

10. The backbone of the biblical prophecy

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In my opinion, the biggest difficulty of understanding the biblical prophecies is comprehending what all the symbols and numbers mean. Some off-the-wall scholars come up with really twisted interpretations to exalt themselves with exclusiveness of revelations that were supposedly reveal to them only by Jesus, when it could have been nothing more than bad enchiladas from the night before.

I taught you guys many times before regarding how to interpret the Bible. The best way to interpret the Bible is using BIBLE. Cross references and staying contexts will give us enough lead ways to the proper understanding of the Word of God.

Here is the portion of the Scripture that is undoubtedly backbone of prophecy concerning Israel, Christ and the antichrist. However, it is that fewer predictions in Scripture have been interpreted in as many ways as have "the seventy weeks of Daniel." Given this fact, we will make every attempt to allow the Bible to speak for itself as we apply to this chapter the rules of literary interpretation.

A. DANIEL ON HIS KNEES

Daniel 9:20-21 Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God, 21 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

As I said, staying in context of the Scripture is extremely important for us to understand this prophecy, we need to go back to what we studied last time.

Sometime around 538 B.C., Daniel observed in the Book of Jeremiah that the predicted seventy-year captivity of the Jews was nearing completion. So he came before God on his knees, pleading with the Lord to forgive the sins of the Jews and allow them to return to their native land and rebuild Jerusalem.

While Daniel was still praying, he was revisited by the angel Gabriel. Appearing in human form, Gabriel told the elderly prophet that he had been sent to give him "skill to understand."

This is one of the few places in the Bible where we are told that angels fly.

B. THE ANSWER TO DANIEL'S PRAYER

Daniel 9:22-23 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. 23 At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

Notice how fast the Lord answered Daniel's prayer here. We may say, "Well, God answered Daniel's prayer fast because he was God's favorite." I believe that God answers all of our prayers immediately. In many cases, the answers of our prayers are "WAIT" the word we hate to hear, but good for our faith in God.

Isaiah 65:24 It shall come to pass That before they call, I will answer; And while they are still speaking, I will hear.

Matthew 6:8 Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

Another thing we must notice is what Gabriel called Daniel: “you are greatly beloved”. Again, it is easy for us to think that Daniel was such a man of God that the Lord would call him like that. But the believer in Jesus Christ is seen by God as being in Christ, so the believer in Christ is beloved by God Himself. It just doesn’t get any better than that.

Ephesians 1:6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

C. THE SIX GOALS TO ACHIEVE

Daniel 9:24 “Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, (1) To finish the transgression, (2) To make an end of sins, (3) To make reconciliation for iniquity, (4) To bring in everlasting righteousness, (5) To seal up vision and prophecy, And (6) to anoint the Most Holy.

Understanding the word “week” is very important here. The Hebrew word for ‘week’ is ‘shabua’, meaning “a unit of measure.” It would be comparable to our word dozen. When somebody says, “I have a dozen of that,” we all know he has twelve of whatever he has. When the Jewish people say, “week,’ they all know it means ‘seven’. So ‘seventy weeks’ means seventy of sevens.

Not only we can tell by the Jewish custom, but also in the context of this verse it is plain that Daniel has been reading in Jeremiah about years, seventy years. Jeremiah had been preaching and writing that the captivity would be for seventy years. The seventy years of captivity were the specific penalty for violating seventy sabbatic years. That would be seventy sevens, a total of 490 years. In those 490 years, Israel had violated exactly seventy sabbatic years. So they would go into captivity for seventy years according to 2 Chron. 36:21.

During this 490 year time span, six aims are to be achieved. The first three have to do with sin, and the last three are concerned with the Millennial Kingdom.

Let’s briefly look at each one:

1) To finish the transgression

Jesus Christ paid the penalty for man’s sin on the cross at Calvary, but human beings still commit wrongs. Therefore, the persistence of sin needs to be dealt with. And it will be, particularly in relationship to Israel when she finally repents and acknowledges Christ as her Savior prior to His Second Event.

2) To make an end of sins

That is to seal up disobedience with a view to punish and remove it. In regard to Israel, the foundation for this being accomplished was laid when Christ bore the punishment for the sins of the world. But Israel’s sin will not be totally removed from her until the Lord returns to earth and establishes His Kingdom.

3) To make reconciliation for iniquity

The basic provision for the reconciliation of man to God was made at Calvary.

4) To bring in everlasting righteousness

This will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

5) To seal up vision and prophecy

6) To anoint the Most Holy

This may be referring to the dedication of the Holy of Holies in the millennial temple, as described in Ezekiel 41-46. Or it could be denoting the enthronement of Christ as the King of kings in the Millennium. Whichever the case, this objective is yet to be fulfilled.

D. THE THREE DIVISIONS

Daniel 9:25-26 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. 26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

Gabriel is telling Daniel that there would be three divisions of the prophecy: Seven weeks, sixty two weeks and one week

1) Seven Weeks = 49 Years

The decree of Artaxerxes in the twentieth year of his reign, the commandment to rebuild the city of Jerusalem was issued in the month Nisan which is April 445 B.C. The 49 years would take us to 397 B.C. and to Malachi and the end of the Old Testament. These were "troublesome times," as witnessed to by both Nehemiah and Malachi.

2) Sixty Two Weeks = 434 Years

434 years would take us from the end of the Old Testament to the day of Messiah's Triumphant Entry to Jerusalem, April 6th, 32 A.D.

How do we know? A simple math will do the job.

$483 \text{ years} \times 360 \text{ days} = 173,880 \text{ days}$

Why 360 days instead of 365 days? Because the ancient Jewish people used a lunar calendar that has 360 days, not 365.

We add 173,380 days to the date when Artaxerxes made a decree, we come to the exact date when Jesus entered Jerusalem through the Palm Sunday road from the Mount Olive and was welcomed by the people of Jerusalem.

After the 69 weeks, or 483 years, there is an indeterminate length of time break. Between the sixty-ninth and Seventieth Week two events of utmost importance are to take place:

• **Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself**

This was the crucifixion of Christ. He didn't die for Himself, but for us, for our sins as the Atoning Sacrifice. The Israel nation "cut off" Jesus Christ, so God cut them off from being a nation. Until May 14, 1948, Israel was not a nation.

• **The people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary**

This part of the prophecy was literally fulfilled in A.D. 70, when a Roman general named Titus forced his way into Jerusalem like flood. On August 6 of that year, his troops burned the temple and leveled it. They also destroyed the city and its fortifications, just as both Daniel and Christ had predicted. This people of the prince was the foreshadow of the antichrist to come.

3) One Week = 7 Years

Daniel 9:27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

The antichrist will come into the picture right after the rapture of the church. He will promise the peace on earth. This prince will make an agreement with the Jews to protect them from the other nations, and this agreement will be set for seven years.

This final seven years is the completion of Daniel's 490-year period. Between the death of Christ and the signing of this covenant you have the entire Age of the Church in God's program.

After three and a half years, the antichrist will invade Israel, break his covenant and set himself up as world dictator and a god. He will stop all worship at the Jewish temple and force the world to worship him and his image. This is the abomination of desolation. How will this period end? As we all know Jesus Christ will return to earth, meet the rebel armies at Armageddon, and defeat them.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) God is a Master of details.

His prophecy is incredibly accurate, to the day. Sometimes He even names whom He is going to use in His plan.

2) God deals in specifics.

When Daniel made a specific request in prayer, the Lord answered with particulars, not generalities. This should encourage us to make our requests as specific as possible.

3) God keeps His promises.

These days, a promise isn't worth much unless it's written into a contract drawn up by lawyers and signed in blood. Even then, someone will find a way to break it. But with God, it is better than gold. What He promises, He keeps.