

Daniel 9 (Part 2) - John Karmelich

If you've been reading my Daniel studies to date you might have noticed how much I loved saying how much I liked "this phrase" or "that chapter"! Well the text here hooked me on a lifelong joy of studying Bible prophecy. It led me down many "rabbit holes" chasing things that were a waste of time. In spite of that, I wouldn't trade my study of this topic for anything! Understanding and appreciating what one can learn on that topic taught me lots of great things about world history as well as what'll occur in the "end times". OK John, good for you! Why should we care? Because texts like the one here in Daniel Chapter 9 validate the bible as God's word. It's also a great reminder that all of this "stuff" is real when we go through our moments of doubts about Jesus being the only way to God!

My goal in teaching prophecy isn't just to grasp what such text mean, but it's to realize once one grasps such knowledge, you'll never see the bible the same way again! I don't guarantee such passages as this one in Daniel will lead people to salvation, as it's up to God to open people's hearts. It's just a reminder of what is God's truth and what's the most valuable use of our time!

Realize I'm not alone in my love of the text here. Sir Isaac Newton considered this passage the greatest in the Old Testament as proof that Jesus was God! In effect, to understand the meaning of last 4 verses of this chapter are key to understanding all bible prophecy. Later, I'll explain how Jewish scholars read this passage and why they're wrong on their interpretation. I've read books on this text. My favorite is one written about a hundred years ago, by a man who was knighted by the queen for his explanation of this passage! (The Coming Price by Sir Robert Anderson.)

OK enough background, onto the passage itself. Before I get into the prediction itself, let's review this chapter so far as it explains why God gave this specific prediction to Daniel. Most of the chapter is one big prayer when Jerusalem was in ruins, and Daniel who lived in Babylon (Iraq) prayed about when it's going to change. The prayer literally got interrupted by an angel to give Daniel an answer to his prayer and well, "plenty more". I figured out if God created the universe, then He exists somewhere outside of what He created. It has to be someplace physical or else we won't be able to be with Him forever there. I mention that because the text says that angel flew from wherever God was to be where Daniel was. It says the angel left when Daniel started praying, and he got there before he finished praying to give us a clue how far apart those places are! The angel first told Daniel he's loved by God! (I have to admit that is something I'd love to hear!) Then the angel says in effect, " Daniel, you're focused on the fact the 70 years of capacity is almost up, let me tell you about another group of 70 "sevens" that's more important than the question you are concerned about! Yes the Daniel's prayer was answered, but the answer goes far beyond what he requested! Why? Because the great concern of all religious Jewish people is when will the Messiah come to rule the world and that's what this passage is in effect focused on.

Before I go any further, I should talk about the topic of "gaps" in the bible. My favorite description of a bible time gap is like looking at a mountain range and not being able to see a large valley that separates some of those mountains. A lot of those time gaps exist sometimes in the middle of a verse! Remember what the apostle Paul said about reading the Old Testament: The church is a mystery (no reference to it in the Old Testament)! (See Ephesians 3:1-12.) Meanwhile the angel is telling Daniel, in effect what's the time frame till Jesus First Coming! The time frame of the angel's prediction ends almost exactly at the time of Jesus crucifixion. Then the text tells us Jerusalem will be destroyed (as the Romans did) as the next significant event. Remember this is centuries before it occurred. The text then skips the church age to discuss the time frame of His Second Coming. Bottom line, this lesson only covers four verses.

They tell us when Jerusalem will be rebuilt (it was in ruins when Daniel prayed) and the key historical events after that. Also realize these last four verses involve math and I'll do my best to keep it simple.

The answer to Daniel's pray in this text begins with God explaining the purpose of it. The angel says to Daniel there will be "Seventy times seven" years (we know it's years as nothing happens in 70 x 7 days or months). I warned you this involves math and I'm warming up. The purpose of the 70x7 is to make an end of sin, to bring in "everlasting righteousness" (i.e., the Messiah to rule!) to bring an end to all of the prophecy about the future and make the city of Jerusalem God's world headquarters on earth!

The text says this seventy year period begins when the order is given to rebuild Jerusalem. The order to return to the land of Israel isn't the same thing. The order to rebuild Jerusalem came in Ezra's day who lived roughly a century after Daniel. That order was given by a Persian emperor. Nehemiah wrote that down in Chapter 1 of his book. One can use a few different dates use to mark that order to rebuild that city, but I'd argue the best evidence points to March 01, 445 BC. Next realize the Hebrew Calendar is based on a 360 day year. They add a month every so often to catch up with our 365 day year.

OK, time for more math: The text says in effect after seven times seven years Jerusalem will be rebuilt. That's when Nehemiah was rebuilding the city. The angel then says there will be 62 more "seven-year" time periods till the Messiah is presented to Israel. The point of this math is by (using a 360-day year) like the Jewish people did and a starting date of March 01, 445BC, the time frame ends on April 6, 32. (AD)! To me, even if the math is off by a few years, it's still impressive. Robert Anderson argues that this was "the" Palm Sunday when Jesus presented Himself as their king. Back to Daniel: The text says after the 69 "weeks of years" the Messiah will be "cut off" (as in executed) and have nothing. The text then moves in effect to when the Romans destroyed the temple. Chapter 9 describes that specific event exactly as it happened. Remember there were 70 "weeks of years". The final seven year period is when the Antichrist rules the world and yes, Jesus wins by destroying him! Again there's a big time gap from 69 "weeks" to the 70th "week" for the church age. Since the first 69 didn't involve the church, I believe neither does the 70th, which is why I argue the church will be gone before that final week occurs.

Confused? Great! I invite you to read the details the lesson where I try to explain all of this better. We have lots of people who disagree with this view including Christians who argue for different dates that all of this began! To me, the fact that the starting date matches what a lot of historians argue is when it began and lines up incredibly well when Jesus walks the earth, is my argument that this view isn't only correct but it's the one God intended us to learn!

So how do religious Jewish people see this verse? They agree with the time frame, but they'll argue it refers to King Herod who allowed the Jews to rebuild the temple. While that is true and the Messiah is a reference to any leader, let's just say that temple didn't bring an end to sin. Jesus dying on the cross is in effect the end of sin for those who believe it. That's why the "Herod argument" is wrong! Yes, there are more details and other views about this time frame. To me the fact that this ties to the exact date of Palm Sunday when Jesus in effect asked the crowd to realize He is the Messiah is proof to me that it is what God intended. Again, even the Jewish view argues it "ends" around the same date!

OK John, that's a neat proof that Jesus is God. What if I already believe that and don't have any doubts at the moment? The issue isn't so much the specific text proof, but what do we do when we go through our moments of doubts. It's verses like this that draw us back to God when we study His word. Then it leads back to the great question of "What are we doing about it?" I'll let that one hang there to end this lesson!

As I mentioned earlier, there are two links on this section of the book are a more detailed lesson that I did write about twenty years ago. You're welcome to read that if you'd like. Either way, I'm grateful that you did read this! If you're new here, realize you're always welcome to e-mail me. Thanks again,
John