

Daniel 9:24 (Part IV)

Introduction

This morning we come to the last of the six things that the angel Gabriel tells Daniel are to be accomplished within the seventy sevens.

Seventy sevens are decreed about your people and your holy city,
to make an end of the transgression,
to SEAL up *sin*,
and to atone for *iniquity*,
to bring in everlasting righteousness,
to SEAL vision and prophet,
and to anoint a most holy.

We've seen so much already in the first five of these accomplishments—certainly, we must be anticipating eagerly what we're about to see in this sixth one. Remember how there are three matching pairs, here; so the last of these pairs is this: “Seventy sevens are decreed... to atone for iniquity... **and to anoint a most holy.**” If you want to know what the main point of this sermon is, it's this—“to anoint a most holy.” And now the “million dollar question” is this: *What—or who(?)*—is this “most holy”?

I. “most holy” (an adjective)

The Hebrew for this expression is “*qo-des qo-des*” or “*qo-des qa-da-sim*” – “holy of holies.” It's a noun repeated two times in a row (so it's a noun phrase), but very often it's used in a sentence not as a noun, but as an adjective – describing or modifying a different noun (another person, or place, or thing). So, for example, listen to these verses:

- Exodus 30:35–36 — Make an *incense* blended as by the perfumer... You shall beat some of it very small, and put part of it before the testimony in the tent of meeting where I shall meet with you. ***It shall be most holy [qo-des qa-da-sim] – it shall be “holy of holies.” for you.***

There's no question here about what it is that's “most holy” is there? This is a “most holy” incense – an incense that is “holy of holies.” Now consider these other examples and see if you notice any connection between these things that are “most holy.”

- Exodus 40:10 — You shall also anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar, so that ***the altar may become most holy [qo-des qa-da-sim] – an altar that is “holy of holies”***.
- Leviticus 2:3 — ***The rest of the grain offering*** shall be for Aaron and his sons; ***it is a most holy part [qo-des qa-da-sim] – “holy of holies” of the LORD's food offerings.***
- Ezekiel 43:12 — This is the law of the temple: ***the whole territory on the top of the mountain all around shall be most holy [qo-des qa-da-sim] – “holy of holies”***.

□ 1 Chronicles 23:13 (NASB; Hebrew; cf. Keil)— *Aaron* was set apart to sanctify *him as most holy [qo-des qa-da-sim]* – “**holy of holies**”, **he and his sons forever**.

Do you see the common denominator here between all the things that are described as “most holy”? All these things are connected with the tabernacle or the temple worship. If we’re counting, “*qo-des qa-da-sim*” refers *most often* (14x’s) to the altar and to the sacrifices that were offered upon that altar (Exod. 29:37; 30:10; 40:10; Lev. 2:3, 10; 6:17, 25, 29; 7:1, 6; 10:12, 17; 14:13; 24:9). It also refers to the incense offered on the altar of incense (Exod. 30:35-36) and to all the territory of the temple in Ezekiel’s vision (Ezek. 43:12; 48:12). In one place it’s used to describe all the utensils used in the tabernacle worship as well as all the tabernacle furnishings and even the tabernacle itself (Exod. 30:25-29). And finally, we see that in one place it refers to the priesthood – to Aaron and his sons forever (1 Chron. 23:13; cf. Exod. 28:36-38).

Obviously, there wasn’t anything intrinsically holy about these things. There wasn’t anything “magical” about them. They weren’t holy in and of themselves. Only God is holy like that. The point here is that these things were set apart *from* any kind of common or mundane use, and set apart exclusively *unto* the holy God and unto His service (cf. Exod. 30:31-33, 37-38). In particular, these things were set apart to accomplish God’s purposes in entering into fellowship—covenant relationship—with His people, and so in this sense they weren’t just “holy” (*qo-des*), they were “*most holy*” (*qo-des qo-des* or *qo-des qa-da-sim*). I’m reminded of the Lord’s words to Moses in Exodus 25:

□ Exodus 25:8 — Let them make me a sanctuary [which assumes the furniture, and the sacrifices, and the priesthood that go with it], *that I may dwell in their midst*.

Everything that was connected with this sanctuary and with this stated goal and purpose that God might dwell among his people and that His people might enjoy fellowship with Him was, indeed, “*most holy*.”

II. “to anoint A MOST HOLY” (not an adjective; a substantive)

So we come back, now, to our passage this morning—“Seventy sevens are decreed... **to anoint a most holy**”—and the first thing we might notice now is that this phrase, *qo-des qa-da-sim*, is not being used as an adjective. It’s not modifying or describing any other noun. Instead, it’s all by itself. We could say that it’s used here as a “stand alone” noun (substantively): To anoint *what? A most holy.*” But is this a person, a place, or a thing? Everywhere else in the Bible, the answer to this question is never in doubt. It’s clear from the context. So listen, for example, to these verses, and see again if you notice any common theme:

□ Ezekiel 42:13 (cf. 2 Chron. 31:14) — The north chambers and the south chambers... are the holy chambers, where the priests who approach the LORD **shall eat the most holy**. There they shall put **the most holy—the grain offering, the sin offering, and the guilt offering**.

You don’t eat a most holy *place* or a most holy *person*, so we know this must be a *thing* – the most holy *offerings*.

- Numbers 4:4, 15 — This is the service of the sons of Kohath in the tent of meeting: **the most holy... when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry these.**

This time, instead of the offerings, it's the furniture in the tabernacle that is "the most holy."

- 2 Chronicles 4:19, 22 — Solomon made... the sockets of the temple, for **the inner doors to the Most Holy.**

You can figure it out for yourself, can't you? The doors in the temple tell us that this must be the most holy *place* or *room*. Are you seeing, again, the theme? Everything is still intimately connected with the tabernacle or the temple worship. If we're counting, "*qo-des ha-qo-da-sim*" ("the most holy") refers most often to the most holy *place* – that inner room of the tabernacle or temple where the ark of the covenant was placed (Exod. 26:33, 34; 1 Kings 6:16; 7:50; 8:6; 1 Chron. 6:49; 2 Chron. 3:8, 10; 4:22; 5:7; Ezek. 41:4; 45:3 [in apposition to an articular noun]; cf. Heb. 9:3). Then it also refers to the sacrificial offerings (Lev. 21:22; Num. 18:9; 2 Chron. 31:14; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65; Ezek. 42:13; 44:13) and to the tabernacle or temple furniture (Num. 4:4, 19; Ezek. 44:13). Are you getting a sense of the "flavor," as it were, of these words? Everywhere else in the Old Testament, this expression ("[the] most holy") is reserved for those things connected with the tabernacle (or the temple) as the place where God came down to dwell among His people and where the people came to enjoy fellowship with God.

III. What was Daniel thinking?

So when we read here in Daniel chapter nine, "Seventy sevens... to anoint a most holy" what word would you supply—*if you were Daniel*—after "a most holy"? A most holy *thing*? A most holy *one*? A most holy *place*? Wouldn't *Daniel* be thinking of a new and rebuilt temple?—A most holy *place* where God would put His name forever and dwell among us forever; a most holy *place* where we could enjoy fellowship with God in a Sabbath rest and Jubilee that never ends?

Remember, the book of Daniel begins with the desecration of Solomon's temple in far-away Jerusalem (Dan. 1:1-2; 5:1-4, 23), and remember how it's also concerned with the desecration of a temple (or temples) that are still future – one by Antiochus Epiphanes and the Greeks and another by Titus and the Romans (Dan. 7:25; 8:11; 11:31). So what do we see here? Seventy sevens to anoint a most holy that will never, ever again be desecrated or destroyed – a "most holy" that will continue and remain forever. Remember, too, how the angel says that "seventy sevens are decreed about... *your holy [qo-des] city*... to anoint a most holy." What was it that made the *city* holy? It was the temple *within* the city (cf. the connection between the city and the sanctuary [*qo-des*; NOT *qo-des qa-da-sim*; cf. Steinmann] in verse 26). And finally, we remember the matching "negative" in the first half of verse 29. "Seventy sevens are decreed... **to atone for iniquity... and to anoint a most holy.**" It was on the day of atonement once a year that the blood of the sacrifice for atonement was brought into "the Most Holy" (Lev. 16)—the Most Holy PLACE.

So, then, this is what Daniel *must* have understood: “Seventy sevens... to anoint a most holy *place*” – a new and rebuilt temple that will continue and remain forever as a place where redeemed sinners can enjoy eternal fellowship with God (cf. ESV; NRSV; NET; NCV). That’s what Daniel must have been envisioning.

IV. “to anoint a most holy” (a substantive without a “the”)

But then there’s this: Everywhere else in the Bible, whenever this phrase functions as a “stand alone” noun it always has the article (*qo-des ha-qo-da-sim*; “**the** most holy”). But not here. This is the only place in all the Bible where there’s no article (no “the”). In other words, what the angel “should” say—especially if he’s referring to a rebuilt temple—is this: “Seventy sevens... to anoint *the* most holy [place].” And many versions of the Bible, recognizing this fact, translate it exactly so—they all add a “the” for “*the* most holy place” (cf. NASB; NIV; HCSB; ASV; KJV; NKJV; NLT). Because, after all, that’s what it should say, right? If this is referring to “*the* most holy *place*” then it should say “*the* most holy *place*” as it does everywhere else. Only it doesn’t say this.

“Seventy sevens are decreed about your people and your holy city... to anoint *a* most holy.” On the one hand, it’s impossible if we’re Daniel not to be thinking of the temple rebuilt – a temple that’s somehow *fit* for that eschatological day when the covenant-breaking of God’s people is no more, when sin has been sealed up, when iniquity has been atoned for once and for all, when everlasting righteousness has been brought in, and when vision and prophet have been sealed. If I’m Daniel, I can’t help but be thinking of a rebuilt temple—with sacrifice and priesthood—that’s fit for that eschatological day. And yet at the same time, if I’m Daniel I can’t help but be wondering what such a temple—with its sacrifice and priesthood—could actually *look* like. If the transgression of God’s people is finished and their sin sealed up and their iniquity atoned for, then what sort of temple could be fit for life lived under such glorious conditions? What sort of temple could be fit to accomplish all of these glorious things? Certainly not the temple with which Daniel was acquainted. Certainly not the temple with its constantly repeated sacrifices by a constantly renewed priesthood for the sins of a constantly covenant-breaking people. And so even as we can’t help but think with Daniel of a rebuilt temple, we also can’t help but wonder with Daniel what such a “temple” could possibly *look* like. We have to feel with Daniel the mystery of seventy sevens to anoint “a most holy” – “a most holy” (*qo-des qa-da-sim*) that’s somehow fit for that eternal sabbath rest and Jubilee of all God’s redeemed people.

V. “Seventy sevens... to anoint a most holy.”

In the Bible, anointing with oil was a visible way of consecrating a thing or a person to some holy or sacred use (cf. Exod. 28:41; 29:36). So kings were anointed (1 Sam. 16:13; 2 Sam. 2:4) and prophets could also be anointed (1 Kings 19:16). But in light of the connection here with “a most holy” we have to be thinking of the things associated with the tabernacle or the temple. So we read in Exodus chapter 30:

- Exodus 30:25–29 (cf. Exod. 40:9-11; Lev. 8:10-11, 30; Num. 7:1) — You shall make... a **holy anointing oil** blended as by the perfumer; it shall be a **holy anointing oil**. With it you **shall anoint** the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony, and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense, and the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils and the basin and its stand. **You shall consecrate** them, **that they may be most holy...**”

This fits perfectly, so far, with our understanding that Gabriel is referring to the anointing of a most holy *place* – including all the most holy *things* associated with that most holy place. But then we also read in the very next verse:

- Exodus 30:30 (cf. Exod. 28:41; 40:12-15; Lev. 4:3, 5, 16; Num. 35:25) — **You shall anoint** Aaron and his sons, and **consecrate** them, that they may serve me as priests.

So *along with* the holy place and the holy things associated with that place (including the altar and the sacrifices) we also have a holy priesthood that’s anointed with the same holy oil. We read in Exodus 29:

- Exodus 29:4–9, 21 (cf. Lev. 8:12, 30) — You shall bring Aaron... to the entrance of the tent of meeting... You shall take the anointing oil and pour it on his head and anoint him... Then you shall take part of the blood that is on the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and his garments, and on his sons and his sons’ garments with him. He and his garments shall be holy, and his sons and his sons’ garments with him.
- 1 Chronicles 23:13 (NASB; Hebrew; cf. Keil) — Aaron was **set apart** to **sanctify him as most holy, he and his sons forever** to burn incense before the LORD, to minister to Him and to bless in His name forever.

Do you see, now, how when we say “a most holy [*place*]” (*qo-des qa-da-sim*) included with this place must also be the most holy priesthood along with all the most holy things (including the altar and the sacrifices)? The *place* assumes *ALL* of these things – *all* that God, in His wisdom, had ordained so that He might dwell with and among us and that we might enjoy fellowship with Him.

And so once again, if I’m Daniel I have to be asking: What sort of temple (complete with altar and sacrifice and priesthood), could ever be suited or fit for that day of eternal Sabbath rest and Jubilee – when the transgression of God’s people is finished, when their sin is sealed up, and their iniquity atoned for? Indeed, at what sort of temple—with altar and sacrifice and priesthood—could all of these things ever be accomplished?

VI. Fulfillment

In Zechariah chapter four, anointing with oil symbolizes, visually, being anointed with the Holy Spirit (Zech. 4:1-14; cf. 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 1 Jn. 2:20). We see this same connection in Isaiah sixty-one, a passage that we know is fulfilled in Jesus:

- Isaiah 61:1–2 (cf. 11:2; 42:1; 1 Sam. 10:1, 6; 16:13) — The **Spirit** of the Lord God is **upon me**, because the LORD has **anointed me** to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to... proclaim the year of the LORD's favor.

The anointing of the tabernacle, and the anointing of the altar, and the anointing of the priest with the holy anointing oil is fulfilled in the anointing of Jesus with the Holy Spirit – when Jesus was consecrated and set apart to be for us our temple, our priest, and our sacrifice, the one in whom God comes down to dwell with us and through whom we draw near to God to enjoy fellowship with Him. So we read in Matthew chapter three:

- Matthew 3:13–17 (cf. Luke 4:16-21; Acts 4:26-27; 10:38) — Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

The Hebrew word for “anointed” is *ma-si-ah* – Messiah. The Greek word for “anointed” is *christos* – Christ. And so we have believed and have come to know with Peter that Jesus is the *Christ* (the *anointed*), the *holy one* of God (Mat. 16:16; Jn. 6:69; cf. Jn. 20:31; Acts 3:20; 5:42; 9:22; 17:3; 18:5, 28; 1 Jn. 2:22; 5:1; Mk. 1:24; Lk. 1:35; Acts 3:14). Are you seeing all the full riches that are in Christ? Where the Old Testament looks forward to a rebuilt temple with sacrifice and priesthood that will continue forever and ever, we see now the fulfillment of this temple and all that belongs to this temple—we see the fulfillment of this “most holy,” this *qo-des qa-da-sim*—in Christ.

- John 1:14 — The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us.

Jesus said, as He stood in the court of the temple at Jerusalem:

- John 2:19–21 — “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body [the true fulfillment of that temple that was about to pass away forever].

The Apostle Paul writes:

- Colossians 1:19–20 (cf. 2:9) — In [Christ] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile *to himself* all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Conclusion

And so we see once more that the “seventy sevens” have been fulfilled. “Seventy sevens,” the angel said to Daniel, “are decreed... to anoint a most holy.” Do you see the riches, now, in this phrase? In these words? What *sort* of temple, complete with sacrifice and priesthood, could be *fit* for *these days* when the covenant-breaking of God’s people is ended, when the guilt of our sin has been sealed up, and when iniquity has been atoned for once and for all? What *sort* of temple could be *fit* for *these days* when everlasting righteousness has been brought in and vision and prophet have been sealed? Indeed, at what *sort* of temple could these things ever be accomplished? And we answer with joy: Only the temple, complete with sacrifice and priesthood, that **is Christ**. Do you see in Christ your all? Do you know the real peace and joy of drawing near to God through Christ by faith? Are you every day enjoying fellowship with God through Christ, by faith? Have you found—and are you finding—**in Him** your Sabbath rest and Jubilee?