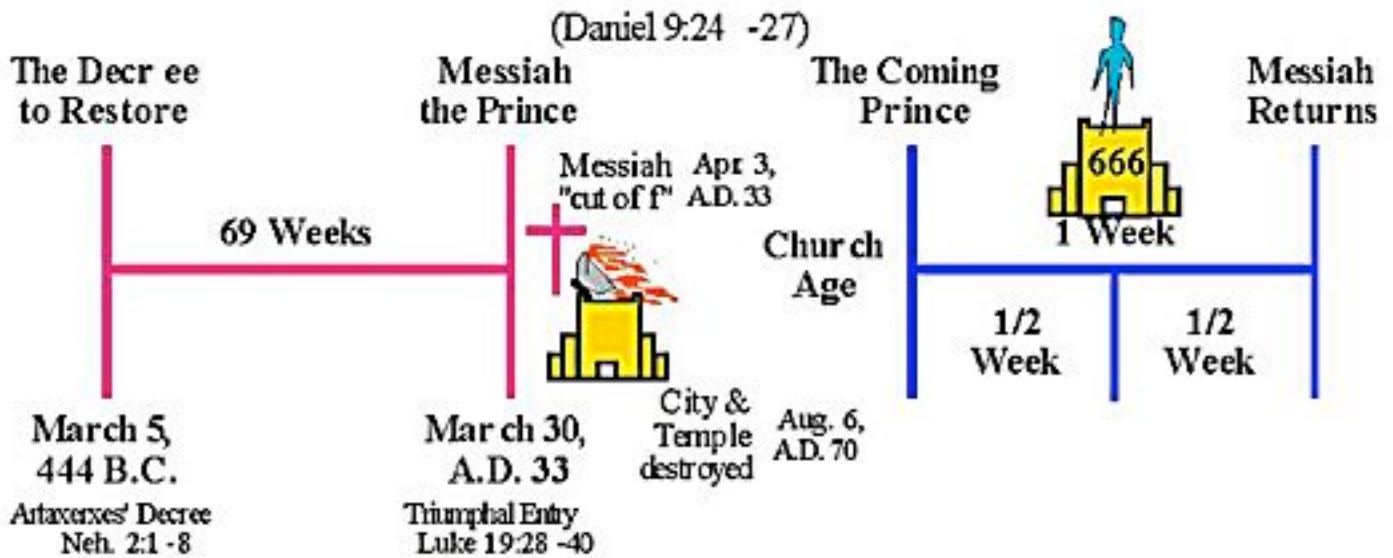


Daniel's Seventy Weeks



Lesson 5 - Daniel's Prayer & Seventy Weeks

Daniel Chapter 9 - Verses 1 - 27

Lesson 5

The exercise of studying Daniel and seeking to understand God's Word helps us to look at the events in our time and see how things are unfolding. We KNOW God is in charge - that is not in question. Our challenge is knowing that Satan is the master of deception and he is working hard to deceive all believers. The deception is not like the choice between Heaven and Hell. Satan is blurring the lines under the guise of personal choice, freedoms, and rational human logic. We are easily led astray especially if we are not diligent in staying in God's plan. EVERYTHING in our world means something. No leader is in their position that God did not put there. Study - PRAY - Listen - Repeat.

Daniel Chapter 9

Nebuchadnezzar had built the great Babylonian empire and it was conquered by Darius the Great during Daniel's time. Darius The Great (550BC – 486 BC) expanded the empire and had a good organization for administering such a large empire. He built roads and standardized the language as Aramaic and introduced standard weights and measures. Darius ruled from Susa, his capital city and his empire eventually stretched from Egypt to India and from the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea.

We can read Ezra and pull together a little more of the chronology of these Persian kings. In Ezra 1:1 we see how King Cyrus sets the plan in motion for Israel to return home and rebuild their temple.

Ezra 1:1 - In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing:

Later in Ezra we get more information.

Ezra 4:4-5 - Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building. They bribed officials to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Ezra 4:6-7 - At the beginning of the reign of Xerxes, they lodged an accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem. And in the days of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest of his associates wrote a letter to Artaxerxes. The letter was written in Aramaic script and in the Aramaic language.

This is a letter from local governors to the king protesting against letting the Jews rebuild Jerusalem. Obviously they sent a complaint to Xerxes but nothing seemed to happen so now they are sending one to Artaxerxes about the same thing. Ezra details their complaints. The king does a little research and seems to agree with his governors and issues an order for them to stop the Jews from rebuilding. Then the Jews told them that King Cyrus had issued the letter ordering them to return and rebuild. Later King Cyrus issued the decree and even gave them all the temple articles to bring with

them as they rebuilt the temple. They asked that the king check the records in Babylon and see if he could find their original letter from King Cyrus. Which King Darius did and learned that they were telling the truth. Therefore, King Darius enforced the edict and issued this order.

Ezra 6:11 - Furthermore, I decree that if anyone defies this edict, a beam is to be pulled from their house and they are to be impaled on it. And for this crime their house is to be made a pile of rubble.

So, we find confirmation of the timeline in Ezra that King Cyrus was first and then King Darius. Now we get to Daniel Chapter 9.

It is during this time that Daniel is praying to God in Chapter 9.

Daniel 9:1 – 2 - In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom— in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.

Jeremiah 29:10 - This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place.

This is what Daniel is referring to in Jeremiah. So, the time of the exile must be getting close to an end. Daniel would be in the range of 60 - 70 years old. It is generally thought that Daniel was in the first wave of Israelites that were brought from Jerusalem to Babylon around 605 BC. Nebuchadnezzar brought back exiles in 3 waves – 597 BC, 587 BC and 582 BC. Cyrus the Great (559 – 530 BC) conquered Babylon in 539 BC and ended the exile in 538 BC and allowed the Israelites to return under Zerubbabel. Darius ruled from approximately 522 BC to 486 BC.

Xerxes was the son of Darius which gives us a question about the beginning of Chapter 9. Historians say Darius' son was Xerxes.

Daniel 9:3 - So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

Daniel feels that the seventy years is coming to a close and he does not want God to forget about Israel after such a long time. Daniel's prayer is such a powerful prayer for any believer to pray for their nation. It pretty much applies to any nation at any time. Read the prayer all at one time, then read it a second time.

Read Daniel 9:4-19

Daniel 9:20 - 21 - While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the Lord my God for his holy hill — while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.

This is why the chronology of Daniel's visions are so important - here we see that Daniel refers to the man he had seen in the earlier vision. This naturally makes us wonder - Which vision? Keep that in mind as we see the explanation that Gabriel gives him and let's see which vision it relates to. Daniel sets the time of the visit as the time of the evening sacrifice. Even without a temple to offer sacrifices, Daniel maintained his dedication to the commandments of God from the daily sacrifices to prayer time to his diet. Daniel's faithfulness is well known throughout the kingdom and served as an example to others throughout at least 3 different rulers.

Daniel 9:22 - He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding.

Insight and understanding - Gabriel knows Daniel and he is going to help Daniel understand. Throughout Daniel's life he demonstrates the connection between faithfulness and intelligence. Each king that he worked for quickly learned that Daniel was way smarter than any of their other advisors and they took advantage of his gifts by placing him in high levels of responsibility.

Daniel 9:23 - As soon as you began to pray, a word went out, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the word and understand the vision:

Several key points here - first, Gabriel tells Daniel that "as soon as he began to pray a word went out". We have no idea how angels communicate or travel. It obviously takes some time for Gabriel to get to Daniel and it lets us know that God knew when Daniel started praying. Also, it is very exciting to Daniel to be told by the angel that

he is highly esteemed. For many people live great lives and strive to be Godly but others do not receive such a clear confirmation that their faithfulness has been noticed.

Daniel 9:24 - Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.

So Gabriel starts right in and as you can see it is not clear if this connects with the statute with the gold head that was Nebuchadnezzar or the vision in Chapter 7 dream of the four beasts that represented 4 kings in the future or Chapter 8 - the ram and the goat that represents 4 kings that will emerge from the powerful king that many think was Alexander the Great. There is an interesting part that ends Chapter 8. In 8:26 we get - *The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future.*" At first glance we may think that it relates to the explanation Daniel just received but it may have been a separate vision and that may be what Gabriel is explaining.

Daniel 9:25 - "Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble.

This is a clear messianic prophecy. The word will go out as we see in Ezra through King Cyrus and affirmed by King Darius and this would be very shortly in the future for Daniel. That will start the angel's seventy weeks. We can see that seven and sixty two total 69 weeks or $69 \times 7 = 483$ years according to the Jewish calendar. As this prophecy foretells Jerusalem will be rebuilt but there will be trouble and indeed there will be trouble for Israel. The Anointed One is Jesus Christ.

Daniel 9:26 - After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed.

As we know Jesus is crucified and as we see in Matt. 27:35 - *When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots.*

That was all of Jesus' earthly possessions so He, indeed, had nothing at His death. The

people of the ruler who will come - will destroy the city and the sanctuary. This would pretty much be what happened in 70 AD.

Daniel 9:27 - He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.

Now, this is where the prophecy takes a completely different turn, this is Daniel's seventieth week. We are not sure WHO the HE is in 27. Many who study this tie in the Roman empire to be the "He" because they go back to 9:26 where it says the people of the ruler who will come - will destroy the city and the sanctuary. But, immediately after that it says war will continue and desolations will continue until the end. That seems to indicate what we have had - a long time period that doesn't have any clear identifying characteristics as it relates to Israel.

Furthermore, it is really hard to understand why Jesus tell His disciples in Matt. 24:15 - *So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand ...*

By any logical explanation you have to think that it refers to a future event. There isn't any reason for Jesus to warn them of an event that occurred 200 years earlier. As we did deeper into Daniel it is easy to see why it is so difficult to pinpoint any details but like Daniel I think we see how much more prayer we need to let God help us to understand. Daniel's curiosity followed by his strong prayer life and faithfulness is what we need to do so that we are not deceived.

Lesson Goals - What did we learn?

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