promises and not focus on the distant moment of their fulfillment. Our faith is to be based on our dependence upon God, rather than being a matter of persevering until a given time. It is not the length of our imprisonment that is of utmost importance, but rather the presence of God with us in our prison.

Not knowing the time also avoids the human propensity to “have it both ways” until the final deadline. We love to “cut it close” and put things off as long as possible. Jesus illustrated this in the parable of the wise and wicked servants (Matthew 24:45-51). “So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (Matthew 24:44). The promise is sure, but the time is unknown. Therefore,

our proper position is to live in readiness every moment of our lives. As Jesus himself demonstrated, one is made ready by being obedient to God's revealed will.

**Heavenly Father, may I live every moment of my life in the attempt to obey your perfect will, so that I will know your presence and grow to trust you wholly. May I live so as to demonstrate the truth of your promises as if they were fully consummated on this day. Amen.**