

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 417

Paul's Use of the Old Testament Series: The Messiahs of Daniel 9

March 19, 2022

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Episode Summary

Like the previous episode, this discussion with Dr. Matt Halstead takes us to Daniel 9, a passage that uses *mashiach* (“anointed one”) twice, as well as the verb *mashach* (“to anoint”). The passage has historical fulfillment roots in the second century B.C., but also is referenced later by Jesus as something awaiting fulfillment. In this episode we consider what Daniel 9’s contribution to the messianic profile we’ve been building in this series.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 417: Paul’s Use of the Old Testament Series: The Messiahs in Daniel 9, with Dr. Matt Halsted. I’m the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he’s the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! How are you doing?

MSH: Can’t complain unnecessarily about things.

TS: Yeah, well that’s good. Um, I know we’ve recorded...

MSH: How about yourself?

TS: Yeah, I’m good. I can’t complain.

MSH: Are you on a post-Olympic low? I’m still in the dead zone here, Trey. I mean, I got a little fill with the Olympics. But now they’re over. And it’s like, “Then what do I do now?”

TS: Well, obviously March Madness—basketball—is what you do now. That’s the correct answer.

MSH: Alright, well, for your sake I’ll try it.

TS: Alright. Sounds good, Mike. Well, I'm excited about this episode—Daniel 9. I know we're kind of getting in the weeds here, but it's fascinating kind of the stage y'all are setting for us.

MSH: Yep, this is ultimately the goal. We want to make what Paul does with the Old Testament clearer. So to do that we've got to sort of fill out the résumé or build the profile. And that's where we're at. We're still working on it.

MSH: Well, we're pleased again to have Matt Halsted back with us. This is our seventh discussion on the messianic profile and how to think about prophecy. But really, we got into that because the larger goal here is how to think hermeneutically about what the New Testament does with the Old Testament. So we're giving a lot of time to how we should understand messianism—the concept of messiah. And of course, last time we talked about Daniel 7, so we threw “son of man” in there. We threw enthronement and kingship in there. There are lots of motifs, lots of passages, lots of vocabulary outside just the term “messiah” that has something to do, and not in a peripheral sense, but really an integral part—plays an integral role... There's a number of things that play really significant roles in fleshing out how an Old Testament person would have thought about messiah. And we're doing all of this, again... Like I said, this is our seventh conversation focusing on messiah-ism. We're doing all of this so that we can transition from it (and we'll be doing that shortly in the episodes to come) to Matt taking us through what Paul (and of course, it's going to apply to other New Testament writers) does with the Old Testament—how Paul isn't violating the Old Testament. He's actually very consistent with it. And he's also part of at least one strain of Judaism (out of multiple strains of Judaism) in his own day. So Paul is not an outlier. He's not a villain—a hermeneutical villain. [laughs] You know? This is not the way to be thinking about Paul, that he's avant-garde, or doing all sorts of strange things and making things up. Okay? We're trying to articulate the reasons why that is not the case so that we can then understand what Paul is actually doing in different passages when he uses the Old Testament. So we're bringing Matt back. Matt, as you come on here, we're going to be talking about Daniel 9. So I know this is going to be kind of a... I mean, Daniel 7, I got the impression, was one of your favorite landing points. [MLH laughs] And I'm thinking Daniel 9's going to be the same. But... Well, why is Daniel 9 important? Let's just begin with that question. I know you hinted at it last time. But here we are, to have the actual conversation here. So tell us why we need to be getting into Daniel 9.

MLH: Yeah, Daniel as a whole of course, like we saw in the last episode, is important—Daniel 7 specifically. But Daniel 9 is, I think, critical for our discussion on how to understand messiah language in the Old Testament and for crafting

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the whole messianic profile that we're interested in. It's important because in just the span of a few verses (and I'm thinking about Daniel 9:24-26), you have the verb "anoint" used once and the noun "anointed one" used twice. And I'm referring to the Hebrew Bible here. Things kind of get a little different and funky when you look into the Septuagint and another recension of the Septuagint. But anyway, just looking at Hebrew Bible, that's what we've got.

So if we're investigating messiah language, we're going to have to make a detour here—a nice stop—and look at what Daniel is talking about here. And I think, just like we've seen in the Psalms and in other parts of the Old Testament, we're going to see here (at least based on my interpretation of the text) that these references to messiah have historical reference. They refer to historical people within Judaism. And so yeah, we'll look at that in a moment. But that's essentially the brief introduction as to why this text is important. I guess I should say, too, for those of you who are into eschatology, this text is super important because a lot of dispensationalists will run to this text to make their arguments for a seven-year tribulation and all of that stuff. So it's kind of a two-for-one here in this episode. [laughs]

MSH: Right. But we're going to try to focus on the messianic elements specifically.

MLH: Sure, yeah.

MSH: And for those of you who have been listening to this series, think about act and reenactment. Okay? Reading the Bible as a storied presentation. It's a story. Think about the metanarrative and how events get repeated—get reenacted—both within the pages of Scripture and extending beyond the pages of Scripture to a future that is distant to us and how that might work. So you want me to read a little bit of Daniel 9 to get us started here?

MLH: Yeah! Let's do it.

MSH: Okay. So I'll read Daniel 9:1-4, and then 20-27. This is the ESV.

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—² in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

³ Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. ⁴ I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps

covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments,

Now we'll jump to verse 20:

²⁰ While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill of my God, ²¹ while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. ²² He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. ²³ At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.

²⁴ "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. ²⁵ 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. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. 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. ²⁷ And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

So that took us through verse 27.

MLH: Yeah. That's the text we can focus on. It's important because the audience will notice that the word "anoint" is used in verse 24. And the words "anointed one" are used in verses 25 and 26. So according to most critical scholars, they're going to say that these references to messiah (*mashiach*) are not a reference to a future messiah, but rather some historical second century or maybe prior to second century B.C. characters. And I would call this maybe sort of from our perspective at least a preterist approach to the text. Now as I mentioned earlier, other scholars (particularly dispensationalists) are going to see these as

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references to the future messiah (Jesus). So you could call this is a futurist perspective. And my proposal...

MSH: As if it's one or the other.

MLH: Yeah, there is... There's kind of, it gives you the impression that you have to choose between the two.

MSH: Yeah.

MLH: And you know, I'm not trying to just play the pious "middle ground" card here, but [laughter] I think there's a way we can have both. I hate excluded middles, right, where I'm just presented with A or B. [laughs]

MSH: Yeah, that's what systems do, though. That's exactly what systems do: they exclude the middle.

MLH: Right. And there could be many middles. Like there could be so many options. And I just want to be an out-of-the-box thinker. And so I encourage everybody: "Question the systems. Go back to the text and just think about it." So that's what I want to do. My proposal is that I think we can have both. I think that even if these are references to historical people of the second century B.C. or before, I think we can still see some future aspects to these texts or to these words. So I'd like to just sort of craft a way forward—a proposal—on how to do that.

MSH: Sure.

MLH: Before I get to that, though, I think it's helpful just to briefly say something about what Daniel's actually doing here with respect to Jeremiah. So in the first couple of verses that you read, Daniel mentions Jeremiah's prophecies. So originally, Jeremiah had prophesied that there would be 70 years of exile. And you can find this in Jeremiah 25:11, Jeremiah 29:10. That was his prophecy. So the idea is, "Okay, after 70 years we can go home. We're ready to go home." But things don't turn out that way. And so what Daniel learns after considering this and praying about this, is that the angel tells him, "Well, Daniel, it is 70 years, but actually it's 70 *sevens* of years," which comes out to 490 years of exile. And that looks very arbitrary in many respects, right? You know, how can Gabriel interpret Jeremiah so apparently flippantly, right? Like...

MSH: Yeah, Gabriel didn't have a hermeneutics class.

MLH: Maybe he didn't. [laughs] You know, actually on second look, maybe he knew Torah better than maybe we thought, right?

MSH: He did.

MLH: [laughs] It's likely. And so when you go back to the Torah, specifically Leviticus 26, there are several references here that show that the covenant that God had given Israel stipulated that if Israel ever rebelled against God that they would be punished sevenfold. Okay? And many scholars point to these Levitical texts to justify this expansion of Jeremiah's original prophecy from 70 to 490 years. So two things we can say about Gabriel's...

MSH: It's 70 times seven, yep.

MLH: Yeah, 70 times seven—490 years. And there's a couple things I want to just say about this new interpretation is, one, it is new. It is fresh. It is different from Jeremiah's original prophecy. But new and fresh doesn't mean contradictory. In fact, it's very congruent with and consistent with Torah and the greater scheme of things. So it's not new in the sense of... Look, Gabriel's not being violent with Jeremiah's texts, right? He's just...

MSH: We could even ask, "Why does Jeremiah have to give us all the information at any given point about any given thing?"

MLH: Exactly. And as your audience knows (being familiar with your own writings) is that sometimes prophecy is cryptic. It has to be, right? For a number of reasons. So yeah, we don't have to assume that everything's going to be told to us in one whack. And so I think this is just an example of that. It's also another example of how prophecy can be repurposed, repackaged, or reenacted (that's the word we've been using)—that the initial act can be reenacted and then perhaps even expanded down the road. And so this is just really a fascinating text. I encourage everybody to go read and study Daniel's piece here in chapter 9. But to the text itself, Daniel prophesies 490 years. That's the new term of exile. But the way it's packaged here is that it's given in essentially three installments. So you have a period of seven years, or what's called seven weeks of years. So seven times seven, that would be 49. And then you have another set of 62 sevens, which what would that be? 434, I think. And...

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MSH: I'm terrible at math, so don't ask me.

MLH: [laughs] I am too. I had my calculator out the other day and was adding all this up, and yeah, I need a calculator. I'm not good at math. So but anyway, you have essentially 69 weeks of years that Daniel prophesies, and that comes up to 483 years of exile. And then this final week—this 70th week of Daniel—that's where things get really, really bad. But all that aside, where the whole messiah language begins to come in is that in verse 25, I'll just read it again, it says:

25 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.

MLH: Seven sevens—49 years. So the idea is that after 49 years of exile, a messiah will come. Okay? And I'll talk about who I think that might be in a moment. But then it goes on later in verse 25, it says:

Then for sixty-two weeks [MLH: of years, which that's 62 sevens which means 434 years later] it [MLH: Jerusalem] shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time.

Verse 26 says:

26 And after the sixty-two weeks [MLH: after 434 years], an anointed one shall be cut off [MLH: a *mashiach* will be cut off] and shall have nothing.

And so forth. So okay, who are these anointed ones? Because you could get your calculator out and do the math and try to figure out, "Okay, 49... after this prophecy, who came on the scene that might be identified as the anointed one of verse 25?" Well, a lot of scholars, well, I would say... I don't know how many, right? But many scholars point to that first messiah figure as being perhaps someone like Zerubbabel or Joshua. So if you go back and read...

MSH: Joshua, the high priest at the time.

MLH: Yeah, I'm sorry, the high priest.

MSH: Back in the book of Zechariah. Yeah.

MLH: And Haggai, exactly. And I think this is Robert Alter's position, if I remember right. And so some will identify this messiah figure (verse 25) with one of those two. And my perspective is, "Okay..."

MSH: Tell us why that would be the case. Zerubbabel would be a candidate because...

MLH: Okay, yeah. So he's a descendant of the Davidic line. Right?

MSH: Yeah.

MLH: And so that would make him...

MSH: And Joshua would be a candidate because other priests in the Old Testament are said to have been anointed—*mashach*.

MLH: Yep. That's right.

MSH: So that's where the two candidates emerge.

MLH: And again, like you said, if you read Zechariah and Haggai, these two prophetic texts in the so-called Minor Prophets, you read about these two figures. And they're pretty important people that come on the scene. And so that's why many scholars might do some of the math and say, "Okay, well, the math kind of works out. It's not exact. It's not exactly after 49 years that Zerubbabel comes on the scene, but it's close." And that actually... I want to say something about this whole numbers game here. I don't think we need to get too caught up into it. So what I mean by that is we don't need to make the text...

MSH: Conform?

MLH: Yeah, that's the word I'm looking for—conform to a literal conclusion. Like, I don't think it has to be exactly 49 years, right?

MSH: What you're saying is actually pretty consistent with... I mean, as you can imagine, there are a lot of people in between the testaments here in the Second Temple period (other Jews) that have their interpretation of what's going on with Jeremiah, what's going on with exile. You get those who are writing in relationship to the book of Daniel... Of course, we're not too worried about the date of Daniel. The date of Daniel also needs to be factored into when other Jewish groups are quoting him—in other words, when his writings would've been around. And that gets a little hairy for either view. But anyway, they had these views of what this unfolding of these weeks of years meant. And none of them are getting out calculators or abacuses or whatever they used then. [laughter] It's all sort of this general workability as far as, "Is this close?" You know? "Is this approximate?" So all of the systems that were developed, including the one from Qumran (which people in this audience will know I have a special fondness for), even that one gives you latitude and leeway as far as how you'd work the numbers. You know, there's a plus or minus thing going on here on either end of the prophetic scheme. So what you're proposing is not anything novel or aberrant. It's actually the way it's been done for a long time.

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MLH: Right. Yeah, and John Goldingay in his Daniel commentary proposes that we *not* see this as chronological, but rather as chronography. And he just means, essentially, that there's some theological freight behind all of this—these numbers. And the Second Temple Jews and just Jews of that era, they were capable of being precise with their numbers, right? And that doesn't seem to be

what's going on here. I mean, think of just the number itself: 490. You have this jubilee aspect that's going on. And so...

MSH: Yeah. The tenth jubilee being special and all that. Yeah.

MLH: Yeah, exactly. And I think just the study of numbers in Scripture will show that, okay, probably what's intended here at least is not an exact one-for-one. They've got some theological weight to them that we need to interpret them more theologically and not be so caught up with precision—literalness.

MSH: There's no way we can count literally from day to day, front to back, because there's ambiguity here as to when you would even start the calculation.

MLH: Oh, there's a lot of ambiguity for sure. Yeah. Robert Alter in one of his commentaries, he just has a little one-sentence line here I'd like to share. He says:

Biblical Hebrew with its attachment to formulaic numbers often uses numerical indications only approximately.

And that's maybe something to consider, too, along with this. And we do this, too, in a lot of ways. I think I mentioned in one of the episodes as an example is if somebody asked me, "Hey, Matt, how tall are you?" I might say just, "Six foot," even though that's not technically true. I'm more like 5' 11 ³/₄" or something. But precision is not always required. It depends on the context. And here this is a very important Jewish context, and I think that's what's going on here. So... Do I know for certain that the first reference to an anointed one in verse 25 is to Zerubbabel or Joshua? I wouldn't say I'm certain about it. I'd say I think I'm confident about it. But I leave it open to a different interpretation for sure.

So the other... We still have another instance of *mashiach* that we have to deal with in verse 26. Because it says, "After the sixty-two sevens (after much longer period) there's an anointed one who will be cut off and have nothing." Okay, so depending on who you ask about this verse will depend on the answer you get. [MSH laughs] Okay? [laughs] So let me go off an author who's very popular in his writings, probably shaped an entire generation (my generation, mainly, I think). But it's Tim LaHaye in his *Left Behind* series. They point to this a lot. And he does and I think he has a little Revelation commentary that I was looking through. He basically says, "Okay. When it says that the messiah's going to be cut off, that's a reference to Jesus' crucifixion. And if you add up the numbers just right," I think he picks 445 B.C. when the clock starts ticking, you count down...

MSH: Right. You'd have to take the... You have to take the crucifixion as your anchor point as opposed to starting up front at the beginning of the timeline as an

anchor point. So you're using something that's three-quarters down the road as your anchor point and extrapolating backwards.

MLH: Yeah, and essentially, you've already assumed the conclusion from the outset, right?

MSH: Yeah, that's part of the problem with that.

25:00 **MLH:** Yeah, and I'm hesitant to do that. And of course, LaHaye makes (in my opinion) other mistakes with this passage, too. But anyway, that aside, yeah, I'm hesitant to do what he's done. Okay, so I don't think this is a reference to Jesus' crucifixion. But as I'll talk about later, I do think that it might still have something to say about a messianic profile, which of course would have something to do with Jesus. But so a lot of scholars (and I would say the majority of scholars on this one) are going to say that the messiah who is cut off in verse 26 is a reference to a priest of the second century B.C. Okay, and who was this priest? Well, a lot of scholars point to Onias III, who was a highly respected priest in that era. And you can read about this whole era, what they call the Antiochene crisis, where Antiochus IV Epiphanes is just wreaking havoc and he's had swine (pig) sacrificed on the altar. He's desecrated the altar, and he's done some terrible stuff.

MSH: Yeah, Onias becomes the candidate because of the events associated with his death.

MLH: Right. Yeah. That's right. He does. So if you go back to 1 and 2 Maccabees, particularly 2 Maccabees 4-6 and the first chapter of 1 Maccabees, you can read about this whole era. But essentially what you find is that this priest (Onias III) was highly respected by people, but he ends up being deposed whenever Antiochus comes to power. His brother, Jason, assumes the priesthood because Jason bribes Antiochus—offers him some cash—and gets to be the pastor of the town for a while. And then later Jason gets deposed and another figure comes on the scene and ends up killing Onias. And everybody's just really upset that this innocent priest—this God-fearing man—was assassinated the way he was. Okay, so people may say, "Well, how come he gets to be the messiah?" Well, you know, generally speaking, it does fit the timeframe. So that's one factor we can conclude. But secondly, priests were called messiah—"anointed one." We've seen this already in episodes prior to this. The other thing, though, is that if you look in 1 Maccabees and these other texts outside of Scripture, they interpret Antiochus' sacrifice on the altar and his desecration of the temple as an abomination of desolation, which comes from Daniel 9. So they...

MSH: Yeah, language coming from Daniel

MLH: That's right. It really does. And so at least if we... Collecting all this other as data, then we can be pretty confident that this reference is to Onias III.

MSH: At the very least you would've had a large number of Jews look at the passage this way.

MLH: Yes.

MSH: Because of the events of the abomination.

MLH: I definitely think so. I mean, for me, Maccabees has just really helped me understand Daniel. And a lot of scholars will say, "Look, Maccabees and Daniel 9 or just big portions of Daniel, they really go together. They complement each other. So for those who are listening, if you want to study Daniel 9 and just the surrounding passages, you really need to dive into 1 Maccabees, the first several chapters, and then 2 Maccabees, of course, too. It'll just help you.

MSH: Yeah, specifically, Daniel 9-11. You're going to have to get into that material.

MLH: Yeah. They're both mutually interpreting... They're talking about the same events. Right? So okay, I'm going to go with that. I mean, am I certain? Probably not. I don't like to be certain about some things. [laughs] But am I confident? I think so. Yeah, I think I'm confident that the messiah of verse 26 is Onias III. Okay. What about verse 24, where the verb is used? Where he talks about... I just go back and read that text. Was it verse 24? Yeah. It says:

24 "Seventy weeks [MLH: or again, 490 years] 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.

So essentially what he's saying is that, "After these 490 years, your exile will be complete, and you're going to be healthy again spiritually. And it's going to take that long before you can anoint a most holy place." Right? So what does it mean to anoint a most holy place? Well, that's a good question. Most likely it means to rededicate the temple—when they cleanse the temple after its defilement. So again, you read Maccabees, they do this three or three and a half years after its defilement. So yeah, that's what's going on. And I'm pretty confident that that's what the reference is here to. So if I'm correct... I stand to be corrected if somebody can point me another direction. But if I'm correct, I think all three of these references (the two uses of the noun "anointed one" and the verb "anoint") have historical references. They're not explicitly about an eschatological messiah that is to come. Okay? So maybe I've pleased the critical scholars for a moment. [laughs] Maybe they're really happy with me right now.

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MSH: But they're still going to turn around and say that the apocalyptic events—these events that look like, when you're talking about desecrating the temple by a foreign overlord, things are looking pretty bad for the Israelite—for the Jew. And so a lot of scholars will say, "Well, this end-of-the-world-as-we-know-it situation was a catalyst to looking for a future deliverer." So even though they're going to situate it historically, there's still this element in their thinking that would lend itself to at least a future perspective.

MLH: Right. Yeah. And I'm okay with that. I'm okay with saying that there's a future perspective here. And I'm okay saying that all of this—every bit that we've read—contributes to that messianic profile that...

MSH: Jesus is going to refer to the abomination later.

MLH: He does. He does. And that's our first clue something else is going on, that even Jesus is referring back to this text to speak about his own time, namely A.D. 70, the destruction of the temple.

MSH: Which would've been future to Onias. So there we go. Now we've jumped to the future again.

MLH: Right. So it really hinges on whether Jesus is the messiah. Right? [laughter] I mean, it really does. Now that's a conversation for another time, of course. But I think there's really good reasons to believe Jesus is the messiah. And I'm going to take my cues from Paul here in 1 Corinthians 15, where he says, "Look. If Jesus hasn't resurrected from the dead, our whole faith is in vain." So he stakes everything on the resurrection of Jesus. And I do, too. I think the resurrection proves that Jesus is the messiah. Paul says this in Romans 1:4, I believe it is, where he says that he was declared Son of God in power through his resurrection from the dead. Right? And so the resurrection vindicates him—shows him to be who he said he was. Well, how can I know he resurrected from the dead? Go read my friend Gary Habermas' stuff, okay? I've had great conversations with Gary about all this stuff. And he's actually writing this huge tome right now on the resurrection of Jesus and why you should believe that it actually happened. That's not out yet. But I've gotten to read a couple chapters. It's super fun.

But anyway, back to this. When it comes to resurrection, that's what proves Jesus is messiah. And it all does hinge on that. And once we can establish Jesus rose from the dead—that he is the messiah—then I think even these historical texts (Daniel 9) can point to Jesus as messiah. They are categories in which the ministry of Jesus can come in and fill and complete and make sense of. That's my position. And if it's okay, I'd like to read this quote from John Goldingay.

MSH: Sure. Yeah, tell us how this would work.

MLH: Okay, let's get into this. How can this work? Because remember at the beginning of the episode I said, "Here's the critical scholar position. Here's the futurist position. And I think we can have both. I don't think we have to choose between the two." Alright, how does it work? Listen to this quote from John Goldingay. This is from his Daniel commentary. He says:

In Jewish and Christian tradition, Gabriel's promise has been applied to rather later events: the birth of the messiah, Jesus' death and resurrection, the fall of Jerusalem, various subsequent historical events, and the still-future manifesting of the messiah. Exegetically such views are mistaken. The detail of vv 24-27 fits the second-century B.C. crisis and agree with allusions to this crisis elsewhere in Daniel. The verses do not indicate that they are looking centuries of millennia beyond the period to which chaps. 8 and 10-12 refer... the passage refers to the Antiochene crisis. Yet its allusiveness justifies reapplication of the passage, as is the case with previous chapters, in the following sense. It does not refer specifically to concrete persons and events in the way of historical narrative such as 1 Maccabees, but refers in terms of symbols to what those persons and events embodied, symbols such as sin, justice, and anointed prince, a flood, an abomination. Concrete events and persons are understood in the light of such symbols, but the symbols transcend them. They are not limited in their reference to these particular concrete realities. They have other embodiments. What these other embodiments are is a matter of theological, not exegetical, judgment—a matter of faith, not of science. But if I am justified in believing that Jesus is God's anointed, and that his birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and appearing are God's ultimate means of revealing himself and achieving his purpose in the world, they are also his means of ultimately achieving what the symbols in vv 24-27 speak of. It is this point that is made in traditional categories by speaking of a typological relationship between the events and people of the Antiochene crisis and deliverance and those of the Christ event and the End we still await.

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So let me just repackage that. What he's saying is that Daniel 9 is speaking in symbols—it's speaking in symbolic language. It's very ambiguous language at that. Now if you go back and read 1 Maccabees, they talk about the same stuff there, but they name names. Okay? So it's very historically-minded, and there's some precision there. There's even some dates given throughout the Maccabean text. Daniel's slightly different, though. Daniel's going to speak more symbolically. And what Goldingay is saying here (and I think he's correct) is that these categories invite further reapplication down the road for future realities, to even future persons. And that's exactly what we've been talking about with respect to act and reenactment, that prophecy can be repurposed and repackaged for later events. So what this would mean is that those words like "anoint" and "anointed one" have historical second century B.C. references, but they could also be repackaged and reapplied to the Christ event and all that entails. Here's the deal:

It's not unreasonable to take it like that. It's not unreasonable to detect a typological relationship between the events of second century B.C. and the Christ event and all that later down the road. Again, Goldingay has said the Daniel text is elusive enough to invite something like this. So that's my position.

MSH: And Jesus as well. I mean, if you read through the Gospels, Jesus knows when he is riffing off something in the Old Testament—a person, an event, an institution—and using it to present himself. I mean, he knows when he's doing that. And the reader knows it, too. So why can't this be yet another example—when Jesus gets into the Olivet Discourse and some of these other passages and even later? I mean, the disciples are going to know that Jesus did this. Paul, I would think, is going to know Jesus did this by virtue of what he learns from Jesus on his own and from the other disciples. You know? But nevertheless, they all talk about this stuff in a yet future sense. So they all kind of know how the game is played. [laughs]

MLH: They do.

MSH: They know that this is how prophetic material works. “There's this. Okay, we saw this happen. We know it happened in real time, so God is good on his word.” But they look for more to come because of the language that's used and how loaded it is. And when Jesus comes along... And of course, if he is who he says he is and he starts doing this with these texts and applying it to himself, well that should draw some attention. He ought to know what he's talking about. And he does. Because what happens to him is validation of his own prophecies.

MLH: Right.

MSH: You know, like you said last time, you have the same thing that keeps going in the Epistles and the book of Revelation, whether John's writing just before 70 or in the 90s. The Christ event is something in the past, but nevertheless he ties it into a lot of these passages as something yet to look forward to. This is just the way it works.

MLH: Right. Yeah, and I think Jesus, when he quotes the Daniel text in Matthew 24, I think he does it with a wink. [laughs] You know? There's a piece here, whether it's Matthew making an editorial comment or it's Jesus saying it, I don't know. But in Matthew 24:15 he says:

¹⁵ **“So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel...**

MSH: “You see it.” Yeah.

MLH: Yeah. “When *you* see it, spoken by the prophet Daniel...”

...standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),

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Then he goes on and tells them what to do. I think the “let the reader understand...” I’m assuming that’s an editorial by Matthew or maybe it’s something Jesus said. I don’t know. According to the ESV it looks like they have it in red ink, so Jesus must have said it, right? [laughs] But nonetheless, there’s a piece here that invites us to really consider what Jesus is doing. Well, what did Daniel say about the abomination of desolation? Well, if what I’ve proposed is correct (that Daniel was actually talking about the Antiochene crises, when Antiochus goes into the temple and does really bad things there), I think what Jesus is doing is saying, “Look, let’s repurpose this.” That was the epitome of...

MSH: He knows his audience knows those events.

MLH: Yeah, he does.

MSH: It’s part of their history. But then he turns around and says, “When *you* see this.”

MLH: What is he saying?

MSH: It *has* to be a repurposing.

MLH: Yeah. That’s exactly right. And again, when you read Matthew 24:15, when Jesus says the abomination of desolation, you have to keep *that* in context of the verses prior to that. So Jesus is here talking about clearly the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70. The disciples ask him, “When is this going to happen?” And so here he begins to give them these clues. Like, “Well, when you see this, you know that things are really going to...” Well, things have already gotten bad by that point. But this is part of that whole discussion. So what does this have to do with interpreting Daniel 9 as having to do with *the* messiah (Jesus). Because didn’t I just say that messiah there has nothing to do with Jesus in the sense that it wasn’t prophesying Jesus or an eschatological messiah? So how does it have to do with Jesus? Well, okay, here’s how I’m going to view this text. I think once we see how Christ has cited the Daniel 9:27 abomination of desolation text, once we take that part and fuse it with Jesus’ larger perspective about his relationship to the temple itself, then I think we can kind of see the logic of how these messiah references in Daniel 9 can, in fact, refer to Jesus (or the Christ event, more generally speaking).

MSH: Is it because of the destruction of the temple? And the re-anointing of the temple?

MLH: Yeah, okay, so let's just start there. Yeah, I think so. First Jesus' re-appropriation of the Daniel material in Matthew 24 actually just teaches us how to understand prophecy. Jesus repackages the whole abomination of desolation piece to no longer really be about the second century B.C. Antiochene crisis but to be about the A.D. 70 Roman crisis when the Romans came and destroyed the temple. So it really helps us to understand how prophecy works in that respect. So okay, let's take our cues from Jesus here. When he quotes that piece, I think he's inviting us to go back and look at the whole context. I don't think that's unreasonable to think.

Well, when we go back and look at that whole context, what do we find out now? If Jesus can repackage some of that material for his own time, what if we go back and see what sort of categories that Daniel 9:24-27 gives us to help us understand Jesus' ministry as messiah? Well, there's lots of things there. So for example, the references in Daniel 9 to how a holy place will be anointed, that seems to me to be a category in which we can say, "Huh, that sounds a whole lot like Jesus' resurrection. Jesus says the temple was destroyed (his crucifixion) and yet his resurrection validates that he is truly who he was. He is the place of sacrifice." So in a sense, Daniel offers us a neat category for how we understand the messianic profile—what the messiah actually ends up doing. When the messiah is cut off, which in Daniel 9 is a tragedy (that's the context there), why can't that also in a roundabout way be a category at least for understanding Jesus' own suffering as a suffering servant messiah? Whenever in Daniel 9 it talks about the abomination of desolation—the temple's desecration—well, Jesus has already re-appropriated that to the physical temple of A.D. 70. But given what we've seen how Jesus understands the physical temple to be intimately linked with his body (because he is the place of sacrifice), well, why can't we also see that as a reference to Jesus' own work on the cross—his crucifixion—as well? Maybe the crucifixion of Jesus really is the ultimate desecration of the temple. Here's sort of my point: all of Daniel 9 potentially becomes really good material for crafting that profile for the messiah. Right?

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MSH: Yeah, it's good theological fodder for the Christ event in all of its aspects.

MLH: Right. And again, notice what I've done. I've said, "Look, I love the insight of critical scholars. I love the historical work they've done. Let's go with it. Let's just go with it." Does that mean I can't also see this as being part of the messianic profile? No. It actually... There's a way to do it. There's theological ways of getting there I think. So you *can* have both.

MSH: You'd have the same discussion with a Second Temple Jew. A Second Temple Jew would say, "Oh, yeah, we know what this is about. We saw this happen. Blah blah blah blah blah." You'd have the same conversation with them. Well, what if this guy came along and was doing all these miracles and the blind see and the deaf hear and he raises the dead, and he starts talking about himself

as being the temple? Again, you get the idea. You'd have the same conversation with a Second Temple Jew, not a modern scholar, about how the symbology and really the theological content—some of these motifs—wind up aligning with each other.

MLH: Mm hmm. That's a good point. Yeah, so I am not afraid of what the critical scholars have said here. I'm using Goldingay's little piece there. He says the language is so elusive in Daniel 9. I mean, it kind of invites a re-appropriation. And so let's go with it! And if you look at how Jesus understood temple ministry, it just all fits.

Now Mike, somebody could say to me, "Okay, Matt. You're making this... You're turning it into almost a prediction/fulfillment scheme with Daniel's prophecy." And I would respond, "No, not exactly." I mean, it's act and reenactment. And I don't think I can be accused of doing something inappropriate there because Jesus has re-appropriated it as an act/reenactment in Matthew 24. I'm just following his cues, and there's nothing inconsistent with that. And here's the point: at the very least, I don't think what I've proposed is unreasonable. I think it's very reasonable. And I think one thing I would also say is we don't have to ignore the second century B.C. context of Daniel 9 in order to discover messianic content for first century A.D. application to the life of Jesus. In fact, I think knowing a lot about the history of Daniel 9 (the second century context) goes a long way in actually filling out that messianic profile itself and pointing us to Jesus.

MSH: Right. And for sure other writers like Paul are going to be doing this with various Old Testament passages—the whole act/reenactment. So why can't Jesus do that? [laughs]

MLH: Right. Yeah.

MSH: So Paul can do it but Jesus isn't allowed to do it? That doesn't make any sense.

MLH: [laughs] Right. It doesn't at all. You know, my introduction to this whole idea was really thinking through Paul. And you know this: when you do a PhD, you're going to spend a lot of time in the text. If you do it right, you're going to spend *lots* of time. You've got to be patient with the text. And just wading through Paul, I really learned how to read the Old Testament. And then later I come back to Jesus and I think, "Huh. He's doing the same thing." And as it turns out, they're on the same plane. In scholarship, there's a lot of talk about how Jesus is... It's Jesus versus Paul. [laughs] Sometimes.

MSH: Right.

MLH: And I do not see that one iota.

MSH: Yeah.

MLH: Yeah, they're very consistent with one another. I think the entire New Testament is consistent with itself and it's also consistent with the Old Testament. There's a lot of continuity here, much more than maybe some scholars are willing to admit.

MSH: Yeah. And there's a... For those who are interested in that particular subject (Jesus and Paul aligning), I'm trying to remember, I think it was... We had Nijay Gupta on a while ago. And I think it was him that made the reference to David Wenham's work. Wenham was a New Testament scholar in this regard. So there's plenty out there if you're interested in this—how the two align. There's good scholarship on that to defend the fact that they do align.

MLH: Mm hmm. Yeah. Sometimes the differences between the two are often exploited and just go too far. They're exaggerated in a lot of ways. And for me (and I think people who read my work are going to see this), I'm honest about some of the freshness, the newness, in some of these New Testament re-appropriations of the Old Testament. I want to admit that. I mean, Jesus is giving a fresh interpretation of Daniel.

MSH: But the mode of the approach is very familiar.

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MLH: It is. Because think about it, Jesus re-appropriates Daniel for his own time. But notice what Daniel has done. Daniel has re-appropriated Jeremiah's prophecy for *his* own time. [laughs] So there are very consistent ways of doing this. And it's not flippant re-appropriation. I think there's a logic to it. There's a deep structural logic to this that I think we can celebrate and look into.

MSH: If you're looking at the motifs, that would certainly be the case—how to propel some of these motifs that we've talked about (servant and son and Davidic king and all this sort of stuff). They contribute to all of those.

MLH: And they're so intertwined. I mean, think of just Jesus' statement about how he describes himself as the Son of Man. He says, "The Son of Man has not come to be served, but to serve." So he's fused servant language (Isaiah) with Daniel language (Son of Man). So he's brought the two together. So not only do they give us a story... We don't approach these motifs through a linear fashion, but it's more webbed. They're more connected in all sorts of different ways. And when you see that deep connection, you have a really neat story to work with.

MSH: Yeah, I mean, we tend to as moderns just generally, but especially as evangelicals... And again, this goes back to the way we're taught about hermeneutics, which I think is unfortunate. We're looking for one verse to tell us precisely in exhaustive detail how some other verse worked. And a lot of times

they just don't do that. Biblical writers don't do that. They'll marry two or three verses. And they'll presume... And I think their presumption is based upon... They're thinking you are reading it as story. [laughs] I think that's their assumption.

MLH: Right. Oh, true.

MSH: They don't need to spell it out for you. You should be able to discern (“let the reader understand”). You should be able to discern how these things support each other and how they interlock. Because you should be reading this story. “Don't you know the story?” [MLH laughs] “If you knew the story you wouldn't ask this question. How are you not following the story?”

MLH: Mm hmm.

MSH: I mean, I think that's exactly the mentality and the modality of how a lot of this works when it comes to not just prophecy but hermeneutics in general. We're supposed to be tracking with the story.

MLH: Right. And part of our problem hermeneutically (you talked about hermeneutics in general), is I think we need to recognize that our hermeneutics is the result of our own cultural assumptions sometimes. Because as Westerners (Americans and stuff), we're a very individualistic-based culture. And some of those assumptions bleed into how we read Scripture. We read it as being all about us. And when you make it all about us, or all about yourself, it's really different than the way the Jews read it. Because when Jews read Scripture, they saw themselves as part of a larger story—a larger community, a larger family. And they weren't as individualistic in their assumptions. And that allowed them to see themselves as part of a story and whatnot. But evangelicals, the only reason you read your Bible is to get a word from God for yourself. And there's a place for that. I don't want to take away from that. But at some point, we need to see our relationship with Jesus as being part of a much bigger story. It's a story about, well, what you've always talked about—a reconstitution of the council. It's the idea of being part of a heavenly family. There's the family corporate motif there, too. So I just can't help but think our cultural assumptions almost blind us to the very thing that we're trying to see. [laughs] In one of my Scripture readings, the past week we've been in... We're going through the Psalms from the beginning to the end. So we've been in the 80s. Are you familiar with any of the 80s Psalms? [laughs] Eighty-nine, right? So we've been talking a lot about...

MSH: Yeah, 82 and 89. Yeah.

MLH: Eighty-two and 89. We've been looking at that. And so here's the deal: you've messed me up. Because every time I read texts like that, I immediately

think Mike Heiser. [laughter] It's so much fun. That's good. Maybe we can bleed into some Romans stuff later, too.

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MSH: Yeah, we're almost there, for those who are listening. We're almost ready to transition into the New Testament specifically. So we want to thank Matt again for being with us and helping us think more broadly about... We got into a lot of prophetic stuff today because it's Daniel, and that's where the popular perception of Daniel lives. But there's that. But how to think more biblically about it, both in terms of what the original context of a passage might have been about, and also how it could be repurposed and reenacted. So the act/reenactment thing I think its really important here. And again, the fact that Jesus, like other New Testament authors, is so willing to repurpose content and motifs and different points of the messianic profile toward a specific conclusion that again, if we're following the story, we should be able to put these things together when the writers and the characters of the story start doing this. So that's what we're looking for. And again, we're almost ready to transition into the New Testament. But thanks for being with us and helping us do this, Matt.

MLH: Thanks, man.

TS: Alright, Mike, that's interesting about Daniel. And we're getting close to the New Testament. So I think y'all are setting the stage. I mean, this could be a really good book, too. So this is a great podcast series.

MSH: Yeah, I mean, what we're trying to do *is* set the stage to when we jump into the New Testament, that some of the stuff that Paul does with the Old Testament that looks kind of strange or again makes it look like he's freewheeling, he's really not. By his time the story has been played out and Paul knows the story really well from all through the Old Testament all the way into what Jesus did and what he taught. And so I think it's going to help us sort out the logic of what Paul is doing in various places. And so that's the goal.

TS: Alright. Interested to get into the New Testament, and ready for next week's installment. And with that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.