

Postponement, Intercalation and Contingency

📖 Various Passages

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We come today to the NT portion of our class on Major Prophetic Passages and what we are trying to do is two things. First, evaluate all the major prophetic passages to show the big picture. To be clear, by saying major I do not mean to say that the many other prophetic passages are unimportant. What I mean is that these passages are key to understanding the overall prophetic program because they paint the big picture inside of which all the other prophecies should be placed. For that reason, it might have been better if I titled the class Key Prophetic Passages. Daniel is a key and really he is the key to all prophetic revelation because he paints the biggest picture of all, a picture that is still unfolding today. Ezekiel also is a major key because of its relevance for today and the return and regathering of Israel in the land. Zechariah is a key because of his revelation of the attack on Jerusalem that is immediately followed by the kingdom. But there are other prophetic passages that could be brought into the mix and I don't want you to think I am ignorant of those or avoiding them because they don't fit the prophetic picture I am painting. Isaiah has large prophetic sections as does Jeremiah. The minor prophets are largely prophetic. Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and the Psalms all contain prophetic sections as well. I'm aware of these passages but the reason I am not taking us to those is because this is not an exhaustive study and I think these passages can be fit into the bigger picture the key players are painting. Second, showing how this big picture unfolds according to progressive revelation. By progressive revelation we mean that all Scripture was not given at one time but over a long period of time so that the prophetic picture emerges piece by piece over several centuries. And what we want to do is allow each piece to make its contribution to the big picture while preserving its significance to the original audience. This way we don't commit the error of reading later revelation back into earlier revelation. What I mean when I say that is not reading the NT Church back into OT Israel but allowing the passages of the OT that relate to Israel to continue to keep their original significance to the nation Israel and not allowing later revelation of the NT Church to be grafted into those OT passages. If you allow the Church to be grafted back into the OT passages then you end up changing the meaning of the OT passages so that now the OT passage has a different significance than the original audience could have and would have understood. And that means that the Bible's message is unstable because now we can posit that in the future the meaning of the NT revelation in the epistles could change or take on new significance and by doing this you are saying truth is not stable, the truth changes and this quickly

devolves into relativism. So the two things we are doing in this class is trying to paint the big picture from the key players in Bible prophecy and develop this big picture according to progressive revelation, preserving the original intent and significance the passage had to the original audience. And all I'm really saying here is let's let the Bible speak for itself. Let's let God tell the story piece by piece and imagine how the picture might have been shaping up for those who had less pieces than us and by the end we will have all the pieces put together, prayerfully in the proper orientation.

Turn to Matthew 3. The genealogy and birth of the King have already been narrated in Matt 1. The escape to Egypt and return to Nazareth where the King grew up has already been described in Matt 2. Matt 3 takes us 30 years later to a very interesting person who appeared on the scene, John the Baptist. You see in verse 1 that he was "preaching in the wilderness of Judea," this was east of Jerusalem near the Jordan River. In verse 4 you see he was clothed in "camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist and his food was locusts and wild honey." This was one strange dude. And apparently, everyone else thought so too because in verse 5 "all Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan." Masses of people were going out to see this guy. Why? Because everything about John except one thing was identical to Elijah. Elijah ministered in the wilderness of Judea. Elijah was dressed in a garment of camel's hair. Elijah even ate wild foods. The only thing different was baptizing. Elijah baptized no one. John was baptizing. That's why they called him John the Baptist. Not because he was a part of the Baptist denomination. He was baptizing people and in Judaism nobody baptized anybody else. They knew of baptism but it was self-baptism, baptism was walking into a pool of water called a *mikveh* and walking out the other side of the steps without touching anyone. Baptism was a part of ritual cleanliness and identification with a group, namely the Pharisees, so what he was doing by baptizing others was strange and that's why they nicknamed him John the Baptizer. And lots of people were going out to see Him because he looked like Elijah, he ate like Elijah, he dressed like Elijah and he ministered where Elijah was taken up into a whirlwind. So people wondered, "Are you Elijah?" because Elijah was predicted to come in Mal 4:5-6, and the Jews believed that Elijah was to return. When was Elijah supposed to return? Just before the establishment of the kingdom of God. And look at John's message in 3:2, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." So the kingdom was near to coming. Maybe John is Elijah, people thought. He says the kingdom was "at hand" and the perfect tense of that word *γγιζω* means "near" not "here." We have lots of theologians saying that the kingdom was already here in the person of Jesus. That is a lie. It was near, it was not here. In order for it to actually come what had to happen? The nation Israel had to "repent." That's what John says, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." It's near and so there is a spiritual preparation that must take place among the nation. Repent means what? Have a change of mind and here the nation of Israel needs to have a change of mind in order for the kingdom to come. A change of mind about what? About the kind of righteousness necessary to enter the kingdom. You see, by this time the Pharisees dominated all of Jewish society. They had all kinds of rules and regulations that they had put together into an entire religious system. The religious system was based on the Bible but it was a distortion of the Bible. Nothing has changed. Lots of ministries and

denominations are Bible based. But that doesn't mean they teach what the Bible teaches. People do the same thing today that the Pharisees did yesterday. They misinterpret the text in order to support their religious system. The main issue with the Pharisees religious system is it promoted a kind of external righteousness and this made them think they were alright before God; they looked holy, they had holy clothes, holy underwear, holy socks, holy looking faces, it was all nonsense, but that was the kind of righteousness the Pharisees told the nation they needed to have to enter the kingdom of God. John slightly disagreed in verse 7 when he called the Pharisees and Sadducees a bunch of snakes. And so this baptism of repentance which everyone was going out to see was a baptism that would signify their break with Pharisaism and their identification with John and his message, that message that the kingdom was near. And by receiving this baptism they were saying they would believe in the one John pointed out as the Messiah. And you can see from verse 3 that John was clearly at this time viewed as the fulfillment of Isa 40:3 which prophesied of a prophet to come who would prepare the way for the Lord. Always the prophet preceded the king and announced the king's arrival. Samuel preceded Saul and announced Saul. Nathan preceded Solomon and announced Solomon and so forth and so on. All the authorized kings of Judah were preceded by a prophet who announced the king. John was the prophet sent before King Jesus to prepare the way for Him and to announce Him when He arrived on the scene. Another interesting thing to add to the mix is there hadn't been a prophet for over 400 years. The intertestamental times were a time of God's silence in preparation for the Messiah's coming. So here we are and you can see in verse 12 that from John's point of view, when Messiah came He came with "a winnowing fork in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." What's that a picture of? It's a picture of a separation; the wheat being gathered into the barn, which is the kingdom, and the chaff being burned up with unquenchable fire, that is being judged and excluded from the kingdom. And those in view are the nation Israel. A judgment was coming on Israel because what has to happen before the kingdom can come? Judgment! There can't be a kingdom of God until there is judgment on the world and that means there can't be any kingdom now because no judgment on the world has taken place. And if we have learned anything from Daniel we learned that there must be a judgment before the kingdom. What was the stone in Daniel 2? It was Messiah. What did the stone do? It smashed the four metal statue at the base and obliterated it then grew to fill the whole earth. What are the four metals? Four Gentile kingdoms. So what is the picture of the stone smashing the four metals? The Messiah judging and establishing His kingdom to fill the whole earth. And John you can see in verse 12 was expecting that to come in his generation. Everything prophetically speaking was right on track. But the nation had to repent.

I want to capitalize on Matt 3:2 because this is a key to the Gospels and the rest of the NT. There is a condition for the kingdom to come. What's the condition? Israel must repent. Repent is a change of mind so repent about what? The kind of righteousness necessary to enter the kingdom. They must realize that self-righteousness can never get you there, only the Messiah's righteousness which comes through faith can get you there. This condition for the kingdom to arrive we call contingency. And when I say contingency I mean from the human

perspective. I'm not saying the plan of God is contingent. The plan of God doesn't change and hasn't changed and will never change. But God's plan has contingency built into it in order to generate genuine human responsibility. In other words, think about certain events in Scripture that teach contingency. For example, think about God's word to Adam. If you eat you will surely die. True or false? True statement. But wait a minute. Didn't God know that Adam would eat? Of course, He's omniscient. Then was it really possible that Adam could not eat and live forever? Of course. You have to look at it that way. You can't say, "Well, God set it up so that Adam would fall." No, He didn't. He set it up so Adam would live and Adam could have lived but he chose to sin and that brought in death. But did the plan of God change. No. This was forever in the plan of God. Take another example, God promised Jeroboam an eternal throne and an eternal kingdom if he would obey. Was God just saying that or was that true? It was true. But isn't it a problem that God had already promised David an eternal throne and an eternal kingdom unconditionally? How then can He promise it to Jeroboam? Jeroboam is not of David's house. Then Jeroboam failed to obey and so He never received the promise but does that mean the original promise God made Him was not genuine? Of course not. It was genuine. That is the way God has constructed history. It has contingency built in. Take another example that we are seeing right here in Matthew. John the Baptist. Is John the Baptist Elijah? He looks like Elijah, he eats like Elijah, the people think he is Elijah. Is John Elijah? Well, it depends. "Depends on what you say? How could it depend on anything? This is the plan of God we're talking about." I realize that. But it absolutely depends on something. John's being Elijah is contingent. Jesus said so, Matt 11:14, "And if you are willing to accept, John himself is Elijah who is to come." So John is Elijah if what? If they were willing to accept John. That's contingency. Why would John have been Elijah? Because if they had accepted John they would have accepted John's message of repentance, they would have realized the righteousness necessary to enter the kingdom is found only in Messiah and when John pointed to Jesus as the Messiah they would have believed in Him. But did they receive John? No. And so was John Elijah? No. It was only contingent. He could have been. But he was not. Jesus said, "Elijah is to come." And that means John did not fulfill Isa 40:3. He could have but he did not because he was rejected. That's the idea of contingency and it is built into the plan of God all over Scripture. Here's one more example that is so practical. Paul in Acts 16:31 said what to the Philippian jailer and his family? "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." Is that true? Of course. But does that remain a genuine offer for a person who God knows will not believe? If God knows the person will not believe then how could it still be true for them? Well, it is. That's the whole point. And that is the way you have to think about history because if you don't you're going to slide off into a fatalistic determinism or chance. There are no other options and those two options are paganism. In fact, they are the twin truths of paganism used to try to write a universal history. And we aren't pagan. We're Christian. We are here to learn to think God's thoughts after Him. And the thought in Matt 3 coming through John the Baptizer is that the kingdom's arrival is contingent on what? Israel's repentance. John clearly thought the kingdom could come at that time if the nation repented. So contingency of the kingdom is the first big idea today.

The second big idea is to think about why John thought the kingdom could come. Well, let's think about what he knew from Scripture. Did he know Daniel? Absolutely. He knew exactly what we know; four successive Gentile kingdoms would come and then Messiah would return in great judgment and establish the kingdom of God on the earth. What are the four kingdoms? Who's first? Babylon. Had Babylon come? Yes. Who's second? Medo-Persia. Had Medo-Persia come? Yes. Who's third? Greece. Had Greece come? Yes. Who's fourth? Rome. Had Rome come? Yes. Well, what kingdom comes fifth? The kingdom of God. So was John right to think that the kingdom of God was near? Absolutely. Here's another question though. Did John know that Rome would be divided into two phases, an ancient and future phase? No. Go back and read Dan 2 and 7. Turn to Dan 2:33. Here's all Daniel was told about the fourth kingdom. "its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay." Is that a kingdom in one or two phases? You can't tell. It could be one or two. That's the mystery of Bible prophecy and how it unfolds. Look at 2:40, here's the interpretation of the fourth kingdom. "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces. ⁴¹"In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. ⁴²"As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. ⁴³"And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery." One or two phases to the fourth kingdom? It's hard to tell. You could say, well, it says it will be a divided kingdom. But it's not divided in time, it's divided in strength. So you can't tell for sure. And then verse 44, "In the days of those kings (the ten kings) the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed..." So was John right to think that the kingdom was near? As far as Dan 2 is concerned, sure. As far as he could tell his nation was living in the fourth kingdom, Rome, and the kingdom of God could interrupt and come anytime. Turn to Dan 7:7. This is the fourth beast which is also the fourth kingdom that turned out to be Rome. "After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. ⁸"While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great *boasts*." Can you tell from the text that the fourth kingdom would be divided into two separate time frames? Can't tell at all. We can only tell because of hindsight. Hindsight is 20-20 but we couldn't tell if we were Daniel. And Daniel certainly saw only one phase to this kingdom because look at 7:19, "Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet, ²⁰and the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great *boasts* and which was larger in appearance than its associates." For Daniel this was all just one beast, not plural beasts, it was the fourth beast in the vision, the fourth kingdom, and

it really is just one kingdom in a way, you never read of a fifth beast. And that's why John the Baptizer, in Matthew 3:2, living in the fourth Gentile kingdom is saying, "Hey guys, the kingdom of God is near, you need to repent," because the kingdom is contingent on repentance. But something happened so that the fourth kingdom, Rome, was divided into two phases. What happened? The nation did not repent. That's contingency. And so what happened to the kingdom? It was postponed.

This is the second word I want to talk about today; postponement. This is a very unpopular concept in theological circles because when people say the kingdom was postponed they think you are saying that the nation Israel thwarted the plan of God by not repenting. They think this word means you are saying God's plan failed and so God had to scramble and come up with another plan. They think you are saying God is not sovereign. These same people reject the concept of contingency as I've described it, and just as an example, they say John is Elijah. Elijah has already come and there is no Elijah to come in the future. They can't accept that Jesus said that John only came in the spirit and power of Elijah but he was not Elijah and Elijah is still to come. They really dislike the concept of contingency because it infringes on their neo-Platonic view of God and they don't like the concept of a postponed kingdom for the same reason. They argue that the kingdom already came. They argue that when John and Jesus said the kingdom is "at hand" that "at hand" means "here," not "near." But that's the exact opposite of the words meaning and there is no attestation of that usage anywhere. Another problem with saying the kingdom is here is where is it exactly and what was the judgment that preceded the kingdom? All the OT prophets speak of judgment preceding the kingdom. But there was no judgment so there is no kingdom. The kingdom has been postponed, from the human point of view. Again, I'm not saying the plan of God was altered. I'm saying that in the plan of God Israel was going to reject the King and His kingdom but that does not negate that the offer of the kingdom was a genuine offer. This is back to the contingency factor that Scripture states repeatedly in numerous contexts. God's plan has contingency built into it in order to create human responsibility. That's just part of it. Some Christians recoil at this because they are so influenced by pagan doctrine that they can't think about God's sovereignty in any other way than some kind of personal determinism. So they wince at the idea of contingency and a postponed kingdom, you are attacking their pagan view of God. But the kingdom has been postponed whether they like it or not and so there appeared a gap of time in between two phases of the fourth kingdom of Rome. Turn to Matt 21:43. Jesus is speaking. Who is He speaking to in verse 45? "the chief priests and the Pharisees...understood that He was speaking about them." So, what we now read in verse 43 relates to the leadership of Israel who represent the nation of Israel at that time. "Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it." What does that mean? It means the kingdom is being postponed. It was offered to that generation of Israel but the leaders said no and the people followed the leaders and said no, so the kingdom was taken away from them, the offer was no longer on the table but guess what? It would be back on the table for another generation of Israel and they would accept it. Then the kingdom would come. The people the kingdom was given to is not the Church. That would change all the promises of God. That would destroy all the terms of the

unconditional covenants God made with Israel. And those are contracts. You can't change contracts. It would also change the entire nature of the kingdom from something visible and spiritual and on earth to something in people's hearts. And I have to say something; if God is ruling now in his kingdom through the Church then He is not doing a very good job of it. I do not see the rule of Messiah with the rod of iron in believer's lives. I see a lot of rebellious believers. Nor do I see righteousness from sea to sea and shore to shore. I see injustice, chaos, misery, suffering and war. There is no kingdom now. That is a fool's paradise. The reason is because the kingdom was rejected by 1st century Israel and 21:43 is saying it will be postponed until a future nation of Israel receives it. So it is still to come. Turn back to Matthew 19:28. Here's another passage indicating the kingdom has been postponed. In 19:27 Peter asks, what will there be for us since we've left everything and followed You? Jesus answers, "And Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." So has this come yet? Is Jesus sitting on His glorious Davidic throne? Is this some thing in heaven. No. The regeneration is when He makes all things new in the kingdom. Are the twelve sitting on thrones and reigning over the twelve tribes of Israel today? Tell Netanyahu that. So has the kingdom come? No. Did the judgment come that has to precede the kingdom? No. Well, what happened to it? It has been postponed from the human point of view. As far as the plan of God it is right on track. But that doesn't mean that its offer was not genuine. Now John the Baptist was confused about this. He saw what was happening and he started to question whether Jesus was the Messiah or not. Look at Matt 11:2. "Now when John, while imprisoned." Take note of that. Where was John? In prison. And what did John hear of? "the works of Christ." He heals, He casts out demons. He is powerful. But here's John in prison. What do you think John is thinking? If you're so powerful why don't you bust me out of prison and bring in the kingdom. Let's get the ball rolling here. So John is confused and in verse 3 he sends his disciples to Christ and says, "Are you the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" In other words, are you the Messiah? Because if you are why aren't you judging your enemies, busting me out of here and bringing in the kingdom? What's going on with the plan of God? Well, the plan hasn't changed but the nation Israel was not receiving Him and so the kingdom was already on the brink of being postponed. John could see it. John knew something wasn't right. Jesus said to Him Isa 35, "Go and report to John what you hear and see; the blind receive sight and the lame walk the lepers are cleansed..." and so forth and so on. What does that mean? He is the Messiah. He does the works of Messiah. But the leadership of the nation said the works of Messiah were not done by the Spirit through Messiah but by Satan through this impostor. That was the unpardonable sin. The unpardonable sin was a sin committed by that generation of Israel. The judgment for the sin came in AD70. It was the unpardonable sin that resulted in the kingdom being postponed. Now there are many other verses that indicate this postponement feature but we don't have time to go through them all. The point so far is to realize the meaning of two words, contingency, which means God has built human responsibility into His plan such that some things in His plan are conditioned on human choices. Prayer is another one for those of you who are skeptical. Prayer is not just going through motions, requesting something ahead of time that would take place anyway, that is a fatalistic notion of God's sovereignty that will destroy your

prayer life. And the other is postponement. The kingdom has been postponed. Why? Because that generation of Israel rejected the King. They did not repent. And if they had repented then guess what? The kingdom would have come. Not without the cross of course, but nevertheless, it still would have come. But they rejected.

Lastly a third word; intercalation. This is also an unpopular concept in theological circles. This word means a gap in a calendar. So a gap in calendar time. Calendar time was clipping along and then it just stopped, but it will pick back up in the future. Where have we seen a calendar of time in the OT prophecy? Daniel again. Turn to Dan 9. In Dan 9:2 Daniel was studying the book of Jeremiah the prophet where it said that Jerusalem would remain in desolation for seventy years. And you see in 9:3 that Daniel went into a prayer of confession at that time, confessing his sin and the sin of his nation because that is always a precondition for the covenant nation Israel being restored to blessing. And as he was praying 9:20 says, "confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel" and 9:21, "while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel" appeared. Now in 9:24 we see Gabriel's message, not seventy years but seventy weeks or sevens of years, which is 490 years "have been decreed for your people and your holy city. In other words, what Daniel saw in Jer 25 and 29 was seventy years and he assumed that meant that all twelve tribes of Israel would be restored to the land and enter into the kingdom. They were just a few years away from the seventy years so he started to confess. But what he failed to understand was that the seventy years in Jeremiah were prophesying a partial restoration of just the southern kingdom of Judah, in preparation for Messiah's birth, and that the prophecy of Jeremiah of all Israel being restored was not going to happen in seventy years but 490 years. So what Gabriel is doing is revealing a calendar so that Jews the world over could calculate the time of the Messiah's coming and the restoration of the kingdom of God. And needless to say, Daniel didn't quite know how to reconcile the four Gentile kingdoms with this time table because he lived in the first one, but he confessed nonetheless because with God all things are possible. Now note in verse 24 that the seventy weeks have been decreed for who? For Daniels's people and Daniel's holy city. Well who are Daniel's people? Israel, the nation Israel. And what is Daniel's holy city? Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the city of all the Jewish people. And by the end of the 490 years six things will have taken place. What are they? To finish the 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. Now have those things taken place? The short story is no, they have not all taken place. And its most obvious that everlasting righteousness has not been brought in, but it will be brought in with the kingdom. And so all six things will have taken place by the time the kingdom is established. Well, when did this 490-year calendar begin? Dan 9:25 says "So you are to know and to 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..." which if you add the seven and sixty-two you get sixty-nine weeks or 483 years. From when? From the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. So hold your place here and turn to Neh 2 to see this decree. Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the king. He had to taste the king's wine to make sure it was not poisoned. And the king he was serving in Neh 2 was "King Artaxerxes." It was "the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes." And the short story is that Nehemiah was sad because in verse 3 the report of the city of

Jerusalem's condition was that it was in desolations. And in verse 5 what was his request? That King Artaxerxes send him "to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it." The request is to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. And in verse 8 that request is granted. "a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city and for the house to which I will go. And the king granted them to me because the good hand of my God was on me." That is the beginning of the 490 years and it was the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes Longimanus which was 444BC when he issued the decree. So we know when the calendar countdown began and Dan 9:25 says that the first 483 years will bring us to what? "Messiah the Prince." So if we do the math it doesn't work out with our year of 365.2129 days, but it does work out to the day of Triumphal Entry if we use the 360-day creation year. In other words, as far as this prophecy was concerned, 483 years to Messiah the Prince and just seven more years until the 490 years would be completed and then the kingdom of God. So was John the Baptist that far off when he said, "the kingdom of God is at hand?" He was not far off at all. He was right on. As far as you can tell from this prophecy the calendar could have just continued to countdown and that is what I am trying to get you to see. If we continue reading this prophecy of the 490 years you can't tell for sure if there is a gap of time in the calendar. It could simply be continuous. There is no definitive indication that the last seven years would not simply continue without interruption. So let's read 9:26, "Then after the sixty-two weeks (which is really sixty-nine in all because you can't forget he already added the seven weeks) the Messiah will be cut off (that means death) and have nothing (have no kingdom), and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary (that's the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple) And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. 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..." etc., etc. The point I'm trying to make is that you cannot say definitively if you were Daniel or even John the Baptist that the last seven years would not simply follow continuously after the 483. However, Dan 9:26 leaves the door open for a possible gap in the calendar when he uses the words "after the sixty-two weeks." He does not say this is within the seventieth week but after the sixty-two or sixty ninth when we add the seven already passed. So the door is open for a possible gap but it is not clear until we see the things in verse 26 like the city of Jerusalem and the Temple destroyed in AD70, but the things in verse 27 have not yet come to pass. So we see in hindsight there is a gap, that there is an intercalation in this calendar and therefore this is one more confirmation that the kingdom has not come because the kingdom cannot come until the entire 490 years has elapsed. But you could not see that if you were John the Baptist. If you were John the Baptist the calendar was almost complete, there was not more than 10 more years left. And so the kingdom was at hand in the most realistic sense of the term.

Let's put all this together. Let's put the three words together; contingency, postponement and intercalation. First, contingency means that there is a condition placed on something. In this case the condition is upon the coming of the kingdom of God. The condition for it to come is the nation Israel must repent. John said, "repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" and Jesus said the same thing (cf Matt 4:17). They were living in the fourth

kingdom prophesied by Daniel and it could have come if they had repented. But the nation Israel led by the religious leadership did not repent. They would not and therefore they rejected Jesus. That introduces our second word, postponement, the kingdom was postponed. Postponement means that from the human perspective the kingdom could have come but did not and will be put off to the future, taken away from that generation and given to a generation that will bring forth its fruits. It doesn't violate the plan of God because as Dan 9:26 said, Messiah will be cut off and have nothing. So the kingdom was always going to be postponed, but that did not negate its genuine offer. And finally our third word, intercalation. Intercalation means a gap in a calendar. There is now an intercalation in the calendar of Daniel's seventy sevens or 490 years. 483 years on that calendar have elapsed but the 484th year never began. Messiah was cut off, Jerusalem and the Temple destroyed, but anti-Christ did not come and carry out his terrible works. But the fact of the intercalation could not be seen if we lived in the time of Daniel or John the Baptist. It can only be seen in hindsight. And what all these three words add up to is the theology that says there is no kingdom now but the kingdom is still to come. And that is the background for the Olivet Discourse in Matt 24-25 which we will begin next week and move through quickly. For preparation read Matt 23:37-25:46 and see if you don't see the three components of contingency, postponement and intercalation. They are all there, there are still things to come and it was all set up by the major prophetic passages of the OT. This is the background for Jesus' most extensive prophetic teaching.