

MARCH OF EMPIRE - LECTURES ON THE BOOK OF DANIEL

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CHAPTER 16

The Message of the Seventy Weeks

LESSON TEXT -- Daniel 9:25-27

World Events Justify a Study of the Book of Daniel -- The March of Empire Was Revealed Unto Daniel by the Angel Gabriel -- How the Seventy Weeks Determined Upon Daniel's People Were to Be Divided -- It Was Prophecied That Messiah Would Be Cut Off -- The Message of the Seventy Weeks Was to Daniel and His People -- When the Seventy Weeks Began -- The Prophets Had Foreseen and Foretold the Restoration of the Jews and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple -- King Cyrus Issued a Decree and Fulfilled the Prophecy -- The Command to Rebuild the City of Jerusalem Was Given to Nehemiah -- The Accepted Chronology of These Events -- JESUS Came As the Messiah of Israel and Was Cut Off -- The Reason for This Event -- A Prophecy of the Antichrist Who Will Come and Cause the Offering of Sacrifices in Jerusalem to Cease -- JESUS Prophesied That "The Abomination of Desolation" Spoken of by Daniel Would Be Followed by the Great Tribulation

THROUGH DANIEL GOD GAVE LIGHT AND TRUTH TO THE GENTILES

Much of the prophecy in the Old Testament refers to CHRIST in particular and to the Children of Israel in a general way, but to Daniel was given a vision of the march of empire during the times of the Gentiles which began with the Babylonian captivity and which will continue until the fulness of the Gentiles become in, which will not be until JESUS comes in His revelation back to the earth, to overthrow Gentile dominion and establish Himself upon the throne of David in Jerusalem. The Gentile nations, therefore, should be thankful that in the Book of Daniel, and in the Book of Revelation, GOD has given to them a prophetic outline of present and future events.

With world events shaping up as they are now, the information given to us in the Book of Daniel is of vital importance to all thinking people whether Jews, Gentiles or Christians, for when these things come to pass, Jews, Gentiles, and Christians alike will be affected by them.

We have progressed in our present study to Daniel the ninth chapter and the 25th verse,

where our lesson will begin.

DANIEL A MAN GREATLY BELOVED

Our last lesson was based upon Daniel 9:20-24, which reveals that GOD sent the Angel Gabriel to make known unto Daniel future events as outlined in the vision of the seventy weeks.

In Daniel 9:23-24 the Angel Gabriel said to Daniel, **"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."**

LESSON TEXT -- Messiah WAS TO BE CUT OFF

Having considered these things in our last lesson we are now ready to advance in our study by considering what is written in Daniel 9:25-27, where the Angel further said to Daniel, **"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince that 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 until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."**

THE SEVENTY WEEKS WERE VERY IMPORTANT

We have already pointed out that the seventy weeks referred to here by the Angel Gabriel as being determined upon the Jews and upon the city of Jerusalem **"To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy."**

THE INTERPRETATION BELONGS TO THE JEWS

We should remember that in this passage we are strictly upon Jewish ground, for the message of the Angel Gabriel was to Daniel and his people. The interpretation of the passage, therefore, belongs to them, and not to the Gentiles or to the Church.

In verse 25 the Angel said, **"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 three-score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the**

wall, even in troublous times."

HOW THE SEVENTY WEEKS WERE DIVIDED

This was a very important statement because it prophesied the coming of Israel's Messiah and the time when he should appear. In this verse the 490-year period which was determined upon Daniel's people is divided into a period of seven weeks or 49 years, and into threescore and two weeks which amounted to 434 years, according to the prophetic interpretation of this passage. If we add these two periods together; namely the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks, we have a total of 69 weeks up to the time that Messiah was to be cut off. This would leave one prophetic week of seven years to make the third division in the seventy weeks, or 490-year period, which was announced by the Angel Gabriel, as determined upon Daniel's people.

WHEN THE SEVENTY WEEKS BEGAN

With these three divisions of the seventy weeks or 490-year period in mind, our next problem will be to determine as nearly as possible the time when these seventy weeks began. Notice again in verse 25 it says, "**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.**"

AN INTERESTING PROPHECY

Was there any place in the Word of GOD which prophesied that such a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem would be given?

Yes, indeed, there certainly was. In Isaiah 44:24-28 the Prophet said, "**Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof; that saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up the rivers: That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.**"

THE PROCLAMATION OF KING CYRUS

Since these things were prophesied, naturally we wonder whether they came to pass or not. We do not need to be in doubt about this for in Ezra 1:1-4 it says, "**Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith**

Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you, of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel which is in Jerusalem. And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offerings, for the house of God that is in Jerusalem."

THE COMMAND GIVEN TO NEHEMIAH

In the passages given from Isaiah 45 and Ezra, the first chapter, we have the broad basis for the rebuilding of both the temple and the city of Jerusalem. It was the basis upon which the great work of restoration from captivity was begun. But the particular command spoken of in Daniel 9:25, to "**restore and build Jerusalem**" was evidently given to Nehemiah in Nehemiah 2:2-6, where it says:

"And the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid. And I said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of Heaven. And I said unto the king, if it please the king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. And the king said unto me (the queen also sitting by him), For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me;"

THE MESSIAH CUT OFF BY CRUCIFIXION

This command was given in the year 445 B.C. in the generally accepted chronology. With a few minor changes to correct what is now recognized a mistake in the chronology, as to beginning of our present era, we have the time brought down to the year of the crucifixion when the 69th seven of years came to an end. But since there is some dispute among Bible scholars about the exact date when this command was given it is better to rely on another source of information which is just as sure, and perhaps much easier to understand, which I will present as an end to discussions about the matter.

JESUS FULFILLED THE PROPHECY

Here, without any doubt, is a prophecy of Messiah -- the Lord JESUS. The two terms here used of him, i.e., "**the Anointed One**" and "**the Prince**," were true of him but once in his personal ministry. He was "anointed" at His Baptism with the HOLY SPIRIT and power. He was proclaimed "PRINCE" on his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11). A few days later JESUS went out of the temple and said to the Nation of Israel, "**You house is left unto you desolate.**" (Matthew 23:38) -- CHRIST's Baptism marks the middle of the 69th week and the triumphant entrance, the close. The forsaking of the temple by them was when

the clock for Israel ceased to tick. Here, then is the end of the 69th week. We shall find the 70th week later on.

In Daniel 9:26, which is a part of our lesson text, it says, "**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.**"

In this verse, we have a prediction that the Messiah would come and be cut off and that the City of Jerusalem and the sanctuary of the Jews should be destroyed, by the people of the prince that should come.

WHY Messiah WAS TO BE CUT OFF

We do not have to be very wise to detect that the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, (which was spoken of by the prophet) would be, because of their rejection of the Messiah. If the Messiah was to come and be cut off, but not for Himself, this would indicate that the Messiah Himself would be innocent, and that those who cut Him off would be accounted guilty. Hence the destruction of the city and their sanctuary, would be a just punishment for the sin of having rejected the Messiah.

CONFIRMED BY HISTORY

A study of history will reveal that about 70 A.D. the City of Jerusalem, including the temple and the sanctuary of the Jews, was destroyed by the Roman Army under General Titus. Therefore, we know that, what was prophesied in verse 26 of our lesson text concerning the cutting off of the Messiah and the destruction of the City and the sanctuary have fulfilled and is now a matter of history.

A PROPHECY OF THE FUTURE

Let us notice that in verse 26 it says, "**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.**"

In this statement the prophecy overlaps the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and looks forward to the very end or consummation of the long period, which GOD knew would intervene between the destruction of the city and the end of the age, when the prince spoken of in this chapter should come and make his covenant with the Jewish people.

THE ANTICHRIST

All students of prophecy know that the prince spoken of in verse 26 (that should come) was not Titus, but is none other than the coming Antichrist.

In verse 26, notice the language carefully for it says, "**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."

Notice, that in the 27th verse of our lesson text it says, "**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 until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate."**

THE TEMPLE TO BE REBUILT IN JERUSALEM

This important verse implies a partial restoration of the Jewish people from their present international dispersion among the nations to their own land. It implies also that a new Jewish temple will be built in Jerusalem and that the Levitical order of sacrifice will be reinstated by the Jewish people.

No doubt all this will come about as a result of the deceitful covenant which the coming Antichrist will make with a remnant of the Jewish people. But, alas, we are told that in the midst of his covenant with them, which will be for one prophetic week of seven years, the prince that shall come, namely, the Antichrist, will break his covenant with the Jews and 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 GREAT TRIBULATION

This is the abomination of desolation referred to by our Lord in Matthew 24:15, 21, where He said, "**When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand;) For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."**

~ end of chapter 16 ~
