

"The Comings of Jesus"

Daniel 9:20-27

Last Sunday we were in Daniel 9 where we focused on how Daniel's prayer revealed a lot about prophecy. It showed he believed that when God promised something would happen, it happened exactly the way God meant it would happen. So then, the best way to approach all the Word of God is to take God literally unless He clearly explains it otherwise.

Again the main reasons why we fail to understand prophecy is 1) we don't really read the text. We keep trying to read into it and not what it actually says. Or we try to apply what it means for us before we actually understand what it meant for the original audience. 2) We keep trying to put the church when God is usually talking about Israel. God has a separate plan for the church and a separate plan for Israel. And ultimately they come together. The church (body of Jews and gentiles in Jesus is not in the Old Testament).

Daniel 9:20-27 is the most important passage in the Bible to help us understand prophecy. Last week we saw that Daniel was reading Jeremiah's prophecy in Jer. 25 and 29 that God would end the exile after 70 years. Babylon has been over-thrown by the Medes and Persians (just as God said). It is now 68 years since the exile began. Daniel believes in a literal interpretation of prophecy, so he is praying for God to restore the temple in Jerusalem and return the people to Israel, forgiving them for their rebellious ways. Daniel knows from Jeremiah and Isaiah's prophecies that a wonderful age of righteousness and peace with the Messiah on Israel's throne is going to happen when Israel gets back into their land. So, this is what he's ultimately praying about. However, Daniel has also interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream and received a dream and vision of his own that indicate Babylon is only the first of a number of successive gentile powers who will rule over Israel. Yet, he still prays for God to forgive the nation of their sins and restore Jerusalem and the temple.

Keep in mind Daniel's prayer is for Israel's complete restoration if we're to understand prophecy. The prophecy is about when God will wipe out Israel's sin, when He will restore Jerusalem and the temple. As Daniel was praying God sent Gabriel to give him a direct answer to his prayer about Jerusalem, the temple and Israel's forgiveness. Gabriel speaks from God to assure Daniel (and us) that . . .

God Plans to Fulfil His Promises to Israel **(9:24)**

Remember what Daniel is praying about; *"confessing my sin and the sin of the people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for His holy hill"* (v.20). He prayed for their forgiveness so God would forgive and restore and fulfil His plans for them. This is why Gabriel was sent to tell him. When Gabriel arrives and speaks to Daniel to instruct him about these very things he says, *"Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding"* on these very things.

God has not changed His promises for Israel. He wants us to know prophecy. He wants us to have insight and understanding about future things. It's Satan who has deceived many Christians today. He is called the deceiver and the father of lies. The first prophecy God gave in the Bible was to Adam and Eve when He said not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil "for in that day you will surely die". That was a prophecy. Satan comes along and deceives them and blatantly

says “You will not surely die!” (3:4). Never forget, it is the pattern of Satan to lie about all God’s promises.

Gabriel wants Daniel to be assured that God will forgive and restore Israel so that the promises God made to them will still happen. Daniel needs understanding because he knows the exile will only last 70 years, but he also knows restoration is farther away because of the dreams about the world empires coming along in the future (Greeks and Romans at the very least) before the Kingdom of God will ultimately come to the earth, ruled by the Son of man (7:13-14). Daniel’s prayer was for Israel’s forgiveness and restoration. God tells Daniel that Israel’s complete forgiveness and complete restoration won’t happen in 70 years but in 70 times seven years, 490 years. That’s the most obvious and logical answer as we’ll see in a minute.

God tells Daniel that He has six purposes (v.24) that will be accomplished when the 490 years are over. The word ‘decreed’ means determined, ordained, pertaining to a plan which will occur. It will happen according to God’s plan. God doesn’t lie and he won’t change His plan. It’s predetermined.

These six purposes pertain to the people of Israel and to the city of Jerusalem. This was the context of the prayer and is the context of the answer. It is not about the church. If you try and interpret this for the church you will misunderstand the passage and misunderstand future events and purposes.

Daniel prayed that God would forgive Israel’s sin and by the time these 490 years are complete, Israel’s transgression (punishment for rebellion) will be finished. The word transgression means ‘rebellion’. It literally reads, “the rebellion”. Israel rebelled against God which was why they went into exile. All Israel did not return to God after the exile. They continued to rebel as a nation and still continue to rebel today against God because they deny Jesus as their Messiah. The rebellion will continue until the end of the 490th year of prophecy. Israel will no longer sin against God after that time. There will be a complete turning to God of the entire nation one day. This is what Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 and Zech. 8 and 13 speak about. A national repentance followed by a complete indwelling of the Spirit so that we read in Jer. 31:34,

“no longer will a man teach his neighbour or his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord’ because they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest”.

At that time Israel’s sin will be completely atoned for. Wasn’t their sin – and ours – completely atoned for when Jesus died? Atonement for sin was made available when Jesus died on the cross but the atonement can only be applied when people accept Jesus’ atonement for their sins. Israel has yet to do that. Some individuals have but not the nation, which is who Daniel is praying for.

When their sins are completely forgiven God will at the same time bring in everlasting righteousness because Jesus will return at the end of 490 years to establish His righteous rule on the earth called the millennial kingdom. What’s left of Israel will have all returned to their land and God will have fulfilled all His promises to Israel regarding the land. Then there will be no need for any more prophecy or visions because God’s plan for Israel will be completely fulfilled. And at that time God will also *“anoint the Most Holy.”* God’s temple including the Holy of holies which contained God’s presence would be restored. This means there will be a temple in the millennium which is in agreement with Ezekiel 40-48.

God will completely forgive Israel’s sins when they completely turn to Him. Then He will establish Jesus’ throne on earth and all the covenant promises will be fulfilled. This will happen at the end of the 490 years. Do we know when this will happen? Yes and no!! It’s all tied in with Jesus’ first and second comings.

God Prophesied the Timing of Jesus' First Coming **(9:25)**

When did the 490-year period begin? Gabriel divides these 70 sevens of years into three sections: the first 7 x seven years, then the next 62 times seven years and the last 7 years. When does or did all this take place?

Starting point of 69 x 7 years is Artaxerxes' decree (v.25a)

"Know and understand this: from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed, One, the Ruler comes, there will be 7 sevens and 62 sevens. It [Jerusalem] will be rebuilt with streets and a trench but in times of trouble."

We start calculating the time from the issuing of an important decree, to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. The Persian King Cyrus issued a decree for Israel to return and rebuild their temple in 536 BC but only Artaxerxes issued a decree when asked by Nehemiah in Neh. 2 who was concerned about the walls of Jerusalem broken down. We know the year is 444 BC.

The rebuilding of the city took 49 years which brings us to Malachi's time as a prophet, who ended his book with a prophecy about the Messiah's coming to his temple preceded by a messenger.

62 x seven is 434 plus the 49 years since Artaxerxes decree gives us 483 years when Messiah, the Ruler would come. When you do the math based on Israel's 12 month/30 day/360 day calendar (not our 365 day calendar) you come to the spring of 32 AD as the time when *"Messiah, the Anointed One, the ruler comes."* When was the only public affirmation by the people that Jesus was the Anointed One/Messiah? His triumphal entry into Jerusalem days before his death.

So, the beginning point of 69x 7 years starts with Artaxerxes decree and the . . .

Ending point of 483 years is Jesus' Triumphal entry (v.25b)

Go to Luke 19:41 and let's read something fascinating that Jesus Himself said, after the triumphal entry and after the people verbally affirmed Jesus was the Anointed One with their Hosannahs.

^{19:41}When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴²saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. ⁴³"For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, ⁴⁴and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

Jesus clearly indicates that they should have recognized the timing of His coming but they did not. God told them yet they didn't study or believe what God's Word said.

God Told His People the Time-Frame of Jesus' Second Coming **(9:26-27)**

Not only did God give the starting point and ending point of the 1st year and 483 year he also gave Israel some detailed info regarding Christ's return. So if 32 AD was the end of the 69th seven

why are we still waiting for Jesus return? Normally one would expect that the 70th period of 7 years would follow the others since they all followed. We would expect that if God hadn't told us here in His Word that . . .

There is a gap of time between Christ's comings (v.26)

"After the 62 sevens [which followed the first 7 sevens] the Messiah would be cut off." "After" the 483 years things will happen before the seventh seven which doesn't start until v.27. What else happened after Jesus died? *"The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary."* In 70 AD Jerusalem was destroyed again along with the temple by the Roman empire. Who is this 'ruler who will come'?

In Nebuchadnezzar's vision in Ch. 2 of the statue representing consecutive world empires, the legs and feet represented the Roman Empire which came after the Greek empire. The Roman empire divided in half before it dissolved. Yet the dream talked about a time after that of ten kings represented by the toes before the kingdom of God come, destroying the last Gentile kingdom.

Somehow the final and future Gentile world power is related to the ancient Roman empire. The ruler who will come will rule this last empire, the little horn of Daniel's dream in ch. 7. Right now we are in this gap of time. This is the church age which Paul called the mystery. The prophecy doesn't deal with the church. It deals with God's plan for Israel. *"War will continue until the end and desolations have been decreed."* While this may sound like a general statement about history from then til now, I think it is still talking about Israel. Israel has always been at war and has always been persecuted. Even though they finally got their land back in 1948 the persecution has increased. Part of this is God's refining and disciplining them because they still primarily refuse to accept Jesus as the Messiah.

The last seven years has yet to come. It will be a terrible time for Israel when God uses the anti-christ to bring out a remnant from Israel who will all one day turn to Him. When will that start?

The last 7 begins with a covenant with Israel (v.27a)

"He [the ruler who will come, the anti-christ] will confirm a covenant with many for one seven." How do we know "the many" is Israel? Because this covenant involves sacrifices which means there must be a temple. There is no temple today and Israel has very little hope of ever building one again since the Muslims have one of their most sacred shrines on that spot, the Dome of the Rock which sits on the temple mount.

Why will Israel will agree to a covenant with this person? The only way we can imagine this happening is that Israel gives what the Muslims want, part of their land. The Palestinians have no land of their own and will only settle for Israel's land. Some-how they will agree to a trade; land from Israel in exchange for peace or protection by this ruler. This covenant will be a seven year covenant that will give Israel what they want, a temple so they can make sacrifices. That they want to make sacrifices tells us they are still in rebellion against God because they still have not accepted Jesus as their Messiah. Israel has yet to face the most horrific persecution and that will begin to happen at . . .

Mid-point of the 7 years at the anti-christ's abomination (v.27b)

Here we read *"In the middle of the seven, he [anti-christ] will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of a temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation."* What is this abomination which causes desolation? We read in Rev. 13:14 that the false prophet has an image of the anti-christ set up and everyone will be ordered to worship him. Why worship him?

Because the anti0christ will suffer a “fatal wound” (13:3, 14) and yet came back from the dead. Only the Messiah has done that and a false messiah given miraculous powers by Satan himself will do it as well. Unlike Jesus who did not demand the world worship Him, the anti-christ will. The Jews will reject him and he will turn his wrath on them for 42 months [3 ½ years]. According to Zech 13, 2/3 of the nation of Israel will die.

However, this time has been decreed by God to last only seven years, and the last 3 ½ being the great tribulation. Jesus Himself said in Matt. 24:22 *“If those days had not been cut short [past tense indicating they have a period of time has already been set for it] that no one would survive.”*

So we know the start, the middle and the end of the seven years:

Ending point of the 7 years is Christ’s return and anti-christ’s destruction (v.27c)

Here we read that the end that is decreed will be poured out on Him. Rev. 19 tells us the ant-christ and the false prophet will be thrown into the lake of fire when Christ returns and sets His feet on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14) and the surviving Israelites – 1/3 - will *Look on Him who they have pierced and mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly as one grieves for a first-born son” (Zech. 12:10)*. Tears of repentance of how they rejected Him but now accept Him. Then Zech. 13:1 says *“On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity”*.

Paul says of this time in Rom. 11:26, *“And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written, ‘A deliverer will come from Zion; He will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.’”*.

But until this time happens many Jews have experienced a hardening of heart and the gospel is far more received by gentiles, you and me. Where are we in this prophecy? We’re not in the prophecy since it concerns Israel. We exist in the gap time and I believe will be raptured before the last 7 begins. The prophecy gives us a time-frame about the last seven years. We know when it will begin. We know how long it will last. We know the mid point and the end. We know even more from ch’s 6-18 from Revelation.

Like Daniel, God wants all His people to have insight and understanding about the future so that we can warn those who don’t know Jesus Christ. The world is escalating toward its final days. There are Jews today who would be ready to make any deal that would bring them peace. But the peace they’ll get will be a false peace. A lie covered up by the Satan’s own hand-picked man. Again, Satan always has lies ready to thwart people from believing God’s prophecies.

One day God will put an end to sin. What a joy it will be to not sin again! No more angry thoughts, no more fractured relationships, no more careless words or selfish actions. While sin has not come to an end yet, we who have accepted Christ are no longer powerless against sin’s temptations. Sin no longer has the same control over us. When we yield to the Spirit’s power and choose not to sin, we can experience a taste of the eternal now. So why not trust God’s Word and God’s Spirit and strengthen our relationships with each other, resist the temptation to say unkind words and make better choices of what we read, watch and listen to since all of these affect our minds.

God meant for prophecy to change the way we live not just fill our mind with knowledge. Knowledge about the future should change the way we live in the present. Knowing our sins are forgiven and God has a place in His kingdom for us should humble us and want to share this with others – Jews as well as Gentiles. Daniel 9 is the foundation for prophecy. Now we know God’s plan

for Israel and we learn we are in this gap. So how do we live in the gap? And are there things the Bible says about when this gap is coming to an end? We'll look at that next week.

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If you have any comments or questions about this message please
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