

XVII. Daniel in Biblical Perspective
Daniel's Seventy Weeks, Part II
Daniel 9:20-27
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August 1, 2010 – Evening Sermon

This study will be a reprise of the 70 weeks and an opportunity to catch up from where we left off from the last 9 chapters. Then we'll plunge into the last three sermons covering Daniel 10, 11 and 12. God has given us a great opportunity to do a mission work here. We have such a stewardship of God bringing the nations to us. Tom Cheely shared with me recently that one of our missionaries in Japan who was sharing the Gospel with a man and the man said, "I'm already a Christian." Our missionary said, "How did you get to be one?" The man said, "I went to school in Birmingham and the International Ministry at Briarwood reached me." Isn't it amazing that one of our missionaries in Japan ran across someone that you as a missionary here was able to reach for Christ and sent them back to Japan. It's just another affirmation of how God works. This is a stewardship. The way our staff has led this ministry has done something enormous. There's nothing official about it but it is something that is very enormously blessed and that is the secular universities and states actually look to us to provide this ministry to internationals. We bemoan many times about how the secularism of our society keeps the church out but here we actually have a welcomed hand through our international ministry. This friendship partners is a great opportunity. So let's cease that moment and opportunity. The stewardship God has given to us there we should not treat lightly and take full advantage of. There is nothing like a relationship with someone to be able to share Christ in a way that they see Jesus in us as well as hear Jesus from us. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for these moments in Your Word and would You teach us please Father? We are a people who are in great need. Take our heart and form it. Take our minds and transform them. Take our wills and conform them. We have sung that as a prayer and now Jesus please answer that prayer. I pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

The reason I started the series on Daniel was the book kind of falls into two marvelous sections. The first six chapters are the memoirs of Daniel in his 80 year ministry through four different dynasties and six different kings. How does he live in a pagan culture having been taken from his culture? There is one group of people that Jeremiah reported that said separate yourself, look to each other, marry with each other, talk to each other, go to each other's school and stay there and Daniel is the one who leads the people of God with the word of Jeremiah saying, "Don't be like that. Seek the good of the city. I have put you there to be My witness not to isolate yourself from them. Turn from their sin and their paganism but turn to them to win them." Daniel becomes an extraordinary example of this. His memoirs in the first six chapters, lay this out for us of how to be in the world but not of the world.

The second reason I started this series is because Daniel was not just simply in a neutral culture but he was in a pagan culture that stood against the true and living God of Israel yet he did not respond in anger or segregating himself but he responded in love, consistency and graciousness continually. This is a great lesson for us who live in an increasingly paganized world, a neo-paganism that's plunging our world in a godless

view of life or really an idolatrous view of life in the paganism of our age. So Daniel becomes another example for us.

The last six chapters of Daniel are the messages of Daniel through various visions. We have already seen some of these visions previously as he dealt with kings like Nebuchadnezzar and others in which he had this vision that pre-wrote history prophetically that there would not only be an Assyrian Empire and a Babylonian Empire but a Medo-Persian Empire, Greek Empire and a Roman Empire. Before any of that happens God writes it out through visions and that's what prophecy is. It is God prewriting history before it occurs. He does that on two or three occasions with Daniel through the various visions and dreams. In that He would embed a small stone that will be cut from a mountain and as it moves and gathers fire it will shatter these gigantic statements of the empires of this world. Thereby looking at the Kingdom of heaven that small stone, our Rock, Jesus Christ, from a mountain, not Mount Sinai but Mount Calvary would that Stone roll forth and shatter the kingdoms of this world because He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords and the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our God.

Now we are in those last sections where He gives an interesting statement. There are many people who will actually turn in their Bibles and commentaries to this particular passage to find out how people will deal with these 70 weeks and they'll decide whether to read the rest of the commentary or not. There are no less than five basic views of the 70 weeks and I'm not going to give you all five but I'll just give you the right one and we'll miss the other four. I'll share that with you as we walk through and recapitulate what we studied a couple of months ago when we left off and then we'll move into what is behind the 70 weeks as it moves forward to Christ and the glorious work of redemption that He will do. We'll see that in Daniel 10, 11 and 12.

It's interesting to note that what I'm about to read takes on such glorious significance in the lives of many people which is about this 70 weeks yet while we get fascinated with this and most of this fascination comes because the fifth view of the 70 weeks which has only come into popularity in the last 175 years. It's the dispensational view in which it covers the third of the 70 weeks. There is the 70 weeks, the 7 weeks of the 7 years and then the 62 weeks of the 7 years and then there's a last week of the 7 years and the dispensational view covers that last week of the 70 years which takes place after a parenthesis called the church and then it will be enacted at the end. While I think this is a very important text I just want to remind you that this text is never quoted in the New Testament. The abomination of desolation is quoted in the New Testament exactly coming from Daniel 11 but this part isn't even quoted yet that doesn't mean it's not important. It just means we have put a fascination with it that the apostolic writers led by the Holy Spirit did not get as consumed with it as we do. It is prophetic literature and so we need to be careful with it. Some people would look at this 70 times 7 and think why couldn't this be purely symbolic which would just point to the perfections of God's plan and certainly that is one of the views that's out there.

I think it refers to actual years because it takes place in the conversation of a prayer that Daniel was raised because he has read the book of Jeremiah where the Babylonian captivity would last for 70 years. It's in the context of that prayer on 70 years that God sends the message of the 70 times 7 to Daniel. Daniel is getting up in age. He is around 80 years of age. He has been in the captivity the entire time. Israel had gone

into captivity in 605 BC, 597 BC and 586 BC. There were three deportations of Israel into the captivity. A prophet who wrote during that time was Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 25:11 it said this captivity would last 70 years. As Daniel read that it drove him to prayer. That prayer of Daniel calling upon the Lord for wisdom concerning this prophecy and his confusion in terms of how long God's people would be here, he is confessing his sins and the sins of the people in this marvelous prayer that takes place in Daniel 9:1-19 and as he is praying God comes to answer his prayer.

What is the answer? It can be found in Daniel 9:20-27. We'll first look at Daniel 9:20-23 which says **20** *While I was speaking and praying (wanting to know about these 70 years), confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my plea before the LORD my God for the holy hill (speaking of Mount Zion in Jerusalem) of my God, 21 while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the first, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. 22 He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. 23 At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for you are greatly loved. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision.* Daniel has answered prayer.

Periodically people will say to me "Pastor, the Lord heard my prayer." The Lord hears all your prayers. They would go on to say, "The Lord answered my prayer." The Lord answers all your prayers. Sometimes the answer is 'yes' and sometimes the answer is 'no' and sometimes it's keep on praying. Sometimes the Lord will answer it in His own way and not necessarily the way you asked. What's interesting here is not that God answered his prayer but there are five things that are revealed in what we just read. The first one is He answered while Daniel was praying. He didn't even finish praying and he got the answer to his prayer. Secondly, this is so startling, not that God answered the prayer through Gabriel but that He answered the prayer while he was praying. So Gabriel will take the time to explain why something like this occurred. Thirdly there is an interesting side note that all of this occurred, Daniel's praying and God's answering, in the context of the evening sacrifices. That would have been about 3 or 4pm in the afternoon. Why is this an interesting side note? Where is Daniel? He is in Babylon. Where do you give sacrifices? You give them in Jerusalem. What happened to the temple at Jerusalem? It has been destroyed. So what in the world is this text talking about that Daniel had his prayer answered during the evening sacrifice?

Here is what clearly has happened. Daniel, this man of God who had built into his life the habits of obedience and worship which means sacrifice that even now, 70 years into captivity, he is still remembering the habits. He's not able to do an actual sacrifice because there's no altar, no priesthood and no privilege to do that but during that time he continued to worship the Lord to the extent that he is able to do it. I received a note from one of our older members the other day and many times I or Bruce has prayed for this member during our pastoral prayer. He has gone through a number of hard things and not only has the Lord restored his health to some degree of blessing in his 80 plus years but he was able to drive again. Every day I pass him on the way to worship on the Lord's Day at the 8am service and I stop and say 'hello' to him. After his second week back he wrote me a note and said, "Pastor thank you for praying I cannot tell you what it means that my prayers have been answered. I have now been able to return to worship and how I have missed this" and his prayers weren't about his health. How I have longed

for this. Daniel longs for Jerusalem to be rebuilt, for the temple to be rebuilt and the sacrifices but in the meantime he has continued to whatever degree he can to remember the habits of his heart before the Lord.

That brings me to number four that Daniel is loved from heaven. Why? God's love is being poured out upon him. Some of us may have a problem with this because in our view of grace, rightly so, God's love is unmerited. But as much as God's love is unmerited in saving us and God's love is sufficient to save us, in spite of our righteousness which is like filthy rags, God is personal. That means He is relational and He responds to our love for Him, not by our earning our way to heaven but the Bible says "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." So our obedience in worship, meeting with the Lord in a quiet time, in praying, in ministry, in evangelizing, is not earning our way to heaven because in the midst of all of that we pollute that with our own sins, but your desire to grow in grace God loves to affirm with His love from heaven. Daniel's love to worship the Lord even though he couldn't bring a sacrifice and he wasn't in Jerusalem and that he continued to come before the Lord even facing Jerusalem in that evening sacrifice time, God reciprocated, drawing near to him. While he didn't earn God's love he did begin to enjoy the intimacies of God's love as He responds to him.

The fifth thing I want to note is that Daniel has now been called by Gabriel coming so that Daniel can take the Word he has been given and Gabriel wants him to do two things. He wants Daniel to consider it and understand it. There is a lot to be said right here but I'd like to give one sentence. We are very lazy as Christians today. What we want is give me my seven step sermon because I don't want to search the Scriptures, I don't want to study to show myself approved, I don't want to exert any effort at all, I just want it laid out for me. Daniel is being ministered to but he is still being called to consider and understand. Give yourself to it and search the Word of God. Then let the Word of God search you.

What does Gabriel actually bring to him? He comes with this answered prayer. Daniel 9:24-27 says **24** *"Seventy weeks are decreed about your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place. 25 Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. 27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."*

What we are told initially is that God has now looked at this scope of history from the restoration of Israel when you get back to the city from the decree to return and rebuild the city which takes place after the 70 years. The 70 years is sure. There will be a decree. My people will return and as you return and are placed back and the city is being built there will then be 70 weeks in which there are six things that are going to happen. The first thing is there is going to come One who will finish the transgression,

put an end to sin and deal with the sin issues. Number two this One will put an end to sacrifice, the whole sacrificially system, a final sacrifice will be given. Number three this One will atone for iniquity. So the first three are negative and then come three positives. Fourthly this One will bring in everlasting righteousness. Fifthly this One will seal, finish up, complete vision and prophecy which is the process of God revealing His Word. Finally this One will anoint the most holy and the most holy place in which He is referring directly to a place that they would normally have thought of as the holy of holies in the temple and He will anoint the most holy place. It doesn't take a preacher or a seminary education to realize we're talking about Jesus here.

Who is it that will put an end to sin? There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Who is it that will put an end to sacrifice? The book of Hebrews says God has given His Son who has given Himself up as the last and final sacrifice. The Priest has brought the sacrifice. The Priest is Jesus and the Sacrifice is Jesus and He has put an end to sacrifice.

Number three is He has made an atonement that is full and final and free. The atonement is for our sins. Recently, I heard a politician who had been caught up in some sinful activities and had put himself under the care of three preachers and then after six months he came out and was given a platform at one of the churches to share about his restoration in the process. I was certainly hoping and praying that he knew the Savior and that God would renew his life and heart but what so broke my heart as I heard his testimony was when he said, "I'm just human." Being human does not necessarily make you a sinner. It's a sin nature that makes us sinners. It's not hu-man it's old man that makes us sinners but in Jesus you can become a new man and by God's grace begin to deal with the old man. The second thing the politician said was, "I would like for you all to be patient with me as I go through this process of atoning for my sins." Giving the judgment of charity what I was hoping and praying he meant by that was restitution and confession which aren't atoning acts. They are acts of repentance. They are bringing forth deeds appropriate to repentance. The reason we can repent and bring forth deeds of appropriate repentance is not because we're making an atonement but because an atonement has been made. I am forgiven in Jesus Christ and because I'm forgiven I can now repent and put my trust in Him. Now by God's grace I can go back and do acts of reconciliation, restitution, restoration and deed appropriate to repentance which aren't atoning deeds but they're evidences of my repentance and a heart that now wants to honor the Lord, having once sinned against the Lord with high handed treason. The reason we can live by faith, repentance and confidence is because Jesus has brought the atonement for iniquity and has paid for all of the sins of all of His people for all of eternity.

Number four is He has brought in an everlasting righteousness. I have been preaching on this in the Sermon on the Mount series and when Jesus says, "You have to have a righteousness that is better than the Pharisees and the Sadducees" He of course is talking about when God's people do righteousness it is a whole lot different than that of the Pharisees and Sadducees, but even then we're not trusting in that righteousness. When Jesus says to the righteous in that day my righteousness ticket is not what I did in my life but my righteousness ticket is the righteousness of Jesus. Romans 1:16-17 says *16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the*

righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." I have an everlasting righteousness that's impeccable. It's the righteousness that's imputed to me by Jesus Christ. His blood atones for my iniquity. His righteousness clothes me and makes me acceptable to Him, an everlasting righteousness.

Number five is to seal up a vision and prophecy. This Anointed One that comes that brings all of this to completion is One who will not only bring the sacrifice as Priest, not only His reign as King, but He will bring the Word as the Prophet. God has finally spoken in His Son, Jesus Christ. He has now sealed up vision and prophecy as He brought the Word and empowered the Apostles to write out for us the New Testament Scriptures that become a part of the Word of God.

Sixthly and finally, He will anoint the most holy place. There is this thing called Solomon's Temple and the shekinah glory fell upon it. They will go back after the Babylonian captivity and they will build another temple called Zerubbabel's Temple. The glory of God never fell upon it. Ezekiel is saying, "But look at this temple" that he describes in Ezekiel 40 and afterwards. When did Ezekiel's temple get built? It was built on the day that Jesus came into this world. The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, it templated among us and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). In other words, Jesus was full of the shekinah glory. When you have seen Him you have seen the glory of the Father. Jesus, Himself, not only anointed the holy place but He was the Holy Place. He is Ezekiel's temple and that's why He says in John 17 "I sanctify Myself for you." He is the dwelling place of God's glory and if you are in Him and He is in you then you have become a temple of the Lord because the Temple of the Lord is Jesus Himself.

So when did this anointing take place? It takes place as He begins His public ministry. As He begins His public ministry in 30 AD He is baptized and when He is baptized and the water is being poured out upon Him at the same time the Holy Spirit is poured out upon Him. God states, "This is My Son in whom I am well pleased." Jesus is anointed for that ministry to accomplish our redemption and righteousness and to give us His Word. So He is telling him there is 70 weeks.

It's interesting that you have the decree of Cyrus that sends them back to Jerusalem which is given in 538 BC there are also two more decrees. I don't have time to go into all of this but let me encourage you to read Ezra 4 and Ezra 7. There is not only Cyrus' decree but there will come a decree from Darius and then there will come a decree from Artaxerxes. If you take the time to look through the years from Artaxerxes decree until the finishing of Christ's ministry it is 490 years. From the decree of Artaxerxes to rebuild it in the day of trouble and how much trouble was there? Read the book of Nehemiah and you will see all kinds of trouble as they are rebuilding it with walls, moats and squares but it will be rebuilt.

When it is rebuilt, notice what he says in the decree to build. He takes these seventy sevens and divides them into three parts. The first is the first seven in which the decree comes and they go back and start rebuilding Jerusalem and the walls and then continue on in days of trouble for 62 more sevens which is 434 years in the seven years and these two divisions bring up to 483 years. Those 483 years are then followed by the last week which is seven and it is marked by the abomination of desolation which Jesus Himself referred to in Matthew 24. He referred to it in the context of Daniel 11 and we'll come back to this but I'd like to look at the passage in Matthew 24. Here Jesus is dealing

with the issue of His coming again and He tells them that the city of Jerusalem is going to be made desolate. In its desolation look at what He says in Matthew 24:15-28; **15** “*So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, 18 and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. 19 And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. 23 Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand. 26 So, if they say to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out. If they say, ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.*”

Now look at Daniel 9 and these concluding verse and that’s how we will finish up this study. Daniel 9:25-27 says **25** *Know therefore and understand that from the going out of the word to restore and build Jerusalem (this is the decree from Artaxerxes) to the coming of an anointed one (who will fulfill all of those six things that have already been said), a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time. 26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off (look in Isaiah 53:8 which is the language referring to Jesus, where the Messiah shall become the suffering servant and He shall be ‘cut off’. This is looking to the death of Jesus Christ. Christ and His death will accomplish our atonement and our righteousness and forgiveness and will fulfill and finish all sacrifices.) and shall have nothing (that is He will be brought to the end). And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary (He came to His own, Israel. Through their disobedience woe be unto Jerusalem. So judgment falls upon Jerusalem because the people He came to who had rejected Him now He tells them it will be a day of great desolation that will come upon them and He goes on to describe it like He did in Matthew 24). Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. 27 And he shall make a strong covenant (a new covenant which Jeremiah spoke of) with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator.”*

He is saying very simply that Jesus Christ is coming and in the midst of His presence He shall be cut off and in His death He shall accomplish that which God has called Him to. Then those who had been His people that He came to, with their rejection will come desolation upon Jerusalem and that desolation will be filled up by one who will come to make it desolate. There He is pointing to what will take place in 66 and 70 AD under a Roman General by the name of Titus in which the temple is destroyed, the sacrifice again as it has been in the past, as he puts a pagan god on the throne of mercy in the holy of holies, makes it desolate. There all sacrifices have now ended and God not

only has brought the sacrifices of all sacrifices but He has even brought the judgment that brings an end to the continuation of those Old Testament sacrifices and they are finished. So it all points to Christ.

I just want to give you a couple of takeaways. The first takeaway is from this text God answers prayers. We have not because we ask not. I cannot tell you how this happens but I can only tell you this that in the preaching of the Word God Himself by Jesus begins to speak to your heart even through fallible vessels like me and our staff. The Holy Spirit takes the Word and speaks to your heart. I can't explain preaching and the ministry of the Word or totally what it means. I can explain it theologically so that we don't fall into any error but the Lord's Supper and how we're actually feasting upon Jesus yet not His body and blood actually/physically but His body and blood spiritually. Some of these things the Bible says are mysteries that are revealed to us and it's the same thing with prayer. God changes things through praying people. God answers prayer and He always answers it just right. So let's pray. No hype, no 'at a boy' but let's just pray and we'll be amazed that God may show up while you're praying to answer the prayer. God draws near to those who draw near to Him.

The second takeaway from the text is that our lives do not make God love us. He has loved us freely but our love for God through obedience does not go unnoticed by God. When you come before the Lord in obedience with a broken heart and a contrite spirit God delights in you. We don't cause Him to love us but He does love to respond to the love of His people.

The third and final takeaway is if you get anything out of the 70 weeks get this; all the Scripture points to Jesus and Jesus fulfills all the Scripture. The Word of God is here so that you can know the God of the Word and put your trust in Him, love Him, follow Him and serve Him. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. As we move through and see the intricacies of what You have declared through Gabriel to Daniel in Daniel 10, 11 and 12 would You guide us but Father more than that would You take these things and the Jesus who made Daniel and came to Daniel to minister to him even through an angel, and do in us what You did in him that our eyes are on You, wonderful Savior. In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.