

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

This evening we are going to be in Daniel 9.

Daniel 9 is considered by most students of the Bible to be one of the premier chapters in all of scripture as far as prophecy is concerned.

In it we find a timetable for events stretching from the Babylonians Exile right up to the Second Coming of Christ.

In it we will see how Israel plays a central role in both the plan and the purpose of God.

And by the time we're finished, I think you'll see that what's taking place over in the Middle East right now with Iran and Syria – it is just more of the final arrangement of props on the stage as we await the curtain rising on the Last Days.

We must remember that God is still in control – and as we study the scriptures, we just see the pieces simply coming together.

Let's pray...

Ok – so chapter nine is divided in two parts.

The last eight verse is where we find the prophetic word of events that are going to occur before Jesus' Second Coming –

However, the first 19 verse are important also because in it, we see a man, Daniel, who was completely sold out to God and lived his life a loyal servant to God most high.

[Dan 9:1-27 NKJV] 1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans—

In chapters seven and eight, we looked at two different visions that were given to Daniel.

Those were given during the reign of Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar.

However, this third vision that was given to Daniel comes to him within the first year after the Medes and the Persians had conquered Babylon.

If the name Darius sounds familiar to us – it should, because it was this same Darius that threw Daniel into the lion’s den for praying back in chapter six.

2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years [specified] by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

So, Daniel is really old – but he is not living out his days as a retiree.

What is he doing???

He is reading his Bible.

And not only reading, he is studying it!

He is reading with precision and care and as he does he discovers something that shook him.

As he was reading through the writings of Jeremiah, he discovered a prophecy that Israel would be exiled in Babylon for 70 years.

And he starts to count the years from the time he was taken away by Nebuchadnezzar as a teenager and he realizes that the 70 years are coming to an end.

Turn to Jeremiah 29 -

[Jer 29:10-14 NKJV] 10 For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find [Me], when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

Why did God specify 70 years for their captivity? Why not 80 or 90?

Because the scriptures tell us that for 490 years, the Jews neglected to observe the Sabbath year.

Remember, they were supposed to work the fields for six years and then they were supposed to allow the ground to rest on the seventh year and were to place their dependence on God.

So Daniel sees that the time of exile is coming to an end but he also sees what he is supposed to be doing – he is supposed to be seeking God with all of his heart.

And that is just what Daniel does.

3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.

For the Jews, when they prayed – they would normally pray in the direction of Jerusalem – that is where the temple was.

But Daniel sets his face directly to God and begins to intercede not only for himself, but for the other Jews that were in exile as well.

To pray with fasting, sackcloth and ashes – these are all emblems of humiliation and mourning and grieving.

We get the idea that this wasn't a 30 second prayer that Daniel prayed here.

This is serious prayer –

We should be more like Daniel.

4 And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments,

Daniel begins his prayer the way we all should. That is by acknowledging the greatness and goodness of God.

5 "we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. 6 "Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. 7 "O Lord, righteousness [belongs] to You, but to us shame of face, as [it is] this day--to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You. 8 "O Lord, to us [belongs] shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

In the scriptures, we don't find instances of Daniel ever rebelling against the statutes of God. In fact, we saw in the first chapter that Daniel was not one who compromised.

He did not want to defile himself by eating from the king's food because he knew that it was sacrificed to idols.

He continued to pray to God in chapter 6 even though he knew that it went against the edict of the king.

But notice in his prayer that he confesses Israel's sins as if he were as bad as the rest of Israel.

It was not a prayer of they... it was a prayer of we...

He doesn't point fingers at his wicked brethren – he stands with those who have erred.

9 "To the Lord our God [belong] mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. 10 "We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. 11 "Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.

Turn with me to the book of Leviticus 26 –

We have the same oath and curse in Deut 28 – God had warned the Israelites what would happen if they rebelled against Him.

[Lev 26:31-34 NKJV] 31 I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas. 32 I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it. 33 I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. 34 Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you [are] in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths.

This is exactly what happened to them and why they find themselves in Babylon.

12 "And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem. 13 "As [it is] written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. 14 "Therefore the LORD has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the LORD our God [is] righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice. 15 "And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as [it is] this day--we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

For many generations Israel strayed from God.

He sent warning after warning of judgment.

And all the time, all people had to do was turn to Him in confession and repentance and He would have forgiven and stayed the judgment.

But they never did – they just proceeded from bad to worse.

So God brought His promised judgment on them.

16 "O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people [are] a reproach to all [those] around us. 17 "Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. 18 "O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. 19 "O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

Now, we have to be careful to understand the basis of Daniel's request here.

He does not ask that God would bless and restore Israel on the basis of anything that they have done, but rather, Daniel is asking that God will restore Israel in spite of their continued sin and waywardness.

I asked you to make a note in verse 18 where it says because of Your great mercies – You see, we have to understand that forgiveness isn't based on what we do, but solely on God's mercy.

There is a payment required for our sin.

There must be a sacrifice for God to forgive us in a correct, righteous, just manner.

Jesus paid our debt. He was our sacrifice.

(1 Jn 1:9 NKJV) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

God is "just" when He forgives us because He has paid the price for our sins by sending His Son to die in our place.

20 Now while I [was] speaking, 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, 21 yes, while I [was] speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

We are not told how long Daniel interceded for Israel.

It could have been hours or days or weeks.

Daniel was determined to continue to intercede until God gave him an answer.

The answer came in the form of the angel Gabriel who was sent to give Daniel a message.

Gabriel's appearance was as a man – meaning that Daniel was able to communicate with him in a normal and usual manner.

Notice at what moment Gabriel arrived – Daniel says it was at the time of the evening offering.

But Daniel is in Babylon – not Jerusalem.

And the temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar almost 50 years before this vision was given to Daniel.

But while his body was in Babylon, his heart was in the holy city, worshipping at a spiritual temple.

The evening offering was made every day at 3 PM.

It was a year old lamb sacrificed whole on the altar, followed by a meal and drink offering.

This symbolized the sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and who offered Himself completely.

The meal and drink offering represent the fellowship God desires to have with us through the sacrifice of the Lamb who takes away our sins.

It was as Daniel was celebrating this evening offering in his heart, that God sends Gabriel to the prophet with a word about the future.

22 And he informed [me], and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. 23 "At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell [you], for you [are] greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

The chapter began with Daniel studying Jeremiah's prophecy that the captivity would last for seventy years. Now Gabriel is going to give Daniel a little more insight into how "seventy" applies to the future of Israel.

24 "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

First of all, we have to understand what Gabriel means by 70 weeks.

The word “weeks” is a Hebrew word that literally means “sevens”

So you have 70 X 7 or 490 years.

Your people – of course refers to the Jews

Your holy city is the city of Jerusalem.

So what is supposed to occur within these 490 years???

The six things listed here in verse 24 –

The first three have to do with sin.

These items will have been accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross.

The last three have to do with God’s kingdom.

They will be accomplished when Jesus comes back.

**25 "Know therefore and understand, [That] from the going forth of the command
**To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, [There shall be] seven
 weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in
 troublesome times.****

Here Gabriel takes those 70 weeks and divides them into three parts.

He provides Daniel with the prophesy on two of the parts here in verse 25.

Seven weeks – or 49 years, that is a reference to how long it is going to take to rebuild Jerusalem.

Seven weeks and sixty two weeks – or 69 weeks. Here, Gabriel is telling Daniel how many years before the Messiah appears – after the decree has been announced.

Many bible scholars believe that the decree that Gabriel is speaking of is the one issued to Nehemiah in Nehemiah 2 – and some have even done the math using a Hebrew calendar which consisted of 360 days or 173,880 days.

If one starts counting from March 14th 445 BC and counts 173,880 days – one gets April 6th 32 AD. That is the day of Jesus Christ triumphant entry into Jerusalem Gabriel tells Daniel this 500 years before it even happened!!! And guess what? It happened!!!

How do I know there is a God?

How do I know that the Bible really is God's Word to us?

I think one of the greatest things to point to is the fact that the Bible accurately speaks of things in the future, and they come to pass.

This is just one of hundreds of prophecies that have come to pass exactly like God said they would.

God Himself says:

(Is 46:9–10 NKJV) —9 Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,’

26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it [shall be] with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

After the 62-7's, the Messiah will be cut off – but not for Himself, it's for others. This is in reference to Jesus Christ dying on the cross.

Jesus died for the sins of the world.

Less than a week after His triumphal entry, Jesus was arrested and crucified.

And when Jesus was cut off, God's time clock was put on "pause" with one week to go.

The people of the prince to come is in reference to the Roman army that destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 70 AD –

You have to remember that Gabriel is telling Daniel this even before the second temple is even built,

27 Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

Here we have the remaining week.

The "he" that is described here in verse 27 is the prince who is to come that it speaks of in verse 26.

If we know that the prince's people destroyed the temple in 70 AD – and we have already established that it was the Roman Empire who did this. Then we know that this coming prince has roots in the Roman Empire.

And of course this refers to the AntiChrist.

We spoke last week that the antichrist will make a covenant with the Jews.

For the first half of the last 7 years, the Jews look to the Antichrist as their Messiah.

He had brought about apparent peace and has pledged their safety.

He has even allowed them to rebuild their temple.

But when he enters that temple and claims to be God, then demands they worship him, they will realize him to be an imposter and will reject him.

His fury will be indescribable and will set out to wipe them out.

Turn with me to Matthew 24,

[Mat 24:15-22 NKJV] 15 "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), 16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Jesus quotes from the book of Daniel.

The first 69 weeks have already been fulfilled – just like God said it would.

Yet there are people who say that the Tribulation period will never occur.

God is always right – if He said it will happen, it will.

Let's pray...

