

Daniel - Chapter nine

Vs.1. 'in the first year of Darius' (soon after the fall of the Babylonian Empire).

- This 'Darius' is likely the king known as 'Xerxes'.

- Too, 'Ahasuerus' is a 'title' (similar to that of 'Pharaoh' of Egypt, or 'Caesar' of Rome), and it was given to four different kings of Medo-Persia.

Note: The Medes were descendants of Japheth, a son of Noah (Gen.10:2).

V.2. Daniel, a student of prophecy, had read and studied the scrolls of Jeremiah (25:11; 29:1,10), and understood that the 70 years of Judah's captivity in Babylon was nearing its end. The Babylonian Empire had been defeated and Daniel's people (Jews) would soon be returning to their homeland.

Vs.3-19. Daniel's prayer and confession for himself and Israel.

- 'I set my face unto the Lord God' - praying and fasting with sackcloth and ashes. Note: This was a common procedure with Daniel when he needed an answer from the Lord. And I'm convinced it's because of the lack of such dedication and commitment that many of today's prayers go unanswered. God promises to answer when we pray, if we are sincere and obedient.

V.4,5. 'We have sinned'. Daniel began 'his prayer of intercession' by recognizing the greatness of God, as well as His love and mercy shown to all who love and obey Him. Then he made his confession, identifying himself with the people of Israel who had sinned and rebelled against God. Notice what Daniel includes in his prayer:

- We have sinned.
- Committed iniquity
- Done wickedly
- Departed from God's precepts
- Departed from God's judgments
- Not listened to God's servants, the prophets
- Trespassed against God
- Rebelled against God
- Not obeyed God's law
- Not walked in His laws
- Transgressed God's law
- Disobeyed God's voice

V.11. 'the curse is poured upon us'. (The curse that God promised would come upon them if they rebelled; if they refused to obey His commandments (Deut.27-29). Note: God gave the 'Law' to Moses some 950 years earlier . . . but it was still in effect.

Vs.16-19. Daniel makes his requests to God:

- Let your anger and fury be turned away from Jerusalem and Mt. Zion.
- Hear my prayer.
- Hear my supplications.

- Cause Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary.
 - Incline Your ear to hear.
 - Open Your eyes toward us.
 - See our desolations.
 - Forgive our sins.
 - Hearken and do.
 - Defer not my answer.
- In concluding his prayer, Daniel asks God to do these things for His own sake since Jerusalem and the people of Israel are called by His name.

Vs.20-23. While Daniel was praying Gabriel came and touched him.

- 'at the time of the evening oblation (sacrifice)'. Note: The following are some examples:
 - David sinned in numbering the people. Judgment fell. 70,000 died. Angel ceased destroying in Jerusalem - 'at time of 'evening sacrifice' (I Sam.14:15).
 - Elijah, while on Mt. Carmel, offered a sacrifice and called fire down from heaven - 'at time of 'evening sacrifice' (I Kings 18:29,36).
 - When Ezra learned that the people were inter-marrying with the heathen of Canaan, he prayed and confessed before God - 'at the time of the evening sacrifice' (Ezra 9:1-5).
 - Jesus died on the cross at the 9th hour, at the 'time of the evening sacrifice' (Matt.27:46-50).
 - Peter and John went to the Temple for prayer - 'at the time of the evening sacrifice' (Acts 3:1). Lame man was healed.
 - Cornelius was praying for spiritual guidance and direction (Acts 10:3, 30) - 'at the time of the evening sacrifice'. God sent Peter in answer to his prayer and all that were present received the Word and were filled with the Holy Ghost. Amen! It's good to have a time set aside (whatever the time of day or night) to seek God and pray for the needs of others. And while doing so, to offer your bodies (total being) as a 'living sacrifice' unto the Lord (Rom.12:1,2).

Note: Until this time, all the dreams and visions recorded in the Book of Daniel had to do with 'Gentile powers' having rule over the Hebrews. Now, God reveals that which is to happen in the future concerning His chosen people, Israel.

Vs.24-27. Daniel is given one of the most amazing visions ever given to man. In fact, many believe it to be the 'Key to the Prophetic Word'. Surely, it is undoubtedly the most important prophecy given in Scripture to assist in understanding 'God's Plan for the Ages'.

- Daniel's vision of 'Seventy Weeks' foretold not only that Israel would reject their Messiah when He arrived on the scene, but gave the day they would have Him to be 'cut off'. Then the vision looks forward to the Messiah's 'second coming to earth' to set up His everlasting kingdom.

Two important 'bits of information' that must be grasped if we are to understand the vision:

- (1) The word translated 'weeks' (v.24) means a 'unit of seven years' (heptad). Therefore, 'seventy weeks' is a period of seventy weeks of years, or 490 years.

(2) An important point, but often overlooked in considering the chronology of prophecy, is the 'length of the prophetic year'.

- The Jewish year of biblical times was 'lunar-solar', and had only 360 days. The 'solar year' of 365.25 days, which we now live by, was unknown to the nations in the Old Testament. **Example 1:** The recorded history of Noah's flood confirms that a thirty-day month was used in the Book of Genesis. One hundred fifty days are recorded as the five month interval between the 17th day of the 2nd month to the 17th day of the 7th month (Gen.7:11; 8:3,4). **Example 2:** Rev.12:6 describes the last three and one-half years of tribulation as precisely 1260 days, 'a time, times and half a time', where a 'time' in Hebrew stands for a year of 360 days (v.14), and 'forty-two months', of 30 days each (13:5).

- Too, Sir Isaac Newton relates that 'all nations, before the just length of the solar year was known, reckoned months by the course of the moon . . . 30 days to a lunar month, and 12 lunar months to a year'.

- Therefore, if we wish to understand the precise times involved in the fulfillment of prophecy, we need to use the same biblical lunar-solar year of 360 days as they did, not 365 days.

V.24. The prophecy has to do specifically with 'Daniel's people' (Hebrews), and the 'holy city' (Jerusalem).

- Six things (three negative and three positive) are to be fulfilled during the 70 weeks (heptads), or 490 years.

Negatives:

- Make reconciliation for iniquity. An atonement for iniquity will be made by Christ's death on the cross.
- Finish the transgression. The national transgression of 'unbelief' will no longer exist.
- Make an end of sins. All Israel (i.e. the remnant) will return to God in righteousness (Rom.11:26),

Positives:

- A rule of 'everlasting righteousness' (holiness forevermore) will be brought in.
- Seal up the vision and prophecy. (Prophecy is fulfilled and completed.)
- Anoint the most Holy. Jesus Christ to be anointed King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev,19:16).

V.25. God says, from the time the commandment is given for the Hebrew captives to rebuild the city of Jerusalem until the Messiah (the Anointed One) returns and is 'cut off' - will be '69 weeks', or 483 years. Note: There are differences of opinion as to 'when' (the exact date) Cyrus gave the decree for the Hebrews to rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

- Some think it was 538BC. Yet, that decree was given for the rebuilding of the temple, not the city.
- Others believe Ezra returned to Jerusalem in 457BC to begin the rebuilding the city. They also believe 483 years from that date would end in AD27 (considered to be the time of Jesus beginning His ministry).

- Sir Robert Anderson gives the following calculation as to the proper date:

- 'According to Neh.2:1, the decree was issued by the Persian King Artaxerxes Longimanus 'in the twentieth year' of his reign. The 'Talmud' says, 'the first day of the month of Nisan' is the New Year for the computation of the reign of kings and for festivals.

- The first of Nisan in King Artaxerxes' twentieth year was computed by the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, United Kingdom, as March 14, 445 B.C.

- From the days of that commandment there is a period of 'seven weeks and threescore and two weeks', which total '69 weeks of years' (69 X 7 years = 483 biblical years). Too, 483 X 360 days = 173,880 days.

- At the end of these 69 weeks (483 years, or 173,880 days) there is to be a particular time, according to Daniel, when the 'Messiah will be cut off'.

- On the tenth day of Nisan (April 6, AD32), on 'Palm Sunday', in fulfillment of this prophecy, Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem and presented Himself as 'the Messiah'. It was the time of Israel's visitation, but they knew it not (Lu.19:41-44).

- It was their 'decision day'. They must decide whether or not to accept Jesus as their prophesied Messiah-King. They rejected Him, and four days later (April 10, AD32) He was crucified (cut off).

- Their promised kingdom has now, since the crucifixion, been postponed for almost two thousand years'.

Note: The sixty-nine weeks of years (483 years, 173,880 days) began with the command to rebuild the city of Jerusalem (March 14, 445BC) and ended on the day the Messiah was 'cut off' (April 10, AD32) - the tenth of Nisan.

V.26. After the '7 weeks' and '62 weeks' (69 weeks; 483 years), two things would happen: (1) The Messiah would be 'cut off' (rejected and crucified), (2) The 'people of the prince that shall come' will destroy Jerusalem and the temple'.

- The 'people of the prince' are those of the Roman army under the leadership of Titus. They destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in AD70.

Notice: The destruction of Jerusalem did not take place immediately after the crucifixion of Christ. In like manner, the conclusion of the 69th week is separated from the beginning of the 70th week by an interval of time. This is the time of the 'Church Age'.

- The 'prince' refers to the end-time Antichrist.

- Until the end, there will be war and a sentence of desolations.

V.27. 'And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week' (seven years). The 'prince that shall come' (Antichrist) will negotiate a treaty (covenant) between Israel and its enemies concerning a 'land dispute' and 'peace'. When this happens, it will signal the beginning of the 70th week (the final seven years of the prophecy revealed to Daniel by Gabriel).

- In the middle of this 7-year period, the 'prince' will break his covenant with Israel, declare himself to be God, (abomination of desolation), take the reins of government in Jerusalem, forbid the worship of the Lord, and devastate the Holy Land (Israel).

Three interesting occurrences having to do with the 490-year cycle:

(1) From time of the coronation of King Saul as Israel's first king (1096BC) until the captivity of Judah by the Babylonians in 606BC - was 490 years.

(2) From the dedication of the first temple in Jerusalem, built by Solomon (1005BC), until the dedication of second temple, built by Zerubbabel in 515BC (after returning from captivity), was 490 years.

- The first temple, built by Solomon, was dedicated on the 'Feast of Tabernacles' (15th day of Tishri). And the second temple was dedicated to God by Ezra on the 'Feast of Tabernacles' 490 years later to the exact day (I Kings 8:2,65; Neh.8:14-18).

(3) Daniel's vision of the 'seventy weeks' (490 years) was of a period between the command to rebuild the city of Jerusalem (March 14, 445BC) until the Messiah was 'cut off' (April 10, AD32), a period of 483 biblical years to the day. And the 'final week' (7 years of tribulation), the time to seal up the vision and prophecy, is yet to take place. But remember: The rapture of the saints could take place at any moment. And when that glorious event takes place, the 70th week will soon follow. Note: That's why it is so important for everyone to 'get ready' (accept Christ as Savior), and then, 'stay ready' (live in obedience to His Word).