

The Book of Daniel⁴³

Lesson 8

Daniel Chapter 9

70 Years to Exile – 70 Weeks to Messiah

536 BC

The great Babylonian Empire ends after just 70 years. The Medes and the Persians control the country. The head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the statue no longer controls the kingdom; the chest of silver and gold dominates the world. The two-horned ram of Daniel's dream has arrived; the shaggy goat will not arrive for 207 years. Darius the Mede controls Babylon. Cyrus the Great, the king of the new empire, will soon arrive in the city. Jeremiah's scroll has arrived in Babylon for an older Daniel to study.

Jeremiah's Prophecy

Daniel ^{9:1} In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans-- ^{9:2} in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was *revealed as* the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, *namely*, seventy years.

More than 50 years before, Baruch wrote every word that the Lord instructed Jeremiah to tell the people in Jerusalem and the surrounding area. The scrolls had infuriated King Jehoiakim so much that he cut them into pieces with a knife and cast them into the fire. Baruch re-wrote every word on new scrolls and they have arrived in Babylon in 536 BC the first year of Darius' control of the city and the empire for Daniel to study.

As Jeremiah reads the scroll, he comes to the passage that we call Jeremiah 25:11-12 that says,

"This whole land will be a desolation and a horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation," declares the LORD, "for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation."

Daniel must have been shocked at the passage. Nebuchadnezzar had taken him out of the Southern Kingdom in 606 BC and now, 70 years later, Darius has ended the Babylonian Empire in 536 BC. The great interpreter of dreams, visions, and enigmas had discovered the prophecy for his people in the 50 year-old manuscript of Jeremiah. With the 70 years completed, Jeremiah's prophecy has confirmed and fulfilled the punishment of the Babylonian Empire. It will never rise again.

Reading on in Jeremiah, Daniel reads in Jeremiah 29:10,

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For thus says the LORD, "When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place."

We can only imagine the joy in Daniel's heart as he reads this passage. He now understands that with the overthrow of the Babylonian Empire; his people will soon head back to their Promised Land.

Daniel's Prayer

Daniel ^{9:3} So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek *Him* by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. ^{9:4} And I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said,

The Scriptures have enlightened Daniel. By 536 BC, only eight of the Old Testament books remain to be written. Those books include Daniel, Zechariah, Haggai, Nehemiah, Ezra, I and II Chronicles, and Malachi. How many of the other 31 books does Daniel have to read? No one knows! More than likely none because the exiles from the Southern Kingdom do not know the law. When they return to Jerusalem, the people will find the scrolls in the rubble, protected by the Lord for 70 years, and Ezra will begin reading them to the people from morning to night.

Thrilled with the words of Jeremiah, Daniel now turns his attention to the Lord with prayer and supplication. Prayer means direct communication with God in a conversation, but supplication means a cry for mercy from the Lord. How will he pray? Where will he pray? In what environment will he pray? He will pray as he fasts, wearing sackcloth and ashes. Unlike all the other religions of Daniel's day, he will not include food with his prayer time or the pomp of extravagant garb and fineries as others do. He knows that he needs nothing special to impress the Lord. His royal robe comes off, replaced with the clothing of the poor. He exchanges his royal chair for the dirt floor, and Daniel offers nothing to the Lord from the sacrifices to the Babylonian gods.

Faithful God

Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, ^{9:5} we have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly, and rebelled, even turning aside from Thy commandments and ordinances.

Daniel begins his prayer by giving praise to the great and awesome God Who keeps His promises. Even though Daniel's people broke the Lord's command, as a faithful God He keeps His promise.

Unfaithful People

Daniel ^{9:6} Moreover, we have not listened to Thy servants the prophets, who spoke in Thy name to our kings, our princes, our fathers, and all the people of the land.

Daniel recognizes the fact that in the past the Lord had faithfully sent His Word to His people through prophets like Jeremiah, but the Jews had refused to listen.

Open Shame

Daniel ^{9:7} Righteousness belongs to Thee, O Lord, but to us open shame, as it is this day-- to the men of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Israel, those who are nearby and those who are far away in all the countries to which Thou hast driven them, because of their unfaithful deeds which they have committed against Thee. ^{9:8} Open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee.

Israel, the old Northern Kingdom, Judah, the old Southern Kingdom and the people who once resided in Jerusalem including all the royalty, have no excuse for their actions. Guilty "open shame" is their only position before the world.

Transgressed Law

Daniel ^{9:9} To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him; ^{9:10} nor have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His teachings which He set before us through His servants the prophets. ^{9:11} Indeed all Israel has transgressed Thy law and turned aside, not obeying Thy voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him.

Before the children of Israel entered the Promised Land, the Lord revealed to them their curse if they rebelled against Him in Deuteronomy 28.

The eventual exile of the Jews and the kings of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms from their lands fulfills every promise of the curse from the Lord.⁴⁴

Confirmed Word

Daniel ^{9:12} Thus He has confirmed His words which He had spoken against us and against our rulers who ruled us, to bring on us great calamity; for under the whole heaven there has not been done *anything* like what was done to Jerusalem.

No other city or kingdom "under the whole heaven" has felt the wrath of the Lord like Jerusalem and the descendants of Jacob.

His Deeds

Daniel ^{9:13} As it is written in the law of Moses, all this calamity has come on us; yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our iniquity and giving attention to Thy truth. ^{9:14} Therefore, the LORD has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the LORD our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds which He has done, but we have not obeyed His voice.

Surely Daniel's prayer reflects his thought about the Deuteronomy 28 passage. The calamity that transpired over 70 years and culminated in 536 BC reveals the righteousness of God to accomplish in their lives what He has promised.

⁴⁴ See Deuteronomy 28 at the end of this lesson.

Thy City

Daniel ^{9:15} And now, O Lord our God, who hast brought Thy people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and hast made a name for Thyself, as it is this day-- we have sinned, we have been wicked. ^{9:16} O Lord, in accordance with all Thy righteous acts, let now Thine anger and Thy wrath turn away from Thy city Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain; for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Thy people *have become* a reproach to all those around us.

Why do the people of all the nations hate the Jews? Is it because of God? No. It is because of the Jews unfaithfulness to God. The Lord brought all the calamity upon them and He will continue to do so until they fully give themselves to Him.

God Listen

Daniel ^{9:17} So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Thy servant and to his supplications, and for Thy sake, O Lord, let Thy face shine on Thy desolate sanctuary.

Daniel begs the Lord to allow the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem.

God Incline

Daniel ^{9:18} O my God, incline Thine ear and hear! Open Thine eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Thy name; for we are not presenting our supplications before Thee on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Thy great compassion.

Daniel begs the Lord to allow the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem, not for the sake of the Jews but because of the great compassion of the Lord.

Take Action

Daniel ^{9:19} O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Thine own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name.

Daniel begs the Lord to rebuild the nation of Israel quickly and without any further delay. With the 70 years complete, Daniel begs the Lord to take action.

Gabriel's Arrival

Daniel ^{9:20} Now 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 in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, ^{9:21} while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in *my* extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering.

The evening offering occurs at the ninth hour or 3:00 PM. For over 50 years, no offering has been made because the temple lies in ruins but the faithful Jewish remnant has continued to remember God during the hours of the regular sacrifices. About 3:00 PM, the angel Gabriel appears and speaks with Daniel. He recognizes him from the previous visions.

Gabriel's Instruction

Daniel ^{9:22} And he gave *me* instruction and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding.

Gabriel arrives purely to provide Daniel with the insight to understand the future that he has worried about since the vision of the ram and the shaggy goat.

Daniel Esteemed Highly

Daniel ^{9:23} "At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell *you*, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision.

Because of the Lord's heart for Daniel, as soon as Daniel starts praying, He dispatches Gabriel to give him further understanding about the future of Israel and the promise the Lord has in store for them in the Messiah.

Seventy Weeks Decreed

Daniel ^{9:24} "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy *place*.

In the original, seventy weeks of years means that each day of the week consists of a year. Seven days equal seven years. Therefore, in the Scripture, 70 weeks, or 490 years, must pass before Israel will stop sinning against the Lord. Surely Daniel must be startled by that information. He has just read in Jeremiah that the calamity of his people will end at the 70 year mark and 536 BC marks the end of those years. Now, 70 more weeks of years must transpire because of the sins of his people. How can it be? Seventy weeks times seven equals 490 years. Can Daniel's people remain in exile for 490 more years? Why will it take so long to end sin, to make atonement for sin and to complete all the visions and prophecies and re-establish the temple? How long will Daniel's people continue to sin? Have they not learned their lessons during their time in exile in Babylon?

Seven Weeks and Sixty-two Weeks

Daniel ^{9:25} "So you are to know and discern *that* from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince *there will be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.

Gabriel tells Daniel that at some time a decree to order the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem will start a timeline that will lead to the Messiah they have longed to see. The timeline has two markers on it, one at the end of the first 7 weeks of years or 49 years, and the second at the end of another 62 weeks of years or 434 years. What will happen at the end of the first 49 years? What will happen at the end of the second 434 years?

Messiah and Prince to Come

Daniel ^{9:26} "Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

Some time after the end of the 434 years, "the Messiah will be cut off." After that time a horrible ruler of the people will come and destroy the temple along with the city of Jerusalem with a flood of water rolling over it, but that is not the end for Israel. In John's Revelation, this horrible ruler, assisted by Satan, will attack Jerusalem and the people will begin to run from the city. Satan will attempt to drown them in a flood but an earthquake will swallow the water to save the people.⁴⁵ The wars are not over; they will continue even after the destruction.

Broken Covenant

Daniel ^{9:27} "And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

Finally, after years of fighting, a ruler will make a seven-year treaty with Israel, but at the 3 1/2 year mark, he will break the treaty, enter the land "on the wing of abomination" and stop the sacrifices that have been reinstated. He will not succeed for another man will come and destroy him. Then the 70 weeks will be complete.

Does this information help Daniel? Perhaps!

We know that the crucifixion of Jesus occurred on April VI, 30 AD, the day that He was "cut off" by the Jews. He had made His inaugural appearance at the Jordan River in January of 27 AD, about 3 1/2 years before. Did someone give a decree to rebuild Jerusalem 483 years before either of those dates?⁴⁶ Yes! In 455 BC, 483 years before 27 AD, Artaxerxes I ordered Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem, rebuild the wall, rebuild the city and to do it with Persian money.⁴⁷

With the order from Artaxerxes I, the timeline starts. What occurred 49 years later in 406 BC? Malachi, the last prophet of the Old Testament completed his book and the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures was complete. What occurs 62 weeks of years or 434 years later? In 27 AD Jesus presents Himself at the Jordan River for baptism. Just 3 1/2 years later, they crucify Jesus.

At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, in April of 27 AD, the work on building the temple according to the design of Herod the Great has stopped because of a lack of funds after 46 years of constant construction.⁴⁸ Work begins again within the year and continues until its completion in 66 AD. Four years later, Titus' men roll into Jerusalem, destroy the temple and the city in 70 AD. However, wars are not over in Jerusalem. Even though the exiles are given back their land on May 1IV, 1948 by the British, wars and conflicts will continue to plague the nations. The events of Daniel 9:1-26 have all been fulfilled; however, verse 27 has not. Some time in the future, a ruler from the area of the old Roman Empire will make a peace treaty with Israel for seven years. In the middle of the treaty, he will break the agreement and enter

⁴⁵ **Revelation 12:15** And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. ¹⁶ And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

⁴⁶ 7 weeks of years and 62 weeks of years = 69 weeks of years or 483 years

⁴⁷ Nehemiah 2

⁴⁸ John 2:20 – Herod the Great began repairs and expansion of the temple to appease the Jews in 20 BC. It will take 86 years to complete his design plans, culminating in 66 BC.

Israel to completely desolate it. His efforts will come to an end when the Lord arrives to rescue Israel and destroy the ruler and his followers.

We can only wonder, "How much of Gabriel's vision does Daniel understand?" It does not matter because history has proven the first 26 verses of the vision to be true. Why would we not believe that the last verse would also come true?

Darius has been in Babylon long enough to grow fond of Daniel. He has divided the kingdom up into 120 portions, each controlled by a satrap. He selects Daniel, even in his old age, to be one of three commissioners over the satraps. It will be Daniel's last appointment in the service of the kings, but one that will prove profitable to Darius' eternity, as we will see in chapter 6.

Deuteronomy 28

Deuteronomy 28:15 " But it shall come about, if you will not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. " Cursed *shall* you be in the city, and cursed *shall* you be in the country. " Cursed *shall* be your basket and your kneading bowl. " Cursed *shall* be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock. " Cursed *shall* you be when you come in, and cursed *shall* you be when you go out. " The LORD will send upon you curses, confusion, and rebuke, in all you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken Me. " The LORD will make the pestilence cling to you until He has consumed you from the land, where you are entering to possess it. " The LORD will smite you with consumption and with fever and with inflammation and with fiery heat and with the sword and with blight and with mildew, and they shall pursue you until you perish. " And the heaven which is over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you, iron. " The LORD will make the rain of your land powder and dust; from heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed. " The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them, but you shall flee seven ways before them, and you shall be *an example of* terror to all the kingdoms of the earth. " And your carcasses shall be food to all birds of the sky and to the beasts of the earth, and there shall be no one to frighten *them* away. " The LORD will smite you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors and with the scab and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. " The LORD will smite you with madness and with blindness and with bewilderment of heart; and you shall grope at noon, as the blind man gropes in darkness, and you shall not prosper in your ways; but you shall only be oppressed and robbed continually, with none to save you. " You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall violate her; you shall build a house, but you shall not live in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but you shall not use its fruit. " Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey shall be torn away from you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you shall have none to save you. " Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, while your eyes shall look on and yearn for them continually; but there shall be nothing you can do. " A people whom you do not know shall eat up the produce of your ground and all your labors, and you shall never be anything but oppressed and crushed continually. " And you shall be driven mad by the sight of what you see. " The LORD will strike you on the knees and legs with sore boils, from which you cannot be healed, from the sole of your foot to the crown of your head. " The LORD will bring you and your king, whom you shall set over you, to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone. " And you shall become a horror, a proverb, and a taunt among

all the people where the LORD will drive you. " You shall bring out much seed to the field but you shall gather in little, for the locust shall consume it. " You shall plant and cultivate vineyards, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather *the grapes*, for the worm shall devour them. " You shall have olive trees throughout your territory but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil, for your olives shall drop off. " You shall have sons and daughters but they shall not be yours, for they shall go into captivity. " The cricket shall possess all your trees and the produce of your ground. " The alien who is among you shall rise above you higher and higher, but you shall go down lower and lower. " He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail. "So all these curses shall come on you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you would not obey the LORD your God by keeping His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. "And they shall become a sign and a wonder on you and your descendants forever. " Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the LORD shall send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you. " The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand, a nation of fierce countenance who shall have no respect for the old, nor show favor to the young. "Moreover, it shall eat the offspring of your herd and the produce of your ground until you are destroyed, who also leaves you no grain, new wine, or oil, nor the increase of your herd or the young of your flock until they have caused you to perish. " And it shall besiege you in all your towns until your high and fortified walls in which you trusted come down throughout your land, and it shall besiege you in all your towns throughout your land which the LORD your God has given you. " Then you shall eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your sons and of your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy shall oppress you. "The man who is refined and very delicate among you shall be hostile toward his brother and toward the wife he cherishes and toward the rest of his children who remain, so that he will not give even one of them any of the flesh of his children which he shall eat, since he has nothing else left, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy shall oppress you in all your towns. " The refined and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground for delicateness and refinement, shall be hostile toward the husband she cherishes and toward her son and daughter, and toward her afterbirth which issues from between her legs and toward her children whom she bears; for she shall eat them secretly for lack of anything else, during the siege and the distress by which your enemy shall oppress you in your towns. "If you are not careful to observe all the words of this law which are written in this book, to fear this honored and awesome name, the LORD your God, then the LORD will bring extraordinary plagues on you and your descendants, even severe and lasting plagues, and miserable and chronic sicknesses. " ... "Then you shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven for multitude, because you did not obey the LORD your God. "And it shall come about that as the LORD delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the LORD will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you; and you shall be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it. "Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known. "And among those nations you shall find no rest, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul. "So your life shall hang in doubt before you; and you shall be in dread night and day, and shall have no assurance of your life. "