

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

14

UNDERSTAND THE MATTER AND CONSIDER THE VISION

*“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.”*

Daniel 9:23b-24

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Daniel 9:23b

Daniel was an extraordinary man of faith. Taken from his home as a very young man and required to serve a pagan king, Daniel remained true to the Heavenly Father. In fact, he is considered by the Father to be *“greatly beloved”*. (Vs. 23) He had served in Babylon for over 67 years when he discovered a thrilling truth. God, through the prophet Jeremiah had promised that the Jews would be in servitude to Babylon for only seventy years. (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10) When he realized how soon this seventy-year period was to end, he was moved to prayer. “Just reading through the passage is to sense and feel the very heart throb of his holy and beloved man of God. . . . In the firm belief that the Lord would honor His promise, and in the persuasion that He was yet merciful toward His people, Daniel writes, ‘I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the

LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God . . . (Dan. 9:3,4a)’” “Prayer is an overwhelming, all-consuming confession of need.” (Criswell. Vol. 4. P. 84-85,95) In his prayer Daniel acknowledges the sins of his people. “*We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments.*” (Vs. 5) And he prays for the forgiveness of those sins. “*O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers*” (Vs. 16) He begged God to hear and answer their prayers. “*O Lord, hear; O Lord, 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.*” (Vs. 19)

The answer to his prayer came as God’s message delivered through the angel Gabriel. Gabriel reported to Daniel who said, “*And he informed me, and talked with 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.” (Vs. 22-23) The vision he showed Daniel was of a period of time called the “Seventy Weeks.” (Literally seventy groups of seven) “These messages in the ninth chapter in the Book of Daniel, this is doubtless the most significant and the most meaningful of all the prophecies to be found in the Bible. This is the key to an understanding of the prophetic outline of history and the denouement [conclusion] of the age.” (Criswell. Vol. 4. P. 115) Gabriel told Daniel that there was coming a period of 490 years in which God would finish sinful rebellion, reconcile the sinners to God and establish the Messiah as the ruler of the world. *“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.* (Vs. 24) “There is no prophecy in the Bible that is fraught with such astonishing meaning. . . . In this vision

and this word that was brought in answer to Daniel's prayer by Gabriel, God's messenger from heaven, the seventy weeks are divided into seven, into sixty-two, and into one." (Criswell. Vol. 4. P. 104)

The first period of 49 years, or seven weeks, was the time when Jerusalem would be rebuilt. "*The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.*" (Vs. 25b) That actually happened. By 396 B.C. the walls of the city were rebuilt. Interestingly, the year 396 B.C. marks the end of the ministry of Malachi and the sealing and completion of the Old Testament canon.

The next period of sixty-two weeks (or 434 years) takes history from 396 B.C. to A.D. 38. By making corrections for the differences in the Jewish calendar the ending date becomes A.D. 33. "When our western calendar was established, the year of the birth of Jesus was miscalculated. It is now known that He was born sometime between 2 and 6 B.C. At thirty-three years of age, about A.D. 30, Messiah was 'cut off' in literal and exact fulfillment of Daniel 9:26 (Criswell. Vol. 4. P. 106-107) History tells us that the decree was signed on March 14, 445 B.C.

Jesus' Triumphal Entry to Jerusalem was in the spring of A.D. 30. Daniel's prophecy was fulfilled to the day.

At this point there is a pause in the 70-week period. Week 70 has not yet come to pass. This pause before the last week is called the day of God's Grace. This is a protracted period of time giving mankind the opportunity to come to Christ to be saved. It is also called the Church Age. This is a time that the Old Testament prophets knew nothing about. It was a mystery to them. Paul explains this "dispensation of grace" in Ephesians 3:1-6. He speaks of the mystery of Christ. This knowledge was unknown to men in other ages but has been revealed to us through the Apostle Paul by the Spirit of God. The important lesson here is that this pause in the divine 70-week time table is the time during which we are to be saved. The last or 70th week will begin when Jesus raptures the church out of this world. This is when the Antichrist will be revealed and salvation's door will be closed. Antichrist will bring peace but "in the midst" (the middle of the week or at the 3.5 years point) he will "*cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and*

for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate” (Vs. 27) We read about this terrible time in the Revelation chapters 4 – 19. If we are to win the lost, it is now. If we are to receive Christ as our savior, it is now before the door closes.

Child of God, understand that the church will be taken out of the world before the start of the 70th week. We will not experience the Tribulation. We must work for the Savior now because we do not know when the coming of Christ for his Bride will occur.

Notes

70 weeks of Daniel 9

A time line

