

MARCH OF EMPIRE - LECTURES ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL

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CHAPTER 15

Seventy Years Determined Upon thy People and thy Holy City

LESSON TEXT -- Daniel 9:20-27

The Prophecies Recorded in the Book of Daniel Are of Great Importance These Days, Especially to the Gentiles -- Prophecy Reveals the Wisdom and Foreknowledge of GOD -- The Duration of the Babylonian Captivity Was to Be Seventy Years -- Daniel's Wonderful Prayer and the Vision Which Followed -- In Chapter Nine the Theme is, the Time When the Messianic Kingdom of Righteousness Will Be Established Upon the Earth -- The Mysteries of the Kingdom Given in Matthew the Thirteenth Chapter Help Us to Understand the Present State of the Kingdom. and When and How it Will Be Established -- The Jews Must Accept JESUS As Their Messiah Before the Kingdom of Righteousness Can Be Established Upon Earth -- Israel's Special Sin -- It Was a Sad Event in History for the Jews and for the World When they Rejected CHRIST As Their Messiah -- A Long Time Has Been and Will be Required of GOD to Atone for Their Sin and to Bring in Everlasting Righteousness

We could not give our time and attention to a more interesting or worthwhile subject than the prophecies which we find recorded in the Book of Daniel, because Daniel was the great prophet to the Gentiles.

WHAT PROPHECY IS -- WHAT PROPHECY DOES

I cannot impress upon your minds too much the importance of studying the prophetic portion of GOD's Word. Prophecy has been called "The miracle of utterance," and even so it is.

The prophetic Scriptures reveal not only the wisdom of GOD but the foreknowledge of GOD. How wonderful it is that in His Word, which was written centuries ago by the prophets, we find things recorded which are coming to pass today exactly on prophetic schedule.

We should not forget, therefore, that GOD has a plan for the ages. The prophecies of the Bible, are as it were the blueprint of GOD's plan for the present and for the future. Happy is the man who realizes the importance of prophecy and gives his time and attention to a study of it, so that he may be, not only informed concerning impending events, but forewarned

concerning the future, and be able to teach others of these things.

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

We have progressed in our study to Daniel the ninth chapter. Our last lesson in this Book was based upon Daniel 9:1-19, where we learned that seventy years would be the duration of the Babylonian captivity. Daniel discovered this truth by reading the Book of Jeremiah the Prophet.

DANIEL'S PRAYER

We also studied Daniel's wonderful prayer and confession in which he confessed his own sins and those of this nation, and in which he implored GOD in verses 18 and 19 saying, "**O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.**"

WHAT DANIEL DID NOT UNDERSTAND

We must impress upon your minds again the fact that Daniel, from his study of the books of Jeremiah, thought that the coming of Son of man and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom would take place at the end of the Babylonian captivity. Apparently he had failed to understand from the writings of Jeremiah that there would be not only one but two restorations of the Children of Israel from captivity. The first was to come at the end of the seventy years in Babylon but the other restoration of the Children of Israel from among all the nations would not take place until in the distant future. We know from history and from current events that the second and final restorations of the Jews, spoken of by Jeremiah, belongs even yet to the future.

Since Daniel did not understand these things, it was necessary for GOD to give him definite information on this subject, which He did by sending Gabriel, the archangel, who gave to Daniel an understanding of the seventy weeks, which were determined upon the Jewish people.

THE VISION OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

This is confirmed in verses 20-27 of Daniel the ninth chapter, where Daniel said, "**And while I was speaking, and 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; Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore**

understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even unto the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."

THE MARCH OF EMPIRE

We must not forget that GOD had revealed to Daniel the march of empire during the times of the Gentiles under the symbolism of four beasts. The fourth, and last beast, representing the Roman Empire was a nondescript beast, which was described as being very terrible both in nature and in appearance.

Therefore, in Daniel 7:19-20, the prophet expressed a desire to know the truth concerning the Roman Empire and the ten kings which were to rule over the Revived Roman Empire, and the coming Antichrist, which were represented by the ten horns, and the little horn respectively, on the nondescript beast.

In the eighth chapter GOD gave to Daniel certain information concerning the fulfillment of these things. We may expect, therefore, that in the ninth chapter also, GOD would reveal to Daniel still further information regarding the revival of the Roman Empire and the ten kings and the Antichrist. And that is exactly what He did.

Since Daniel had not fully understood the prophecy of Jeremiah, GOD found it necessary to give him this special vision of the seventy weeks.

AN INTERESTING COMMENT

In his new book entitled "*Messiah: His First Coming Scheduled*," Dr. David L. Cooper, President of the Biblical Research Society of Los Angeles, California, makes a very interesting comment upon this point, which we quote as follows:

"The time element of Gabriel's message, as far as possible, is expressed in terms of Daniel's thought. Speaking in a figure, we would say that the angel's language is an echo of the prophet's thinking. In order to make the idea so very clear that no one may misunderstand, I will paraphrase and supply the implied elements of the revelation brought to the prophet.

"Daniel, you have been thinking that the final restoration will be accomplished and the full covenant blessings will be realized at the close of these seventy years of exile in Babylon. On this point you are mistaken. You are not now, on the eve of the fulfillment of this wonderful prediction. Instead of its being brought to pass at this time, I am sent to inform you that there is decreed upon your people and the Holy City a period of seventy sevens of years before they can be realized. At the conclusion of this period of 490 years the nation of Israel will be reconciled and will be reinstated into the divine favor and will enter into the enjoyment of all the covenant blessings."

To supplement what Dr. Cooper has said, we must explain that the seventy weeks referred to here were not weeks of seven days each but were prophetic weeks of seven years each, as a study of the text with its context will reveal.

The real theme therefore, of this portion of the ninth chapter is the time when the kingdom of righteousness will be established by the Messiah here on earth.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM

When we mention these things some people assume that we do not acknowledge the kingdom of GOD upon earth as it is now, but this is not true, for we understand that the Kingdom of GOD is always and constantly present with us. At the present time the kingdom of Heaven upon earth is in its mystery form as taught by the Lord JESUS CHRIST in the seven parables of the kingdom of Heaven recorded in the 13th chapter of Matthew. We may see, therefore, that the kingdom of Heaven upon earth at the present time is like the sower who went forth to sow. It is also like the tares among the wheat, and like the grain of mustard seed. The kingdom of Heaven is now like the leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened. Today the kingdom of Heaven upon earth is like unto a treasure hid in a field. It is also like a merchantmen seeking goodly pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price went and sold all he had and bought it. Last of all, the kingdom of Heaven upon earth is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind.

These parables express the mystery state of the kingdom upon earth as it is now during this present age or dispensation, but the time is coming when all of these aspects of the kingdom as described in the seven parables will be fulfilled, and the kingdom which is now in mystery form will be established by the Messiah in outward form and visible glory, over all the earth.

CERTAIN THINGS MUST OCCUR

One thing is certain: The universal kingdom of righteousness which has been promised in the Scriptures cannot and will not come until the Messiah Himself returns, and not until the Jewish people are converted back to GOD and accept the Messiah as GOD'S SON and as their KING.

Daniel needed to understand these things. Therefore, in verse 24 of our lesson text, the Angel Gabriel said to Daniel, "**Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make**

reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

We remind you again that these seventy weeks were not weeks of seven days each but were weeks of seven years each, which would make the period of time referred to here 490 years that were determined upon Daniel's people the Jews and upon the Holy City to finish the transgression and to make an end of sin and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

A SPECIAL SIN INDICATED

Now let us examine each one of these statements carefully and discover if we can see what the angel meant when he said these things.

Since all of these things were spoken to Daniel concerning his people and the Holy City, I am compelled to believe that the transgression spoken of here, refers to some special sin of the Jewish people. True enough, all we need to do is to study the Old Testament and we will discover that Israel, as the chosen people of GOD had been guilty of many sins, but the very wording of the expression in our lesson text seems to indicate some special sin which they, as a people, have committed which needs to be atoned for.

To emphasize this point, in Leviticus 26:40 it says, **"If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me,"** etc. These words seem to indicate some special sin which they must confess before they can expect the blessings of GOD to rest upon them.

Again in Hosea 5:15 the Lord said, **"I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early."**

WHAT THE SPECIAL SIN WAS

The nature of the sin which Israel would commit against her Messiah was prophetically foretold in Isaiah 53:1-8, where it says, **"Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before**

her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken."

THIS PROPHECY NOW A MATTER OF HISTORY

These words, we know were prophetic of CHRIST who came unto His own and His own received Him not. What was prophetically announced by Isaiah is now a matter of history and was fulfilled in the coming and rejection of CHRIST by the Jewish people.

Therefore, when the Angel Gabriel announced to Daniel saying seventy weeks "**are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression,**" we know from the Word of GOD and from history that the transgression referred to in this passage was the rejection of CHRIST by His own people.

TO MAKE AN END OF SINS

The second thing mentioned in Daniel 9:24 was that seventy weeks or 490 years would be required to make an end of sins. In other words, this period of time, i.e., 70 weeks or 490 years would be required to atone for or to expiate, or to clear the Jewish people from sin. In other words, the time is coming when sinning shall cease in Israel, but this time will not come until the 490 years referred to in this passage shall have been accomplished. But before the children of Israel will cease to sin against the Lord, they must be converted back to GOD both individually and nationally. That, my friends, is what we have every reason to expect. Even now we see how GOD is dealing with His chosen people in preparation for the bringing to pass of these very things.

TO MAKE RECONCILIATION FOR INIQUITY

The next thing mentioned in our lesson text is that seventy weeks, or 490 years are determined to make reconciliation for iniquity.

This expression really means to purge away or to cover or to forgive or to atone for iniquity.

The word "iniquity" as used in this passage means "perverseness," or "sin," "guilt," or "crime," which well expresses the perverted nature of the human heart, which has come about as a result of Adam's fall. One thing is sure all men must be born again by the renewing power of the SPIRIT of GOD before they can be delivered from iniquity. The Psalmist David seemed to realize this when he prayed, saying in Psalm 51:10, "**Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.**"

Judging, therefore, from our lesson text the time is coming, no doubt when the Children of Israel will confess their iniquity. What a happy time it will be for Israel and for all the people of the world when reconciliation has been made for their iniquity, and they are restored into fellowship and communion with GOD.

TO BRING IN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS

According to our lesson text, seventy weeks or 490 years are required upon Daniel's people to bring in everlasting righteousness.

Dr. Cooper tells us that the expression "everlasting righteousness" if literally translated means the "righteousness of the ages." In other words, they look forward prophetically to the time when the kingdom of Heaven shall be established upon earth, and GOD brings in everlasting righteousness, so that His will shall be done upon earth as it is in Heaven.

But mind you, no such condition of righteousness can or will ever be established until the seventy weeks of 490 years have been accomplished upon Daniel's people, the Jews. These words reveal what an important place the Jewish people have in GOD's plans and purposes for the present and for the future, for until the Jews turn back to GOD, the world must wait for the coming of that kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The same period of time was required to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most Holy.

TO SEAL UP THE PROPHECY

The expression "**seal up the vision and prophecy**" signifies the finishing up of the matter. Just as we do not seal up a letter until the letter is finished, just so this vision which the angel Gabriel gave to Daniel will not be sealed up until it is finished, which assures us that all these things will come to pass.

TO ANOINT THE MOST HOLY

The expression "**to anoint the most Holy**," is the most difficult of all this group to understand. Therefore, we cannot be too sure as to what it means.

It is accepted by many Bible scholars of note, to refer to the holy temple, which will be in Jerusalem during the millennial period, which we understand will be built by the Lord Himself, as stated in Zechariah 6:12-13, where it says, "**Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH: and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.**"

Therefore, we have reason to expect that when such a temple has been built in Jerusalem, it will be anointed and filled with the very presence of GOD, even as Solomon's temple was on the day that it was dedicated.

There is much more to be said upon the subject of the seventy weeks but space will not permit it here. Therefore, suffice it to say that the Angel Gabriel spoke unto Daniel saying, "**Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and**

to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."

~ end of chapter 15 ~
